

RISE.



IMPACT REPORT

Berwick

Young Men in Berwick

Consultation, undertaken in 2020, with key strategic partners from the criminal justice system, Northumberland County Council, health, housing, education and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, identified a gap in support for young males aged 16 to 30 years old in Berwick, Northumberland.

The young men identified were presenting with poor mental health and not currently engaging with any support services, which was contributing to higher-than-average suicide rates and self-harm hospital admissions for this cohort in the town.

The Berwick Project

To tackle these issues, in May 2021 Rise employed a Key Worker dedicated to supporting men aged 16 to 30 years old from Berwick and the surrounding rural areas.

The position, which is funded through the Northumbria's Police and Crime Commissioners Office, Violence Reduction Unit and located within Berwick Community Trust, takes a place based, whole system approach to tackle physical and mental health and social inequalities, which will benefit the young men and wider community of Berwick long term.

Through adopting this approach, we have gained a better understanding of the complex factors that are interacting in young men's lives which can cause multiple issues and challenges and in turn lead to often very chaotic lifestyles.

Over the past 15 months the Key Worker has been in post, they have directly supported thirty young men all of whom have presented with one or more of the issues highlighted here.

Challenges Faced by the Young Men supported in Berwick

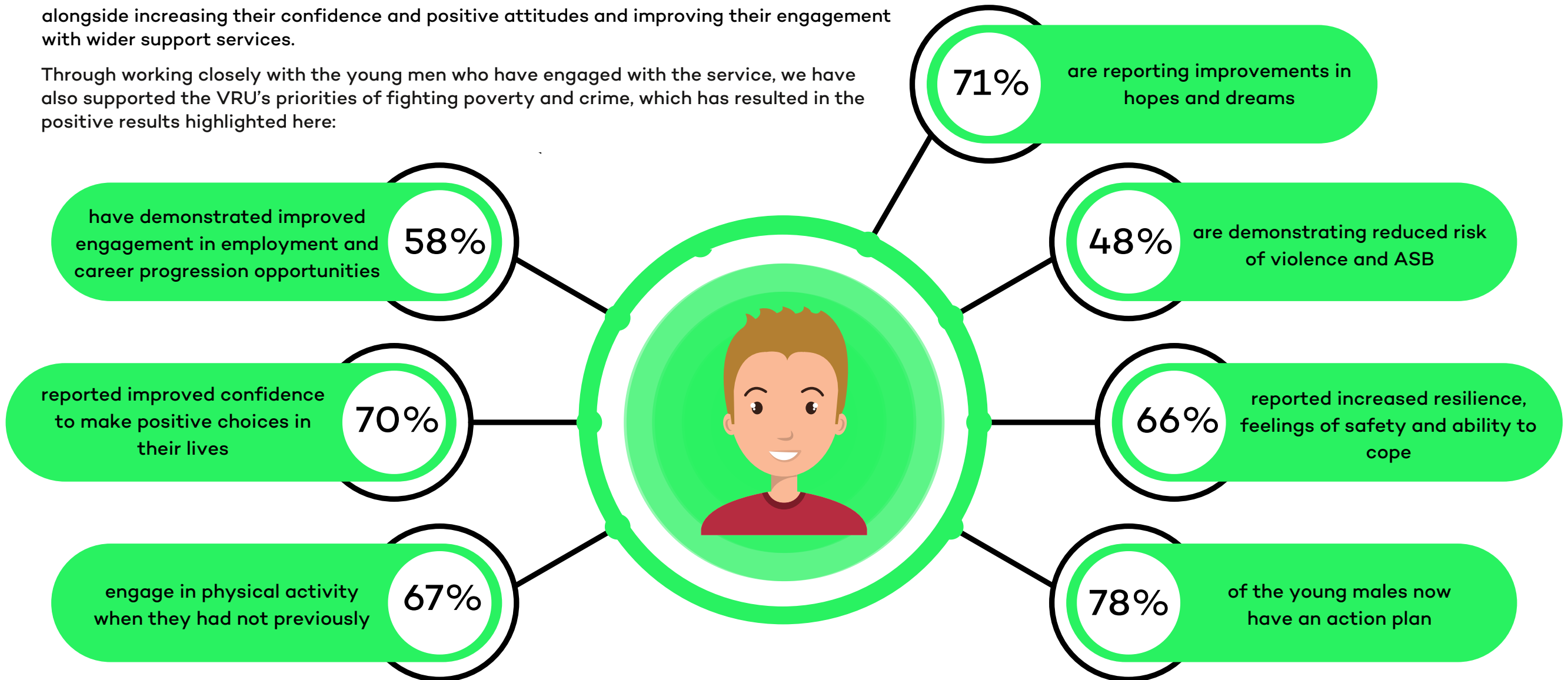
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Outcomes

Over the past 15 months the intervention has aimed to achieve a number of outcomes including supporting the young men to improve their physical and mental wellbeing, which has seen **67% of the young men engage in physical activity when they had not previously**, alongside increasing their confidence and positive attitudes and improving their engagement with wider support services.

Through working closely with the young men who have engaged with the service, we have also supported the VRU's priorities of fighting poverty and crime, which has resulted in the positive results highlighted here:



have demonstrated improved engagement in employment and career progression opportunities

58%

reported improved confidence to make positive choices in their lives

70%

engage in physical activity when they had not previously

67%

71%

are reporting improvements in hopes and dreams

48%

are demonstrating reduced risk of violence and ASB

66%

reported increased resilience, feelings of safety and ability to cope

78%

of the young males now have an action plan

Delivery Approach

To achieve these outcomes, the Key Worker has adopted a partnership approach to resolve the multiple complex issues going on in these young men's lives, collaborating with partners such as Primary Mental Health, Thriving Together, Social Prescribers, Housing, Department for Work and Pensions and multiple VCSE partners.

To hear more about the project and from some of the partners involved please watch our video [here](#).

To compliment the direct support the Key Worker has provided, and as part of our placed based approach, we have also implemented a number of other interventions including undertaking youth voice sessions across various settings in Berwick, coordinating a 12th Man programme in conjunction with Newcastle United Foundation and providing SIM cards to tackle digital exclusion (further details on these projects can be found below).



Tackling Digital Exclusion

Throughout the initial six months of the programme, it was identified that a huge barrier the young men faced was the inability to connect digitally with local services; they did not have the connectivity to listen to messages, text or call the Key Worker or other vital services to arrange appointments, follow up on issues and allow them to feel part of the local community.

In November 2021, we were successful in securing 25 SIM cards through the Vodafone Charities Connected fund to distribute to those young men engaging with the Key Worker who faced digital exclusion; this has provided them with the ability to not only connect better with the Key Worker but also other support services in the Berwick area such as GP's, Dentists, Housing, Job Centres and Citizens Advice Bureau.

For one service user the SIM card enabled him to arrange a job interview and receive the call which led to him securing employment. He told us "Being able to call people and services and them being able to contact me has been excellent, extremely helpful".

Additionally, feedback from another service user stated "since using the SIM card I feel really happy, I feel it has reconnected me to the world".

Results of youth voice sessions undertaken with Berwick Youth Project, Berwick Academy and Engage



In addition to the 1:1 support the Key Worker provides, we were also keen to provide a service for the wider male community of Berwick who wanted support with their mental health. In February 2022, in conjunction with partners and volunteers from Berwick we launched Andy's Man Club. Andy's Man Club provide talking groups to support men suffering with mental health issues and focus on suicide prevention. One attendee who lost his wife of 37 years to cancer during lockdown told our Key Worker:

"Thank you for this, it is truly helpful. I met a man there who had also lost his wife of 47 years last year, we had both, for the last five months sat in the house, lights off with the door locked. I didn't know if what I had to say was as bad as some of the other guys there but being able to talk with similar people was amazing and so helpful. I will definitely be going each week. I am encouraging my son to go too (when he is ready) as it has helped me so much."

Additionally, we also identified a gap in provision for males to improve their mental and physical wellbeing following the COVID-19 pandemic. To tackle these issues in early 2022 in conjunction with Newcastle United Foundation and multiple physical activity deliverers we facilitated the inaugural 12th Man programme in Berwick. The 12th Man is a 12 week holistic health and wellbeing programme designed to create long term health behaviour changes in men. Using the draw of Newcastle United Football club, the programme aims to target men who would not usually engage in traditional health interventions.

Alongside the health improvements of the group which included:

a collective **27kg** weight loss,

100% of the males who attended the programme agreed it had improved their mental wellbeing

88% stated the programme improved their physical health.



To find out more about Andy's Man Club, [click here](#).

If you would like more information about our work in Berwick please contact;

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To find out more about the 12th Man programme, [click here](#).

Acknowledgements

Andy's Man Club	Citizens Advice Bureau Northumberland	Northumberland Communities Together
Bernica Housing	Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland	Northumberland County Council
Berwick Academy	Engage	Northumberland Recovery College
Berwick Community Fire Station (James Henderson)	Homeless Team (Paul Charlwood)	North Family Hub
Berwick Community Trust (Becci Murray & Joanne Douglas)	Job Centre Berwick	Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioners Office - Violence Reduction Unit
Berwick DWP	MIND	Social Prescribers
Berwick Rugby Club (Dougie Hall)	Mind and Sole (Chrissy Smith & Volunteers)	Thriving Together
Berwick Sports and Leisure Centre (Keiron Logan & Catherine Barnes)	Newcastle United Foundation (Regan Graham, Nicole Ainslie & Dave Pick)	Tweedmouth Rangers (Kevin Dixon)
Berwick Youth Project	Nicole Frost Fitness	Vodafone Charities Connected
Beth Meakin Primary Mental Health Occupational Therapist	Northern View (Isabel Litster)	Yoga with Jamie
Choices4Growth		

and a huge thank you to all men that have accessed the service(s) and have helped shape the offer going forward enabling us to support even more men in the future.