Creating Pathways Final Evaluation Report

August 2021

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Contents

1   Executive Summary

1.1 About the programme

Creating Pathways supports Fight for Peace UK-based Alliance members to adapt the Fight for Peace Pathways education programme for delivery to young people in their local communities. The project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) as part of a wider project which aims to strengthen and grow the Fight for Peace Alliance in the UK. The programme builds upon the Pathways education programme developed at the Fight for Peace London and Rio Academies.   Five delivery partners – all UK-based Fight for Peace Alliance members - have adapted the Pathways model for their communities.

1.2 What we have learned

Alternative education is delivered separately to mainstream education and is designed for students from whom mainstream settings are not effective.   The Fight for Peace Pathways model is transferrable to other delivery bodies in different contexts and environments. Where delivery partners are well known in their local communities, they are likely to be more successful, recruiting and retaining high numbers of young people to their programmes.

The 5 partners have illustrated three broad "models" for recruiting, retaining and delivering alternative education.

- **Setting-specific** - Young participants are exclusively from a particular setting. For example one partner delivered the programme in a prison, and the project is wholly designed around the setting.

- **Referral-responders** - Partner organisations refer into the project. Requires strong partnerships and robust referral process.

- **Community-cognisant** - Clubs have a high level of visibility within their local communities and young people are attracted due to word of mouth and local reputation. Also accepts referrals.

The level of support – in terms of funding (£100k per partner over two years) and training - provided by Fight for Peace during this pilot to partners was deemed to be about right and valued by the partners.

Two projects have impressive plans for developing their work further – St Columbs Park House and Strike (partnership) are developing their prison-based programme to deliver in other prisons. And ZKJ Dojo has been invited to work with the world governing body for mixed martial arts (MMA) (IMMAF) to roll out a programme to train trainers to deliver similar programmes in other countries focusing on MMA, personal development, coaching and mentoring. ZKJ Dojo is working with Fight for Peace's Alliance Programme Manager on this initiative and seven other countries have already expressed an interest.

1.3 The programme in numbers

The data in this summary and the full report is based on figures provided up to the end of June 2021. It is expected that these numbers will increase by the end of 2021 as some young people are awaiting exam results or planning resits.

- 208 young people engaged with the project
- 34 dropped out the most reported reason being release or early release from prison (5) followed by starting employment, apprenticeship or Further Education course (4), mental health challenges (4) or education level (4). Of those who dropped out, 6 received a vocational qualification.
- 174 young people stayed with the project for the intended duration
    - 149 of whom were involved in the full project (including English, maths and vocational qualifications)
    - 25 of whom were involved in a vocational-only version of the programme (without English or maths)
- 28 young people received an English qualification and 34 received a maths qualification

1.4 Outcomes for young people

Young people describe the main impacts of the project to include personal, social and health outcomes that are pre- conditions for achieving educationally further down the line. Personal, social and health outcomes were more often described as the impact of the project rather than direct educational outcomes such as qualifications.

Figure 1: Example outcomes reported by young people

Personal and social development

- I have a new peer group
- I feel more confident
- I have more belief in myself
- I have improved interpersonal skills
- I am able to set myself goals
- I am better able to lose / fail – it is ok!
- I can see people have faith in me
- I can stick with something
- I am more organised than I thought I was

Physical and mental health

- I have new mindfulness skills
- I have improved physical health
- I look after myself better (sleep, diet, exercise)

Employability

- I have a future career in coaching

1.5 Recommendations

Fight for Peace are considering programmes to scale their work in the future. To support this, we have made some recommendations including:

- Encourage delivery partners to deliver over a longer time frame where needed – 18 weeks is not enough for some young people

- Consider a "laddered" approach for regranting potential delivery partners with smaller pots of money available for organisations who are new to education

- Ensure that selection criteria of delivery partners assesses potential to deliver as well as existing capacity

- Recognise that mental health of young people and staff is a priority and should be factored into subsequent programme

2   Introduction

2.1 About Creating Pathways

Creating Pathways supports Fight for Peace UK-based Alliance members to adapt the Fight for Peace Pathways education programme for delivery to young people in their local communities. The project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) as part of a wider project which aims to strengthen and grow the Fight for Peace Alliance in the UK. The programme builds upon the Pathways education programme developed at the Fight for Peace London and Rio Academies.

The Fight for Peace Alliance is a network of over 100 like-minded organisations across the world who actively participate in a thriving community of practice, which strengthens the capacity and capability of its members to realise the potential of young people living in communities affected by crime and violence.

The Fight for Peace Pathways programme is designed to provide education qualifications to young people who have been excluded from the traditional education system. The programme is an opportunity to deliver scaled up delivery of a proven accelerated education programme for NEET young people at risk of involvement in crime and violence. The programme follows Fight for Peace's five pillar methodology (education, employability, personal development, youth leadership, and boxing and martial arts).

Six UK-based Alliance partners began the Creating Pathways programme:

- o   Bulldogs Boxing and Community Activities (Port Talbot, Wales)
- o   Oldham Boxing and Personal Development Centre (Oldham, England)
- o   Tamworth Boxing Club (Tamworth, England)
- o   The ZKJ Dojo (Belfast, N. Ireland)
- o   Strike Martial Arts and St. Columbs Park House (Derry-Londonderry, N. Ireland)
- o   Sporting Chance (Newcastle, England).

More information about the delivery partners can be found in the Appendix.

This programme is the first time that Fight for Peace have commissioned another organisation (Laureus) to provide grant administration support.

A training course was delivered to all partners and a summary of outcomes from that course can be found in our baseline report (October, 2019). The course focused on how to design and set up education courses for young people in different local contexts and covered areas including consulting young people, building local partnerships, generating referrals, establishing progression routes and tracking the progress of participants.

Following the training course, Alliance partners were invited to plan their education programmes in preparation for the delivery to young people in their communities over a

period of two years, and with the support of specialists at Fight for Peace. This plan was required for delivery partners to receive funding.
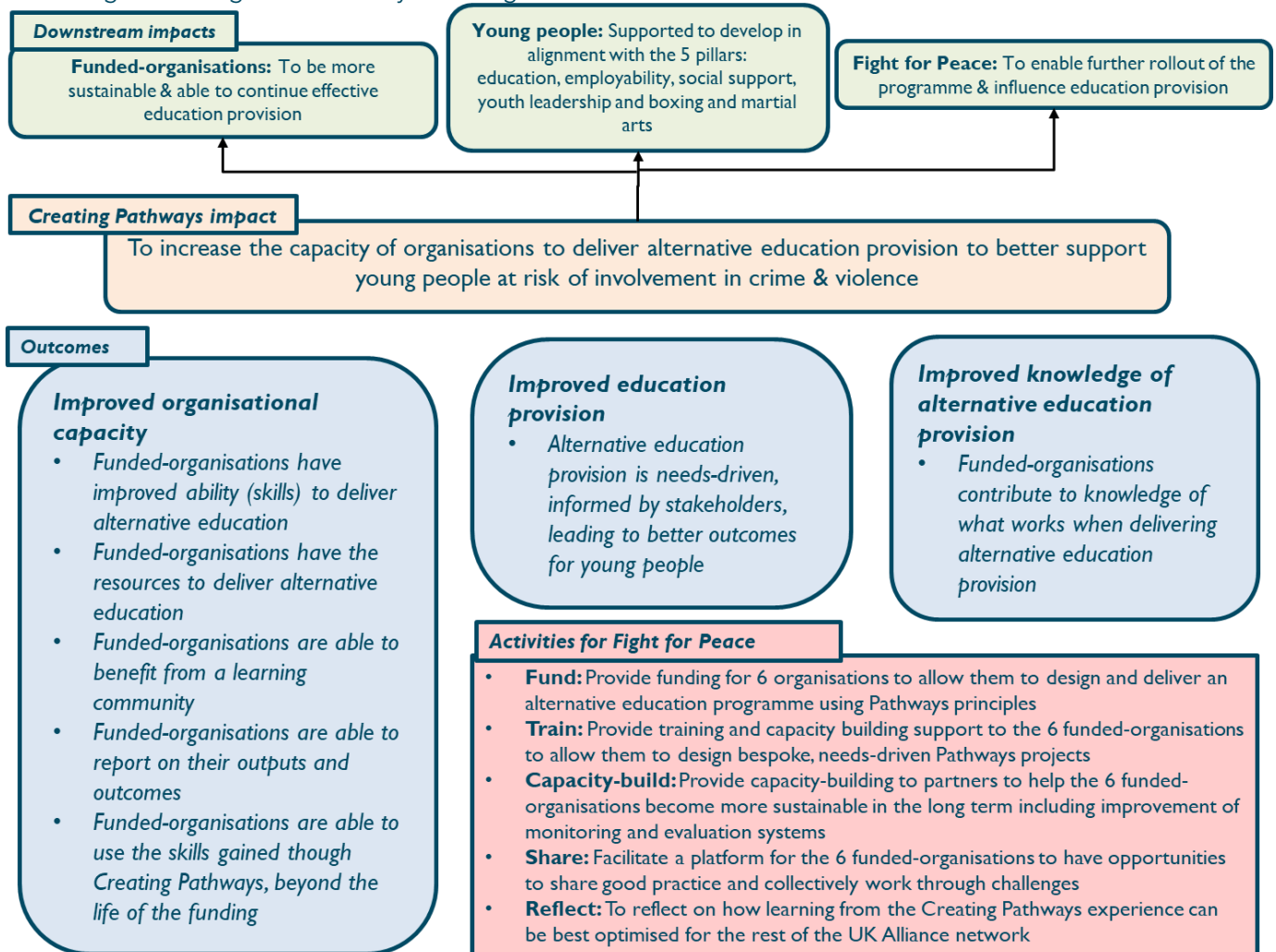
Initially there were 6 Creating Pathways partners. Early in 2020 it was reluctantly decided by Fight for Peace and Laureus that one of the partners was ineligible to continue as a partner. This final report focuses primarily on the impact achieved by the 5 continuing partners. Some reflections are reported about the lapsed partner which can be found in the appendix.

2.2 Creating Pathways Theory of Change

In 2019, SocialQual and Cloud Chamber worked with Fight for Peace to develop the Theory of Change for the programme. The Theory of Change exercise revealed that to a large extent, Creating Pathways is a capacity building programme – building the confidence and capacity of Alliance members to deliver alternative education. There is a long-term aspiration for the Creating Pathways model to be adapted more broadly throughout the UK and potentially internationally too.

Creating Pathways is therefore a pilot – an opportunity for Fight for Peace, Laureus and the Alliance more broadly to learn "what works" when supporting boxing and martial arts clubs with designing alternative education programmes. Creating Pathways is the first time Fight for Peace has codified its education programme in detail and transferred the learning to partners and supported them to adapt and set up their own alternative education programmes.

Figure 2: Programme Theory of Change

Downstream impacts

Funded-organisations: To be more sustainable & able to continue effective education provision

Young people: Supported to develop in alignment with the 5 pillars: education, employability, social support, youth leadership and boxing and martial arts

Fight for Peace: To enable further rollout of the programme & influence education provision

Creating Pathways impact

To increase the capacity of organisations to deliver alternative education provision to better support young people at risk of involvement in crime & violence

Outcomes

Improved organisational capacity
- *Funded-organisations have improved ability (skills) to deliver alternative education*
- *Funded-organisations have the resources to deliver alternative education*
- *Funded-organisations are able to benefit from a learning community*
- *Funded-organisations are able to report on their outputs and outcomes*
- *Funded-organisations are able to use the skills gained though Creating Pathways, beyond the life of the funding*

Improved education provision
- *Alternative education provision is needs-driven, informed by stakeholders, leading to better outcomes for young people*

Improved knowledge of alternative education provision
- *Funded-organisations contribute to knowledge of what works when delivering alternative education provision*

Activities for Fight for Peace
- **Fund:** Provide funding for 6 organisations to allow them to design and deliver an alternative education programme using Pathways principles
- **Train:** Provide training and capacity building support to the 6 funded-organisations to allow them to design bespoke, needs-driven Pathways projects
- **Capacity-build:** Provide capacity-building to partners to help the 6 funded-organisations become more sustainable in the long term including improvement of monitoring and evaluation systems
- **Share:** Facilitate a platform for the 6 funded-organisations to have opportunities to share good practice and collectively work through challenges
- **Reflect:** To reflect on how learning from the Creating Pathways experience can be best optimised for the rest of the UK Alliance network

During 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted much of the education and youth provision in the UK. However, the Fight for Peace team are confident that in broad terms the Theory of Change still remains robust and a fair representation of the aspirations of the programme.

2.3 Evaluation method

This report is informed by the following data collection:

Baseline and early stages (to inform baseline report in October 2019):

- Theory of Change workshop with the Fight for Peace team in April 2019
- Observation of the Creating Pathways training
- Interviews with 6 funded Creating Pathways partners at baseline period
- Review of funding applications from Creating Pathways applicants (both successful and unsuccessful)
- Baseline survey completed by 6 funded organisations
- Desk-based review of delivery plans

- Consultation with unsuccessful Creating Pathways applicants

Interim stages (to inform learning report for January 2021):

- Interviews with 5 funded Creating Pathways partners and 1 coach at a partner organisation in Autumn 2020
- Consultation with the Fight for Peace Programme Managers
- Consultation with Laureus Grant Manager
- Paired interview with 2 young people from 1 funded partner
- Review of monitoring data provided for Cohort 1 and partial data for Cohort 2

Final evaluation stages (spring and summer 2021):

- Review of monitoring data provided in July 2021 which includes a complete set of data on participants until end of June 2021
- Interviews with 5 x project leads representing 5 x funded Creating Pathways partners
- Interviews with 3 x team members employed by the project (e.g., social workers, coaches, youth workers)
- Interviews with 2 x parents of young participants (from 2 delivery partners)
- Interviews with 6 x Fight for Peace team members
- Interview with 1 x Laureus team member
- 3 x learning sessions with project leads and/or coaches
- Youth-based consultation based on toolkit (see appendix) from 2 delivery partners

This final evaluation report has been drafted for Fight for Peace, Laureus Sport for Good Foundation (hereafter referred to as Laureus), the 5 Creating Pathways partners and National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF). This report discusses the impact achieved aligned with the programme Theory of Change and makes recommendations for Fight for Peace in the context of alternative education and scaling up activities generally.

3   Delivering alternative education – what works?

3.1 Project adaptation

Central to the ethos of the Creating Pathways programme is that each delivery partner can decide which qualifications are relevant and of interest to their young people. This resonates with the needs-led ethos of the programme which encouraged partners to do a needs assessment, consulting with stakeholders and mapping existing local provision in order to design a bespoke service to meet need. As a result, the qualifications offered by each delivery partner are different and can be summarised as follows:

Figure 3: Qualifications offered by 5 Pathways partners

Partner	Maths and English	Vocational qualifications	Programme duration
Bulldogs	Functional skills Levels 1 and 2 for Maths and English	o Level 2 in Gym Instructing. o Anatomy and Physiology/Principles Fitness	18 weeks (adapted to 13 weeks for Cohort 2)
Sporting Chance	Functional skills Levels 1 and 2 for Maths and English GCSE for Maths and English	o Level 1 Exercise Studies o Level 1 Sport Leaders o Level 2 Gym Instructing	15-20 weeks
St Columbs Park House and Strike	Entry Level 1-3 Literacy Entry Level 1-3 Numeracy	Fitness Coach Training: o OCN NI Level 2 Sport Award o OCNNI Endorsed Kickboxing (L2) Educational Programme: o OCN NI Level 2 Award in the Principles of Customer Service World Host Qualifications: o World Host- Customers with Disabilities o World Host- Service Across Cultures o World Host- Principles of Customer Service o Mentoring Toolkit OCN NI Level 2 (Education Programme) Employability Skills	Up to 52 weeks

		OCN Level 1 Award in Employability Skills	
Tamworth	Functional skills Levels 1 and 2 for Maths and English	o Level 1 Cert in Developing Skills for Employment o Level 1 Cert in Customer Service o Level 1 Mentoring o Level 1 Health and Safety o Level 1 Developing Skills for Employment o Level 2 Fitness Instructing o Emergency First Aid	18 weeks
ZKJ Dojo	GCSE for Maths and English	o Level 3 MMA (although paused due to Covid-19)	18 weeks

3.2 Models for recruitment, retention and delivery

The 5 partners have illustrated three broad "models" for recruiting, retaining and delivering alternative education. These were not articulated in the planning stages but have become clear as the programme has progressed.

Figure 4: Typologies of model

Model	Partner(s)	Summary
Setting-specific	St Columbs Park House and Strike	Young participants are exclusively from a particular setting. In this case, a prison, and the project is wholly designed around the setting.
Referral-responders	Tamworth Bulldogs	Partner organisations refer into the project. Requires strong partnerships and robust referral process.
Community-cognisant	ZKJ Dojo Sporting Chance	Clubs have a high level of visibility within their local communities and young people are attracted due to word of mouth and local reputation. Also accepts referrals.

(Source: SocialQual, 2021)

3.3 What we're learning about recruitment, retention and referrals

o **Community profile:** organisations with a high profile locally (community cognisant) have consistently had a high number of young people interested in participating in their projects. Clubs who are successful report that they see their role as supporting a "family, not just the young person". They also deliver other community activities such as food parcels, Christmas hampers and providing buggies.

o **Outreach:** there have been challenges for partners who planned to do direct outreach to attract young people to their projects. This is partly due to Covid-19 and the inability to promote the projects as planned in spaces where young people hang out such as McDonald's. These organisations have become more reliant on referrals from partner agencies to recruit young people into their programmes.

o **Referrals:** there have been mixed experiences of referrals into local projects amongst delivery partners. In summary:

  ▪ Although partner organisations may verbally commit to referring young people to the project, there is often a disparity between what is verbally agreed and what happens in practice. Some partners received no (or very few) referrals from partners despite there being a strong level of interest at the "mapping" stage. This suggests a need to either get written agreements in place, work with a greater number of potential referral partners, continue to raise awareness of the project throughout and/or make the referral process more simple / robust.

  ▪ For one partner, a relationship with a local Pupil Referral Unit generated good levels of engagement

  ▪ Some young people were referred by a partner agency but did not show up. But….

  ▪ …where referred young people are accompanied (e.g., by a keyworker) there seems to be greater retention

  ▪ Delivery partners have helped arrange transport and meet young people at bus stops to support their arrival at the club, recognising that the first visit can feel intimidating and overwhelming

  ▪ Some delivery partners found that there is a lack of shared information between referral agencies about young people's needs

  ▪ When a young person is referred to a delivery partner, there is a need to respond quickly and sometimes waiting for "cohorts" to start isn't the right approach. A more fluid recruitment cycle has worked well in some cases

o **Agility:** delivery partners who were agile and able to respond to contexts were able to identify high numbers of young people to participate in the programme. For example, St Columb's Park House in partnership with Strike Academy were initially delivering in a prison setting. When the prison project was suspended due

to Covid-19, St Columb's started up an alternative project to ensure continued use of project funds (and given uncertainty around whether or when the prison project would re-start). They teamed up with Reach Across, a cross-community charity in Derry who work with young people of mixed faiths and genders who are not in education or employment. Through this extension, 11 young people aged 16-24 were supported on a programme of education and physical activity similar to that provided in prison.

3.4 What we're learning about delivering in a prison setting

St Columb's Park House in partnership with the Strike Academy designed a structured exercise, wellbeing and education programme for young prisoners at Magilligan prison in Northern Ireland; building resilience among offenders to improve their lives in the prison service and beyond. The programme was called "Fight for Myself."

- **Sport and physical exercise**

Boxing and martial arts mean a lot to many of the young participants – "it's a big thing for them" (delivery team member), so it was an important attractor for applicants. While often regarded as combative and adversarial to those who don't know it, the project team think that boxing and MMA really help to generate *"a sense of brotherhood…the model of boxing and the model of martial arts really works" (delivery team member)* in creating teamwork and togetherness.

The physical exercise element of the programme has been absolutely essential – "unbelievably" important: "*they can come in in bad form…then you see the changes in their body language, their tone and their mood" (delivery team member)* from the exercise.

- **Assess readiness**

Young men were interviewed to assess their readiness, motivations and commitment to participating in the programme. It is thought that this assessment contributed to improved retention as the project was able to select young people who were already keen to be part of the project (i.e. they were not having to convince new participants of the benefits of taking part).

- **Mindfulness**

The programme introduced some meditation after the physical exercise sessions. The team was pleasantly surprised at how well the participants reacted (unexpected for a group of young men from tough backgrounds): *"surprisingly meditation was one part that they really enjoyed about the programme" (delivery team member).* The result was so positive that the sessions were extended to include mindfulness more generally.

- **Education**

The programme offered a range of qualification to participants (see table earlier in this section). Providing awarding organisations with evidence of learning was a struggle,

especially during Covid. The team agreed to introduce an evidence diary – the 'black book' – for participants to overcome the problem of not being allowed to take photos or recordings (due to prison rules). This was negotiated with the awarding bodies. Participants who didn't have the literacy skills to complete the diaries themselves were paired up with programme mentors.

The member of the delivery staff noted how much educational progress the participants had made. Some are "preparing to leave with a suitcase full of qualifications"; *"you do get the privilege of seeing people coming in that don't think they're capable of achieving, but they achieve so much"*. Some have laminated certificates on the walls of their cells: they're proud of their achievements.

- **The link between physical activity, education, and personal development**

The three elements are viewed by the programme team as mutually reinforcing, especially in developing participants' self-confidence. It's difficult to separate out what has built their confidence more. For participants "it's the building of relationships and trust; it's the leadership progression through boxing and MMA; it's the ability to self-reflect…and the goal setting for the future" (delivery team member). It's about "having a plan" for what they will do on release, stay sober, stay in contact with a gym.

- *"If you have somebody who was suicidal, who now feels like they have a purpose, that's a really significant change…it's due to the combination of the three" (delivery team member).*

- **Mentoring**

Some of the participants from Cohort 1 were retained as mentors for Cohort 2. This was particularly fortuitous given Covid and prison lockdowns. They have become "role models" for their peers: "their body language and everything changed…they had earned their positions" (delivery team member). Mentors were provided with a booklet on mentoring which took them through their roles and responsibilities.

- **Covid-19**

There were additional challenges delivering the programme during Covid-19 as the prison went through various phases of lockdown. This limited the physical access to the prison by the programme team (as of July 2021 they have only just been granted permission to return) and restricted the movement of prisoners. Through the project's own networks, they were able to secure online access to the prison and continued to deliver the programme via video and with the help of the prisoner mentors, but the programme staff described it as "very challenging" to deliver, especially the physical exercise elements.

Quoted in a press release, the Governor of HMP Prison Magilligan said: *"The flexibility of this programme has allowed us to adapt our procedures to continue its delivery, via the virtual learning medium, throughout the Covid pandemic; it has contributed significantly to the mental and physical well-being of the participants, as well as improving their future prospects and reducing their risk of re-offending."*

- **Prison views**

The programme has the full support of prison management. There are some restrictions, for example heavy contact or sparring is not allowed in the physical activity sessions – most of the exercised is focused on circuits and pad work. It's recognised on all sides that the prison took a risk with the programme given the potential for it to be viewed as giving permission for prisoners to be trained in combat sports. But the prison certainly sees positive results: "they [participants] are calmer as a result, less likely to take drugs; they take care of themselves" (delivery team member).

The prison does have a role in participant selection – a small number of applicants were rejected on the grounds of safety and the programme team "had to respect that" – prison officers are normally not present in the room for the training sessions, so the potential risk had to be managed.

The prison officer responsible for liaison with the project team reports that prisoners approach him on a daily basis wanting to join the programme – that reportedly doesn't happen for any other programme at the prison.

The project team considers that independent delivery of the programme (i.e., by an outside agency rather than prison staff) helps to secure the interest and engagement of prisoners. The absence of prison staff during the sessions requires a strong degree of responsibility and trust at an individual and group participant level which is an important transformational element of the programme. That might be lost if it was delivered by prison staff themselves.

- **Recommendations for other prison-based programmes:**
  - Treat prisoners with **respect** – "remember that they're human beings", "we had to make sure there was trust, there was respect". The delivery team never asked – and never wanted to know – the reasons why participants were in prison. In return prisoners "felt that we weren't judging them…approach them with the attitude that you're willing to help them make a change"
  - **Mentoring** has been a huge part of the project: "create the mentors, help them become leaders". It develops leadership skills in the participants and helps to create a more self-sufficient sense of togetherness within the programme group. It changes the power balance within sessions.
  - Take care to understand **individual learning styles** at the outset but deliver as a group. The programme team found that learning ability and learning styles varied considerably and this meant having to adapt the training sessions to ensure fitness for purpose. Some, for example, had problems reading and writing. Regular recall during training sessions helped.
  - Providing participants with their own **branded gear** was hugely powerful in a setting where personal items are few and far between. It also created a talking point when participants returned to their wings – it helped sell the programme to others.

- One of the things they didn't think of at the start of the project was the **sentence length** of participants and how they might track the outcomes for participants in the long term (i.e., beyond the prison gate). Evidence therefore tends to focus only on participant outcomes within the prison environment. Future projects should be encouraged to continue monitoring outcomes beyond the prison gate, recognising that this can be time and resource intensive.

3.5 What we're learning about embedding a social worker in the team

This section is informed by the learning of delivery partner Sporting Chance Northeast who used the Creating Pathways funding to employ a qualified social worker are part of their core team.

- **Curriculum for social issues:** the social worker put together a curriculum map including session plans for topics which are relevant to young people on the Pathways project. These topics included: healthy relationship, moods, sexual health, bullying, knife crime and others. This curriculum can be used by other projects delivered by Sporting Chance.

- **1:1 and group work balance:** initially, the social worker delivered group sessions as part of the core timetable. However, there were multiple occasions where the social worker needed to be "pulled out" of sessions to respond to crises. As a result, Sporting Chance have adapted. Instead of having the social worker delivering timetabled sessions, she now provides one to one support. The Sporting Chance core team, including a youth worker, continue to deliver group personal development group sessions. It is acknowledged by the team at Sporting Chance that social workers have unique skills: "*The social worker is trained in a different way [to the core Sporting Chance team], to pull the information out of young people.. to spot red flags*" (Sporting Chance team). This one-to-one support is felt to be a better use of the social worker skill and resource.

- **Multiagency within an agency:** Sporting Chance have a strong understanding of where services are weak and strong in the local area. For example, they recognise that sexual health services are weak and there are multiple barriers facing young people who need to access these services. With the input from the social worker, Sporting Chance have become a C-card provider so that young people can access contraception directly from the club where they have a good relationship with staff.

- **Chronologies**: based on social work practice, Sporting Chance now use chronologies to document issues affecting a young person including behaviour changes, family contact, referrals to other agencies, relevant assessments and relevant information. All trained members of staff have access to chronologies. Chronologies have been a useful way to track how young people are progressing and identify any additional needs.

  - *"The chronologies are a working document. They are confidential. They are for us to see if there are any patterns of behaviour. It can be easy to forget a conversation [with a young person or another professional]. We*

work on different sites, so it is important things don't get missed. For example, a parent may call up and tell us something and we need to make a note of it" (Sporting Chance team).

All members of Sporting Chance staff have access to this. Volunteers however are given information for reference verbally. Sensitive information that shouldn't be shared is highlighte in red. *"For example if a female young person is pregnant and doesn't want to tell anyone yet".* Once a chronology is updated it is put into the work phone group chat so all members of staff know they need to read it.

o **Flexibility:** the social worker notes that there have been times when topics arise that need to be addressed. For example, following a racist comment from a young person, the curriculum adapted to give more focus to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) – *"we've got to be ready for everything!" (Sporting Chance Team).*

o **Perceptions of social workers:** the Sporting Chance team recognise that, for some of their young people, there has been a challenging relationship with social workers and often a lack of trust. Many of the young people at Sporting Chance have social workers involved in their families and there can be a general distrust or nervousness of social workers. It has been important for young people to be made aware that the social worker based at Sporting Chance does not work for the Local Authority and is "on their side." Having the social worker spend time in the classroom – almost in a teaching assistant role - has been an important part of building this trusted relationship between young people and the professional

  ▪ *"I do tell them I'm a social worker. Some of the younger ones have bad experience of social workers, they've been put into care. Social workers change [staff turnover] a lot. I wanted to make sure that they knew I was consistent. It has taken a lot to get this across. It has taken a lot. They don't see me as a social worker. I spend some time in their classrooms. I try to put a positive spin on social workers. It is not the social worker's fault. I don't want them to be afraid of social workers" (Sporting Chance team).*

o **Safeguarding:** as well as providing support for young people with personal development and mental health, the social worker has provided support with safeguarding. Her training allows her to identify any safeguarding concerns and work with the young people – and sometimes their wider families – to provide holistic support.

  ▪ *"Loads of red flags! Just loads. There's that many. One [young person] grabbed his mam and threatened her with a knife. The social worker has a DV background. [Now she's] doing work with mam and the learner. Another example. A problematic young girl where homelife is hectic she's got a lot of safeguarding around her. Her partner is older and very controlling. It is coercive control. This was spotted. So [we are] working with her to help her. We report it to safeguarding. That girl has learned a lot. [Before the support] she would get wound up in class and now she knows to walk away" (Sporting Chance team).*

o **Valued by external agencies:** the social worker and the wider Sporting Chance team have good relationships with other agencies including the Local Authority

social workers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the work provided by Sporting Chance is valued by these professionals as it supports them – many of whom are over stretched. An indicator of this is the number of referrals and signposts received to Sporting Chance from Local Authority social workers.

- o **Staff need support:** the social worker in the team works long hours often on complex cases. It is important to note that this role can only be done by someone with adequate training and with appropriate supervision.

    - ▪ *"If boxing clubs are doing this sort of thing [providing social work] they need to make time for supervision [of social workers] and be able to deal with what comes up in supervision" (Sporting Chance team).*

Typical day of a social worker at Sporting Chance NE:

"My working day starts at 7.30 - some parents have issues getting their young people out of bed. I will ring around at 7.30, make sure they are out of bed, speak to them on the phone. That works 98% of the time, they end up coming in. And it saves an argument at home between young people and their parents. When they arrive, you don't always know what's happened that morning - there's usually someone who had an argument on the bus.   I need to firefight all of that before we get started properly. We make sure they have food. I always offer breakfast and a nice hot drink. If they feel nurtured, they will be more ready to learn. We've educated them around food and how it can change your mood.

Our Youth Worker will start the group session using our curriculum. I am usually in meetings, sometimes safeguarding, sometimes 1:1s with young people. The young people always know their specified time for 1:1s with me.

The young people leave us at 2pm. The team here will reflect on the session, which has been so important. And the curriculum map will evolve based on what we are learning.

In the evening, we go and collect young people on our minibus. They come here and do weights and boxing. We take them home for 7.30.

The young people all have my work phone number, and they can text. Not everything can wait until the morning.

I do feel really lucky with the team I'm in. It is very supportive. Self-care is important for me. I use the gym. I keep my diet healthy. The lads at Sporting Chance offer me food and let me vent if I've had a tough day. Every Friday afternoon we have team meetings, a bit like clinical supervision. I do feel supported although I wouldn't say no to a holiday!!"

3.6 What we're learning about accommodating higher participation numbers

In Belfast, ZKJ Dojo have been able to deliver their programme to much greater numbers of young people than expected. By the end of 2020 the expected two cohorts of 20 participants had grown to 80.

To accommodate high numbers of young people, ZKJ Dojo offered a "vocational-only" programme. It was delivered at weekends and followed Pathway's principles around personal development and included a vocational qualification (but without English and maths).

The gym's ability to generate and retain such numbers of participants has been put down to a number of factors:

o The gym's well-established links with the local community

o Young people appreciate and value ethos of the gym which has always focused on personal development and growth: "this is the core of our agenda"

o Its operation as a volunteer-led organisation has meant that scaling up has not required the additional resourcing that might be required if the whole delivery team comprised paid staff

o Effective use of social media outlets most popular with young people

o A willingness to accept young people onto the programme with a range of different issues (e.g., autism, falling out of school, etc.): "we didn't want to turn kids away"

3.7 What we're learning about supporting mental health

All five (5) Creating Pathways partners have observed high levels of anxiety and depression amongst their young people. This has been exacerbated by lockdown restrictions which add isolation into the mix. While mental health falls within the Fight for Peace Five Pillar methodology it appears that partners who are increasingly working to support young people with their mental health specifically and broadly speaking had underestimated the amount of time and skill required to support young people with their mental health during this pilot project. Some of the things that have helped include:

o **Routine:** for some young people, new structures and routines are challenging especially where anxiety is an issue. Creating Pathways partners recognise this and for some, they spend several weeks working towards establishing a routine before beginning the education part of the programme

▪ *"He [young person] sat in his bedroom for 2 years before coming to us […] just talking to people was a big thing. We started for 30 minutes. Then an hour. We had to slowly build it up. At first it was very informal. We talked about video games he'd played. It was all about building a relationship" (Creating Pathways partner).*

- ▪ *"Just getting them to attend on time is a big step – getting them to turn up is a big deal. Doing vocational work [before Maths and English] is deliberate" (coach at a Creating Pathways partner).*

- o **Takes time:** it is acknowledged by Creating Pathways partners that supporting young people with mental health challenges can take longer than the formal 13-24 weeks of the Creating Pathways programme. There have been occasions where young people have been supported beyond the formal period to support them with mental health challenges. The example below refers to a young person who attended Cohort 1, but it took that time to overcome some of anxiety issues and get used to the routine of the setting and needed to complete the formal part of Pathways during Cohort 2:

  - ▪ *"We adapted the Creating Pathways model. We extended it. His development was far more important than the structure of Creating Pathways. There was no way we were going to let him go [at the end of Cohort 1]. I knew Fight for Peace would have supported that ethos. They would've been disappointed if we'd let him go. No one asked any questions from Fight for Peace. In that way, Fight for Peace understood. We had a relationship with Fight for Peace and they had our back. We included him as both first cohort and second cohort" (Creating Pathways partner).*

  - ▪ *"They [young people] open up to us more and open up to their peers the more that time goes on" (Creating Pathways partner).*

- o **Qualification framework**: for one partner, Creating Pathways has been an opportunity to formalise their delivery of personal development which has had positive impacts on mental health. Bulldogs are now delivering a personal development qualification (accredited by Agored Cymru) which supports with self-esteem, self-identify and goal setting. The Creating Pathways Lead at Bulldogs acknowledges that this framework has encouraged young people to open up and acknowledge their aspirations. Before Creating Pathways, Bulldogs delivered some personal development as part of a Physical Fitness qualification which touched on goal setting but didn't go into as much depth as their new qualification. The driver for providing this new qualification was less about the 'qualification' and more about the value it adds – Bulldogs recognised the structure of the qualification and how it resonates with their young people. They are now delivering this qualification to other young people outside of the Pathways programme and, as the Bulldogs lead describes: *"they love it!"*

3.8 What we're learning about project design

- o **Project-readiness:** some young people came to the project and needed "pre project" support to be fully engaged. For example, some were unable to commit to the routine and others had anxiety. Delivery partners responded by putting some bespoke sessions in place. Some young people began the Pathways "programme" after some 1:1 sessions to bring them into the space.

- o **Flexible approach to qualifications:** not all young people were able to achieve maths and English within the timeframe (usually around 12-18 weeks).   Where this was the case, some delivery partners were flexible – shifting from Level 2 to Level 1

with the option to do Level 2 with a later cohort, for example – resulting in greater retention.

Eligibility criteria: eligibility criteria for the Creating Pathways pilot included young people who are aged 16-25 and not in education, employment or training. This was based upon learning from the Pathways programme at the London Academy. Some people have shown an interest who are not technically "eligible" for the Creating Pathways programme. For example, they may be slightly older, slightly younger and/or technically engaged in some full-time education. It has been unfortunate to "turn people away" from the programme, especially for delivery partners who were struggling to recruit young people.

o **Engagement window:** initially the Creating Pathways programme was expected to be delivered in "cohorts" of young people beginning and ending at the same time. For most delivery partners this worked well. However, in a small number of cases, a fluid recruitment process (i.e., not "cohorts" with defined start and finish dates) felt like a better fit. This acknowledges that for some young people, after expressing an interest in the project, being made to wait for an official "start date" could result in "losing" the young person for example, if they change their mind. In some cases, it is important to seize the opportunity to work with young people when they show interest.

o **Young-person centred:** for some young people, a group setting works well. Others need a more tailored 1:1 programme. Flexibility is important – the programme works best where it can adapt to the individual.

3.9 How the funding was used during the pilot

The five Creating Pathways partners had a budget of £50,000 per year each for two years. Partners were invited to use this resource to bestmeet the needs of their projects.

Figure 5: Budget breakdown across 5 partners
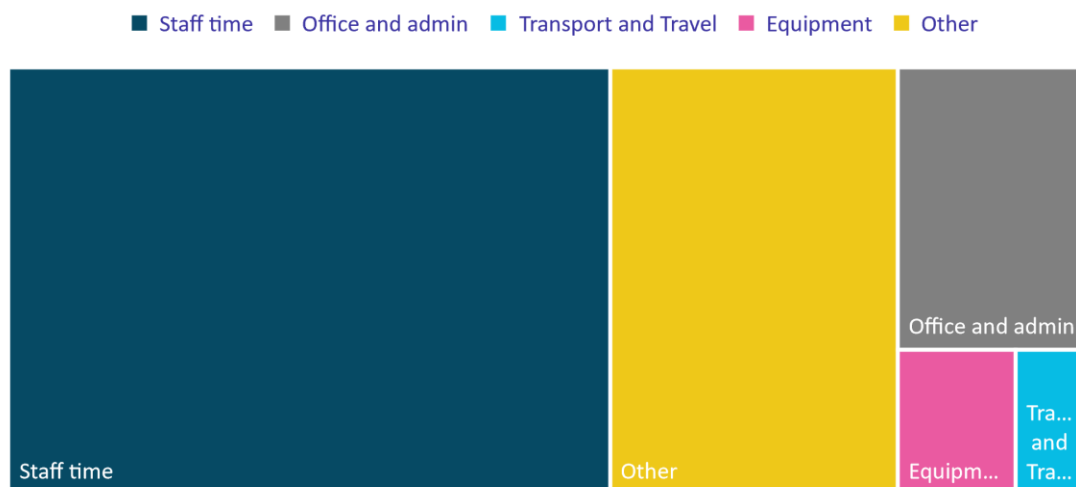
Source: Year 1 budget and Year 2 expenditure data provided by Laureus

Just over half (56%) of the project budget was spent on staff time with a mean average of £28.8k per year. This includes a combination of recruiting new staff and supplementing existing staff salaries. The use of budget for staff time varies with the most common use being Programme Coordinator / Officer (34% of staff costs) and tutors / sports coaches (26%).

Costs which have been coded as "other" (27% of budget) include English and maths tutors and specialist coaches (MMA, for example) which are not necessarily classed as "staff" but are external providers / freelancers and paid for from the Pathways budget. This shows us that the ways in which tutors and coaches have been sourced by the delivery partners differs within some bringing expertise "in house" and others using external providers.

4   Young people's participation

4.1 Outputs

4.1.1 Participation and achievement

- 208 young people engaged with the project

- 34 dropped out the most reported reason being release or early release from prison (5) followed by starting employment, apprenticeship or Further Education course (4), mental health challenges (4) or education level (4). Of those who dropped out, 6 received a vocational qualification.

- 174 young people stayed with the project for the intended duration,
    - 149 of whom were involved in the full project (including maths, English and vocational)
    - 25 of whom participated in a vocational-only version of the project

- Data on gender of participants is not available although it is reported that the vast majority of participants are boys and young men.

Figure 6: Qualifications gained [1]

Qualification topic	Number of qualifications received
English	- Functional Skills Level 1 – 9 - Functional Skills Level 2 – 8 - Functional Skills Level 3 – 4 - GCSE - 7
Maths	- Functional Skills Level 1 – 6 - Functional Skills Level 2 – 7 - Functional Skills Level 3 – 4 - GCSE - 11
Vocational	91 young people achieve a variety of vocational qualifications (see Figure 2 above for examples of quals achieved) - Plus an additional 20 x OCN Level 2 Youth Leadership And Level and Head Trauma MMA First Aid Certification from the ZJK vocational only programme

(Source: SocialQual based on data provided by FFP, 2021)

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[1] It is important to note that some partners are still awaiting qualification results at time of writing and this data represents achievements up until the end of June 2021.

The overarching outcome agreed with NLCF is to provide scaled up delivery of a proven accelerated education programme for NEET young people at risk of involvement in crime and violence. Three indicators were agreed between Fight for Peace and NLCF and a summary of progress is illustrated in the table below:

Figure 7: Summary of achievement

Outcome indicator	Indicator level [2]	Progress as of June 2021
% of young people in supported partners' education programmes who gain a qualification in English and maths	60% at the end of year 3	34% (51 out of 149) of young people in supported partners' education programmes gained maths and English qualifications.
% of young people in supported partners' education programmes who gain recognised vocational qualifications	60% at the end of year 3	61% (91 out of 149) of young people in supported partners' education programmes gained recognised vocational qualifications
% of young people in supported partners' education programmes who progress into further education, employment or training	50% at the end of the project	16% (24 out of 149) of young people in supported partners' education programmes progressed into further education, employment or training. This is thought to be underreported as longer-term data on progression has been difficult for delivery partners to capture.

(Source: SocialQual based on data provided by FFP, 2021)

As mentioned in the table, data on the number of young people supported into education, employment and training has been difficult to capture. There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, as with many evaluations, following up with people after the end of a programme is challenging. Once people have graduated from a programme, they have little incentive to provide information to the training provider (in this case, the delivery partners). Secondly, making contact with young people in the weeks and months following a programme is time consuming for delivery partners who are already operating with minimal resources.

We do not think it is necessarily a good use of time for delivery partners to chase this data in the remaining months of the programme for the following reasons:

- Qualitative data from young people suggests that much of the value of the programme can be found in personal, social and health outcomes associated with participating in the programme. Young people were keen to share the impact of

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[2] Informal target, agreed between Fight for Peace and NLCF

participation on their lifestyles, attitudes and behaviors, some of which could be seen as a precursor to employment and/or reentering formal education.

○ Covid-19 means that there have been limited employment opportunities for young people during the peak of the programme. Some young people were planning to go into hospitality or leisure, for example, and were unable to do so in 2020. Maintaining a rigid focus on employability targets would not be reflecting the context.

○ If there are resources available, delivery partners might find other more suitable ways to gain intelligence to inform subsequent delivery (instead of focusing on FE / employment outcomes). For example, there is relatively little known about:

   ▪ How best to support young people who are experiencing anxiety in alternative education in sports settings

   ▪ Barriers young people face when attending and participating in alternative education

   ▪ Reasons for dropping out and how to mitigate / reintroduce young people to the project

   ▪ Impact of sitting an exam but not passing – impact on morale and plans for the future

   ▪ General support needs young people face when trying to enter employment following the Creating Pathways programme

   ▪ Experiences and needs of women and girls who access (or would like to access) Creating Pathways projects

4.2 Outcomes for young people: what we are learning

4.2.1 Feedback from young people

Thirty young people from ZKJ Dojo and two young people from Tamworth Boxing Club took part in club-led consultation directed by this evaluation. This section summarises the lessons learned from this exercise and it is triangulated with interviews with all 5 project leads, delivery teams and parents.

Young people report three main motivations for joining the Pathways programme. Firstly and most commonly was hearing about how friendly and fun the club is:

○ *"I heard everyone was friendly" (young person)*

○ *"My mate was going and promised I would love it" (young person)*

Secondly, school not meeting their needs:

○ *"I needed my Maths but hated school" (young person)*

○ *"I wanted to get involved in coaching but couldn't get that at school" (young person)*

Finally, we have heard about how parents have encouraged their children to attend in the first instance:

- *"My Da forced me or else I was getting grounded" (young person)*

- *"I told him he needed to go [to the project]. There wasn't much else going on for him so I probably did pressure him into it. But I knew it was worth a try" (parent)*

- *"I was forced by my parents but now I want to be there every night" (young person)*

4.2.2 Personal, social and health outcomes

The following outcomes were reported from young people about how the programme has impacted on them. These are not quantified and feedback suggests that the outcomes are very diverse and specific to the young people. However, the importance of new friends and new peer groups was mentioned several times and seems to feature highly amongst young people. This was deemed particularly important in the context of Covid 19 and associated social isolation.

Figure 8: Outcomes reported by young people at ZKJ Dojo and Tamworth

Personal and social development	*Physical and mental health*
o I have a new peer group	o I have new mindfulness skills
o I feel more confident	o I have improved physical health
o I have more belief in myself	o I look after myself better (sleep, diet, exercise)
o I have improved interpersonal skills	
o I am able to set myself goals	
o I am better able to lose / fail – it is ok!	*Employability*
o I can see people have faith in me	o I have a future career in coaching
o I can stick with something	
o I am more organised than I thought I was	

(Source: SocialQual 2021 based on feedback from ZKJ Dojo and Tamworth Boxing Club)

Interestingly, direct educational outcomes focused on qualifications did not feature highly amongst young people when they were asked to describe the impact of the project. However, some of the personal, social and health outcomes they describe could be important pre-conditions for achieving educationally further down the line.

4.2.3 What happens after Creating Pathways?

Young people changed behaviour and long-term plans in 5 areas as a result of participating in Creating Pathways. Those in marked with an asterisk (*) were most commonly mentioned :

- Coaching and mentoring others* *("I'd like to coach other kids in the gym")*

- Take new qualifications or college courses* *("I'd like to get help with my English if possible")*

- o Continue with training in the gym
- o Compete in boxing / MMA competitions
- o Have a new job / planning to get a new job

4.2.4 Case study: how Creating Pathways supports employability

Josh explains how the Pathways programme made him reassess his employment situation and helped him find a job he enjoys:

Josh*: "*Yeah, I think it made me realise with my job as well, I just worked at MacDonald's, I just don't want to waste my time. I just went out and applied myself, and I've got a new job, I'm a carer now. It's a really rewarding job and it wouldn't have happened if I didn't come here, so big up to Bulldogs, basically".

SocialQual*: Amazing. Tell me about being a carer, what's that like?*

***Josh****: "It can be stressful, but it's nice. Each day is different, there's not the same crap different day. You're chatting to people all the time, and it keeps you busy as well. So you don't even know, time flies. By the time you get there and sit down with someone to have a chat and see how they are, it's like, oh crap, I've got to move on. It's good, really good […]

Well, it was a five pillar program here. So I went through that […], she helped me build my CV up. I think coming here, I was quiet and reserved and I wasn't happy to be honest. When I came here, it just kept building and building, and in the end I just thought I'll go for it. I had a massive change, and it's been positive so far".

Names have been changed

4.2.5 Case study: how the Creating Pathways programme differs from school

"It seemed to get into my brain more" - Eva aged 19
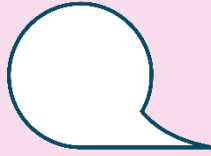
Heard about it on social media and with a bit of encouragement from Mom – *"*I'd seen it on Facebook but my mom's quite good with the gym and then she had mentioned it, like, "Oh, like you've proper tickled my fancy." I was like, "Yeah, sounds good." So I thought might as well, why not? And I was into sport as well, so…."*

Values the practical side of learning: "I also like the learning part of it because I understand it more. I like learning as well and then I like doing the practical part. [….] [Practical demonstration] is a good way of learning […] I didn't expect it. They were very involved in the teaching as well. So that was unexpected as well, because I really do like that. So I was like, "Oh, this is class. I'm learning better." That's how I learn, so I was genuinely struggling with everything [at school], it seemed to get into my brain more [on the Pathways programme]".

Friendly atmosphere helps to boost confidence: "Everyone just seems so happy and positive, and when you speak to them [teachers and staff] it's not like you're asking them something like when you go to the doctors and they're like... You can speak to them, and they're really happy to help and engage. I think it's to do with how everyone is here to be honest. Just a good atmosphere".

Different to other gyms: *"*It's so different to a normal gym, you don't feel as intimidated when you go on. Sometimes when you go to a normal gym, you just feel a bit shy, and with this you don't. You feel like everyone's there doing the same thing as you, they're there to work hard and they're only bothered about themselves, whereas in an open gym it just feels like you're being, not watched, but watched and judged and that. You don't get that".

Personal approach compared to school: "They know you more, compared to in school it's just like, go in, sit down. They speak to you, they talk to you, you can have a conversation with them about anything. They are really helpful, teaching us while we're teaching".

Names have been changed

5   Impact on organisations and sustainability

5.1 Programme outcome summary

Our initial Theory of Change to inform this evaluation is focused on the extent to which Creating Pathways funding supports Alliance Members to build their capacity to deliver alternative education: the intended programme outcomes are organisational. The delivery partners were starting from a strong base with regards to their confidence and ability to deliver high quality alternative education for young people.

Figure 9: Summary of progress against intended capacity building outcomes from initial ToC

Change	Outcome	Baseline (October 2019)	End of project (June 2021)
Moderate change overall and/or differed for delivery partner	*Delivery Partners have improved ability (skills) to deliver alternative education*		
	Delivery Partners are able to benefit from a learning community		
	Delivery Partners are able to use the skills gained though Creating Pathways, beyond the life of the funding		
	Delivery Partners contribute to knowledge of what works when delivering alternative education provision		
Maintained status quo	*Delivery Partners have the resources to deliver alternative education*		
	Alternative education provision is needs-driven, informed by stakeholders, leading to better outcomes for young people		

(Source: SocialQual)

Our evaluation has identified some unintended outcomes (not in the initial Theory of Change) at organisational level as described in more detail the section below.
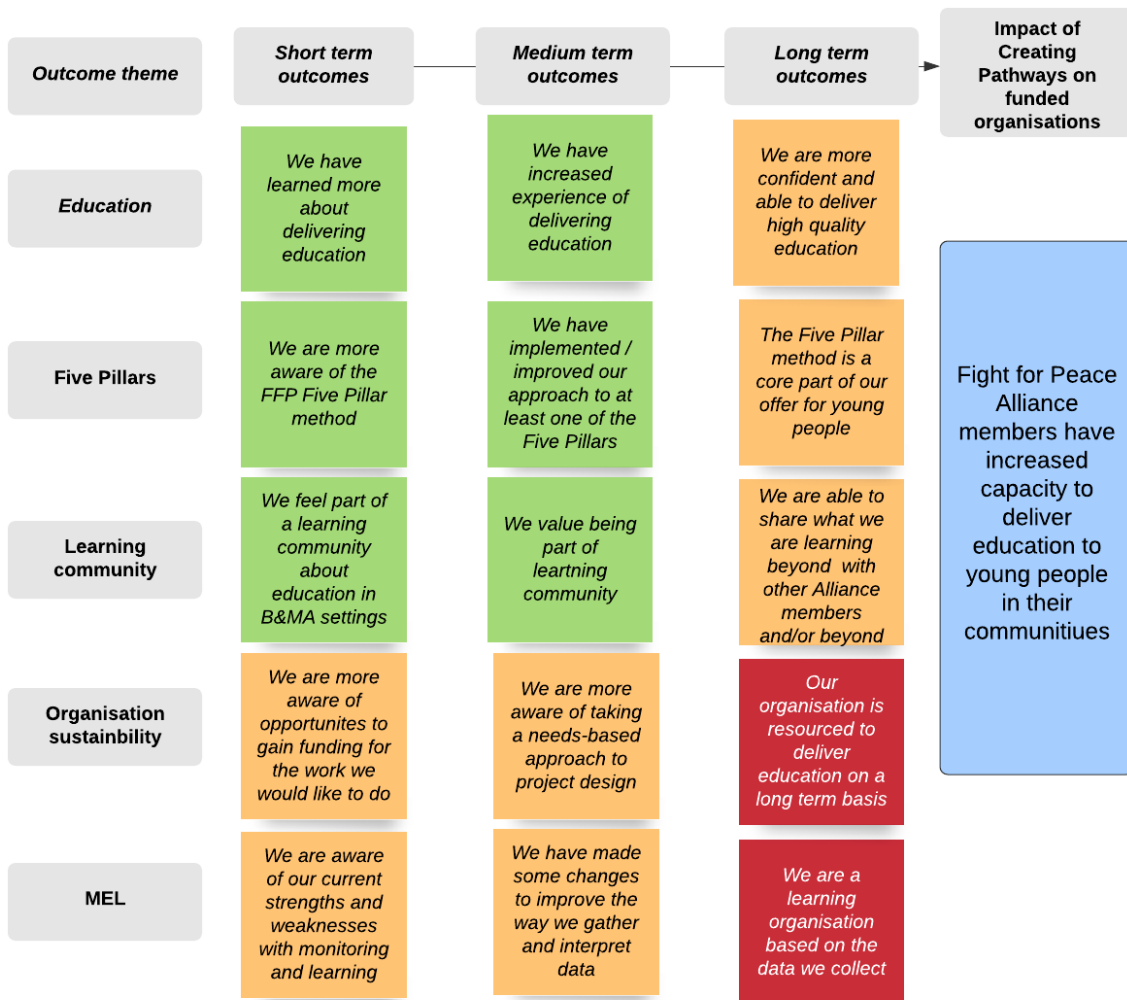
5.2 Improved organisational capacity

5.2.1 About organisational capacity outcomes

As mentioned above, some of the organisational capacity outcomes achieved through the programme were not articulated in the original Theory of Change – which is to be expected for a pilot programme with learning at its core.

The figure below proposes an alternative Theory of Change based on evaluation evidence, to reflect the impact of the Creating Pathways pilot on the 5 funded delivery partners. Outcomes shaded in green represent change has occurred for all 5 partners. Those shaded orange represent where change has occurred for 2-4 partners. Those shaded in red represent where change has occurred for 0-1 partner.

Figure 10: Proposed Theory of Change to reflect organisational impacts of Creating Pathways pilot

Outcome theme	Short term outcomes	Medium term outcomes	Long term outcomes	Impact of Creating Pathways on funded organisations
Education	We have learned more about delivering education	We have increased experience of delivering education	We are more confident and able to deliver high quality education	
Five Pillars	We are more aware of the FFP Five Pillar method	We have implemented / improved our approach to at least one of the Five Pillars	The Five Pillar method is a core part of our offer for young people	Fight for Peace Alliance members have increased capacity to deliver education to young people in their communitiues
Learning community	We feel part of a learning community about education in B&MA settings	We value being part of leartning community	We are able to share what we are learning beyond with other Alliance members and/or beyond	
Organisation sustainbility	We are more aware of opportunites to gain funding for the work we would like to do	We are more aware of taking a needs-based approach to project design	Our organisation is resourced to deliver education on a long term basis	
MEL	We are aware of our current strengths and weaknesses with monitoring and learning	We have made some changes to improve the way we gather and interpret data	We are a learning organisation based on the data we collect	

(Source: SocialQual: 2021)

5.2.2 Education delivery outcomes

All partners self-identified as having the skills required to deliver alternative education at the baseline period. However, while they claim to have the skills, this was not matched by experience with 4 (out of 5) providing accredited English and maths for the first time with Creating Pathways funding. Interestingly, previous experience of delivering formal education was not a prerequisite for success with one of the partners delivering formal education for the first time achieving very high recruitment, retention and qualification rates.

5.2.3 Five Pillars outcomes

All delivery partners had received training in the Five Pillar methodology to become an Alliance member, prior to this Creating Pathways project starting. This was a foundation on which they could build through the Creating Pathways projects.

Delivery partners report that since their Creating Pathways training, they have better understanding of the 5 Fight for Peace Pillars and how to integrate them into their work. This was not in our initial Theory of Change but we can see how personal development, education and B&MA have become integrated with some partners also embracing principles of youth leadership and employability. Increased ability to deliver personal development support including supporting young people to re-engage with learning, building confidence and preconditions to learn (such as supporting daily routines) has been a particular success of the programme and it is likely that the delivery partners will be able to apply this in other work they do.

5.2.4 Learning community outcomes

Funded organisations report benefits of a Learning Community and there is evidence of funded delivery partners supporting one another. Training sessions and site-visits have been delivered at Alliance-member sites (Tamworth and St Columbs Park House / Stirke) which has enhanced the learning and contributed to the sense that the fund-holders are partners in the programme. Online meetings were held during lock down and a final face-to-face session is planned for September 2021.

5.2.5 MEL outcomes

Delivery partners do not report feeling confident around monitoring, evaluation and learning. A shared-outcomes framework was codesigned between the 5 delivery partners, Fight for Peace, Laureus and SocialQual. This shared-outcomes framework focused on demographics and qualifications rather than soft outcomes. It was ambitious to codesign a data collection tool that would work for all partners and the shared framework has had limited success according to delivery partners, some of whom found it difficult to align with their own systems. Challenges include different timings of the cohorts between partners making it challenging to set consistent data reporting "milestones."

One partner (Sporting Chance North East) is collecting qualitative data via chronologies (a method used by social work) and has found this to be very valuable. Another partner has collected their own baseline and follow up survey of data around their local context (attitudes to different religious groups).

5.3 Organisational sustainability outcomes

Partners have mixed levels of clarity about what their exit strategy will be after the Creating Pathways funding ends with 3 partners having a vision for what they'd like to do to build upon the experience and 2 partners planning to continue albeit without clarity of how it will be funded. Delivery partners are confident that the skills will be embedded within their organisation, but they are not certain if funding will be available to allow activities to continue. The Fight for Peace team have offered support to organisations seeking to sustain and/or build upon their work on the Creating Pathways project. The following plans and needs have been identified.

5.3.1 Social work and Senco at Sporting Chance North East

o Sporting Chance North East are planning to extend the contract of the social worker to make it a permanent member of staff. Ideally they would recruit a second social worker too to meet demand. They have also identified a need for a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO). At present the Managing Director of the organisation deals with the Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) but this takes a lot of their time; it would be more economical to have a specialist in the role who liaises with the local authority to get plans in place.

5.3.2 Growth at ZKJ Dojo and beyond

o As a result of the success of the programme and the subsequent raising of the gym's profile, ZKJ Dojo has been approached by several organisations including local government in Northern Ireland to consider delivering a similar programme for young people (excluding the education element) during the 2021 summer holidays (this includes Northern Ireland's 'Marching Season' when there is a higher risk of young people getting into trouble). ZKJ Dojo is also helping to establish an Fight for Peace-type programme in Drogheda (Republic of Ireland), a town which has had a very serious drug and gang problem in recent years.

o Beyond individual programmes, ZKJ Dojo has been invited to work with the world governing body for MMA (IMMAF) to roll out a programme to train trainers to deliver similar programmes in other countries focusing on MMA, personal development, coaching and mentoring. ZKJ Dojo is working with Fight for Peace's Alliance Programme Manager on this initiative and seven other countries have already expressed an interest. Through the facilitation of Fight for Peace, ZKJ is working with a consultant specialised in content and training to document and package their programme.

5.3.3 A scaled up Fight for Myself prison based programme in development

o Fight for Peace are helping St Columb's develop a new project bid which would maintain the programme at Magilligan Prison. The second phase would be to extend delivery to Hydebank Wood, a prison and young offenders' centre in Belfast. This would allow St Columb's to focus on younger offenders and also extend delivery to women (there's a women's wing at the prison). Finally, assuming the project is able to continue to grow, there is an ambition to take it national, involving Alliance partners from across the UK to deliver the programme in prisons.

o The delivery team has considered whether the programme could be delivered by others, such as prison staff themselves. While technically possible – prisons have gyms with staff who could potentially deliver the physical elements – they found at Magilligan some resistance to change and scepticism from the gym staff. It may be a challenge to get such staff to buy into the whole programme (i.e. including the 'softer' elements around mindfulness). There is also a belief that prisoner buy-in is much easier when a project such as this is delivered by an external agency.

o St Columb's recognises that much of the success of the project is down to Pinta, who leads the physical exercise aspects of the programme. He is very highly

respected by the participants and one potential factor limiting the expansion of the project would be the reliance on a single individual. However, the programme does include a mentoring element which means that participants are able to take a leadership role for some aspects of the programme, once it is up and running.

5.3.4 Two partners seeking to identify ways to sustain their work

Two delivery partners – Bulldogs and Tamworth – are looking at how to sustain their education provision. Unlike the three delivery partners mentioned above, Tamworth and Bulldogs experienced some challenges during the pilot phase contributing to challenges with sustaining / rolling out their programmes. For example:

o Throughout the pilot period both Bulldogs and Tamworth struggled, at times, to recruit and retain young people onto their programme

o Bulldogs furloughed a number of their staff during lockdown in 2020 making planned outreach challenging

o Partner organisations who had committed to referring young people to both organisations did not materialise (see section 3.3 for more on this). This could partly be due to Covid 19-associated challenges but also could indicate that the context mapping stage did not go far enough in ascertaining demand for services and/or formalising referral procedures

In Tamworth, a partnership with the local Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is likely to generate new referrals of young people for a partnership project in the future.

5.4 About 'scale'

Creating Pathways is the first time that Fight for Peace have "scaled up" their activities in this way and the first time they have commissioned a grant administrator (Laureus) to support them. In this case it is the education pillar that has been "scaled" although it is possible that other features of Fight for Peace's methodology could be scaled up too. This section provides a summary of reflections and lessons for Fight for Peace in the context of "scaling up" their activity.

5.5 Regranting processes

5.5.1 About the Pathways regranting process

All UK-based Alliance members were invited to apply for Creating Pathways funding. This included:

o A call for proposals and communications campaign including email, social media, WhatsApp messages and a hosted webinar (plus recording)

o An initial application and visit to assess due diligence, ability to manage a grant of this size and ensure robust governance structures

o Following selection of the initial 6 partners, a five-day training under a "Community of Practice" format to share the theory behind the programme, in particular the "needs-led" ethos

- A second stage including a "needs" or "context" mapping was conducted by the 6 delivery partners. This informed a more detailed project plan. Completion of this second stage was necessary for the first payment of funds to be made to delivery partners

- The two-phase application process was a strategic decision from Fight for Peace and Laureus to encourage a robust programme design, informed by context mapping.

Eleven (11) applicants were received. Overall, the 6 partners selected to deliver Pathways are a good mix of size of organisation, mix of geographies and a mix of settings.

5.5.2 One partner unable to deliver

Early in 2020 it was reluctantly decided by Fight for Peace and Laureus that one of the partners (Oldham Boxing Club) would be ineligible to continue as a Pathways partner. Prior to this decision, the team at Fight for Peace offered and provided support to Oldham Boxing Club with specific measures to achieve the requirements in the agreement. For example, they were encouraged to appoint a specific Project Manager for Pathways. This appointment did not happen, and it became clear that even with the additional support over a number of weeks, the club would not be able to meet the requirements they had signed up to in the Partnership Agreement. Further information about the partner who did not continue and associated learning can be found in the appendix.

In the context of a "pilot" programme it is understandable that 1 partner was not suited to delivering the programme and that some partners were more successful than others in reaching young people.

5.5.3 Selection criteria

The following selection criteria about Creating Pathways applicant-organisations were included in the call for proposals

Figure 11: Eligibility criteria

- Must be an Alliance partner;

- Must be a not-for-profit incorporated entity;

- Must be located in an area affected by crime and violence;

- Must be able to demonstrate a need in the local area, NEET population 16 - 25 years old, that is not currently being met;

- Must be using boxing and martial arts as a tool for development;

- Must have capacity for formal and informal outreach and engagement;

- Must have experience in one of the three following areas: personal development, mentoring and/or employability.

The application form included questions to ascertain commitment, motivation and potential to deliver. These included:

- Organisations capacity for formal and informal outreach and how they work with others (referral agencies)
- Organisations experience of providing services related to personal development, mentoring and employability for young people
- Organisations experience of using B&MA as a tool for development
- A summary of how the programme would be adapted in the local area e.g. how NEETs would be recruited, qualifications on offer etc.
- A summary of local need
- A summary of current provision in the local area

The information provided in the application form was discussed further during the visits.

Once all applications were received, other considerations informed the final decision. For example, there was a desire to ensure a geographically diverse set of partners and ensuring that partners were not too big (and therefore able to attract funding from elsewhere) or too small (and therefore presenting a risk for managing a large budget). Once all applications were received, there was an acknowledgement that having 5 (or 6) partners with a diverse set of delivery contexts would be helpful for the pilot, maximising the opportunity for Fight for Peace and the Alliance to learn about what works .

The team at Fight for Peace considered applicants' previous involvement in the Alliance i.e. their level of involvement, how much help they'd requested, how much they'd shared and their ability to implement advice received. This was regarded as a "proxy" to assess the willingness of potential delivery partners to adopt the principles of Creating Pathways and a willingness to learn. Knowledge of applicant's prior Alliance involvement was based on relationships between applicant delivery partners and staff within the Fight for Peace team. At the point of making final decisions, some of the key Fight for Peace staff were not present and Laureus (with little in-depth knowledge of applicant-Alliance involvement) made the final decision. Fight for Peace team members recognise that consideration to applicant-Alliance involvement is an important part of such programmes and steps should be taken in future programmes to ensure such knowledge is systematically considered.

Experience of unsuccessful Creating Pathways applicants can be found in our baseline and interim reports (October 2019 and January 2020 respectively). In summary, there was a mixed experience of applying for the funding with some negative experiences reported amongst unsuccessful applicants.

5.5.4 Identifying potential at application stage

This section summarises reflections from the Fight for Peace team, Laureus and observations made by the evaluators.

Balancing risk with potential

Of the 5 partners who delivered Pathways, one of partner was a volunteer-led organisation. Based on their application they were deemed somewhat "risky" because they had not managed a grant of that size previously and didn't have paid employees. However, this partner turned out to be one of the more successful delivery partners, reaching a higher number of young people and achieving a high number of qualifications. At the same time, some of the more "robust" organisations (i.e. those with a previous track record of managing large grants, larger staff team) submitted high quality applications which didn't translate into their delivery, i.e. reaching smaller-than-planned numbers of young people and a higher-than-expected dropout rate etc.

When the grant managers and programme leads (at both Fight for Peace and Laureus) were invited to reflect on this, there was an acknowledgement that such programme should go beyond assessing organisational capacity and track record and should endeavour to assess potential to deliver. The charisma and leadership skills of the delivery teams was credited with the reason why some delivery partners were more successful than others. This is something that is difficult to assess on a traditional application form, but some interesting ideas for selection criteria have emerged.

Figure 12: Selection criteria ideas for subsequent programme

Source: SocialQual (2021)

Below is a short explanation of why these selection criteria may help to fund successful delivery partners for subsequent programmes. Some of these concepts are at odds with traditional application processes whereby applicants need to demonstrate "how much they know" and instead invite applicants to share their vulnerabilities and weaknesses as an indicator of being able to benefit from such a programme.

- **Need to assess agility –** some of the more successful Pathways partners were able to pivot their project based on context (e.g. St Columbs Park House and Strike Academy developed a community partnership when Covid-19 made it challenging to work in the Magilligan prison). Inviting applicants to give examples of how they have had to respond to difficult contexts (such as Covid-19, for example) might be one way of identifying successful partners.

- **Need to understand willingness to learn, grow and ask for / accept support –** the partner who was unable to continue with the project was reluctant to accept help offered by Fight for Peace (see appendix for more info). Applicants who demonstrate a "growth mindset" and a willingness to "get things wrong" and learn from it are more likely to benefit from such programmes.

- **Acknowledge what they "don't know" –** an application process which invites applicants to tell the Fight for Peace "what they don't know" and areas they wish to develop will set the tone for the programme, encouraging partners to seek support.

- **Need to hear from young people** – the passion, charisma and grit of delivery teams has been observed as one of the critical success factors for Creating Pathways partners. Hearing from young people who access services from the (applicant) delivery partner is a potential way to assess the extent to which delivery partners have these qualities and is aligned with the Fight for Peace youth leadership pillar.

- **Need to understand ability to mainstream** – gaining a sense of whether the delivery partner has a clear idea and intention to mainstream the project beyond the life of the funding.

6   Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Consideration points

The first set of recommendations are Programme-design focused (6.2) for Fight for Peace to consider when designing subsequent programmes. These recommendations are based on learning from Creating Pathways but could be considered for any programme where Fight for Peace are considering 'scale'.

The second set of recommendations are Project-delivery focused (6.3) which may be helpful for other sports clubs seeking to develop alternative education. Fight for Peace may also note some of these recommendations as development needs for their Alliance members.

6.2 Programme-design

6.2.1 Supporting in a menu of qualifications over a longer time frame

The programme was designed to make English and maths teaching a mandatory part of the projects. However, only 1 in 5 young people who completed the programme gained an English or maths qualification (so far, with some still awaiting results at time of writing) suggesting that this is not an appropriate pathway for many young people within the timeframe of this programme. However, there has been huge success with vocational qualifications, with 74% of all young people (and 61% of those who participated in the full programme including maths and English too) gaining at least 1 vocational qualification.

It is recommended that future programmes offer a combination of vocational-only pathways AND English/maths pathways too. For those young people who wish to gain English and/or maths qualifications, a longer period of time (i.e. beyond the standard 18 weeks) is likely to be required.

6.2.2 Consider a "laddered" approach for regranting

It is acknowledged that delivering a comprehensive education programme is a big leap for some Alliance partners (with 2 partners struggling to recruit and retain young people, for example). Those with high visibility in their local communities appear able to recruit and retain high numbers of young people and this should be a consideration point for assessing applications. Clubs with minimal visibility may benefit from smaller grants in the short term to build their reputations locally.

It is suggested that subsequent programmes offer a "ladder" of options with a smaller grant available for those who are new to education delivery to start a homework club and/or employ a sessional tutor, for example.

6.2.3 Ensure that selection criteria assess potential as well as existing capacity

The assessment and selection criteria for (Alliance member) applicants wishing to deliver Creating Pathways projects was broadly successful and based on capacity. However, this pilot has shown that organisational capacity based on systems, procedures and prior experience do not automatically translate to success in project implementation. Many other factors come into play, including the staff and volunteers involved, especially their ability to build trust with young people and their creativity to adapt the programme to changing needs.

While a small sample, the pilot has demonstrated that organisations who have a high level of visibility within their local communities are more likely to recruit and retain high numbers of young people to these programmes. Indicators for assessing this visibility should be considered, ideally beyond claims from clubs themselves and impartial where possible.

Subsequent programmes should consider more transparency over selection criteria for such programmes and should invite applicants to develop indicators to demonstrate their potential (e.g. willingness to learn and accept capacity building support). (See section 5.5.4 for more information).

6.2.4 Value attitudinal shifts

One of the key successes of the programme has been a shift in mindset amongst young people towards learning. When young people were invited to talk through the biggest impact of the project on themselves they are more likely to report personal, social and health outcomes rather than education outcomes. Similarly, delivery partners report that even where qualifications have not been achieved, young participants have less fear or dislike towards education because education has been presented to them in a different way (more fun, and person-centred). Even though young people may not have gained an English or maths qualification in the cycle of the project, they may be more likely to try again in the future due to the positive experience they've had on this project. The combination of peer support, fitness, personal development and life skills and can contribute to improved health (physical and mental) outcomes, as exemplified above in section 4.2.3 (e.g. "I have more belief in myself" and "I am more likely to stick with something"), which were not initial target outcomes for this programme but could take more of a central role in the future. This resonates with Fight for Peace 5 pillar methodology which takes a holistic approach to supporting young people recognising that education, personal development, leadership, B&MA and employability are complementary.

A baseline assessment of attitudes to learning early in a young person's journey would be useful to capture and compare against their attitudes towards the end of their participation.

6.2.5 Still more to learn

Data about the number of young people supported into education, employment and training has been difficult to capture. There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, as with many evaluations, following up with people after the end of a programme is challenging. Once people have graduated from a programme, they have little incentive to provide information to the training provider (in this case, the delivery partners). Secondly, making contact with young people in the weeks and months following a programme is time consuming for delivery partners who are already operating with minimal resources.

Subsequent programmes should carefully consider if long term data about employability and education is a desirable outcome and proportionate to collect. Any data collection efforts should be balanced with other gaps in knowledge, for example, there is relatively little known about the impact of sitting an exam but not passing – impact on morale and plans for the future.

6.2.6 Recognise that mental health remains a priority

Creating Pathways partners indicate that an increasing number of young people are presenting mental health issues. And the nature of these issues is intensified and exacerbated by Covid-19, occasionally leading to safeguarding implications. It is also recognised that Creating Pathways partners (and indeed other clubs in the Fight for Peace Alliance) are likely to be one of the few "trusted" organisations for some of these young people, therefore a unique opportunity to support young people with their mental health.

It is important to recognise that the needs of young people are increasingly complex and any subsequent programmes designed by Fight for Peace should encourage partners to build in adequate resource for trained, skilled professionals to support this work.

6.2.7 Share the learning with Alliance members

There has been good learning between the 5 partners but, at present, limited dissemination amongst the broader Alliance. Some plans are in place to share learning from Creating Pathways with the Alliance in late 2021.

We suggest that Fight for Peace should develop a strategy to raise awareness of 'what works' as a result of Creating Pathways (and any subsequent programmes).

6.3 Project delivery

6.3.1 Support mentors

Where projects have had a mentor initiative within their project there has been positive feedback about the impact this has had on both the mentee and the mentor. It also aligns with the Fight for Peace pillar of Youth Leadership.

Where appropriate it is recommended that education projects build in a mentor initiative, empowering the mentor and supporting the mentee.

6.3.2 Consider "routes" into the programme

Where delivery partners have been reliant on referrals into the programme, there have been challenges associated with recruiting young people onto the programme. An early context / needs mapping process (see 5.5.1) went some way to encourage delivery partners to think about how young people would be identified into their projects. However, in some cases it didn't go far enough and there was some lack of clarity around how many referrals could be expected and how robust (clear, timely, relevant information shared) referrals could be made.

For future programmes it is recommended that "context / needs mapping" goes further to include an articulation of who referral partners are, how many young people can be expected to be referred and some suggestions to "boost" numbers in case a potential referral partner is unable to deliver. Fight for Peace may be able to support this process.

6.3.3 Giving young people control over their journey

We have heard examples of Pathways partners listening to what young people want and offering responsive, flexible pathways through the programme.

Where relevant it may be appropriate for young people to have an extended induction period or inviting them to re-join in subsequent cohorts.   This resonates with the Fight for Peace pillar of Youth Leadership which is giving space for young people to lead their own journey.

6.3.4 Support for social workers and others on the front line

The social worker embedded within the North East project has been successful and could be adapted elsewhere. If an organisation is to host such a role it is important that the infrastructure is there to give supervision and support to the post-holder.

Embedding a social worker within a team should be encouraged. Such a role is likely to lead to disclosures from young people.   It is important that any social worker (or similar role) is given appropriate support to avoid burnout and to ensure that safeguarding standards remain high.

Appendix 1 – baseline of 5 Creating Pathways partners

Baseline position (before Creating Pathways funding):

- 4 (out of 5) provided accredited qualifications

- 2 (out of 5) provided accredited English and Maths

- 4 (out of 5) are providing accredited English and Maths for the first time with Creating Pathways funding

Appendix 2 - response to Covid-19

A longer version of this section was initially in our Interim Learning Report (January 2020) and a summary has been included here as an appendix for ease

Each of the five Creating Pathways partners have had to respond differently to the lockdown restrictions implemented in March 2020. For the first lockdown, educational establishments were allowed to remain open for children and young people who are considered to be at risk, vulnerable and/or have a social worker involved in their family. Following the first lockdown, restrictions were driven by a Tier system which meant that different regions had different restrictions.   The table below summarises how each Creating Pathways partner responded to the first (and longest) lockdown in 2020 which ran from 16th March 2020 – 10th May 2020 (with many restrictions still in place beyond). All partners continued provision during this period albeit in different ways.

Figure 13: Impact of Covid-19 summary

Name of Creating Pathways partner	Delivery mode during lockdown 2020	Impact of Covid-19 on recruitment, retention and completion
Bulldogs	Switch to primarily online delivery.	• Cohort 1 some participants unable to complete Maths and English qualifications as planned due to lockdown (although 3 did achieve vocational qualifications). • Cohort 2 recruitment severely impacted.
Sporting Chance CIC	Switch to primarily online with some face to face delivery.	• Cohort 1 had challenges with the quality of work submitted for accredited qualifications. Have been invited back to complete. • Recruitment for subsequent cohorts remained high.
St Columbs Park House	Switch to online delivery for remainder of Cohort 1. Cohort 2 has adapted to a different setting.	• There were interruptions in delivery due to covid (prison lockdown). Remote access was eventually secured to allow continued delivery. Physical exercise training pivoted to general fitness rather than kickboxing because prison gym closed due to covid. • A separate community-based project was set up to ensure some delivery took place while the prison was locked down.
Tamworth	Remained open, face to face continued.	• Cohort 1 retention was not affected. • Cohort 2 has been fine due to referrals from schools.
ZKJ Dojo	Remained open, face to face continued.	• Recruitment and retention remained high throughout.

In summary:

- There has been a severe impact because of Covid-19 on the **recruitment** of young people for 2 partners (Bulldogs and Tamworth).

- There has been a severe impact because of Covid-19 on the **completion of qualifications** for 2 partners (Bulldogs, Tamworth) and a moderate impact on 1 partner (Sporting Chance CIC).

- Covid-19 has impacted on the **delivery format** for 3 partners who have needed to adapt their programmes (St Columbs Park House, Bulldogs, Sporting Chance CIC).

Covid-19 has exacerbated mental health problems: all 5 partners have observed additional complex mental health challenges as a result of Covid-19. This ranges from tension which can lead to outbursts in the home, through to lack of motivation:

- *"[Our young people] felt isolated. They couldn't do anything. They had no energy. [This led to] tensions, anger in the home". (Creating Pathways partner)*

- *"For the young people who are NEET they have even lower aspirations [than before Covid-19]. They just say "we can't [attend sessions], it's covid" because we are being told to stay at home. Normally if the young person is NEET the family aspirations are low. It [Covid] gives the family an excuse [to not engage]". (Creating Pathways partner)*

- *"Young people are more isolated [now, as a result of Covid-19] They feel isolated. In some ways they became a bit needy. They been quite open to support. They do accept." (Creating Pathways partner)*

Appendix 3 – an unsuccessful partner

Initially there were 6 Creating Pathways partners. Early in 2020 it was reluctantly decided by Fight for Peace and Laureus that one of the partners would be ineligible to continue as a Pathways partner.

Prior to this decision, the team at Fight for Peace offered and provided support to the club with specific measures to achieve the requirements in the agreement. There were concerned, for example, that data was not stored securely and that fire exits were inaccessible. The partner was also unable to fully account for all its expenditure in its reporting i.e. there was poor financial management. As a result, the club were encouraged to appoint a specific Project Manager for Pathways. This appointment did not happen and it became clear that even with the additional support over a number of weeks, the club would not be able to meet the requirements they had signed up to in the Partnership Agreement.

This experience has highlighted the following:

- Before making the decision to cease funding the club, Fight for Peace offered support to the organisation to give them every possible opportunity to engage with the Pathways programme. The club were encouraged to make an external appointment of a specific Project Manager for Pathways. They were also asked to get fire safety procedures in place and asked to get official contracts in place with partner organisations. Unfortunately these things were not delivered.

- An organisation can appear to be well-managed on "paper" (i.e. an application form) and even during an initial visit. However, it is not always easy for a funder to know whether a funded organisation possess the unique skills – some of which are being employed for the first time on a programme of this nature.

- There is an element of risk when funding projects with an experimental ethos. Creating Pathways has innovation at its core. Inherently, some projects which take a new or experimental approach will not be wholly successful.

- For subsequent programmes, there may be an opportunity to ask for more specific examples of robust project management to minimise the risk and maximise the chance that funded organisations are able to manage budgets appropriately.

Appendix 4 – about the 5 delivery partners

Name of organisation	About the organisation
Bulldogs Boxing and Community Activities (Port Talbot, Wales)	The Bulldogs is a Partnership between Bulldogs Boxing & Community Activities and Port Talbot Amateur Boxing Club. The Charity delivers community-focused activities whilst the Boxing Club delivers the sport. The Bulldogs has been formed to give the people of Port Talbot and its surrounding area a fighting chance in life by supporting positive life choices. Bulldogs adopt a holistic approach – working with community members to support them with their health and wellbeing by providing fitness services as well as educational programmes. The Bulldogs also use the power of non-contact Boxing to involve, educate and inspire young people and their families[3].
Sporting Chance North East (Newcastle, England)	Sporting Chance is a not-for profit organisation set up in 2016. The focus is to support people to overcome their life experiences and unlock their potential via sport. Their model looks to "prevent" further involvement in offending services by "retaining" our young people's engagement and commitment, ultimately leading to positive "progression" through life. Sporting Chance empowers children and young people through sport and fitness to gain qualifications, achieve employment and improve social skills. They specialise in working with schools and disadvantaged/ disabled groups to improve health outcomes via our innovative sport, exercise and health programmes[4.]
Strike Martial Arts and St. Columbs Park House (Derry-Londonderry, N. Ireland)	**Strike Martial Arts Academy**, based in Derry, is a club for all abilities and fitness goals. Support people with fitness goals and or to compete right up to world champion status. **St Columb's Park House** opened as a peace and reconciliation centre in 1994 in Derry offering a shared space for learning, leadership and

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[3] Adapted from https://bulldogsboxingcommunity.wales/about-us/who-are-we/ accessed 2021

[4] Adapted from https://scne.org.uk/ accessed 2021

	peaceful activism. Their mission is to help to nurture peaceful, vibrant and compassionate communities.
Tamworth Boxing Club (Tamworth, England)	Tamworth Boxing Club (TBC) is a charity established in 1969 that has a track record of working with the most vulnerable members of our community. TBC has successfully delivered a high number of projects aimed at all sectors of a local community that has experienced significant economic decline and increasing poverty over recent years. TBC's aims and objectives as expressed in the constitution statement: "The advancement of education and the provision of recreational and leisure time activities in particular boxing facilities for all age groups of the community, in the interests of social welfare with the objects of improving the conditions of life for the said people"[5]
The ZKJ Dojo (Belfast, N. Ireland)	ZKJ is the leading mixed martial arts organisation in Northern Ireland. ZKJs initial goal of the club was to provide a unique and fully operational gym to promote all aspects of Karate Jutsu, this has since developed into a vehicle for engaging young people on the margins of society into positive life changing activities. An exemplary model for youth development using MMA ZKJ recently won the World Amateur Award for Changing Lives through sport. ZKJ works with partners such as the NIYF and Comic relief to provide bespoke programmes for youths affected by negative influences in their lives. The organisation aim is to develop mentors and coaches who can work in all parts of our wider community in changing lives through our programmes[6]

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[5] Adapted from the application form to Creating Pathways 2019

[6] Adapted from the application form to Creating Pathways 2019