

THE WAY FORWARD EVALUATION – KEY FACTS

This page highlights some key findings of the evaluation of the Way Forward, which will be of use to policy-makers. Using evidence from focus group discussions with young women, focus groups and semi-structured interviews with project staff and stakeholders and desk-based analysis of monitoring data and case notes we **can emphatically say** that the Way Forward was a successful project that provides a good example of preventative, early intervention work with young women. From October 2012 to October 2015, the project succeeded in identifying and addressing unmet need for 165 young women.

Key Messages from the Evaluation

1. The Way Forward is an example of effective, gendered, personalised, preventative approach with young women at risk.
2. Young women using the Way Forward Project have trust and confidence in it.
3. Young women using the Way Forward have high levels of need and distress that are not recognised or do not reach the thresholds for other services.
4. The Way Forward leads us to consider how many fewer women might be in abusive relationships if young women developed resilience and self-esteem through projects such as this; and how many fewer children would be involved in child protection proceedings or in local authority care if young women were supported in their own right and not just in relation to parenting abilities/capabilities.

The evaluation findings: Making a difference, and improving girls and women's lives

The stories of the young women involved with the project reflected many positive changes, with one saying,

“But I’m stopping drinking. I’ve been drinking too much and I don’t want to end up like my mum, it got to the point where I was just using it as a release of my problems and it’s not healthy so I’ve decided to stop drinking for a bit until I get myself sorted. Probably get some counselling and stuff like that” Young woman

The Engagement Worker also suggested that another way in which the project was having an impact was in relation to prevention, suggesting that

“If this service wasn’t here, without the work that we’ve done we maybe have more crisis around mental health with more self-harming, more girls displaying risk of behaviour or putting themselves at risk or harm, the crime rate could go up, further sexual exploitation, .pregnancies, working girls, all of that and then we hit the criminal justice system.” Engagement Worker

For more detailed findings please see our other relevant documents: Evaluation Summary, Full evaluation report, dissemination events, publications and conference papers, available <http://www.womencentredworking.com/> and <http://womencentre.org.uk/> or please contact Dr Louise Warwick-Booth, l.warwick-booth@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

