

Positive Progressions is a Building Better Opportunities Project Co-financed by National Lottery Community Fund and European Social Funding, and delivered by Craven College. This is an Executive Summary of an Independent Evaluation carried out by The Evaluator.

Positive Progressions helps people get back to work, and to stay there. Participants see increases in wellbeing and resilience. The impact is assessed here, including an assessment of what happens, Six Months Later, after people have left the project.

Participants were all families living in York and North Yorkshire and who were in receipt of means-tested benefits and not currently in employment.

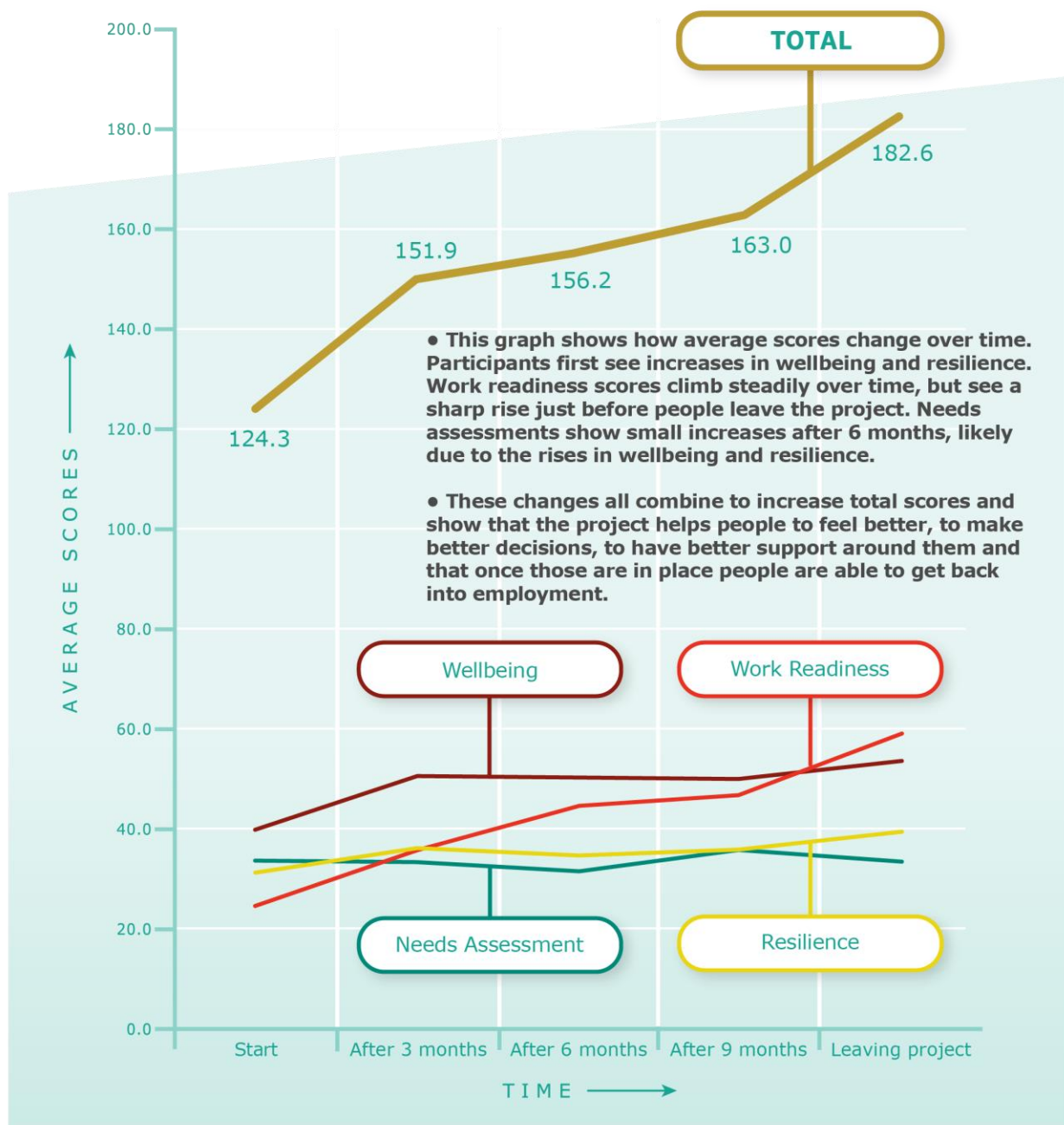


Executive Summary

The Positive Progressions project supports individuals and families who are at risk of isolation from society. The project is delivered across Craven, Harrogate, Selby and York and aims to increase the resilience and employability of disadvantaged people.

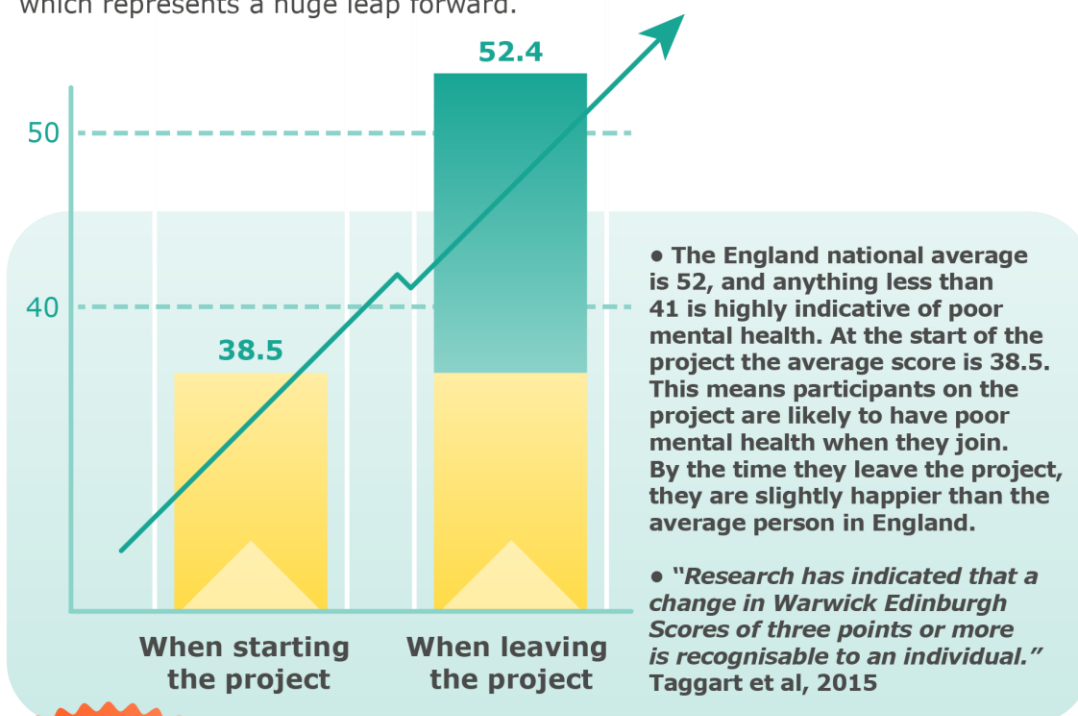
Participants are assigned their own keyworker to help them access the services and tools they need in order to find suitable employment or training opportunities. Our specifically designed measurement tools are able to capture any changes in wellbeing, confidence, resilience and work-readiness over the duration of the project, in turn providing a crucial insight into its all-round success.

Not all participants spend 9 months on the project. It is a bespoke offer and some spend less time and some spend more.



Wellbeing

For participants, their journey from start to end of the project sees **their wellbeing increase enormously**. From joining with poor mental health, participants progress in leaps and bounds and essentially leave feeling happier than the average person - with a threefold noticeable increase in happiness, which represents a huge leap forward.



90%
increased
their
wellbeing

...an average increase of **13.9** points.

That's the difference between:

being at risk of
severe mental
health problems

being almost as
happy as anyone
else in the UK



Participant Quote

"I have times now when I am just so content with life; it fills you up and takes your breath away for a moment."



Wellbeing was measured via the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)

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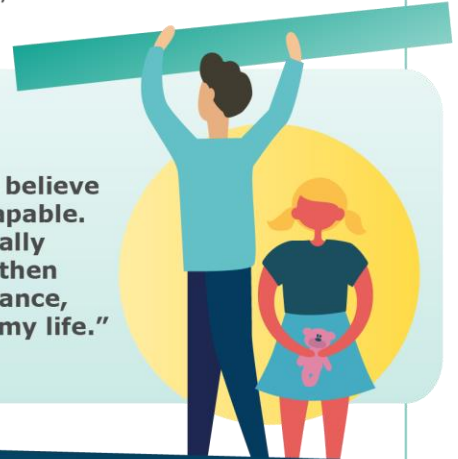
Resilience

People are more resilient; participants on the project experience a notable increase in their ability to overcome adversity. They have higher self-esteem and now cope with making decisions. They are demonstrably better able to make plans and stick to them, freely say yes to opportunities, and are able to deal with stressful situations.



Participant Quote

"Positive Progressions gave me the confidence to believe in myself after years of being told that I wasn't capable. The fact that you believed in me, and you were really proactive in helping me boost my confidence and then helping me find the right path and giving me guidance, was the thing that helped me move forward with my life."



85%

saw a positive increase in resilience skills

→ ...of whom 50% saw a change of 10 points or more.

These are long term skills including being able to:

"plan for the future"

&

"cope with stressful situations"



"They (the participants) are more confident, have better self-esteem and hopefully will be more resilient when problems arise."

Keyworker



"The keyworker offer is bespoke to the individual participant."

From the outset the keyworker recognises the barriers, interests, assets, and circumstances of each individual and creates a collaborative plan to empower the participant to progress. No journey is the same, but the keyworker always has the participant in the centre of the journey - there is no agenda; just the main aim to move the individual towards, and into, employment that works for them."

Pippa Syers, Community & Projects Manager, Craven College

Work Readiness



Participant Quote

"Positive Progressions was definitely a stepping stone and a lifeline in getting my life back after my illness. I didn't know what I was going to do or who to turn to at the time. You gave me guidance and pointed me in the right direction on which road to take. In 6 months, I had turned a corner and felt much better with my anxiety. I gained confidence and started mixing with people again. I got my CV together so that I could apply for jobs; I wouldn't have applied for the jobs at Carer's Resource without Positive Progressions. I wouldn't have had confidence to set up the cleaning business."

Participants feel more ready and able to seek out, acquire and maintain employment. The progress they make is best described as an overall journey whereby the average participant increases their scores consistently.

At the start of the project there are notably large increases in emotional wellbeing and resilience, which in turn have a positive and direct impact on work readiness.

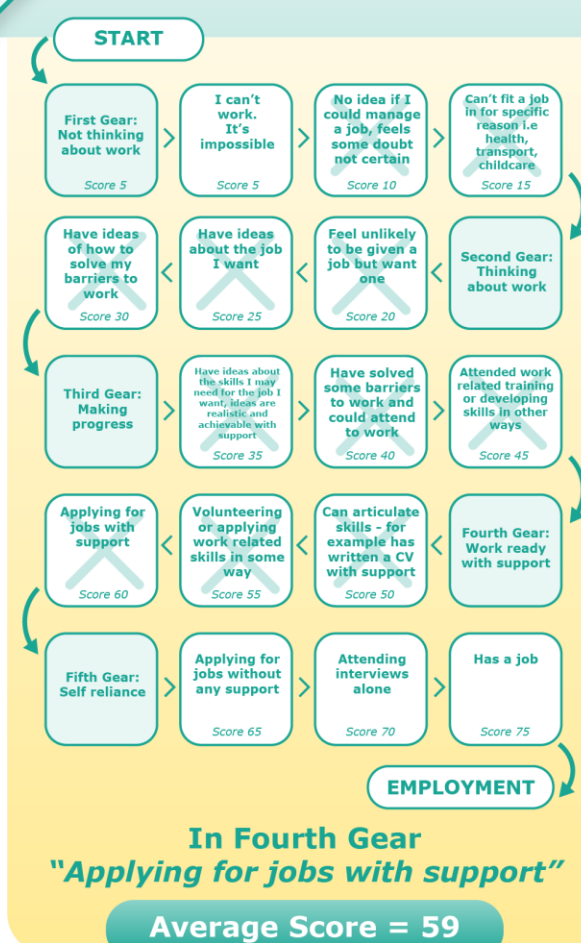
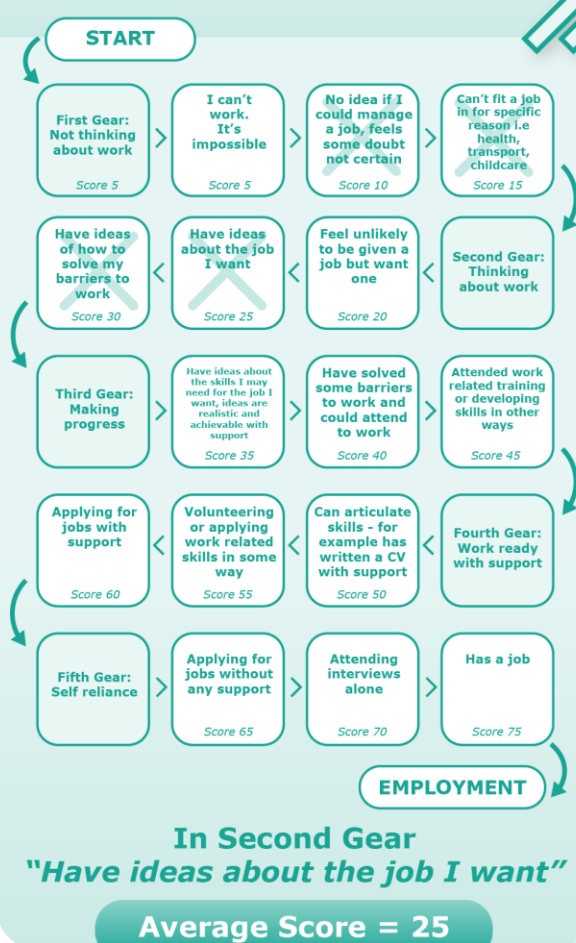
91% of graduates leave to a positive progression outcome,

...and **51%** of those leave to start employment.

The Work Readiness Road Map

From here at the **START**

to here at the **END**



Six Months Later

Six Months after graduating from Positive Progressions, participants were claiming fewer benefits, using fewer public services, and feeling happier and healthier.

People visited their GP less, relied on foodbanks less, and accessed mental health support less.

Translated into financial terms, this represents a huge saving for the public purse of £1.8 million each year!

£1.8 million

20 graduates of the programme Six Months Later. What is life like for them now?



90%
have still
positively
progressed

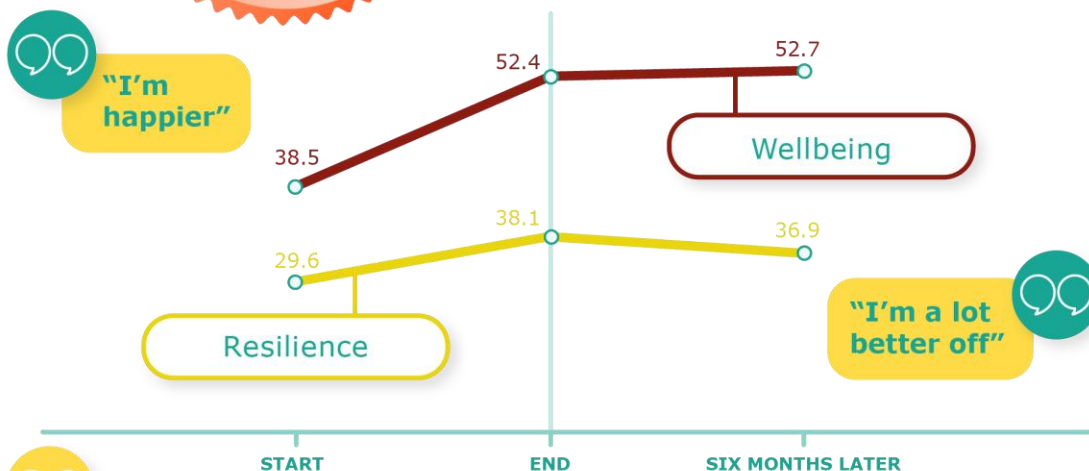
12

people who left with a job, still have a job

5

people who left to study, are still studying

1 person is still setting up their own business, 1 person is on maternity leave, and 1 person is pregnant and no longer working



"Is there anything you are particularly proud of during your time on Positive Progressions?"

The number of individuals who have positively progressed and then sustained that employment at least 6 months later is a huge success. In my view the social impact to the whole family and society is priceless. Giving children a role model, sometimes for the first time, of a parent who is working can break generational cycles of joblessness and poverty."

Pippa Syers, Community & Projects Manager, Craven College