

The Breakout Programme ran for 12 weeks, starting on 23/01/23, and finishing on 24/04/23. During this time, the 10 young people took part in 3 mentoring sessions, and 9 days of educational and adventurous sessions. The educational sessions consisted of things such as a county lines prevention programme, first aid, leadership skills, emotional resilience as well as a session from Thames Valley police centred around knife and gang crime, and a session from drug and alcohol services.

The adventurous sessions involved things such as Jacob's ladder, indoor climbing, high ropes, bushcraft, caving, archery and team dynamics. These were all aimed to support the young people in developing greater confidence and teamwork.

The programme started with 10 students, with varying needs and issues that were explained before starting to work with them. For example, risky behaviours (drugs and alcohol), struggling to maintain relationships, dislikes to authority, discrimination, experience in care, victim of grooming, lack of trust, broken families with lasting effects and disruptive behaviours. Every student on the programme was experiencing a lack of confidence in themselves and trust in others, which was a potential cause of any risky or disruptive behaviours.

However at the end of the programme there were 6. This is due to 1 having been on a temporary move and so returned back to their old school. Another was on a reduced timetable and was waiting for a space at a specialist provision, which became available during the programme and so they left the school. Another student was dismissed from the programme by the school staff due to verbal abuse towards staff at Caldecotte. A further student was dismissed from the programme again by the school staff due to lack of engagement. This young person didn't know anyone else on the programme so felt unable to engage and didn't want to come.

Of the students remaining on the programme till the final mentoring session, all increased their ratings on the shooting star on at least 4 areas, with majority increasing in 5 areas, and one in all 6 areas. Additionally, no students dropped back in their ratings, meaning they remained the same for the 2/3 areas they didn't increase in.

Overall, there was a clear development of confidence within the group. At the beginning, it was obvious the group didn't know each other well. They were hard to engage, and wouldn't contribute or take part. They were unwilling to speak up in front of those they didn't know. This went on for many weeks, with the A4Y team trying new things to engage them and get them interested. After some time, they began engaging in the session and speaking their mind, discussing their opinions and contributing. The teambuilding/adventurous activities definitely helped this to happen, they got more comfortable around each other and started to support one another.

The fact that these students started rating themselves as higher on their shooting stars shows the development in how they positively feel about themselves. They gained confidence in their abilities and who they are. Rating themselves higher in these areas – Aspirations, Contribution, Confidence, Learning, People & Support

and Communicating – could show that the programme has positively impacted them and supported them to make better choices for themselves now and in the future.

Some feedback from students –

- I enjoyed the caving, it was better when there was a whole group of us, when some weren't there it wasn't as fun. Should be more people on it. The morning sessions were good.
- It has been good. I enjoyed the canoeing a lot. The morning sessions were good. I wish I came to more sessions.
- Really enjoyed it. The afternoon sessions were a lot of fun, and the morning sessions were good. They taught me a lot about life.
- I enjoyed it, it was all fun. I have learnt about confidence and how to deal with stress. It has been good.