



DECEMBER 2014

INCLUDE YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY  
SERVICE

EVALUATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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Include Youth was established in 1979 and is an independent non-governmental organisation that actively promotes the rights, best interests of and best practice with disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people. Include Youth works primarily with and for young people not in education, training or employment (NEET) and the organisation is focused upon three core areas of work;

- 1) influencing policy – particularly in the areas of youth justice and youth employability
- 2) supporting other practitioners to develop more rights based policies and practice
- 3) enhancing the employability of young people who are not in education, training or employment through the provision of employability training and support programmes.

This evaluation was commissioned by Include Youth to review the Employability Services of the organisation, focusing upon employability work in six of their pre-employment programmes;

- Give and Take
- New Leaf
- Employability services for Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Western Health and Social Care Trust
- Youth Works
- START
- Aiming Higher

## 2.0 GIVE AND TAKE

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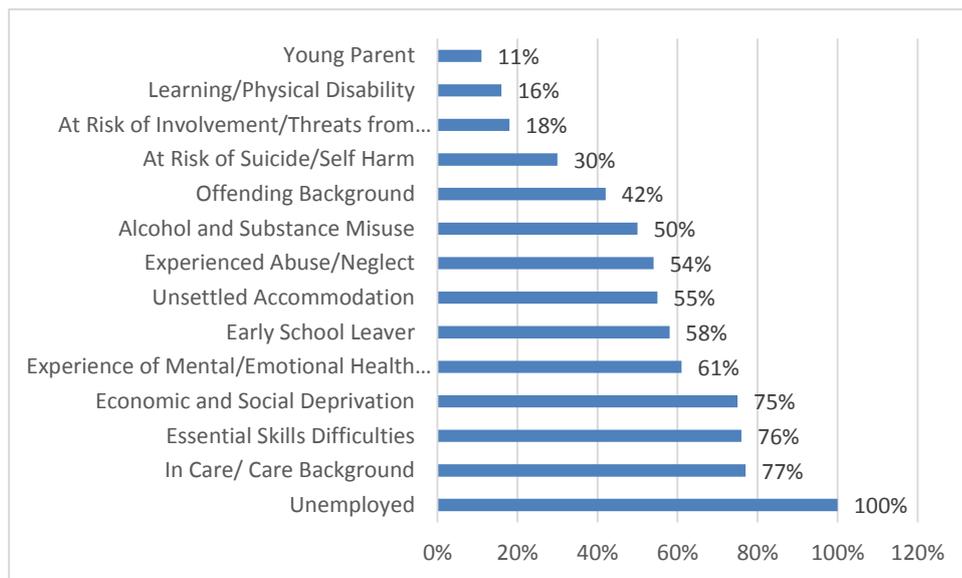
The Give and Take scheme works predominantly (but not exclusively) with young people from a care background aged 16 to 21 years. It is a pre-vocational programme which aims to improve the employability and increase the self-esteem and confidence of vulnerable young people who are not ready to participate in mainstream training and education. The programme is delivered in 6 offices across Northern Ireland (Belfast, Ballymena, Armagh, Derry, Omagh and Newtownards) with each office aligned to one of the Health and Social Care Trusts.

Young people are referred to Give and Take by Social Workers from each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts and specifically from within the 16+ Transitional Teams within each Trust. On average, each Trust has agreed to fund 12 places at any one time on Give and Take, with the exception of the Western HSC Trust who increased numbers to allow for 12 young people from the Omagh / Enniskillen area and 12 from the Derry area. The Southern HSC Trust's contract with Include Youth stipulates a minimum of 12 but with the capacity for a maximum of up to 20 places at any one time. Consultation with Social Workers has indicated that the young people most suited to Give and Take are those who do not typically engage in programmes, are not ready for more structured, mainstream education or training provision and who have little educational attainment and poor essential skills. They are those furthest from mainstream education, training or employment opportunities.

### 2.1 Participant Profile

The evaluation of the Give and Take scheme covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. Over this period a total of 220 young people leaving care have been referred to Give and Take. Engagement on the programme is voluntary and participation has included 55% males and 45% females. Figure i illustrates the profile of participants and shows their multiple and complex issues, all of which are impacting upon their NEET status.

**Fig. i: Give and Take Participant Profile**



These complex issues demonstrate that the young people engaged on Give and Take are amongst the most vulnerable and needy group of NEET young people. These barriers have made it difficult for this group of young people to engage with mainstream education or training or to get employment. The complexity of issues and needs has implications on the model of support that can effectively be delivered with such young people. Include Youth has developed a flexible, highly supportive programme which allows most young people to stay engaged for up to a year, with the provision of longer term support for those who are not ready to move on after one year. The model of delivery is a flexible, person centred approach, delivered by a dedicated and committed staff team of Youth Workers.

Consultation with Health and Social Care staff has confirmed that this youth work model has resulted in an extremely effective programme that is pitched at the starting point for each young person and meets the individual needs of all young care leavers who require a person centred programme of interventions, in a supported learning environment. Programme delivery is focused upon key areas of work that include;

- Induction
- Employability training and support
- Personal development training and support
- Essential skills training
- Mentoring
- Work experience

## 2.2 Induction

All young people complete a structured induction process as part of their recruitment to Give and Take. This is a process that involves engagement with both the Youth Development Worker and the Youth Employability Worker who are the core staff team involved in the delivery of Give and Take across all include Youth sites. Induction involves one to one working with participants and is important for getting to know each of the young people, developing a relationship with them and developing an action plan with targets and goals that they can work towards as part of Give and Take.

Over the three years of Give and Take an average of 80% of young people have completed Induction, with only 9% leaving the programme early before completing. This is a marked improvement on a previous independent evaluation of Give and Take for the three year period 2008/09 to 2010/11 when there was an average of 22% early leavers. Upon completion of induction all young people achieve credits towards a qualification in Improving Own Learning and Performance. This is an excellent motivator for young people, many of whom have had a negative experience of schooling and have achieved little / no qualifications. This helps to enhance the self-confidence and self-esteem of young people and motivates them to sustain engagement with Give and Take and progress into further training and programme activities.

## 2.3 Employability

A priority aim of the Give and Take scheme is to improve the employability of participant young people. There are many definitions of employability which indicate that employability is much more than skills / qualifications but it is also about the personal attributes, capabilities and competencies of individuals to enable them to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.

Within Give and Take a variety of employability related accredited courses have been delivered and qualifications attained by young people. These include general employability skills training programmes as well as more work focused and specific training courses. Analysis of annual training achievements shows a year on year increase in performance in respect to the number of qualifications achieved and the level of qualification attainment. In 2013/14 a total of 245 accredited Entry Level, Level 1 and 2 qualifications were attained. Increasing performance can be explained by the introduction late in 2011 of the Big Lottery funded Essential Employability project. This is a three year project that began in September 2011 and has introduced a greater focus upon employability within the Give and Take programme.

## 2.4 Personal Development

Include Youth staff acknowledge that in order to maximise the employability skills achieved by young people there is a need to address other personal and social barriers which are negatively impacting upon their ability to succeed. Experience of Include Youth has highlighted the importance of the need to enhance young people's personal development skills, which will provide them with the confidence and self-esteem to engage effectively in accredited training and recognise the importance of qualifications. Personal development training has;

- Focused upon developing skills within young people to cope with mental health issues and promote independent living
- Addressed health and wellbeing issues in relation to sexual health and misuse of drugs and alcohol
- Challenged young people through the Duke of Edinburgh Award to engage in team building activities that build confidence, self-esteem and self-belief in their ability to achieve

There has been a year on year increase in the number of personal development attainments. This is due to improved performance in existing programmes and the introduction of new programmes. While in 2011/12 employability and personal development were more evenly balanced, in 2012/13 and 2013/14 there has been an increasing shift towards more personal development qualifications attainment.

## 2.5 Essential Skills

The participant profile shows that 76% of young people over the three year period had essential skills difficulties and the Give and Take scheme has addressed this critical need through the provision of Essential Skills training across all skill areas - Application of Number, Numeracy, Literacy, Communication and ICT. Training is provided by in house tutors and delivered both on a one to one level and in small groups.

Monitoring data shows that the number of essential skills qualifications has increased year on year. In 2013/14, 247 essential skills qualifications were attained, a performance which was two and a half times the attainment in 2011/12. The increasing success of essential skills attainment correlates with Include Youth's award in 2011 of Big Lottery funding for the Essential Employability project.

## 2.6 Work Experience

Work experience is focused upon three core areas of activity;

- Work prep – is the first step to help develop young people’s awareness of career options and develops their work place skills by facilitating their engagement in the planning and organisation of activities through group based activities.
- Work ready - focuses upon the individual young person, exploring their skills, interests and potential career options. The Employability Worker will organise work taster sessions for each young person so that they can visit a work place for a day and sample a specific job role.
- Work well - young people are encouraged to engage in a longer work placement for up to 12 weeks in a particular area of work that interests them.

## 2.7 Employer Engagement

Employer engagement activity is primarily the role of Give and Take Employability Workers who are largely client facing, working with young people to develop their employability skills. Inconsistencies have been highlighted in respect to employer engagement activity across Give and Take offices and it is considered that there is a need for a more co-ordinated, centralised approach with respect to an employer facing role. Some work has begun, with a more centralised approach to the development of an employer database undertaken through the successful Blow Your Socks Off campaign and the development of a Model of Supported Employment. Guidelines for employer engagement are being developed and targets have been set for Employability Workers in respect to the timetabling of weekly employer engagement activity and targets for work experience opportunities secured with employers.

## 2.8 Mentoring Support

Volunteer mentoring was introduced in 2009 when Include Youth was awarded Big Lottery funding for the introduction of Personal Development and Mentoring support. This was a five year project, aimed at enhancing the employability of young people through the inclusion of a complementary personal development programme and support service. Recruitment and management of volunteer mentors was the responsibility of Youth Development Workers but proved to be a challenge on top of their day to day responsibilities supporting young people. As a result only 25% of all young people on Give and Take received mentoring support from a volunteer mentor. In 2013 a new centralised post was therefore created for a Volunteer and Mentor Co-ordinator who has responsibility for recruitment, training, management

and support of mentors and will ensure that there is a sufficient pool of mentors to meet the future demand for mentoring support by young people.

## 2.9 Transition from Give and Take

Monitoring data shows that over the three year period of the evaluation 191 young people that had completed induction left the Give and Take scheme. 65% (124) had a positive transition into education, training, employment or volunteering. When analysed annually figures show that there has been increasing performance with 58% positive transition to ETE achieved in 2011/12, 70% in 2012/13 and 70% in 2013/14. This is an excellent achievement given the nature of the complex issues facing the NEET group that Give and Take is working with.

A scoping study conducted by Include Youth highlighted concerns that young people were not sustaining their move on from Give and Take. In 2013 additional ESF funding was secured to introduce a two year pilot project focused upon transitional support for young people on Give and Take. This project will run from July 2013 to June 2015 and has employed two Transition Support workers, covering the five HSC Trust areas.

Transition Support Workers are introduced to Give and Take participants during their induction process. This ensures that from the outset young people are advised that their time on Give and Take is part of a journey / pathway towards education, training or employment. Six months before a young person is due to leave Transition Support staff will work on a one to one with young people to develop a Transition Plan and they will work with them and support them towards this transition, during their transition period and for 12 months after they leave Give and Take.

Table i shows that after the first year of operation, the Transition Support service, when benchmarked against the original scoping study, has made excellent improvement on sustaining the engagement of young people moving to mainstream education or training after Give and Take.

**Table i: Sustained Engagement of Young People in Mainstream Education or Training**

	Nos	Sustained placement after			
		3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months
<b>Scoping Study</b>	82	53 (65%)	49 (60%)	N/A	N/A
<b>Transition Support</b>	22	22 (100%)	21 (95%)	18 (95%)	15 (79%)

Tracking of young people in receipt of post Give and Take transition support for 9 months shows that 18 out of 19 (95%) supported were still in placement and at 12 months, 15 of the 19 (79%) supported were still in placement.

## 2.10 Programme Impact

Evaluation findings have indicated a very positive impact on young people. Specifically they have;

- Enhanced self belief, self esteem and self confidence
- Improved inter personal and communication skills
- A better awareness of the world of work
- Enhanced their employability through increased qualifications and especially the improvement in their essential skills
- Matured into young adults
- Are better networked with other support services
- Are willing to engage in more structured programmes
- Are more confident about moving into mainstream education or training

## 3.0 NEW LEAF

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The aim of New Leaf is to improve the employability and increase the self-esteem and confidence of vulnerable young people aged 16 to 21 years who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour. It is a pre vocational programme that adopts the Give and Take model of providing employability, personal development and essential skills training. The programme employs one Youth Worker who delivers the programme largely on an individual basis with young people who are referred primarily (but not exclusively) through each of the Health and Social Care Trusts. Over the years New Leaf has evolved from a programme that originally was delivered solely on a one to one basis with young people, with the inclusion now of group based activities.

Young people are identified by a variety of sources including Youth Justice Agency, Probation Board, Health and Social Care Trusts and Therapeutic Agencies. HSC Trusts do not have a defined number of places available on New Leaf and will refer young people on a needs basis. Only young people who are engaging in therapeutic support for their harmful sexual behaviour are eligible for the programme.

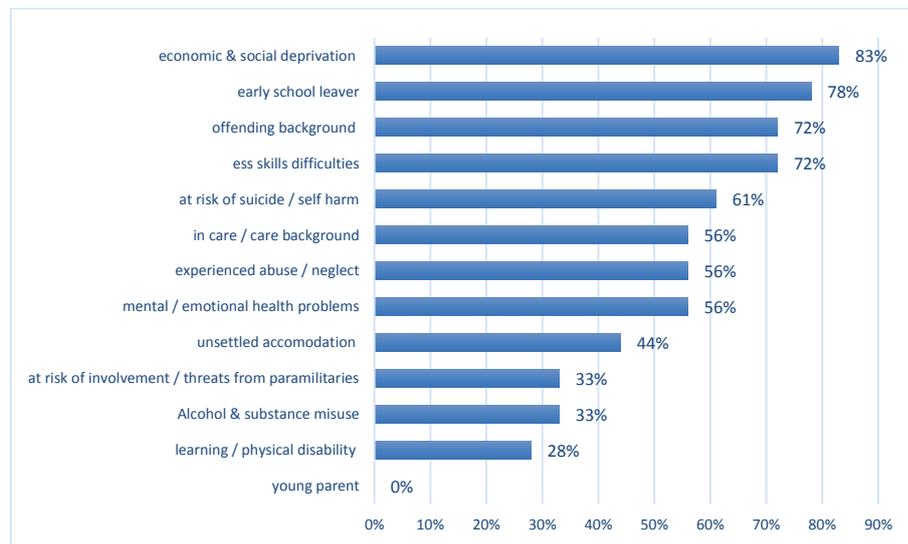
Over the period 2011/12 to 2013/14 a total of 17 young people have been referred to New Leaf and referral statistics show that referrals have been slowing up. Consultation with Social Workers (16+ team) has indicated that numbers of young

people exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour are low and it was recommended by one Social Worker that Include Youth should consider liaising with Disability Services / Teams within the Trusts who may also have young people that could be referred to New Leaf.

### 3.1 Participant Profile

100% of New Leaf participants are male and they have complex needs as demonstrated in figure ii. This presents a very challenging case load for the Youth Worker and on the basis of a one worker model dictates that only a small number of young people can be supported annually.

**Fig. ii: New Leaf Participant Profile**



### 3.2 Programme Delivery

The New Leaf programme has adopted the model of Give and Take in respect to induction, employability, personal development, essential skills training and work experience. All young people recruited to New Leaf have completed induction, with none leaving the programme early.

Employability and personal development training is delivered by the Youth Worker while Essential Skills tutors provide both one to one support and group training in Numeracy, Literacy and / or ICT. The New Leaf programme database shows that despite the majority of participants having no or very low (below NVQ Level 1) qualifications on joining New Leaf, many have completed accredited employability, personal development and essential skills qualifications. In total 74 employability, 68 essential skills and 43 employability courses have been completed / qualifications have been attained.

### 3.3 Transition from New Leaf

New Leaf database figures show in the period 2012/13 to 2013/14 13 young people left New Leaf. Of these leavers, 69% of young people had a positive move on destination to employment, education or training. This is an excellent achievement. Give and Take Transition Support Workers also work with New Leaf participants.

### 3.4 Programme Impact

Consultation with Social Workers and stakeholders has confirmed that there is nothing similar to New Leaf on offer for their young people who have exhibited harmful sexual behaviour. They advise that New Leaf is very valuable and supportive of Trust services because it enables and supports Social Workers to help their young people. They report very positively on the impact that the programme has had on participants. Specifically they report that the young men who have participated;

- are now engaged in a positive activity where previously they have not sustained engagement with any programme
- have enhanced their personal development
- have improved their communication skills and are engaging more with their Social Worker
- have become more independent
- are happier
- are more reliable
- are motivated to get a job
- are more physically active
- are less socially isolated

## 4.0 EMPLOYABILITY

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Delivery of Employability Services is one of a number of actions within the DHSSPS “Priorities for Action” (PFA) 2010-2011, a short-to-medium term strategy for the DHSSPS which places year-by-year requirements on Boards and Health Trusts to make improvements to health outcomes. There are seven Priorities for Action of which one, Priority for Action 5 is concerned with improving children’s health and wellbeing. Priority 5 has seven standards and associated targets. Standard 3 is the indicator that has direct relevance to Employability Services and states *Care leavers in education, training or employment: “The HSC Board and Trusts should ensure that, from April 2010, at least 70% of all care leavers aged 19 are in education, training or employment”*. This target was increased to 75% in April 2014.

The Employability Service is a direct response to the HSC Trust's commitment to supporting care leavers to move into education, training or employment and Include Youth was commissioned to provide Employability Services to Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (in partnership with Start 360<sup>1</sup>) and the Western Health and Social Care Trust. The service works closely with Social Workers and Personal Advisors and adopts a 10 step process delivered over approximately 12 weeks. One to one employability support is provided to young care leavers to support them and sign post on an employability pathway. Work experience opportunities are also arranged for young people.

#### 4.1 Progression to ETE

Figures for Belfast's Employability Service show that over the period 2012/13 to 2013/14 a total of 154 young people (aged 16 to 21 years) have been supported by Include Youth into education, training or employment which represents 87% of the caseload over the two years. Comparative figures for the Western area Employability Service show that a total of 48 young people have been supported into ETE, which represents 86% of the caseload over the two years.

#### 4.2 Employer Engagement

A significant achievement of the Belfast Employability Service has been Include Youth's influence in Belfast HSC Trust ring fencing 10% of vacancies for young care leavers. Through engagement with the Trust's HR department the Employability service receives advance notice of vacancies so that staff can make young people aware of the job opportunity and support them through the application and interview process. To date 18 young people have secured a job with Belfast HSC Trust. This equates to 11% of young people receiving support through the Employability Service.

## 5.0 Youth Works

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Youth Works was funded under the International Fund for Ireland's (IFI) Sharing in Education Programme and was managed by Include Youth in partnership with Challenge for Youth, Artillery Youth Centre, North Belfast Alternatives, South and East Belfast Alternatives and New Start Education Centre. The programme was 26 weeks and targeted at 16 and 17 year olds who have dropped out of / been excluded from school. Initially Include Youth was funded to deliver a pilot programme in

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<sup>1</sup> Previously known as Opportunity Youth

North Belfast which ran from September 2011 to March 2012 and following the success of the pilot the project was extended for an additional two phases across Belfast, over the period July 2012 to November 2013.

The aim of Youth Works was;

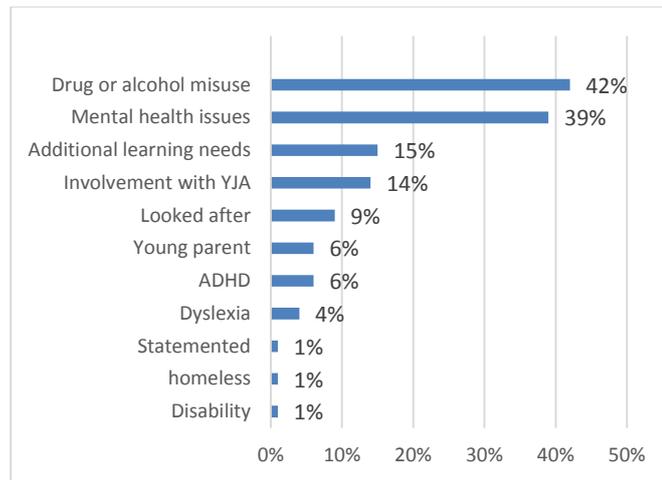
*To identify and target 16 to 17 year olds, not in education, employment or training and with no formal qualifications (i.e. at level 1 or above), within communities suffering the greatest economic and social deprivation and using those economic concerns as a platform to build stronger relationships with other 16 to 17 year olds in similar circumstances, whilst at the same time enabling them to re-engage with formal education and training and help them fulfil their potential.*

The recruitment target for Youth Works, over the pilot and phases 2 and 3, was a total of 164 young people, set by and agreed with the Youth Council. This target was exceeded by 6%, with a total of 174 young people recruited over the two years. The partnership with local, community based youth organisations has been an effective partnership arrangement in terms of their ability to access young people. Partners have shown that through their local presence in communities and their community and stakeholder networks, they have been able to successfully target and recruit 16 and 17 year olds. While word of mouth recommendation helped in recruitment as the programme was rolled out a second and third time, some partners did however report that the market was becoming more crowded with other programmes targeting NEET young people. This made it more difficult in Phases 2 and 3 as organisations were competing for the same young people.

## 5.1 Participant Profile

Figure iii demonstrates that young people recruited to the Youth Works programme had multiple personal issues that have impacted upon their NEET status.

**Fig.iii: Youth Works Participant Profile**



## 5.2 Induction

The first six weeks of the programme focused upon induction, helping young people to settle into a more formalised, structured programme. Relationship building was important at this stage and activities were focused upon ice breaker, fun and team building activities. Quick win training programmes such as First Aid were introduced which would provide young people with a qualification early in their engagement. This helped to motivate young people and develop their self confidence to achieve. Induction also provided an opportunity for staff to get to know the young people better.

## 5.3 Training

Training was focused upon personal development, employability, essential skills and peace and reconciliation. All partners had autonomy to deliver any programmes within this framework as long as they fulfilled the aims and objectives of the Youth Works programme and met the needs of each of the participants. As a result of the autonomy afforded to each partner, there was a huge diversity of programmes delivered. The pilot programme included 15 different training programmes and as Youth Works developed in phases 2 and 3, additional courses were introduced, to meet the needs of the young people engaging. In addition, more structured and formalised peace and reconciliation training programmes were introduced.

In total 58 different training courses have been delivered across the three phases and 196 accredited qualifications have been achieved. These have included a mix of Level 1 and 2 qualifications, of which 37% of accredited awards have been focused upon employability, 18% focused upon personal development and 45% on peace and reconciliation. 62% of programmes delivered have been short courses and workshops, many of which were externally endorsed / approved. An ETI evaluation of Youth Works reported that the *“interesting and challenging programmes were*

*matched well to the young people's needs and interests" and also that "Young people achieved an appropriate range of qualifications, which prepares them well for the next stage of their education, training or employment."*

- a. **Employability** training programmes delivered focused upon generic skills targeted at all young people, as well as specific training courses completed by smaller numbers of young people, more focused on their individual interests and career aspirations. Employability was not an explicit theme initially in the Youth Works model terms of reference and the Youth Council acknowledge that it was the learning from the pilot, managed by Include Youth, that highlighted the importance of an employability focus in supporting NEET young people to achieve a positive move into ETE.
- b. **Personal development** programmes were important to enhance the life skills of young people and facilitate their improved health and wellbeing. Many of the personal development programmes focused upon the issues young people were experiencing, identified at induction stage such as mental health issues, addiction issues, poor lifestyle, financial difficulties etc.
- c. **Essential skills** delivery within a 26 week timescale, for young people with complex needs, was a challenge. Despite this, over the three phases, 81 Essential Skills awards were achieved, 53% of which were at entry level, 22% at Level 1 and 25% were Level 2 awards.
- d. **Peace and reconciliation** training was initially a challenge for partners. Youth Works staff and steering group members acknowledged that they needed to specifically reflect on how they were going to deliver on this core theme and in phases 2 and 3 the OCN in Cultural Relations was delivered across all partner sites and additional training and joint activities were introduced to facilitate increased interaction between young people from different backgrounds.

## 5.4 Mentoring

Mentoring was a core theme of the Youth Works model and was delivered both on a formal, scheduled basis and also informally on a day to day basis through the relationships established and engagement between young people and staff. Formal one to one sessions provided an opportunity to reflect on the experiences of the young person on the programme, address any concerns or issues they may have, review their learning and reinforce the successes and achievements they have made on the programme. In addition, informal mentoring support was a daily and ongoing function of staff who had to respond to the immediate demands and needs of the young people.

The ETI Evaluation reported favourably on mentoring support and stated "*The quality of pastoral care for the young people was excellent; in particular the staff had*

*a clear understanding and empathy for the needs of the young people. The staff were enthusiastic, caring and provide excellent role models."*

## 5.5 Transition from Youth Works

Youth Works has been successful in sustaining the engagement 68% of young people recruited. This has exceeded the programme target of 60%. With respect to transition from Youth Works, the target set by the Youth Council was that 60% of participants would be signposted to education, training or employment opportunities. Monitoring records show that this was achieved and 60% of young people had a positive transition to ETE. When volunteering and youth service move on destinations are included, this equates to a 71% positive move on.

## 5.6 Programme Impact

The use of social impact tools has indicated that by enabling and facilitating young people to reengage in a community based intervention such as Youth Works, this has enhanced their self-confidence to engage in other community based provision. Other significant changes include;

- Young people's enhanced awareness about they want to achieve / do in the future
- the increased interaction with young people from other community backgrounds which Youth Works has facilitated
- reported improvements in young people's mental health

These findings concur with Youth Works staff reported observations of how the programme has impacted upon young people. They report that young people;

- Have become more self confident and have greater self esteem
- Can communicate better and are more open about their feelings and any issues that are bothering or concerning them
- Are more motivated to move onto other training / learning opportunities
- Have enhanced respect for others
- Have an enhanced sense of responsibility and discipline
- Have an enhanced self of wellbeing

## 5.7 Partnership

Partnership working in the delivery of Youth Works was a relatively new approach for Include Youth and managing the partnership process was a challenging role

because of the autonomy of each partner to deliver the Youth Works programme independently.

Partners report that their collaboration with Include Youth has positively impacted upon their organisation in the following way;

- Organisations are now more aware of skills and qualifications opportunities and have additional training resources which they did not previously have and staff skilled to deliver training programmes in the future.
- Organisations are now more aware of the need to support young people to identify opportunities and assist them to achieve more.
- Organisations report that they are more aware now of the importance of wrap around support for young people.
- Organisations are more aware of employability and the importance of young people developing their skills and qualifications. Traditionally they focused upon the personal development of young people but did not focus upon employability.

## 6.0 START

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The START programme is a partnership initiative managed by Include Youth and delivered in conjunction with Challenge for Youth, Lisburn YMCA, Youth Initiatives and North Down Alternatives. The programme is funded by DEL under the Collaboration and Innovation Fund and is a 28 week programme targeted at young people aged 16 to 24 years, with the aim of improving their self confidence, skills and employability within a community based setting.

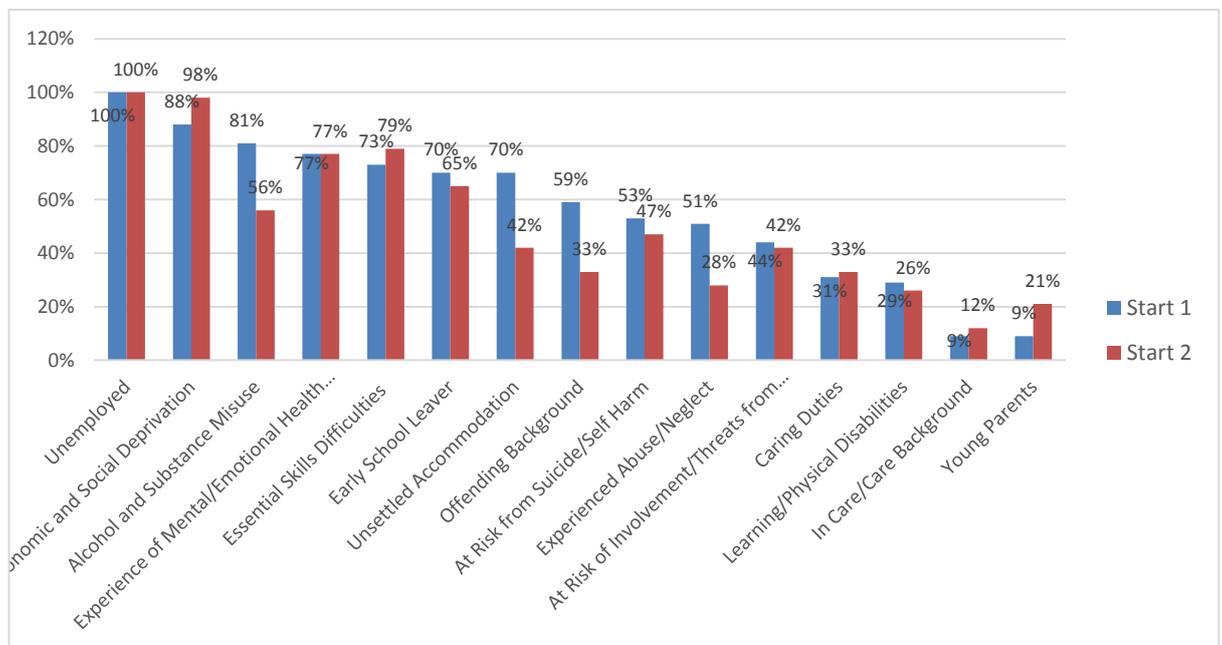
START was modelled upon the success of the Youth Works programme, offering a youth work based approach focused upon skills and qualifications attainment in employability, personal development and essential skills as well as personal and social development through mentoring support.

At the time of the evaluation, two of three programme cycles had been delivered and a total of 85 young people had been recruited, 18% above target and of which approximately two thirds were male and one third female. 89% of young people recruited have stayed engaged with START and completed the programme, which is in excess of the target of achieving 65% retention and completion.

### 6.1 Participant Profile

Figure iv illustrates the profile of young people recruited to START and illustrates the complexity of issues they are facing. The nature of the needs and issues facing young people has impacted upon the need to deliver a flexible programme model that can respond to the challenges of engaging with such young people.

**Fig. iv: START Participant Profile, Cycles 1 and 2**



## 6.2 Training

Monitoring records show that 70% of cycle 1 participants and 65% of cycle 2 participants had left school early with little or no qualifications and 73% and 79% respectively had essential skills difficulties. The START training programme was developed to reflect Include Youth’s experience and success in supporting the most disadvantaged and disengaged young people to successfully move into education, employment or training through a combination of personal development, employability, essential skills and adventure learning training interventions. A total of 359 qualifications and 109 non accredited courses have been attained / completed by young people over the two programme cycles, with an average of 4

qualifications per participant attained by young people in cycle 1 and an average of 6 per participant in cycle 2.

A new development to the focus of training was the introduction of the OCN in Adventure Learning which was introduced by Challenge for Youth. Initially Challenge for Youth was providing team building and outdoor activities as a fun activity that would give young people an opportunity to interact outside each of the partner venues. Upon reflection partners identified that the adventure learning could be enhanced and adapted to ensure that young people were reflecting on the learning from their activities and how their skills and achievements could be applied in other settings such as employment related situations. All of the young people consulted advised that they really enjoyed this aspect of the programme and staff report that it helped to cement each of the groups. Young people reported that the activities challenged them and took them out of their comfort zone.

### 6.3 Mentoring

One to one mentoring support is focused upon three key areas of work, namely supporting young people;

- who are struggling with course work and need more focused one to one working to help them catch up or complete modules
- with their employability needs and their transition from START
- experiencing difficulties in their personal life, for example;
  - Homelessness
  - Pregnancy
  - Family issues
  - Drug and alcohol addiction
  - Housing issues
  - Benefits worries
  - Abuse issues
  - Relationship issues

Project Workers reported that the model of providing one to one support for young people has ensured their sustained engagement with the programme. One to one time has provided an opportunity to push young people to work hard and motivate them. The one to one support was identified by young people as the one area that differentiates START from other education and training experiences which have lacked the one to one person centred approach.

### 6.4 Transition from START

Monitoring records show that for cycle 1 and 2, a total of 11% of young people that joined START left early, with 89% completing. This is an excellent achievement. 72% of all participants that joined START have moved to education, training or employment but when early leavers are factored out, START performance is even

higher, achieving a positive move on for 81% of those completing the programme. 29% of young people leaving have progressed to employment.

At the time of the evaluation monitoring data was available for the sustained transition of cycle 1 participants. Data showed that at move on stage from START, 76% of participants moved into education, training or employment. After 3 months 74% had sustained an ETE placement and after 6 months this had fallen to 67%. The fall out was largely from education and training.

## 6.5 Programme Impact

Rickter was used to help measure impact as well as a baseline self-assessment which young people completed at the start and end of the project. Young people's responses indicate that the greatest positive impact has been in respect to their;

- Self esteem and self confidence
- Employability skills
- Personal skills and qualities
- Having a voice
- The positive opportunities available to them
- Their hopes for the future

## 7.0 AIMING HIGHER

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Aiming Higher is a five month programme targeted at young care leavers aged 16 to 21 years and aims to inspire them to take up employment, education or training opportunities by enhancing their exposure to and engagement with employers. The programme is funded by the Big Lottery and delivered in partnership with Business in the Community across Belfast and South Eastern HSC Trust areas over a three year period from January 2013 to January 2016.

At the time of the evaluation, two phases of Aiming Higher had been completed and monitoring records show that 12 young people were recruited in phase 1 and 10 in phase 2. All of these young people were from Belfast, with no young people referred from the South Eastern HSC Trust area.

The commitment required by young people to Aiming Higher is ½ day per week over a five month period. Each session begins with lunch and BITC and Include Youth have developed a programme of activities which includes a mix of employability and

personal development focused learning activities as well as visits to work places, volunteering activities, team building activities and learning groups.

## 7.1 Employer Engagement

Employer engagement activity has been the responsibility of Business in the Community. BITC is a membership organisation for businesses that are committed to doing business responsibly and working together on societal issues where they can make a real difference. They have approximately 260 member businesses and therefore have access to a committed resource in respect to employers who are willing to engage in activities such as Aiming Higher. It is the role of BITC on the Aiming Higher programme to identify businesses to input to the programme and also to recruit business people willing to commit time to becoming a volunteer mentor on the programme.

Employers are invited to engage in one or more activities including volunteer mentoring, hosting a work place visit, giving a talk to young people and / or providing work experience opportunities. BITC advise that securing employer engagement in the programme has not been difficult and that employers have been keen to get involved.

## 7.2 Mentoring

In phases 1 and 2 BITC recruited 22 volunteer business mentors who were matched with young people (10 in Phase 1 and 12 in Phase 2). Include Youth and BITC provided one day training for mentors in advance, bringing the expertise developed through the Give and Take programme and other BITC mentoring initiatives. Feedback from mentors is very positive with mentors reporting on the sense of satisfaction and enjoyment that they got from their experience. They could see the positive development of the young people they were mentoring and acknowledged that having an adult (who was not being paid to engage with them) to encourage and support was a positive asset for the young person. Feedback from young people was primarily positive but mixed, highlighting that mentoring support is not necessarily suited to all young people.

## 7.3 Transition from Aiming Higher

Of the 22 young people recruited to Aiming Higher, 59% remained engaged with the programme until the end of the five month period, with 41% dropping out. Staff consultation has confirmed that it has been difficult to keep young people engaged in a programme that only requires a commitment of one day per week, especially if

they are engaged in other programmes / initiatives. Additionally, young people have other personal and social issues that have impacted upon their ability to sustain commitment, for example, drug and alcohol issues, pregnancy, accommodation issues etc.

Programme records show that 55% of young people recruited in Phases 1 and 2 moved to education, training or employment within 6 months of the programme finishing. An additional 9% moved into volunteering, equating to 64% with a positive move on destination. The target was 70%.

## 7.4 Partnership

The partnership between Include Youth and Business in the Community has worked well with both organisations bringing different expertise to the programme which has enabled clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the implementation of Aiming Higher. Include Youth has brought to the partnership;

- Access to young people leaving care through the Employability scheme which has helped recruitment
- Experience working with young people through a youth work based approach which has influenced the delivery of a flexible and diverse programme with a focus very much on the needs of the young people
- Experience in the training of mentors supporting young people from a care background

BITC has brought to the partnership access to employer networks which has enabled effective employer engagement in the programme in terms of recruiting volunteer mentors, providing opportunities for work visits and the inclusion of employers as guest speakers.

## 8.0 SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

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An organisation's Social Return on Investment (SROI) is the social value created by its activities, where "social value" refers to social, environmental and economic costs and benefits. SROI is a relatively new approach in general economic assessment and evaluations of projects in Northern Ireland; the SROI is a model that is still being developed and improved all the time. The techniques, standards and applications of SROI are improving all the time and the principles of SROI are the principles of standard cost-benefit analysis, which are well documented and deployed by economists across the UK. For example, these principles are used by every part of

government in evaluating policy, and have been developed in HM Treasury's "Green Book on Appraisal and Evaluation" (HM Treasury, 2003).

To inform the evaluation of Include Youth's employability services, it was agreed that an SROI would be calculated for all of the programmes that were being evaluated (Give and Take, New Leaf, Employability, Youth Works, START and Aiming Higher). Initial work focused upon scoping out the type of impacts/benefits/costs that could realistically be valued (and/or where research based evidence exists) to be confident that any SROI calculation had a high degree of validity and robustness.

The SROI was informed by;

- a) Direct financial costs - the core Input/Costs associated with the delivery of the suite of programmes offered and delivered by Include Youth
- b) Key qualitative benefits associated with the delivery of the various programmes. Each potential benefit was discussed as was a robust method (or citing available research reports) to 'valuing' the benefit. It was agreed that the following benefits would form the assessment of the SROI:
  - Move into Education, training or employment (i.e. No Longer NEET)
  - Removal of Homeless Status
  - Value of Volunteering by Participants

Data used to inform the SROI included;

- Include Youth financial data and programme level evaluation data
- Findings of a research report undertaken by the University of York (for the Audit Commission in July 2010)<sup>2</sup> estimating the lifetime cost of being NEET
- The Northern Ireland Survey of Hours & Earnings (2012)<sup>3</sup>
- Independent research by the New Economics Foundation on the value of being homeless

Applying an SROI methodology has enabled a total economic benefit associated with the individual and collective programmes within Include Youth to be calculated and is summarised in the table overleaf. Essentially, the total economic benefit of Include Youth is quantified at £141 million, with the Give & Take Programme accounting for almost £102 million (72%).

#### **Table ii: SROI Calculation**

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<sup>2</sup> Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training (Audit Commission). July 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency

Programme	Cost of Programme (£)	Economic Benefit (£)	SROI (For Every £ Invested)
Give & Take/New Leaf	3,027,242	101,995,100	£33.69
Employability	130,160	3,177,526	£24.41
Youth Works	940,950	22,114,769	£23.50
Start	343,055	14,257,111	£41.56
Aiming Higher	19,575	99,603	£5.09
<b>Overall (£)</b>	<b>4,460,982</b>	<b>141,644,108</b>	<b>£31.75</b>

The table indicates the following:

- across all of its programme, Include Youth provides a £32 return for every pound invested;
- Start is its most efficient programme providing a Return on Investment of almost £42 for every pound invested;
- The Flagship Programme (Give & Take/New Leaf) provides approximately £34 Return on Investment and represents a benefit of almost £102 million which is 72% of the total benefit derived across all the Programme in Include Youth;
- The lowest 'value' programme is Aiming Higher with a return on investment ratio of 1:5

## 9.0 CONCLUSIONS

### **Engagement & recruitment of young people**

Include Youth has been very effective in its engagement with and recruitment of young people to all of its programmes. Typically the young people that Include Youth is engaging with are the hardest to reach NEET young people who do not typically join programmes. Methodologies have therefore had to be developed that firstly enable the identification of such young people, secondly motivates and persuades them to join their programmes, thirdly ensures that they stay engaged and lastly facilitates a successful move on strategy for them that takes them out of the NEET status category.

For those programmes which have required a proactive marketing approach to recruit young people, Include Youth has been very successful, exceeding their programme targets. For those programmes for which Include Youth relies on referrals from the Health and Social Care Trusts, appointed places have been filled.

### **Participant Profile**

Across all of their programmes, Include Youth is targeting and engaging with young people who are not in education, employment or training and who have complex and multiple issues i.e. young people within the Core NEET category.

### **Induction & assessment**

Induction is an important element of Include Youth's structured training programmes which help staff to get to know young people better and also helps young people to settle into a programme. Induction focuses very much on individuals, with needs assessment, action planning and baselining completed for each young person, all of which are important and essential components of ensuring delivery of a programme that meets the needs of young people.

The use of Rickter at induction stage is very helpful for measuring distance travelled, when repeated at the end of a young person's engagement with Include Youth.

### **Training**

The majority of young people supported by Include Youth across all programmes have no or very low levels of qualifications. Include Youth has therefore focused on the development of accredited training programmes that will contribute to the enhanced employability of young people.

For those programmes delivering more structured training the focus has been upon three core areas - Employability, Personal Development and Essential Skills. Year on year performance across all programmes has been increasing, reflected in increasing qualifications attainment achieved by young people.

### **Good relations**

Include Youth has introduced an increased focus on the delivery

	<p>of peace and reconciliation / good relations to their training programmes which has been well received by young people. This is particularly important for young people from deprived communities who may have little contact with other young people outside their own area / community.</p>
<b>Personal development</b>	<p>The successes of Include Youth's programmes in terms of young people's sustained engagement with programmes, increasing qualifications attainment, excellent personal outcomes in terms of their distance travelled and improving transition outcomes to employment, education or training are largely influenced by the focus on the personal development of young people.</p>
<b>Mentoring</b>	<p>A youth work methodology by its very nature fosters the development of personal relationships between staff and young people that are supportive, encouraging and motivating. Across all programmes the role of staff as mentors has been consistently praised and the supportive nature of staff has differentiated Include Youth programmes from young people's previous experiences of school.</p>
<b>Work experience</b>	<p>Give and Take, New Leaf and the Employability Services are the only programmes that include work experience options, as the short term nature of other programmes does not accommodate sufficient time for work experience.</p> <p>Give and Take monitoring records show that year on year more young people have been engaging in work experience but numbers are low at 40%.</p>
<b>Transition to employment, education or training</b>	<p>In total across all programmes, 514 young people have been supported into employment, education, training or volunteering. This equates to 63% of all young people engaged with Include Youth across all programmes.</p> <p>The introduction of a Transition Support Service to Give and Take and New Leaf has seen move on to ETE increase from 58% to 70% over the three year period and sustained placements significantly increased as a result of the intervention of transition support.</p>
<b>Monitoring &amp; evaluation</b>	<p>Monitoring and evaluation systems across Include Youth's programmes varies and while there is a lot of monitoring being conducted for each programme there is a lack of consistency that allows for a single point of information gathering and collation.</p>
<b>Market development</b>	<p>Include Youth has been successful in their market development through outreach programmes where they have entered into</p>

effective partnership and collaborative relationships with other youth organisations. The success of the Include Youth approach and the growing recognition as a professional and reputable Youth organisation will present opportunities to extend this market development through other collaborative opportunities in the future.

**Social clauses**

Progress has been made with the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust through the use of Positive Action Measures which has resulted in the Trust ring-fencing jobs and providing Give & Take participants with the opportunity of job and work placements.

## 10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Engagement & recruitment of young people

There is a need to review the length of time that young people remain on the Give and Take programme and ensure that they progress on, freeing up places for new young people to be referred.

<b>Participant Profile</b>	<p>Information gathered to inform participant profiles is not consistent across programmes and it is recommended that Include Youth should adopt one profile template that is used for all programmes.</p> <p>In addition, this profile assessment should be designed to include information that will enable Include Youth to monitor the impact of their intervention on young people, which would facilitate future measurement of their social return on investment.</p>
<b>Induction &amp; assessment</b>	<p>There is a need for consistency with respect to the use of Rickter and the recording of results for all young people.</p>
<b>Training</b>	<p>Include Youth should ensure that they do not become too focused upon accreditation and qualifications at the expense of the more fun, sociable activities which are important for sustaining engagement of young people.</p> <p>Include Youth should review its current suite of training provided and consider options for expanding the range of subject areas provided. This should facilitate the provision of higher level qualifications. In the first instance Include Youth might consider offering subjects such as art, history, technology etc.</p>
<b>Good relations</b>	<p>Good relations should be developed further and included in all Include Youth employability programmes.</p>
<b>Mentoring</b>	<p>Centralising the coordination role for mentor and volunteer recruitment and management is a positive step and there will be a need for sustained emphasis on ensuring the availability of a pool of mentors. On the premise that approximately 70 new young people are recruited annually to Give and Take, and the average caseload per year is approximately 133, this will be a challenge for Include Youth.</p>
<b>Employer Engagement</b>	<p>A consistent approach to employer engagement needs to be applied across the organisation</p> <p>The partnership arrangement with Business in the Community should be developed and Include Youth should seek to build the Aiming Higher model into future programmes in terms of a</p>

	<p>one day per week employer focused programme of activities.</p>
<b>Transition to employment, education or training</b>	<p>There is a need for a sustained Transition Support service</p> <p>The Youth Works model of recording engagement at 6, 12, 18 and 26 weeks provides a useful record of engagement over programmes that have a defined period of delivery. This helps to identify if there is a trend when young people are leaving, e.g. following induction, during training or just before they are about to make the transition from the programme. This recording should be considered across all programmes.</p> <p>It would be useful if move on destinations were recorded individually i.e. education, training or employment and not as one collective destination. Also whether young people are moving into supported or non-supported placements should be recorded.</p>
<b>Monitoring &amp; evaluation</b>	<p>As a minimum, a monitoring and evaluation framework for the organisation should be developed that can be applied consistently to all future programmes.</p> <p>Resources permitting, Include Youth should consider creation of a monitoring and evaluation post that would develop a consistent approach to the gathering of information across the organisation and would have responsibility for implementing / coordinating monitoring and evaluation procedures across all programmes.</p> <p>Include Youth should consider moving towards a more simplified model for evaluation across the organisation e.g. Outcomes Based Accountability model.</p> <p>Establish KPIs for each staff member to work towards, ultimately delivering a more effective and efficient service for young people. KPIs can help to clarify the role each member of staff plays, for example for some it could be aligned to developing linkages with employers , for others retention of Give &amp; Take clients, progression into education, further training or employment.</p>
<b>Market development</b>	<p>For future outreach initiatives Include Youth will need to ensure that they enter into effective partnership arrangements where there is real added value and with organisations who share the same values and principles as Include Youth.</p> <p>Include Youth should also consider entering into the Republic of Ireland marketplace with its suite of employability programmes which have been tried, tested and modified over time in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Consider other target groups which would benefit from the</p>

	<p>suite of programmes currently provided. For example, this might include young people on the edge of care, young people at risk of becoming NEET, young people from a criminal justice background, entry level Training for Success young people etc. Include Youth is unlikely to provide to these groups without firstly forming partnerships and alliances with other key delivery organisations.</p>
<p><b>Social clauses</b></p>	<p>Include Youth work with key commissioning and procurement bodies to lobby for the inclusion of specific clauses which target young people from a care background.</p>