

**Faith in Families**

**Brighter Futures Project**

By Linda Harle

# Evaluation report 2021



Brighter Futures Project

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Effective projects require more than an understanding of the community, it depends on the ability to effectively evaluate the needs, plan relevant projects and manage resources and the way we respond to events and make decisions is fundamental. We hope you enjoy reading this informative report.

# **Brighter Futures Project**

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1

Faith in Families services is run from our 3 centres across Swansea where a high percentage of the children and families that we work with experience the impact of living in areas of deprivation. We support the local community by offering a variety of groups and projects. These include, Parent and Toddler groups, support groups, healthy lunch clubs, Playgroups, After School Clubs, parenting groups and back-to-work programmes.

We aim to make easily accessible opportunities for children and young people and their families to change their lives for the better. We work in partnership with a number of agencies in Swansea to ensure that a complete package of opportunities and support is on offer.

The Brighter Futures Project was developed in May **2019** after many years of research and consultation. We recognised the growing need to develop this project as we became increasingly aware that more and more children were experiencing emotional difficulties, multiple adverse childhood experiences and were becoming disengaged and excluded from education, social activities and their communities, from young ages.

Over the last year the Brighter Futures Project has grown and adapted through a multitude of methods to continue providing quality support for children, young people and families during the Covid-19 pandemic. The project continues to work with children on a one-to-one basis who are identified as having emotional/behavioural challenges which affect many aspects of their lives, this has included their home and school lives, relationships with their peers and families as well as having an impact on their academic achievements. A large majority of children that we are currently working with have experienced a variety of disadvantage including chaotic home lives, parents without the capacity to help with school work, no private space, family separations, non-working families on benefits with high debts, family members with addictions, parents with little or no interest in the importance of spending quality time together, having low aspirations for themselves or their children. Due to the ongoing pandemic, these issues have become more prevalent than ever before.

Research has proved that adverse childhood experiences can affect the developing brain, immune and endocrine systems. Due to the high level of stress in their environment, children who experience more adverse events are more likely to develop behaviours that are harmful to health, such as smoking, drinking alcohol or antisocial behaviour. Our engagement team has been able to provide bespoke 1-2-1 interventions for children who require extra support with: Understanding and managing strong emotions, processing traumatic events, attachment difficulties, anxiety, self-esteem, family relationships, to name just a few. We are now actively working with 26 local schools and receive regular referrals on a weekly basis. Over the year we have supported 128 children

## 1.2. Meet the team

### Linda Harle

My name is Linda and I am the Project Manager for the Brighter Futures team and Clase Community Cwtch. I grew up in Neath in South Wales before heading out into the world. I am passionate, caring, and self-motivated and try to live life to the full!

When I was younger I always knew I wanted to work with people and particularly children but I also had a love for the great outdoors and the environment. I studied health and social care, child development and child psychology then at 18 I moved to Hereford to work on a conservation project. I took the skills I had learned from this and college and went to work in a school in Portugal developing conservation areas for vulnerable children to enjoy. I still love the outdoors and in my spare time you will find me walking my 3 dogs, sitting around a fire pit or at the beach doing beach cleans!



After some time travelling I moved back to the UK and started a new job in London as a social work assistant. This gave me so much insight and understanding of the diverse issues that so many people faced. In 1999 I returned to Neath where I still live with my husband and children. I started working in Swansea Women's Aid in 1999 as children services development manager. I stayed in this roll for 11 years before moving to Faith in Families where I have now worked for 11 years.

Throughout my career I have completed endless qualifications, training courses and attended countless conferences that have enhanced my knowledge and my practice. My passion for ensuring that all children deserve a good start in life, have access to the same opportunities drove me to push for the development of the Brighter Futures project. I want to support children to flourish in their home and school and reduce the impact of any difficulties they have already had to endure.

I am extremely proud of the project and the team and I look forward to growing and developing the project ensuring that all children that need support have access to our services. I am constantly researching and seeking out new opportunities for the project to ensure the team receive the training and support that they need and that the children and families receive a high-quality service.

As Dr. Seuss said, "To the world, you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world."

## **Jake Mayes**

Hallo ☺ My name is Jake, and I am the Senior Children's Engagement Worker from the Brighter Futures Project within Faith in Families. I was born and raised in Swansea – mainly in a single-parent family.

My interest in Psychology and understanding human behaviour came during my time spent in Gorseinon College, learning about the eponymous subject – which greatly differed from my previous ambitions of being a dentist, or some ambiguously rich “businessman”.



I then achieved my Undergraduate BSC Diploma in Psychology from Cardiff University. During my time at University, I was able to engage with a placement scheme, working for Llamau - a leading charity in youth homelessness. During my time spent in Llamau, I was able to grow a deeper understanding of mental health issues, the impacts of poverty/relative deprivation and how to help others by using a trauma-informed, non-judgemental approach. I enjoyed every moment working with Llamau, which then helped direct my future career ambitions to work in an area, where I could use my knowledge and skills to support a wide variety of young people.

Once I graduated, I then qualified to become a teacher, where I taught in colleges and high schools in Swansea and Cardiff. Whilst I enjoyed teaching social-related topics, and supporting young people to thrive in their education, I wanted more of a supporting role in my career, opposed to an educating one. After 2 years of teaching, I then became a YP IDVA (Young people independent domestic violence advisory) in Cardiff, where I supported children and young people who had witnessed or experienced domestic abuse. This role was fulfilling, challenging and inspiring, as I was able to meet so many amazing, resilient people, who had broken the cycle of abuse and proactively taken further steps to better themselves. However, due to wanting to be closer to family, I moved back to Swansea, where I began my role as a children's engagement worker with the Brighter Futures Project.

One of the aspects of my role that I enjoy the most is the ability to bring in my own personal interests, and use them to help support those in need. For instance, my interests in psychology have helped young people understand their own behaviour and thinking patterns. My love for games has helped build rapport with other children, and games are a frequent method of delivery for various coping skills we deliver. Finally, my enthusiasm for creativity has been used to encourage young people to try new and novel methods to overcome various difficulties and to help them find new and effective ways for emotional release.

In terms of the future, I hope to keep developing my practise, by learning new & exciting ways to support young people. I also aim to be a strong driving force in

developing the Brighter Futures Project further, to reach an even wider demographic of children & families who need a helping hand, in our lovely little country, Wales.

### **Nadelle Davis**

Hi 🖐️ I'm Nadelle and I'm one of the Children's Engagement Worker Team in the Faith In Families 'Brighter Futures' Project. I joined the team in 2020 and have enjoyed all the challenges that I have encountered so far and am so proud of the progress in the children, young people and families that we have worked with.



I was born and raised in Swansea and still live there with my husband and three children. I love Swansea for the contrast of the wide variety of shops, restaurants and nightlife combined with the beauty of Gower and the picturesque walks and scenery. In my spare time, I really enjoy cooking and baking and am always looking for new recipes to try. I also love going camping and travelling to visit new places around the world with family and friends.

I am a qualified Primary School Teacher and have a special interest in Additional Learning Needs and behaviour management. I am also a trained Drawing and Talking Practitioner and am currently working towards attaining a Parenting Course Facilitator Qualification.

### **Anna Wilkins**

Hello there. My name is Anna and I am one of the engagement workers on the Brighter Futures Project in Faith in Families. I am 24 years old and live in Ogmere Vale in Bridgend. I was originally brought up in Blaengwynfi in the Afan Valleys but moved into my first house with my partner Jack in October 2020.



I am a very outgoing, bubbly person with a big personality. People often tell me I am quite loud but I always make people laugh. I am very caring of people and quite sensitive towards other people's emotions. I do not like seeing those I love and care about in any kind of pain. I love to make people smile and I feel complete when supporting and helping others.

From as young as I can remember, I always wanted to work with children. I spent hours teaching my teddies and dolls the alphabet as well as always helping my younger brother with his homework. I had big dreams of becoming a teacher and after two years in college completing my level 3 in Childcare, Learning and Development, I went onto university to get my teacher's degree. I graduated in 2018

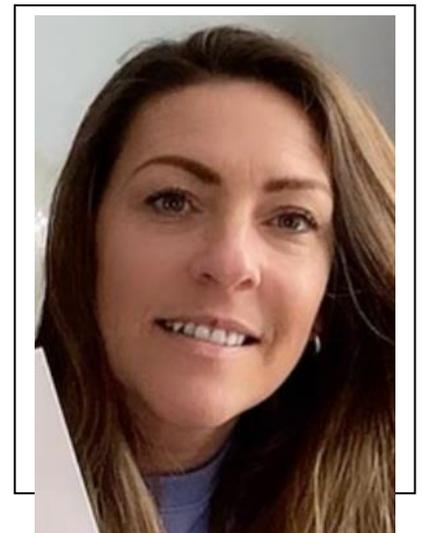
with BA Hons in Primary Education with Qualified Teaching Status and taught in a school for two years before joining Faith in Families.

It is my aspiration in life to help others and show others that dark times do not last forever with a little bit of help. As I was able to achieve my dream, I want to make it possible for young people and children to realise that they can achieve their dreams also, they just need the courage to pursue them. There are a number of children that do not have an adult behind them to encourage them and support them. Therefore, if I can be that adult in their life then I am content.

### **Hayley Maddick**

Hi my name is Hayley and I am one of the engagement workers on the Brighter Futures Project in Faith in Families. I am 38 years old and live in Swansea with my two children.

I started my career in Faith in Families way back in 2009 as a sessional play-worker when my daughter was just a baby. Over the last 12 years I have worked my way up through the organisation from play-worker, child and family worker, senior child and family worker to an engagement worker on the Brighter Futures team. I have learned and developed so much during this time, I have completed my Level 3 in childcare, learning and development, my Level 5 in leadership for children and young people and I am now a Drawing and Talking practitioner.

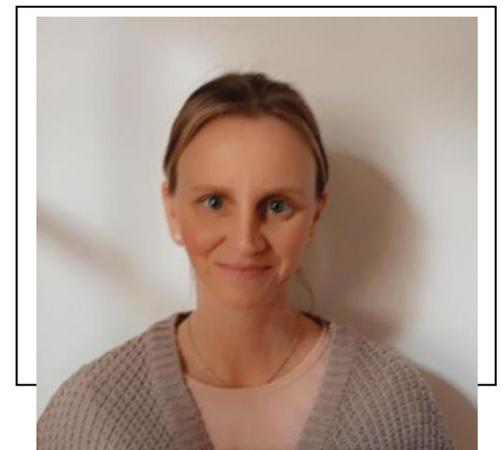


I consider myself to be a resourceful individual with excellent interpersonal skills, I am confident in my own abilities and I am an effective communicator. I am extremely motivated and enjoy a challenge. I am passionate about people and this is evident in both my working life and personal life. I enjoy encouraging others and am often sought out by friends and family to provide support and advice. I love my current role within the organisation and hope to continue enabling hard-to-reach children to build their confidence, self-awareness and to have a voice.

### **Jodie Hyett**

Hi my name is Jodie I am a children's engagement worker on the Brighter Futures team with Faith in families. I grew up in the city centre of Swansea with my mum, dad and 3 siblings. I am 38 years old and currently live in the Bonymean area of Swansea. I am a very proud mum to 2 children Connor age 13 and Jasmine age 2.

I have a very busy life, with working and my 2 busy children who enjoy being active. The time is filled with visits to the beach, park, football training and football matches.



When I left school I began an apprenticeship with Faith in Families this allowed me to achieve my NVQ levels 2 & 3 in early years care and education with the crucial hands-on experience which I feel is important when working with children and families. After I completed my apprenticeship I left Faith in Families and during this time I had my son, when he was school age I worked in the local primary school providing one-to-one support to children who were facing academic difficulties and those with behavioural issues.

Even though I enjoyed my time at the school, this kind of work and environment wasn't for me. So I re-joined the Faith in Families' as a sessional worker in 2014. I was back doing what I love most, supporting the children and families within the community. I was lucky enough to progress from my sessional role, to a permanent position as a play-worker on to a senior role within the family centre. I worked as a senior child and family worker until 2019, until I took adoption leave for a year to spend time with my daughter. During this time I completed my Level 5 in leadership for children and young people.

When I returned from adoption leave, there was an opportunity to join the Brighter Futures team. Although I was nervous about the new role I had the confidence and 20 years of experience with children and families to draw upon. I have always wanted to be part of something that supports children and families, providing them with the necessary support to get them through tough times. I want all the children and families that I support to realise their potential, this role has allowed me to support children and to provide them with the tools they need to achieve their own dreams. I believe that everyone should have at least one person in their lives who is their champion, never gives up on them and enable them to become the best version of themselves, I hope that I am that person for our families. During the short time I have worked on the project I have had lots of opportunities to attend training that has enhanced my practice and I am now a Drawing and Talking practitioner.

### 1.3 The Evaluation

This is an evaluation of the work of Brighter Futures Project from May 2020 to May 2021.

The evaluation aims to gain an overview of the impact that The Brighter Futures Project has made in order to value the work of all partners in the programme while also highlighting the distinctive aspects, particular strengths and any weaknesses with the overall work of the Project.

It includes some data from monitoring however it is mainly based on qualitative data from research.

Monitoring data was supplemented by information from project reports and additional research. The additional research took the form of structured questionnaires, pupil pre and post-assessments and part-structured interviews.

## 1.4 This report

This report tries to present the main findings of the research undertaken in relation to the research asked. Through representing the views of parents/carers, team and partner agencies, through direct quotation, case studies and combining these views with quantified findings, it tries to provide some analysis regarding most aspects of The Brighter Futures Project. Conclusions are made on the basis of the information given in the report.

Qualitative findings are illustrated with direct quotations whenever possible.

The percentage meter questionnaire allows opinions about selected statements to be expressed as a single percentage figure. This report uses the following descriptions in relation to each percentage score:

80%+ very strong agreement

70 - 79% strong agreement

60 – 69% agreement

50 – 59% less strong agreement

There are few scores of less than 50% and these are expressed as a disagreement for scores of 30 – 49% or strong disagreement for scores of less than 30%

## 2.0. Parent/carers questionnaire feedback

We ask parents/carers of children who had received support from the project to complete a feedback form answering a number of questions to gauge the effectiveness of the work and the services we were providing. 56 parents/carers responded.

### Questions

Question	Agreement %
My child has benefited from support from the Brighter Futures Project	94%
My child attends school regularly	91%
My child receives good feedback from school	86%

My child is more confident	96%
My child can develop positive friendships	95%
My child interacts well with others	95%
My child can talk about their worries	96%
My child can control their temper if something upsets them	91%
My child can calm themselves down if they are worried/anxious	90%
My child appears happier	96%
My child can say how they feel	94%
The project has helped me to enjoy my child/children	84%
I feel more confident in managing my child's behaviour	84%
I think this support should be offered to all children	97%

## 2.1 Feedback from parents/carers/professionals/children

### Brighter Futures Parent Feedback

Please answer the following questions honestly, reflecting on the most recent support you and your child/children have received.

1. On a scale of 0-5 how would you rate the quality of the support you have been offered?

1	2	3	4	5
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2. On a scale of 0-5, how would you rate the progress your child/children have made during their support?

1	2	3	4	5
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3. On a scale of 0-5, how would you rate the support worker's understanding of you and your children's needs?

1	2	3	4	5
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4. **Would you recommend the Brighter Futures project to other parents seeking support for their child/children's wellbeing? Please circle Yes/No**

5. **Do you have any further comments you would like to make? Please include what you think went well or not well, and anything you would like to see different in the future.**

I was asking for help for my daughter for years, and was shuttling back and forth between the GP, HV and school with no success. After all the traumas my daughter endured in her young life, I knew we needed help and it was so frustrating not getting it.

From the moment the Brighter Futures team started working with us they listened - really listened - to all my concerns without judgement or pity, but with quiet empathy.

P loved her from the first meeting and was always excited to see her. When lockdown started I assumed that would end her sessions so I was relieved and delighted to be able to carry them on, especially as the situation had, of course, heightened P's anxieties.

Before P started her sessions, she was having daily meltdowns that could last hours, she would lash out physically, wet the bed and generally exhibited what I worried was PTSD or some kind of disorder such as bipolar or ODD. This meant we perceived her as having something 'wrong' with her and whether subconsciously or not treated her accordingly.

I noticed P's behaviour beginning to change when she would show me techniques she had been taught in the sessions. She began learning to self-regulate her emotions better and would stop just before losing control and would practice these techniques with increasing success.

There was a real breakthrough for us when she'd had over half of her sessions, she told me she'd been really honest about her feelings and behaviour and this seemed to have a massive impact with her outbursts reducing to very occasional and her demeanour becoming much more confident and settled.

For myself, the real true impact of these sessions has been on my own understanding of my daughter's personality and needs. Thanks to the project their insights and the way of explaining these to me I finally felt I had actual answers to what I was instinctively feeling but not understanding. Learning that my child has not got something 'wrong' with her that needs fixing, feels like an enormous weight has finally lifted off my shoulders - I can view her with much more compassion instead of concern and anxiety which has completely changed my parenting methods. I truly believe it is this, coupled with the techniques and self-knowledge P now has, which has the real potential to change P's whole life for the better. With these skills, we can strengthen our own relationship and hopefully set the bar for P's future relationships, and self-worth.

These sessions have been genuinely life-changing and I will forever be so grateful to the Brighter Futures project for giving us this chance, for giving my beautiful, funny, clever, and EMPATHIC child a chance at a fulfilling, happy life without so much anxiety and fear holding her (or us) back. Thank you so much I don't think you know the difference you have made to our family.

*"Really so grateful they have you to talk to as well Jake - nothing but absolute praise for Faith in Families it's been a complete godsend for my family" Parent*

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*"I'm so happy your working with Tobey and it's going so well. Think he's really enjoying working with yourself and it's helping him with his emotions and feeling and having better control over his actions" parent*

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*"She's getting better every week. I'm so grateful for everything you have done and proud of how well she has adapted to it all" parent*

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*"Nicole had positive feedback after the sessions. It is just a shame it had to end soon just as we can see improvements of X (As Jake [Engagement worker] may have remembered she was not sure about the programme when she started)" Parent*

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*"Absolutely great help and a mission-driven of well-being support. Keep it up team! Nevertheless, the accessories given for each session were a bonus. A special mention to Jake for facilitating the opportunity!!! Well recommended" Parent*

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*"Jessica really enjoyed the sessions. Everything was organised really well each week" Parent*

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*"I have been grateful for the support you have given X at the difficult time. Keep up the good work. You are all doing a good job. Thank you." Parent*

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*"Libi enjoys the Zoom calls, if she can continue with the calls, I would recommend a later time so she has more time to get home from school," Parent*

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"She has come home from school a completely different child. She seems so happy and non-stop talking about you and what you two did today. Thank you so much"

parent

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"I feel more confident than before and I feel more confident to talk to my parents and I am glad I had support," child

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"It was fun and I think it went well. I always look forward to the sessions" child

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"Now that he has had his voice listened to and action is taken from that, his confidence is back to his old self" parent

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"Thank you so much for everything, it really has meant a lot" parent

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"He really likes you and speaks about your sessions all the time. You make a Monday at school more bearable for him. You have both formed a relationship that he will remember forever (kind of like a favourite teacher you may remember) thank you for everything" parent

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"Thank you for your support, it's not often I get a good worker" parent

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"He had some mindfulness session tasks to do for school and one of the questions was is there anyone you trust to talk to, and you were top of it. In fact, it was only you that he named" parent

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"The work, time and effort you put into these children really makes such a positive impact, you should all be proud of yourselves" a worker from the early help hub

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"thank you for all my help and support with her son, all the family and school can see a big change in him but he did come home from school yesterday as it was his last session saying he feels really sad and lonely now that our sessions are over" parent

### 3.0 School feedback

*"Linda, just wanted you to know how grateful we are to your team who do such an amazing job. I find them so efficient and professional in every way. Whenever I mention Bright Futures to social services and what you do they are always impressed. Thank you and your team for your hard work and commitment"* K. Jones  
teacher

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*"We have referred a number of families with varying needs to the Brighter Futures project since its commencement. The application process is simple and the response is speedy and efficient. All the families referred have been allocated a key worker as a single point of contact and this keyworker has then gone on to complete both face to face and remote work and support with the parents and the children. The children and parents involved in the Brighter Future project have thoroughly enjoyed it and have felt worked with not worked 'at'. The children have looked forward to their weekly contact sessions with the key worker and updates from parents on the front gate have been really positive. All of the children and parents involved in this project so far have had great success in achieving the outcomes that have been set for them - with the support of the staff running the programme. It was also lovely to see that the support did not run term time - the support ran through the holiday periods which is often when children and parents need support the most. A huge thank you to all those involved"* Allison Christopherson, Headteacher, Pentrechwyth Primary School

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*"The Brighter Futures project supports the work in our school and enhances the experiences of pupils, enabling them to work in a safe objective space with a trained adult who can support them to transfer the skills they learn into their school and home lives. The Brighter Futures team are communicative and responsive, and have built strong relationships with the team as well as the pupils they work with. The project responds swiftly to applications submitted by the school, and form an integral part of the pastoral support plans that we offer to our pupils and their families"* R. Barker Trallwn Headteacher

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*"The Brighter Futures project, has been able to develop some excellent relationships... as a result we are experiencing significantly improved learner wellbeing outcomes"* Portmead Head

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*"None of us got to where we are alone. Whether the assistance we received was obvious or subtle, acknowledging someone's help is a big part of understanding the*

*importance of saying Thank you. Thankyou Bright Futures for your dedication and support which has been invaluable” Pastoral care officer*

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*“Faith in families has been part of our school for a few years. They have been an invaluable support to me as Family Liaison Officer of a large primary school. Their commitment and enthusiasm are a massive strength of theirs as a team. The families I have referred speak highly of them and the children love to see them and respond well to their sessions. They are always prepared to go that extra mile which proves their dedication to Faith in Families and its success. Thank you, you are all amazing” Family Liaison Cwmrhydyceirw Primary School*

## 4.0 Group work

To reach more children this year we ran two group sessions with medium-to-low needs with their self-esteem, wellbeing and peer relationships.

### Group 1

The Brighter Futures Group programme was aimed at targeting young people (YP), aged between 12-15 years old, with medium-to-low needs, who reside in the local area. The group focused on building YP’s sense of self-esteem and general wellbeing. The group sessions were facilitated after school on a weekly basis for 8 weeks, using the Zoom app to allow for group video sessions.

To gather participants for our group programme, we advised in schools, the local community & social services. The majority of referrals came from local schools, with some YP wanting to attend who had previously engaged with 1:1 Brighter Futures support. In total, 10 YP were referred to the group programme, with 7 wishing to attend.

Each week of the group programme focused on a different topic, which ranged from challenging negative automatic thoughts, identifying personal strengths and qualities, to learning a new skill (making a dream catcher).

Weekly deliveries to each attendee’s home were also necessary to facilitate the group sessions, as YP would be provided with information & activity sheets etc. to assist with participant engagement during the sessions.

YP’s self-esteem was then measured using the verified Rosenberg Scale of Self-esteem, and YP were then given the opportunity during the feedback form, to reflect on their own wellbeing progress since attending the group.

Whilst each session focused on a different theme, each session shared the same general structure. After general greetings, everyone would “check-in”, but putting a digital stamp on an emoji face, to indicate how they are feeling. This would be followed by a recap of the “house rules”, which was helped developed by members of the group.

Furthermore, every week an “icebreaker game” would be played, with each week holding a different game. These activities ranged from adaptations of charades & Pictionary, to item hunting & guessing games. The rationale behind using such activities was to help the group bond and to raise social confidence.

Following the icebreaker game, we would then move on to the talk about the targeted topic, which would be explored by using further games and activities. For example, the YP were given individual scenario cards to practise challenging thinking errors. In contrast, to explore the topic of mindfulness, the YP were given chocolate to practise eating mindfully in a group activity, with the facilitators giving prompts to focus attention.

Finally, the sessions would end with each YP digitally writing down a “positivity pledge”, which involved the YP promising to take a healthy/positive action during the week (i.e. walk the dog, take a bath, study for a test).

Overall, many positive changes were observed and recorded through the 8-week group course. For instance, during the first session, none of the attendees would put their cameras on, nor would they talk using their microphones (only by using the chat function). However, by session 3, all of the attendees had their cameras on, and one YP was confident enough to start communicating to the group, using her microphone and not her keyboard.

Moreover, all of the YP (bar one who did not send back their completed feedback form), reported having made good progress with their self-esteem & wellbeing during the course (3/5 or higher). More so, the results from the Rosenberg Scale of Self-Esteem also showed positive changes in scoring (i.e. 13/40 – 17/40), thus indicating higher levels of confidence, self-worth & assertiveness.

In addition, the parents & carers of the YP attending the group also reported consistently high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the support provided to their children (5/5 across all received feedback forms).

Finally, as the group initiated with 7 YP attending, the results that 6 out of the 7 stayed for the entirety of the programme further highlights how much the YP enjoyed attending and felt that the sessions were worth their time.



## Group 2

Number of sessions: 6

Number of participants: 3

Age: 7-9

Session objective: To work on building children's self-esteem and developing positive friendships.

The aim behind the group session was to allow children to develop their self-esteem whilst making new friends. Over the 6 sessions, 3 children attended regularly until the end. We began by asking the children to scale themselves on their self-esteem, this involved a number of questions. Each session had the same structure, we would begin with a check-in, move on to discussing session rules, do a warm-up activity with the confidence cookies, and complete the main task, and then review. We would then finish with a mindfulness activity.

We saw changes from as early as the second session when talking about their strengths and talents and completing the strengths and talents puzzle piece. The children enjoyed this and did very well and spoke openly about what their own personal strengths and talents were. This session encouraged the children to acknowledge the positive aspects of themselves and highlight them in front of other children.

The third session consisted of looking at negative and positive thoughts. The aim of the session was to change the negative thoughts into positive ones. The children did well with this but found it more difficult to do in the moment. The children were open about some negative thoughts they had about themselves and we worked together as a group to change that negative thought into a positive one.

By the fourth session, we were creating positives diaries. The children really enjoyed this session as they were able to get creative in designing the front cover of their positives diary. We held a discussion on the types of positive things we can place in them and agreed the children would try to do this weekly. It was rewarding to see the children working together to list positive comments they can place in their diaries. The children encouraged one another to write certain things on the first page in which they completed in the session.

During session 5 we started exploring our hopes and dreams. This session was the one where the children laughed the most. We put a great emphasis on the fact that they could achieve any dream they put their mind to. The children spoke about what they would like to be when they grow up and explored a variety of hopes such as having big houses, fancy cars and lots of money.

During our last session, we looked at the 4 steps to becoming a good friend. The children really enjoyed this, all provided great answers. As this was our last session, we finished with a virtual party. The children wore their party clothes and had some snacks and we did a scavenger hunt and guess the song.

The children provided positive feedback about the sessions and all stated that they really enjoyed it and they were sad to see the sessions end. It was lovely to see their confidence grow. They supported and encouraged one another each session and provided positive praise towards each other.

## 5.0 Case studies

### 5.1

## **Bright Futures Engagement Project Progress Report**

<b>Name:</b> xx xx	<b>Address:</b> xxxxxxx		<b>D.O.B:</b>
<b>School:</b> Bishop Vaughn Catholic School	<b>Total Hours of Support:</b> 29	<b>Start Date:</b> 17/07/2020	<b>Engagement Worker:</b> Jake Mayes
		<b>End Date:</b> 25/02/21	

<b>Intended Outcomes of Support:</b>	<b>Support Outline:</b>
To understand emotions. To improve self-esteem. To reduce self-harm and develop healthy coping strategies To improve notions of understanding healthy relationships How to handle bullying	KP attended 21 1:1 sessions via school & digital appointments.  KP was originally referred by her new school due to concerns surrounding self-harm, bereavement and difficulties getting on with others. These issues arose during the start of 2020, when KP's brother was stillborn.  KP was initially a bit reluctant to engage with support, as she was unaware that the school had made the referral, and she was under the impression that she was still able to see the school

counsellor, as she had been during her previous academic year. However, after multiple conversations with KP's Nan and Father, sharing resources and WhatsApp messaging KP, KP agreed to attend 1:1 sessions in our Community Office after school.

During our first session, KP was forthcoming with her issues, as she voluntarily showed me her self-harming marks. KP engaged well during our sessions, and began to use apps such as "Calm Harm" to moderate her emotions when she would have self-harming impulses. To my understanding, KP has not engaged in self-harming behaviours since starting our support.

However, during our support, KP also spoke of an incident where she was assaulted by other pupils in the school toilet. KP had made school and her father immediately aware of this incident, for safeguarding actions to take place. In turn, KP and I then worked together to create a plan of action when dealing with bullies/jerks.

Moreover, during our sessions, KP would frequently talk about her feelings of loss and sadness and in relation to losing her still-born brother. KP and her family were also then signposted to Cruse Bereavement service.

Towards the end of our 1:1 support, KP explored techniques to increase self-esteem and well-being. KP uses many effective coping strategies to regulate her emotions, and she actively tries to meet and achieve her 5 areas of well-being daily.

<b>Area of support</b>	<b>Change in score</b>
Pro-Social Scale	No change (9/10)
Hyperactivity Scale	+3
Emotional Scale	-4
Conduct Scale	-2
Peer Scale	+1
Total difference	-2 (16 -> 14)

KP's self-assessed post-SDQ scores further indicate an overall positive development. KP's scoring in her abilities to handle her emotions & behaviour particular showed improvement, with pre-test scores indicating some need, compared to the low need results, yielded from the post-test.

Whilst KP's hyperactivity scores have increased, this

	<p>could be explained by the restrictions related to the ongoing pandemic.</p> <p>Moreover, within the parental feedback report, KP's Grandmother stated, "Very happy with all support given and how much my Granddaughter has progressed with issues she had. She is more confident in herself."</p> <p>KP is now currently engaging with our Brighter Futures Project group programme, which further explores wellbeing and self-esteem. KP is enjoying these sessions, and actively participates on a weekly basis.</p>
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## 5.2

### **Bright Futures Engagement Project Progress Report**

<b>Name:</b> xxx	<b>Address:</b> xxx	<b>D.O.B:</b> xxx
<b>School:</b> Bishop Vaughn Catholic School	<b>Total Hours of Support:</b>  24.5	<b>Start Date:</b> 20/07/2020
		<b>End Date:</b> 06/01/2021
		<b>Engagement Worker:</b> Jake Mayes

<b>Intended Outcomes of Support:</b>	<b>Support Outline:</b>
<p>To develop emotional literacy</p> <p>To develop an outdoor safety plan to improve sense of safety</p> <p>To minimise anxiety and develop coping strategies.</p> <p>To improve self-esteem.</p> <p>To improve notions of understanding healthy relationships</p>	<p>BLS was originally referred to the Brighter Futures Project from school, to support BLS with managing her emotions in relation to her childhood trauma and for support around recent multiple family losses.</p> <p>BLS was eager to engage with 1:1 support, which firstly started via telephone call sessions, followed by face-to-face appointments.</p> <p>Through completing the SDQ with BLS, it became clear that she had many fears surrounding un-prohibited contact with her mother. To help develop BLS's sense of safety, we developed an outdoor safety plan. This plan reminded BLS of various safety precautions she can take when leaving her</p>

	<p>house, which helped her to feel more confident to go to the shops, or play in the park with her friends.</p> <p>BLS also spoke of difficulties managing her worries of losing other family members in her life. BLS engaged with cognitive-based activities, involving identifying thinking errors &amp; challenging negative automatic thoughts.</p> <p>Furthermore, to help improve BLS's self-esteem, she engaged with numerous activities where she named and listed her strengths and qualities. Whilst BLS initially struggled with these tasks, she grew more confident in naming her strengths.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="715 730 1350 976"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area of support</th> <th>Change in score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pro-Social Scale</td> <td>0 (8-8)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hyperactivity Scale</td> <td>-3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emotional Scale</td> <td>-4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conduct Scale</td> <td>+3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peer Scale</td> <td>-1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total difference</td> <td>-4 (22 -&gt; 18)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>.BLS's SDQ scores further highlight a positive change in her overall wellbeing. Whilst BLS's pre-SDQ results indicate that she is within the "high need" category, her post-results show how she would now be considered "some need". Moreover, the decrease in BLS's emotional regulation score additionally reveals how she personally reflects that she is now more in control of her feelings and behaviours.</p> <p>BLS and her father have now been signposted to Cruse Bereavement, for BLS to engage with further support around the loss of her family members. Both BLS and her father know that she can be re-referred if issues persist.</p> <p>BLS showed tremendous strength &amp; development during our sessions, and I hope she continues to practise her new skills in resiliency.</p>	Area of support	Change in score	Pro-Social Scale	0 (8-8)	Hyperactivity Scale	-3	Emotional Scale	-4	Conduct Scale	+3	Peer Scale	-1	Total difference	-4 (22 -> 18)
Area of support	Change in score														
Pro-Social Scale	0 (8-8)														
Hyperactivity Scale	-3														
Emotional Scale	-4														
Conduct Scale	+3														
Peer Scale	-1														
Total difference	-4 (22 -> 18)														

5.3

JL (9 years old) was originally referred to the Brighter Futures Project for 1:1 support by his school. School had concerns around JL's ability to regulate his emotions and behaviour, in addition to deteriorating self-esteem, following the loss of his mother.

JL's family and school have described how JL often struggled to manage his anger, and how he lacks the self-belief to fully engage with new activities in class. In turn, the aforementioned behaviours have previously impacted his attainment in school, and his ability to maintain friendships.

As a part of the "Emotional Literacy" support framework, provided by the Brighter Futures Project, JL has engaged with sessions held in school, which so far, have centred on acknowledging strengths, qualities, support networks, and challenges JL has overcome.

One session that focused on building JL's self-esteem involved him learning to make a balloon dog. JL had agreed to this activity during the prior session, and the school's SENCO was also aware of the session plan.

Before the appointment began, the school's SENCO discussed the possibility of JL being able to demonstrate his new skill of balloon making in front of his class, as this would provide further means for JL to feel accomplished and proud of his own capabilities.

This session began with JL learning how developing new skills can help one feel good about themselves, as confidence is often increased, alongside improved abilities to be creative, followed by a strong sense of self-satisfaction.

Through modelling and positive reinforcement, JL was able to make a series of successfully made balloon dogs. JL could not wait to show these dogs to his peers, family and to the SENCO, as he said he felt so proud of his dogs, and he did not think that he would be able to make them when we first began.

JL was then asked if he would like to demonstrate his new skill in front of his class, to which he agreed, although he described how he felt both nervous and excited about the task.

With the assistance of the school's SENCO to arrange the event, JL was then able to demonstrate in front of his class how he makes balloon dogs. The class responded with lots of applause and claims from his peers that they would score JL "10 out of 10!" for his efforts and abilities. After the classroom demonstration, JL declared how proud of himself he was, and how he could not wait to tell his father about what he had achieved, as that his father would also be so proud of him.

Since this session, JL has learned how to make more balloon creations independently and has introduced the activity to his younger sister, which the family has reported to be a good bonding tool for the siblings. JL's teachers have also observed that since he was able to demonstrate his new skill in front of his peers his motivation in school has improved, in addition to having more confidence to answer questions in class.

Overall, JL has benefitted thus far from Brighter Futures support by having a greater awareness of his own strengths, qualities and capabilities, along with having an improved sense of confidence to take on challenges and to try new experiences.



## 5.4

IR has previously been supported by the service a few times in the past few years. On this occasion, he was referred as he did not settle back to school well following the first lockdown. He struggled with the new guidelines and got very upset and angry if others did not follow the rules. He fell out with some friends and got in trouble in school. Mum was very concerned that these issues would re-occur following the second lockdown and wanted to prevent this if possible and Mum made a referral to the project. I worked with IR on strategies to manage his emotions with a focus on returning to school. We discussed and role-played scenarios that may occur to suggest strategies to handle them more effectively whilst managing his emotions. I encouraged him to pause, step back and think before reacting. Upon returning to school, IR settled back far better than the previous lockdown. He managed his emotions positively when friends were not following Covid rules and helped them by giving advice rather than getting upset or angry. His teachers were very pleased with his progress and he was proud of himself too. His mum observed him using the strategies I introduced regularly at home and even said they've helped her also. His SDQ has improved by four points during the support. The questionnaire indicates that he is now more generally calmer at home for his Mum and does what is asked of him. There has also been a significant improvement in all areas of peer relationships which will benefit him in school and in his social life.

## 5.5

At the beginning of this year EM was not coping well with the second lockdown. She was struggling to control her emotions and this was affecting her friendships and family life. I worked closely with the team at the Family Centre and her family to create a plan to support her. We used a range of strategies both on Zoom and in-person to give her the skills to recognise and manage her emotions. This was in the form of social stories, relationship-based play, breathing techniques and relaxation tools amongst others. She has made significant progress since support started and her friendships have improved and grown. She is now able to express herself without getting upset and frustrated. Both her family and the team at the Family Centre have been very thankful for the support.

## 5.6

L (12) was referred to the Brighter Futures Project by the school family liaison office due to his low self-esteem and worries. L had previously told the Nurture TA in school that he wanted to end his life or wishes he would be taken into care to give his dad an easier life. L was taken off his mum at the age of 3 due to her mental health issues and placed in the care of dad. They moved to Swansea and have no support network. Dad is employed but struggles financially and this is something L really worries about.

The school had described L's behaviour as very challenging and has previously made very serious threats to staff and other children. Dad stated that L's behaviour was spoiling everything and blamed L for his wife leaving with their children. L was aware of dad's thoughts.

On my first session with L, he came in appearing as if he had the weight of the world on his shoulders and was really down. It was reported L would walk around school with his head to the floor. L was very honest with me and opened up about the fact he cannot control his anger and it upsets his dad. L commented that he hated life and dad would be better off without him.

The Brighter Futures project has a mass resource base in terms of 'Emotional Literacy'. To begin, I focused on building L's self-esteem. We completed sessions based on strengths and talents, achievement, positive mirror image and hopes and dreams. We have focused on these aspects in school and L has attended every session so far.

There was one particular session where L and I created a Christmas bauble to allow L to feel a sense of achievement. He was very satisfied with his finished project and proudly present it to his class. This allowed L to feel good about himself in the sense that he can achieve things he puts his mind to and encouraged him to feel proud of himself.

L's self-esteem was increasing well however he remained to still have struggled with regulating his emotions, more so his anger. We completed various activities to give L

the tools and skills to regulate his anger safely. I created a 6-week plan looking at what anger is, how it affects our bodies, what are our triggers and safe and unsafe ways to cope with anger. L and I had many practical sessions included in this. One of L's favourite sessions was creating a calming down jar using oil, water, glitter and food colouring. L kept this in class and used it during lessons to keep him calm and engaged.

Towards the end of the anger 6-week session plan, L and I looked at mindfulness activities to support L in anger regulation. L engaged really well in these and often uses the 5 senses to help him calm when times get a bit tough.

During an Early Help Hub Review regarding L and dad, it was very evident the progress made. L now walks around school with a bounce in his step. He is often very happy during class morning check-in and always reports to myself or his nurture TA positive news that has occurred at school or home. L now comes into the session with me full of smiles and gives off so much positive energy. L no longer spends a great deal of time with the ALNCO and Nurture TA due to challenging behaviour. L is now an active member of his class and participates well with other children. L has a positive view of himself and often tells me about how he now likes to look in the mirror. The relationship between L and dad has developed greatly and L no longer worries about dad's financial situation or the fact he may abandon him. L often mentions that he no longer worries about things that he has no control over. Dad has reported that L is much better at home and no longer finds his behaviour very challenging.

During a session last week, L mentioned he is now finally happy with life and I believe this is down to the support provided to him not just through the school but through the time and effort of the Brighter Futures Project.

## 5.7

L was referred to the Brighter Futures project in late November 2020 by the family liaison officer at Portmead School. L's mum had recently lost her mum suddenly (L grandmother). Her mum was not coping very well and it was starting to affect L as mum is unable to talk about the death or console L which I having a negative effect on L's behaviour at home.

After the initial assessment, it was clear that L was grieving for her grandmother, even though she wasn't displaying any behavioural changes within the school. My plan for L was to provide a safe environment where she feels comfortable to talk about her grandmother as she was unable to talk about it with mum and support her through the grieving process.

In our first session I read the invisible string book to L. It is a heart-warming story that reassures children that even though they can't always be with someone they love they are always connected. L loved this story and she engaged really well. After the

story we did an activity relating to the book, we decorated hearts and L wrote messages on them to her grandmother.

Over the next few sessions we made a memory box together, it is a special box where L could put photos, items that remind her of her grandmother, notes that she writes and/or anything L wants to help her through the grieving process and feel close to her grandmother. L has made great progress during our time together, she feels more confident talking about her grandmother and she is using the memory box as a way to express her feelings, whether it be through writing notes or drawing pictures.

During this ongoing support with L I have also been providing support to mum, mum will often ring me for advice or a chat when she isn't feeling her best, mum has made a comment that after talking to me she feels stronger to face the difficult times. She has been finding it really difficult since the death of her mum, I have advised mum to make an appointment with her GP and supported her with her parenting approach with L as their relationship has become strained.

I have now referred mum to the Early Help Hub, so she can receive tailored support based on what mum needs. I feel that mine and L's one-to-one sessions have come to the point where she doesn't need my intense support anymore. However, mum and L's relationship is still slightly strained and can change daily. With this in mind the plan moving forward is to end my one to one sessions with L and start doing relationship-based play with mum and L at their home to strengthen their relationship.

## 6.0 Covid-19

### Covid-19 Support Case Studies

Due to the frequent changes in Covid-19 related policies, the role of the Children's Engagement Workers within the Brighter Futures Project had to be greatly adapted to fit the current social climate. Whilst previously, the team was able to provide support in person, in such locations as schools, family centres, and clients' homes – this was no longer the case.

Instead, we had to act quickly and adapted our service to still provide vital support for families and children via multiple alternative methods. Such approaches include implementing new creative ways to engage young people via video calls using digital technology, adapting child-led well-being-based activities to function within isolation, and providing families with weekly check-in calls, to explore how the families are coping and if needed, what additional support we can provide.

For instance, we had recently begun supporting Client A, who is a 6-year-old boy. Client A's parents made the referral for Client A to receive support surrounding his compulsive and anxious behaviours. To make novel use of digital technology when engaging children in sessions, we held our first meeting via video call on Zoom.

Through utilising Zoom, we were able to share images with Client A for interactive 'get-to-know-you' activities, and we were able to draw and create images using the shared "Whiteboard" features.

After speaking with Client A's parents following our first session, we received positive feedback related to the interactive use of technology, when holding the Zoom meeting.

Whilst the parents reported how other recent interventions have been ineffective in engaging Client A during video-call sessions, the interactive and creative use of sharing images and the drawing features through Zoom, helped enable a dynamic and supportive environment, which Client A now wanted to continue with.

Future support for Client A then included further rapport-building activities and sessions, followed by a 12-week Drawing & Talking Therapy intervention, where Client A utilised the "Whiteboard" feature on Zoom, to draw and discuss his pictures. This intervention will then support Client A to understand his own anxieties and compulsive behaviours.

A case study related to adapting well-being-based activities during isolation involves Client B. Client B is a 9-year-old Boy we had been supporting for multiple weeks. After completing initial assessments via telephone with Mum, we were aware that Client B has difficulties with self-esteem and regulating emotions. This inability to emotionally regulate will often lead to angry outbursts, bouts of crying, or self-harm.

We began support with Client B through facilitating 'get-to-know-you' activities via Zoom, where he was able to communicate his interests, including monsters and drawing. As a result, we were able to use a person-centred approach to provide Client B with support relevant to his needs and interest. For instance, during the following Zoom sessions, Client B had engaged with activities centred on drawing monsters based on various emotional themes, such as an "angry monster" and a "sad monster". When Client B draws these monsters, we are then able to non-intrusively ask questions around the emotions we are exploring, i.e. "What does anger feel like?", "How can you tell that you are beginning to feel angry?" "What advice can you give the angry monster to stop being so angry?" Such questions can then assist Client B to reflect on his own feelings, develop a greater understanding of emotions, and learn various coping strategies to avoid future disproportionate outbursts.

Our support with Client B is still ongoing, with many more areas of well-being to explore. However, both parents have reported that Client B thoroughly enjoys and looks forward to the weekly sessions, and they have found that Client B is more open to talking about his feelings when compared prior to the current support.

The next example relates to the support we have been providing for Family C, which began with weekly check-in phone calls. Originally, the two brothers of Family C

(aged 8 and 6 years old) were referred to the Brighter Futures Project for support surrounding their behaviours related to witnessing domestic abuse. This referral then led us to make weekly check-in calls to Mum during isolation. This form of contact eventually led Mum to talk about a recent event where her ex-partner had entered their home and destroyed much of her and her children's property.

From this conversation, we were then able to provide the family with donations, including a gaming console and an iPad, to help replace some of the children's items that their father had destroyed. Moreover, with Mum's consent, we were able to make a referral to Women's Aid, to safeguard the family. Mum also agreed for her children to engage in weekly sessions via Zoom, to help build emotional resiliency. Whilst the support for this family is also the in early days, the brothers have both identified that they would like help controlling their anger, which will be the focus and direction of future digital support.

Through contacting families on a weekly basis, we have been able to gradually build strong, trusting relationships, allowing members of the community to accept and ask for support with confidence.

Overall, despite being unable to provide face-to-face, in-person support, we have still been able to engage and assist many families through creative uses of digital technologies, adapting activities, and consistently reaching out, to remind the community that we are here, and we want to help. The team has worked consistently through the pandemic to ensure all the families we were supporting still had access to support as well as taking on and building trusting relationships with new referrals/families.

## 7.0 Conclusion

Looking back over the evaluation report it makes me very proud of the achievements of the project, it is clear that the Brighter Futures Project continues to make a positive difference. The report and research have evidenced the need for this project and the support it offers. It has highlighted the difficulties that children are experiencing and the lack of resources available to them. The Brighter futures project is bridging that gap and providing children and their families with a variety of non-intrusive interventions and support that are based on their individual needs. We have provided one-to-one intensive support ensuring children that are marginalised can get the support they need through directed engagement. We have worked closely with identified children ensuring that they receive support relevant to their individual needs that are age and ability appropriate and most importantly are fun and engaging. We currently use a number of resources and interventions, these include the still method, drawing and talking, relationship-based play, sensory regulation and emotional literacy, this list is not exhaustive. We have provided direct support to children who really need it, these children are referred to the project through local schools, health visitors, social services etc. We are able to identify

issues through our assessment tools and put a package of appropriate support in place. We advocate for children, we are their ambassadors, we give them a voice and make sure they are heard and included, we provide them with support, respect and guidance.

At the start of engagement a lot of the children we work with were telling us that their relationships at home, with their peers and teachers were not good, these issues along with the pressures of lockdown due to Covid-19 escalated feelings of loneliness. Children were telling us they felt unhappy and frustrated, that no one cares, understands or listens to them. We were seeing negative changes in behaviour that were impacting all areas of children's lives, for example at the beginning of this year EM was not coping well with the second lock-down. She was struggling to control her emotions and this was affecting her friendships and family life. We worked closely with the team at the Family Centre and her family to create a plan to support her. We used a range of strategies both on Zoom and in-person to give her the skills to recognise and manage her emotions. This was in the form of social stories, relationship-based play, breathing techniques, and relaxation tools among others. She has made significant progress since support started and her friendships have improved and grown. She is now able to express herself without getting upset and frustrated. This is just one example of the great work being achieved by the project.

Overall this evaluation is very positive and highlights what a difference is being made to children and the impact on their families. The case studies alone show the positive difference the project is having and the impact it is having on not just only the child but family life as a whole. We are supporting and enabling children and young people to form positive trusting relationships so they can thrive,

The project fully meets the Government publication 'Every Child Matters: The publication indicates national and local priorities for Children's Services and sets out an Outcomes Framework which includes the 5 Outcomes for Children and Young people, given legal force in the Children Act 2004.

The 5 outcomes are:

**Being Healthy** so that they are physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy, have healthy lifestyles and choose not to take illegal drugs.

**Staying Safe** from maltreatment, neglect, violence, sexual exploitation, accidental injury and death, bullying and discrimination, crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school, have security and stability and are cared for.

**Enjoying and achieving** so that they are ready for school, attend and enjoy school, achieve stretching national educational standards at primary and secondary school, achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation.

**Making a Positive Contribution** so that they engage in decision-making, support their community and environment, engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school, develop positive relationships, choose not to bully and discriminate, develop self-confidence, successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges and develop enterprising behaviour.

**Achieving Economic Well-being** so that they engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school, are ready for employment, live in decent homes and sustainable communities, have access to transport and material goods, live in households free from low income.

Our team is dedicated and motivated to improve the lives of children, young people, families and our communities. We want to see children thrive, families grow and young people develop into happy adults. Accordingly, we are continually looking at ways to develop and grow the project to give the children and families we work with the best chance of success. All of the fantastic work carried out by the project would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of the team who go above and beyond to ensure that the service is of a high standard. We understand the critical importance of listening and responding to the problems of children, young people and families, and designing services around their needs.

*“The most important condition for success was found always to be the quality of the relationship between the child’s family and the responsible professional”*

Child Protection, Messages from Research – Department of Health 1995

Once again I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all the team that has, and continue to work so hard in making the projects a success. It is a pleasure to work with such an enthusiastic, creative and dedicated team.

**What we have learned** – The need for this project is evidenced in the number of referrals received and the positive outcomes achieved. Due to the content of many of the referrals we have had to ensure that the team have appropriate support and training. We have developed a comprehensive induction training program that has helped the new staff get all the necessary information about the project and are clear on their expectations of them. The induction programme gives staff a chance to understand policies and procedures, get to know the project systems and the team, enabling them to quickly adapt to the work-place.

We acknowledge that our team is our most valuable resource and supervision has played a key role in supporting them to deliver high-quality service. Supervision is important when building emotional resilience and this is one of our priorities to ensure the team are supported within their roles. We have also made sure team meetings and de-briefing sessions are a priority to ensure the team are well supported.

We have also invested in high-quality training to ensure our team are trained to a high level so they are equipped, confident and knowledgeable within their roles.

## 8.0 Words from Faith in Families CEO

Childhood happens just once in a lifetime. We believe that it should be one filled with inspiration, belief, and success. This project aims to ensure that children have the opportunities and experiences in order to achieve a brighter future, one they deserve and have a right to experience.

Many schools do not feel that they are able to meet the needs of some of the most challenging behaviour that some of our young people are exhibiting. Our teams across Swansea were noticing an increase in school exclusions from children of a very young age. That is when the Brighter Futures project was founded, way before any pandemic children were being denied their rights to an education and we wanted to do something about it.

The Children's Commissioner in Wales report "Building Blocks" December 2020 raises that the effect of school exclusion is denying children their human rights to thrive and reach their potential. The report says that the issues these children face are not simply about the classroom or even the school.

Working with 26 schools to address the causes that trigger children's behaviour we work to best reengage children, ensuring they receive the support they need for their wellbeing and mental health. I am incredibly proud of this project and the impact that my team is having in Swansea. With the latest research from the UK End Child Poverty Coalition showing that Wales has the highest percentage of children living in poverty nationwide (31%) we strive to develop the reach of this work further across Wales – making sure that every child has a Brighter Future. Cherrie Bija – Chief Executive Officer – Faith in Families

**9.0 Future plans** - As we enter a new financial year our challenge now is to secure additional funding to not only continue the work we have achieved but to maximise the impact of this work ensuring that children and young people and their families fully benefit. By providing this support we aim to achieve the following-

- Children will get one-to-one support, individual to their needs.
- Children's school attendance will improve.
- Children will achieve more academically.
- Children be happier and develop healthy friendships
- Children will be able to recognise and name their emotions.
- Children will become more confident.

- Children will become more resilient and be able to regulate their feelings.
- Children will develop their voice and ability to use it positively.
- Parents will have a better understanding of their child's needs.
- Parents will develop skills to parent effectively.
- Families will spend more quality time together

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this report and I hope you have found it informative. If you have any further questions reading the work of this project you can contact me directly via email at [linda@faithinfamilies.wales](mailto:linda@faithinfamilies.wales)

*Linda Harle - Project Manger*

## Supporting evidence

With support from Children in Need we delivered 140 care and wellbeing activity packs that were delivered to the community for the start of summer and during Easter we provided 10 families with food hampers and outdoor activity packs.

Please follow the below links to watch our two Children in Need videos that highlight the work achieved by the project.

<https://fb.watch/5IQ5WOGZiU/>

<https://fb.watch/5IPYSgwrJQ/>

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

— Maya Angelou

