END OF GRANT REPORT

BEER HARRIS FUNDING FOR BREAK'S THINK POSITIVE PROGRAMME

grant awarded £1,500 for period April 2024 to March 2025

BREAK- Who we are and what we do

Break is an East Anglian charity which, for almost 60 years, has supported some of the most disadvantaged children and young people in society – those who have been taken into care. Break provides safe and nurturing children's homes, including specialist disability homes for children whose levels of need are too high for their families to meet. We also provide respite care for families whose children have disabilities but are still able to live at home. Break offers a wide range of charitably funded opportunities and support to help young people overcome the trauma they have experienced and go on to fulfil their potential.

Our support doesn't end when our children turn 18, and we continue to be there for them as they start to live independently. Break's innovative services are highly effective and this is reflected when outcomes for our young people are compared with national averages. At a time when almost a million young people are NEET (not in education, employment or training), and young care leavers over 3 and a half times more likely to be so, our young people are flourishing with 67% engaged in education, employment or training.

Details of the Think Positive Programme

Think Positive offers care experienced children and young people mental health support which is tailored to their specific needs and not otherwise available through the NHS or other statutorily funded organisations.

Aspiration Sessions This support begins with one to one visits from the team which encourage isolated young people to begin engaging in group sessions. Through fun activities young people begin to connect with their peers and trust the adults in the team. They grow in confidence as they start to move beyond their comfort zone and try new activities.

Wellbeing Young people connect with their peers in a safe environment. While engaging in activities to support good mental health such as yoga, nature walks and cooking and eating together they begin a process of self-reflection and learn techniques to support their own mental health. They can talk about the challenges they face and the concerns they have. Trusted adults can signpost to further mental health support.

Emotional Wellbeing Sessions (EWS) Young people can access one to one therapeutic session with trained practitioners who are aware of the specific issues faced by those with care experience. Many of these young people find it too difficult to access mental health support in the community for a variety of reasons. The EWS practitioners will travel to the young people and be flexible about changing or missing appointments. They are usually known to the young people who trust them. Their support is not limited to a few weeks or months, but continues for as long as the young person needs it.

The areas of mental health addressed and profile of our young people

The support offered by Think Positive is tailored to address the needs of young people with experience of living in care. It focuses particularly on understanding and overcoming the effects of trauma including low mood, anxiety and emotional dysregulation. It also supports young people to be aware of and better care for their mental health. Young people who have been taken into care have suffered loss, neglect and abuse and the trauma they have experienced can severely impact their life outcomes. Children in care are four times more likely to have a mental disorder than other children living with their families (NSPCC 2015) and are between four and five times more likely to attempt suicide. (NYAS 2019). This group is less likely to seek mental health support in the community and needs specially tailored support to overcome the trauma they have experienced.

The Impact of the Think Positive Programme

Outputs This service is available to 80 young people across Break in East Anglia .

Over the 12 month grant period Break delivered:-

Wellbeing 33 sessions

Aspiration 43 sessions

At which 58 young people made 301 attendances in total

Activities carried out included
Archery; Trip to the coast; Rock climbing; Visit to a cat café; Building pontoons and walkways at a nature reserve; Glow golf; Crate stacking; Pottery; Cooking and eating together

EWS services 39 young people accessed one- to- one support, 16 of whom are also accessing the Wellbeing sessions. .

Impact

100% of participants have increased engagement with activities

100% of participants have reduced isolation

80% of participants have increased confidence

68% of participants have improved interpersonal skills

32 young people have made significant progress in identifying personal goals and making progress toward achieving them through improved confidence and skills. I would like to tell you about some of them:

AP & CC are now working on trading sessions on our CoffeeBreak van to improve their CVs before looking for work.

DH has successfully secured employment

MA has been supported to reconnect with her extended family and is taking the courageous step of moving to Manchester to be near them.

MC has finished college, found a job and has started living independently

LG is attending a MINT employment programme while earning money working on the CoffeeBreak van and has made two close friendships.

JA is now employed full time

HB recently moved to Cambridge and through attending Wellbeing sessions has confidently started to build a network of friends and contacts.

T lost his job and is being supported to overcome this set back.

SP through Wellbeing sessions, has gained the confidence to apply for a college course.

CG is doing well at college and living independently

CT shares a flat with CG and both young people have forged a strong friendship over gaming and support each other.

V had been offered a place at Bristol University but deferred entry as he felt anxious about making new friends. Attending Wellbeing sessions gave him the confidence to participate in the Excelsior Tall Ships voyage from Helsinki to Tallin. During the voyage he learned that friendships can be made when young people, strangers to one another, are in 'the same boat' literally, in a new and challenging environment. He has now gone to Bristol, started his undergraduate course and has made new friends.

Case study

Break's support doesn't end when our young people reach 18 and leave care - we continue to offer support when they need it. One young man, who had left his Break home and been living independently for a couple of years suddenly came back to us for help. He had lost his job at the same time that he and his partner had to move home as the landlord was selling the property. In addition his partner discovered she was expecting their second child.
As a young father and main supporter of the family, he felt overwhelmed and his anxiety was preventing him from looking for a new job. His stress was effecting the family and he approached us for help.
The Break team persuaded him to attend Wellbeing sessions as well as access some one-to-one Emotional Wellbeing support.
Through these sessions he managed to regain his emotional equilibrium and reduce his anxiety. He was then able to do some work on Break's CoffeeBreak van, to boost his confidence about getting back into the work environment.
Without Break's support, the anxiety he felt may have resulted in him becoming long term unemployed and putting stress on his family life and possibly a breakdown of the family. He is now back on an even keel. Previously the young man was working as a labourer, but through his recent engagement with Break, he is now more ambitious for himself and is taking a number of training courses with a view to obtaining an internship. He is the proud father of a new baby girl and optimistically looking to develop a sustainable and fulfilling career. He knows that Break is always here to support him.

I hope that you are as proud as we are of the progress our young people have made over the last twelve months .

One of our young people told us "*"It should be happening nationally, not just in Break…there's how many kids in care throughout the UK? And they aren't getting the same support that we get in Break."*

Break feeds learning in to the Department of Education and local authorities in order to improve provision in the sector. Charitable funding allows us to pilot and run innovative programmes that can be scaled and imbedded in statutory provision.

Again, thank you so much for your funding which has allowed the Think Positive Programme to help our young people achieve or retain good mental health and make this progress.

We are always very happy to share the work we do so if you would like to visit us please do let me know, we would be delighted to welcome you.

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