

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE KEY ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Sophie Fletcher

Newcastle University
POL2096 - Politics Work Placement Module
School of Geography, Politics and Sociology



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The Brief

To carry out research into the impact that The Key project has on young people. This will then be used to form guidance on how direct feedback can be given to Key participants.

The Key is currently engaging in a three year strategy, in which they will digitise and bring their services into the digital age. As opposed to previous formats, young people and facilitators will be able to interact directly with each other and The Key through the new Key+ digital format (The Key 2021). They want to provide feedback to better communicate the distance travelled through the duration of however many stages the groups decide to engage with.

In terms of primary research, my research partner, Isabel, and I will conduct two surveys - one with young people, and one with facilitators. This will help us to understand the impact of The Key on both groups. This will also help me to calculate the benefits of feedback on young people, and their skill development. The Key ensure that they give the young people the skills to go into later life with confidence in their potential and allow them to realise their aspirations. This is done currently via the skills wheel, but it is the hope that the result of this research and the ability to give feedback to the young people will aid their development further.

In terms of secondary research, I will look at videos produced by The Key in the form of interviews with Key participants and facilitators. This will help me to further understand the impact of The Key and may possibly spark ideas for recommendations of improvements to The Key's services. I will also consider the different types of feedback that could be given to the young people, how accessible these would be to The Key as an organisation and then which one would be the best model to use.

The outcome of this research will be a set of recommendations as to how the new Key+ model can be used to provide feedback that will further enhance the experience of The Key for young people and give them the most beneficial experience possible, to allow them to move forward into life with more confidence. The research needs to consider the capabilities of The Key, with the funding and resources they have available, to ensure that any recommendations are reasonable and implementable.

Understanding the work of The Key

How do they deliver their services?

In order to be able to measure the impact of The Key on young people, I first must understand what The Key does, and how it is designed to benefit young people. The Key work with young people to create and carry out projects in five stages: think, plan (including budget), pitch (to an external panel), do and review (MacDermott 2022). The Key state that they ‘want to create a world where all young people are inspired to believe in themselves and achieve their full potential’ (The Key 2022a). Their main aim is to help reduce social immobility within young people in the North East. They support a range of organisations, who have employees known as “facilitators” to carry out different stages of projects with young people to develop twelve key skills that The Key believe will benefit them in transitioning into education or employment in the future. During these five stages, they engage in activities to improve key skills and increase confidence. The Key cite their objectives as being ‘to advance the education of young people aged 11-25 in the North East by the provision of grants’ and to ‘provide recreational and leisure activities in the interests of social welfare to improve the conditions of life’ (CCEW 2021). They provide these activities in the form of the different projects that are of various size and impact to the local community. The Key have supported 9,153 young people to complete 2,209 projects over the last 6 years, which in turn have benefitted 84,157 community members. Since 2021, they have subjected themselves to a three year plan in which they hope to increase their abilities, through technological advancement to their services and greater youth voice and influence (The Key 2021).

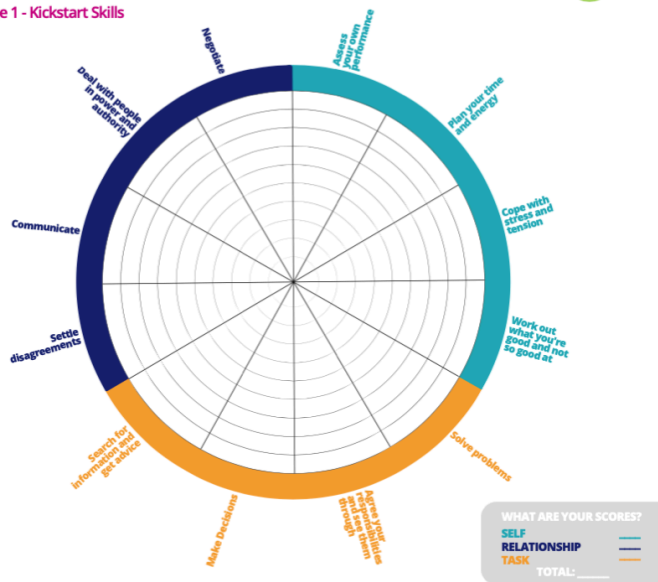


Figure 1

Throughout their projects, the young people fill out skills wheels at various stages. The intended benefit of this is for them to be able to see where they have improved, and help them to gauge an understanding of the skills they possess, and allow them to have confidence in their abilities. The skills wheel beside (Figure 1) shows the twelve skills and the format in which the young people visualise them. They can rate themselves on a scale of 1-10, and they complete these currently at the start middle and end of each stage. When progressing between stages they then complete an evaluation of the previous stage, then another at the middle and end. This helps them to track their progress through the stages and notice how they have improved.

In their three year plan, and development to Key+, they have changed this format slightly. Participants will now complete the skills wheels digitally, at the start and end of each project. The skills wheel in the middle of the project has been removed.

What is the need for The Key?

The Key operates solely in the North East, which provides a unique opportunity for The Key, as young people in the North East are at a disadvantage compared to young people in more privileged regions of the UK. One way in which this can be seen is in GCSE and A-Level results over the past few years, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, in the North East, 63.8% of GCSE grades were a 4 or higher, indicating a pass. This is compared to 67.3% nationally, and 70.6% in London (Graham 2019).

“We know the teachers and schools across the region have been working hard to close the ‘gap’ in attainment, yet much more needs to be done by the Government to ensure that any proposed future increases in funding are targeted to challenge the significant impact of disadvantage faced by students in deprived areas like the North East.”

- *Chris Zaraga, Schools North East Director of Operation [2019]*

Similarly, in 2021, there was a rise in A-Level grades up and down the country, however the results in the North East were proportionately lower. The percentage of A-A* grades increased by 3.6% in the North East, however in the rest of the country, the results varied between a 6-7% increase (Havery 2021; Blair 2021)

“The widening of the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is worrying, especially in the proportion going on to achieve the higher grades, when compared with others who started GCSE study at the same level of previous attainment.”

“Long term disadvantaged children here were already far behind even before the pandemic and the legacy of this crisis could be to make the situation much worse.”

- *Andrew McPhillips, Chief Economist at the Northern Powerhouse Partnership [2021]*

Various officials and local bodies have long been calling for greater investment in the North in general, this can be signified by the government's ‘Northern Powerhouse’ scheme. Most of this is focused on other areas of the Northern economy, however some attention is being given to education, and therefore the development of young people. In their *Educating the North* document, the foreword stated ‘Too many children in the North aren’t getting the education they need or deserve.’ (The Northern Powerhouse Partnership 2018). This demonstrates that the government are well aware of issues within the education system.

These facts make the work of The Key fundamental, because where the government are failing and the disparity in youth funding is growing, The Key attempt to fill the gaps and catch the young people who would otherwise fall through the net. The twelve skills that the young people score themselves on, allow them to be confident in their abilities and realise that they possess these skills going forward into later life. This means for all Key participants, whether they left school with fewer qualifications or an abundance, will be confident in their vocational skills they have gained from their Key experience.

The Key gives young people the opportunities to develop their CVs and work related skills, as they often leave school ill-equipped to enter the workplace. Schools and colleges in the North East have to focus on exam results and teaching to the curriculum, which means vocational skills could be overlooked or have a minimal priority placed on them - a factor that is not their individual fault but a fault of the system as a whole. This means the work of The Key is even more important and the desire for feedback from the young people makes even more sense. Many of the participants understand the value that their Key experience will add to them and want to get the most out of it - hence the need for greater feedback from The Key on their improvements and therefore the need for this research.

The effect of the three-year plan and Key+ development

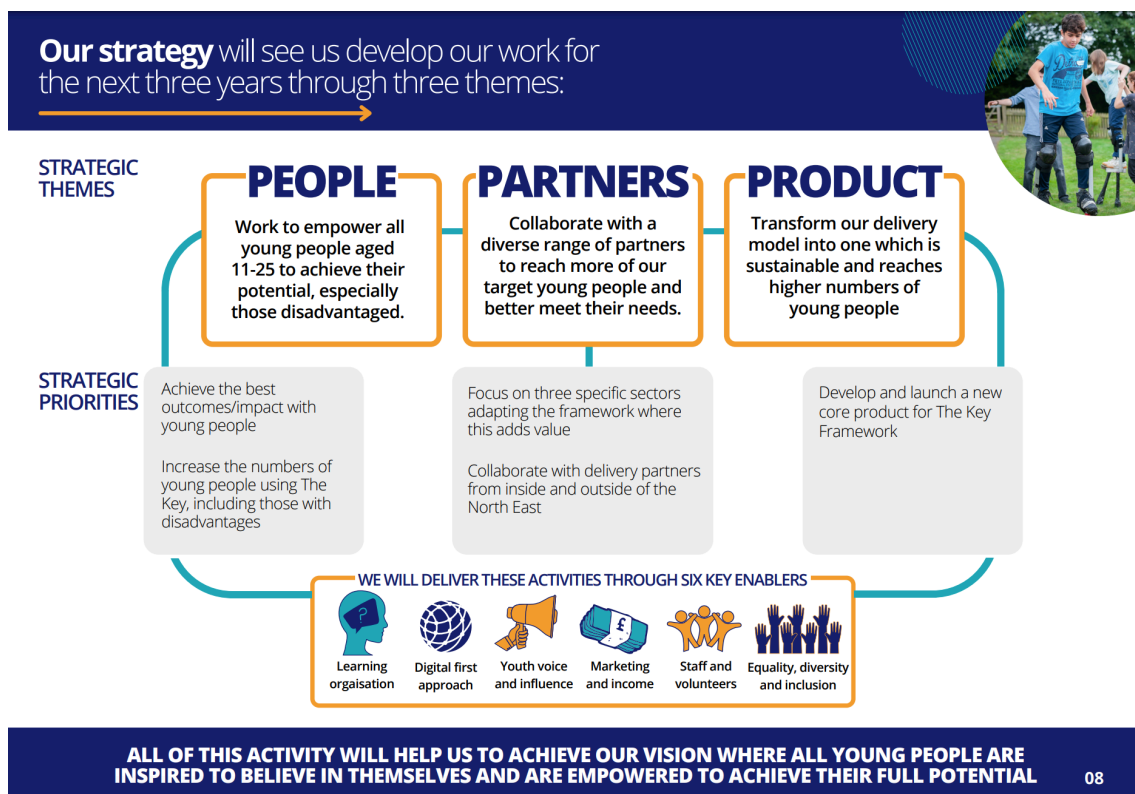


Figure 2

The Key are undertaking a substantial overhaul of their systems, by investing in all areas and incorporating a host of improvements into a new digital platform. Figure 2 demonstrates the main aspects of the three-year strategy. They hope this will help young people lead and engage in activities that interest them whilst developing their skills, increasing their capabilities and providing wider community benefit. In the placement brief, The Key stated they want ‘young people to interact directly with the digital interface, entering their own progress scores and receiving playback feedback directly through a device.’

Key+ will allow the young people to be able to track their progress throughout the stages more easily, and they will be able to see their improvements in their skills wheels. This will, hopefully, also help The Key to improve their services and have a greater understanding of where they most benefit young people engaging with the programme. It will also give both the facilitators and young people more interaction with The Key and enable greater development.

From my work with The Key, there has been an impressive desire to develop and grow as a charity, in order to best help the young people they work with. They are always looking for ways in which to grow and develop their services. The three year plan is a great demonstration of this and proves how they are constantly looking for feedback, whether it be positive or negative, to learn from it.

By moving to a digital platform, The Key is giving itself, and the people it works with, so many more opportunities to interact and so the benefits to young people are more than they were before. The young people will also be able to have a greater understanding of how they have benefitted their local community with their Key projects, which will be great for self-esteem and their feeling of competence.

Feedback for Young People

Different types of feedback available to The Key

Feedback is a vital part of learning and development, especially in young people. It helps us to understand what we need to improve on and in what ways we can achieve this. ‘Feedback is important as it helps us develop and improve our skills, it can be positive or negative’ (Youth Employment, 2018).

The Key already provides an opportunity for reflection, in the form of the skills wheel. Not only are there the twelve skills that they must rate themselves on, but also a few questions at the bottom for them to also answer.

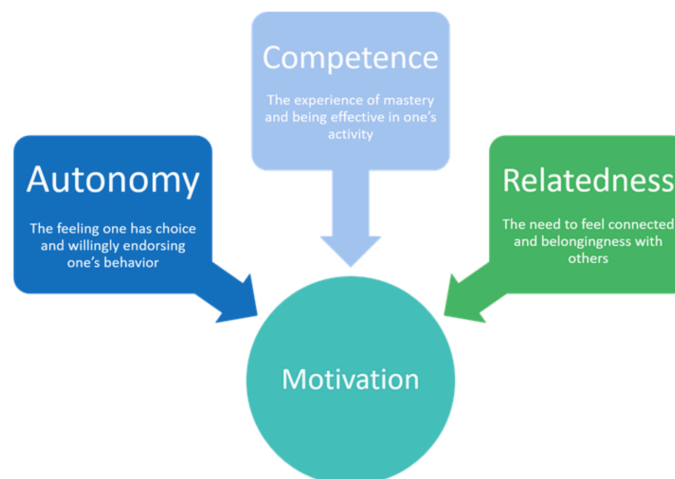


Figure 3

In the AmbitionLab Mini Film, explaining how The Key works and what problems they are trying to solve, there is mention of self-determination theory. Dr Kate Herron, from the University of East London, discusses the theory and says that: "Self-determination theory states that we need three different psychological needs to be met: autonomy, relatedness and competence." (AmbitionLab pre-2019) Figure 3 models the self-determination theory. This is an interesting theory that I use to model one of my proposals for feedback.

In terms of the feedback styles that could be offered to the young people, they can have self-reflection, which is the model currently used by The Key, in the form of the skills wheels. There could also be more peer feedback introduced, where other members of the group could rate the improvement in skills across the course of the stages. The other option would be to allow the facilitators to offer feedback to the young people themselves, at different stages of their projects. This would depend on their prior relationship with the young people and how well they know them prior to their Key experience, so that they could perhaps suggest which of the twelve skills the young person is successful at and/or confident on, before they have started their Key projects.

Self Reflection

The young people currently complete a self reflection exercise in the form of the skills wheel. This helps them to realise their own potential and abilities, but also to see how they have improved as a result of The Key. This is a fantastic method for the young people to understand the impact that The Key has on them, as they may not notice themselves without completing this activity.

As well as the skills wheel, there are some boxes at the bottom of the sheets for the young people to complete. These are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 consists of three empty rectangular boxes arranged horizontally. The first box on the left has a purple border and contains the text 'Which are your strongest skills?'. The middle box has a pink border and contains the text 'Which skills give you most room for improvement?'. The third box on the right has a blue border and contains the text 'Name at least 3 skills you will use during your project.'.

Figure 4

These boxes allow the young people to further self reflect as they can write out qualitative answers, as well as providing their own quantitative data. This could then be used later on in the programme to show the young people how far they have come. They could be shown their earlier answers from the start of Stage 1 for example and these could be compared to their answers at Stage 3, so they can see how much they have improved across the course of their Key experience. These improvements could then be added to their CVs or mentioned in job interviews when discussing the benefits of their Key experience. They could also be used to help the young people write testimonials for the website or promotional material for The Key.

Self reflection will also be valuable for the young people in later life, especially when it comes to writing their CVs and interviews, perhaps even when writing a UCAs application if they hope to go to university. If they can successfully identify their areas of strength and weakness early on in life, through their work with The Key, then their experience will have an even greater benefit on them, not just immediately and in the short term, but over the long term as well.

The idea of self reflection also allows the participants to enhance their sense of competence, another one of the psychological needs from the self determination theory. If The Key can attempt to give young people the greatest sense of motivation possible through the three factors, then they will be setting them up for even more success in their future.

Peer Feedback

The young people could also benefit from more peer feedback, considering how all of the work is group work. There are various ways in which this could be conducted, in order to allow the young people to gain the best feedback possible and learn as much as possible from their experience with The Key. One way in which The Key already does this is at the end of the Youth Action (Stage 3) review skills wheel where the young people are asked to fill in the four boxes in Figure 5.

Figure 5 consists of four rectangular boxes arranged horizontally, each with a different colored border and containing a question. From left to right: 1. A purple-bordered box with the text 'Share your skills wheel with your group. Do they agree with your scores?'. 2. A pink-bordered box with the text 'Has talking with your group changed any of your scores?'. 3. A blue-bordered box with the text 'What are your strengths? How will they help the team during the project?'. 4. An orange-bordered box with the text 'What are your three weakest skills and how will you develop them?'.

Figure 5

Within these boxes the young people are given the opportunity to share their skills wheel with their group members and ask them if they agree with their scores. This is a great time to encourage more peer feedback within the groups and also to improve their peer to peer feedback skills to again use in later life. If they can feel confident in giving both positive feedback and constructive criticism to their peers at this early stage in their life, they will again find it a lot easier moving forward - again demonstrating the value of the skills and experiences they gain from The Key. In working with their peers, they will be enhancing their sense of relatedness, one of the psychological needs identified in the self-determination theory. If they believe they are feeling connected within their group, and that they are helping others develop, they will be more motivated in their own project and in their own abilities in general.

Facilitator-led Feedback

The facilitators are also in a position to be a valuable part of the feedback provided to the young people. Due to the way in which The Key functions, and the groups become a part of The Key, it is highly likely the facilitators will have a prior relationship with the young people in their group before their engagement with The Key. I believe The Key could utilise this prior relationship, in order to provide even more feedback for the young people to again enhance the impact of their experience. At the start of the Stage 1, the facilitator could answer a few simple questions, identifying skills from the skills wheel that they know the group members are confident on and what they could gain from completing the project.

Then the facilitators could also be asked those questions at the end of the stage, in order to see how they personally believe the young person has developed. This would help with their sense of competence again, as they will not just be self evaluating, but their facilitator, who has worked with them the whole time, has noticed an improvement in **Skill X** and they can feel proud of this. This would add another opinion to the feedback they receive and could provide them with useful perspective they may not be able to see themselves, especially in young people who aren't as confident in themselves and their own abilities.

Primary Research

Survey - Impact of The Key [Young People]

A survey was sent out to Key participants, and we asked as many as possible to fill it in. The start of the survey explained:

‘We are Isabel and Sophie, students from Newcastle University, helping The Key to do some research with young people about your experience with Key projects, We are looking specifically at the benefit for you and why you did or did not progress further with The Key programme.

This survey aims to help The Key make positive improvements in the way they run their programme to make sure young people across the North-East get the upmost benefit from taking part.

We want to gather your opinion on what influenced you to progress, or not, through The Key stages and what impact or benefit you think The Key had, or could have, on you.

All data gathered from this will remain anonymous.’

Appendix 1 is a copy of the blank survey that was sent out to participants. Appendix 2 gives the full breakdown of responses, but below is a summary of the findings.

We had 19 responses to the survey. Some of the young people only answered some of the questions, hence the disparity in results across the questions.

All 19 respondents rated their experience with the Key as good or higher, with 13 out of 19 respondents rating their experience as excellent as shown in Figure 6.

The respondents cited the ability to ‘learn new things’, ‘it’s great fun’, ‘spending time working with your peers is amazing’ and ‘it improved my mental strength’ as reasons for enjoying their experience with The Key.

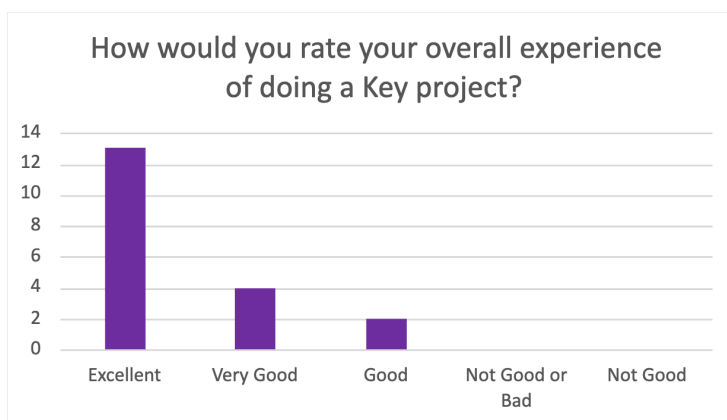


Figure 6

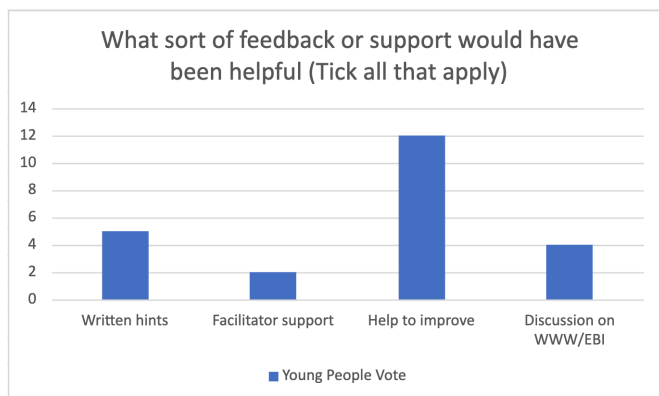


Figure 7

When asked if they would have liked some sort of feedback on the results of their skills wheel, 10/18 said yes they would (Figure 7). 8/18 said no. So there is an almost 50/50 split in whether or not they think this would be useful. With that being said, the young people then went on to answer the question on what sort of feedback would be useful.

The young people were asked to identify what feedback methods they believe to have been most helpful in their work (Figure 8). The full titles of the options were:

- Written hints about how to complete and think about skills
- Support from your Key facilitator to look at your skills
- Help to improve the skills you were least confident in
- Discussion with someone about what you do well or how to improve

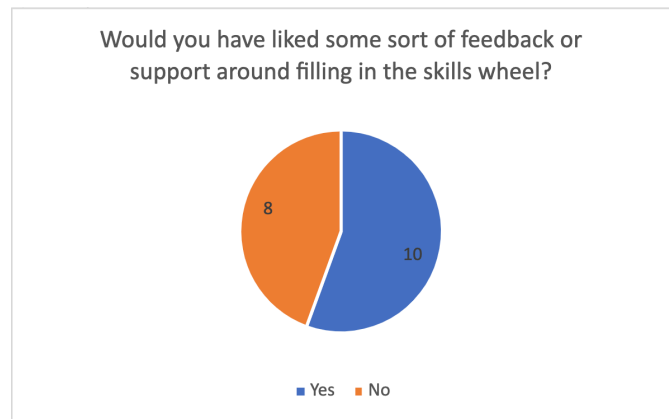


Figure 8

The most popular answer, by far, was help to improve on the skills they are least confident in with 12 votes. It doesn't seem that there is a desire for Key facilitator support in terms of looking at the skills as only 2 voted for this option.

The final question on the survey was to test a possible recommendation to The Key. The idea was that the young people would give a 'top tip' in a skill they are more confident on, when they fill out their skills wheels (Figure 9). This would then be collated by The Key and provided back to young people as a help guide for them to be more confident on. This will be modelled later on in the research. The response from the young people was that yes, 17/18 of them would be willing to do this.

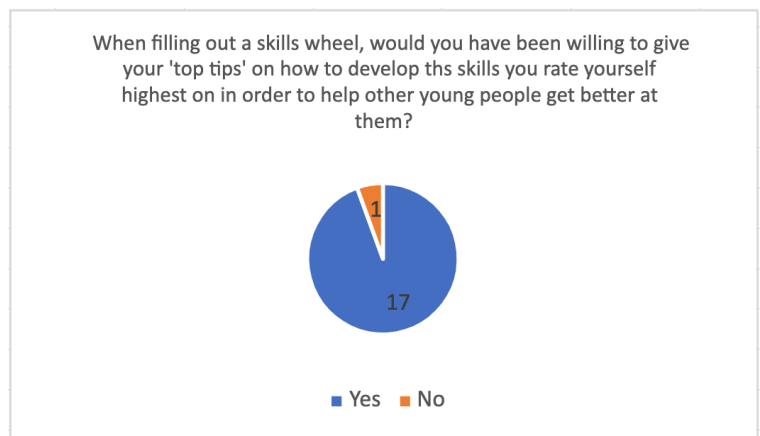


Figure 9

Conclusions from the survey results

- Young people surveyed enjoyed their Key experience overall. There was a lot of mention of 'fun' and 'skill development' throughout the survey responses. They believe they get benefits socially and vocationally.
- The young people were fairly split on whether or not they wanted feedback in addition to the skills wheels they currently complete.
- With that being said, the young people went on to vote on the different feedback types they believed to be useful.
 - > Help to improve skills you're not confident on was rated the highest by far with 12 votes
 - > This was followed by written hints about how to complete and think about skills (5 votes).
- The young people were willing to support other young people in their improvement of skills. This supports the self-determination theory mentioned previously in the report, as it provides the young people with autonomy, competence and relatedness.
- We only had 19 responses, with some respondents missing out multiple questions. Those that have responded are also heavily engaged with The Key and have completed multiple stages. This must be taken into consideration as it does bring bias into some questions. It is likely they are still engaging with The Key due to their positive experience

Survey - Impact of The Key [Facilitator]

A survey was sent out to Key facilitators, and we asked as many as possible to fill it in. The start of the survey explained:

‘We are Isabel and Sophie and we are students from Newcastle University. We are researching the different experiences of Key projects and we need your help to do that. We want to know about the benefit you, as a Key Facilitator, think The Key offers and why young people have and have not progressed through The Key Stages.

The outcome of this survey is to give The Key tangible ways to improve their service further ensuring that you and the young people you support get the upmost support and experience as possible from The Key.

This survey hopes to understand your opinion on what influences your young people in choosing whether or not they progress through The Key stages as well as what impact The Key has had, or could have, on you as a Key Facilitator and your young people. We value your opinion on what support you think The Key could further provide to encourage young people to progress.

We will not be using any personal data and the results of this survey will all be anonymised.’

Appendix 3 is a copy of the blank survey that was sent out to participants. Appendix 4 gives the full breakdown of responses, but below is a summary of the findings.

We had 10 responses to the survey. As before, there is some disparity in the results as some questions were missed out by some of the facilitators.

Do you think the feedback on their skills development would have been beneficial for the participants after they had completed their Key project?

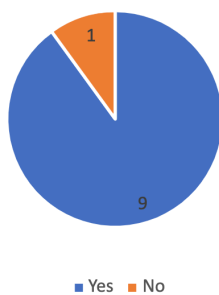


Figure 10

Would you be willing to give young people feedback on their skills development?

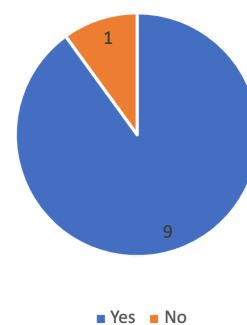


Figure 11

When asked, 9 out of 10 facilitators said they believe feedback would be beneficial to the young people (Figure 10). The same number then went on to say they would be willing to give feedback to the young people based upon their skills development (Figure 11)

The facilitators were given options on what type of feedback would be beneficial to the young people (Figure 12). The full titles of the options were:

- Written
- Verbal
- Given by other group members
- What they did well
- What they could improve on

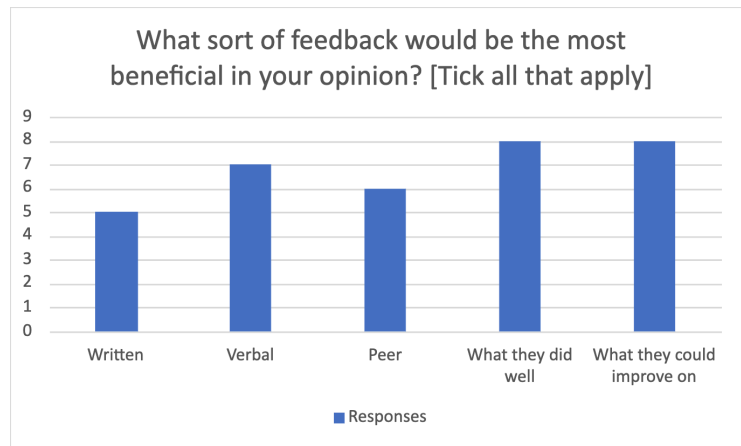


Figure 12

The most popular answers were giving the young people feedback on what they did well and what they could improve on (8 votes each). All answers got more than 5 of the possible 10 votes, suggesting that there is support from facilitators for all possible options proposed.

Within the responses, there is regular mention of the 'CV benefits' of The Key projects for the young people and there was also reference to 'skills' whether that be 'developing new skills' or having the opportunity to 'assess their own skills'

Conclusions from survey results

- Almost all of the facilitators surveyed agreed that some form of feedback on the skills wheel would be beneficial to the young people.
- They also almost all stated that they would be willing to give feedback to the young people
- It seems the facilitators are open to multiple methods of feedback, but it seems they think the focus should be on what the young people have done well and what they could improve on within their Key experience.

Secondary Research

The Key Case Study 1 - No-One Knows

No-One Knows are a group of five young people from Gosforth East Middle School. They have currently completed three stages of The Key and they are a fantastic demonstration of how successful The Key can be at providing benefits to the young people. I attended the school along with Isabel, my research partner and Jess Allwright, The Key's marketing and income generation executive. Jess conducted interviews with both No-One Knows and their facilitator Helen Cheape. It was very helpful for my research, to see how The Key can be used in action, but also to experience first hand the positive benefits of The Key projects.

'Taking part and completing stage 1 and 2 provided No-One Knows with the opportunity to come together after the pandemic and create projects about things that mattered most to them and they had never been able to do before.' (The Key 2022b) The boys stage two project was to take a trip to Kielder to experience the outdoors, something the boys said improved their mental health and benefitted them greatly. When discussing their experience, the boys spoke about how, for some of them, their attitude in school had improved. They believed this to be a direct result of their Key experience and being in the outdoors during their trip to Kielder. This led them to think of their stage three project - creating a tent library in school, so that other pupils could also emulate their experience in Kielder in the hope they would get the same benefits from it.

The boys said that they grew in confidence along their Key journey, and felt closer as a friendship group. They mentioned being able to talk to each other more if they were facing social issues and it seemed they had a high level of trust between them, despite being so young. They also had a real sense of duty about them, they were determined to help others and this is shown in the fact they chose to help others at their school for stage three. One of the boys even spoke about his hope to 'leave a legacy' at the school once they move onto high school at the end of this year. For a group of eleven and twelve year olds to be so ambitious and community driven. Is incredible and demonstrates how The Key can help young people turn into young adults who are now equipped with new skills and abilities, as well as a new found confidence to take into the next stages of their lives.

Interview of Helen Cheape, Gosforth East Middle School 15 March 2022 - Conducted by Jess Allwright

The above was echoed by their facilitator Helen Cheape, who is a history and RE teacher at the school. When interviewed by Jess she was incredibly positive about The Key experience, as she has been a facilitator for many years. No-One Knows is one of many groups that she has gone on to lead through The Key and she could not speak higher of the experience. Below are some key points from her interview.

- The Key is different to other programmes available to young people as it 'allows the pupils to be independent' - school is very teacher led, whereas The Key is the complete opposite.
- For No-One Knows, they have massively grown in confidence and she believes they now have been given 'the ability to know they can do something, and something quite big'.
- The Key gives young people 'the negotiation skills that we take for granted as adults' as well as teamwork skills and (self reflection) skills.
- The Key has helped bring the boys from No-One Knows from 'little lads of 11' into 'mature and responsible young men,' through the work they have done and the skills they have developed.

“One of the lads in No One Knows, he has ADHD, he’s had a very difficult year. This year could have been about him being excluded from school, getting into trouble, having internal exclusions or detentions. He has got into bits of bother, it’s not been about that. It’s been about his successes in the Key and it’s given him something positive in what might have been a very very difficult year for him. It’s given him something positive to cling onto. There is another girl in a different group who also needs a mention. We took her away to Keswick last week. She has a fairly rubbish home life and she smiled for two days. You can’t buy that.”

Helen Cheape, *Facilitator at Gosforth East Middle School [2022]*

- The Key gives young people the opportunity to thrive in environments they would normally struggle in.

From this information, I learnt of the sheer impact The Key can have and this was just one group. It helped me to understand the benefits gained from engaging in The Key programme, but also the impact that it has on the young people.

In both the survey responses and the interview with the boys, confidence gains were mentioned so many times. I think this is from the independence given to The Key participants. From a young age, most decision making is led by teachers or parents, it is not often that young people are given such freedom and autonomy over their own decisions, especially when large sums of money come into play. They are given the opportunity to plan and then pitch their ideas, giving them the opportunity to demonstrate their growing confidence. At every opportunity, The Key gives the young people a chance to not only develop their skills but demonstrate these newfound skills in action, further perpetuating their confidence and development and therefore the overall impact that it has.

The Key Case Study 2 - Stand4

Stand4 are a group of young adults from West Newcastle who are a part of Success4All, who work ‘to prepare children and young people for a brighter future’ (Success4All 2021). After lockdown, the group decided to take part in Key+. Initially it was to become closer as a group and make memories together, however it soon became a different opportunity; they realised they had a lot in common and wanted to make a difference in their local community. They believed they could address a range of social issues during their Stage 3 project. They made the decision to set up a podcast to discuss these social issues and put their voices out there. Each group member has different interests and passions, and so they tried to get a range of guests on board so each Key participant could address social issues they believed in the most.

I contacted Jess after reading about Stand4 on The Key’s website - I was intrigued by their work and the podcast. She put me in touch with Abbie Foster, The Key’s fundraising and marketing manager, and I arranged to watch their interviews. The interviews gave me fantastic insight into how The Key has benefitted the group and how they now see themselves since going through different stages. There were four parts to the interviews, the first was with Chloe Sutton, the Key facilitator working with Stand4. Then with Caroline Afolabi-Deleu, the founder of Success4All, before going on to talk to Jessica, a 16 year old member of Stand4. Finally Sophie and Obi, two other group members, were also interviewed.

Hearing Chloe speak about Stand4, you could tell how beneficial The Key has been. She has been a Key facilitator since summer 2021 and is very passionate about the work The Key has allowed Stand4 to do. She described how the group went from arguing about decisions to taking a more democratic approach and voting on issues, demonstrating how the group became more cohesive and could function better as a group as a result of their work with The Key.

“They are so much more confident in themselves, they can critically think in ways I haven’t seen young people do before.”

“They are so much more aware of social issues and things that are going on in their community.”

- Chloe Sutton, *Facilitator at Success4All [2022]*

She even discussed the ideas that Stand4 have for a Stage 4 project. They hope to help young migrants by forming a youth group, to provide a buddy system and create welcome packs for them. They want to use their experiences of the difficulties of finding information about attending college and different bus routes to collate all of the information in one place so that it is easier for the young migrants to integrate into life in the UK.

Next the Success4All founder, Caroline Afolabi-Deleu spoke about how The Key allows young people to take ownership, and learn to work as a team. She believes this is because of their opportunities to have full independence on the projects, from planning, to pricing things up to organising their own transport. This fits in well with Success4All’s philosophy of informal learning.

Jessica is 16 years old and an active member of Stand4, being able to hear her speak about her Key experience showed how mature she is, but also how much she has realised about herself since being a part of Stand4. She herself has experienced racism and realised that young people from other ethnic minorities also face discrimination and racism in different ways through meeting others at The Key. This helped her to realise that she is not alone in her experiences, but also that “this generation has to change because we can’t keep going on like this.” She believes that “lots of kids are struggling who can’t speak up for themselves” so she wants Stand4 to be that voice through their podcast.

“We are the next generation. We are going to be the next Boris Johnson”

- Jessica, 16, *Stand4 Member [2022]*

She discusses now being “mature enough” to conduct the podcast and work together and communicate well within the group, something she admits that they struggled on at the start. When asked what they want to achieve as a group she says they want to get their voices out there and inspire other young people by sharing their experiences. She thinks that young people are underestimated by adults and think that they have no opinion or voice, so the podcast is invaluable to Stand4 in proving that this isn’t the case, and for other young people to realise they also deserve to have their voice heard.

Finally, Sophie and Obi were interviewed, they spoke in depth about how valuable each stage was for them.

Stage 1 - they went on a trip to a local escape room, which helped to bring them together as a group and problem solve together, followed by a meal out. They believe it enhanced their critical thinking skills.

Stage 2 - they went to Jump Giants, followed by a meal, which they say helped to energise them as a group.

Stage 3 - setting up the Stand4 podcast to demonstrate what they are passionate about and feeling the need to “reach people who aren’t in the group” in order to inspire them. They said that the podcast felt exciting as it gave them a voice they felt they didn’t previously have.

They spoke about how in education they don’t get to make as many decisions especially post pandemic. In comparison, during their Key projects they can make all their own decisions. They believe there are

misconceptions about how young people interact with their community, and that they must not want to help their community. Sophie and Obi insist this is not the case, instead that young people often aren't given many opportunities to interact with and benefit their local community. They believe The Key is invaluable in this sense and Sophie said it has even helped her to realise passions she didn't even know she had, from listening to other group members and participating in the projects.

Conclusion

Key Findings

The Key does an amazing job to inspire young people, this is evident from the secondary research, hearing of the successes of No-One Knows and Stand4. No-One Knows gave me the opportunity to see how The Key works, and how some of the younger Key participants have been inspired by their work with The Key. They have noticed behavioural improvements and improvements in their overall mental health, especially post-pandemic. They demonstrated how even the youngest Key participants can be positively impacted and can have such a strong sense of community which is enhanced by their Key experience. Stand4 demonstrated how The Key can help young people to realise their potential in life, and can grow in confidence and in skills. They spoke of their desires to help other young people their age, from similar backgrounds, to realise their voice and discuss social issues they feel passionate about.

The primary research demonstrated some interest in greater levels of feedback from The Key, with both young people and facilitators willing to give feedback and open to a wide range of modes of feedback. Both facilitators and young people believe that The Key has many benefits to its participants. The young people referred to the fun they have had, stronger friendships they have built and their skill development over their Key experience. They noted how in the earlier stages the groups argued over where to go for their projects and how group members came and went due to the changing nature of young friendships; however they all spoke of the impact that The Key had on that. The groups now can act diplomatically and make decisions together, showing the progress they make as a result of their Key experience.

During the secondary research, both groups have mentioned the positive impact that The Key has had, but especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, as it was such a big change for them. Having to move to online education so suddenly, and not being able to interact with their peers for such a long period of time. The Key has had a great impact on them, if anything, the impact of The Key is greater since the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are various opportunities for feedback within The Key model, and this involves both facilitators and peers. There are already methods for self reflection in the form of the skills wheel, so that can form the feedback in that respect. There are a number of proposals that I will make in relation to improving the impact of The Key and the feedback that can be given to the young people in order to increase this impact further.

Other Considerations

It has to be noted that the number of survey results we received is low. We had 10 facilitator responses and 19 young person responses. While this has meant I can make deductions from the data and can therefore put forward proposals, it is still worth noting. In addition, the responses we did receive were from those highly engaged with The Key, which again means the data is somewhat skewed. If they are more engaged they are more likely to think positively of The Key and have completed more stages of the programme.

The willingness of all facilitators and all participants to provide each other with feedback also needs to be considered, as The Key is a lot bigger than the 29 people who responded to the surveys overall. However, I am confident from watching the work of The Key, that all participants will be willing to engage in at least one of these proposals to enhance their own experience and the experience of others.

The Key have also spoken of the issues with funding that charities have faced, that have been heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic. In my proposals I must ensure that they are cost-effective and are of minimal cost to The Key, so that their funding can be focused more of their Key+ digitisation and giving more young people the opportunity to experience The Key.

Final Proposals

From my research project, I have come up with a few different proposals that I believe will help to improve the overall impact of The Key and some ideas for how feedback could be delivered to the young people.

My first proposal is related to the self-determination theory mentioned earlier. As identified in the AmbitionLab mini film there are three things that every person has three psychological needs to be met in order to be motivated: autonomy, competence and relatedness. If they can give the young people the opportunity to regularly have these psychological needs to be met, then The Key will be able to motivate the young people further. To demonstrate competence, by giving them the opportunity to discuss the skills they are the most confident in and give advice on how others can make themselves confident on this skill too, they will be able to realise their competence in this area. The fact they are helping other young people from a similar area and age range to them, means they will hopefully feel connected to the other Key participants. The idea behind the young people giving each other top tips or advice is that it will form a guide for the young people of the North East, by the young people of the North East. Yes, they could google advice on how to improve on these areas, they may already have done, but these online tips are often written by adults, and could be unfeasible or patronising. This idea somewhat removes that element and will hopefully be more successful as it is more personable. Figure 13 is a mock up of how the tips could be presented to the young people digitally.

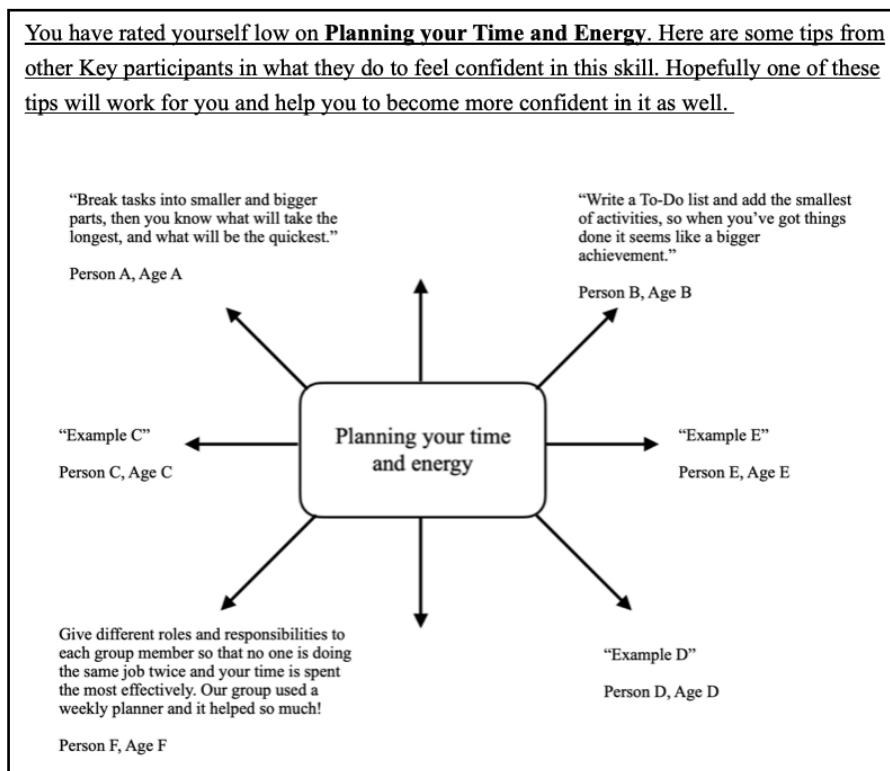


Figure 13

These comments/ tips could be gathered as the young people are filling out their skills wheels. They have the boxes they have to fill in at the bottom of the skills wheels. A box could be added, asking the young person what they think makes them so good at that skill and what they would suggest to help another young person. This could then be compiled and presented to the young person at the end of the stage.

My next proposal is in relation to the impact of The Key on young people. Many of the facilitators spoke about the CV benefits of completing multiple Key stages and through the course of my research and work with The Key, I believe that this could be utilised a lot more. If The Key can give the young people the tools to easily add the skills they have learnt or improved on whilst taking part in their stages, then the CV benefits will be even greater. If a template could be provided, for how to add their Key experience to their CV, then The Key would be preparing the young people even further for working life.


<p>CV Template</p> <p>Name of Project, Community Project with The Key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Brief introduction sentence to explain what your group did- What things you did throughout that look good to someone reading the CV (eg. Pitch to panel for funding, planning etc)- Discuss the skills you improved on throughout- Any extra information you think would be relevant to the job you are applying for <p>We want you to get the most out of your experience with us at The Key, by adding in all of your hard work to your CV, we hope employers will be able to see how much you have improved and the skills you have developed!</p>	
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Figure 14


Figure 14 is only an example of how a template could be formed in order to assist the young people with adding their Key experience to their CV. It could even be taken one step further, if The Key has the resources, to carry out an extra session, with Key employees going to facilitators and their group to apply this template and brainstorm ideas for how their personal experience and specific group activity could be added to a CV.

Next, my proposals in relation to feedback being provided to the young people. Firstly, the young people could receive feedback from the facilitators. Over the course of my research, I have come to the understanding that most facilitators would have some sort of prior relationship with the young people and so would be able to evaluate each group member before they start each stage and at the end. This information could then be compiled and fed back to the young people at the end of the stage. Figures 15 and 16 are examples of the forms that could be filled in at the start and end of the stage.

The facilitator would be given the opportunity to choose which of the 12 key skills the young person is the most confident in prior to their project. This way the same question can be asked again, to see if there have been any changes. It could also be used to see if the young person rates themselves the highest on a different skill as to what the facilitator believes. The same can be done with the skill they are believed to be the least confident in. The last question would be in the hope of reflection from the facilitator to help assist maximising the benefit for the young person.

The facilitator would then be given a similar form to fill in at the end of the stage. This way there would be more information to give to the young people in relation to their progress but through the eyes of their facilitator, rather than through the eyes of the young person themselves. This will help to add another element of feedback, so they can fully understand the benefit of their work with The Key.

Facilitator Feedback Sheet



Date:

Name of group:

Group member:

Stage of Project:

Which of the twelve skills are they the most confident in now?

Self	Relationship	Task
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess your own performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate	<input type="checkbox"/> Search for information and get advice
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan your time and energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Deal with people in power and authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Make decisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Cope with stress and tension	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree your responsibilities and see them through
<input type="checkbox"/> Work out what you're good at and not so good at	<input type="checkbox"/> Settle disagreements	<input type="checkbox"/> Solve problems

Which of the twelve skills have they most improved in?

Self	Relationship	Task
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess your own performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate	<input type="checkbox"/> Search for information and get advice
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan your time and energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Deal with people in power and authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Make decisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Cope with stress and tension	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree your responsibilities and see them through
<input type="checkbox"/> Work out what you're good at and not so good at	<input type="checkbox"/> Settle disagreements	<input type="checkbox"/> Solve problems

Are there any skills that they could focus on in their next stage? (If applicable)


Self	Relationship	Task
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess your own performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate	<input type="checkbox"/> Search for information and get advice
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan your time and energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Deal with people in power and authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Make decisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Cope with stress and tension	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree your responsibilities and see them through
<input type="checkbox"/> Work out what you're good at and not so good at	<input type="checkbox"/> Settle disagreements	<input type="checkbox"/> Solve problems

How do you think The Key has benefitted them?

Figure 15

The form would also give the facilitators the opportunity to consider how they could help the young people in their next stage, with their development of skills. If they identify a skill they think the young person could benefit from working on, they could get the group to share tips, similar to the above proposal, but on a group level rather than through The Key as a whole.

Facilitator Feedback Sheet



Date:

Name of group:

Group member:

Stage of Project:

Which of the twelve skills would you say is the strongest for them?

Self	Relationship	Task
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess your own performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate	<input type="checkbox"/> Search for information and get advice
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan your time and energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Deal with people in power and authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Make decisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Cope with stress and tension	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree your responsibilities and see them through
<input type="checkbox"/> Work out what you're good at and not so good at	<input type="checkbox"/> Settle disagreements	<input type="checkbox"/> Solve problems

Are there any skills that they are particularly less confident on?

Self	Relationship	Task
<input type="checkbox"/> Assess your own performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate	<input type="checkbox"/> Search for information and get advice
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan your time and energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Deal with people in power and authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Make decisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Cope with stress and tension	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree your responsibilities and see them through
<input type="checkbox"/> Work out what you're good at and not so good at	<input type="checkbox"/> Settle disagreements	<input type="checkbox"/> Solve problems

How do you think they could benefit from The Key?

Figure 16

Peer feedback could also be a great method of feedback to be utilised. The No-One Knows boys were a fantastic example of this. When interviewed, they spoke about how one of the group members behaviour had improved, as a result of their trip to Kielder and experience of the outdoors. They were all very willing to give this feedback, heaping praise onto that group member - and you could see the results of this on the young boy they were speaking about.

As mentioned previously in the report, at the end of the Youth Action (Stage 3) review skills wheel the young people are asked to fill in four boxes. Two of these boxes refer to peer feedback, asking the young person to share their skills wheel scores with the group, and see if they agree with the scores they rated themselves. They are then asked if talking with their group has changed their scores; this presumably would be as a result of peer feedback that made them realise they are stronger or less strong on certain skills.

I propose that these boxes are filled in at the end of each stage, so that more peer feedback can be received. They would be able to discuss their skill development and perhaps they could be given the opportunity as a group to give each member a most improved skill. They could vote amongst themselves to assign a 'most improved' skill to each group member, in order to solidify the group's feedback and positive opinions - demonstrating how far they have come through the stage.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEY

1. What organisation did you do The Key with?

-

2. How would you rate your overall experience of doing a Key Project?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Not Good or Bad
- Not Good

3. Please give up to 3 reasons to your answer above

-

-

-

4. How do you think your experience of doing a Key project could be improved?

5. Did you do more than one Key Project/Stage?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes go to Q7. If not continue to Q6 then skip to Q10

6. What was the main reason you did not progress to the next stage?

- School/studying pressure
- Motivation/interest
- Didn't feel in helped you develop skills
- Other group members left
- The Key Facilitator/staff who supported you left
- Other:

7. What was the main reason you progressed to the next stage?

- You wanted to do it and felt it was fun/useful
- Motivation/Interest
- It helped you develop skills
- Other members of the group encouraged you
- The Key Facilitator/Staff encouraged you
- Other:

8. How influential was the Key Facilitator/Staff member in getting you to progress to the next stage of The Key?

- Very influential/Wouldn't have done it otherwise
- Influential, but I would have probably chosen to do it anyway

- They didn't influence me one way or the other, I chose to do it
- Not at all, they didn't influence or encourage me at all
- Other:

9. Who were the most influential people that encouraged you to progress to the next stage?

- Myself
- Facilitator/Staff Member
- Friends/Group Members
- Teacher
- Family
- Other:

10. List up to 3 things you faced that were difficult when completing your Key project.

-
-
-

11. If you did not progress to the next stage, what were the reasons that stopped you from continuing?

12. If you progressed to the next stage or more, list those factors that motivated you to continue progressing?

13. Do you think you learn anything about yourself from completing the skills wheel?

- Yes
- No

14. Did it help you to track your progress through your Key project?

- Yes
- No

15. Would you have liked some sort of feedback or support around filling in the Skills Wheel?

- Yes
- No

16. What sort of feedback or support would have been helpful (Tick all that apply)

- Written hints about how to complete and think about your skills
- Support from your Key Facilitator/Staff member to look at your skills
- Help to improve the skills you were at least confident in
- Discussion with someone about what you do well or what you could improve on

17. When filling out the skills wheel, would you have been willing to give your 'top tips'/advice on how to develop the skills you rate yourself the highest on in order to help other young people get better at them

- Yes
- No

Appendix 2

SURVEY RESULTS - YOUNG PEOPLE

Q1. What organisation did you do The Key with?

- Bilton Hall - 3
- Axiullia Youth - 1
- Northbourne Youth Initiative - 3
- Success for All - 7
- Gosforth East Middle School - 5

Q2. How would you rate your overall experience of doing a Key Project?

- Excellent - 13
- Very Good - 4
- Good - 2
- Not Good or Bad - 0
- Not Good - 0

Q3. Please give up to 3 reasons to your previous answer

- Well organised, able to improve my skills, learn new things
- We get food, we have lots of things to do
- Good experience, learn new skills
- I am a fast typer, a good thinker, good at making ideas
- Staff are always there to help, we all work as a team, its great fun
- Educative, creative, fun
- They're nice
- It's nice
- I enjoyed myself, felt helped, provision was great
- Gave us opportunity to have amazing trips, brought us together as a group, allowing us to do things in community moving forward
- They were fun; they're not strict, they helped us move forward with the launch event
- Its fun, helps with team building, gives you lots of opportunities
- I benefitted from it, it improved my mental strength, helped my bond with the others
- It's a fun experience, you make a lot of friends
- It improves your friendships with others in our group, it allows you to learn how to work with people even if you're not friends with them, you develop new skills
- It lets you get closer to peers in your group, the trips that you do get you out of school, spending time working with your peers is amazing
- Useful advice, supportive team, skill development
- Really generous and supporting, gave useful tips, very invested within the youth by providing skills like teamwork

Q4. How do you think your experience of doing a Key project could be improved?

- Doing the projects over a shorter period of time
- To know more about the skills wheels

- Can't be improved
- By thinking of better ideas
- We could have a session dedicated to the key
- Advice of what to do for the next project
- I don't know/ nothing - 6
- Skills wheel > couldn't remember my last wheel so hard to track progress, more interaction with key staff
 - had a session with Jack and Leah which was so helpful, wish we had had more
- I think the Key should come more often (Jack and Leah)
- It was perfect
- I could try to help a bit more with the prices
- When we decide where we are going at the start of the project

Q5. Did you do more than one Key Project/ Stage?

- Yes - 16
- No - 2

Q6. What was the main reason you did not progress to the next stage?

- In the process of progressing to the next stage - 2

Q7. What was the main reason you progressed to the next stage?

- You wanted to do it and it was fun/useful - 7
- Motivation/ interest - 7
- It helped you develop skills - 3
- Other members of the group encouraged you - 1
- The Key Facilitator/Staff encouraged you - 0
- Other

Q8. How influential was the Key Facilitator/ staff member in getting you to progress to the next stage of The Key?

- Very influential/ wouldn't have done it otherwise - 7
- Influential, but I would have probably chosen to do it anyway - 12
- They didn't influence me one way or the other, I chose to do it - 0
- Not at all, they didn't influence or encourage me at all - 0
- Other - 0

Q9. Who were the most influential people that encouraged you to progress to the next stage?

- Myself - 4
- Facilitator/ Staff member - 5
- Friends/ Group members - 12
- Teacher - 0
- Family - 0
- Other - 0

Q10. List up to 3 things you faced that were difficult when completing your Key project.

- Thinking of ideas, getting everyone to work together to time frames, doing the evaluation

- Creating the powerpoint, doing the evaluation
- Keeping my group together, making sure everyone participates
- Nothing
- Groups different opinions, covid, motivation
- I think everything was quite easy
- Doing things indoors, concentrating, listening
- In the first project we argued over trips, we couldn't figure out the right prices at first, we did not know each other as well as we do now
- Argued a lot in the first project, finding prices, we didn't know people as well as we do now
- Working with everyone, deciding on a place to go, finding costs
- Getting to know your group, finding a similarity with the others, calculating the costs
- Communication, time management, efficiency
- Communication, time management, efficiency

Q11. If you did not progress to the next stage, what were the reasons that stopped you from continuing?

- Loss of interest
- Lazy
- I did progress

Q12. If you progressed to the next stage or more, list those factors that motivated you to continue progressing?

- Enjoyed it, wanting to do more projects
- Team members
- It was useful and showed younger people they could be part of a project
- The staff, teammates and myself
- Staff members, group members
- Community work, They Key staff (Jack and Leah) helped with motivation
- I enjoy coming to the meetings
- You get a lot of new experiences
- It was intriguing and it seemed fun so I kept doing it
- Fun, interesting
- Friends/ teachers

Q13. Do you think you learn anything about yourself from completing the skills wheel?

- Yes - 14
- No - 2
- No - lost it so couldn't track progress

Q14. Did it help you to track your progress through your Key project?

- Yes - 12
- No - 5

Q15. Would you have liked some sort of feedback or support around filling in the Skills Wheel?

- Yes - 10
- No - 8

Q16. What sort of feedback or support would have been helpful (Tick all that apply)

- Written hints about how to complete and think about skills - 5
- Support from your Key facilitator to look at your skills - 2
- Help to improve the skills you were least confident in - 12
- Discussion with someone about what you do well or how to improve - 4

Q17. When filling out the skills wheel, would you have been willing to give your 'top tips'/ advice on how to develop the skills you rate yourself the highest on in order to help other young people get better at them?

- Yes - 17
- No - 1

Appendix 3

FACILITATOR SURVEY

1. What are 3 Factors that keep young people motivated with Key projects?
 -
 -
 -

2. What are 3 limitations or challenges you find with young people progressing?
 -
 -
 -

3. What 3 factors encourage young people to progress to more stages?
 -
 -
 -

4. Do you think the feedback on their skills development would have been beneficial for the participants after they had completed their Key project?
 - Yes
 - No

5. Would you be willing to give young people feedback on their skills development?
 - Yes
 - No

6. What sort of feedback would be the most beneficial in your opinion? [Tick all that apply]
 - Written
 - Verbal
 - Given by other group members
 - What they did well
 - What they could improve on

7. What could The Key Team do to support you to motivate young people to progress through The Key stages?
 -

8. What could The Key change about how the Key works to make it more likely that young people will want to progress and make you more inclined to encourage them to do so?
 -

Appendix 4

SURVEY RESULTS - FACILITATORS

Q1. What are 3 Factors that keep young people motivated with Key projects?

- The outcome/trips, having full control of an idea and being with their friends
- The end result, seeing the progress, excitement of planning their own project
- 1 - Being able to try new things, 2 - Access to funds they otherwise wouldn't be able to use, 3 - The ability to assess their own skills
- Good leadership, momentum, clear objectives
- Completing trips, they want to do (reward at the end), developing new skills, being a part of a project that they can get stuck into weekly
- Experience, getting the money to deliver projects, looks good on CV
- 1 - The chance to embrace their ideas, 2 - The feeling of having responsibilities and control of their own projects, 3 - Moving through the stages
- Possibly learning new skills, being rewarded after the project, building rapport with other young people
- Future opportunities, rewards, great role models

Q2. What are 3 limitations or challenges you find with young people progressing?

- Young people fall out, priorities change, disagreements and the process takes too long
- Time, concentrating levels, commitment
- 1 - Time: over the last couple of years, it's been difficult to run Key groups online, 2 - groups changing and no longer working together, 3 - Young people not being allowed in more than one Key group
- Encouragement, lack of enthusiasm and if they have done previous stages, it becomes repetitive.
- Time, increasing work needed as progress which in many ways is fair enough,
- 1 - Changes in friendships/relationships, 2 - Covid, 3 - Limitations of school environment
- Being lazy, not wanting to try new things and not having a good attitude to thrive
- Lack of motivation, poor self-esteem, can't visualise future
- "The key can get lost amongst other activities" if a group is busy with another project
- Groups being fluid and changing, friends fall out then group numbers may reduce, the 2 young people left can't progress without another friend first completing the other stages
- Time to commit to the process (facilitator and young person)

Q3. What 3 factors encourage young people to progress to more stages?

- Seeing the budget increase, involving and benefiting more people, the status of completing all 4 stages
- Looking at the bigger projects, gives them responsibility for planning larger projects which makes them feel they have a larger role to play in the youth club, the end results
- Being able to do something 'bigger'
- Feedback, meaningful involvement, ownership
- Bigger pots of money, involving the community in stage 3, decision making
- Getting money for project, CV value, sense of achievement
- 1 - the amount of money, 2 - the ability to see their ideas become a reality, 3 - the opportunity to gain new skills
- It provides opportunities, helps them with self-belief, helps them set goals for the future
- Rewards, discussing the future, verbal encouragement from elders and peers
- Inspiration for future projects
- An understanding of the process, time commitment etc

- Balancing the ‘work’ with fun - i.e. let’s write half of the budget then we will play pool

Q4. Do you think the feedback on their skills development would have been beneficial for the participants after they had completed their Key project?

- Yes - 9
- No - 1

Q5. Would you be willing to give young people feedback on their skills development?

- Yes - 9
- No - 1

Q6. What sort of feedback would be the most beneficial in your opinion? [Tick all that apply]

- Written - 5
- Verbal - 7
- Given by other group members - 6
- What they did well - 8
- What they could improve on - 8

Q7. What could The Key Team do to support you to motivate young people to progress through The Key stages?

- Provide the feedback mentioned above so we can share it and set goals for progression at the next stage
- They give so much support already
- The new packs have been great, not sure young people need anymore
- Come along, meet the young people and encourage. Praise them for the work they have done
- I think they are supportive, have always listened when I’ve talked to them; but also don’t try to put a square peg in a round hole
- They do a great job already
- Continue to give young people more opportunities with rewarding opportunities after a project
- Maybe look at fluidity in groups, i.e. if the majority of the group have completed previous stages can another young person come on board who hasn’t yet completed other stages

Q8. What could The Key change about how the Key works to make it more likely that young people will want to progress and make you more inclined to encourage them to do so?

- Bring together all of the elements of a project and put them in one place so young people can access everything and be in control making it really youth led
- Young people to input their skills wheels online themselves and have the wheels side by side to show progress
- Be more flexible on the community benefit in stage 3/4. My groups ALWAYS have community benefit at stages 1 and 2, it would be nice to occasionally to be able to use a stage 3 or 4 for a residential
- Make the progressions pages different, young people are less encouraged because it’s the same process for all 4 stages, it’s boring
- Have faith in facilitators, don’t make it too difficult to get through stages
- Make some more fun activities so young people don’t feel like its schoolwork and a fun activity with friends
- Show how it’s helped other young people
- As above [fluidity in groups answer to Q7]

Appendix 5

Interview with Helen Cheape - History and RE teacher at Gosforth East Middle School; Key Facilitator

Interviewed by Jess Allwright for The Key Marketing Department

JA: How would you describe The Key?

HC: It has different benefits for different people. They might go on lots of trips, but they've never booked a train ticket, they don't know how much stuff costs.

JA: As a facilitator, (inaudible)

HC: They have improved massively. You just watched the group No One Knows who have massively grown in confidence and they now have the ability to know they can do something, and do something quite big. To kids that haven't got opportunities to do stuff outside of school that we give them those opportunities. They're working together, to increase their confidence. It just has massive, massive benefits. The negotiation skills we take for granted as adults, we have to teach them, and they learn from that. They really come on from learning those teamwork skills, those negotiation skills which as adults they might come more naturally.

JA: So in terms of the other programmes that could be available to the young people, what makes The Key different?

HC: It allows the pupils to be independent, and to be in charge of what they do. It's very much their trips. They do everything, they do everything from budgeting everything, to writing the parental permission letters, kit lists. We get them to do everything, whereas in school a lot of it tends to be very teacher led. The Key is very pupil led.

JA: What would you say to other people considering becoming Key facilitators?

HC: I don't understand why more schools don't do it if I'm honest. Even just mathematically, the return is massive. My membership is £650 for 15 projects, so even if they all just did their stage one projects, as school budgets are so tight, this gives us the money to let us do the things that sometimes school budgets don't let us do.

JA: What is your favourite thing about watching the group members grow throughout their stages?

HC: Their confidence, their ability to work together and to come back from a knock. They've had issues within the group, with fallings out etc. but they've come back from it, solved things and put them right. Just seeing them be independent and mature. They've grown into young men; they started as little lads of 11, and now they are mature and responsible young men.

JA: Do you think that their experience with the Key helps prepare them for the transition from middle school to high school?

HC: Oh definitely. Definitely. When we look at careers in school, the Key links to loads of different things. You watch the kids in the panels, and it's like watching adults in interview. The questions that you ask in

panel, are the questions that you trip up on as an adult in interview. What are your weaknesses? What are your strengths? Tell me something you did well. What do you need to work on? Those are the questions that are hard as a forty-odd year old in an interview, so it is great that they are getting the practice as 12 year olds.

JA: Do you think it helps them if say they wanted to go out and get a job, a weekend job for example?

HC: Yeah definitely. They've planned stuff, organised stuff, worked together as a team. It's a lot of skills that employers are asking for. They're the skills that are harder to get through school, just sitting in a lesson sometimes.

JA: Out of No One Knows, or another group you've worked with, is there anyone that stands out?

HC: One of the lads in No One Knows, he has ADHD, he's had a very difficult year. This year could have been about him being excluded from school, getting into trouble, having internal exclusions or detentions. He has got into bits of bother, it's not been about that. It's been about his successes in the Key and it's given him something positive in what might have been a very very difficult year for him. It's given him something positive to cling onto. There is another girl in a different group who also needs a mention. We took her away to Keswick last week. She has a fairly rubbish home life, and she smiled for two days. You can't buy that.

JA: It's so nice to hear the stories it actually makes

HC: I know I get slightly emotional talking about it.

JA: I think when you actually talk about the difference that it has made to their lives it's nice to see.

JA: What is your favourite part of The Key?

HC: I love taking them out if I'm honest. I'm always well known as the trip advisor at school. I love taking them out on their trips, especially in smaller groups. As a teacher you take them on trips in a group of 30, and you are just counting heads. Whereas in the smaller groups, it's just lovely. The relationships can build. I's just watching them grow and develop; having confidence and experiencing new things.