

# Re-Ach Project Evaluation Support

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## REPORT SUMMARY

1. This report presents the findings from external evaluation support that York Consulting Limited Liability Partnership (YCL) provided to the Re-Ach Project on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).
2. Re-Ach was a two year pilot programme that aimed, through challenging workshops and performance coaching, to **“raise aspiration, engagement and achievement among young people who are least likely to succeed and achieve and most likely to indulge in behaviour which is not productive for them”**<sup>1</sup>. It was delivered by Hanover Foundations and Youth at Risk (YaR), who have complementary approaches to raising the aspirations of and outcomes for young people and have over ten years experience of delivering this type of work. This was the first joint project the organisations had run.

### Key Findings

3. The Re-Ach pilot did not, on the whole, involve young people identified as the hardest to reach and as a result, the pilot did not achieve the spread of participants originally intended<sup>2</sup>. This was largely a function of the response from many of the delivery agencies<sup>3</sup> engaged in the programme who questioned whether the programme was suited for this disengaged group and tended to target and refer those on the borderline of achieving Level 2.
4. The pilot was not, therefore, able to test the programme’s value for the more disengaged and disaffected target groups. More specifically, it was unable to make a significant contribution to two of the three strategic outcomes that were identified in its business case - namely, reducing the number of 16-19 year olds not in education employment or training (NEET); and reducing the number of teenage pregnancies.
5. Most Re-Ach participants were characterised as operating below their potential but not those with the most challenging behaviours. The young people selected were often capable of achieving Level 2 but at risk of achieving lower grades because of relatively mild behaviour, attendance or attitudinal factors.
6. The evaluation demonstrated that Re-Ach was positive and engaging for most of the young people that completed the programme. For some, the evidence showed that the programme helped to prevent a decline in levels of engagement or achievement and / or improve attitudes towards learning. Underpinning this change was an improvement in cognitive skills and understanding of responsibility and choice. Amongst those for whom we have data, a very small number of participants also indicated better attainment and attendance than had previously been predicted.
7. Given the general characteristics of most participants, the positive influence of the Re-Ach programme may have contributed towards the third strategic outcome identified in the pilot’s business case - that is, improved Level 2 attainment for some of those involved. However, more definitive measurement of the impact of the pilot on hard outcomes (such as attendance, attainment and destinations), has been constrained by data quantity and quality issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Business case to DCSF for Re-Ach pilot.

<sup>2</sup> 3 target groups were identified - young people not on target to achieve Level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs A\*-C); those most likely to fall into the NEET group; and those at risk of teenage pregnancy.

<sup>3</sup> Schools, colleges and others.

8. Up to 700 young people completed the programme over the two years, compared to a target of 1,000. Unit costs for the pilot were therefore higher than expected. Costs were also assessed as relatively high for a programme of this nature given that a minority of participants were, in the event, in the more disaffected target group.
9. Learning from the pilot suggested the potential for improved engagement, communication and management strategies that may have resulted in more effective targeting of agencies, and those young people demonstrating more disengaged characteristics. There are also a number of lessons from the pilot which would help to improve its overall impact and cost-effectiveness including greater ownership at local level; coherence with wider pupil engagement strategies; more flexible and responsive delivery; and improved access to high quality outcomes data to provide realistic measures of success.

## **Section 1: Introduction**

10. The Re-Ach programme was a two year pilot funded by the DCSF and delivered by Hanover Foundations and Youth at Risk (YaR). Through providing intensive support focused on raising aspiration, the pilot was intended to support the wider 14-19 agenda, as set out in the Government's 14-19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan (2005). Three strategic outcomes for Re-Ach to contribute towards were identified, each of which link to Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets, as follows:
  - increase the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve at Level 2;
  - decrease the number of 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET); and
  - reduce the under-18 conception rate.
11. The programme was piloted in three areas identified as having particular needs - Barking and Dagenham, Hillingdon and Leicester. It was designed to raise aspirations among young people at risk of not achieving or engaging in behaviour that was not productive for them. It brought together the existing expertise of the two organisations to deliver workshops and coaching support designed to ensure that participants:
  - take greater responsibility for their own results from education and training and have a clear plan for their life-long learning;
  - are more receptive to the curriculum and support available to them through their educational provider, thereby enhancing their educational potential; and
  - have increased self-awareness and self-belief.
12. The project was also designed to create and maintain improved relationships between adults who support these young people.

## **Section 2: Delivery Effectiveness**

13. Re-Ach enrolled approximately 800 young people over two years (302 Year 1 and 461 Year 2). A breakdown of completers/non completers was not available for year one, but in year two, 364 young people completed the full programme (79%). This achievement of up to 700 young people completing the programme over two years was below the target set in the business case for the pilot of 1,000.
14. Drop-out rates were fairly low once young people had made the choice to commit to the programme. Exceptions to this were amongst 'other' agencies<sup>4</sup> where large drop outs were experienced from the young people's workshop. Agencies perceived that this was due to participants not responding well to the challenging content and workshop rules.

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<sup>4</sup> Other than mainstream schools/colleges (e.g. work-based providers, youth offending services).



15. In general, schools recruited young people who should have been achieving Grades A\*-C but their behaviour, attitude or attendance was putting this at risk. Colleges and other agencies had more mixed cohorts depending on the approach to selection and the young people they work with.
16. Disaffected and disengaged young people were a minority of the Re-Ach cohort. This was a result of not being able to engage many 'other' agencies and mainstream agencies choosing not to select their most disengaged for reasons of "protectiveness" or wariness about how they may respond to an outside programme. Some stakeholders therefore questioned whether the programme was really suited for this more disengaged group.
17. The majority of qualitative and quantitative data show high levels of satisfaction with the programme. Most participants and agencies found it useful. Delivery to young people and professionals was of high quality and agencies welcomed the support offered by the programme.
18. Attendance at coaching was generally good, especially where the agency (or coach) had embedded processes to remind and chase participants for appointments. The greatest variability in attendance was in colleges and other agencies where young people were not necessarily attending on their coaching day and culturally had more choice over attendance.
19. There were some differing views amongst participants and professionals regarding specific elements of the programme. Nevertheless, the majority were positive about the value of the programme as a whole, with the workshops and coaching sessions resulting in specific achievements, for example:
  - the workshops contributed towards positive experiences, learning about yourself, confidence and empathy with others; and
  - the coaching sessions helped to increase responsibility and motivation amongst young people.

### **Section 3: Outcomes and Value**

20. The evidence suggests that the programme had a positive influence and engaged most of those participating. It commonly supported those considered to be on the borderline of achieving 5A\*-Cs and translated to skills development<sup>5</sup> and improvements in attitudes for some of those involved (between one quarter and one third). In this way, the Re-Ach programme may have contributed towards one of its three strategic outcomes - that is, improved Level 2 attainment for some of those involved.
21. The areas where the programme had the most positive influence were helping to prevent deterioration in engagement and achievement and improve attitudes towards learning. Underpinning this change was an improvement in cognitive skills and understanding of responsibility and choice.

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<sup>5</sup> Skills are referred to here and throughout the report to describe 'life' skills as opposed to vocational skills.

22. There is some anecdotal evidence of impact on attendance, achievement and destinations. However, despite efforts to improve data access throughout the evaluation, assessing the impact on young people using quantitative data was constrained due to ongoing data issues associated with quantity, quality, timing and attributability.
23. Participants were not generally identified as the hardest to reach and illustrated minimal evidence of disaffection and disengagement. Consequently, the pilot was unable to make a significant contribution to two of the three strategic outcomes that were identified in its business case - namely, reducing the number of 16-19 year olds not in education employment or training (NEET); and reducing the number of teenage pregnancies.
24. Given the underperformance against target numbers, unit costs for the pilot were higher than expected. Costs were also assessed as relatively high for a programme of this nature given that a minority of participants were, in the event, in the more disaffected target group. The evaluation has identified areas where there is the potential to improve cost-effectiveness for any future delivery of programmes that incorporate the principles and elements of the Re-Ach programme.

#### **Section 4: Factors Influencing Effectiveness**

25. Learning from the pilot suggested the potential for improved engagement, communication and management strategies at national level. This may have resulted in more effective targeting of agencies and of those young people demonstrating more disengaged characteristics.
26. Learning points included understanding the challenges associated with engaging Local Authorities; improved communication; the need for flexibility of content and timing within agencies; and responding to different agency and cohort cultures and contexts. Some elements of project management affected the engagement and attitude of agencies to Re-Ach, but did not significantly impact on the quality of delivery to young people.
27. Local Authorities adopted different approaches to the local co-ordination of Re-Ach and levels of commitment varied significantly. Only one Local Authority (LA) appeared to provide consistent levels of co-ordination and administrative / management information (MI) support for Re-Ach. This impacted on the extent to which agencies felt engaged with Re-Ach as a pilot programme.

## Success Factors and Lessons Learnt

### **Project management:**

- LAs and agencies were better able to lead the programme where there was clear messages about Re-Ach policy, practice and expectations;
- the effectiveness of project management had a bearing on morale and commitment within LAs and agencies;

### **Features of delivery:**

- the combination of workshop and coaching was considered key by the majority of agencies and/or participants, with the workshop acting as a catalyst and preparation for the coaching (especially schools);
- delivery of workshops off site was considered essential in removing young people from an environment in which they are used to behaving in a certain way;
- the professionalism of Re-Ach delivery staff was critical in engaging and effecting change in young people;
- the voluntary and confidential nature of the programme for young people supported the engagement process;

### **Agency planning and organisation:**

- timing, duration and timetabling of the programme around exams and important events allowed Re-Ach to fit to context and 'hook' in young people;
- agency processes to help secure attendance (text, slips, physically bringing participants) increased attendance at coaching sessions;

### **Staff engagement at agency level:**

- senior commitment and pastoral staff involvement within agencies supported effective young people selection and the release of staff time; and
- ensuring continual involvement of staff from the professional workshops to support Re-Ach participants maintained momentum of the programme;

**Measuring success** - access to consistent and high quality outcomes data could be improved through:

- clear and consistent frameworks developed before delivery begins to set out the management information (baseline and end programme outputs / outcomes data) required, including relevant typologies (e.g. attainment levels, attendance bands);
- such frameworks and the responsibilities/timescales for collation should be communicated, clarified and agreed directly with the agencies that maintain the data / information required.

28. Good practice in local co-ordination by LAs included locating Re-Ach within an appropriate team / strategy; organising feedback meetings with agencies; developing consistent data / communication / marketing processes; and providing funding for venues / transport etc.

29. LAs found it difficult to engage agencies who work specifically with disengaged young people and those at risk of becoming NEET. Reasons provided include variable levels of awareness about what the programme was about; concerns over the perceived rigid structure of the programme; the level of challenge in the workshop; and the pilot nature of the programme. Mainstream agencies also commonly identified referral processes focused specifically on involving those with the potential to achieve Level 2.
30. More upfront planning and customisation with agencies may have helped to engage the older and / or more disaffected clients, and heightened agency pre-involvement may have enabled better selection of participants.

## **Section 5: Conclusions**

31. The Re-Ach programme was a valuable experience for many of those involved and for some there were observable changes in attitude and skill development. However, the value of the programme for a more disengaged target group was not tested through the pilot as originally intended.
32. The requirement for participants to demonstrate some commitment and ownership through the workshop process perhaps negated against the harder to reach group of young people being targeted and referred by some agencies from the outset. Whilst involvement in similar workshops and coaching programmes may be a potentially valuable tool for this group, it is likely that they would need to be used alongside more effective and flexible approaches to engaging agencies, staff and the young people themselves.
33. The pilot programme, which sought to test the combination of the workshop and coaching methodologies, has had some success with young people in danger of not achieving Level 2. As such, individual LA areas or agencies that are facing particular issues with low Level 2 attainment may find it valuable to consider the introduction of Re-Ach type activities alongside other tools and programmes designed to address these issues.
34. Any future implementation, however, should take account of the learning from the pilot, which identified a number of areas to improve delivery and cost-effectiveness, for example:
  - improved communication and project management at central and local level;
  - greater coherence with local pupil engagement strategies;
  - greater preparation with agencies to support ownership and clear expectations;
  - more flexible and responsive delivery, including potential development work to build capacity at local level; and
  - improvements in access to consistent and high quality outcomes data and information.

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 In May 2007, York Consulting LLP (YCL) was appointed by the former Department for Education and Skills (DfES), now the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to provide 'Evaluation Support to the Re-Ach Project'. This final report presents findings from fieldwork and analysis at both qualitative and quantitative levels undertaken over a 15 month period.

## The Re-Ach Project

1.2 Re-Ach was a two year pilot programme funded by the DCSF and delivered by Hanover Foundations and Youth at Risk (YaR). The aim of the project was **“to raise aspiration, engagement and achievement among young people who are least likely to succeed and achieve; and most likely to indulge in behaviour which is not productive for them”**. The business case for the project identified three target groups for the pilot as follows:

- young people not on target to achieve Level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSEs A\*-C);
- those most likely to fall into the NEET (not in education, employment or training) group; and
- those at risk of teenage pregnancy.

1.3 The pilot brought together the existing expertise of two organisations to deliver workshops and coaching support designed to ensure that participants:

- take greater responsibility for their own results from education and training and have a clear plan for their life-long learning;
- are more receptive to the curriculum and support available to them through their education provider, thereby enhancing their educational potential; and
- have increased self-awareness and self-belief.

1.4 The project was also designed to create and maintain improved relationships between adults who support these young people.

1.5 Through providing intensive support focused on raising aspiration, the pilot was intended to support the wider 14-19 agenda, as set out in the Government's 14-19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan (2005). Three strategic outcomes for Re-Ach were identified that link to Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets, as follows:

- increase the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve at Level 2;
- decrease the number of 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET);
- reduce the under-18 conception rate.

## Model of Delivery

- 1.6 The Re-Ach pilot project was based on two well established models previously developed and delivered by Hanover and YaR. YaR is a charity that works with young people and the professionals who work with them, providing the opportunity for transformation and development through breakthrough methodology workshops. Hanover Foundations, also a registered charity, has been offering a personal development coaching service to schools since 1997. Both organisations believe that:

*“all young people, whatever their background or intellectual ability, possess immense potential, with young people on their programmes seeing for themselves that they do not have to have a predictable life of unfulfilled potential. They see that they do have choices and that they can choose an educational path that will work for them and their future”<sup>6</sup>.*

- 1.7 The aim of Re-Ach was to create a powerful synergy from the combination of the two methods into one seamless programme. It was intended that by raising young people’s self awareness of the influence of their own limiting beliefs, the young person may open themselves up to new possibilities which are reinforced and supported through professional performance coaching. The Re-Ach Model comprises five main elements:
- a three-day professionals workshop (the term professionals could include senior management, teaching, pastoral, support and/or administration staff);
  - one-day enrolment for young people;
  - three-day workshop for young people;
  - one-day coaching workshop for young people; and
  - six performance coaching sessions.
- 1.8 These components are described further in **Figure 1.1**. There were also normally two revision days (part way through and at the end) run jointly by YaR and Hanover to review progress and maintain momentum.

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<sup>6</sup> Re-Ach project background note.

**Figure 1.1: Components of Re-Ach Delivery**

<p><b>Professionals Workshop - for agency staff that support young people on a day to day basis:</b> The purpose of the Re-Ach professional workshop is to provide staff/professionals with the opportunity for self-reflection and personal development through enabling participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the process their young people will engage with and enable them to support them in implementing what they have learnt;</li> <li>• undergo a professional development opportunity - which professionals may use to improve their day to day working (and personal) lives; and</li> <li>• create new ways forward in areas of their work where they may have previously felt challenged.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enrolment Day - for young people, also attended by agency staff:</b> All young people selected by their agencies are invited to attend an enrolment day where specialists from YaR provide them with more details about the programme. Young people are asked to identify a number of goals they would like to achieve. At this point young people are asked to make a final choice as to whether to participate.</p>
<p><b>Young People Workshop - for young people, also attended by agency staff and coaches:</b> Having made the decision to commit to the project, young people attend a three-day workshop. At the workshop the Re-Ach team run through various activities with the young people. Participants start to develop the goals identified at the enrolment day.</p>
<p><b>Coaching Workshop - for young people, also attended by agency staff and coaches:</b> After the three-day workshop has been completed, the young people attend a one day coaching workshop. This is where the young people meet their coaches again (coaches attend the three-day workshop) and prepare for the next stage of the programme - the professional performance coaching sessions.</p>
<p><b>Coaching Sessions - for young people, delivered by coaches:</b> The standard model is for participants to receive six professional performance coaching sessions (normally once a month) from an external professional coach to identify goals and support the young person to identify how to meet these goals. Some coaching sessions in year one were delivered on a paired basis and in some agencies the sessions were more frequent.</p>

### **Delivery Partners**

- 1.9 Re-Ach was delivered jointly by Youth at Risk (YaR) and Hanover Foundations. YaR led on the delivery of the enrolment and the three-day workshops and Hanover delivered the coaching workshop and professional performance coaching sessions. Re-Ach was managed through a strategic management board comprising senior members of YaR and Hanover Foundations.

1.10 Three Local Authorities (LAs) were engaged to deliver the pilot - Barking & Dagenham, Hillingdon, and Leicester. In total, 21 agencies participated in the programme across the two years in these LA areas, including:

- **schools;**
- formal educational provision for 16-19 year-olds such as **FE Colleges;** and
- **other routes** such as youth offending services, entry to employment or agencies working with children in public care.

1.11 The majority of agencies were schools (52% by Year 2). In Year 1 LAs tended to recruit those agencies that could 'run' with the programme quickly. In Year 2 a more structured approach to engaging agencies was evident, including the use of presentations by agencies already involved.

1.12 **Table 1.1** outlines the breakdown of participating agency by type in Year 1 and Year 2. In Year 1 an equal number of schools and colleges were involved. In Year 2 the number of schools participating more than doubled, whereas the number of colleges increased by a lower rate.

<b>Table 1.1: Breakdown of Participating Agency Type</b>					
		<b>Barking &amp; Dagenham</b>	<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>Leicester</b>	<b>Total</b>
Year 1	School	2	1	2	5
	College	0	1	4	5
	Other	2 <sup>7</sup>	0	0	2
Year 2	School	3	4	5	12
	College	0	1	5	6
	Other	2	0	1	3

**Source: Hanover and YaR**

### **Evaluation Aims and Approach**

1.13 The evaluation aimed to “assess whether Re-Ach worked in raising young people’s engagement and attainment in education; and if so, what it was about this particular project that added value”. Specifically, to assess:

- whether the project contributed to raising young people’s aspirations, engagement and achievement;
- the degree to which young people met their personal targets, how their attitude to learning changed and the impact this had on their levels of engagement and attainment; and
- how the project had been implemented and delivered in each area.

<sup>7</sup> This includes a Youth Offending Team that was initially recruited but did not proceed



1.14 Our approach comprised both qualitative and quantitative elements including:

- baseline and completer attitude surveys with pupil participants;
- consultations with strategic and delivery stakeholders (Hanover, YaR, Local Authorities, coaches, trainers);
- ten agency case studies (involving two visits to each and including consultations with project coordinators, strategic representatives, staff engaged in professional workshops and staff supporting participants in a learning environment);
- 35 pupil consultations, undertaken as part of the agency case study visits; and
- analysis of project management information (MI) collated via the delivery agencies (including participant characteristics, and baseline and end of programme achievements, attendance and destinations).

1.15 The value of analysing the project MI has been constrained by the quality and quantity of data available; and the ability to attribute any achievements to the Re-Ach programme itself. The identification of a suitable comparator group was not feasible given the range of factors influencing attitudes and achievements for the young people participating in the programme. Specific detail regarding data access and quality is provided in **Section 3**.

1.16 Nevertheless, it is also important to recognise that the nature of the target group engaged (who were not on the whole the hardest to reach) and the potential for the project to have a significant and quantifiable impact is limited within the context of other developments / activities and initiatives. Quantitative data alone does not provide therefore a good indication of the value of the programme.

### **Report Structure**

1.17 The remaining sections of the report are structured as follows:

- **Section Two:** Delivery Effectiveness;
- **Section Three:** Outcomes and Value;
- **Section Four:** Factors influencing Effectiveness; and
- **Section Five:** Conclusions.

## 2 DELIVERY EFFECTIVENESS

### Key Messages

1. Re-Ach has enrolled approximately 800 young people (302 Year 1 and 461 Year 2), with an estimate of just under 700 completing the programme over two years. This was below the target set in the business case for the pilot of 1,000.
2. Drop-out rates were fairly low once young people had made the choice to commit to the programme. Exceptions to this were amongst 'other' agencies<sup>8</sup> where large drop outs were experienced from the young people's workshop. Agencies perceived that this was due to participants not responding well to the challenging content and workshop rules.
3. In general, schools recruited young people who should have been achieving grades A\*-C but their behaviour, attitude or attendance was putting this at risk. Colleges and other agencies had more mixed cohorts depending on the approach to selection and the young people they work with.
4. Disaffected and disengaged young people were a minority of the Re-Ach cohort. This was a result of not being able to engage many 'other' agencies and mainstream agencies choosing not to select their most disengaged for reasons of "protectiveness" or wariness about how they may respond to an outside programme. Some stakeholders therefore questioned whether the programme was really suited for this more disengaged group.
5. The majority of qualitative and quantitative data show high levels of satisfaction with the programme. Most participants and agencies found it useful. Delivery to young people and professionals was of high quality and agencies welcomed the support offered by the programme.
6. Attendance at coaching was generally good, especially where processes for reminding participants had been embedded. The greatest variability in attendance was in colleges and other agencies where young people were not necessarily attending on their coaching day and culturally had more choice over attendance.
7. There were some differing views amongst participants and professionals regarding specific elements of the programme. Nevertheless, the majority were positive about the value of the programme as a whole, with the workshops and coaching sessions resulting in specific achievements, for example:
  - the workshops contributed towards positive experiences, learning about yourself, confidence and empathy with others; and
  - the coaching sessions helped to increase responsibility and motivation amongst young people.

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<sup>8</sup> Other than mainstream schools/colleges (e.g. work-based providers, youth offending services).

## Young People Engaged

- 2.1 Over the two years, Re-Ach enrolled almost 800 young people (302 Year 1 and 461 Year 2). These are lower numbers than those originally expected of 400 participants in Year 1 and 600 in Year 2.
- 2.2 Cohort sizes in some agencies were less than expected largely due to time and staff resource constraints. These included, for example, a very short timescale available for initial set-up of the pilot and difficulties faced by some agencies in providing the adult staff resource required for attendance at workshops and wider support for the programme.
- 2.3 A breakdown of completers/non completers was not available for Year 1, but in Year 2, 364 (79%) completed the full programme. Drop-out rates were therefore relatively high (97<sup>9</sup> people dropped out of Re-Ach completely<sup>10</sup>) though qualitative findings suggested that once young people had made the choice to commit to the programme they were fairly low.
- 2.4 The drop-out rate of around 21% could be considered a more reasonable figure if the programme had successfully engaged hard to reach young people. This has not generally been the case (as outlined later in this section). In addition, where drop-outs did occur they tended to be from 'other' agencies (the most likely point of engagement for the more disaffected and disengaged youngsters). Agencies perceived this was due to participants not responding well to the challenging content and workshop rules. If the pilot had been more successful in engaging this group of young people, therefore, drop-out rates may have been even higher.

## Participant Characteristics

- 2.5 We used the baseline data and survey responses to establish common features of the young people participating in the Re-Ach programme. It should be noted at this point that a range of data quality issues (discussed further in **Section 3** and outlined in **Figure 3.1**) meant that characteristic information was not available for all 763 pupils engaged in the programme. This particularly affected, for example, data for free school meals and looked after status where the data was particularly limited.
- 2.6 **Figure 2.1** outlines participant characteristics from the data we have. Key features of note include:
  - in Year 1 most participants were in Year 10 or Year 12 and above; in Year 2, only a quarter were in Year 10, a quarter in Year 12 and above, and the majority in Year 11;
  - there was a fairly even split between males and females participating in the Re-Ach programme over both years;

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<sup>9</sup> This is an approximate figure found by deduction - it may be the case that more young people than this dropped out.

<sup>10</sup> In addition, we have data for 37 pupils who participated only in the coaching element in Year 2. These have not been included in the analysis and a separate assessment was undertaken for these young people.

- most participants were white, though participants from Asian and black communities were also well represented according to Local Authority characteristics;
- a very small number of participants were looked-after children or had a disability;
- just under a third of the second year Re-Ach programme (for whom we had data) had Free School Meals (FSM), which was higher than LA averages in two of the areas;
- most participants achieved Level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 in Year 2 and around two-fifths of those under 16 were predicted to achieve 5 or more A\* to C grades at Key Stage 4; and
- from baseline data, between a quarter and a third of participants attended school or other learning environments less than 90% of the time.

**Figure 2.1: Re-Ach Participant Characteristics**

<p><b>Year Group</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 1 - most participants were in Year 10 (45%) or Year 12 and above (48%)</li> <li>• Year 2 - only 26% were in Year 10, 27% in Year 12 and above, and the majority in Year 11 (46%)</li> <li>• These trends followed across all three Local Authorities, where large proportions were Year 11</li> <li>• An anomaly for the sixth-form is Barking and Dagenham where only 5% of young people were in Year 12 and above</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 1- there is a fairly even split between males and females, with the number of males being slightly less (46% )</li> <li>• Year 2 - the same trend applies, (43% male)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ethnicity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 1 - majority white (57%), Asian well- represented (20%), black less-so (14%)</li> <li>• Year 2 - majority white (72%), Asian 12%, black 10%</li> <li>• The white majority trend was reflected in individual Local Authorities, but minority groups differed</li> <li>• Leicester had more of an Asian community in both years (14% Yr1, 15% Yr2), but had less black students in Year 2 (17% Yr1, 6% Yr2)</li> <li>• Barking and Dagenham had more black students (9% Yr1, 15% Yr2) than Asian students (2% Yr1m 4% Yr2) in both years</li> <li>• Hillingdon reflected a similar trend in Year 1 (25% black, 6% Asian), but was fairly equal in Year 2 (14% black, 16% Asian)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Looked after Children</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of the total responses for Year 2 (264), 13 were Looked After Children (LAC)</li> <li>• Leicester had the lowest percentage (1%, 2/162); Barking and Dagenham slightly more (3%, 2/65); and Hillingdon had by far the highest proportion (24%, 9/37)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Free School Meals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under a third (29% out of a total of 178 responses) of the second year Re-Ach programme had free school meals</li> <li>• Leicester had the lowest number (21%, 20/95); Barking and Dagenham had 35% (8/23); and Hillingdon had 40% (26/60)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around a tenth of the responses in Year 2 were classed as having some form of disability (12% out of a total of 74 responses)</li> <li>• All of these came from one agency in the Leicester area, as responses were not given from other authorities</li> </ul>

Figure 2.1: Re-Ach Participant Characteristics	
<b>Prior Attainment</b> <sup>11</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior attainment was mainly in the form of KS3 results</li> <li>• English was the stronger subject of the Re-Ach participants in Year 2 (69% compared to 64% maths, 59% science), mirrored in each Local Authority</li> <li>• Leicester had worse results in Year 2 English and maths, but Barking and Dagenham had the worst in science</li> </ul>
<b>Predicted Grades</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 1 - 46% of responses were predicted 5 or more A*- C grades</li> <li>• Year 2 - 42%</li> <li>• Barking and Dagenham had 53% Yr1, 32% Yr2; Hillingdon 53% Yr1, 25% Yr2; and Leicester had 37% Yr1, 64% Yr2</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance Baseline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 1 - 24% achieved less than 90% attendance rate</li> <li>• Year 2 - 30%, so slightly worse</li> <li>• Leicester was worst achieving in the top-attendance bracket; (96-100%) at 45% in the first year</li> <li>• Barking and Dagenham was worst in the second year (38%)</li> </ul>

Source: Baseline data collated from agencies

- 2.7 Baseline attitudes show that relatively engaged young people were selected for the programme, particularly in Year 2 as shown in **Table 2.1**. In Year 1, although the young people appeared to have a good attitude to learning and school / college they did indicate a less positive attitude towards the skills they had to help them achieve their potential / goals. However in Year 2, this was not such a problem - suggesting that Year 2 participants may have been more engaged at the outset than those involved in Year 1<sup>12</sup>.

Table 2.1: Baseline Attitudes		
Statement	Year 1	Year 2
Good / excellent at 'coming to school / college / work every day'	78%	97%
Good / excellent at having 'good behaviour in lessons / work'	68%	82%
Agreed that they 'enjoy learning'	87%	73%
Good / excellent at 'being confident when talking to adults other than their parents'	58%	71%
Good / excellent at 'improving their own learning and performance'	54%	82%
Good / excellent at 'coping with new experiences and situations'	52%	65%

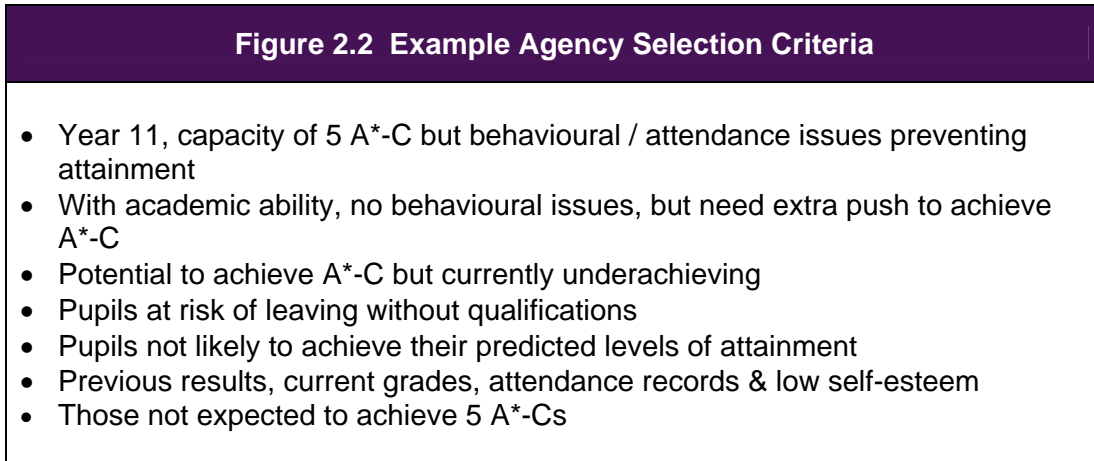
Source: Pupil baseline attitude surveys completed at enrolment (slightly different questionnaires were used in Year 1 and Year 2)

<sup>11</sup> Although Year 1 data is available, it is not directly comparable to national and Year 2 data.

<sup>12</sup> Some of this difference could also be attributed to both the different year group mix across the two years and the use of slightly different survey tools being used at the baseline point.

## Participant Type

- 2.8 In schools, the majority of young people selected were capable of achieving grade A\*-C GCSEs but were at risk of achieving lower grades because of relatively mild behaviour, attendance or attitudinal factors. **Figure 2.2** provides some examples of selection approaches amongst the participating agencies.



**Source: Fieldwork Notes, York Consulting LLP**

- 2.9 In colleges the cohorts were more mixed and in other agencies young people had significant behavioural and / or attitudinal issues. However, the agency-led approach to selection (and difficulty in attracting 'other' agencies) resulted in attracting fewer young people at risk of becoming NEET than anticipated:
- there were much fewer 'other' agencies engaged in the programme, for example work based training providers and youth offending teams. These are the agencies that would be likely to engage harder to reach individuals. Representatives from LAs reported a perception that 'other' agencies lacked confidence in putting vulnerable young people through such a structured, challenging programme; and
  - many mainstream agencies chose not to select their most disengaged for reasons of "protectiveness" or wariness about how they may respond to an outside programme.
- 2.10 As a result and as the characteristics trend indicates relatively few young people that participated in the programme could be regarded as disaffected or disengaged. This was supported through some of the more qualitative evidence:
- most young people consulted during the case studies, particularly in schools, did not show an unwillingness to achieve and illustrated a good attitude towards learning; and
  - coaches and trainers generally estimated on average that between 5-20% of cohorts were seriously disaffected.

2.11 Overall the findings suggest, therefore, that participants were those ‘*operating below their potential*’ but not disengaged or disaffected, and particularly not those with the most challenging behaviours. This is also apparent when comparing characteristics to those young people participating in the national Key Stage 4 Engagement Programme (KS4EP)<sup>13</sup> - this programme involves young people with similar characteristics to those on the Re-Ach programme but indicators suggest that they may fall within a group classed as relatively more disengaged.

2.12 Comparisons between the Re-Ach pilot years, KS4EP and LA/national data are provided in **Table 2.2** and **Figure 2.3** overleaf. These data support the view that most Re-Ach pupils, whilst having some characteristics that might influence levels of achievement and attitudes towards learning, were not, on the whole, those from the more disengaged or disaffected groups:

- a slightly higher proportion of Re-Ach pupils accessed free school meals compared to Local Authority averages;
- a similar proportion of Re-Ach pupils were looked after children to LA and national averages;
- a third of Re-Ach pupils have baseline attendance trends of less than national and LA average levels;
- the prior attainment and predicted grades for Re-Ach pupils are similar to national and local averages.

2.13 Some stakeholders questioned whether the Re-Ach programme was really suited for this more disengaged group:

*“Some Year 10 pupils dropped out of the programme for not being able to grasp the programme and also behaving dangerously. I felt that these pupils and Year 10 in general are not mature enough to handle the programme.” (Agency staff member);*

*“In one of the ‘other agencies’ 15 pupils started the workshops but only 4 completed the programme. The staff put this down to the rigid approach of the YaR staff and the style of delivery.” (Case study report)*

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<sup>13</sup> YCL undertook an evaluation of the KS4EP over a similar time period to that undertaken for Re-Ach. KS4EP is “*a personalised programme for those KS4 learners most at risk of disengagement*”.



**Table 2.2: Participant Type Data**

Category	Detail	Year 1	Year 2	KS4 Project Comparison	LA / National Comparison
Free School Meals	Barking and Dagenham	N/A	35%	39%	28.70%
	Leicester	N/A	21%		22%
	Hillingdon	N/A	40%		17.40%
Looked After Children	Barking and Dagenham	N/A	3%	N/A	2%
	Leicester	N/A	1%		0.70%
	Hillingdon	N/A	24%		2%
Attendance <sup>14</sup>	Barking & Dagenham	27%	41%	N/A	92.30%
	Leicester	27%	26%		92%
	Hillingdon	17%	27%		91.70%
Prior Attainment <sup>15</sup>	English	N/A	69%	28%	74%
	Maths	N/A	64%	27%	76%
	Science	N/A	59%	26%	73%
Predicted Grades	Barking and Dagenham	53%	32%	N/A	39.70%
	Leicester	63%	64%		36.50%
	Hillingdon	53%	25%		44.90%

Source: Re-Ach baseline enrolment data and Key Stage 4 Evaluation Database - York Consulting LLP; National/LA statistic websites

<sup>14</sup> National comparison is overall attendance rates, LA attendance is percentage below 90% (i.e. approximately the proportion of students that were below national average).

<sup>15</sup> Although Year 1 data is available, it is not directly comparable to national and Year 2 data.

**Figure 2.3: Participant Type Data - Comparison to National and LA trends<sup>16</sup>**

<p><b>Free School Meals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two out of three areas enrolled a comparatively high proportion of pupils that are eligible for free school meals:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Barking and Dagenham had an average of 35% of Re-Ach pupils, which is higher than the LA average of 28.7%</li> <li>– Leicester had a slightly lower figure (21% compared to 22% for the LA)</li> <li>– Hillingdon has a far higher percentage (40% compared to the LA average of 17.4%)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Looked After Children</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National figures are for children aged 13-19</li> <li>• Leicester had slightly higher proportions of Re-Ach pupils being LAC (1% compared to LA average of 0.7%)</li> <li>• Hillingdon had much higher proportions of Re-Ach pupils that were LAC (24% compared to 2% LA average)</li> <li>• Barking and Dagenham had slightly higher Re-Ach LAC pupils (3% compared to 2% LA average)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attendance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just under a third of Re-Ach pupils had attendance rates less than 90%. The national average for attendance is 92.2% (with LA averages of 92.3% for Barking and Dagenham, 92% for Leicester and 91.7% for Hillingdon)</li> <li>• 41% of Barking and Dagenham Re-Ach pupils had baseline attendance trends, compared to 27% in Hillingdon and 26% in Leicester</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prior Attainment<sup>17</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The national level for English KS3 was 74%, for Maths 76% and Science 73%. The overall Year 2 Re-Ach results were only slightly lower.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Predicted Grades</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46% of Re-Ach pupils in Year 1 were predicted 5 or more A*-C grades and 42% in Year 2, compared to national levels of 46.8%</li> <li>• 32% of Barking and Dagenham Re-Ach pupils had predicted Level 2 attainment, compared to an area average for the LA of 39.7%. This compares to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 25% of Hillingdon Re-Ach pupils compared to 44.9% for the LA;</li> <li>– 64% of Leicester Re-Ach pupils compared to a local average of 36.5% - Leicester students were likely to be significantly more engaged than in the other agencies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Source: Re-Ach Baseline Enrolment Data; National/LA Statistic Websites**

<sup>16</sup> Due to the very low numbers in many cases, the differences highlighted are not statistically significant

<sup>17</sup> Although year one data is available, it is not directly comparable to national and Year 2 data

## Delivery Components

- 2.14 Most qualitative and quantitative data showed high levels of satisfaction with the programme, where most participants and agencies found it of use. This is evidenced through case study, survey and workshop feedback from both young people and agency representatives.
- 2.15 Six of the ten case study agencies expressed satisfaction with the overall Re-Ach programme. Amongst the remaining agencies, there was satisfaction with some elements of the programme but some mixed views about the effectiveness of specific elements or a view that other support programmes they operated were more suited to the needs of the young people they support.
- 2.16 The training and coaching staff from Hanover and YaR were deemed high quality professionals by most case study agencies. A small number identified some inconsistencies in quality between those staff involved in Year 1 and Year 2 of delivery.
- 2.17 **Table 2.3** shows the pupil survey results associated with the effectiveness of different Re-Ach elements. The workshops and one-to-one coaching sessions were considered enjoyable by most of those participants responding to the survey. Overall the programme met the needs of the young people, though around a fifth said they needed more sessions. Few young people said Re-Ach was a waste of time, and most said it helped with their personal goals.

<b>Table 2.3: Survey Findings - Effectiveness of Re-Ach Delivery Elements</b>	
	<b>Year 2</b>
The workshops I attended were interesting and enjoyable	87%
The one to one coaching sessions I received were helpful	93%
The coaching sessions were often enough to meet my needs	85%
I needed more coaching sessions than I had	18%
The Re-Ach programme has been a waste of my time	6%

**Source: Re-Ach End of Programme Survey**

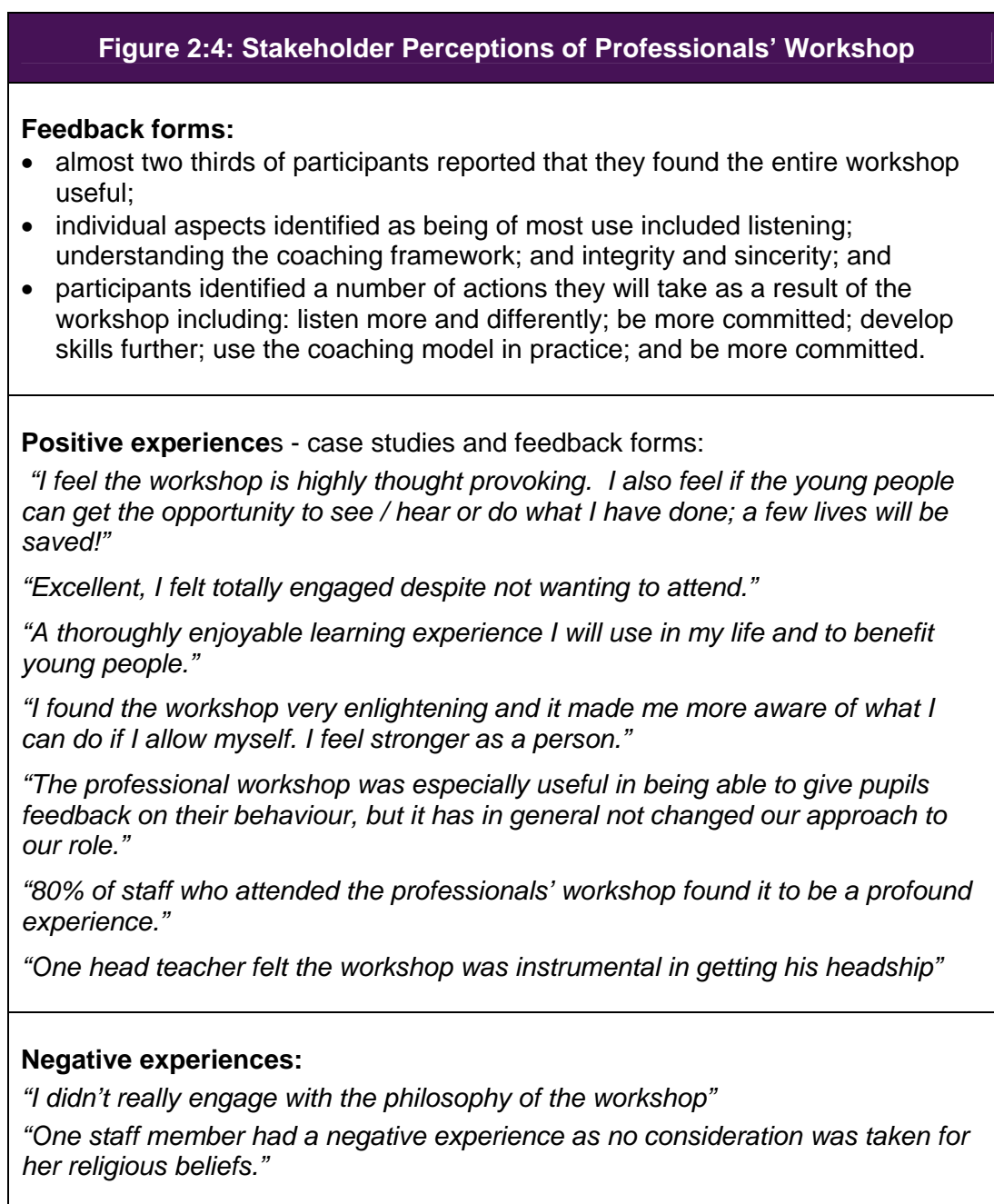
## Professional Workshop

- 2.18 Most participants attending the professional workshops enjoyed them, and staff from a couple of agencies were particularly positive. There were some mixed responses across other agencies but generally these highlighted issues of effectiveness rather than negative experiences.
- 2.19 Effectiveness issues raised about the professionals' workshop include:
- a number of professionals stated that they did not know what to expect from the workshop and were not clear what their role was in the project after completing the workshop:
 

*"I was not sure what role I had in the project and what this meant for me in my everyday role". "I thought I would learn more about the Re-Ach project itself" (Agency Professionals);*
  - some agency coordinators noted that they felt their own support teams could play a more formal role in the facilitation and consolidation of the training;

- releasing staff to attend the workshop has been identified as a barrier for some agencies particularly when the role of agency staff was unclear and the senior leadership team was not championing the project - *“Although I have found it very interesting from a personal development point of view, I am confused as to my role in the Re-Ach project and how I link in my support for the young people on the programme” (Learning Mentor);* and
- in some agencies staff turnover meant that the continuity of support was lost when workshop attendees left the agency.

2.20 **Figure 2.4** outlines further stakeholder perceptions of the professionals’ workshop.

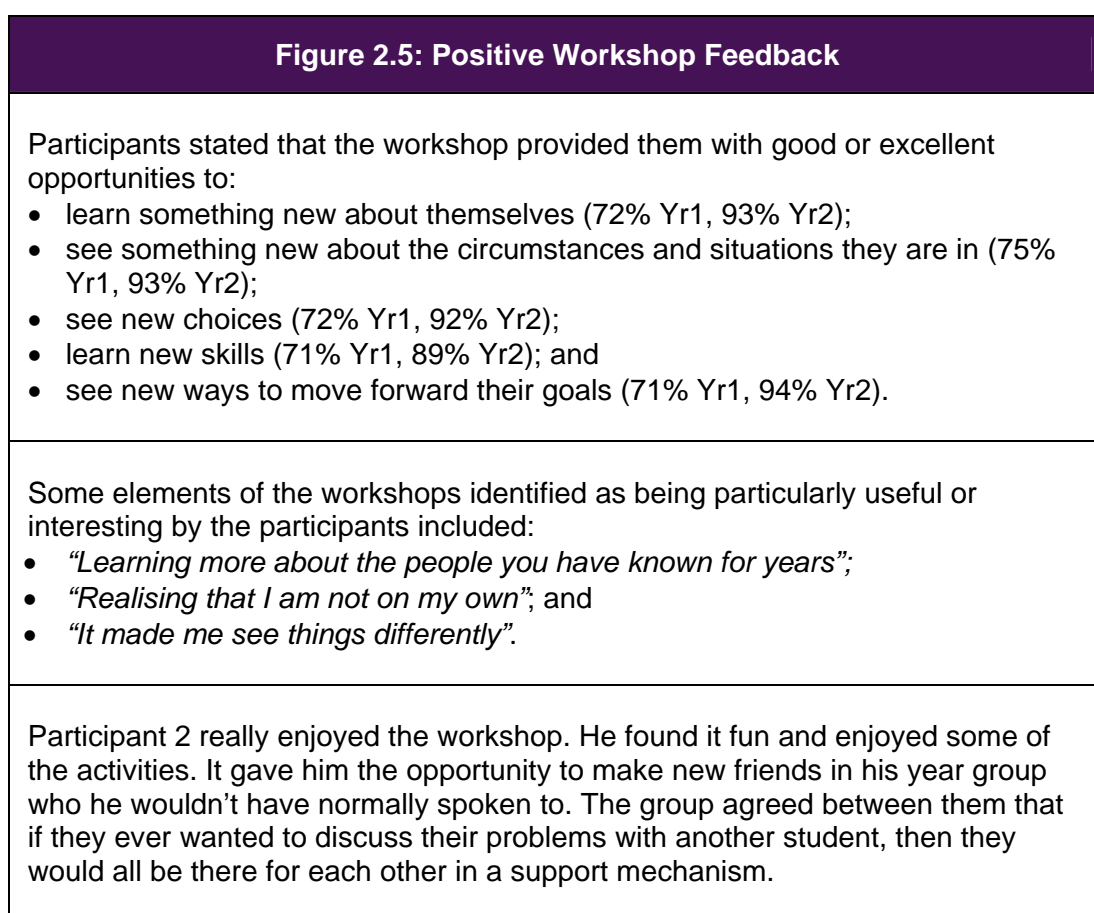


## Young People Workshops

2.21 There was strong support from the majority of young people and agencies regarding the series of workshops for young people. Findings from the feedback forms included:

- almost three quarters of the 237 participants who completed the feedback form thought that their experience was positive (71% Year 1, 92% Year 2);
- just under a half of participants felt the overall experience was excellent (43% Yr1, 53% Yr2); and
- 70% of participants rated the content of the workshop as good or excellent in Year 1 and 91% in Year 2.

2.22 Feedback illustrated that the workshop had been a catalyst in many participants' personal development. **Figure 2.5** provides some examples.



**Source: Surveys and Fieldwork Notes**

2.23 Over half of the participants stated that the information they received on what to expect from the workshop was good or excellent (61% Year 1, 78% Year 2). In addition, feedback forms from Year 2 showed that 89% of participants rated the facilitators as good / excellent. A couple of positive examples were:

- *I found the workshop very useful... it benefited me...I have a very good relationship with the leader;* and

- *I don't think there are any improvements that can be made, but the group sessions at the workshop could be longer - and keep the leaders.*

2.24 However, there were a small number of participants who were less positive about their experiences:

- Participant 1 didn't like being forced to enter the programme. She had a lot of coursework to complete at the time of the workshop and didn't like missing a lot of school; and
- Participant 2 said *"it felt like I was at a psychiatrist's. It did help me to open up and I wouldn't have spoken to anyone else, but it was very intense."*

2.25 Most agencies were also satisfied with the young peoples' workshops and considered them to be of value. The vast majority of workshops were delivered off site. Agency staff reported that this was an important feature of the model because it ensured that a young person was away from everyday influences. Only a couple of agencies suggested that they would have preferred the workshops to take place on site (this may have been because they did not find the selected venue appropriate). Feedback forms show that 79% of pupils in Year 2 thought the location of the venue was excellent or good.

2.26 Nevertheless, some effectiveness issues that impacted on the potential value gained from the workshops were highlighted through the evaluation:

- some internal and external support staff were not clear why they were required to attend. Several individuals felt that the trainers did not relate to them well and overlooked the teacher and pupil relationship. Professionals also reported that the trainers did not appreciate the supervisory position played by the staff;
- over half the case study agencies (schools and colleges) reported concerns that the structure (5 days in total, including 1 day for enrolment, 3 days for the young people workshop, and 1 day for the coaching workshop) was too long and / or not suitable for the target group. A number of agencies also said they would prefer some flexibility in the structure of enrolment and workshops, given that the timing and duration of the workshops were sometimes barriers to agency engagement and commitment. Flexibility was offered in some circumstances, for example in one college the enrolment and workshops were rolled into one;
- some agency staff thought the workshop rules to exclude students from the programme if they were late or missed a day due to illness were too inflexible given that (they felt) these young people could still benefit from the programme. *"The very nature of these students, those who have poor attendance, punctuality, commitment, are the very students that should not miss out and would most benefit from this training"*. Some of these students were offered coaching but are not formally Re-Ach programme completers;
- support staff from one agency questioned the methodology of the workshop. They were concerned about what the trainers were encouraging the young people to admit to. They had strong concerns about the openness of it. These were reflected in pupil comments, such as:

- “feeling vulnerable during the workshop”; and
- “being challenged as they had to address things that were personal to them with people they were unfamiliar with”.

### **Performance Coaching Sessions**

- 2.27 This element of the project involved the young person working with a Professional Performance Coach (PPC) over a six-month period meeting once a month. Young people within each agency also came together with the PPCs and YaR trainers twice during the six months to review progress as a group.
- 2.28 Agencies reported, on the whole, relatively good attendance at coaching sessions by the young people involved (reporting attendance as good or in some cases identifying that 80-90% of young people had attended all/most of their coaching sessions). However, there was some mixed attendance in other agencies and in one, attendance was particularly low (this agency estimated that only around one third of those that enrolled and completed the workshop went on to attend all their coaching sessions).
- 2.29 Most agencies consulted liked the concepts relating to the Performance Coaching Sessions (PCS) and felt that they could complement the support already offered by the agencies. Agency staff felt that the young people gained from the sessions as they were able to speak to someone disassociated with the school. In addition, the confidentiality aspect was fundamental in gaining the confidence of the young people.
- 2.30 The young people consulted as part of the case studies and surveys found the Performance Coaching Sessions useful. A number of participants reported feeling more motivated and aware that they were responsible for their life.
- 2.31 Young people and professionals consulted as part of the case studies found the performance coaching sessions useful as a result of:
- participants forming a good relationship with their coach;
  - working closely with someone disassociated with the school;
  - the confidentiality and trust; and
  - support staff within some agencies complementing the support.
- 2.32 Completer survey responses also illustrated that the Performance Coaching Sessions were viewed positively by participants:
- nine tenths of participants stated that the one-to-one coaching sessions were helpful (96% Year 1, 93% Year 2);
  - almost three quarters of participants stated that the paired coaching sessions were helpful (73% Year 1, 34% Year 2<sup>18</sup>); and
  - over three quarters stated that the coaching sessions were enough to meet their needs (78% Year 1, 85% Year 2).

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<sup>18</sup> 5% said they don't know.

- 2.33 Most young people stated that they had formed good relationships with their coaches although at first some did find it hard to engage with their coach - *“when I first met him I didn’t think I would be able to talk to him about myself but he’s been great. He has really helped me focus on what I want”* (Participant).
- 2.34 Some young people did not think the coaching sessions had as much impact on them as the workshop and not all young people were happy with their experiences. Nearly a quarter felt that they needed more coaching sessions (24% Year 1, 19% Year 2)<sup>19</sup> and one in ten stated that overall the Re-Ach project had been ‘a waste of their time’ (11% Year 1, 6% Year 2). Some agencies used their own staff and their knowledge developed through the professional workshop to continue sessions with the young people.
- 2.35 Some issues of effectiveness relating to the coaching sessions, identified through consultations, include:
- the fact that discussions in the coaching sessions were in confidence was considered a key benefit by many participants;
  - the effectiveness of the PCSs was linked in a number of cases to the relationship established between the coach(es) and the agency. Where a coach was embedded into the existing support structures, for example located in the office with other support workers, agencies found this encouraged communication and added value to the support offered to the young people. *“By encouraging our staff to work with the coaches progress made by a young person can be validated without taking away confidentiality”* (School). One coach consulted at the time of reporting stated that he was encouraged to work alongside the agency professionals and use their knowledge of the young people to provide better support;
  - the six coaching sessions provided a good starting point for the young people but some professionals argued that a longer period of support (dependent upon the young person in question) was needed. There was no flexibility in the Re-Ach pilot model to meet this need though continuation of support was being piloted with young people in one agency. Agencies felt they may have been able to provide more continuation support following the formal completion of the Re-Ach intervention had there been an opportunity within the programme structure for their own support staff to further develop their coaching skills.

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<sup>19</sup> The statistical inconsistency with the finding regarding young people that thought the coaching sessions were sufficient reflects two different questions being asked within the survey.



### 3 OUTCOMES AND VALUE

#### Key Messages

1. The evidence suggests that the programme had a positive influence and engaged most of those participating. It commonly supported those considered to be on the borderline of achieving 5A\*-C grade GCSEs and translated to skills development<sup>20</sup> and improvements in attitudes for some of those involved (between one quarter and one third). In this way, the Re-Ach programme may have contributed towards one of its three strategic outcomes - that is, improved Level 2 attainment for some of those involved.
2. The areas where the programme had the most positive influence were helping to prevent deterioration in engagement and achievement and improve attitudes towards learning. Underpinning this change was an improvement in cognitive skills and understanding of responsibility and choice.
3. There is some anecdotal evidence of impact on attendance, achievement and destinations. However, despite efforts to improve data access throughout the evaluation, assessing the impact on young people using quantitative data was constrained due to ongoing data issues associated with quantity, quality, timing and attributability.
4. Participants were not generally identified as the hardest to reach and illustrated minimal evidence of disaffection and disengagement. Consequently, the pilot was unable to make a significant contribution to two of the three strategic outcomes that were identified in its business case - namely, reducing the number of 16-19 year olds not in education employment or training (NEET); and reducing the number of teenage pregnancies.
5. Given the underperformance against target numbers, unit costs for the pilot were higher than expected. Costs were also assessed as relatively high for a programme of this nature given that a minority of participants were, in the event, in the more disaffected target group. The evaluation has identified areas where there is the potential to improve cost-effectiveness for any future delivery of programmes that incorporate the principles and elements of the Re-Ach programme.

#### Context for Impact Assessment

- 3.1 In this section we present data and survey results alongside the more detailed qualitative understanding gained through case studies. This enables us to provide a reasonable assessment of the outcomes and value associated with the Re-Ach programme. First, however, we briefly outline the data constraints and limitations that have been faced during the study and analysis of findings. This is an important context which influences the confidence that can be applied to any quantitative findings in particular.

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<sup>20</sup> Skills are referred to here and throughout the report to describe 'life' skills as opposed to vocational skills.

- 3.2 A range of data access and quality issues identified at the interim reporting stage led to a decision not to follow-up Year 1 outcomes (though we did access some for a sample of participants in Leicester). At the same time, a greater focus was placed on improving the collation and access to data for Year 2 participants, including considerable efforts to collate baseline and follow-up data by Hanover and YaR; and YCL designed a pro-forma to aid the collation of outcomes data.
- 3.3 We therefore had access to some outcomes data for Year 2 participants which we comment on (alongside the more qualitative assessments) later in this section. This includes an update of the data collected at the start of the project, specifically attendance, attainment and destination outcomes.
- 3.4 However, there was a range of issues faced during the evaluation which limited our ability to quantitatively assess impact, both in terms of assessing softer changes such as those associated with attitudes / behaviour; and harder outcomes relating to achievement, attendance and destinations. Details are shown in **Figure 3.1**, which includes issues associated with:
- quantity and quality of data available;
  - timing of reporting, meaning that attainment outcomes are only potentially available for a sample of participants (those that have completed Year 11 or Year 13); and
  - attributing outcomes to the Re-Ach programme given the context of a wide range of influences on young people, and other initiatives / programmes / approaches in place to support improvements in achievement and engagement.
- 3.5 In **Section 5** we comment on potential ways to improve the consistency and quality of outcomes data for future evaluations.

**Figure 3.1: Limitations on Measuring Impact**

<p><b>Quantity of data</b></p>	<p>Records show that Re-Ach recruited 301 young people onto the programme in Year 1 and 461 in Year 2 - 762 participants. Of these data is available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• baseline performance for 268 Yr1 (maximum), 423 Yr2;</li> <li>• outcomes for 283 in Yr 2 (maximum);</li> <li>• workshop feedback for 239 Yr1, 315 Yr2;</li> <li>• baseline questionnaires for 268 Yr1 and 202 Yr2</li> <li>• follow-up questionnaires for 78 Yr1 and 152 Yr2; and</li> <li>• surveys completed both at baseline and follow-up for only 65 Yr1 and 80 Yr2.</li> </ul> <p>However, each data set shows a different total figure, which limits the evidence available to illustrate the distance travelled on the hard outcomes and attitudinal / behavioural indicators.</p>
<p><b>Data quality issues</b></p>	<p>Where data was available there were a number of inconsistencies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnicity coding was not standardised;</li> <li>• there was no identification of year groups on baseline data (though we requested this for follow-up Year 2 data);</li> <li>• Year 1 outcomes data were not requested due to the issues faced in accessing baseline data;</li> <li>• not all unique identifier numbers were received. We therefore had to undertake cleansing exercises to remove duplicate names, spelling errors and missing data; and</li> <li>• not all data in Year 2 came back completed, and some students that information had been requested for did not, in the end, participate in or complete the Re-Ach programme.</li> </ul> <p>This last issue has meant, however, that we have been able to do some comparisons of outcomes between completers and non-completers.</p>
<p><b>Timing of final report</b></p>	<p>Most of Year 1 and half of Year 2 pupils were not at an age where quantifiable outcomes are available (i.e. end of Key Stage 4 or 5).</p>
<p><b>Attributing impact</b></p>	<p>There are a number of factors that will have influenced the young people engaged on the programme, which meant that it was difficult to attribute any changes in performance for participants to the Re-Ach programme alone, due to for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a range of other influences (school context, peers, culture, home environment);</li> <li>• school delivery approaches, support, other initiatives; and</li> <li>• wider programmes / schemes / initiatives (at local and national level).</li> </ul>

## Skills, Engagement and Attitudes

- 3.6 The evidence suggests that the Re-Ach project was positive and engaging for most of the young people that completed the programme, influencing a range of areas associated with skills development<sup>21</sup>, confidence and behaviour. Some of the participants (up to one third) responding to the surveys indicated changes associated with skills and attitudes, for example, improvements in recognition of their own strengths and weaknesses and enjoyment of learning. For others, the programme may have helped to prevent deterioration in levels of engagement or attainment.
- 3.7 Pupils responding to the surveys in both Years 1 and 2 were positive about the programme saying that it had supported them in a number of respects, as shown in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Impact of the Re-Ach Project – Survey Responses		
The Re-Ach programme helped me to.....	Year 1	Year 2
..achieve my personal goals	77%	85%
..improve my attendance at school/college/ work	67%	68%
..improve my behaviour	75%	65%
..enjoy learning more	67%	69%
..be aware of my strengths and weaknesses	90%	81%
..raise my level of achievement	82%	79%
..decide what to do in the future	64%	64%

**Source: Re-Ach end of programme survey responses**

- 3.8 Supporting skills development and raising levels of achievement were areas where the largest majority of respondents were positive about the programme. The specific goals and positive outcomes achieved tended to relate to the development of life skills and raised aspirations that might support future achievement and progression. Themes identified by young people included:
- developing an understanding of themselves, their beliefs, values and responses;
  - helping to identify strengths and weaknesses;
  - developing empathy with others;
  - understanding how they could change things for the better;
  - taking actions to make things better (e.g. moving seats away from people they are distracted by); and
  - developing confidence and vocalising opinions.
- 3.9 Some of the case studies with young people highlighted in particular the success of the programme in helping to prevent attitudinal or behavioural issues deteriorate further. The pen pictures in **Figure 3.2** provide a range of examples of students engaged on the Re-Ach programme, including one (E) where the programme was not considered to have an impact.

<sup>21</sup> Skills are referred to here and throughout the report to describe 'life' skills as opposed to vocational skills.

**Figure 3.2: Participant Pen Pictures**

Participant A: 15, Male, School	
<b>Previous attainment:</b>	Level 6 SAT score in Maths; Level 5 SAT score in English; Level 4 SAT score in Science; attendance in Year 9 was 100%
<b>Previous attitude to learning:</b>	He is a student who is on the 5 A*-C GCSE borderline and has the potential to achieve this. However because of his relaxed attitude to school and learning he is not likely to achieve 5 A*-Cs. He had a few issues with punctuality and behaviour but has not been excluded from school. He lacked motivation and confidence to achieve his goals in sport (football).
<b>Aspirations prior to Re-Ach:</b>	He has always known he wanted to go into business management but was not clear what he needed to do to get there.
<b>Impact on attitude to learning:</b>	He believes Re-Ach has really helped him progress with his school work and his sport. It has enabled him to focus more and take responsibility for his own future. He is now comfortable approaching teachers when he does not understand something he is working on. He has more confidence and is able to communicate well with adults.
<b>Current aspirations:</b>	Achieve a minimum of 5 A*-C grades in his GCSEs. Go on to college to do A Levels and to continue to progress his football career firstly by successfully getting offered a place in a local team through his trial. He is now clearer on the path he wants to take to achieve his goals.
<b>Views of Re-Ach</b>	He thought the Re-Ach project would help him with his confidence and dealing with some issues he had with teaching staff. He found the workshop confusing at first but then it all became clear on the third day. Re-Ach has enabled him to see things from a different point of view and he is now doing a lot better in and out of class.
Participant B: Male, School (Check Report)	
<b>Predicted grades:</b>	At the moment he is predicted all Cs and Ds.
<b>Previous attitude to learning:</b>	He had a history of poor behaviour in class, poor attendance and non-completion of coursework. He was an able student who was underperforming. Initially he was attracted to the scheme because it gave him days off. He found school very boring. He enjoys some lessons (PE, resistant materials & art) and dislikes maths, science and IT. He hasn't sought support from teachers / parents / siblings about study and feels fairly isolated in that respect (his brothers have both been excluded / suspended from school).
<b>Aspirations prior to Re-Ach:</b>	Looked forward to leaving and joining the Navy
<b>Impact on attitude to learning:</b>	Helped him realise a number of things - that he hasn't been trying at school at all; that he can get better grades, despite the fact that teachers don't like him/he doesn't like them; that he should focus more on his football training outside school (to keep him from getting into trouble, and so he can be better); that talking about 'stuff' can be useful. He feels that his attendance has improved and his teachers have reported behavioural improvements.
<b>Current aspirations:</b>	He was 70-80% sure that he will get better grades than predicted because he is working harder and is committed to working for GCSEs

**Figure 3.2: Participant Pen Pictures**

<b>Participant C: 18, Female, FE College</b>	
<b>Previous attainment:</b>	Left school with 3 GCSEs D-G; Attended college to re-sit GCSEs
<b>Previous attitude to learning:</b>	She had a history of poor behaviour and punctuality resulting in her being removed from class on a number of occasions. Personal issues at home were affecting her attendance and she felt she did not have a good relationship with any staff members. Although she acknowledged her poor behaviour she felt that it wasn't always her fault and she was unfairly treated by staff at times. She was constantly late for class and often did not attend at all. She lacked motivation to complete coursework.
<b>Aspirations prior to Re-Ach:</b>	She had no aspirations to go to university. Prior to Re-Ach she was struggling to achieve Level 1 qualifications.
<b>Impact on attitude to learning:</b>	As a result of setting and agreeing goals with her coach (in relation to attendance) her attendance and punctuality has greatly improved. She is addressing her anger issues by using coping techniques developed with her coach. She has renewed confidence in her ability to achieve at whatever level.
<b>Current aspirations:</b>	She has aspirations to attend university to study midwifery and is now studying for her Level 3 qualifications in health and social care.
<b>Views of Re-Ach</b>	She feels extremely positive about her experience of Re-Ach and believed coaching helped her to settle into her work through increased attendance and was a much calmer person because of it. She has improved her communication skills and feels she could talk to anyone no matter what their position.
<b>Participant D: Female, School (Check Report)</b>	
<b>Previous attainment:</b>	Doing quite well - not sure why she was on the programme - Science, BB; Maths, B; English; CC; Relatively happy with progress at school; Parents happy with how she was doing at school and very supportive of her.
<b>Previous attitude to learning:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become disinterested in the class.</li> <li>• She would ask teachers for help but it would depend on the teacher in question as some were more approachable than others.</li> <li>• She did not get in any trouble at school.</li> <li>• Attendance and punctuality very good.</li> <li>• She liked studying but found it not very enjoyable when it was stressful and busy. She thought she was a motivated person.</li> </ul>
<b>Aspirations prior to Re-Ach:</b>	She wants be a journalist and is determined to go to college and university. She thinks she will do English / English literature. She is looking forward to her future and feels she has the support of her family to achieve her goals.
<b>Impact on attitude to learning:</b>	The programme helped her realise what she needs to do to succeed and how to manage work load and organise herself.
<b>Current aspirations:</b>	She feels she is more confident and is excited about doing well and going on to better things.
<b>Views of Re-Ach</b>	She found the 3 day workshop and coaching very enjoyable and made some new friendships as a result of them.

**Figure 3.2: Participant Pen Pictures**

<b>Participant E, 15, Female, School</b>	
<b>Previous attainment:</b>	No information available from participant entry forms.
<b>Previous attitude to learning:</b>	She found it difficult to focus in the school environment and got easily distracted in lessons by her peers. She never had any issues with attendance. A teacher commented that because she is a Muslim girl she is not allowed to socialise outside of school. Therefore she enjoyed being with her friends during school which distracted her from her learning.
<b>Aspirations prior to Re-Ach:</b>	She wants to do well in her GCSEs and then wants to leave school and do her A Levels elsewhere.
<b>Impact on attitude to learning:</b>	She does not think Re-Ach had any impact on her attitude to school and learning. She did however really enjoy the workshop.
<b>Current aspirations:</b>	Achieve 5 A*-C grades in her GCSEs.
<b>Views of Re-Ach</b>	She was not aware of why she was included in the Re-Ach project and thought that it would teach her the study skills required during KS4. The most beneficial thing she learnt from Re-Ach was the 'blocking' technique during the workshop. This helped her focus and concentrate more on work. She expected that she would develop study skills in the coaching session which was not the case. Although the one-to-one chats were helpful she did not think they benefited her in the long-term.

**Source: Fieldwork Consultations - York Consulting LLP**

3.10 The majority of agencies also reported positive changes in the behaviour, attitudes and skills development of some participants. **Figure 3.3** provides a range of examples. Common observations across agencies included:

- improved confidence and self-esteem (in a couple of agencies this was particularly seen amongst female participants);
- better attitudes amongst those previously identified as having relatively poor behaviour - one agency identified that some pupils had developed their anger-management skills;
- general improvements in attitudes when in learning, for example, being less talkative, focusing on the need to succeed, asking for help, improved peer relationships; and
- improvements in young peoples' behaviour in school / college including their focus in lessons, their punctuality, and their commitment to learning.

### Figure 3.3: Agency Observations and Perceptions

*“One agency reported evidence of impact on about 60% of pupils with improvements in behaviour and confidence. The pupils in this school also felt their behaviour was much improved.”*

*“One school found pupils’ attitudes towards their ability to do well had improved along with their confidence in their future. Some of the pupils felt their relationships with their peers and teachers had improved as a result of the programme, they were also more focused on their work.”*

*“A learning mentor felt the biggest impact of Re-Ach had been on the attitudinal change of the pupils.”*

*“One School reflected that just from the 3 day workshop the pupils gained more confidence and also learnt about the importance of behaviour within school.”*

*“One staff member commented that pupils’ “work ethic and focus in class had improved no end” since they had joined the programme. She also felt girls in particular had calmed down and become more focused in class.”*

*“One college felt Re-Ach had impacted most on entry level students especially those with esteem and confidence issues.”*

*“At one school, there has been a “recognisable, fundamental change in some of the pupils” and the staff, therefore, feel that it should be sustainable.”*

*“We noticed a difference in the attitude of the young people, particularly around the areas of confidence and aspirations.”*

**Source: Fieldwork Consultations, YCL**

- 3.11 According to many agency professionals, the young people showed signs of developing good social, team and personal skills and this was particularly evident after the workshop. They also noted that participants started to support each other (peer support) throughout the project.

*“They have bonded with each other even though they are from very different social circles. They really support each other, it is great to see.” (School)*

*“Some of the groups of young people have really bonded. The development of peer support has been a positive outcome, particularly in colleges.” (LA)*

- 3.12 Coaches estimated that between 60-90% of participants achieved their goals. The Year 2 survey of completers showed that 85% of those responding felt that the Re-Ach programme had helped them to achieve their personal goals.



3.13 **Table 3.2** shows that these positive perceptions translated into attitudinal changes amongst some participants responding to surveys at baseline and follow-up. This is reflected in terms of positive changes in respondents' assessment of their own skills, including:

- recognising strengths and weaknesses (around one third saw improvement in Year 2); and
- solving problems, finding information, organising, working with others and communicating with teachers (around one quarter of respondents saw improvement in Year 2).

<b>Table 3.2: Change in Attitudes - Year 2 Survey Respondents</b>			
	<b>Year 2 (n=80) Attitude Change between Baseline &amp; Follow-Up</b>		
	<b>Improve (%)</b>	<b>Same (%)</b>	<b>Decline (%)</b>
I come to school / college / work every day	15	72.5	12.5
My behaviour in class / work is good	20	57.5	22.5
I get my homework done on time	20	46.25	27.5
I enjoy learning new things	37.5	41.25	21.25
I concentrate well in class/work	22.5	56.25	21.25
I find school / college / work is a waste of time	6.25	61.25	18.75
I communicate well with teachers / other adults	28.75	41.25	25
I work well with other people	25	56.25	18.75
I am good at solving problems	25	50	25
I am good at finding out information	26.25	45	20
I am confident in new situations (meeting new people and going to new places)	27.5	45	25
I recognise my own strengths and weaknesses	32.5	50	17.5
I am good at organising myself	25	53.75	21.25
I try to improve my own performance in school college / work	20	55	25

**Source: Re-Ach end of programme surveys**

3.14 There was also some positive change in general attitudes towards learning, with improvements in responses to enjoyment of learning and feeling good about the future for around one third of respondents, and confidence boosts for around one quarter of respondents in Year 2.

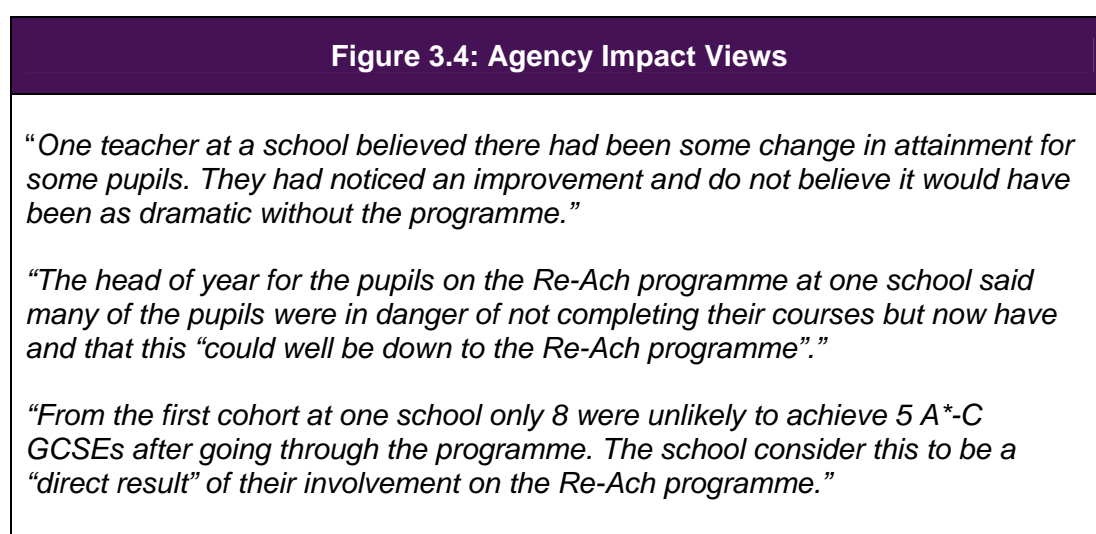
3.15 For the majority (around half or more of the survey respondents) attitudes remained at similar levels between baseline and follow-up. This may support the view (as evidenced through the qualitative findings) that in some cases the programme has played a preventative role. Nevertheless some young people did also demonstrate a downward trend in attitudes between baseline and follow-up:

- around one fifth saw a decline in skills, and behaviour and concentration in class; and
- around one quarter saw a decline in attitudes such as ensuring homework is in on time and trying to improve own performance.

- 3.16 The negative trend could reflect a number of unknown factors related to wider changes and influences on the young person's life (such as family circumstances or peer influences for example). It may also be a function of greater awareness of strengths and weaknesses for some young people - that is, the change indicates a better understanding of their strengths and weakness at follow up stage (compared to baseline) and therefore a more realistic response, rather than a decline in attitude/skill per se.

### **Achievement, Attendance and Destinations**

- 3.17 There was some anecdotal evidence that the Re-Ach programme may have had some positive influence in relation to harder outcomes for a small number of participants. This was in relation to, for example, levels of attainment in coursework and grades, improving attendance levels and positive destinations. **Figure 3.4** shows some agency views on impact.



**Source: Fieldwork Notes, York Consulting LLP**

- 3.18 There was minimal quantitative evidence of impact on achievement, attendance or destinations (given that we only had data for between 25 and 72 pupils). Nevertheless, the data that we analysed showed positive outcomes for some pupils, including:
- **attendance:** half of Year 2 participants for which we had data improved attendance between baseline and follow up (37 of 72 participants), though only 15 of the survey respondents (one sixth) indicated such improvements;
  - **achievement:**
    - a high proportion of Year 1 participants that were in Year 10 when they were on the programme saw higher achievements at GCSE than they had been predicted at baseline - 19 of the 35 pupils that we have data for achieved better than predicted A\*-C grades and 21 improved on predicted D-G grades;
    - in Year 2, 2 of 15 improved on predicted grades at GCSE and 4 of 27 achieved better vocational achievements than had been expected at baseline; and
  - **destinations:** most Year 2 participant completers that we have data for had progressed to full-time education (32 of the 35).

3.19 This data does not demonstrate the additionality of the programme as the numbers are low and we have no understanding of what may have happened without the programme. There are, however, some differences between those that completed the full Re-Ach programme and those that dropped-out of the programme:

- **attendance:** only 32% of non-completers had better attendance, 16% the same and 53% worse; and
- **destinations:** 8 of the 14 non-completers were in full-time education (57%), and smaller numbers were in employment (1), unemployed (3) or unknown (2).

3.20 There were, nevertheless, some less positive outcomes for some of the completers on the programme:

- **attendance:** 30 of the 35 Year 1 participants (in Year 10 whilst on the programme) saw a decline in attendance between baseline and end of programme; and
- **achievement:** most (13/15) Year 2 participants achieved the same or worse than predicted grades at GCSE.

3.21 Significant caution needs to be taken when interpreting these results given that:

- the numbers for both completers and non-completers are very small;
- non-completers do not provide a close comparator group given that the factors influencing drop-out mean they may have different characteristics to those that completed the programme; and
- the Year 1, Year 10 pupils for which we have data are a very small number from only two agencies - there could be a range of other factors specific to the school context that might be impacting on their performance.

3.22 A number of those consulted found it difficult to attribute change to the Re-Ach programme alone, especially where young people were receiving other targeted support which may have contributed to changes in attitudes, aspirations and attainment. **Figure 3.5** outlines some of the views expressed by agencies during the fieldwork.

### Figure 3.5: Agency Perceptions on Realistic Impact

*“The staff at one school felt it would be difficult to attribute any changes in the pupils to the Re-Ach programme. It was felt by most of the staff consulted that the changes would have happened anyway with one teacher suggesting Yr9 might be a better target audience.”*

*“Staff in one College noted there had been improvements in behaviour and attendance but felt they were attributable to other mechanisms as well as the Re-Ach programme.”*

*“Most of the pupils at one College receive Learning Mentor support as well as the Re-Ach programme. Staff do not believe the Re-Ach programme is more effective than their mentoring.”*

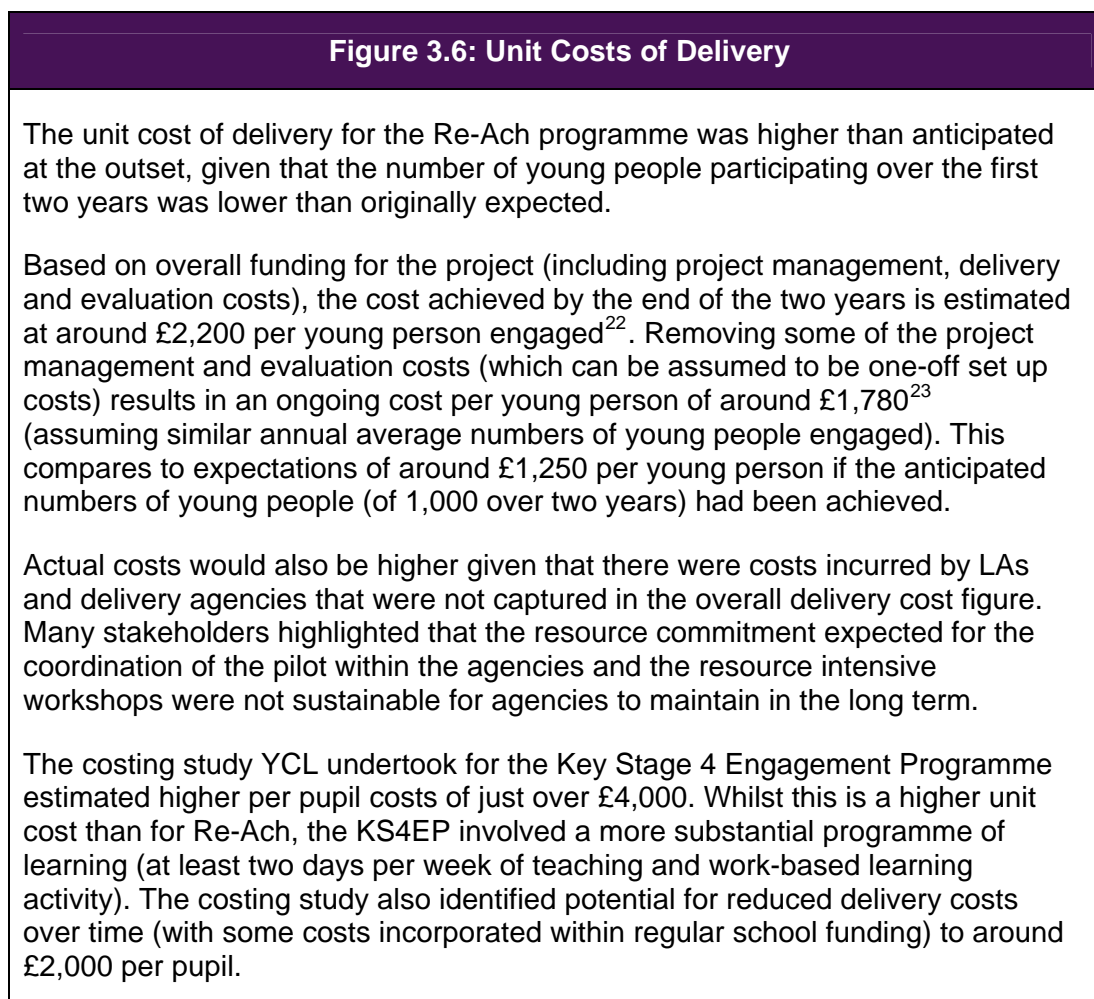
*“At one school the pupils have access to support such as youth workers and learning mentors in addition to the Re-Ach programme.”*

**Source: Fieldwork notes – York Consulting LLP**

- 3.23 There was no substantial qualitative or quantitative evidence to show whether the programme had a particular influence on some types of young people compared to others. Nevertheless, given the relatively low numbers of completers regarded as “harder to reach”, the pilot was not able to fully test the programme impact in relation to this originally intended target group.

## Cost-Effectiveness

- 3.24 The costs of delivering the Re-Ach programme are assessed as relatively high for an initiative of this nature (see **Figure 3.6 below**), especially given that the more disengaged target group was not as significantly involved as originally intended.



**Source: Re-Ach Cost Data, DCSF; KS4EP costs, York Consulting LLP**

- 3.25 The evaluation identified areas where there is the potential to improve cost-effectiveness for any future delivery of programmes which incorporate the principles and elements of Re-Ach. These effectiveness issues are explored in detail in the following section and include the potential to:
- improve engagement approaches at project management, local authority, agency and young people levels;
  - develop greater ownership and coherence, including ensuring some fit within wider strategies to engage and motivate and support improvements at local level; and
  - provide more flexible and responsive delivery to accommodate local agency and pupil contexts.

<sup>22</sup> Overall costs include funding to Hanover and YaR for delivery and costs for national evaluation. They do not include any estimates for costs incurred by Local Authorities and delivery agencies.

<sup>23</sup> Estimate based on removing external evaluation costs and around £200K of project management costs

## 4 FACTORS INFLUENCING EFFECTIVENESS

### Key Messages

1. Learning from the pilot suggested the potential for improved engagement, communication and management strategies at national level. This may have resulted in more effective targeting of agencies and of those young people demonstrating more disengaged characteristics.
2. Learning points included understanding the challenges associated with engaging Local Authorities; improved communication; the need for flexibility of content and timing within agencies; and responding to different agency and cohort cultures and contexts. Some elements of project management affected the engagement and attitude of agencies to Re-Ach, but did not significantly impact on the quality of delivery to young people.
3. Local Authorities adopted different approaches to the co-ordination of Re-Ach and levels of commitment varied significantly. Only one LA appeared to provide consistent levels of co-ordination and administrative / management information support for Re-Ach. This impacted on the extent to which agencies felt engaged with Re-Ach as a pilot programme.
4. Good practice in local co-ordination by LAs included locating Re-Ach within an appropriate team / strategy; organising feedback meetings with agencies; developing consistent data / communication / marketing processes; and providing funding for venues / transport etc.
5. LAs found it difficult to engage agencies who work specifically with disengaged young people and those at risk of becoming NEET. Reasons provided included variable levels of awareness about what the programme was about; concerns over the perceived rigid structure of the programme; the level of challenge in the workshop; and the pilot nature of the programme. Mainstream agencies also commonly identified referral processes focused specifically on involving those with the potential to achieve Level 2.
6. More upfront planning and customisation with agencies may have helped to engage the older and / or more disaffected clients, and heightened agency pre-involvement may have enabled better selection of participants.
7. Success factors and lessons learnt for the delivery of the programme include those relating to project management; features of delivery; agency planning and organisation; and staff engagement at agency level.

- 4.1 Previous sections have already touched on some factors which have positively or negatively influenced the overall value that has been achieved through the Re-Ach programme. Here we provided a thematic review of those factors that appear to be the most significant.

### Project Management and Co-ordination

#### National Management

- 4.2 The interim report identified a number of issues associated with overall management of the programme, including:
- different approaches of the delivery partners led to a degree of inconsistency in programme delivery which has affected agencies' understanding of the programme;

- the short lead in time for the project (and timing over the summer holidays), together with a change in co-ordinator part way through the project, had a negative influence on capacity for project management;
- agencies and LAs were unsure about the capacity and ability of Re-Ach to continue managing and coordinating delivery centrally given that the position of the co-ordinator was uncertain; and
- agencies and LAs reported that in order to take Re-Ach forward more effectively, project management protocols needed to be more clearly defined and the role played by the LA leads would need to be more effectively outlined and communicated.

4.3 Some of these issues affected the engagement and attitude of agencies to Re-Ach, but did not significantly impact on the quality of delivery to young people. In addition, the effectiveness of project management did improve over the two years, as part of a process of continual learning. Learning points have included:

- understanding the challenges in engaging LAs;
- improved communication;
- the need for flexibility of content and timing within agencies; and
- responding to different agency and cohort cultures and contexts.

#### **LA Management and Co-ordination**

4.4 Local Authorities adopted different approaches to the co-ordination of Re-Ach and levels of commitment varied significantly. Only 1 LA provided consistent levels of co-ordination and administrative / MI support for Re-Ach. However, in Year 2 a more structured approach to engaging agencies was evident, including the use of presentations by agencies already involved.

4.5 Staff turnover, resource levels and engagement of senior staff negatively impacted on effectiveness and engagement at the LA level.

4.6 Good practice in local co-ordination by LAs included:

- locating Re-Ach within an appropriate team / strategy so that it has a coherence with other work ongoing in the LA;
- senior level engagement;
- organising feedback meetings with agencies to discuss progress, data collection and understand barriers and success factors within different types of agency;
- developing consistent data / communication / marketing processes; and
- providing funding for venues / transport so that agencies do not have to fund these themselves.

## Data and Management Information

- 4.7 There were difficulties associated with the collation of baseline, monitoring and achievement data to support the evaluation of the programme. This has been influenced to some extent by issues highlighted above regarding overall management and coordination.
- 4.8 There are lessons associated with setting clear expectations and providing clear guidance from the outset. This would support the evaluation process, enabling more consistent and coherent access to data to inform progress and effectiveness in any future delivery of the programme or its components.

## Selection and Engagement

### Agency Engagement

- 4.9 The tight timescales for setting up the project meant that LAs tended to engage agencies that could quickly take it forward. There is evidence illustrating that a more structured approach was used to engage agencies in Year 2. For example in one LA, existing agencies were used to promote and market the project to other agencies.
- 4.10 Motivation for participation was three-fold for agencies consulted during the case studies:
- to **raise number of pupils achieving 5 A\*-C GCSEs** by targeting pupils on the C/D grade borderline;
  - to **achieve qualifications at Level 2 or above** and **progress onto other education training or employment**; and
  - to **develop and improve the quality of the support service** offered to their students as a driver behind their participation.
- 4.11 LAs found it difficult to engage agencies that work specifically with disengaged young people and those at risk of becoming NEET. Inevitably this meant that fewer disengaged young people were enrolled onto Re-Ach than anticipated. Representatives from LAs reported that there was a perception that the 'other' agencies lacked confidence in putting vulnerable young people through a structured, challenging programme that was in the pilot phase.
- 4.12 One constraint was convincing agency staff of the potential value and impact of participation as there was no clear evidence (given that Re-Ach was being piloted) that it works for those young people that are harder to reach. Other reasons provided by agencies and LAs included:
- variable levels of awareness about what the programme was about;
  - concerns over the perceived rigid structure of the programme;
  - the level of challenge in the workshop; and
  - the pilot nature of the programme.



4.13 The professional workshops were deemed valuable and enlightening. However:

- the rationale behind the professionals' workshop was not always clear to all the professionals;
- there was some ambiguity and inconsistency in the role to be played by professionals once back in their daily role; and
- agencies felt their own support teams could play an important role in the facilitation and consolidation of the training.

### **Young People Engagement**

4.14 There was variability in the approach adopted by the different agencies to the recruitment and selection of young people. Agencies selected young people based on their knowledge of the individuals in question. Data used to corroborate their selection included:

- previous attainment at KS3;
- previous attainment at GSCE;
- current grades;
- current attendance;
- previous attendance; and
- low confidence and self-esteem.

4.15 Selection practice at agency level included, for example:

- involving the pupils themselves in the decision to ensure it was owned by the young people and that it was voluntary;
- heads of year selecting the pupils to ensure those most in need of support would receive it; and
- staff responsible within the school for social inclusion policy and practice were involved in the decision making.

4.16 There was evidence in some agencies, however, of the potential to improve the processes associated with selection of young people, for example in relation to participants' engagement and knowledge of why they were being engaged in the programme:

*"Participant 3 has just started Year 11 and was part of the Re-Ach programme during Year 10. She received the introduction to the programme at the end of Year 9 and thought the programme would be teaching her the study skills required at KS4. She wasn't aware of the reasons behind her inclusion on the programme."*

4.17 Agencies reported that being able to select participants using their own criteria was important as they could identify who would be the most suitable young people. This enabled them to fit Re-Ach to their agency goals and context.

- 4.18 Many schools found it refreshing that they could offer Re-Ach to 'borderline' students because often government programmes were targeted exclusively on those at risk of exclusion. This is one factor that is likely to have influenced the overall profile of participants, specifically the low proportion of hard to reach pupils engaged. Indeed, many of the mainstream agencies chose not to select their most disengaged young people for reasons of "protectiveness" or wariness about how they may respond to an outside programme:
- 4.19 Equally a small number of the staff consulted questioned the extent to which it would be feasible to engage the hardest to reach pupils, suggesting that this may have been an unrealistic expectation at the outset.

### **Content and Delivery**

- 4.20 As evidenced in earlier sections, overall delivery to young people and professionals was high quality and agencies welcomed the support offered by the programme. Success factors and lessons learnt from the delivery of the programme include those relating to:
- features of delivery;
  - agency planning and organisation; and
  - staff engagement at agency level.

### **Features / Principles of Re-Ach**

- 4.21 There are a number of features of the Re-Ach programme which are considered by participants to have helped to the potential outcomes and value for the young people engaged:
- the combination of workshop and coaching was considered key by the majority of agencies and / or participants, with the workshop acting as a catalyst and preparation for the coaching (especially in schools);
  - the delivery of workshops off site was considered essential in removing young people from an environment in which they are used to behaving in a certain way;
  - the professionalism of Re-Ach delivery staff was critical to engaging and effecting change in young people; and
  - the voluntary and confidential nature of the programme for young people supported the engagement process.

4.22 Examples are provided in **Figure 4.1**

<b>Figure 4.1: Features of Re-Ach</b>	
<b>Workshops Off-Site</b>	<p><i>“Staff felt the delivery of the coaching workshop within the school was intrinsically linked to a small number of pupils dropping out of the programme that day- they slip back into their old ways.”</i></p> <p><i>“Stakeholders felt having the introductory elements of the programme conducted off-site was a “critical success factor” in achieving the commitment and also the engagement of the pupils.”</i></p>
<b>Professionalism of Re-Ach delivery staff</b>	<p><i>“One agency was particularly complementary about their coach. The staff felt she fitted in really well in the school and reinforced the programme’s ideals in her monthly sessions.”</i></p>
<b>Voluntary &amp; Confidential</b>	<p><i>“Some staff felt the confidential nature was good as it allowed pupils to open up to their coach. Pupils also identified the confidentiality aspect of the programme as positive as this meant they could discuss anything.”</i></p>

**Source: Fieldwork Notes, York Consulting LLP**

4.23 A number of agencies and professional staff identified, however, the potential to improve the flexibility of aspects of the programme management and delivery. Although the young people workshops were on the whole favoured by both the participants and professionals, they were more complex and lacked flexibility with respect to delivery and fit with the agencies structures and approaches:

*“It was frustrating that pupils who were taken out of the workshop were then denied the opportunity for coaching.”*

*“One agency found it difficult to engage staff with the programme due to the timing of the professional workshops. They were delivered late in the summer term which meant not making any progress with the programme until September.”*

*“Releasing teaching staff rather than pastoral staff is a significant barrier especially when they didn’t feel the workshop was massively useful.”*

**Agency Planning and Organisation**

4.24 Attendance at coaching was especially good where the agency (or coach) had embedded processes to remind and chase participants (text, slips, and physically bringing participants) for appointments:

*“Two agencies highlighted that they had identified specific support teams within the school to lead and coordinate activities associated with the programme. As these involved generally non-teaching staff, this didn’t impact on teaching resource significantly.”*

*“One of the coaches kept in touch with her pupils by text message. This helped them remember their sessions and also enabled more constant support.”*

- 4.25 The greatest variability in attendance was in college and 'other' agencies where young people were not necessarily attending on their coaching day and culturally had more choice over attendance:

*"Two of the case study colleges highlighted that they had found getting young people to turn up for coaching sessions a challenge - they felt that the young people were less reliable than those in a school based environment, often they forgot or just didn't turn up."*

*"One college found it difficult to facilitate the chasing of pupils to ensure attendance but this got better once the coaches took on this responsibility."*

- 4.26 In addition, the timing, duration and timetabling of the programme around exams and important events allows Re-Ach to fit to context and 'hook' in young people:

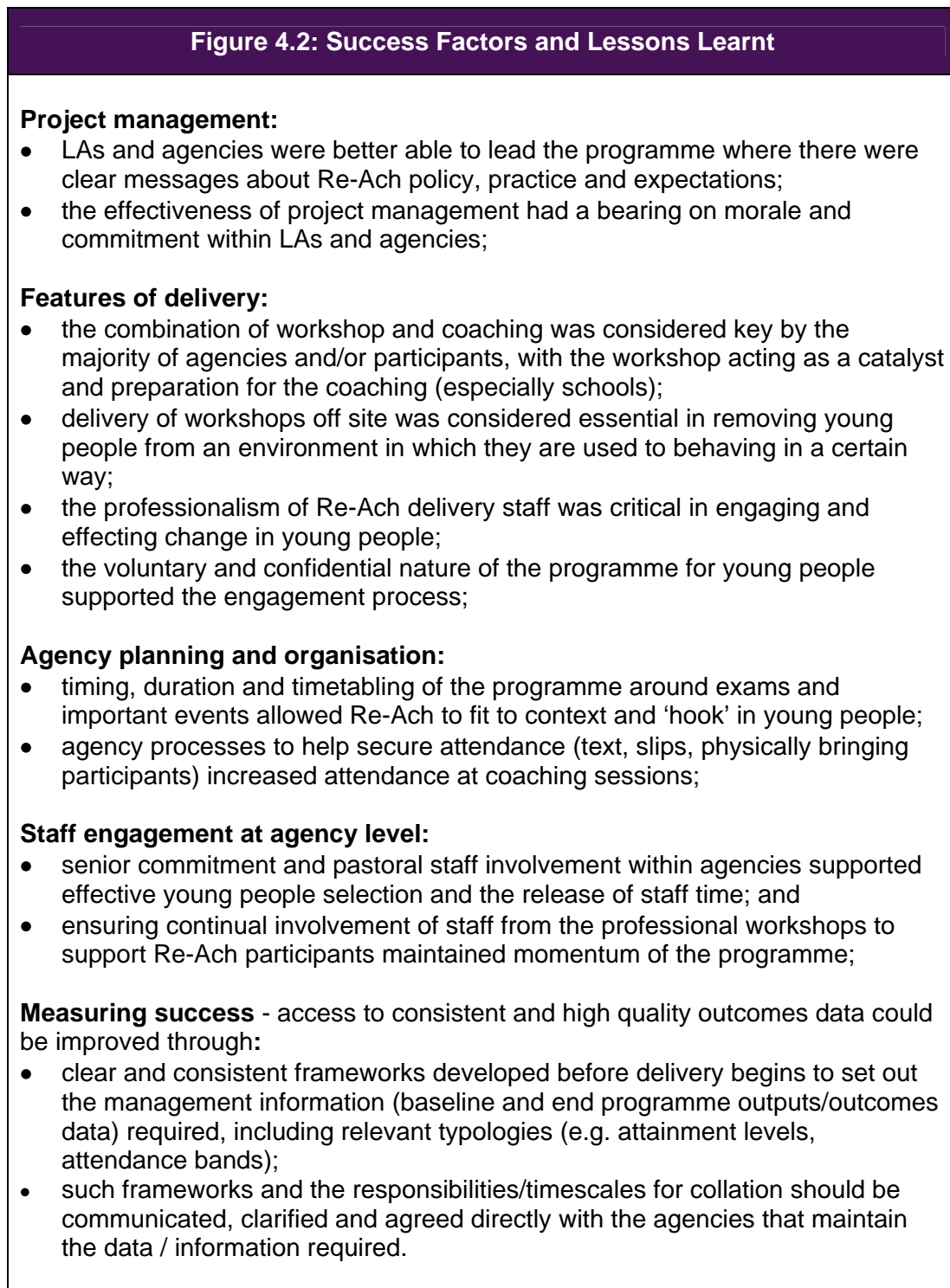
*"During the coaches' steering group the point was raised that the coaches ensure they provide support to the pupils towards exam time. They do this through recognition of the need for revision and also ensuring pupils are equipped to ask teachers the related questions in order to be prepared."*

### **Staff Engagement at Agency Level**

- 4.27 The engagement of professional staff at agency level can have a significant impact on effective delivery and therefore the potential value of the Re-Ach programme on young people. Lessons for embedding delivery in the future (identified through the case studies) include:

- embedding the programme is easier where there are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for agency staff after the 3-day young person's workshop;
- coaching is perhaps easier to integrate where support teams have developed a good relationship with the coach and encourage communication;
- ensuring continual involvement of staff from the professional workshops to support Re-Ach participants maintains momentum of the programme;
- senior commitment and pastoral staff involvement within agencies supports effective young people selection and the release of staff time;
- having a senior leadership representative spearheading the project is key to driving the project forward and integrating it into the agency structures; and
- other support frameworks which the young person may be involved with need to be considered in order to ensure a coordinated and consistent method of support without duplication of effort.

4.28 **Figure 4.2** provides a summary of the success factors and lessons learnt.



## 5 CONCLUSIONS

### Key Messages

1. The Re-Ach programme was a valuable experience for many of those involved and for some there were observable changes in attitudes and skills development. However, the value of the programme for a more disengaged target group was not tested through the pilot as originally intended.
2. The requirement for participants to demonstrate some commitment and ownership through the workshop process perhaps mitigated against the harder to reach group of young people being targeted and referred by some agencies from the outset. Whilst involvement in similar workshops and coaching programmes may be a potentially valuable tool for this group, it is likely that they would need to be used alongside more effective and flexible approaches to engaging agencies, staff and the young people themselves.
3. The pilot programme, which sought to test the combination of the workshop and coaching methodologies, has had some success with young people in danger of not achieving Level 2. As such, individual LA areas or agencies that are facing particular issues with low Level 2 attainment may find it valuable to consider the introduction of Re-Ach type activities alongside other tools and programmes designed to address these issues.
4. Any future implementation, however, should take account of the learning from the pilot, which identified a number of areas to improve delivery and cost-effectiveness, for example:
  - improved communication and project management at central and local level;
  - greater coherence with local pupil engagement strategies;
  - greater preparation with agencies to support ownership and clear expectations;
  - more flexible and responsive delivery, including potential development work to build capacity at local level; and
  - improvements in access to consistent and high quality evaluation data and information.

- 5.1 The preceding sections demonstrate that the Re-Ach programme was a valuable experience for many of those involved. There is also some evidence that the programme contributed to skills development, positive attitude changes (or prevention of deteriorating attitudes), and support for young people to achieve their potential.
- 5.2 With its focus both on raising aspirations amongst young people and undertaking development work with the adults that support these young people, the programme fits well with Government policy focused on increasing the proportion of young people achieving Level 2 attainment and personalised learning approaches.

- 5.3 The pilot programme, which sought to test the combination of the workshop and coaching methodologies, has had some success with young people in danger of not achieving Level 2. As such, individual LA areas or agencies that are facing particular issues with low Level 2 attainment may find it valuable to consider the introduction of Re-Ach type activities alongside other tools and programmes designed to address these issues.
- 5.4 However, the value of programme for those young people who are particularly disengaged or harder to reach has not been tested as originally intended. There were difficulties in engaging those agencies that work with these groups and in some cases encouraging those agencies that did engage to refer participants that fell within the harder to reach category. Perceptions were influenced by this being a pilot programme. There was, therefore, a lack of existing evidence that the programme would work for these young people and some agencies made a 'risk assessment' that less disruption would be caused by not taking this group of young people out of lessons to be involved in the workshops.
- 5.5 Equally, the requirement for participants to demonstrate some commitment and ownership through the workshop process perhaps mitigated against this group of young people being targeted from the outset. Whilst involvement in similar workshops and coaching programmes may be a potentially valuable tool for this group, it is likely that they would need to be used alongside more effective and flexible approaches to engaging agencies, staff and the young people themselves. This hypothesis would need to be tested through a future programme.

### **Lessons for the Future**

- 5.6 Although many agencies and the LAs support some of the principles behind the Re-Ach programme, they did identify a number of issues that affect its sustainability:
- **Funding:** LAs were not consistent in their resourcing, interest or ability to engage with Re-Ach. At the point of consultation, over half the case study agencies would have liked to continue with Re-Ach but could not or would not do so from their own funding. One LA had considered submitting a funding application. Several agencies had identified that they may wish to fund a component of Re-Ach independently, but not necessarily the Re-Ach programme;
  - **Agency resource:** the resource intensiveness for agencies was a clear challenge for programme delivery. Schools in particular are very tightly resourced and struggled in many cases to devote the necessary level of support to Re-Ach. This was raised in particular in relation to the length of the workshops for young people (spanning 5 days in total);
  - **Use of highly skilled, trained, well supported and experienced professionals:** whilst some local development and embedding of training and coaching skills might be achievable, it is likely that an element of external expertise will always be required to deliver the professional and young people workshops;

- **Cost / value for money:** the unit costs of around £2,200 per young person enrolled are high, and value for money at a local level compared to other support programmes may not be evident. Nevertheless these costs are associated with delivery of the pilot programme and they are considerably higher than the unit costs for YaR and Hanover's existing separate programmes. Both organisations believe that considerable cost efficiencies would be achieved in future delivery.

5.7 Any future implementation of the programme should take account of the learning from the pilot, which identified a number of areas to improve delivery and cost-effectiveness, as follows:

- more effective project management and communication (at both central and local levels), which can impact on the levels of engagement (at agency and young person level);
- improved ownership and coherence at the local level is critical to help maximise potential value from delivery of the programme;
- greater flexibility and customisation around timing, duration and inclusion of other components;
- greater preparation with agencies to ensure Re-Ach fits with agency culture and expectations and that the cohort can be selected who are 'right' for the style and commitment required by Re-Ach;
- developmental work with LAs to build capacity locally for coaches and trainers to deliver the programme as part of a locally managed project;
- limited data availability regarding outcomes for the young people engaged could lead to over or under-estimating the impact of the programme; and
- improvements in access to consistent and high quality evaluation information through, for example, the development of clear and consistent data frameworks and clarification of requirements and responsibilities with agencies at the outset.



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