



I4-NOW – Year 3 Final Report

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1. Introduction

14-NOW builds on the Fourteen programme (2015-2018) funded by Spirit of 2012 to increase levels of social inclusion and enhance participation in community activities across fourteen communities throughout the UK. Two of the fourteen communities (Creggan & Monkstown/Mossley) were selected in Northern Ireland and managed by Springboard Opportunities Limited. Springboard had overall responsibility for the delivery of the Fourteen project and was supported by designated Community Partner within each community – Old Library Trust and Monkstown Boxing Club.

Following the three-year partnership with Spirit of 2012, Springboard was awarded an additional £450,000 in July 2018, to continue building on the success of Fourteen, via a new programme called 14-NOW. 14-NOW aims to consolidate impact in both communities and work with a ‘new’ community Limavady and community partner, Roe Valley Residents Association.

Now in its third and final year, the 14-NOW programme is focused on four main outcome areas defined by Spirit of 2012:

- ▶ Increased wellbeing (based on ONS measure)
- ▶ Challenging perceptions of disability and enabling people to participate on equal terms
- ▶ Increasing social connectedness
- ▶ Empowering young people (including evidencing pathways to employability)

14-NOW projects in Creggan and Monkstown also engaged with volunteers as part of their activities, particularly through the COVID-19 response, although for most projects, this was not a focus of their monitoring and evaluation.

This report specifically covers the final year of the programme. A separate report will take a combined look across the three years of 14-NOW.

2. Evaluation Methodology

In August 2018 inFocus Consultancy Ltd started a three-year evaluation of the 14-NOW programme based on a mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data. This report compares baseline and end-line data for the third and final year of 14-NOW, combining baseline/end-line questionnaires, interviews with project leads and participants, and remote focus groups with participants conducted by inFocus.

There were a number of limitations effecting the evaluation, mainly in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, which effected the timing of collecting data, prevented field visits from taking place, and limited the inFocus evaluation team to conducting interviews and focus groups remotely (as some projects had stopped delivery in the weeks leading up to Christmas to protect themselves, their participants and their families).

As in each year of the evaluation, there is also a reliance on questionnaire data collected by the staff and volunteers from projects funded by 14-NOW (which could impact impartiality and the quality of the data), which is mitigated in part, through the mixed methods approach and triangulating through using both quantitative and qualitative data.

It should also be noted that the sample size across projects varied considerably. Findings from larger sample sizes will have more weighting as there is less possibility that the results are circumstantial and outliers (unusual results) will have less impact. The data may therefore have a different interpretation, dependant on the sample size.

3. Overview of Activities

This section provides detail on the different activities that were run as part of the third year of 14-NOW and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on activities.

3.1 Summary of projects and outputs

The four projects run as part of the third year of 14-NOW are shown in the table below, along with the breakdown of the participants they engaged with.

Project	Provider	Target Audience	No. of participants	Ethnicity	Disability	Gender
Play to Grey	Roe Valley Residents Association (Limavady)	This partnership project between the areas of Greysteel, Burnfoot, Dungiven, Glack and Limavady targeted 7 demographic groups (Pre-school/Parents & Toddlers, Children and Young people (4-18 years old), Women (25 years+), Men, Older People, Volunteers, Residents with a disability)	568 participants	White: 100%	Disabled: 22% Non-disabled: 78%	Female: 67% Male: 33%
			30 volunteers			
Community Builder	Old Library Trust (Creggan)	The Community Builder engaged with women and girls aged 8-25 years old within schools and community	110 participants	White: 100%	Disabled: 2% Non-disabled: 98%	Female: 49% Male: 51%
			4 volunteers			
Step Forward	Old Library Trust (Creggan)	Target group aged 26+ who are living with a life limiting, long term illness, health problem or a disability.	208 participants	White: 100%	Disabled: 26% Non-disabled: 74%	Female: 75% Male: 25%
			2 volunteers			
Community Thriving	Monkstown Boxing Club (Monkstown/ New Mosley)	Community Thriving support young people aged 11-16 years old and adults aged 40+ years old from New Mossley/Monkstown communities.	67 participants	White: 78% Mixed Ethnicity: 22%	Disabled: 22% Non-disabled: 78%	Female: 58% Male: 42%
			4 volunteers			

3.2 The impact of Covid-19

In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic caused the whole of the United Kingdom to be placed under lockdown measures, resulting in all community programming, work, and education had to be stopped or predominantly moved online. Further lockdowns have taken place since March 2020, with some restrictions still in place at the time this report was written. The summary below details the impact of Covid-19 on the 14-Now programme and the communities involved. In many ways, in their responses to the lockdown, the various projects became more creative in the way they engaged participants and delivered their activities. Significantly, the temporary cessation of project activities had different impacts for individuals and communities. In some cases, the Covid-19 pandemic actually provided new opportunities, for example, through the unplanned widening of the stakeholders who were initially targeted by particular projects. The main areas of the 14-NOW projects impacted on by Covid-19 were;

- ▶ Project delivery methods and activities
- ▶ Social interaction
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Finances
- ▶ Health and wellbeing.

3.2.1 Impact of Covid-19 on 14-Now Communities

Although the lockdown periods in the third year of 14-NOW were not as long as they were in the second year of the programme, the pandemic continues to have an impact on all four projects. Project leads highlighted that the pandemic has set them back on the programmes they wanted to initially deliver, as much of their efforts in the second and third years went on responding to the needs of participants at the time, and trying to re-engage them both back into the project but also into the community.

Staff in the Community Thriving project reported that they, in addition to the participants were impacted by the pandemic due to the increased support they needed to provide in the community which resulted in long working hours/days. Moreover, many of their participants (primarily young people) were experiencing low levels of wellbeing and high levels of isolation and anxiety, which in turn had a lasting impact on mentors who were providing support. To aid their staff members and mentors, group and individual counselling sessions were provided to staff as/when they were needed, which the project lead has said was welcomed by the team and was needed to allow them to continue doing their jobs.

As mentioned above, all projects reported that the mental health of participants was adversely affected as a result of the pandemic. At Step Forward, the project lead reported that when they identified a participant was struggling with mental health, they would refer them onto their counsellors to provide additional support from a qualified individual.

Due to the nature of the Step Forward project, they receive high levels of referrals from GPs in the local areas. Throughout COVID-19 their waiting lists for their project has increased rapidly, and therefore the project leads have had to refer potential beneficiaries to their normal timetable of opportunities while they wait for their specific support, to ensure everyone in the community has the opportunity to engage in activities.

Project leads from Play to Grey reported that the Roe Valleys Women's Network was particularly impacted by COVID-19 in relation to engagement from participants. Prior to the pandemic, the network was "well-attended", however when COVID-19 caused restrictions and national lockdowns, they moved activities online and attendance decreased. However, since returning back to in-person delivery, the Play to Grey programme *"were able to re-establish the women's network, and there's still a steady stream of 20 to 25 woman wanting to engage on a weekly basis."* (Project lead).

3.1.2 Response to, and moving forward from COVID-19 and lockdowns

“COVID has been a nightmare, but the community cohesion that we now have established through our work in the community over this past almost 20 months is unparalleled, as a community, we have just grown together.” **Project lead, Community Thriving**

By the end of the reporting period, the majority of projects, although still being impacted by the pandemic, were able to go back to some form of face-to-face delivery of their project. Project leads from Step Forward, Play to Grey and Community Thriving all reported that social connectedness was a key outcome for them to focus on in response to COVID-19, and to re-engage participants with activities and projects.

Project leads from Play to Grey reported that the residents with a disability group specifically benefitted greatly from engaging with activities during COVID-19, and then continuing that engagement once the project was able to be delivered in-person:

“The feedback from the families and the young service users that were using it was unbelievable, and even during the connections that they had through COVID, the willingness and eagerness for the young people to participate and connect with others that they just wouldn't have that outside of their day to day activities that they were doing, and the opportunities to attend social outings and get seeing environments outside of the Limavady area was great too.” **Play to Grey, Project Lead**

When going back to in-person delivery, all four projects stated that they had focused on providing participants with opportunities to engage with the outdoors. For the Step Forward project, this included adding weekly walks to their timetable. Participant groups across Community Thriving also focused largely on outdoor activities, particularly during the summer months with then male groups going rock climbing, and the female groups going sea swimming:

“We were just doing all the things that we'd all always done, and we used a lot of outdoor space for our activities. We did a lot of sea swimming and mountain climbing, a lot of the boys did mountain climbing. And after Easter, I did a lot of sea swimming with the young women which just raised their confidence, jumping into waterfalls and we had the best time just exploring the outdoors” **Community Thriving, Project Lead**

3.2 Barriers to participants attending activities

In this section we outline some of the main barriers that emerged for participants attending the 14-NOW projects in the final year of the programme, as identified by programme leads across the four projects:

▶ **Digital skills**

“The old people didn't know how to work the tablets and didn't know how to connect the internet. You have to have the human resources in the building to actually go to the doorsteps and you're giving a crash course to older people on a daily basis as to how they can connect and participate in their Zoom.”- Play to Grey, Project lead

▶ **Access to digital**

“(We had) to secure additional funding to purchase the tablets and also the 4g data, because, you know, the barriers were that households didn't have a tablet or they didn't have a digital device, but then other households may have a digital device, but no internet access. So it was just getting that balance.”- Play to Grey, Project lead

▶ **Mental health**

“So the ones that were in that group (transgender young people) were struggling with school attendance. I had been on the phone to a few (of their) parents and they said; “if they don't go to school they can't go to the group” and it was a case that they could really do with coming to the group because it would support their mental health and we might get them back into school.” – Community Thriving, Project lead

▶ **Time and capacity**

“I suppose at the start of the exercise referral the only real barrier was time because I was running all of those programs, and we were getting a lot of referrals and from the GP referral so we dealt with a lot of people that we weren't able to reach all at one time. And then over COVID the only thing was those people just still on a waiting list and we were still nowhere near even reaching them.” – Step Forward, Project lead

4 Findings

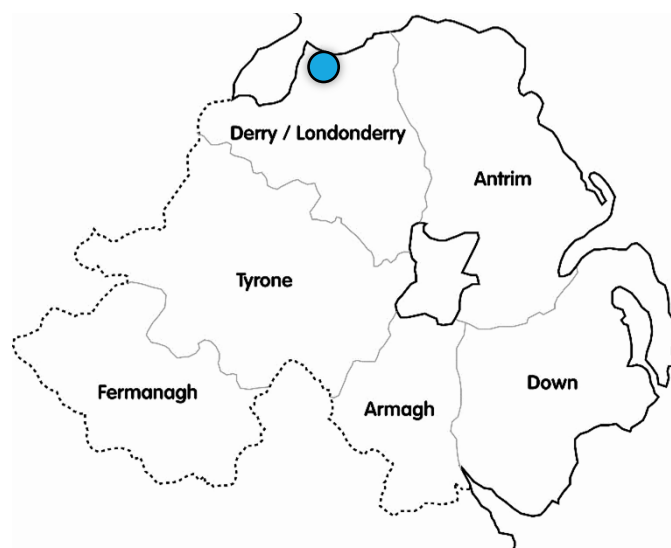
In this section we detail the findings for each of the four 14-NOW projects taking place across 2020. Each project collected data relating to the four Office of National Statistics (ONS) wellbeing questions, with the option to use other survey questions across other areas such as *perceptions of disability*, *empowering young people*, *social connectedness*, and *volunteering*. For all of the projects the quantitative data is also combined with qualitative data from interviews and focus groups (as described above, this was not possible to collect across all projects).

4.1 Play to Grey (Limavady)

4.2.1 Description

The Play to Grey programme is a partnership project between the areas of Greysteel, Burnfoot, Dungiven, Glack and Limavady.

The overall aim is to provide services which encourage inclusion, personal well-being and social connectiveness, with a specific focus on reducing isolation during the COVID/19 pandemic. The Play to Grey project targets seven demographic groupings with bespoke services for each grouping. Each grouping was identified and chosen based upon the needs of the rural communities in these areas, which all share a common challenge of limited access to services and activities.



4.2.2 Outcome areas

Wellbeing 	Perceptions of Disability 	Empowering Young People 	Social Connectedness 	Volunteering 
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4.2.3 Outcomes Summary

Average levels of **Wellbeing** increased by 2.3-2.7 points amongst participants from baseline to end-line across all ONS measures of *Life Satisfaction*, *Life is Worthwhile* and *Current Happiness*, with overall *current anxiety* levels decreasing by 1.2 on average across participants. Across the participant groups, the participants in the Mens group had the highest increase in average scores for life satisfaction, life is worthwhile, and current

happiness. Participants from the Women’s group reported the biggest decrease in anxiety levels, with average scores decreasing by 2.3. However, residents with a disability reported a significant increase in anxiety levels (from 4.2 to 6.3). By the endline reporting, average wellbeing scores among all groups were higher than the national average in life satisfaction, life is worthwhile and current happiness. In relation to anxiety levels, average scores across all groups were slightly less than the national average (0.1), however three groups (Parents and Toddlers, older people and residents with a disability) reported higher anxiety levels than the national average in the end-line survey. It is important to note that the delivery partner confirmed the anxiety question was likely filled out incorrectly and misunderstood by participants in the residents with a disability group, as they have observed lower levels of anxiety by the group in general.

	Life Satisfaction 0= not satisfied at all/10= completely satisfied			Life is Worthwhile 0= not at all worthwhile/10= completely worthwhile			Current Happiness 0= not at all happy/10= completely happy			Current Anxiety 0= not anxious/10= completely anxious		
	Baseline	Endline	↑	Baseline	Endline	↑	Baseline	Endline	↑	Baseline	Endline	↓
Average score across all groupings	6.1	8.4	+2.3	6.1	8.8	+2.7	6.0	8.5	+2.5	4.4	3.2	-1.2
Parents and Toddlers	7.9	7.8	-0.1	5.8	8.9	+3.1	5.7	8.1	+2.4	4.3	4.1	-0.2
Children and Young People 4-18 years old	5.7	8.7	+3.0	5.8	8.7	+2.9	5.4	8.7	+3.3	2.3	2.5	+0.2
Women (25 years+)	6.5	8.5	+2.0	6.5	8.9	+2.4	6.3	8.7	+2.4	4.8	2.5	-2.3
Men	5.4	8.3	+2.9	5.2	9.4	+4.2	5.2	8.8	+3.6	2.9	1.2	-1.7
Older people	5.4	8.1	+2.7	5.6	8.9	+3.3	5.5	8.4	+2.9	3.9	4.1	+0.2
Residents with a disability	7.5	7.8	+0.3	6.4	8.2	+1.8	7	8	+1.0	4.2	6.3	+2.1
NOW-14 Y3 Average	6.6	8.1	+1.5	6.6	8.3	+1.7	6.3	8.1	+1.8	3.9	3	-0.9
National Average 2021	7.4			7.7			7.3			3.3		

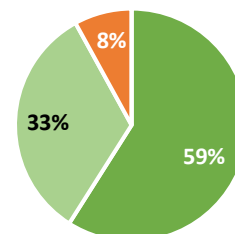
*National Average taken from ONS data on personal well-being in the UK between April 2020 to March 2021, (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2020tomarch2021>)

The following pages look at outcome-related findings for this project, which have been analysed together and not by specific participant group. However, for results concerning empowering young people, these relate only to the answers provided by young people.

To start with, as shown in the chart to the right, 63% of respondents reported that they felt better about their life and future as a result of being involved in the project.

Participants from the women and residents with a disability groups were asked about their confidence and self-esteem levels, and whether these levels have improved since joining the project/activity. 96% (48

Do you feel better about your life and future as a result of being involved in this project/event?



■ Yes a lot ■ Yes ■ A bit ■ Not at all

out of 50) of participants confirmed that they had seen an improvement in their confidence, with 2% (1 individual) not sure and 1% (1 individual) responding that they had not seen an improvement. These findings are similar to self-reported increases in self-esteem, with 94% identifying that this had increased and 6% of individuals reporting that they weren't sure. One delivery partner working with the residents with disabilities group highlighted that the activities in the third year have facilitated participants to increase their confidence:

“Getting them out and about and raising their confidence and going out and about again, because they have been a year and a half without any kind of engagement with the outside community”-
Delivery partner, Play to Grey

74% of participants also responded that they enjoyed the project very much, with 26% identifying that they enjoyed it.

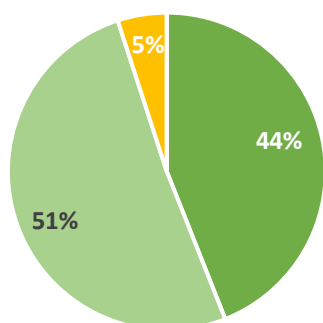
Project leads from the Play to Grey programme reported that the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a lasting impact on the wellbeing and mental health of participants across all groups. Although self-reporting from participant surveys showed an increase in wellbeing, project leads reported that some participants still face social anxiety and a fear of mixing with others:

“The anxiety levels and social anxiety still exists”, **Project lead, Play to Grey**

In relation to *perceptions of disability*, year one and part of year two included volunteer activities taking place on a Friday night including disability discos and trips. In the final year of the delivery, activities moved to focus on activity packs, however some trips were planned with the disability groups to increase their confidence in going back outside after a long period of being isolated due to the pandemic.

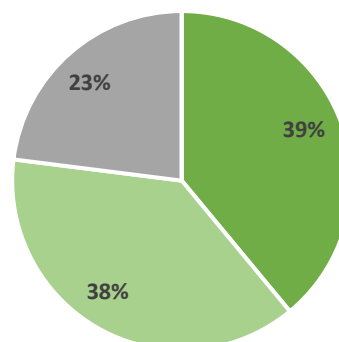
Across Play to Grey participants, 95% reported that their views of disabled people were very positive or positive before taking part in the project. However, 77% felt they had a much more or more positive view of disabled people as a result of taking part.

Would you say your view of disabled people was positive or negative before this project/event?



■ Very positive ■ Positive ■ Negative ■ Very negative

Would you say that the project/event that you have taken part in/attended has caused you to have a different view of disabled people?

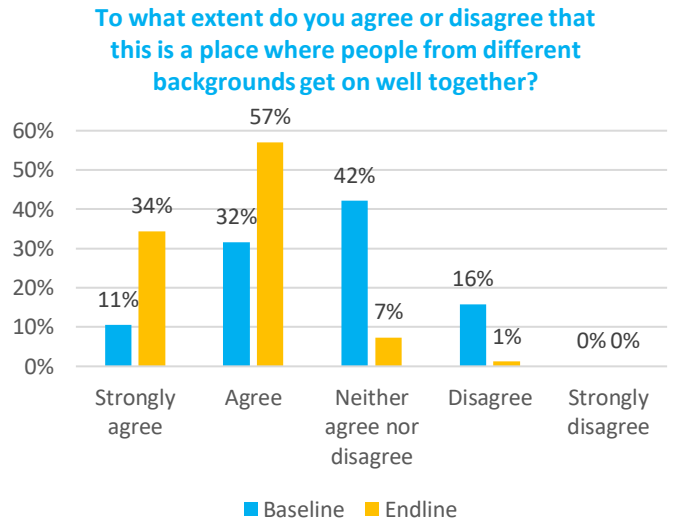
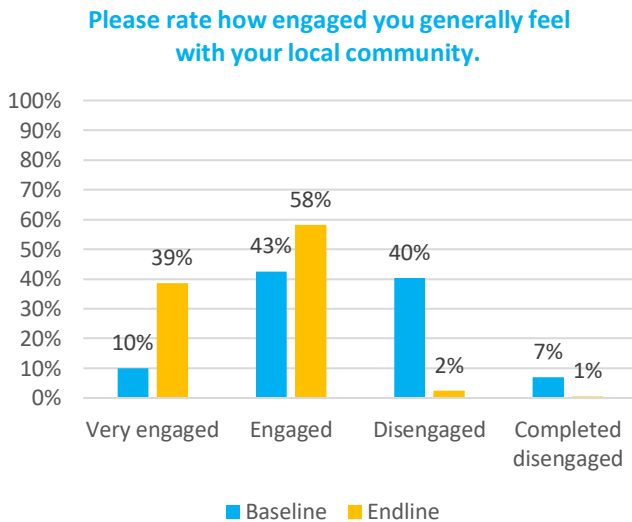
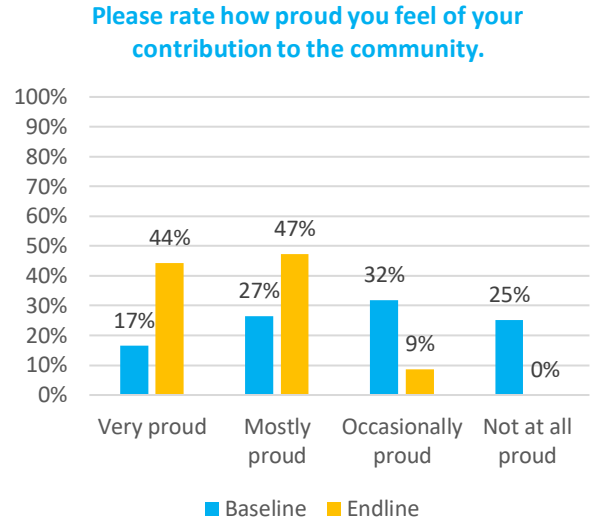
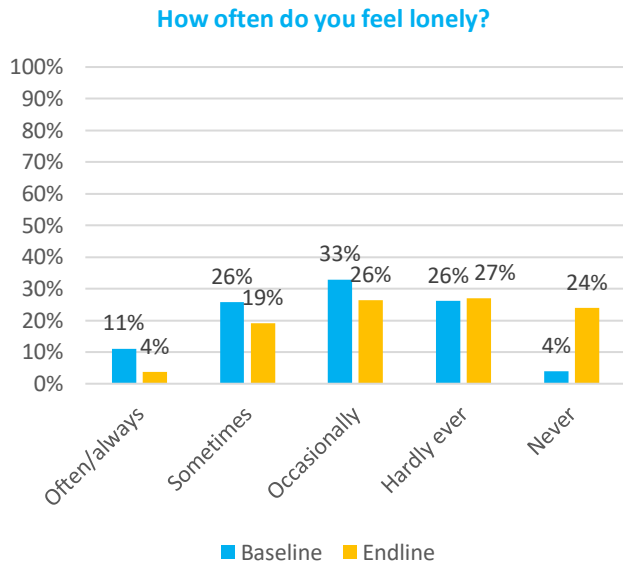


■ Much more positive ■ More positive
 ■ Stayed the same ■ More negative
 ■ Much more negative

As shown in the charts below, in relation to **Social Connectedness**, there were slight reductions in participants feeling lonely with those reporting they ‘often/always’ felt lonely reducing from 11% to 4%. Participants who ‘never’ felt lonely increased from 4% to 24%, demonstrating that levels of loneliness had reduced between baseline and endline reporting. One factor contributing to this could be due to baseline survey being conducted as a number of participants were in lockdown or isolating due to COVID-19, whereas by the end-line survey, the majority of individuals were participating in face to face activities, as described by a project lead:

“I think for some of the groups they were able to actually deliver the programmes with smaller groups and smaller bubbles (after lockdown). I know from Roe Valleys perspective, we were able to take on bigger premises so that alleviated the fact that we couldn’t, within our small community house, we couldn’t deliver really anything, but now with the new premises we were able to offer a bit more.”- Project lead, Play to Grey

There was a significant increase in participants feeling proud of their contribution to the community (an increase from 17% to 44% feeling very proud), and feelings of engagement in the local community (from 10% at baseline to 30% feeling very engaged at the end of the project). The proportion of respondents agreeing that their community “is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together”, increased significantly with 43% stating they either strongly agree or agree at baseline, compared to 91% by the end of the project.



When asked at end-line, 62% of respondents felt that they always belonged at their project, while 36% felt they belonged most of the time and 2% some of the time. Moreover, 52% of respondents felt very proud of their contribution to the project, while 46% felt mostly proud and 2% occasionally proud when asked at endline. As shown in the table below, there was also a significant increase within all categories; arts and cultural heritage, leisure, sport and physical activity and volunteering, between baseline and end-line in relation to participants feeling very empowered or empowered to take part.

	Arts and cultural heritage		Leisure		Sport and physical activity		Volunteering	
	Baseline	End-line	Baseline	End-line	Baseline	End-line	Baseline	End-line
Very empowered	13%	43%	15%	33%	13%	32%	12%	52%
Empowered	21%	40%	32%	51%	16%	45%	16%	28%
Sometimes empowered	40%	16%	33%	13%	35%	16%	35%	14%
Never empowered	27%	1%	19%	4%	38%	8%	38%	7%

Interview discussions with project leads found that there were partnerships being formed with some groups and other local organisations. For example, the residents with a disability group took part in some activities with other projects in the local community to raise awareness of disabilities and to bring young people together:

“There was a lot of partnership work and the reach project worked with other able-bodied groups, young people that were in other youth projects, and there's a lot of partnership work and done with particularly one of the groups in Limavady here, the 17 to 24 year olds, and they did a social activity with them in order for them to raise awareness about people living with disabilities, and their competence and working with people with disabilities and removing barriers and things after all, they're young people. And that worked really well as well.”- Project lead, Play to Grey

Project leads also highlighted that social connections within the women’s group particularly were strengthened as a result of the project, and that many participants made friendships with other women in the local community:

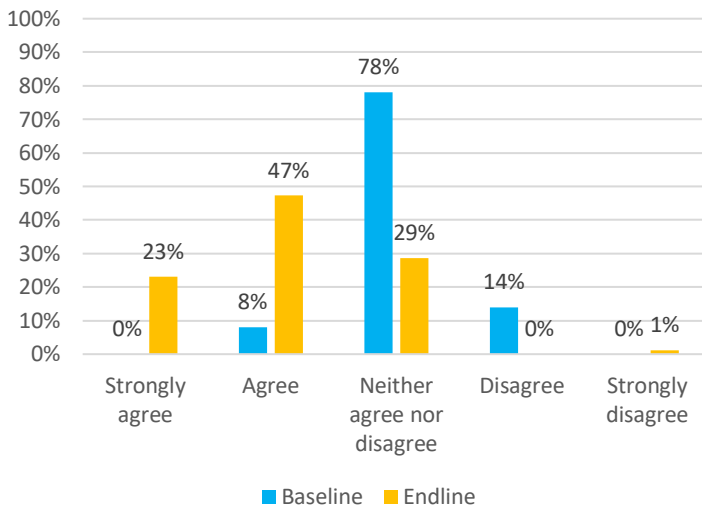
“For the women, it was a lifeline for a lot of them and still is. They did simple activities just to bring them together, where you weren't spending massive amounts of the funding, but it was just an opportunity for people, for woman to come in and connect was great, improve their mental health, their physical wellbeing by going on walks, just connecting with the neighbours that they might even have lived in the same street, but would never have spoken to one another.”- Project lead, Play to Grey

As shown in the charts below, in relation to **Empowering Young People**, the percentage of young people that felt they could make a difference in the community increased considerably between baseline and end-line (an increase of 0% to 23% that strongly agreed and between 8% and 47% that agreed).

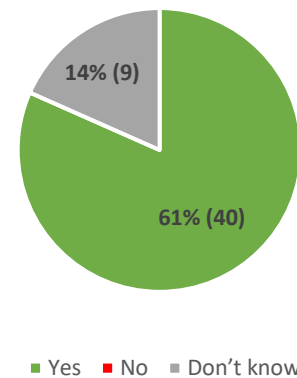
Additionally, the percentage of participants who felt their views were heard by members of the community also increased (from 7% to 62%) and felt that they were able to challenge

the ideas and perspectives of other members of their community (from 3% to 59%). When asked at endline, 61% of participants felt that the project had given them a voice in their community, while 90% reported that they felt the project/activity gave them enough support to have a voice in their community.

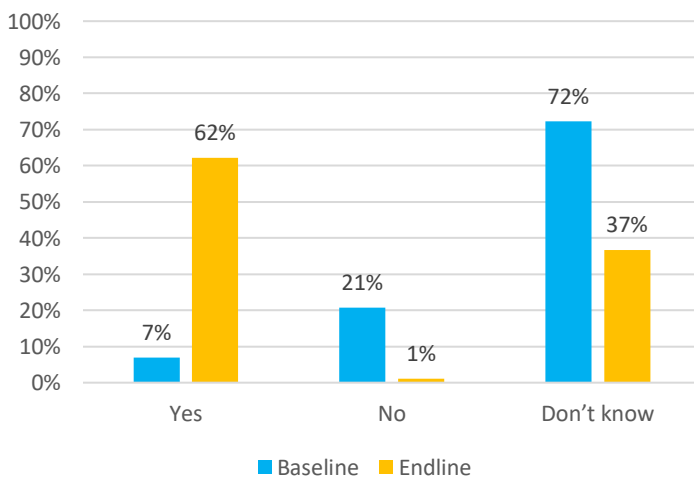
I can make a difference in my community



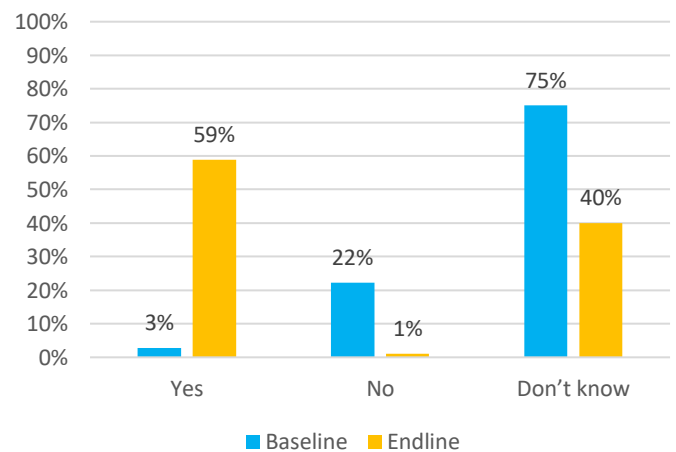
Do you feel that your project/activity has given you a voice in your community?



Do you feel that your views are heard by members of your community?



Do you feel that you are able to challenge the ideas and perspectives of other members of your community?



In addition to the above, 59% of young people stated that they felt they could run a project in their community (12% reported 'no' and 29% stated they 'don't know'). Furthermore, 96% of young people strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of taking part in the project, they are more likely to help their community in the future. This gives an indication that there is the potential for lasting impact in relation to empowering young people to be engaged in the local community and take part in volunteering opportunities.

4.3 Community Builder (Creggan)

4.3.1 Description

This project targets women and girls aged 5-25. The organisation has employed a 'Community Builder', a staff-member who is familiar with the local community, to liaise across all groups in the area, encourage collaboration and partnership working, assist with grant aided activity, and support the local steering group. The Community Builder also works with Sean Dolans GAC, to increase capacity of young girls and women to take part in Gaelic football within school and community settings. This project aims to increase community cohesion and wellbeing levels.



4.3.2 Outcome areas



4.3.3 Outcomes Summary

Average levels of **Wellbeing** actually slightly decreased by 0.1-0.2 points amongst participants from baseline to endline across the ONS measures of *Life Satisfaction*, *Life is Worthwhile* and *Current Happiness*, with *current anxiety* levels slightly increasing by 0.2 percentage points.

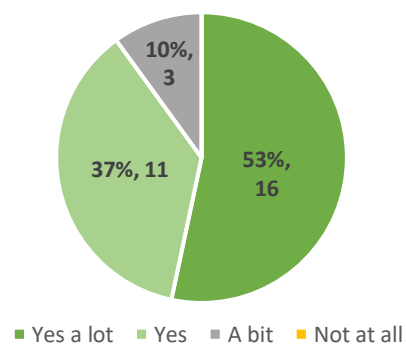
	Life Satisfaction 0= not satisfied at all/10= completely satisfied			Life is Worthwhile 0= not at all worthwhile/10= completely worthwhile			Current Happiness 0= not at all happy/10= completely happy			Current Anxiety 0= not anxious/10= completely anxious		
	Baseline	Endline	Δ	Baseline	Endline	Δ	Baseline	Endline	Δ	Baseline	Endline	Δ
Average score across all groupings	8.2	8	-0.2	8.0	7.9	-0.1	7.9	7.8	-0.1	1.7	1.9	+0.2
NOW-14 Y3 Average	6.6	8.1	1.5	6.6	8.3	1.7	6.3	8.1	1.8	3.9	3	-0.9
National Average 2021	7.4			7.7			7.3			3.3		

The results above could be attributed to the fact that the majority of activities in the third year could not take place, particularly those in schools, due to COVID-19 regulations and limitations. This was explained further by a delivery member of staff on the Sean Dolans project:

“We only got back into the schools here in October. From last March of last year, (we were not in schools) from the 15th March of 2020 untill October 21st.”- **Games Promotion Officer, Sean Dolan’s GAC**

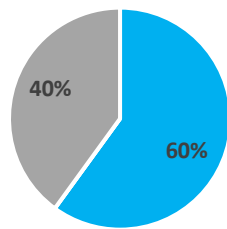
As shown in the chart to the right, 90% of participants felt better about their lives and future as a result of being involved in the project, with 10% reporting that they let ‘a bit’ better.

Do you feel better about your life and future as a result of being involved in this project?



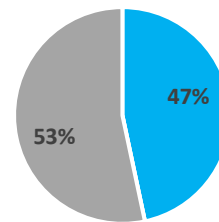
In relation to **volunteering** and **youth empowerment**, 86% of participants agreed that they can make a difference in their community, with all young people reported that because of the project they are more likely to help their community in the future. The charts below demonstrate the extent to which young people in this project felt that they could be heard and challenge ideas in their community. By the end of the project, 47% of participants (14 out of 30) reported that they felt their views were heard by members of their community (53% stated they ‘don’t know’). 60% of young people (18 out of 30) also felt that they were able to challenge the ideas and perspectives of other members of their community (40% reported they did not know). Similarly, when asked if they felt the project had given them a voice in their community, 70% of individuals (21 out of 30) stated ‘yes’, with 30% reporting they ‘don’t know’. The same results were found in relation to whether they felt they had been given enough support by their project to have a voice in the community, with 70% stating yes and 30% did not know.

Do you feel that you are able to challenge the ideas and perspectives of other members of your community?



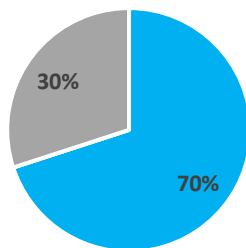
■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Do you feel that your views are heard by members of your community?



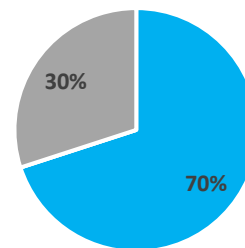
■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Do you feel that your project/activity has given you a voice in your community?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Do you feel that you have been given enough support by your project/activity to have a voice in your community?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Finally, when asked if they felt they could run an activity/project in their community, 33% report 'yes', 3% 'no' and 63% did not know. In a similar way to the wellbeing scores, this could potentially be attributed to the number of contact hours in the third year of the project being reduced, particularly in schools. Therefore participants did not take part in the same activities as they would have done, had the pandemic not occurred.

4.4 Step Forward (Creggan)

4.4.1 Description

The Step Forward programme aimed to support local people living with a long-term condition to live better within their community, by providing tailored opportunities to improve their overall wellbeing. The learning from year one of the programme indicated that people living with a long-term condition need a particular 'hook' or focus to get them engaged in programmes and services. As part of year two, the project offered one-off sessions to



people living with long-term conditions to entice them onto the programme and to assist with their 'journey'. During the third year, project leads noticed a high level of anxiety and isolation due to COVID-19, and therefore added a counselling option for those participants identified as experiencing these challenges. The target group is adults over 16, that are living with a life limiting long term illness, health problem or a disability.

4.4.2 Outcome areas

Wellbeing ✓	Perceptions of Disability ✓	Empowering Young People ✓	Social Connectedness ✓	Volunteering ✗
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4.4.3 Outcomes Summary

Average levels of **Wellbeing** increased slightly by 0.3-0.6 points amongst participants from baseline to endline across the ONS measures of *Life Satisfaction*, *Life is Worthwhile* and *Current Happiness*. Although the average score for these areas were lower than the NOW-14 average, they are all higher than the national average. *Current anxiety* levels also decreased by 1 point, and was lower than both the NOW-14 average and the national average.

	Life Satisfaction 0= not satisfied at all/10= completely satisfied			Life is Worthwhile 0= not at all worthwhile/10= completely worthwhile			Current Happiness 0= not at all happy/10= completely happy			Current Anxiety 0= not anxious/10= completely anxious		
	Baseline	Endline	↑	Baseline	Endline	↑	Baseline	Endline	↑	Baseline	Endline	↓
Average score across all groupings	7.4	7.9	+0.5	7.5	7.8	+0.3	7.1	7.7	+0.6	2.9	1.9	-1.0
NOW-14 Y3 Average	6.6	8.1	1.5	6.6	8.3	1.7	6.3	8.1	1.8	3.9	3	-0.9
National Average 2021	7.4			7.7			7.3			3.3		

One factor for the increase in wellbeing could potentially be the introduction of one-to-one counselling sessions for this final year. The project lead described that:

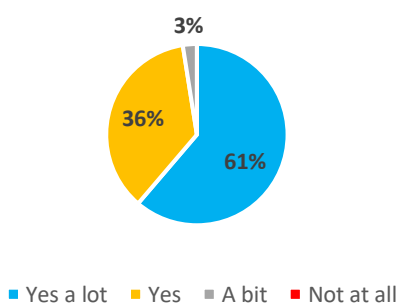
“So all of the programs that we’ve been doing have a massive emphasis on socialising for improvements in mental health, physical activity for a mental health. But we have the opportunity to work with counsellors in here. So anybody that’s coming on to the program, if they really identifying as somebody who struggled mentally, we were able to refer them on to that. And also going forward for any programmes with the funding that we go for, for condition management, we’re going to have counselling budgets set aside for that, because for 90% of the people it’s not just physical it’s mental.” – Project lead, Step Forward

Moreover, one participant who is living with long COVID, reported that their wellbeing and mental health had improved as the project gives them the opportunity to leave the house, get outside and take part in activities with other people. Before experiencing this condition, the participant worked full time in the health sector and went to the gym four times a week. Therefore, taking part in Step Forward gave them an opportunity to follow a schedule and not be isolated indoors:

“It gives me a reason to go out. It’s good socially and is helping me feel better and stronger. The social aspect is good for my mental health. I’m used to being busy and I needed this to give me something to do”- Participant, Step Forward

As shown in the chart to the right, 61% of participants felt a lot better about their lives and future, as a result of being involved in the project, with 36% feeling better (3% stated they felt ‘a bit’ better). 90% of participants very much enjoyed taking part in the project, with the remaining 10% enjoying the experience. All participants identified that their self-esteem and confidence had increased as a result of the project.

Do you feel better about your life and future as a result of being involved in this project/event?



As shown in the charts below, in relation to *social connectedness*, there were some notable increases in outcomes, which were reflected in responses to a range of questions relating to this theme. Slight increases were found in participants never feeling lonely (from 24% to 28%) and hardly ever feeling lonely (from 28% to 33%). The percentage of individuals reporting that they felt lonely often/always or sometimes also decreased from 35% in total at baseline to 5% by the end of the project. The Step Forward project lead highlighted that loneliness was one outcome they were focusing on during the third year due to the lasting effect of the pandemic and multiple lockdowns. Whilst the project lead noted that they had a long waiting list from GP referrals, they were able to engage those on the waiting list in their normal timetabled activities, such as weekly walks, to get individuals socialising again:

“So what we’re doing is people that are on the waiting list, we have the other programmes on our timetable which can refer people onto that first to say; ‘look there is something for you to do health and wellbeing you know, we’ve got the falls programme, we’ve got chronic pain, you know, if you need it, we can try and refer to the counselling, but we have this other exercise timetable that you can use in the meantime’. At the start people can be hesitant to joining a big group... but then once they join they say they are staying because it’s brilliant”- Project lead, Step Forward

In relation to their contribution to the community, there was a slight decrease in those that felt very proud (from 26% to 18%), however there was a significant increase from those who reported they were proud (from 38% to 54%). There was also a slightly increase in those that felt very engaged or engaged (from 98% to 100%) with their local community, although this was already high at baseline. Re-engaging people with their local community was a key focus of this third and final year. To achieve this, the project led activities in the local county park with volunteers, for example removing invasive plants and litter picking, however this did not continue throughout the whole funding period due to adverse weather conditions and works going on in the park. There are plans in place post NOW-14 funding to use a space in the county park for their weekly timetabled activities.

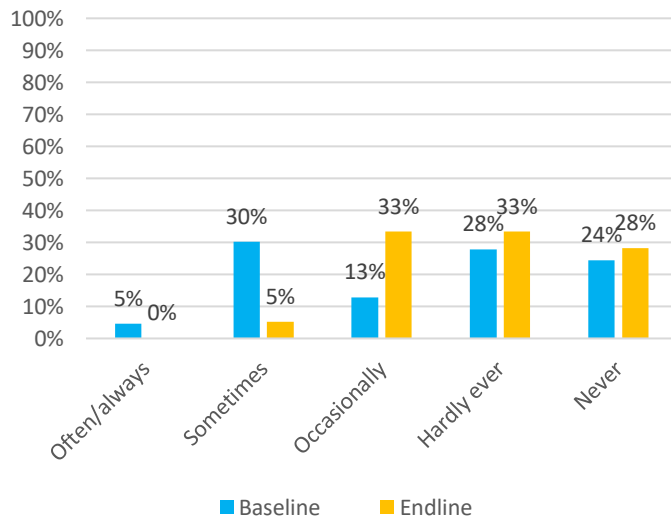
There was an increase in those that strongly agreed (from 35% to 59%) that their community was a place where people from different backgrounds got on well together. The Step Forward project is currently creating connections with a local organisation working with asylum seekers, so they can broaden the scope of individuals from different background that they are engaging:

“There was there was an asylum seekers forum and there was a meeting held in one of the hotels recently. And one of our staff members attended to try and connect with those communities because Creggan is predominantly white Catholic, they’re the people that you would work with

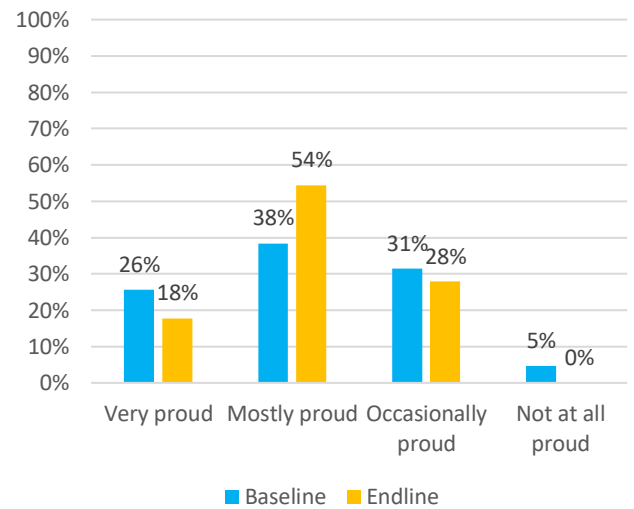
mainly, so we're trying to vary and broaden the clientele. We get people from all over the city in general, we don't get many multicultural people up here.”- Project lead, Step Forward

When asked at endline, 72% of participants were also very proud in their contribution to the project, with 28% mostly proud of their contribution, and 99% felt that they always belonged to the project, with 1% feeling this most of the time.

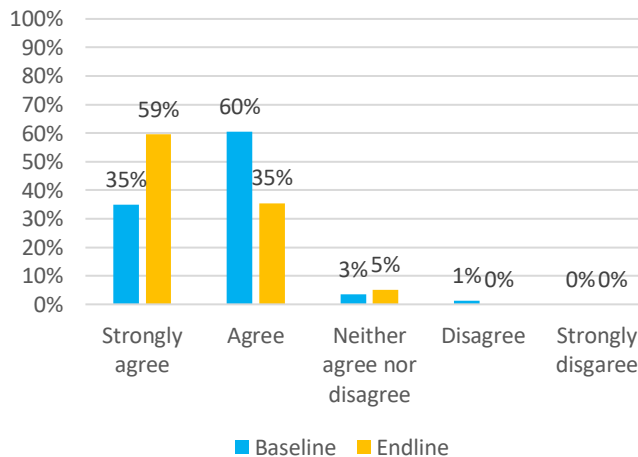
How often do you feel lonely?



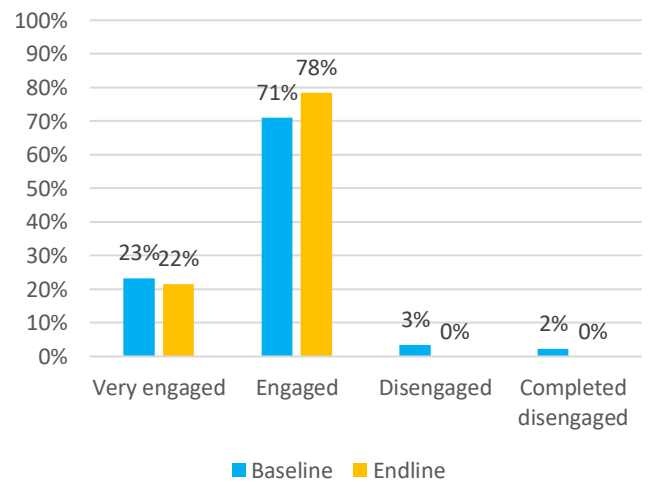
Please rate how proud you feel of your contribution to the community.



To what extent do you agree or disagree that this is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



Please rate how engaged you generally feel with your local community.



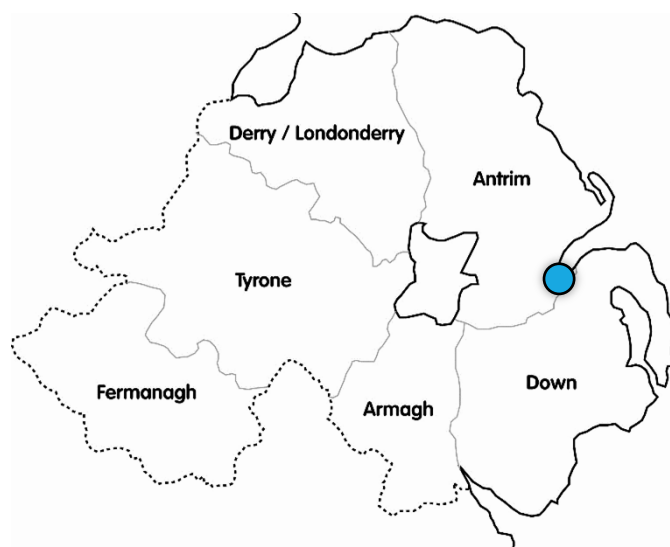
As shown in the table below, there was also an increase within the majority of activity categories; arts and cultural heritage, leisure, and sport and physical activity for those reporting they were either very empowered or empowered to take part. However, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents noting they felt very empowered or empowered to participate in volunteering activities between baseline and endline.

	Arts and cultural heritage		Leisure		Sport and physical activity		Volunteering	
	Baseline	End-line	Baseline	End-line	Baseline	End-line	Baseline	End-line
Very empowered	30%	27%	33%	34%	28%	25%	21%	8%
Empowered	30%	38%	40%	62%	16%	59%	16%	18%
Sometimes empowered	33%	33%	26%	4%	35%	15%	35%	48%
Never empowered	6%	3%	0%	0%	24%	0%	24%	27%

4.5 Community Thriving (Monkstown/New Mossley)

4.5.1 Description

The Community Thriving project supported existing and potential participants within the Monkstown/ New Mossley communities. The activities ran across three key programme areas. The first programme area was youth groups (HERizon, imMENse, EmpowHER, Mpact Youth Empowerment and the Lads Group), for young people aged 11 – 13 years olds, where they recieved one to one mentoring where required, as well as having external facilitators being brought in to deliver specific topics. The second programme area was an education support programme (In Your Corner) for young people excluded from mainstream education. The third programme area was a health & wellbeing programme (This Girl Can), for women aged 30+ from the local community and focused primarily on the empowerment of women in the third year of the programme.



4.5.2 Outcome areas



4.5.3 Outcomes Summary

Average levels of **Wellbeing** varied vastly across the different programme areas amongst participants from baseline to endline across the ONS measures of *Life Satisfaction*, *Life is Worthwhile* and *Current Happiness*, with *current anxiety*. Overall, *Life Satisfaction* and *Current Happiness* levels increased, and although the levels were lower than the NOW-14 average, they were both either equal to or higher than the UK national average. The average overall scores for Life is Worthwhile decreased slightly by 0.1, however some areas of the programme such as the This Gril can group and In Your Corner, had significant increases in this area. *Current Anxiety* levels increased by 0.2 overall. Anxiety levels of the participants in the Mpact Youth Empowerment group increased the most (by 1.7), however anxiety levels of those in the This Girl Can group decreased significantly by 2.4.

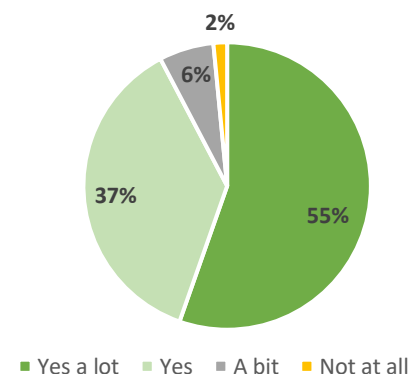
	Life Satisfaction 0= not satisfied at all/10= completely satisfied			Life is Worthwhile 0= not at all worthwhile/10= completely worthwhile			Current Happiness 0= not at all happy/10= completely happy			Current Anxiety 0= not anxious/10= completely anxious		
	Baseline	Endline		Baseline	Endline		Baseline	Endline		Baseline	Endline	
Average score across all groupings	7	7.4	↑ +0.4	7.3	7.2	↓ -0.1	6.3	7.2	↑ +0.9	3.9	4.1	↑ +0.2
This Girl Can	5.6	6.8	↑ +1.2	6.3	7	↑ +0.7	4.4	6.6	↑ +2.2	6.3	3.9	↓ -2.4
HERizon	7	7.3	↑ +0.3	7.6	7	↓ -0.6	6.6	7.9	↑ +1.3	2.9	2.9	0
imMENse	8.7	8	↓ -0.7	8.3	7.3	↓ -1.0	8	6.6	↓ -1.4	2.7	3	↑ +0.3
EmpowHER	7	6.7	↓ -0.3	7	5.8	↓ -1.2	6	6	0	3.8	4.2	↑ +0.4
Mpact Youth Empowerment	7.5	7.4	↓ -0.1	7.9	7.8	↓ -0.1	6.5	7.7	↑ +1.2	4.2	5.9	↑ +1.7
Lads Group	6.8	7.5	↑ +0.7	6.8	7.5	↑ +0.7	6.8	8.1	↑ +1.3	2.8	3.9	↑ +1.1
In Your Corner	6.8	8.2	↑ +1.4	6.6	7.7	↑ +1.1	6.2	8	↑ +1.8	4	3.9	↓ -0.1
NOW-14 Y3 Average	6.6	8.1	↑ 1.5	6.6	8.3	↑ 1.7	6.3	8.1	↑ 1.8	3.9	3	↓ -0.9
National Average 2021	7.4			7.7			7.3			3.3		

Wellbeing was a key area of concern of the project lead in year three of the programme due to the lasting impact of COVID-19 and national lockdowns. The project lead was particularly concerned about the individuals on the youth programmes:

“We were face to face with young people up until Halloween, there was a real focus on their mental health because they had been in lockdown for most of the beginning of the year. And that went well. And then after Halloween, went back online, to Zoom and unlike like the first lockdown, the winter lockdown really hit the kids harder and we found their engagement dropped off significantly. The young people that were turning up, they’re just sitting in their jammies, they were just sort of withdrawn and you could really tell that they just had no motivation there.”- Project lead, Community Thriving

When asked at endline, 55% of participants reported that they felt a lot better about their life and future, as a result of being involved in the project, with 37% generally feeling better (6% stated they felt a bit better and 2% - 1 participant - did not feel better at all). Two participants from the In Your Corner group reported that they felt that their physical fitness had also improved as a result of the project as they had the opportunity to access the boxing and gym facilities:

Do you feel better about your life and future as a result of being involved in this project/event?



“I go to the gym more and so we’re increasing our physical fitness rather than just sitting about all the time”- Participant, In Your Corner

Interviews with the project lead and focus groups with participants also identified a range of benefits to emotional wellbeing as a result of the Community Thriving project, for example, individuals from the women’s group who took part in the STEPs project (project focusing on wellbeing, aspirations and empowerment of women) reported that they had increased their self-esteem, and had a happier family environment at home as a result of the project:

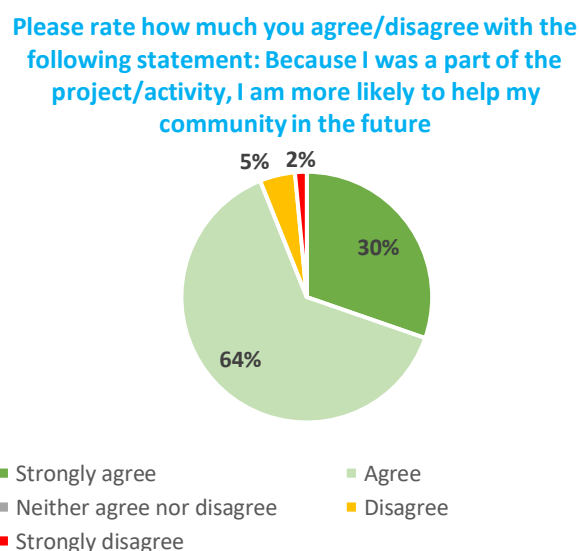
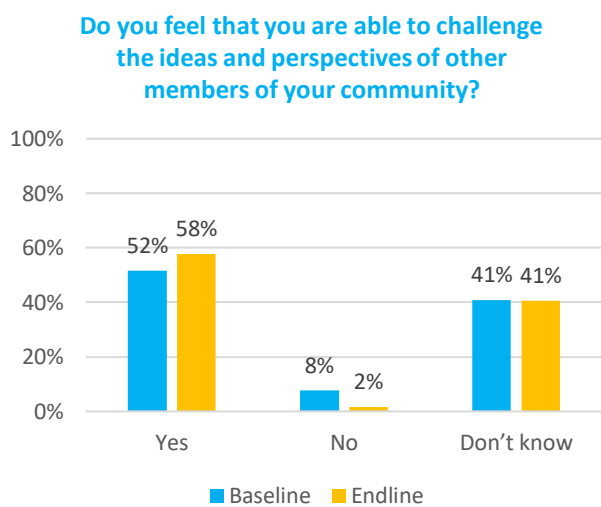
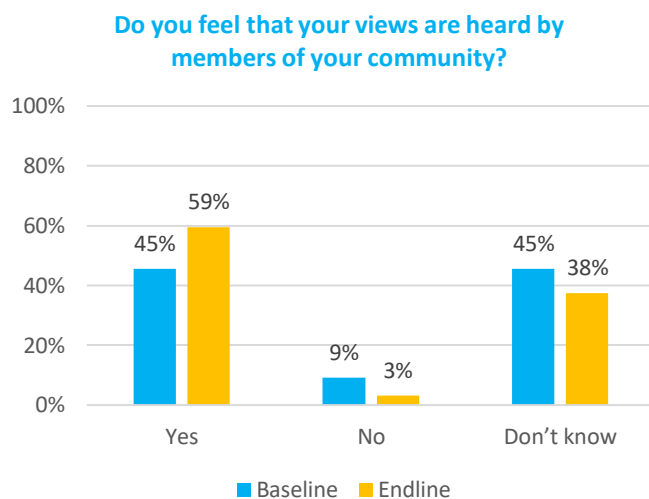
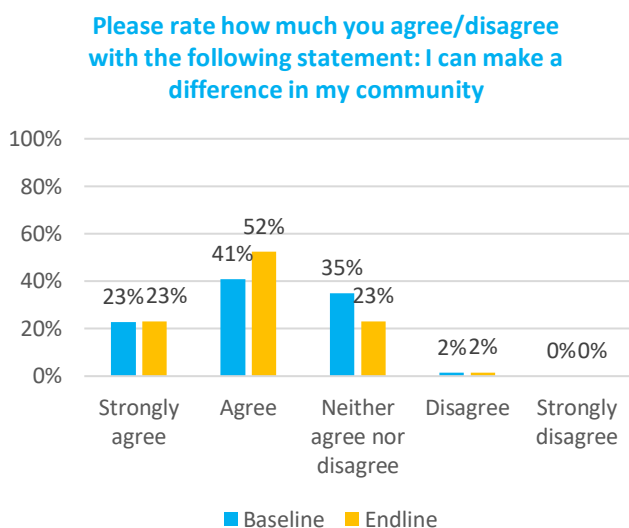
“I have found over the three months that I’ve been doing this, the communication in our house is a lot better.”- Participant, Women’s group

Participants on the youth programme also reported that the project helped them learn about coping mechanisms when they experience high levels of anxiety or have a period of bad mental health:

“Yeah, I also have a mentor. I suffered from depression anxiety during the pandemic, and she Zoom called me and I just felt so much better. Knowing that someone was there to listen to me and was able to give me support and give me advice on how to deal with a situation I had gone through. And that’s really helped me through all of it”- Participant, Youth programme

In relation to **Empowering Young People** there was an increase between baseline and endline (from 64% to 75%) between participants strongly agreeing/agreeing that they could make a difference in their community. Furthermore, there were also increases in participants feeling that their voices would be heard by members of the community (from 45% to 59%), and that they could challenge the ideas and perspectives of other members of the community (from 52% to 58%).

When asked at endline 65% of participants felt that the project had given them a voice in their community, with 29% not sure and 6% stating 'no'. Moreover, 80% of respondents felt that they had been given enough support by the project to have a voice in their community (2% reported 'no' and 18% were not sure). When asked the extent to which they felt that they are more likely to help their community in the future as a result of the project, 94% either strongly agreed or agreed, with 5% disagreeing and 2% strongly disagreeing.



Similarly to the second year of the project, although **social connectedness** was not a focus of the project, evidence of this outcome did emerge from project lead interviews and participant focus groups. Participants from the This Girl Can group reported that they felt fully supported by other women in their local community because of the project, and felt that they had a positive impact on each other's lives:

“They're very supportive, non-judgmental, they're there for you no matter what. It just seems anytime any one of us throughout the group has had any issues, they're there, they have your back.” - Participant, Women's programme

5 Conclusions

In this third and final year of the 14-NOW programme, Springboard has worked with over 953 community members, in communities with high levels of deprivation in Northern Ireland. This final section explores the overall results across all four 14-NOW projects across Limavady, Creggan and Monkstown/New Mosley.

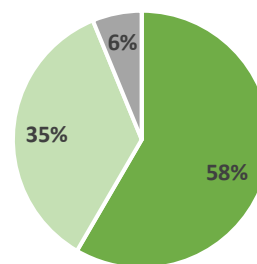
Wellbeing

Average wellbeing increased across all 14-NOW projects in 2021 in each of the four ONS wellbeing areas; *Life Satisfaction*, *Life is Worthwhile*, *Current Happiness* and *Current Anxiety*. In relation to the first three areas, the baseline average for 14-NOW started lower than the national average across all projects apart from Community Builder and increased to above the national average in most cases (and this was not the case for the Community Thriving project where the same or slightly lower than the national average), with an average increase of 1.66 points across the programme. In relation to the final thematic area of anxiety, there was an average decrease in anxiety of 0.9, starting with levels of anxiety higher than the national average in both Play to Grey and Community Builder, and finishing with levels lower than the national average in three out of the four projects (Community Thriving were 0.8 above national average). The only anomaly was in relation to the Play to Grey project, where anxiety levels slightly increased. Further exploration of this figure could be helpful going forward but in a year in which Covid-19 had a significant impact on the wellbeing of the UK population, this aspect may have been a contributory factor.

	Life Satisfaction 0= not satisfied at all/10= completely satisfied			Life is Worthwhile 0= not at all worthwhile/10= completely worthwhile			Current Happiness 0= not at all happy/10= completely happy			Current Anxiety 0= not anxious/10= completely anxious		
	Baseline	Endline	Increase/ Decrease	Baseline	Endline	Increase/ Decrease	Baseline	Endline	Increase/ Decrease	Baseline	Endline	Increase/ Decrease
Play to Grey (Limavady)	6.1	8.4	↑ +2.3	6.1	8.8	↑ +2.7	6.0	8.5	↑ +2.5	4.4	3.2	↓ -1.2
Community Builder (Creggan)	8.2	8	↓ -0.2	8.0	7.9	↓ -0.1	7.9	7.8	↓ -0.1	1.7	1.9	↑ +0.2
Step Forward (Creggan)	7.4	7.9	↑ +0.5	7.5	7.8	↑ +0.3	7.1	7.7	↑ +0.6	2.9	1.9	↓ -1.0
Community Thriving (Monkstown/New Mossley)	7.0	7.4	↑ +0.4	7.3	7.2	↓ -0.1	6.3	7.2	↑ +0.9	3.9	4.1	↑ +0.2
NOW-14 Y3 Average	6.6	8.1	↑ +1.5	6.6	8.3	↑ +1.7	6.3	8.1	↑ +1.8	3.9	3	↓ -0.9
National Average 2021	7.4			7.7			7.3			3.3		

Overall, looking across all four projects, over 94% of participants advised that they felt better, or a lot better about their life and future as a result of being engaged in their project, and participants across three projects that collected endline data in relation to confidence and self-esteem identified that they had increased in both areas as a result of their project (98% of participants reported an increase in self-esteem and 98% of participants reported an increase in confidence). This was also indicated in the results from interviews with project leads and focus groups with participants across four of the projects, including an increase in emotional wellbeing (e.g. feeling happier and motivated), mental health (e.g. improving coping mechanisms, feeling less lonely) and increases in self-esteem and confidence (including having positive goals and aspirations for the future).

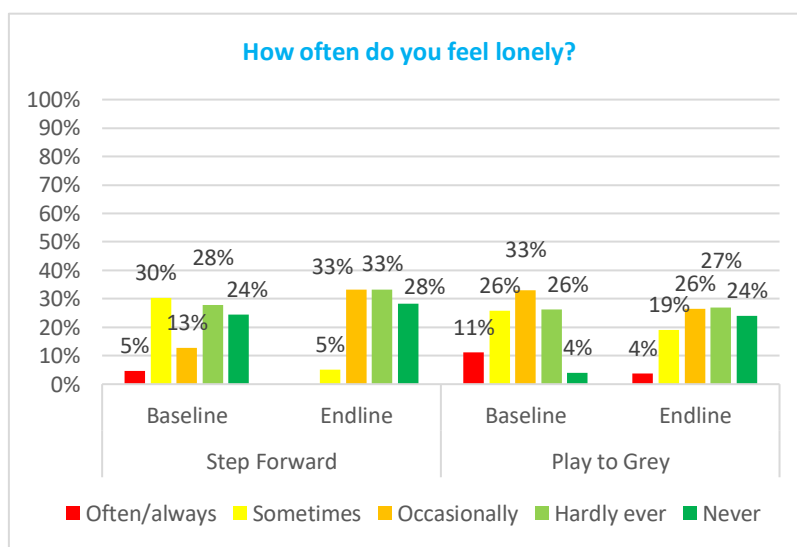
Do you feel better about your life and future as a result of being involved in this project/event?



■ Yes a lot ■ Yes ■ A bit ■ Not at all

Social Connectedness

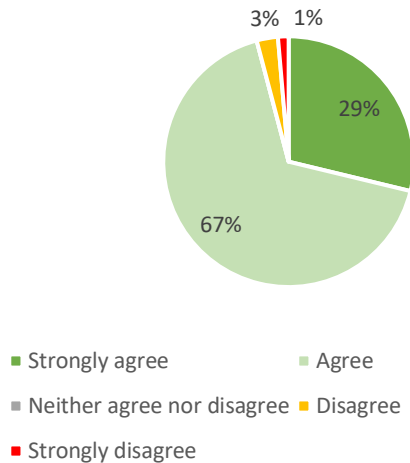
Overall projects collecting quantitative data in relation to social connectedness recorded increases between baseline and endline, as shown to the right with the survey question relating to how often participants felt lonely. There were additional increases across all projects relating to other social connectedness questions, for example the agreement as to whether people from different backgrounds got on well in the



community, how proud participants felt of their contribution to the community, and how engaged they generally felt with the local community. Across all four projects, quantitative and qualitative data found that social connectedness was a key focus in the third year due to delivery being focused on re-engagement into activities after lockdowns and isolation periods as a consequence of the pandemic. Although social connectedness was not a key target area for the community Thriving project across all three years, focus groups with participants found that they valued the friendships and interactions with other members of their community in similar situations as themselves as the main benefit of taking part.

Empowering Young People

Please rate how much you agree/disagree with the following statement: **Because I was a part of the project/activity, I am more likely to help my community in the future**



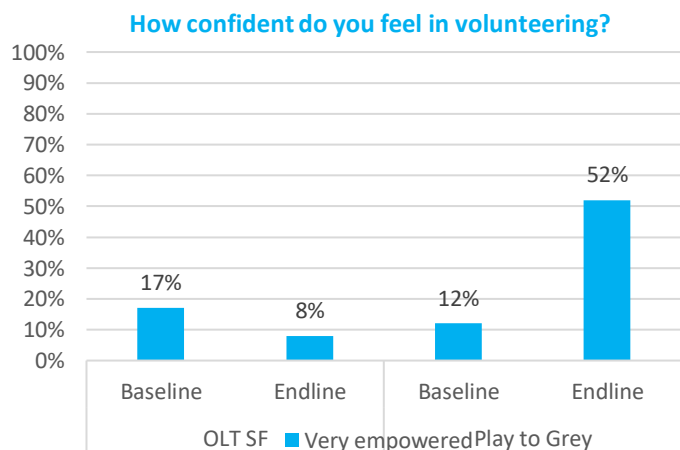
All projects collecting quantitative data in relation to empowering young people, saw increases across participants that felt their views were heard by members of the community. This was also true in respect of feeling able to challenge the ideas and perspectives of other members of their community, particularly for the Play to Grey project where there was a 56% increase between baseline and endline surveys. Young people involved in both Play to Grey and Community thriving also reported an increase in the extent to which participants felt they could make a difference in the community. The

combined endline data for Play to Grey, Community Thriving and Community Builder shown to the left, also indicated that participants would be more likely to help their community in future.

Interviews with the project leads at Play to Grey found that young people from the residents with a disability group had become more empowered through the project to participate in lobbying activities, including talking to their local council about improvements to accessibility across the community.

Engaging Volunteers

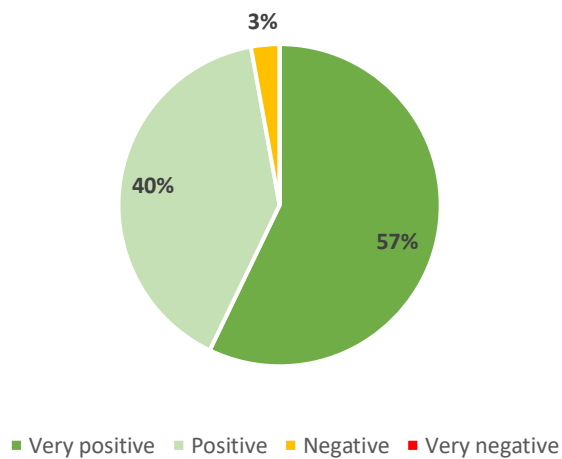
Both the Play to Grey project and Step Forward had an element of volunteering within their delivery. The diagram to the right shows that there was a decrease in Step Forward’s participants confidence to volunteer, whereas there was a significant increase for the Play to Grey group. An interview with the project lead for Step Forward found that this decrease may have been a result of volunteering activities in the county park being halted from adverse weather conditions, works going on in the park and individuals commitment to volunteering decreasing.



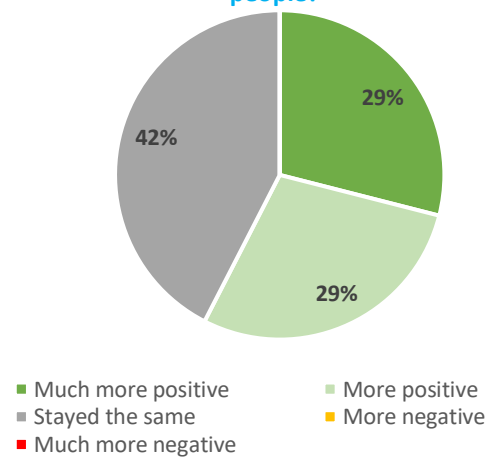
Disability

While most projects did not include a specific disability element to their programme, similar to the year two findings, the majority of projects detailed how they took a more inclusive approach and were seeking to collaborate with other organisations in their community to increase their reach to those who may not be currently included within the programme. This is the case particularly for Step Forward who reported that they were collaborating with a local disability group who used their facilities to play football. As part of the Play to Grey project, the residents with a disability group took part in some activities with local organisations to increase the awareness of people with disabilities and their experiences.

Would you say your view of disabled people was positive or negative before this project/event?



Would you say that the project/event that you have taken part in/attended has caused you to have a different view of disabled people?



Final Summary

Overall, the findings from this third and final year of the 14-NOW programme demonstrated strong results similar to the previous two years across the areas of wellbeing, social connectedness and empowering young people. Across all projects, wellbeing was a key focus, and even more so with participants having high levels of anxiety and fear of returning to activities after a long period of online delivery and national lockdowns. Three of the four projects (not including Community Builder) had ONS wellbeing measures starting below the national average at baseline and in most cases increased to above the national average at endline (or went from above the national average to below it in relation to anxiety). However it was clear from interviews and focus group discussions that respondents found some improvements in wellbeing were limited, due to the ongoing concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic and government restrictions. In relation to social connectedness, participants reported that they felt engaged with their local community, with participants across focus groups and interviews highlighting that they benefited most from the relationships they formed from the projects. Many participants are still in touch with the individuals they interacted with, either via group chats online or through other projects they are involved with. There were also found to be increases in the empowerment of young people (participants feeling that their views were heard by members of the community), although with an overall response of 59% of young people feeling that their views are heard by members of their community, it is clear that there are more improvements that could be made to this outcome area. Interviews and focus groups found that the majority of projects supported their participants throughout the pandemic, and there are additional opportunities being made for beneficiaries to support them further, particularly with their wellbeing (for example, opportunities to engage with a counsellor).