



solace



Evaluation of the Solace Hear2Change Prevention Programme

solace for young people

solacewomensaid.org

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Introduction

In September 2019 Against Violence and Abuse (AVA) began an independent evaluation of **Solace's Hear2Change** programme.

Hear2Change is a five-year project run by **Solace Women's Aid** and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. The programme ran from September 2016 to October 2021 (with an extension until December 2021).

Hear2Change is for young people aged 13 – 19 (up to 25 with disabilities). The project employs a dedicated, experienced team working in schools, colleges, and community youth settings via early intervention, prevention and advocacy and ran in the London boroughs of Haringey and Islington with an overall aim to reduce Young Women and Girls (YWG) vulnerability to violence and abuse through:

- a Their active leadership in changing attitudes around Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- b Gaining confidence and self-esteem in challenging VAWG
- c Supporting those who have experienced abuse and are most vulnerable to abuse

Solace have summarised the project as:

‘a VAWG prevention programme; using education and tailored 1:1 support to develop young women’s leadership skills and empower them to speak out against VAWG in their communities.

***Hear2Change** aims to build a collective of young people across Haringey & Islington who will create a step change towards stopping violence from happening in the first place’.*

“Some students are not able to discuss these issues at home, being able to do so in an educational setting can challenge perceptions and stereotypes. If you want to enrich them it has to be a key part of the curriculum. To gain understanding and be progressive schools need to look at embedding this.

*The way **Solace** offered this was brilliant, it was with two very passionate young women facilitators. We have a lot of training delivered by external orgs and there was a difference between how **Solace** delivered, some of the other facilitators make you want to fall asleep. The students looked forward to it even though it was in their own time.”*

Teacher



The **outcomes** for the project are set out below, mapped against the main **BLF outcomes**. The **indicators** for each outcome are also provided.

Solace Outcome	BLF Outcome	Indicator
Young women and girls particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse evidence increased resilience and safety through a holistic, integrated, person-centred approach	Increased provision of holistic, integrated, person-centred approaches for women and girls at risk	24 YWG receive 1:1 support 40 YWG attend support groups, evidencing change through before and after questionnaires
Young women and girls have increased confidence to lead change in attitudes to VAWG through their role in co-producing services	Increased role and voice for women and girls in co-producing services	12 Young women become Steering Group members or Champions to have a voice, shape services and assist with designing resources, programmes, and delivery
A greater number of women and girls are aware of the support available and are able to identify abuse	A greater number of women and girls are supported through the provision of improved specialist support	Presentations provided to 800 YP. 5x Educational Awareness programmes delivered to 100 YP by advocates, steering group members and champions to change attitudes and increase awareness
Young women and girls have shaped VAWG interventions which has increased its relevance and impact	Better quality of evidence for what works in empowering women and girls	Better quality of evidence for what works in empowering women and girls

800
presentations
provided to young
people





Content of Hear2Change

The work comprises five main strands:

1

Specialist one to one support for young survivors of all forms of violence against women and girls

This advocacy and support service is aimed at young women and girls who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, any form of VAWG including domestic abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage, “honour” based violence, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation.

The youth advocates initially complete a risk and needs assessment with each young person to identify specific risks they are facing and to get a better understanding of their individual situation. This then leads to

the joint development of a support plan and programme of work. The work typically lasts for 4-10 weeks dependent on the levels of risk and issues being discussed. Additional signposting to other services is also made if required. The aims of this one-to-one work are to increase self-esteem and resilience coupled with an understanding of VAWG and their rights within a relationship. The sessions also aim to help with safety planning, and reduce self-blame, building on strengths via an empowered and trauma informed model.

“It was an amazing opportunity to come up with coping mechanisms and deal with situations.”
Young women, Year 13



2

Group work with young people to raise awareness of the issues and support them to speak out and be involved in related campaigns

The original core ten-week **Hear2Change** group work programme aimed to empower young people to speak out against VAWG. It utilises interactive participatory activities that allow young people to lead discussions and support each other, and aims to increase young people's knowledge of VAWG, to recognise healthy and unhealthy behaviours, to keep themselves safe and to recognise harmful attitudes that support unequal power within relationships.

It also has the additional goal of developing young leaders and champions with the confidence to challenge gender stereotypes, support healthy relationships and change harmful attitudes in their communities.

The programme meets several strands of the PSHE curriculum and is flexible so can be adapted according to need. It is this flexibility that was crucial during the covid-19 pandemic and allowed **Solace** to adapt their model to meet the changing needs of schools and young people. One way that this changed was the integration of the POW programme, which **Solace** had been running

separately from **Hear2Change**. It was felt that the learning from both pieces of work could be jointly utilised to develop a whole school approach model which would form a more holistic package for schools. This is especially important given that **Solace** will have to charge for this service once current funding ends. New teaching and learning resources were developed for KS3/KS4 and the programme will last for 12 weeks. The programme looks at the root causes of VAWG, as well as all strands of VAWG, with the main aim of students developing meaningful campaigns at the end of the programme to speak out against violence.

To support young peoples' learning **Solace** also developed sessional materials and reflective learning journals which will support students to gain AQA Awards for Level 1 -KS3 and Level 2 for KS4.

The learning journals will also provide useful data via the inclusion of pre and post questionnaires. Unfortunately, this data was not available for this evaluation due to the delays posed by covid-19.

The sessions in the new revised groups are as follows:

- Intro
- Gender stereotypes
- Power and inequality
- Healthy/unhealthy relationships
- DVA
- SV and Consent
- Social media and online safety
- Stalking and harassment
- CSE and grooming
- VAWG and media representation
- Harmful practices
- Campaigning

3

Presentations, events, campaigns, and youth conferences

The **Hear2Change** programme also offers a variety of presentations and events on a wide range of VAWG related issues which can be adapted to suit the audience.

This can be an effective way of reaching larger numbers of people, albeit in a less intensive way than the groupwork.

4

Recruitment and training of Steering Group members to set the direction of the work

The steering group is a core part of **Hear2Change**, and also a unique component, setting it aside from other prevention programmes. By supporting vulnerable young women to train and develop as leaders and role models in their communities they aim to create a step change that will eventually stop violence from happening in the first place. In this way it is hoped that young women will

develop increased confidence and a greater understanding of the harmful attitudes that condone VAWG with a view to then develop resources for **Hear2Change** and influence and guide the direction, content and delivery of the programmes. They are also able to develop their own campaigns and activities to raise awareness and challenge VAWG in their local communities.

This is an example of meaningful participation where young women's views and experience is valued, validated and acted upon and where young women are empowered to become leaders and activists.



5

A champions/changemakers component for young people who have been through the group work programme and would like to take action in their communities to speak out against VAWG

In addition to the work of the steering group, some young people who have accessed a groupwork programme can go on to become champions. The group work programme will have given the champions the skills, knowledge and tools to step out into their

communities to start the change process, and their ideas, actions and campaigns will be supported by the **Hear2Change** steering group. Some champions are able to receive training on facilitation and can go on to co-facilitate the group sessions.

It is this combination of tailored, targeted support, education and empowerment that makes **Hear2Change** such a unique programme and stand out against more traditional models of prevention work in schools which rely more on one off sessions or assemblies or require teachers to lead the work without the support of external experts.

Using this model, young people are provided with the education they need and deserve on healthy relationships and other VAWG related issues, they are given a safe space to explore those issues and then the opportunity to actively campaign and become champions in their communities to help prevent VAWG.

Methodology

When 2019-2020 AVA began the evaluation of the **Hear2Change** project, the established aims of the evaluation were to:

- Establish and clarify the project operating/delivery model (what makes **Hear2Change** what it is)
- To assess project impact on participants; did the Project enable them to find their voice and use that voice to improve theirs and other's circumstances, wellbeing and independence?
- To identify aspects of the project that best support the achievement of this impact
- To consider what other outcomes there were for these children and young people and identify what aspects of the project supported these outcomes
- To identify any gaps or opportunities for better outcomes
- To review the established delivery model for the project, identifying benefits and key lessons to be learned

Covid19

This is not an evaluation of the full five years of delivery as the evaluation was only commissioned in 2019. Shortly after this, the project was understandably compromised due to the Covid19 pandemic, which obviously had huge ramifications for project delivery. As the team were prevented from undertaking direct work

in schools, they were unable to collect data as expected. However, this time was well spent revising and updating the programme model and installing new data collection and analysis software. Unfortunately, this meant that more recent data is unable to be compared to the early work done by the project pre-covid.

“There is so much else going on in schools, this feels like an additional side thought, there is a process of a lot of follow up, often not hearing back, we are trying to get in ASAP from September, but some didn't want us in until January once they had settled in more. They needed to get heads around everything. Now schools don't want external people in.”
Solace Advocate



The evaluators were provided with some quantitative data including referral data, demographics and some pre and post evaluation forms from various parts of the programme.

The evaluators were also able to conduct some focus groups and interviews with young people, school staff and **Solace** staff to gain a deeper

qualitative understanding of the work, although this was also hindered by the lockdowns and schools not being open in order to conduct the focus groups.

The table below details the interviews and focus groups undertaken by the evaluators.

School/Organisation	Role	Type of evaluation method	Numbers
School Staff			
Beacon High	Deputy Head	Interview	1
	Wellbeing Co-ordinator	Interview	1
	Safeguarding Lead	Interview	1
Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School	Head of Skills Development and Progression	Interview	1
	PSHE teacher and head of EAL	Interview	1
Haringey Sixth Form	Director of Health and Social Care	Interview	1
Alexandra Park School	Head of Inclusion Unit	Interview	1
Rose Bowl Youth Centre	Youth Projects Manager	Interview	1
Islington Local Authority	Anti-bullying Coordinator/DV Prevention Officer	Interview	1
Young People			
Beacon High	Years 10/9/8 Workshop attendees	Focus group online	Focus group online
Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School	Years 10/11 Workshop attendees	Focus group online	17
Young changemakers	Young Changemakers group members	Focus group online	2
Steering Group	Steering Group members	Focus group in person	6
Solace Staff			
Hear2Change Team	Youth Advocates and Educators	Interview	4
Total			44

The findings will be discussed using each main outcome as a general theme. The table below summarises the numbers reached for each outcome, against the projected target.

It is clear that for each outcome the project exceeded the target considerably, reaching a vast number of young people and professionals.

Outcome	Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
1:1 Support	24	14	38 (31 young women)	28 (20 young women)	30	35 (28 young women)	145 (123 young women)
Attended support groups	40	59	58 (51 young women)	80	268	287	752
Steering group members	12	12	7 steering group and 15 changemakers	32 young steering group (23 young women) 19 champions (10 young women)	7 steering group and 27 changemakers	5 steering group and 10 changemakers	134
Presentations	800 young people	1400	1196 / 5 events	3257 / 27 events	1450 / 15 events Summer camp campaign reaching 500 professionals Online survey with 150 young people responding	1100	8403
Educational awareness programmes	100 young people across five events	130 / 5 events	72 / 6 events	98 / 14 events	268 / 10 events	333 / 7 events	901

123
young women offered 1:1 support





1

Increased provision of holistic, integrated, person-centred approaches for women and girls at risk

Advocacy Work

The core components of the project are the 1:1 advocacy work and the groupwork programme. The original targets were to work with 24 1:1 clients and for 40 people to go through the groupwork programme each year.

In 2020/2021 **35** (28 women, 6 men and 1 undefined service user) young people received and engaged with 1:1 support which is 45% increase in capacity. They represented **22** 16-20 year olds, **10** 11-15 year olds, **2** 21-21 year olds and **1** 6-11 year old.

These young people had experienced severe forms of abuse and violence with the most common being domestic abuse (16 cases), rape (7 cases), sexual offences (5 cases), sexual exploitation (4 cases), stalking and harassment (2 cases).

Of course, domestic abuse often intersects with other issues and needs, and the young people also had other support needs including:

- 28.5% of cases had some children’s social care involvement
- 40% had mental health needs.
- 8.5% had sexual health needs
- 14% had educational needs

The average case length of support for the young people worked with was **4 months**. The following outcomes were reported:

- 61.5% of the young people supported stated their perception of risk had improved after working with **Solace**
- 58% of the young people supported stated



*“**Advocacy** is that attention, the moment for them focusing on them and **really hearing them**. Teachers don’t have the time, and they often don’t have that at home. Having someone who they can build **trust** with, a **positive relationship** is such an important way to change patterns/survival mechanisms that they have built in their head. It’s about **mutual respect**.”*

*A space for them to have a voice is the most important thing, you can see them grow as they are **allowed to have a voice**.”*

Youth Advocate

their perception of safety had improved after working with **Solace**

- 24% had positive educational outcomes
- 48% were supported with their mental health needs

- 24% were supported with their sexual health needs and
- 2% of the young people supported stated an aspect of their wellbeing and relationships had improved.



“In the few sessions we had, you helped me to discover so much about myself, one thing that really stuck with me is the trauma/ stress responses. Being able to break down my behaviour and further understand it has definitely made me a lot more conscious and in control of how I react to particular situations.”

1:1 client

The sessions are tailored to the individual’s needs, risks and learning styles. This was appreciated by the young people spoken to as part of this evaluation. One commented that

“The setup is easy, with PowerPoint and visuals to look at rather than just talking, it’s a contrast to therapy, words can just go over your head. We find resources on-line and reflect back. Naomi is really kind and open; I can be honest. ”

Another young person reflected that the sessions were not just about theory but were also made personal by looking at how they deal with life

and peers in relation to the issues they were discussing.

Both young people agreed that the support offered a much-needed safe space that was lacking generally in school. In the second year of the project, before receiving 1:1 support, 63% of young people reported that they felt scared for themselves and for others either most of or some of the time. By the end of their 1:1 support programme, this had dropped to only 38% feeling scared some of the time (none of them reported still feeling scared “most of the time”). In fact, 63% of young people reported “hardly ever” feeling scared after having received 1:1 support.

“I like the lesson [1:1] because I can express my feelings and tell her what is really going on and have advice on where to go for help”

“School has been rubbish at dealing with things, pastoral care can be condescending and not great to talk to about things. We need a space where our best interests are at heart by someone who is specialised at these issues.”

The young person's advocates have also supported two young men 1:1, who had been highlighted by their schools for being inappropriate with young girls in a school environment. This work highlighted the importance of working with young boys as allies and bystanders to prevent VAWG and has become an aim for future iterations of the work. One young man commented that the sessions helped him as

“ Talking through consent, patriarchy..... conversational, a confidential thing, there is never any judgement, you leave feeling better than you came in. All students should be able to access this. ”

Another young man (worked with as a survivor of domestic abuse at home) attended 1:1 support and it was noted that ‘by the end of the support programme, he opened up to his male friends

and talked to them about masculinity and the importance of challenging gender stereotypes. He encouraged them to talk about their feelings and be more vulnerable amongst themselves. This deepened their relationships with each other. His sleeping improved and he was able to start opening up to his mother and his sister’. He commented:

“ If I had not received the support, I would have left the college, as I would not have been able to follow the classes and study. I felt too depressed, angry and alone. ”

During lockdown, advocacy work increased as advocates were working from home and group work was not able to take place. However, it is important to acknowledge that from 23 young people originally on the support programme only eight of them fully engaged with the support. The

advocates explained that

“The rest of young people disengaged due to school closures and loss of the contact with the service as schools could not release students private contact numbers due to the GPDR. The school’s designated safeguarding leads notified young people of advocates contact numbers with the hope they would engage with the support on their own out of the school community.”

The main reason for non-engagement was that many young people do not have a private and confidential space to talk freely with advocates from home. One teacher told the evaluator that they also found that some young people were

afraid to go online and turn their cameras on as they were being bullied about what their rooms looked like. Additionally, some young people did not have mobiles or laptops to access online support (Solace were able to provide laptops to three young people through emergency funding).

One of the youth advocates commented that after lockdown, the numbers of 1:1 referrals increased, not just from schools but also community groups, social care and health services who were all recognising the increased levels of domestic abuse during lockdown and the resultant risks to young people. The young people spoken to as part of this evaluation very clearly spoke about the impacts of lockdown on their mental health and wellbeing.

“I am still young, but I had to teach myself to grown up really quick, my character has grown in so many ways, I went through emotions that I had never felt before like anxiety. Schools forget there is a life outside of school.”

Young Woman, Year 10

“The things I went through in lockdown I’d never been through in my life, my childhood was good but things were destroyed in lockdown and I’m not the only one. School has done nothing to help with my mental health, we need workshops to deal with mental health.”

Young Woman, Year 10

Each year, the target of 40 people accessing groupwork has been exceeded, with numbers increasing year on year. In 2019/20, prior to lockdown, the project was able to work with whole year classes in the Arts and Media School as a part of the PHSE mainstream curriculum.

This highlights the recognition that all young people need to be educated on healthy/unhealthy relationships. Via this new approach the project reached 268 students who completed the ‘Leaders4Change’ programme.

Unfortunately, **Solace** found it difficult to measure the impacts of the groupwork programmes via the usual pre and post tools. A main reason for this was young people having knowledge of GDPR and refusing to give consent for their data to be stored and/or shared for the evaluation. The evaluation team were planning (pre-lockdown) to run a focus group on this issue with a sample of young people to try and address and alleviate their concerns and develop a way of collecting data that they felt more comfortable with. However, lockdown prevented this from taking place. **Solace** have now invested in new software 'Qualtrics' which will allow them to collect and collate anonymous data. Unfortunately, this was not set up in time for this evaluation to make use of but will be vital for future reports.

In year 2, some basic pre and post data was collected from 72 young people across 6

programmes. They found that before taking part in the programme only **50%** of young people knew where to go for help if they or their friend was having trouble with a partner who was being controlling, possessive or abusive. By the end of the programme, **96%** of young people knew where and how to access support

In the academic year 2020/21 there were considerable difficulties delivering groupwork programmes in schools due to the impact of COVID, although some one-off lessons were able to go ahead. Despite these issues, the team managed to find creative ways of continuing the programme of work to ensure young people who needed it the most were able to access some form of intervention.

In total they supported **287 young people** through the groupwork programme. This included:

- 16 workshops for 250 pupils in total at Steward Academy in Harlow through our costed model in July 2021 (although this does not come under this funding stream as it is in another borough, it shows the impact of a committed school who are willing to pay for the work and the numbers of young people that can be reached)
- A 6-session bespoke programme combining POW (Healthy Relationship programme) and the wellbeing programme to SEND pupils at Alexandra Park school (Haringey) to 8 pupils.
- A 8-session emotional well-being programme in Beacon High school to targeted group of 8 young boys.

287

young people supported through the groupwork programme



A teacher provided the following feedback:

“A young woman who took time off from college after intimate footage of her was shared around. In this space, she openly talked about this in front of her peers for the first time, and her story was met with sympathy and agrees on her behalf. I have seen her begin to re-enter college life with confidence and I believe this session played a key role in this.”

As it was not possible to take young people away for a residential, the **Hear2Change** team set up a ‘Summer Camp of Power’ for a week during summer holidays which was promoted to all schools in Haringey and Islington. 21 young people attended, (85% girls). Sessions included VAWG, gender, leadership, and campaigning with afternoon creative external workshops such as poetry, self-defence, and photography workshops. Newly recruited young people went onto become part of the new Young Change Makers group

and have continued working on a victim blaming campaign throughout the autumn term.

One of the young change makers commented:

“It’s an open space, in many households, when young women start to question things maturely, they get shut down, not seen as womanly. Here you can ask questions and get answers without worrying about the consequences of asking. You can educate friends and family and be more educated yourself about issues that are relevant in society and may affect you.”

Pre and post evaluation data was available for the summer camp. 16 people completed the pre survey and 18 people completed the post survey. A selection of the statements given can be seen in the table below, showing how for each one, the percentages increased for each one in terms of confidence.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am confident in my understanding of Violence Against Women and Girls	Pre: 0	Pre: 0	Pre: 12.5%	Pre: 56.25%	Pre: 31.25%
	Post: 0	Post: 0	Post: 0	Post: 33.33%	Post: 66.67%
I am confident in my understanding of gender and how it affects individual life	Pre: 0	Pre: 0	Pre: 6.25%	Pre: 68.75%	Pre: 25.00%
	Post: 0	Post: 0	Post: 0	Post: 50%	Post: 50%
I am confident in my understanding of all these issues enough to speak about them, recognise misconceptions and explain them to someone else	Pre: 0	Pre: 0	Pre: 31.25%	Pre: 43.75%	Pre: 25.00%
	Post: 0	Post: 0	Post: 5.56%	Post: 38.89%	Post: 55.56%
I am confident in my understanding of leadership and leadership skills	Pre: 0	Pre: 0	Pre: 25%	Pre: 50%	Pre: 25%
	Post: 0	Post: 0	Post: 0	Post: 50%	Post: 50%
I am confident in my understanding of campaigning and related topics	Pre: 0	Pre: 6.25%	Pre: 31.25%	Pre: 37.50%	Pre: 25%
	Post: 0	Post: 0	Post: 5.56%	Post: 33.33%	Post: 61.11%

Comments provided on the surveys included:

“ I loved meeting new people and learning about VAWG. The activities were fun ”

“ I really enjoyed learning about peoples past experience, I grew a deeper understanding in problems about women’s and young girls and what abuse is used ”



“They created a kind of area where you can talk freely with no judgement, with no pressure to say anything.

Warm and welcoming atmosphere, you can talk and they actually listen instead of it going in one ear.”

Young Change Maker, Age 14

Q Do you think it’s important for young people to attend this programme? Why?

“ Yes, because more young people need to hear about these problems and for us to counter them ”

“ Yes, to learn and become aware not only of society’s problems but also how to better them ”

“ Yes, because it educated you on intense and difficult topics ”

A POW programme was given to 312 young people (male and female) in years 11, 12 and 13 (mean age 16.5) across several schools. Some basic data was provided and showed overall

that young people enjoyed the session, would recommend it, would like more sessions like it and that they learnt a lot.

#	Field	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Completely Agree	Total
1	I enjoyed this session	1.18% 3	2.75% 7	15.29% 39	43.92% 112	36.86% 94	255
2	I would recommend the session to others	0.79% 2	1.98% 5	12.70% 32	40.08% 101	44.44% 112	252
3	I would like more sessions like this	2.77% 7	2.77% 7	18.18% 46	33.20% 84	43.08% 109	253
4	I learnt a lot from this session	1.98% 5	2.37% 6	18.58% 47	36.76% 93	40.32% 102	253

The students also provided feedback for how sessions could be improved.

This is incredibly useful data and should help to guide future iterations of the programme.

Suggestions included:

- longer sessions (many respondents said this)
- more practical advice for survivors and support
- more interactive activities (this was another popular comment)
- more on how to prevent it
- more discussions between students
- hear about someone's experience
- add trigger warnings

Some of these sessions had to take place online due to lockdown. It seemed that many students found it harder to engage with the topic when it was not in person and therefore not able to be so interactive. This was reflected in the majority of the comments such as:

“ The session involved a lot of the presenters talking to us rather than us actually being able to interact with the presenter to help us widen our knowledge beyond what was on the screen..... To improve this session, try and make it more interactive and less Zoom oriented learning if possible.

”

This is not a finding unique to **Solace**. Researchers from Swansea University and Cardiff University¹ surveyed a total of 407 pupils (17 male, 390 female) aged between 11 and 18 years old during November 2020 when schools had reopened. They found that pupils' learning experiences (concentration, engagement, ability to learn, and self-worth from learning) were significantly lower for online learning compared to classroom learning. It may well be that future programmes will be run online for a variety of reasons, and there can be many benefits to this in terms of reaching more young people, particularly those who are unable to access mainstream education, however, more thought needs to be given as to how to make these sessions more interactive whilst still creating a safe space to talk about sensitive issues.



Emotional Well-being Work

In response to covid-19 and the resultant school closures and loss of direct contact with young people, as well as reports of the increase in DVA, **Solace** partnered with Arsenal in the Community and the Islington Anti-bullying/ Safeguarding Coordinator and developed a three-level emotional wellbeing pack for primary and secondary schools to support young people at a distance.

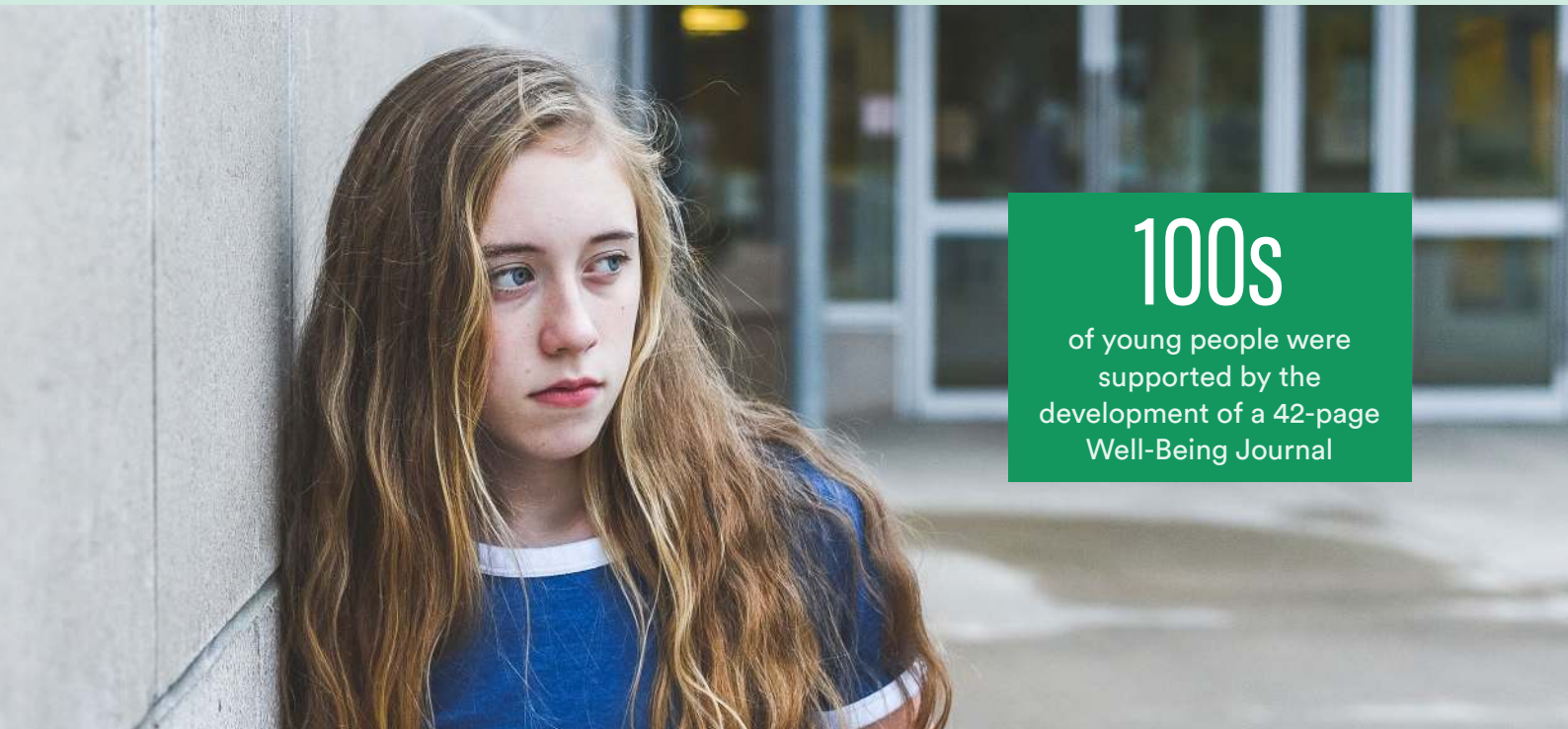
The first pack was developed by the safeguarding lead in Islington and included a recorded webinar

to support teachers/professionals understanding of DVA/signs and supporting services.

The second pack was developed by Arsenal in the Community and focused mostly on physical aspects of activities and meaningful exercises to support children's focus, leadership and purpose.

The third part was developed by **Solace**. They developed a 42-page Well-Being Learning Journals in order to support children and young people to:

- build up their resilience and plan for safety, to reflect on their life, to understand what healthy relationships look like
- to develop their understanding of daily feelings
- to promote diverse selfcare strategies
- to share inspirational stories of excellent role models
- to understand the importance of a growth mindset
- to set goals and achieve them while journaling their experiences individually or with their parent/teacher.



100s
of young people were supported by the development of a 42-page Well-Being Journal



The Well-Being Journals provided many different suggestions on mindfulness, various selfcare strategies as well as giving children/young people suggestions of many fun games they could play at home with their family members to strengthen their connections and relationships through laughter and play.

Emotional Well-being learning journals had a huge impact reaching 100's of young people, in the target boroughs as well as others:

- All primary and secondary schools in Islington (700 copies)
- All primary and secondary schools in Haringey through the Healthy School Coordinator received a link to the journals
- **Solace** printed out 200 of journals for all Solace CYP Services and these were mostly used by Family Support Workers in accommodation services
- All Steering group members and YCM received a version of the journal
- Haringey Libraries shared a link of the journals on their website to reach a wider community
- DVIP in Hammersmith shared the link with their advocates on a national level
- Approximately 1000 students in the Sutton area also benefited from the journals
- The link and journals were shared on the Enfield Thrive Together platform

Additionally, a 6-week programme based on the Emotional Wellbeing Learning Journals was developed to deliver in schools either virtually or in person to students. Teachers can also be trained to use it so they can meaningfully use them in the classroom.

These journals show how the team were able to think creatively in order to meet the two emerging needs of a) having to work remotely and b) the increase in domestic abuse and impacts of this (And of lockdown in general) on well-being and mental health.

It is this flexibility and responsiveness that set this work aside from more traditional models and is testament to the skills, expertise and passion of the **Solace** staff team.



“My son has demonstrated a better understanding of healthy relationship while the learning journal helped him to also understand different ways of taking care of his emotional wellbeing. He enjoys working on the pack independently and talks to me about things he learned.”

Young person's mother

The team were able to collect pre and post data on the emotional wellbeing programme for primary schools for just over 100 students. This is summarised below:

Pre-Programme

#	Question	😊 A Lot	😐 A Bit	☹ Nothing	Total
1	How much do you know about the importance of emotional well-being?	27.27% 30	56.36% 62	16.36% 18	110
2	How much do you know about the importance of safety planning?	25.45% 28	45.45% 50	29.09% 32	110
3	How much do you know about different feelings?	65.45% 72	29.09% 32	5.45% 6	110
4	How much do you know about expressing feelings in a safe way?	29.09% 32	52.73% 58	18.18% 20	110
5	How much do you know about different ways you can care for yourself (self-care strategies) ?	47.27% 52	41.82% 46	10.91% 12	110
6	How much do you know about organisations that can support your emotional well-being?	11.82% 13	44.55% 49	43.64% 48	110

Post-Programme

#	Question	😊 A Lot	😐 A Bit	☹ Nothing	Total
1	How much do you know about the importance of emotional well-being?	54.81% 57	40.38% 42	4.81% 5	104
2	How much do you know about the importance of safety planning?	50.96% 53	43.27% 45	5.77% 6	104
3	How much do you know about different feelings?	73.08% 76	23.08% 24	3.85% 4	104
4	How much do you know about expressing feelings in a safe way?	44.23% 46	50.00% 52	5.77% 6	104
5	How much do you know about different ways you can care for yourself (self-care strategies) ?	48.08% 50	42.31% 44	9.62% 10	104
6	How much do you know about organisations that can support your emotional well-being?	28.85% 30	46.15% 48	25.00% 26	104

The data shows an improvement in knowledge for each question. Students also reported improved scores/confidence in being able to develop a safety plan, recognise and express feelings, calm themselves down and knowing who to speak to if they need to.

2 Increased role and voice for women and girls in co-producing services

A key aim of the work was to empower young women and girls to be able to speak out about VAWG and to develop leadership and campaigning skills via co-production of services. Youth participation is often mentioned as an aim but is rarely done well, in a truly meaningful way where young people genuinely lead the work. When done in this way there are enormous benefits to young people, school and organisations. By working with young people to co-produce services, **Solace** have ensured that their work is robust, relevant and authentic.

One of the main ways they attempted this aim was via the setting up of the steering group. Numbers fluctuated, especially with covid-19 but they always met the target of 12 young women

actively taking part. One steering group member commented in an interview:

“ They let us take the lead, it didn’t feel like teacher-student. We are more like a team, and all heavily involved. I really value that, at school the teacher supervises everything, picks up immediately on any flaws and teaches you how to do it but not how to work with flaws and make it better. Solace encourage active and critical thinking and free thought. ”

Professionals have reported their positive feedback for the steering group. The Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator for Islington attended an event

“Contributing makes it feel like the power is in my hands”

where steering group members led a roundtable discussion on sexual bullying for schools (both peers and staff). She commented that it was very clear that they were confident and empowered. IN fact, she contacted the senior management team from their school to commend how well the young women had delivered the session and provided peer support. This was the first time she had ever done that. Consistently every time she meets

the H2Ch participants across the borough, she finds them to be well educated in the topics and confident and empowered in their delivery.

Another teacher commented:

“ It was very important we heard young people sharing their experiences, opinions and what they think schools need to do to change the culture ”

Over the five years, the steering group have led on a number of initiatives such as:

- Developing sessions for schools
- Hosting events within school and college for International Women’s Day
- Participated in GOGA (Get out Get Active Haringey) consultations while also developing questionnaires for survey about safe spaces and activities to engage young women becoming more physically active in the borough
- Participated and developed poems for Because I am a girl campaign which they filmed for International Women’s Day event
- Supported development of activities, topics and promotional materials for Summer of Power camp
- Supported recruitment of new advocates at the end of the summer
- Shaping a youth conference and leading activities
- Contributing to the recruitment of the new Senior Project Worker
- Summer campaign #everychildsafesafe
- Youth Voices Questionnaire
- Contributed to Haringey Council’s Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
- Wrote and produced several films
- Development of short webinars to raise awareness amongst teachers and parents
- Completed 12 weeks Healthy Relationships training to deepen their knowledge and skills while completing AQA Level 2 Award in POW
- Fundraising campaign for families in refuges



“[F] talks at home about things she does in the steering group and how that’s changed the way she perceives the relationships around her. At home we watch the news together and F is very vocal about things that are not right.”

F’s father

In the first year of the project, the advocates noted that many of the young women within the steering group had more complex vulnerabilities than they were initially expecting, and this meant that many of those steering the project were also receiving 1:1 support. On one hand, this means that the project is being led by young people who thoroughly understand the impact of these issues and would typically be deemed too vulnerable to take on a leadership role such as this, however it also meant that the team had to re-shape their approach to developing their leadership skills and empowering them to genuinely contribute. This also impacted on numbers of young people the advocates were able to see in

a 1:1 capacity because of the vulnerabilities and complexities young people face (particularly steering group members). When working with experts by experience, the amount of additional time that may be needed to support them so they can meaningfully contribute, cannot be under-estimated. It is crucial that any work with young people with lived experience must include appropriate trauma-informed support and that additional time is built into projects from the start to allow for this. It is also important that staff leading on this work are trained in supporting people with complex needs and that they are given regular clinical supervision to mitigate any potential secondary trauma.

The Champions Programme

In 2018, the champions programme was launched. This offered the opportunity for young people who had been through the group work programme to develop their own campaigns or actions to speak out against violence and they had 15 champions recruited in the first year. Before becoming Champions, only 27% of these young women felt confident to speak to people in their family and community about Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and explain what needs to change to stop it. After taking part in the group work programme and becoming Champions, 87% of these same young women said they felt confident to speak out about, and against, VAWG.

Champions from Haringey Sixth Form, were very successful in their campaign. They were campaigning for safer social spaces where young people could meet which previously were very male dominated and young women did not feel safe to participate. As a result, the College found young people a new larger space, furnished with more colourful sofas and plants which is now occupied with 60% of young women.

Unfortunately, during the pandemic, all school assemblies where the students in Arts and Media school were due to present their campaigns were cancelled.

87%

of young women said they felt confident to speak out about, and against, VAWG after becoming Champions



Young Change Makers (YCM)

27 Young Change Makers (YCM) were recruited prior to the COVID –19 lockdown to develop their leadership and campaigning skills in order to develop meaningful campaigns to speak out against VAWG.

In the Covid19 aftermath, adjustments and changes had to be made:

- 4 new CYP were recruited through contacts with schools and local communities during the lockdown and an initial session was held which was very successful. **Solace** also partnered with Haringey Coordinated Community response steering group to recruit an additional 15 young people
- Training sessions have been suspended and summer residential had to be cancelled.
- An online check-in session took place once a fortnight in June and July and young people supported the development of the CYP summer campaign.
- Plans for re-establishing the work and engagement of young people to develop meaningful campaigns started again in October 2020.

Teachers were asked if they had noticed an impact in the young people’s behaviour as a result of being in the changemakers group.

Comments included:

“ This definitely happened, it has gone really well. Via conversations with the young women, I could tell they felt empowered and were able to deliver sessions to peers confidently. ”

“ On a personal level, they have a different viewpoint, feel they are making a difference to themselves and the wider community. Their confidence has really grown, they are empowered to speak up. ”

“The changemakers group is amazing, a real positive framework to encourage more people to do this. I have referred some 1:1’s when their risk has decreased and they are really excited, came in shy and timid but now want to make a career in this. IT’s a beautiful transition!”

Solace Advocate



3 A greater number of women and girls are supported through the provision of improved specialist support.

Presentations

The **Hear2Change** team have developed and delivered numerous presentations at conferences, bootcamps, assemblies, summer camps etc. **In total 8403 young people benefitted.**

Topics include:

- Presentations outlining what VAWG is, what it looks like and what support is available to young women
- Healthy Relationships
- Sexual Consent
- Objectification of girls & young women
- Sexual Violence
- Emotional Well-being

The target was to deliver to 800 young people each year and this was exceeded each year.

Educational Awareness programmes

The target for this funding was to deliver five Educational Awareness programmes to 100 young people each year, by advocates, steering group members and champions to change attitudes and increase awareness. This was exceeded in three of the five years, with the other two impacted by covid-19 but still reaching many young people. Overall, 901 young people benefitted across 42 events.

The programmes covered nuanced and sensitive topics, many of which were designed in response to current issues in the media and society which were affecting young people directly:



“Providing a space for boys to learn, discuss, and share, to become more self-aware, explore their emotions, and feel secure in asking for help, could be the key to healthier intra- and inter-personal relationships for boys and young men. This would also be a place for boys to learn about issues of VAWG, positive masculinity, and inequality, without becoming defensive or feeling blamed.”

Young person’s advocate

- Leadership and Campaigning skills
- Influence media has on young people's identity and image
- Emotional well-being
- Sexual abuse and consent and toxic sexual culture in schools (as a response to the Everyone's Invited website)
- Rape and victim blaming culture

Some of these sessions have also been adapted for an all-male group and a group of young people with additional sensory and educational needs.

4

Better quality of evidence for what works in empowering women and girls

This outcome is evidenced by the previous three as each part of the **Hear2Change** programme is adding to the evidence base of what works to empower women and girls. The various components; 1:1 advocacy, groupwork, presentations, steering group, champions and changemakers all intersect to form a more holistic prevention and empowerment programme. Unfortunately, for much of this project, quantitative data was not available due to young people not giving consent for their data to be collected or shared, issues with the initial software used to collate data and then the impacts of covid-19 preventing the work from even taking place. Despite these setbacks, the team have been able to amass a huge body of work and have developed the **Hear2Change** materials significantly over the course of the five years. This, coupled with the new data collection and analysis software means that they are in an

excellent place to start collecting robust data to prove the impact of their work.

One advocate from **Solace** commented about data collection:

“ We need to try different mechanisms to get feedback, we implemented Qualtrics software when covid started, so pre and post data at the moment is hard. We are still adjusting to new methods and delivering to less people. We are working on it, refining it, even getting tablets so young people can fill it in while they are there. ”

However, the qualitative data presented in this report provides vital evidence that the work is having a positive impact and effecting change not only in the young people themselves but also in their schools and wider communities.

“Traditional evaluation forms, young people are not always honest, it can take time or they are not interested in filling them out. Tick boxes give an indication on how it's going but don't get to meat of it.”

Solace Advocate



Discussion

The section above has laid out what work has been done in the **Hear2Change** project. It is now important to reflect on the impact of this work and how it can be improved to ensure sustainability and a longer-term impact.

Students and staff were asked why they felt these kind of interventions are important. This was asked by the evaluators in focus groups/ interviews and also in some post-groupwork surveys carried out by **Solace**. The responses are encouraging and highlight how crucial this work is and how young people are clearly benefitting from the work.

Here is a selection of responses:

- The amount of abuse in relationships is really high, so we want to prevent it for those who had not had the input from **Solace**
- To make a difference and hopefully know what to do in any situation.
- They make you rethink decisions and make you want to research more about the situation more and have a passion and think about you could change society
- To educate people on how to keep safe but also put the responsibility on the abusers and not the person who was abused
- It is good to raise awareness to remind us that there is a support system that offers protection.
- Without these sessions, the present horrific statistics will repeat in the future and will affect our future
- To help to stop female discrimination and to educate women and young girls
- They are important to educate young people about these serious matters as our parents may not teach us about some of these things
- It's something great that young people can get involved in at the moment. We are the future generation – if we get involved in politics etc, we need to change laws and policies around domestic abuse. We need to educate about multiple forms of abuse for widespread change above just Haringey.

“They're essential in creating a generation of respectful people who accept one another's boundaries and are understanding of the differing struggles of the genders. Not everyone faces the same experiences, but I believe it's important for everyone to be willing to listen and appreciate what others' experience, sessions like these make those conversations more comfortable and normal, as they should be.”

Young Person



Benefits

Respondents were also asked what they felt the benefits were of this work for young people, schools and Solace as an organisation.

Young People

There were many key benefits that were mentioned by most of the schools. These included:

- Students feeling more empowered and confident
- Students were really engaged in the lessons (more so than in others)
- An increase in knowledge around healthy/unhealthy relationships
- A desire to want to campaign around the issues they had learnt about
- Knowing who to talk to if they needed help
- Calmer behaviour in school
- Feeling like they have a voice



“Working with young people is a process, you may see improvement in one area and regression in another. Working with the adolescent brain, there are no quick fixes. But hopefully the conversations resonated, and they will make more informed choices moving forward.”

Youth Club

One teacher commented:

“ They enjoy being able to ask questions in a safe space. They talk to their peers, but they don’t have the knowledge either. They can grow as a group in peer-to-peer work but Solace facilitate the space and help them understand the issues. ”

Another felt that it had improved the school community, as students had more understanding of each other, that they are equal despite differences. Students feel empowered and knowledgeable and confident to challenge what is not ok but also have grown in general confidence.

Some teachers were able to identify young women who have had direct experience of abuse and how they work had impacted them positively. For instance, having a better understanding about what is acceptable in a relationship and that it's ok to speak about concerning behaviour.

This quote emphasises the importance of a trauma informed approach and the impacts this can have on student wellbeing and school understanding of the issues and resultant manifestation of trauma in behaviour.

“School can be oblivious; they may have witnessed abuse in the morning and then explode at school. Now they more willing to talk and ask for help. It's not a quick fix but they are more open and much calmer and less frustrated. Feel like they have a voice, there are things that can help.”

“It's the most amazing project and body of work, it has most impact of all the work done in school. Students engage really well.”

Deputy Head

Schools

Some staff found it harder to identify the benefits to schools. Also, some staff had 'inherited' this work and did not have relevant data to hand.

There seemed to be a slight defensiveness suggesting that the staff had not needed additional training and this work was solely for the benefit of the students.

However, when this was discussed further some helpful issues were mentioned:

- Helping staff to better understand and support students who have experienced trauma and abuse
- An increased understanding in domestic abuse (although not all schools have had staff training on this, some seemed to be confused about how this was different from normal safeguarding training)
- An enhancement to the curriculum
- Improved grades and a contribution to school life with the additional school wide campaigns
- Enriches social moral and personal development which school is graded on via ofsted



“It’s been good for staff members – they should just know these things, but it has been helpful in the way they deal with students who have experienced trauma. It has increased their understanding such as the differences in student’s behaviour. There are still issues around equality with staff, but this has helped. It’s good for them to see the assemblies and see what work is happening and reinforce the messages in breaktimes etc.”

Safeguarding Lead

Another teacher stated:

“Overtime I hope this might change the environment of school, help us to be more confident to say it is not acceptable, not be a bystander, but to disclose. It changes the vibe of the place.”

“Overtime I hope this might change the environment of school, help us to be more confident to say it is not acceptable, not be a bystander, but to disclose. It changes the vibe of the place.”

Staff were not able to comment on whether the work had had an increase in disclosures from students or in the recognition of potential students who may be at risk. The staff

interviewed were mostly more in wellbeing roles or pshe leads, and it felt that the responsibility of this work sat with them, whereas the wider school staff were not involved, some not even knowing that this work was taking place. However, since lockdowns it seems that most schools are more aware of the student’s mental health and wellbeing, and it is hoped that this will filter across into work around healthy relationships.

Solace advocates felt that these topics are not covered otherwise in school. The funding really helped as many schools don’t have funding to access it. The 1:1 advocacy work means that counsellors don’t need to see so many young people as they get targeted support.

“This also feels like the perfect time to be doing this work with RSE becoming mandatory and with issues such as the everyone’s invited movement. Some schools would be doing this work anyway regardless of this and are really investing time and resources to be a more equal school with more mindful delivery. Some is more tokenistic but no way around that. When big social change happens there will be a lot of tokenistic stuff there. Some schools do take advantage of our resources, some already have their own, some don’t have resources to do it. We become embedded and integrated into schools, but lockdown inhibits that human relationship.”

Solace Advocate

“I don’t know what to do if they are not here. They support staff who able to talk to them and clarify things. We have a better understanding of DA and healthy relationships and what it means for students and families. Therefore we are more able to engage with more ‘difficult’ people”

Head of Wellbeing

Solace

Solace have been developing service standards, one advocate mentored the team to be more person centred and trauma informed. This led to them re-writing the standards to meet these aims and they created a booklet of what to include in each session with more reflective pre and post questions for young people such as ‘how would you like to see yourself coming out of these sessions?’ The service manager really wants to steer the team in a more trauma informed direction and sends them a lot of useful material.

The **Hear2Change** staff team were clear that previously there had been a gap in **Solace’s** reach

to CYP, they mainly worked with women and children in refuges who were in crisis. Education and early intervention were ‘on the back burner’. They commented that this service is so beneficial to **Solace**, involving young people in **Solace’s** narrative which in turn has helped with awareness raising. They feel that as they are in so many schools, they are well known, and **Solace** is seen as ‘not just that charity that has those refuges’ but who also has useful programmes for schools and 1:1 that social care and police can refer to. It feels like the work has created more of a vision for **Solace**.

For an organisation that deals with the huge issue that **Solace** deals with, putting in place systems so that they are obsolete one day is crucial. Not many people know that **Solace** has a CYP service. We are spear heading prevention efforts/early intervention within **Solace** and giving space for young people to become campaigners.

Challenges

There are several barriers and challenges that can stand in the way of schools taking on this work and embedding it within the school. These can include curriculum pressures, teacher confidence, normalisation of VAWG, lack of procedures for responding to VAWG and potential concerns from parents and the community. These can be valid concerns and this project in particular has been further hindered by the pandemic. When asked about challenges, respondents were able to identify some (aside from those posed by covid-19) and a common theme included accessing schools to set up the work. As one advocate started:

“ Why would they answer a random email. We had to keep on emailing or go in. It’s better now the product is a sold product, but we found it is easier to go via councils and then distribute to schools. It’s really hard for advocates to blind email and not get replies. ”

This takes a lot of time and can feel demoralising for staff and unfortunately has only got harder since schools went back after lockdown. With the prospect of having to charge for the work, staff are more worried that this will become even more difficult.

“ It’s hard to watch schools crumble because they can’t afford to keep it on. ”

A deputy head concurred saying

“ Now it’s paid for, the head can’t afford it, but we also can’t afford to not do it. We need Solace to do this work as the school staff are not equipped. ”

Another concern was the difficulties with engaging with young people. This can be hard for a myriad of factors and was comprised even further by having to deliver some of the work online. Some students found this much harder to engage with and in some cases the schools blocked the work as they did not feel it would be safe for all children to access from home. One teacher commented:

“ We were not able to deliver online as we were not sure what environments they were in and if it was safe. The senior lead for child protection said not too. We did try some work online but girls were reluctant to be on camera. Some were blanking their cameras as they were being bullied about what their homes looked like. ”

Interestingly not many challenges were mentioned by the schools. Obviously, the lockdown was mentioned as it disrupted and cut short interventions in the school.

A common theme was the behaviour in the lessons from some students who may have felt

awkward or uncomfortable and therefore 'acted out' or said 'silly things'. However, it was felt that this was dealt with well by the facilitators. Some mentioned that it was hard to fit the work into the curriculum but acknowledged this was an issue for many topics, not just this one. One school added an extra hour into the curriculum so students to attend, however this resulted in several dropping out as they did not want to stay longer at school.

Overall, the staff felt that the work had good buy in and support from the senior leadership teams within the schools and they all intend to continue working with **Solace** next year, if possible.

Solace had hoped to specifically target a more diverse range of communities and especially noted the travelling community and Somalian communities. However, they noted that 'it has been harder than expected to utilise these existing organisational links. This has partly been because we do not have institutional knowledge of specifically working with young people from these communities. As a result, we will be strengthening our cross-service working within the organisation to ensure we are adapting our work to the needs of these groups, to ensure these young people can learn, benefit and contribute to this project. We will be making a particular effort to target these marginalised communities (such as Somalian young women and those from the travelling community) when we start the next round of steering group recruitment'.

An external stakeholder commented that generally there is a



"Lack of multi-culturalism when talking about feminism with a focus on white middle class women. Delivery needs to be more sophisticated and does not go far enough"

This was a general comment about VAWG prevention work, not just a reflection of the **Solace** project, but it is crucial for **Solace** to consider intersectionality and to ensure that their materials reflect this appropriately.

Whilst a lot of focus has been on the impacts of lockdown on schools and students, it is also important to consider the impacts on staff. One advocate commented that she struggled, didn't feel like she was doing her job properly and lost confidence. Staff doing frontline work in this way should have access to clinical supervision (this has been provided by **Solace** to advocates) and management need to be aware of the impacts of the work on staff.

The Benefits of External, Specialist Support

When asked 'Can you talk to teachers?' in the focus groups, the common response was a resounding No!

Reasons given included:

“ I know that what is said in the room won't stay in the room. ”

“ Why would I tell a teacher when I can just call a number anonymously? ”

“ Teachers will call someone, but they don’t know how to handle it either, so you’d have to call someone anyway. ”

“ Teachers look at it in a different way. It’s hard as you know the teacher, it’s less awkward if it’s someone you don’t know. ”

Some went on to say that teachers need more training about how to deal with disclosures, with one young woman saying a teacher had once said to her

“ Oh I can’t talk to you about that as I am a teacher, and you are a student. ”

Concerningly a teacher commented:

“ We should know how to handle it if a student does come to talk to us but we mostly avoid it so those conversations wouldn’t happen. ”

These comments highlight the importance of having external specialists coming in to do the work, but also the need for teachers to be adequately trained to recognise warning signs and confidently respond to disclosures.

Everyone interviewed from schools spoke very highly of the **Solace** staff who were facilitating the sessions. Their passion, knowledge and way of communicating is a huge part of the success of the work, the engagement of the young people and the willingness of the schools to continue with the work.

A common theme was how it felt like the staff were part of the school community.

“ They are a part of the school, they engage with young people who are not part of the sessions, they are happy to talk to anyone. Kids know them and want to be a part of the work. ”

The youth club had specifically wanted the staff to be part of the team in order to build trusting relationships with the young people. They developed a programme around health and beauty that the young women had requested and built discussions around healthy relationships into those sessions. When challenging behaviour or comments arose the

“ Solace worker was not afraid to challenge them. They valued her so did not want her to disapprove of them, she made them re-evaluate their actions. Where she identified issues, she had 1:1 sessions as well. ”

*“We were lucky with the **Solace** staff, they relate to them brilliantly, really seamless, and build good relationships. The young people ask questions they wouldn’t usually. So, they don’t just rely on what their peers say, they get the correct answers, and all get a chance to speak.”*

A Whole School Approach

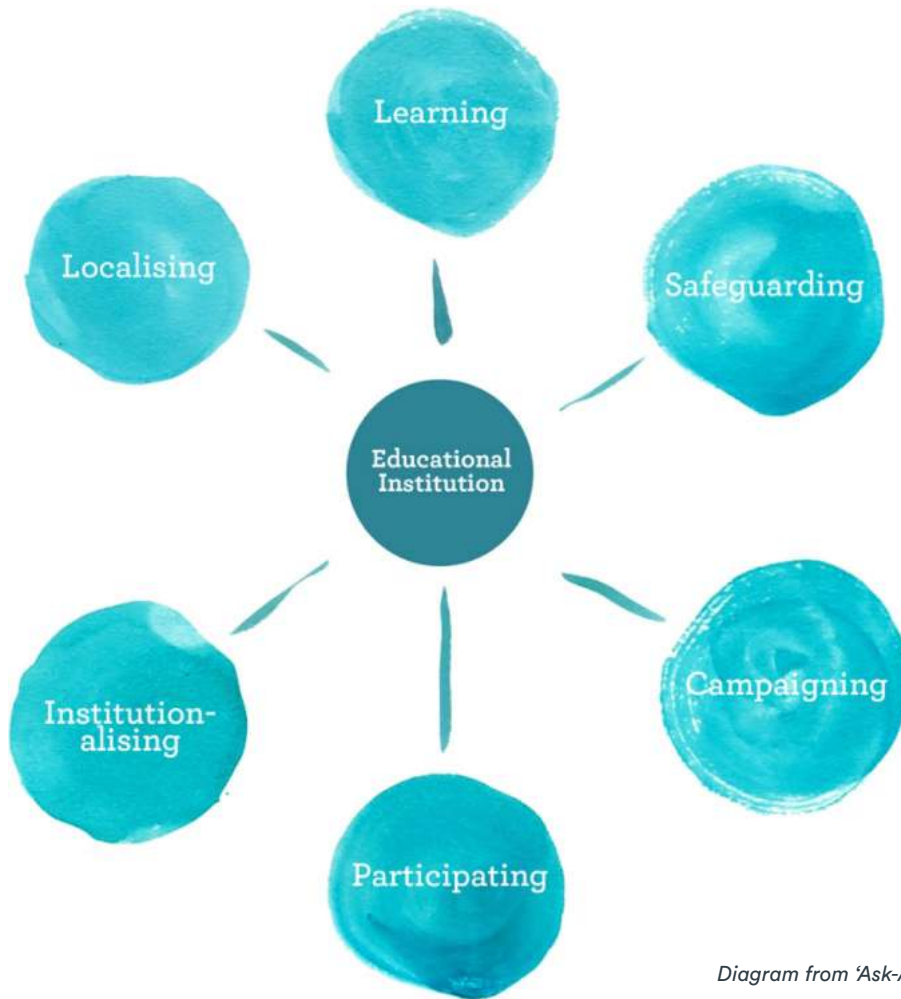


Diagram from 'Ask-AVA'²

Throughout this report, the evidence shows the importance of this work being embedded within the school, not just in the 1:1 and groupwork but in school policies, staff behaviour, training and safeguarding. AVA have developed a whole school approach model which can be found in their online toolkit with explanations of each of the six core elements shown in the diagram above.

Solace have developed a Whole School Approach model which runs in other boroughs and delivers similar content to **Hear2Change**. This WSA

has supported **Hear2Change** with getting into additional schools (for example, Holloway School in Islington) and the WSA group work model supports teachers to select students to take part in the group work during core school hours, meaning they have been able to take the same group of young people on a consistent learning journey where the knowledge gained and shifts in attitude have had more time to become ingrained.

Developing this model further and offering it as part of the costed model with support around policies, safeguarding and training will be a useful



addition to the Hear2Change work. Another element of this is around engaging with parents. **Solace** staff have noted that this was an area that was more difficult to do, and this has been mirrored in other prevention work programmes nationally. Particularly at secondary level where

parents have less engagement with the school. After lockdown, the advocates were hearing more about domestic abuse at home and cases of child to parent abuse and are considering how best to work with parents to support them.

Suggestions could include:

- Coffee mornings and drop in sessions
- Posters and information in the schools and on their websites
- Inviting parents to assemblies and workshops on VAWG
- Run workshops to help parents talk to their children about these issues
- Help parents' safety plan if they are in an abusive relationship, provide details of support service within the school so they can be easily seen

More information and tips for engaging parents can be [found on the Ask Ava platform](#).

“Schools have an obligation under the education act – in terms of a broad and balanced curriculum, and the moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils. It must include gender equality, to create citizens of the future who understand and practice equality at work and in society. This work needs to be embedded across the education estate from early years up, every lesson, every subject, formal and informal education. The challenge is that it is piecemeal and patchy and often slotted in as an afterthought. We need gender equality risk assessments and action plans in schools.”

Anti-bullying Coordinator



Recommendations

The findings in this report have clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of the Hear2Change model and the importance of the work for young people and schools.

The following recommendations are suggestions for improvements or additions to enhance the work further in future iterations of the work.

The main recommendation is that this work needs to be funded, young people need and deserve access to high quality, specialist support and this model provides the education, advocacy and empowerment work that is so lacking universally.

Direct work with Schools

- More of a focus on providing staff training alongside the work with students to help staff improve their knowledge of VAWG but also their confidence to respond to students
- Auditing of school policies and data to ensure a whole school approach and to gain a better understanding of the impact of the work (in terms of increased disclosures, attendance, behaviour etc). This should include guidance on gender equality risk assessments and action plans
- Consideration of how to help embed a whole school approach so the work does not just sit with pshe or wellbeing leads within the school to ensure sustainability
- Think about how to make online sessions safe and more interactive. See AVA's digital safeguarding pack.
- Ensure all aspects of intersectionality are considered when developing materials and the profile of women's voices are raised more comprehensively across the curriculum
- Strengthening links with other organisations in the boroughs doing similar work. Some schools are working with other organisations whose work intersects (ie: mental health, sexual health services)

Steering Group

- For steering group members – be clear about the work involved and consider time and location, including transport for young women to be able to take part safely
- Consider developing an online platform for young people to access support and resources. The advocates are keen to develop this to add to the ways they can work with young people. The steering group would be well placed to lead on this.



Data Collection

- To ensure that new data software is utilised, and data is able to be shared easily with future evaluators
- Try to capture pre/post feedback in the lesson by providing tablets to enter responses on
- Reflection logs and/or pre and post questionnaires to include questions and space to reflect on the degree to which young people have felt 1. empowered and 2. felt involved in the direction and shape of the programme
- Run a participatory focus group with steering group to discuss participation and consent and gain ideas for how to encourage participation and the sharing of data for evaluative purposes

Solace

- Staff with specialist expertise, such as children and young people, should be consulted when considering wider organisational business plans and strategic directions
- Children and young people work should continue to be seen as core business and promoted as a key service offered by **Solace**

References

¹ Walters, T. et al (2021) Secondary school students' perception of the online teaching experience during COVID-19: The impact on mental wellbeing and specific learning difficulties. British Journal of Educational Psychology.

² <https://ask-ava.org.uk/index.php/toolkit/prevent/>





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