



Measuring the longer-term outcomes for graduates of Leap Improving Prospects programme, 2016/17

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Acknowledgements

Brathay Research Hub would like to thank all graduates participating in this evaluation, together with staff from Leap Confronting Conflict for their continued assistance.

Executive Summary - *Measuring the longer-term outcomes for graduates of Leap Improving Prospects programme 2016/17*

This is an Executive Summary of an independent evaluation carried out by Brathay Research Hub. It presents key findings on the starting points and longer-term outcomes of the 2016/17 graduate cohort of Leap Confronting Conflict Improving Prospects programme. The evaluation set out to evidence six outcome areas (see below) and to develop key messages and recommendations:

1. Managing conflict and helping others to do so
2. Involvement in offending, violence and anti-social behaviour
3. Networks of support and managing relationships
4. Engagement in education, employment and training
5. Engagement in community and voluntary activities
6. Developing personal goals.

Understanding the starting points of graduates

The 2016/17 Improving Prospects (IP) cohort consists of 92 individuals graduating from 9 Leadership and 2 Choice to Change courses. This represents a 53% increase on that of the previous year, with an expansion of courses hosted by partner organisations, including 2 young people's development projects, 2 youth offending services and a pupil referral unit.

The average age of the 2016/17 cohort at graduation date was 17.8 years, with a range from 13 to 23. 65% of the graduate cohort were under-18 and 60% were male; the latter being an increase of 12% from the 2014/15 cohort. The cohort was ethnically diverse compared to figures for the population of London as a whole: 38% Black, 20% White, 18% mixed heritage, 10% Asian and 13% any other ethnic group.²

Information obtained prior to participation in the IP programme indicates that those classified as not in education, employment, training (NEET) and those involved in offending and violence, appeared to be well represented within the cohort:

- ◇ 22% were NEET (higher than the national average for this age group)³
- ◇ Half of graduates had been involved in offending⁴
- ◇ 41% self-reported that they had been arrested and,
- ◇ 53% self-reported that they had been involved in violence.

² Figures for the ethnic breakdown, published by London Datastore, are as follows: White 59%, Asian 18%, Black 12%, Mixed and other 10%. These figures are for the London population as a whole in 2016. See: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/ethnic-groups-borough>

³ Office for National Statistics (2017) *Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)*. August 2017. See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/august2017>

⁴ Of the data available, 33 graduates self-reported as having been involved in offending and/or were referred by the Youth Offending Service or equivalent.

Understanding the longer-term outcomes of graduates

The evaluation fieldwork phase took place from September to November 2017, i.e. between 7 and 20 months after graduation. Following an intensive recruitment campaign, a diverse group of 35 graduates engaged in one-to-one interviews to explore the impact of the IP programme on their longer-term outcomes. Given this is 38% (35/92) of the total cohort; measures were taken to assess the representativeness of this follow-up group and to contextualise evaluation findings. It was found that the group was representative in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, EET status and involvement in violence, whilst those reporting offending, having been arrested, and those attending a pupil referral unit whilst participating in the programme, were less represented. Recommendations are made to improve the participation and understanding of less represented (harder to reach) groups in future evaluations.

There was evidence of the IP programme achieving longer-term outcomes for the group of graduates participating in the follow-up interviews. Positive change was particularly identified for the following outcome areas: the management of conflict and helping others to do so, networks of support and managing relationships, engagement in education, employment and training, and developing personal goals. For example, 80% of graduates agreed they had succeeded in resolving conflict since graduation, and 78% agreed that IP had helped them make positive choices about their relationships, friendships and networks. The key findings for the 6 outcome areas are reported below.

1. Managing conflict and helping others to do so

Overall, the evaluation found positive messages about the impact of the IP programme on graduates' experience of conflict. Graduates were asked to reflect on the management of conflict in a number of ways, providing confidence in the evidence collected and achievement of this outcome.

- ★ 83% of graduates agreed that: a) the IP programme helped them to learn how to resolve conflict, and b) they had put what they had learnt into practice since graduation
- ★ 80% agreed they had succeeded in resolving conflict since graduation
- ★ 91% said they would continue to use what they had learnt
- ★ 80% agreed that what they had learnt on the IP programme contributed to a positive change in the management of conflict with a person identified as being most in conflict with
- ★ 71% agreed that since graduation they had helped others involved in conflict.

2. Involvement in offending, violence and anti-social behaviour

Graduates attributed their positive change in this outcome area to the development of awareness and the ability to act on choices, to greater self-reflection and to improvements in communication with the police and other professionals due to the development of emotional regulation and empathy.

3. Networks of support and managing relationships

The evaluation set out to investigate the experience of support and relationships, in particular whether graduates: a) Engage with other services in addition to Leap and, b) Felt more able to manage negative or damaging relationships and make positive choices in their support networks.

- ★ 32% agreed that participation in IP had helped them to find out about support and services and a quarter that they had been helped to take up support
- ★ 77% agreed IP had helped them become more aware of relationships, friendships and networks that have a negative impact in their life
- ★ 69% agreed IP had helped them have less to do with relationships, friendships and networks that have a negative impact in their life, and
- ★ 78% agreed the IP programme helped them make positive choices about their relationships, friendships and networks.

4. Engagement in education, employment and training

89% of graduates in the follow-up group were engaged in at least one EET activity, whilst 11% were classified as NEET. Graduates were asked about the attribution of participation in the IP programme to their engagement with education, employment or training.

- ★ 69% agreed that IP had helped them to find out about EET opportunities
- ★ 66% agreed IP had helped them to participate EET, and
- ★ 70% agreed that attending the IP programme helped them to stay in EET.

5. Engagement in community and voluntary activities

The evaluation was interested in whether graduates had taken on active roles within Leap and the wider community, and the contribution the IP programme had made to this engagement.

- ★ 54% of graduates had participated in further activities, progression or leadership roles with Leap following graduation
- ★ 51% of graduates reported continuing with and/or taking up new activities or roles within the wider community following graduation
- ★ 44% agreed that the IP programme had helped them take up community activities and/or volunteering, whilst 46% agreed IP had helped them to stay in these roles.

6. Developing personal goals.

Graduates described the goals they were working towards and the contribution of the IP programme to making progress to achieve these goals.

- ★ 71% reported they had set goals since graduation
- ★ 57% agreed that attending IP had helped them to identify their goals, whilst
- ★ 80% agreed that IP had helped them to make progress on achieving their goals.

Graduates attributed the positive change in these 6 outcome areas to personal and inter-personal skills and qualities developed through their participation in IP. Most-commonly, graduates identified an increase in their ability to take control over their own life and to the development of empathy, confidence, emotional intelligence and regulation, and communication skills. They acknowledged that they had made some form of change or had taken action to improve their circumstances and gain positive outcomes; whether this was in the form of seeking support, identifying and managing negative relationships or making changes to their behaviour. Graduates identified greater self-reflection and an increased ability to understand others' perspectives and emotions, and the impact conflict may have.

Full report - *Measuring the longer-term outcomes for graduates of Leap Improving Prospects programme 2016/17*

Introduction to the Improving Prospects Programme⁵

Improving Prospects (IP) is Leap's flagship community-based programme designed to give young people an insight into the causes and consequences of conflict, as well as develop their capabilities and confidence to manage personal and interpersonal conflict. Two group based courses are offered through the programme, a 3-day Leadership and a 10-day Choice to Change course, with the curriculum being explored through discussions, interactive models, enactive learning techniques and drama-based games.

The Leadership course focuses on young people's understanding and self-awareness of conflict, specifically in relation to choices and responsibility. It is delivered at Leap or hosted externally, at a partner organisation. Choice to Change explores these concepts in greater depth with young people, working together to develop their understanding of conflict and put strategies into practice. The course develops facilitation skills, giving participants an opportunity to deliver workshops to each other. Choice to Change courses are delivered at Leap alongside an off-site residential experience.

The IP programme takes referrals from statutory and third sector services, together with self-referrals from young people themselves. One-to-one information collection and support sessions take place before participation in courses. Earlier in 2017, a Progression Routes Officer joined Leap to offer graduates of internally delivered courses dedicated post-course support and development. This includes help with CV writing and exploring education, employment and training opportunities, together with an invitation to participate in the Leap Youth Involvement Group. The latter gives them an opportunity to stay in touch with their peers, as well as get involved with Leap's wider work, such as planning and attending events or becoming ambassadors.⁶

Introduction to the Improving Prospects Evaluation

This is an independent evaluation of the Improving Prospects programme carried out by Brathay Research Hub.⁷ The purpose of the evaluation was to describe the starting points and identify the longer-term impact on young people of graduating from the IP programme. In particular, the evaluation set out to evidence the longer-term outcomes across six key areas (see below) and to develop key messages and recommendations:

1. Managing conflict and helping others to do so
2. Involvement in offending, violence and anti-social behaviour
3. Networks of support and managing relationships
4. Engagement in education, employment and training
5. Engagement in community and voluntary activities
6. Developing personal goals.

⁵ Information predominantly sourced from: <http://www.leapconfrontingconflict.org.uk/support-young-people>

⁶ It is understood that post-course engagement with Leap is not offered to graduates of externally delivered IP courses.

⁷ See: <https://www.brathay.org.uk/research/our-research-services>

Evaluation methods, response rates and parameters

This evaluation is based on the analysis of data across two time-points: prior to participation in the IP programme and at a follow-up point. Desk-based analysis of pre-course (secondary) data established the starting points for IP participants, whilst the investigation of the longer-term outcomes of the IP programme was carried out through structured interviews with graduates at a follow-up point of 7 to 20 months (primary research). The approach and methods used are placed within the scope and limitations of the evaluation in order to provide context of what was feasible to investigate and the validity of the findings.

Defining the evaluation cohort and parameters

The evaluation sample consisted of all graduates of the 9 Leadership and 2 Choice to Change courses that took place between March 2016 and February 2017 (see Appendix 1 for further details). This year saw the expansion of Leadership courses being hosted by partners (externally), with 6 of the 9 being delivered to young people in 2 youth organisations, 2 youth offending services and 1 pupil referral unit. The remainder of the IP courses (3 Leadership and the 2 Choice to Change) were delivered internally to Leap. Whilst the curriculum was consistent across all Leadership courses, there were key points of variation between those delivered internally and externally:

- The range of pre-course information available to the evaluation (self-reported and from referral source). All graduates of internal IP courses had completed some form of pre-course documentation compared to a quarter of external graduates.⁸ As such, the dataset was not comprehensive and the evaluation was unable to paint a full picture of the young people's starting points across key demographics and indicators.
- Graduates of internal courses had opportunities to engage with Leap before and after the course, including activities such as the Youth Involvement Group and, for some, practical progression support.⁹ In addition, a proportion participated in two IP courses.

The IP programme defined a graduate as a young person attending the requisite number of course sessions and agreeing completion with the IP Delivery Manager. **In total, 92 individual graduates were identified and included in the evaluation. Of these, 55% (51/92) participated in internally delivered courses and 45% (41/92) in courses hosted externally.**¹⁰

Follow-up interviews

The main aim of this evaluation was to evidence the longer-term outcomes achieved by IP graduates and to place findings in the context of the data available on graduate starting points, as well as the parameters of the programme and evaluation. Primary data was collected through one-off,

⁸ It is believed that it was difficult to enforce pre-course information collection at the majority of the partner organisations, mainly due to there being limited time available.

⁹ The Progression Routes Officer came into post late in the evaluation time period under consideration. The creation of this post has led to the expansion of the infra-structure and support services available to graduates. Prior to this, the capacity to offer dedicated progression support was more limited.

¹⁰ Data was not made available for young people participating in the 11 courses that did not go on to graduate, and enquiry into this sub-group fell outside the scope of the evaluation.

structured face-to-face or phone interviews with graduates, to explore experience, progress and attribution to engagement with the IP programme, across the 6 outcome areas.

The evaluation fieldwork phase took place from September to November 2017 meaning that follow-up interviews were between 7 and 20 months after graduation. An intense recruitment period endeavoured to establish contact with all 92 graduates to invite them to participate in the interviews. Despite the considerable efforts of the IP and evaluation teams, direct contact was made with just 60% (55/92) of graduates, as current/functioning phone numbers were not available for 40% (37/92) and indirect contact, via key adults and referrers, did not succeed. Of the 55 graduates that were reached, 35 took part in the evaluation, 11 did not wish to and 9 did not respond.

The 35 graduates participating in the longer-term outcomes interviews represent 38% of the 2016/17 cohort. Of these, 13 interviews took place with graduates of externally delivered courses and 22 with graduates of internally delivered courses (see Appendix 1 for further details).

Evaluation challenges and opportunities

The evaluation faced key challenges which placed limitations on the capacity to report on certain findings with confidence and to draw comparisons across cohort sub-groups. These were:

- The limited baseline data available for 34% (31/92) of the cohort, particularly from externally delivered courses
- The variation in levels of post-course opportunities available from Leap and taken up by graduates
- The variation in the time elapsing between graduation and follow-up (from 7 to 20 months) and thus, the potential for variation in memory, experience and impact of the IP programme
- A lack of access to 40% of potential interview recruits, and as a result
- Follow-up interviews taking place with just 38% of the total cohort, with particular gaps in graduates of courses hosted by partner youth offending services and pupil referral unit.

As such, in order to verify that the follow-up sample is representative of the total 2016/17 cohort, baseline demographics and indicators are compared and, where necessary, findings are contextualised to ensure the limitations above are transparent. It is important to note, however, that the interviews provided an opportunity to listen to the voices of a diverse group of 35 graduates and learn from the rich quantitative and qualitative evidence collected.

Ethics

Graduates were invited to participate in the follow-up interviews on a voluntary basis and were fully informed about the purpose of the evaluation, how the information they shared would be used (including anonymous reporting) and their right to opt out of the process at any time. All graduates completed a consent form and verbal agreement was sought from a responsible adult for those under 18. The confidentiality policy was explained prior to the interview taking place and the wellbeing of participants was prioritised in terms of the design and delivery of the interviews. Both electronic and hard copy data were stored and processed securely, and unique codes were used as identifiers.

Findings - Baseline

Understanding the starting points of graduates

This section describes the 2016/17 Improving Prospects (IP) cohort, in terms of demographics and key indicators, at the point they began participation in the programme (baseline). It also compares the starting points of the sample of 35 graduates participating in the longer-term outcomes interviews to the full cohort of 92, in order to be transparent about the extent to which the follow-up group is representative.

Key:

- n = the number we have evidence for, for a particular indicator or line of enquiry
- md = missing data, the number of missing cases for a particular indicator or line of enquiry
- 92 = total evaluation group at baseline
- 35 = total evaluation group at follow-up.

Referral and participation

Graduates came from a range of at least thirteen boroughs, in particular Waltham Forest, Newham, Haringey and Islington. Referrals to the IP programme originated from a variety of sources categorised as follows:

◇ Youth Organisations	49% (45/91)
◇ Youth Offending Services	20% (18/91)
◇ Pupil Referral Unit (venue for Leadership Course)	14% (13/91)
◇ Self-referral	10% (9/91)
◇ Other (hostel, employment support, school, social services)	7% (6/91)

A proportion of the graduates of courses hosted by Leap, rather than those held at partner organisations, had attended two IP courses¹¹ and/or at least one progression activity. Table 1 below indicates that the follow-up group includes a higher proportion of graduates having post-course interaction with Leap compared to the full cohort of 92. This finding is noted as the evaluation goes on to present analysis of the longer-term outcomes for graduates and attribution to the IP programme.

Table 1. Graduates that had participated in:	Full cohort	Follow-up group	
	n = 92	n = 35	
2 x IP courses	9 (10%)	7 (20%)	This represents 13 graduates as 3 participated in 2 courses & progression
At least 1 progression activity / meeting (as recorded by the IP programme)	13 (14%)	9 (26%)	

¹¹ Predominantly a Leadership followed by a Choice to Change course.

Demographics at baseline

The average age of the full 2016/17 cohort at graduation date was 17.8 years, with a range from 13 to 23.¹² 65% of the graduate cohort were under-18 and 60% were male; the latter being an increase of 12% from the 2014/15 cohort. The cohort was ethnically diverse compared to figures for the population of London as a whole: 38% Black, 20% White, 18% mixed heritage and 10% Asian.¹³ Within the information available, 31% of the cohort self-reported a learning difficulty, in particular dyslexia, and 23% some form of physical or mental health issue. Information about experience of care was limited and, as such, this report notes that 8 individuals were identified as currently/having been in care/care leavers.

Table 2 describes the demographic indicators in more detail, alongside those of the follow-up group at baseline. It can be seen that the follow-up group does not vary greatly from the cohort as a whole. The main differences are the greater proportions of females and older graduates participating in the follow-up interviews. This is not a great concern, as the voices of males and under-18s are still well represented.

	Full 2016/17 graduate cohort		Follow-up group	
Age range at graduation date	13 to 23 years old	n = 74	13 to 23 years old	n = 35
Average age at graduation date	17.8 years	md = 18	18.5 years	
% under 18	65% (48/74)		51% (18/35)	
Gender	60% male 40% female	n = 92	49% male 51% female	n = 35
Ethnicity:				
Black or Black British (any other Black background)	38.3%	n = 60 md = 32	32%	n = 34 md = 1
White British or any other white background	20%		26.5%	
Mixed (any other mixed background)	18.3%		23.5%	
Asian or Asian British (any other Asian background)	10%		9%	
Any other ethnic group	13.3%		9%	
Learning support needs	31% (18/58) including 10 reporting dyslexia & 3 ADHD	n = 58 md = 34	28% (7/25)	n = 25 md = 10
Physical & mental health needs	23% (13/56)	n = 56 md = 36	17% (4/24)	n = 24 md = 11

¹² Age calculated according to the date of completion of the IP course, i.e. graduation date. For those who completed two courses, the first graduation date was taken.

¹³ Figures for the ethnic breakdown, published by London Datastore, are as follows: White 59%, Asian 18%, Black 12%, Mixed and other 10%. These figures are for the London population as a whole in 2016. See: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/ethnic-groups-borough>

Education, employment and training activity at baseline

Table 3 sets out the primary education, employment, training (EET) activity for graduates at the point they participated in the IP course. 72% of graduates were engaged in some form of substantial EET activity, with 22% NEET and 6% other (insufficient information to categorise). Published figures for January 2016 to March 2017 indicates that the percentage of young adults aged 16 to 24 in England classified as NEET fluctuates between 10.4 and 13.6%.¹⁴ As such, it would appear that the percentage of NEET in the 2016/17 IP cohort at baseline is higher than the national average.

It was possible to identify 13 graduates who were attending a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) at the point they graduated, as the IP Leadership course took place at this unit. Just one graduate from this unit participated in a follow-up interview and, as a consequence, PRU experienced graduates are under-represented in the follow-up group, whilst those attending a further education establishment are over-represented. See Table 3 for details.

Table 3. Main EET activity at the point graduate participated in the IP course ¹⁵	Full 2016/17 graduate cohort		Follow-up group	
	n = 79 md = 13	%	n = 34 md = 1	%
Education (Mainstream school – key stages 3 & 4)	15	19%	6	18%
Education – PRU (key stage 4)	13	16%	1	3%
Education - FE (including one in HE)	23	29%	14	41%
Employment (F/T or P/T)	6	8%	4	12%
Total engaged in some form of EET activity	57	72%	25	74%
NEET, including not in education and under 18	17 (4 under 18)	22%	8 (2 under 18)	24%
Other (insufficient information to categorise)	5	6%	1	3%

Involvement in violence and offending at baseline

Information about participation in offending and violence was not comprehensive due to limited pre-course data collection with those young people participating in externally delivered courses (see *Evaluation methods, response rates and parameters*). As such, figures presented in Table 4 below may be an under-estimate. Half of graduates that we have information for (33/66) had been involved in offending, whilst 41% (24/58) had been arrested and, of these 4 had spent some time in the secure estate.¹⁶ It was only possible to recruit 4 of the 18 graduates referred by a youth offending service to the follow-up interviews. Hence the under-representation of those that had offended or been arrested in the evaluation process. Over half of graduates self-reported that they

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics (2017) *Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)*. August 2017. See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/august2017>

¹⁵ Some graduates were engaged in more than one EET activity, e.g. education and part-time employment.

¹⁶ It was not possible to obtain like-for-like national statistics to place these indicators in context.

had been involved in violence (53%, 30/57), this figure rising to 63% (15/24) for those in the follow-up group. Just 4 graduates said they had been involved in a gang.

Table 4. Involvement in offending and violence at baseline	Full 2016/17 graduate cohort		Follow-up group	
Has been/is involved in offending ¹⁷	50% (33/66)	n = 66 md = 26	27% (7/26)	n = 26 md = 9
Has been arrested ¹⁸	41% (24/58)	n = 58 md = 34	24% (6/25)	n = 25 md = 10
Has been in the secure estate (prison)	7% (4/59)	n = 59 md = 33	8% (2/25)	n = 25 md = 10
Has been involved in violence	53% (30/57)	n = 57 md = 35	63% (15/24)	n = 24 md = 11
Has been involved in a gang	7% (4/59)	n = 59 md = 33	0	n = 26 md = 9

Summary

Leap aims to reach out to socially excluded, disengaged and vulnerable young people across a wide age range: *Our support is focused on 11-25 year-olds who will benefit from our training the most: young people at risk of exclusion from school, in or on the edge of gangs, in care or involved in the criminal justice system.*¹⁹ As can be seen in this section (*Findings – baseline*), the 2016/17 IP graduate cohort is diverse in terms of ethnicity, age, gender, EET status (including those attending pupil referral units), and young people self-reporting learning support needs and involvement in offending and violence.²⁰ It can be concluded that the IP programme is engaging young people with experience of the target indicators quoted above. However, further information about care experience, and risk of exclusion and gang involvement, would be beneficial to developing a fuller understanding of the cohort being reached (see *Messages and recommendations*).

¹⁷ Of the data available, 33 graduates self-reported as having been involved in offending and/or were referred by the Youth Offending Service or equivalent.

¹⁸ The information available to the evaluation at baseline appears to indicate that males were more likely to have been involved in offending and to have been arrested than females. Of those who had been involved in offending, 27% were female (9/33), whilst 33% of those who had been arrested were female (8/24). This is in keeping with the general population of adults; females appearing to be substantially under-represented as offenders throughout the Criminal Justice System compared with males. See:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/572043/women-and-the-criminal-justice-system-statistics-2015.pdf

¹⁹ See: <http://www.leapconfrontingconflict.org.uk/why-we-exist>

²⁰ See Appendix 2 for comparisons of the starting points of the 2016/17 IP graduate cohort to the 2014/15 cohort (where appropriate).

Findings - Longer-term outcomes and attribution

This section describes the findings of follow-up interviews with 35 graduates in the 2016/17 Improving Prospects cohort aged between 14 and 24 years.²¹ Findings are presented across six outcome areas, with attribution to the IP programme being investigated through the analysis of scale-based questions²² and supporting exploration of personal and inter-personal development.

Outcome area 1 - Managing conflict and helping others to do so

Overall, the evaluation found positive messages about the impact of the IP programme on graduates' experience of conflict. Graduates were asked to reflect on the management of conflict in a number of different ways, providing confidence in the evidence collected and achievement of this outcome for the sample of 35 graduates participating in the follow-up.

83% (29/35) of graduates agreed or strongly agreed that: a) IP helped them to learn how resolve conflict, and b) they had put what they had learnt into practice since graduation. A similar majority, 80% (28/35), agreed they had succeeded in resolving conflict since participating in the IP course, whilst 91% (31/34) said they would continue to use what they had learnt.

"Helped me learn how to mediate in conflict... All the materials we used helped me stay calm in any situation in life that gives me the time to figure out how to use them and apply them properly... Helped me identify what exactly conflict is; where it can happen, why it can happen and what I can do. It also made us aware of the skills we already had and how we can use them to our advantage."
Female, 18.

Graduates were asked about the risk and frequency of being caught up in conflict. **The majority of graduates agreed they were less at risk of being caught up in conflict and had been involved in less conflict since graduation; 66% (23/35) and 74%, (26/35) respectively.** However, these findings need to be placed in the context of Leap's approach to the management of conflict. The IP curriculum emphasises that conflict is inevitable, and therefore, that the situations encountered may not decrease, and could even increase, if participant's awareness has grown. Some participants acknowledged this inevitability, stating that it is their approach to, and management of, conflict that has changed as a result of the course, rather than the risk or frequency of encountering it.

"I feel like conflict, it's something that is bound to happen. It's just how you deal with it. I know how to avoid it now because of the course - I avoid certain people and the way I act." Female, 16.

"... conflict is everywhere you go, it's about how you deal with [conflict]. I'm just more aware of my thought process I have more choices." Male, 17.

²¹ The mean age of graduates, at the point of the follow-up interview, was 19.5 years and they ranged in age from 14 to 24 years, with a quarter being under-18.

²² See Appendix 2 for comparisons of findings of the longer-term outcomes of the 2016/17 IP graduate cohort to the 2014/15 cohort (where appropriate).

More specifically, graduates were asked if they felt the management of conflict, with a range of people in their life, had improved since completing the IP course(s). Findings are presented in Table 5, indicating positive change in the management of conflict, particularly with parents/carers, peers, professionals and siblings.

Table 5. Since the IP course, how successful have you been in managing conflict with the following:

n = 35	Parents / carers	Siblings	Other Family	Peers	Professionals	Authority	General Public
Better	71%	57%	40%	68%	63%	48%	54%
No change	14%	17%	20%	11%	14%	20%	29%
Worse	0%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Not applicable	14%	23%	40%	17%	23%	31%	17%

Supporting evidence was found when graduates were asked about the person they were most in conflict with in their lives, the nature of this conflict and whether the intensity had changed since completing the IP course(s). Graduates were most likely to say that they had greater conflict with parent(s), siblings and then peers/friends, and with themselves. **72% (23/32) of those responding said that they felt the frequency of the conflict had decreased since completing the course.** For 5 individuals this was because they now saw the person less or the other person had changed rather than being attributed to positive change from the IP programme. However, **80% (25/31) of respondents agreed that what they had learnt through IP contributed to a change in the management of this conflict.**

“I’m trying to work through the conflict that I’m growing inside of me rather than the conflict with my father. It’s like a two-level thing, I’ve just realised that from just talking to you.” Male, 22.

“I think it’s helped quite a bit, including family; we now sit down and talk a lot more. I think it’s definitely helped.” Female, 22.

“The general public, randomly, if something happens, I’d be much more understanding towards them like if they bumped into me like, I’d probably think he’s in a rush, he’s stressed out. I don’t even know the person for why he’d be angry, before I would have reacted.” Male, 22.

71% (25/35) agreed that, since graduation, they had helped others involved in conflict; an indication of the growth in their skills and confidence, and the ability to take on leadership roles (see also *Engagement in community and voluntary activities*).

“Younger girls getting bullied; I sorted it out for them and I spoke to them both and I made them both clarify things as they were misunderstanding.” Female, 16.

“A friend went through some problems and I’ve been there for them...I had to take them through “vicious cycle”, had to talk about the consequences of actions, and using analogies and scenarios I’ve learnt from Leap and putting it into perspective for them.” Male, 22.

Personal and inter-personal development contributing to the achievement of outcome area 1 - *Managing conflict and helping others to do so*

Graduates were asked to explore their responses to the scale based questions in greater depth, including what may have contributed to greater success in the management of conflict since participating in IP. Based on the qualitative evidence gathered, a number of themes were identified and developed. These can be found in Table 6 below, together with illustrative quotes from graduates. The IP programme was found to have contributed to the development of graduates’ ability to take control over their own life (their locus of control), their emotional intelligence, empathy and communication skills. Whilst growth in these attributes supports improvement across the six outcome areas, nuances were identified. In relation to managing conflict, graduates’ responses focussed on the ability to apply their knowledge and the tools acquired to their day-to-day life and the development of greater patience, reflection, self-awareness and assertiveness.

Table 6. Managing conflict and helping others to do so; personal and interpersonal development supported by participation in the IP programme, illustrated by graduate’s quotes

<p>Increased ability to take control and belief in skills and knowledge: applying tools / knowledge learnt to real life, taking responsibility, taking control of situation, seeking out support, allowing others to support them.</p>	<p><i>“Yes, because I know how to resolve it and I’m not afraid to step up and take responsibility and help...I used to be violent at school but now I’m a lot calmer and I just sort things out.” Female, 15.</i></p> <p><i>“I think it’s the way I now approach things. I’ve changed the way I do it now instead of rushing in. The Leap course helped me. What I mainly got out of it was about getting the outcome. Now I always look at something and think about what I’m going to get out of it.” Male, 19.</i></p>
<p>Increased emotional intelligence: greater patience and reflection, self-awareness, a changed perspective, e.g. positive outlook/more appreciative, calmer/less angry, uses knowledge to support others.</p>	<p><i>“Since I’ve been coming here I don’t feel as angry as much as I did before. Now I’m more confident since learning about conflict and red flags, the more I talked about it, the less angry I got and by the end I felt calmer. I get angry sometimes, but less often. I’ve been fine since.” Male, 23.</i></p> <p><i>“Afterwards it helped me to be more solution focused, because if you stop and think too much you can become depressed.” Male, 22.</i></p>
<p>Increased empathy and awareness of others’ needs and perspectives</p>	<p><i>“A few people who have had friends who have lost people through stabbings. Looking out for them, supporting them, being there for them...Helped with empathy. Understood young people’s background and how they’ve grown up. Eye-opening.” Male, 24.</i></p> <p><i>“Before it was like petty arguments, but now I understand more when they feel upset with me. I’m more appreciative and I now don’t see the point in arguments.” Male, 18.</i></p>

<p>Improved communication and assertiveness, particularly with family.</p>	<p><i>“Around the time I was around Leap I was having problems with family, but now things are much better I can just talk to them more about things now. My communications skills are better.”</i> Female, 18.</p> <p><i>“... now I've learnt how to talk to others about problems. Speaking to others with the same problems as me helped. Sometimes when [you are] struggling with mental health effects, relationship with mum and she doesn't realise and we argue and I don't say anything. But now I say something and we ended up having a heart to heart and now the relationship is a lot better. I have more support.”</i> Female, 23</p>
<p>“Growing up” and learning from experience</p>	<p><i>“... I'd link these improvements to the course, but also growing up and learning from my mistakes.”</i> Female, 18.</p>
<p>Was unable to apply/sustain learning²³</p>	<p><i>“When you have an argument, what you learn goes out of the window. I don't want to seem like I'm weak or anything.”</i> Female, 21.</p> <p><i>“It was quite good, but recently with siblings it's a problem again. My mum has eight kids and I tell her when she is favouritising, but the problem is the way I say it.”</i> Female, 19.</p>

Outcome area 2 - Involvement in offending, violence and anti-social behaviour

The IP programme aims to reduce young people’s involvement in destructive conflict, violence, offending and anti-social behaviour. Given the sensitivity of this line of enquiry, the capacity to obtain accurate and meaningful evaluation information was limited. The discussion of offending and violent behaviour within the context of a one-off research interview raised ethical issues, alongside difficulties of defining terms such as anti-social behaviour and the potential for bias, as it was likely that the graduate would not want to disclose crimes. It is recommended that further thought is given to the best strategy for investigating this field and obtaining evidence of the impact of the IP programme on graduates’ pro-social choices. Within a one-off evaluation interview, exploration of the issues through open questions is suggested, rather than attempts at any form of quantitative measurement.

As a result of these arguments, and given the lower number of harder to reach graduates participating in the evaluation, findings are presented with caution. However, it is appropriate to consider them alongside the report of the positive impact of IP on the management of conflict for graduates in the follow-up group (as discussed above).

²³ This anecdotal information may suggest the benefits, for graduates, of refresher or top-up sessions in the management of conflict.

Graduates were asked about their involvement in anti-social behaviour, offending and violence before and since completion of the IP courses(s) on a simple scale of “never”, “sometimes” and “often”. Table 7 describes these basic findings. The majority reported no involvement or arrests either before or since graduation. Of the minority who did report some involvement in offending, violence and anti-social behaviour, graduates were most likely to say that the frequency of involvement had decreased following participation in IP. There were 8 individual graduates for whom this was not the case. 6 reported that the frequency of their involvement had remained the same (i.e. “sometimes”) across the time period. Of these, 3 were female and 3 male, and 2 had been referred by their youth offending team. There were then 2 instances of graduates describing one-off violent incidents in the time period since the IP courses. One was a survivor of violence by their partner and the other had been involved in an incident at a party and was subsequently arrested, apparently uncharacteristically.

“Less anti-social behaviour because I’m able to control it now and get in less trouble. Also helped improve relationship with dad.” Female, 18.

“Often ASB when I was 14 years old. For 6 years I’ve been calm, I’m 22 now. I’ve been with Leap for a long time now. Since I’ve been involved with Leap I haven’t been arrested.” Male, 22.

“Got arrested for GBH but not violent person. Course hasn’t helped with any of this.” Female, 18.

“... officers might stop me and sometimes they then look for another issue. This is when I get angry. Hard to explain your point if they mix it all up.” Female, 19.

Table 7. n = 35	Neither before nor since completion of the IP course	Positive change; decrease in frequency since completion of IP course	No change in frequency since completion of IP course, i.e. remains as “sometimes”	Negative change; increase in frequency since completion of IP course
Involved in anti-social behaviour	24 (69%)	7 (20%)	4 (11%)	0
Involved in offending	28 (80%)	6 (17%)	1 (3%)	0
Involved in violence	23 (66%)	7 (20%)	3 (9%)	2 (6%)
Has been arrested	24 (69%)	9 (26%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)

Personal and inter-personal development contributing to the achievement of outcome area 2 - *Involvement in offending, violence and anti-social behaviour*

Graduates were asked to explore their responses to the simple scale-based questions summarised in Table 7 above, including what may have contributed to a sustained or greater success in making pro-social choices. They were also asked about whether IP had helped in any way with their contact with the police or other members of the criminal justice system.²⁴

Based on the qualitative evidence gathered, a number of themes were identified and developed. These can be found in Table 8 below, together with illustrative quotes. Graduates attributed positive change in this outcome area to the development of awareness and the ability to act on choices, to greater self-reflection and to improvements in communication with the police and other professionals due to the development of emotional regulation and empathy.

Table 8. Involvement in offending, violence and anti-social behaviour; personal and interpersonal development supported by participation in the IP programme, illustrated by graduate's quotes	
Increased ability to take control and belief in skills and knowledge: recognises own choices and power to influence situations, focus and determination, sets goals and is striving to achieve	<i>"It's helped me relax a bit more and think about the situation I'm in. I now think in any situation what will happen if I follow it through. I'd rather have a better outcome than a worse one. I have a choice."</i> Male, 19. <i>"The course gave me other alternatives when I come to certain situations, like not just to always fight people and follow that first instinct."</i> Male, 20.
Increased self-reflection and confidence: changed mind-set/attitude, self-aware of own behaviours and consequences, learns from others, reflects on past behaviour, calmer/more relaxed	<i>"I feel like the course helped because I remember other people's stories and how they're improved or changed their ways. It made me think I could change my ways as well and I've matured."</i> Female, 18. <i>"Being more confident in myself, the course helped me with this... We work with police officers now as part of [youth organisation], and having done the course has helped me have the confidence to do this."</i> Male, 22.
Improved communication with police officers and professionals.	<i>"I just speak to them less angrily, I speak to them calmly. They showed me a video/role play of someone speaking to police in calm rather than angry manner and different outcomes."</i> Female, 16. <i>"Helped me stay more kind with police, usually I don't like them. It made me relax a bit more when I'm talking to them."</i> Male, 19.
Increased empathy and awareness of others' needs and perspectives	<i>"I was sometimes anti-social in the home. The course made me realise I have conflict in the house. I realised I would leave the house or zone out, whereas now I am there and I will try and listen more and understand from other's perspective and not be childish."</i> Female, 18.

²⁴ Of the 13 graduates responding to the question "Has the IP course helped you in any way with your contact with the police and any other professionals in the criminal justice system?" 7 said yes and 6 said no. The remaining 22 graduates did not feel this question was relevant to them.

Outcome area 3 - Networks of support and managing relationships

The evaluation set out to investigate the experience of support and relationships, in particular whether graduates:

- Engage with other services, in addition to Leap
- Felt more able to manage negative or damaging relationships and make positive choices in their support networks after participating in IP.

Engagement with Support and Services

Evaluation participants were asked about the formal and informal support they had received since graduation, externally to Leap. **Two thirds had received support from services, groups and professionals in the intervening months (66%, 23/35).** This was particularly from employment support services and educational establishments, but also from youth offending services, a variety of youth organisations, CAMHS, housing and social services. It is likely that: a) a number of these organisations referred the young people to Leap and b) the support received contributed to the progress made since graduation. The following quotes illustrate the practical and pastoral support received:

“If they saw anything that was about to happen in college they would take me out of it so I wasn't involved.” Male, 20, Support from college

“Helped me improve my customer skills to deal with them every day as... you have to go through a lot of abuse from customers and not react.” Male, 19, Support from employment/careers service

“Helped me with everything; said they could give references, told me what colleges I could apply for, motivated me, said that's kind of your path now and if you continue to do well then you carry on with what you want to do... They helped me with a lot of things; helped me with dyslexia... Now I have a paper that says I'm dyslexic. Usually at college it takes months for them to support me, but now I have that.” Female, 19, Support from YOT/Probation

“Got me a job; did job centre for me. Used to take me out sometimes as well to lead [support] group. Helped me with my own practical needs, e.g. food vouchers.” Male, 23, Support from homeless/housing service

Graduates tended not to agree that their participation in the IP programme had helped them to find out about or take up support and services that could help them. **Just a third agreed that IP had helped them to find out about support and services (32%, 11/35) and a quarter that they had been helped to take up support through their involvement in IP (26%, 9/35).** Given these findings, it is suggested that the programme indicator, and related intervention regarding young people's engagement with services, are reviewed (see *Messages and recommendations*).

Finally, 40% (14/35) of graduates were pro-active in reporting support from friends and/or family, for example, with reassurance, motivation and emotional support, as illustrated below:

“Being there to listen, telling me not to give up.” Female, 22

“Allowing me to express my feelings and reassure me that how I feel isn't unusual or not normal.”
Female, 23

“Encouraging me to stay on something and complete.” Male, 18

The management of relationships

The evaluation explored how graduates manage the impact of negative and positive relationships. The majority of graduates agreed that the IP course had helped them become more aware of, and have less to do with, relationships, friendships and networks that have a negative impact in their life. In parallel, the majority agreed the IP course had helped them become more aware of and have more relationships, friendships and networks that have a positive impact in their life. Table 9 presents the strength of these findings in more detail and indicates that **78% (25/32) of graduates agreed that IP had helped them to make positive choices about their relationships, friendships and networks.**

“I've started new friendships, within kickboxing, it's really healthy and they don't do anything stupid.”
Male, 16.

“I've got better people, but less people. More quality, less quantity - 100%.” Female, 20.

Table 9. The management of relationships	Agree
The IP course helped me become more aware of relationships, friendships and networks that have a negative impact in my life	77% (27/35)
Since the IP course, I have less relationships, friendships and networks that have a negative impact in my life	80% (28/35)
The IP course helped me to have less to do with relationships, friendships and networks that have a negative impact in my life ²⁵	69% (24/35)
The IP course helped me become more aware of relationships, friendships and networks that have a positive impact in my life	80% (28/35)
Since the IP course I have more relationships, friendships and networks that have a positive impact in my life	83% (29/35)
The IP course helped me to make positive choices about my relationships, friendships and networks	78% (25/32)

²⁵ The statement *“The IP course helped me to have less to do with relationships, friendships and networks that have a negative impact in my life”* asks the graduate to consider the attribution of their withdrawal from negative relationships to the IP programme.

Personal and inter-personal development contributing to the achievement of outcome area 3 - *Networks of support and managing relationships*

Graduates were asked to explore their responses to the frequency based questions, including what may have contributed to making choices to reduce contact with negative influences and engage in more positive networks of support. Based on the qualitative evidence gathered, a number of themes were identified and developed. These can be found in Table 10 below, together with illustrative quotes. An increase in self-reflection, confidence and the management of emotions were attributed to participation in IP and progress with this outcome area, together with self-awareness around emotions, social skills and relationships, and a desire to attain positive outcomes. Some graduates did not attribute the development of positive networks to Leap, but rather to a growing maturity or to relationships with other sources of support.

Table 10. Networks of support and managing relationships; personal and interpersonal development supported by participation in the IP programme, illustrated by graduate's quotes	
Increased self-reflection and confidence: regulates emotions better, increased self-awareness of emotions and perceptions, increased confidence, supports others, positive outlook	<p><i>"Confidence thing, it just makes it easier to network. A lot of people on [the] street probably have things they can offer me. I can speak to them now."</i> Male, 17.</p> <p><i>"More aware - it made me aware of certain people in my life that I didn't realise how their behaviour was affecting me and how I was perceiving them."</i> Female, 23.</p>
Increased ability to take control and belief in skills and knowledge: selects and accesses support /services that will help achieve goals, recognises situations and impact, and actively seeks positive outcomes, prioritises, cuts out negative relationships, seeks out positive relationships	<p><i>"It helped me identify which people I wanted around me. The ones that I didn't want, I rarely now associate with them. This is based on knowing what outcomes I want."</i> Male, 19.</p> <p><i>"I cut out the toxic people, either having conflict with or conflict came when the people were around. I realised that I didn't have the problems, the people [I was] hanging out with did and was then taking that on. So I got rid of the people and tested it! [Found] it worked."</i> Female, 20.</p>
Attribution not identified – no negative relationships / not influenced by others, improved relationships down to own resilience and growth, has less free time, already had positive relationships and support from other professionals/services	<p><i>"I'm not the type of person who is influenced, I think for myself - I don't believe Leap had that impact."</i> Female, 19.</p>
Increased empathy and awareness of others' needs and perspectives	<p><i>"Made me feel like instead of completely shutting out certain people to instead try and understand where they were coming from and turn negative situations into positive ones."</i> Female, 23.</p>
Improved communication	<p><i>"I do have a lot more positive relationships, because I now know how to talk about things and talk about things up front from the start."</i> Female, 22.</p>

Outcome area 4 - Engagement in employment, education and training

89% (31/35) of graduates were engaged in at least one EET activity at follow-up (see Table 11 for detailed breakdown). In the main, graduates had taken up employment, apprenticeships or places in higher education in the intervening period up to their participation in the evaluation. Graduates who were NEET had dropped from 24% (8/34) at baseline to 11% (4/35). This latter figure reflects the published statistics for the quarter July to September 2017 for young adults aged 16 – 24 years living in London; 12.9% being NEET.²⁶

Of the 4 graduates identifying as NEET at the follow-up interview, 2 left education in July 2017 (including one under 18) and 2 had been looking for work for approximately 9 months. In total, 40% (14/35) of graduates interviewed at follow-up had experienced a period of no EET activity since their initial engagement with the IP programme, including those categorised as NEET: a) at the point they participated in the course and b) at the follow-up interview.

Table 11. Main EET activity at the point graduate participated in the IP course and at follow-up	Baseline		At follow-up	
	n = 34 md = 1	%	n = 35 md = 0	%
Education (Mainstream school – key stages 3 & 4)	6	18%	2	6%
Education - PRU	1	3%	0	/
Education - FE	13	38%	10	29%
Education - HE	1	3%	4	11%
Training/Apprenticeship	0	/	3	9%
Employment (F/T or P/T)	4	12%	12	34%
Total engaged in some form of EET activity	25	74%	31²⁷	89%
NEET, including not in education and under 18	8 (inc. 2 under 18)	24%	4 (inc. 1 under 18)	11%
Other (insufficient information to categorise)	1	3%	0	/

Graduates were asked about the attribution of participation in IP to their engagement with education, employment or training. **69% (24/35) agreed that IP had helped them to find out about EET opportunities, 66% (23/35) agreed IP had helped them to participate in employment, education or training, whilst 70% (23/33) agreed that the programme had helped them to stay in employment, education or training.**²⁸

“It helped me look for different options. When I left college my Maths and English weren’t high enough, but then I found out I could do an apprenticeship with nursery.” Female, 21.

²⁶ Department for Education, November 2017, *NEET Statistics Quarterly Brief, July to September 2017, England*. See: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661031/SFR65-2017_NEET_Statistics_Quarterly_Brief_Q3-2017.pdf

²⁷ At least 8 graduates were participating in two EET activities at follow-up, e.g. college and part-time work.

²⁸ These findings appeared not to be influenced by whether the graduate had participated in some form of post-course activity (progression) with Leap.

“Personally, it's really helped. Coming here, experiencing this opportunity has helped me stay in education, because before, I was about to back out. It changed my mind-set.” Female, 19.

Personal and inter-personal development contributing to the achievement of outcome area 4 - *Engagement in employment, education and training*

Graduates were asked to explore their responses to the scale based questions in greater depth, including how the development of their skills, knowledge and attributes, through participation in IP, may have contributed to engagement in education, employment or training. Based on the qualitative evidence gathered, a number of themes were identified and developed. These can be found in Table 12 below, together with illustrative quotes. The development of aspirations, an understanding of choices and consequences, and greater emotional intelligence were all cited as contributing factors. Graduates also attributed the development of a positive outlook, motivation, increased self-awareness, social skills and teamwork to the achievement of this outcome area.

Increased goals and aspirations: gaining sense of direction, awareness of opportunities.	<i>“It taught us about our targets what we wanted to achieve and our goals and a lot of this was about education. One of my goals was to complete my personal statement.”</i> Female, 18.
Increased ability to take control and belief in skills and knowledge: understanding choices, consequences and behaviour and making changes.	<i>“...before I didn't really go to any of my lessons but then after the course I started going. It made me think about the consequences and the outcomes of not going to lessons; made me think what I am going to get out of it at the end of it if I kept not going to lessons.”</i> Male, 19. <i>“Help me to stay in education because I realised my education is more important than my personal drama and conflict. I learnt how to control myself, rather than answering back. I learnt to stay away and ignore them and focus on what I needed to.”</i> Female, 19.
Increased emotional intelligence: calmer, positive outlook, self-awareness, social skills, motivation/enthusiasm.	<i>“Doing Leap helped me know I could achieve a lot more than I was giving myself credit for.”</i> Female, 15. <i>“Through the course it enabled me to understand how I work as an individual. Pushed me to be interested in other fields of study. Increased my participation and involvement in everything I do. Increased my zeal to stay in.”</i> Female, 18.
Increased confidence	<i>“I used to be afraid. There was this one lesson about confidence in speaking in front of others or interviews. I said I'm not confident and I normally stutter when I'm nervous and now I speak to people on interviews panels that I'm part of or interviews I attend.”</i> Male, 23.
Improved communication and teamwork	<i>“I had a problem with my manager and it was there at the course that I realised I was reacting and the next day I started responding which meant that he then started responding and made things a lot easier.”</i> Male, 22

	<i>"I remember how to work with other people to work in groups and be more social with others and how to present myself." Male, 16.</i>
Resilience and endurance	<i>"Not accept it, but hate it less. Stayed in a job longer than I would have. Opened my eyes to different ways of looking at things." Female, 18.</i> <i>"It was the first thing I completed that I finished to the end. It was having that achievement - so before I never finished anything but taught me that I can finish something." Male, 18</i>
Practical progression support from Leap	<i>"There were a lot more people to help you and give you links to find out about opportunities and help you stay away from consequences of not being in education." Female, 16</i> <i>"They helped me with my CV and applying for college and some interview skills, like what the employer expects and in interview." Female, 19.</i>

Outcome area 5 - Engagement in community and voluntary activities

The evaluation was interested in whether graduates had taken on active roles within Leap and the wider community, and the contribution the IP programme had made to this engagement.

Further engagement with Leap

54% of graduates (19/35)²⁹ had participated in further activities, progression, voluntary or leadership roles with Leap following the IP course. These graduates had all attended internally delivered courses and included all those who had graduated from two IP courses. Examples of participation at Leap and the roles taken up include:

- The Youth Involvement Group
- Public speaking
- The Lighting the Fire awards event, including involvement in the organising committee
- Representing Leap at other award ceremonies
- Practical progression activities, including money management course(s).

"I went to charity dinner with Leap. I was the only person from that programme that they chose and I spoke to the other charities there." Female, 19.

²⁹ This includes the 9 graduates identified as participating in progression by the IP team (see Table 1).

Wider engagement in the community

57% of graduates (20/35) reported that they were involved in some form of community activity or voluntary work before attending the IP course and becoming familiar with Leap. This may have included participating in groups or clubs, in addition to voluntary roles. **51% of graduates (18/35) reported continuing with and/or taking up new community activities/roles following completion of the IP course.** Although it would appear that there is a decrease in civic participation following graduation, the findings do not identify whether the quality and level of responsibility of the roles and activities taken up were developed and strengthened, and how engagement in education, employment or training may have impacted on their availability for voluntary work.

Of those participating in community activities/volunteer work at some point, either with Leap and/or in the wider community, there were 21 reports of taking on voluntary work and 15 reports of undertaking leadership roles. Examples of the range of roles taken up included:

- Scout leader, peer mentor, peer leader, sports coaching
- Volunteering related to faith (assisting at the mosque or church), in a nursery, at a youth club
- Participation in the work of the Young Independent Advisory Group (YIAG)
- Facilitating events, workshops, Youth Council
- Other, such as participation in the National Citizen Service and charity shop work.

“In school I've become a peer mentor. If anyone has any problems at school I can help them through them (since year 10)” Female, 14.

“I did a lot of inspirational talks and in general I like to help my community.” Female, 18.

Given the number of graduates already engaging in community groups and volunteer roles prior to the IP programme, most did not attribute take-up or continued civic participation to Leap. **44% (15/34) agreed that IP had helped them take up community activities and/or volunteering, whilst 46% (12/26³⁰) agreed IP had helped them to stay in these roles.**

Personal and inter-personal development contributing to the achievement of outcome area 5 - *Engagement in community and voluntary activities*

Graduates were asked to explore what they felt they got out of voluntary and community activity, and how IP might have helped or not with take up and sustaining engagement. Based on the qualitative evidence gathered, a number of themes were identified and developed. These can be found in Table 13 below, together with illustrative quotes. Graduates discuss giving back to the community and gaining employability and social, communication and public speaking skills. An increasing sense of confidence, having a positive outlook and gaining a sense of direction through the IP programme were all cited as contributing to greater civic engagement.

³⁰ 9 out of 35 graduates did not respond to this question, predominantly because they had not participated in any community activities or voluntary work.

Table 13. Engagement in, and benefits of, community and voluntary activities; personal and interpersonal development supported by participation in the IP programme, illustrated by graduate's quotes

<p>Increased confidence and positive outlook: motivation, emotional regulation, changed mind-set, social skills relationship building</p>	<p><i>"I did the safeguarding training. It made me feel good about myself, made me realise I definitely want to work with children...Yes, in a way Leap gave me a step up a little push and some guidance. I'm glad I did that course. With the guidance it made me realise that I could do something. It made me realise I could do anything if I put my mind to it, because before I was heavily bullied."</i> Female, 15.</p> <p><i>"...the way I look at things. It helped me change the way I looked at things. Gave me a sense of motivation. Became more optimistic about things I was previously pessimistic about."</i> Male, 18</p>
<p>Sense of giving back to the community or helping others behaviour and making changes.</p>	<p><i>"I used to do scouting when I was young and giving back to them the chances that I had."</i> Female, 22.</p> <p><i>"I didn't do anything to get something; just wanted to help."</i> Male, 18</p>
<p>Gaining employability skills, training and experience, organisational skills, creative thinking</p>	<p><i>"It helped me develop and polish my skills as a leader. Increased my organisational skills and confidence."</i> Female, 18</p> <p><i>"Like how to build relationships with others; it gives you all those skills you need to get a job."</i> Female, 17.</p>
<p>Increased goals and aspirations: gained sense of direction, awareness of opportunities, making positive choices, sense of autonomy</p>	<p><i>"It gave me a view of what happens when you take opportunities. I was told by the trainer, when opportunities come round you want to take them. At the time I had opportunities but I wasn't taking them and now I say yes to all of them."</i> Male, 17.</p> <p><i>"It may have affected my decision to take it up because I wanted to make positive choice from the Leap course."</i> Male, 22.</p>
<p>Increased empathy and understanding of others</p>	<p><i>"...enabled me to see the perspective of young people and revisit how I was when I was their age and give them what they wanted."</i> Male, 17.</p> <p><i>"It opened up my eyes to a different perspective on life and people no matter age, gender, race."</i> Female, 18.</p>
<p>Increased confidence in communication skills</p>	<p><i>"...At Leap my confidence went up and I realised I'm actually a very good public speaker."</i> Female, 18.</p> <p><i>"Helped my confidence a lot, before I never used to go out there and talk and now I'm more friendly and now I talk to anyone."</i> Male, 19.</p>

Outcome area 6 - Developing personal goals

Graduates were asked to talk about the goals they had identified through their pre-course contact with Leap (if undertaken) and since completion of the IP course(s), together with the progress made. **71% (25/35) reported they had set goals since graduation.** The vignettes below present the perspectives and aspirations of a sample of graduates, including those identifying as NEET at follow-up and those in further education and/or employment. The graduates describe a wide range of goals and the progress made, and examples of attribution to participation in IP are identified.

Vignette 1: Female, 21, NEET at follow-up. This graduate's baseline goal was to become a chef and was making progress at baseline by working in a catering role. At the time of follow-up this goal had changed to wanting to find a job in varying areas to see where her interests lie. She acknowledged difficulty in finding work due to insufficient academic grades. Participation in IP led her to realise that she was no longer interested in a career in catering so she changed her goals.

"Doing an activity on the Leap course and I thought I don't want to be in catering anymore and I changed everything."

Vignette 2: Female, 19, NEET at follow-up. This graduate's baseline goal was to become a youth offending worker. This was still a goal for the graduate at follow-up and she was making progress by looking for opportunities with the help of a family support worker. The IP programme had assisted by advising on pathways to achieve this goal.

"The reason why I came on the course I wanted to do something with youth offending, when I was there they were talking to me about how I could get there."

Vignette 3: Male, 20, NEET at follow-up. This graduate's baseline goal was to complete the IP course and it was expressed that he often does not complete things he begins. He acknowledged his need to focus to achieve this. At the time of follow-up the graduate could not remember this goal and stated that he no longer has a goal but mentioned playing music with others. He did acknowledge a new-found sense of resilience toward conflict, however, which he stated would help him to make progress generally.

"Stayed in college, I feel like if I didn't learn the skills I learnt at Leap then I would have been kicked out, like analysing situations, talking to other people about certain situations... I'm always going to find conflict when doing something, so now I know how to overcome it. I'm more able to make progress."

Vignette 4: Male, 16, in further education at follow-up. Information regarding this graduate's goals at baseline was not available, however, since IP he had set goals to pass a vocational course, pass his driving test and attain employment. Progress was currently being made towards the first goal, as the graduate is attending a vocational course at a college. He selected the college and course specifically

as it would provide opportunities to achieve the goal. He stated that IP had helped him to achieve this by giving a sense of direction and focus towards the future. He had also found the confidence to seek out support and guidance in order to achieve his goals (particularly with teachers).

"It helped me plan my future; you should have more than one idea. After the Leap course made me really think about what I want... I'm more communicative towards teachers now, like I won't feel stupid anymore to ask for help as know it will help with my exams. I'm more humble."

Vignette 5: Female, 19, in further education at follow-up. This graduate's baseline goal was to take up a customer service apprenticeship and progress was being made through attendance on various courses. The goal remained at follow-up, with the participant about to complete a business course. Further goals at follow-up were identified as gaining employment in customer service and to volunteer in the youth sector. Participation in IP was felt to have aided the graduate as she had gained a sense of direction and refined her options through research, support and guidance.

"It's opened up my brain a lot more. Before the course I didn't know what to do, but now it's made me think what do I really want, do your research, and find out what to do."

Vignette 6: Male, 23, in employment at follow-up. This graduate's baseline goal was to develop a higher self-awareness of his own anger and develop strategies to manage this. At follow-up, this goal remained and progress had been made in the form of seeing a counsellor and therapist relating to his behaviour, and gaining a greater feeling of self-control over his anger. Further goals had been set since graduation; gaining employment, securing his own accommodation and owning his own business. He has since gained employment and has begun saving for and designing ideas around the business he would like to own. IP helped to build his confidence and reduce his fear, opening further opportunities to him. He is setting goals and planning the steps needed to achieve them.

"I only just started planning out my life after the Leap course. They [boosted] my confidence a lot, they've opened me up a lot and I'm not afraid to do these things anymore and now I feel adventurous really. Now I've been really busy looking for jobs and planning my future and goals."

Vignette 7: Female, 18, in employment at follow-up. This graduate's baseline goal was to be a neuroscientist and more generally to publish her own books. Progress was being made through finishing A-Levels and studying/researching. At follow-up, the goal remained with the graduate still needing to complete A-Levels, with the intention to do this through an online course. Furthermore, an additional goal had been set to run a café. Progress so far involves gaining experience in catering, and an intention to begin saving for an online A-Level course. She acknowledged that IP had helped her to become calmer and reduce anger; an obstacle to achieving goals.

"Helped me be calm with myself and less distracted. Anger is something that distracts a lot of people from things they need to do. The course helped me with this."

As a whole, 57% (20/35) of the follow-up group agreed that IP had helped them to identify their goals, whilst 80% (28/35) agreed that it had helped them to make progress on achieving their goals. It would appear that those graduates who had participated in at least one form of post-course/progression activity with Leap were more likely to attribute the identification of goals, and progress made, to their involvement with the IP programme.³¹

Personal and inter-personal development contributing to the achievement of outcome area 6 - *Developing personal goals*

Graduates were asked to explore whether the IP course contributed to identifying goals, making progress towards and taking up opportunities to achieve these goals. Based on the qualitative evidence gathered, a number of themes were identified and developed. These can be found in Table 14 below, together with illustrative quotes. Graduates' growing belief in their abilities, improved emotional regulation and confidence, a change of perspectives and maturity, together with increased assertiveness, particularly in seeking support, all contributed towards identifying and making progress with goals.

<p>Increased ability to take control and belief in skills and knowledge: assessing own goals and making changes, accessing/seeking out opportunities, self-management, sense of direction and focus</p>	<p><i>"I think I'm more focussed now. Even if I'm struggling to complete something I will at least now try and complete it. Before I never even tried."</i> Male, 18.</p> <p><i>"Same way Leap taught me to break down the conflict in my life it was the same as my life goals. Don't allow myself to limit my options but manage properly."</i> Female, 18.</p>
<p>Increased emotional intelligence: calmer, increased confidence, social skills – improved relationships, increased self-belief – broadened aspirations, more humble, changed mind-set/perspective, sense of maturity and independence</p>	<p><i>"When I said I won't do what I don't want to do, I realised that I should give it a go anyway and really changed my approach to education, before I would just refuse to do things teachers said."</i> Male, 18.</p> <p><i>"The course helped me see I'm an adult now and can be independent. Helped me see I can get by without other people's help. I packed myself, I wanted to be independent I felt free. Being with other people encouraged me; just being in the same room and having chats."</i> Female, 19.</p>
<p>Increased communication and assertiveness</p>	<p><i>"I'm more communicative towards teachers now, like I won't feel stupid anymore to ask for help as know it will help with my exams."</i> Male, 16.</p>

³¹ Further analysis of this finding is not feasible, given the limitations on the evaluation (see *Evaluation methods, response rates and parameters: Evaluation challenges and opportunities*).

Messages and recommendations

This evaluation has reported on the starting points and longer-term outcomes of the 2016/17 graduate cohort of the Improving Prospects Programme. The graduate cohort was made up of 92 individuals, a 53% increase on that of the previous year,³² with an expansion of courses hosted by a range of partner organisations. The evaluation concludes that the programme is working with a diverse cohort of young people in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and participation in education, employment, training and community activities on referral. Those who were classified as not in education, employment, training and those involved in offending and violence, appeared to be well represented within the cohort.

There was evidence of the IP programme achieving longer-term outcomes for the group of graduates participating in the follow-up interviews. Positive change was particularly identified for the following outcome areas: the management of conflict and helping others to do so, networks of support and managing relationships, engagement in education, employment and training, and developing personal goals. For example, 80% (28/35) of graduates agreed they had succeeded in resolving conflict since graduation, and 78% (25/32) agreed that the IP had helped them make positive choices about their relationships, friendships and networks.

Graduates attributed the positive change in these outcomes to personal and inter-personal skills and qualities developed through their participation in the IP programme. Most-commonly, graduates identified an increase in their ability to take control over their own life and to the development of empathy, confidence, emotional intelligence and regulation, and communication skills. They acknowledged that they had made some form of change or had taken action to improve their circumstances and gain positive outcomes; whether this was in the form of seeking support, identifying and managing negative relationships or making changes to their behaviour. Graduates identified greater self-reflection and an increased ability to understand others' perspectives and emotions, and the impact conflict may have.

As stated in *Evaluation methods, response rates and parameters*, the evaluation faced a number of challenges, limiting the scope and depth of enquiry. As such, recommendations are made to build on the strong commitment to learning and quality within the IP programme and to consider strategies to overcome these limitations.

Understanding the starting points across the cohort

The baseline information, collected before a young person attends an IP course, serves a number of practice and evaluation purposes, in particular:

- a) It is a means of getting to know the young person and their circumstances
- b) It enables a full description of the cohort in order to identify and assess whether Leap is reaching out to the population of young people being targeted and,

³² There were 60 individuals included in the evaluation of the longer-term outcomes achieved by Quarrel Shop graduates in 2014/15.

- c) It establishes a starting point for each young person that can then be compared back to during the follow-up evaluation process.

As stated in *Evaluation methods, response rates and parameters: Defining the evaluation cohort and parameters*, there were gaps in the information available to the evaluation across key indicators, in particular, but not exclusively, for graduates of externally delivered Leadership courses. As such, limitations to b) and c) above are high-lighted in the report. Therefore it is suggested that:

- 1) The IP programme seeks to review what is required for practice and evaluation purposes pre-course, to enable an effective dual purpose tool to be used³³
- 2) The minimum baseline evaluation information required for **all** young people (both “internal” and “external”) is agreed³⁴
- 3) There are clear category based, or yes/no questions, to collect key information at baseline, alongside more open, conversational questions
- 4) Systems for securely processing baseline information continue to be developed.

In addition, alongside 1 to 4 above, consent for baseline information to be shared with the evaluator needs to be clarified, prior to any further evaluation taking place.

Ensuring the longer-term outcomes evaluation is representative

The evaluation prioritised the voices of graduates and sought to engage a representative group in the follow-up interviews. As stated in *Evaluation methods, response rates and parameters: Follow-up interviews*, there were challenges to this objective being achieved, with access limited to 60% of the total cohort during the recruitment phase of the evaluation. There are particular concerns that those graduates who were more engaged with Leap and the IP programme were well represented in the evaluation, whilst those who were less engaged, particularly those referred by youth offending services and the partner pupil referral unit, were under-represented.³⁵ A point to note is that, in keeping with last year’s evaluation, it would appear that the two graduates interviewed at follow-up, from courses delivered at host youth offending services, were less responsive within the interview and less likely to attribute any change to IP.

In order to understand the longer-term outcomes for graduates that might be considered harder to reach; the evaluation would recommend a particular focus of resources on this group. A starting point would be to review how best to reach out to graduates referred by youth offending services and pupil referral units, and to encourage engagement in the evaluation. It is suggested that the review considers: a) how evaluation activity may be incorporated into contracts drawn up for delivery of the IP programme externally, b) the appropriate timescale for any follow-up activity for

³³ A review of pre-course information obtained would need to bear in mind the characteristics of the young people the IP programme is seeking to target, together with the outcomes framework.

³⁴ Minimum key information: date of birth, gender, ethnic origin, EET status (including outside of mainstream education), care experience, learning support needs, involvement in offending, violence and anti-social behaviour, secure estate experience.

³⁵ Eighteen graduates were referred by youth offending services, including 10 from courses hosted externally. Of these 4 participated in a follow-up interview. 13 graduates attended the Leadership course delivered at the pupil referral unit and only 1 took part in a follow-up interview.

harder to reach graduates (e.g., 6 months) and c) revisiting methods of exploring longer-term outcomes with graduates, including the venue for any possible interview/focus group.

Further improvements to the evaluation of the IP programme and investigation into longer-term outcomes

Building on the messages above, the evaluation makes further suggestions that may benefit future enquiry in terms of greater participation, representation, depth of understanding, and thus, validity.

- 1) Look to reduce the variation in time elapsed since graduation to the follow-up point to between 6 and 12 months. This lends itself to a rolling evaluation programme.
- 2) Consider how to evaluate the outcome area “Involvement in offending, violence and anti-social behaviour” in a meaningful and purposeful way. This will include conversations about definitions of terms, what is ethical or feasible to expect a young person to self-report and the most appropriate ways to begin to explore these issues, prior to participation in the programme and at follow-up. Within the context of a one-off evaluation interview, it is recommended that open questions are used to develop understanding and look into the impact of IP on graduates’ pro-social choices, rather than attempts at any form of measurement.
- 3) Investigate the specific benefits of post-course IP progression activities on the longer-term outcomes for graduates. Factors to bear in mind include other sources of support, and opportunities to take up community activity and leadership roles, externally to Leap.

Alongside:

- i. Consider how best to explore, in greater depth, civic participation and the leadership roles taken on by graduates, including the IP programme indicator regarding young people becoming positive role models for their peers.
 - ii. Given the low proportions of graduates agreeing that IP had helped them find out about, and take up, support and services, it is suggested that the programme indicator and intervention regarding young people’s engagement with services are reviewed.
- 4) Further optimise joined up working between the IP programme team and evaluator, to maximise access to graduates during the evaluation recruitment phase.

Appendix 1: Overview of the 11 Improving Prospects courses that took place from March 2016 to Feb 2017 and participation in the follow-up evaluation

Course ID L: Leadership Course CC: Choice to Change Course	Course dates	Hosted by external partner or internally to Leap	Number of graduates in total	Number of graduates participating in follow-up interviews
L15	30/03/16 to 01/04/16	External - Youth Organisation A	8	5
L16	06/04/16 to 03/05/16	External - YOT A	3	1
CC1	05/04/16 to 05/05/16	Internal	8	5
L17	31/05/16 to 02/06/16	External YOT B	4	1
L18	18/08/16 to 10/08/16	Internal	13	7
L19	09/08/16 to 11/08/16	External - YOT A	3	0
L20	15/08/16 to 17/08/16	Internal	12	3
CC2	25/10/16 to 24/11/16	Internal	6 (plus 7 who had graduated from a leadership course in 2016/17)	4
L21	22/11/16 to 24/11/16	External - PRU	13	1
L22	14/02/17 to 16/02/17	Internal	12	3
L23	14/02/17 to 16/02/17	External - Youth Organisation B	10	5

Appendix 2: Comparison of some key findings across the 2014/15 and 2016/17 Improving Prospects graduate cohorts

Table A: Comparing the starting points	2016/17 IP graduate cohort (total = 92 individuals)	2014/15 IP graduate cohort (total = 60 individuals)
Age range at graduation date	13 to 23 years old (n = 74)	15 to 23 years old (n = 59)
Average age at graduation date	17.8 years (n = 74)	17.4 years (n = 59)
% under 18	65% (n = 74)	63% (n = 59)
Gender	60% male, 40% female (n = 92)	48% male, 52% female (n = 60)
Ethnicity:		
Black or Black British (any other Black background)	38.3%	30%
White British or any other white background	20%	26%
Mixed (any other mixed background)	18.3%	17%
Asian or Asian British (any other Asian background)	10%	24%
Any other ethnic group	13.3% (n = 60)	4% (n = 54)
Engaged in at least one EET activity	72%	68%
NEET	22%	32%
Other	6% (n = 79)	/ (n = 53)
Has been arrested	41% (n = 58)	47% (n = 58)
Has been involved in violence	53% (n = 57)	64% (n = 52)
Has been involved in a gang	7% (n = 59)	18% (n = 51)

Table B: Comparing the longer-term outcomes (where applicable)	2016/17 IP graduate cohort at follow-up (total = 35)	2014/15 IP graduate cohort at follow-up (total = 31)
IP helped graduate learn how to resolve conflict	83%	90%
IP helped graduate put conflict learning into practice	83%	89%
Feel at less at risk of being involved in conflict	66%	77%
Involved in less conflict than before	74%	77%
Graduate helped others involved in conflict	71%	75%
Reduction in conflict with person named as in most conflict with	72%	88%
IP helped graduate to become more aware of relationships having a negative impact	77%	68%
IP helped graduate to become more aware of relationships having a positive impact	80%	77% (n = 30)
Engaged in at least one EET activity at follow-up	89%	94%
NEET at follow-up	11%	6%
Civic participation and involvement in projects in the community since graduating from IP course	51%	64% (n = 28)
IP helped graduate take up community activities and/or volunteering	44% (n = 34)	45% (n = 20)