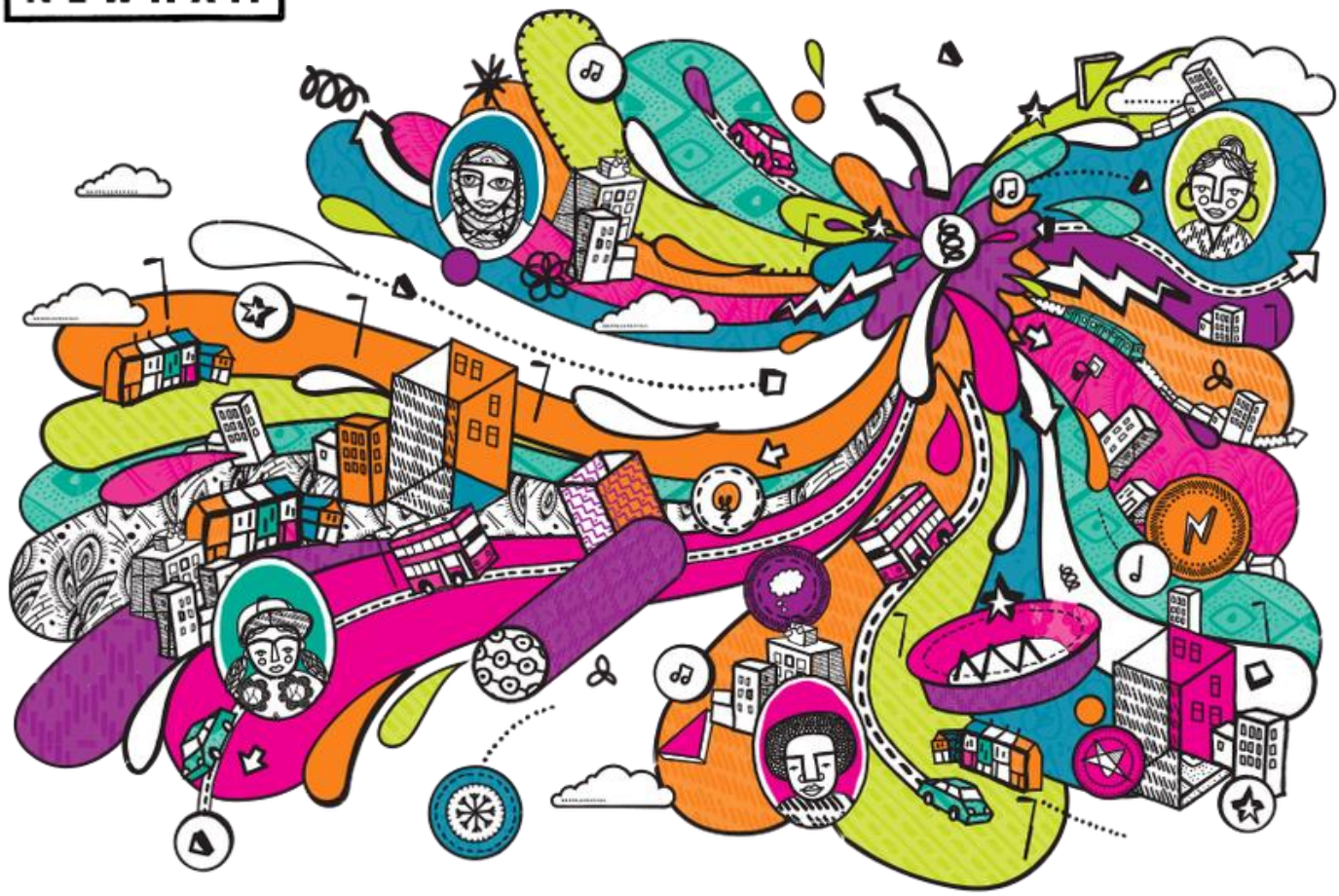
Bounce Back
NEWHAM



an evaluation of intervention delivery and outcomes

Prepared by: Elizabeth Ville and Valdeep Gill, HeadStart Newham Research Team
Prepared for: HeadStart Newham
November 2019

HEAD START NEWHAM
COMMUNITY FUND
in partnership with Newham London

Thank you.

This study would not have been possible without the support and input of many people. We are thankful to all young people and school staff that took part.

This study was led by the research team at HeadStart Newham, including Elizabeth Ville, Michelle Mooney, and Valdeep Gill. The team were supported by Marianne Promberger and Luís Costa da Silva at Children's Outcome Research Consortium (CORC) in the data analysis plan and quality assurance for the statistical outputs and interpretation.

The data used in this study was collected as part of HeadStart learning programme and supported by funding from The National Lottery Community Fund. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and it does not necessarily reflect the views of The National Lottery Community Fund.

HeadStart

This report focuses on HeadStart Newham. HeadStart is a National Lottery funded programme developed by the National Lottery Community Fund. It aims to explore and test new ways to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people prevent serious mental health issues from developing.

The programme supports a broad range of initiatives for building resilience and emotional wellbeing in 10 to 16 year olds in order to:

- improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people
- reduce the onset of mental health conditions
- improve young people's engagement in school and their employability
- reduce the risk of young people taking part in criminal or risky behaviour.

The programme is being delivered in six local authority areas between 2016 and 2021: Blackpool, Cornwall, Hull, Kent, Newham and Wolverhampton. HeadStart Newham is delivered in partnership with the London Borough of Newham.

The National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund is the largest funder of community activity in the UK. Every year it distributes over half a billion pounds for good causes, all thanks to the players of The National Lottery.

Summary

HeadStart Newham is an early help service for 10-16 year olds with, or at risk of developing emerging mental health difficulties. BounceBack Newham is a targeted intervention run in primary schools. Pupils are supported by a Youth Practitioner to explore different life areas linked to building resilience and wellbeing, using a workbook. The aim of this study was to assess implementation and outcomes of BounceBack.

Method

A mixed methods research design was used. This included descriptive analysis of demographic data, statistical tests comparing pre and post intervention outcome measures, and thematic analysis of focus groups and interviews with pupils, and school staff involved in BounceBack. Fieldwork took place in July 2018.

Summary of findings

1. **Who takes part in BounceBack?**
   BounceBack pupils had higher emotional and behavioural difficulties scores at baseline compared with the pupil population average in Newham. This suggests that BounceBack recommendations were made appropriately by school staff and in-line with HeadStart recommendation criteria.
2. **Implementing BounceBack**
   On average, BounceBack sessions were delivered over 8 weeks. The majority (84%) of pupils who started completed the intervention. Whilst overall pupil experience was positive, it could be affected by inconsistencies in delivery including building relationships with pupils, working collaboratively with schools, and use of the BounceBack journal.
3. **Pupil outcomes.**
   Quantitative analyses showed a small, but statistically significant improvement across all outcome measures: emotional and behavioural difficulties, self-esteem, and problem solving. Improvements in emotional and behavioural difficulties did not differ by gender or SEN provision.

   School staff and young people recognised that BounceBack was likely to benefit pupils who participated fully and contributed during sessions. Benefits described included a sense of belonging, improved emotional vocabulary, and increased self-awareness, empathy, confidence and self-esteem. However, it is hard to attribute these benefits directly to BounceBack, due to additional pupil factors, such as level of family, peer and/or other professional support. Ending BounceBack could feel sad for young people and it was felt important to plan next steps for the pupils.

Making use of the findings

The findings identify areas of delivery that HeadStart Newham may wish to review:

- Collaborative working between Youth Practitioners and school staff, and scheduling workload to include planning and briefing with learning mentors.
- Communication processes for feeding back pupil progress with relevant school staff.
- Consistent use of session resources and manual instructions.
- Managing endings and processes for making onward recommendations, or referrals to external organisations

BounceBack Newham

HeadStart Newham is a preventative early help service that promotes the resilience and wellbeing of 10-16 year olds with emerging mental health difficulties. BounceBack is a targeted intervention delivered as part of the HeadStart Newham programme. Pupils are supported by a HeadStart Youth Practitioner to explore different life areas linked to building resilience and wellbeing, using a workbook. It is a novel intervention developed by HeadStart Newham with the support of the Young Foundation. It was based on the Academic Resilience approach[1] and co-produced with young people in Newham.

Recruitment

Young people can be recommended by a professional, such as a teacher, or they can self-recommend. Young people must attend a primary school working with HeadStart, be in Year 5 or 6, have at least one indicator of emerging mental health difficulty (mild or moderate emotional, behavioural, attention, or relationship difficulty) as assessed by the person recommending them. Pupils under the care of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are excluded. A Youth Practitioner has a one-to-one discussion with the pupil to check they meet the criteria, explain the intervention and confirm they want to take part.

The intervention

Over 7 to 10 weekly sessions, a trained Youth Practitioner supports the group to learn about 10 different life areas or 'moves' and the skills required to maintain wellbeing and emotional resilience. Using an action learning approach, participants are encouraged to plan and try behaviour change moves, to reflect on their learning and progress. Participants are provided with a BounceBack journal to guide their learning.

BounceBack is delivered during school for up to an hour. In some schools the Youth Practitioner is supported by a school staff member in sessions, usually a learning mentor.

BounceBack aims to improve understanding of resilience and wellbeing, provide practical skills to make positive behaviour changes, and to build confidence and friendships. It is anticipated that these outcomes support a positive transition to secondary school.

[1] http://www.boingboing.org.uk/

The study

A mixed-methods study was designed. The quantitative strand included analysis of participant demographics, attendance and pre and post intervention survey data. The qualitative strand included focus groups with pupils that had completed BounceBack and depth interviews with school staff. There were three research questions:

Who takes part in BounceBack Newham?
Participant demographic data was used to profile the characteristics of BounceBack participants, and assess how this profile compared with the wider key stage 2 pupil population of schools participating in HeadStart.

How is BounceBack implemented?
The qualitative strand explored how pupils and schools experienced the intervention from start to end, including the facilitators and barriers to implementation. Additionally, participant attendance data was also analysed to determine attendance and dropout rates and profile the characteristics of those that exited the intervention early.

Does participation benefit young people?
Pre and post intervention survey data were analysed to examine any change across four outcome measures: emotional difficulty, behavioural difficulty, self-esteem, and problem solving. Additionally, the qualitative strand explored the perceived outcomes for young people as a result of BounceBack and the mechanisms for any changes.

Sample

During the academic year 2017/18, 490 pupils participated in BounceBack, across 38 primary schools. One school dropped out of the intervention after the initial session, and were therefore excluded from the analysis, leaving a final sample of 482 pupils across 37 schools.

The quantitative sample included:

1. Pre and post survey data: 354 participants completed the pre survey and 265 completed the post survey, 214 (44% of BounceBack participants) completed both.
2. The Wellbeing Measurement Framework is an annual survey across year 5 and 6 pupils at participating HeadStart primary schools. The 2017/18 data, comprised a large sample (N=2490) and was used as benchmark data for the pre and post survey measures.
3. Attendance data is collected for each young person across the service, and was available for 36 BounceBack groups.
4. Demographic data for young people was obtained via the October 2017 school census, a statutory return (N=5984).

The qualitative strand included four schools. The schools were chosen by the service; in two of the schools the intervention had been implemented as planned, and two schools had experienced challenges to implementation.

- 4 focus groups, with 14 pupils that had taken part in BounceBack. Pupils were recruited to this study via their school.
- 5 members of school staff were interviewed. Staff were recruited by the school and had had involvement with BounceBack in some capacity.

The researcher explained the study, voluntary participation and how the information would be used directly before each focus group/interview. Researchers used qualitative topic guides to ensure consistency of coverage across data

collection activities. Qualitative research fieldwork took place in July 2018.

Analysis

The quantitative dataset was compiled by linking three different sources; data linkage was done using the Unique Pupil Number (UPN). The dataset was cleaned in Excel and analysed using R Studio. Analysts at Children's Outcome Research Consortium (CORC) supported analysis planning and quality assured the outputs and interpretation.

Qualitative research encounters were audio recorded, with participant consent. Framework, a thematic analysis approach was used. An analytical matrix framework was developed in Excel, with key themes listed in column headings and each row represented a focus group/interview. Data from each group/interview was summarised under the appropriate column. The data were systematically and comprehensively analysed. Data were compared and contrasted between cases (looking at what different groups said on the same issue) and within case (looking at how a group's opinion on a topic relate to their views on another). The analysis was documented and conclusions can be linked to the original data source.

Limitations

This study is not an impact assessment. The findings provide an indication of change, but cannot be attributed to participation in BounceBack as there is no control group to compare against.

Findings

Section 1: Who takes part in BounceBack Newham?

This section profiles the young people that were recommended to BounceBack and examines the recommendation process, including pupil choice and reasons for referral.

Section 2: How is BounceBack implemented?

This section describes attendance and profiles young people that exited the intervention early. The facilitators and challenges to implementation are examined via qualitative accounts from young people and school staff.

Section 3: Does participation benefit young people?

This section discusses outcomes for young people at the end of the intervention, drawing on survey data and qualitative accounts from young people and school staff.

Who takes part in BounceBack Newham?

BounceBack participants were profiled using demographic data alongside self-rated emotional and behavioural difficulty survey scores. Data were examined and compared against the wider Year 5 and 6 pupil populations in those schools.

Year group

There were slightly more Year 5 than Year 6 pupils on BounceBack (55% Year 5 pupils and 45% Year 6 pupils).

Gender

There were slightly more boys than girls on BounceBack (54% boys and 46% girls). In the wider Year 5 and 6 pupil population, there is an equal proportion of boys and girls.

Ethnicity

Approximately one third of BounceBack participants were Black (31%), one third were Asian (30%), a quarter were White (24%), one tenth were Mixed (9%) and the remainder were of 'Other' ethnicity (5%). This ethnic make-up was similar but slightly different to the wider year 5/6 population. Specifically, Asian pupils were underrepresented and Black and White pupils were slightly over represented in the BounceBack cohort.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision

A quarter (25%) of BounceBack participants were in receipt of informal Special Educational Need support in the school, but did not have an Educational, Health and Care (EHC) Plan in place. This was a larger proportion compared with the wider Year 5/6 population in receipt of informal SEN support (14%). One Bounceback participant (0.2%) had an EHC plan.

[Table 1.1]

Table 1.1 Demographic characteristics of BounceBack participants and the Year 5 and 6 population at participating schools

Academic year 2017/18

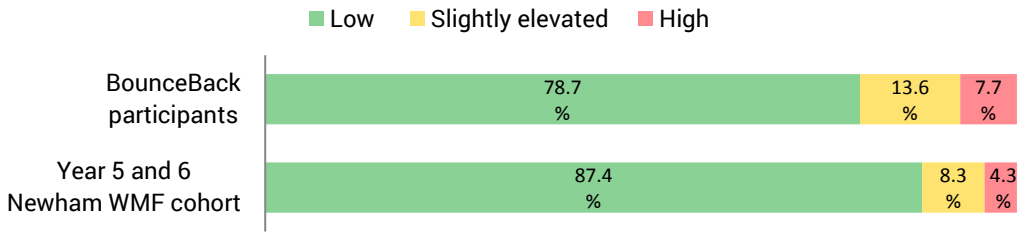
	BounceBack participants		Year 5 and 6 population at participating schools	
	N	%	N	%
Year group				
Year 5	261	*54.4*	3043	*50.9*
Year 6	219	*45.6*	2941	*49.1*
Gender				
Male	270	*56.0*	2989	*49.9*
Female	212	*44.0*	2995	*50.1*
Ethnicity				
Asian	144	*30.0*	2563	*43.6*
Black	148	*30.8*	1351	*23.0*
Chinese	0	*0.0*	20	*0.3*
Mixed	45	*9.4*	425	*7.2*
White	115	*24.0*	1166	*19.8*
Other	25	*5.2*	358	*6.1*
Special Educational Needs provision				
No provision	360	*74.7*	5150	*86.1*
SEN support	121	*25.1*	815	*13.6*
EHC Plan	1	*0.2*	17	*0.3*
Bases				
Year group	*480*		*5984*	
Gender	*482*		*5984*	
Ethnicity	*477*		*5883*	
SEN provision	*482*		*5982*	
Sources	*School census January 2018*			

Emotional difficulty

Emotional difficulty scores range from 0-20. Scores can be divided into thresholds: low, 0-9; slightly elevated, 10-11; and high, 12-20. The average pre-intervention emotional difficulty score was higher among BounceBack participants (6.2) than the Newham benchmark (5.2). Emotional difficulty scores were higher for girls than boys, for both BounceBack and wider pupil population. BounceBack groups had a larger proportion of young people with a slightly elevated or high emotional difficulty (21%) than the benchmark (13%), indicating that schools had recommended pupils with higher levels of difficulty.

[Table 1.2-1.3, Chart 1.1]

Chart 1.1 Percentage of pupils with emotional difficulty, by threshold



Behavioural difficulty

Behavioural difficulty scores range from 0-12. Scores can be divided into thresholds: low, 0-5; slightly elevated, 6; and high 7-12. The average pre-intervention behavioural difficulty score was slightly higher among BounceBack participants (3.1) than the Newham benchmark (2.6). Behavioural difficulty scores were higher for boys than girls, for both BounceBack and wider pupil population. This may explain the slightly higher number of boys recommended to the intervention. BounceBack groups had a slightly larger proportion of young people with a slightly elevated or high range behavioural difficulty (15%) than the benchmark (11%), indicating that schools had recommended pupils with higher levels of difficulty.

[Table 1.2- 1.3, Chart 1.2]

Chart 1.2 Percentage of pupils with behavioural difficulty, by threshold

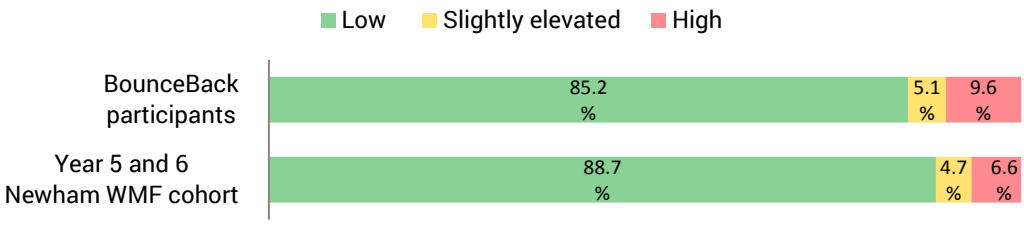


Table 1.2 Average emotional and behavioural difficulty scores Academic year 2017/18				
	BounceBack participants		Year 5 and 6 Newham WMF cohort	
	Mean	*Standard deviation*	Mean	*Standard deviation*
Emotional difficulty, range 0-20				
All	6.23	*3.67*	5.22	*3.48*
Male	5.26	*3.31*	4.87	*3.36*
Female	7.40	*3.76*	5.58	*3.57*
Behavioural difficulty, range 0-12				
All	3.14	*2.56*	2.59	*2.35*
Male	3.46	*2.61*	3.11	*2.51*
Female	2.78	*2.47*	2.06	*2.05*
Bases				
Emotional difficulties	*324*		*2308*	
Behavioural difficulties	*332*		*2328*	
Sources	*Pre intervention survey*		*WMF 2018*	

Table 1.3 Emotional and behavioural difficulty scores, by threshold Academic year 2017/18				
	BounceBack participants		Year 5 and 6 Newham WMF cohort	
	N	%	N	%
Emotional difficulty				
Low score (0-9)	255	*78.7*	2017	*87.4*
Slightly elevated (10-11)	44	*13.6*	192	*8.3*
High (12-20)	25	*7.7*	99	*4.3*
Behavioural difficulty				
Low score (0-5)	283	*85.2*	2065	*88.7*
Slightly elevated (6)	17	*5.1*	109	*4.7*
High (7-12)	32	*9.6*	154	*6.6*
Bases				
Emotional difficulties	*324*		*2308*	
Behavioural difficulties	*332*		*2328*	
Sources	*Pre intervention survey*		*WMF 2018*	

How selection and recommendation worked in practice

School staff were asked how schools chose pupils to participate in BounceBack and pupils were asked about their perception of the selection process.

A process for selecting pupils

Schools in this study took similar approaches to selecting pupils. The staff lead for BounceBack consulted pastoral and teaching staff to identify and select pupils to recommend. Staff explained that this approach worked well as pastoral and teaching staff have different relationships and understandings of pupils from one another, which together can support a fuller understanding of the pupil's needs.

Staff highlighted two things that helped in the appropriate selection of pupils to the intervention. Firstly, the whole school training provided by HeadStart had helped to create an understanding of how to identify pupils with an emerging mental health need and would benefit from a short term intervention, such as BounceBack. School staff noted the importance of ensuring the training is provided to new staff, as with annual staff turnover the approach to early mental health support can become watered down or lost.

Secondly, learning from the experience of running BounceBack in previous years had given schools a better idea of pupils that would be suited to the intervention and benefit from it.

Schools selected pupils across four factors

Internalising behaviours

Pupils with low self-esteem and/or those who were quiet.

Externalising behaviours

Pupils that were disruptive in class or the playground, or with peer relationships difficulties or limited ability to empathise with others.

Educational needs

Those with low attainment. One school selected pupils with autism. They had discussed the suitability of this pupil for the intervention with the Youth Practitioner beforehand. It was agreed that their inclusion could be trialled with the support of a learning mentor in the sessions as support.

Difficulties at home

This included pupils with a parent with a mental health difficulty, or a recent bereavement. Schools prioritised pupils not accessing support in the community. Schools were sometimes unsure whether a pupil was suitable, or whether their need was too high. For example, a school lead reflected that they had selected pupils with higher levels of need, including those on Child in Need status and Child Protection status[2] that may have benefited from a different type of support.

Suitability for a group intervention

Additionally, schools also considered pupil suitability to participate in a group setting, and ability to express themselves verbally.

[2] Child in Need and Child Protection statuses indicate that local authority social services have involvement with the child or family.

Involving teachers, parents and young people in the selection process

Teacher buy-in. Part of the selection process included having buy-in from the pupil's teacher to release them from lesson time to participate in the intervention. Teachers could be reluctant to release pupils that were already part of a number of additional support activities that took them out of lessons regularly.

Learning mentors suggested that teachers could be open to releasing pupils that were disruptive in lessons, but reluctant to release quieter or well behaved pupils.

Parent/carer buy-in. Schools sought parental consent for their child to participate, utilising the HeadStart parental information and opt-out letter. Parents largely did not object. School staff explained that parental concerns were two-fold: first, parents were concerned about an external service working with their child, and specifically that the service may be linked to local authority and social services. Secondly, parents disagreed that their child required early mental health support. Schools suggested a need for HeadStart to review the parent letter and simplify the language used.

Pupil choice. Schools had consulted pupils about participating in BounceBack. One school drafted a letter to pupils inviting them to participate in BounceBack and a member of staff had also discussed it with them. The school lead explained that such letters are standard practice for all interventions at the school. They are child friendly and empower them to be part of the decision making about participating in an intervention. The school drafted the letter as HeadStart do not provide a child facing letter.

Young people were generally aware that they needed extra help with an aspect of their behaviour and had therefore been put forward by the school. At one school, pupils felt that the school had not explained the specific reason for selecting them and wanted to know.

Pupils described their motivations for agreeing to participate in BounceBack. They:

- had a positive experience of a HeadStart intervention they had done before (such as Champions, or BounceBack in a previous year) and wanted to continue their involvement in HeadStart;
- were curious what the intervention would be;
- were aware that BounceBack is designed to help young people, and wanted help with a specific issue, such as how to deal with bullying; or,
- trusted the opinion of the school staff member that suggested they take part.

School staff explained the reasons that children chose not to take part. They:

- did not want to miss regular class;
- did not want to participate in an intervention that may involve talking about difficulties they could be experiencing at school or home.

How is BounceBack implemented?

BounceBack Newham was delivered across 37 schools during 2017/18, one group at each school. There was attendance information available for 36 groups.

Intervention length

BounceBack is designed as a 7 to 10 week intervention. During 2017/18, the intervention length varied across groups. The maximum intervention length ranged from 4 to 12 sessions. The average number of sessions delivered per group was 8.

[Table 2.1]

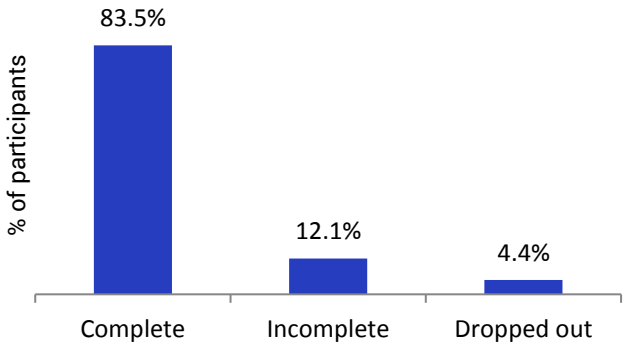
The qualitative interviews with school staff highlighted that session length varied by school, ranging from 45 to 90 minutes, according to lesson length and whether extra time from break or lunch had been added on to the session.

Attendance

Overall attendance to BounceBack was high. Average attendance was 87% of the available sessions. Participants were grouped into one of three attendance categories[3]: 'dropped out' were those with 33% attendance or lower; 'intervention incomplete' were those with 34% - 74% attendance; and 'intervention complete' were those with 75% or higher attendance.

The majority (84%) completed the intervention, 12% were categorised as incomplete and 4% dropped out. There was little difference in attendance by gender, year group, ethnicity, or SEN provision. However, those with slightly elevated or high pre-intervention emotional or behavioural difficulty scores were more likely to have completed the intervention.

Chart 2.1 BounceBack completion, 2017/18, (n=473)



[Table 2.2, Chart 2.1]

Reasons for drop outs or incomplete attendance

The qualitative interviews explored reasons for pupils exiting the intervention early. School staff outlined two main reasons:

'It's not for me'. There were pupils that tried BounceBack and attending one or two sessions, and decided they did not like it and chose to discontinue.

BounceBack brings together pupils from different academic and peer groups. Staff explained that pupils may drop out if they do not feel comfortable in the group. For example, a pupil believed they were more popular than the pupils in the group and therefore chose to leave.

Competing priorities. Pupils dropped out to participate in their regular lesson or participate in extra-curricular activities such as a school play, running at the same time as the BounceBack. Additionally, pupils explained that school staff requested them to drop out of BounceBack in favour of another intervention or extra-curricular

[3] Attendance categories were determined by Headstart Newham.

activity, pupils explained that they were given a choice.

Pupils may have missed individual sessions due to not attending school or a school trip.

How implementing BounceBack Newham worked in practice

Youth Practitioner facilitation

The HeadStart Youth Practitioner leads the intervention. Their approach to organising and facilitating sessions as well as their relationship with pupils and school staff was pivotal to the overall intervention experience. This section highlights feedback about what they did well and areas they could improve.

What worked?

- Practitioners being prepared for sessions, arriving early, outlining the session aims at the start to both pupils and the learning mentor, but also adapting the session in response to things brought up by pupils.
- Small touches, such as a Practitioner remembering pupil's names and taking a genuine interest in the pupils.
- Communicating progress – the school appreciated the Youth Practitioner providing weekly feedback to the school lead via email about the session.

What did not work?

- The Youth Practitioner working in isolation from the school, i.e., with no learning mentor present and not communicating the intervention content or pupil progress to the school.
- Practitioners not remembering names of pupils. A school lead explained that using pet names for pupils such as 'little guy' are inappropriate and could result in inadvertently reinforcing a young person's concerns about themselves.
- Inconsistent delivery across Practitioners. For example, a school reported a positive relationship and intervention delivery in year 1 of HeadStart, but not in year 2. This was attributed to a change in Youth Practitioner. The school lead explained that the Year 2 Practitioner's delivery and engagement with the school was different to that of the Year 1 Practitioner. This changed the school's perception of the intervention and service from good to bad.
- Running over the allocated session time. Youth Practitioners should stay within the given time, as delays can result in disruption to pupils and wider school schedule.

Learning mentor support

The intervention design advocates the presence of a member of school staff in sessions. Across the four schools in the qualitative strand, each had a learning mentor present in sessions except one.

What worked?

- Learning mentors generally welcomed the opportunity to be involved in delivery. Their presence could support delivery and benefit them professionally.
- They supported the Youth Practitioner as they knew the pupils in the intervention, including their names. They could manage behaviour and support pupils with higher level need e.g. those with SEND. They also organised the logistics such as ensuring the room was ready and pupils were in attendance.
- Learning mentors described involvement as supporting their continual professional development (CPD). By working with the Youth Practitioner they could learn new approaches and resources to use in their work with wider pupils in the school.

- Furthermore, learning mentors built on existing relationships with pupils. For example, a pupil who lived in a home with known domestic violence, who was usually very quiet, was said to have opened up and connected more with others and during the intervention, but since it ended, the pupil had shut down again.

"[s/he's] usually quiet and holds a lot of stuff in, but [s/he] talked in the group and we got a bit more of a connection then"

Learning mentor

- School senior leaders sought informal updates from learning mentors about the quality of the intervention and pupil progress. Learning mentors felt that they could advocate for the value of BounceBack and justify that it was worth taking pupils out of academic timetable to participate.

What did not work?

- Learning mentor involvement and experience of the intervention was depended on how the Youth Practitioner worked with them. The collaboration worked best where the Youth Practitioner informed the learning mentor the session plan ahead of time. In the absence of this, the learning mentor was not always clear on their role in sessions.

The journal

Intervention delivery is complemented with a journal for pupils to document and reflect on their learning.

What worked?

- A school lead explained that having evidence of learning is useful for the school to have for a range of reasons such as, to share with teaching staff, parents evenings and Ofsted inspections.

What did not work?

- There appeared to be variation in use of the journal in sessions across Practitioners, with some using it each session and others using it less frequently or not at all.
- Learning mentors that were present in the sessions believed that the language in the journal is not age appropriate and too high level. Pupils echoed this and explained that the journal introduced unfamiliar concepts that they did not always understand.
- The journal was not viewed as especially helpful by learning mentors or pupils. For example, the planner, where pupils log their progress against the moves was not considered useful, as pupils wanted to place a thumbs-up sticker (a marker of positive progress) against each move regardless of whether progress made in that area. Learning mentors therefore viewed this activity as time consuming and felt it did not add value. Instead the activity was viewed as a box-ticking exercise.
- Use of the journal encouraged silent working, similar to academic work which pupils did not like, and learning mentors felt this took time away from the talking based activities, which they believed were of benefit to pupils and themselves, to learn more about pupil's thoughts and experiences.
- Pupils fed back that the imagery in the journal was not appealing. They specifically did not like the images of the cartoon people and stated a preference for real images of people.
- A BounceBack magnet was included alongside the journal, to take home to involved parents and act as a reminder to try the moves. The magnets were taken home, but it was unclear whether they had been used.
- Furthermore, a school that did not have a learning mentor present in the intervention, did not know whether the journals had been

used, nor did they receive the completed journals at the end of the intervention as evidence of learning.

Intervention activities

The intervention involves a range of activities to develop the skills involved in the 10 moves.

What worked?

- Intervention activities that involved pupils talking and listening to each other were valued by learning mentors. For example, the 'shine' activity, whereby pupils said something positive about one another, was highlighted as a particularly useful activity to encourage pupils to cooperate and see the good in others. They believed these activities enabled self-reflection and self-expression among pupils. Furthermore pupils may not have the explicit opportunity to do during a regular school day.
- Team building activities were valued as a way to learn how to work with different groups compared to those they work with in regular school lessons.
- The small group setting was perceived to help shy pupils to engage and express themselves.

Suggestions to develop delivery:
Learning mentors and pupils suggested additional content they would have liked to see in BounceBack, such as, practical suggestions for how to address bullying, falling out with friends. On the other hand, generic information about good sleeping, eating and exercise, were viewed as less helpful by learning mentors.

Ending the intervention

What worked?
Celebrating pupil's participation via:

- A celebratory final session,
- Pupils discussing their personal learning and reflections on the changes they had seen in others during the intervention.
- Presenting pupils with a certificate for their participation at the final session or in a school assembly.
- A senior school lead, such as the Year 5/6 phase leader and/or the Head Teacher attending the final session to give the intervention further gravitas among pupils, and provided further insight about the intervention and its benefits for pupils.
- Inviting pupils to the HeadStart Newham celebration event helped pupils feel important and part of a wider network of BounceBack Newham cohort.

Planning next steps for pupils:

- Referring pupils to other HeadStart interventions, such as Champions, or creative and sports activities.
- Learning mentors in particular schools continue resilience boosting work with pupils.

What didn't work well?

- Young people could feel sad about BounceBack coming to an end. Learning mentors noted that after the end of the intervention, there were pupils that did not seem emotionally held. In the absence of BounceBack, pupils had lost their weekly opportunity to offload their feelings.
- There were also pupils that missed the sense of belonging to the BounceBack group.

Table 2.1 Intervention fidelity: number of sessions delivered		
	Academic year 2017/18	
	N	%
BounceBack intervention groups run	36	-
Range for maximum intervention length *(no of sessions run)*	4-12	-
Maximum intervention length		
4-6 sessions	4	*11.1*
7 sessions	7	*19.4*
8 sessions	8	*22.2*
9 sessions	11	*30.6*
10 sessions	3	*8.3*
11 sessions	2	*5.6*
12 sessions	1	*2.8*
Mean number of sessions delivered	8.25	-
Standard deviation of sessions delivered	1.6	-
Base		
Total intervention groups	*37 groups*	
Maximum session lengths	*36 groups*	
Source	*HeadStart monitoring data*	

Table 2.2 Intervention completion by participant demographic characteristics

Academic year 2017/18

% attendance to BounceBack sessions	Complete 75%-100%		Incomplete 34% - 74%		Dropped out 0%-33%	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Overall	395	*83.5*	57	*12.1*	21	*4.4*
Year group						
Year 5	214	*83.9*	31	*12.2*	10	*3.9*
Year 6	179	*82.9*	26	*12.0*	11	*5.1*
Gender						
Male	217	*81.9*	38	*14.3*	10	*3.8*
Female	178	*85.6*	19	*9.1*	11	*5.3*
Ethnicity						
Asian	122	*86.5*	14	*9.9*	5	*3.5*
Black	124	*84.3*	18	*12.2*	5	*3.4*
Mixed	34	*77.3*	7	*15.9*	3	*6.8*
White	91	*80.5*	17	*15.0*	5	*4.4*
Other	21	*91.3*	0	-	2	*8.7*
Special Educational Needs provision						
No provision	291	*82.2*	42	*11.7*	21	*5.9*
SEN support	103	*87.3*	15	*12.7*	0	-
Educational Health and Care Plan	1	*100.0*	0	-	0	-
Emotional difficulty score, at T1						
Low score	214	*86.6*	26	*10.5*	7	*2.8*
Slightly elevated	41	*93.2*	1	*2.3*	2	*4.5*
High	25	*100.0*	0	-	0	-
Behavioural difficulty score, at T1						
Low score	242	*88.0*	26	*9.5*	7	*2.5*
Slightly elevated	14	*82.4*	3	*17.6*	0	-
High	30	*93.8*	0	-	2	*6.3*

Bases

Overall	*473*
Year group	*471*
Gender	*473*
Ethnicity	*468*
SEN provision	*473*
Emotional difficulty	*316*
Behavioural difficulty	*324*

Sources *HeadStart monitoring data*
School census January 2018
Pre intervention survey

Does participation benefit young people?

Group outcomes

Four matched outcome measures from the pre and post intervention survey were examined: emotional difficulty, behavioural difficulty, self-esteem, and problem solving. Small, but statistically significant, improvement in all outcome measures was observed, between the start (T1) and end (T2) of BounceBack, at the group level. Average emotional and behavioural difficulty scores decreased (-0.51, -0.28, respectively), while self-esteem and problem solving scores increased (0.38 and 0.53, respectively).

[Table 3.1, Chart 4-7]

Emotional difficulty

An emotional difficulty change score of +/-3 or more points between T1 and T2 indicates a reliable change[4] at the individual level; -3 indicates improvement and +3 indicates worse score. The majority (65%) of participants had no reliable change, 22% had reliably improved and 13% had reliably worse emotional difficulty scores.

The majority of participants had a low emotional difficulty score at T1 and T2. Using pre and post-intervention matched data, the proportion of participants in the slightly elevated or high thresholds decreased between T1 and T2 (from 17% to 13%), and the proportion in the low range increased (from 83% to 87%).

[Table 3.1-3.2, Chart 4]

Behavioural difficulty

A behavioural difficulty change score of +/-3 or more points between T1 and T2 indicates a reliable change at the individual level; -3 indicates improvement and +3 indicates worse score. The majority (84%) of participants had no reliable change, 10% had reliably improved and 6% had reliably worse behavioural difficulty scores.

The majority of participants had a low behavioural difficulty score at T1 and T2. Using pre and post-matched data, there was a small decrease in the proportion of pupils in the slightly elevated or high range thresholds between T1 and T2 (from 8% to 6%), and there was a small increase in the proportion of pupils in the low range (from 92% to 94%).

[Table 3.1-3.2, Chart 5]

Self-esteem

A self-esteem change score of +/-3 or more points between T1 and T2 indicates a reliable change at the individual level; +3 indicates improvement and -3 indicates a worse score. The majority (74%) of participants had no reliable change, 16% had reliably improved and 11% had reliably worse self-esteem scores.

[Table 3.1, Chart 6]

Problem solving

A problem solving change score of +/-4 points between T1 and T2 indicates a reliable change at the individual level; +4 indicates improvement and -4 indicates worse score. The majority (78%) of participants had no reliable change, 14% had reliably improved and 8% had reliably worse problem solving scores.

[Table 3.1, Chart 7]

[4] Reliable change is a statistical concept and may not be experienced by the young person.

Emotional and behavioural outcomes by gender

T1 behavioural difficulty scores were higher among boys, while emotional difficulty scores were higher among girls. Between T1 and T2, emotional and behavioural difficulty scores improved for both boys and girls. The average size of this improvement (i.e. change scores) did not significantly differ between boys and girls, for either emotional or behavioural difficulty.

[Table 3.3]

Emotional and behavioural outcomes by SEN provision

Average emotional and behavioural difficulty scores improved for participants in receipt of SEN support and those with no SEN provision, between T1 and T2. The average size of this improvement (i.e. change scores) did not significantly differ between those with and without SEN provision, for either emotional or behavioural difficulty.

[Table 3.3]

Outcomes by attendance to the intervention

No correlations were found between attendance and improvements between the start and the end of the intervention (for emotional difficulty, behavioural difficulty, self-esteem, or problem solving).

[Table 3.4]

Qualitative findings

Reliable change is a statistical concept and may not be experienced by the young person. We therefore team this analysis with qualitative data about perceptions of what young people got from taking part.

Learning mentors present in the sessions observed differences among the participating pupils:

- Building empathy. Learning mentors noted that during and since BounceBack there were pupils who took time to consider other people's feelings and perspectives more so than before.

> *"We've seen [pupil] progress from beginning to the last session. [Pupil has] been able to tap into [his/her] empathetic side and tap into a different side of [his/her] personality, and then [s/he's] kind of blossomed into somebody slightly different."*
>
> Learning mentor

- Developing language. Learning mentors also noted that activities had helped pupils to articulate their feelings better.

- Building self-confidence. Learning mentors felt that by giving pupils time and space in BounceBack in a smaller group setting, they build their self-confidence.

- Priding a sense of belonging. Learning mentors observed that by being part of an intervention group, pupils developed a sense of belonging. They witnessed pupils playing together in playground and looking out for each other outside of the group.

- Thinking about behaviour. Learning mentors build on behaviour lessons from BounceBack when pupils were in regular class. This prompt throughout the week was felt to reinforce good behaviour among pupils.

Learning mentors acknowledged that not all pupils seemed to benefit from the intervention. There were pupils who enjoyed the intervention, but it did not seem to bring about change for them. This was particularly thought to be the case for pupils who talked less and chose not to express themselves as much in the intervention.

School staff found it hard to know whether changes seen in pupils were due to BounceBack specifically or related to other interventions / support they were in receipt of, or changes at home.

School staff were keen to obtain evidence of what difference or benefit the intervention had made to individual pupils, especially when there were no noticeable differences in classroom. School staff stressed the importance of ensuring senior leads in the school are aware of what the intervention is about and the types of changes that can be expected to be seen.

Outcome charts

Charts 4-7 below depict the percentage of young people with each possible change score, in addition to average T1, T2, and change scores. Note that the percentages may differ marginally from those in Table 3.1, due to rounding.

Chart 4. **Emotional difficulties scores, BounceBack 2017/18**

Base: BounceBack participants with pre and post score, n=187

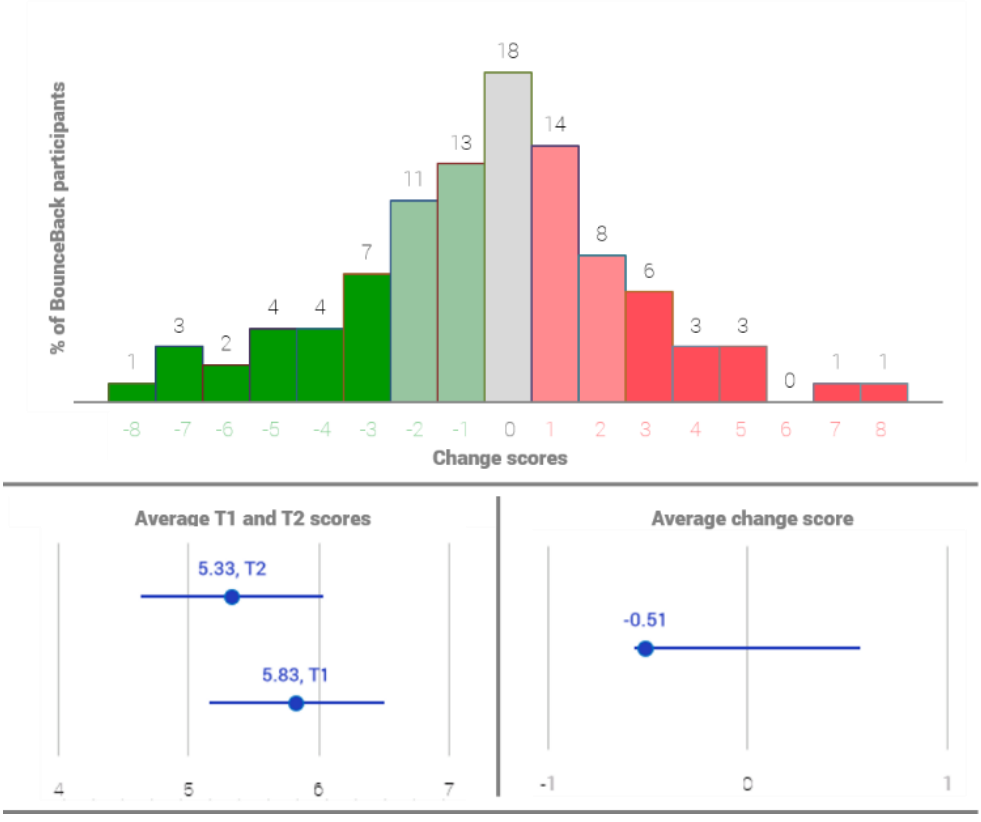


Chart 5. **Behavioural difficulties scores, BounceBack 2017/18**

Base: BounceBack participants with pre and post score, n=192

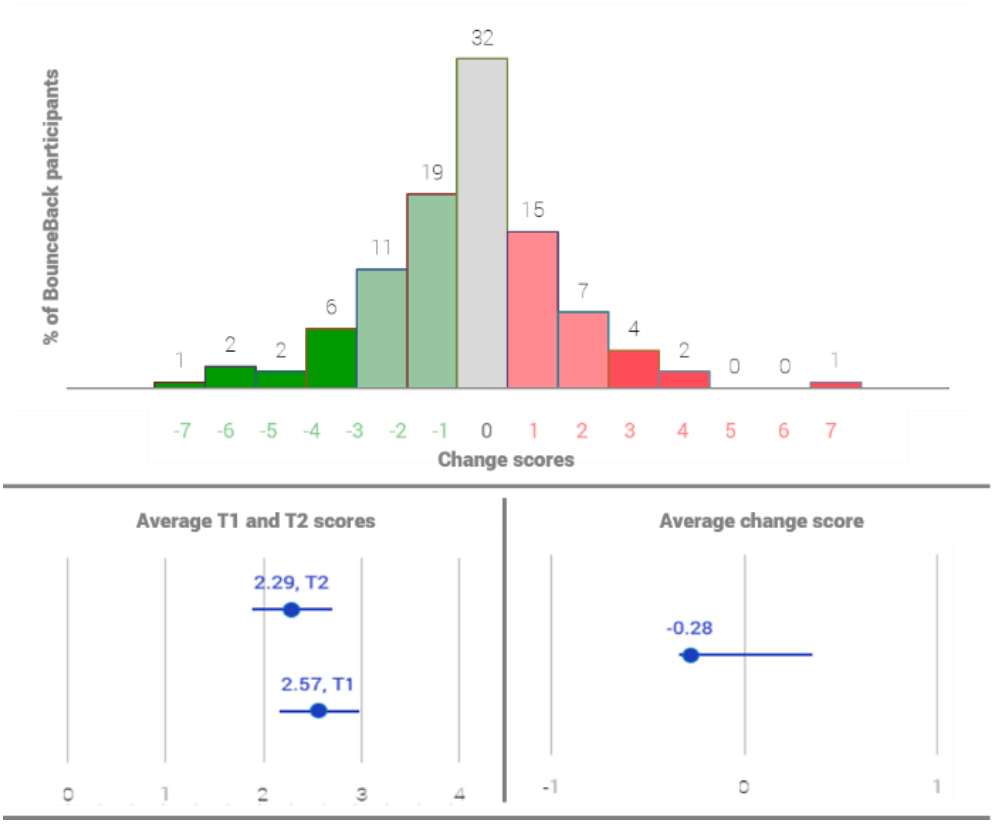


Chart 6. **Self-esteem scores, BounceBack 2017/18**

Base: BounceBack participants with pre and post score, n=200

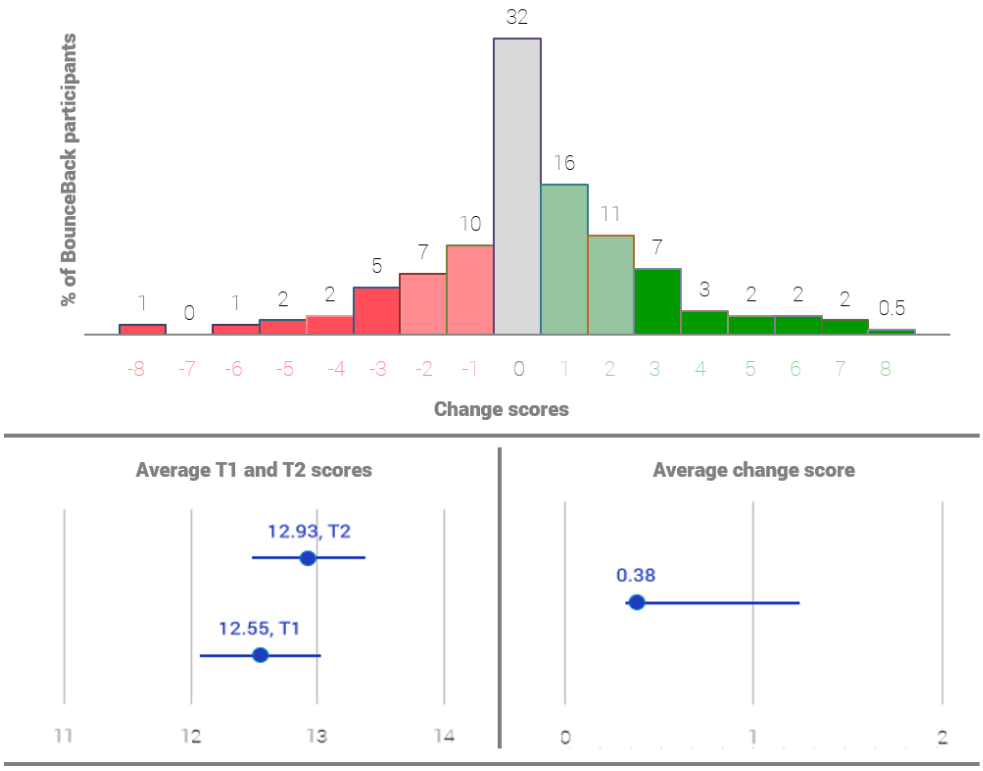


Chart 7. **Problem solving scores, BounceBack 2017/18**

Base: BounceBack participants with pre and post score, n=193

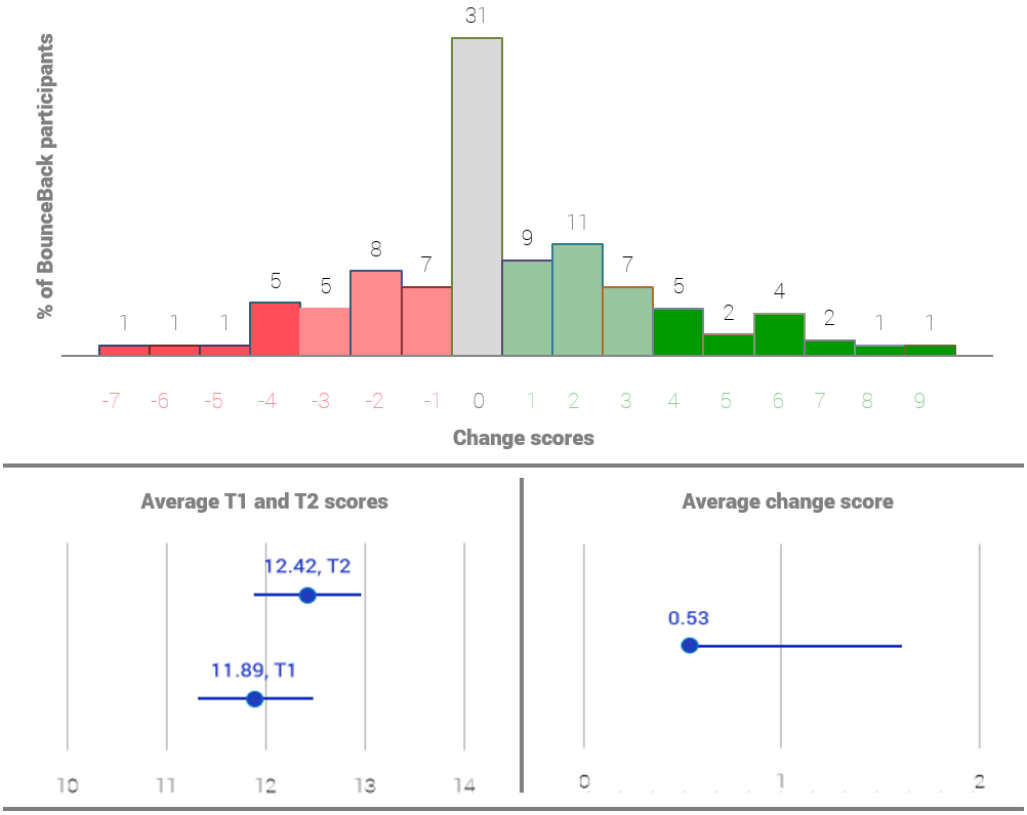


Table 3.1 Group outcomes of BounceBack participants, between start and end of intervention

Academic year 2017/18

	Emotional difficulty		Behavioural difficulty		Self-esteem		Problem solving	
Score range	0-20		0-12		3-15		3-15	
Average (mean) scores								
T1 average (mean)	5.83		2.57		12.55		11.89	
T2 average (mean)	5.33		2.29		12.93		12.42	
Change score								
Average (mean)	-0.51		-0.28		0.38		0.53	
95% confidence interval	-0.94, -0.08		-0.54, -0.02		0.03, 0.72		0.12, 0.94	
t (df)	-2.33 (186)		-2.13 (191)		2.12 (199)		2.54 (192)	
p-value, **=significant at α = .05*	0.021*		0.034*		0.036*		0.012*	
Reliable change	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Improvement	41	*21.9*	19	*9.9*	31	*15.5*	27	*14.0*
No change	121	*64.7*	162	*84.4*	148	*74.0*	150	*77.7*
Worse	25	*13.4*	11	*5.7*	21	*10.5*	16	*8.3*
Bases	*187*		*192*		*200*		*193*	
Sources	*Matched pre and post intervention survey*							

Table 3.2 Emotional and behavioural difficulty scores at the start and end of intervention, by threshold

Academic year 2017/18

	Emotional difficulty		Behavioural difficulty	
	N	%	N	%
T1				
Low score	155	*82.9*	176	*91.7*
Slightly elevated	19	*10.2*	6	*3.1*
High	13	*7.0*	10	*5.2*
T2				
Low score	163	*87.2*	180	*93.8*
Slightly elevated	12	*6.4*	4	*2.1*
High	12	*6.4*	8	*4.2*
Bases	*187*		*192*	
Sources	*Matched pre and post intervention survey*			

Table 3.3 Emotional and behavioural difficulty change scores between the start and end of intervention, by gender and SEN provision

Academic year 2017/18

	Emotional difficulty change score	Behavioural difficulty change score
Gender		
Male average (mean)	-0.28	-0.32
Female average (mean)	-0.80	-0.23
t (df)	1.20 (170.7)	-0.38 (190.0)
p-value, **=significant*	0.233	0.705
SEN provision		
No provision average (mean)	-0.45	0.23
SEN provision average (mean)	-0.68	0.46
t (df)	0.45 (74.2)	0.75 (76.3)
p-value, **=significant*	0.653	0.455
Bases		
Male	*105*	*108*
Female	*82*	*84*
No SEN provision	*143*	*146*
SEN provision	*44*	*46*
EHCP	*0*	*0*
Sources	*Matched pre and post intervention survey*	

Table 3.4 Correlations between % attendance and start-end change scores

Academic year 2017/18

	Emotional difficulty change	Behavioural difficulty change	Self-esteem change	Problem solving change
Correlation with % attendance to intervention				
Pearson's r (df)	0.11 (177)	-0.06 (182)	-0.10 (190)	-0.07 (183)
p-value, **=significant*	0.151	0.407	0.175	0.321
Direction of outcome as attendance increases	Improvement size increases	Improvement size decreases	Improvement size decreases	Improvement size decreases
Bases	*179*	*184*	*192*	*183*
Sources	*Matched pre and post intervention survey*			

Conclusion

Overall, schools took a consistent approach in recommending pupils to BounceBack, which was led by pastoral staff with a good understanding of pupil needs. Pupils selected for BounceBack had greater levels of emotional and behavioural difficulty at baseline compared with the wider pupil population, suggesting appropriate selection. Demographics of BounceBack pupils were similar to the wider pupil population, although boys and pupils with Special Educational Need support were slightly over-represented in the BounceBack cohort, whilst Asian pupils were under-represented. In order for recruitment to be successful, it was important that young people, parents and school staff received all available information about BounceBack, and had the opportunity to ask questions to allay any concerns or misunderstandings about the intervention.

The majority of pupils who were recruited to BounceBack, completed the intervention. For the minority of pupils who dropped out of the intervention, reasons such as competing demands on their time, finding it hard to talk about personal difficulties and feeling uncomfortable in mixed year groups were cited. The number of BounceBack sessions delivered varied widely by group although the majority of groups received the recommended 7 or more sessions.

Sessions worked well when Youth Practitioners prepared in advance, took an interest in pupils, and worked collaboratively with the school. Where these elements were not present, BounceBack experience for pupils and staff was not always positive. For example, sessions worked well where Practitioners took a personal and genuine interest in pupils, but could inadvertently reinforce pupils' concerns where names were not remembered. Implementation was successful when learning mentors were involved in BounceBack to manage behaviour, organise logistics, and build supportive relationships with pupils. Where this did not occur, learning mentors could be left under-utilised and unsure of their role. Furthermore, school staff valued communication from Youth Practitioners regarding individual pupil progress; in contrast, working in isolation did not allow the school to build on intervention progress.

There were inconsistencies in the extent of Youth Practitioner use of the BounceBack journal during sessions. Where used, it was not always valued by staff and pupils. Pupils and learning mentors felt that some exercises in the journal were hard to understand and completing them in session could feel too much like academic work. Furthermore, pupils found the journal's cartoon imagery unappealing, expressing a preference for real images of people.

Overall, intervention experience was positive for pupils. Activities involving sharing and listening in a small group setting were highly valued. In particular, encouraging pupils to say positive things about one another enabled self-reflection and expression. However, the content of the sessions was sometimes felt to be more generic than specific. Suggestions were made to include issues relevant to everyday pupil problems, such as bullying/peer disagreements. Celebratory sessions at the end of BounceBack were valued, although interviews identified the need to ensure pupils were emotionally held after BounceBack had ended.

Our analyses revealed improvements in emotional and behavioural difficulty, self-esteem, and problem solving scores between the start and end of the intervention. These improvements did not differ by gender, Special Educational Need status, or intervention attendance. The findings from the qualitative interviews supported these findings. Generally it was felt that pupils built on existing empathy skills, improved self-confidence, gained a vocabulary for wellbeing, a sense of belonging and the

opportunity to reflect on theirs and others behaviours. It was acknowledged, however, that pupils who did not engage fully during the intervention were unlikely to have benefitted in the same way as those who did. Furthermore, there are a range of protective factors which could provide an alternative account for the observed positive outcomes, such as other support provision in school or community, and level of peer/family support.

Considerations for service development

The HeadStart Newham service may wish to review the aspects of intervention delivery where inconsistent approaches were present, namely by:

1. **Supporting collaborative working between Youth Practitioners and learning mentors:**
    - Youth Practitioners to arrange meetings with learning mentors before the start of intervention, to plan logistics of running BounceBack in school, and agree roles and responsibilities.
    - Learning mentors to be given opportunities to share knowledge of working with pupils selected for BounceBack with Youth Practitioners
    - Youth Practitioners to share session plans with learning mentors ahead of intervention sessions.

2. **Promote proactive communication with school about pupil progress:**
    - Sharing intervention content and pupil progress with relevant contact(s) within the school via weekly e-mails or through learning mentor feedback.
    - Ensuring learning mentors and/or school staff receive completed journals for each pupil to evidence learning.

3. **Using session resources:**
    - Providing refresher training on delivering BounceBack and using resources with pupils e.g. BounceBack journal.
    - Introducing a quality assurance mechanism to provide feedback to Practitioners about delivery practice.
    - Consider including specific problems faced by pupils in session plans e.g. bullying / peer disagreements.

4. **Managing intervention endings:**
    - Ensure this is a positive, celebratory event and that each pupil receives a certificate for taking part.
    - Where possible, invite senior school leads to celebration events to ensure pupils are recognised by the school for taking part.
    - Youth Practitioners to plan next steps for pupils and consider onwards referrals to other HeadStart Activities, or support in school/community where a need is identified.
    - Youth Practitioners to encourage learning mentors to continue resilience boosting with pupils in school after the intervention has ended.
    - Consider with learning mentors how to continue to nurture and facilitate a space where pupils retain a sense of belonging to a group.

5. **Continuing to ensure the right pupils are selected for the intervention:**
    - Whole school training to be provided to new staff in schools, as with annual staff turnover the approach to early mental health support can become watered down or lost.

Further research. The service is currently conducting a randomised control trial of BounceBack Newham to assess its impact for pupils. The results will be available in 2020

Appendix

Pre and post intervention survey questions

Measure (Survey)	**Question**
Emotional difficulty (Me and my feelings)	I feel lonely
	I cry a lot
	I am unhappy
	Nobody likes me
	I worry a lot
	I have problems sleeping
Behavioural difficulty (Me and my feelings)	I wake up in the night
	I am shy
	I feel scared
	I worry when I am at school
	I get very angry
	I lose my temper
	I hit out when I am angry
	I do things to hurt people
	I am calm
	I break things on purpose
Self-esteem (Student Resilience Survey)	I can work out my problems
	I can do most things if I try
	There are many things that I do well
Problem Solving (Student Resilience Survey)	When I need help, I find someone to talk to
	I know where to go for help when I have a problems
	I try to work out problems by talking about them
Goal Setting (Student Resilience Survey)	I have goals and plans for the future
	I think I will be successful when I grow up