

# UK YOUTH



## EMPOWHER

February 2020



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## Executive Summary

EmpowHER builds young women and girls' self-esteem and wellbeing by providing inclusive and meaningful social action opportunities to inspire them to lead change in their communities. Over 900 young women and girls have completed the programme in Cohorts One and Two across England.

### Project context and need

For young people low wellbeing and self-esteem are significant issues that particularly impact young women and girls, and those from families with lower income. To address these factors a trusted support network and the influence of role models is vital. In addition, social action has been identified as an important mechanism for improving confidence and mental wellbeing.

### The project

EmpowHER inspires young women and girls to lead change in their communities. Launched to mark the centenary of women's suffrage, the programme encourages young women and girls to use their voices for positive change – just as their predecessors did 100 years ago. Led by UK Youth in partnership with the British Red Cross and Young Women's Trust, EmpowHER addresses the worryingly low levels of wellbeing amongst young women and girls in the UK and supports them to give back to their local communities through inclusive and meaningful social action

opportunities. EmpowHER is a three-and-a-half-year programme funded by Spirit of 2012 and the #iwill Fund.

### Project reach

Of 683 young women and girls between the ages of 10-20 who engaged in EmpowHER Cohort Two, **625 completed the programme**, a retention rate of 92%. Almost three out of four young women and girls were aged 15 or younger, and 29% were from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic groups.

More than half of participants came from England's most deprived areas, and almost three out of four had at least one personal barrier. **The wellbeing of the young women and girls at the start of the programme was lower than both the national average and comparable figures from Cohort One.**

Youth social action projects in Cohort Two reached almost three times as many people as Cohort One and raised over twice as much funds.

## Key findings

Young women and girls reported statistically significant improvement in:

- Wellbeing indicators of happiness, feeling worthwhile and life satisfaction. The extent of improvement may be associated with factors such as length of time engaged in the programme, ethnicity, and age.
- Their perceptions about their own abilities and that of young women and girls, with a larger change in the former.
- Their ability to make a positive difference where they live and to lead change, in addition to each of the UK Youth's emotional and social

capabilities, with the biggest improvement in confidence.

- Their perception of and trust in others.

## Conclusions

EmpowHER shows the impact that a single-gender, small-group, long-term intervention can have on the wellbeing and self-perception of young women and girls.

Using the mechanism of social learning and social action, participating in EmpowHER improves the confidence and self-esteem of young women and girls and encourages them to lead change in their communities. UK Youth and its partners will work to further enhance and learn from the programme in Cohorts Three and Four.



“The most amazing thing that I’ve seen through EmpowHER is that the young women don’t realise the significance of sisterhood, until they’re in it, and then by the end they do! And the love they have for each other at the end is phenomenal!”

- Ian, Youth Worker, Positive Youth Foundation





## Programme context and need

For young people, low wellbeing and self-esteem are significant issues that particularly impact young women and girls and those from families with lower income. For these young women and girls, the representation of women by the media can exacerbate low self-esteem and make them internalise limiting perceptions. Launched to mark the centenary of women's suffrage, EmpowHER inspires young women and girls to overcome these limiting perceptions, build their confidence, and use their voices for positive change in their communities – just as their predecessors did 100 years ago.

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Led by UK Youth in partnership with the British Red Cross and Young Women's Trust, and supported by the Spirit of 2012 and #iwill, EmpowHER addresses the worryingly low levels of wellbeing amongst young women and girls (YW&G) in the UK and supports them to give back to their local communities through inclusive and meaningful social action opportunities.

### Low wellbeing of young women and girls

The poor wellbeing and general low self-esteem of young people is alarming. More than one in five young people report that they have experienced a high level of emotional problems and other emotional difficulties during the last six months (Brooks et al., 2020). Young women and girls, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are even more likely to experience poor wellbeing.

A 2018 report by the Children's Society found that girls had lower wellbeing and higher depressive symptoms than boys, and that girls are more than twice as likely to self-harm as boys. What's more, young people from lower income households had a higher than average risk of self-harming, making young women and girls from poorer families a high-risk group.

These findings corroborate those of the Millennium Cohort Study in 2015 (when participants were 14 years-old), which showed that girls were significantly less happy than boys with their lives overall, and especially less happy with their appearance. Girls from homes with lower

family income were more likely to report poorer mental health and lower wellbeing than their better-off peers (Centre for Longitudinal Studies, 2020).

Public Health England funded research into the wellbeing of adolescent girls in 2017 shows similar results, with girls scoring lower than boys in life satisfaction, and draws a direct link between life satisfaction and family affluence. The report also identified key mitigating measures, such as having a trusted support network (Brooks et al.).

As well as a greater likelihood of dissatisfaction with their lives, the research shows differences between how dissatisfaction manifests among girls and boys, with girls being more prone to concerns about how they look, a much higher likelihood of self-harming, and a higher likelihood of having (or developing) an eating disorder. A survey carried out by Girlguiding in 2017 points to some potential causes of these discrepancies. Almost all the girls surveyed (95%) said that the advertising industry should show more positive, diverse representations of women. Many felt angry about gender stereotypes in the media and the products sold to them, but despite this awareness many girls internalise these negative messages. More than half the girls surveyed (55%) said that prevalent gender stereotypes affect their ability to say what they think, and they feel that stepping outside the norm will result in bullying and teasing from their peers.



This issue is not receding. New research released by Headstart in February 2020 shows the emotional difficulties of girls escalate as they move from early to mid-adolescence. On average, the emotional difficulties of girls increase by 17% between the ages of 11 and 14. The Headstart report identifies the transition between primary and secondary school as a key opportunity to provide intervention (Deighton, Yoon and Garland, 2020).

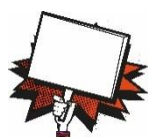
The ample research into the wellbeing of young women and girls paints a clear picture.

- Low wellbeing is prevalent among YW&G – especially from a low socio-economic background
- YW&G are especially impacted by negative gender stereotypes
- A trusted support network is important
- The transitional ages are a key moment for intervention

Having this foundation of evidence to stand upon, the next question is: what we can do to overcome these challenges and provide opportunities for young women and girls to feel happy, supported and valued members of their community?

### Impact of youth social action and role models

Evidence suggests that inclusive and meaningful social action opportunities, including volunteering, and the influence of role models can improve the wellbeing of young women and girls and inspire them to lead change in their communities.



Volunteering opportunities, social action and informal education expose girls to an environment in which they can be inspired by their own peers and challenge perceived norms. YW&G are also inspired by role models who challenge and overcome stereotypes and are increasingly prepared, as they get older, to challenge sexism themselves (Girlguiding, 2017).

The 2018 National Youth Social Action survey (funded by DCMS) found that volunteering and social action was particularly helpful for YW&G, since – once involved – girls are more likely to believe their actions can have an impact on their community (Knibbs et al., 2019).

In a 2015 study into regular weekly volunteering sessions with 13 and 14-year-old girls, Youth United found that self-reported self-confidence and the ability to work in a team both improved (Education Endowment Foundation, 2020). Similarly, a 2016 Cabinet office report shows positive improvements in Resilience, Problem Solving, Empathy and Community Investment among young women and girls who participated in social actions (Kirkman et al., 2016).

### Key Facts

- Of 10,000 young people surveyed by NCVO in 2019
  - 77% agreed volunteering had health.
  - 53% said it had improved their physical health
  - 74% said it gave them more confidence
  - 84% of 18-24 year olds said it increased their confidence

EmpowHER was created on the centenary of suffrage in this context to address these worrying low levels of wellbeing in young women, through the mechanism of social action. Through meaningful and inclusive social action opportunities, YW&G challenge limiting perceptions and are inspired to lead change in their local areas, building community cohesion.

The programme has evolved since its inception in 2018 and the completion of two cohorts. As new research emerges, new ideas are tested and structures are tweaked following feedback and learnings. Over the Cohorts Three and Four the programme will remain open to improvements. However, the core of the programme, inspiring YW&G to lead change, remains the same.

## Programme design and structure

EmpowHER was co-designed with young people to provide activities and learning around individuals' rights, wellbeing, empowerment and resilience and provide the opportunity to lead and design social action projects. The programme is targeted at "unusual suspects", i.e. YW&G with low wellbeing who may have been excluded from social action opportunities due to lack of access or the necessary skills or confidence to engage.

UK Youth leads the programme which is delivered in partnership with the British Red Cross (BRC), and Young Women's Trust (YWT). The three partners bring

together their expertise in youth work, social action, campaigning, national programmes, and gender specific advocacy, and work closely on the planning and delivery of EmpowHER across the country.

UK Youth leads a national Movement of youth organisations who support young people in their local communities. From across this Movement, 11 youth organisations have been recruited as delivery partners and trained on the aims, structure and delivery requirements of EmpowHER. They work closely with UK Youth to flexibly adapt elements of the programme to their local context. The youth organisations and youth workers bring incredible value to the programme through their knowledge and expertise in their local context. They have the ability to reach and engage "unusual suspects" and understand how to adapt the programme to meet the different needs of different young people.

The relationships and partnerships between funders, programme partners, delivery partners and young people

### Role Models

**Juliet Davenport**, founder and Chief Executive Officer of Good Energy.

**Maggie Murphy**, General Manager from Lewes FC – the only club in the world to have equal pay for its male and female players.

**Alison Leeming**, a survivor of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

These role models took part in an EmpowHER panel exploring womanhood, values, motives and advice as part of the Change Festival.

enable wider sector development and sharing of best practice, particularly around social action, partnership working and the 'test and learn' approach.

YW&G, ages 10-20, who have been identified as "unusual suspects" join a small EmpowHER group (of no more than 12). Over the six months of each cohort, the YW&G meet together with a youth worker for at least 12 weeks and complete a minimum of 30 hours (of which at least ten hours is 'Social Learning', ten hours is 'Social Action' and an additional ten hours which can consist of either Social Learning or Social Action). The programme is based on UK Youth's Social Development Journey, described in detail below, with the youth worker and YW&G deciding together exactly how, or what, their EmpowHER group focuses on.

Both during and at the end of each cohort, the YW&G are recognised for their progress through accreditations, celebration events and opportunities with the programme partners.

## Social Engagement

The first step of UK Youth's Social Development Journey is engagement. In order to effectively deliver EmpowHER, it is vital youth workers build relationships with the YW&G and encourage them to take part.

In order to facilitate social engagement, EmpowHER:

- Provides a safe place
- Delivers inclusive engaging activities appealing to all young people
- Enables a group of peers to socialise and support one another
- Acts as a catalyst for new ideas and experiences

- Helps young people to experience and understand the wider world
- Engages young people with their community and politics

## Role model case study

The Metamorphosisters in Coventry were given the opportunity to curate an event at the Change Festival, a festival inviting audiences to imagine better. With this opportunity they chose to host a panel discussion with women from different industries and walks of life exploring womanhood, values, motives and advice for other YW&G in attendance. The YW&G with the assistance of their British Red Cross Youth Engagement Worker were able to access their register of role models to determine the guests they wanted for their stage.

Through devising their panel, the girls not only got to explore and meet a range of role models but had the opportunities to hear diverse experiences of these women, about their lives and how they had thrived and come up against challenges and barriers. It was also an avenue for the YW&G to continue their social learning and build connections with other strong women.



**Z came to the club as a shy individual ...When she came to her first EmpowHER session, she looked into the room and felt there were too many new faces and couldn't bring herself in. We gradually eased her into the sessions."**

- Youth Worker Nillafah, Bolton Lads and Girls Club



## Social Learning

Once engaged, youth workers are then able to support young people with their 'social learning'; i.e. to grow and learn a range of technical and broader life skills through a range of non-formal learning opportunities.

Social learning encompasses the emotional and social capabilities we all need throughout life, including becoming self-aware and receptive, motivated and resilient, confident and an effective communicator, and learning how to take personal responsibility. In EmpowHER, social learning enables the development of these emotional and social capabilities through the framework of learning about empowerment, resilience and individual rights.

The YW&G and youth workers can decide which of a wide range of topics they want to cover, including but not limited to:

- Inspirational Women and Role Models
- Body Image and Positivity
- Social Media and Technology
- Dating, sexual health and relationships
- Gender-based violence and exploitation
- Women in Sports
- Politics and Feminism
- Destigmatising periods
- Choosing an Ally

To encourage the embedding of social learning, with the support of the BRC, the youth workers and YW&G invite role models to



attend sessions, both bringing the social learning to life and inspiring the transition from learning to action.



**I have a lot of qualities  
I didn't realise I had."**

- Young person, Positive Youth Foundation

## Social action

Through the social learning, the YW&G explore topics and issues that are important to them and which can then lay the foundation for the next stage of 'social action'.

Social action allows young people to use and practice life skills gained by learning through doing, volunteering, making their voice heard and engaging in democratic structures. Importantly this provides the opportunity for young people to fail in a safe environment with the support and guidance that comes with having trusted caring adults and positive peer groups in their life, while at the same time acquiring vital practical experience which they will benefit from as they progress into adulthood.

In EmpowHER, social action is first introduced through the partnership with BRC and then developed through the following activities:

**Calls to Action** These bite-size activities help familiarise young people with the concept of social action and act as a stepping stone towards larger social action projects.

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**Social Action Project** Through the EmpowHER programme the YW&G organise social actions within their local communities and schools. The groups can do one or more social action projects, and the projects can be done as a whole group, or smaller sub-groups. However, they are supported by their youth worker to ensure that their projects follow the #iwill principles of high-quality youth social action by being; **youth-led, socially impactful, progressive, embedded, reflective and challenging.**

The BRC team of EmpowHER Youth Engagement Workers are there to support the social action projects by providing networks, capacity and additional expertise and UK Youth can provide social action funding of up to £250 for the projects.

**Social Action Pitch Day** As part of their social action projects, the YW&G have the opportunity to pitch their project ideas in a 'Dragons Den' to increase their social action funding to £400. This is an amazing opportunity for the YW&G to gain life skills, attend workshops on public speaking, campaigning, and pitch to a panel for something they truly believe in.



*Social Action Pitch Day in Coventry with BRC role model Nonie*

**Stand Up Speak Out Workshop** This peer led session is facilitated by young women across the UK who are part of the YWT Advisory Panel. As part of their membership they have trained in public speaking, confidence building and campaigning. Many have then gone on to create their own social action projects in their communities and are eager to share their skills, experience, and encourage the YW&G on EmpowHER - 'If I can do this, so can you!'.

## Social leadership

Finally, EmpowHER is not just about making an impact for the duration of the programme, but about creating lasting change for the YW&G. For EmpowHER participants, there is the opportunity to progress into 'Social leadership' roles; applying their life skills and experience to access training, employment and other leadership opportunities, to find roles in their community and become an empowered and contributing member of society.

Social leadership also refers to a person's ability to be able to effectively lead themselves; make nuanced and thought-through decisions, have empathy for others, and apply their skills to make positive choices for themselves both in the immediacy and in the long-term.

In EmpowHER, the following activities have been designed to foster this progression.

**Be Your Best Self Workshop** This session is run by YWT and provides an opportunity for EmpowHER participants to think about themselves and reflect on their achievements, both within the

EmpowHER project and more widely. By the end of the session, YW&G feel more confident and inspired to continue to make change in their community.

**Peer Mentoring** This strand of EmpowHER has developed organically over the first two cohorts as YW&G are loathe to leave EmpowHER behind and so volunteer to support future groups. Going into Cohort Three, Anna Freud Centre guidance has been provided to delivery partners to encourage the incorporation of peer mentors when appropriate.



*Be Your Best Self Workshop in Gloucester*

## Celebration and recognition of the YW&G

Recognising and celebrating achievement in young people is a key part of cementing learning and can both increase self-esteem and motivation, as well as encourage continued engagement in learning (Scottish Government, 2010). In EmpowHER, we acknowledge the importance of celebrating and recognising the progress of the YW&G and have built into the programme numerous mechanisms for celebrating success and encouraging reflective practice in the young people.

**Red Award** This certificate is given to young people who complete ten hours of engagement of volunteering with the BRC.

### UK Youth Achievement Award (UKYAA)

The UKYAAs are designed to formally recognise the learning and work young people are doing. They provide structure, and an accreditation to the social learning or social action of EmpowHER through three simple steps; Plan, Do, Review. Through this process, young people gain vital life skills, as well as develop their reflective practice.

**Celebration Events** At the end of each cohort, there are regional celebration events. Designed by the youth workers according to the interests of the participants in their region, these events are a chance for the YW&G to meet other EmpowHER participants, learn about other social action projects, receive their awards and hoodies, and have fun!

**EmpowHER Awards** At the Celebration Events, Awards are given to YW&G in the categories of Leadership, Courage, Peer Support and a Team Award. Nominated by their youth worker, these awards commend girls for exceptional effort or growth in EmpowHER.





*EmpowHER Awards presentation at Young People Cornwall Celebration event*

**Opportunities with BRC** Through our partnership with BRC, EmpowHER YW&G have access to incredible opportunities such as visiting the birthplace of the Red Cross in Geneva and interviewing Swiss women who did not receive the right to vote until 1971. This trip took place in February 2020, followed by a trip to Disneyland in France over Easter – made possible due to the partnership between BRC and British Airways. Under this pillar of celebrating and recognising the YW&G achievements, the BRC will continue to seek exciting and rewarding activities for EmpowHER participants, demonstrating to YW&G that being involved with social action groups has the potential to open up many opportunities, from dream trips, to careers and events.

## Sector upskilling and sharing learnings

EmpowHER has been designed as a 'test and learn' programme with a strong focus on sharing learnings and supporting the sector. Built into the programme are regional networking meetings which bring together delivery partners to discuss challenges and share successes of the programme, as well as a Project Steering Group and Strategic Steering Group which allow space for reflection and analysis.

In addition, in each cohort UK Youth delivers training and upskilling to youth workers, from face-to-face trainings, to webinars, to reflective sessions. These trainings encourage youth workers to

challenge their own perceptions of "unusual suspects" and think laterally about youth social action and its application in their specific context.

UK Youth and the other partners are constantly seeking to share their learnings from the programme more broadly with organisations supporting young people through sector events and publications.

## Partnership working

EmpowHER is above all, a programme that depends on partnerships, between funders, programme leads, and delivery partners. The partnership between #iwill and Spirit of 2012 to fund the programme has helped shape the focus of EmpowHER on the intersection and relationship between wellbeing and social action. The partnership between UK Youth, BRC and YWT has provided much wider access to opportunities for the YW&G and youth workers, increased expertise on a range of social action models and social learning topics, and the potential for further opportunities for YW&G who want to continue volunteering, campaigning or being an advocate for young people.

Finally, partnerships with the delivery organisations at the local level ensure that the programme is tailored to the local context. Sustainability is embedded into new relationships with local organisations or businesses, as best practice and solutions to common challenges are shared.

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# Programme Delivery and Reach

EmpowHER has grown in Cohort Two quite significantly in comparison to Cohort One. In addition, we have added a new delivery partner, Young People Cornwall, in the South West, bringing the total number of delivery partners to 11.

Figure 1. EmpowHER in Numbers

EmpowHER In Numbers	Cohort One				Cohort Two			
	North West	West Midlands	South West	Total	North West	West Midlands	South West	Total
# of YW&G engaged	139	136	53	<b>328</b>	221	217	245	<b>683</b>
# of YW&G completed	129	113	44	<b>286</b>	201	215	206	<b>625</b>
# registering for YAA	67	34	29	<b>130</b>	58	151	30	<b>239</b>
# of role models recruited	-	-	-	<b>75</b>	-	-	-	<b>90</b>
# of social action projects	16	10	8	<b>46</b>	22	19	17	<b>83</b>

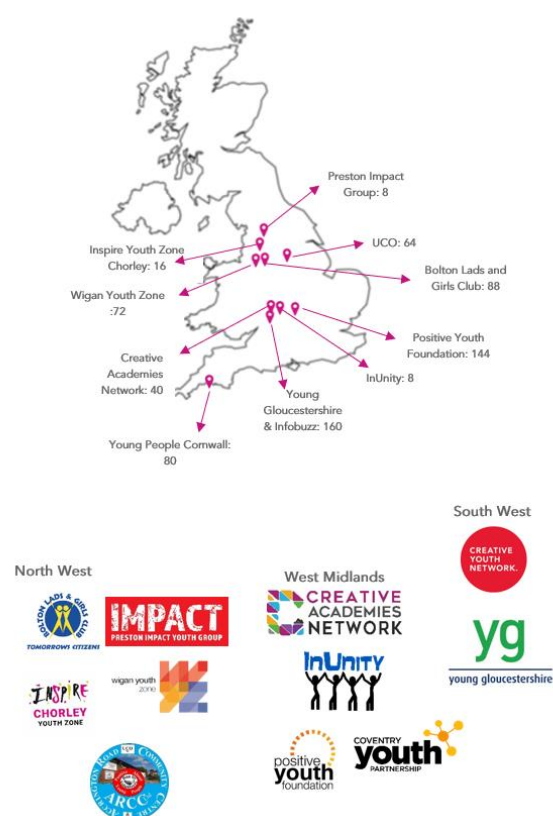
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# at celebration events	-	-	-	164	55	43	97	195
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The 11 EmpowHER delivery partners are spread across the North West, South West and West Midlands.



## Social learning in Cohort Two

In Cohort Two, the most popular social learning topics included: **Inspirational Women and Role Models**, **First Aid Train**, **Healthy Relationships (online & offline)**, **Image and Self-Esteem**, **Mental Health & Wellbeing**, and **Young People's Rights**.

Youth workers who participated in Cohorts One and Two expressed that it was relatively straightforward to embed learning and changes into Cohort Two, including making sessions more informal, building in more teambuilding games at the start of the session, enabling young people to decide what they focused on each week, building in more interaction with BRC and other organisations, and using the journals only as young people wanted to do so.

A key learning from Cohort One around the impact of role models, led to an increase in youth workers using local connections or working with BRC to invite role models to come and bring social learning to life, as in the below example. Youth workers did comment that some gendered assumptions may be deeply embedded and hard to unpick for some young people. For example, discussions about beliefs such as the appropriateness of women of childbearing age not being employed could feel larger than what could be tackled in an evening session.

## Reproductive Rights Case Study

One group of YW&G working with Positive Youth Foundation in Coventry was vocal from the start about their interest in exploring reproductive rights and women's rights. Their interest spurred by the recent law changes in North America around abortion, the YW&G spent weeks learning about the issues and

planning how to support women on the topic of reproductive rights. With the support of their youth worker and BRC, and their own research and planning, they were able to arrange a Skype call with Ailbhe Treacy from the Republic of Ireland theatre company Contact. Ailbhe shared her experience of living through 'Repeal the 8<sup>th</sup>' campaign, and offered advice on how to speak about the subject matter with the public. She also provided additional resources to further their research and social action campaign.

The social learning sessions also continued to be an opportunity for YW&G to explore their own emotions and feelings in a safe environment, supported by their peers.



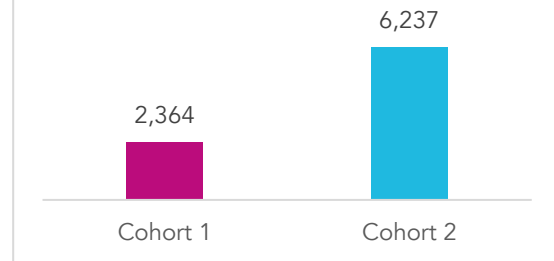
**It's okay to be different. It's okay to have emotions."**

- Young person, Coventry

## Social action

Youth social action projects in Cohort Two reached almost three times as many people compared to Cohort One and raised over twice as much funds (Figures 2, 3).

Figure 2. Number of people supported by Youth Social Action, Cohorts One & Two



Note: Cohort 2 data based on 59 delivery partner reports submitted by 10 delivery partners.

Source: UK Youth.

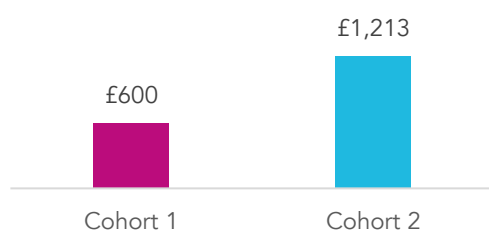
## Power of Kindness

The "Through Care" EmpowHER group in Coventry are YW&G within the care system and they identified early on that they wanted to create a safe space for young women to have a 'night out.' The YW&G hosted an event during the summer called 'Make It Your Own Girls Night,' for girls in care and to other EmpowHER groups. The evening was filled with food, live performances and a DJ, plus the opportunity for the EmpowHER groups to present and share their experiences of the programme and showcase their social action

## Climate Change Case Study

Over half-term, the House EmpowHER group working with Young People Cornwall focussed their social action on making a positive impact to their natural heritage in the community. The group spent a full day supporting the friends of Menacuddle Well to preserve and protect the ancient holy well. They weeded to make room for indigenous plants and planted bulbs to make the community site beautiful for residents of St. Austell.

Figure 3. Funds raised by Youth Social Action, Cohorts One & Two



Note: Cohort 2 data based on 59 delivery partner reports submitted by 10 delivery partners.

Source: UK Youth.

58 social action project funds were granted, amounting to a total of £12,727 with EmpowHER groups requesting on average £219 for their social action.

The focus and intended beneficiaries of EmpowHER social action projects ranged from supporting peers at school and other young women (45%), to supporting local families and the community (12%), and many others including; refugees, people experiencing loneliness, elderly community members, local charities (such as those focused on cancer or girls' education), LGBTQ+ community, people experiencing period poverty, homeless people, hospital patients, people accessing domestic violence services, and young children.

In Cohort Two, many EmpowHER groups chose to engage in social action projects related to climate change or the environment, potentially reflecting increased public interest in the topic.

**Climate change** BRC has launched a limited-edition Call to Action which asked YW&G to support the International Federation of the Red Cross Climate Crisis campaign by uploading Tik Tok videos. A lot of young people connected with this campaign and made videos for BRC TikTok, one group's video has been viewed over 14,000 times.

**Power of Kindness** Across all regions 'Power of Kindness' activities remain the most popular. EmpowHER groups have been spreading kindness and positivity, encouraging their peers to treat each other with more respect.

In Cohort Two, social action projects included a mix of YW&G interacting directly with the community, and information awareness campaigns or related activities. Of available information about social action projects from delivery



partners, about 73% of projects involved direct interaction with the community, and 27% focused instead on building information awareness across potential beneficiaries.

**Social Action Pitch Day** Four EmpowHER groups from YMCA Coventry and Warwickshire and Positive Youth Foundation came together to participate in a 'Dragons Den' style pitch day for funding, to source all resources and

## Community Engagement

The Little Harwood group decided to make iftar packs for members of their community. They planned what they wanted to do, shopped for the ingredients and cooked 40 iftar packs which were then distributed to people in their community who might be experiencing loneliness over Ramadan.

To celebrate Eid the groups all ran Eid parties at their respective community centres. The young women and girls made and sold food, ran a tombola, sold sweets, had a bouncy castle and arts and crafts stalls. At both events the girls raised money to be given to the British Red Cross, but ultimately, they wanted people in their community to be able to come together, have fun and raise money to help others.

equipment needed for their EmpowHER social action projects. Prior to their pitch, the girls took part in workshops focusing on developing their public speaking and storytelling skills, and hearing from a BRC role model about her campaigning experience on body positivity. After a fun filled day of learning and project planning the YW&G pitched their ideas and had to respond to questions about their projects. The projects included; curating a panel

discussion of women of different backgrounds and industries at Coventry's 'Change Festival', hosting an EmpowHER Confidence Event with stalls offering LGBTQ+ support for the year seven students at President Kennedy School, engaging women in sports, a Power of Kindness t-shirt making stall, and lastly, an event focusing on social injustice, specifically on LGBTQ+, gender and women's issues in their city centre.

## Community Engagement through Eid

For some of the EmpowHER groups, Ramadan and Eid are important parts of their community's culture. The girls were inspired to find ways to show kindness to the people in their communities during these times of fasting and celebration. Two EmpowHER groups make Eid Mubarak cards for members of their communities who might be feeling lonely over the festivities.



**I have been working here for so long and have never heard of a youth group in this community do something like this"**

- Local Shopkeeper, Blackburn

## Social leadership

In EmpowHER, social leadership can be seen through the Be Your Best Self Workshops, in the YW&G returning to act as peer mentors to further cohorts, YW&G using their EmpowHER experience as a

foundation on which to continue to advocate for change, and through the dramatic change in some young people who take on a leadership role within their groups.

### Peer Mentoring at Positive Youth Foundation

One young woman from Cohort One loved the programme so much she really wanted to know how she could help bring change in the next cohort and act as a mentor. Positive Youth Foundation was able to integrate the young woman into their Metamorphosisters group as an active peer mentor. She attended the sessions, helping to rally the group, inspire the other girls and stay on top of the management of the programme. The main social action the group took part in was coordinating a panel discussion evening of inspiring female figures.



Organising a show of this ambitious nature took a lot of administration and patience. She supported the group in this aspect of the process, working independently outside of sessions.

Furthermore, she kept a positive and hopeful attitude with the group when things got hard and the motivation to keep going became more and more difficult. Ian, a youth worker at Positive Youth Foundation reflected that her role as a peer mentor demonstrated how being part of EmpowHER increased her confidence, independence and productivity, things which she had found very difficult before.



**With very low self-esteem and social anxiety it was amazing to see the transformation she has undergone! We are all whole heartedly proud of her!”**

- Ian, Youth Worker, Positive Youth Foundation

### Be Your Best Self Workshop

Three YWT Be Your Best Self workshops were delivered in Cohort Two. The workshop consisted of three core elements: Knowing Yourself, Being Yourself and Looking After Yourself. Within these the YW&G explored elements of confidence coaching, being authentic, getting their point across and the power of speaking out – as well as discovering the leader within themselves.



*Be Your Best Self Workshop in Wigan*

**Speaking events** A young woman attended a BRC 'Let's talk about race' event to speak about her experience of race and growing up as the only mixed-race person in a predominantly white British area. This is a topic she made frequent reference to during her social learning, and she felt she wanted to educate people on. The experience, and praise she received from BRC staff, helped boost her confidence around public speaking and passion for the topic.



*British Red Cross Let's Talk About Race Part Two conference*

“

**I want to do talks all the time! Maybe this will be my job. Thank you for the opportunity”**

*-Young person, Coventry*

## Celebration and recognition of the YW&G

During Cohort Two, EmpowHER participants were recognised in a range of ways. 195 YW&G attended five celebration events. The activities in the events ranged from a UV party, silent disco, summer picnic barbeque, Ninja Warrior Adventure Park, and Halloween themed lunch and social. At the awards, 11 young people and groups received gift cards for extraordinary contributions to their group, or the programme, across the categories of Leadership, Courage, Peer Support and Team Award.



*West Midlands Halloween themed celebration event*

**Opportunities with the BRC** 12 YW&G applied to go to Geneva in February 2020. Although it was more challenging than expected to promote the opportunity, the applications that were received were extremely positive, and, retrospectively youth workers have commented that they wish more of the young people had applied. For the next opportunity, visiting Disneyland, an additional 16 YW&G applied,



demonstrating the importance of celebrating the YW&G and encouraging them to access special opportunities.

## Sector upskilling and sharing learnings

The learnings from Cohort One presented a rich opportunity to share insight and best practice, both internally and externally.

During Cohort Two, the EmpowHER team has presented the findings from Cohort One to UK Youth's Senior Leadership. During Cohort Two, UK Youth submitted its final Impact Accelerator report and fed into a consultation with the Centre for Youth Impact on the future of the tool. UK Youth has also used the learnings from the Impact Accelerator to refine EmpowHER's Theory of Change (Appendix 1) and influence other UK Youth programmes, most recently Outdoor Activators (funded by Sport England), improving the experience of young people on other social action programmes. In the Programme Learning Chapter there is further reflection on the Impact Accelerator report and next steps.

Team, and the trustees of BRC. Key reflections were also shared in BRC's internal staff magazine, as well as on all partners' social media accounts. Externally, the EmpowHER team presented its approach to a 'test and learn' programme at the Spirit Learning Event and co-presented on the EmpowHER impact methodology (and the importance of a trusted relationship between funder and grantee) with Spirit of 2012 to the #iwill Match Funder Event. UK Youth's Deputy CEO continues to sit on the board of #iwill and feed into their strategy and legacy through events like the #iwill Ambassadors event.

## Sustainability and Continuation

Thanks to the extension funding from Spirit of 2012 and #iwill, EmpowHER has the possibility to continue, both into a new region, and a fourth cohort. During Cohort Four, the focus of the EmpowHER team will be on avenues to sustainability and during Cohort Two, the Project Steering Group began to discuss and define sustainability, coming up with five main ways of understanding what it could mean to EmpowHER, across three different intersecting levels; young people, youth organisations and the community. In the Programme Learnings Chapter, the result and examples of these discussions will be explored in full.



outcomes of Cohort One have been reinforced with a larger sample size, giving us assurance that the programme is producing the desired outcomes; wellbeing of YW&G improves, limiting perceptions are changed, social cohesion improves, YW&G empowered to identify and lead change, and long term social action habits formed

## Methodology

UK Youth collected a mix of quantitative and qualitative information to conduct the evaluation. To assess the extent of change in participants' outcomes, data was collected about EmpowHER participants, including information from surveys intended to be completed by all YW&G who completed the programme. We also conducted:

- in-depth focus groups with YW&G across six delivery partners;
- in-depth interviews with youth workers across ten delivery partners;<sup>1</sup>

- information from reports about YW&G social action projects across all 11 delivery partners and;
- visits to social action projects.

To assess the extent of change across participants, we designed entry and exit surveys to capture indicators of EmpowHER participants' wellbeing and other information at the start and end of the programme, respectively. We provided the surveys to youth workers with guidance and training, and youth workers distributed the surveys to

<sup>1</sup> An end-of-programme interview could not be completed with one delivery partner due

to staff transition within the delivery partner organisation at that time.

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EmpowHER participants. The surveys contained questions related to personal wellbeing, the ability to identify and lead change, social cohesion, previous involvement in social action, and limiting perceptions.

To assess the extent that EmpowHER participants' demographic characteristics were associated with changes in outcomes, we collected information about YW&G age, ethnicity, postcode, and any personal barriers as reported by youth workers. We provided youth workers with blank participant records at the beginning of the programme in addition to guidance and training, and youth workers were responsible for completing a record for every participant during the programme.

To gain more in-depth understanding of YW&G experiences of EmpowHER and relevant factors for changes in outcomes, we conducted focus groups with YW&G who had completed or were near completion of the programme in Cohort Two. YW&G attended a one-hour reflection session in which UK Youth facilitators asked a series of questions about YW&G experience of EmpowHER and what they felt they had gained.

To gain more insight into the extent of outcomes observed across participants and learnings about EmpowHER, we conducted in-depth interviews with youth workers. Youth workers participated in an hour-long interview via phone or in-

person, to discuss topics related to impact from the programme or programme learning.

To gain additional insight and assess patterns, if any, across the variety of social learning topics and social action projects YW&G participated in, we collected information about social learning topics, social action activities, and reach from social action from all delivery partners. Youth workers from each delivery partner were responsible for submitting a delivery report for every group of eight-plus EmpowHER participants. UK Youth also attended social action projects where possible.

## Participants Engaged

In Cohort Two of EmpowHER, 681 YW&G between the ages of 10-20 and two young women over the age of 20 with special education needs or disabilities engaged in the programme. Of the 683 YW&G, 625 YW&G completed the programme<sup>2</sup>. This represents a retention rate of 92%, which is slightly higher than the retention rate of 87% in Cohort One.

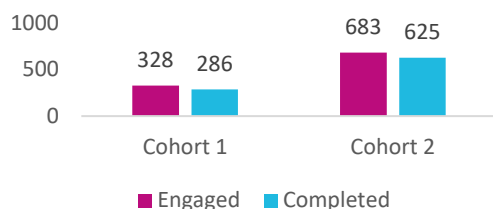
More than twice as many EmpowHER participants were engaged and completed EmpowHER in Cohort Two than Cohort One (Figure 4).

<sup>2</sup> In addition, seven girls under the age of 10 and who would not have turned 10 during the programme, and one young woman over the age of 20, participated in EmpowHER.

Because they were outside of the programme age requirements, they were not counted towards engagement and completion numbers for the purposes of this report.



**Figure 4. Cohort Two participants who engaged in and completed EmpowHER**

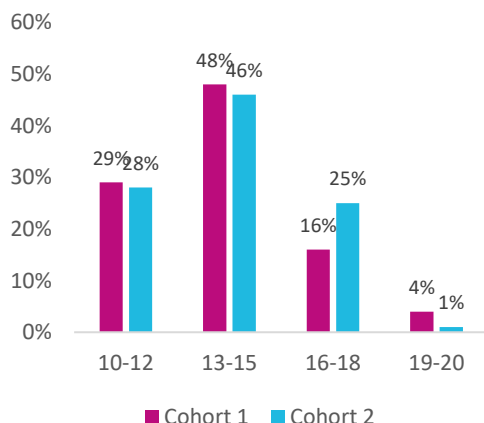


Source: UK Youth.

### One out of four YW&G in EmpowHER Cohort two were 16+ years old

Cohort Two had more YW&G in the 16-18 age range, though slightly fewer YW&G ages 19-20, compared to Cohort One (Figure 5). The increase in YW&G in this age bracket may reflect a greater emphasis on recruitment for older age groups for Cohort Two.

**Figure 5. Age ranges of Cohorts One and Two YW&G**



<sup>3</sup> Deprivation analysis conducted for participants with available postcode data. December 2018 figures published by the Office for National Statistics.

<sup>4</sup> Social mobility analysis conducted for participants with available postcode data. Social Mobility Index 2016.

Note: In addition, two young women ages 21 and 26 with special educational needs or disabilities participated in the programme. Cohort One data based on 306 YW&G engaged in EmpowHER, across nine delivery partners. Cohort Two data based on 625 YW&G who completed EmpowHER across 11 delivery partners.

Source: UK Youth.

### Over half of YW&G who completed EmpowHER Cohort Two came from England's most deprived areas

In Cohort Two, 56% of EmpowHER YW&G came from the 30% most deprived areas of the UK,<sup>3</sup> compared to 65% in Cohort One. In addition, 20% of Cohort Two YW&G came from the top 30% 'cold spots' or least socially mobile areas of the UK<sup>4</sup>. This shows that EmpowHER is engaging YW&G from areas of high deprivation and low social mobility, and they and their communities stand to gain from wellbeing and youth social action efforts.

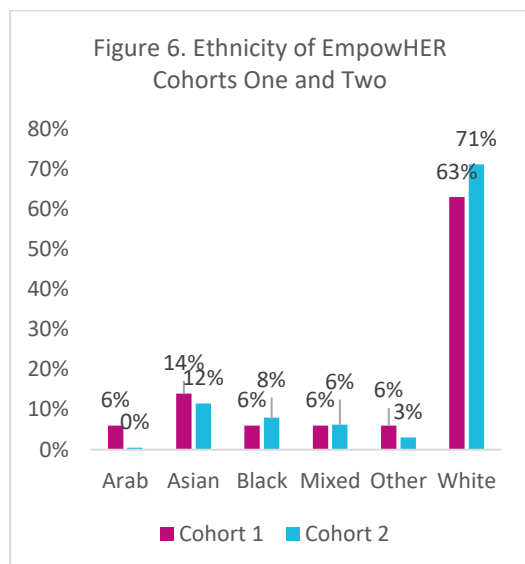
### EmpowHER engaged BAME YW&G

About 29% of YW&G in Cohort Two were from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, compared to 37% in Cohort One. The percentage of YW&G from BAME groups in Cohort Two is well above the national average of 18% for young people between the ages of 10-24 in the UK<sup>5</sup> (Ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk, 2018).

Figure 6 shows the breakdown of ethnicities for the two cohorts.

<sup>5</sup> Based on UK Youth analysis of UK census data from 2011, the most recent year for which data is available. Source: Gov. UK (2018). Ethnicity facts and figures, Age groups. Downloaded from: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk>

Percentages of YW&G who were Black, Asian, Mixed, or Other were comparable between the two cohorts. A higher percentage of YW&G were Arab in Cohort One, and a higher percentage were White in Cohort Two.



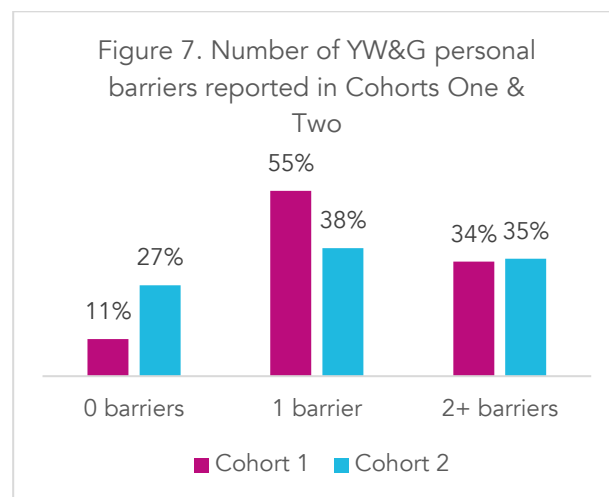
Note: Cohort One data based on 300 YW&G engaged in EmpowHER, across 9 delivery partners. Cohort Two data based on 625 YW&G who completed EmpowHER, across 11 delivery partners.

Source: UK Youth.

### Almost three out of four YW&G had at least one reported personal barrier

73% of YW&G who completed EmpowHER in Cohort Two were reported by youth workers to have at least one personal barrier. A higher percentage of YW&G in Cohort Two had no personal barriers compared to those in Cohort One, though the data for Cohort One includes information for YW&G who were engaged but did not complete EmpowHER.

Of 58 YW&G who did not complete EmpowHER Cohort Two, 19% had no personal barriers, 36% had one personal barrier, and 45% had two or more personal barriers. The latter compares to 35% of YW&G who completed the programme with two or more personal barriers (Figure 7).



Note: Cohort One data based on 261 YW&G engaged in EmpowHER, across nine delivery partners. Cohort Two data based on 625 YW&G who completed EmpowHER, across 11 delivery partners.

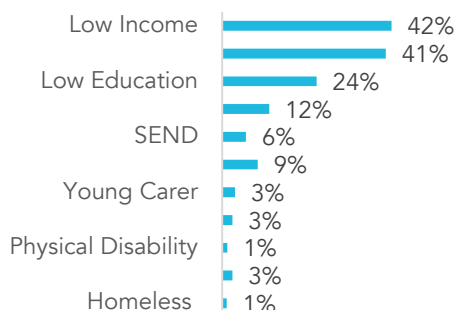
Source: UK Youth.

In Cohort Two, about four in 10 YW&G were reported as having low mental health, and almost a quarter were reported as having low educational attainment (Figure 8).

[figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/age-groups/latest#download-the-data](https://figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/age-groups/latest#download-the-data)

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Figure 8. Percentage of YW&G in Cohort Two with personal barriers



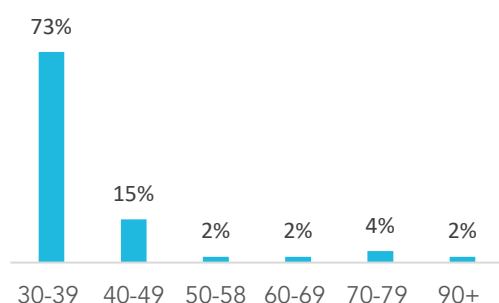
Note: Cohort Two data based on 625 YW&G who completed EmpowHER, across 11 delivery partners. Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD); Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND); Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). Source: UK Youth.

Of 58 YW&G in Cohort Two who did not complete EmpowHER, 24% spoke English as a second language (ESL), a far higher percentage than that of YW&G who did complete the programme (9%).

### Over a quarter of participants completed 40 hours or more

Most (73%) of YW&G who completed the programme completed 30-39 hours (Figure 9); while the remaining 27% completed between 40-92 hours.

Figure 9. Programme hours completed

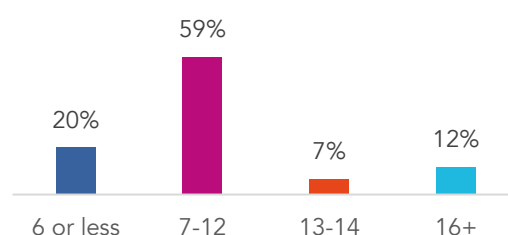


Note: Cohort Two data based on 625 YW&G who completed EmpowHER, across 11 delivery partners. Source: UK Youth.

### The large majority of participants engaged within small groups

A core component of EmpowHER is that YW&G participate in small group sizes of 7-12, to support sharing and building meaningful relationships. About 59% of reporting delivery partners had a group size of 7-12, while almost 20% of groups had a larger number of participants (Figure 10). Additional steps may be needed in future cohorts to understand and mitigate challenges, if any, of limiting group sizes.

Figure 10. Percent of Cohort Two EmpowHER groups by number of participants



Note: Cohort Two data based on 59 delivery partner reports submitted by 10 delivery partners. Source: UK Youth.

### Of YW&G who answered, over 1/3 had not engaged in social action before EmpowHER

Of YW&G who answered, about 34% had not engaged in social action activities such as volunteering, fundraising or campaigning before EmpowHER. About 44% of EmpowHER Cohort Two YW&G reported that they had done so, a smaller percentage compared to Cohort One (60%) and to the national average of 58% identified by #iwill in 2017.



Very few (3%) reported volunteering or fundraising with BRC before EmpowHER.

### YW&G engage in, and drop-out of, the programme for a range of reasons

YW&G report and youth workers observed multiple motivations for engaging, and continuing to engage, with EmpowHER. YW&G motivations include spending time doing activities in an environment different from school or home; making friends; and the chance to contribute to change in their communities. Some YW&G and youth workers also reported that YW&G valued incentives such as food at sessions or being provided EmpowHER hoodies.

Youth workers also provided insight into reasons why YW&G had left the programme. Four youth workers attributed drop-out to feelings of anxiety about potentially not having friends in the group. As a key principle of EmpowHER is building a small group for YW&G to feel comfortable sharing experiences, drop-out for social reasons may reflect the importance of individual relationships among YW&G within a group.

Two youth workers reported YW&G drop-out due to personal reasons, and two reported drop-out because of a young person's parents either not being able to take them to sessions or discouraging attendance. Other reported reasons for drop-out include the following: challenges in reaching the venue; not wanting to commit to attending on a weekly basis; feeling forced to participate when EmpowHER was coordinated through school; and behaviour challenges.

## Outcomes of the programme

### Wellbeing of YW&G improves

YW&G in Cohort Two reported improvements in all indicators for wellbeing (Figure 11), and the results show that EmpowHER is engaging YW&G with lower levels of wellbeing compared to the national average.

The statistically significant improvement in the four key indicators of wellbeing tells us that the increase in wellbeing reported by YW&G is 'real' and not likely due to random fluctuations in the data. Put another way, we could reasonably expect to see another group of YW&G who are similar to those participating in EmpowHER Cohort Two, to report similar increases if they were to participate.

A slight improvement for the Anxiety indicator (i.e., a reduction in anxiety) was detected, but the result was not statistically significant. This may have been due to the small sample size since the information was collected specifically from young women who were ages 16 and up.

We also found that the increases in wellbeing indicators can be considered as having 'real world' effects. The effects are slightly higher than those detected for

Cohort One and would be categorised as small.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 11. Average change in selected wellbeing indicators for EmpowHER Cohort Two YW&G

Indicator	Effect size
Happiness	.30 (small)*
Worthwhile	.41 (small)*
Satisfaction	.42 (small)*
Anxiety	.04
Happy when think about the future	.42 (small)*

Notes: \*statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.01$  level.

Base size of matched entry/exit surveys for each indicator are as follows: Happiness: 434, Worthwhile: 434, Satisfaction: 433, Anxiety: 48, Happy when think about the future: 439. For ease of interpretation, the Anxiety score was rescored on an ascending scale, so that a higher score signifies lower anxiety and therefore improvement. Paired t-test used to determine statistical significance, and Cohen's d used to determine effect size. Source: UK Youth.

More detailed analysis of the results raises interesting questions of whether other factors could affect the size of increase in wellbeing for EmpowHER participants. For example, using an average of the ONS happiness, worthwhile and satisfaction scores, the average change for those who engaged for 40 or more hours was 2.05, which was higher than for those who engaged for 30-39 hours, at .33. Factors other than length of time engaged, such

as quality of youth work delivery, could also directly affect outcomes.

In addition, average change for Black YW&G (1.19) and Asian YW&G (1.09) was higher than for White YW&G (.86), though firm conclusions cannot be reached since the sub-samples compared are small. Other research suggests the possibility that ethnicity could be associated with lower wellbeing for some young people,<sup>7</sup> but larger sample sizes would be needed to gain further insight.

### EmpowHER is shifting wellbeing among participants closer to the national population

Reviewing indicators that showed a larger increase (i.e. 'satisfaction' and 'worthwhile'), EmpowHER Cohort Two YW&G's ratings of high or very high went up for both indicators (Figures 11, 12). When compared to the UK national averages for young women and young men between the ages of 16-19,<sup>8</sup> EmpowHER YW&G's ratings can be seen to closer approach national ratings after the programme (Figures 12, 13).

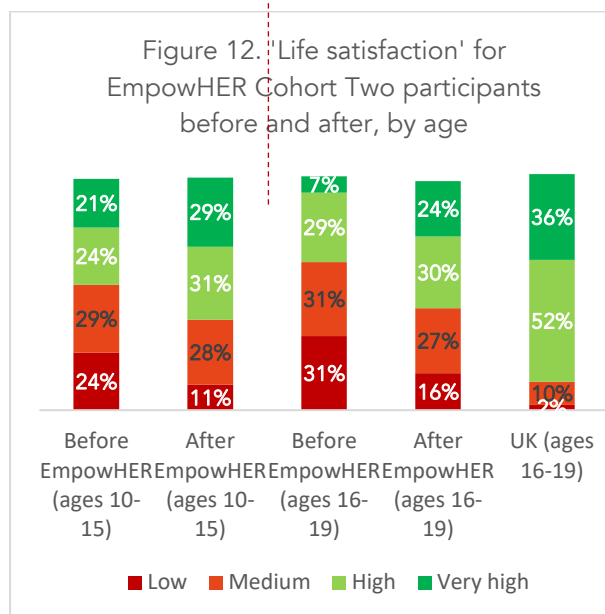
EmpowHER YW&G's ratings were broken out by age to further highlight differences between those ages 10-15, and those ages 16-19. Generally, a higher

<sup>6</sup> Reference ranges for effect size using Cohen's d are as follows:  $d=0.2$  represents a 'small' effect size, 0.5 represents a 'medium' effect size, and 0.8 represents a 'large' effect size.

<sup>7</sup> The Department of Education suggested that there are possible differences in wellbeing by ethnicity for young people ages 16-24: "There was a trend towards lower anxiety, but also lower life satisfaction, in young people from a Black/African/Caribbean/Black British background

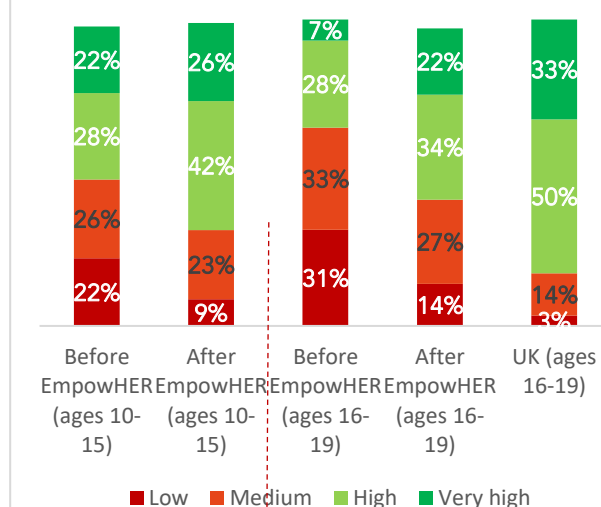
compared to young people from a White background. However, the small proportion of individuals in these ethnicity breakdowns means we should interpret these findings with caution." Source: UK Department of Education (2019). State of nation 2019: Children and young people's wellbeing, p. 26.  
<sup>8</sup> U.K. Office of National Statistics (ONS) national averages are shown for young people between the ages of 16-19, to better reflect comparable age groups to EmpowHER participants.

proportion of YW&G ages 10-15 rated themselves as high or very high for both wellbeing indicators before and after the programme, compared to YW&G ages 16-19.



Note: Base size: 345 (Ages 10-15); and 102 (Ages 16+) matched entry and exit surveys from YW&G from 11 delivery partners. National data for young people ages 16-19 from ONS National Data from April 2015 – March 2016, the most recent data available. On a scale of 0 – 10: low = 0-4, medium = 5-6, high=7-8, very high = 9-10. ONS administers the survey on an annual basis for young people and adults ages 16 and up. Data for EmpowHER YW&G age 20 not reported due to small matched sample size of 2. Source: UK Youth.

Figure 13. 'Worthwhile' for EmpowHER Cohort 2 participants, by age



Note: Base size: 345 (Ages 10-15); and 102 (Ages 16+) matched entry and exit surveys from YW&G from 11 delivery partners. National data for young people ages 16-19 from ONS National Data from April 2015 – March 2016, the most recent data available. On a scale of 0 – 10: low = 0-4, medium = 5-6, high=7-8, very high = 9-10. ONS administers the survey on an annual basis for young people and adults ages 16 and up. Data for EmpowHER YW&G age 20 not reported due to small matched sample size of 2. Source: UK Youth.

## Limiting perceptions are challenged

YW&G in Cohort Two also reported statistically significant improvement in their perceptions about their own abilities and their gender (Figure 14). YW&G reported a moderate improvement in their ability to do things as well as others, and a small improvement in their perception that YW&G can do anything they set their minds to.

Figure 14. Average change in limiting perceptions for EmpowHER Cohort Two YW&G

Indicator	Effect size
-----------	-------------

Own ability	.47 (medium)*
Gender	.32 (small)*

Notes: \*statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.01$  level.

Base size of matched entry/exit surveys for each indicator are as follows: Gender: 438, Own ability: 434. Paired t-test used to determine statistical significance, and Cohen's d used to determine effect size.

Source: UK Youth.

Similar to YW&G in Cohort One, YW&G in Cohort Two had higher limiting perceptions of their own abilities, compared to what they believed young women and girls more generally could achieve (Figure 15).

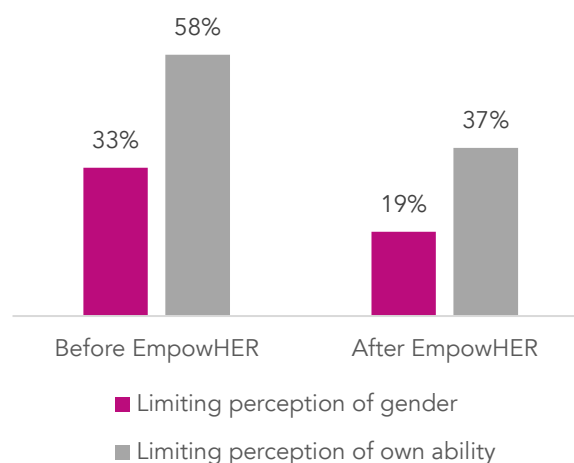
Several YW&G we spoke with after they had participated in EmpowHER remarked on feeling confident about what women could accomplish. For example, one EmpowHER participant said that “

In terms of what they themselves could accomplish, another EmpowHER participant found that, “EmpowHER made me feel confident and step outside of my comfort zone. At first I was a bit shy, but now I know that I can do anything...[before], if we were in school or something and the teacher would ask a question, I would know the answer but I I've learned that women can do construction and different things.” would feel too shy to put my hand up and stuff. But now, if the teacher asks me a question, I have confidence.”

One EmpowHER participant spoke about enjoying meeting women role models: “Loads of inspiring women came in and we worked with them,” while another observed, “there are a lot of females who want their voice to be heard, if we are there to support them.”

Another EmpowHER participant also said she felt more confident in school: “I feel confident in myself trying new things as well as helping others. Before, in class, I never used to put my hand up because I was thinking will I get laughed at, will I get shouted at, but I don't feel the same way now.”

Figure 15. Percentage of YW&G in Cohort Two with limiting perceptions before and after EmpowHER



Note: Base size: 449 YW&G from 11 delivery partners. Those that scored statements from 0-6 on a 10 point scale are considered to have a limiting perception. Statements as follows: Perception of gender = ‘Young women and girls can do anything they set their minds to’. Perception of own ability = ‘I can do things as well as most other people.’

Source: UK Youth.

## YW&G are empowered to identify and lead change

YW&G in Cohort Two also reported statistically significant improvement in their ability to make a positive difference where they live and to lead change (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Average change in ability to make a difference and lead change, EmpowHER Cohort 2 YW&G

Indicator	Effect size
Make a positive difference	.42 (small)*
Lead change	.35 (small)*

Notes: \*statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.01$  level.

Base size of matched entry/exit surveys for each indicator are as follows: Make a positive difference: 436, Lead change: 440. Paired t-test used to determine statistical significance, and Cohen's d used to determine effect size.

Source: UK Youth.

In addition, YW&G in Cohort Two reported statistically significant improvement across all indicators for emotional and social capabilities, with a higher increase for confidence in particular (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Average change in emotional and social capabilities (ESCs), EmpowHER Cohort Two YW&G

Indicator	Effect size
Receptiveness	.32 (small)*
Communication	.42 (small)*
Self-awareness	.24 (small)*
Motivation	.29 (small)*
Confidence	.55 (medium)*
Resilience	.42 (small)*
Responsibility	.28 (small)*

Notes: \*statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.01$  level.

Base size of matched entry/exit surveys for each indicator are as follows: Receptiveness: 437, Communication: 434, Self-awareness: 440, Motivation: 442, Confidence: 429, Resilience: 429, Responsibility: 433. Paired t-test used to determine statistical significance, and Cohen's d used to determine effect size.

Source: UK Youth.

YW&G also spoke about gaining more confidence and skills through participating in social action. For example, one participant said, "It's helped me with my confidence with helping with other

people." Another participant found, "I've learned I can work as a team with people I don't know and still enjoy it," while another said, "We know what it's like to volunteer...I really liked helping out people."

Multiple YW&G across youth organisations also talked about how much fun they had learning first aid and feeling a sense of accomplishment in being able to use it in the service of others. For example, participants expressed the following:

- "I would know what to do [in a medical situation], and I would have the confidence to go up to them and help them."
- "I liked the first-aid, because now I know how to help people."
- "We've learned how to save peoples' lives."

Another EmpowHER participant spoke about being bullied before EmpowHER. During the programme, she learned how to manage such interactions, as well as treat others with respect. She talked about the qualities that, "make a good friend – someone who listens, who's responsible, who's trustworthy. Now I know how to react to certain things...and how to help people. I feel confident in myself trying new things as well as helping others."

Another EmpowHER participant remarked about feeling good about her social action efforts: "It makes me feel good because I feel like I have been able to make a change. There are some younger girls who do the boxing sessions who have anger problems and stuff and I have been able to help them. It makes me feel

good that they are able to get their anger out and relax doing those sessions.”

### Social cohesion improves

YW&G reported statistically significant improvements in their perceptions of acceptance by those they spend time with, trust for others around them, and interacting with people different from them (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Average change in indicators related to Social Cohesion, EmpowHER Cohort Two YW&G

Indicator	Effect size
Feel accepted by others	.35 (small)*
Trust for others	.39 (small)*
Meeting people different from oneself	.36 (small)*

Notes: \*statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.01$  level.

Base size of matched entry/exit surveys for each indicator are as follows: Acceptance by others: 395, Trust for others: 398, Meeting people different from oneself: 432. Paired t-test used to determine statistical significance, and Cohen's d used to determine effect size.

Source: UK Youth.

In social action events observed by UK Youth and BRC, YW&G and local perceptions of EmpowHER social action efforts were encouraging and positive. For one social action project, two EmpowHER groups organized an event for local year three and year four pupils. Activities included a first aid awareness tent and a language awareness tent. Although about 350 pupils attended, which was higher than expected, YW&G broke out the activities into multiple sessions to allow everyone to participate. Multiple YW&G enjoyed planning and organising the event, and felt the day was worthwhile:

- “It’s nice to learn and then go out into the world and do something with it.”
- “I wanted other people to know how difficult it is to move to another country and not speak the language. When I was doing the session, I saw their faces and I knew that they’d got it.”

For another social action project, YW&G organised a panel of inspirational speakers at a local festival. Multiple attendees from the local community gave positive feedback about EmpowHER participants’ efforts:

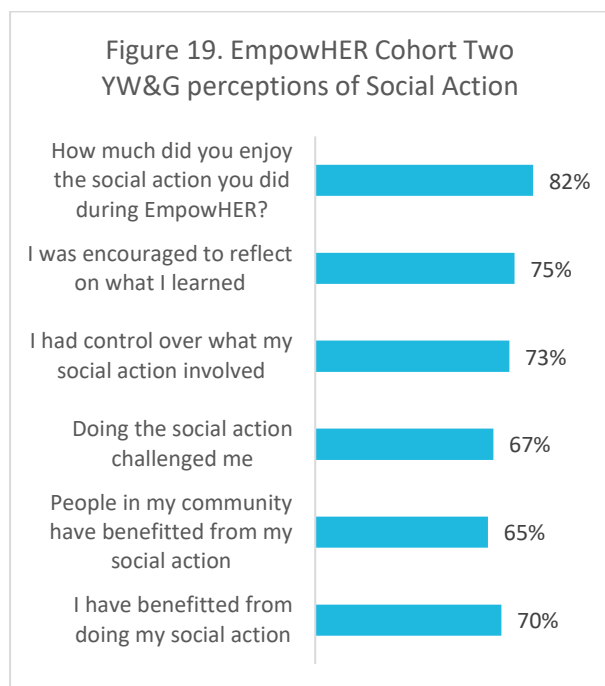
- “I enjoyed hearing everyone’s stories. How they ‘wouldn’t take no for an answer.’ I found some of the stories relatable, even as a male. Discrimination is happening to everyone. It’s great that there are strong people making changes for the future generations – move forward!”
- “Amazing event, we need more of these events to inspire more young people. Perfect sized group and great diversity.”

### Long-term, youth-led, meaningful social action habits are formed

#### YW&G are motivated to engage in future social action

About 37% of YW&G in Cohort Two indicated they were likely to take part in volunteering, fundraising or campaigning in the next year. This is a small increase from Cohort One (34%).

In terms of YW&G's perceptions about doing social action, over 80% enjoyed taking part, while about two-thirds felt that their social action efforts had benefitted their community (Figure 19).



Note: Based on 449 matched entry and exit surveys. Percentages by question report proportion of responses that scored at least 7 out of 10. Source: UK Youth.

In programme exit surveys, YW&G reported multiple motivations for engaging in social action. Of 338 YW&G who responded to the question about what motivated them to do their social action projects, about 60% indicated helping others, almost 30% indicated personal growth, and 10% because they thought it was fun:

- "I wanted to do these social actions because I find it hard to make friends. I also needed more confidence. This project really helped me and I am really happy I took the opportunity to do it.
- "To show people that it is ok to be different and to make the world a

better place. Also to show that it is ok to not be ok."

- "I've been in a lot of trouble recently with the police and I wanted to be able to give something back to the community."

YW&G across multiple focus groups also talked about enjoying interacting with members of their communities and learning more about where they lived. For social action, one group pursued participating in climate change protests where they lived. Because participating required missing school, they worked to persuade their parents and school headteacher to permit them. Some YW&G felt motivated by environmental causes, and others felt motivated to join their friends in the community's efforts.

YW&G from another group spoke about feeling pride in organising a local community event and enjoyed meeting local leaders and inspirational woman in traditionally male-dominated professions.

### Likelihood of future engagement with the BRC improved

In Cohort One, about 18% of YW&G expressed an intention to volunteer with the BRC in the next 12 months. During Cohort Two, the EmpowHER team ensured that the Youth Engagement Workers were introduced to groups much earlier on and worked with delivery partners to talk through the benefit of getting BRC support in the social action. In Cohort Two, the percentage of YW&G

expressing an intention to volunteer with the BRC went up to 23%.<sup>9</sup>

### The factors for developing long-term, youth-led social action habits were reinforced

During Cohort One we identified three key enablers of youth-led social action:

- Small social action activities e.g. writing a Christmas card to someone who may be lonely, building up to a larger project
- Sessions that support YW&G to explore and identify topics they feel passionate about
- Accessible opportunities and support to engage in future social action projects.

Youth Workers in Cohort Two similarly highlighted the importance of giving young people the power to take ownership of the project, while also emphasising teaching young people how to get from idea to action, through a step-by-step approach.

Focus, resources, increased confidence and local connections also emerged as key to “planting a seed” for long-term, youth-led social action habits. These enablers, and the challenges facing young people, are explored in further detail in the next chapter.

## Further programme findings

### Partnerships and flexibility were key to the successful delivery of the programme

During the qualitative interviews, youth workers discussed what aspects of the programme they felt worked well, and what areas they felt could be improved. Youth workers valued the flexibility of EmpowHER, communication from UK Youth, collaborating with BRC and other organisations, and incorporating social learning topics into sessions. Topics and structures could be tailored to the needs of the group. For example, there was space to change the content of sessions depending on participants’ needs and interests, and one youth worker commented that incorporating 1-2-1’s for especially vulnerable members of the group, and varying the size depending on who was participating in the group, was valuable.

Another youth worker found that scenario-based examples helped to open discussions and not make YW&G feel alone in their experiences. Another youth worker commented that collaborating with BRC had a “massive impact” on helping YW&G engage in social action, while others noted the benefits of communicating with local schools to support social action and sharing experiences with other youth organisations via EmpowHER regional meetings and discussions.

### Programmatic Challenges

In terms of potential improvements to the programme, individual youth workers

<sup>9</sup> Base size of 459 matched entry and exit surveys, future intention based on those that

rated the question “I will volunteer with the BRC in the next 12 months” 8 more out of 10.





planning and completing social action projects.

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# Programme Learning

The research and learning framework of EmpowHER has been built in order to deepen our understanding of the impact of social action on wellbeing and identify the enablers of longer-term social action habits. Cohorts One and Two provided statistically significant findings across many of our five outcomes, increasing our confidence that EmpowHER is producing meaningful change to the wellbeing and confidence of young women and girls.

## Programme design

Going into Cohort Two, there were two key questions to be answered about the programme design.

- How can the programme be improved to optimise outcomes?
- What are factors for engagement and retention in EmpowHER?

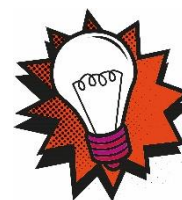
It is evident from Figures 11 and 17 above that the YW&G are continuing to achieve positive outcomes from their participation in the programme and the confirmation of our findings from Cohort One assure us that no drastic changes need to be made to the programme design. This section will identify

what we have learnt to enable us to answer those key questions and the steps

we are taking to ensure optimisation of outcomes and increased engagement with YW&G with personal barriers.

## Structure and articulation

This period of the project has included various staff changes at UK Youth which has allowed for analysis and reflection on both the programme design and ways of managing the project. During the handover period, it became apparent that the richness of the programme was sometimes being lost in translation due to the complexity of the overlapping pieces, and what was needed was a refresh around the messaging. This led to the core team spending some time digging into what EmpowHER is, and how all of the elements, from role models, to learning about wellbeing to the Be Your Best Self Workshops, were connected – and how they could be communicated in a way that felt exciting to delivery partners rather than overwhelming.



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Based on this reflection period, the team decided to retrain all the youth workers on EmpowHER. Rather than a training that spent significant time telling youth workers what each element looked like, we designed an activity that allowed youth workers to physically put the EmpowHER journey together like a jigsaw and move pieces around depending on the interests or personal barriers of the young women they would be working with.

It was evident from the exercise that due to a previous lack of understanding or miscommunication of how the different activities of EmpowHER fit together, youth workers in prior cohorts were not incorporating activities that could be very impactful to the YW&G, including the use of role models, applying for the Access Fund, or Social Action Pitch Days.

The fact that there were certain elements of the programme unfamiliar to youth workers showed that the cascade model of communication had not worked in all regions, especially when there had been staff turnover at the local level. Going into Cohort Three we are confident that the delivery teams have a much stronger understanding of the EmpowHER journey, the UK Youth team has a clear understanding of how delivery partners will be adapting the programme to their local context and have already booked dates for visits to ensure programme fidelity and quality.

## Engagement and retention of unusual suspects

The engagement and retention of unusual suspects is core to EmpowHER. From Figure 7, it appears that the number of YW&G in Cohort Two reported by youth workers to have personal barriers was lower than in Cohort One. Since this data is reported by youth workers based on their knowledge of the YW&G rather than asked directly, it is possible that the data is not showing the whole picture.

However, viewed alone, it appears that the recruitment of YW&G who most need the programme has been less successful. But, as the What Works Centre for Wellbeing states, wellbeing is impacted not just by outside influences, but also by “how we experience our lives”. Keeping that in mind, it is important to think about the other factors that contribute to low wellbeing. For life satisfaction, more EmpowHER participants started at a low level in Cohort Two, compared to the previous cohort.

Figure 12 shows that a higher percentage of YW&G in Cohort Two had low life satisfaction, 27% which fell to 12% at the end of the programme, compared to 22% in Cohort One falling to 11%. For the older YW&G (16+) who had been a focus of recruitment efforts for Cohort Two, the percentage who began the programme with low life satisfaction is even higher (31%).

This suggests that Cohort Two was even more successful in engaging YW&G with low wellbeing – and that the impact of the programme was slightly enhanced. Furthermore, EmpowHER is engaging YW&G who potentially are not always identified as having personal barriers, but whose low wellbeing and life satisfaction indicates that they would highly benefit

from a programme like EmpowHER. Going into Cohorts Three and Four, we will continue to emphasise the primacy of low wellbeing over other factors of disadvantage when working with local delivery partners on their engagement plans.

In addition to recruiting unusual suspects, EmpowHER aims to retain YW&G over a minimum of 12 weeks. Overall, the high, and improving (compared against Cohort One), retention rate shows that the programme is very good at retaining the participants.

When looking at the demographics of the 58 YW&G who did not complete the programme, the higher percentage of YW&G who faced multiple personal barriers, including ESL, and did not complete EmpowHER suggests that challenges exist in ensuring their ability to attend or commit to the programme, or even, as raised by one youth worker, understand some of the social learning topics.

These challenges to retention for YW&G with multiple barriers, particularly ESL speakers, could be mitigated in future cohorts, such as through support funds for translated materials or interpreters. For example, one delivery partner noted that some YW&G with English as a second language found the entry surveys difficult and time-consuming to complete, which may have affected their willingness to return to future sessions.

This learning ties into the importance of effectively articulating the programme and cascading information. As mentioned in the previous section, and brought up in the qualitative interviews, many youth

workers were not familiar with the access fund and did not know how to apply to it. Going into Cohort Three, and using the mid-point data check-in, the UK Youth team will specifically target communication to programme leads, and youth workers working with YW&G with multiple personal barriers, or who speak English as a second language.

## Length of intervention

Cohort One's results made clear that the length and intensity of the engagement was a key enabler for the programme. However, there are also interesting questions to be asked about whether a longer engagement would provide even more significant change. As discussed, the average change for participants who engaged in EmpowHER for over 40 hours was higher than those who engaged for 30 to 39.

Although there was not sufficient data from this cohort to draw firm conclusions, the increased impact of a longer intervention is an element we will continue to monitor across the outcomes.

Going into Cohort Three, we have already encouraged delivery partners when possible to offer additional hours for EmpowHER, and will highlight the potential for the increased impact on the wellbeing of the YW&G when sharing the learnings of this cohort.





Wigan Youth Zone glow in the dark sponsored walk, walking the time it takes for some girls to walk to school to get an education.

## Quality youth-led social action

In Cohort One, our research showed us that social action had greater impact on YW&G when they had choice in what they did. Going into Cohort Two, a key focus was deepening our understanding of how to strengthen social action habits.

75% of YW&G in Cohort Two said they felt they had a choice in what they did and 73% of YW&G indicated they were encouraged to reflect upon their learning, key tenets of quality youth-led social action.

Several tweaks to the programme elements in Cohort Two, from the journals and the awards to the social action fund applications, were designed to support this reflection, so it is positive that YW&G are not just doing social action, but also

reflecting and learning from the experience.

However, the responses were slightly less confident when asked whether the social action challenged them (68%). At this time, there is still much more to learn around the development of social action habits, however, it is important that the social action project stretches the YW&G. Feedback from the Youth Engagement Workers and youth workers indicates that sometimes the first idea from the YW&G is to do a bake sale. In order for the YW&G to push themselves further, it is important that the social action ideation and planning is given sufficient time and space to allow the YW&G to potentially think bigger about the type of the project they could achieve.

For Cohort Three, we have reiterated to youth workers the importance of giving time to plan and will be rolling out the Social Action Pitch Days, adding an additional level of challenge to groups, across all regions.

In addition, we will be providing all delivery partners with the Social Action Quality Mark (SAQM) and guidance which encourages ambitious and challenging target and goal setting for social action projects. Full details of the SAQM are found in Programme Conclusion.

The learnings from Cohort Two indicate that the reach, number and ambition of the social action continues to increase. To build upon this momentum, going into Cohort Three, BRC have added to their Call to Action resources, creating resources which will help groups to better plan their social action activity and ensure it is meaningful and well thought out. They have also added an activity to the

initial BRC social action sessions following feedback from youth workers at recent training events.

## Connecting to something bigger

In Cohort One, there was feedback from the YW&G that they benefitted from feeling “part of something bigger”. Although regional working and sharing of best practice had been identified at an early stage as key to the success of the programme, the impact on the YW&G of feeling like their work was part of a bigger movement or programme was not always articulated, leading to occasional challenges in bringing different organisations together for celebration events or YWT workshops.

For Cohort Three, in order to cement the feeling for a ‘bigger picture’ for the YW&G, UK Youth, BRC and YWT will continue to lever their status as national organisations to create opportunities for YW&G to come together, through Social Action Pitch days, opportunities through the BRC like Geneva and Disneyland, continuing to use celebration events to connect groups across regions and using the very popular EmpowHER merchandise to connect YW&G through hoodies, hashtags and video content.



*Celebration Event in the West Midlands*



**I feel like I'm a part of something bigger than just a girls' session, part of something that's become important to me and has sparked a passion."**

- Young person, Positive Youth Foundation

## Sector upskilling and best practice

EmpowHER aims to leave a lasting impact on the sector, both in terms of regional working and partnership, as well as the structure of the programme and the design of the topics.

Feedback from Cohort One and Two, as well as the insight of the BRC Youth Engagement Workers, and interviews with the youth workers, showed some delivery staff might benefit from additional training and resources or specialist knowledge in order to effectively deliver EmpowHER. These include facilitating discussions of wellbeing, mental health or relationships and sexual health,

supporting quality youth-led social action, and overcoming limiting perceptions.

## Facilitating social action and difficult conversations

In Cohort Two, the programme partners worked hard to embed BRC in the delivery early on to provide extra capacity. There has been a marked increase in the number of delivery partners engaging with the BRC, however there is still room for progress.

Going into Cohort Three, UK Youth will be attending some initial sessions with youth workers and BRC in order to facilitate the Youth Engagement Workers connection to the delivery partner.

In addition, YWT and UK Youth are working through a new offer for Cohort Three and Four for delivery partners. Discussions are still in the early stage, but options include coaching from the YWT team or solution focussed training for youth workers in order to support them to deal with difficult conversations.

## Limiting perceptions and personal barriers

As Figure 14 shows, over a third of the YW&G had limiting perceptions of their gender at the beginning of EmpowHER, and well over half had limiting perceptions of themselves. Although outwardly YW&G may not report

thinking that women are less able to do things than men, it is common for women to internalise these messages, and this effect can impact both delivery staff, ie youth workers, as well as the participants.

During Cohort Two, there were instances when youth workers expressed doubt or disbelief in the YW&G abilities to tackle a challenging social action project, or did not put the YW&G forward for opportunities. It was important to spend time reflecting on the difference between the practical barriers many of the participants faced and any limiting perceptions being placed upon them, even subconsciously.

At the end of Cohort Two, in the train-the-trainer sessions, the EmpowHER team used the Power Walk Activity (Appendix II) to identify real barriers, demonstrating and discussing the difference between barriers and perceptions, i.e:

"She would not be right for the opportunity"

versus

"I know transportation is a barrier to her accessing this opportunity"

A key learning from this is that it is important for all staff across the programme partnership to understand their own position, prejudices or lack of confidence when working on a programme like EmpowHER, to ensure that these are not projected onto the participants and do not impact their experience.

In regard to practical barriers, the quantitative data showed that of 58 YW&G who did not complete EmpowHER Cohort Two, 45% had two or more personal barriers and 24% spoke English as second language. In fact, only 9% of YW&G who spoke English as a second language managed to complete the programme.

This demonstrates that EmpowHER is engaging YW&G who are facing extra challenges in their lives and could hugely benefit from the programme but it is not completely accessible to these young people, especially if their first language is not English.

Although it is unrealistic to expect 100% retention rates for any programme, UK Youth has provided an Access Fund for the project specifically to ensure that practical barriers can be overcome, however there has been very little uptake across Cohorts One and Two, and when running train-the-trainers at the end of Cohort Two, it was evident that many of the youth workers did not know this fund existed.

By reiterating to both programme leads and the youth workers the purpose of the fund and how to apply, and giving practical examples of how other UK Youth programmes have used this fund, we are hopeful that there will be additional take up in Cohort Three.

## Partnership Working

In Cohort One, there was a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities across the partnership of UK Youth, BRC and YWT. This particularly impacted the partnership between BRC and UK Youth, where multiple lines of communication were confusing to delivery partners and resulted in some not sufficiently engaging with BRC. Going into Cohort Two, the roles were re-defined and communicated to the delivery partners, with emphasis on the role and value of the Youth

Engagement Worker. In addition, new ways of working were introduced including bi-weekly phone calls and team days.

During Cohort Two, both BRC and UK Youth felt that their positioning as one "EmpowHER team" was working much better. There was streamlining of communication at both a partnership level (with the Youth Engagement Workers and UK Youth Coordinators maintaining communication lines and the Managers at both organisations keeping communication lines) and between delivery partners and the programme team. UK Youth used their check-ins with delivery partners to ensure that they were engaging with BRC and encourage them to do so.

The BRC Youth Engagement Workers, as the on-the-ground representatives of the EmpowHER team, were also able to relay back to UK Youth valuable insight about the delivery of the programme and act as catalysts for regional working, providing extra capacity to support regional working for meetings and celebration events.

The BRC believes that due to the success of the partnership and the increased buy-in from the delivery partners as to engaging with BRC, there has been an



increase in EmpowHER alumni becoming involved in events and social action after their time on the programme, as they are more easily able to link up with the BRC network.

The learnings from both Cohort One and Two have informed a stronger partnership, with new trainings being co-



designed by the whole EmpowHER team, communication being synchronised and streamlined, and challenges addressed together.

## Sustainability and Legacy

In Cohort One, significant barriers for YW&G engaging in long-term social action habits, were identified, including lack of local opportunities in some areas. For example, in some cases, once EmpowHER finished, there was no sustained follow-on support, especially when delivery was done through schools. 37% of YW&G in Cohort Two indicated they were likely to take part in volunteering, fundraising or campaigning in the next year. This is a slight increase from Cohort One (34%) however there is still work to be done in this area. Youth workers identified the barriers to YW&G continuing as; understanding or knowledge to be able to continue, resources, access in their local area, space to continue in, and the continual support and motivating presence of an adult.

From the Project Steering Group, the following insights were gathered around what sustainability might mean for different EmpowHER stakeholders.

To respond to this guidance from the Steering Group, EmpowHER is already beginning to create pathways for continued development of, and engagement with YW&G, youth organisations and local communities. The enablers will be built upon and evaluated during Cohort Three as we build towards a focus on sustainability in Cohort Four.

### For young people, sustainability is;

- YW&G with knowledge of the past and understanding of the context around women's rights.
- Embedded confidence and skills in the girls to do social action in the future.
- YW&G building belief in themselves and in the causes they care about.
- EmpowHER building hopes and dreams and positively contributing to their longer-term ambitions and work goals.
- Positive childhood memories
- The tools they need to deal with life's challenges

### Paid work experience

A young woman from Coventry has recently taken on paid work experience role in retail with BRC. This has meant that she can gain retail and humanitarian work experience without having to take on an additional job to fund herself.

Some YW&G have also managed to secure paid work experience within EmpowHER. UCO has expressed the significant impact that EmpowHER is having in their community, where previously many young women were unable to access youth provision due to it being mixed gender. Because of EmpowHER's popularity, particularly as a single-gender programme, UCO has increased the number of groups in Cohort Three and has employed and trained YW&G from Cohort One to support with EmpowHER delivery. This model effectively allows YW&G to continue their EmpowHER journey post-EmpowHER and

provides additional capacity and expertise to the UCO team.

### Speaking events

Three EmpowHER alumni attended a BRC conference in January for the volunteer mobilisation team, who recruit, retain and work with BRC volunteers. The three young women delivered a presentation about the reasons they enjoyed volunteering with BRC and the activities they have completed since their involvement in EmpowHER. For two of the young women this was their first time travelling independently by train and speaking at an event. The feedback from the event showed that their section was the most popular part of the day amongst participants. BRC sent thank you letters to the young women so that they can include them in their university or job applications.



**EmpowHER girls are AMAZING! The girls have been inspired and are giving back. They spoke with such unbridled joy"**

- Conference Attendee, British Red Cross

**EmpowHER groups 2.0** Several EmpowHER groups have continued meeting after the end of the funded programme. Two particular examples are:

- We Change Adversity, an EmpowHER group who launched a reproductive rights campaign as their social action project

- Preston Impact Group, who focused on mental health, have continued running 'Be Kind to Your Mind,' a peer led programme in their school that offers a safe space for young people who are struggling with mental health

The ability of the YW&G to continue engaging has been made possible due to BRC and their role models. Following a request from the young women running the We Change Adversity campaign, BRC has introduced the group to a role model, who provides a mechanism of support for the YW&G to realistically continue and grow their campaign. The role model can support and encourage the YW&G while ensuring that the campaign remains youth led and independent of EmpowHER.

In Cohort Three, the EmpowHER team will be working to gather more case studies and examples of best practice to share with the delivery partners and sector in order to ensure that sustainability for the young people is fully embedded in Cohort Four.

### For youth organisations, sustainability is;

- Building relationships and trust between organisations and young people
- Upskilling of youth workers through building knowledge of social action and providing accessible and simple EmpowHER Toolkits.
- Embedding of programme into institutional knowledge through core and flex, Social Action Quality Mark and toolkits.

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- Connecting with local networks and funders to demonstrate the power of the programme and draw down funding.

In Cohort Two, UK Youth in consultation with #iwill finalised the Social Action Quality Mark which we will provide to EmpowHER delivery partners free of charge over Cohort Three and Four.

We will also continue to provide training and development opportunities to the youth workers on the programme and look to share the findings more broadly in the sector through events and publications.

#### For the community, sustainability is;

- Creating a cycle of engagement for the YW&G; the YW&G receive support, understand and lead social action, come back to

provide support to other groups of YW&G.

- Planting the seeds of YW&G shaping future society and becoming better citizens in their community.

The question of sustainability for the community is intrinsically linked to the themes of double benefit and inspiring YW&G to lead change. This question is also context specific, as sustainable practice in St. Austell and Coventry (for example) may look very different.

In Cohort Three, the EmpowHER team, using the mechanisms of the Regional Steering Meetings and Project Steering Group, will collaborate with delivery partners to further explore what sustainability means to them, and how the national partners can work in partnership to support local sustainability.



## Conclusions and Next Steps

Going into Cohort Three, the essential EmpowHER programme design will remain the same and the focus will be on continuing to improve quality youth led social action through the SAQM, developing and sharing best practice and exploring options for sustainability.

### Programme design

With the conclusion of Cohorts One and Two, and over 900 YW&G completing the programme, we are confident from our research that the core elements of the programme (the length of intervention, single-gender groups, social learning, social action, and recognition of the YW&G) are driving increases in wellbeing. Therefore, going into Cohort Three there will be no significant change to the programme design, rather continued work

on communicating this design in an accessible manner and a deepening of the impact of certain elements, especially around social action.

### Quality youth led social action

As mentioned in the Learning Chapter, during Cohort Three, UK Youth will also be rolling out the Social Action Quality Mark. This quality mark is an off-the-shelf resource that has been developed by UK

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Youth in consultation with #iwill to provide a framework designed to enhance the quality of youth organisations' social action activity. The SAQM will be accompanied by a user guide which provides useful information and additional resources for embedding quality youth led social action, as well as an EmpowHER evidence guide which lists the current EmpowHER materials that can be used for evidence (such as journals, Youth

Achievement Awards, Delivery Partner Reports, Photos, etc.).

In Cohort Three, all delivery partners (14) will receive a designed version of the SAQM as well as a user guide and EmpowHER evidence guide. In addition, there will be a pilot with three to four delivery partners who will complete the training and receive additional support from UK Youth's Head of Quality through phone calls and clinics. UK Youth will also moderate the mark, providing feedback to the delivery team.

Finally, the pilot of the Social Action Pitch Day received excellent feedback from the YW&G and excitement and interest from other delivery partners. In Cohort Three we will expand the Social Action Pitch Days to deliver them in each region, working with delivery partners to create exciting, challenging events which develop the confidence, public speaking and reflective practice of the YW&G.

## Connecting to something bigger

One of the challenges of Cohort Two was the wide geographical spread in the South West region, between Young

People Cornwall and Young Gloucester. The expansion in Cohort Three to the East of England where the delivery partners are also dispersed will introduce these geographic challenges to another region. Therefore, in Cohort Three, the EmpowHER team has already begun conversations with the relevant delivery partners about suitable dates for end of Cohort Celebration events, to ensure that all the young people feel this sense of connection to the wider programme.

## Sector upskilling and sharing best practice

During Cohort Two, youth workers were more confident in the delivery of EmpowHER, reflecting that, especially with the social action projects, they felt much more prepared for the amount of time and work it required of themselves and the YW&G. Going into Cohort Three, the embedding of the Social Action Quality Mark and the development of training with YWT for the youth workers will contribute to the ongoing upskilling of the sector.

Cohort Three will occur alongside UK Youth's new three-year strategy. Although the final strategy will not be finalised until April 2020, a key pillar of the work will be both developing programmatic evidence and sharing this best practice with the sector. Given the wealth of information

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that the rich research framework on this programme supports, the learnings from EmpowHER are well-placed to be at the centre of this new strategic focus.

EmpowHER has been a very successful programme and garnered considerable attention and enquiries from Masters students, school leaders, Community Wellbeing services, local Councils, Pupil Referral Units and individual YW&G from around the country – many of them asking if they can join the programme or recreate it in their setting. We will continue to work to ensure that the lessons learned are shared internally to inform UK Youth's programmatic approach, with these organisations and the rest of the UK Youth Movement, and with other national charities and funders.

Sustainability of the project for the YW&G, the youth organisations, local communities, the programme partners and the sector more broadly is a key area of focus for Cohorts Three and Four. The number of YW&G who plan to continue social action has not increased significantly between Cohorts One and Two and so this will be a focus of delivery and research for Cohort Three to understand how better EmpowHER can create lasting social action habits.

During the next Project Steering Group (scheduled for April 2020) we will be presenting the findings from this report and continuing the discussion around sustainability, focussing on what it means for organisations as well as reviewing YW&G pathways.

## Partnership working

Feedback from YWT and BRC about the effectiveness of the partnership showed that the lessons learnt from Cohort One made a significant difference in Cohort Two. However, there is still work to do – UK Youth will continue to streamline communication and activities with BRC and work with YWT to identify a new way of engaging in EmpowHER with the younger age range.

## Research Focus for Cohort Three

UK Youth and the EmpowHER team are delighted that due to the additional impact funding from Spirit of 2012 and #iwill, the longitudinal impact of EmpowHER on YW&G can be measured for YW&G just starting on the programme. This will provide rich insight into the long-term impact of the programme and social action more broadly. In addition, we will be engaging with Spirit of 2012 to agree any further research focus for Cohort Three in the coming months.

## Sustainability and legacy

## Cohort Three Timeline

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Oct 18 – Feb 19	Mar 18 – Apr 19	May 19 – Oct 19	Nov 19 – Jan 20	Feb 20 – Jul 20	Aug – Sep 20	Oct 20 – Mar 21	Apr 21 – Sep 21
Cohort 1 Delivery phase	Impact & Learning phase 1	Cohort 2 Delivery phase	Impact & Learning phase 2	Cohort 3 Delivery phase	Impact & Learning phase 3	Cohort 4 Delivery phase	Knowledge & Sharing phase



Data deadlines	Cohort 3 Midpoint Data Check-in 17th April 2020	Cohort 3 7th August 2020	Cohort 4 9th April 2021
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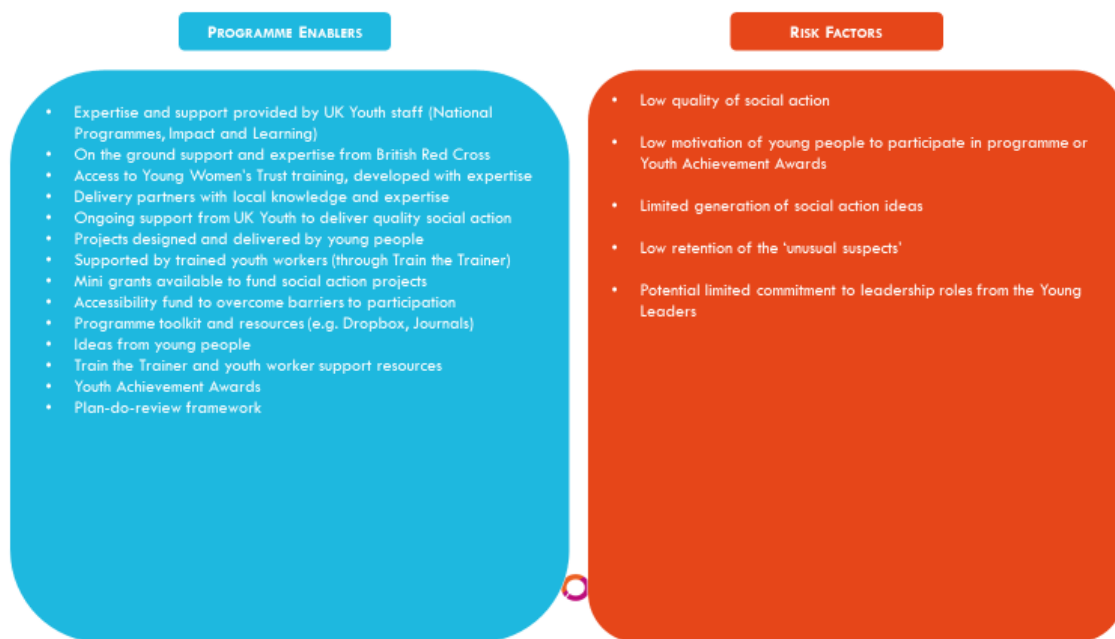
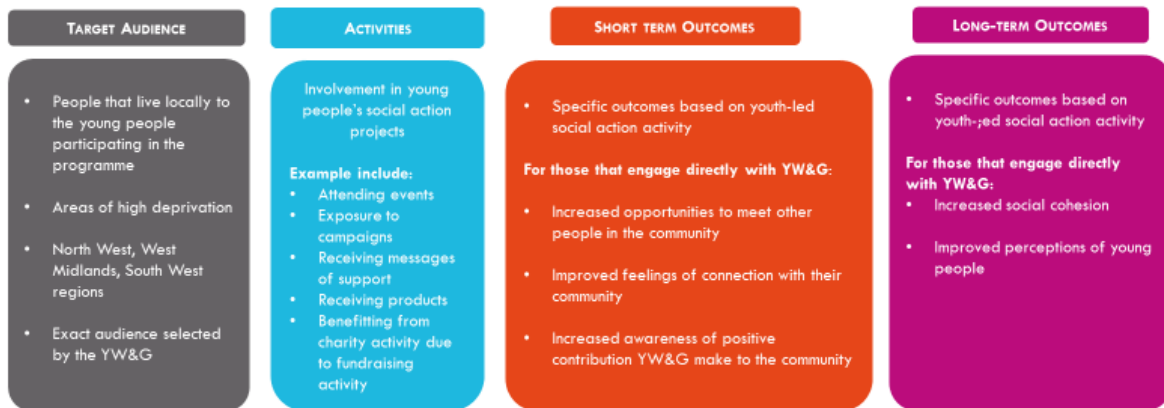
# Appendix I

## Theory of Change









# Appendix II

## Power Walk Activity

<b>Title:</b>	Power Walk
<b>Brief description of session or activities:</b>	Simulation of young women and girls on the EmpowHER programme.
<b>Objectives</b> (by the end of the session participants will):	Help Youth Workers identify barriers in young women and girls, and work out a strategy for including them in the EmpowHER programme.

Method	
Activity, task, description, etc.	Resources
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Get everyone to stand up and move to one side of the room and ask all participants to stand in one line.</li> <li>2. Hand out a character to each participant at random</li> <li>3. Ask participants to listen to the statements below and for every statement to which the character they are representing could answer yes, they should take one step forward. Those characters to whom the answers would be <i>no</i>, or it is unclear, should remain in the place (note: you need enough space for at least some of the people to take as many steps as characters given).</li> <li>4. Inform participants that they will need to make assumptions during this activity.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character paper slips</li> <li>• Statements</li> </ul>
Discussion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify who are those at the front? Why are they at the front? Should they be there? How could we work with them to better relate and respond to the expectations of those at the back?</li> <li>• Who are those at the back? Why are they at the back? How did they feel as they watched all the others moving forward? Should they be there?</li> <li>• How can we reach the people at the back? Young people are very heterogenous, it is important to make deliberate efforts to reach the 'unusual suspects.'</li> <li>• What can the EmpowHER programme do to help those in the back move forward?</li> </ul>	
Key Points	
<p>There are many factors that affect marginalisation e.g. age, location, ethnicity, access to different types of services, etc. Power relations have a huge impact on who we are and what we can be, how we access opportunities and realise our potential.</p>	

For those who are left behind it is impossible to catch up without specific targeted assistance.

Resources and capacities alone will not do the trick. The enabling environment is a fundamental determinant.

### Character Paper Slips

Chelsea is aged 17 and has a daughter. She doesn't get much time for herself and is struggling to maintain her friendships

Sid is non-binary. They are currently exploring their identity and feeling unsupported by their family.

Huda is aged 16, she goes straight home from college and is not permitted to spend time outside of the family house unless escorted.

Jamie is aged 12, she is really interested in sport but doesn't think she can play because she doesn't know any other girls who like sport.

Lily is aged 18, she has an eating disorder and spent a large amount of her schooling in an inpatient unit.

Katy is aged 14, her Instagram page is very important to her and she always considers how her actions will affect what her boyfriend thinks of her.

Mahala is aged 11, she recently started her period. Her family do not have enough money to buy sanitary products for her and she doesn't feel comfortable discussing this with anyone.

Sara is aged 10, she doesn't have a strong friendship group. She is rarely in trouble with teachers but doesn't get picked for the special jobs at school or get best student prizes either.

Yara is aged 12, she has recently arrived in Coventry. She has been told she is an 'asylum seeker' she doesn't understand what this means and is trying to learn English.

Brie is aged 19, she is a care leaver and doesn't know what and feels unsure about what she'd like to achieve in her life.

Sophie spends her summer holidays caring for her cousins while her family goes to work. She is expected to cook for the entire family, and complete other domestic tasks.

Selina is aged 20, she has an internship over the summer with her uncle's law firm in London. She regularly gets the train back to Bristol to spend weekends with her friends during this time.

Laura is aged 17, she describes herself as an intersectional feminist. She has attended women's marches since she was 14 and wants to work for the United Nations.

Rita is aged 16, she volunteers for the British Red Cross in retail and is a member of UK Youth Voice. She also delivers sessions at her local youth club.

### Statements

1. I can buy new clothes easily
2. I can influence decisions made by my local council
3. I will be consulted on issues affecting children and young people
4. I can access sexual health advice in my own language
5. People can easily understand what I say and my thoughts and feelings
6. I find it easy to complain about services I receive
7. The media portrays people like me in a positive light
8. I know where to/have time to access volunteer opportunities
9. I know what feminism is
10. I feel respected by adults around me
11. I am confident
12. I know how to get help if I get into trouble
13. I eat at least two full meals a day
14. I expect to finish secondary school, or I did finish secondary school
15. I can decide when to see my friends or travel to visit relatives without asking for permission
16. I have a say in whom I marry and when
17. I have access to information about sexual and reproductive health, HIV and other health information
18. I can get information in the language that I use
19. I am comfortable talking in public and expressing my views
20. I do not face discrimination or stigma when using public services
21. I feel very safe at home and in my community, and I do not worry about being sexually harassed or abused



22. If I were accused of a crime I would be asked for my side of the story and believed

## EmpowHER Journey Mapping

<b>Title:</b>	EmpowHER Journey Mapping
<b>Brief description of session or activities:</b>	Develop a 'map' of an EmpowHER programme journey integrating the core and flex elements of the programme over the span of a minimum of 12 weeks to a maximum of 16 weeks or more.
<b>Objectives</b> (by the end of the session participants will):	To help Youth Workers visualise and understand the core and flex elements of EmpowHER, identify problems and identify opportunities for improvements.  Aim of this process is to make things clear and to provide insight. Remember, the best map is often the simplest map.

Method	
Activity, task, description, etc.	Resources
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With your group please use the provided cards in your envelope to create your EmpowHER programme map over the span of 12 weeks (or more).</li> <li>2. The pink cards are core elements to the programme and the orange cards are flexible or additional elements to EmpowHER.</li> <li>3. You can use one or more core &amp; flex elements at a time, but if you are only structuring your EmpowHER programme to be only 12 weeks, please do not finish your timeline with the <i>Be Your Best Self Workshop</i> or <i>Celebration Event</i>.</li> <li>4. Once completed, ask group to reflect on activity, and introduce the Demographic cards to see if group(s) will make any adjustments to their 'map' as a result of the group of young people they are now working with.</li> <li>5. Reflect and debrief.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-it notes</li> <li>• Biro's/markers</li> <li>• Core &amp; Flex cards</li> <li>• Demographic Slips</li> </ul>
Discussion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has this process help you in the lead up to programme delivery?</li> </ul>	
Key Points	
Reminder of the Core and Flex	

### Demographic Slips

You are working with a group of young women and girls between the ages of 11 – 13 years old, they are new refugees and English is a barrier.

You are working with a group of 13 – 15-year-old girls out of a Muslim faith-based school. They are interested on the topics of equality and inclusion, specifically within the LGBTQ+ community.

You are working with a group of young women and girls between the ages of 14 -16 years old. They are starting to notice young men and boys and focus more on their physical appearance.

You are working with a group of young women and girls between the ages of 10 – 12 that are struggling or worried about secondary school transition. They are interested in ways to build confidence and making new friends.

## Appendix III

### YW&G Quantitative Indicators

Outcome	Quantitative indicator(s)
Improved wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, how satisfied are you with your life?</li> <li>Overall, how much do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?</li> <li>Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?</li> <li>Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? (16+)</li> <li>I feel happy when I think about my future</li> </ul>
Reduce limiting perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young women and girls can do anything they set their minds to</li> <li>I can do things as well as most other people</li> </ul>
Increase in social cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am accepted by people that I spend my time with</li> <li>I can trust people that live near me</li> <li>I often meet people that are different to me</li> </ul>
Empowered to identify and lead change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can make a positive difference to where I live</li> <li>I feel comfortable taking the lead in small groups</li> <li>UK Youth emotional social capabilities</li> </ul>
Long-term social action habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you taken part in volunteering, fundraising or campaigning in the last year?</li> </ul>

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How likely or unlikely are you to take part in social action in the next 12 months?</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## Appendix IV

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