

# 5 YEARS OF SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORK

TALENT MATCH SOUTH EAST 2014 - 2018:  
AN EVALUATION  
JULY 2018



A J D  
Solutions



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## Abstract

Talent Match is a £108 million Big Lottery Fund investment in 21 Talent Match projects in England, aimed at helping young people aged 18-24, who have been out of work for 12 months or more, to gain employment. Each project is led by a partnership of voluntary, public and private sector organisations and a panel of young people (Talent Match Ambassadors) to deliver employment outcomes, employability skill sets, and increased feelings of health and wellbeing for young people.

In the South East, Talent Match has particularly focused on delivering locally relevant solutions in areas of highest unemployment. It has concentrated on specific areas within Essex, East Sussex and Kent, due to the high proportion of unemployed young people living in the following locations: **Kent – Medway, Swale, Thanet and Dover; East Sussex – Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne and Essex – Southend, Thurrock, Colchester, Basildon and Tendring.**

Talent Match South East (TMSE) has worked in conjunction with a number of stakeholders, its core partnership, delivery partners and local organisations and employers. Each delivery partner put in their own bid, outlining their proposed offer, method of delivery, and funding requirements. The delivery partners have been:

- ❖ **The Prince's Trust** (lead partner of TMSE), responsible for volunteer mentoring support (Volunteer Mentors), outreach activity, and co-ordination of the Young Person's Partnership (YPP).
- ❖ **CXK Ltd, Southend YMCA and Tomorrow's People**, responsible for specialist mentoring support.
- ❖ **KATO** has worked with training providers and local employers to support, in conjunction with the mentors, a young person's journey through training, work tasters and work experience opportunities, and all other employer related activity, by delivery of the Employer and Skills Network (ESN).

Each TMSE young person has received 1:1 support from a mentor, who has acted as the main point of contact and support. The role of the mentor has been to:

- ❖ Develop an individual plan based on a young person's skills, interests and goals.
- ❖ Link a young person to the ESN, for job search support and for access to employer and training provider opportunity.
- ❖ Provide access to the Bursary (personalised and travel).
- ❖ Refer to additional services as necessary.
- ❖ Conduct a follow up survey with each young person at 3, 6, 12 and 18-month intervals, to evaluate progress.

## Introduction

TMSE has been a large project, which started in 2014, and which covers 10 areas across 3 large counties. This report has therefore concentrated on the measurement of outputs and outcomes from carefully selected aspects of the project.

To have attempted to evaluate every activity and aspect of TMSE would have led to too large a scope, with too much detail. Accordingly, the research has concentrated on a sample range of activities across selected timeframes and geographical locations.



This report will demonstrate the effectiveness of TMSE in supporting young people to achieve a number of different individual outcomes. These have been split into 3 separate categories (see table on the following page) and have been selected according to specific project targets around achievement of sustainable employment (6 months or more) and other employment, training and education outcomes; in addition to employability indicators; and personal wellbeing factors.

It will show how TMSE has achieved strong measurable headline outcomes, but will also dig deep into the stories behind young people's achievements. It will do this by investigating the breadth of activities that were accessed by young people; as well as by looking at the highly effective partnerships and collaborations that were built to facilitate these achievements.

The table below breaks the project outcomes down into 3 main headings, for ease of reference:

*Table 1: Main project outcomes, as defined by this report, and categories within each heading*

Category A	Category B	Category C
EET Outcomes	Employability outcomes	Personal Wellbeing Outcomes
Full time and part time employment*	Reliability	Satisfaction with life
Volunteering	Confidence	Happiness
Full time education	Managing Feelings	Anxiety
Training**	Working with others	Worthwhile (the extent to which the things you do in life are worthwhile)
Sustained employment	Communication	
Work Experience	Setting and achieving goals	

\* Including Apprenticeships

\*\* Including Traineeships

The report will include interviews and quotes from meetings held with mentors, other project practitioners, and with young people who participated on TMSE. It will include the opinions and thoughts captured at 4 separate Focus Groups, where a total of 20 young people gave their views on the effectiveness of TMSE support in helping move them closer to an outcome.

The Focus Group activities were held in London, Chatham, Hastings, and Southend, and captured feedback and comment about the project from young people across all 3 TMSE areas.

It will demonstrate the breadth of the project offer, by using a case study approach to highlight 6 TMSE funded activities or collaborations, including capturing the views of young people who took part in these, as well as the organisations that were commissioned to partner with TMSE.

It will also look at Bursary spend and marketing, as well as considering the ways in which the different mentoring models, the engagement with employers, and the Young People's Partnership all impacted on a young person's outcome on TMSE.

It will also reflect on best practice and lessons learned and will include a short section containing recommendations for future delivery, which will intend to be of benefit to organisations who are considering applying for funding to run similar NEET-mentoring style projects.

On the following page, there is an illustrative Impact Map, which shows the scope of the analysis from the research project plan. This outlines the key stakeholders involved in the research, the inputs each stakeholder has committed, as well as the intended outcomes and outputs of each stakeholder which the report will evaluate and measure.

## Impact Map

Stakeholder	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Young people	Time, Incentives (Vouchers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus Group events (one in each county and YPP)</li> <li>1:1 meetings with young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Focus Groups (Essex, Kent, East Sussex)</li> <li>20 young people giving face to face feedback</li> <li>2 one to one interviews</li> <li>1 interview with a young person's family</li> </ul>	An understanding of how young people have been impacted by TMSE to support them to reach their preferred outcomes
Delivery Partners	Time, Venue space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews with representatives of all delivery partners,</li> <li>Feedback at each HUB from practitioners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 interview with a Lead Practitioner (Essex)</li> <li>1 interview with the Marketing function</li> <li>1 interview with Volunteer Manager (Kent)</li> <li>1 interview with Head of ESN (All)</li> <li>1 interview with Outreach Co-ordinators (Essex)</li> <li>1 interview with a Service Delivery Manager (Kent)</li> <li>1 interview with YPP co-ordinator (All)</li> <li>1 interview with a Volunteer Executive (Essex)</li> <li>1 interview with a YPP member (Kent)</li> </ul>	<p>An understanding of how each delivery partner has impacted on a young person's preferred outcomes</p> <p>Recommendations for future delivery which will impact on each delivery partner's growth plans and business development</p>
Local Organisations	Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings with different organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 case studies in conjunction with:</li> <li>Nucleus Arts (Kent)</li> <li>Thanet Community Development Trust (Kent)</li> <li>Benjamin Film Photography (Kent)</li> <li>Glowing Health (Kent)</li> <li>Firebreak (Essex)</li> <li>Inspiring Talent (East Sussex)</li> </ul>	<p>An understanding of how TMSE has created change in local communities through partnership work</p> <p>An understanding of how this partnership has created lasting change for young people in these areas</p> <p>An understanding of spend devoted to building up new partnerships</p>
Commissioning body	Time, Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly catch up meetings,</li> <li>Payment to supplier</li> </ul>		Recommendations for future delivery which will impact on the commissioning body's growth plans and business development



# A Talent Match participant – characteristics, demographics and history

## A national perspective – the employment context for young people between 2014-17 in the UK

As Talent Match South East continued its delivery of mentoring support to young people over the 5-year period starting in 2014, it did so against a favourable backdrop of national employment statistics. According to the Office for National Statistics, the unemployment rate for people aged 16 and over, seasonally adjusted, fell from 6.8% in the period from January to March 2014, to 4.3% in the period between September to November 2017<sup>(1)</sup>.

Precise statistical data outlining the unemployment figures for 18-24-year olds in the TMSE areas is difficult to investigate, given that most Government figures relating to young people relate to 16-18 years old only.

However, the data available for 16-18-year olds, does show that fewer young people are unemployed now, compared to the start of the project <sup>(2)</sup>. There were large increases in the employment rate for young people aged between 16 and 18 in 2016, and overall, the 16-18 NEET rate has been on a downward trend since 2008.

Between 2011 and 2016 the employment rate has *risen* for each of those aged either 16, 17 or 18, and for 16-18-year olds overall, albeit with some fluctuations when looking at a single year of age. Similarly, data available for 19-24-year olds shows a similar trend, as the table below demonstrates.

Table 2: NEET rates for different age cohorts: England 2014 – 2016 <sup>(3)</sup>

Age range	Jan-Mar 2014	Jan-Mar 2015	Jan-Mar 2016	% point change from Jan-Mar 2014 to Jan-Mar 2016
16-18	6.8%	7.1%	6.5%	-0.3%
19-24	15.9%	14.7%	14%	-1.9%
16-24	13%	12.3%	11.7%	-1.3%

These figures reflect a stubborn trend, however, which is that youth unemployment figures are running at much higher levels compared to all other age demographic groups in the UK. The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), for example, covering the period from Sep-Nov 2017, show the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for all adults to be at 4.3% <sup>(4)</sup>. 6 years earlier, for the period Sep-Nov 2011, the rate stood at 8.5%, so a drop of almost a half. So, while unemployment rates among all adults are falling rapidly, youth unemployment figures have fallen by only very small amounts indeed.

Before the report moves on to look at project performance data – and a look at outcomes - it is important to explore the general characteristics of young people who participated on TMSE, **taken at the time of their joining the project** upon completion of the Baseline Questionnaire. This data is found on the Headline Report <sup>(5)</sup> sent to each Talent Match partnership on a

quarterly basis by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU). These go a long way to showing the **number of barriers faced by young people** on the TMSE project, and puts any subsequent investigation into data and outcomes into a sharper perspective.

### General characteristics

- ❖ The most common age for all participants was between 19 and 20
- ❖ The number of young people with 5 GCSEs (A\*-C including English and Maths) was 30% (31% for all partnerships)
- ❖ The average participant was more likely to be male than female – 63% male, 37% female, mirroring the gender split almost identically across all partnerships
- ❖ The average participant was more likely to be White British (91%, as against 77% across all 21 partnerships)

### Economic-related and 'employability' characteristics

- ❖ 48% of TMSE participants have taken up additional training
- ❖ 82% have undertaken some form of work experience activity
- ❖ 90% have applied for at least 1 job
- ❖ 74% have attended at least one interview
- ❖ 5% have completed an apprenticeship
- ❖ 36% have completed a formal training course
- ❖ 59% of all TMSE participants had no experience of paid employment

### Personal and social characteristics

- ❖ 28% of TMSE participants have experienced mental ill health
- ❖ 16 % of TMSE participants have experienced homelessness
- ❖ 13% have been convicted of a criminal offence
- ❖ 12% have been in local authority care
- ❖ 7% have experienced drug dependency
- ❖ 27% consider themselves to have a disability, 84% of whom said that this disability limits their activities

These broadly match figures that relate to participants on all 21 partnerships, with the biggest difference being the figure for all Talent Match participants who have experienced mental ill health, which stands 3% lower than the TMSE figure, at 25%.

The standouts here are the worryingly high percentage of young people who have experienced mental ill-health, as well as those who have experienced homelessness. There are also significantly high numbers of young people who have been in local authority care, and/or have been convicted of a criminal offence. These four indicators have all been well researched in recent times, to evidence the huge factor they play in stopping a young person from entering work.

The relatively low percentages of young people who have completed a training course or formal education course (60% for the latter), might be said to point to a skills gap, which may explain why young people who have attended an interview, which is a high percentage, are not gaining success at this important milestone event.

For the 10% of participants who have never applied for a job, it could be concluded that these are the very furthest away from the job market, who have a number of very specific barriers to entering employment.

Finally, **59% of participants reported no experience of ever having had paid employment** at sign up – a very high figure, and one that has undoubtedly represented a huge challenge to mentoring agencies and other delivery partners. Put another way, for 6 out of every 10 young people on the project, the whole notion of being in employment – what it feels like, what the expectations of employers are, what the financial and social benefits of work are – is a concept that they can only ponder or imagine, in a completely abstract fashion.

TMSE therefore sought to support those young people who have been largely untouched by the national trend of increased employment rates, to focus on young people who were furthest from the job market. It sought to work with those young people who displayed a specific set of individual circumstances, needs or challenges, as demonstrated above, that were arguably not being adequately addressed by existing welfare to work programmes.

## Performance and outcomes

### Data

In the introduction to this report, the main project outcomes have been outlined and grouped into 3 categories – **EET** (Employed, Education or Training) outcomes, where young people have moved out of NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training); **employability outcomes**, which include the learning of skills and attributes that employers look for; as well as **soft outcomes**, which relate to personal wellbeing indicators.

The data for the above has come from two areas:

### Sheffield Hallam University Headline (SHU) report

This contains data collected by mentors with their young people at 3/6/12 and 18-month intervals, as well as at the start of a young person's Talent Match journey, which is then recorded on a Baseline Questionnaire, as well as on subsequent Follow Up forms. These forms are then sent to SHU, who monitor Baseline and Follow Up form data from all 21 Talent Match

partnerships, and publish this data on a quarterly basis, in the form of a summarised breakdown for each partnership, (called a Headline Report) and a separate data appendix, which gives the full data set for every partnership, also released on a quarterly basis.

This report has used the data from the Headline Report and the accompanying data appendix to investigate the employability and the soft outcomes of the project. It has used the most recent data set available at the time of compiling this report, which covers the period up to the end of Year 4 Quarter 4, to end December 2017.

### **The Talent Match South East database**

The database has been used by mentoring agencies as the place to record all EET outcomes, including jobs, training courses, and full-time education. It also captures sustained employment outcomes. It does this by automatically triggering an email to the mentoring agency responsible for adding the employed outcome, exactly 6 months after it has been added. It asks the question 'Is this young person still in the outcome added 6 months ago?' to which the mentor replies either yes or no.

Feedback from mentors has been very positive about the recording of outcomes on the database, and in particular about the 6-month reminder email, which negated the need for mentors to have their own systems for remembering to confirm this important piece of information.

Information from the database has the advantage of being able to be looked at in real time, without the need to wait for the quarterly reports from SHU to land. This report chose a cut-off date of the end of April 2018 to look at the outcomes from the database. This date was chosen in order to review the outcomes in relation to a similar timeframe that the SHU data covered, as well as to be able to assess all 3 categories of data outcomes in a comprehensive fashion before the finalisation of the report, in summer 2018.

Ideally, a full evaluation of all EET outcomes from the TMSE project would be completed around the middle of 2019, when sustained employment outcomes attained by young people right up to the end of the project (Dec 2018) could be reviewed. This makes sense when you consider the mathematical impossibility of anyone attaining a 6-month sustained outcome before 1 July, 2014. Rather than assess sustained outcomes over 4.5 years of a 5-year project, it would be more useful to take the timeframe identified above as an end point to data collection and analysis.

A final, but important point to make is that the SHU Headline data here covers young people signed up to the project up to end December 2017, and numbers 2115.

The database data, which stretches to a later date - April 2018 - captures data for 2573 young people – including all young people who were either 'active' (those currently working with a Talent Match mentor), 'ended' (those who had completed their TMSE journey with their mentor), and 'pending' (those who had started to meet with their mentor, but whose Baseline forms were still to be uploaded to the database).

## Outcomes

### Sustained Outcomes by provider

Table 3: sustained employed outcomes per provider and as partnership as of end April 2018

Provider	Total YP	Number of sustained employed outcomes	Percentage of sustained employed outcomes against total YP (%)
CXK	490	61	12.4%
Southend YMCA	402	72	17.9%
Tomorrow's People	264	55	20.8%
The Prince's Trust (E Sussex)	341	59	17.3%
The Prince's Trust (Kent)	473	76	16.1%
The Prince's Trust (Essex)	498	123	24.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2573</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>17.3%</b>

The key takeaway from this is the trajectory towards the TMSE partnership target of **20% of all participants entering into a sustained employed outcome** (6 months or more). As of end April 2018, no further outreach activity on the project will occur, and from end May 2018, no further young people will be signed up to TMSE.

Therefore, the number of people signed up the project by May 2018 will be a final number – it will not increase – which leaves the project with a further 7 months to ensure that those young people already in employment are given all support necessary to reach the 6-month sustained outcome. Additionally, any young people who are supported into an employed outcome from July 1, 2018, will be tracked post-project by SHU, to ascertain whether they reached the 6-month sustained outcome.

It therefore seems possible to conclude with a high level of certainty that **TMSE will exceed the 20% sustained target quite comfortably.**

**EET outcomes***Table 4: EET outcomes achieved by the TMSE partnership for the 2573 young people signed up by Apr 2018*

EET Outcomes	Number of outcomes*
Full time Employment	671
Part Time Employment	55
Apprenticeship	86
Volunteering	162
Full Time Education	82
Training (inc Traineeship)	689
Work experience/taster activity	372

\*It is an important point to make that the number of employed outcomes achieved is a total count of outcomes, rather than the number of young people who gained an outcome – in some cases, a young person gained more than one period of employment, sometimes in concurrence, sometimes consecutively. NB The data for the sustained figure does not double count – a young person can only be counted by the database as having gained one sustained employed outcome.

It is interesting to note how many employed outcomes were full time, compared to part time. An explanation for this points to the fact that zero-hour, or seasonal contracts, are often quite difficult to quantify in terms of hours worked per week, and conversations with mentors suggested that, in most cases, where young people were hesitant about the number of hours they were doing, then it was recorded as 12 hours or more.

The numbers of young people who completed an accredited training course included a variety of courses – JCP Work Programme, Home Study, training courses arranged by the Employer and Skills Network or the Young People's Partnership, courses arranged through external training providers, as well as sector specific courses, more often than not arranged between mentor and mentee.

If we take the total number of full time employment and apprenticeships together, to constitute the total number of full time employed positions gained, this gives a total of 757. In which case, 54.2% of all full time employed outcomes went on to reach the 6-month sustained time frame.

The report believes that any future research into the TMSE project, would be most usefully directed at looking into this figure – specifically, the 45.8% of young people who have not been able to get through to the 6-month sustainment. This would constitute a very worthwhile future research project, and would tell us a great deal about what employers and young people need to do more effectively, in order to stem the flow of newly recruited young people leaving employment prematurely.

## Employability Outcomes

*Table 5: Participants' self-recorded assessment of employability skills gained, from Baseline (start of project), to the most recently completed Baseline Follow Up form (either 3/6/12 or 18-months).*

Criteria	Positive change %	No change %	Negative change %
Communication skills	45%	38%	16%
Working with others	41%	42%	17%
Setting and achieving goals	51%	34%	15%
Confidence	58%	29%	13%
Reliability	40%	43%	16%

(figures based on 2,115 of participants as of Dec 2017)

The highest recorded area for positive change, confidence, is something that comes as no surprise. Young people in the focus group activities continually referenced 'feeling more confident' as a key attainment for them, which TMSE has helped them with.

It is interesting that reliability scores were lowest, in terms of positive change %. This report suspects this might be to do with the difficulty young people might have found, on completing their Follow Up form with their mentor, of moving away from a long-held perception of themselves as being 'unreliable'. Even the most organised and prepared young people were prone, according to both themselves and their mentors, to miss a meeting with their mentor, or to turn up late. For many, the reasons behind these missed or late appointments were often valid and unavoidable, reflecting a general disorganised life pattern and structure of an everyday young person.

This report contends that if the question been: "In terms of your work experience/training/work, how much more reliable have you become?", then the young person would have been able to frame it more positively in their mind.

Almost all surveys of employers, which ask what they look for in a member of their staff, reference good communication, along with good teamwork skills – the high scores evident in the table above, are extremely positive, in terms of what it might tell us about a young person's ability to get work, and, crucially, to stick with it and to be able to cope with the many and varied demands of employment.

## Personal Wellbeing Outcomes

*Table 6: Participants' self-recorded assessment of personal wellbeing indicators, from Baseline (start of project), to the most recently completed Baseline Follow Up form (either 3/6/12 or 18-months).*

Criteria	Positive change %	No change %	Negative change %
Satisfied with their lives	66%	16%	18%
Things they did which made them feel their life was more	61%	19%	20%
Happier	51%	18%	31%
Less anxious	47%	21%	32%
Managing feelings	47%	34%	19%

(figures based on 2,115 of participants as of Dec 2017)

This points to very healthy attainment rates of positive changes in participants' personal wellbeing while being on the project, with ensuing benefits for society at large, for mental health (and other health-related) services, for family and friends, and for the young people themselves – themes covered later in the report.

The data above also can be viewed as representing improved chances of a participant becoming employed – people who are less anxious, and who are better at managing their feelings, are much more likely to want to search for employment, and also have a higher chance of approaching it in a positive proactive and solution-focused manner.

## How TMSE responded to change

Over the course of the first four years of the project, there were fluctuations in the nature of the local economy in each area, as well as changes in the breadth and scope of support offered by other, non-TMSE, training provision. We met with project Outreach Co-ordinators, Jake Smith and Sophie Sheppard, in January 2018, to find out about the ways in which, from their perspective, TMSE was able to adapt to change, in order to respond to evolving local need.

Sophie joined the project in February 2015, as a Talent Match Ambassador on the Young Person's Partnership, and progressed into an outreach role, covering north Essex, six months later. Her previous experiences included a length of time being unemployed, and a part time waiting role at a restaurant. Jake, meanwhile, was part of the outreach team from the outset, and has worked in estuarine and coastal Essex since October 2014. Prior to taking up the role of Outreach Co-ordinator, Jake had worked for Thurrock Council within the Youth Offending Team, and also had some customer service and retail experience.

Jake and Sophie have worked across a geographically large area of Essex, and have been able to develop evolving working relationships with a number of delivery providers, with the



Job Centre Plus, with housing associations and with charities such as Mind, in order to gain as many referrals of young people into the project as possible.

On average, the Outreach team in Essex manage to meet with, and refer, over 30 young people into the Talent Match project each month. The process follows a simple but effective path – each referral is taken to a weekly referral meeting, attended by Outreach co-ordinators, Specialist Mentors and Volunteer Executives. At these meetings, a brief discussion is held about the identifiable needs of each young person being referred, which culminates in a decision being made regarding which mentoring agency – specialist or volunteer – will support the young person.

From conversations with Jake and Sophie, this report was able to identify the following instances where TMSE was able to respond to changing circumstances:

- ❖ In 2017, Colchester was added to the list of areas where young people could be referred onto the project. Prior to this time, a significant number of potential sign ups from the Colchester area were being brought to referral meetings and taken on by a mentoring agency as an 'out of area' young person.

The number of young people being referred from Colchester was a trend that the Outreach team identified in late 2016, and the decision to add the town as a TMSE area was made quickly and effectively. This allowed mentors and outreach workers to develop deeper working relationships with agencies and providers in the area, in order to meet the need. A successful launch event was held in the town, which was attended by companies, charities and the Job Centre Plus, where information about the project was given to likely referral agencies. Sophie was then able to quickly built up a network of agencies to work alongside, and venues to base herself in - for example, in the premises of the Government's Work Programme providers, Seetec and Ingeus.

- ❖ In 2016, Harlow was dropped from the project as an area where young people could be referred on to the project from. This decision was made after the outreach team analysed referral data for 2015-16, and used their own working knowledge of the area, to conclude that, although Harlow was a town with significant social and economic problem, it appeared that the ratio of young people living in Harlow was much lower than in growing areas of Essex, such as Colchester and Thurrock.
- ❖ New providers came on to the scene during the lifespan of the project – for example On Track (Thurrock) and Realise Futures (Basildon, Clacton and Colchester) – which sought to deliver projects that had very similar delivery models to that of Talent Match. The Outreach Co-ordinators were able to make effective working relationships with these providers, to ensure that they had a good understanding of the offer. They were able to make changes to how they planned their own outreach activity to concentrate more fully on those areas that didn't have as much provision for young people, and which were more reliant on Talent Match to provide mentoring support.
- ❖ The changing employment landscape also had an influence on how the outreach team worked to best target those areas in greater need of the TMSE offer. In Thurrock, for example, large scale employers such as Amazon and UPS opened up huge warehouse

operations, employing up to 2,000 people in all, providing attractive employment opportunities to young people. Thurrock also benefitted from a growing retail centre and Lakeside, which included Ikea as well as very large branches of Mark and Spencer, TK Max, and Decathlon. The Outreach Co-ordinators therefore concluded that other areas, that were not benefitting from the arrival of large employers, were the ones to target for referrals of young people to the project.

Jake altered his recruitment strategy in late 2016, to concentrate on gaining referrals and making new links in areas that hadn't seen such an employer boost. He concentrated more on Southend – a coastal area where the nature of the local economy is mixed and small-scale, centred primarily on retail opportunities, and where young people were expressing frustrations about the nature of the seasonal, short-term contract work that they were experiencing in the area.

Young people living in coastal areas such as Clacton and Southend also told Jake that they were much less likely to wish to take up the opportunities of work offered in London, in comparison to Greys, in Thurrock, which is only 30 minutes from London by train.

The final insightful piece of information gained from meeting with Jake and Sophie was around the nature and needs of the young people being referred onto the project as time went on.

Both Outreach Co-ordinators stated that they felt that the slow reduction in numbers of young people being referred onto Talent Match, towards the end of 2017 and the start of 2018, was a reflection of the fact that the number of employment opportunities in Essex had grown, and so, arguably, those young people who were still in the unemployed group were those who were hardest to help.

This can be demonstrated by the number of young people referred to the specialist mentoring agency in Essex (Southend YMCA) compared to the number of young people referred to the volunteer mentoring agency (The Prince's Trust) across 2017 – taking into account that those young people referred to a specialist mentoring agency were those who were the furthest away from the labour market, and those referred to a volunteer mentoring agency were the closest.

The table below demonstrates that in Essex, Southend YMCA were picking up the majority of referrals deep into the project, which leads to the conclusion that they were taking onto caseload those young people with the highest number of barriers to gaining employment.

The data below also backs up statements made later in the report, that suggests that specialist mentoring agencies in the 3 different areas were signing up a cohort of young people with differences in their levels of need.

In East Sussex, for instance, where the specialist mentoring agency, Tomorrow's People, had the highest success rate of achieving sustained employment outcomes for young people, the % ratio of young people being referred to specialist and volunteer mentors remained at the 50/50 mark well into Year 5 of the project.

This suggests that in Essex, where the percentage number of sustained employed outcomes (17.9%) was significantly lower than in East Sussex (20.8%), the mentoring agencies were being referred higher ratios of young people who were furthest away from the labour market.

The same scenario would therefore seem to apply to the other specialist mentoring agency, CXX, whose percentage number of sustained employed outcomes (12.4%) was lower still.

*Table 7: Number of young people referred to a mentoring agency by the Outreach team in 2017*

Area	Total number of referrals	Total referred to Prince's Trust (Volunteer)	Total referred to Southend YMCA (Specialist)	% Ratio (Vol: Spec)
South Essex	166	63	103	32:68
North Essex	85	31	54	43:57
<b>Total</b>	251	94	157	37:63

In conclusion to this section, it is clear that the Outreach Co-ordinators were able to develop a nuanced view of the landscape of employment and training support available for young people in Essex, and to adapt to changes within this landscape in a speedy and effective fashion. They built very solid working relationships with a wide array of referral partners, and also developed robust ways of working with the mentoring agencies to ensure that the right young person was being referred for the right mentoring support.

This nimble, light-touch way of working is an impressive feature of the TMSE offer – an acknowledgement that over 5 years, things change, and that delivery plans taken in 2014 were required, by necessity, to be adaptable and responsive to changing times.

## **The impact of TMSE mentoring on a participant's outcome**

Research into the impact of mentoring on a participant's outcome including the following activities:

- ❖ Focus group sessions with participating young people held between Jan – Feb 2018
- ❖ Interviews with mentors – specialist and volunteer
- ❖ Feedback from the Specialist Mentor meeting held in April 2017
- ❖ Information taken from existing project case studies and newsletter items featuring young people on TMSE
- ❖ 1:1 interviews with young people on TMSE

TMSE mentoring has been provided by 3 specialist mentoring agencies and 1 volunteer mentoring agency. The table on the following page shows the agencies and the areas they cover.

*Table 8: Breakdown of mentoring agencies across TMSE*

Area	Service	Agency
Essex	Volunteer	The Prince's Trust
E Sussex	Volunteer	The Prince's Trust
Kent	Volunteer	The Prince's Trust
Essex	Specialist	Southend YMCA
E Sussex	Specialist	Tomorrows People
Kent	Specialist	CXK

### **Specialist Mentoring service**

All three specialist mentoring delivery models are very similar in terms of delivery style and philosophy and have involved (in most cases) the deployment of existing staff from each organisation to deliver the mentoring, in the form of 1:1 interventions.

Specialist Mentors who took part in this research, frequently outlined the following pros and cons of the specialist mentoring delivery model:

*Table 9: Pros and cons of the specialist mentoring delivery model*

Pros	Cons
Voluntary nature of the project meant that young people engaged positively with mentors	Large caseloads
Good range of options for referring young people onto courses, events and other personal development opportunities within TMSE	Could be difficult to move a young person off a caseload
Flexible nature of where/when meetings could take place	A significant number of young people had personal circumstances that led to them not being ready for work at the time of referral
Use of the Bursary award to remove barriers for young people	

Staff from the three specialist mentoring organisations typically have a lot of prior experience working with young people in the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) group, and expertise of working with young people who face multiple barriers to progression.

For almost all practitioners, this was not their first role working with the NEET client group. Staff came to the project with the following relevant experiences:

- ❖ Youth Work
- ❖ Careers Advice
- ❖ Employability trainer
- ❖ Community education background
- ❖ Youth Offending
- ❖ Connexions Personal Advisers

The mentors have been well-trained by their individual organisations, and have received mandatory training in safeguarding issues, as well as attended relevant internal training ranging from mental health training, to interviewing skills sessions.

Each specialist mentoring agency has employed a Lead Practitioner, who, as well as working with a small caseload of young people, has ensured that a quality mentoring service is given to the young people, through delivery of line management support, observation of mentoring sessions, and appraisal processes.

A Specialist Mentors meeting was held in April 2017, to look at learning points from each delivery model, and to achieve a better understanding of mentoring best practice. The meeting was attended by 12 mentors, representing almost all the delivery staff on the TMSE specialist mentoring team. Aspects that were discussed included:

- ❖ HUB Budget spend – which projects had been delivered with the underspend from the TMSE Bursary
- ❖ In work support – how each organisation had worked to ensure that young people continued to receive mentoring support once they had started work
- ❖ Bursary spend – what the Bursary had been used for
- ❖ Partnership work with the Employer and Skills Network (ESN)

Across all these areas, it was apparent that very similar processes had been rolled out, that there was synchronicity in the support mechanisms for young people who had entered employment, that Bursary spend had been used in very similar ways, and that the same views regarding partnership work with the ESN were held by all.

In retrospect, mentors interviewed for this report felt that it would have been helpful to have held a meeting of specialist mentors before the middle of Year 4 (this meeting was the first of its kind). An awareness of the similarity of each delivery model at an earlier point might have allowed for reflection about the possibilities of trialling something new, on a pilot basis, maybe in one specific area. This could then have been evaluated earlier in the project, to see what learning points could have been attained.

The percentage number of employed outcomes across each specialist mentoring delivery partner supports the notion that a very similar model of delivery was in operation across TMSE, as the table below demonstrates.

*Table 10: Data showing number of young people attached to a specialist mentoring agency, and outcomes achieved by these young people (Figures taken from TMSE database up to end April 2018)*

Delivery partner	Area	Number of young people	Number of employed outcomes	Percentage of gained outcomes
CXK	Kent	490	123	25%
Tomorrow's People	East Sussex	264	85	32%
Southend YMCA	Essex	402	133	33%
All		1,156	341	29.4%

This data suggests a standardised mentoring offer, with only a 5% differential between the 'highest performing' and 'lowest performing' provider.

The one major area where outcomes diverge, is the number of sustained outcomes (*numbers of young people who had entered employment and remained there for 6 months or more*) that were attained by each specialist mentoring agency, as evidenced by the table below. Data for this has been taken for the period up to the end of April 2018.

*Table 11: Sustained outcomes achieved by specialist mentoring agencies (Figures taken from TMSE database up to and including 30 April 2018)*

Delivery partner	Area	Number of young people	Number of sustained employed outcomes	Percentage of gained outcomes
CXK	Kent	490	61	12.4%
Tomorrow's People	East Sussex	264	55	20.8%
Southend YMCA	Essex	402	72	17.9%
All		1156	188	16.2%

Despite having a much smaller cohort of participants, Tomorrow's People has achieved almost the same number of sustained outcomes as both the other specialist mentoring providers. This formed a discussion topic at the East Sussex HUB meeting held in Dec 2017.

The conclusion this report has reached from the discussion at this meeting, and from subsequent one to one conversation with mentors in East Sussex, is that Tomorrow's People has had more robust processes in place at the point of referral, which has allowed them to decide on whether to sign the young people onto programme or not.

Of the 3 specialist mentoring agencies, Tomorrow's People has had the clearest view on whether to progress with sign up, based on an assessment of how likely the young person was to achieve an employed outcome. Conversations at the other HUB meetings in Essex and Kent, has led this report to conclude that the mentoring agencies signed young people up who were much further away from the job market, and who needed greater levels of social and personal support packages put in place, before they were ready to look for work.

It was also suggested by several mentors, that having a smaller, more focused team of mentors in East Sussex (2 initially but increasing to 3 in April 2016) and a significantly smaller cohort of young people to work with (the engaged numbers were roughly split at a ratio of 40:40:20 between the 3 specialist agencies) gave greater clarity to the work, and a better sense of how to offer practical support to those young people who were entering employment.

The other two agencies, with larger cohorts of young people, were unable to have the concentrated input required to support a young person in employment to reach the 6 months' sustained period, due in part to the larger geographical spread, the lack of a central base (especially in Kent) and a much greater number of participants to monitor.

### **Employed/sustained employed outcomes – a perspective**

It is worth noting, to give the figures above a greater relevance, that although TMSE started in January 2014, for the first 6 months of the project, much more time was given to the setting up of shared working practices, partnership working protocols, and recruitment of staff. CXK, for example, were only able to initiate recruitment of specialist mentors in April 2014, and Prince's Trust's outreach team were not recruited until shortly after this date.

Consequently, for all mentoring partners, the through flow of young people into caseloads, and with it, the opportunity to gain employed and/or sustained employed outcomes for young people on the project, was compromised.

Indeed, by September 2014 – the end of Year 1 Quarter 3 – only 14 young people had attained a sustained employed position. Furthermore, by the end of December 2014 – the end of the first year of delivery – 25 young people had attained a sustained employed position – giving a total number of sustained employed outcomes in 2014 of 39.

This is in comparison to 2015, when the project was fully up and running, and young people were being referred at much higher numbers, when the annual figure was over 3 times greater, at 142. The figure for 2016 was greater still, at 179. The project can be seen to have very much been playing a game of 'catch up' after a sluggish start.

The primary target for the project was to have 20% of all TMSE young people to have entered a sustained employed outcome. At end April 2018, the figure stood at 17.3%, which, when you consider the 10 months of remaining delivery time, and with reasonably large numbers of young people currently in employment who could be anticipated to sustain, seems very much on track.

A common discussion point at the Specialist Mentor meeting (April 2017) centred around number of young people on each mentor's caseload, and the length of time a young person has remained on caseload. This issue was followed up with mentors during this research. It has become apparent that caseloads, although large, have consisted of many young people who had been mentored for over 1 year – in some cases, for 2-3 years. The average length of time that a young person stayed on a mentor's caseload, and received direct support, was almost 11 months.

Wider definitions of what constitutes a mentoring relationship point to a person offering expertise, knowledge and information to someone who is at the beginning of their personal or professional journey, and which takes place over a set number of sessions. Reference is often made to a successful mentoring relationship needing to have a defined end.

This report believes that greater thought could have been given at the outset (and through the first 2-3 years of the project) to exploring a mentoring model where young people were given either a set number of 1:1 appointments (a set of 6 seems reasonable), in order to provide a greater degree of focus to the relationship, and to enable goal-setting to have more clearly indicated timeframes.

The project Follow Up forms, completed by the young person with the mentor at 3/6/12/18-months, set an early expectation that the support on offer was long-lasting. It has been noticeable that the number of completed Follow Up forms has dropped significantly at the 18-month stage – again suggesting that a tighter timeframe structure could have been beneficial to maintaining a sharper focus to engagement.

During conversations about this report's interim recommendations, some practitioners argued that, because young people mentored by the specialist agencies have had a great number of social, economic and personal barriers, they required a longer duration of 1:1 support.

Mentors and young people also articulated that the ongoing nature of the mentor support gives young people time to develop a relationship with their mentor, and to understand, and benefit from the TMSE offer more fully. Nonetheless, several previous intensive support projects, such as Connexions, which employed Intensive Personal Advisers to work with 13-19-year olds with very similar challenges a decade previously, moved to a 6-session model to support the people on their caseload. At the sixth session, the option was discussed between the Personal Adviser and the young person to continue for a second set of 6 sessions, and this was often an option that was taken up. This 'second 6' could be followed up with a further 6, on a rolling contract basis.

Having a more structured model of support, either session or timebound, would have alleviated the challenge of high caseload numbers that mentors referred to regularly, and would have stopped the risk that young people on Talent Match might become dependent on their mentor, and from attending 'drop-in' sessions on an almost weekly basis, for (in some cases) several years.

A final observation on the specialist delivery model is based around geographic and local knowledge. It became apparent that some TMSE areas are very well staffed, with a clutch of young person-friendly delivery venues, and with well-developed partnership working (with external as well as internal stakeholders) in place.



Medway, in Kent, provides us with a prime example – where staff can meet young people at two TMSE venues (the Prince's Trust Centre in Chatham, and the HUB Budget-funded shared space in the Chatham Pentagon Centre), where partnership working has been well embedded, both in terms of receiving referrals from, as well as referring young people to, a wide network of providers and community interest groups.

In other areas, such as Dover in Kent, mentors spoke of low referral and caseload numbers, and a feeling that partnership working was difficult to get off the ground due to a much smaller presence (it is a fact worth noting, however, that in the original TMSE profile, it was assumed that Medway would receive around 4x the number of referrals as would Dover).

Nevertheless, conversations with mentors led this report to conclude that having one large organisation operating the specialist model across each county, has led to some county areas having experienced much less of an impact from the project than others. It could be argued that the initial delivery model, where 3 organisations were awarded a 5-year contract to deliver across geographically disparate regions within each county, left TMSE with a model that was not as locally responsive, or as able to respond to community need, as might have been envisaged.

There is a strong argument to make about the beneficial consequences that would have arisen from a re-evaluation of the delivery model part of the way through the contract. This might have allowed a set of circumstances to arise whereby small, locally rooted projects could have been given the opportunity, on a pilot basis, to deliver the specialist mentoring model, perhaps alongside the main 'umbrella' provider, on a satellite basis.

The local expertise and knowledge of the smaller provider could then have been pooled with the greater resource and reputational reach of the larger provider to create a dynamic new mentoring partnership.

### **Volunteer Mentoring service**

In the report's research into the Volunteer Mentoring model, people in the following roles were interviewed:

- ❖ Volunteer Manager
- ❖ Volunteer Executive
- ❖ Volunteer Mentors
- ❖ Young people mentored by a Volunteer Mentor (Focus Group)

It quickly became apparent how crucial the role of the Volunteer Executive has been to the whole project, and how the success of the mentoring offer has relied heavily on this pivotal role.

Volunteer Executives came to the project with a wealth of experiences, held in very similar vocational areas than we have seen with regard to the Specialist Mentors, including youth work, careers guidance and training roles.

There have been 5 Volunteer Executives across the TMSE region – 2 each in Kent and Essex, and 1 in East Sussex. Their role has been similar to the role of the Lead Practitioner role utilised by specialist mentoring services, in that they kept in touch with the Volunteer Mentors, responded to training needs, recognised successes and managed expectations of the role – the difference being, that the Volunteer Executive was responsible for overseeing the mentoring delivery of around 50 mentors at any one time.

The line management of the Volunteer Executives has been undertaken by a Volunteer Manager in each area, through the facilitation of 1:1 monthly ‘check-ins’ – similar to the line management arrangements in place for Specialist Mentors.

The Volunteer Executives have also been also responsible for the following tasks:

- ❖ Promotion of the Volunteer Mentor opportunity within TMSE areas, through engagement with voluntary organisations, community groups, and existing professional and personal contacts.
- ❖ The recruitment process – reading through applications, carrying out the interviews, taking references
- ❖ Training of Volunteer Mentors
- ❖ Support management of the mentors
- ❖ Matching the mentors to the mentees
- ❖ Meeting the young person, and then, at a separate meeting, convening a 3-way meeting – Volunteer Executive, Volunteer Mentor, and young person
- ❖ Promoting TMSE opportunities to Volunteer Mentors
- ❖ Ensuring that outcomes (employed or otherwise) were added to the database, through progress report returns that were the responsibility of the Volunteer Mentor to complete

The role has been multi-faceted and demanding. It has required frequent travel across a large geographical spread. Given the complexity of the role, and the pivotal part it plays in the effective delivery of the Volunteer Mentoring service, it might have been appropriate to direct more funding to the role, to create a Volunteer Executive in each specific area within the three counties – so, 4 Volunteer Executives to cover each of the 4 delivery areas in Kent, for example.

This would have allowed for the Volunteer Executive to get to know the area more and have a greater presence, and would have had more of an impact on addressing the aspects of delivery that didn't work as well as they could have – in particular, in relation to the lower level of referrals made by Volunteer Mentors, (in comparison to Specialist Mentors), to TMSE projects such as those run by the Employer and Skills Network (ESN), for example – a theme that was frequently aired by the ESN team at Delivery Partner Hub meetings.

Having one Volunteer Executive in each locality could also have allowed for more productive working relationships to have been built up with the Specialist Mentor working in that area. This would, in turn, have helped to ensure that the young person was receiving the appropriate level of mentoring support.

On occasions, a young person has been transferred from one service to another, depending on the fluctuating needs of the young person whilst on TMSE.

More often than most, a transfer has been made from the Volunteer Mentor to the Specialist Mentor – particularly on occasions when the Volunteer Mentor began to feel uncomfortable with the developing complex nature of the young person's support needs.

Transfers between services haven't happened regularly – in part due to the logistics required to get Volunteer Executive/Specialist Mentor/Volunteer Mentor and young person together at one time, for a handover to occur. Occasionally, too, there have been tensions when the 'receiving' mentoring service felt that the issues were not substantial enough to merit a transfer to a Specialist Mentor.

The transfer process could have run much more smoothly if a closer working relationship had existed between the Volunteer Executive and the Specialist Mentor – something that would have been achieved much more easily if there were a Volunteer Executive for each area.

The Volunteer Mentoring service has been quick to change an aspect of the project that wasn't working, a trait which holds true to one of the Talent Match principles of 'Test and Learn'. Crucially, the service adapted the processes used for matching mentors to mentees at an early stage in the project life, moving to a process that put the young person's voice at the centre of the matching.

Initial plans for matching were to hold a workshop-styled event, to which were invited the mentors and young people. The plan was for the Volunteer Executives, supported by a Specialist Mentor, to hold an activity which would seek to engage all in attendance. During the activity, the Volunteer Executive would observe and interact with the young people, and thereafter form a view on who would be best matched with whom.

The objectives were possibly optimistic, and in any event, young people simply did not attend in great enough numbers for the workshop idea to take root. It was agreed very quickly to adopt a matching process based much more around interviewing each young person – finding out more about their strengths and weaknesses, and about their characteristics and personalities.

It was an innovative, but flawed idea to use the workshop model – but certainly one that was worth exploring, and the decision to replace it with a more workable process was made quickly and without fuss.

A summary table is included here to show the frequently outlined pros and cons of the volunteer mentoring delivery model, as gained through discussion with the relevant parties.

*Table 12: Pros and cons of the Volunteer Mentoring delivery model*

Pros	Cons
Diverse nature, experience and skills offered by a large pool of volunteer mentors	Difficult to standardise the volunteer mentoring offer
The ability to match the right mentor to the right person	Use of the Bursary award to remove barriers for young people not used by all mentors
Flexible nature of where/when meetings take place	Initial 'spark' of enthusiasm occasionally extinguished due to young people not attending
Weekly communication to all mentors highlighting internal (Prince's Trust) and external opportunities and events to share with mentees	Volunteer Mentors not always aware of the opportunities available for young people, and unsure about ensuing referral process.

A table has also been included to outline the number and percentage of employed outcomes gained by young people on TMSE, up to 1 Dec 2017. As with the specialist mentoring outcomes, there is a reasonable degree of uniformity to the figures, with all areas attaining broadly similar outcomes, within a 5% radius of the average of 34%.

*Table 13: Data showing number of young people attached to a volunteer mentoring agency, and outcomes achieved by these young people*

Delivery partner	Area	Number of young people	Number of employed outcomes	Percentage of employed outcomes
The Prince's Trust	Kent	365	108	29%
The Prince's Trust	East Sussex	309	103	33%
The Prince's Trust	Essex	436	161	36%
All		1109	372	34%

*(Figures taken from TMSE database Apr 2018)*

The 34% of employed outcomes per volunteer mentee cohort is higher than the percentage achieved by mentees working with the specialist mentoring delivery providers (29.4%). This is not unexpected – specialist mentoring agencies have taken referrals from the Outreach team based on those who were the very furthest away from the labour market, and who have had a very high number of social and personal barriers to progression.

Every young person on TMSE has had, however, the shared set of circumstances of not having held employment for at least 1 year. This, for a young person, unarguably amounts to a steep step to climb, in order to take that path back towards employment.

The figures, therefore, are what they are – a lower outcomes figure for the specialist mentoring services, who have worked with those furthest from the job market, but who employ highly skilled, experienced practitioners; and a higher figure for the volunteer mentoring services, who have worked with those closer to the job market but whose mentors have a lower level of sector specific skills and less experience of the issues. It is reasonable to conclude that the figures point to the fact that the overriding factor, in determining a TMSE participant's likelihood of attaining an employed outcome, is highly dependent on how close they are to the labour market in the first place.

Those who have needed a nudge in the right direction, some signposting perhaps, some extra training or work experience – these young people were referred to the volunteer mentoring service, and the chance of effecting change for that young person was always likely to be higher than for those referred to the specialist mentoring service, who needed in-depth support to tackle personal and social issues before being ready to engage with the wider TMSE offer of opportunities, training and work experience.

It has been clear from speaking to TMSE young people across the 4 Focus Groups, and by examining existing research into the impact of having a mentor, that all viewed having a mentor as being of great importance in supporting them to achieve a positive outcome.

### **Interview with a TMSE mentor**

An interview was held with Katharyn Harriss, Talent Match Senior Specialist Mentor (Southend YMCA, Essex) in January 2018, to gain a perspective of project scope and effectiveness of delivery, from a mentor's perspective.

Katharyn has worked as a Talent Match mentor since the beginning of the project, in January 2014, and came to the project with a significant amount of experience working with disengaged young people, after having worked with young offenders for 6 years for a charity based in the South East, Prison Fellowship.

A summary of the interview is presented below:

AD: How has Talent Match differed from other projects you have worked on?

KH: I had previously worked with groups of young people who were in a custodial setting, so their attendance at training events, group sessions and one-to-one interventions was pretty much a given.

So, with Talent Match, it took a while to gain a handle on thinking of ways to ensure that young people would turn up to their appointments with me, because engagement on the project from a young person's point of view is entirely voluntary. But I felt that the project offer, when outlined to young people, was strong enough to gain their motivation to attend.

As the project went on, many providers seemed to replicate the Talent Match offer, locally. But at the start, it felt different to everything else. The combination of mentoring, bursary, employer engagement and activities felt really fresh and exciting.

AD: So, what, specifically, has set it apart from previous projects?

KH: The Bursary offer has been the main thing, from my experience of discussing the project with young people. It has really motivated them to sign up to the project, and, having signed up, it has helped motivate them to continue to engage, because they know they can get something tangible from it.

AD: What other aspects of the TMSE delivery have worked well, in your view, in terms of moving a young person into, or closer to a positive outcome?

KH: I think it's the flexibility of the offer, as well as the ability to try something new. The ability to use Hub Budget funding to put on events and activities that meet the needs of young people has been hugely beneficial.

For example, we have run 'monthly meet ups' with young people – especially targeted at those who are socially isolated or have high anxiety levels.

AD: Monthly meet ups?

KH: We've been able to put together a number of activities – a theatre trip, confident communication sessions, a bowling event, a Christmas social gathering – it's worked like a social club, or youth club, and feedback from young people who have attended has been extremely positive, citing it as the first time they have been able to feel part of a meaningful friendship group in years.

The flexibility of offer has been great too. We ran a programme called Firebreak, which consisted of activities with the Essex Fire and Rescue Service, and this helped the young people to learn more about effective communication techniques, teambuilding, motivation – all the things that Talent Match has aimed to improve from Day 1.

Events like these have had a huge impact on motivation levels and on enabling young people to engage more socially – and I believe that's definitely helped them deal with stress and anxiety.

AD: What would you change, or do differently?

KH: I think the project could have built up a network of supportive employers from an early stage and developed these links more thoroughly as the project went on. The employer events that were put on by the Employer and Skills Network were excellent, but these didn't come about until the midpoint of the project.

I feel that one of the strengths of the project has been its partnership work. I think that by having delivery partners operate from the same venue more often, would have had a bigger impact. Collaborative working has been largely effective, especially when working face to face with other providers, so I would like to have seen more of that, and it's what I would recommend for future delivery.

I would also want to see a more effective system for getting information and data from the database. The database came into being quite late in the project lifespan, and it has not been easy to use, in terms of exporting data that would have helped us deliver the project in a more focused manner.

AD: How has the input of young people been integrated into the project?

KH: I think it has been great having young people attend the Hub meetings, and we have had some really positive experiences through that. One of our young people became a Talent Match Ambassador and is now employed as an Outreach Coordinator on the project, so there have been some real success stories.

With regard to the Young People's Partnership (YPP), I think the roles assigned to each young person could have been outlined in a sharper fashion, so that we, as mentors, would have been able to use the Ambassadors more effectively. It's a big challenge for the YPP co-ordinator to be based in one county (Kent) and be expected to co-ordinate the work of Ambassadors in Essex, for example.

AD: Following on from that, are there any aspects of the project that could have benefited from a boost – either in terms of funding or resources?

KH: Specialist Mentor caseloads have been very high, so the uplift in funding in April 2016 was very much welcomed, and eased the burden on mentors, allowing for more focussed interventions. I still feel that more resourcing was needed for the mentoring agencies.

Occasionally, too, the Outreach delivery has felt stretched, especially when there have been additional requirements added to what was already a pretty full-on role.

AD: Have the needs or support levels of young people on TMSE, specifically on your caseload, changed at all?

KH: There has seemed to be an increase in mental health concerns – reflected by my colleagues, when discussing caseload issues at team meetings. Also, an increase in social isolation and loneliness. I think a big feature of Talent Match lies in its emphasis on having a safe, supportive and friendly feel.

Many of my young people comment on the friendship groups they have been able to build whilst on the project, and my young people are able to speak to me, and seek my advice, on what feels like a friendship basis, which I think has helped to address the anxieties about social isolation.

Also, the project has been able to fund training for practitioners, such as Mental Health for Young People, and Suicide Prevention training, which has been very responsive to the needs of the mentor and the young people on their caseload. Training events like Mindfulness too – they have all helped a great deal to give practitioners the skills needed to support young people effectively.

AD: If you had to describe Talent Match to someone, using only one word or sentence, what would that be?

KH: Helping young people on their journey into work. Helping them in a befriending, supportive capacity.

AD: And finally, what do you think the legacy of Talent Match should be?

KH: Anything that builds upon TMSE, or carries on from it, should seek to maintain the 'befriending' element of the project, and recreate the support groups that TMSE young people have benefitted from.

An emphasis on befriending, but on the mentoring support, also. I think the ability to give a young person someone they trust, whose advice they value, has been very powerful.

There is a good example of what I mean - a recent issue I dealt with, involving a young person who had just started work as a waitress, for a restaurant chain. She was struggling to adapt to the demands of a new working environment, not the least because she was also pregnant. She had several concerns about her new role, and about how to deal with her colleagues, not all of whom were always totally supportive.

She told me that she had spoken to her Dad to get some advice from him, and that his response was that he didn't really know what to suggest, and that she should contact me. So that was what happened, and I was able to support her through her initial challenges at work. And she's still there – so it's that sort of support that needs to continue.

End of interview

### The Value of Mentoring – participant perspectives

Feedback from young people about the specialist and volunteer mentoring models has been invariably positive. CXK's 'Barriers to Employment' research 2016-17<sup>(6)</sup> contains many quotes from young people who were interviewed for the piece of work, that alludes to the importance they place on the support given by their Talent Match mentor.

One of the sessions with the 20-young people who took part in the CXK research required the participants to create a Social Network chart. The charts provided pictorial evidence showing the lack of relevant social networks that existed around the participating young people.

The set task was to complete a visual representation of their social network. This was achieved by placing people made from card on flipchart paper. The closer the young person placed the figure to themselves, at the centre of the chart, the more important that figure is perceived to be in helping the individual find employment.

The objective was to establish who forms the social network of these NEET young people, and how useful that relationship is in relation to finding and sustaining work.

The following table shows the results and comments taken from the participants' social network displays.

*Table 14: A summary of 20 Young People's social network results (CXK Barriers to Employment research, July-Sep 2016)*

Data Category	Results	Comment
Number of employer/ business contacts	1 participant listed previous employer  19 listed 0 employer or business contacts	
Training Contacts	14 out of 20 participants listed CXK, Talent Match or Prince's Trust.	1 mentioned Go Train, and 1 Aspire.



Contacts linked to personal aspirations	90% had no personal contacts relevant to their career aspirations. 20% listed emails, self-help websites and websites as their 'supportive network' to finding a job.	
Most Important and Supportive contact	Over 15% listed animals. 36% placed CXK or Talent Match in this category.	Mum, girlfriend, best friend often mentioned.
Who features as a listed support service	Talent Match Mentor x 14 CXK Staff x 4 Social Worker x 2 Health Visitor Refuge Staff Work Coach	Job Centres were considered least supportive.  Family members were also placed in this category.

It is telling that in over 70% of responses, Talent Match mentors were mentioned as central figures in the young person's life – a demonstration of the value young people place on the TMSE mentoring model. The focus group feedback highlighted in the following section goes a long way to showing why they place a high value on this form of support.

This data also demonstrates the chronic lack of exposure TMSE young people have had to employers, business contacts, or training contacts, prior to joining the project. This has been a crucial area that TMSE has sought to address, through the employer related activity led by the Employer and Skills Network – as seen later in this report.

### Focus Group feedback

During each of the 4 focus groups, young people were asked about how working with a mentor has helped them to move forward towards their desired outcome. The 'outcome' was not specified – it was up to the young people to explain what they felt about the nature of support they received, and which particular outcome this helped them to reach.

The 3 questions that are most relevant to this section of the report, are listed below:

- How has having a mentor helped you move forward in life?
- In what ways has Talent Match helped you move into a positive outcome?
- In which ways has Talent Match helped you feel more positive, confident and resilient, and less anxious about your life? How has it contributed to you feeling that life is more worthwhile?

Young people had a great deal to say about the ways in which mentor support had helped them move forward, all of it resoundingly positive. There were many reflections and observations on the personal style and approach of each mentor:

- ❖ “My mentor knows young people and what their needs are. She looks at things from (my) perspective.”
- ❖ “Mentors are friendly, approachable. They seem passionate about supporting young people.”
- ❖ “My mentor doesn’t look down on me, she makes me feel validated, I’ve been able to feel more confidence in sharing personal information with her than with anyone else before.”
- ❖ “She speaks to me on a human level, which is helpful to me, she doesn’t come across as knowing everything or having all the answers.”
- ❖ “The emotional support from my mentor – I can tell by the look on her face that she is really listening and understanding.”
- ❖ “My mentor has helped take a weight off my mind.”
- ❖ “I trust and respect her; her opinions are important to me because I don’t get that kind of input from my family.”

One young person identified the **venue**, as an additional factor that helped her to feel more at ease – and the proliferation of 1:1 meetings held in cafes has, I feel, helped to create an informal, trusting environment, where mentoring has been able to work well:

- ❖ “I felt anxious about my first meeting, but the fact that it was at Costa really put me at ease. I didn’t feel like I was being judged and I felt he really believed in me – I started to attend more of my sessions with him.”

Some specific qualities of each mentor were articulated too:

- ❖ “I didn’t feel like I was being judged.”
- ❖ “The emotional support from my mentor – I can tell by the look on her face that she is really listening and understanding.”
- ❖ “It’s about their ‘relatability’ – she listens to me.”
- ❖ “Not giving up on me – sticking with me.”
- ❖ “Persistence – she won’t give up on me and leave me to tread water.”

And a final one, touching upon a theme that runs through this report:

- ❖ “The Talent Match mentors, when they are all here helping young people, **it has really seemed like a big family.**”

Asked to comment on how Talent Match has enabled them to move forward in life, there were many positive responses that again talked about practical, as well as emotional support:

- ❖ “Talent Match has given me **coping strategies to deal with difficult circumstances** and knock backs when I have been applying for work.”
- ❖ “It has given me the confidence to apply for jobs and has helped me become more aware of volunteering opportunities, and I now volunteer in the office at Prince’s Trust, which I wouldn’t have thought of doing.”
- ❖ “It has helped to pick me up after I’ve not been successful at interviews. The feedback I’ve got from staff on the project has really helped for other interviews.”
- ❖ “It has given me the confidence to feel more prepared to cold call employers to enquire about vacancies, and also to deal better with nerves at interviews.”
- ❖ “Meeting new people has made me realise that I am **much more confident than I thought**. Now I’m ready to start my Level 3 course at South Essex College.”

Participants also touched upon the role of the mentor as being one of brokering access to other projects and programmes, particularly opportunities that were available from TMSE delivery partners themselves:

- ❖ “My mentor has been able to tell me all about other programmes that have been open to me – Get Into Retail, for example” (a Prince’s Trust programme that partners with employers to provide work experience) “which helped me gain work at Marks and Spencer as a Customer Assistant.”
- ❖ “I got onto The Prince’s Trust’s Fairbridge programme through Talent Match, and this boosted my confidence, and I was able to gain qualifications in outdoor activity events, and I’m now going to an interview next week for PGL, to become an outdoor instructor.”
- ❖ “I was introduced to APM training, and from being with them for a while, I was able to get some business administration experience and qualifications which has really helped me get an administrative job at the hospital.”
- ❖ “It gave me a connection to the sector of work I want to go into.”

In terms of how young people had perceived the degree to which TMSE had helped them to feel more confident, more able to cope with life, and more positive about the future, there were a great many responses. In fact, this was the question which prompted more responses than any of the others.

The quotes listed directly below, show the ways in which the young people have felt that the project has boosted their resilience and coping strategies:

- ❖ “It has helped me to make new friends and have a **new friendship base has been brilliant for my self-esteem.**”
- ❖ “It has helped me feel that I was not alone in struggling to get work and be happy.”

- ❖ “It has helped me cope with rejection better, through talking through things on a 1-1 basis, and really being listened to.”
- ❖ “It has helped me to **believe in myself**, and to meet new people.”
- ❖ “It has helped me gain huge amounts of confidence as I hadn’t left the house on my own for over 4 years and now I am able to walk to the train station on my own.”

Some young people reflected on where they imagined they would be, if they hadn’t been on TMSE, especially with regard to how the project has helped them cope with setbacks or with certain challenges:

- ❖ “It has given me a new sense of direction. I’m no longer sitting in my flat on my own, I’m no longer just drifting, I now have a goal to focus on.”
- ❖ “My views on life have changed and I have a much more positive outlook.”
- ❖ “**I wouldn’t be sitting here in this Focus Group, if not for Talent Match** or my mentor, Kerry. And I certainly wouldn’t be going to interviews. It has really boosted my self-esteem as she has always been there to listen to me after a knock-back.”
- ❖ “Just going out and having things to do has made me much happier.”
- ❖ “It helped with my depression because I was getting more and more down, especially when I was not being busy and had little to do. It has given me a purpose, and also helped me to deal better with those periods in my day or week when I’ve not got anything to do, I’ve proved to myself that I can be happy even when I’m having a quiet day.”

Other young people pointed to specific activities they had taken part in, which had boosted their confidence levels and reduced anxieties:

- ❖ “I went on a Go Ape course and I met a lot of new people and the activities helped me to deal with my fear of heights, and I can use this experience to help me deal with other challenging events in my life.”
- ❖ “The Firebreak activity made me realise that my anxieties are largely self-inflicted and, for example, with the ladder activity, to get to the top made me realise that I could overcome any anxieties I might face in the future.”

It is clear from the data and comment highlighted in this section how high a value has been placed on the mentoring relationship by the mentees. Things that stand out are the references to the ‘**relatability**’ of the mentors, their non-judgemental approach, and the role the mentor has played to promote self-belief and confidence, as well as a positive frame of mind in their mentees.

The data from the CXK research from 2017, as well as from the interview with Specialist Mentor Katharyn Harriss (and, later, with Emily Ryles, a participant on the project) also demonstrates how mentors have filled a gap in the lives of the young people they have been mentoring – to become the **go-to person for support, encouragement, and advice**.

The most effective forms of mentoring have taken place face-to-face. There has been little evidence gained from participants that they utilised or valued phone or email-based support.

A premium has been placed, moreover, on the importance of a high quality, professional one to one, face to face meeting with someone who has provided the right level of support, at a crucial time in the participants' lives.

## Impact of the Young People's Partnership on participants' outcomes

The Young People's Partnership, (YPP), was formed at the outset of the project, and has continued through to present time. It has been led by The Prince's Trust.

There have been over 70 young people, across all TMSE areas, who have represented the YPP, through their role as a Talent Match Ambassador (TMA).

TMA's have represented the project at a wider level – being interviewed by radio stations, taking part in homelessness awareness raising campaigns (The Big Sleep Out, for example) and have been responsible for much of the young person-led content on the Talent Match South East Facebook page.

Ambassadors have also represented the project at a variety of outreach, and other events, including playing a full part at an event held at Turner Contemporary in Margate, Kent in June 2017, when they spoke to a large audience of stakeholders about their experiences of being young and long term unemployed. The YPP have also produced a TMSE newsletter on a regular basis, which has gone out to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

The Ambassadors have also played a full role in influencing how the project has been delivered, and in contributing to decision making. This has come about through representation at meetings at the following levels - Core Partnership, Delivery Partner meetings, and Hub meetings. They have attended project training, on themes around mental health, confident communication, and personal presentation, among others, and have always had a role to play, including a vote, on decisions around Hub Budget activity proposals, and recruitment of project staff.



The project has had 3 YPP Co-ordinators over the first 4 years of the project, a detail that is significant, because this has allowed different styles of delivery, and diverging views on the role of a TMA, to come to the fore. Each Co-ordinator has brought a diverse range of skills and experiences to the role, and this section will include feedback on the effectiveness of the YPP from its current Co-ordinator, Samantha Crees.

Because this section of the report is focused on the YPP, almost the whole part will feature the voice and views of young people who have been, or currently are, Ambassadors. Their reflections, along with the views of the Co-ordinator and those of other practitioners on the project, have helped to form a view on how to increase the effectiveness of future YPP-style input for new projects. These centre around the large geographical area of co-ordination, as well as a more structured definition of a TMA's role on YPP – something that has not been achieved in full, due in the main to issues centring around the Kent-centric feel of the YPP, as well as the turnover of staff who have taken on the Co-ordinator role.

The following quotes, from Focus Groups and from other meetings which TMA representatives attended, will demonstrate the huge and vital impact the role of a TMA has had on the young people who got involved, as well as, to an understandably lesser extent, on all young people involved in the project. Ideas on how to reconfigure the role of YPP structures, and TMA roles, for future project delivery, are outlined in the Recommendations section of the report.

The focus group question I asked was:

- How has being a member of the YPP helped you to achieve a specific outcome that you wanted?

The most frequently aired responses to this centred around the common themes of more confidence, better communication skills, reduction of anxiety and stress levels, and also relating to gaining constructive feedback.

Some quotes below, from the Focus Group I held in London, in January 2018, with a group of Ambassadors, demonstrate these key themes very well:

- ❖ “It has helped me with confidence, with communication, and with general life skills, such as getting to places on time, finding out where venues are, and working out how to get to them before I set off.”

This latter comment cropped up a lot, with those young people who were required to travel from Kent, East Sussex, or Essex, to London, to Prince’s Trust House, in the central finance district of the capital. Many TMA’s spoke of their journeys to London as an adventure – a journey often with twists and turns, involving missed connections and misunderstood arrangement for meeting and greeting others. Some YPP members took the learning they gained from these journeys to a further level:

- ❖ “It helped me to develop an awareness about how to run a small project. For example, after a group of us found it hard to travel to, and find the Prince’s Trust office in London, we formed a group that looked at ways in which we could deliver travel training to future Ambassadors, so they would be more aware of the best routes and what to expect prior to setting off for new locations.”

Other comments focused on the reduction of stress levels they found, through being a part of a meaningful activity that gave them something positive to do, and also new people and contacts to meet.

- ❖ “Meeting other Ambassadors really helped me to connect and relate to a different bunch of people.”
- ❖ “It gave me contacts which have been very helpful to me, and also helped me understand how to network better.”
- ❖ “Being part of the YPP has helped me to cope with things in the ‘real world’, and to reduce my stress levels.”

Employability skills were also frequently mentioned, most often related to etiquette within a formal meeting, confident communication, and feedback about personal and professional behaviours:

- ❖ “I have attended meetings (as part of the Hub and Core partnership meeting structure) and this has taught me how to be professional and has given me an insight into how to cope with meetings in the real world. This will help me when I am in a job I’m sure.”

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- ❖ “One to one sessions with the YPP co-ordinator have helped me as I have been given lots of feedback about my performance in my role, for example tips about maintaining professional behaviour during meetings, things like not rolling up a cigarette during the meeting, or snapping my fingers, and the importance of keeping my phone switched off or on silent.”
- ❖ “I learned about how to approach organisations to build up partnerships that would support our aims.”
- ❖ “I valued the feedback I received from the YPP co-ordinator, especially around how to speak up at a meeting with confidence and to learn that my viewpoint was as important as anyone else’s.”
- ❖ “It has helped me understand large scale projects and this might come in useful when I hopefully work on similar things in the future.”

There were further comments that related specifically to key skills and learning picked up from YPP training sessions attended, which related to a variety of things – safeguarding awareness and skills needed to undertake outreach work being the ones that cropped up the most.

There were isolated comments about how difficult it could sometimes be to contact the YPP Co-ordinator – an issue that will be addressed in the recommendations section of this report.

Ambassadors regularly contributed to the quarterly TMSE newsletter, which was sent to stakeholders and external partners, as well as to Talent Match young people. In 2018, a newsletter was produced that consisted solely of Ambassador-led content. This explained about some of the projects and activities that the group had been involved in. These activities are presented here as demonstration of the attainment of further skills, experiences, and achievements that helped each Ambassador move closer to their preferred outcome.

There are 3 articles presented here, covering a residential event (Talent Match Rocks), a promotional campaign, and a photography project.

### **Talent Match Rocks - By Katie, (Talent Match Ambassador), June 2017**

“Back in June a group of Ambassadors went to Cornwall for Talent Match Rocks. It was a chance for people from Talent Match all over England to get to know other Ambassadors and learn what other Talent Match members have been doing and what topics they have covered.

There were different activities throughout the 3 days where you learnt things that were going on around different towns in Cornwall and we got to see the local businesses and what they are all about.

On the first day we went to a local gym to see all the different sports and fitness they have done and we had the chance to join in with the trainers then we went to a café called Chaos which takes on volunteers to help feed the homeless throughout the year and which sometimes keep their volunteers on and give them full time jobs.

On the second day we went to Jamie Oliver’s restaurant called 15, where we learnt about food hygiene and how certain foods were prepared we also got to taste some foods and drinks that



we would never have got to try back home. We went glamping that night and there was a big party thrown for everyone, we had mocktails and a BBQ then a band played, this was fun because we all got to dance and play games!

We then went to one of the beaches where we got to bond as a group to help members get over their phobias of the sea and learn all the history of the beaches.

We then went to a B&B called Cedars and it was a chance for our little group to fully get to know and open up to each other and we still keep in contact and have started to plan another residential for all 3 counties next year!"

A member of the East Sussex Focus Group, Jessica, also spoke about the things she had taken from the Talent Match Rocks event:

- ❖ "I went to the Talent Match convention called Talent Match Rocks. It was in Cornwall and I loved meeting lots of other really upbeat young people, I did things like glamping, a 5km bike ride, and ate at Jamie Oliver's restaurant, I gained so much confidence from this and felt very refreshed and positive at the end of the week.

I met other young people who were in a housing foyer while on Talent Match Rocks and this gave me a new perspective of other young people's lives."

The next passage demonstrates how TMA's gained a new awareness of the impact of marketing and promotional techniques, as well as teamwork abilities, presentational skills, and a better awareness of how projects are funded.

The comment made at the end of the piece, referencing the '**family feel**' of TMSE, in relation here to the YPP, is really instructive, as it touches upon a key finding and subsequent recommendation within this report – how best to engender, and maintain, a family feel to a future project.

Young people at the focus groups (as well as several mentors) made repeated reference to the TMSE project feeling like a big family, where support is gained, and experiences shared, by a whole range of project stakeholders – young people, Specialist and Volunteer Mentors, Talent Match Ambassadors, and YPP Co-ordinators.

This large support network helped them to feel like there was always someone there for them to help them achieve their preferred outcomes.

### **What's the Big Lottery Idea? – Ben, (Talent Match Ambassador), Aug 2017**

"In August, a group of us (Talent Match Ambassadors from across the south east) were given a task by the Big Lottery Fund to do with viral videos. At the end of August, we had a briefing meeting with Sue, the Big Lottery Funding Manager, to find out what we had to do. It was a consultation task on social media with their communications team on viral videos.

We were given two tasks. First, find a project in our area that is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, and second, to create a presentation on how we would make a viral video."

Photo: Talent Match Ambassadors at the Big Lottery



“We created our presentations at The Prince’s Trust office. We chose a Dwayne Johnson video about depression, Sainsbury’s Christmas Advert with the WW1 scene, and a motivational speech. We explained that these were either relatable (to us) or had a message that people could relate to and had good background music and that’s why they went viral.”

“The next task was to find three viral videos that we liked and explain what we like about each. This was the task that was set and we got to it. We had two weeks. The clock was ticking (hear that tick tock sound in your mind whilst reading). We did it and conquered it.”

“We then got into groups and did our presentation. The first one was by me, Jodie and Lacey and was about Pathways to Independence, which provides supported accommodation to homeless people of all ages. This is a personal one for some of us as we have experience of living in Pathways to Independence accommodation.

The next charity that was presented was Mencap, a charity for people with disabilities – this one was presented by Reece, Hannah and Katie. The final one was the Essex crew, Anna and Alex, who chose a community radio station which provides opportunities for local people. This was a brilliant opportunity for us to explore our local area and meet the Big Lottery communication team (who are awesome by the way). We were nervous to present, but we did it. We conquered our fears and we all did this together – the Talent Match YPP family.”

The third piece from the newsletter, written by two Ambassadors, demonstrates the skills learnt and experiences gained through attendance at the photography project (which is covered more comprehensively in a following section of the report). This is added here to show how TMA’s have assessed and valued the impact that TMSE projects have had on a wider cross-section of Talent Match young people, through attending projects that were brought about through Ambassador involvement at Hub Budget meetings\*.

\*Every proposal for a Hub Budget activity needed at least one vote from a YPP member.

**Love Where You Live - by Lacey and Jodie, November 2017**

“We had a photography course that lasted six weeks, seeing our local area in a different light. We were also learning about how to create a business using photography or any of our other skills we have learnt during our time at Talent Match.

During the six weeks we took the time to go to different areas in our local town to find and learn different ways of making our photography more creative on a wider spectrum.

On our first week we had a walk into Chatham town centre to have an introduction on basic camera skills and how to take different types of photographs.

On the second week we went to a local park called Jackson Fields. Here we learnt how to incorporate the scenery within a frame of the picture and also spent some time doing portrait pictures.

On the third week we went to Fort Amherst. We explored different ways of taking photographs this included putting the camera against different surface such as walls and the floor.

On the fourth week we went to Chatham Dockyard and continued to explore different ways of taking photographs.

On the fifth week we visited our local pier (Sun Pier) and focused more on using the skills we had learnt in previous sessions. On the sixth week we stayed at The Prince’s Trust office to pick our final photographs that we wanted to be displayed at a well-known gallery, the Turner Contemporary, in Margate”.

Photo: Jodie and her photographs at the Turner Contemporary exhibition event



“Our photographs were then on exhibition for two weeks at the Turner Contemporary. A few of us went to the exhibition opening to help set up and show off our photography, we also were interviewed and asked questions about the course, our photos, and our views on the whole experience.

Overall it was a brilliant course and (we) really enjoyed it and would highly recommend it to other young people on Talent Match.”

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The newsletter also includes brief case studies from two current TMA's, Jodie and Lacey, which I have included below, which demonstrate what the two young people have gained from being on TMSE.

The case studies were presented in such a way as to have meaning to any other young people reading the newsletter who might be in the process of either thinking about joining the project or are currently engaging with it.

Many of the project case studies tended to be quite lengthy, with a good range of appeal to young people, as well as to referral agencies and other partners. These shorter ones below provide a good example of how key messages were able to be put forward by young people, in a concise fashion, which might facilitate a response from other young people.

### Lacey



“Since being on Talent Match I have overcome huge barriers in my life. Now I can leave the house by myself and it has given me the confidence to start applying for work. I have made friends who have supported me throughout and look forward to starting a career in care.”

### Jodie



“Talent Match has helped me become more employable and given me the confidence to apply and look for work. As part of the YPP I have received further training and have been given opportunities to do hands on youth work which is what I want to build a career in.”

The research team met with the YPP Co-ordinator, Samantha Crees, in April 2018, to gain her thoughts on the YPP, reflecting on successes, as well as areas where future project delivery might wish to consider changes.

### Interview with YPP Co-ordinator

AD: What worked well, for your perspective – and from the feedback you have gained from members of the YPP?

SC: I think, for me, it was the ability, evidenced particularly in the latter stages of the project, to run mini-projects that were devised, planned and delivered by the Ambassadors themselves.

AD: And how many of these were there – and which would you like to highlight here?

SC: There have been 4 planned for this year these have focused on social media training, on autism awareness, and on making yourself look the part for interviews. All of these have been well-attended and have been led by young people, in conjunction with training providers that have been chosen by the Ambassadors, such as 360 Recruitment, and Kent Autistic Training.

AD: And the fourth?

SC: That's the one I'm most proud of. It's been about the identification of mental health as being a primary obstacle in the way of young people progressing. And it is something that has affected many members of the YPP along the way too, so was something that the group felt very passionately about.

AD: Tell me more about that one.

SC: Well, it started with the group working together to identify employers who they felt, from their experience of being a young person, were the 'go to' employers favoured by many young people – JD Sports, McDonalds and Burger King were mentioned. Many of the group had experienced problems working within such places of employment, when they felt that their mental health had not been fully taken into account or catered for properly in order to give them the best chance of holding down the job for a lengthy period.

AD: So, what did you and the group plan?

SC: It was down to them really – but it involved an awareness raising campaign, a project that had at its centre the notion that employers would benefit from meeting with and listening to young people – their future workforce – who had mental health concerns. The idea was that once the employers better understood the issues at large, then they would be well placed to put forward some processes within the workplace to tackle the issue.

AD: Did any employers in particular get involved, that you might otherwise have not expected?

SC: Well, the big win for the project was in getting Medway Council involved. The group presented to Councillors, included to Cllr Jarrett, the leader of Medway Council, earlier this month. They used a PowerPoint presentation, and also talked to council staff about their experiences of trying to hold down permanent employment. The presentation contained lots of very practical advice for an employer working with a young person who has some mental health needs.

There were tips on how to deal with an employee who is having a panic attack, and suggestions about strategies that management could put in place to solve the issue of retention of staff – particularly younger members of the workforce.

The group talked to Heads of Departments too, and really put their views across in a powerful and articulate manner. It was a brilliant exercise – it really showed how the YPP were able to identify a barrier and address it head on through taking ownership of it and taking action.

AD: And longer term?

SC: The group very much want to take it forward from here. They are already talking about writing and leading some formal training for employers, on the same issue. That is the aim for both the autism and social media mini-projects too – young people, addressing barriers faced by young people, and engaging employers in the debate to, in order to make change happen.

AD: You mentioned some of the other organisations the YPP have worked with – Kent Autistic Trust's remit is pretty well known, but what about 360 Recruitment, how did that work out?

SC: Well this was through a working relationship I built up with the company's owner, Sarah Wilson. Sarah met the YPP and discussed what training needs they thought young people had, and what format of training was required to tackle these needs.

AD: And the result?

SC: Another fantastic project! This one ran across all 3 counties and was called The Mannequin Challenge. This was delivered over 3 days and was based around the concept of dressing for success – of presenting yourself professionally and appropriately, to give yourself the very best chance of making a good first impression, and also a continued good impression once in employment!

AD: What were the main themes of each day?

SC: Day 1 was very much about testing out long held preconceptions about what constituted 'interview wear', and this involved using shop-store mannequins that the young people dressed, using a selection of various clothing items, to match each 'person' to the role or employer they were interested in. This provoked much debate, was great fun, and got the activity off to a lively start. The day also looked at what you need to plan for, before the interview – how you're going to get there, is your shirt ironed, did you remember to sew that button back on?

AD: Day 2?

SC: This was when the young people went shopping! Each participant was handed £15 and given the challenge of sourcing a full set of interview clothes from local stores. Most pretty quickly worked out that charity shops were going to be your friend here – and the things they came back with were amazing – suits, shirts, skirts, ties, the lot. And we also felt it was a good thing to spend the money in stores that were supporting local charities.

This set them up for the final day, where the young people had mock interviews with local employers – we had a gaming employer, a make-up artist – lots of different employers that were relevant to the aspirations of the group. There was a final session too, that looked at personal presentation – how much make-up to wear, how to clean shoes so they shone, how to do your hair professionally.

All 3 activities across each county got rave reviews from the young people, and we were delighted with the input from Sarah – she told it how it was, she didn't leave any room for misinterpretation of any of her key messages – it was a delivery style that really worked I think, it was stripped bare and just hit home. Some undoubtedly found this style challenging – but from the start, everyone agreed that an honest approach was going to work best.

AD: How many people were on the YPP, on average at any one time?

SC: I always wanted a quorum of 6. In Kent, we pretty much ran at 6 -8 throughout. In East Sussex it ranged from 3 to 7. And in Essex the numbers were slightly lower, averaging between 4-5.

AD: Any thoughts as to why there was a slight divergence?

SC: I think it comes down to the role of the YPP Co-ordinator, which was based in Kent. This undoubtedly played a part in my ability to get the message out to Kent based mentors and other young people, because I was much more visible. I could promote engagement with YPP much more easily because I was constantly there, talking to people about it, promoting it and encouraging participation.

I think in Essex especially, there were large numbers of young people who were working with Specialist Mentors, and who had many specific barriers to engagement. The challenges in

engaging these young people, and in particular, in motivating them to attend YPP training in London, which was a pre-requisite to becoming an Ambassador, were great.

AD: Are there ways around this for future delivery?

SC: I think so, yes. I think a more localised approach would have worked better. Ideally, my role would have been more co-ordination, and less delivery, with a YPP Lead, a paid role, working in each county. I think this would have increased participation and also would have had the added advantage of having 3 very distinct, independent YPP groups, who could meet more frequently - and at a reduced cost because of the fewer travel commitments.

The further advantage of this arrangement is that when the 3-county groups were to meet, maybe every 6 months at a central point, then these meetings would have more impact – more shared learning would take place, in terms of what each YPP had experienced as an entity.

AD: Were there many recurring issues, or problems -other than the one you mention above?

SC: There were lots of little squabbles, yes...but you get that within any team of people I think, but it was perhaps more challenging dealing with YPP squabbles because the young people were less inhibited about airing their grievances with each other. The hardest one to manage was around occasional unhelpful debate between members of social media platforms. But again, good lessons to learn for the young people for when they undoubtedly face similar scenarios later, potentially in the workplace.

AD: And a key highlight?

SC: Undoubtedly the Talent Match Rocks event. It was just great seeing young people being given the opportunity to be taken out of their comfort zone – geographically and socially – and to mix with young people from different parts of the county. I think this did wonders for the young people, who came back very refreshed, and with a positive mentality.

On a secondary note, I've always been very proud of any Ambassador who has taken the opportunity to put their point across as Delivery Partner, Core Partnership or Hub meetings – it takes a lot of determination and encourage to make a point at these meetings, and to have the confidence to speak up on behalf of other young people who they are representing.

End of interview

## **Impact on participant outcomes through TMSE collaboration with organisations**

TMSE worked with a large number of organisations and training providers between 2014 and 2017, and many mutually beneficial partnerships were made within each TMSE delivery area, that found ways to respond more sharply to the individual needs of young people.

Conversations with Leanne Zahra, Outreach Co-ordinator for Kent, as well as the information gained from the interview held with Jake Smith and Sophie Sheppard, in February 2018, shed light on the variety of partnerships made by the outreach team in order to a) gain referrals from organisations to the project, and b) provide a full range of organisations that mentors could refer their young people onto.

These organisations included housing organisations, such as Stonham Housing in Kent, and Swan Housing in Essex; Job Centre Plus; Work Programme providers such as RBLI in Kent, and Ingeus in Essex; as well as local, smaller third sector organisations, such as East Sussex Community Development Association, in Sussex, and Thanet Community Development Trust, in Kent.

Two-way, mutually beneficial relationships were built up with a wide variety of partners, to meet the needs of young people on TMSE, and which also helped partner organisations, as well as Talent Match, to meet their own distinct targets, in terms of numbers of engaged young people, and the outcomes that the young people gained.

This report will now demonstrate the wide-ranging impact that one such partnership had on young people, through a case study which evidences the many ways in which TMSE collaborated with a local arts charity based in Kent, Nucleus Arts.

### **Case study 1 - Nucleus Arts**

Nucleus Arts was founded in 2002, and was the Kent Creative Awards winner in 2017. It has its main centre in Chatham, the Nucleus Arts Centre, which contains a variety of studios, a gallery, a café, as well as its central administrative bases. It has two further creative spaces in the local area – Nucleus Arts Rochester, and Creative HUB Riverside.

It also has a pop up underground cinema space, and a shared community space, called Heart.

Heart is the latest project for Nucleus Arts, and partnered with the Pentagon Shopping Centre, Chatham to provide accessible space for community groups, charities and community projects. In September 2015, CXK saw an opportunity to use HUB Budget funds to rent the Heart space in order to turn it into a Talent Match Hub – a place where young people could meet their mentors, where Job Jump activity could take place, and where the YPP could convene and hold both formal, and informal meetings. Approximately £550 of Talent Match funding was spent each quarter, from Sep 2015 onwards, to open the venue for TMSE purposes, on an (initial) one-day a week basis. Data from CXK suggests that in the region of 525 young people accessed support from their mentor at Heart in 2016, with around 65 young people attending Job Jumps, held by the Employer and Skills Network.

A further 15 young people attended a housing Focus Group session, run by Sheffield Hallam University in March 2017, at Heart, and 4 YPP meetings were held there in 2017. Feedback from young people regarding the Heart space was extremely positive, and played a vital role in gaining further funding, in April 2016, to open the venue for an additional day of the week. Young people spoke of the venue being accessible,



welcoming, and multi-purpose – there were 3 spaces within the venue, which ensured that 1:1 meetings of a more confidential nature could be held in a separate space from the main area.

A small amount of the funding was also used to help to create a more convivial atmosphere within the Heart space – fruit, drinks, and pastries were bought from the supermarket nearby, which were offered to young people on arrival – and printing facilities were introduced by CXK at no additional cost to TMSE.

Photo below – Heart, taken from the Nucleus Arts website – showing the main central space, with the space used for more confidential 1:1 meetings behind the dividing wall to the left of the photo, and a second, larger private space just behind the dividing wall on the right of the photo.



Heart was also used by other agencies and training providers, at the invitation of TMSE delivery partners – RBLI, Medway Mencap, and APM, for example – on a no charge basis, in order to enable them to run short programmes and hold events which TMSE mentors were able to refer their young people onto.

Medway Mencap, in particular, worked closely with TMSE in 2016-17, to run several courses, which were attended by Talent Match young people. The home page of the Medway Mencap Facebook page, has as its profile picture, a photograph of several young people receiving an award – and 4 of the young people in the photograph are

Talent Match participants, who were accessing a Money Matters course at Heart, run by Medway Mencap, whilst also receiving support from their TMSE mentors.

Mentors interviewed for this research spoke of the importance of having the Mencap provision in the same venue as they were working from, as it enabled them to refer the young people to the provision in a seamless way, and to be able to build ongoing support through informal 'catch ups' either before or after each Money Matters training event.

The agreement to rent Heart came about through a contact Talent Match had already made with Natasha Boardman-Steer, the Community Engagement Adviser for Nucleus Arts. Natasha had responded to a Prince's Trust advertisement for Volunteer Mentors in September 2014, and went on to mentor 3 young people, as well as set up and run some very successful projects for TMSE young people between 2016-17.

A meeting was held with Natasha in December 2017, at the Nucleus Arts Centre, to find out more about the collaboration between Nucleus Arts and TMSE, and the impact this collaboration had on TMSE young people.

Natasha spoke about her Talent Match mentoring experience, and explained that the 3 young people she had worked with, were all interested in the creative industries – ceramics, photography, and illustration – and she felt that the match with each young person was a good one, as she was able to use her industry knowledge and community engagement skills to support the young people to move further towards their employment goals. Natasha explained how she had supported one young person with issues such as mental wellbeing, and housing, and had acted as an advocate on several occasions, especially with regard to interactions with housing organisations and the local council.

Natasha explained how she had supported the young person to set up a website, which showcased her ceramic work, and helped her to start a ceramics course at Medway Council Adult Education. She introduced the young person to a colleague at Nucleus Arts who was able to advise her further with regard to specific ceramic skills – use of a kiln – and also successfully applied for £100 from the Talent Match Bursary Award, to fund her participation on a training course for kiln use.

Further funds were gained through the Bursary Award to buy some smart uniform, so that she could undertake a very successful 6-week work experience period working at the café at Nucleus Arts Rochester. This demonstrates highly effective partnership

building – TMSE working very closely with a local organisation - to bring about meaningful change to a young person's circumstances, and to have a real impact on her chances of pursuing a career in her preferred vocational area.

Nucleus Arts also worked closely with TMSE to run 4 creative workshop projects, between September 2016 and March 2017. The programmes were run in conjunction with the Riverside One Studios, in Medway, and were funded through use of the Talent Match HUB Budget funds ((£2,800).

The 4 projects were:

- ❖ Music production
- ❖ Music Industry
- ❖ Gaming and Technology
- ❖ Street Art

6 young people accessed the programme offer, and a YouTube video (link below) was included as part of the evaluation undertaken by Nucleus Arts and TMSE, at the conclusion of one of the projects: [Talent Match Making Music Programme](#)

The feedback from the participants in this clip clearly demonstrates the increases in self-esteem, confidence levels, the ability to work as a team, and project skills. One young person speaks about how the project helped him to be “more myself” – and not to be afraid to show his true self.

This case study has shown the huge impact that TMSE has been able to have on young people's outcomes, through its collaboration with a local organisation, Nucleus Arts. It has shown how a Volunteer Mentor, employed by Nucleus Arts, was able to use technical expertise and sector specific resources, available from within the organisation, to enable the mentee to gain skills in the area she is interested in. It has shown how the organisation was able to provide a work experience opportunity. It has demonstrated the impact that a Nucleus Arts led creative project has had on 6 young people and has evidenced the benefits that have come from using a low cost, accessible new delivery venue to increase footfall, and to enable new partnerships to flourish within the venue which have directly supported TMSE aims.

The amounts of funding used to facilitate the partnership work outlined here, has been relatively small – amounting to an average of around £3-4000 per annum (rental

costs/HUB Budget funds) over the 2016-17 period when the majority of the activities have taken place.

TMSE frequently collaborated with many varied training providers, across the 3 areas, to provide sector specific, low cost training and work experience events for young people on the project. On occasions, the projects that were delivered involved a 3-way partnership – usually a training provider, an employer, and a Talent Match delivery partner.

In December 2015, TMSE delivered a 6-week project called Testing Your Talent, in Margate, Kent, which sought to provide employability skills training with a training provider, and link this to further employability skills training, and work experience sessions, with a local employer.

The following case study demonstrates the joint partnership work involved, the evaluative views of the training provider and the employer, as well as comments and reflection from practitioners and from young people who participated in Testing Your Talent.

### Case Study 2 - Testing Your Talent (Thanet Community Development Trust and Dreamland)



TMSE delivery partners collaborated with training provider Thanet Community Development Trust (TCDT), and employer Dreamland Trust, to deliver an

employability and work experience activity that took place towards the end of 2015. The initial relationship was built up between the Employer and Skills Network (KATO – a TMSE delivery partner) and TCDT.

Week 1 involved a series of workshops built around breaking down the barriers to work and developing soft skills such as communication skills at work, time management, and self-motivation.

Week 2 included a certificated course in Customer Service skills, ensuring that every young person gained the key skills required to work in a customer service focused environment at Dreamland, in the busy period leading up to, and around, Christmas. Training that was given was sector specific – young people were given work experience choices in the following job roles, and undertook the relevant training course for the role:

*Table 15: Training delivered to young people on the TCDT/Dreamland project*

Job area	Training offered (Core)	Training offered (Additional)
Food and Beverage	Food Safety Level 2	Emergency First Aid at work
Events	Health and Safety at work	Emergency First Aid at work
Guest Experience	Health and Safety at work	Emergency First Aid at work
Ride Operatives	Health and Safety at work	Emergency First Aid at work

During week 3, a CV clinic took place, to ensure that all the young people’s achievements and qualifications had been captured, along with interview skills sessions and tips on how to job search proactively.

Week 4/5 took the form of a 2-week work experience placement at Dreamland Trust, providing transferable skills and experiences within customer service, timekeeping, communication, cash handling and other skills that were relevant to working within a large-scale amusement park. Young people also had the opportunity to find out from Dreamland employees about what their jobs were really like - the pros and cons – and there were regular meetings between the young people and their ‘buddy’ to review progress, work on a reflective log, and gain feedback, as well as to receive workplace mentoring from members of the Dreamland Trust management team.

Week 6 involved the planning and presentation of the young people's Celebration of Achievement event, held at the Dreamland Trust premises, and attended by friends, family, and TMSE practitioners.

Feedback from practitioners who were involved in the event was extremely positive, and with regard to working alongside TCDT, on this and on subsequent joint ventures, received this view from a Specialist Mentor in January 2018:

"My experience of working with TCDT has always been good. I always feel that if I need to see them I can call in, and between them someone will know the answer."

The mentor continued:

"I've put several young people onto the activity through TCDT and found that they were really supportive of the YP and also felt the need to consistently ask after them beyond the activity – to ensure their outcome was recorded but also because they care about the individual learner."

Feedback from young people was positive too, and I gained the following reflections on his time on the Testing Your Talent activity from one of the participants, Tom, during an interview I held with him in February 2018:

- ❖ "Initially, I wasn't sure it was for me, because the travelling (to the training provider's premises) was daunting to begin with, involving two train changes, and later in the project, a bus journey too. I'd done quite a bit of independent travel a few months before though when I went to London on the train, to attend Talent Match meetings in my role as a Talent Match Ambassador, and this really helped me initially, although it was a new route for me. I'm glad I was able to overcome initial concerns and anxieties."
- ❖ "I guess I really learned how to communicate with other people on the course, and this has helped me to communicate more confidently subsequently. I've always been able to use complex vocabulary, but little things, like knowing how to take a joke, and how to fit in with the group, I've struggled with, and this really helped me. By week 3 I was much more focused on building friendships within the group and on getting the most out of working with other people."
- ❖ "It made me realise that, although I enjoyed the activity, and the teamwork involved, retail and hospitality weren't really for me – they didn't play to my strengths, which was frustrating to begin with, because I'd talked to my mentor a lot about getting into retail, but in hindsight it was really helpful, as it made me consider new career opportunities and different roles more. So, **it changed me** – I realised that my skills and strengths could be used better in a

different sector.” (Tom is currently studying Interior Design at Mid Kent College).

- ❖ “I would say that going to the course every day really helped my self-esteem, and I felt more comfortable being myself. Being in such a supportive group definitely helped this too.”
- ❖ “The celebration event was really important to me, because my parents attended, my mentor was there, all the other participants were there. I was able to gain confirmation of what I’d achieved, and to do this in front of lots of people, made me feel that we had achieved something as a group, together, that was really worthwhile. It also gave me the opportunity, at a later date, to talk about something I’d spend my time on, at interviews, and on my CVs – so it had a real impact on me in lots of ways”.

Tom was also able to add the following to his CV, explaining to me that this was the first time that he felt he could add something to his CV that he was really proud of, and that stood out to potential employers:

- ❖ “My responsibilities included handling cash, stock rotation and working the till. I worked in the catering department both outside in the park and the canteen, I was responsible for serving and cooking the hotdogs, burgers and fries (and) helping customers get the best experience possible.”

Feedback was also gained from the employer, Dreamland, as part of the evaluation of the activity, and their perspective (below) shows how Talent Match was able to change the thinking processes of employers in relation to the induction and employment of new members of their team, as well as the lengths to which the employer was prepared to go to, to take the young people’s views on board, in order to make the work experience activities as positive and meaningful as possible:

- ❖ “We had liaised fully with our partners to provide the young people with a structured timetable that enabled them to smoothly and fully integrate into the organisation. Dreamland Margate treated the young people as employees, with an access-all-areas pass to all aspects of the business. Reports afterwards proved this to be valuable. It was important, they said, to not be treated as ‘kids just here on work experience’. The recruits were keen to learn, asked questions, and were trusted and so were able to work without supervision much of the time. This resulted in a hardworking, can-do attitude from all of them.

In fact, 5 of the young people were taken on for the Christmas production at Dreamland. And those who fulfil the criteria to work as seasonal staff will be offered the opportunity to be involved this year”.

Dreamland Trust went on to say:

- ❖ “This pilot has proved that Dreamland Margate can offer a useful package for young people wishing to develop their skills and confidence in areas that they wish to develop. We originally focussed on four departments for training but since the scheme ended other departments are keen to get involved, so we are discussing developing and extending this further.”
- ❖ “After the initial set up the workload was nowhere near as demanding or concerning as we had suspected and in fact the whole process allowed us to think up ideas on how to improve the induction of new employees in the future.”

Feedback from the training provider was also gained at the end of the activity and included a summary of the outcomes of the project, as well as quotes from young people who participated.

Outcomes provided by TCDT to The Prince’s Trust, in February 2016:

- ❖ Over 50% completed the programme (5 from an initial referral number of 9).
- ❖ Of those, 100% gained zero hours contracts at Dreamland.
- ❖ 19 new qualifications were achieved by the group.
- ❖ 100% of those who completed scored themselves higher in our soft skills questionnaire at the end of the programme compared with the start.

This report has looked at the soft skills questionnaires that the young people completed and these make interesting reading. The areas that the young people scored themselves higher in, at the end compared to the start of the activity, relate clearly to the questions asked of all Talent Match young people through completion of the Baseline Questionnaire and Follow Up forms – and evidence how the link with TCDT directly supported wider TMSE project outcomes.

The ‘personal attribute’ areas include punctuality, attitude, relationship with others, perseverance, responsibility and adaptability, while the ‘key skills’ areas include verbal communication, team work, problem solving, listening skills, and improving on one’s learning and development.

It is perhaps worth clarifying the reasoning behind the nature of the award of zero-hour contracts. Due to the changing nature of the amusement park over this time (the company was entering into a period of receivership, before being purchased by a new owner) the young people were employed on a zero-hour contract basis, with an offer of further work once the summer season began in six months’ time.

Although we live in a time when zero-hour contracts are becoming quite common features of the employment contracts awarded to many young people, this arrangement wasn’t made clear to the young people at the outset by the employer. Nonetheless, it is difficult to know how this situation could have been handled differently, given the



uncertainty surrounding the ownership of the park, that occurred during the programme, and the seasonal nature of employment at the amusement park at the time.

Participant and practitioner comments and feedback, as provided by TCDT to The Prince's Trust in February 2016:

- ❖ "I found the courses really good fun and useful." Martin, participant
- ❖ "They all did us proud!" Laura, Dreamland Education Trust
- ❖ "I loved every minute of working with Dreamland and the crew, it was very good experience and I've learnt a lot from all of you. I'm now much more confident, thank you for giving me this opportunity." Trevor, participant

TCDT also provided reflections on the activity, as part of their evaluation for TMSE (below), which highlights the increase in confidence, motivation levels, and team working abilities that were demonstrated by the young people during the activity:

- ❖ "Dreamland as partner employer were great at engaging the young people throughout their work experience placements and it was obvious from the Celebration of Achievement event what an impact TCDT and Dreamland had on the young people. There were notable changes in them, in terms of increased confidence and comradery."
- ❖ "We feel this project was such a success because TCDT and Dreamland worked together tirelessly to ensure the young people on our cohort remained at the centre of what we were offering."
- ❖ "We feel that by keeping the group together throughout the entire process, i.e. not branching off to different employers, they were able to really support and encourage one and other and this was evident as they celebrated each other's successes at the celebration event."
- ❖ "The communication between TCDT, Dreamland and TMSE throughout the activity was also very good and the workbooks used throughout the work experience were particularly useful for evaluating each of the young people's achievements."

Photo: participants at the Dreamland park



### Budget

Total spend on the project amounted to £9782, which equated to £1222.75 per participant (£1956.40 per participant who completed). Full costings are presented on the next page.

*Table 16: Full costs for Testing Your Talent activity, Nov-Dec 2015*

Expense	Unit	Unit cost	Total Cost
Certified Customer Service Training	1-day x 8 people	£65	£520
QCF accredited Emergency First Aid at Work	1-day x 8 people	£85	£680
CIEH accredited Food Safety Level 2	1-day x 2 people	£85	£170
Highfields accredited Health & Safety at Work	1-day x 6 people	£85	£510
Soft skills development	1-day x 6	£200	£1200
CV clinic and interview workshops	3 days	£200	£600
Venue hire	11 days	£100	£1100
Refreshments	11 days x 8 people	£5	£440
Accreditation and exam fees	2 x 8 people	£15	£240
Celebration of Achievement (TCDT)	2 days	£200	£400

Project Administration (TCDT)	74 hours	£10	£740
Project Management (TCDT)	37 hours	£20	£740
Office Consumables (TCDT)	cost	£20	£160
Travel expenses for participants	8 x 11 journeys	£2.30	£202
Workshop by Education Team and Customer Experience Training	1 Event	£400	£400
Project Management (Dreamland)	22 hours	£30	£660
Administration (Dreamland)	14 hours	£10	£140
Catering for Celebratory Event	1 Event	£280	£280
Venue Hire (Dreamland)	2 Days	£250	£500
Office Consumables (Dreamland)	cost	£100	£100
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£9,782</b>

This case study has highlighted the huge benefits to young people when TMSE funds are spent in ways which bring new partners together, to deliver a dynamic, employer-led activity such as Testing Your Talent. The soft outcomes – the changes in levels of confidence, motivation and responsibility, alongside the attainment of a greater number of employability skills, as well as the hard outcomes - 5 young people entering into paid employment – can all be viewed as very positive factors.

Photo: a participant receiving his certificate at the celebration event



## Impact on participant outcomes through TMSE commissioning of new activities

In late 2015, Core Partners agreed to devolve £350,000 of TMSE funding, which had originally been planned to be used for commissioning, to the 3 TMSE Hub Groups. The idea was for this money to be used to fund local activity that would benefit young people in each area and help progress them towards achieving sustainable employment.

The activities that would gain funding were to focus on innovative activities or events that might support progress young people towards an outcome. Activities were to be proposed on the premise that they would meet one of the two following objectives:

- ❖ Increase the numbers of young people engaged in the project with a focus on those areas where engagement levels have been most difficult to achieve
- ❖ Provide additional services or opportunities that will progress young people on their journey towards sustainable employment, to include activities to develop young people's confidence and resilience or opportunities to develop workplace skills.

At each area Hub meeting, one vote was cast on behalf of each TMSE funded service for each proposed activity. External stakeholders and guests present were asked to contribute to the discussion of proposals but did not have a vote. In addition, representatives of the YPP were required to take part in the vote.

There was a monthly opportunity to discuss proposals submitted, with a standing item on the bi-monthly hub meeting agendas, and a local meeting for the leads from each TMSE service in each county, during the month between hub meetings to discuss proposals (this latter activity frequently took the form of a conference call, rather than a face to face meeting).

Each service lead was able to vote on behalf of their organisation at the meetings, on the basis that they had discussed proposed activities with their team in advance of the meeting.

Proposals with a spend of £5k or less could be approved by the Head of TMSE. Proposals with a spend of over £5k required approval by 2 Core Partners, and the Head of TMSE. Funds were only paid to existing TMSE Delivery Partners, who then took on responsibility for making payments to the organisation delivering the service.

The figures below show that there was considerable financial scope across the three areas to plan and deliver some innovative projects, which met the objectives outlined at the outset of this section.

*Table 17: Hub Budget amounts available to each area from 2016-2018*

Area	2016	2017	2018	
	Hub Budget	Hub Budget	Hub Budget	Total Budget
East Sussex	£27,838	£28,675	£17,596	£74,108
Essex	£46,921	£50,228	£26,585	£123,734

## Talent Match South East 2014-18

Kent	£53,574	£61,098	£37,486	£152,158
<b>Total</b>	<b>£128,333</b>	<b>£14,000</b>	<b>£81,667</b>	<b>£350,000</b>

The amount of funding available was extensive, although, according to the delivery partners interviewed for this report, this presented a significant challenge. Delivery partners spoke of the difficulty in finding the time and resources available to, in effect, project manage several small to medium scale additional activities that were taking place at any one time, on top of the 'day job' of delivery.

The challenge that delivery partners came across, in finding the resources necessary to spend all of the available funding, is detailed in the set of tables on the next page.

*Table 18: Hub Budget activity and spend (Essex, 2016)*

Date approved	Activity	Lead	Amount
June 2016	Travel Training	Southend YMCA	£3,350
August 2016	Health and Wellbeing project	Southend YMCA	£2,780
August 2016	Inspire Talent (x2)	KATO	£1,500
August 2016	Joint Proposal	KATO	£4,421
September 2016	Firebreak (x2)	Prince's Trust	£8,000
November 2016	Unbound	Southend YMCA	£4,240
<b>Total</b>			<b>£24,291</b>

This shows that the total spend for 2016 in Essex was £24,291, against an available budget of £46,921. This amounts to a 48.23% underspend of the available amount, or a total of £22,630 that wasn't able to be used.

In Kent, there has been a similar scenario, as the following table for the same period demonstrates.

*Table 19: Hub Budget activity and spend (Kent, 2016)*

Date Approved	Activity	Lead	Amount
June 2016	Glowing Health	CXK	£4,199
August 2016	Urban Street	YPP	£6,502
August 2016	Kent Foundation	KF	£9,750
August 2016	Inspire Talent x2	KATO	£1,400
August 2016	AMS Training	KATO	£3,590

## Talent Match South East 2014-18

September 2016	HeArt	CXK	£452
November 2016	Testing Your Talent	KATO	£4,995
November 2016	HeArt 2	CXK	£2,590
December 2016	Fire Safety Training	KATO	£420
<b>Total</b>			<b>£34,689</b>

This shows that the total spend for 2016 in Kent was £34,689, against an available budget of £54,574. This amounts to a 32.77% underspend of the available amount, or a total of £19,855 that wasn't able to be used.

In 2017, the same scenario presents itself, detailed here in table form, as a summary of spend across all 3 areas over the year.

*Table 20: Summary of Hub Budget activity and spend 2017*

Area	Budget	Spend	Amount unspent	% unspent
Kent	£61,098	£45,490	£15,608	25.55%
Essex	£50,228	£34,761	£15,468	30.80%
East Sussex	£28,675	£6,594	£22,081	77.00%

Given the year on year underspend, along with the issues delivery partners had in managing the processes involved for submitting bids and managing subsequent activities, a different way of managing the Hub Budget spend could have been discussed more fully at a Delivery Partner or Core Stakeholder meeting at an early stage.

A new approach was introduced for 2018, which involved the commissioning of an external consultant to oversee the bid submission, project planning, and evaluation of all Hub Budget related activity, a development which will be evaluated at a later date, in conjunction with input from delivery partners.

Notwithstanding the significant challenges faced by finding the resources needed to deliver activities, many proposals were submitted by delivery providers, with a wide range of activities gaining approval for funding.

A number of proposals were, however, rejected – some on the grounds of cost, and others because they did not meet the objectives set out in the terms outlining the use of the funding.

The table on the following page gives a brief, but representative feel for the nature of the HUB Budget activities that were approved across TMSE.

*Table 21: Examples of activities funded by the Hub Budget (Jan 2016-Apr 2017)*

Activity and Area	Objective	Delivery Partner
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Photography project with Benjamin Film Photography Kent	To raise levels of confidence, to develop greater awareness of self-enterprise/self-employment	The Prince's Trust
Travel training to London to visit Madam Tussauds Essex	To raise levels of confidence and resilience, to broaden horizons	Southend YMCA
Creative writing course (12-weeks) Essex	To promote workplace skills (project planning for eg) and create a published book of writing and poetry	Southend YMCA
Outdoor activity sessions with Go Ape! (x2) East Sussex	To raise levels of confidence, development of teamwork skills, and interaction with others	Tomorrows People
Street Soccer Foundation employability with Gillingham FC (12 weeks) Kent	To develop workplace skills and teamwork skills using football activities	The Prince's Trust
Personal fitness course with Glowing Health (x2) (12-week course) Kent	To develop greater confidence, increased awareness of healthy lifestyle choices and improved personal fitness	CXK
Testing Your Talent (4-week course) Kent	To develop workplace skills through employability sessions with Thanet Community Development Trust, alongside work experience with Dreamland Trust	Employer and Skills Network
Firebreak with Essex Fire and Rescue Service Essex	To develop the building of confidence, communication and teamwork skills, and overcoming challenges	The Prince's Trust

This report will look at 3 of the above activities in more depth, to show the impact they had on the outcomes of the young people who participated in them, and to show how these outcomes were achieved in relation to reactively small amounts of funding through the Hub Budget.

### Case study 3 – 'Love Where You Live' street photography with Ben Bowles

Two 6-week social engagement projects, that used photography to enable participants to feel better connected with their local surroundings, took place in 2017. One was delivered in Margate, and one in Medway.

In early 2017, TMSE partnered with a variety of creative industries across Kent, including Riverside One, Supa-Jam, Turner Contemporary, and Nucleus Arts, to deliver a series of projects that helped young people increase creative skills, gain insight into local industries and organisations, gain confidence and social skills, and develop teamwork abilities.

The initial projects featured a Street Art Programme, computer gaming workshops, singing and music performance with Riverside One, music industry training, and street photography. The young people who participated in these projects were able to gain a deeper awareness of the skills and knowledge they needed to acquire in order to begin working in the creative industries.

The project featured here as a case study formed a part of a wider Creative Industry Project offer as illustrated above, and took the form of the use photography, in the young person's local environment, to change the perspective and attitude towards where young people lived, as well as to teach them photographic techniques and skills.

The project plan of activities is shown below.

Table 22: Project plan of activity

Week	Activity
1	Introduction to photography and 'changing perceptions' project, and a photo walk that focuses on getting used to a camera.
2	Recap of week 1 and introduction to the 'rule of 3rd's in photography'. Group photo walk to reinforce the learning.
3	Recap and introduction to 'leading lines' in photography. Group photo walk to reinforce the learning.
4	Recap and introduction to ' Street portraits'. Group photo walk to reinforce the learning and try the techniques.
5	Recap and 'creativity in constraints' technique. Group photo walk to reinforce the learning and try the techniques.
6	Recap of all weeks learning. Final photo walk that combines all the techniques and skills used over the previous weeks. De-brief and evaluation of sessions. Planning of gallery event.

The project was delivered in a collective fashion, using expertise and skills from a wide partnership of individuals.

Ben Bowles, from Benjamin Film Photography, was contracted to deliver the photography workshops, while Natasha Boardman-Steer, from Nucleus Arts, was used



to project manage various aspects of the provision, including liaising with local galleries and offering communication links with external creative industries.

Leanne Zahra, Talent Match Outreach Co-ordinator for The Prince's Trust, and Ben Marsh-Allen, Talent Match Volunteer Executive for The Prince's Trust, were responsible for promoting the project to young people, for gaining referrals, and for ensuring the smooth running of the project from the perspective of the Talent Match participants.

Turner Contemporary in Margate were also brought in to the partnership for the Thanet project. This was to enable the young people to exhibit their photography over a 2-weekend period at the beginning of November 2017.

11 young people took part in the project, and refreshments and equipment were included in the costs of the project, as well as additional costs necessary to capture the exhibition event at Turner Contemporary.

Given the total cost of each project, which amounted to £2,950, (see table below) this seems an impressive use of financial resources to bring together such a wide-ranging network of delivery partners and participants.

*Table 23: Love Where You Live project costings*

Expenditure Item	Who	Cost	Amount
<b>Project costs</b>			
Project Management	Natasha Boardman-Steer	20hrs at £10	£200
Workshop Leader	Ben Bowles	48 hrs x £35	£1680
Travel	Ben Bowles		£120
Refreshments	Young People		£100
<b>Project delivery costs total</b>			<b>£2,100</b>
<b>Exhibition costs</b>			
Exhibition costs	Turner Contemporary	Free	£0
Frames and prints	Young People		£300
Exhibition refreshments	Young People and members of the		£200
Videography			£200
Framing and editing	Ben Bowles		£150
<b>Exhibition Total</b>			<b>£850</b>
<b>Project Total</b>			<b>£2,950</b>

A meeting was held with Natasha Boardman-Steer, Ben Bowles, Ben Marsh-Allen and Leanne Zahra, in January 2018, to gain an insight into the how the project went, and the nature of the outcomes it delivered for the young people who participated in it.

It appeared, from listening to Ben Bowles's comments, that the project was very much led by the young people involved in it. The destination of each photo walk was proposed and agreed upon by the participants a week in advance, and all young people were able to give feedback to each other and reflect on the distance travelled by the group as a whole. Group 'debriefs' were held over coffee after each photo walk, either at a base (Heart or The Prince's Trust centre in Chatham, or Bernie's Chocolate Café in Margate) and this, again, appears to have given the group the opportunity to discuss progress as a group.

The session themselves consisted of a meet up, an introductory talk by Ben Bowles on what the aims of the day's session would be – enhancing existing photo skills, composition, simple photography techniques, and introduction of new skills, for example, were topics that were frequently covered – a 1-hour photo walk, and the sharing of images for reflection and group comment with scope for individual analysis with the workshop leader too.

Soft outcomes from the two projects included:

- A young person articulating how the photos she was taking were helping her to reflect more fully on a recent distressing bereavement.
- A young person taking public transport for the first time to attend the event in a neighbouring town.
- A young person expressing how her levels of anxiety had reduced during the project – **"I was a different person at the end of the project than at the beginning**, in terms of dealing with anxiety".
- A young person's parent explaining that he has never seen her son speak to new people with confidence before, as he witnessed happening at the Turner Contemporary event.
- A young person who was an agoraphobic who began to feel more confident in engaging with meaningful outdoor activity – and started biking again after a period where he hadn't felt confident enough to do so.
- A young person with low self-esteem who attended several 1:1 sessions with enterprise mentoring organisation Kent Foundation to gain support in reaching his aim of a career in photography.

Hard outcomes from the two projects included:

- 2 young people gained employment in warehouse and in retail shortly after completing the project.
- 1 young person began a volunteer administration role with The Prince's Trust, which included supporting the work of the YPP Co-ordinator, and taking minutes at Delivery Partner and HUB meetings.
- 1 young person started a music industry training course with a local training provider.

In terms of the project raising awareness for the wider TMSE offer to young people, the trailer for the event at Turner Contemporary was posted on the TMSE Facebook page and had attracted over 3,000 views by January 2018:

<https://www.facebook.com/SEtalentmatch/videos/vb.1624297404475421/1946927278879097/?type=2&theater>

The 'talking heads' video shot on one of the days of the exhibition event, featuring all 5 young people who took part in the Thanet project, as well as contributions from Natasha Boardman-Steer, Ben Marsh-Allen and Ben Bowles was also posted to the Facebook page and had attracted over 4,400 views by January 2018:

<https://www.facebook.com/SEtalentmatch/videos/vb.1624297404475421/1950677725170719/?type=2&theater>

The young people's quotes from the video above demonstrate what they learned from the project, and what has inspired them for the future. They also show how the young people were able to develop new ways of thinking about themselves, and about the area they are from – different perspectives of the seafront, or of Dreamland, in Margate, for example - as the project progressed:

- ❖ "The photos tell my own story."
- ❖ "Before I didn't really look at things and think they were pretty but when you've got a camera in your hands **you look at things in a different light.**"
- ❖ "This is Dreamland. It's by the beach. I though everyone knows Dreamland but they're all (taken from) different places ...all different."
- ❖ "I feel that I'm more confident with a camera."
- ❖ "I realise that I am good with a camera and that I got my own style straight away."
- ❖ "Before I would be very shy but now I feel I can take a photo of just anything."

The Margate event was also featured in the Isle of Thanet and Kent Online news outlets, the latter featuring a photograph, and a quote from Joe, one of the participants:

- ❖ "I really enjoyed the course and learning the different ways to take photos. It made me realise that photography could be my future. I can't wait to see where it takes me next."

The exhibition event itself enabled young people to learn about planning an event, team work, budgeting skills, speaking confidently to members of the public, speaking confidently to camera, and other forms of non-verbal confident communication.

To summarise, it is worth recalling that the two projects were run at a total cost of £2950. For the breadth of personal development experiences, alongside the individual outcomes achieved, as well as the publicity generated for the wider TMSE project, it seems reasonable to conclude that this was an innovative, ambitious and well-planned project, and that the project's social outcomes represent an excellent return for the investment.

A selection of the young people's photography, which was exhibited at the Turner Contemporary in late 2017, is included over the following pages.



Image taken by Will, TMSE participant, 2017



Image taken by Michael, TMSE participant, 2017



Image taken by Lacey, TMSE participant, 2017



Image taken by Joe, Talent Match participant 2107

#### Case study 4 - Glowing Health

In the summer of 2016, and again a year later, CXK partnered with Glowing Health Food & Fitness to deliver two personalised, 1:1 fitness and healthy lifestyle activities in Kent – one in Medway, and one in Thanet.

The activity included an initial consultation which included a review of all aspects of health and wellbeing, including smoking, alcohol/substance use, nutrition, sleep, hydration and any other health issues, with young people who were interested in participating.

The weekly activity sessions were varied and tailored to each individual's needs and goals in order to help them progress throughout the programme and encourage a sustained interest in exercise and fitness.

The sessions included use of a gym, as well as (in Medway) use of an outdoor gym, to encourage exercise outside of the programme, as well as encouragement in attending other community-based activities, for example engaging in the Passport to Leisure scheme at local leisure centres, joining local sports teams or running groups.

A group fitness activity was held every 4 weeks, where the young people got the opportunity to share progress with other participants, and gain acknowledgement of their achievements.

The intended outcomes of the activity were:

- ❖ Improved confidence
- ❖ Weight loss.
- ❖ Sustained engagement in regular exercise.
- ❖ Improved cardiovascular fitness.
- ❖ A greater awareness of what constitutes healthy eating.
- ❖ Smoking cessation

The link between exercise and good mental health, and higher levels of motivation and confidence, has been well documented in a number of health and wellbeing studies, and was an important factor in the proposal gaining traction each time it was presented at a Hub meeting.

The Glowing Health activity directly targeted the achievement of some of the softer outcomes of the TMSE project, for example setting and achieving goals, managing feelings, and confidence and self-esteem, which have been assessed at regular intervals by every young person and their mentor in the 'My Journey Scale' section of the Talent Match baseline questionnaire and follow up forms.

The activity held in 2016, in Medway, was held over a 9-week period, and the activity in Thanet, a year later, was increased to a 12-week project, after taking into account the views of previous participants.

Each of the projects culminated in a celebration event. The one in Medway was held at Pausenbrot Café, in Rochester, a café which has a commitment to fresh ingredients and which has a healthy vibe. The event in Thanet was held at Dreamland, where, again, healthy food options were on offer. Each participant received a certificate of

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achievement, as well as a small trophy to take home with them. Each event was featured on CXX's Twitter page, as well as on the Talent Match South East Facebook page.

The photograph below shows one young person receiving her certificate from Hannah Presland, Glowing Health Lead Trainer, at the celebration event at Dreamland, Margate, in September 2017.



The photograph below shows a participant on the Glowing Health activity that took place in Medway in 2016, alongside Hannah Presland, Glowing Health Lead trainer, while working out at the GI Gym in Rochester.





Full costings for the two events are detailed below.

*Table 24: Glowing Health 1 project costings*

Expenditure Item	Reason	Unit price	Total
Tutor costs	Project delivery (1:1)	£27 per hour	£3,888
Tutor costs	Travel	40p per mile	£1,058.40
Tutor costs	Project delivery (group)	£30 per hour	£360
Venue costs	Individual and group	£10 per hour	£1,680
Printing costs	Recipes		£20
Bottled water	Rehydration		£40
Celebration event	Refreshments and venue		£300
<b>Total</b>			<b>£7,346.40</b>

*Table 25: Glowing Health 2 project costings*

Expenditure Item	Reason	Unit price	Total
Tutor costs	Project delivery (1:1)	£22.50 per hour	£2160
Tutor costs	Project delivery (group)	£30 per hour	£270
Venue costs	Individual and group	£100 per day	£1359
Bottled water	Rehydration		£20.43
Celebration event	Refreshments and venue		£389.02
<b>Total</b>			<b>£4198.45</b>

### Cost per participant

Total spend on both Glowing Health activities was £11,544.85, which works out at an average spend of £769.65 per young person.

### Engagement and attendance

The number of young people engaged on both programmes was 15 (5 on Glowing Health 1, 10 on Glowing Health 2).

Attendance typically varied between 50-90%, with average attendance at 65%. The main reasons for lack of attendance were illness, injury, and lack of childcare. Attendance was improved during Glowing Health 2, in comparison to Glowing Health 1, due to having young people on a reserve list, who could fill in the gaps at short notice.

It also helped that there was some flexibility with the venue in Rochester, as no booking was required, so if a Medway/Maidstone young person couldn't attend their session it could sometimes be rearranged (depending on the trainer's availability).

It also worked well not having a set appointment time each week on Glowing Health 2, so if a young person had another appointment they could choose a slot that fitted in with their schedule (slots were booked on a week by week basis by the young people).

### Outcomes

Many of the young people cited weight loss as a goal. Young people were given weekly recipes to help aid their weight loss journey and other exercise throughout the week was suggested.

Of the 15-young people who were tracked from start to finish, **all gained lean muscle**. 4 of them lost body fat. This shows that the exercise side of the programme worked very well, as muscle mass increased in everyone, but that the diet side of the programme proved to have less of an impact. Many of the young people struggled with this due to not being in control of cooking at home, despite being given encouragement to try new recipes and cook for themselves. It is perhaps unrealistic to expect that a 12-week activity could have significantly impacted on entrenched eating habits.

Outcomes cited by the young people at the end of the programme included:

- ❖ Smoking less
- ❖ Drinking more water
- ❖ Using exercise to process things and deal with things emotionally
- ❖ Using exercise as a relief for boredom
- ❖ Making better choices with food
- ❖ Sleeping better
- ❖ Improved confidence and motivation
- ❖ Feeling more energised
- ❖ Increased emotional resilience
- ❖ Using exercise to control anxiety

One young person commented, at the celebration event, that the programme had completely altered his view of physical fitness, and of food, saying that his new mantra was that “**physical fitness was not the enemy**”.

He also related to the attendees at the celebration event of a recent time when he and his friends had visited a local McDonalds and while his friends had chosen the usual fast food offer, he had opted for a healthy alternative, despite feeling peer pressure to follow the crowd.

### Interview with a participant

I interviewed a young person, who took part in the Glowing Health activity during July 2017 and asked him to give me his view on what he felt he had gained from the course.

AD: What made you want to participate in the activity?

YP: “I really wanted to lose weight, but couldn’t afford a Gym membership, and although my mentor had discussed this option with me and offered to pay for a trial month as part of the Bursary, I wasn’t really very confident about going to a Gym on my own.”

AD: So this activity fitted the bill?

YP: The Glowing Health course seemed like a good compromise – I’d get to find out about how to lose weight and live a healthier lifestyle, but I wouldn’t need to go to a big gym and plan things for myself. The activities were all planned by Hannah, (Glowing Health trainer) who I felt really listened to me and took into view my needs.

AD: How did the activity change you? What did it make you think twice about?

YP: The course made me much more aware of healthy eating options, and I lost around 15lbs in 3 months. I still have difficulty with what I call stress eating – but I’ve stopped from having snacks such as crisps to having proper meals instead, and this has **helped me deal with stress** whilst not eating unhealthy foods.

AD: And in terms of how it made you feel about yourself?

YP: The project really boosted my self-esteem and better prepared me to go to college, because I realised that if I could get myself to Rochester, which was a place I didn’t really know, for the twice-weekly outdoor gym sessions, then I would definitely be able to get myself to college when I started there, as although the journey would need to be done 3 times a week, it was closer to where I lived and the route was more familiar to me.

AD: Did it have an impact on what you are going on to do next?

YP: Finishing Glowing Health in September, and then going straight on to college the week after really benefitted me, as it didn’t give me time to think or get anxious, I just carried straight on. I think it really helped motivate me to start college.

End of interview

Talent Match mentors who were interviewed for this section talked about the changes that they had seen in their young people, in terms of increased levels of motivation and confidence. They also talked about how the prospect of having a 1 to 1 trainer was a real factor in encouraging them to participate, especially for those young people who did not have the confidence needed to start a gym membership on their own.

The total cost per young person, of just under £770, seems a very reasonable amount of expenditure to allocate to the two activities, especially when you consider the prior experiences of the Lead Trainer.

Hannah Presland had previously worked with young people for Medway Youth Trust for several years before starting her own fitness company, and so was highly experienced in working with young people. Hannah had also worked on the TMSE project for a year, as the YPP co-ordinator, and so was very much in tune with Talent Match’s intended aims and outcomes and was able to model her activity offer to help the participants to achieve the softer outcomes favoured by TMSE, such as confidence, motivation, and increased feelings of wellbeing.

This case study has demonstrated how TMSE was able to find the **right activity, led by the right person**, and using suitable venues, to deliver project related outcomes at a very reasonable cost.

### Case Study 5 - Firebreak with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

TMSE in Essex worked in partnership with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) to deliver a number of activities between 2016 and 2018, using Hub Budget funds on each occasion. The table below outlines the dates and costs of each activity.

Table 26: Summary of Firebreak events in Essex

Date of activity	Area	TMSE Hub Budget expenditure	Matched funding*
Sep 2016	South Essex	£4,000	-
Sep 2016	South Essex	£4,000	-
April 2017	South Essex	£4,000	-
April 2017	South Essex	£4,000	-
Summer 2018	North Essex	£2,000	£2,000
<b>Total cost</b>		<b>£18,000</b>	<b>£2,000</b>

\*The ECFRS have committed to funded half of the cost of the activity planned for later in 2018

Firebreak is designed for those aged 10-12, 13-17 and 18-24, and is suitable for young people who have demonstrated risky behaviours, and who have problems with low levels of self-esteem and confidence.

The Firebreak programme aims to promote a culture of safety and team work and citizenship by teaching a range of vital life skills whilst undertaking the various disciplines of the Fire Service.

The course provides a learning environment that combines practical skills and scenario-based training, with classroom centred theory/discussion workshops.

During the intensive week-long Fire Station based course, the participants gain confidence and develop vital life skills, while experiencing the techniques used by fire-fighters in their working lives.

It aims to reduce the risky lifestyle choices by young people and raise awareness of the consequences of fire, fire setting and hoax calls.

On their website promoting the programme, ECFRS state that:

“We believe we have a social and moral responsibility to work with partners and assist them with their priorities, and that our courses offer the following opportunities to young people:

- ❖ Supports children and young people to reach their full potential.
- ❖ Builds self-esteem and confidence.
- ❖ Excellent introduction to uniformed or public service.
- ❖ Re-engages children and young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training.
- ❖ Teaches core skills for the world of work and independent living.
- ❖ Demonstrates consequences of certain life choices.
- ❖ Highlights benefits of community engagement.

It is evident from the above that the aims of the Firebreak programme clearly reflect the aims of the wider TMSE project, in its emphasis on better preparing young people for the world of work through suitable engagement activity that builds self-esteem, confidence, resilience, and the ability to meet and take on various challenges in life.

Firebreak has worked with TMSE participants to develop the skills and understanding necessary for the young people to develop as active and responsible citizens. It has used project-based learning, which is recognised as a powerful vehicle for moving students beyond ‘surface learning’ (gathering and measuring facts) to ‘deep learning’ (relating concepts to experience).

All of the young people who took part in the Essex Focus group spoke very positively about how the activity had supported them to move forward in life:

- ❖ “It made me realise that my anxieties are largely self-inflicted”.
- ❖ “With the ladder activity, to get to the top made me realise that I could overcome any anxieties I might face in the future.”
- ❖ “I was the only female on the activity and I learned a lot about team dynamics and my self-belief and confidence grew throughout the day.”

I met with TMSE Volunteer Executive, Liz Williamson, in London in April 2018, to find out more about the collaboration with ECFRS and Firebreak, and specifically find out:

- ❖ What had made TMSE want to partner with the ECFRS in the first place?
- ❖ How were the activities planned (TMSE staffing resource)?
- ❖ How many young people accessed each programme?

This conversation was in relation to the first 4 Firebreak activities, and not the 5th, which is currently still in the planning stage.

### **Interview with a Volunteer Executive**

AD: Why Firebreak? Why ECFRS?

LW: It was something we had discussed at hub meetings on a regular basis – how to get young people to participate in an activity that might take them out of their comfort zone, how to challenge their view of what constituted a training course. We thought a partnership with the Fire Service would provide that – an opportunity for young people to gain strategies to cope with new challenges in a setting that was unfamiliar to them.

AD: So how did it take off?

LW: Well, a lot of hard work! All 3 TMSE organisations (The Prince's Trust, KATO and Southend YMCA), worked brilliantly together – there was always a mentor or a Volunteer Executive at each session, and I think that, especially over the duration of the first activity, this really helped the young people to feel more at ease. After the first one, it was much easier to develop further activities – there were 3 more – because we had built excellent relationships with members of the Firebreak delivery team. Also, and importantly, members of the YPP had been on the activities (as the quotes above have detailed) and this was really helpful to us – young people tend to listen more, when they are being encouraged to try something new, when they are receiving the message from one of their peers!

AD: Were there any differences between the delivery of each activity – changes that improved the experience for the participants?

LW: We worked hard to ensure that we were getting the front-end right – and after the first activity, we introduced the idea of asking the Fire Service Outreach Manager to attend Job Jump sessions, to meet interested young people, to explain about the activity, and what they would benefit from by taking part. He was a really engaging individual and he was able to 'sell' the activity in a very enthusiastic fashion.

AD: Did this have an effect on numbers of participants?

LZ: Well, each activity had around 8-9 young people on them – this stayed pretty constant throughout. But I think the relationship that was built up between the Outreach Manager and prospective participants, at the Job jumps, helped to ensure that the young people were more prepared for the activity – they started day 1 in a better frame of mind.

AD: How many people participated in all 4 projects? Were there any issues with referral numbers, or drop-outs?

LW: We had 37 young people on all 4 main activities. We tended to over-refer, to take into account the notion that around 50% who say they'll attend actually don't – so we were looking for around 12 on each activity and were pleased with the final numbers. No-one dropped out from start – which we were really happy with. Everyone achieved full attendance.

AD: Was travel a barrier in any way?

LW: Well, we (The Prince's Trust) worked very closely with the other mentoring agency (Southend YMCA) to come up with cost-effective solutions. Southend YMCA made use of their minibus to pick people up from designated places – usually from a central railway station – and mentors from both organisations were always on hand at each activity to arrange for refund of

travel costs paid out by participants. This came to around £100 and was paid out of the young person travel budget allowance.

AD: What do you perceive were the main outcomes of the partnership with ECFRS?

LW: Well, for us, for TMSE it was about being able to build a rewarding and durable working relationship with a major local employer. This benefitted all the young people who took part and enabled them to engage with staff at the Fire Station, and with each other, in a meaningful and positive fashion.

After the first day, when there were still grumbles about not having access to their mobile phones, it was really noticeable to me how the young people interacted with each other rather than with contacts on their phone. I think they were able to make some very fruitful relationships. In terms of our partnership with the ECFRS, it has been really positive throughout, and I think the fact that they are running a fifth activity for us later this year, and contributing £2000 to the cost, is testament to that.

They have also been able to contribute to discussions with young people who have an interest in joining the public or emergency services – I know one young person in particular, who has really benefitted from this, and has spent time at the Fire Station since the activity, learning about what the Firefighter role entails.

AD: And for the young people?

LW: Increased levels of respect for the emergencies services. A much clearer idea of how actions can sometimes lead to unintended consequences. Greater levels of confidence. Better communication with peers and with employers.

I think also, on a wider scale, there has been a knock-on effect on family members of the participants. Each presentation event, for example, where the young people received their certificates of achievement, was attended by 30-40 people, including family members. Lots of parents approached me during and after the event, to say that they **had noticed a change in the behaviour and outlook of their son or daughter** – so I guess this has an impact in the household, on family dynamics and relationships.

End of interview.

In concluding this section, it is clear to see that a key strength of TMSE has been its ability to engage with a wide and diverse range of partners, and to build up strong and mutually beneficial working relationships with these.

Whether this has been through Hub Budget funded activity, as seen in this section, or through wider and longer lasting collaboration, as shown in the previous section, it has been evident through focus group, and 1:1 interview feedback, that the impact on young people has been significant.

In the focus group sessions, young people were asked which TMSE-funded activities they had been on, and how these had helped them move forward in life. A selection of responses is outlined below, along with the activities they relate to, which concludes this section.

Music Production course and the Making Music Project

- ❖ “It made me more confident, definitely.”

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- ❖ “The video we shot about the course was really professional and inspiring and lots of my family and friends have viewed it, which has made me feel really great.”
- ❖ “I now know exactly how to **get into that career.**”

### Rosemary Schragger Cookery School

- ❖ “I met new people, I had to work out how to work alongside new people, and plan things, it taught me about team working and cooking from scratch.”

### Go Ape

- ❖ “It helped us to **face our fears.** When I got stuck at one point, I got encouragement from others and this helped me deal with the situation.”
- ❖ “I conquered my fears and gained confidence, and learned team building skills.”

### Referral event (Hastings)

- ❖ “This gave me great problem-solving skills. We had planned a hog roast activity but the supplier said he couldn’t provide this because it was too windy on the seafront.

We went around town as a group and worked out other options for food, based on the budget we had for the hog roast. We went to several outlets and worked out the costs and in the end, we were able to source more food and drink – fish and chips, burgers, soft drinks – for the participants, at a lower cost, than the hog roast

We ended up giving what was left over to group of homeless people. This taught me how to deal with a changing situation and with budgets and to be resourceful and proactive and to have a flexible plan.”

### Breakfast networking event

- ❖ “I went to a business breakfast event organised by Talent Match. I spoke to referral partners, this was a really hard thing for me to do, because I had to stand up in front of people and talk. I just wanted to stay in the corner and hide inside my hoodie, but when I was up there I felt okay and it gave me a confidence boost. It made me realise **I could cope with being out of my comfort zone.**”



## Impact of the Talent Match Bursary award on participants' outcomes

Bursary awards were used by mentoring agencies to make payments to young people to in two distinct ways:

- ❖ Personalised Bursary - payments that amounted up to £500 per individual, to help remove a barrier to a young person gaining employment. Typical and most frequent examples of these payments included purchasing of smart clothing for interviews or for work, reimbursing training fees, and financing the purchase of employment specific equipment or tools
- ❖ Travel Bursary – a payment that funded the first month's travel costs once a young person had gained employment.

The Personalised Bursary was the one used the most – and midway through the project, a reprofile of the amounts available to mentoring agencies was completed by the lead provider, Prince's Trust, to ensure that any overspend could be rectified during the second part of the project. By the end of June 2016, the specialist mentoring agency in Kent, CXK, had spent 137% of its allocated funds on Personalised Bursary awards to young people, whereas the volunteer mentoring agency, Prince's Trust, had spent 80% of its allotted amount. Both agencies had spent substantially lower amounts on the Travel Bursary allocation, however, with CXK's at 39%. The reprofile led to a reduction in the amount of money specialist mentors could spend on young people. However, the reprofiled amount for CXK still amounted to £19,000 remaining to spend, over the period from July 2016 to end 2018 – a not insignificant amount of money.

The research team spent some time with CXK's Senior Specialist Mentor, Tony Hollingdale, to more fully understand trends, in terms of Bursary requests from young people; amounts awarded; and, most crucially, the impact these awards had on supporting young people to gain a successful outcome. I chose to investigate the spend in 2016, as this was the period that processes for making Bursary payments by CXK to young people, were properly embedded, in terms of being able to use company credit cards to pay for items.

*Table 27: A summary of Personalised Bursary payments (CXK, 2016)*

Personalised Bursary		Comment
Number of awards made to young people	123	
Number of young people in receipt of an award	62	
Total amount awarded	£6358.15	
Average amount of award	£52.12	
Highest single amount*	£250	Training fees
Lowest single amount	£2.50	Tie for interview

Travel Bursary		
Number of awards made to young people	97	
Number of young people in receipt of an award	16	Frequently, young people were paid weekly bus travel or single
Total amount awarded	£1169.97	
Average amount of award	£14.27	
Highest single amount	£144.97	Bicycle, along with lock and lights
Lowest single amount	£1.70	Single bus journey

Table 28: Examples of other larger payments (CXK, 2016)

Item	Amount
Construction Industry training fees	Varied, but between £220-£250
Security Industry training fees	Varied, but between £185-£240
Security Vest	£150
CTB Motorcycle Licence	£129
Photography equipment	£96.94

These tables demonstrate extensive use of the Bursary and highlight the more frequent reasons for an award being granted to a young person. They also demonstrate how a proportionally small number of young people (67) received awards, as by the end of 2016, CXK had signed 347 young people up to the Talent Match programme. Although a significant number would have been exited over this period, this nevertheless poses a question about whether the Personalised Bursary award offer was promoted fully to all young people over the period in question.

Better information sharing processes might have been put in place to ensure that the benefits of paying an award to a young person were more widely acknowledged and understood, especially in terms of the impact the payment had on their outcome. Success stories could have been more widely disseminated at the local, HUB, and Delivery Partner level meetings, to promote the benefits of the Bursary, in order to help ensure that the payments were spread more evenly across a wider demographic.

It is also interesting to note, that 76% of the awards made to young people in 2016 by CXK were to young people who lived in Medway - mostly by one mentor - which again raises the question of whether the impact of the awards could have been deeper if they had been promoted to a wider geographical spread of young people.

If we turn to the impact that the payment of these awards had on the young people who received them, it is clear to see how the Personalised Bursary in particular, was used extremely effectively to remove barriers, and to support young people into positive outcomes. Examples and amounts of Bursary payments, along with the related outcome that the award helped the young person to achieve, are shown in table form below.

*Table 29: Examples of Bursary payments (CXK, 2016)*

	Nature of award	Amount of award	Outcome achieved
Client A	Interview clothes	£9.50	Successful interview led to a 4-week contract with the National Citizen Service
Client B	Security Industry Licence and associated equipment	£235	Successfully gained his Licence and achieved 6-month sustained employment in the industry
Client C	Hard hat, Hi-Vis vest and steel toe-capped boots	£79.88	Successfully gained sustained employment in the construction industry
Client D	Sportswear to participate in a 1:1 TMSE fitness programme	£7.99	Successfully completed the 9-week programme and attended the graduation event in Sep 2016
Client E	Clothing and equipment needed for employment with a construction firm	£193.88	Successfully gained sustained employment in the construction industry
Client F	Security Industry Licence	£194.99	Successfully gained his Licence and achieved 6-month sustained employment in the industry
Client G	Clothing production costs and costs to set up a fashion clothing website	£149.67	The young person staged a fashion event attended by 20 people, and subsequently sold a number of items he had produced
Client H	Arts equipment required to further his plans to start a career in illustration	£38.47	The young person had some work commissioned by a local charity, and progressed to do a Foundation Arts Degree at University of Creative Arts
Client I (2017)	Hair Extensions course (fees)	£211.40	The young person is now studying hair and beauty at East Kent College, and has also set up as a self-employed hairdresser

These examples, taken from a period of just over 12 months, and for just one mentoring agency, CXK, highlight the impact that Bursary payments have had on young people's outcomes, and demonstrate the effectiveness of the Bursary element of Talent Match. Young people frequently cited the availability of Bursary payments as something that attracted them to the project and which gave it a different feel to other projects that they had experienced before.

The interview held with two members of the Outreach Team in Essex, Jake Smith and Sophie Sheppard in January 2018, highlighted how referral partners frequently cited the Bursary award as something that encouraged them to make a referral. Partners spoke of how they were able to sell the project to their young people as being able to offer them something tangible.

The Bursary offer, according to Jake and Sophie, was especially helpful in encouraging those young people to sign up who already had fixed careers aims, particularly in the construction or security industries, and who had identified the courses that they needed to fund in order to further their career aims.

It is noticeable how other projects that came along during the lifespan of TMSE sought to replicate aspects of the TMSE offer, in particular in relation to the Bursary offer. National and local training providers, across all three TMSE areas, used the same £500 Bursary 'hook' to motivate young people to sign up, and to support them to achieve outcomes.

This demonstrates the wider impact TMSE has had on the offer of training provision in Kent, Essex and East Sussex, and the potential for young people who have been encouraged to access new, Talent Match-like provision, to move into positive outcomes, post TMSE.

Young people who attended one of the 4 focus groups were asked the following question:

- If you used the Talent Match Bursary, what did you use it for, and how did it help you to move forward in life?

A selection of the responses is presented below.

- ❖ "I (asked for) funding for a haircut which made me look more professional. It also made me realise that I didn't have to hide behind a colourful hairstyle, that I could have a standard haircut with no highlights and just be comfortable showing my true self."
- ❖ "I will be using Bursary funding through the Hub to pay for driving test package to support me to be able to travel independently from one place of work to another." (the young person wishes to become a care assistant, and this will require travelling between different care settings).
- ❖ "The Bursary paid for my DBS so I could start my own babysitting enterprise."
- ❖ "Talent Match paid for my driving theory test, which has been really useful because the industry I'm getting into – film production – involves needing to be in rural locations (to give the filming a bigger feel on a low budget), and these locations are not accessible by public transport."
- ❖ "It paid for the beauty kit that I needed before I could start my college course, I wouldn't have been able to go without this."

- ❖ “It paid for **smart clothing for an interview**. My mentor came with me to pay, and also so she could offer advice on what to choose.”
- ❖ “It paid for my SIA licence and for my driving license, this all came to over £250, I was able to start my job in retail security straight after.”

A lot of responses mentioned payment for travel. These payments, although not part of the Bursary, were paid by mentoring agencies to young people to enable them to attend their mentoring sessions, work experience placements, or training or interviews. These amounts were often small but were used by many young people. Other payments were more substantial and involved funding trips to events in London.

The focus group responses go a long way to demonstrating the invaluable nature of the Bursary offer, in removing practical barriers preventing young people from progressing. In the Recommendations section of this report, a remodelled Bursary system is suggested, for future project delivery – one that places more responsibility on both mentor and mentee to choose how best to use the funding to move the young person forward.

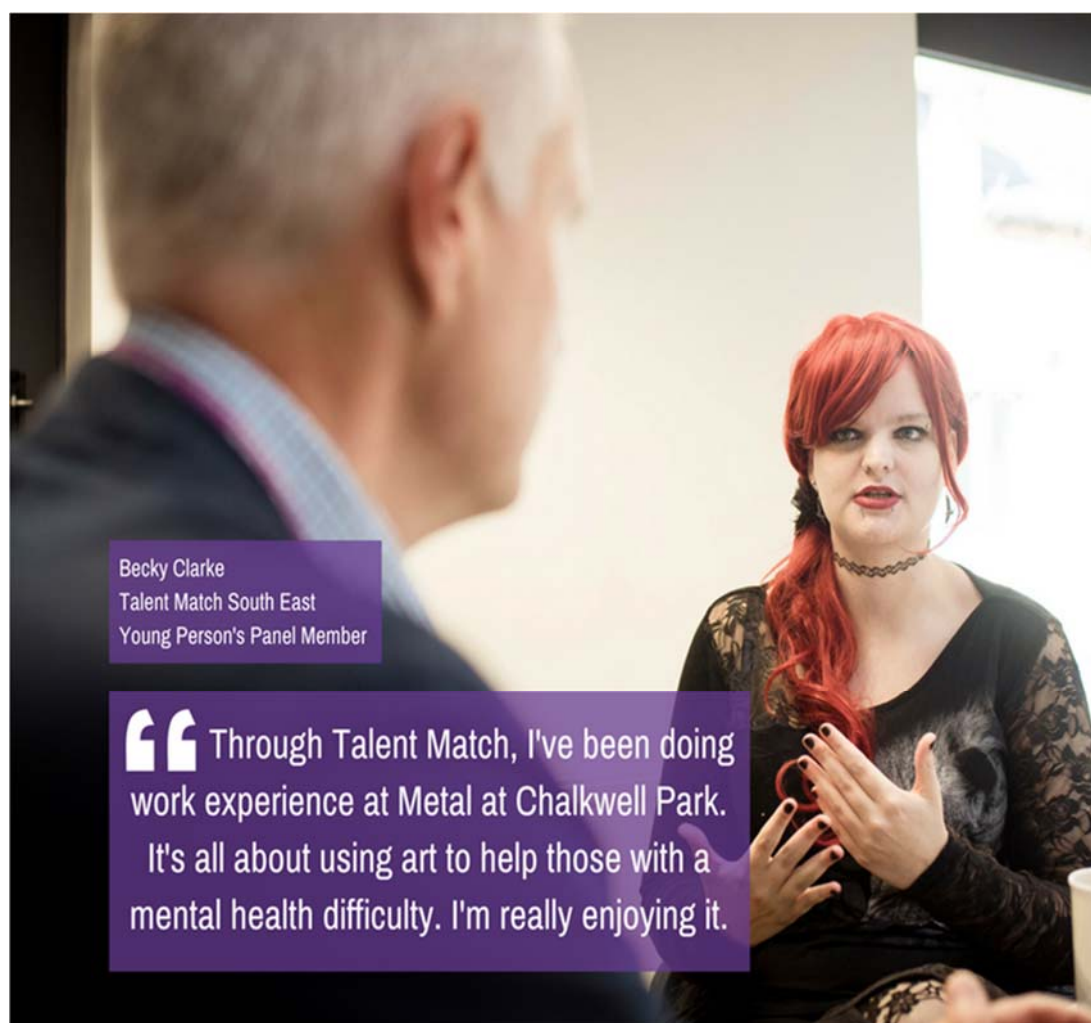
## Employer and Skills Network

This section of the report will look at the successes TMSE had in working with employers, through the delivery of the Employer and Skills Network (ESN). It will demonstrate how ESN's offer adapted to changing circumstances – including internal restructures and responsiveness to new ideas – as well as looking at an employer event held in East Sussex which had very clear and successful outcomes for attendees. It will also give a selection of comments and quotes from young people who attended the 4 focus group sessions.

The ESN offer, from the outset, was two-fold. It sought to bring training and skills opportunities to young people on Talent Match, and also to bring employers closer to the project, to enable young people to better understand the world of work through a succession of work taster, employer events, and employer visits.

The training and skills offer has been documented previously in this report – the links with Thanet Community Development Trust, (Case Study 2 – Testing Your Talent) – which showed how ESN was able to work successfully with a local training provider in Kent, to provide the opportunity for a number of young people to learn and develop skills for the workplace.

This section will therefore concentrate more fully on employer engagement, as well as looking at aspects of ESN delivery which supported the work of the mentoring agencies who were working more directly with the young people.



From June 2016, the ESN benefited from an uplift in funding from the project, which enabled it to split the training and skills, and the employer focus of their offer, between designated staff.

This separation of role happened in Essex and Kent, but not in East Sussex, where the geographical area being covered and the numbers of participating young people are significantly smaller. Two new distinct roles were created – the Employer Coach and the Development Executive. The former worked alongside employers, to better develop employer engagement with young people on the project, while the latter worked closely with training providers, who were best placed to offer the training and skills that young people could benefit from. The table below shows the remodelled staffing element of the KATO ESN offer, from June 2016.

*Table 30: KATO staffing resource allocated to the ESN delivery of the TMSE project, by county (as of Apr 2018)*

Area	Kent (FTE)	Essex (FTE)	East Sussex (FTE)	Total (FTE)
Employer Coach	1.0	1.0	0.4	2.4
Development Executive	0.6	0.6	0.4	1.6
ESN Lead				1.0

KATO Manager				0.3
Total (delivery)	1.6	1.6	0.8	5.3

ESN has undoubtedly been successful in extending its reach to a great many employers and training providers during the TMSE project. But it was also the delivery partner that, above all others, was willing to look at new ways of working and trialling new approaches. The case study within this section shows the extent to which ESN has sought to promote and deliver new ways of bringing young people into contact with employers, by successfully proposing the use of activities funded by the Hub Budget.

ESN have been quick to see the value that small projects could give to the wider TMSE offer, and a selection of the activities they have delivered, is included in the table below.

*Table 31: A selection of ESN activities using Hub funding across all 3 areas*

Date	Activity and area	Employer	Format	Young People's comments
Sep 2017	Cookery Challenge, Kent East Sussex Essex	Rosemary Shrager School	An inspirational talk from professional chef and television personality Rosemary Shrager on the role of a chef and the opportunities a qualified and experienced chef can have.  A practical cookery challenge that included creativity, the challenge of working under pressure, and teamwork.	"Would recommend this to everyone, great day, bought my confidence up and had fun as well."  "I was able to <b>handle pressure better than I thought I could.</b> "  "My feedback on the task is that it has made me reconsider a hospitality career, thank you."
June 2017	Work taster event, Kent	Hilton Hotel	A 1-day work taster with 8 young people, to introduce them to the realities of being employed in a large, busy hotel.  Interviews for paid roles and for work experience were held with young people after the event.	"I didn't realise what different roles went on in a hotel before."  "I would love to go back."  "I'm very keen to take up some work experience there."
June 2016	Sky Academy visit, Kent	Sky	A 1-day tour of Sky's studios, including talk about how to gain work	"I thought the visit was really good and I'd like to explore media as a possible career option."

	East Sussex  Essex		<p>experience with the company.</p> <p>A career talk from Simon Thomas, (former presenter of Blue Peter and who now presents Sky Sports), as well as meeting former England footballer Gary Neville</p> <p>A team building challenge to create a programme schedule based on incoming news items.</p>	<p>“It was a long day, but worth it.”</p> <p>“I would never have had the opportunity to do this if it weren’t for Talent Match.”</p>
April 2017	Creative Futures,  Essex	Colchester Institute	<p>A 4-week enterprise that sought to address barriers to progression in life, as identified by young people</p> <p>This included learning, developing, and upskilling in a creative way, including animation techniques and film making; as well as mindfulness, communication skills, and emotional resilience workshops</p>	<p>“I would have liked a longer course, I did not want it to end.”</p> <p><b>“I enjoyed everything about the course.”</b></p> <p>“The mindfulness was very helpful and relaxing”</p>

A meeting was held with ESN Lead Michael Ratcliffe, in April 2018, to further explore the ways in which their delivery changed to meet the different needs of young people on the TMSE project, and to gain an understanding of the consequences of these changes.

### Interview with ESN Lead

AD: Can you talk about some of the main challenges for the ESN delivery on project, and ways in which your team has been able to meet these?

MR: I think you can separate those into internal and external challenges – the former being about processes, and the latter about delivery – and I think ways in which we have approached both of these areas have had a beneficial outcome on the young people on project.

AD: Internal challenge?

MR: That’s been about getting systems right for validating data – so we know where the need is, geographically. The move from an internal monthly reporting system, to one that is weekly, and so therefore less cumbersome, and much easier to analyse in a responsive fashion, has really had an impact. It has allowed me to see where the staffing resources need to be located – for example, Job Jump staffing, or employer engagement activity. I think this has allowed ESN



to have staff in place, at the time when young people need them – for interview practice for an interview tomorrow, for instance.

AD: Other challenges?

MR: The uplift of funding to the ESN in June 2016 allowed me to introduce two more members of staff to the existing team – staff who brought dynamism and fresh ideas – and which took the workload pressures off the two existing practitioners in the larger areas of delivery, Kent and Essex. I was able to develop two separate roles – one (Employer Coach) to concentrate on employer engagement, and the other (Development Executive) to focus on the training needs of young people.

AD: You mentioned Job Jump earlier – can you outline the aims of that initiative?

MR: This was something we introduced in early 2017. It was a wide-ranging offer to young people – an offer put to them by their mentors – of practical support and advice related to their search for employment. It worked, notionally, on a referral basis, through the ESN website, but also frequently worked as a ‘drop-in’ offer at the point of need. The central idea was that by engendering more 1:1 work with the young people, my team would better understand the needs of the young people, be able to build up meaningful working relationships with them, and so then be in a stronger position to match them to the most appropriate training provider or employer. It meant we could liaise directly between young person and employer, for example, which was undoubtedly beneficial.

AD: An example?

MR: Work placements. Instead of the mentor getting involved, and the process becoming a 3-way conversation, my team could engage directly with the employer. They could contact the young person with the practical arrangements of the work experience day, they could fund their travel (and actually get them their tickets there and then, without needing to go through the mentor), and they were able to follow through with support during the day – checking on progress, nipping any issues in the bud. It was a more responsive and direct form of support.

AD: How well did information and data flow between the ESN team and the mentoring agencies? The example you gave just now for example – how was it possible to ensure that the young person’s mentor was kept apprised of activity?

MR: We started a system of Case Conferences in January 2016. These occurred on a monthly basis across all 3 counties and were attended by Specialist Mentors and the ESN team. This undoubtedly helped to exchange information, and to pool knowledge and ideas – all with the aim of helping the young person move forward as speedily as possible. The Case Conferences also helped us to increase transparency and accuracy of data – to ensure that outcomes or interventions were not being duplicated on the database.

AD: To focus on the Employer Coach role in particular – other project staff I have interviewed, in relation to their specific remits, have made mention of the large geographical project area – especially in Kent and Essex. How did this affect the ability of the Employer Coach to develop and maintain a partnership of ‘project friendly’ employers?

MR: The large geographical project area was a challenge, yes. We thought a lot about the best ways to implement a process that allowed our team to interact with as many employers as possible – for the benefit of the young people – and realised that targeted use of Hub Budget funds was the likely solution. We put forward several successful proposals, from 2016 onwards, across each county, to run activities that brought employers into contact with young people. The Inspiring Talent activities, for example ([case study 6, this section](#)) were held across each county,

in almost every area. These allowed us to engage with several local employers in one 'hit', and to increase the exposure of young people to them by interacting with them at each event.

Employer visits were also funded by the Hub budget – we introduced several of these, and partnered with some large-scale employers, on a local basis. Feedback from mentors was very positive about these activities – reflecting the positive feedback gained from their mentees. And employers gave great feedback too. The informal, professional nature of the events gave us scope to build longer-lasting relationships with participating employers for the remainder of the project.

AD: How would you sum up the main features of the ESN offer, as it has developed over the project lifespan?

MR: I think we've always wanted to try new things - to develop new partnerships and to look at new ways of delivering the remit – which have played to the strengths of my team. It's a 5-year project so you have to look at changing things as you go through – and that has been our view throughout.

End of interview.

As the conversation above has demonstrated, a crucial part of the success of the ESN offer has been its ability to adapt to change – essential, for a 5-year project – in order to better meet the needs of the young people participating on it.

One such change highlighted through conversation with Michael Ratcliffe – the way in which ESN were able to use Hub Budget funding to run activities that sought to encourage more meaningful levels of engagement between young people and employers - contributes to our final case study, which is a look at one such activity that took place in East Sussex in June 2017.

### **Case Study 6 - Inspiring Talent (IT), Hastings 2017**

ESN has worked in conjunction with Culture Shift, as well as on an independent basis, to run a number of Inspiring Talent (IT) events across all areas, from 2016 onwards.

The aim of the activities has been to provide an opportunity for young people to have direct contact and engagement with businesses from a variety of sectors, to undertake practical challenges, and to learn about the skills employers are looking for in their local areas. The proposition to hold IT events was based around the wish to position Talent Match as a go-to organisation for young people looking for work.

The events have been held in galleries and public spaces that have lent a bright, modern and airy feel to each one – on the basis that to 'inspire', it is important to deliver the activity in an inspirational way. For example, Sun Pier House in Chatham was used to hold one activity - a contemporary gallery space with large windows overlooking the river, with views to the Norman castles at Rochester and Upnor.

A further activity was held at Turner Contemporary in Margate, another new gallery with a modern feel to it, and with large windows that look directly onto the sea. Feedback from employers and training providers at both of these events made reference to the appropriateness of the venues for stimulating lively discussion and a positive, optimistic feel to the day.

The event in June 2017, at Hastings, was held at the Azur Marina Pavilion. Its website states that “Azur at the Marina Pavilion is a unique beach front multi-use venue for hire. You won't find any other venue which boasts our fantastic balcony facility.”

The plan to use Culture Shift, a Community Interest Company established in 2011 by the people behind Creative Partnerships in Sussex and Surrey, was also a step towards creating something with a more modern, breezy feel to it. Culture Shift, states their website, “creates dynamic partnerships where the creative and cultural sector work with community, business and education partners to produce bespoke, creative, action-based solutions.”

Culture Shift provided support with planning the event, contacting and briefing businesses, preparation and delivery of the event, as well as taking on responsibility for evaluation and review of activity.

ESN drew upon positive feedback from young people and businesses who attended previous Inspiring Talent events, stating in their Hub proposal that “Feedback from businesses and young people has been overwhelmingly positive. Young people .... really enjoyed the event.... a number of young people have had work placement and taster opportunities as a direct result of these events.”

The intended outputs and outcomes of the activity were listed by ESN on their Hub Budget proposal for the Hastings event, and are given here:

- ❖ Young people will be more aware of employment opportunities locally.
- ❖ Young people will be more aware of what employers expect of them as employees.
- ❖ Employers will become more aware of the needs and expectations of young people and how these can be supported.
- ❖ It will provide unique opportunities to have 1-1 contact with a business that the young person may not have had prior involvement with.
- ❖ It is intended to lead to further opportunities from the employer such as work experience, apprenticeships, volunteering or even an interview.
- ❖ It will give the employers a chance to ‘try before they buy’ with young people who they may want to recruit or offer a placement to.
- ❖ It will help keep young people engaged in Talent Match.

So, what of the event itself?

The ESN website carried a ‘Success Story’ piece about the event on its website, which featured a short (1 min) video, that told the story of the day, the link to which is pasted below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5sltU4HuYg>

A good mix of employers attended the event, and each employer gave a short presentation about the company they were representing, what they were looking for when recruiting for staff, and which opportunities they currently had.

Employers that attended:

- ❖ Freedom Leisure – a Leisure Centre, not for profit trust that operates across the south coast.
- ❖ Helen Owen Marketing Enterprises – a not for profit marketing enterprise based in Eastbourne.
- ❖ Marshall Tufflex – a well-established PVC plastic mouldings company based in Hastings.
- ❖ Orbit Housing – a leading housing provider across the south of England.

Young people sat in groups around circular tables, giving the event more of a conference or workshop feel than a standard employer event, which is usually typified by stalls and banner stands and a less natural form of engagement between employer and job seeker.

The young people were encouraged to discuss their career aims with each other, as well as to interact in the presentations that were delivered by TMSE staff. There was ample opportunity throughout the activity for informal discussion to take place between a young person and an employer.

There was no 'us and them' feel to the day – everyone contributed on an equal footing, with the primary goal centred around the idea of mutually beneficial information sharing.

Feedback from employers who attended the event focused on how valuable they had found it to be able to talk directly to young people, to hear their stories, and of wanting to find ways to meet their needs and of inspiring them. One employer stated that the event aided confidence and self-esteem of the young people in attendance, and helped to 'myth-bust', to show that employers are not remote, aloof or unsympathetic towards young people.

Young people fed back a variety of comments, which are represented below, but which centre on the opportunities they felt the event had given them to fact find roles and sectors; to gain an insight into the world of work and recruitment; and to network with employers.

The choice of venues, and the use of low-cost, specialist, external delivery partners, undoubtedly played a large part in the success of the IT events.

It is clear that ESN developed a successful template that worked, and that met the needs of young people who attended. Feedback from the Hastings event underscored the success of this delivery model:

- ❖ "I liked the opportunity to ask employers for some advice on the career path."

- ❖ “I found out about job I did not know about, I enjoyed the freedom to chat about what we wanted to know and talk casually.”
- ❖ “It was good to go to the construction talk as I’m interested in that - **it gave me an insight into employers’ needs.**”
- ❖ “The best thing about the event for me was being able to interact and ask questions to the employer...talking to the employer themselves and finding out what they want from candidates.”
- ❖ “I enjoyed being able to engage with employers in a friendly way without ‘interview’ pressure.”

There were specific outcomes for the event too, which young people subsequently relayed to the ESN team:

- ❖ “I got **more confidence and more knowledge** of what I want to do in the future.”
- ❖ “I did a week’s work experience at the Grand Hotel in Eastbourne (after talking to the employer at the IT event) and this helped me to learn that I really wanted to do something more hands on than I initially thought, because I now want to work as a beauty therapist rather than on Reception.”
- ❖ “I went to the event and I learned about different sectors within the leisure industry, and there was a cruise liner employer there – so I found out about working as a beautician on there, which is what I’m now planning on doing.”

*Table 32: Breakdown of costs associated with the IT event*

Expenditure Item	Who	Total Cost
Project Management	Culture Shift	£1200.00
Venue costs and refreshments	Azar	£350.00
Printing and Marketing costs	KATO	£50.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1600.00</b>

The overall cost seems extremely good value, for an event that brought together around 40 people, including 16 young people who attended, at a cost per person of £100.

The feedback from the attendees, referenced above, shows the value of the activity that, to refer back to the wording of the proposal, helped position Talent Match as a **‘go-to’ organisation for young people looking for work.**

**ESN offer – partner feedback**

In April 2016, Specialist Mentors from each of the 3 counties held a meeting at The Prince's Trust, in London. The aim of the meeting was to share practice that was working well, to discuss ideas for Hub Budget funded activities, and to look at Bursary spend across the 3 areas. There was also a section devoted to discussing partnership work with ESN – what had been working, what could be improved – and the focus of these discussions provides us with a good opportunity to look at the ESN offer from a wider perspective.

There were 3 discussion groups, each one consisting of at least 1 mentor from each organisation – CXK, Southend YMCA, and Tomorrow's People. The discussions were relatively short – 20 minutes with a 10-minute feedback session at the end. The feedback from the groups has been collated below.

*Table 33: ESN feedback gathered from the Specialist Mentor meeting, April 2017*

Area of delivery	Pros	Cons
Job Jumps	<p>A new perspective, a fresh pair of eyes</p> <p>Good interpersonal skills from ESN staff</p> <p>Good partnership work with mentors</p> <p>Informal approach has worked well</p>	Blurred the boundaries of the ESN role with the mentoring offer
Employer Activity (WEX, work taster, employer visits)	Work taster sessions have been useful and fun	<p>Too long to organise the placement form referral to start of WEX</p> <p>Difficulty of maintaining a network of employers given other ESN role responsibilities</p>
Training Activity	A good range of offer – especially in Construction and Security	<p>Referral mechanism unwieldy</p> <p>Over-promised on delivery of training opportunities</p>
Hub Budget activities	Very positive feedback from young people	Input from ESN to organise can be time consuming (can take away from other areas of delivery)

Other	<p>Website is really helpful and informative</p> <p>ESN staff are highly skilled</p> <p>Very committed staff</p> <p>Having ESN staff visible at venues of project delivery helped to build relationships with young people</p>	
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It is fair to take the view that this feedback shows the ESN offer in a positive light, with twice the number of positive comments given, as against those comments that signify an area for improvement. Conversation during the 10-minute feedback at the end centred on the employer offer. The feeling in the room was that, with an FTE staffing allocation of 2.4 members of staff across 3 counties, encompassing around a dozen individual towns, it was always likely to be a challenging task to build a network of employers who would be responsive to project need, in every town.

Subsequent discussions with ESN Lead, Michael Ratcliffe, revealed an additional barrier to building an employer network. He argued that any employer network could only be fully developed in response to what mentors were feeding back to them, in relation to the requirements of young people on their caseloads.

In some geographical areas, the requirements of young people were not regularly or clearly communicated to the ESN team, which hampered the process of building an employer network. The introduction of Case Conferences between mentors and the ESN team was a move to meet this challenge, and to gain a better idea of mentor/mentee needs.

Innovative solutions such as the Inspiring Talent events certainly produced low-cost, quick-win ways of building immediate partnerships with employers, but whether there was scope following these events to build more long-lasting partnerships, is doubtful, given the staffing allocation and geographical remit.

During the 4 focus group activities, I asked young people two questions, to get their responses to how they felt the Employer and Skills Network had helped them move towards an outcome. These questions concentrated on the types of activities the young people had experienced, and their views on these, and also on how working with ESN had helped them to better understand the needs of employer.

I will set out the responses in separate sections, looking at feedback to each question in turn.

The first question asked was:

- If you took part in any employer engagement activities arranged by the ESN, how did this experience move you closer to the world of work?

A selection of responses:

- ❖ “I learned a lot about the expectations of an employer through my work experience session at Hilton Hotel, Maidstone. For example, I learned that employers are

looking for skills that are specific to their sector, such as good presentation and good communication.”

- ❖ “The work taster I did made me think more about how I need to **differ my approach and my mindset according to which employer I am with**, so I dress accordingly to give me the best chance.”
- ❖ “I did the 60-minute makeover TV programme, this helped my understanding of how when a team works well together, everyone has different skills they can use.”
- ❖ “I did a 2-week work experience at Waterstones in Maidstone, I learned how to stock merchandise, learned new team skills, understood systems and processes, and also gained customer service skills.”
- ❖ “I went to a careers event in Maidstone, it helped me speak to several employers and to open up my thought processes about further job opportunities.”
- ❖ “I went to an employer event arranged by Penny (ESN Employer Coach) and I gained really insightful feedback from an employer – namely, that I answered too many questions with examples of having gained experience from a role that wasn’t relevant to the role I was talking to the employer about. It made me realise that I need to tailor my answers to make them more relevant.”
- ❖ “I did First Aid, and Fire Marshal training, which were organised by Ana (ESN Employer Coach) and these helped me to gain a job in security.”

Many of the responses above make mention of the words ‘**skills**’ and ‘**opportunities**’ – and the two go hand-in-hand. By presenting a set of opportunities to the young person, and then doing everything possible to ease the path towards taking up the opportunity, the ESN offer enabled young people, as highlighted above, to develop new skills, as well as to recognise the skills they already possessed.

The second question asked was:

- How did Talent Match help you to understand the skills that employers are looking for? Did you feel you became better at these skills?

A selection of responses is offered below:

- ❖ “Meeting employers through Talent Match gave me an insight into strength-based interviews – how to promote what I’m good at!”
- ❖ “Talking to employers themselves and finding out what they want from candidates.”
- ❖ “The tips during Job Jumps on how to move on to the career path I really love.”
- ❖ “I learned about customer service skills through getting **feedback from staff at Job Jump about the things I need to improve upon.**”



- ❖ “I learned how to put the skills I have onto my CV so it looks professional.”
- ❖ “I gained an interview through the ESN worker, Ana, because of a contact she had at WHSmith, she also helped me prep for interview - it was really helpful.”
- ❖ “I liked the way I was able to get put forward for an interview for a work experience placement with an employer without me having to get too involved in what I thought might be a complicated process – it was all sorted out for me.”
- ❖ “I thought the advice I got on my CV was spot on.”

Many of the responses to the second question relate to a form of *advice* that was given – something that it is highly likely a mentor would have given to the young person too.

It could plausibly be argued that one of the advantages of the general shift towards having more interaction between the young people and the ESN team, as the project went on, is that it enabled the young person to take advice on board from a different person – someone who they would have perceived to be (by their job title alone) an ‘employer expert’.

Possibly also, given the often-close working relationship between mentor and mentee, it was beneficial for the young person to receive advice about employability from someone who was not part of the mentoring relationship.

This section will conclude with some data showing the reach of the ESN offer – in relation to project activity in Year 3 and 4 of the TMSE project. The aim of this is to show the extent of the work delivered by ESN that supported young people to gain more work-related skills and to have greater interaction with employers.

Years 3 and 4 (2016-17) were chosen to explore whether ESN activity changed between Y3 - when one practitioner covered the skills and employer work for the first part of the year - and Y4, when the uplift in funding allowed for the Employer Coach and Development Executive roles to be fully embedded.

*Table 34: Outcomes achieved by ESN Years 3-4 (2016-17)*

Timeframe	Basic Skills Training	Work Experience placements	New Employers engaged
Year 3 Q1	24	47	75
Year 3 Q2	28	42	58
Year 3 Q3	100	85	71
Year 3 Q4	126	69	18
<b>Year 3 Total</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>222</b>
Year 4 Q1	49	37	21
Year 4 Q2	71	28	15

Year 4 Q3	130	67	27
Year 4 Q4	37	55	14
Year 4 Total	287	187	77
Total	565	430	299

This data shows that once the creation of the two new roles had taken affect, in Year 3 Q3, there was an immediate surge in the number of young people accessing training and work experience placements. The number of young people accessing training opportunities in the second half 2016, compared to the first half of the year, more than quadrupled, for example.

The reason why this surge faltered in 2017 is highly likely to be due to the increase in emphasis placed by the ESN team on developing proposals for Hub Budget funded activities, and the subsequent time allocated to deliver on these proposals.



On occasions, the ESN team worked on proposals for activities that, despite several date changes and tweaks to their intended form of delivery, did not get off the ground and were cancelled. These pieces of work, as stated elsewhere in the report, took time away from delivering the ‘day job’, and, especially when the activities didn’t see the light of day, were a less than effective use of staffing resource.

To conclude this section, the ESN offer was a varied and constantly developing one. We have seen that it delivered impressive outcomes – nearly 1,000 work experience and training outcomes achieved by young people between 2016-17 alone – and almost 300 new employers (a significant proportion of whom were subsequently involved in the project as Volunteer Mentors) engaged over the same time frame.

We have seen how project funding was used by ESN to deliver a wide range of activities that met the needs of young people and have seen highly positive feedback given by young people who participated in some of these projects.

By evolving its delivery model as the project went on, KATO were able to develop a very responsive and comprehensive ESN offer, which added substantial value to the mentoring model, and to the delivery partnership as a whole.

## The reach of TMSE – marketing, promotion and wider engagement

A meeting was held with a representative from the Marketing function, a service commissioned to The Prince's Trust for the duration of the project, in December 2017, to gain an insight into how the outcomes and the impact of TMSE has been disseminated to a wider audience - internally (to its participants and stakeholders), and externally, too.

The Marketing function was responsible for overseeing marketing activity across all 5 Talent Match partnerships which were led by The Prince's Trust. Most other partnerships were better resourced, marketing-wise, with a marketing manager in each of the other 16 partnerships.

The main marketing tool used by Marketing, and by participants, was the TMSE Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SEtalentmatch/>. This page had 1,103 followers, and (a statistical quirk!) also had 1,103 likes, as of May 2018.

It attracted lots of traffic to activity generated by the young people themselves. A 45 second video blog by one participant, Jodie, which was uploaded on the 23 October, and in which she discusses her journey on TMSE, had over 1,119 views, just a few weeks later, and a similar video posted by the Young People's Partnership (YPP) Co-ordinator, aimed at promoting the benefits of joining the YPP, had almost 500 views.

Two posts on the page that were about specific events, such as the two that featured the photography exhibition held at Turner Contemporary, gained 3,308 and 4,427 views. A '*What's Talent Match All About?*' promotional video posted on the TMSE site had 4,800 views, (all figures as of May 2018).

The Marketing function took the decision in 2016 to allocate funds to promote certain key messages, so that they would appear in the timelines and feeds of young people, to increase engagement and sign up rates to the project. The spend for this rose from £1,337 in 2016 to just over £2,000 in 2017 – and returned a 5x increase in reach (impressions and engagements) from 2016 to 2017. This shows that small increases in investment, when used in a targeted fashion (the posts were promoted in such a way as to reach the right demographic/geographic of potential TMSE young people) had a very beneficial impact.

## Talent Match South East 2014-18

There were 425,000 impressions across the TMSE Facebook page in 2017, an increase from the 385,000 impressions in 2016. Engagements on Facebook doubled from 5,300 in 2016, to 11,200 in 2017.

Full Facebook comparative data between 2016-17 is set out in the following table:

*Table 35: Engagements on Facebook and % change 2016-2017*

	Pieces of content	Post reach	Impressions	Engaged	Likes	Amount spent	Average cost per engaged user	Average cost per like	Direct messages
2016 (Jan - Dec)	296	296,888	385,722	5,355	416	£1,337.25	£0.25	£3.21	15
2017 (Jan - Nov)	157	351,590	425,150	11,194	296	£1,868.09	£0.17	£6.31	35
% change	-47%	18%	10%	109%	-29%	40%	-33%	96%	133%

### What went well

Successful events that were put on by TMSE, such as the photographic project and exhibition that culminated in an exhibition at Turner Contemporary, gained over 2,400 views in just a few weeks, and were also covered by local newspapers such as Kent Online. The link to this event is pasted below, and features TMSE in an extremely positive fashion:

<http://www.kentonline.co.uk/thanet/news/long-term-unemployed-to-display-photography-134452/>

In the first six months of 2017, an average of almost 164,000 people visited Kent Online each day - and more than 785,000 each week. The link to the event was posted on the TMSE Facebook page, and for an investment of £40, to promote the feature, achieved 3,351 impressions, 45 clicks on the story, 2 comments, and 4 shares, during the 3 weeks after the event.

In June 2017, two Talent Match participants and one Specialist Mentor were interviewed on BBC Radio Kent Breakfast. The theme of the interview was about how Talent Match had supported young people to overcome barriers to employment, and was a live event, picked up by the TMSE Facebook page as well as by the local delivery partner CXK:

<https://www.cxk.org/news/cxk-discusses-barriers-to-youth-employment-with-bbc-radio-kent-and-kmfm>

The BBC undertake a survey of official audience figures, on a rolling 6-month basis, and for the period covered by the TMSE event, shows that the weekly total of listeners for BBC Radio Kent was 186,000 - representing another potentially very high engagement figure - a very positive promotional vehicle for the project. The young people were interviewed just after the

## Talent Match South East 2014-18

7.00am news slot, which is the time when most listeners are engaged with radio output, according to a recent survey of peoples' radio listening habits. (7)

Talent Match young people are even due to star in a television programme, (in 2018), after participating in the 60 Minute Makeover programme, fronted by Peter Andre on ITV, where they will be putting their painting and decorating skills to great use.

<https://employerandskillsnetworktmse.org/esn-tmse-60-minute-makeover/>

All the specialist and volunteer mentoring agencies had a section about the Talent Match offer on their organisational websites, and these were updated on a yearly basis. These were mainly aimed at increasing referrals to the project and had a very limited impact in terms of young people contacting the organisation to find out about how to sign up – CXK, for example, reported an average on 1 young person expressing an interest in the project every 6 months.

The delivery partner that did the most to promote the Talent Match offer was KATO, through its Employer and Skills Network. This became, for practitioners and delivery partners, the place to go to, to find out about events and opportunities, as well as to locate relevant forms and information needed for referring young people to events. In fact, if 'TMSE' is tapped into a search engine, the results are as follows:

1. TMSE – The Prince's Trust
2. TMSE – KATO Training
3. Talent Match – Funding (The Big Lottery website)
4. TMSE Facebook page

This demonstrates the reach of the KATO site, and a link to its page is pasted below:

<https://employerandskillsnetworktmse.org/>

Discussions with people who participated in this research confirm that the KATO website was more widely used by practitioners rather than young people. This seems to be, in the main, due to the preference the young people expressed for user-generated input, as on the Facebook page.

It could also be said that aspects of the KATO site were off-putting to young people – too many links on the pages, a cluttered formatting, and a poor site map were commented upon. It was recognised, however, that the resource was widely used by practitioners, and the website was created, and managed, with a very small resource, and the content was always up-to-date.

Content based around success stories, and which frequently featured short, professionally made video clips, was the content most widely commented upon as being most young-person friendly, according to focus group responses.

Case studies read well on both the TMSE Facebook page, and the KATO Training website. One of the most powerful of these was 'Chloe's Story', which takes the form of a YouTube video featuring a Talent Match participant from Essex, Chloe Passfield. Chloe shares her story about how she turned her life around, and the clip had 124 views in the first week it was aired.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPMKD3If6DA>

Chloe went on to win recognition at the Prince's Trust 'Rising Star Awards event, in 2017.

## What could have been done differently

### Case Studies

Focus group responses to case studies were consistent – they were much more likely to watch a short clip on YouTube or on Facebook, than read a case study.

The more formal format of case studies featured a photograph of the young person, some text about their story, and a section (in larger font) with a key (positive) quote.

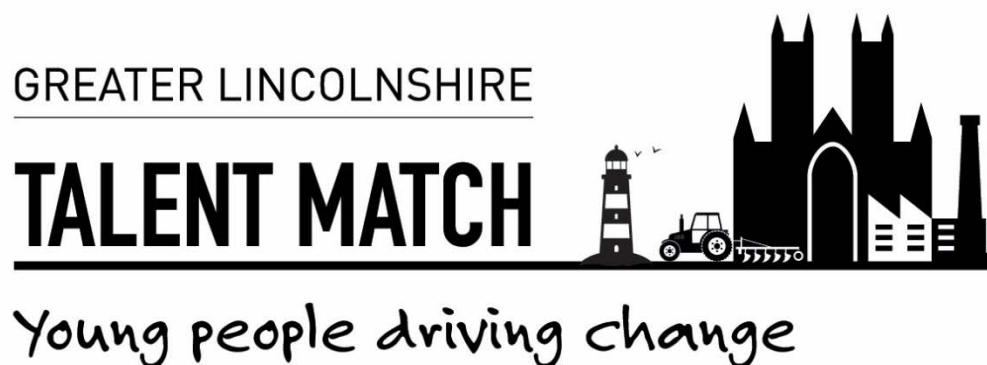
The Marketing function pointed to the frequent number of times that a case study was sent in without one of the key components needed before it could be published – usually a poor-quality photo, or consent not fully gained from the young person, but also because they were often sent to her without an accompanying first-person quote, which was the most powerful part of the case studies.

A greater emphasis on quality of case study, rather than quantity, might have been beneficial too. While researching for this report, it was quickly evident that although many case studies were in existence, no single one stood out from the rest as being the most evocative or powerful.

As noted previously, video clips from young people stood out more than written content. Perhaps a more co-ordinated approach from delivery partners – encompassing a training event or an outreach activity, to which young people could have been invited – may have helped focus thoughts in a more creative and inspiring fashion.

### Logos and promotion

The 5 Talent Match projects led by The Prince's Trust all had logos designed by young people – which led to the development of 5 completely different designs:





Only one of the logos (New Anglia) tells the audience what the project aims to achieve. TMSE mentors (and YPP Ambassadors) were frequently asked whether they were promoting a talent finding event, such as Britain's Got Talent, and it was only in late 2016 that leaflets and banners promoting the project carried more directive information, typically along the lines of:

18-24? Unemployed? Speak to Us!

On a wider perspective, the Marketing function queried the need to have 5 different logos, for what was, essentially, 5 projects with similar delivery models and expected outcomes. It felt it carried the potential to dilute the overall Talent Match branding and confuse young people who might move from one Talent Match partnership area to another.

### **New ways of working – could more have been done?**

My discussions with the Marketing function allowed me to spot a couple of areas where new suggestions were not taken up by the wider partnership. Plans to recruit a young person to the role of Digital Marketing apprentice were often spoken about, but conversations over the young person's work base did not reach a conclusion to allow the idea to take root.

The Marketing function's attempts to introduce a more analytical use of emailing young people, based on data segmentation practices, where emails are sent to relevant interest groups, rather than to a mass audience, and which can be analysed as to who has opened them or not, were not taken up, in part due to mentoring agency concerns that the messages (coming

from someone other than the young person's mentor) could have caused confusion for the recipient.

Both these initiatives could have been trialled – in accordance with the Talent Match principal of 'test and learn' - perhaps in one locality, for a 12-month period.

Opportunities to work closely with the Young Person's Partnership were missed along the way. The different priorities of the YPP Co-ordinator, and the turnover of staff in this role (3 co-ordinators in 4 years) would have had an impact on these missed opportunities. Nevertheless, two workshops were held in the Prince's Trust offices in London, where marketing techniques, discussions about promotional vehicles – social media – and conversations about 'young person friendly' language were given precedence.

Focus group responses were positive about the content of the TMSE Facebook page, but the number of young people who had not known about the page was much higher than would have been hoped for. Only 6 out of the 20 young people had seen the Facebook page, while another 2 others knew of its existence, but had been unable to locate it. Given the excellent and varied nature of the content on the site, especially the young person-led content, this seems a real missed opportunity.

One young person suggested that a business card, or appointment card, with the Facebook page details on the reverse, would have been a helpful move. The Recommendations section of this report look at the ways in which the social media content of the project could be better disseminated and makes some suggestions for future project delivery.

Some comments from the young people at the Focus Groups are presented below. The majority of these comments come from young people who attended the YPP Focus Group:

- ❖ "The Facebook page was young person friendly, it reflected the interests and views of young people, and the posts are aimed at young people."
- ❖ "The videos in particular were aimed at young people in a really positive refreshing way."
- ❖ "The Marketing team was very keen to get the views of young people and it was right that the page was managed by one person because this gave it a professional look."
- ❖ "I like the fact that we can have input but think it's good that is it professionally worded."
- ❖ "It would be better if it was advertised on TV or a YouTube channel."
- ❖ "An advert in the cinema. There's one for Prince's Trust but it didn't mention Talent Match."
- ❖ "More location specific posts would be more relevant."
- ❖ "I was a bit confused about what I was signing up for."



❖ “The videos of the young people’s journeys worked very well.”

The Chatham Focus Group was the most well attended, with 7 young people in attendance, and I asked everyone how they had found out about the project. The responses contained a variety of sources – Job Centre Plus, The Prince’s Trust Team Programme, a partner, other support workers, and other organisations, but no-one had found out about the project through direct marketing strategies.

Perhaps a different vehicle could have been used to spread the word – cinema, radio, TV and YouTube channel being the suggestions from the young people – all of which, of course, are less cost-effective than a social media strategy.

I feel it is possible to conclude that TMSE enjoyed many high-profile moments, (particularly between 2016-17), and reached a wider audience than might have been expected, especially given the resource issues highlighted in this section.

Coverage of TMSE locally, across radio, newspaper, Facebook and YouTube, gave a strong perception of a successful and supportive project much valued by its participants. Whether this output reached the *intended audience* (potential, and current participants) as effectively as might have been hoped, is worth greater consideration for future project delivery.

## **The impact on a young person’s wider social environment**

This research regularly gained insight from project staff and young people about the impact Talent Match has had on a young person’s wider social environment. Feedback received included how being on TMSE has had a beneficial effect on family dynamics; on sibling relationships; on the ways in which a new parent has been able to cope more easily with their childcare responsibilities; and how it has enabled a young person to feel more positive when faced with difficult housing and other personal circumstances. A number of these comments have been referenced in quotes throughout this report.

A meeting was held with Catherine, a young person living in Thanet in Kent, in the summer of 2018, to find out a little more about how being on TMSE has had a beneficial effect on her wider social dynamic.

Catherine had been out of work for 3 years prior to joining Talent Match in 2016. She was living with her Mum, who worked 20 hours a week, and between the two, they were struggling to make ends meet, and were dealing with bailiffs on a regular basis as a consequence of being unable to make repayments on a variety of arrangements with Pay Day Loan companies.

Catherine is now in full time work, carrying out administrative and triage duties at a mental health centre. She has been there for over 6 months. We discussed how this change in her circumstances, and the support she has received whilst on Talent Match, has impacted on her, on her immediate family, and on her wider social environment.

AD: Tell me about life pre-Talent Match – what were you doing? How were things in your life at that time?

CB: Horrible! Lots of stress about money. Lots of worry about my health – I have had back pain for a number of years – and lots of frustration with my Mum, who I live with – there were just the two of us.

AD: What was the frustration with your Mum about?

CB: Mainly, it was about the struggle to deal with finances in a structured, planned way. I mean, neither of us had a lot of money coming in, as I was on benefits, but when bailiffs came knocking, it was always while Mum was out, and I had to deal with it. I don't blame my Mum at all – it just made things difficult for me, and I started to get a bit anxious about going out on my own.

AD: Are you able to sum up how you felt a couple of years or so ago?

CB: I guess things were just a bit 'snappy' at home. My Mum was stressed about money and this was having a bad effect on me. We did argue, in a sort of passive-aggressive way, we never really shouted or anything. But things were not great. I was also down about not getting work – I did actually start a job at a toy store, but this lasted only a few weeks, which really set me back a lot, because I had told them about my back-pain issues, and they got rid of me during my probation without really trying to understand how they could have supported me.

AD: In what way did things change once you were on Talent Match?

CB: Well, straight away if I'm honest! I'd really got into a rut of not going out at all. I couldn't really see the point. This was having a bad effect on my relationship with my boyfriend too, who had just moved in with us.

AD: So how did things change?

CB: Laura – my mentor – just refused to give up on me, right from the first session. She actually got me to sign up for a course with Thanet Community Development Trust at my very first session with her! She was determined that I would make a meaningful change right from the outset.

AD: And how did this go?

CB: Well, aspects of it were frustrating, as I didn't feel like my issues were the same as everyone else's on the course – a few people mucked around and didn't really seem ready for work, but I felt I was.

I stuck with it and gradually started to find it become easier and easier to leave the house on my own. It gave me a structure too. I had something to do, and something to talk to both my Mum and boyfriend about at the end of each day. This definitely lessened the strain on my relationship with my boyfriend, who was out of work at this time. I think it also gave my Mum a break from me – not in a horrible way, it just gave us some space though.

AD: And what was next?

CB: I really wanted to work on my health issues. I knew I needed to lose some weight to help with this, and so I joined a Gym. I soon lost motivation and stopped going, however. And that was when Laura mentioned the Glowing Health activity, with the trainer, Hannah – and this was just what I needed.

AD: In what way?

CB: Hannah knew exactly which exercises I needed to be doing. She was aware of my back injury and tailored the sessions to my specific requirements. I was signed up to do 1 day a week, but after a cancellation with another trainee, I took an extra place and went twice a week. It changed me as a person. I was able to stop getting worked up about little things, and

to use exercise to calm me. My Dad, who lives nearby, said he had noticed a change in me around this time – as did my friends – and my relationship with him improved too. I became very proud of myself for losing weight.

AD: And now you're working – and have been for almost a year or so. What impact has this had on your wider surroundings?

CB: It's eased the financial pressure at home hugely. I now pay for exactly half the amount of each utility bill, and also contribute towards the rent. My Mum has told me how much she has seen a change in me. And also, it's given my Mum the impetus to change little things in her life too – for example, she has developed a better plan for saving money, and is communicating with her debtors in a better way. I feel having a job has really had a good knock-on effect on those people who are closest to me.

My relationship with my Dad has got better too. Since I've started working, it's given me a different perspective on the issues he has to deal with. We are able to have the occasional day out together – with my sister too – and things have definitely got better. I've really found it helpful talking about these things with Laura too – relationship stuff too, about my boyfriend – she's always able to give good advice and this has made me less anxious too.

AD: Anything else to add?

CB: Well I've noticed that my friendship group has changed too. Before I started working, I had a lot of friends, many of whom were out of work. There was an assumption that being on benefits was okay, and I was never happy with that. I now have a smaller group of friends – about 3 or so – and all of them are in work, and we are able to talk about different things we are doing, and that's a positive influence on me I think.

I look back to where I was before Talent Match, and I can really see how having the support of Laura, of being on courses and then getting work, has made my closest relationships become much more rewarding. I can see the impact of this on my Mum, which has made me really happy.

End of interview

In August 2018, an interview was held with a Grandparent (Nan) of a young person who had been on TMSE for 2 years, from 2014-16. This interview took place at Nan's home, where the young person, her daughter, and her partner also lived. The following summarised exchange gives an insight into the extent to which other family members have benefitted from the project, as a result of the young person's improved employment and personal wellbeing indicators. The interview also includes the views of Nan's husband, who also lives at the house. All names have been anonymised to protect the family's privacy.

*AD – Interviewer E – TMSE young person P – Nan's husband D – Nan*

AD: Can you recall the time before E started Talent Match? What were things like for you all?

P: I'd put it this way - E was drifting. She had no clear view of her future. She'd had lots of knock backs and she had a very low understanding of the skills needed to get by in life – low levels of life skills and experience.

D: I thought that E was in danger of giving up. We knew she had potential and was more than capable. But she was having arguments with P on a regular basis – he couldn't understand why she didn't want to get involved in things, to do volunteering or meet new people – and this caused tensions. She was stuck in her own four walls – and I mean that mentally as well as

physically – she stayed in her room until very late in the day, and when she did engage with us, she complained that we weren't treating her like an adult. And as this went on it became a bit of a vicious circle.

P: We argued about silly things, really, looking back. Petty things...moaning. We meant well but E wasn't in a position to listen to us. It needed to come from someone else.

AD: So, when Talent Match came along, what were your initial thoughts?

D: We were relieved, although if I'm honest, we didn't really understand what the offer of support was. We were suddenly 'lifted' though – someone from outside our family circle actually wanted to show an interest in her, to work out with her what she needed to do to move on. It felt like a big step when she started to meet with her mentor, Tony.

P: We noticed that conversations were all of a sudden starting up again. E would take an interest in Nan's work and ask questions. She started to work on the admin side of the Talent Match project, supporting the staff there, and then she started showing an interest in my bowling club, and sorting out all the meeting minutes, and files and bits of paper – our club was a bit disorganised and E started to create systems for us. She'd not shown an interest in any of this beforehand. She started joking with me about how backward we all were at the club – how our systems needed to be brought into a new century – the twentieth century would be a good start, she'd say.

E: I got all that from Talent Match though. I'd sort our agendas and plan meetings for the project and so I felt more interested in things like that, things that you were doing.

P: Meeting new people – staff and young people on the project – allowed E to gain a new perspective on her lifestyle, and on the lifestyle choices of her peers. She suddenly started to see things from a new direction, and see other people's points of view. She changed almost overnight – she became committed to something she wanted to be a part of and that she thought she felt a bit responsible for – Talent Match was just getting going, and learning how to be a success, and E, as one of its first young people, wanted to help steer it in the right direction.

AD: What did these mean for you all – not just for the 3 of you here, but for E's young daughter, and her boyfriend, all of whom have been a big part of this family unit?

D: We are nowhere near as confrontational with one another now. Arguments still happen – but they are controlled - almost structured - and each person's point of view is listened to more carefully. The tension in the household is no longer there. We all have things to talk about. We started to sit together as a family at meal times a while back. Lots of little differences that add up to a big one.

E: My relationship with my partner has also improved. I am able to handle my frustration better – like in any relationship we have our moments – but because I am busy, or I am out much more often, we get on better when we are here together.

D: Travelling to places too. That has been a huge improvement for us all. E quickly became very confident at independent travel, and much less reliant on us. She carefully planned journeys into London and other parts of the South East – often arranging to meet up with others who were less confident than here - and it meant that we were spending less time taking her to places ourselves.

AD: So, a couple of years later now – E has finished Talent Match, and has permanent employment. Can you sun up the impact these changes have had on you all?

D: Well... we just function better! Eating meals together, as I mentioned, is a little thing but has made a real difference. She and P still argue but there's no nastiness to it, they tease each other mainly, and there's shared respect there now. She's recently had a pay rise, so financially we are all getting along better now too.

P: For me, it's the level of maturity that's been the key – it's been a massive change in a short time.

End of interview

This interview, which echoes many aspects of the interview held with Catherine earlier in this section, details how family dynamics changed during the young person's time on Talent Match. It highlights how tensions lessened, and arguments became less fractious. It shows that a better understanding and respect for each other's point of view was gained.

It also shows how the young person's increased independence, maturity and new perspectives on life have helped the family unit to co-exist in a more mutually supportive and loving way. It was evident throughout the interview that this was a close-knit, loving family unit, that had seen its challenges through the period before the young person started Talent Match, and which had arrived at a better understanding of these challenges, and of one another, as time wore on.

## Legacy and Recommendations for Future Delivery

This section of the report, which will contain the recommendations for future project delivery, will look at comment and feedback from the two groups of people who are best placed to have the most relevant and insightful views about the TMSE project – the mentors (including other project practitioners) and the mentees.

It will outline the views held by young people and practitioners in relation to what went well, what could have been done differently, and what TMSE should be remembered for.



### Practitioner Feedback

During February 2018, the research team attended all 3 Hub meetings, in Kent, Essex and East Sussex, and asked every practitioner at the meetings for their views on what they felt were the best aspects of the TMSE project. It was felt that this would provide a really important insight into what this report's recommendations would be, in the light of any future project delivery.

There was a huge degree of positive comment and interesting insight at these meetings, attended in total by around 50 practitioners, from all areas of delivery.

The table on the following page gives a summary of the responses I gained, to the following question:

- What has been the standout feature of Talent Match?

Table 36: Summary of practitioner responses from Hub meetings in Feb 2018

Project role	Comment
Volunteer Executives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The scope, and range of services for young people.</li> <li>➤ The sharing of skills and resources through partnership with others who have a certain specialism.</li> <li>➤ A really tight team sharing specialisms and solutions.</li> </ul>
Employer and Skills Network practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The flexibility of the offer to young people.</li> <li>➤ Different organisations with different values and delivery styles, coming together to put young people first.</li> <li>➤ Adaptable and flexible to an individual young person's needs through partnership work.</li> <li>➤ The opportunity to listen to a young person's viewpoint and to explore new opportunities with them.</li> </ul>
Specialist Mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ I always feel that when I'm supporting a young person, there is always a solution available to help move a young person forward.</li> <li>➤ Putting the focus on individual needs and finding the right outcome for the young person which has turned their lives around.</li> <li>➤ The in-work support has been key.</li> <li>➤ The mentor role, encompassing Bursary spend to remove barriers for young people.</li> </ul>
Talent Match Ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The range of opportunities available to young people, which you don't get from other projects.</li> <li>➤ The support system that exists for us – from mentors and from other young people.</li> <li>➤ The excitement you gain when you meet you mentor and it's the start of your journey.</li> </ul>
Funding bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The way in which funding can easily be channelled into different projects.</li> </ul>
Outreach Co-ordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A lifeline to individuals. A parent told me yesterday that a weight had been lifted off his shoulders because now they've found someone to help them.</li> <li>➤ There is something tangible on offer for each young person.</li> <li>➤ The Bursary – this has really helped to move a young person forward.</li> </ul>
Management and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The flexibility of approach to funding through funding officers.</li> <li>➤ Personalised, tailored approach for each young person.</li> <li>➤ The range of support from the partnership which helps to remove barriers.</li> </ul>

Responses from focus group participants were also gained, and young people were asked for comment in relation to what could have been done differently. The responses to each are outlined below, through a series of quotes.

### Participant Feedback

- “What is the one thing Talent Match should be remembered for?”

Table 37: Young People’s views of the best thing about TMSE, (Jan-Mar 2018)

Focus Group	Young people’s response
YPP group	The Talent Match team are all young person friendly and approachable
	For the pure support from every single member of the Talent Match team that you meet
	It’s about how project staff have been able to relate to young people
	The friendly, laid-back approach and family feel of the project
	For its uniqueness and for its partnership work
Kent	Positivity
	<b>A chance to change yourself</b>
	Break free from your bubble or shell
	<b>A change for the better</b>
	Like a big family that encourages you to do your best
	Treats you like a person rather than a statistic
	I wouldn’t be here doing this now if it wasn’t for Talent Match, I’d still be in bed
	Opening doors
East Sussex	It has offered me <b>a second chance in life</b>
	Supportive
	It’s been life changing for me because I’ve had the support that I’ve never had before
	It’s helped me grab life by the horns and achieve success
Essex	<b>Pushed me to believe in myself</b>
	Helping you plan for the unexpected
	Gave me the chance to build my confidence for the future



It is worth noting that the two key words that occur most frequently are ‘**change**’, or, ‘**changing**’ and ‘**chance**’, along with frequent mention of the **friendly, supportive, family-feel** nature of the project.

Key phrases that seem to encapsulate the project, in briefest form, are:

- ❖ “**A change for the better**”
- ❖ “**A chance to change yourself**”
- ❖ “**Break free**”
- ❖ “**Second chance**”
- ❖ “**A chance to build**”

Comment and feedback about what could have been done differently, was harder to elicit. Nonetheless, some interesting suggestions were made by each group, and included a range of observations, after being asked the following question:

- “If you were to start a new project like Talent Match, what changes would you make?”

Many responses centred around marketing and promotion. This might have been a reflection of the strong feeling the groups held about this subject, or it might also have been partly a reflection on the fact that this question came directly after the focus group discussion about marketing.

- ❖ “I think it should be advertised and promoted to a greater degree.”
- ❖ “A sign-up button on social media would be good.”
- ❖ “It’d be good to have clearer marketing with a more obvious ‘hook’ – although it said 18-24s, I wasn’t really sure what it did.”
- ❖ “There should be better ways of promoting the course such as a website because lots more people would have been interested.”
- ❖ “Adverts on the local radio station would help.”
- ❖ “Young people should be shown online videos of the programme at sign up, then they would know how to get the most out of it.”

Other observations centred around processes and data collection:

- ❖ “There should be fewer forms, and those forms that there are should be shorter.”
- ❖ “More online forms, with tick boxes would help.”



Some gave views that were relevant to the project format – in relation to length, eligibility criteria, and age range of participants:

- ❖ “A 5-year project lifespan is not long enough.”
- ❖ “16-30 would be better and fairer because people up to 30 are still young and are still dealing with the same issues we are dealing with.”
- ❖ “Raising the eligibility to 26 would be good.”
- ❖ “6 months out of work before joining would open it up more.”

In fewer cases, young people were able to outline specific changes they would like to see introduced to future project delivery:

- ❖ “A ‘Young Helpers’ scheme to help others.” (Peer support)
- ❖ “Peer mentoring – if we’ve been through it, we can relate better to other young people with the same issues.”
- ❖ “An end of support date would stop a young person from becoming complacent.”

All of the direct, first-hand feedback and comment that this research has gained, such as that referenced in this section, has had a major influence on the main findings and recommendations for future delivery, which is the final section of the report.

It seemed sensible to discuss the report's main findings with two people who have been integral to the project from the outset, in order to gain their perspective – a young person and a delivery partner representative. It was felt that this would give the findings greater credence, and, in one area in particular, after a discussion with the young person who agreed to be interviewed, presented the opportunity to reflect on the findings in a slightly different fashion.

The research team discussed all the young person comment and feedback and sought to gain further insight into what could be done to improve the delivery of future mentoring type projects, through conversation with Emily Ryles, in May 2018.

Emily started on TMSE right at the outset, as one of the first young people signed up to the project for mentoring support. Emily lives in Rochester, Kent, and was referred to work with a CXK Specialist Mentor, Tony Hollingdale, due to the fact that Emily felt she needed extra support, due to some issues she was experiencing around additional family responsibilities.

Emily quickly progressed onto the YPP and became a focal point of all young people-led activity, in the time before a YPP Co-ordinator was appointed. She attended all the project launch events in 2014 and was instrumental in ensuring that the voice of young people was clearly heard during the initial months and years of the project.

It was decided to discuss the project with Emily because, having had a dual role (young person and YPP representative) on the project from the outset, it was felt that she was in a good position to reflect not only on her progress, but also on how the project had evolved, during her time on it.

A summary of the conversation that took place is given below.

### **Interview with Emily Ryles**

AD: How did you hear about TMSE in the first instance – and how did you come to be involved in it in such a full way?

ER: I was doing an employability course at Strood Community Project, and the CXK Careers Adviser there thought I would benefit from this new mentoring project called Talent Match. I had never been on a mentoring project before, and the way she explained it to me made me feel it would be very worthwhile. And I had several issues in my life at the time – caring for a child, working out how best to get a job – and I could see how it would help me, almost straight off.

AD: In what way?

ER: My mentor, Tony. He treated me like an equal. He came up with a suggested route forward for me, but looking back, I realise that he did this in such a way as to ensure that I was in control – I had ownership of the route I was taking, and he was able to advise and encourage me along the way. It eased pressure at home straight away. It gave me focus and made me think about planning for my future.

AD: And I know you quickly came to play a fuller role in the project – what was this, and how did this come about?



ER: After a few meetings with Tony, we discussed my potential involvement in the YPP. This hadn't really got going as yet, and there was a sense that the voice of young people on the project was not being heard. So, I decided I'd change that!

AD: What things were you able to change?

ER: Well, I attended all the TMSE Launch events, across all counties, in the Autumn of 2014. I spoke to potential partners and to funding agencies, as well as to referral agencies, and stood up in front of large groups of people to explain why they should get involved. It pushed me out of my comfort zone, I was really nervous. But I learned a lot about myself through experiencing these challenges.

I also got involved in the marketing of the project – to ensure that it was seen as a partnership offer, and not just a project run by The Prince's Trust. I met with Big Lottery in late 2015 to help ensure continued funding for the project, by explaining how it had helped me and other young people to move forward. And I never lost sight of the main thing I was on the YPP to do – to model the project around the needs of young people.

AD: When you gained your first job – an apprenticeship with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council – in what ways do you think TMSE helped you to get that?

ER: The role was an administrator one. I was confident that I would be able to make an impact straight away because I had had lots of experience doing admin on the YPP – organising

venues, inputting onto the database, doing minutes at YPP and Hub meetings, for instance. The job felt, initially, like an extension of my YPP role.

Also, because I had taken part in a number of interviews on the TMSE project – interviews to recruit mentors and other staff – I had come to learn a great deal about how to conduct myself in a formal, professional environment – and also, of course, was able to gain a really good awareness of the interview process itself.

AD: I understand that ill health led to you leaving the apprenticeship after 6 months. How did this setback affect you?

ER: I was fine, really. I was able to pick up my role on the YPP, and also gain the support of my mentor again. I got fully involved in the promotion of the YPP and took part in the interviewing processes for young people who wanted to join. I took up the role of YPP Chair and learned a lot about how to scrutinise project spend, in order to ensure that young people were getting the best possible array of options – in terms of activities and events they could access – at a reasonable cost to the project.

AD: Your second job – the one you are in now – tell me about that, and whether TMSE helped prepare you for that?

ER: I'm currently working as an Administrator for Tesco Vehicle Maintenance Unit. I am responsible for scanning and filing, for invoicing and purchase orders, and for communicating with contractors. I'm very much learning on the job, but my supervisor tells me I'm picking everything up really quickly, and what started out as a 3-week temporary position, has now become a 7-month one. I'm about to be taken on as a permanent member of the team there too.

TMSE definitely helped me prepare for this role, and to make it a success. Initially, it got me used to the need to get up early and plan to be somewhere at the required time and place. It also gave me administrative experience through my role on the YPP. It helped me to understand the importance of personal organisation, if I were to sum it up!

But it helped in other ways too – my confidence levels were really boosted by playing such a big role on the project. By meeting lots of new people and by speaking at events, I knew I could achieve things without being held back by my anxiety.

AD: Looking back over the project, what do you think worked, in relation to the TMSE project?

ER: It was great that young people had a voice. That helped make the project be meaningful, I think. The mentoring was really good – I always felt listened to and respected, but also Tony was able to challenge me too - he didn't always give me an easy ride! The practical advice I received on things like CVs and application forms was always helpful.

I liked the fact that my mentor was there to support me over a long period of time. I did realise too, that lots of other young people were out there, needing support, and maybe a tighter structure to the number of sessions might have helped mentors and mentees to end their working relationships more effectively.

AD: 6 sessions? 12 sessions? What further thoughts do you have on this?

ER: I think 6-12 would be okay for those who don't have huge issues. But for others, they might feel anxious as they reached the end. And this might add unnecessary pressure. But I do like the idea of knowing what the initial offer is – as long as it can be extended. Maybe a contract – get to 6 and then extend - with a rolling offer of 6 sessions that can continue through.

AD: And what didn't work?

ER: Well, I knew some young people liked to meet their mentors in cafes – personally, I preferred to meet in an office or project-based location. The cafes could be too loud and didn't give the meetings an air of professionalism. Some of the forms were much too long. And I think the eligibility requirements for participating in the project were too stringent – 12 months could have been reduced to 6, or even 2 or 3 months if unemployment. It can be horrible, being out of work, and the sooner the support is there for you the better.

AD: Looking back on your 3 years or so on TMSE, in what ways did it help you to change things about you, about your life?

ER: It helped me to change an enormous amount. I'm now a Brownie Group Leader for example. Nobody else was going to do it, and lots of girls would have been left disappointed – so I gave it a go. It's a big commitment, but I really enjoy it.

And my job too – I get really positive feedback from my colleagues. All of these things have changed me as a person. I'm much better at managing my own time. I feel more relaxed and I deal with my emotions much better than I used to be able to. I've changed for the better, no doubt about that!

End of interview.

It was also decided to hold an interview with a representative of a Delivery Partner who had been deeply rooted in the TMSE project from the outset, to outline initial thoughts and to seek feedback, and gain the opportunity to reflect further on the likely recommendations.

A meeting was arranged with Roberta Fullarton in March 2018, and an open discussion held with her about the report's likely recommendations, to gain her thoughts. Roberta has acted as Delivery Partner Manager for CXK, with responsibility for Line Management, Contract Variance, Finance and Budget, and Recruitment for CXK's Specialist Mentoring service.

She began this role at the outset of the project, in 2014, and moved on to a new role around the time of this research project commencing. Roberta was fully involved in the set-up of TMSE, and, initially, chaired the bi-monthly Kent Hub meetings, as well as attended the quarterly Delivery Partner meetings in London.

A summary of this conversation is presented below, after the report's interim findings had been discussed with her.

### **Interview with Delivery Partner Manager**

AD: After looking at the recommendations, what are your initial thoughts?

RF: The thing that stands out to me is the more structured mentor-mentee relationship, the initial outline of a rolling offer of 6 sessions, and the ownership this gives to each young person, as well as to their mentor.

AD: Can you expand on that?

RF: My feeling about the offer to young people has been that, yes, it's great that young people feel that they have the potential to access support over a long period of time from their mentor. But I wonder whether this has, in part, led to a bit of a funding glut, where a smaller group of young people, who know the project very well, have been able to take a disproportionate share of the funding, of the activities and the Bursary, for example.

It's great that a core group have been able to access the breadth of the TMSE offer, but towards my time on the project, I definitely became aware that I was seeing the same faces at events, on activities, and on case studies.

AD: But the range of activities – that's been a strength, would you say? Or has this diluted the relationship between mentor and mentee, in any way?

RF: I think the breadth of the offer has been extremely positive and has added hugely to the outcomes achieved by young people. I just feel that the offer, as such, should have been articulated more clearly to every participant, in every area. I wonder how many young people in Dover, for example, accessed the range of opportunities and activities, in relation to Medway? Not nearly as many, relatively speaking, I would guess.

AD: Has there been anything innovative about TMSE? How could future delivery of a mentoring project approach things differently?

RF: There were innovative pilot projects, definitely. These tended to be relatively short-term and small-scale. I think the use of Hub Budget funding from 2016 onwards, to create new projects and activities aimed at addressing the needs of participants, was the most innovative feature of the project. It's a risky thing to try - and maybe a more localised approach could achieve this - but looking back I wonder if more risks could have been taken with commissioning services – a trial period, perhaps, with a provider with a different approach?

AD: What has worked best, in terms of delivery? What aspects of the project could have been looked at in a different way

RF: The effectiveness of the partnership seemed to improve as the project went on. This was an undoubted strength of the project. The mix of Volunteer Mentors and Specialist Mentors was key too – it meant that there was someone out there for everyone, pretty much. And it gave the project such a large field of mentors to pick from, in order to identify the right mentor for the right young person.

AD: And an area of development?

RF: I always felt that, for a project that had such a high level of outputs and outcomes from volunteers, in terms of the mentoring offer, that a greater emphasis on encouraging young people to volunteer could have been developed. Young people gained a lot from the project, I think, and there was a feeling of goodwill towards TMSE from every participant I spoke to. So, on reflection, I wonder if more could have been put in place to enthuse young people to volunteer on the project – maybe to get involved in a social action project, or raise funds for the local community, or do some peer mentoring – it would have represented good coverage for the project too!

End of interview

### **Recommendations for future delivery – a perspective**

The recommendations will take into account a recent report completed by Youth Employment UK <sup>(8)</sup> for the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), published in February 2018, which looked into the support mechanisms in place to address the issues faced by those young people who are furthest away from the job market.

Some of APPG report's key recommendations, specifically the importance it places on all young people having access to work experience; that young people should be taught how to

develop resilience; and that a ‘one size fits all’ approach, which fails to recognise the unique potential of each young person, doesn’t work, are addressed either directly, or indirectly, in the following recommendations.

Also addressed here, is the APPG report’s recommendation that young people and experienced organisations should be fully included in the design and local approaches to youth employment.

Feedback from young people about the project has almost always been highly positive, and reflections from delivery partner practitioners have followed suit. The recommendations this report makes, therefore, are based on the premise that it would be beneficial to keep hold of many of the things that have worked on the TMSE project.

However, the main theme of the recommendations is based on the assertion that it would be beneficial to have a **more local, more cost-effective, and more inclusive** approach to future delivery of similarly styled projects, and which adds in a greater emphasis on the participants having a bigger say in making decisions that directly affect them. This theme is built around the notion of choice, of accountability, and of individual responsibility for making change.

Recommendations for future delivery of mentoring projects similar to TMSE, need to be based on a number of things – feedback gained from young people at focus groups and one to one interviews; comments and reflections from delivery partners and other associated partners who have been involved in the project; mentors who have worked directly with the young people; and in addition, through reflection on some of the main themes of this report.

I have presented the recommendations in this report in two ways – a summary in table form, and a more detailed explanation, including the suggested impact that each recommendation is intended to have. These recommendations form the basis of some suggested improvements to any future delivery of a mentoring style project – which follow on from the table.

*Table 38: A summary of the report recommendations*

Recommendation	Rationale	Potential impact
A 6-session ‘rolling contract’ of mentor support	Practitioner feedback indicated that mentor caseloads are too large  Focus Group responses suggested that some mentees have benefitted from an unequal share of mentor time and project funding	All mentees will have equal access to the same number of opportunities  Mentor/mentee relationship will be more focused and structured
A more localised YPP framework - separate YPP groups in each area of delivery and a YPP Co-ordinator role in each whose	Focus Group responses, and Delivery Partner feedback, suggested that YPP focus has been too concentrated on one area	A sharper focus to the role and responsibility of each Ambassador, so it feels more like a job.



work is overseen by a YPP Manager across all areas	and on a relatively small group of young people  The role of the present YPP Co-ordinator is stretched	Potential for more localised solutions for participants
Reconfiguration of the Personalised Bursary offer  Greater consistency in the promotion of the offer	Focus Group responses indicated that a relatively small number of mentees have benefited from an unequal share of bursary payment	Democratisation of the offer so that all young people are aware from the outset of what they are entitled to
An Activity Award (a development of the current Hub Budget fund)  A menu of activities that is drawn up and reviewed annually	Focus Group responses, and Delivery Partner feedback, pointed to a relatively small number of mentees have benefited from unequal access to activities	All young people would be aware of the activity offer from the outset  A greater number of young people who be able to participate in activities that are suitable to their needs
Greater promotion and awareness of project marketing and social media output	Focus Group responses indicated that a relatively small number of mentees were aware of the TMSE Facebook page, which carried lots of engaging, participant-led content	All mentees and mentors would know what the offer was, and how to access it
Creation of a low-cost, partnership Hub, where young people could access a project in a friendly, supportive space	Focus Group responses drew on the 'family feel' of the project and how this helped with their personal development	All young people would know where to access project support and opportunities available to them, on a 1:1, drop-in basis
Creation of a localised, 4-session peer mentoring scheme	Some Focus Group responses indicated that they would benefit from either being a peer mentor, or having the support of a peer mentor	Participants would be able to draw upon the support and advice of a someone of a similar age, who has recent, or current, experience of dealing with challenging issues

## A fresh model

### ➤ Mentoring

Young people have spoken extremely favourably of the support they have received from mentors, citing a non-judgemental, friendly and solution-focused approach that has really worked for them.

This report has looked at what has worked well, and not so well, in relation to both the volunteer and specialist mentoring models, and how the mentoring relationship between mentor and young person has been lengthy in duration.

This report recommends that mentors should **outline the number of sessions of support** that they can offer to a young person from the outset and suggests that this be capped at 6 sessions initially, with the understanding that a 'rolling contract' would allow for a further 6 sessions to be offered at each endpoint.

One focus group in particular spoke persuasively about this as a change they would add to future delivery, stating that it would provide a clearer timeline of support for young people, which would place a greater emphasis on achievement of individual goals according to agreed deadlines.

A 'rolling contract', was a concept that was raised in conversation with Emily Ryles, the TMSE young person and YPP representative interviewed for this report. Her view was that a 6-session model would work best if each young person had the option of renewing this contract on a rolling basis. This would maintain the option of providing a significant number of support sessions which would allow scope for progression with young people who needed extra support, while also allowing the mentor to work towards a structure that would enable both mentor and mentee to openly discuss the circumstances where support would end.

Session 1 would be structured around building the mentor/mentee relationships. At the end of session 1, or during session 2, jointly agreed targets would be identified for the mentee to achieve during sessions 2-6, with the final session looking at the achievements and successes made by the mentee over the mentoring relationship and drawing the support to a close. There would, at session 6, also be the opportunity for both mentor and mentee to jointly agree whether a further 6 sessions would be appropriate, on a rolling basis.

Further to this, the report recommends that it would benefit future delivery to have one organisation in each area (Dover, Eastbourne etc), which has a deeply planted root already established in the area, to manage both specialist and volunteer mentoring delivery. This would support the promotion of more local solutions to issues faced by young people, and would ensure that partnership work, a key positive feature of TMSE delivery, would be maintained and be run along existing local networks.

The advantage of having one organisation managing the volunteer and specialist mentoring delivery is that it would maximise the flexibility of offer, increase the chances of shared knowledge and specialisms to flow between mentors, and create simpler processes for transferring a young person from one mentoring support package to another, depending on their changing needs or circumstances.

### ➤ Young people representation

Young people have been at the heart of the TMSE project and have had significant roles to play as Talent Match Ambassadors. Those who have acted as Ambassadors, in particular, have gained hugely from the project, in terms of personal and professional development opportunities, and access to training sessions and work experience events. The YPP has also benefitted from having highly skilled and passionate Co-ordinators throughout the project, each of whom have brought different skill sets to the role. However, it has seemed that a main challenge for the YPP has been its ability to reach outlying areas of the project, and to feel fully inclusive to all young people and mentors.

Often, YPP representation has seemed to be skewed towards Kent, which is understandable given that the project 'home', and the base for each YPP Co-ordinator, has been the Prince's Trust Chatham Centre, in Kent. Feedback from focus groups, as well as from delivery providers, leads this report to recommend that local YPP groups are set up – one in each area – which have a more locally responsive feel to them, and which understand the needs and requirements of young people in that area much more intricately.

This report also recommends that each local YPP group consists of young people who are given a **specific role**, as well as a specific timeframe set out to undertake this role – 12 to 18 months would seem a sensible duration.

These roles could be applied for by young people, through a recruitment process, and the roles could be formalised as either a traineeship or internship opportunity. In this way, Ambassadors would be able to handover to a new team at a set time, which would allow for fresh ideas to be introduced on a regular basis.

This report recommends that the roles carried out by Ambassadors would include having responsibility for the following areas:

- ❖ Marketing
- ❖ Evaluation and research
- ❖ Project administration
- ❖ Employer engagement
- ❖ Outreach

### ➤ Bursary

The Bursary fund has been a very popular feature of the TMSE project, and we have seen from the Focus Group responses and from additional detail in the report, how the Bursary has supported young people to achieve their individual outcomes more easily.

It has also been highlighted how the spread of Bursary payments to young people has not been equitable – young people in one part of Kent gaining a much greater number of awards than those living in another part, as well as a small number of young people gaining cumulative awards that have reached the £500 mark. A significant number of young people, meanwhile, did not apply for bursary funding, which represents a missed opportunity for them.

This report considers it unlikely that future project delivery could make a similar offer of £500 per person. It is therefore important to make sure that with a smaller amount available, every

participant is aware of how to request and access the funding, and every participant is encouraged by their mentor to start thinking about how best to spend their allotted sum at every opportunity.

This report recommends that every young person is made aware, at their first meeting both their meeting, of the amount of Bursary available to them.

It would then be up to the mentor and young person to hold discussions at their meetings, about how to best prioritise this sum. Young people would be expected to keep records of how much they have been able to spend though the award and be more in control of the budgeting of this amount.

This tighter model of funding would help to ensure that **every young person has access to the same degree of funding**, and also to support them to become more financially aware, and to have more ownership of their entitled sum of money.

### ➤ **Activities**

We have seen how the Hub Budget activities have added great value to the TMSE project, through the funding of projects that have benefitted young people's outcomes in terms of **socialisation, health and wellbeing, reduced instances of isolation, and increased levels of participation**. They have also played a large role in ensuring that the participants have learned ways of building resilience, and have been able to explore ways in which they can take better care of themselves, both mentally and physically.

We have also seen how large chunks of funding have not been spent. This report recommends that each local mentoring organisation is given an Activity Award, the value of which would depend on the size of each area, which mentors and young people, as well as each local YPP, would be able to decide how best to use, in order to commission **new and exciting small-scale partnerships** that would be responsive to young people's needs.

The activities would be set out at the beginning of each project, ideally revised annually, so that they would form a 'menu' of activities that young people were aware of from the outset, and, with the agreement of the mentor, that they would be able to identify as a preferred option to participate in. In this way, young people would be able to take more responsibility for deciding the way in which they use their Bursary funding, so that it can support their participation in a selected activity.

### ➤ **Marketing**

The Talent Match South East Facebook page carries a whole host of 'young person friendly' project related content, much of it produced by young people themselves. Focus group findings however point to the fact that very small numbers of young people were aware of the Facebook page, and the focus group that contained members of the YPP was the only one that was able to comment on it meaningfully. The challenge is therefore to ensure that future delivery is able to create a similar page, which is **accessed by all**.

This report recommends that consideration be given to each area having its own Facebook page, which is shown to young people at the point of any outreach or sign up activity occurring. An expectation would be placed on each young person, by their mentor, to add content to the

site, and any content deriving from any engagements with employers, or from funded activities, is uploaded to the site as a matter of course.

### ➤ **A Hub (delivery venue)**

Focus Group responses often made mention of the ‘family feel’ of TMSE – the way in which young people placed great value on the support they received, from their mentors, from other practitioners on the project, and from other young people. This came out strongest from the Kent focus group, where a hub-style access point was central to the delivery of the project in the county’s largest TMSE area, Medway.

This report recommends that any future project spends time during the project inception phase to identify an **accessible, town centre, low cost venue space** to deliver from. The report has shown how costs for using a space, for 1 or 2 days a week, do not need to be high, and, if the right partner organisation is found, then there are many positive spin offs to be had from this.

This space would serve as a fulcrum point for the project – somewhere where delivery partner and YPP meetings can be held, where specialist and volunteer meetings are convened, and where young people can meet other young people in a safe, supportive environment.

Recalling that 28% of all young people on the project have reported experiencing mental ill health, this would go some way to addressing the mental health issues faced by young people on TMSE and on future similar projects. Greater levels of socialisation, and opportunities to meet people who have experienced similar issues in life, increase the chances of people finding support networks, and supportive people, that impact positively on them.

### ➤ **Peer Mentors**

One focus group in particular talked about conversations they had had previously, as a separate group, regarding what they termed ‘Young Helpers’.

Pressed further on this, the focus group felt that many young people on TMSE would have benefited from short bursts of peer mentoring, on the basis that it is helpful to draw upon the support and advice of a someone of a similar age, who has recent, or current experience of dealing with challenging issues.

This report considers that a **form of peer mentoring could be offered to young people** on an individual basis, depending on the needs of the mentee and the skills and experiences of the mentor.

A briefing session could be run by delivery partners, aimed at ensuring that all young people interested in taking up the option of having a peer mentor, understand the mentor/mentee relationship fully, and are aware of expectations and boundaries. A 4-session model could be drawn up to work from, similar to the 6-session model outlined in the first recommendation.

## Recommendations – concluding comments

These recommendations would ensure that the most beneficial aspects of TMSE are at the forefront of any future delivery, but are more locally responsive, are more cost effective, and are more tightly focussed in terms of the duration and scope of support offered to young people.

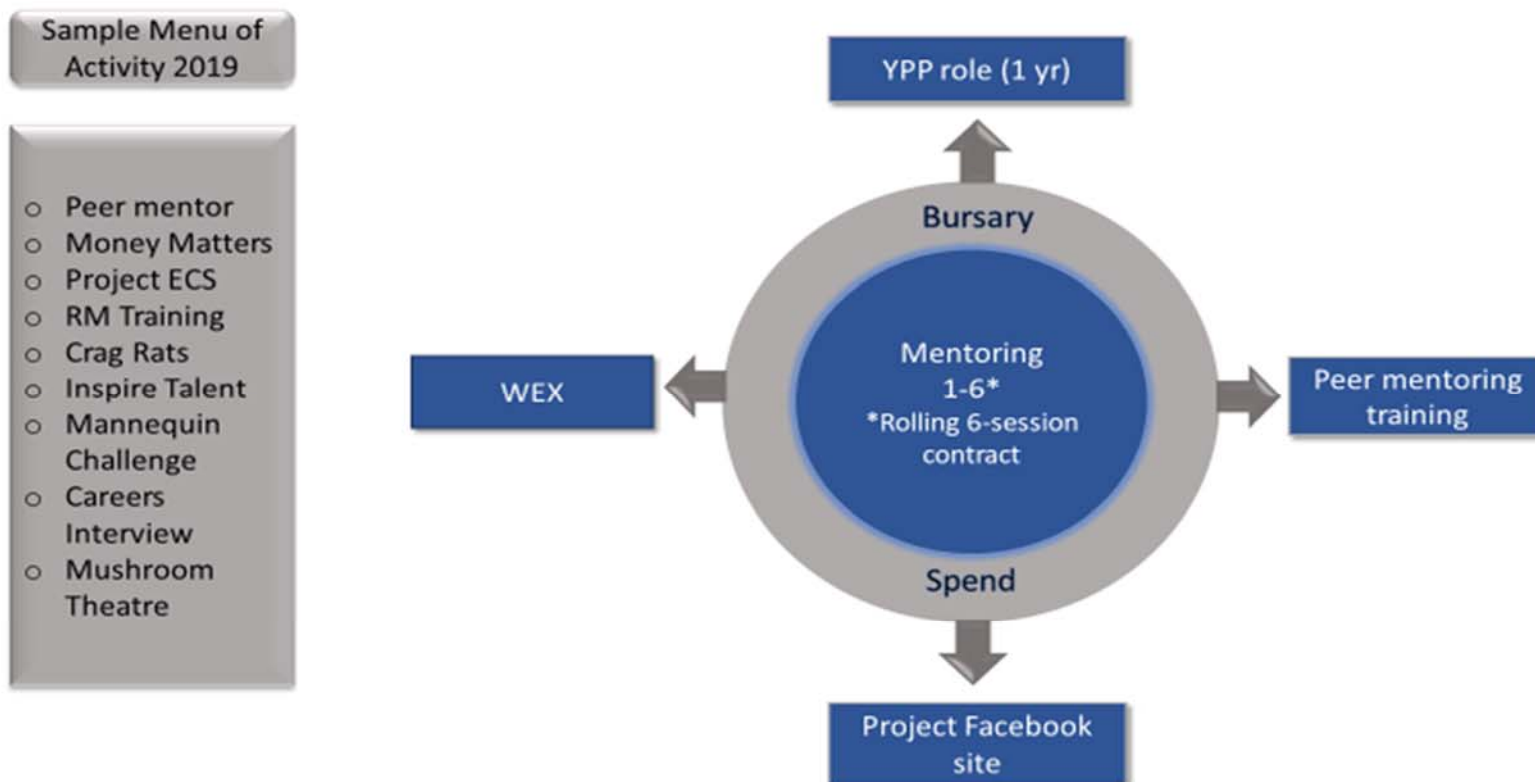
They are based on the views of discussions held with 20 young people who have participated on the project, as well as from a wide range of practitioners from all 3 areas. They bring the very large scope of the TMSE project, with all its different moving parts and processes, into a more manageable and sharper offer of support.

A simple visual diagrammatic representation of the recommended new model is added here to conclude this section. The intention of this diagram is to show the clear differentiation between the core offer – the one that every mentee should be aware of (shaded blue), and the non-core offer (shaded grey).

The diagram provides a clear outline of the different activities and opportunities for personal development offered by a project that mentors and mentees can tap into where appropriate to individual need – either passively, such as viewing the project Facebook site, or more actively, such as becoming a project Ambassador or taking part in peer mentoring training. It also highlights the available opportunities on offer, so that mentees can plan to engage with these, and start to have thoughts about how their bursary spend can be used to facilitate their engagement.

This model would help to ensure that everyone gets the same offer – that mentees and mentors are aware of what the offer is and of how it can be accessed. It makes certain that the offer is more democratised, and that **no-one misses out on engaging with the full scope** of the offer through either a lack of awareness or understanding of what can be accessed.

A diagram to show the proposed new model for future delivery of a mentoring project



## Final Comments

It has been evident, from talking to young people, delivery partners, and organisations who have partnered with TMSE, that many aspects of the 5-year project have worked extremely well. The **partnership work**, the **innovative use of funding to deliver additional activities**, and the **breadth of the 1:1 support offer**, encompassing both Specialist and Volunteer Mentors, are the most **prominent examples of what has worked well**.

Young people, across the focus groups sessions, and in individual conversations, have clearly articulated what they have gained from the project most – **confidence, communication skills, conquering fears, making new contacts and having new experiences**.

They have spoken about the project having given them the opportunity to make changes in their lives, and about the high value they have placed on the support they have received from mentors as well as from other project delivery staff.

The recommendations within this report seek to place these positive experiences within a tighter framework, making future delivery of a similar styled project more democratic and localised, and giving each participant the **same number of opportunities** as everyone else.

The report has shown how young people have been at the heart of the project in many ways – and how young people have begun to advocate on behalf of their peers, for better mental health awareness and a greater understanding of autism, for example, when they have met with employers and other public figures of influence.

Right at the very end of completing this report, I attended a TMSE celebration event in Margate, in Kent, for an employability event (Project ECS, in conjunction with 360 Recruitment). At the end of the event, one of the young people handed a thank you card to her mentor. Its message read:

“Thank you for helping me out with getting the work experience and sticking by me. It means a lot to me as I have actually completed something on my own.”

Towards the end of 2017, TMSE were invited to apply for legacy funding from Big Lottery Fund. A bid was put together which encompassed many of the successes of TMSE, but delivered with a fresher feel. This has been approved, and the TMSE team in Kent have already started a new pilot project called Launch Pad Swale. This project is built around the premise that people are more likely to gain support where there is an accessible, friendly, supportive venue from where this support can be accessed. If this pilot is successful, then plans are in place to extend within Kent next year. Partners in other areas are also investigating feasibility of running Launch Pads in their own areas. TMSE has provided the evidence base to support any bid, but organisations also have to consider their own local needs and incorporate them to provide the best service for young people in their areas.

The drive must now be centred around developing existing partnerships, and building new ones to set in motion a number of other Launch Pad initiatives that could spring up across other areas.

This would go a great distance to ensuring that the successes of the TMSE project are carried forward in tangible ways, well into the future, so that many more people like the one quoted above, are able to feel such a sense of personal pride in achieving something important to them.



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# This document has been compiled by Talent Match South East and AJD Solutions.

## **About Talent Match South East**

Talent Match is a Big Lottery Fund project that helps long-term unemployed 18 - 24 year olds find training and work.

A number of organisations work together to form the Talent Match South East partnership, led by The Prince's Trust, to deliver an effective range of local services to support young people.

## **About AJD Solutions**

AJD Solutions is a Rochester based consultancy firm, specialising in project evaluation and the delivery of innovative community engagement projects.

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