An Evaluation of the British Red Cross' Educational Pilot Project for Young People Serving Reparation Orders

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Executive Summary

- In 2011, through an inter-agency collaborative approach, the British Red Cross and Newcastle Youth Offending Team designed and delivered an Educational Pilot Project as an alternative method of reparation to that of the physical tasks previously offered collaboratively by the two organisations.

- The young people that participated in the programme did not represent a homogenous group in terms of their characteristics, risk assessment and offending patterns. Other than serving a reparation order, the sample represented a complex and heterogeneous picture in terms of the service users' differing needs and patterns of offending and (re)offending behaviour. Of note, the majority of service users who completed the programme were already in education or some form of employment and/or training at the time of engagement (62%).

- Comparative analysis of the data on the pre-Educational Pilot Project offending profile of service users with their post-engagement behaviour suggests a considerable reduction in offending. There was a decrease in offending for 54% of service users (7 of 13) post-engagement, 15% of service users' (2 of 13) offending remained consistent with their pre-engagement behaviour and 15% of service users (2 of 13) desisted from offending altogether following the intervention. Furthermore, the gravity scores of offences committed post- engagement for 76% (10 out of 13) of service users was significantly lower than the gravity score for offences committed pre- engagement.

- The data from the interviews with key stakeholders suggested two causal factors with regard to high levels of service user engagement with the programme. First, stakeholders expressed the view that service users engaged positively as a result of the philosophical aspects of humanitarian education, in contrast to statutory-based education. Second, heightened levels of engagement were the result of an amalgamation between interactive engagement and educational learning. This method of reparation was said to meet the needs of service users by specifically developing service users' practical, communication and social skills.

- Whilst stakeholders suggested that service users engaged positively with the programme, there is an important caveat. The data indicates that young offenders were less likely to engage with the programme if they had a sibling or partner simultaneously serving an order within a YOT. 54% (7 of 13) of service users achieved 100% attendance across the quantitative data set; however this figure fell to 33% (2 of 6) for service users with

siblings and/or partners within a YOT. Thus, the influence of family and social networks may play a key role in how well a service user engages with, and benefits from, the programme.

- Overall, key stakeholders offered the view that the Educational Pilot Project was designed and delivered effectively. However, across the interviews, there were various concerns expressed and suggestions of progressive possibilities with regard to improving the programme.
    - o First, on completion of the programme, service users attain a British Red Cross certificate of recognition. Whilst stakeholders proffered the view that such certificates were well received, it was also suggested that service users may benefit more from an official recognised certificate of education. Such a suggestion requires serious consideration given to the current climate of austerity and the already significant marginalisation of offenders in the job market.
    - o Second, stakeholders highlighted the potential of the programme to be developed and rolled-out on a larger scale through the creation of a downloadable resource pack. Doing so offers the potential to develop and improve multi-collaboration through a 'what works' paradigm.
    - o Lastly, stakeholder's expressed various concerns regarding forthcoming managerial, staffing, and pragmatic structural changes which may impact the overall effectiveness of the programme detrimentally.
- Examples of Good Practice identified in this evaluation include;
    - o Strong multi-agency working, allowing an innovative and useful intervention to develop from reflective practice upon prior working arrangements.
    - o Innovative learning methodologies that took service users beyond the constraints of a statutory curricula.
    - o Progressive curricula strengthened through the humanitarian focused education ethos of the BRC.
    - o Valuable intervention in developing service users practical, communication and social skills.

Introduction

Using Newcastle Youth Offending Team (YOT) as a case-study, this report presents the findings of the evaluation of the British Red Cross[1] (BRC) Educational Pilot Project (EPP) for service users serving reparation as part of Community Orders. The EPP was implemented between November 2011 and June 2012. However prior to this development, the BRC and Newcastle YOT had been working in partnership since 2005, to offer young people alternative forms of youth justice, focused around more physical tasks, such as cleaning and re-stocking on-site ambulances and creating packs for events in the North East such as the Great North Run. Whilst such tasks were generally considered successful, such work was not sustainable due to staff change-overs. In 2007, the BRC and Newcastle YOT once again entered into collaboration to meet the needs of young people serving reparation as part of Community Orders. This time, individuals were tasked with the maintenance of wheelchairs and litter picking. Regrettably, service users found it increasingly difficult to engage with these tasks and thus such work did not have the positive impact envisaged. Latterly, the EPP was introduced in 2011 - initially as a five-week programme - designed to introduce service users to the humanitarian work undertaken by BRC.

The evaluation of EPP focused upon developing a perspective on the EPP from the point-of-view of four BRC and YOT frontline and managerial stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of the project. However, the qualitative data afforded by the semi-structured interviews is complemented by anonymised data on the characteristics, offending histories and re-offending records of all young people who have completed the programme to date (as supplied by Newcastle YOT). Thus, the evaluation has been undertaken using a mixed-methods approach, which enabled a nuanced understanding of the strategic and operational context of the project, whilst concomitantly strengthening the validity of evaluation findings.

In total, thirteen young offenders participated in the EPP. As a caveat, the young people whom participated in the programme do not represent a homogenous group in terms of their characteristics, risk assessment and offending patterns. Rather, the sample represents a complex and heterogeneous picture in terms of the service users' differing needs and patterns of offending and (re)offending behaviour.

Background to Multi-Agency Partnerships

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[1] The British Red Cross is a volunteer-led humanitarian organisation that supports people in crisis;

The EPP delivered through an inter-agency approach between the BRC and Newcastle YOT, can be understood through two significant developments in the context of youth justice, (re)offending and the ways in which young people's behaviour can be circumscribed. First, the significance attached to the management of risk through the 'responsibilisation'[2] of offenders can be seen in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which sets out a new framework for the governance of youth crime (Gray, 2005: 940). The 'new rehabilitation' through responsibilisation is evident in the proliferation of 'evidence-based' offending behaviour programmes, which contribute to a 'what works' paradigm (McGuire et al., 2002) in an era of risk (see Kemshall, 2002; Robinson, 2002; O'Malley, 2001). Importantly, key within this discursive mix of responsibilisation is the active involvement of offenders in the reduction of their own risk of reoffending as part of a wider project of harm minimization and public protection (Gray, 2005: 340). Specifically, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced reparation orders, in which a young offender can be ordered to make reparation to the victim of the offence, any person otherwise affected or to the community at large (Muncie, 1999), thus coinciding with 'restorative justice' schemes. Second, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 facilitated the requirement for local authorities to establish multi-agency Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), which include a plurality of representatives from the police, probation, education, health and social services; thus eschewing the traditional one-dimensional security dichotomy. These teams, usually in partnership with voluntary-sector agencies, are expected to provide holistic interventions, which specifically target the interrelated risks associated with offending and social exclusion (Gray, 2005: 940). In addition, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 created the Youth Justice Board (YJB) which has sponsored numerous training, employment and health programmes (Pitcher et al., 2004) including education. Thus, in the field of youth justice, there has been a simultaneous devolution and centralization of policy (Muncie, 2006) through the statutory duty of local authorities to 'prevent offending by young people'[3] (Muncie, 2006; see also Crime and Disorder Act, 1998: s. 37).

Background to EPP: Pilot 1

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[2] Running throughout much of the Act is also a legitimating rhetoric of restoration, reintegration, and reparation (Muncie, 1999: 171; see NACRO, 1997; Home Office, 1997: 30).

[3] It is also important to recognise that the now omnipresent multi-lateralization of auspices and providers within the governance of youth crime and justice is interrelated with the 'new public management' ethos, and 'modernization' agenda in advanced liberal societies.

On 8th November 2011, the first EPP for young people serving reparation orders took place at the offices of BRC in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The first pilot project consisted of five two-hour workshops (between the hours of 16:00 – 18:00) delivered over the course of ten weeks. Each week considered a particular 'theme'. These included: a general induction to the work of BRC; humanitarian education (specifically the ICRC film on child soldiers, '*I don't want to go back*'); first aid learning; health and social care education; and emergency response work. The number of young people who participated in the first pilot fluctuated on weekly basis; during certain weeks, the pilot project was delivered to just one young person, whilst other weeks two individuals engaged with the programme. However, upon further evaluation discussions between BRC and Newcastle YOT regarding the first pilot project, it was mutually decided that the delivery of the workshops should be targeted at small groups rather than on a one-to-one basis as they were designed to be interactive in nature. Thus, it was decided that future delivery of the programme would be to groups of young people.. Moreover, it was decided that one – as opposed to two - hour workshops would be equally effective in meeting the needs of service users.

Background to EPP: Pilot 2

Following the success of the first EPP, the second pilot project commenced on 8th May 2012[4]. In contrast to inconsistent numbers of young people who participated in the first pilot project, all five of the workshops within the second pilot were attended by four service users. Similarly to the first pilot project, each week consisted of a different theme including: a short film into the work of the Red Cross Crescent Movement and a PowerPoint quiz on refugees[5]; Education on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) delivered through a RAID CROSS activity pack (consisting of 7 different workshops designed to educate young people about IHL); Health and Social Care education (specifically, a 'Landmines/Wheelchairs' activity designed to educated people on challenges faced by people confined to a wheelchair); First Aid education using casualty simulation; and a Sexual Health and HIV awareness including the IRIN film '*Love Positively',* which provides education on the HIV/AIDS

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[4] The location and time of the workshops remained consistent with the first pilot project.

[5] Of note, the first week of the second Pilot Project encountered numerous difficulties. For instance, the young people who participated were not familiar with each other, nor were they familiar with the two YOT facilitators; this led to a significant reduction in overall engagement within the first week. Secondly, one particular individual had literacy difficulties. This was not communicated to the BRC facilitators, while one of the activities involved a quiz. Subsequently, the second week was rolled-out on a trial basis and was to be discontinued if the young people couldn't be given adequate support with this.

epidemic in Uganda. Having completed the EPP, all young people were presented with a BRC certificate of achievement.

Methodology

Research Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to:

- Evaluate the approach to delivery of the BRC/Newcastle YOT education programme for young offenders;
- Assess the outcomes and impacts of participation in the programme on young offenders;
- Where appropriate, identify recommendations to inform the future strategic and operational development of the programme from both BRC and Newcastle YOT perspectives.

Research Questions

In meeting the evaluation aims, the following broad *research questions* were addressed:

- What are the foci of the education programme and how is it delivered to young offenders?
- What are the criteria for access?
- What are the demographic and offending profiles of the young people who have participated in the programme?
- How engaged are young people with the programme? How does this compare to levels of engagement with other programmes? What accounts for this?
- What impact does participation in the programme have on young people, including attitudes, behaviours, aspirations and re-offending rates? What accounts for this?
- To what extent is the programme tailored to, and meets the needs of, young people?
- What is the experience of BRC and Newcastle YOT stakeholders in developing and delivering the programme?
- Could the design and delivery of the programme be improved, in order to have a greater impact on young people and to improve the experience of BRC and Newcastle YOT in respect of delivery?
- Could the programme play a greater role in BRC's national youth education strategy (and the work of YOTs)?

Research Design

The present research used a *single-embedded* case study approach in line with the case study classification matrix outlined by Yin (2009) (see Figure 1).

	Single Case	Multiple Cases
Single unit of analysis	Single-holistic case study	Multiple-holistic case study
Multiple units of analysis	**Single-embedded case study**	Multiple-embedded case Study

Figure 1 Case Study Classification Matrix (as cited in Yin, 2009).

Moreover, Yin (2009) further states that a case study may be further classified in terms of the number of cases being studied and number of *units of analysis* (UoA hereafter) within the study; what is termed 'case definition'. The present research evaluated two UoA as outlined in Figure 2:
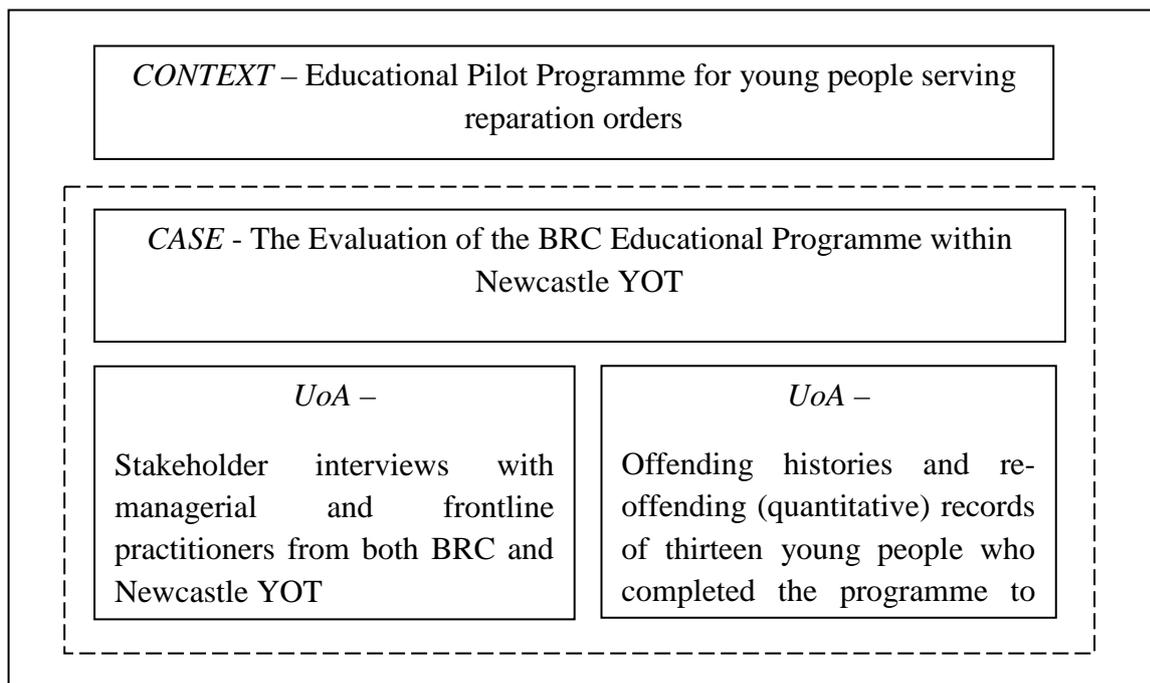
Figure 2 Single-embedded Case Study Design.

Whilst the appropriate 'form' or case definition has been establish above, case study research can be carried out through quantitative or qualitative methods or a synergistic amalgamation of both (see Eisenhardt, 1989). The present research has been conducted using a mixed-methods (or what is commonly termed 'triangulation') approach, combining analysis of quantitative data of thirteen service users who have completed the programme (including

characteristics, offending histories, and re-offending records); four semi-structured interviews with frontline and managerial stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of the project (three from Newcastle YOT and one from BRC); and a review of relevant academic and policy literature. Conducting a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods increased the scope, depth and consistency in methodological proceedings (Flick, 2006: 390), thus proffering a more nuanced understanding of the strategic and operational context of the EPP.

Quantitative Approach

Anonymised quantitative data supplied by Newcastle YOT on the characteristics, offending histories and re-offending records of all young people who have completed the programme to date has been used to identify the delivery and impact of the EPP, in terms of desistance from crime; the frequency and gravity of offending pre and post EPP; and any other criminal trajectories.

Stakeholder Interviews

Managerial and frontline practitioners from both BRC and Newcastle YOT are significant to the key aims of this research, in that they provided data from 'live' primary sources. To this end, semi-structured interviews[6] were conducted with four key stakeholders selected on the basis of their respective understanding of the design and delivery of the EPP; what Burgess (1984) terms 'judgement' or 'purposive' sampling. Purposive sampling was also deemed most appropriate in order to constrain extraneous variation and sharpen external validity (Eisenhardt, 1989: 533). Of note, the present study took an *exploratory* approach across professionals through a lack of desire to compare and contrast the accounts of professionals from BRC and Newcastle YOT. Thus, the data collected from the interviews was amalgamated into a single data set. The researchers employed several methodological measures to ensure the accuracy of the data: First, all interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure a heightened level of depth and context with regard to participants' utterances. Second, transcriptions were checked for errors through re-reading of the recorded data alongside full transcriptions. Of note, it was decided that intonation and body language

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[6] It should be recognised that the nature of the interviews, whilst semi-structured, adhered more towards what Rubin and Rubin (1995) term an "interview protocol; that is, an interview protocol serving as a 'conversational guide'.

descriptions (paralinguistic aspects of data) were not included within transcription as paralinguistic content was not central to the analysis.

Lastly, the research was conducted with the approval of the Research Ethics Committee of Northumbria University. All participation was on the basis of informed consent; participants were supplied with an information sheet which explained the aims and content of the research. All participants were also made aware of their right to withdraw from participating in the project, whenever, and for whatever, reasons. All participation was also on the basis of anonymity.

Findings: Service User Data

Demographics of Service Users

In total, thirteen service users completed the EPP (across two pilot programmes). Of these, nine were male (69%) and four were female (31%) respectively. Of the nine males, the (bi)modal age was 16 and 17, whilst the mode age for females was 15. Eightt service users were in education or training (62%); three were classified as 'NEET'[7] (23%); and two were neither in education nor training, but were under the age of 16 (15%) at the time of participating in the programme.
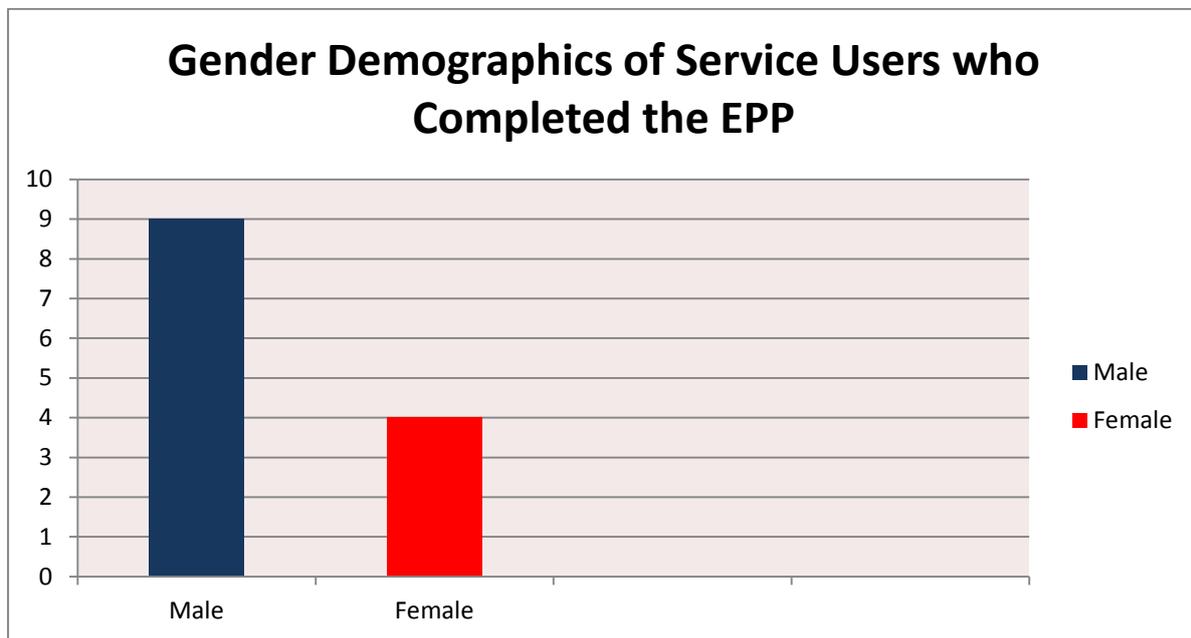

Figure 3 Demographics of service users who completed EPP by Gender

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[7] 'NEET' refers to a young person (between the ages of 16-24) who is not in education, employment or training.

Demographics of Service Users in Education and/or Training

- 62% In education or training
- 23% 'NEET'
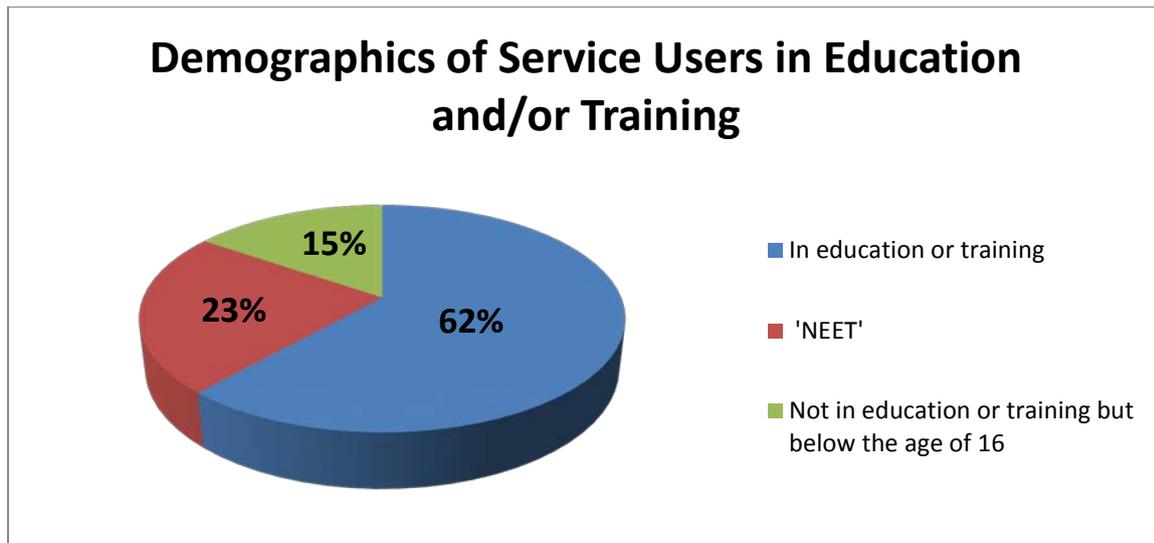- 15% Not in education or training but below the age of 16

Figure 4 Demographics of service users in education and/or employment/training

Trajectories of Crime Committed by Service Users Pre and Post- EPP

A review of the offending profile of service users pre and post- EPP suggests that service users were less likely to offend post- EPP. The quantitative data evidences a decrease in overall amount of recorded offences committed post- EPP. In total, 58 offences were recorded across the data set pre- EPP. In contrast, 46 offences were recorded post- EPP. Specifically,

- 7/13 service users committed less crime post- programme (54%);
- 4/13 committed more crime post- programme (31%); whilst
- 2/13 service users committed the same number of crimes post- programme (15%).

Of note, out of the two service users whose number of offences remained consistent pre- and post- EPP completion, it is important to recognise that there was a reduction in the gravity score of offences for one individual (a combined gravity score of 24 pre- programme to 15 post- programme). The gravity score remained constant for the other individual.

Moreover, whilst the statistical data evidences that only 2/13 individuals completely desisted from criminal activity post- EPP (15%), the picture is more complex. There was also a significant decrease in the *gravity* of offences recorded post- EPP across the entire data set. Pre- EPP, the gravity of offences totalled a collective score of 164. However, post- EPP this figure fell to 126 (see Table 2.1 and Table 2.2). There was a particularly significant reduction in the gravity score of four participants, by at least 60% post- EPP (see Table 1 and Figure 5).

Participant	Combined Gravity Score for Offences Committed pre- Educational Programme	Combined Gravity Score for Offences Committed post- Educational Programme	% Reduction in Gravity Score for Offences Committed post- Educational Programme
No. 1 (Male)	9	3	66%
No. 2 (Male)	8	3	62.5%
No. 3 (Female)	30	3	90%
No. 4 (Female)	25	2	92%

Table 1 Gravity Score for Offences Committed by Service Users Pre and Post- EPP
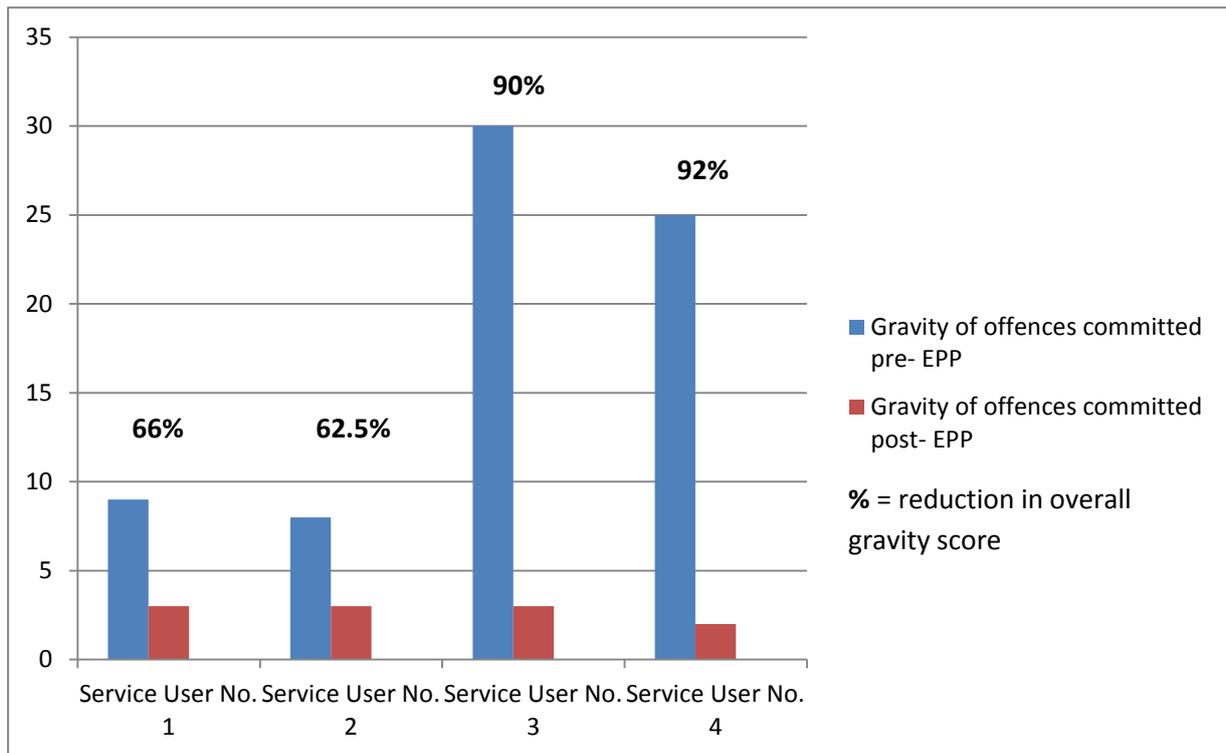
Figure 5 Gravity of Offences Committed by Four Service Users Pre and Post- EPP

In relation to specific crime types committed pre- EPP, across the data set, 'theft and handling of stolen goods' had the highest frequency (13 recorded offences) (gravity score of 3), whereas post- EPP, 'violence against a person'(7 recorded offences) (gravity score of between 3-7) and 'Public Order Offence' (7 recorded offences) (gravity score of between 1-4) were the two most common offences committed by service users.

Offence	Frequency Across Data Set	Gravity
Theft	1	3
Criminal Damage	5	2-3
Possession of a Weapon	1	3
Violence Against the Person	12	3-4
Public Order	9	1-2
Theft & Handling of Stolen Goods	13	3
Breach of Bail	3	2
Breach of Statutory Order	2	4
Drugs	4	2
Unlawful Wounding	1	7
Domestic Burglary	2	6-7
Robbery	1	6
Common Assault	1	3
Drunk & Disorderly	1	1
S.4 of Public Order Act 1984	1	2
Other	1	3
Total	**58**	**164**

Table 2 Frequency of Offence Type and Gravity Score *Pre*- EPP[8]

Offence	Frequency Across Data Set	Gravity
Possession of a Weapon	1	3
Motoring Offences	4	2
Breach of Conditional Discharge	1	1
Drugs	4	2
Public Order	7	1-4
Theft	2	3
Non- Domestic Burglary	1	3
Violence Against the Person	7	3-7

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[8] This table omits 30 offences committed by one individual given that there was no data entry for these offences. All other offences are accounted for.

Breach of Bail	5	2
Criminal Damage	5	2
Breach of Statutory Order	3	4
Fraud & Forgery	1	3
Theft & Handling of Stolen Goods	4	3
Vehicle Theft/Unauthorised Taking	1	4
Total	**46**	**126**

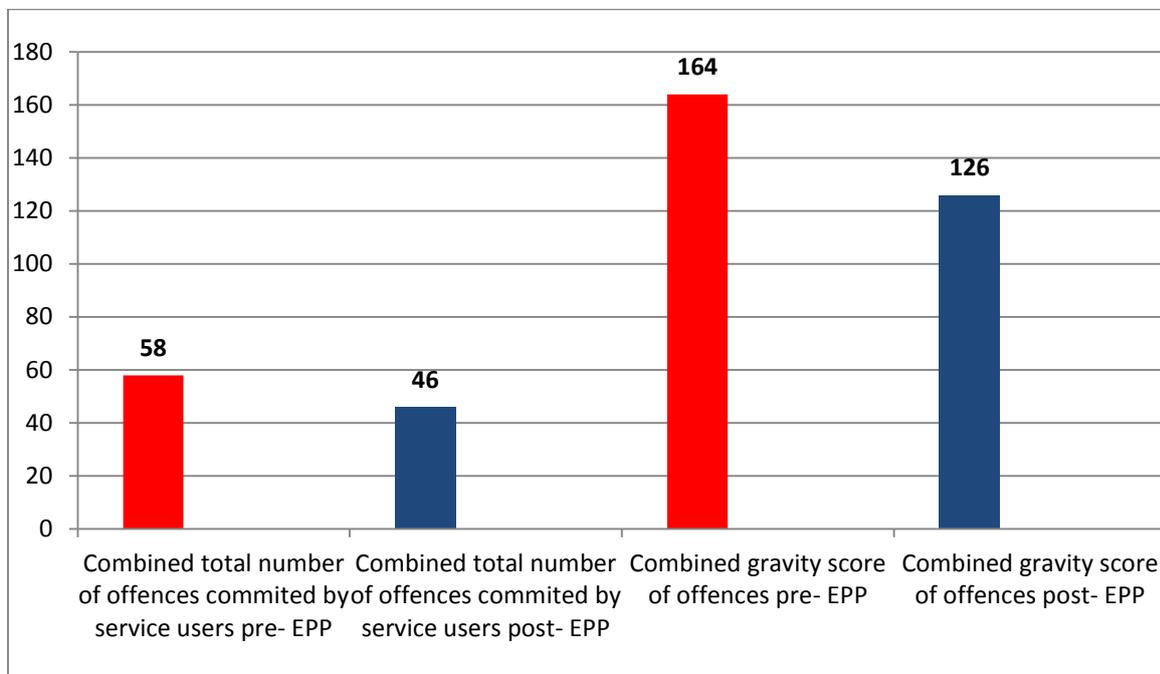Table 3 Frequency of Offence Type and Gravity Score *Post*- Educational Programme

Figure 6 Number of Offences Committed by Service Users Pre and Post- EPP, including Gravity of Offences.

Findings: Stakeholder Interviews

Engagement

In terms of service user engagement with the EPP, the picture is complex and there are a number of important factors which seemingly affected levels of service user engagement. Across the data set, 54% of service users attained 100% attendance with the EPP. Of this figure, 25% of females attained 100% attendance (1 out of 4) and 67% of males (6 out of 9) respectively. It is also important to note that across the month of May (2012), all service users (exclusively male) attained 100% attendance.

Whilst the interviews with key stakeholders suggest an overall positive level of engagement with the EPP, the quantitative data indicates that young offenders were less likely to engage with the programme if they had a sibling or partner simultaneously serving an order within a YOT. For instance, 54% (7 of 13) of service users achieved 100% attendance across the quantitative data set. However, this figure fell to 33% (2 of 6) for service users with siblings and/or partners within a YOT. 67% (4 out of 6) of service users with siblings and/or a partner serving an order in a YOT failed to achieve 100% attendance. The quantitative statistics also find support in the view offered by one stakeholder who suggested that for one particular individual, their level of engagement with the EPP was significantly influenced by their family support network who had a history of criminal activity themselves. As the participant noted:

> *'The older younger person, his family didn't do a lot anyway ...; and they didn't want to do anything new – they were quite happy being at home watching Jeremy Kyle or whatever. So you could see why ... Rubbed off on him ... and I suppose he didn't want to be ... he still wanted to be part of his family so he didn't want to identify as being something, somebody different who did something different, or 'cause I think in his family he had ... a long history of ... siblings, and adults who had gone through the criminal justice system as well ...'*[9]

Thus, the data indicates the significance of support networks and family and social tie influence upon levels of service user engagement (cf., Gorman-Smith and Tolan, 1998). Across the qualitative interviews, all stakeholders expressed the view that services users

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[9] Interview with practitioner No. 1

engaged positively with the programme. However, when reflecting upon the positive level of engagement (as demonstrated by service users), in various instances, comparisons were made between levels of engagement of service users within the EPP to that of litter picking (a previous reparation order), for example. Thus, it is important to recognise that participants' accounts may be more indicative of the limited success of previous litter picking activities rather than the broader success of the EPP. As one participated noted:

> *'Well, I would say more, but I'm looking at, say, the litter picking. I keep using this one, but that in itself people, you know, they just don't want to do it.'*[10]

> *'They're not getting out of it, no. And, you know, there's no other brain thought process about that; it's literally walking and picking up litter. Whereas this, you know, they're thinking outside the box, we're challenging their opinions'.*

Nevertheless, practitioners offered the view that heightened levels of engagement were the result of two key principles within the EPP. First, service users were said to respond positively to the broader, more philosophical aspects humanitarian education, in contrast to statutory educational learning[11].To put it differently, it was suggested that service users engaged in a positive manner with the EPP as a result of a '*new and fresh*' educational approach which challenged service users opinions in a more philosophical sense rather than educating service users in a manner similar to statutory classroom-based education. As one participant noted:

> *'I feel that the education approach really works when it works, because I feel like they're going away with stuff that they, literally, wouldn't know that they wouldn't get from anywhere else, especially if they're not in school and not in training.'*

> *'I know I'm probably generalising, but a lot of them probably come from similar kind of backgrounds, and I think there is something about the whole war, soldiers, children in war, neutrality. There is just something about it'.*

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[10] Interview with practitioner no. 2

[11] It should be noted that two participants recognised that such humanitarian education also coincides more broadly with citizenship and PSHE within statutory education.

Second, stakeholders offered the view that the interactive and practical nature of some of the tasks embedded within the programme significantly increased the level of engagement of service users. When discussing the interactive nature of the EPP, one participant stated:

> *'I guess these games are learning them about the Geneva conventions, learning them, teaching them about the Geneva conventions, and the rules of war.'*

The participated added:

> *'If somebody says to you, "The Geneva conventions," then you just think paper-based or school lectures.'*

Moreover, the correlation between increased service user engagement and interactive learning was recognised by the facilitators themselves during the initial weeks which subsequently affected the delivery of the programme. As one participant noted:

> *'I think we found that the young people really worked well on the practical side, so when they were playing games, you know, do a little bit more of that. Doing quizzes; that kind of work, so we kept the quizzes in. I think, you know, just talking at young people doesn't really work; I think it has to be interactive, so as the programmes went on we just learnt that.'[12]*

Practitioners also offered the view that as the weeks progressed, service users become more engaged with the programme as a result of adapting to and becoming more familiar with the social environment, and as a result of the change in content of the programme towards a more interactive nature. Reflecting on the attitudinal transition of one service user, one participant put it:

> *'There was a distinct difference between him at the start of the programme and him at the end of the programme. He was very reluctant at first; he couldn't really see how that fitted into a reparation type activity … but as the weeks progressed I think he kind of got quite into it and there was certainly the last three of four*

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[12] Interview with practitioner no. 3

> *sessions it was noted that he really enjoyed them and he really engaged with the material.'[13]*

The participant went further:

> *'You've got like group dynamics type stuff so if you didn't know other people on the programme and the staff .... I think as time went on he's obviously got more comfortable; he was quite shy as far as I remember this lad, so that certainly could have been a factor, but, I think just knowing what to expect as well, you know, a lot of our young people struggle in social situations.'[14]*

Moreover, stakeholders reflected that the introductory workshop within the second pilot project was considered particularly difficult to facilitate. Not only did this lack an interactive element in a practical sense, but bringing together numerous service uses that were unfamiliar with one another and the facilitators delivering the workshop.

> *'I can generally remember the first one is always very difficult, because it's bringing young offenders together, who have never met each other, and they're often from different areas or different ages, or... And I think the feedback, from discussions with (name restricted), I think week one is always the worst; that they don't really engage that much in.'*

> *'It's the second week, when they come back, that's when you start getting them engaged.'[15]*

> *'They know who's going to be there, they know the, they don't know the people, but they kind of know who's going to be in the room with them, so they start to open up a bit more, from that second week. And, obviously, the second week is where we start playing those soldier games and stuff, so they're not sitting in seats watching things anyway; they're doing more the second week.'[16]*

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[13] Interview with practitioner no. 4
[14] Interview with practitioner no. 4
[15] Interview with practitioner no. 1
[16] Interview with practitioner no. 1

Lastly, participants were fervent that two hours was the absolute maximum length of time to deliver each workshop if service user engagement was to be maintained. Delivering the programme beyond this time frame was generally considered detrimental to the overall aims of the project. As a participant noted when reflecting upon the delivery of the EPP:

> *'Two hour block, for the sheer fact that we thought two hours was maximum time, for the young people, and even some young people found that quite difficult. Others flew by, you know, but if we needed to have a break, we would have a break, but definitely no more than two hours.'[17]*

Criteria for Access

Across the interviews, it become apparent that the criteria a young person must meet in order to be put forward for the EPP is not homogenous (other than that all service users were serving a reparation order). Rather, whilst various heterogonous factors were taken into account,[18] participants offered the view that the criteria for access was a meticulous process which was largely based on the discretion of Case Managers as to who is put forward and who would best engage and benefit from the programme. As one participant noted:

> *'Each young person has their own case manager, who's dealing with their court order, so I would always speak to case managers first, to see who would be suitable.'[19]*

However, it should be noted that across the interviews, participants were confident with the level of ability of the Case Mangers to identify and refer the most appropriate and suitable young people to participate in the programme. Thus, rather than a pre-given set of homogenous factors based on, for example, risk assessment, criteria was informed by the experience, understanding and ability of Case Managers to identify appropriate service users.

Whilst participants were particularly sanguine about this method of criteria matching, there is an important caveat to this picture. Since the programme was largely orientated around group dynamics and interaction, it was suggested that young people who found it

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[17] Interview with practitioner No. 2
[18] It was suggested these include: type of offence;
[19] Interview with practitioner No. 2

increasingly difficult to work with other service users were considered inappropriate for referral. As one participant noted:

> *'So somebody who had severe ADHD and couldn't sit in, like, you know, a classroom environment, not that I'm saying it was a classroom environment, but someone who couldn't sit still, it wouldn't work. It just wouldn't work for them so, you know, they had to be kind of suitable and also be able to work with others, because it was a team programme. It wasn't an individual kind of thing, so they had to be able to work with others.'* [20]

Given the interactive nature of the programme, the logistics of this decision are, to a degree, understandable. However, it does raise broader questions of potentially excluding a large proportion of young people from benefitting from the project based on their inability to interact in social settings. Moreover, given that stakeholders suggested the positive benefits the EPP in developing service users' social skills, it is plausible to suggest that individuals whom struggle to interact in social settings might benefit from the programme.

Lastly, whilst the criteria for the programme was not gender specific (as represented in Figure 1.3), male service users far outweighed females referred for the project. Whether this is a result of the physical aspects embedded within of the programme or simply reflects the demographics of young people serving reparation orders in Newcastle is debatable. Interestingly however, a participant reflected upon the stereotypical nature of past YOT programmes:

> *'... I think there's a risk with something like this that they can just sort of sit back and sort of, not really engage whereas some of the other tasks that other young people have done for reparation before have been very physical; it's quite gendered here which is something I take issue with, you know, lads go out and do litter pick and girls sit in charity shops.'* [21]

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[20] Interview with practitioner no. 2
[21] Interview with practitioner no. 4

However, it must be noted that no participants suggested that the EPP was more appropriately designed for male service users and thus the assertion that the physical nature of the EPP is more appropriately suited to male service users is simply anecdotal.

Delivery of the EPP

With regard to the delivery of the EPP, stakeholder interviews suggest that the BRC initially took the lead on the delivery of the project, with frontline practitioners from Newcastle YOT acting as a 'silent partner'. However, once the project gathered traction, the EPP was subsequently rolled-out by YOT facilitators within the Newcastle YOT facilities, in contrast to the introductory week which was conducted at BRC premises.

It is apparent from stakeholder interviews that the EPP was delivered in the most interactive manner possible. For instance, embedded within the project were numerous interactive activities designed to educate service users on the humanitarian aspects of the BRC in an engaging fashion. Educating young service users on the ethics of war had been adapted to incorporate a ten-pin bowling environment. This is just one example of an amalgamation of interactive engagement and educational learning [22]. Overall, it was suggested this method of reparation was effective at meeting the needs of young service users. Several participants emphasised the positive attributes of the EPP in providing education, whilst concomitantly developing practical, communication, and social skills of service users. As one participant stated:

> *'It's all about developing, I guess, communication skills and learning to work with people.'*[23]

> *'It's about developing them as well as… It's not just the knowledge, it's their skills.'*[24]

Whilst discussing the objectives of the EPP, another participant added:

> *'It would possibly slot into, sort of, citizenship ... type stuff, so getting young people to think about the world around them and trying to give them some sort of civic responsibility and maybe sort of something*

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[22]For instance, the delivery of First Aid education had an increasingly interactive nature through the use of casualty simulation and aesthetic props.
[23]Interview with practitioner no. 1
[24] Interview with practitioner no. 1

around, you know, well actually, you're really fortunate where you live, and where you come from and look at, you know, look at what other young people of your age are having to go through in other countries ...'[25]

Thus, whilst workshops on First Aid were said to develop the practical skills which service users could be put to use post- EPP, workshops on Sexual Health and introducing service users to the work undertaken by the BRC allowed service users to develop their knowledge of prevalent issues which were both applicable to service users in their everyday lives and educating service users on the contours of global issues.

Rather than reviewing the EPP at the end of each pilot, the interview data suggests that the delivery of the EPP was subsequently revised and improved as the weeks progressed; a point previously touched upon. This was achieved through effective collaborative partnership working between BRC and Newcastle YOT. Moreover, overall, interviews with stakeholders from both organisations indicated high levels of satisfaction in terms of collaborative working. However, on one particular occasion, Newcastle YOT did not disclose to the BRC facilitator that a particular service user could not read. Subsequently, the BRC facilitator was required to tailor the workshop to the service user's needs at short notice. Whilst the workshop was still considered to meet the needs of each service user, this example draws attention to the dependency of 'inter-agency' programmes upon effective, open collaboration. As one participant stated:

'Well, I think now we would kind of make it clear, if there was anything that we should be aware of. As you'll know yourself, you like to plan for your audience, so if you know you've got people in the room who can't read, then the leaflets that you give out are going to have more pictures on. There's going to be more kind of, less words on the screen, more activities, and it just kind of... I would specifically ask now, before running a programme, if anyone had any needs, special needs, that we needed to be aware of, which we would usually do anyway, but it's just it didn't... It was something when we were

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[25] Interview with practitioner no. 4

running the first one; it just hadn't occurred to the YOT to tell us really.'[26]

Improvement

Overall, key stakeholders offered the view that the EPP was designed and delivered effectively. However, there were certain concerns expressed and various progressive possibilities suggested regarding how the EPP might be improved and developed. First, whilst key practitioners offered the view that the BRC certificates of recognition were well received by service users, there was also the suggestion that service users might benefit from an educational certificate recognised by prospective employers and educational institutions. However, it was conceded that this would increase the cost the EPP:

> *'It wasn't a certificate of an accredited kind of course, it was just a, we've got certificates that have got on them; "You make the world a better place." So they were just like little Red Cross certificates, with a picture on and, "You make the world a better place," and like their name and dated, and signed and things, so it wasn't really an accredited course. It would be nice if we could do that, but it wasn't...'[27]*

> *'I think a lot of our young people, they need all the support they can get, and if they can really get something out of it, in terms of ... getting people into training and employment, it's your bits of paper that count, and for a lot of our young kids they don't have those bits of paper ...'*

Second, it was suggested that Newcastle YOT might benefit from a peer education programme involving service users who have completed the EPP. Although, again, limitations of such an approach were expressed, such as the age that a service user must be in order to volunteer. At present, service users must be 15 years of age to volunteer and thus, any service user under this age would not be able to participate in such a programme irrespective of their success within the EPP and the potential benefits this could bring to other service users.

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[26] Interview with practitioner no. 1
[27] Interview with practitioner no. 1

Third, there was the suggestion that the EPP could be rolled-out on a more national basis through the development of downloadable online resources which would be accessible to, and written by BRC and YOTs. As one participated stated:

> *'If you had an online resource that was kind of, I supposed, backed by the Youth Justice Board or recommended by the Youth Justice Board, or whatever, that was downloadable, in like a pack like this, so that a YOT worker in Surrey or somewhere random could just get a pack downloaded. It's got all the lesson plans in, they've pretty much got pretty much all they need in here.'*[28]

Clearly, the success of the EPP will be different across various localities; nevertheless, developing such a downloaded resource might have the potential to improve the EPP through a multi-collaborative 'what works' paradigm.

Fourth, concerns were expressed regarding the forthcoming change to BRC's National Education Strategy and how this might impact delivery of the EPP. Specifically, concerns were expressed regarding the identification of young people categorised as in 'crisis.' It was suggested that the BRC categorise individuals in crisis on a more quantitative rather than qualitative level through statistics analysis of, for example, alcohol-related admissions to hospitals. Subsequently, since the BRC do not categorise young offenders as a 'crisis' group, the concern was one of perhaps overlooking certain young offenders who might potentially benefit from the EPP. Concomitantly, there was also the suggestion that the BRC is to be restructured in terms of staff, new job roles and the geographical areas covered by its work. Thus, one participant expressed concerns regarding how the forthcoming change in management and staff structure might impact the rural areas, as a result of a new focus primarily being focused around more urbanised areas.

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[28] Interview with practitioner no. 1

Conclusion

In broad terms, the findings of this evaluation demonstrate that the EPP has a positive impact overall on service users' patterns of behaviour post- engagement. Whilst acknowledging only two service users evidence a complete cessation from offending (15%), evaluating the effectiveness of the EPP exclusively on complete desistence of offending does the EPP a disservice. Thus, it is vital not to neglect the broader picture of service user offending trajectories which, across the data set, are significantly lower in terms of gravity of offences committed post- engagement.

A significant advantage of the EPP is that if offers service users the chance to develop an amalgamation of communication, practical and social skills through the fusing of humanitarian education within an interactive environment. Overall, this method of reparation was said to be positively received by service users since the design and delivery of the programme contrasts statutory education in various ways. Thus, reports of high levels of engagement with the EPP are seemingly the result of an innovate method of educational learning which service users can relate to. However, two caveats must be mentioned in the context of evaluation. First, it would seem the influence of social and family ties, particularly if a service user has a sibling and/or partner in a YOT at the time of engagement, plays a significant role in how effectively a service user engages with the EPP. This report advocates the need for further research into how such service users might engage with the programme more effectively and thus benefit from what the programme offers.

The report concurs that the most effective way of determining criteria for access is through the experience of Case Managers who have a significant understanding of service users, in terms of patterns of behaviour, attitudes, social and practical skills etc. However, this evaluation recommends that future service users who are identified as challenging within a social environment are not overlooked for referral since, potentially, it is exactly these users who might fundamentally benefit most from the interactive nature of the programme. Thus, (re)considering who is appropriate for referral might further increase the programme's effectiveness in meeting the needs of a wider cohort of service users.

Whilst, on the whole, key stakeholders offered the view that the EPP was designed and delivered effectively, there is the potential and scope for the EPP to be developed. First, the creation of an online resource pack, which can be readily downloaded and utilised by YOTs offers the potential to implement the programme out on a wider scale, whilst also

offering the potential to improve multi-collaboration between agencies through a 'what works' paradigm. However, it is important to remain aware of the fact that there is no guarantee of replicating the success in on area through a blanket approach across geographic locations. Nevertheless, by developing the programme in order for YOTs to deliver it on their own may even lead to a further increase in service user engagement since service users may be more willing to engage with staff whom have a biography that they feel comfortable with. Second, interviews with key stakeholders offered the view that the EPP responds to the multiple complex needs of service users. Whilst this evaluation certainly does not challenge the sanguinity of stakeholder views, the report does support the stakeholders' views that the needs of service users would be further met through the attainment of a recognised educational certificate by prospective employers and/or educational institutions. Whether such an idea is realistic or idealistic is questionable however, such a suggestion requires consideration given the current climate of austerity and the significant marginalisation of offenders in the job market. Of course, this will need to be considered against 'value for money' which pervades the entire criminal justice system.

To conclude, this evaluation indicates that the amalgamation of interactive learning and humanitarian focused education is germane in meeting several of the needs of young serving reparation as part of Community Orders. However, the researchers acknowledge the micro- nature of the study and recognise that research on a wider-scale will need to be carried in order to more rigorously test the effectiveness of the EPP. Even so, the offending trajectories of 76% of services users, in terms of the gravity of offences, were significantly lower than that of their pre- engagement behaviour. Whilst acknowledging that the ultimate objective is, clearly – a complete cessation from offending – the EPP offers the potential to steer service users down a path towards desistance.

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