Evaluation of the Resilient Schools Programme

Resilient Schools Programme Evaluation Report

Apteligen

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The Resilient Schools Project is a 3 year programme, funded by a Section 64 Third Sector Mental Health Grant (2015-18), in which Time Credits are used as a vehicle to develop a culture of volunteering among children, young people and their families in order to impact positively on wellbeing, improve mental health outcome and support early interventions for those identified at risk. This report provides a summary evaluation of the Resilient Schools project (2015-18), to assess impact against the intended outcomes identified in the grant application.

The evaluation was undertaken by means of the development of an outcome framework in 2015 followed by two surveys which were completed by members earning Time Credits and used to assess self-reported benefits in relation to earning and spending Time Credits. It quickly became clear that gathering data from schools is challenging given the competing demands and priorities for staff time. Although the surveys were purposely kept short and limited to closed questions in order to encourage responses, a number of schools, most notably secondary schools did not participate and not all schools submitted data on membership and earnings. However, despite this, there have been over 1000 responses to the two surveys run over the course of the evaluation, and where possible, membership data and data gathered in other events has been used to help supplement our understanding of how Time Credits have impacted within the Resilient Schools project. These challenges around engagement do however suggest that for the future development of the project it would be wise to try and obtain wider engagement from stakeholders such as Health Boards, and an improved method of data capture from participating schools.

The research identified a number of key findings against core outcomes:

Outcome 1: Improving wellbeing and preventing mental ill health
The overall sense from the responses to the surveys is that earning Time Credits has had a positive impact on pupils with the majority reporting they feel more confident, valued and happier and that their quality of life had improved.
- Two thirds of respondents felt that Time Credits had made their life better.
- Nearly three quarters of pupils felt that earning Time Credits had helped them to feel more confident.
- 88% of pupils reported feeling happier when they were earning Time Credits
- Nearly three quarters (72%) of respondents agreed that spending Time Credits made them feel good about themselves.

Outcome 2: Developing and rolling out Time Credits as a tool for schools to support positive mental health and wellbeing
The Resilient Schools project has achieved the target of being rolled out to 50 schools.
- In total 68 schools have engaged with the Resilient Schools project.
- At least 7,444 individuals registered as earning Time Credits and over 52,300 Time Credit hours have been earned since the start of the project.

Outcome 3: Students will be more aware of mental health issues and how to support their own and their peer's mental health

Time Credits have helped to increase the time spent doing activities with friends and family as well as sharing skills and supporting others.

- Over three quarters (78%) of respondents felt that Time Credits had helped them to feel useful or valued.
- The vast majority of pupils (84%) agreed that they enjoyed earning Time Credits with friends and family.
- Parents also felt that they did more activities together as a family as a result of earning and spending Time Credits through their child's school.
- 70% of pupils reported that they had shared skills with others while earning Time Credits.
- A peer mentoring scheme case study from one secondary school demonstrated the positive impact of the scheme on pupils through improvement in confidence, engagement and communication and leadership skills.

At an overall level, the project has clearly had a positive impact on the lives of many young people and made a positive contribution to factors influencing good mental health. However, there is little evidence from the wider research to indicate that there has been a positive improvement in raising the awareness of Mental Health.

1 Introduction

1.1 Resilient Schools Project

This 3 year programme, funded by Section 64 Third Sector Mental Health Grant (2015-18) uses Time Credits as a vehicle to develop a culture of volunteering among children, young people and their families in order to impact positively on wellbeing, improve mental health outcome and support early interventions for those identified at risk. The programme has been strategically aligned to the outcomes for Together for Mental Health and supported Indicators for the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes National Quality Award.

Time Credits support participants to meet new people, develop personal resilience, learn new skills and encourage the engagement in new and different activities such as sport, theatre and play.

1.1.1 Project Approach

The Resilient Schools project adopted a multi-faceted approach to help achieve the required outcomes. This comprised of three main streams:

- **The development of peer support networks:**
  Peer support is proven to be a key early intervention approach that increases self-awareness, personal resilience, non-traditional learning and reduces damaging stigma. Children and young people earned Time Credits for each hour they gave helping and supporting others.

- **Building community resilience and integration:**
  To support children and young people in appreciating their role in both the school and local communities, the programme encouraged a culture of volunteering to be developed alongside mainstream schooling. This played a key role in supporting pupils to learn more about local issues and widen intergenerational interactions. Additionally, to reinforce the community focused school ethos, family and community members were also encouraged to earn Time Credits by volunteering within their local school environment.

- **Improving skills and applying learning:**
  Time Credits are an asset based tool that values each individual's skills and abilities. The project provided volunteering opportunities for pupils to do things that they are good at and enjoy, thereby building confidence and self-belief. The project complemented traditional learning and allowed pupils to develop non-academic activities and interests. This is of particular importance for those from poorer backgrounds, who are reported as most likely to develop mental health problems and struggle to perform in school.

1.1.2   Project Outcomes

The implementation of this multi-faceted approach underpins the achievement of the following intended project outcomes and their key performance indicators (KPIs):

1. **Improving wellbeing and preventing mental health**
    1.1   Participants will be more confident in their abilities and better able to deal with daily challenges.
    1.2   Participants will have participated in at least five earning activities and five spending activities each year and support health and well-being. This was measured through ongoing activity monitoring.
    1.3   Each school will support students to participate in peer support for which they will earn Time Credits. This will be embedded in schools supporting mental wellbeing, tackling stigma and creating stronger social connectedness and mutual understanding.

2. **Developing and rolling out Time credits as a tool for schools to support positive mental health and wellbeing**
    2.1   Resilient schools will be intended to be rolled out to 50 schools and 5,000 people.
    2.2   A bespoke training package will be developed and shared for schools to develop their own Time Credits projects supporting peer support and wellbeing.
    2.3   A spend offer will be developed so that schools can participate on an all Wales basis. This will be a mixture of community and corporate partners.

3. **Students will be more aware of mental health issues ad how to support their own and their peers' mental health.**
    3.1   200 student led activities will be delivered through this project supporting young people to realise their skills and capabilities.
    3.2   Students will feel more supported by peers.
    3.3   Students will learn new skills and take part in more extra-curricular activities.

1.2   About the evaluation

Apteligen has been involved in supporting Spice in the evaluation of the Resilient Schools Project since the summer of 2015. This began with the design of an outcome framework to understand what outcomes were most critical for schools, and to explore approaches for data collection. We used the insight gathered from meetings with a range of primary, secondary and special needs schools to understand how they sought to use Time Credits to address challenges their specific set of engagement challenges and used this to develop a Theory of Change.

1.2.1 Methodology

We developed a survey for parents and pupils which was completed between April and July 2016. The survey results were analysed and used to inform development of the programme. In July 2017, the survey was reviewed and updated, and schools were asked to get pupils to complete the survey before the Spring Term half-term holiday. Within both surveys pupils across primary and secondary pupils were asked similar questions, although the surveys contained slightly simplified response categories and fewer questions for younger pupils.

This report primarily presents data from the more recent second survey, except where stated otherwise. We have also sought, where possible, to supplement the data from the surveys with membership data and direct feedback received from individuals and schools.

1.2.2 Data collected

In the first survey 585 usable responses were collected[1] (185 parents, 146 secondary age and 254 primary age pupils). The pupil data from the first survey has not been presented within the findings here, as this had contained questions to help profile and understand pupils' mental health and wellbeing, rather than those that were more directly related to self-reported outcomes as a result of earning and spending Time Credits.

Overall there were 454 responses to the most recent survey[2], with 415 responses which had been sufficiently completed to be useable within analysis. The majority of responses were from primary school pupils, accounting for 70% (290) of responses. In total 19 primary schools took part in the survey. Albany School was particularly engaged and a third of primary school responses came from here.

The remaining 125 responses were from secondary schools. In total there were responses from 4 secondary schools. Although the majority (90%) were from one secondary school, it this is one of the larger schools involved in the project. Secondary schools have proved particularly challenging to engage and in future it is recommended that a different approach to evaluation with secondary schools is considered.

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[1] Where the respondent had completed at least as far through the survey as reporting their school, age and gender.

[2] Thirty-three of these did not have a school named and had blank responses, and 6 were duplicate responses where a respondent had started the survey, came out and then re-started.

2 Participation in the programme

2.1 Engagement of schools

Over the lifetime of the project a total of 68 schools – 9 secondary and 59 primary - engaged with the Resilient Schools Programme against a target of 50. Twenty-three new schools were engaged in 2015/16, 19 in 2016/17 and 25 in 2017/18. The schools programme now covers 10 local authorities over three Educational Consortia and 5 health boards.

The number of active members within a school varies naturally each year given changes in the school population and priorities. Although an exact figure for the number of members is not known, because not all schools provided a data return, at least 7,444 individuals (parents and pupils) have been Time Credits members. This is against an overall target of 5,000 between 2015 and 2018.

Similarly, the total number of hours earned over the course of the project is not known exactly, owing to not having all data returns. However, it is known that at least 52,334 hours have been earned.

Due to the size of the school and the age of the learners Family engagement appears to have a stronger priority in the primary setting compared to the secondary. The use of Time Credits therefore seems more appealing to primary head teachers as a vehicle to engage with parents and involve them more in the life of the school and their child's education. The majority of schools subscribing to Schools Time Credits programme are therefore primary schools. Unfortunately, due to issues such as funding and staff turnover, some schools withdrew from the programme, particularly secondary schools who were initially involved in the #IamIcan campaign and ambassador programme.

2.2   Member and response profile

Overall, 47% of pupils who responded to the survey were male and 53% female. There was a similar split with the original survey. However, the proportional breakdown differed between primary and secondary schools, with primary schools having a greater proportion of female respondents and secondary schools having a greater proportion of male respondents.
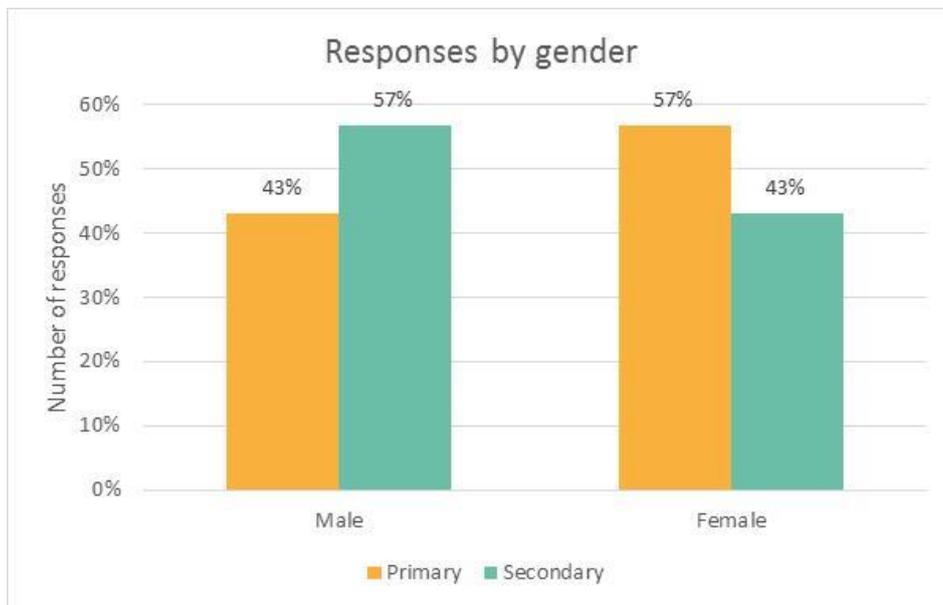

Over three quarters of respondents were from years 5 to 7, with only a small proportion of respondents from years 9 and above. This is similar age breakdown to the first survey.
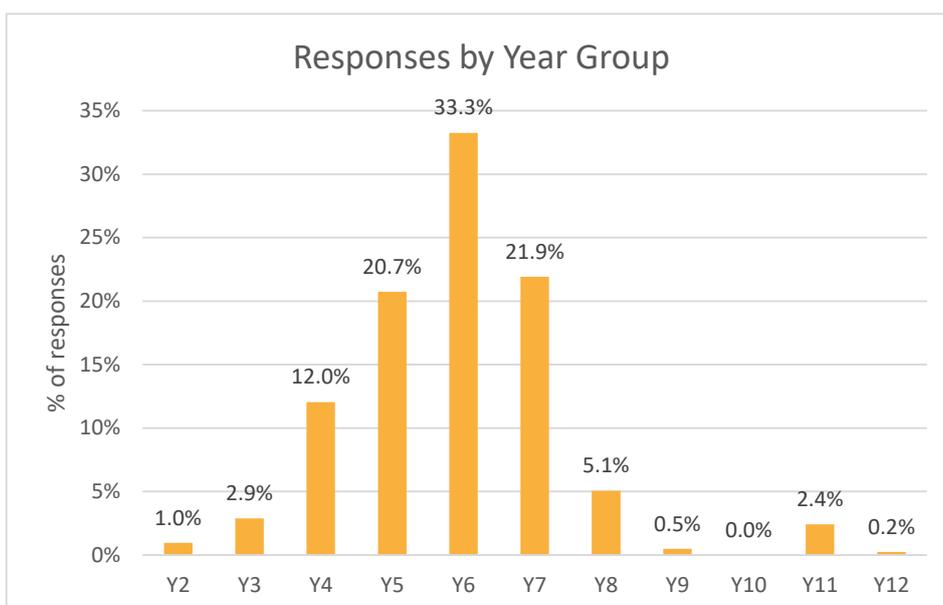
At the time they completed the survey, two thirds of respondents had been earning Time Credits for less than a year, and a quarter had been earning between 1 to 2 years. However,

primary school respondents had generally been earning Time Credits longer than secondary school respondents. Overall, 58% of primary school respondents reported that they had been earning Time Credits for over a year compared to 32% of secondary school respondents. The main reason for this difference is that Fitzlan High School, which provided the majority of secondary school responses, has only been running the Time Credits programme for two years.
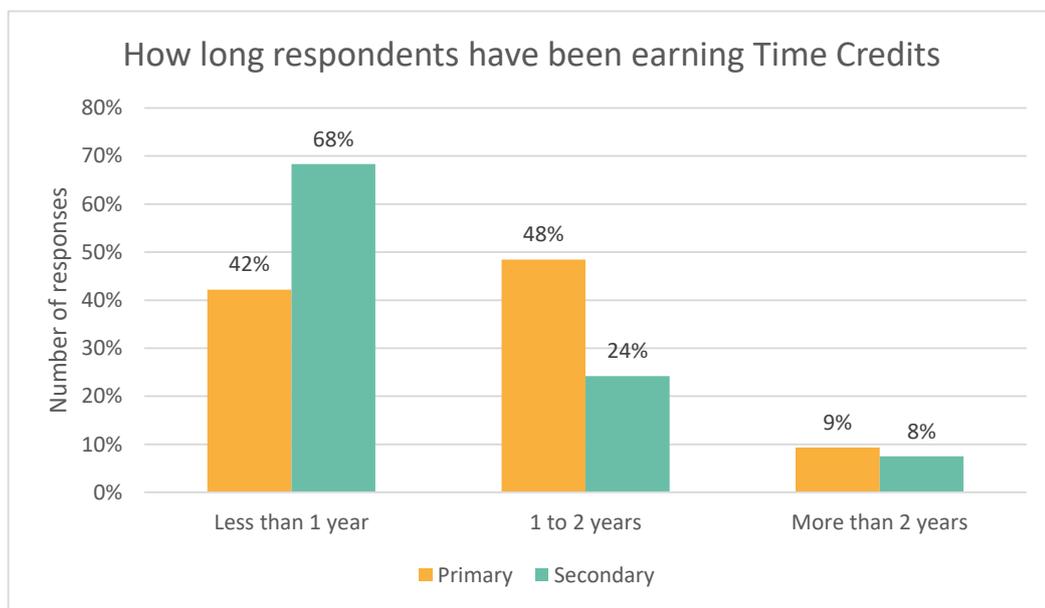
The survey had been designed to be completed only by those who had earned Time Credits, although there were 2 respondents who told us that they had not earned any Time Credits. This may be the result of being inappropriately asked to complete the survey at school, or may be the result of the two individuals not recognising what they had taken part in.

A quarter of primary school and a third of secondary school respondents reported that they earned Time Credits every week. Meanwhile 38% of primary and 37% of secondary age
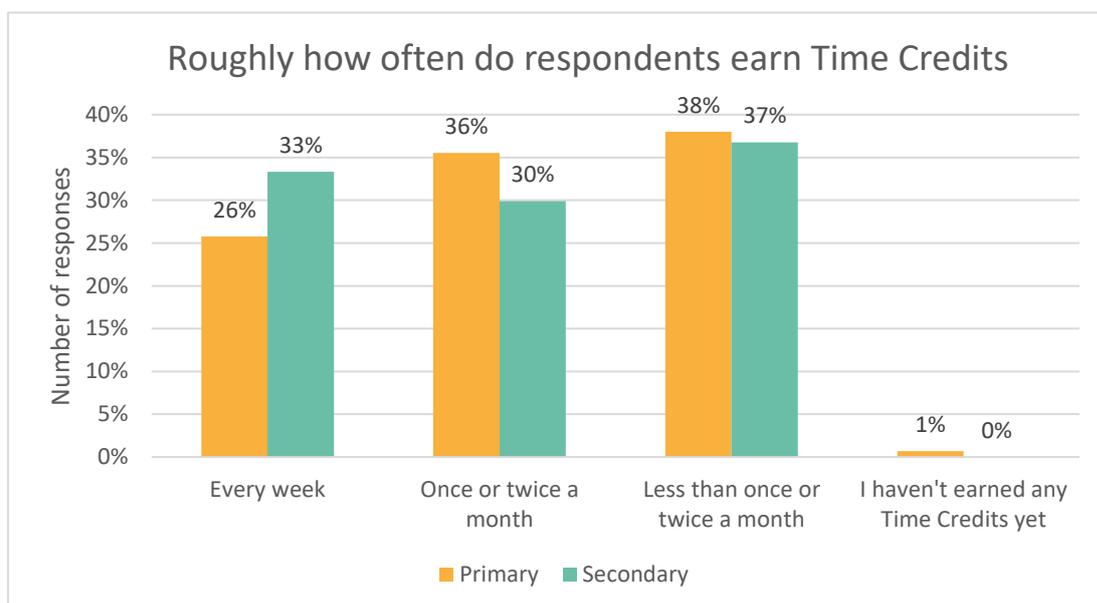
respondents earned them less than once or twice a month. Earning within individual schools is bespoke and can vary on a weekly, monthly or termly basis. This means that some schools provide more opportunities than others, and/or may provide a greater variety of opportunities depending on their needs and objectives. Similarly, some use Time Credits as a universal intervention, others as a bespoke earning programme to hit specific outcomes.

Although direct questions mental health are not specifically covered within the surveys, the 2016 survey asked a number of questions which helped to profile earners in relation to mental health and wellbeing. In the 2016 survey, secondary school pupils were asked questions in line with the 7 item Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)[3] to provide an overall score that measures general well-being. The score achieved by secondary pupils was below national average (18.1 compared to 23.6),

In response to the WEMWBS questions, less than half of respondents reported that they felt optimistic about the future, useful, relaxed or that they were dealing with problems well either often or all of the time. However over 60% of pupils felt that they had been thinking clearly, feeling close to other people and able to make up their own mind either often or all of the time. In addition to the WEMWBS questions the secondary school pupils were also asked about their sense of community. Over 80% agreed that they felt they could talk to others in their year when they were feeling down, and 16% felt that they didn't belong to anything they would call a community. These baseline profiles suggest that some members did not have the ideal support systems in place to help them deal with mental health issues.

Primary school pupils were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with statements about what their life is like. Of these, 83% agreed that they had what they wanted in life and only 11% disagreed with the statement that they wish they had a different kind of life. Overall, 90% of primary school pupils agreed that their life was going well, was just right and that they had a good life.

These responses suggest in general that primary school pupils feel happier about life than secondary schools, which is perhaps to be expected, and suggests that for most primary school pupils, earning Time Credits, is an early intervention activity. It is also encouraging that the majority of secondary school pupils felt that there was a support network, either in terms of their peers or feeling part of a community, for them.

Over the project lifetime there were a number of interventions in participating schools that saw children and young people deemed at risk of mental ill-health being actively encouraged to participate in the Time Credit programme. For the majority, however, Time Credit earning was part of an universal offer that was designed to support a preventative approach to tackling some of the pre-determinants of mental ill-health, such as reducing social isolation, building confidence and self-esteem, being and feeling valued, strengthening peer networks and accessing aspirational opportunities through spending.

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[3] Details about the questions asked can be found here.
https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/swemwbs_7_item.pdf

3   Together for Mental Health outcomes

The grant application identified a number of *Together for Mental Health* outcomes that the project was able to support. These are set out below:

- Promoting Better Mental Wellbeing and Preventing Mental Health Problem:
    - People and communities are more resilient and better able to deal with the stresses of everyday life and at times of crisis.
    - Child welfare and development, educational attainment and workplace productivity are improved as we address poverty.
- A New Partnership with the Public
    - People with mental health ill health experience less stigma and discrimination and feel that these problems are being tackled.
- One System to improve mental health
    - People of all ages experience sustained improvement to their mental health and wellbeing as a result of cross-government commitment to all sectors working together.

The project aimed to address these outcomes through:

- **Participation:** Encouraging young people to participate in volunteering activities and finding enjoyment through this, as well as generating additional community benefit through giving their time.
- **Improving behaviour, capabilities and confidence:** By improving behaviour, capabilities and confidence among all pupils, the schools programme is intended to help with the prevention of mental health problems, and to support those with mental health problems to be participate in activities which promote good relationships and health.
- **Strengthening families and peer networks:** Enabling pupils to expand their support networks. This can help both prevent and provide additional sources of support when dealing with mental health problems.
- **Engagement and community participation:** Engagement and participation in the community provides a sense of achievement and supports pupils to feel empowered to make their own decisions and make difference in their school. This helps to ensure that service users feel listened to and are more fully able to make decisions about their own care.

3.1   Participation

The number of pupils registered as earning time credits has been steadily increasing. In 2015/16 there were 774 pupils registered, nearly doubling to 1,345 in 2016/17 and increasing to 2,743 for a shorter period of only two terms in 2017/18. This suggests a growth in the pupil earning landscape during the lifetime of the programme.

The research revealed that as noted in section 2.2, over half of primary school pupils who responded to the survey, have been earning Time Credits for over a year, whilst over two

thirds of secondary school respondents have been earning Time Credits for less than a year. Around 60% of pupils earned Time Credits every week or at least once or twice a month. This implies that there have been good levels of pupils participating in an established and regular manner.

Pupils across both primary and secondary schools report enjoying the fact they can both earn and spend Time Credits. Pupils clearly appreciated being able to earn Time Credits in school, with over 90% of respondents (375 pupils) agreeing with a statement that they thought it was good they could earn Time Credits in school. This proportion was higher for primary schools (93%) than secondary schools (85%) as a higher proportion of secondary school respondents neither agreed on disagreed (13%). Overall, only 1% (5 pupils) disagreed that they enjoyed earning Time Credits at school.

Whilst earning Time Credits brings value to the school, a broader and detailed evaluation of Time Credits shows that the maximum value is achieved through both earning and spending Time Credits in combination. The survey revealed that pupils also reported that they enjoyed being able to spend their Time Credits, with 89% of respondents (358 pupils) indicating that they enjoyed this. As with earning, this proportion was higher amongst primary school respondents (92%) than secondary school respondents (80%). Eighteen percent of respondents from secondary schools neither agreed or disagreed (18%). In total only 3% (9 pupils) disagreed with the statement.

Experience of participating in Time Credits - Primary and Secondary comparison
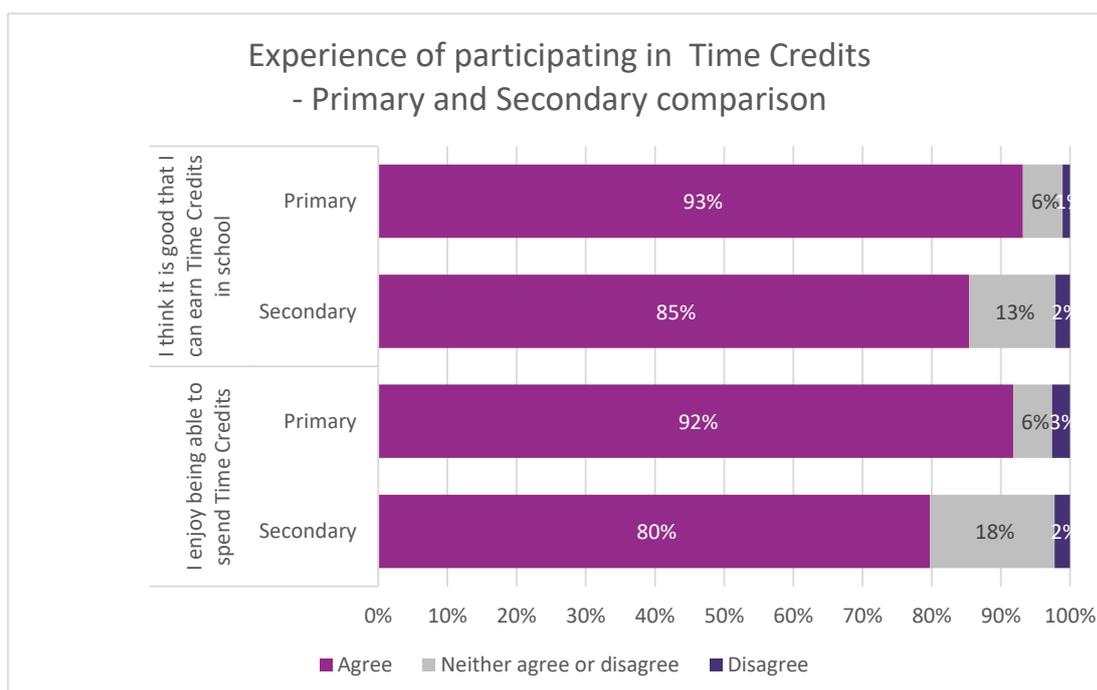
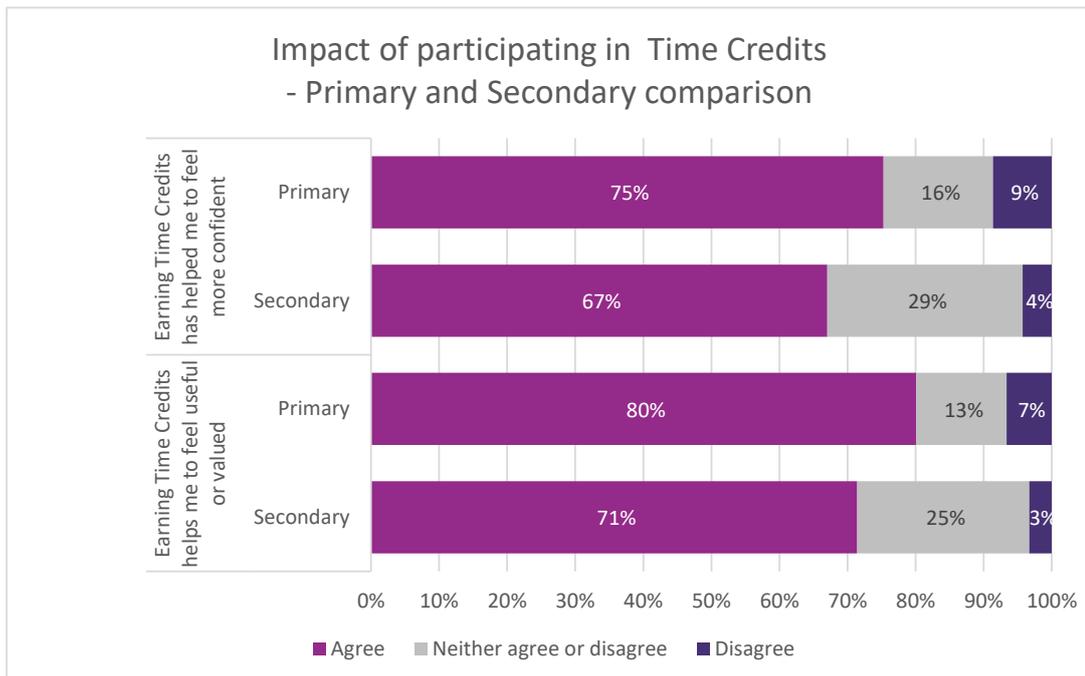## 3.2   Behaviour, capabilities and confidence

Positive behaviour, building confidence and capabilities can be key factors in preventing mental health issues. Our research explored a variety of indicators which influence the prevention of mental health issues.

"Using time credits is very fun. It is a great opportunity using time credits and it helps students feel more confident about themselves." (Year 6 pupil)

When asked whether Time Credits have helped them to feel more confident, nearly three quarters of pupils that responded to this question, agreed that earning Time Credits had helped them to feel more confident (255 pupils). This was slightly higher for primary school respondents (75%) than secondary school respondents (67%). Secondary age pupils were given more granular response categories to indicate whether stronger levels of agreement or disagreement with given statements. Of the secondary pupils, 27% strongly agreed leaving 40% who 'agreed' with the statement. Only 7% (26) of all pupils disagreed that Time Credits had improved their confidence.

"In my experience of earning time credits I would say it really makes you feel good about yourself especially if you didn't in the past. It makes you feel that people appreciate who you are.!" (Year 6 pupil)

Feeling useful and valued can also help with the prevention of mental health issues. When asked whether Time Credits help them to feel useful or valued, 78% of respondents agreed. Again, this was slightly higher for primary schools (80%) than secondary schools (71%). Within secondary schools, a slightly higher proportion (37%) 'agreed' with the statement, compared to 34% who 'strongly agreed'. Only 6% (20 pupils) disagreed with this statement.

Impact of participating in Time Credits
- Primary and Secondary comparison

Considering other factors which influence behaviour, capabilities and confidence, shows that earning and spending Time Credits have helped pupils as they have helped then to try new things, and because they feel happier when earning Time Credits and good about themselves when spending Time Credits. In particular:

- 72% reported that spending Time credits have helped them to try new things. Time Credits appear to particularly encourage primary age pupils to try new things, with 82% stating that they been helped to try new things. By contrast 65% of secondary age pupils felt that spending Time Credits had helped them to try new things.
- 88% of pupils reported feeling happier when they were earning Time Credits
- Overall, 72% of respondents agreed that spending Time Credits made them feel good about themselves. This was slightly higher for primary school respondents (76%) than secondary school respondents (60%). Nearly a third of secondary school respondents neither agreed or disagreed.

In general, earning and spending Time Credits appears to have had a positive impact on the pupils. Around three quarters agreed that they felt more confident and valued through earning Time Credits. In addition, the majority felt happier and good about themselves as well as trying new things.

3.3   Strengthening families and peer support networks

The research also considered the impact of Time Credits on strengthening pupils' networks, adding a resilience and support network to support prevention and treatment of mental health issues. This can include strengthening family networks, getting to know others within the school or community and sharing skills to enhance the strengths of networks. Peer support is proven to be a key early intervention approach that increases self-awareness, personal resilience, non-traditional learning and reduces stigma. Appendix A provides a case study of one secondary school that ran a peer mentoring programme within the Resilient Schools project. As part of the project Year 10 pupils were trained as peer mentors to support the new Year 7s, running 'get to know you' activities, helping pupils to establish positive relationships and be a source of guidance and support. The programme found that the vast majority (91%) of pupils felt better about staring secondary school as a result of the programme and 93% believed that peer mentors were useful in useful in helping them settle in to school. Similarly the peer mentors themselves found the programme to be beneficial, helping them to improve their communication and leadership skills as well as their confidence.

> *"One pupil talked about how she now felt more creative through developing games and activities to help pupils to settle in and make friends. Another pupil talked about developing his own confidence through taking on a leadership commitment in the school, it has helped him to establish new friends and think about the places that he can go in the school for help. Another pupil talked about how he has had to learn to deal with problems quickly in order to appear more confident to the Year 7 pupils so that they trusted him and came to him for more advice."*

Time Credits have also helped strengthen relations with family and friends. The survey indicated that many pupils found that Time Credits enabled pupils to both earn and spend Time Credits with their family (and friends). When asked whether they enjoyed earning Time Credits with friends and family, 84% of respondents agreed. Primary age pupils particularly

enjoyed earning with family, with 89% of pupils agreeing compared to 71% of secondary age pupils. However, a quarter of secondary school respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. This may be due to a reduced emphasis on family engagement in secondary school programmes leading to fewer opportunities to earn with their family.

Whilst there appear to have been many opportunities for pupils to earn Time Credits with their friends and family, it appears that fewer pupils have enjoyed spending Time Credits with their family. Sixty-three percent (63%) indicated that they had spent Time Credits with family, although unsurprisingly, this was higher for primary school pupils (69%) than secondary age pupils (42%).

Time Credits may also help pupils develop empathy with others, with 70% of pupils reporting that they had shared skills with other while earning Time Credits and 37% indicating that they had given some of their Time Credits to someone else.

In the survey run in 2016 70% of parents reported that they felt that they did more activities together as a family as a result of earning and spending Time Credits through their child's school. Furthermore, 86% reported that Time Credits had enabled them to take an active role in my child's life.

Overall, Time Credits has helped respondents spend time with their family, either when earning Time Credits or when spending them, although this was less for secondary schools than primary schools. Time Credits have also encouraged pupils to share their skills with others and a proportion had also given their Time Credits to someone else to spend. This suggests that Time Credits are helping pupils to strengthen their networks and family links.

3.4   Engagement and community participation

"I have spent my time credits for a trip to the Ski Centre. It was really fun. I think there should be more Time credit trips in our school." (Year 5 pupil)

Responses to the survey have shown that because of earning and spending Time Credits, pupils report that they:

- Have attended more events or activities in school (two-thirds of respondents)
- Feel that they are contributing positively to the school (three-quarters of respondents)
- Have spent some Time Credits on a school trip or event (44%)
- Feel more positive about my school since earning Time Credits (77%)

In addition, over 60% of pupils agree that they attend more activities at school and nearly half have spent some Time Credits on a school trip or event.

"It means you don't have to spend money at some places. It makes you feel good about yourself." (Year 6 pupil)

In the previous survey, Time Credits were also seen to have a positive impact on school engagement with parents as well. Over 80% of parents agreed that Time Credits had helped them feel more engaged with school life and that they had a better relationship with their child's school. A similar proportion also agreed that they could attend more activities or events at the school.

Time Credits have had a positive impact on how respondents engage with their school. Over three quarters of pupils not only feel more positive about their school but they also feel that they are contributing positively to the school.

4   Quality of life

"I think that attempting to earn and spend time credits has changed my life, helping me to try new things and keep fit for free and I like to idea of helping the community." (Year 6 pupil)

Overall, pupils reported that Time Credits have improved their quality of life. When asked 'Have Time Credits made your life better?', two thirds of respondents felt that Time Credits had made their life better either a little or a lot. However, there is some notable variation between primary and secondary school pupils. For primary age pupils, there was perceived to be a much stronger positive impact on their quality of life than for secondary age pupils, with 34% of primary pupils feeling they had made their life a lot better, compared to only 13% of secondary pupils. It is notable that nearly 40% of secondary age pupils felt that they didn't know whether Time Credits had had an impact on their quality of life.
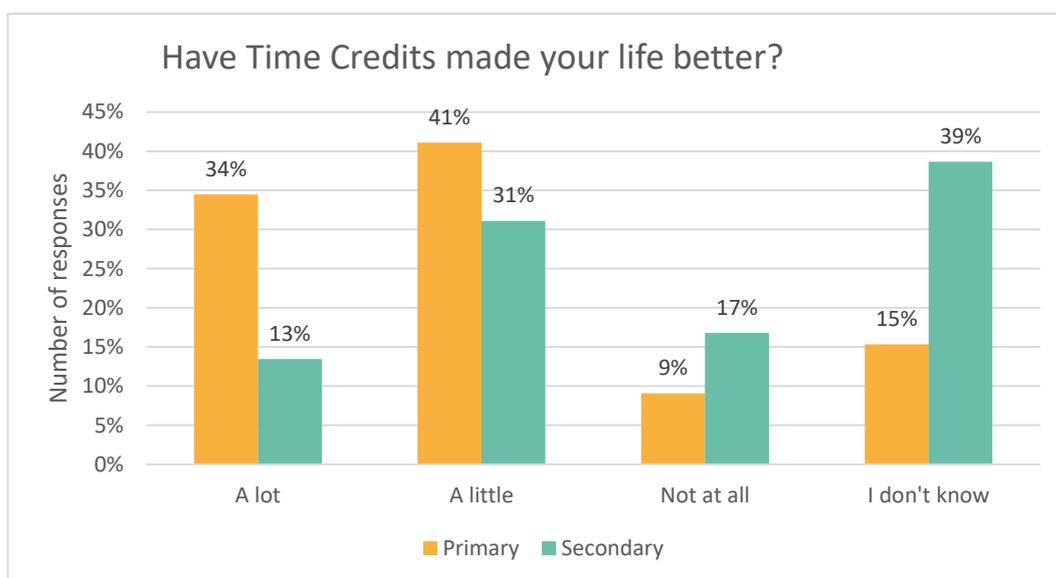
Overall, the findings from the survey suggest that the Time Credit scheme has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the pupils. Many feel more confident, valued and happier whilst strengthening relationships and engagement with the school, family and others.

5   Achievement of outcomes

The project was targeted to be rolled out to at least 50 schools. In total 68 schools have engaged with the Resilient Schools project, with over 50,300 Time Credit hours being earned since the start of the project. However, there has been a great deal of variation in the extent to which schools have actively participated, with secondary schools being less active. Participants will have participated in at least five earning activities and five spending activities each year and support health and well-being.

Throughout the course of the project, Time Credits have successfully supported both primary and secondary schools to engage both pupils and their families. However, the emphasis on family engagement means that Time Credits appear to be appealing more to primary schools, and in turn, the impact seems to have been more notable for primary aged pupils.

Time Credits impact on factors that are considered to be the determinants of mental wellbeing, and support networks and skills to deal with mental health challenges that arise. Feedback from those who took part in the project strongly indicate improvements in confidence, with three quarters of pupils indicating that they feel more confident. Additionally, pupils feel better about themselves (72%), happier (88%) and 78% feel more valued, leaving them equipped to deal with daily challenges.

We also know that strong peer support and networks can help to improve mental wellbeing. Peer networks and family relationships have clearly been strengthened for many of those involved in earning and spending Time Credits, with the vast majority of pupils agreeing that they enjoyed earning Time Credits with friends and family and 70% of pupils reporting that they had shared skills with other while earning Time Credits. Parents also report that they feel more involved with their child's school. In turn this can help to identify potential issues and help respond to problems more quickly.

Evidence from the research suggests that pupils are more aware of mental health issues and how to support their own and their peers' mental health, with many pupils indicating that they had been able to share their skills with others. Many pupils report that as a result of earning and spending Time Credits they have shared skills with other and taken part in more extra-curricular activities. For example, two-thirds of pupils responding to the survey said they had attended more event or activities in school. Forty four percent of pupils have spent their Time Credits on a school trip or event, although it is not known whether this meant that pupils were able to take part in new activities, or whether they are now using Time Credits to attend something they would have taken part in anyway.

At an overall level, the project has clearly had a positive impact on the lives of many young people and made a positive contribution to factors influencing good mental health. However, there is little evidence from to indicate that there has been a positive improvement in raising the awareness of mental health. This is likely to be largely attributable to the complexity of working within the school environment, with differing priorities across participating schools and varying levels of interest among schools

leadership teams in supporting mental resilience. A one-size-fits-all approach is ill-suited to diverse schools and the relatively low level of staff resource available to the project means that broader objectives which are less specific to individuals are harder to achieve. In addition, the lack of marketing budget meant it was not possible to fund and run effective campaigns has that would have been expected to impact on levels of mental health awareness across all participating schools.

6   Recommendations for future projects

Based on the above findings, we have developed a number of recommendations for future projects.

6.1   Engagement with schools

It is recommended that a strong training package is developed for staff and pupils to ensure sustainability and legacy.

6.2   Data capture

As with any project data capture is essential in order to track activity and progress and for evaluation. This project mainly relied on management returns to provide engagement information and tracking of levels of earning activity for individuals was not captured at an organisation level. It is recommended that for future projects a more sophisticated method is used which would make data capture and tracking simpler and more effective.
It would also be useful to have early identification of children and young people whose Time Credit journeys could be tracked over the life time of the programme and demonstrate impact. Furthermore, it is recommended that there is some data capture around those non-volunteers in order to do some comparison work.

6.3   Wider engagement

Engagement with Health Boards and a pan Wales engagement is key to the continuation of the project within schools. As such, embedding the project into Local health boards via a joint planning process will help to ensure the successful continuation of the project. It is recommended that a pan-Wales spend network is created to encourage engagement of schools and provide a more accessible spend network.

Spice Schools
Fitzalan High School Peer Mentoring 2017-2018

School Context/Information

Fitzalan is an 11-19 secondary school serving the central south area of Cardiff. We have approx. 1750 pupils on roll who largely live in Canton, Riverside, Grangetown and Butetown areas of Cardiff. We have approx. 35% of pupils eligible for FSM, 85% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background and have English as an additional language. 60% of our pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. 35% of our pupils have SEN. Each year we admit 300 new Yr 7 pupils to the school from up to 20 primary schools within the area. This can be a difficult and traumatic time for many pupils who find the move to secondary school difficult both socially and academically.

What was the issue/problem/focus area?
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Fitzalan has a well-established transition plan to encourage the safe and productive transition of Year 6 pupils in our cluster into Year 7. However, from survey results, we wanted to address two main concerns:
1. Year 6 pupils requesting to spend more time with pupils as opposed to staff to help them settle in to the school.
2. Secondly, having someone to talk to who had experienced the anxieties around starting secondary school with advice on how to overcome problems faced when pupils had started in Year 7.

We also wanted to establish a way of improving the leadership capacity of our pupils and offer more opportunities around school for pupils to utilise and establish new skills to help others.

What did you do?

We established a team of 32 peer mentors whilst they were Year 9 pupils in June 2017. Each pupil had to complete an application form demonstrating their commitment to the programme and explaining why they believed themselves to be suitable as a peer mentor to help Year 6 pupils. On completion of the application process, all pupils then completed a day's training looking at elements of being a good mentor, demonstrating good listening skills, developing a range of activities to be used as a mentor as well as recognising situations where an adult may need to take over when any concerns arise for the safety and welfare of all involved. These pupils then facilitated 3 transition days in July 2017 that involved leading form time activities, guiding pupils around the school and helping to form relationships that would continue when pupils began Year 7. When pupils began Year 7, these pupils then attended a joint Year 10/Year 7 form time for the first 10 weeks of the Autumn term to help pupils to settle in. Pupils were expected to run 'get to know you' activities to help all pupils establish positive relationships with their form tutors and peers, help more reluctant pupils to take an active part in school life, be a source of guidance and support, to help problem solve and establish independence of Year 7.

What was the impact? Did it work?

The programme developed two main successes:

Firstly, Year 7 pupils and parents through an annual transition survey established that 91% of pupils felt better about starting secondary school as a result of this programme. 93% of parents believed that their child had settled well in to secondary school life at Fitzalan and felt supported. 93% of pupils believed that they knew where to seek help for any problems and believed that the peer mentors were useful in helping them to settle in to school.

Evaluations of the peer mentors equally demonstrated that they found the process to be useful, helping them to improve their communication and leadership skills. One pupils talked about how she now felt more creative through developing games and activities to help pupils to settle in and make friends. Another pupil talked about developing his own confidence through taking on a leadership commitment in the school, it has helped him to establish new friends and think about the places that he can go in the school for help. Another pupil talked about how he has had to learn to deal with problems quickly in order to appear more confident to the Year 7 pupils so that they trusted him and came to him for more advice.

Overall the project has been very successful and we will continue it as part of our transition programme. It has been wonderful to see pupils take on the leadership roles to help their peers. These pupils have become much more confident, are willing to speak more confidently, run group tasks and support staff with the transition programme. They have been able to empathise with Year 7 pupils and advice staff on changes to be made to the transition programme in order to help make the process as smooth as possible. Having a pupil support network has also helped to ease the anxieties of Year 7 in starting a new school and not necessarily having the confidence to ask for help from a member of staff. We have seen the relationships across year groups develop further since the Autumn term as the peer mentors continue to be a source of help and guidance for other year groups.

What next?

The project will be extended this year to include Year 7 pupils establishing workshops suitable to be delivered to Year 6 pupils in the summer term. These pupils will again attend specific mentor training, facilitate the transitions days in July 2018 before being part of the support network available to Year 7 pupils when they actually start at Fitzalan.

Resources

We paid our annual subscription of £1000 to Spice in order to utilise time credits. The peer mentor training was a full day experience for pupils led by Fitzalan staff. Pupils then gave their time over the three transition days in July 2018 to run activities and mentor pupils. This was then extended to pastoral period, each Monday morning for the first 10 weeks of Year 7 starting secondary school.