



Spark Change Final Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

Young people transition to adulthood is associated with complex changes including instability in areas of education, employment, personal relationships, and housing (Arnet, Žukauskienė, and Sugimura, 2014). The number of young people aged 16 to 24 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) reached a historical high shortly after the financial crisis of 2007/2008 (Lőrinc *et al.*, 2020), and even though it is now decreasing, some of the London boroughs (like Havering and Hackney) still experience high level compared to others. Spark Change is a programme funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and five Local Authorities (funding matched the ESIF). It aims to provide tailored support for NEET young people to support them in developing the skills required to progress into employment, training or education. The programme is offered in London (Bexley, Brent, Harrow, Hackney, and Havering) for NEET young people aged 16 to 24 and young people aged 15 to 18 that are At Risk. Overall, this programme is dedicated to improving young people's well-being, education, and employment opportunities. To ensure young people receive the right support Spark change provides the following services:

- Spark Change Me which focuses on mental health, self-esteem and volunteering opportunities through Cognitive Behavioural Mentoring (CBM)¹;
- Spark Change Future focuses on accredited courses and qualifications, self-employment support, and employer engagement through 12-week supported internships.

This report unveils the findings from the research evaluating the Spark Change programme spanning from July 2022 to December 2023 and delves into the impact of the two aforementioned services. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the evaluation utilises both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data, as outlined in section 3 of the report, were procured through an online questionnaire administered to programme participants at the inception and conclusion of their involvement, aiming to scrutinise changes over time. A total of 205 questionnaires were gathered, with 74 respondents indicating their participation in the 12-week supported internships, 118 participants in CBM, four participating in both, four preferring not to disclose, and five leaving the question unanswered. The qualitative data in this report encompass 18 semi-structured interviews, covering both CBM and the 12-week supported internship. These interviews involved nine staff and participants from each route, with two delivery partners and seven programme participants. Additionally, the qualitative segment incorporated four case studies—two featuring participants (one

¹ Cognitive Behavioural Mentoring is based on specialist mentoring using Cognitive Behavioural Training approaches.

from CBM and one from the 12-week supported internships) and two spotlighting staff (one from CBM and one from the 12-week supported internships).

Both the interviews and the analysis of the questionnaires yielded crucial insights into the performance of Spark Change. Participants from both paths exhibited an enhancement in well-being, confidence, self-esteem, and resilience, as evidenced by the scales utilized in the quantitative data collection. These outcomes were corroborated by interview findings, where both staff and participants reported heightened mental health and confidence as primary outcomes. Specifically, the CBM participants reported an increased ability to employ techniques for responding positively to challenging situations. Meanwhile, the 12-week supported internship route facilitated improvements in employability skills and confidence in navigating employment and social interactions. The questionnaire results, particularly when examining outcomes for those concluding their engagement with Spark Change, indicated that young individuals were transitioning to or actively seeking employment, engaging in volunteering, securing work placements, and participating in internships. Programmes like Spark Change, designed to offer essential support and resources for young people navigating the challenges of securing employment and pursuing education, address the gaps in existing service provisions and play a crucial role in facilitating positive outcomes for participants.

Although the evaluation was primarily positive, there are areas for improvement for each service. For the supported internship programme, there were opportunities for improvement specifically in the areas of timing and internship diversity. Participants and a delivery partner emphasized the importance of introducing internships at the outset of the programme to maximize immersion and bolster overall participant outcomes. Furthermore, the delivery partner underscored the need for a more extensive selection of internship options. Some participants faced challenges accessing opportunities aligned with their interests, potentially impacting their motivation and engagement. Family support also emerged as a crucial factor affecting positive outcomes for young individuals, with a lack of support for young people from their families identified as a potential barrier. Although the programme is designed to support the young people, incorporating strategies to foster family involvement would be beneficial in creating a supportive environment for participants. Within the CBM programme, participants and delivery partners noted an opportunity for improvement associated with the delivery method and session frequency. The online format of CBM was perceived by some participants as limiting their experience due to the lack of personal contact which constrained communication. Addressing these issues could significantly enhance participant experiences and

outcomes in both programmes, providing a more impactful intervention for young people seeking to improve their employability and overall well-being.

The report showcases the positive performance of Spark Change's, illustrating the programme's role in improving participants' mental health, confidence, self-esteem, employability skills, and social skills. Figure 1.1 encapsulates the positive outcomes of the programme, highlighting its significant benefits for participants whilst also acknowledging the areas for improvement and refinement.

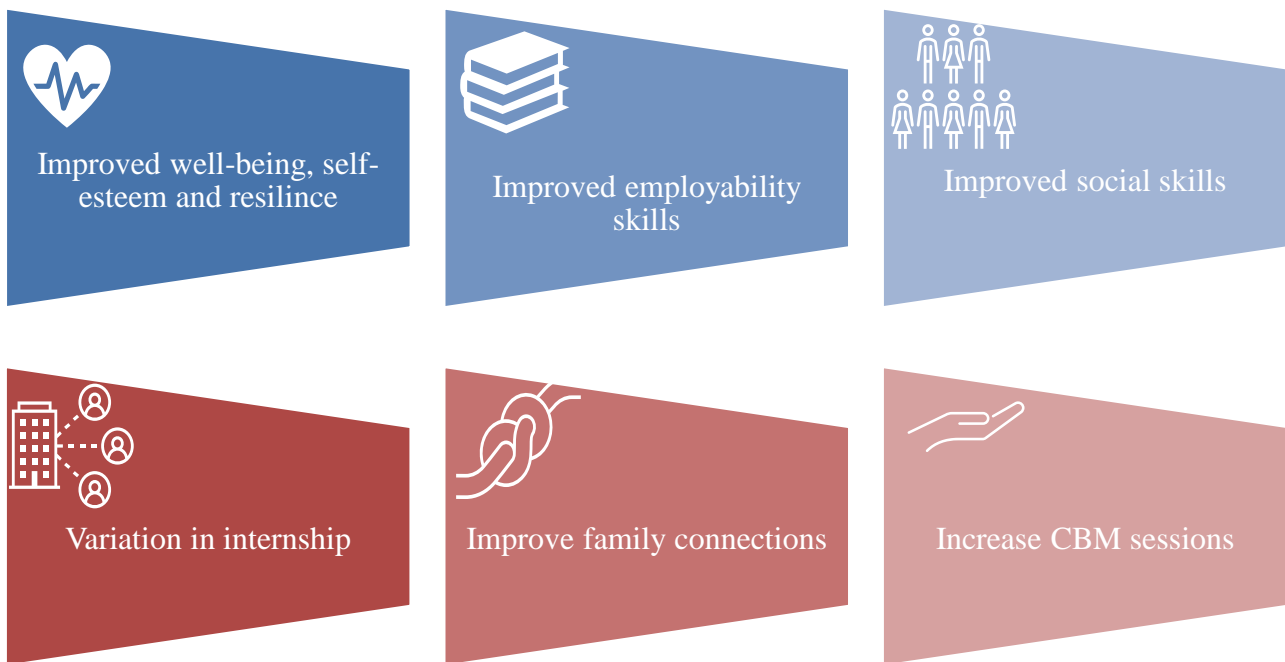


Figure 1.1. Spark change benefits (top) and opportunities for improvement (bottom).

Finally, the data gathered in relation to the social impact of Spark Change demonstrates that the total maximum impact created by Spark Change equates to £2,588,404.03. However, when attribution and deadweight is accounted for, the overall impact value created is **£1,715,389.27**.

Based upon the data outlined in this report, the research team proposes the following key recommendations for developing the project:

- Establish the internship from the beginning and increase the variation of internships offered:** Since the supported internship lasts 12 weeks, young people would experience greater benefit if the internship were established from the beginning. This would allow the programme participants to fully immerse themselves in the work experience and achieve long-term improvements in self-efficacy and well-being. Moreover, increasing the internship

opportunities and the variety would allow participants to pursue their individual interests which would increase the opportunities for success and solidify their engagement.

- **Involve the family from the beginning to ensure participants have a cohesive support system:** The internship opportunity does not include a salary and therefore participants and families can find it hard to understand the programme benefits. Involving the family from the beginning would allow the development of a cohesive and well-rounded support system that encourage participant. Furthermore, fostering engagement with the family has the potential to impact positively on family members which creates an added benefit for participants, family members and society.
- **Increase the number of CBM sessions:** The participants engaging in CBM mentioned how the number of sessions could be increased, however, if this is not possible, the participants could benefit from having follow up sessions after the therapy has ended. Supporting individuals as they embark on their journey into employment or education is a critical intervention that can significantly shape their experience and outcomes. Early support at the beginning of these journeys can help young people navigate an inherently challenging and stressful job market. Providing support from the outset helps individuals navigate these stressors more effectively, creating a more positive and manageable experience. Moreover, early support contributes to the development of resilience, confidence and wellbeing. As participants encounter obstacles or setbacks, the groundwork laid by comprehensive support empowers them to bounce back and persist in their pursuits, thus reducing disengagement or dropout. This would ensure that the substantial support provided by Spark Change remains effective and impactful. In conclusion, a proactive and supportive approach at the beginning of individuals' journeys into employment or education is a powerful strategy that significantly impacts their overall experience and long-term success.
- **Data collection:** There is a missed opportunity to collect data on staff upskilling and staff well-being. If staff upskilling data was collected and/or provided then additional social impact could be leveraged based on the training and qualifications staff gain (i.e., NVQ). Furthermore, if longitudinal data were captured for staff well-being, then Prospects could demonstrate distance travelled and hence quantify how many staff had been supported from lower well-being scores to average or higher well-being scores.

1. Introduction

Spark Change is a programme funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and five Local Authorities (funding matched the ESIF). It aims to provide tailored support for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) to progress into employment or education. The programme is offered in London (Bexley, Brent, Harrow, Hackney, and Havering) for young people aged 16 to 24 that are NEET and young people aged 15 to 18 that are At Risk. Overall, this programme is dedicated to improving young people's well-being, education, and employment opportunities. To ensure young people receive tailored support, an individual Triage and Assessment process is offered using Prospect's Resilience Compass, Key Life areas, Risk Assessment, Specialist Assessments, and Identify Priorities assessment. This identifies suitable support with the two main types of support offered through Spark Change:

- Spark Change Me which focuses on mental health, self-esteem and volunteering opportunities through Cognitive Behavioural Mentoring (CBM)²;
- Spark Change Future focuses on accredited courses and qualifications, self-employment support, and employer engagement through 12-week supported internships.

This report presents results from the research evaluating the Spark Change programme (July 2022 to December 2023)³ and the impact of the two support routes. The evaluation adopts a mixed methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The quantitative data in this report were obtained through an online questionnaire, capturing responses from programme participants at the beginning and end of their participation. A total of 205 questionnaires were collected, with 74 respondents indicating their involvement in the 12-week supported internships, 118 respondents participating in CBM, four in both, four preferring not to disclose, and five leaving the question blank (a more detailed breakdown of the respondents can be found in Section 3 of the report). The qualitative data in this report include 18 semi-structured interviews, encompassing both CBM and 12-week supported internship participants. For each support route, nine interviews were conducted with staff and participants (two with delivery partners and seven with programme participants), focusing on the needs of programme participants and programme performance. Additionally, four case studies were included, featuring two from participants (one CBM and one

² Cognitive Behavioural Mentoring is based on specialist mentoring using Cognitive Behavioural Training approaches.

³ Quantitative analysis is based on results from July 2022 to December 2023.

from 12-week supported internships) and two from staff (one CBM and one from 12-week supported internships).

2. Literature Review

Support for young people in improving well-being and employment opportunities is pivotal giving that the life period in which a young person transition to adulthood is defined by instability in the areas of education, employment, personal relationships, and housing (Arnet, Žukauskienė, and Sugimura, 2014). The number of NEET young people aged 16 to 24 years reached historical highs shortly after the financial crisis of 2007/2008 (Lőrinc *et al.*, 2020). It is now decreasing, with the NEET recorded at 11.3% in January to March 2023 (ONS, 2023⁴). Figure 2.1⁵ (below) displays the proportion of NEET young people (16 to 17 years old) for England, London and the boroughs in which Spark change provides services. All the boroughs in which Spark Change operates appear to have a lower proportion of NEET when compared to England overall. However, when compared to the London average, Havering and Hackney appear to have a higher proportion of NEET from 2019 to 2023 (with Havering having a slightly lower proportion of NEET in 2023 than London). Bexley shares the same starting point as London, however, after a reduction in 2020, the proportion of NEET has increased to have higher levels than London and all the other boroughs.

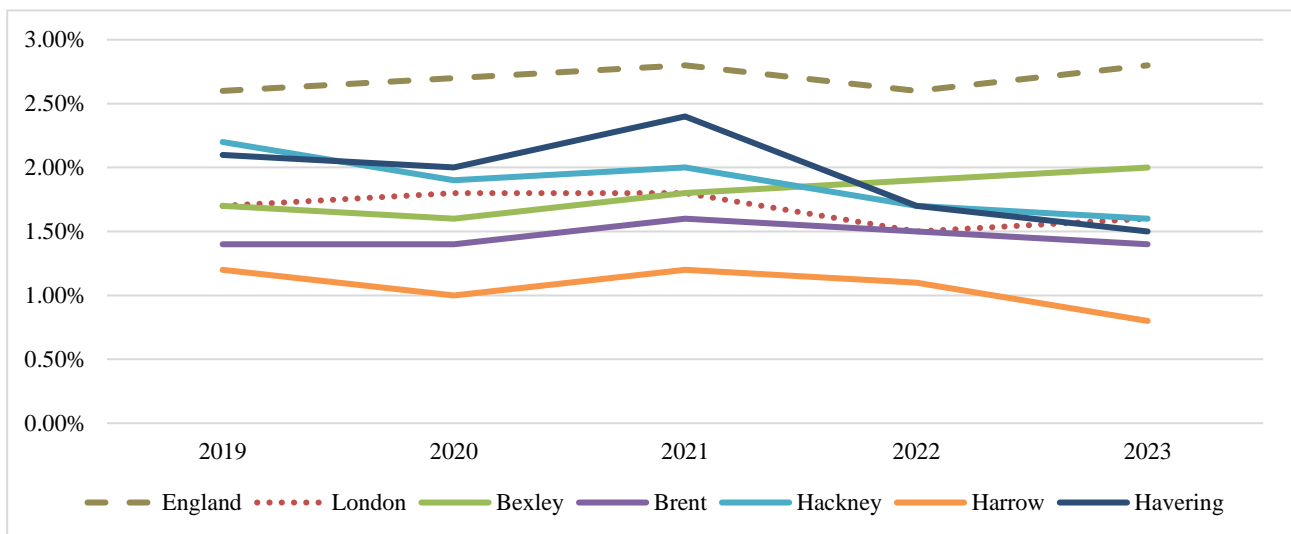


Figure 2.1. NEET proportion in England, London, Bexley, Brent, Hackney, Harrow and Havering between 2019 and 2023. (GOV.UK, 2023)

⁴ONS official data on NEET people available at the website <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/may2023> (last visited 15/01/2024)

⁵Authors Elaboration based on “Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority” <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-neet-age-16-to-17-by-local-authority>

The Youth Futures Foundation (2021) report found that a high proportion of young people do not have access to support, appropriate information, or the connections required to find employment or apply to further or higher education. This underscores the importance of programs like Spark Change, which aim to provide the necessary support and resources to help young people navigate the challenges of finding employment and pursuing education. By addressing these gaps in access to support and information, initiatives such as Spark Change play a crucial role in facilitating positive outcomes for participants. Research (Mawn *et al.*, 2017) indicates that NEET young people face various barriers, including a lack of work experience, low qualification levels, and heightened employer uncertainty. The broader impact of unemployment on a young person's life is significant, affecting physical health, increasing the likelihood of engaging in criminal behaviour, fostering unhealthy lifestyle traits such as smoking, leading to elevated alcohol consumption and substance abuse, and contributing to a higher rate of suicidal tendencies (Bartelink *et al.*, 2020). This highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by NEET individuals and illustrated the importance of targeted interventions to address these issues and support positive outcomes. Furthermore, it is proven that unemployment and low well-being are interconnected. Indeed, unemployed individuals have less subjective well-being with respect to their employed peers (Azizan and Mahmud, 2018) and can experience greater mental health problems (McQuaid, 2017). Unemployed young people can experience higher stress and depression, reduced well-being, lower life satisfaction, and poorer mental health in the years to come (Bartelink *et al.*, 2020). Lastly, from an employment and financial perspective, youth unemployment can have an impact on the whole life span, being linked to lower pay and limited life chances (McQuaid, 2017), reduced income and poorer quality employment (Bartelink *et al.*, 2020).

The impact of unemployment for young people is not limited to individual challenges, but also impacts young people's family and the wider society. The financial costs for society can include the increased cost of unemployment benefits, the missed potential of productive individuals (Bjarnason and Sigurdardottir, 2003), and tax revenue (Caliendo and Schmidl, 2016). Each NEET young person has an average lifetime cost of £56,500 to the public sector and a wider cost of £104,300 to the economy (Mawn *et al.*, 2017). Considering that, in March 2022, there were 704,000 identified NEETs (ONS, 2022), the potential cost to the UK is around 73 billion. Therefore, alongside the fundamental improvement in young people's well-being, a reduction in NEET can also generate a positive impact on society. The Spark Change programme aims to address both issues, at the individual and societal levels, providing young people with support to improve well-being, education, and employment opportunities.

As mentioned in the introduction, Spark Changes aims to enhance young people's well-being and employability through CBM (or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) as known in Literature) and 12-week supported internships. CBM is a psychological treatment delivered in collaboration with the patient that can take various formats (James, et al., 2020). CBT and its different variations have been proven to have a positive impact on children and adolescence's anxiety (Bodden et al., 2008; James et al., 2020), trauma (Deblinger et al., 2016), autism (Wood and Schwartzman, 2013), obsessive-compulsive disorder (Clark and Reynolds, 2013), and depression (Hollis et al., 2017). Working adjacent to CBM, the 12-week supported internship aims to introduce NEET young people in employment. The 12-week supported internship is delivered in a Monday class covering topics related to employment such as curriculum writing, interviews, workspace behaviour, and an internship. Work experiences seem to have a positive impact on young people in NEET (Sims, et al., 2013), increasing their employment abilities, among which teamwork, and improving their communication and interpersonal skills (Beyer, et al., 2016). Moreover, young people participating in work experiences tend to value education more than peers who do not participate in work experience (National Education Business Partnership Network, 2008). Moreover, supported internship can also have an impact on the young people well-being by providing young people with a sense of belonging and increase self-confidence in young people (Hanson, et al., 2021).

This report aims to investigate the impact of Spark Change and the efficiency of the project in addressing the individual needs of young people and society described in the literature review. Through the use of survey data (Section 3), interviews and case studies (Section 4), and Social Impact Measurement (SIM) (Section 5), the report aims to highlight Spark Change outputs, outcomes, and impacts, which can help with the refinement of interventions where the data suggests that impact is limited.

3. Quantitative data analysis

From November 2022 to December 2023, young people participating in the programme were asked to reply to the questionnaire on a voluntary basis. In total, 205 questionnaires were collected, with 74 respondents reporting engagement in the 12-week supported internships, 118 respondents reporting engagement in CBM, four to both, four preferred not to say, and five leaving the question blank. Participants were asked to answer twice, for the first time at the beginning of their participation in the programme and for the second time at the end. Among the 74 participants receiving the supported internship, 43 did the questionnaire for the first time and 31 for the second. Among the 118 CBM participants, 74 did it for the first time and 44 for the second. Among the four respondents participating in both programmes, two did it for the first time and two for the second. Lastly, among the nine participants that preferred not to say or left the information about the path blank, five did it for the first time and four did not provide this information⁶.

3.1. Demographic information

The locations where young people participated in the programmes are presented in Table 3.1⁷, with the supported internship participants being predominantly from Hackney (34.9%) and the CBM participants from Bexley (40.5%).

Area	12-week supported internships	Both	Cognitive Behaviour Mentoring	Grand Total
Bexley	18.6%	50.0%	40.5%	32.8%
Brent	2.3%	0.0%	14.9%	10.1%
Hackney	27.9%	0.0%	16.2%	20.2%
Harrow	34.9%	0.0%	21.6%	26.1%
Havering	16.3%	50.0%	6.8%	10.9%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3.1. Areas of participation

⁶ These respondents will be not included in the analysis to ensure anonymity.

⁷ In this initial section, we will include only the respondents who did the questionnaire for the first time and who have provided the route they participated in (N=119) as those who did it the second time should be the same respondents with the same demographic characteristics. However, not everyone replied to all questions, so some of the percentages displayed could include less than 119 questionnaires.

The duration of participation varied based on the type of programme. Supported internship participants were predominantly engaged for one to three months (39.5%) or between six to 12 months (23.3%). In contrast, CBM respondents were mainly at the initial stages of their journey, with more than half participating for one to three months (53.4%). Participants engaged in both paths had been involved for one to three months (Figure 3.1).

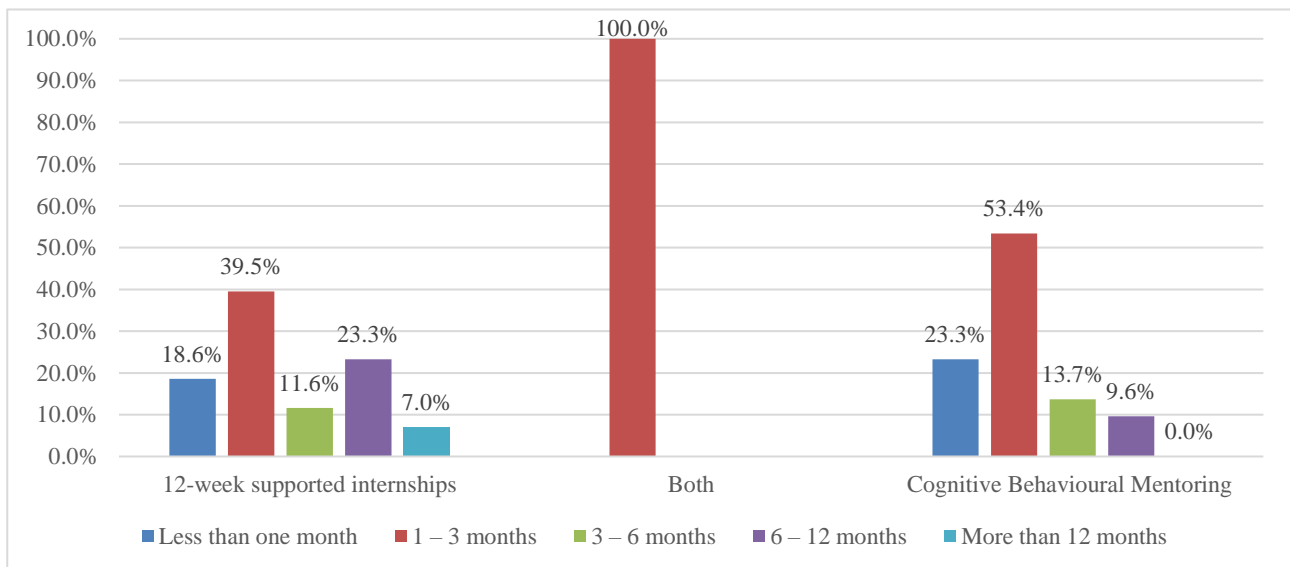


Figure 3.1. Length of participation in the programme

The participants in the supported internship programme are slightly older, ranging in age from 16 to 25 years old, with a mean age of 20.7 years (standard deviation of 2.7 years). On the other hand, CBM participants are slightly younger, spanning an age range from 15 to 25 years old, with a mean age of 19.2 years (standard deviation of 2.2 years). The two participants who engaged in both paths had an average age of 17.5 years, with a standard deviation of 1.3. Table 3.2 below presents the sex and gender distribution of programme participants. Notably, there is a difference in gender distribution between the two paths, with a higher proportion (69.8%) of supported internship participants identifying as male and a higher proportion (55.4%) of CBM participants identifying as female. Further observation reveals that sex and gender are closely aligned for CBM participants. However, for supported internship participants, there is variation, as the percentage identifying as male decreases when considering gender, while the categories of other, prefer not to say, and non-binary show an increase.

Sex	12-week supported internships	Both	Cognitive Behaviour Mentoring	Grand Total
Female	25.6%	50.0%	55.4%	44.5%
Male	69.8%	50.0%	43.2%	52.9%
Prefer not to say	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Other	2.3%	0.0%	1.4%	1.7%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Gender	12-week supported internships	Both	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy	Grand Total
Cisgender Female	22.5%	50.0%	51.4%	41.2%
Cisgender Male	57.5%	50.0%	44.4%	49.1%
Gender neutral	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.9%
Other	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Prefer not to say	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%
Non-binary	5.0%	0.0%	2.8%	3.5%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3.2. Programme participants' sex and gender

The most common ethnicity among participants in both paths is White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British (34.9% among supported internship participants and 58.6% among CBM participants). Supported internship participants show a more varied range of ethnicities compared to CBM participants, as illustrated in Figure 3.2, which suggests that the supported internship pathway may attract participants from a broader range of ethnic backgrounds, contributing to a more heterogeneous participant demographic in terms of ethnicity.

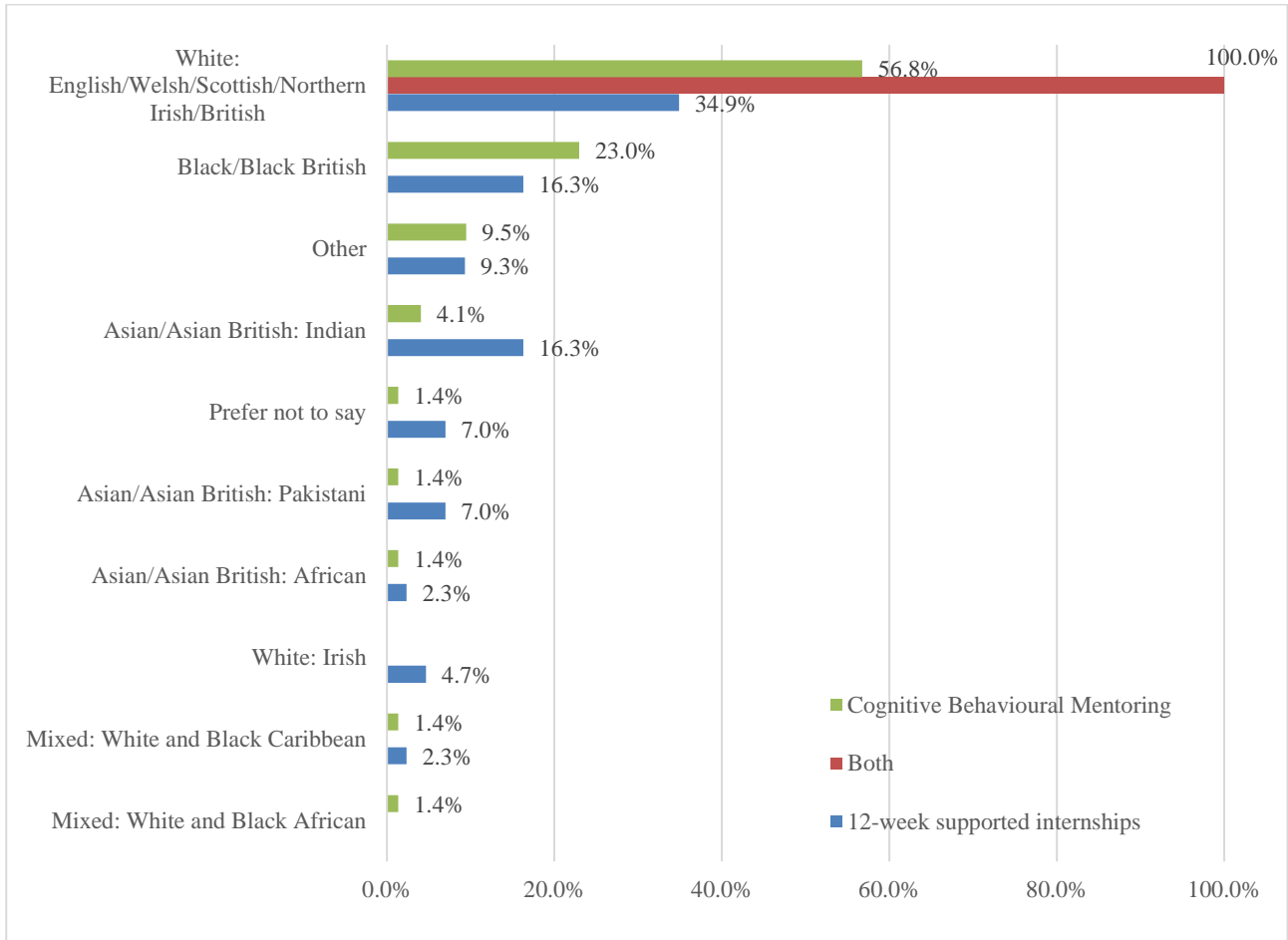


Figure 3.2. Programme participants ethnicity

The educational levels of participants in the supported internship programme were lower compared to those engaging in CBM. Among supported internship participants, 9.8% did not have any qualifications, 22.0% held qualifications at level 1 and below (NVQ Entry Levels 1-3), and 31.7% were educated at GCSE/O-Level grades D-G “3 to 1” & professional/vocational equivalent (NVQ Level 1). In contrast, CBM participants had higher education levels and, while 9.5% of the participants lacked any qualifications, the distribution of education levels among CBM participants skewed towards higher education. Specifically, 14.9% were educated at GCSE/O-Level grades D-G “3 to 1” & professional/vocational equivalent (NVQ Level 1), 36.5% at GCSE/O-Level grades A-C “9 to 4” & professional/vocational equivalent (NVQ Level 2), and 25.7% at A-levels & professional/vocational equivalents (NVQ Level 3). This disparity in educational levels reflects the diverse academic backgrounds of participants on the two programmes.

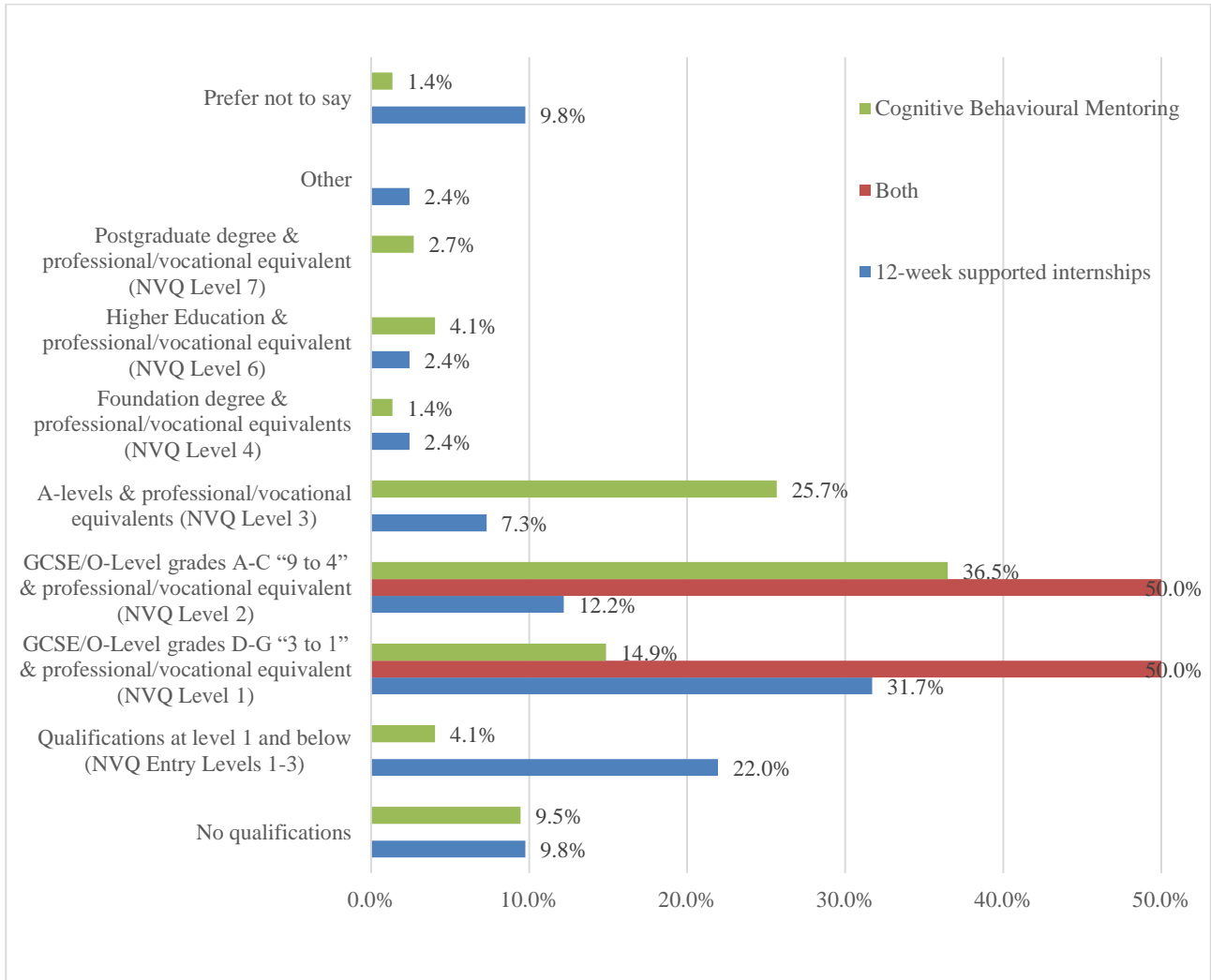


Figure 3.3. Programme participants education levels

The data indicates that a significant portion of participants in both the supported internship and CBM pathways were not actively engaged in school or training. Specifically, 79.1% of those in supported internships and 83.8% of those in CBM reported not attending school or training during the assessment period (Figure 3.4). This suggests that a substantial proportion of programme participants were currently not enrolled in formal educational or training programs which aligns with the inclusion criteria for Spark Change. When considering the average duration of disengagement from education or training, participants in supported internships reported an average of 24.5 months without such engagement, with a standard deviation of 23.1 months. On the other hand, CBM participants reported an average of 14.3 months without participation in education or training, with a standard deviation of 13.0 months. This information provides insights into the educational status and background of the programme participants, highlighting their current disengagement from formal educational or training activities and the varying durations of this disengagement.

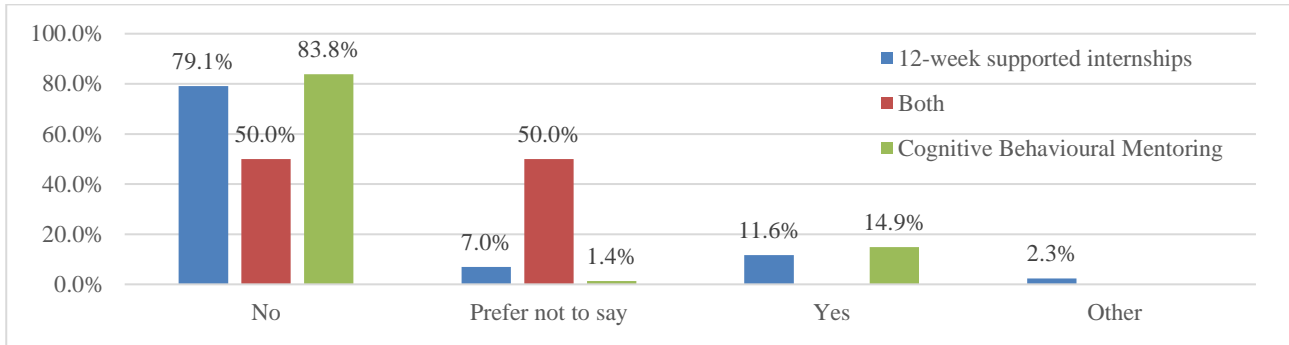


Figure 3.4. School attendance

The majority of participants in both paths were currently not employed, accounting for 72.1% of supported internship respondents and 83.6% of CBM respondents (Figure 3.5). Among the supported internship respondents who provided information about their employment status, 20 individuals reported an average duration of unemployment of 23.3 months, with a standard deviation of 46.5 months. Similarly, among the CBM respondents who shared details on their employment status, 27 individuals reported an average duration of unemployment of 8.5 months, with a standard deviation of 7.9 months. This data emphasises the prevalence of unemployment among the participants and provides insights into the duration of their unemployment.

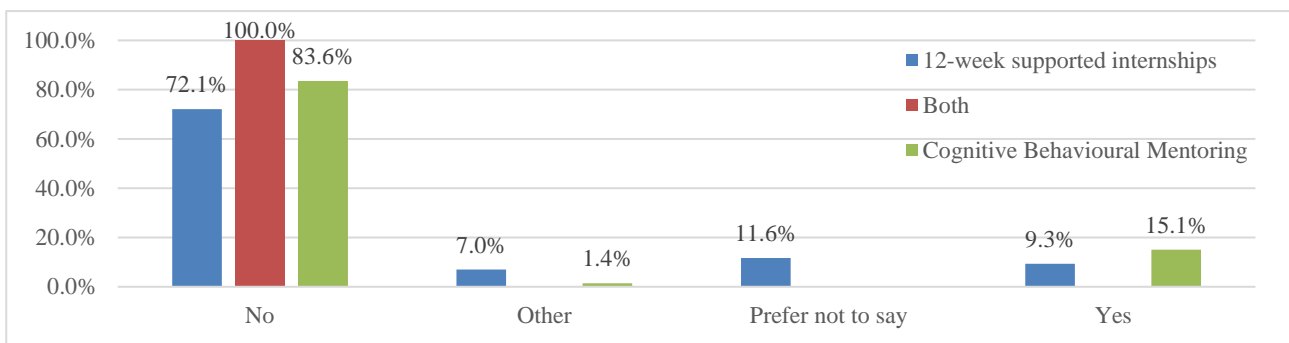


Figure 3.5. Employment

Information on vulnerabilities and risks was collected from survey respondents, who were asked to identify the categories of vulnerability or risk they experienced (with multiple selections available) (Figure 3.6). Both groups of respondents predominantly identified as unemployed, with 76.7% of supported internship participants and 83.6% of CBM participants falling into this category. The second and third most frequent categories were the same for both paths but interestingly inverted. For supported internship participants, the second most frequent category was people with learning needs (34.9%), and the third was people with mental health challenges (14.0%). In contrast, for CBM participants, the second most frequent category was people with mental health challenges (26.0%), and the third was people with learning needs (20.5%). The prevalence of unemployment in both groups is noteworthy, as highlighted in the literature review, where unemployment is associated with

various negative impacts on physical health, increased criminal behaviour, unhealthy lifestyle traits (e.g., smoking), elevated alcohol consumption and substance abuse, and a higher suicidal rate (Bartelink et al., 2020). Additionally, from an employment and financial perspective, youth unemployment is linked to lower pay, limited life chances (McQuaid, 2017), reduced income, and lower-quality employment (Bartelink et al., 2020).

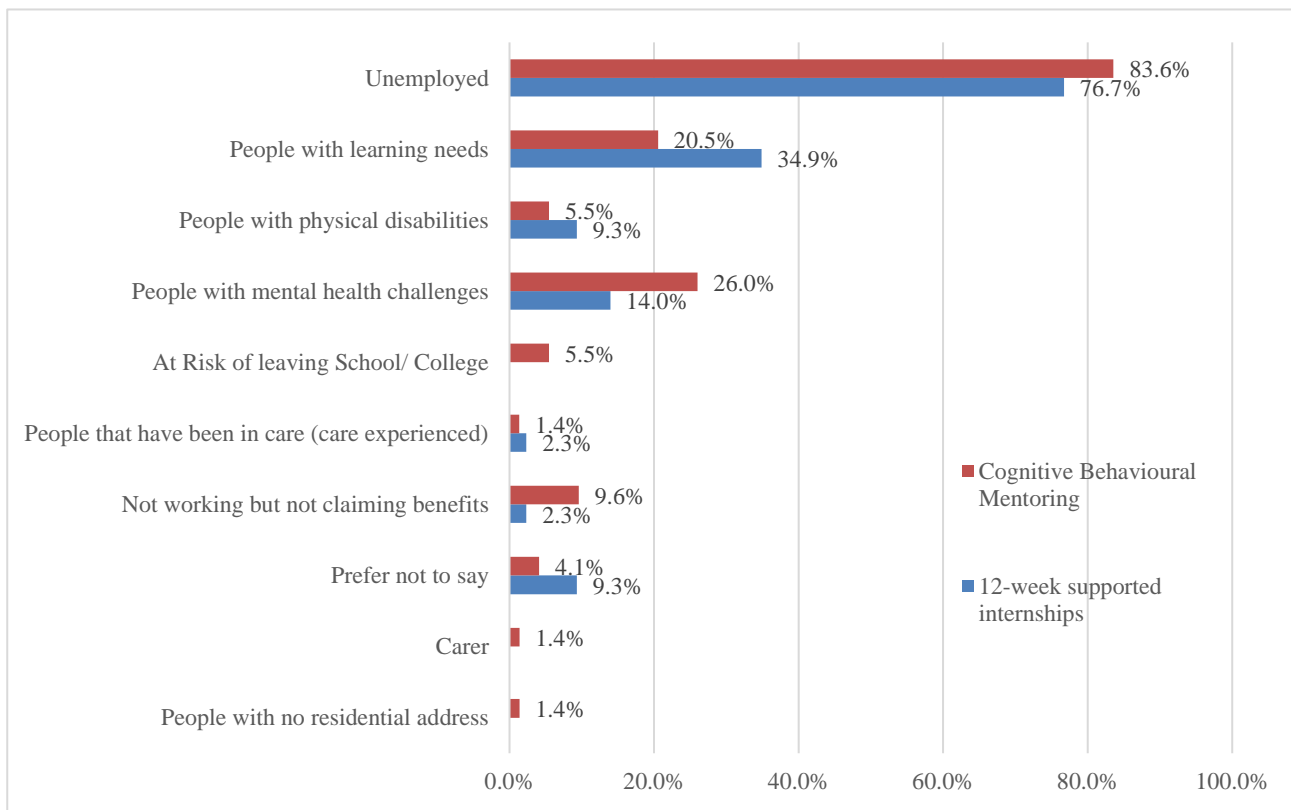


Figure 3.6. Vulnerability categories

3.2. Questionnaire Results

To understand participants’ experience on the programme, the quantitative data collection used psychological scales with three scales including: the General self-efficacy scale, the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, and the Child & Youth Resilience Measure-Revised (CYRM-R). The programme participants were invited to complete the questionnaire two times, allowing for a comparison of their self-efficacy, well-being and resilience.

3.2.1. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy was investigated using the GSE scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). This scale is composed of 10 items on a 4-point Likert Scale (1 = not at all true, 2 = hardly true, 3 = moderately true, 4 = exactly true). The scores range from a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 40. In

both programmes the pre-programmes self-efficacy increased over time (Figure 3.7 illustrates these changes over time), however, the participants engaging in CBM appeared to have experienced a slightly greater increase. Based on the data, individual changes can be investigated over time for 13 participants on supported internships and 34 participants on CBM who completed the survey at both the beginning and the end, and were identifiable, numbered 13 and 34. Among the 13 respondents from the supported internship, six did not experience any change, two experienced positive changes and five experienced negative changes. Among the 34 CBM respondents, five experienced a decrease, four did not experienced any change and 25 experienced a positive change over time. Overall, these results show that individual self-efficacy has increased mainly for the CBM participants, and therefore the programme participants are more confident after participating in the programmes (Meyers and Houssemand, 2010).

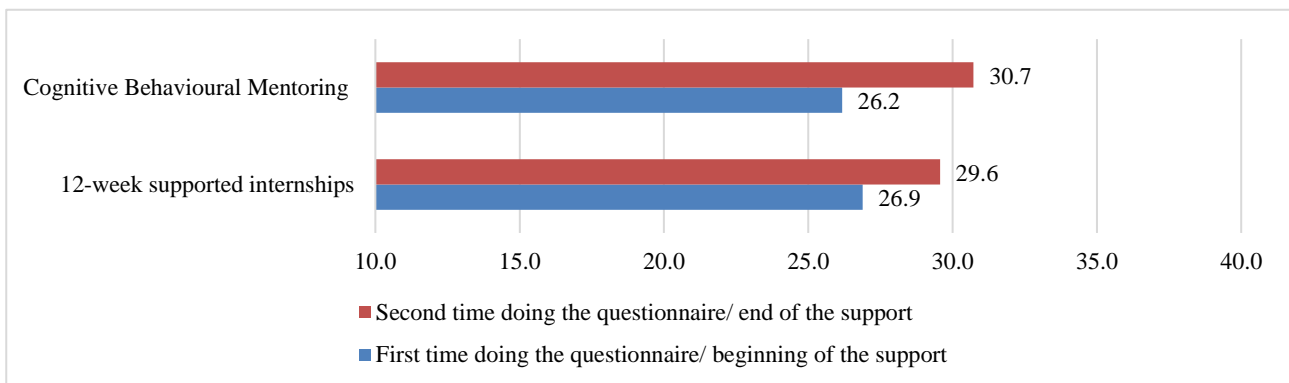


Figure 3.7. Self-efficacy over time (averages)

3.2.2. Mental Health and Well-being

The Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale was used to investigate well-being. Participants were invited to answer seven questions in relation to their well-being on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = none of the time, 2 = rarely, 3 = some of the time, 4 = often, 5 = all of the time). The individuals' final scores are defined by the sum of the single items, thus ranging from 7 to 35⁸. As identified in the literature review, unemployment and lack of well-being are interconnected, with research finding that unemployed individuals have less subjective well-being with respect to their employed peers (Azizan and Mahmud, 2018) and can experience greater mental health problems (McQuaid, 2017). In fact, unemployed young people can experience higher stress and depression, reduced mental health well-being, lower life satisfaction, and poorer mental health in the years to

⁸ As indicated in the Warwick Medical School website, the results of the 7-items scale were transformed using the provided conversion table (<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/using/howto/> last accessed 10/02/2022).

come (Bartelink *et al.*, 2020). In both programmes, the pre-programme well-being increased over time (Figure 3.8 illustrates these changes over time), however, the participants engaging in CBM appeared to have experienced a greater increase. Based on the data, individual changes can be investigated over time for 13 participants on supported internships and 34 participants on CBM who completed the survey at both the beginning and the end and were identifiable. Among the 13 respondents from the supported internship, three experienced negative changes and 10 experienced positive changes. Among the 36 CBM respondents, seven experienced a decrease, three did not experienced any changes and 26 experienced a positive change over time.

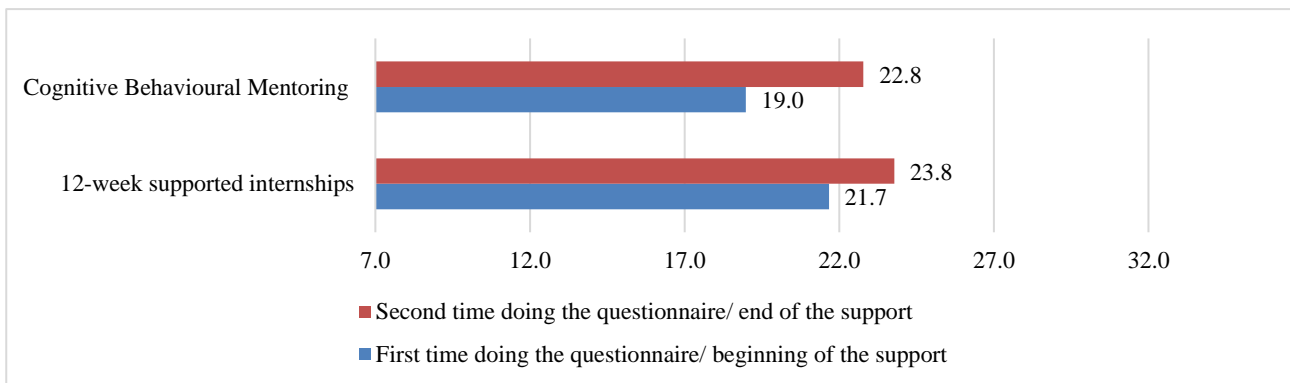


Figure 3.8. Mental Health and Well-being over time

3.2.3. Resilience

The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) scale was used to investigate the programme participants resilience. This scale is composed of 17 questions on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = a lot), the minimum overall resilience can vary from 17 to 85 (Jefferies *et al.*, 2019). In the CBM programme the resilience increased over time (Figure 3.9 illustrates these changes over time), however, the participants in the supported internship seemed to have experienced no increase. Overall, 13 supported internship respondents and 33 CBM respondents did the survey at the beginning and at the end and were identifiable. For these, we investigated individual changes over time. Among the 13 respondents from the internship, four experienced a negative change, five did not experienced any change and four positive changes. Whilst among the 33 CBM respondents, eight experienced a negative change, one did not experience any change, and 24 experienced positive changes.

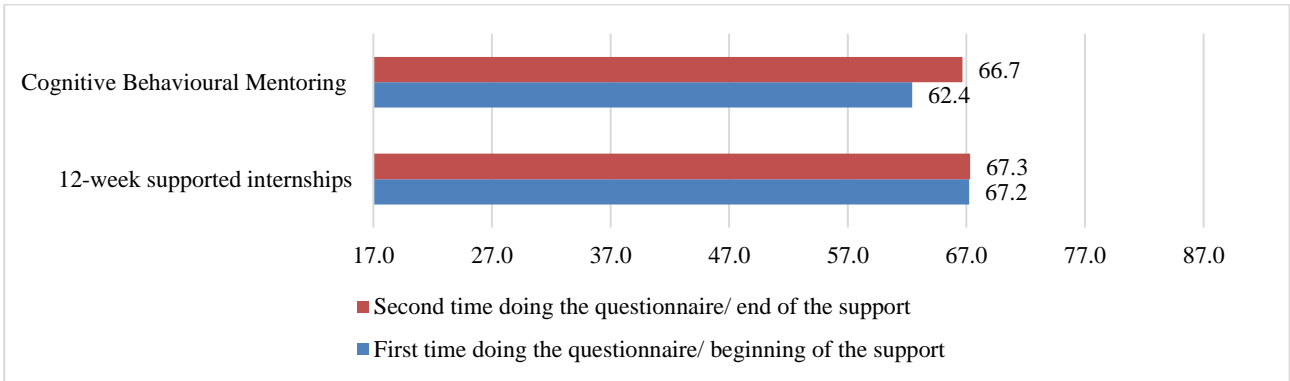


Figure 3.9. Resilience over time

3.2.4. Final outcome

Lastly, the final outcomes for participants were recorded upon finishing the programme, with participants asked to provide a detailed description of the intervention and/or support received and the outcome of the intervention. Table 3.3 presents the participants’ outcomes⁹. The greatest outcome for both the internship participants and the CBM participants has been the move from economically inactive to economically active.

⁹ The participants could select more than one category therefore the totals represent the number of participants. Moreover, some of the responses have been recategorized to allow for comparison and a better discussion of the outputs.

Outcomes	12-week internships	CBM
Participant looking for education	0.0%	2.6%
Participant has moved to education	0.0%	23.1%
Accessing support for speech and language	3.6%	0.0%
I am moving them in the future	3.6%	0.0%
Participant has moved to apprenticeship	3.6%	0.0%
Participant has moved to internship	3.6%	0.0%
Participant is looking for an apprenticeship	3.6%	12.8%
Participant is looking for volunteering	3.6%	0.0%
Participant is still engaging with the Spark Change programme	3.6%	0.0%
Participants in training	3.6%	2.6%
Participant has moved to work placement	10.7%	0.0%
Participant has moved to employment	10.7%	23.1%
Participant has moved to volunteering	21.4%	15.4%
Participant looking for employment	28.6%	25.6%
Grand Total	28	39

Table 3.3. Programme participants’ outcomes

Moreover, among the supported internship participants that did the questionnaire for the second time, 25 provided a detailed description of the delivered intervention (activities, course, qualifications, etc.). Figure 3.10 below represent the word cloud of all Supported internship quotations¹⁰, the most frequent words provide positive feedback about the programme, it is described as: helpful, enjoyed, useful. This positive language indicates that participants in the supported internship programme generally had favourable experiences and found the programme beneficial.

¹⁰ Word clouds are visual representations of text data, where the size of each word indicates its frequency or importance in the given text.

worked at [a] restaurant as a waiter and I enjoyed my time there gaining work experience and confidence with communicating with staff and customers.”

“It helps with my anxiety and become over people lot more that I used to.”

“I found the classes a little bit hard at the start but when I started to listen more I found it a little bit easier, my job coach made it easier by breaking things down for me. The activities we did in the classes helped me a lot as I was able to learn about strategies such as SMART goals and the STAR technique, that can help me in employment. I also got to learn about and identify my skills and qualities which will be helpful to me in the workplace.”

“The course has helped me earn a placement in [a] library and find some of my skills and behaviours that I wasn't able to identify before.”

“It was very helpful and taught me some important interview skills, as well as teaching me what a job poster looks like as well as the skills that were needed for many different jobs.”

“It was okay. It was the first thing I had in a while, so I struggled a little bit, but I'm glad I did it in the end because it helped me achieve something new and take steps forward.”

“I feel that I have learnt a lot on this supported internship, and it will help me with finding employment.”

“The programme has helped me a lot, I feel I am closer to finding work, I really enjoyed working with others in this programme everyone has been really helpful and supportive and looking forward to the next thing.”

Among the CBM participants that did the questionnaire for the second time, 42 provided a detailed description of the intervention delivered. Figure 3.11 below represent the word cloud of all CMB quotations, the most frequent words provide positive feedback about the programme. It's interesting to see a consistent pattern of positive feedback in the word cloud for both the supported internship and CBM quotations. The prominence of words like "helpful" and "useful" suggests that participants in both programmes had positive perceptions and found value in their experiences.

“It has helped me with more confidence to talk about things. It made me think about things going on in my mind differently.”

“CBT was good for me. I got to practice and be more aware of different social situations and scenarios. I also became aware of 'overthinking' and how it can spiral. I learnt a lot of methods to challenge thoughts and also to apply the methods in situations and give my therapist feedback of how it went.”

“It's improved my mental health a lot and boosted my moods. I feel more confident and more like myself just by being able to talk and get it off my chest looking at positives and negatives in situations has helped as well. I can visualise the hot cross bun method when the thoughts get stuck in my head. I have access to the CBT tools we used should I have any problems in the future, I can use them to help me.”

“I think it was really helpful in terms of having a clearer view on situations that I've been through. Now that we've finished I see an improvement in my everyday thinking. Every session was helpful; I was given good advice. Ultimately, my relationship with my mum has improved. I was glad to have this as my first therapy experience.”

“CBT methods were very helpful, and I will continue to use them. Especially the breathing methods and thinking more in depth around my thoughts”

“I think this has helped me put a lot of things in perspective and has given me a direction. The programme has been really enlightening. I have always known the cultural way of doing things that is going to university etc. but with this programme it has given me options and helped me think clearly.”

“It's improved my mental health a lot and boosted my moods. I feel more confident and more like myself just by being able to talk and get it off my chest looking at positives and negatives in situations has helped as well. I can visualise the hot cross bun method when the thoughts get stuck in my head. I have access to the CBT tools we used should I have any problems in the future, I can use them to help me.”

“The programme has been a really positive experience for me. It has helped me develop the tools that I need when it comes to my state of mind especially for when I get too frustrated, stressed or anxious. It also helped me understand different aspect of my mentality and how I've

learned more better about myself, including being more self-aware of my flaws but also accepting them at the same time. The programmed has made a positive impact on me during these 3 months.”

4. Qualitative data findings

In December 2022, May and November 2023, 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted. For both, CBM and 12 weeks supported internship, nine interviews involving staff and participants were conducted (two with delivery partners and seven with programme participants). Moreover, one participant and one staff member from each programme provided case studies. Participants and delivery partners volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews and the case studies with anonymity and confidentiality assured, therefore, the results presented in this report are anonymous¹¹. The interviews were analysed by identifying themes through a thematic analysis approach (Braun, and Clarke, 2006; Clarke, Braun, and Hayfield, 2015) which enables researchers to identify, analyse, and report themes that emerge from qualitative data such as interviews and focus groups (Braun, and Clarke, 2006). It consists of six steps that allow the researcher to distil the rich qualitative dataset into themes, which represent the most frequent and representative patterns linked with the dataset (Braun, and Clarke, 2006). Four main themes were identified, ‘Participants’ needs and expectations’, ‘Impact on mental health’, ‘Spark Change strengths’, and ‘Spark Change opportunities for development’.

4.1. Participants’ needs and expectations

The needs of participants in Spark Change vary depending on their chosen route of participation. Those involved in the 12-week supported internship pathways are primarily seeking support to enhance their employment experience. The quantitative data of Section 3.1 highlights that a significant majority, 79.1% of respondents, are not currently attending school, and 72.1% are not currently employed. These statistics illuminate the unique challenges and demands faced by this group of participants, underscoring the critical importance of customised support and interventions aimed at enhancing their skills and employability. This targeted approach is crucial for addressing the distinct circumstances of individuals in the 12-week supported internship pathways and facilitating their successful transition to employment.

“I wanted to do an apprenticeship so that’s why I started on this programme, to see whether it could help me grow as a person and see how my confidence changes with time.” (P1 – 12 Weeks)

¹¹ The research team labelled the Delivery Partner’s feedback as “DP(numbers)” and Participants as “P(number)”. Moreover, the respondents participating in the 12 weeks internship programme were labelled ‘12 Weeks’ and those participating in the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy were labelled as ‘CBM’.

“I came [...] so they can help me find a job that I would like to do and something that I’d be interested in because I’ve struggled to find a job that I like by myself. [...] I’m participating in this because I have a little bit of a problem understanding other things so the [delivery partners] can slowly take me through it and if I don’t understand it they will put it in more detail so it helps me understand. [...] I have ASD, which is autistic spectrum disorder. It affects me mildly but the way it affects me is I have learning difficulties, so I need things to be a bit more explained. [...] They’ve been very helpful to explain stuff to me and it made me feel comfortable here.” (P7 – 12 Weeks)

“I did a supported internship in the building and then I’ve managed to finish that off but now I’m looking for a job. At the moment I’m doing volunteering, so I’m doing a placement with the children, so I’m helping them out a little bit. That’s it really. [...] I didn’t know how to do the work. I was a bit stuck; I was struggling. Bless them, they are quite good, everybody has been so helpful, yes.” (P9 – 12 Weeks)

“I needed to improve my confidence towards other people and interacting with customers as well. [...] I dropped out from college in December. Before I joined this I was in the Job Centre because I got sent from my Job Centre to here. [...] I struggled to work with other peers because I was still not confident to work with other people at that time. At that time, I still needed to learn more.” (P15 – 12 Weeks)

The comprehensive overview of participants' needs provided by one of the delivery partners illustrates the multifaceted challenges faced by individuals engaged in the Spark Change programme. The prevalence of difficulties related to employment or education highlights a common struggle intertwined with various needs, including learning requirements, economic deprivation, care needs, mental health concerns, and physical health issues. The detailed breakdown of the quantitative data analysis of Section 3.1 reveals specific percentages associated with different challenges, such as 34.9% experiencing learning needs, 9.3% facing physical disabilities, 14.0% struggling with mental health challenges, and 2.3% dealing with care needs. This aligns not only with the quantitative data findings but also reinforces the insights gained from the literature review, emphasising the diverse and interconnected nature of participants' needs within the programme. In fact, unemployment can have an impact or be linked to multiple spheres of the young person's life, such as low physical health, increased criminal behaviour, unhealthy lifestyle traits such as smoking, and increased alcohol consumption and substance abuse, and higher suicidal rate (Bartelink *et al.*, 2020). The cited research underscores the substantial impact of unemployment on individuals, particularly concerning

subjective well-being and mental health. The results indicate that unemployed individuals experience less subjective well-being compared to their employed counterparts (Azizan and Mahmud, 2018) and are more prone to encountering mental health problems (McQuaid, 2017). Furthermore, from an employment and financial perspective, youth unemployment can have a lasting impact on an individual's life, being associated with lower pay and limited life chances (McQuaid, 2017), reduced income, and poorer quality of employment (Bartelink *et al.*, 2020). This comprehensive overview underscores the multifaceted nature of the support required, indicating that participants may benefit from a holistic and integrated approach that addresses various aspects of their lives.

“Well, there are many needs. I think one of the biggest issues that the young people we have - particularly on the supported internship - face is a lack of guidance. They don't really have much job experience; they probably don't have much educational experience. They've done their GCSEs, but they may not have got great qualifications or any qualifications in some cases. So, they've kind of fallen into a route where they don't really know what they want to do [...] So they are jumping from position to position, not really knowing what it is that they actually want to achieve. [...] On the flip side of that, we have those who have particular learning needs and they've not got any experience at all. So, it's not just that they are jumping from position to position, they have no experience in the workplace. So, for them the workplace - they don't understand the etiquette of a workplace, they don't understand that punctuality is essential. [...] There are other needs. I think for a lot of them, certainly from my experience, there are needs that are not necessarily professional needs, like there's poverty, there are care needs, there are learning needs, that have also acted as barriers. [...] It could be that they've got mental health needs, physical health needs, so again that notion of full time, paid employment has been so out of grasp that they've basically fallen through every crack that it's possible to fall through. [...] There's another group as well which I've certainly noticed in our most recent cohort, which are those who up until very recently were on track. They were on the path to the career of their choice and then suddenly there was a health issue that has completely derailed them. [...] But the ultimate need for them is the same, they need to be guided and supported to find a new career path. [...] There are consistent needs, I think, that the young people have in terms of what it is that they actually need to know and that they don't currently know. Consistent themes that come up time and time again are they want to know how to manage their money because they've never been taught how to manage their money. [...] They want to know how to actually put together an application form. A lot of them, they've got a CV and they've

got templates of cover letters, but they don't really know how to be specific. They don't know how to say, 'I want this job and this job is right for me because-'' (S3 – 12 Weeks)

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on young people's opportunities to access education and/or employment. For those more vulnerable this led to early education cessation and/or cessation of education following receipt of lower grades than expected. The disruptions caused by the pandemic has created challenges in access the traditional pathways to education and employment, affecting various aspects of young people's lives and posing additional hurdles for those already facing vulnerability or disadvantage. Moreover, the pandemic exacerbated the mental health difficulties experienced by young people, increasing young people's depression, anxiety, and isolation (Kauhanen *et al.*, 2023).

"It's made things worse for many reasons, but it's made things worse, I think, particularly for younger people because their education, if they were in education at that time, was stalled. They weren't necessarily going to do brilliantly but they may have done okay, but because they've now got that two years essentially without proper teaching [...] I'm not saying the teachers weren't working hard but it has been impossible to provide a proper standard for everybody. [...] I think it's also made things worse in the sense of you've got so much anxiety and there are real serious confidence issues. That's largely because they've experienced, as we all did, something really traumatic and something unexpected that completely upended their lives at the time of their lives where the whole world was supposed to suddenly open up to them. [...] I think the health issues that the young people I've encountered - the mental health issues may be related to Covid, physical health issues weren't, they were things that - I'm not a doctor but I suspect would have happened anyway. But again, even in that respect, getting the treatment for those things, getting diagnoses has taken so much longer." (S3 – 12 Weeks)

Participants in CBM expressed a need for additional support, particularly in the realm of mental health. Many participants presented with challenges such as anxiety, depression, dysfunctional family dynamics, and medical issues that significantly impacted their overall well-being. These observations align with the findings from the quantitative data analysis of Section 3.1, where 26.0% of survey respondents reported facing mental health challenges, 20.5% indicated learning needs, and 5.5% reported physical disabilities. These figures indicate the prevalence of mental health concerns among participants and highlight the importance of tailored support mechanisms to address these specific needs. If these difficulties are not addressed then it can lead to mental health problems in adulthood (Johnson *et al.*, 2018; McLeod, Horwood, and Fergusson, 2016; Fergusson *et al.*, 2005) with research

showing that increased mental health problems in adulthood can result in self-harm or even suicide (Hawton *et al.*, 2012).

“I spoke with the career adviser, and I was telling her how anxious I am and one of the reasons why I left my job was because my mental health wasn’t great. So, she did recommend me Sophia and it’s been helping.” (P5 - CBM)

“I’ve had anxiety most of my life and it resurfaced after finishing university so I thought before I get into any full-time work, just to see what can be done, what I can do. I thought a bit of counselling would be the right way to go.” (P6 - CBM)

“When they come to Spark Change in general, Spark Change is for the needs of young people, so they are not in employment or training, for very, very vast reasons. So that’s when they get identified by Spark Change, that’s how they come to the programme. [...] Not every young person comes to CBM, it’s a handful of them, I would imagine. I don’t know the numbers, but I would imagine a handful of them come to CBM. And the needs presented are a very wide range. What I see often would be anxiety, more anxiety than depression, and the root cause of this anxiety can range from bullying in school to dysfunctional family, unfortunate life events like being bereaved of a loved one, that I’ve seen a few times. [...] But majorly anxiety and plenty of that anxiety has come from bullying from secondary school because the age group is from 16 years, and then the young adults present with depression. [...] I do see some trails of medical issues as well, medical issues that have spiralled into mental health issues.” (S2 - CBM)

“Everything was just really stressful with school, with the work. I wasn’t doing my schoolwork; I was at work more than school. I didn’t have any time to myself. My mental health was really suffering, and my family situation was a really horrible energy and it was really horrible.” (P8 – CBM)

“Anxiety. I’ve never tried a CBM thing before and I thought it would be beneficial to learn some tips and tricks to get through daily life.” (P10 – CBM)

“I just took part because I was living in Harrow before, and I reached out to one of the mental health services there and said I think [CBM] therapy would be good for me. So, they linked me up with [the delivery partner] and I got some mentoring for it. [...] I was struggling with obsessive compulsive disorder and so I wanted a bit of help with that. And also, troubling thoughts as well; struggling with social issues, social anxiety as well.” (P13 – CBM)

“Many of the young people, they need mental health support, and they haven’t received it throughout their whole time at school. That’s the reason often why they are unemployed or they haven’t found a course to study, because their family background often has mental health as well. [...] It might be things like addiction, alcoholism, drugs, so their environment isn’t positive for them to study or positive for them to try and find work.” (S5 – CBM)

4.2. Impact on mental health

The 12-week supported internship had a profound impact on the participants, particularly in terms of boosting their confidence. Many participants had left education, faced difficulties in interacting with others, and experienced social isolation. The supported internship played a crucial role in breaking this isolation by providing opportunities for engagement in Monday workshops as well as structured internships and one-to-one support. This supportive environment helped participants rebuild trust and confidence in themselves, fostering self-efficacy and empowering them to pursue their desired employment opportunities. These qualitative insights align with the findings from the quantitative data collection presented in Section 3.2. The results revealed a notable improvement in respondents' self-efficacy, and mental health and well-being over the course of the programme. This positive transformation, as indicated in Section 3.2.4, correlated with participants transitioning to employment, work placements, and volunteering, among other positive outcomes. The evidence from the combined qualitative and quantitative analyses reinforces the significant impact of the supported internship programme on participants' confidence and overall well-being, contributing to positive outcomes in their lives.

“Since I started I would say I’ve grown my confidence very well. When I first started, settling in took about two weeks, I would say, didn’t really take that long. But then my confidence grew with time, and I feel like I’ve become confident where I can now talk properly as well. [...] But I still want to improve a little bit more in terms of speaking with staff more. [...] I think I’ve achieved more, through getting a lot of feedback as well. I think that was a really good thing, I was getting feedback whilst I was doing this experience. So, I feel that really helped because you never know what you are capable of and it turned out quite good.” (P1 - 12 Weeks)

“I’m someone who’s had difficulties with socialising with people. And this programme, especially this course I’ve done, has really helped me get out of my comfort zone and talk to people more. [...] If I didn’t understand anything I could let them know. So instead of being how I usually am, which is very quiet and very ‘in my own space’, I had to branch out and say,

‘I don’t understand this; I don’t know what I’m doing, can you please help me?’ [...] And also socialise more really. [...] I would say it’s helped me with the whole socialising aspect, but it’s also helped me more with following instruction as well. [...] I will say it has also definitely helped me with second guessing myself, I do that lot. I realised when I was doing the job that I like to question myself a lot and the job has really helped me to stop questioning what I’m doing and just ask again, I’ll keep asking questions, that’s also where it’s helped me. [...] But also, with the whole second guessing thing it’s helped me to not question myself as much and just do what I think is right.’ (P2 – 12 Weeks)

“After I overcame that fear of coming out of my comfort zone I’ve joined [the programme] and they really pushed me further. They put me in the workplace. [...] I work at [a restaurant]. I don’t want to go to [the restaurant] because it’s a busy environment, you have to talk to people and back then I was not good at speaking to people, I was so quiet. So now that I’ve been put into [the restaurant] for the three-month period I came out of my comfort zone; I spoke to people, I spoke to the managers, I made friends. [...] Yes, and on my personality. I feel like I’ve become more vibrant than before. I was all to myself. As I said, I didn’t really speak to people much at all. Now you can see me speaking to strangers, like on the bus.” (P3 – 12 Weeks)

“I was not really feeling confident about myself. Now my confidence and my self-love, it’s just coming up now.” (P4 – 12 Weeks)

“[...] since I’ve come to the [programme] and they’ve helped me out a lot, they’ve built my confidence more. So, I’m slowly but surely becoming more confident in myself and becoming less cautious. [...] In the 12 weeks internship, at first I was nervous but [the delivery partner] stayed with me for the first time for most of the day so she could ease me into it. As I got to know the people around the hotel and the people I’d be working with I slowly started to get more comfortable and less worried. [...] And then it came to somewhere in the afternoon when she said, ‘Is it okay if I leave you by yourself?’ [...] And I said yes, I think I feel okay, so she left me by myself with my co-workers and I was fine. I’ve been okay along the way. [...] So, they’ve helped me to believe in myself.” (P7 -12 Weeks)

“It meets their need by providing that one to one support because without it they haven’t got the motivation to keep going; someone pushing them behind. [...] And also they need that support to actually negotiate and navigate and make those connections with employers and find those placements and stay in placement. Every week I will go and see them, once a week I will

check in on them to see how they are doing. It keeps them reassured that they're on the right path and that they are doing great, that they are really doing an amazing job here. [...] And then the positive impact is from the placement where they say, 'Yes, she's been an asset to the team', and that makes them feel good. [...] It's to build them up ready for work or education because some of them have got gaps in education. Some are ready for work, and some can get back in to work but part time and then go to college. It's a combination of things but it's to build them that confidence and communication and social skills, using their initiative, all these things that you need everywhere in life." (S1 – 12 Weeks)

"Everything has changed for me because the programme has changed getting jobs and stuff, placements. It's a bit tricky but I'm getting there." (P9 – 12 Weeks)

"[...] he didn't really have the confidence in himself to present, to talk about his skills, to give his answers, to give his ideas. Over the course of the programme that confidence flourished so that by the end I had him delivering an elevator pitch to the entirety of the cohort. I had him participating in a mock interview in front of everybody. Having that confidence meant that he was starting to apply for jobs so he was sending me and his job coach job adverts that he had seen and saying, 'Do you think I should go for this?', which we did not get at the start, he just would not do that at all. So, I think one of the big things that the supported internship did for him is it gave him that confidence in himself to recognise that he did have a lot of skills and qualities, he did have a lot to offer and he could present himself and he could communicate properly. [...] On the flip side, one of the participants was in the middle of her degree and she had to stop because of her health condition, the confidence had been completely knocked out of her. But over the course of the programme, she really got a feel for what it is that she wanted to do [...] So you see a very clear trend, I think. It's not just that their confidence, their interpersonal confidence, develops and grows but also their confidence in what it is that they can do and what it is that they want to do really developed over the course of the programme." (S3 – 12 Weeks)

"For me, I was doing a placement in [a workplace] and from thereon I started building my confidence towards the staff members and talking with the customers as well. [...] I started making new friends, outside the place as well. So, it helps me impact the outside world as well, not only the classroom stuff." (P15 – 12 Weeks)

“I felt passionate, excited to do something new. I felt confident to take on new skills and stuff. I felt less anxious I learnt more about directions at first.” (P16 – 12 Weeks)

“As well as these measurable outcomes, participants have developed confidence throughout their time on the programme which have been noted through observation of staff from when they first met the young person to their confidence and communication at the end of the programme. This is especially apparent in those who are more confidently able to communicate their skills and experience in a professional context, where they may have initially struggled to know how to previously identify relevant skills or behaviours, or how to structure this in a concise manner.” (S6 – 12 Weeks)

Support offered through CBM has had a substantial and positive impact on the mental health of participants. The ability to engage in discussions about mental health with mentors and other staff members surrounding the participants played a crucial role in this impact. Spark Change has created an environment that has allowed participants to acknowledge the normalcy of their struggles and receive support in a friendly, supportive and non-judgmental space. Moreover, CBM has equipped participants with a range of techniques, empowering them to navigate challenging situations and fostering positive rebounds. The tangible outcomes of this are observed in improvements in anxiety levels, enhanced confidence, strengthened socialisation skills, and increased resilience in dealing with trauma. These findings illustrate the effectiveness of CBM in addressing and positively impacting participants' mental health and well-being. CBM has been proven to have a positive impact on young people mental health difficulties such as anxiety (James *et al.*, 2020) and depression (Zhou *et al.*, 2015).

“Yes, with [delivery partner] it’s just really nice talking to someone, an outsider who is not judgemental. She doesn’t really put her opinions, its more she just wants to listen, to hear me talk and she’s just there to listen. [...] She’s also told me about so many ways to cope because I struggle with negative thoughts about going to employment and a whole different career. She’s helping me overcome them and I’ve noticed that it’s only been four or five weeks, it hasn’t been too long, but I’ve noticed a difference from before. I’m thinking more positively. [...] Yes. It’s not even just with [delivery partner], it’s my mentor and the career advisers are also helpful and they all just - they are really positive and it’s really lovely to speak to them. They are helping me more than just finding a job; they are helping with my well-being as well. [...] I’ve been really anxious. I’m an anxious individual anyway, even when I had to do this interview I was a bit anxious about it, so going into a whole different career with no experience, having a

visual impairment, having anxiety, it's very scary, very daunting. [...] With my weekly sessions they are just so understanding, and they are always really nice and always giving me good advice to stay positive and that is really nice.” (P5 - CBM)

“I'm a bit more patient with myself, I give myself a bit more leeway. Definitely positive, I'd say it's given me a new perspective on how I approach things and how I treat myself.” (P6 - CBM)

“Even though it's not as many sessions, the acknowledgement and the benefit of hearing that, 'I'm not abnormal, the way I am or the things that are happening to me are not my fault', those assurances bring them to a point where they say, 'Okay, let me try to go to school', or, 'Let me try to move forward', or, 'Let me try to work'. I had a young person who hadn't left home for two years and was housebound. She joined Spark Change, her Changemakers were doing home visits and they referred to her to me - not quite immediately because she wasn't prepared to see anybody. They referred her to me and by the last session she came out to see me in person and that was such a big victory. [...] This young lady shut down. There had been trauma, there had been very unsettling things happen in her family and she decided to shut down, she's not doing it anymore. So, the way of thinking, which is really a CBM approach, was challenged. Current life and thoughts into the future were challenged and that helped. [...] Yes, there are people who benefit more than others. The people who benefit more are the people who recognise that, 'I have a problem and I want help'.” (S2 - CBM)

“I think I really benefitted in finding ways to cope with certain thoughts, certain behaviours. Creating new neural pathways and all of that, just trying to find a way to redirect myself somehow, how I respond to things and react. [...] I think it was having that outlet to speak to somebody and to be guided. I would be tense, and I would hold these things within me. I would be letting them out and I'd feel better. [...] I also started writing in my journal, which I hadn't done in something like four years because of my therapy, it kind of inspired me to do so.” (P8 – CBM)

“I have learned, yes; I've learned quite a few different ones. I've been trying to apply them to daily life since I got a job, and left the job as well, but I've been able to talk through those experiences with my mentor, I've been able to go through those experiences together and work through the anxiety of it. [...] It's helped me identify and deconstruct those negative thoughts that I'm having. I'm still actively working on that, but it's been able to help me separate the thoughts and feelings from reality, I suppose.” (P10 – CBM)

“[...] We use the CBT tools to zoom in on the barriers, negative thoughts and feelings that are stopping the young person from doing what they want to do or feeling how they want to feel, and we find positive ways to tackle those thoughts, feeling and behaviours to help the young person work towards change. This may involve putting thoughts on trial, using the hot cross bun technique, exploring rational vs irrational thoughts, journaling, mood diaries and behaviour experiments. [...] The impact CBM has on young people is that they grow, and there is a soft shift in their outlook on life. I see a self-awareness develop and an understanding of the world around them. The young people seem willing to move out of their comfort zones and try new things. They start to challenge their eating and sleep patterns they may not have been historically healthy; they contact friends that they have lost touch with and gain insights into relationships. Which supports them as a foundation as they move forward into education, training or employment.” (S4 - CBM)

“The CBM is a good service and works well with understanding my thoughts and seeing my patterns and ways to improve that. Having a safe space to be able to talk about thoughts and feelings, that is unbiased, no judgement so I can talk freely. I feel like the CBM is there to help me. [...] It helped me to take charge of my mental health.” (P11 - CBM)

“I’m just trying to get out of my comfort zone, and I feel like [the delivery partner], she helped me a lot with that in the sessions. [...] So now I’m working, and it’s been helping me a lot. If I have negative thoughts I could just step out and use the advice that she gave me. [...] So, it was a really good time to spend, and it opened my eyes a lot, the sessions I had with [the delivery partner].” (P14 - CBM)

“It’s a huge difference. For them it is life changing because sometimes it is the first person they can speak to about what’s happened in their family. So, it is very life changing for them to get the mental health support, know that they are not alone. And also know that sometimes the behaviours that they are carrying out are a result of the environment and it’s not to do with them personally, so that’s a revelation for them. And it very much builds their confidence so they can then, as I said, go to an interview, get out of bed, because a lot of them have got anxiety. They are not leaving their house, this is a big issue that Spark Change faces, where they don’t want to leave their homes, especially after Covid-19. The anxiety with the young people is a real challenge but having someone to talk to gives them confidence just to go to the corner shop, go for a walk around the block. It sounds simple but it’s a huge step if you’ve been inside for months. [...] So CBM really helps with that, to change their mindset and give

them different thought processes. And help them also combat anxiety, so techniques to reduce anxiety - journaling, colouring, things like this to focus their mind.” (S5- CBM)

These qualitative insights align with the findings from the quantitative data collection, reinforcing the positive impact of the 12-week supported internship on participants' self-efficacy, mental health and well-being, and resilience. The results presented in Section 3.2 demonstrate a notable increase in these key areas, both at the average level and individually. Furthermore, the positive transformation observed in participants' self-efficacy, mental health, and resilience is echoed in the outcomes highlighted in Section 3.2.4. This positive shift correlates with participants transitioning to employment, actively seeking employment opportunities, and engaging in education, among other positive outcomes. The convergence of qualitative and quantitative evidence strengthens the conclusion that the supported internship programme has a significant and multifaceted positive impact on participants, contributing to improvements in various aspects of their lives.

4.3. Spark Change strengths

The supported internship path offered multiple positive aspects, with participants noting how both the Monday sessions and the Work Placement helped them to go back into employment and/or education. This is particularly important in a cohort of young people like those participating in the supported internship who have low levels of education. As noted previously, 9.8% did not have any qualification, 22.0% have a qualification at level 1, and 31.7% at NVQ level 1 (Figure 3.3 in Section 3.1). The Monday sessions played a crucial role in supporting programme participants to develop the essential skills and confidence needed for the internship. Simultaneously, the internship experience provided participants with valuable insights, demonstrating their capability to work and study whilst also helping them find their place in society. This dual impact emphasises the interconnectedness of the programme components, contributing to the holistic development and societal integration of participants. Additionally, there is evidence that the programme is beneficial for participants with additional needs such as autism due to the bespoke and tailored approach. This indicates that the programme not only focuses on individual development but also contributes positively to broader social inclusion and understanding, particularly for individuals with diverse needs.

“She said with this programme they would help me with getting a three months’ experience, which is enough for me then to go on to find and apprenticeship. Now she’s just looking for an apprenticeship provider who will help me, so I can work in the same place. [...] I think people should get into this programme because I really got a job offer from them. And they asked me

about my next steps, and I said apprenticeship and they said they need us to find a provider who is going to help me into this apprenticeship so I can work in that same place.” (P1 -12 Weeks)

“What I did like is this programme in general, the lessons we had every Monday did help with reminding me about the different skills that I needed for a job, that I needed to do. [...] So, if I was struggling with something in a job, from all the classes I did on Monday, I remembered all the techniques I needed to use, all the strategies that were given to me. So, it was kind of easy for me to follow on from the classes.” (P1 -12 Weeks)

“I like what I’ve been learning; there’s nothing I don’t like.” (P4 – 12 Weeks)

“At the 12 weeks internship I enjoyed that I was getting along with my co-workers, that I could chat to them normally and I didn’t have to be nervous. [...] I’ve been to those classes, and I think they’ve been very helpful because I’m in a class with a bunch of other interns who are in the same hotel as me or doing other internships somewhere else. I think it was good because I communicated with them slowly and slowly started to get to know them more. [...] The video chats were good as well. I think [the delivery partner] helped everyone participate in the conversation and try and speak up instead of being quiet. When I first got to the class we were all very quiet with each other but as the video helped us to be more into it, it helped us to be more confident and get to know each other more. [...] And I think the education in here is helpful. Yes, I think everything is good here, to be honest.” (P7 – 12 Weeks)

“The advantages would be that they are learning a qualification. They are bridging the gap of being out of school and college and it shows that they are actually able to do something, they haven’t just been doing nothing for a year. They’ve taken the initiative to find something that will build them up. [...] But the advantage is that there are really good links to businesses and the disability awareness as well. [...] The advantages - I think those would be where they’re building up and being placed in society. And seen as well because one [restaurant] said they are really happy with this placement, with this programme, because it helps them to understand autism. It’s like autism awareness, it makes people understand that everyone’s different and you have to work with autistic people in a different way. So, he said, ‘If you’ve got any more, bring them’. [...] I just think it’s a really good programme. Considering that I’ve supported six young people, potentially four are going into work and college and apprenticeships and two will have to go into other placements to start again.” (S1 – 12 Weeks)

“I liked the programme, it was really funny, I thought it was fine. The work was okay. And then I think I needed help in certain work so then they broke it down for me slowly and then [the delivery partner] and the others came and helped me and said I needed help. [...] Then my friend, my colleague, he was with me as well and he helped me as well. Everybody has been quite helpful because.” (P9 – 12 Weeks)

“I’m doing this supported internship. They send you to a shop and you learn skills and you perfect your working ability. You learn about how you work in the classroom to make sure you are the best. [...] Yes, it’s nice to go somewhere then go back home and be tired; I’ve been out of the house, and I’ve done something. It’s nice meeting new people and it’s nice working and doing different tasks and learning about different things.” (P12 – 12 Weeks)

“The physical learning space on Monday’s alongside regular work placement shifts has worked well for the participants, as it has helped provide them with some consistency and routine to work towards. Where some of these young people have had few responsibilities before, since leaving school, it is important that they develop healthy routines and take responsibility for their timekeeping as a skill they can take into employment. Where those that struggle with this initially, it provides a supportive and understanding environment for them to progress and improve ahead of taking on paid work for the first time. The combination of theory and practical experience of employability skills also helps the young people develop an understanding of their professional responsibilities, such as communication and customer service, and put these into practice straight away in their work placement. With the support of their job coach and manager, the areas they struggle with can be identified and supported on an individual level to improve the likelihood of employment for the future once they complete the programme.” (S6 – 12 Weeks)

The CBM staff, when considering CBM and Spark Change as a whole, acknowledged that the programme plays a positive role in guiding participants who are not currently engaged in education or employment. This acknowledgment underscores the programme's efficacy in offering valuable guidance and support to individuals facing challenges in these areas. The positive impact on participants not in education or employment further highlights the programme's relevance and effectiveness in addressing the specific needs of this target group.

“The advantages of Spark Change are that it’s got all the elements needed to help a young person that has not been able to find their way through the world of school or work. That’s

when it has to do with that age group, that's the advantage. [...] There are many things done in Spark Change that many people would comment, 'If I had this I would have had better direction', so that's a very big advantage, that there's someone to tell you, 'This is the pathway; if you do this, you get that'. [...] 'This is where to find a job', or 'You like this, how about looking at this kind of job?' [...] There's someone there to direct you, that's a huge advantage." (S2 - CBM)

"I think the young person benefits from the programme because they have time and space to process their thoughts. It offers them support in setting a goal of what it is of how they want to be moving forward and also helps them to understand themselves better. I really like it when together we look at how they can feel more empowered and confident to use the tools and techniques to feel better about themselves, make conscious decisions, and improve relationships and their view of the world around them." (S4 - CBM)

"I have received support from Cognitive Behaviour Mentoring, Job Broker and Change Maker. Help with CV, job search and finding jobs catered for what I want. I feel the CBM was one of the best supports I have received and one of the best things for young people, where help with mental health is offered. [When asked about describing the programme in three words the participant said] Validating, Helpful, Important" (P11 - CBM)

"I find it useful because it's like an outlet, someone to talk about my problems with, they can help me uncover what the root problem is and uncover what exactly I'm going through and why I behave the way I do. So, I can tackle the problems myself and develop strategies to overcome them. Also, for the [CBM] therapist who imparted his or her wisdom or knowledge about certain psychological principles, principles on me which could help me in battling or tackling the things I'm going through." (P13 - CBM)

"I think Spark Change is a really good programme because it offers the young people CBM support, which is mental health support, and it offers them a person to talk through their hopes for the future, motivate them. [...] It's definitely the one-to-one support, the six to eight session model. And actually, the use of virtual technology. Lots of the young people prefer video or text chat, like text support rather than physical one to one. You definitely see they are much more comfortable using the technology to find mental health support. [...] I think it's been a really positive programme because it's actually quite unique. Not many programmes for young people

offer mental health support; a lot of programmes are still just focussing on career support in isolation. So, that's been actually quite unique.” (S5 - CBM)

Participants in the CBM programme emphasised the significance of their relationships with mentors, particularly highlighting the positive aspect of sessions being led by the participants themselves. This participatory approach seems to have resonated well with the participants, contributing to their positive perception of the programme. The active involvement of participants in leading sessions likely enhances their sense of ownership and engagement in the programme.

“I like that I can contact my mentor, or just anyone else, whenever. I don't need to set an appointment. [...] I like that they are here to listen, and they are really friendly. I feel like they are an actual friend, not like they are someone just doing their job, they genuinely care.” (P5 - CBM)

“I like that each session is dictated by the participant. So, you decide what you talk about that day depending on what you are feeling. [...] And obviously the councillor is very approachable, very easy to talk to. I felt comfortable almost immediately.” (P6 - CBM)

“Well, I didn't know any of the techniques beforehand and it's been really helpful to understand that and to work through certain aspects of my life that I've been struggling with. My mentor has been very friendly, and I felt very heard, and I always appreciate that. [...] And I'm hoping that going forward I can still continue to use the things that I've learned to help me going forward.” (P10 – CBM)

Another positive aspect highlighted by a staff member pertains to the provision of support for the staff, particularly in the context of mental health. Given the high case workload and the complex needs of participants, staff members can experience exhaustion, potentially leading to a desire to leave their roles. The support provided aims to alleviate this burden, enabling staff to unload and, in turn, better support the well-being and development of the young people over the long term. This acknowledgment underscores the importance of fostering a supportive work environment to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of programs like CBM¹².

¹² This is based on a quote that was impossible to make it anonymous and therefore it has been excluded from the text.

4.4. Spark Change opportunities for development

The interviewees mentioned some areas of improvement in both paths. The areas identified for improvement in the supported internship programme are predominantly linked to the Monday sessions. One participant expressed a sentiment that these sessions were not as valuable as the internship itself, as they were already familiar with the information provided. Additional feedback from participants included a desire for the Monday sessions to focus more on practical skills such as writing cover letters and application forms. Some participants expressed dissatisfaction with the session venue, describing it as too quiet, and indicated a desire for sessions to be more enjoyable. Furthermore, a delivery partner emphasised the need to give more importance to qualifications, suggesting a broader focus, beyond core subjects like Maths and English, to include technical qualifications.

“I think I liked work experience more than the sessions. [...] I don’t know, I just felt that work experience, I was able to put myself out there more. With the sessions it was good, but I feel I wasn’t as ‘in the sessions’. It was good but I preferred work experience where I was able to be around children which I think is what makes me happy. I’m very passionate about that. [...] I wish we were in a bigger room because we are always in a small room, so I wish there was a little bit more space. [...] It was behaviour, skills and everything. We had a mixture of all of that, they were talking about skills, and they were preparing us to go into work. And I feel like I already had those skills, I was able to show through the way I was doing it.” (P1 -12 Weeks)

“But I would say the only thing that really I didn’t like was just that we didn’t really go through cover letters, application forms. That’s the only thing I wish we went through a bit more but everything else was fine.” (P2 -12 Weeks)

“I don’t feel like anything - personally I wouldn’t change anything. The only thing I’d say I had - not an ‘issue with’ - but I felt uncomfortable with was virtual - sitting in front of a computer. Even though we had our booklets we had to sit in front of a computer. I feel it would have been better if we could do it as a group and all be there in one spot. [...] I would say a place that we come to - I’m not saying this is bad but the building and where we come, it’s like a classroom upstairs. I would say the place that we come to the building location. I’d say maybe somewhere different. [...] It just feels empty, not really much going on. I only come here on Mondays, so I feel maybe on Saturdays and Sundays it’s lively but on Mondays it’s empty and it’s kind of us,

we're all in a small classroom. So personally, I would change that, make the environment more welcoming.”(P3 -12 Weeks)

“The work could have been more different, it could have been more fun, if that makes sense. More creative activities, [...], something like that. Obviously we did do that but then everything was on the screen, so it was a bit tricky. Other than that, it was okay.” (P9 – 12 Weeks)

“Yes, I do. There’s a combination of reasons why a supported internship doesn’t quite work for some people. As I say, because we’ve got such a broad spectrum it is quite difficult as a curriculum designer to ensure that the learning is at the right level for everybody, and you sometimes have that combination of it’s far too difficult for some of them and it’s far too easy for others. Trying to bridge that gap and trying to make sure that every activity is differentiated properly so that everybody is being stretched or challenged but at the same time everybody is able to access the learning, that is very difficult. [...] Some people really embrace the placement and others don’t so part of the issue is if people know what they want to do and the placement they get is nothing like what they actually want to do, then that can be quite disheartening and it’s hard to keep them engaged. Obviously, there are really severe and strict limitations on the kind of placements a programme like this can offer. [...] I wish there was lot more emphasis and a lot more support for them to get the qualifications that they need. I don’t just mean their English and Maths, but I mean things like forklift truck driving licences and stuff like that. There seem to be so many barriers to them getting to those things. I wish they had a lot more guidance on how to do that and there was a lot more resource to get as many people to get the things that they need, the certificates that they need, the qualifications that they need as quickly as possible. [...] A lot of the time what’s stopping them progressing into a career is they don’t have NVQs and things like that in the areas that they need them in. [...] I think that’s something that needs massive amounts of funding, and it needs to be funded as an investment. This will generate more money in the long term because we’ll have so many people qualified and experienced and able to do things. [...] It feels like an obvious go-to answer but the answer with so many of these things is we need funding, and it just doesn’t exist, as I’m sure you know.” (S3 – 12 Weeks)

“I think for me I was not used to doing the online class because I’m not really a big fan of doing an online class. I think for me I preferred doing the classroom room, not the online, because it feels a bit different.” (P15 – 12 Weeks)

Staff members noted that the supported internships proved to be more effective when the internship was available from the beginning, and when family members were actively engaged in the process from the start. Involving family members early on provides young people with the right support not only within the programme but in the background, increasing engagement. Engagement could be further strengthened by incorporating a broader spectrum of engagement that aligns with the interests of the young people. This observation underscores the importance of early and inclusive involvement of both interns and their families in the internship process, contributing to a more seamless and effective experience for the participants.

“So, I found one, it was Deaf Routes. That was for one day a week, so he didn’t get the full impact of it. So, we have to continue with him and provide the support ongoing because he didn’t get the full 12 weeks. [...] That’s where it falls down, when he’s attending on Mondays, but he’s only got the one day on a placement and it’s only for about three hours, it doesn’t work. The placement has to be at the beginning and finding it half way through, and then it’s only one day a week, it’s difficult. So that’s the disadvantage. [...] That was a disadvantage, not having the placements set up, ready to roll. Especially if it’s only a one day as well, I need to make sure that it’s set up for four days and it’s going to stick, and they are getting the full benefit then. So that’s what I struggled with. [...] So, we’re creating a list of all these different placements that we’ve had so we can use them again. [...] So, it’s about getting the families involved as well so they have awareness of what their young person or young adult is doing. I do have connections with maybe one or two, the ones that are more SEN, special needs. [...] The ones that are more able, I didn’t really get to much of a connection, I just thought, ‘Oh, okay’. [...] But in the future I’ll make sure that I’m connecting with all the families, so they are aware that their young person or young adult is going to a placement and it’s about A, B, C and D. So, when they come home, ‘What have you learned? What have you done?’” (S1 - 12 Weeks)

“Generally speaking, the young people who have engaged the best are those with whom we have good, solid communication with relatives as well, often parents or carers, the ones who bring them in every Monday to the classroom session, for example. There’s just a better engagement and it’s because, perhaps, their home life is more stable and it’s perhaps a bit more comfortable. [...] I think what is needed is a lot more employers to offer this kind of support to a lot more unemployed- [...] In as many different industries as possible. It’s not severely limited but it’s generally hospitality, retail, charity and admin. There are all sorts of

things that people could be doing. People want to work in education, they want to work in construction, they want to work in finance, they want to work in law. If employers were more open to this, at the end of the day it only benefits them. They are getting somebody in to do work experience, that's beneficial to them. [...] culture. We're in London and you'd think people are wanted to work in film and television and music and theatre and when the young people say this they are not unrealistic. They are not saying, 'I want to be a Hollywood actor' It's very much, 'I want to work in lights/sound design', and there's nothing in those industries, those industries are very closed." (S3 – 12 Weeks)

The improvement suggested by the CBM participants included offering additional sessions and/or increasing the length of sessions. However, one staff member highlighted how the number of sessions is effective in achieving the outcomes however acknowledge that more support could be given after the participant completed the CBM session through other areas of Spark Change (i.e., change maker, job broker and/or self-employment adviser). One participant expressed the wish for CBT sessions to occur in person to allow for improved communication with the mentor. This suggestion is specific to one participant however research does suggest that providing treatment in the environment requested or preferred by the participant can have a positive impact on outcomes (Gulliver *et al.*, 2010; Cadigan *et al.*, 2019). Although there was a desire for in person sessions for one participant, online CBT can be beneficial in overcoming accessibility issues since it can be more flexible in timing and location, can allow for a degree of anonymity (Andersson and Titov, 2014; MacDonell *et al.*, 2017; Christ *et al.*, 2020) and can be accessed also by people with illnesses (Gun *et al.*, 2011). However, research (Gerhards *et al.*, 2011; Johansson *et al.*, 2015) show that multiple factors can reduce the attendance or the completion of online CBT, including the lack of personal contact, misunderstanding in the use of the techniques, and reduced computer skills.

"I wish the [CPY] - I'm not sure what it's called, the therapy sessions - I wish they were a bit longer. I know the longest is for eight weeks." (P5 - CBM)

"I think maybe more sessions" (P6 - CBM)

"I think from the off I would have much preferred if it was in person. I think being online has been a bit of a struggle and definitely with Covid everything has gone that way, it would be nice to at least have the option. [...] I think it would be in person, there's that extra level of communication that there isn't quite online. [...] I think definitely at the start of the first session it should be very clear how long the session will last for. I had a lot of therapy before so I

assumed it would be 45 minutes or 50 minutes but sometimes my sessions were shorter than that and I wasn't told why." (P10 – CBM)

"We have already offered the sessions from 6 to up to 10 sessions and make it very much around the young person needs to how many sessions they need. It works really well when the young person is invested in trying out the tools at home. At the end of the 6 -10 sessions it is good to have a next step plan, for example, referring back to a change maker/ job broker/ self-employment adviser to look for jobs, start functional skills or supported internship." (S4 - CBM)

"To have more than 6 sessions" ¹³(P11 - CBM)

"It was helpful, it's a shame that it didn't go on for longer. I think I kind of got - I liked to talk to someone about it, about what I was going through and I think a longer term thing would be better." (P13 - CBM)

"They definitely need much more support. Even the staff members, six to eight sessions it's not enough for them, they all need much more. And some of the young people, I believe, would need at least six months of support if they have had very difficult backgrounds. Or they might be autistic and never received support in school so now they need quite long term support actually. [...] I think it could be really good if they find work, find a course to study but they still can access the mental health support. That would be really, really good because that could help them stay in the job. I think it's hard for them to receive this support, get the job and then 'goodbye'. It's quite hard. [...] Even if it was just for the first three months in their new job or their new study course, it could really help them. [...] I actually think, like, [the delivery organisation] should create more programmes around mental health support for young people, with career support as well, a combination of both but maybe more intensive. It could even be something with the NHS or some kind of programme that can really help young people to become stronger mentally. [...] That will actually have a knock-on effect on the economy because it will keep them in work, it will build their confidence. What I think can happen is it can become a cycle of find a job - two months, no job - back to square one, in the Job Centre, on another programme. [...] Whereas if there's a proper programme of support it has a long term financial benefit to the country." (S5 – CBM)

¹³ The participant needed an additional session following an important event in life and Spark Change provided it. However, in general only 6 sessions are provided.

Another staff member reflected on the potential challenges of having multiple staff members supporting the participants, citing the potential for it to be overwhelming and confusing. However, it's worth noting that one participant mentioned feeling more supported due to the presence of multiple staff members. This dual perspective highlights the complexity of participant experiences and the varied impact of support structures.

“Disadvantage, Spark Change as a programme, as with other contracts really, the admin side of things takes away the beauty of the actual work. I think that’s one thing that is a big thing. I don’t know if you’d call it a disadvantage or something that everyone just has to deal with because you have to do the admin to get the records put in place. But that’s a thing and it does really genuinely take away from the actual delivery of the job. [...] So you’ve got the job broker, you’ve got the Changemaker, you’ve got the job coach, so all these are different faces helping one person, and if you add me to the mix, that’s four people, all within one programme, helping the young person. For some young people that can be too much, that can make them emotionally down. [...] Everybody wants to meet their target, everybody would call, ‘Have you gone to do this job?’ [...] And sometimes it brings frustration to the staff because they want to use this person as part of their numbers so we all juggle and lose sight of the fact that this is one person and one vulnerable human that needs help and not life sucked out of them. So, I think roles overlap. [...] I’ve never actually said that out loud before but I think roles overlap and I think it can be, if we are not careful, too much for a young person.” (S2 - CBM)

Furthermore, a participant shared a challenging situation involving a staff member with whom they generally do not engage. The participant felt pressured in this scenario, but the support from CBM proved helpful in mitigating the issue. This highlights the importance of staff members having a nuanced understanding of the young people they support and emphasizes the potential drawbacks of having too many staff members closely involved with the participants. Striking the right balance in staff engagement is crucial to ensuring a positive and effective support environment.

“I don’t think there would be something a specific I wouldn’t like but there was someone that I spoke to on the phone, it was basically a colleague of [the CBM mentor]. I don’t know who she was and she kept on trying for me to go somewhere to try and find jobs, like a fair, for jobs. [...] But I don’t really know a lot of places and with my anxiety obviously I’m not going to go alone. She kept on trying to force me so I felt pressured. She kept on staying stuff that I didn’t like so I commented back on my work coach and I also spoke to [the CBM mentor] and she gave me feedback. So, that was the good side of it.” (P14 – CBM)

5. Social Impact Matrix

Social Impact measurement allows organisations to understand the value of services and activities for individuals, organisations and society. The Social Impact Matrix© developed by the University of Northampton fills this gap by providing a holistic Social Impact measurement approach that can be used to develop a bespoke measurement framework. The Social Impact Matrix© largely builds on McLoughlin et al.'s (2009) SIMPLE methodology, which focuses upon the measurement of outputs, outcomes and impact. According to this framework, an *output* can be defined as the direct and easily identifiable outputs of a programme (i.e., the number of people supported). Outputs are augmented with longer-term benefits called *outcomes* that represent positive changes to participants' states of mind that will enhance their lives and psychological well-being in the long run (i.e., improved well-being, greater self-efficacy).

The framework also seeks to articulate *impact*, an even longer-term benefit relating to the wider impact on society resulting from the intervention programme (i.e., savings through reducing/preventing homelessness). While *impact's* focus on the wider and less tangible aspects of an intervention programme is the most difficult element to measure, its inclusion in the evaluation is essential for understanding the effectiveness of an intervention programme, especially for government and other funding bodies. Indeed, such an approach allows for the calculation of fiscal proxies that can be attached to social impacts, hence allowing organisations to demonstrate to stakeholders the savings that their work provides society (See Appendix A - The Social Impact Matrix©). The following section presents the estimated social impact for support delivered by the Prospects Spark Change Programme for January 2022 to December 2023 inclusive.

5.1. Employment and Training

Prospects Spark Change offers support in London (Bexley, Brent, Harrow, Hackney, and Havering) for young people aged 16 to 24 that are NEET and young people aged 15 to 18 that are at risk or vulnerable. Overall, Spark Change provides tailored support to help improve young people's well-being, education, and employment opportunities. This support enables young people to develop the capabilities required to overcome challenges to obtaining employment which are essential for improving outcomes. The added value of the support offered to young people seeking employment is based on national insurance and tax contributions, and benefit savings as well as employability support. Spark Change supported 375 young people to obtain and maintaining employment. Unfortunately, Prospects does not record if employment is full-time or part-time therefore an average

salary is applied based on the *maximum* potential value. These numbers were analysed and applied to the support offered to calculate the overall impact (Table 5.1). The net value of social impact delivered by Prospects in this area is equal to **£1,310,611.96** when attribution and deadweight are accounted for.

Support	Total Impact	Costs, Attribution, Displacement & Deadweight	Net Impact
Information and advice given on employment and education.	£112,500.00	Average costs of employability course [Reed's Employability Course ¹⁴ - £300] x 375 young people. [Attribution 20% and Deadweight 10% applied]	£78,750.00
Secured Employment - Tax and National Insurance	£303,152.80	National Insurance and Tax for employed vendors @ salary of £16,289.00 (Average wage [35 hours] employee) x 375 young people supported. [Attribution of 20% and Deadweight 10% applied]	£212,206.96
Secured Employment - Reduction in benefits	£1,456,650.00	Benefit payment (i.e., JSA) for vendors @ salary of £74.70 per week x 375 young people supported [Attribution of 20% and Deadweight 10% applied]	£1,019,655.00
Total	£1,872,302.80	N/A	£1,310,611.96

Table 5.1. Education, Employment and Training¹⁵

5.2. Mental Health, Well-being and Confidence

Health inequalities can be linked with many social determinants that impact the environment and communities in which individuals live (WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health and World Health Organization, 2008). Spark Change promotes good health in young people through the provision of dedicated support. Health and well-being are measured as *general well-being* defined as one's perception of their satisfaction of life and life stability. Research (Cox, Bowen and Kempton, 2012; Maccagnan et al., 2019) has suggested that improving an individual's well-being could be valued at £10,560 per individual, which illustrates the importance of capturing information on well-being. Support from the Spark Change had an impact on young peoples' well-being with 36 young

¹⁴ <https://www.reed.co.uk/courses/reeds-employability-skills/277001#/courses/?keywords=employability>

¹⁵ Given the fact that other provision does exist for this level of support, a deadweight ratio (10%) and attribution (20%) was applied across all areas. No displacement has been added as programme supports young people who experience significant disadvantage.

people reporting that well-being increased across all programmes and 10 young people reporting that well-being reduced. Overall, improvements in well-being can be calculated for 26 young people.

Self-efficacy, on the other hand, is an individual’s belief in their ability to complete a task and the strength of this belief. An individual with high self-efficacy will attempt to complete a task even after repeated failures thus improving self-efficacy is essential for ensuring positive outcomes. Self-efficacy scores are collected using the 10-item Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) Generalized Self-Efficacy (GSE) Scale, scored on a 4-point Likert scale. Identifying a suitable proxy for self-efficacy are complex however an average cost of self-efficacy improvements can be calculated at £1,017 (based on proxy calculations from www.hotcourses.com / Cox et al., 2012). Support from the Spark Change has an impact on young peoples’ self-efficacy with 27 young people reporting that well-being increased across all programmes and 10 young people reporting that self-efficacy reduced. Overall, improvements in self-efficacy can be calculated for 17 young people.

Analysis reveals that the net value of social impact delivered by the Spark Change in this area is equal to **£204,294.30** when attribution and deadweight is accounted for (Table 5.2)

Support	Total Impact	Costs, Attribution, Displacement & Deadweight	Net Impact
Improvements in self-efficacy	£17,289.00	Improvement in self-efficacy * £1,017 (average cost of improvements in self-efficacy). [Attribution of 20% and Deadweight of 10% applied]	£12,102.30
Improvements in well-being	£274,560.00	Average well-being financial proxy of £10,560 (Cox, Bowen and Kempton, 2012; Maccagnan et al., 2019) x 26 young people supported. [Attribution of 20% and Deadweight of 10% applied]	£192,192.00
Total	£291,849.00	N/A	£204,294.30

Table 5.2. Mental Health, Well-being, and Confidence¹⁶

¹⁶ Given the fact that other provision does exist for this area of support, the lower deadweight ratio of 10% was applied across all areas as well as 20% attribution for other service provisions. No displacement was included in this calculation.

5.3. Additional Support

Young people supported though Spark Change are offered additional support to improve engagement in support and activities. Additional support is offered to young people through the provision of ID, travel, laptops, gift cards, housing and food vouchers. Analysis of additional support reveals that the net value of social impact delivered by the Spark Change in this area is equal to **£15,420.50** (Table 5.3).

Support	Total Impact	Costs	Net Impact
ID support	£660.00	Number of young people receiving ID support * average cost passport or other ID [£82.50]	£660.00
Travel support	£1,312.50	Number of young people receiving single bus tickets * average cost of single bus ticket [£1.75]	£1,312.50
Laptops	£3,200.00	Number of laptops provided * average cost of laptop [£400]	£3,200.00
Gift cards	£7,350.00	Number of gift cards	£7,350.00
Food vouchers or free food	£1,260.00	Number of food vouchers or free food* average cost per [£5]	£1,260.00
Housing Support	£4,095.00	Number of young people supported * cost of loss of home (£819) [Attribution of 50% and Deadweight 10% applied]	£1,638.00
Total	£17,877.50	N/A	£15,420.50

Table 5.3. Additional support

5.4. Volunteering

Spark Change support young people and staff to participate in volunteering, the specific data is currently unavailable but young people do volunteer on the programme. The Community Works organization¹⁷ suggests that the economic value that volunteers bring to an organisation can be calculated by multiplying the total volunteer hours by an hourly wage rate. This could be the national

¹⁷ <https://www.bhcommunityworks.org.uk/voluntary-sector/volunteering/good-practice-guide/evaluating/working-out-the-economic-cost-of-volunteering/>

minimum wage¹⁸ or a median hourly wage. The minimum wage is likely to underestimate the value, while the median wage may overestimate it. The value for volunteering is £9.36 per hour (average¹⁹ minimum wage for individuals age 18+). Analysis of additional support reveals that the net value of social impact delivered by the Spark Change in this area is equal to **£37,521.04** (Table 5.4).

Support	Total Impact	Costs	Net Impact
Volunteering for young people	£29,424.64	Number of hours young people volunteered * The value for volunteering is £9.36 per hour (minimum wage)	£29,424.64
Volunteering for staff	£8,096.40	Number of hours staff volunteered * The value for volunteering is £9.36 per hour (minimum wage)	£8,096.40
Total	£37,521.04	N/A	£37,521.04

Table 5.4. Volunteering

5.5. Criminal Justice

In addition to the above outlined savings, some of the young people supported by Spark Change had previous involvement with the criminal justice system ($N = 105$). Therefore, it is possible to estimate the social impact that Spark Change delivered here in relation to reducing reoffending rates and hence making savings for the criminal justice system. This can be calculated using a Ministry of Justice (2011) Technical Paper on the cost of young offenders to the Criminal Justice System, which shows an average cost of £11,259.27²⁰ per young offender annually for proven offending (including cost of police, courts, offender management teams and custody). Assuming the 105 young people did not re-offend of which, theoretically, 32.76 were statistically likely to re-offend as the proven reoffending rates for children and young people is 31.2% (Youth Justice Board, 2023). Analysis of young peoples’

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage>

¹⁹ Average minimum wage for 18-20 years (£7.49), 21-22 years (£10.18) and 23+ years (£10.42). Source: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

²⁰ This has been adjusted for inflation to 2023 values. Original value was £8,000 in 2011.

involvement in Criminal Justice reveals that the net value of social impact delivered by Spark Change in this area is equal to **£147,541.47** (Table 5.5), when deadweight and attribution are applied²¹.

Support	Total Impact	Costs	Net Impact
Reduction in re-offending reducing cost to society	£368,853.69	Number with reduced offending (32.76) * £11,259.27 (cost of offending) [Ministry of Justice (2011)] [Attribution of 30% and Deadweight 30% applied]	£147,541.47
Total	£368,853.69	N/A	£147,541.47

Table 5.5. Reduced involvement in Criminal Justice

5.5. Impact Overview

The data gathered in relation to the social impact of Spark Change presented a above (see also Appendix A), demonstrates that the total maximum impact created equates to £2,588,404.03. However, when attribution and deadweight is accounted for, the overall impact value created is **£1,715,389.27**. Figure 5.1 below illustrates the breakdown of these social impact figures across the key areas.

²¹ Deadweight has been applied at 30% to account for challenges in collecting accurate data on reducing re-offending and Attribution has been applied at 30% to account for the fact young people will receive support from other organisations if involved in the Criminal Justice System.



Figure 5.1. Social Impact

It should be noted that these figures do not account for all impact created through the support offered to young people (i.e., 1:1 support) and staff (i.e., staff upskilling through accredited education and training) therefore there are opportunities to capture further social impact. The research team recommends that caution is exercised in interpreting the true social impact due to the limitations resulting from limitations including the lack of counterfactuals or randomised control group data for comparison.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This report illustrated the findings from Spark Change, a programme funded by the ESIF and five Local Authorities (funding matched the ESIF). The programme aims to provide tailored support for young people aged 16 to 24 years-old not in NEET to progress into employment or education. Overall, this programme is dedicated to improving young people's well-being, education, and employment opportunities. To ensure young people receive the right support Spark change provides the following services:

- Spark Change Me which focuses on mental health, self-esteem and volunteering opportunities through Cognitive Behavioural Mentoring (CBM)²²;
- Spark Change Future focuses on accredited courses and qualifications, self-employment support, and employer engagement through 12-week supported internships.

To evaluate the programme both quantitative and qualitative data collection were implemented from July 2022 to December 2023, with social impact data provided for April 2022 to December 2023. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the evaluation utilises both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data, as outlined in section 3 of the report, were procured through an online questionnaire administered to programme participants at the inception and conclusion of their involvement, aiming to scrutinise changes over time. A total of 205 questionnaires were gathered, with 74 respondents indicating their participation in the 12-week supported internships, 118 participants in CBM, four participating in both, four preferring not to disclose, and five leaving the question unanswered. The qualitative data in this report encompass 18 semi-structured interviews, covering both CBM and the 12-week supported internship. These interviews involved nine staff and participants from each route, with two delivery partners and seven programme participants. Additionally, the qualitative segment incorporated four case studies—two featuring participants (one from CBM and one from the 12-week supported internships) and two spotlighting staff (one from CBM and one from the 12-week supported internships).

Both the interviews and the analysis of the questionnaires yielded crucial insights into the performance of Spark Change. Participants from both paths exhibited an enhancement in well-being, confidence, self-esteem, and resilience, as evidenced by the scales utilized in the quantitative data collection. These outcomes were corroborated by interview findings, where both staff and participants reported heightened mental health and confidence as primary outcomes. Specifically, the CBM

²² Cognitive Behavioural Mentoring is based on specialist mentoring using Cognitive Behavioural Training approaches.

participants reported an increased ability to employ techniques for responding positively to challenging situations. Meanwhile, the 12-week supported internship route facilitated improvements in employability skills and confidence in navigating employment and social interactions. The questionnaire results, particularly when examining outcomes for those concluding their engagement with Spark Change, indicated that young individuals were transitioning to or actively seeking employment, engaging in volunteering, securing work placements, and participating in internships. Programmes like Spark Change, designed to offer essential support and resources for young people navigating the challenges of securing employment and pursuing education, address the gaps in existing service provisions and play a crucial role in facilitating positive outcomes for participants.

Although the evaluation was primarily positive, there are areas for improvement for each service. For the supported internship programme, there were opportunities for improvement specifically in the areas of timing and internship diversity. Participants and a delivery partner emphasized the importance of introducing internships at the outset of the programme to maximize immersion and bolster overall participant outcomes. Furthermore, the delivery partner underscored the need for a more extensive selection of internship options. Some participants faced challenges accessing opportunities aligned with their interests, potentially impacting their motivation and engagement. Family support also emerged as a crucial factor affecting positive outcomes for young individuals, with a lack of support for young people from their families identified as a potential barrier. Although the programme is designed to support the young people, incorporating strategies to foster family involvement would be beneficial in creating a supportive environment for participants. Within the CBM programme, participants and delivery partners noted an opportunity for improvement associated with the delivery method and session frequency. The online format of CBM was perceived by some participants as limiting their experience due to the lack of personal contact which constrained communication. Addressing these issues could significantly enhance participant experiences and outcomes in both programmes, providing a more impactful intervention for young people seeking to improve their employability and overall well-being.

The report showcases the positive performance of Spark Change's, illustrating the programme's role in improving participants' mental health, confidence, self-esteem, employability skills, and social skills. Figure 7.1 encapsulates the positive outcomes of the programme, highlighting its significant benefits for participants whilst also acknowledging the areas for improvement and refinement.

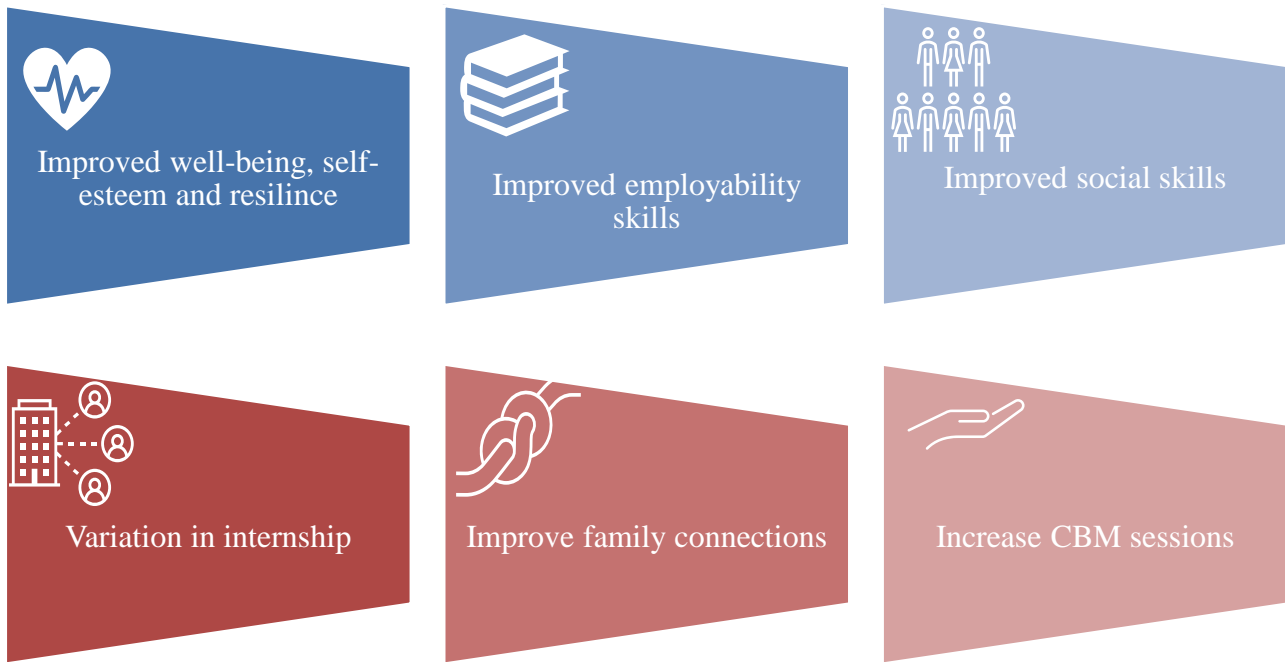


Figure 7.1. Spark change benefits (top) and opportunities for improvement (bottom).

Finally, the data gathered in relation to the social impact of Spark Change and reported in Section 5 (see also Appendix A), demonstrates that the total maximum impact created by Spark Change equates to £2,588,404.03. However, when attribution, displacement and deadweight is accounted for, the overall impact value created is **£1,715,389.27**.

Based upon the data outlined in this report, the research team proposes the following key recommendations for developing the project:

- Establish the internship from the beginning and increase the variation of internships offered:** Since the supported internship lasts 12 weeks, young people would experience greater benefit if the internship were established from the beginning. This would allow the programme participants to fully immerse themselves in the work experience and achieve long-term improvements in self-efficacy and well-being. Moreover, increasing the internship opportunities and the variety would allow participants to pursue their individual interests which would increase the opportunities for success and solidify their engagement.
- Involve the family from the beginning to ensure participants have a cohesive support system:** The internship opportunity does not include a salary and therefore participants and families can find it hard to understand the programme benefits. Involving the family from the beginning would allow the development of a cohesive and well-rounded support system that encourage participant. Furthermore, fostering engagement with the family has the potential to

impact positively on family members which creates an added benefit for participants, family members and society.

- **Increase the number of CBM sessions:** The participants engaging in CBM mentioned how the number of sessions could be increased, however, if this is not possible, the participants could benefit from having follow up sessions after the therapy has ended. Supporting individuals as they embark on their journey into employment or education is a critical intervention that can significantly shape their experience and outcomes. Early support at the beginning of these journeys can help young people navigate an inherently challenging and stressful job market. Providing support from the outset helps individuals navigate these stressors more effectively, creating a more positive and manageable experience. Moreover, early support contributes to the development of resilience, confidence and wellbeing. As participants encounter obstacles or setbacks, the groundwork laid by comprehensive support empowers them to bounce back and persist in their pursuits, thus reducing disengagement or dropout. This would ensure that the substantial support provided by Spark Change remains effective and impactful. In conclusion, a proactive and supportive approach at the beginning of individuals' journeys into employment or education is a powerful strategy that significantly impacts their overall experience and long-term success.
- **Data collection:** There is a missed opportunity to collect data on staff upskilling and staff well-being. If staff upskilling data was collected and/or provided then additional social impact could be leveraged based on the training and qualifications staff gain (i.e., NVQ). Furthermore, if longitudinal data were captured for staff well-being, then Prospects could demonstrate distance travelled and hence quantify how many staff had been supported from lower well-being scores to average or higher well-being scores.

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Appendix A - Methodology

Overview

Impact measurement allows organisations to understand the value of services and activities for individuals, organisations and society. While there are many different types of Social Impact (SI) measurement tools including Social Return on Investment (SROI) (Hall & Arvidson, 2013), the ‘Balance Scorecard’ (Bull, 2007), or ‘practical toolkits’ such as ‘Prove and Improve’ and ‘Outcomes Star’, the use of these tools in different sectors of the social economy may prove problematic if used in isolation (Denny, Seddon and Hazenberg, 2011). Evaluation frameworks based on such tools, generally only provide organisations with surface data on their performance. To overcome this problem, an approach is required that combines a singular approach to understanding the social impact created, but that within this allows for multiple data points that allow for bespoke measurement for an organisation to take place.

The Social Impact Matrix© developed by the University of Northampton fills this gap by providing a holistic Social Impact (SI) measurement approach that can be used to develop a bespoke measurement framework. The Social Impact Matrix© largely builds on McLoughlin et al.’s (2009) SIMPLE methodology, which focuses upon the measurement of outputs, outcomes and impact. According to this framework, an *output* can be defined as the direct and easily identifiable outputs of a programme (i.e. the number of people supported). Outputs are augmented with longer-term benefits called *outcomes* that represent positive changes to participants’ states of mind that will enhance their lives and psychological well-being in the long run (i.e. improved well-being, greater self-efficacy). The framework also seeks to articulate *impact*, an even longer-term benefit relating to the wider impact on society resulting from the intervention programme (i.e. savings through reducing/preventing homelessness). While *impact*’s focus on the wider and less tangible aspects of an intervention programme is the most difficult element to measure, its inclusion in the evaluation is essential for understanding the effectiveness of an intervention programme, especially for government and other funding bodies. Indeed, such an approach allows for the calculation of fiscal proxies that can be attached to social impacts, hence allowing organisations to demonstrate to stakeholders the savings that their work provides society.

The framework also utilises elements from SROI, so as to quantify the value stakeholders attach to the social, environmental and economic changes they experience because of the organisation’s product, service and/or operations. This allows for an approach that focuses on what truly matters for

the organisation and society and provides a bottom-up approach involving stakeholders at every stage of the journey. This also allows the organisation to look at fiscal proxy calculations of its impact and compare this with its programme costs, to see what the ‘return on investment’ ratio is.

Furthermore, the University of Northampton’s ‘Social Impact Matrix’© combines the framework of McLoughlin et al. (2009) with the ‘triple-bottom line’ that is present in the business models of social enterprise and the delivery of public services. The triple-bottom line consists of economic, social, and environmental impacts that are delivered by organisations and (in the absence of a current theoretical definition of social value) used as a proxy for social value. The organisation first decides what specific areas of impact it has in the economic, social and environmental spheres in relation to its programmes, then once these areas have been defined, the organisation must then identify what its specific outputs, outcomes, and impacts are for these areas of impact. The organisation can then develop or identify tools or formula that can be used to measure these specific outputs, outcomes and impacts. This process is outlined in Figure 3.1 below.

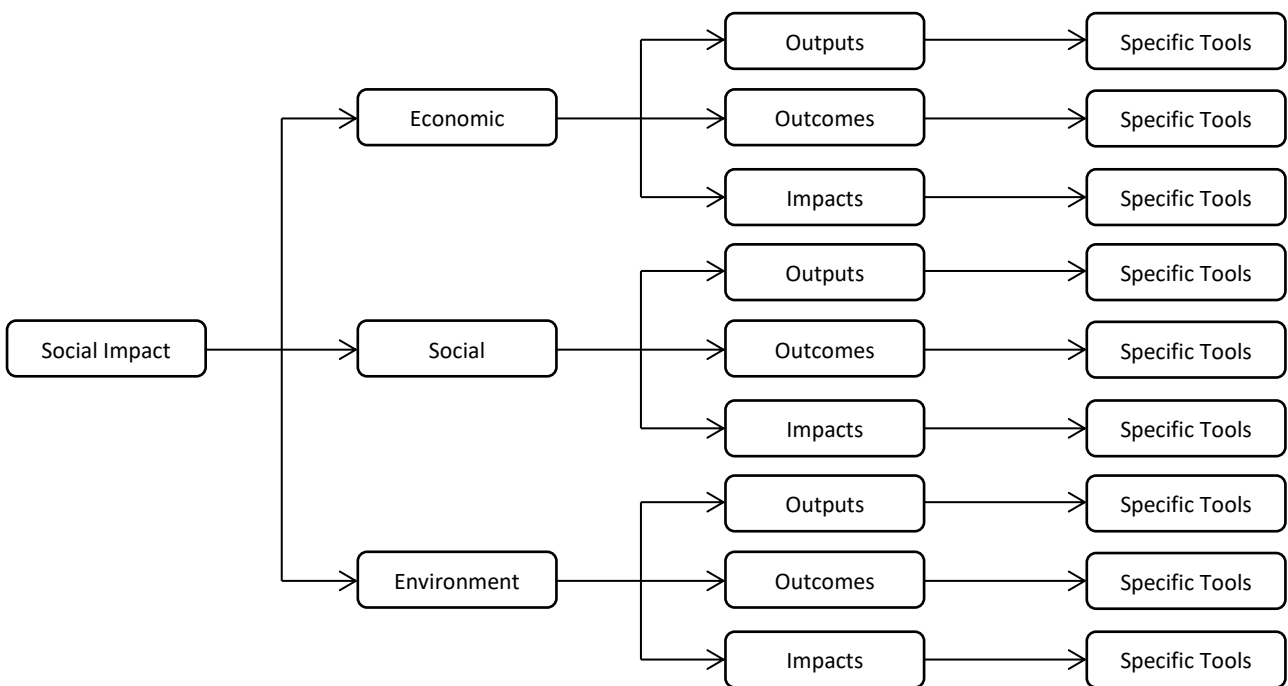


Figure 1. Social Impact Matrix ©

Social impact measurement requires application of accounting principles to address questions such as: What would have happened anyway (deadweight)? What is the contribution of others (attribution)? Have the activities displaced value from elsewhere (displacement)? If an outcome is projected to have lasting impact, what is the rate at which value reduces over time (drop-off)?

Applying these measures enables identification of the total value of outcomes to ensure organisation avoid over-claiming.

Deadweight

Deadweight is a measure of the outcomes that would have occurred regardless of the activities and services delivered (Social Value UK, 2016). Identifying the information required for deadweight is often challenging (and potentially expensive if live control groups are required) thus using detailed reviews of existing service literature, and stakeholder engagement (i.e. SROI Introduction / Kick-Off meetings), enable the identification of what could have happened anyway. It is important to note that measuring deadweight is based on estimations, as identifying an identical comparison group is challenging (Social Value UK, 2016). Stakeholders will often have access to other programmes that offer alternative support, including employability programmes (i.e. Princes Trust); however, Spark Change is the only organisation with a core mission of dismantling homelessness by creating opportunities for young people (i.e. employability, dedicated support) so deadweight will not always be applicable. Levels of deadweight are applied using the rates, with examples below:

- Low = 10%
- Medium = 50%
- High = 90%

Through reviewing literature and stakeholder interviews, estimations for deadweight can be identified. Where deadweight cannot be attributed, either one of the estimate figures above is utilised, or where deadweight is not applicable then it is not placed into the impact calculations.

Attribution

Attribution is a measure of the extent to which the outcomes were caused by the contribution of other activities. It is calculated as a percentage (i.e. the proportion of the outcome that is attributable to your organisation) (Social Value UK, 2016). It is important to note that achieving an accurate measure of attribution at this stage is an attempt to acknowledge that changes may be associated with other activities. Identifying the information required for attribution is often challenging, and organisations need to identify a suitable approach (Social Value UK, 2016). Services can request specific information from beneficiaries, for example, information on other activities offered and the benefit of such activities (Social Value UK, 2016).

Identifying the information required for attribution is often challenging (and potentially expensive if live control groups are required) thus using detailed reviews of organisational information (i.e. qualitative information describing the level of support), can enable the identification of levels of support. It is important to note that measuring attribution is based on estimations, as identifying an identical comparison group is challenging (Social Value UK, 2016).

Displacement

Displacement recognises how the outcomes may displace other outcomes. For example, if the organisation supports individuals to enter employment, they may be taking away a job opportunity from another person. Through conducting a desk-based review and drawing on experience in impact measurement of provisions nationally, it is evident that Spark Change is a unique service. In the main, it is unlikely that direct activities would displace any other activity locally or nationally as the support is offered to individuals experiencing multiple and complex vulnerabilities who would otherwise receive limited and/or no support.

Duration & Drop-off

Drop-off is a measure used to account for a reduction in impact over a specific period (usually calculated for outcomes lasting one year or more) (Social Value UK, 2016). It is usually calculated by deducting a “fixed percentage from the remaining level of outcome at the end of each year. For example, an outcome of 100 that lasts for three years but drops off by 10% per annum would be 100 in the first year, 90 in the second (100 less 10%) and 80 in the third (90 less 10%)” (Social Value UK, 2016: 61). Once impact measurement is embedded, the organisation should have a system that manages this information, by tracking participants to establish accurate information on drop-off (e.g. completing follow-up questionnaires and/or interviews to establish the length of time until the outcomes reduced (Social Value UK, 2016). However, at this stage, with impact being tracked only for one calendar year, this is not a calculation that needs to be embedded. If the [organisation] move towards longitudinal data capture with beneficiaries over multiple years, then drop-off calculations may need to be included.