

Volunteer it Yourself evaluation



A report by IFF Research and Belmana for the Youth Futures Foundation

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November 2023

- Youth Futures Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit organisation established with a £90m endowment from the Reclaim Fund to improve employment outcomes for young people from marginalised backgrounds. Our aim is to narrow employment gaps by identifying what works and why, investing in evidence generation and innovation, and igniting a movement for change.
- This report details the findings from an evaluation conducted by IFF Research of the Volunteer it Yourself (VIY) programme, which supports disadvantaged young people aged 14–24 to learn trade and employability skills through helping to renovate/refurbish local community buildings and facilities in need of essential repairs and improvements.
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Executive summary

The project

In May 2021, Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) commissioned IFF Research to conduct an impact pilot for the Volunteer it Yourself (VIY) programme for the period from September 2021 to June 2022.

The overall aims for this impact pilot were:

- To fully understand the programme theory of the VIY support model and the critical drivers/mechanisms of change.
- To provide consistent evidence against the Theory of Change.
- To understand the pathways and drivers of outcomes, in terms of which elements of the model are most effective, and the impact of contextual factors.
- To capture a rich understanding of how and why participants achieve outcomes from the support model.
- To understand the characteristics of participants who achieve outcomes, and the characteristics of participants who do not.
- To use ongoing evaluation findings to support VIY to know which elements of delivery work most effectively and to refine practice to support further achievement of education, employment and training (EET) outcomes.
- To provide recommendations and a plan for a future impact/experimental evaluation.

VIY supports disadvantaged young people aged 14–24 to learn trade and employability skills through helping to renovate/refurbish local community buildings and facilities in need of essential repairs and improvements.

YFF awarded VIY funding in Spring 2021, and VIY committed to an initial target of 450–500 YFF-funded participants from September 2021¹ to the end of January 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges in meeting this target. As such, the funding was extended to the end of June 2022.

With YFF funding, VIY targeted **disadvantaged young people with (or at risk of) NEET (not in employment, education or training) status**, particularly those living in the 20% most deprived local neighbourhoods nationwide. In line with YFF's intended outcomes, the focus for these young people was **progression outcomes** (obtaining or staying in employment, education or training).

¹ Note that while YFF-funded participants started from September 2021, baselining was not possible until October; the evaluation period is therefore one month shorter than the YFF-funding period.

The young people were principally recruited via youth referral partners, local to each site, that already worked with and supported the target audience (for example, Pupil Referral Units, Jobcentre Plus, special schools, youth offending teams).

The support model comprised the following elements:

- A **welcome call**, conducted over telephone by a youth engagement team.
- Core activities:
 - A project site placement (referred to throughout as a ‘**project**’) at a local facility or community building, usually lasting up to four days. Lead mentors (local tradesmen) supported young people to develop vocational trade skills, employability skills and, building and refurbishment skills.
 - An **entry level 3 City & Guilds accreditation**² for a vocational trade skill, with young people completing the necessary tasks and assessments on a project site.
- **Progressions support** to help young people achieve their desired next steps in work or education, provided by a progressions manager and youth engagement team.
- A range of broader **employability/work-readiness** activities, for example: CV writing and job interview training provided by on-site mentors; introductions to employers on site, or visits to local employers; job interviews with VIY trade sector partners.

Findings

Table 1.1 Summary of study findings

Research questions	Findings
What was the proposed Theory of Change for the intervention?	<p>The rationale for the VIY programme was that if young people aged 14–24 years old are not in employment, education or training, or who have characteristics which identify them as ‘at risk’ of this, have the opportunity to develop construction skills in a real project site and work towards a vocational accreditation, they will build the confidence, motivation and skills to continue in / re-join employment, education or training, particularly in the construction sector.</p> <p>Project work is accompanied by support from a progressions team, focused on next steps and options available to a young person after the programme.</p>

² Entry level qualifications are available at levels 1, 2 and 3, with 3 being the most challenging. Entry level qualifications are below full Level 1, which is equivalent to GCSEs at grades 3–1 or D–G.

	<p>Young people may also have exposure to local employers and talks from professionals in the construction industry, to improve their understanding of what options are available in the sector, and potentially build professional connections within it.</p> <p>Project sites are typically local (to the young person), community-based resources, such as local sport or youth facilities. Contributing to their community in this way should inspire further confidence and greater connection to their local area.</p> <p>Together, these activities should ultimately result in improved and sustained employment and wellbeing outcomes long term.</p>
<p>What were the proposed critical drivers/mechanisms of change?</p>	<p>In the original programme theory, young people were expected to achieve outcomes through four mechanisms of change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A friendly, supportive environment created by mentors. ● An educational setting that makes young people feel valued and respected. ● Exposure to the world of work, in the context of construction. ● Personalised progressions support and guidance. <p>The evaluation identified the following four key mechanisms of change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The relaxed and non-committal quality of the programme is highly attractive to young people looking for programmes to participate in. Many young people felt that this set VIY apart from other skills development and employability programmes available to them. This was particularly attractive for individuals who had caring responsibilities or poor health. ● The option to achieve an accreditation is another attractive quality of the programme for young people. The entry level 3 accreditations further support the relatively low commitment (i.e., days on site) needed for young people to achieve a tangible outcome. ● Many young people attribute their positive experience to the welcoming, supportive environment set by, and attitude of, mentors. For many, the relaxed and friendly atmosphere created by mentors was a reason to go back each day. ● Informal conversations with mentors went a long way in attracting young people to broader construction work (both

	<p>through a sense of what tradesmen would be like, and through discussions about their experiences in the industry).</p>
<p>To what extent is the proposed Theory of Change plausible / evidence informed?</p>	<p>Wider evidence (for example, evaluations of other programmes with these features) suggests the following features of the intended VIY programme design can be positive for participant outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation is voluntary. ● The programme offers employability support. ● Support is designed to develop job-specific skills, basic academic skills, thinking skills, social skills, personal qualities and career motivation. ● Support aims to achieve ‘softer’ outcomes. <p>The VIY model includes features that the existing literature on employability and volunteering programmes has not (fully) evidenced as leading to successful employment, education and training (EET) outcomes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How the approach to mentorship (relaxed, informal, friendly) might affect experience and participant outcomes (mechanisms). ● The specific programme activities and their link to participant outcomes (connections within the Theory of Change). ● Whether positive volunteering experiences lead to improvement in young people’s confidence, which then leads to progression in work (mechanisms and resulting connection between intended outcomes in the Theory of Change).
<p>How have context / external environmental factors affected the delivery of the intervention?</p>	<p>VIY committed to an initial target of 450–500 YFF-funded participants from September 2021 to the end of January 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges in meeting this target. As such, the funding was extended to the end of June 2022.</p> <p>VIY faced other challenges that impacted on the delivery model, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Having no progressions manager in place for a few months during the evaluation period; progressions support during this time was limited and delivered by youth engagement teams.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expanding into new geographical areas, where connections with local employers and potential progression partners had not been established; this meant employability and work-readiness activities were limited in these new areas.
<p>What outcomes have participants achieved?</p>	<p>EET outcomes were relatively uncommon and difficult to draw conclusions from due to limitations such as low sample sizes.</p> <p>Some young people felt EET outcomes would be difficult to achieve through the programme and activities they experienced due to the light-touch and short engagement period of the programme; for many, project work (lasting an average three days per participant) was the sole engagement they had with VIY.</p> <p>Despite this, VIY has been successful in achieving some of the intended softer outcomes for the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The majority (64%) of participants achieved an accreditation. ● Qualitative interviews with referral partners and participants, indicated that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participants in education or training were motivated to stay and engage with school/studies. ○ Participants not in employment, education or training were more confident going into the job market and applying for jobs with more experience on their CV, and a better understanding of what it might be like to work in construction. ○ Some participants described greater direction/clarity for what they might want out of their future. ○ Participants self-reported improved wellbeing (both mentally and physically), although standardised wellbeing metrics did not show a clear change over time, either in a positive or negative direction, from the survey data. <p>The programme has been less successful in terms of creating connections and opportunities between participants and local/potential employers. Providing more exposure to employers and employment opportunities should be a key focus for VIY moving forward.</p>
<p>Which participants benefit / do not benefit from the intervention?</p>	<p>The evidence available does not allow for robust subgroup analysis to explore this research question – the survey response rates and resulting sample sizes for survey data were too low.</p>

<p>How and why do participants achieve outcomes?</p>	<p>The evidence available does not allow for robust analysis linking activities to outcomes – the survey response rates and resulting sample sizes for survey data were too low.</p>
<p>Which elements of the support are more, or less, effective?</p>	<p>The evidence available does not allow for robust analysis to establish the effectiveness of specific activities – the survey response rates and resulting sample sizes for survey data were too low.</p> <p>From a qualitative perspective, young people particularly enjoyed learning skills ‘on-the-job’ and felt the informal mentorship approach to this was valuable.</p>
<p>How can the intervention be refined to support outcomes?</p>	<p>Key considerations for the programme moving forward include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creating more consistency and coverage in welcome calls, ensuring aspirations are covered as well as logistical elements. A greater lead-in time to project work and with the recruited young people will support this. ● Increasing project work time to some extent for each young person (for example, by up to two weeks). This would require finding a greater number of local projects and/or longer, more involved projects. The anticipated benefit of this would be greater skills development, a stronger relationship between participants and VIY (for better progression communication post-project), and greater likelihood of being exposed to employers and employability activities on site. ● Investment in building local networks of employers and delivery partners, to support increased and consistent delivery of employment and employability activities while a young person is on site, is key. ● VIY have already outlined how they intend to offer and deliver progressions support more consistently; a change we consider key to improving the outcomes of young people on the programme. ● Likewise, VIY have already made strides towards strengthening their management information and data collection. Harnessing this data to understand what is working and for whom will be central to future programme improvements. <p>For all recommendations, the balance between improving engagement and outcomes, whilst maintaining the relaxed and</p>

	<p>non-committal quality of the programme so valued by participants, should be carefully considered.</p>
<p>How feasible is the intervention for an impact evaluation?</p>	<p>For impact feasibility, a randomised control trial (RCT) and quasi-experimental design (QED) do not seem possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The various challenges to delivering an RCT include difficulty in identifying a comparator and a randomisation point, the required sample sizes / participant volumes to ‘randomise out’, the associated cost of doing so, and tracking outcomes longer term. • A QED approach is challenging due to the required large sample sizes, weaknesses in available datasets, and limitations with the outcomes that can be analysed.

1. Introduction

Background

In May 2021, Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) commissioned IFF Research to conduct an 'impact pilot' for the Volunteer it Yourself (VIY) programme for participants who started the programme in the period from September 2021 to June 2022.³

YFF commissions an 'impact pilot' where a programme (such as the programme delivered by VIY) is high quality, has a good evidence base behind it, and is working at sufficient scale for an impact analysis / experimental design.

During an impact pilot, theory-informed process analysis is used to understand how the model operates and could be more effective. At this stage, programmes can use data and evaluation findings to make programme improvements.

Alongside this, the impact pilot stage is also used to make an assessment on the suitability of the programme for an impact evaluation (including an exploration of the parts of the support model that could be suitable to test in this way).

The VIY impact pilot evaluation ran until April 2023.

About the programme

VIY supports disadvantaged young people aged 14–24 to learn trade and employability skills through helping to renovate/refurbish local community buildings and facilities in need of essential repairs and improvements.

The target audience for the YFF-funded programme was **disadvantaged young people with (or at risk of) NEET status**, and the focus of the programme was **skills development and employment, education or training outcomes**. In VIY's 2022–25 strategy report, they state that their focus is on 'delivering entry level vocational skills accreditations that enable young people to reach the all-important 'first rung on the ladder'. They go on to state that this first step, which they provide, is 'often the hardest step to take'.⁴ VIY value the importance of building confidence, motivation and awareness of possible next steps in the work that they deliver to young people. As such, there is a focus on these softer outcomes in the work that they do (anticipating that it will ultimately contribute to EET outcomes in the future).

³ Due to issues with the sample in September 2021, the evaluation itself only included participants from October 2021 onwards.

⁴ [VIY_OurStrategy_FINAL.pdf \(volunteerityourself.org\)](#)

The intended support model comprised the following elements:

- A **welcome call**, conducted over the telephone by a youth engagement team, during the two weeks leading up to a young person's first day on site. All young people should receive a welcome call.
- Core activities:
 - A project site placement (referred to throughout as a '**project**') at a local facility or community building, lasting up to 12 weeks. Lead mentors (local tradesmen) support young people to develop vocational trade skills, employability skills and, building and refurbishment skills. All young people experience this element of the programme.
 - An **entry level 3 City & Guilds accreditation**⁵ for a vocational trade skill, with young people completing the necessary tasks and assessments on a project site. Offered to most young people (the main but rare barrier to offering was a lack of assessor availability in the required timeframe).
- **Progressions support** to help young people achieve their desired next steps in work or education, provided by a progressions manager and youth engagement team. Where a young person has expressed progressions interest, VIY work with them to try and make the initial progression possible. Check-ins are then provided at 13 and 26 weeks over the telephone for those who sought progression.
- A range of broader **employability/work-readiness** activities, for example: CV writing and job interview training provided by youth engagement teams; introductions to employers on site, or visits to local employers; and job interviews with VIY trade sector partners. These activities should be available to young people within the 12 weeks on the core programme.

The intended referral routes were youth referral partners, local to each site, that already worked with and supported the target audience (for example, Pupil Referral Units, Jobcentre Plus, special schools, youth offending teams).

Please note that, throughout this report, all support model elements taken together will be referenced as the **programme**, while project site placements are specifically referred to as **projects**. Further detail on this model and delivery on the ground are explored in Chapters 3 (VIY programme theory) and 6 (Refined programme theory).

YFF awarded VIY funding in Spring 2021, and VIY committed to an initial target of 450–500 YFF-funded participants from September 2021 to the end of January 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges in meeting this target. As such, the funding was extended to the end of June 2022.

⁵ Entry level qualifications are available at levels 1, 2 and 3, with 3 being the most challenging. Entry level qualifications are below full Level 1, which is equivalent to GCSEs at grades 3–1 or D–G.

Challenges and changes to the VIY programme during funding period

VIY faced other challenges, which impacted on the delivery model. These included:

- Young people's time on projects was shorter than originally intended, to support greater reach (i.e., more young people for shorter amounts of time);
- Having no progressions manager in place for a few months during the evaluation period; progressions support during this time was limited and delivered by youth engagement teams;
- Expanding into new geographical areas, where connections with local employers and potential progression partners had not been established; this meant employability and work-readiness activities were limited in these new areas.

Aims of the impact pilot

The overall aims for this impact pilot were:

- To fully understand the programme theory of the VIY support model and the critical drivers/mechanisms of change;
- To evidence the Theory of Change in consistent data, to understand the pathways and drivers of outcomes, which elements of the model are most effective, and the impact of contextual factors;
- To capture a rich understanding of how and why participants achieve outcomes from the support model and to understand the participants that do and don't achieve outcomes, and what are the most important triggers of outcomes;
- To support VIY to know which elements of delivery work most effectively and to refine practice to support further achievement of education, employment and training (EET) outcomes;
- To conduct a feasibility study and provide recommendations and, if feasible, a plan for a future impact/experimental evaluation that would align with YFF's remit and evidence standards as part of the What Works Network.

About this report

This report presents the key findings from this evaluation in terms of the experience and impact of the programme on young people.

There are four main sources of data included in this report: surveys with participants (carried out at the start of support, end of programme and in a 13-week follow-up); qualitative depth interviews with participants (conducted as a follow-up to the end of programme and 13-week surveys, to understand responses and experiences in a bit more depth); qualitative interviews and focus groups with VIY staff (carried out relatively early in the funding period, and at the end); and management information provided by VIY.

Structure of subsequent sections of this report:

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the methodology and data sources used in this evaluation.

Chapter 3 presents the original VIY programme theory and intended participant journey.

Chapter 4 examines the operation of the model in practice, for example, the characteristics of the participants, the referral processes, and experiences of VIY programme delivery.

Chapter 5 sets out the outcomes achieved by the participants as well as looking at their stated plans having taken part in a project.

Chapter 6 revisits the programme theory and identifies core areas of delivery and associated outcomes.

Chapter 7 contains a summary of findings from the feasibility strand of this evaluation.

Chapter 8 reflects on the VIY programme and its delivery, drawing conclusions on the extent to which the programme is being delivered as intended, the participant experience and outcomes, and key programme elements and drivers for positive outcomes.

Due to the low number of responses at the end of programme and 13-week follow-up, findings should be treated with caution.

Where we state statistical significance in this report, this is based on independent significance tests (z-tests on percentages, and t-tests on mean) at the 95% level of confidence.

Please note, whenever we use the term 'participant(s)' this is referring to young people who were recruited to the programme and, crucially, *attended* at least some of their project.

2. Methodology

An overview of the evaluation approach for Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) is summarised in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Overview of evaluation methodology

Mobilisation / design May – October 2021	Process Evaluation February 2022 – February 2023	Participant surveys October 2021 – January 2023	Feasibility study October 2021 – January 2023
Stakeholders interviews Programme document / literature review Theory of Change development Participant journey mapping Evaluation framework creation Data protection processes	Two waves of interviews with operational and delivery staff <i>January 2022</i> <i>September 2022</i> Qualitative follow-ups with participants.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of programme (n=13) • 13-week follow-up (n=5) 	Baseline <i>From October 2021</i> 264 completes End of programme <i>From April 2022</i> 61 completes 13-week follow-up <i>From July 2022</i> 40 completes	Interim feasibility analysis <i>October 2021 – July 2022</i> Final feasibility analysis <i>November 2022 – January 2022</i> <div style="border: 1px solid #007060; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px; background-color: #e0f2f1;"> Feasibility findings are summarised in Chapter 7. </div>

The evaluation approach was developed to reflect the original programme design, to ensure data was collected from the right people, at the right time, in the most effective way:

- Speaking to VIY operational and delivery staff a few months into YFF funding, to understand how implementation of programme changes and early stages of delivery had gone; and a follow-up later in delivery to understand emerging impacts, outcomes, and reflections on overall programme delivery.
- Capturing data from participants at intended key points in their journey: at onboarding, at the end of programme (core programme support was expected to last up to three months), after 13 weeks of continued progressions support, and after a 26-week check in. Surveys were supplemented with in-depth interviews with young people to explore certain themes, experiences, and outcomes in greater depth.
- In-depth interviews with other stakeholders (referral and delivery partners) later in programme delivery, to allow time for changes and their outcomes to come to fruition, to understand the programme and it’s impacts from different perspectives.

Understanding the programme theory

The evaluation began with a mobilisation and design stage, conducted between May and September 2021.

IFF Research, in collaboration with Belmana, YFF and VIY, developed an initial Theory of Change (ToC) and participant journey map for the VIY programme. These are presented in Chapter 3, (VIY programme theory).

A literature review was also carried out at this stage to gather high-level information on 10 similar programmes and their outcomes. Programmes were identified through desk research, based on key characteristics of the VIY programme, with documents (usually

evaluation reports) summarised in an excel framework, to understand themes and findings across these programmes.

In December 2022, IFF hosted a second ToC and participant journey workshop with VIY. The purpose of this workshop was to revisit and scrutinise the existing models against current delivery and explore how elements/delivery might evolve moving forward. The current picture of delivery and future intentions are presented in Chapter 6 (Refined programme theory).

Data collection

The programme evaluation has involved a combination of primary research and secondary analysis, conducted between October 2021 and January 2023. Note that, due to an issue with September 2021 starts, participants who started in that month were not included in the evaluation.

Online and telephone surveys of young people

Surveys were used to measure the individual-level attitudinal and behavioural impact of the programme on those taking part. They included key outcome metrics from the evaluation framework, as well as questions about participants’ expectations (at baseline) and experiences (at the end of programme) of VIY. Based on other surveys carried out with this method and with a similar audience (NEET, or at risk of NEET, young people), the anticipated response rate for the baseline survey was 60%; this was expected to reduce between each data collection point to 50% at the 13-week follow-up.

The table below summarises the sample sizes for each survey.

Table 2.1 Sample sizes and completes for each survey wave

Audience	Starting sample	Completes	Response rate
Baseline	394	256	65%
End of programme	254	61	24%
13-week outcome	163	39	24%

- The **baseline** was conducted as an online survey, administered to participants who started projects between October 2021 and the end of June 2022 (to reflect the extension in the funding period). In total, 256 participants completed a baseline survey, equating to a 65% response rate.
- The **end of programme (EOP)** was first administered as an online survey, with telephone follow-up among those who did not complete the online survey, where phone numbers were available. Under 16s were excluded from the survey sample as the necessary parental permissions to contact were not in place. There was a total of 61 EOP survey completes. This equates to a 24% response rate within the useable sample (i.e., those with valid, working email addresses or telephone numbers, and who had consented to follow-up on completion of their previous survey).

- The **13-week outcomes survey** was launched in October 2022 and concluded in January 2023. There were 41 survey completes, equating to a 24% response rate within the useable sample (i.e., those with valid, working email addresses or telephone numbers, and who had consented to follow-up on completion of their previous survey).

There are 19 individuals for whom we have survey data at each of the three time points. To gather as much information as possible about the experience of the programme and outcomes, it was agreed that individuals did not have to have completed the preceding survey to take part in the EOP or 13-week surveys.

An additional, 26-week outcomes survey had been planned in the original evaluation design. However, this was replaced by further follow-up qualitative interviews due to response rates and the resulting available sample for this follow-up being too low to support a meaningful sample size for quantitative analysis.

Qualitative interviews with young people

To supplement the data collected through surveys, follow-up qualitative interviews were carried out over video call or telephone to understand in more depth the participant journey and what young people had been doing since taking part in VIY.

Qualitative interviews were carried out with the assistance of topic guides, developed using the evaluation framework (which mapped out the programme's intended outcomes and evidence data sources for each) to establish where survey topics needed to be explored in further depth, or where qualitative interviews were intended to be the sole source of information. The guides took the young person through their VIY experience chronologically. For example, in a participant's first qualitative follow-up we would start by exploring where they first heard about VIY and then progress through their experience of the project work and other support they received, through to what they were doing at present.

To qualify for recruitment, young people had to have given consent at the EOP and 13-week surveys. A total of 13 and five young people (respectively) were recruited and interviewed.

Qualitative interviews with programme staff and partners

At **Wave 1**, IFF conducted a total of four, one-to-one in-depth interviews with strategic and operational staff, in-depth interviews with the progressions and skills managers, and one focus group with six mentors. The intention of discussions at this stage was to understand the early months of delivery with YFF funding, what the programme of support looked like, and what outcomes had been achieved at that point.

At **Wave 2**, VIY staff interviews included one-to-one in-depth interviews with the progressions and skills managers, one mini-group with three mentors, and one workshop with three strategic/operational staff. Further to this, four in-depth interviews were conducted with referral partners to gain their perspective on programme delivery and outcomes for young people. Overall, this phase of interviews sought to understand what

the programme of support looked like at the end of 2022, and what outcomes were achieved.

Table 2.2 presents the job roles and number of the individuals interviewed.

Table 2.2 Audiences involved in recruitment and delivery

Audience	Method	Wave 1 participants	Wave 2 participants
Strategic/operational staff	Interview	4	3
Progressions manager	Interview	1	1
Skills manager	Interview	1	1
(Lead) mentors	Focus group	4	3
Peer mentors	Focus group	2	-
Referral partners	Interview	-	4
Total		12	12

Achieved interviews at Wave 1 were in line with the original evaluation design. At Wave 2, the number of strategic/operational staff was reduced by one, reflecting VIY’s staff structure and who they felt would be valuable at the workshop. Likewise, VIY identified three (as opposed to the originally intended four) mentors who were available to speak to in Wave 2.

As with qualitative interviews with young people, discussions were based on a pre-agreed topic guide. This was developed using the evaluation framework that determined which themes needed to be explored with which audiences.

In addition to the formal discussions, IFF held regular catchups with VIY throughout the evaluation to discuss programme progress, including operational challenges and how these were being addressed.

Management information

VIY collect data on participant recruitment volumes, attendance, engagement with the programme, and some outcomes data. Outcomes data includes, for example, responses to an end-of-project survey that VIY carries out with young people on their last day working on a project. Note, this is different to the ‘end of programme’ survey that IFF conducted at the end of the intended three months of core programme delivery.

This management information (MI) was used to explore the scope and reach of the programme and measure the profile of young people who engaged with it. As improved centralisation of MI data was ongoing throughout the evaluation period, there are some gaps in the data presented in this report.

In some instances, data captured in the MI and surveys covered the same participant information and outcomes. For example, both captured status on entry. Where this was the case, the data between the two sources usually aligned, giving confidence to survey findings where sample sizes were lower. In this report, we have focused on MI data where this

alignment existed (due to larger sample sizes); survey data is used where MI data was unable to provide the relevant insight or nuance.

Ethics and data protection considerations

The production of a data privacy notice, available to all programme participants, was the first step in communicating details of processing requirements, data linkage and archiving to young people. This was linked in all communications inviting young people to take part in the research.

A secure file transfer system was used to transfer contact details between VIY and IFF for all young people recruited onto the programme. At the end of each survey, consent to re-contact for qualitative follow-up, the subsequent survey (if applicable), and to clarify responses was obtained. Participants were only contacted for further fieldwork if permission had been obtained in the previous contact.

14–15-year-olds were excluded from primary data collection on the grounds of needing to gain parental consent (and this being infeasible in the required timescales).

IFF collaborated with VIY and YFF to complete a thorough Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA), including assessment of risks and mitigations.

Data analysis

Data from surveys has been analysed and reported as descriptive statistics throughout the report. Where we state statistical significance in this report, this is based on independent significance tests (z-tests on percentages, and t-tests on mean) at the 95% level of confidence. This is rare due to the low sample sizes for survey completes.

Qualitative interviews were analysed using a grounded theory approach, where analysis and understanding of emerging findings/themes begins with immersion in the interviews themselves and are developed from the evidence by inductive reasoning.

Discussions were inputted into an Excel-based analysis framework, structured around key themes. Layers of categorising/coding of the data helped to ensure objectivity in analysis and provided a full audit trail of the analysis process. For the interviews with young people, analysis was structured by participant outcomes to enable exploration of the different journeys/pathways.

This information was then synthesised to provide depth to the evidence coming out of the survey and MI data. This synthesis was achieved through an immersive analysis session in which findings across audiences were triangulated and conflicting findings were explored in detail.

Evaluation limitations

The findings reported, and the overall evaluation design, were subject to some important limitations. To summarise:

- Baseline survey responses were very low in the early months of the evaluation, meaning data on earlier participants is relatively lacking;

- Low sample sizes for EOP and 13-week survey completions limited the extent of analysis possible, particularly for subgroups. This meant it was difficult to draw conclusions about what worked for whom;
- The decision to drop the 26-week follow-up meant that we could not explore whether longer-term outcomes were sustained;
- Due to challenges in sample volumes and attrition, it was agreed that individuals did not have to have completed the preceding survey to take part in the EOP or 13-week surveys (to maximise information gathered more broadly). Only 19 participants completed a survey at each stage. This means that the descriptive wave comparisons contain bias, as they are not based on matched samples;
- Relatedly, due to the very low number of young people under 18 and in education, understanding the outcomes for this subgroup (in terms of engagement with and relationships within education settings) was difficult;
- Recruitment during COVID-19 caused low programme uptake among potential participants between November 2021 and February 2022, causing an extension of the overall funding contract and evaluation;
- There was high variation in experience of the programme (progressions support, length of project), making it difficult to identify a consistent and comparable experience of support, even at a 'core programme' level;
- Improvements to contact detail quality, data collection and programme delivery were introduced throughout the evaluation timeline (described qualitatively and supported by improved quality in MI data over time); this evaluation and report comes at a time when the programme is at the cusp of key improvements / greater consistency across cohorts. One of these strands of improvement relates to MI systems and processes. Implementation of these processes (such as ongoing centralisation of all information held on individuals) means there are still some gaps in the MI data that IFF Research and Belmana received within the evaluation timeframe.

3. VIY programme theory

This section presents the Volunteer it Yourself (VIY) programme theory, i.e., how the design and planned activities within the programme should lead to the intended outcomes. It also maps out the intended participant journey in terms of different elements of support and their timescales, from the point of referral.

Theory of Change

The VIY Theory of Change (ToC) depicts the programme inputs, activities, and outputs, and their intended short to medium-term outcomes. It also includes the longer-term impacts that should eventually be realised through / contributed to by the programme. The ToC developed in the mobilisation stage is shown in Figure 3.1 and summarised below. It is based on VIY perceptions of how the programme works, rather than wider evidence.

It is important to note that the YFF funding and evaluation is focused on the outcomes achieved for young people (particularly their employment, education and training outcomes and whether these outcomes have been sustained), and therefore excludes those for mentors and community venues.

There are various **assumptions** underpinning the VIY model, namely around the relative appeal of its design features (young people preferring to learn in an informal environment, wanting to gain accreditations, and being motivated to improve their local community), and participation being a positive experience that invokes pride / a sense of achievement. The assumption that community venues are struggling with the upkeep of facilities is also key to the supply of project sites. The model relies on these assumptions being at least somewhat true/realised.

Inputs can be categorised into *key stakeholders* (organisations and VIY staff central to the delivery of the project), *participants* themselves (those who are at risk of not being in employment, education or training, i.e., NEET, or are currently NEET), *mentors* (either lead mentors involved in the organisation of projects, or locally based mentors helping young people on the ground), and *facilities* that need improvements.

Trade sector partners can be involved in the programme in one of two ways: they either supply essential materials (tools, paints etc.) for doing improvement works, or act as a partner in employability activities on the programme (for example, giving talks to participants about the construction sector, work experience or employment opportunities etc.).

Referral partners are essential to programme success; they are the main source for participant recruitment, with very few participants relevant to YFF funding recruited through direct marketing / open call.

Core programme activities are largely split into three groups:

- *Pre-programme activity*, prior to a young person starting on a project. This primarily consists of a welcome call. In this call, VIY outline what the programme involves, explore additional needs for participation, and explore motivation for taking part / what participants want to get out their VIY experience. This welcome call is also intended to gauge whether progressions support is relevant to the young person. If so, the progressions manager calls them to understand more about their future aspirations. An output of pre-programme activities is a personalised workplan for each young person, which continues to be developed throughout the core programme delivery.
- *Project work*, i.e., the time spent on site doing construction-related improvement work to a community venue (identified with an orange border on Figure 3.1).
- *Progressions support and activities*. Progression activities include support from a progressions manager, work-readiness training, sector-relevant work visits/tasters, and introductions to employers. The role of the progressions manager is to support a young person in achieving desired EET outcomes. Through understanding participant needs and future intentions, the progressions manager offers tailored support (for example, introductions to relevant employers, and signposting to relevant training opportunities).

The anticipated **immediate outcomes** for young people (i.e., those achieved immediately following programme activities, by the end of core programme delivery) were:

- Obtainment of an entry level City & Guilds accreditation and related skill development.
- Increased confidence in employability related skills (the seven employability skills confidence measures are: meeting new people; trying new things; working with others in a team; putting forward my ideas; being a leader of a team; explaining my ideas clearly; getting things done on time).
- Improved employability and progression into further training, work placements, apprenticeships, and other employment.
- Raised aspirations (attitudinal/motivation change to support positive future EET outcomes), in terms of obtaining a job, potential enjoyment of future career, and the type of work they could do.
- Increased interest/consideration for working in the construction sector.
- Increased affiliation, ownership, and responsibility with local facility.

Medium and longer-term outcomes (intended to be achieved within a year of taking part) were predominantly a range of EET outcomes themselves and sustainment of these. It was also anticipated that participation in the programme would have a positive impact on individuals’:

- Take-up of construction-specific education, training and/or employment opportunities, including peer mentoring with VIY.
- Wellbeing (both directly and indirectly, as a result of positive EET outcomes).

- Increased use / engagement with local facility leading to increased sense of belonging to the area.
- Improved school attendance and behaviour (due to raised aspirations, motivation and confidence).

Ultimately, the **programme impact** was for NEET young people aged 17–24 to move into employment, education or training outcomes, and for pre-NEET young people (aged 14–16) to remain in education or training (with better in-school outcomes) or have a positive progression on leaving full-time education. For many, it was expected that these EET outcomes would relate specifically to the construction sector.

Young people were expected to achieve outcomes through four **mechanisms of change**:

- **A friendly, supportive environment** created by mentors on site – this contributes to a positive experience of the programme. Enjoyment of the programme is likely to determine how likely a young person is to consider construction in the future.
- An educational setting that **makes young people feel valued and respected** – it is important to VIY that this feels different to educational settings that have not worked for the young person so far. This improves engagement with the programme, making young people more likely to achieve project work outcomes such as accreditation and skill development. Feeling valued/respected can also contribute to a young person’s confidence (both in relation to employability and more broadly).
- Exposure to the **world of work**, in the context of construction. This improves their understanding of what it is like to work in the sector and, if coupled with a positive experience, may make a young person more interested in working in the sector moving forward.
- **Personalised progressions support** and guidance to help support each young person in achieving their desired next steps in employment, education or training.

Wider evidence to support the model

A wider literature review of programmes with some similar features (also conducted in the mobilisation stage) provided support to some of the claims of this model.

There was evidence that the following features of the intended VIY programme design can be positive for participant outcomes:

- Participation is voluntary. Positive outcomes are more likely when an individual has volunteered to take part in a programme, rather than it being a requirement (Busse et al., 2018).
- The programme offers employability support. There is evidence that multiple activities and types of support work best to bring about positive outcomes for young people (Newton et al., 2020).

- Support is designed to develop job-specific skills, basic academic skills, thinking skills, social skills, personal qualities and career motivation. Evidence shows that employability programmes that develop these skills may deliver more benefit in the long term than ‘work first’ programmes, which may deliver only short-term or poor-quality employment (Newton et al., 2020).
- Support aims to achieve ‘softer’ outcomes. For example, improved confidence, improved wellbeing, and building aspiration. Evidence shows that soft skills can be more beneficial than some ‘hard’ outcomes over the long term: softer outcomes have been linked with more positive or meaningful long-term employment or education outcomes (DWP, 2012).

The VIY model includes features that the existing literature on employability and volunteering programmes has not (fully) evidenced as leading to successful EET outcomes, such as:

- how the approach to mentorship (relaxed, informal, friendly) might affect experience and participant outcomes;
- the particular types of programme activities and their link to participant outcomes; and,
- the sequential link between positive volunteering experiences and improvements in young people’s confidence, leading to progression in work.

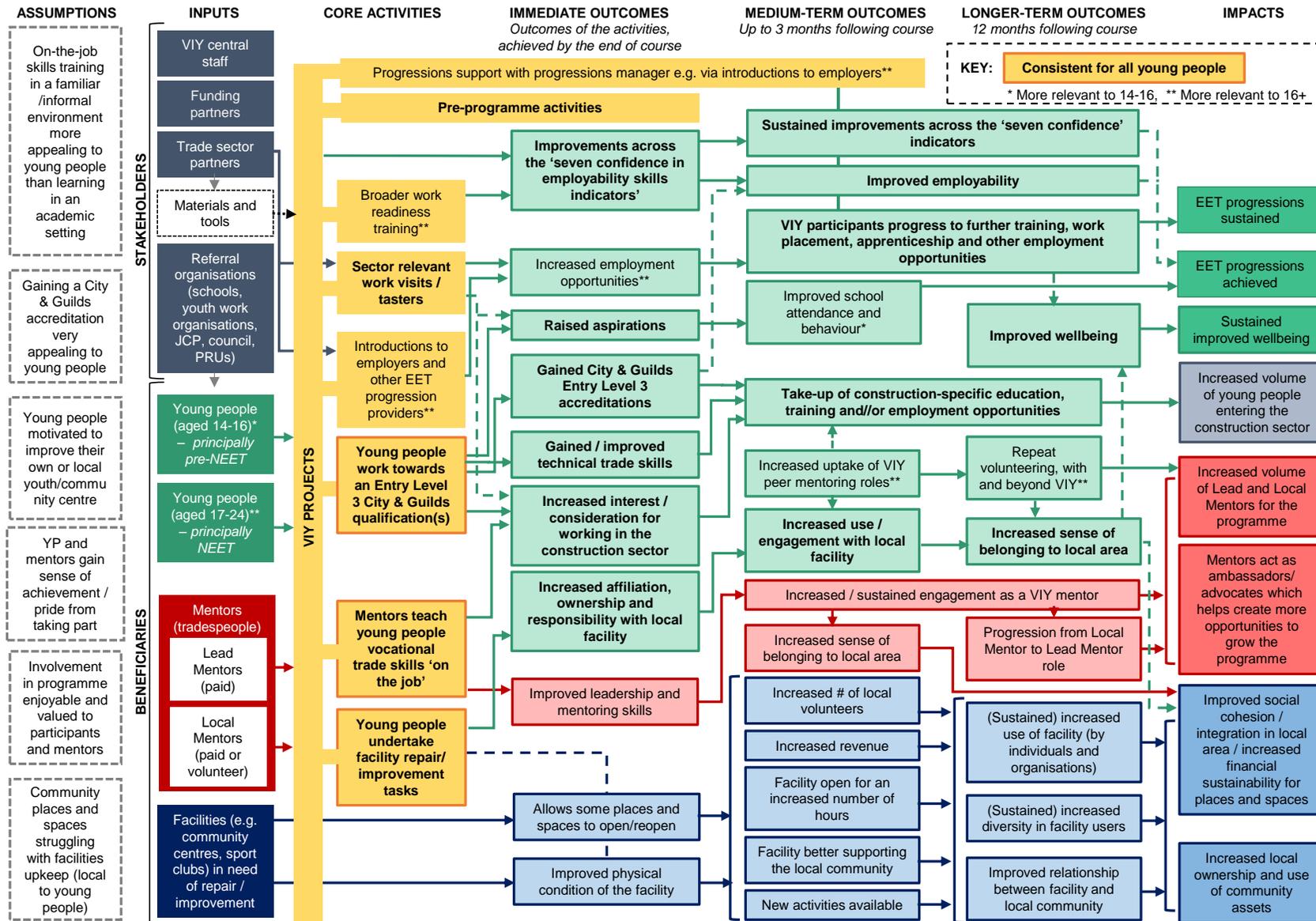
Timescales of support

The participant journey (Figure 3.2) outlines the planned timescales and flow of programme activities for a young person. In this model, project work is identified with green boxes, and progressions support is identified with yellow boxes. Intended time points for data collection are marked in dark red.

Key in this illustration is the scale (in terms of longevity) of project work and overall programme support. Initial discussions indicated that a young person would be actively engaged with the programme for up to 12 weeks. This ‘active engagement’ would be when project work and most progression activities would take place. Project lengths could vary, but scoping discussions indicated that these were anticipated to last between three weeks and two months, and young people would be able to take part in multiple projects if they wished / there was opportunity to do so. After this “core programme support”, communication with VIY was intended to continue, namely with progressions-related support for a further 13 weeks, with a check in after this time period and again at the equivalent of six months after the end of core programme support.

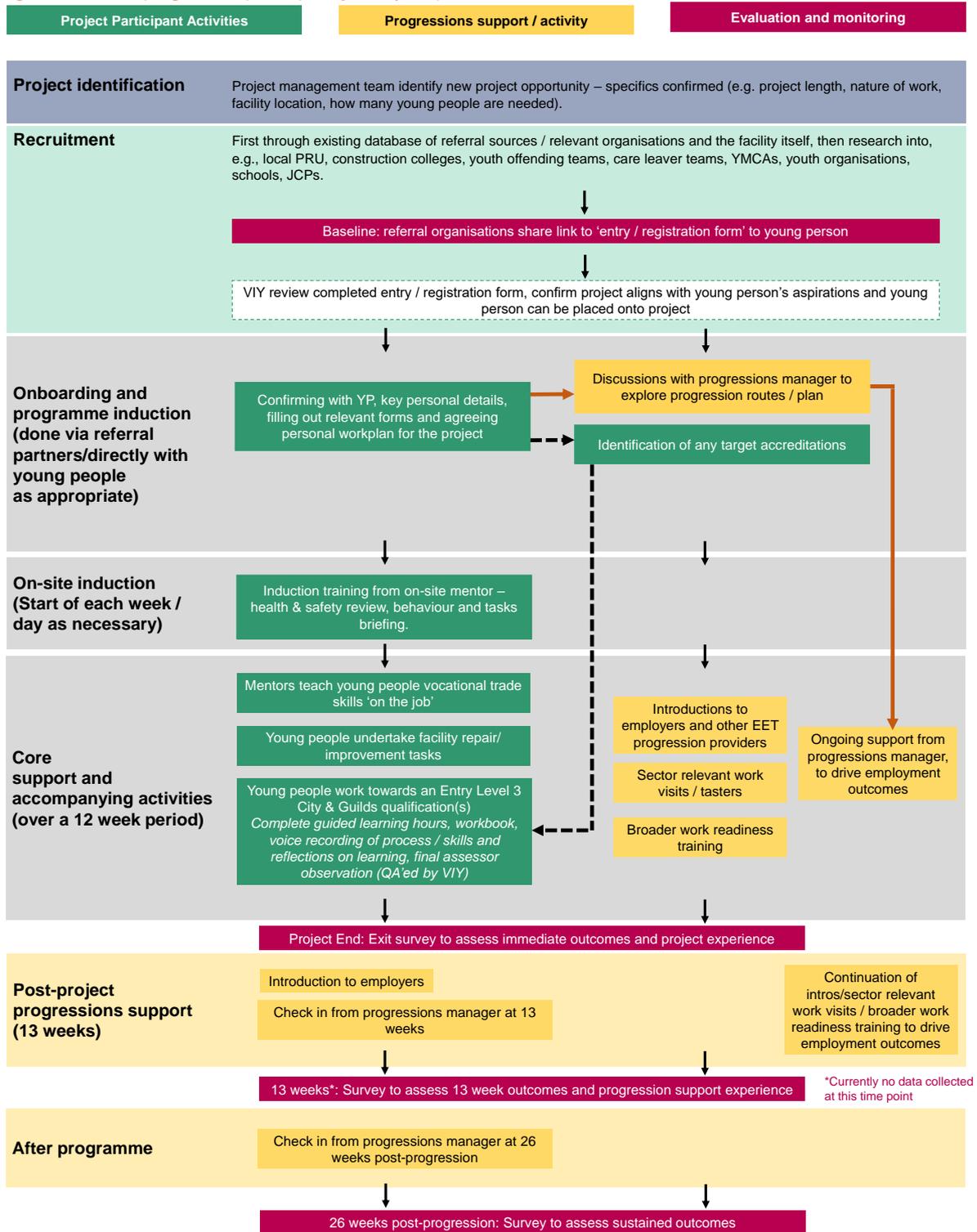
Volunteer It Yourself Evaluation: Pilot study findings

Figure 3.1 Initial programme Theory of Change



Volunteer It Yourself Evaluation: Pilot study findings

Figure 3.2 Initial programme participant journey map



4. Operation of model in practice

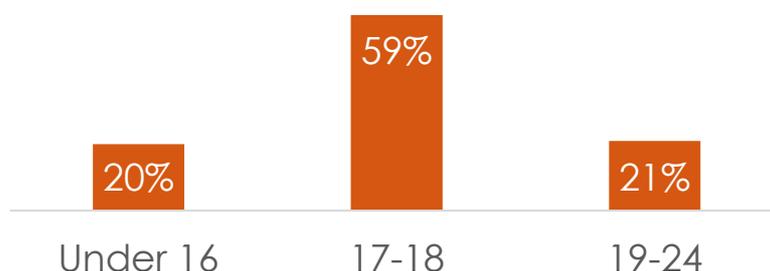
This chapter examines the characteristics of the target and achieved audience, the referral channels and onboarding processes in place. It then explores the nature, duration and experiences of the core VIY programme delivery (on-site project work), and progression and employability support.

Characteristics of participants

Participant demographics

VIY were targeting young people aged 14–24 for YFF-funded projects. According to the MI data, the average age of young people participating was 17.4 years old (median age of 17), and the ages of participants ranged from 12 to 24 years old. As shown in Figure 4.1, the majority of participants (59%) were aged between 16 and 18.

Figure 4.1 Participant demographics – age



Base: All in MI where date of birth known (323)

In MI data, the vast majority of participants were male (86%); just 12% were female. Small minorities stated their gender as ‘other’ or preferred not to say (both 1%).

As shown in Table 4.1, participants were predominately white British (72%). One in five (20%) of participants were from ethnic minority groups.

Table 4.1 Participant demographics – ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentages
White British	72%
White Other (including and Caribbean / African)	5%
Asian or Asian British	4%
Black African	4%
Black Caribbean	5%

Ethnicity	Percentages
Other (including Arab and Other mixed background)	3%
Prefer not to say	5%

Base: All in MI with ethnicity (excluding not known or blank values (221). Note: some subgroups with low proportions have been combined to protect the identify of participants.

Employment, education, and training status

According to MI data, 28% of participants were not in employment, education or training (NEET) prior to starting their VIY project. The remaining 72% were at risk of NEET, as identified by the referral partner and/or during VIY recruitment (and explored in more detail later in this section).

Looking at the MI EET status by MI age, as one might expect, the vast majority of those under 16 and those aged between 16 and 18 years old were in EET on entry (94% and 79% respectively). In contrast, 60% of those aged between 19 and 23 years old were NEET on entry.

Table 4.2 Participant EET status on entry by age group

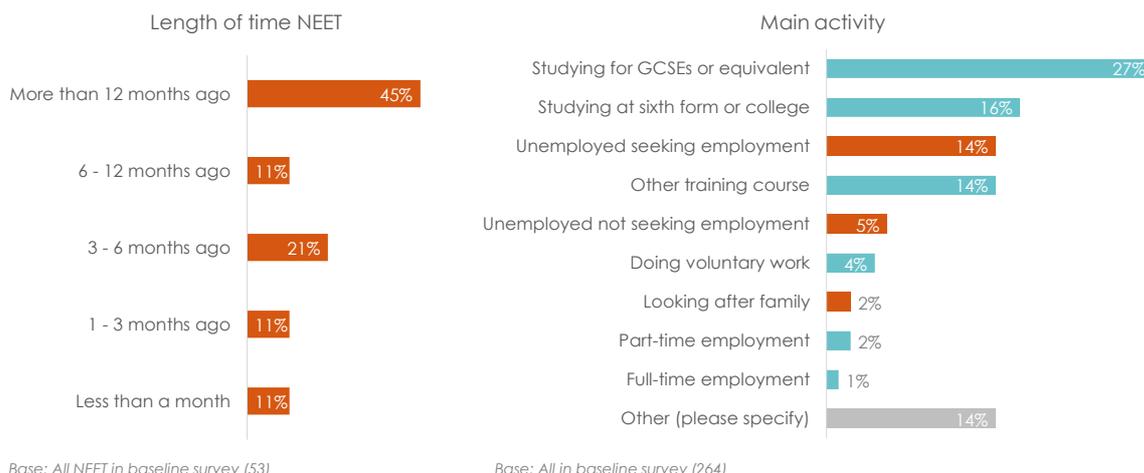
Status on entry	All	Under 16	16–18	19–23	24+
EET on entry	72%	94%	79%	40%	10%
NEET on entry	28%	6%	21%	60%	90%

Source: MI data. Base: All in MI excluding those for whom don't know their EET status (321)

In the survey, almost half (45%) of participants who were NEET on entry said that they had been out of employment, education or training for at least 12 months. Around one in ten (11%) had been out of EET for less than a month, with the remaining participants who were NEET on entry falling somewhere in-between. The majority of participants who were NEET on entry were unemployed and seeking employment on entry (14% of all participants), while minorities were not seeking employment (5% overall) or were looking after family (2% overall).

Looking at EET status more closely from survey data, participants were most commonly studying for a GCSE or equivalent (27% of all participants). This was followed by studying at sixth form or college (16%), or on another form of training (14%).

Figure 4.2 Length of time NEET and main activity on entry (from baseline survey)



Source: Baseline survey. Questions: A1a; A2 Base: All in baseline survey (264)

In the survey, around half (52%) of all participants stated that they had experience volunteering before. As shown in Table 4.3, this was more common among those EET on entry (57% compared to 36% NEET on entry).

Table 4.3 Participants’ previous volunteering experience by status on entry

Volunteering experience	All	EET on entry	NEET on entry
Previous experience	52%	57%	36%
No previous experience	40%	38%	49%
Unsure	8%	6%	15%

Source: Baseline survey. Question: A13 Have you volunteered before? Base: All in baseline survey (264)

Additional needs and disadvantaged characteristics

To further explore the characteristics of participants, the baseline survey presented a range of additional needs and disadvantaged characteristics typically associated with young people with a greater risk of being/becoming NEET in the UK. Table 4.4 presents the frequency of these characteristics among VIY participants.

Overall, those EET on entry were more likely to cite additional needs / disadvantaged characteristics than those NEET on entry (74% compared to 60%).

For participants in EET, the most common of these characteristics was requiring additional special education needs (SEN) support (31%), having an education, health and care plan (EHCP, 30%, which is linked with receiving additional SEN support) and being in receipt of free school meals (26%). Just over one-quarter (26%) of EET young people did not associate with any of the ‘additional needs / disadvantaged’ characteristics in this list.

Table 4.4 Additional needs of participants, by status on entry

Additional need	All	EET on entry	NEET on entry
I require additional SEN support	27%	31%*	11%
I have EHCP	26%	30%*	15%
I have received free school meals in the last 12 months	24%	26%*	17%
English is an additional language for me	13%	15%	6%
I have been home schooled either in the past or currently	13%	11%	19%*
I have been excluded from school in the last 12 months	13%	16%*	6%
I have been under the care of the local authority within the last 12 months	8%	9%	9%
I have been involved with the youth justice system within the last 12 months	6%	5%	11%
I have been in custody within the last 12 months	5%	5%	9%
I am a carer for a vulnerable member of my family	4%	3%	9%
I am currently a parent or pregnant	Incidence too low to report		
None of these / Prefer not to say	30%	26%	40%

Source: Baseline survey. Question: A12 Do any of the following apply to your situation? Base: All in baseline survey (264); all EET (200); NEET (53). *denotes a figure that is significantly higher than the other subgroup(s), at a 95% confidence level.

Breaking this down further we can see that, compared to those who were NEET on entry, those with EET status were more likely to require additional SEN support, have an EHCP, have received free school meals or been excluded from school in the last 12 months. Conversely, those young people NEET on entry were more likely than those in EET to have been home schooled currently or in the past.

Given the target audience for the programme (NEET or *at risk of NEET*), it makes sense that the proportion of participants EET on entry with additional needs / disadvantaged characteristics is higher; those that are NEET are automatically relevant to the VIY programme, for others it should be *indicative* that they are at higher risk of becoming NEET due to their characteristics. Thus, to be eligible for the programme, EET individuals *should* either have a disadvantaged characteristic, or other ‘at risk of NEET’ factors, as explored below.

Other 'at risk of NEET' factors

There are many other factors which contribute to or are indicative of the likelihood of a young person becoming NEET. These include:

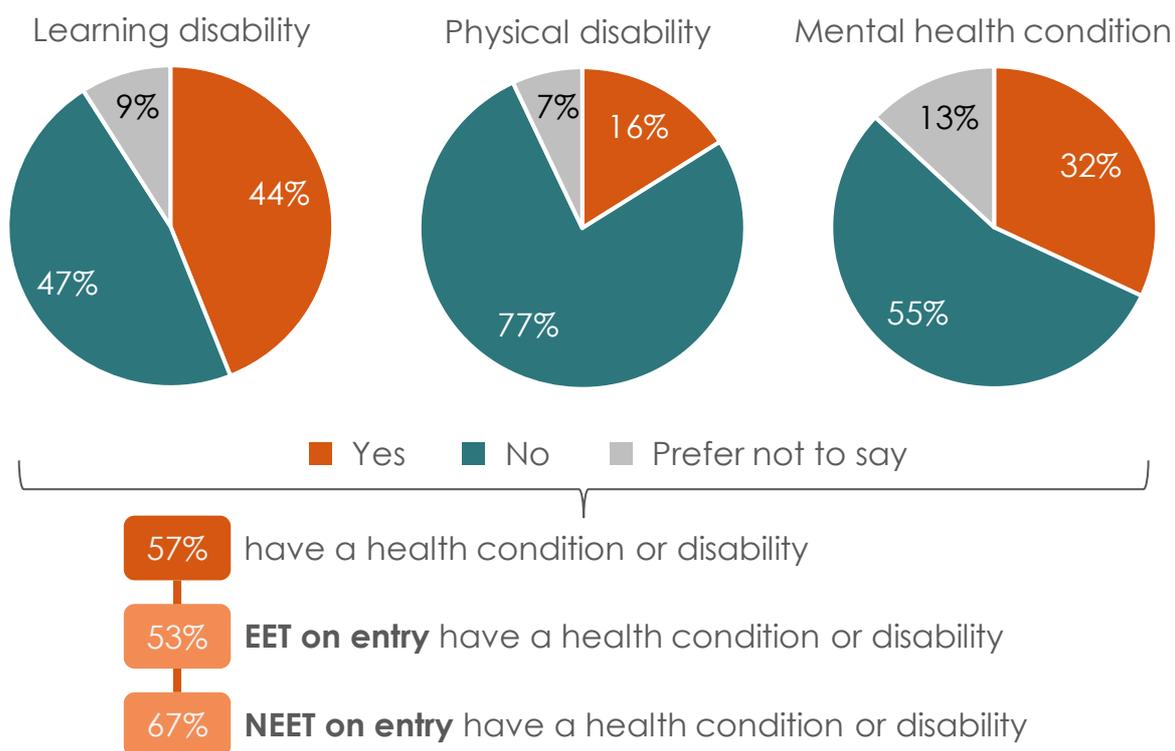
- Low educational attainment;
- School absence; and
- Health conditions and disability.

In the baseline survey, of those that knew their highest level or target grade, 61% obtained or were predicted a Grade 3 or below in GCSE Maths, and 59% obtained or were predicted a Grade 3 or below in GCSE English.

Among those studying towards GCSEs or an equivalent, 33% reported being late to school or college at least once a week, with a further 21% late once or twice a month. One-quarter (25%) missed at least one day of school a month. Please note that some of these instances will not be due to truancy (for example, poor health or care responsibilities can be causes for absence), but high levels of absence are a risk of NEET factor regardless.

As shown in Figure 4.3, just over two-fifths (44%) of young people considered themselves to have a learning difficulty or disability. About one in six (16%) said they considered themselves to have a physical disability or health condition and about one-third (32%) considered themselves to have a mental health condition. Overall, 57% of VIY participants had a health condition or disability. This was more likely among those NEET on entry (67% compared to 53% of those in EET on entry).

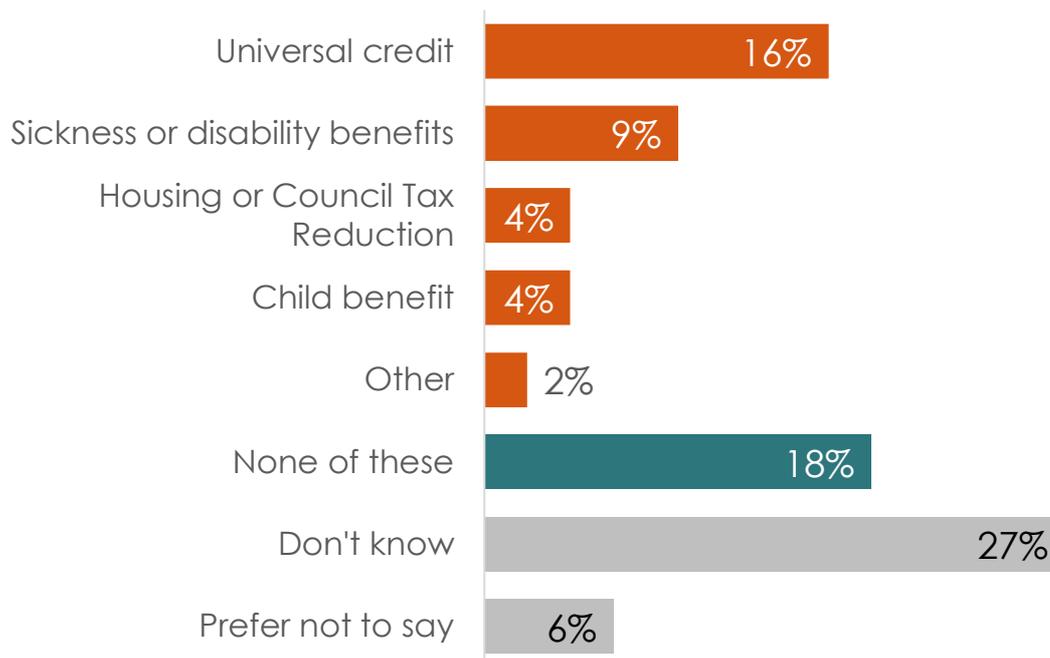
Figure 4.3: Health status



Source: Baseline survey. Questions: E1 Do you consider yourself to have any learning difficulty or disability? E2 Do you consider yourself to have any physical disability or health condition? E3 Do you consider yourself to have a mental health condition (this includes, for example, anxiety, depression)? Base: All in baseline survey (264); EET on entry (161); NEET on entry (55)

Just under one-fifth (18%) of participants in the baseline survey were not receiving any benefits at the time of participating. A slightly lower proportion (16%) were receiving Universal Credit, around one-tenth (9%) were receiving sickness or disability benefits. Smaller minorities were in receipt of housing or council tax reduction (4%), child benefits (3%), carer’s allowance (2%) or ‘other’ (1%). A substantial minority (27%) did not know if they were receiving any benefits. It is important to note that the availability of certain benefits depends on age, however, a breakdown by age risks reducing the sample to identifiable levels, so analysis has been left at an overall level.

Figure 4.4 Benefits participants were in receipt of at baseline



Source: Baseline survey. Question: E4A Do you currently receive any of the following benefits? Base: All in baseline survey (264)

Importantly, taking into consideration all ‘at risk of NEET’ factors explored here (any disadvantage, any health condition or disability, Maths or English Grade 3 or below, being late or missing school at least once a week), among EET individuals, the vast majority – 96% – demonstrate at least one of the at-risk factors. This indicates that VIY are reaching their target group.

Referral channels

VIY did not feel that self-referrals worked well for them, as their intended participant audience was very specific, and working through referral partners was much more effective.

MI data showed that participants were referred by a total of 81 organisations. However, a small number of referral partners accounted for the majority, with approximately half of all participants referred by 12 organisations and one-quarter referred by just four organisations.

These referral organisations were predominately colleges, academies and local youth-focused charities, many of them sport-focused. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), through Jobcentre Plus, and some other statutory services also played a role (such as youth offending teams, employment services, and a few EET-focused charities).

In terms of identifying referral partners, once a project location had been decided, the VIY team undertook a mapping of charities, employment programmes, youth centres, colleges, schools and other potential referral organisations in the local area. If the project venue had existing links to local young people, then the VIY team sought to utilise those links. The objective of this was to try to identify as many partners as they could with young people in

the NEET or at risk of being NEET cohort. The mapping was then filtered according to which organisations had cohorts available during the project dates.

There are national organisations for which VIY could obtain local referrals when setting up a new project and DWP was highlighted as the 'perfect place' to find motivated young people who are the target participants of the project. Those young people referred by DWP were exclusively NEET young people who were seeking employment and eager to develop vocational skills. VIY staff explained how this meant that those young people typically showed strong and positive engagement with the project. One important aspect of DWP referrals discussed by VIY staff was that the project was recognised as work experience by the DWP.

One staff member described how building up relationships with referral organisations in new project areas can be difficult, as effective relationships take time to develop. This also meant that some projects experienced higher rates of drop-out as the support / VIY 'buy-in' from the referral partner had not yet been built, impacting on their likelihood of ensuring and encouraging attendance.

Referral processes

VIY stakeholders outlined how the referral process, whilst initially informal, has begun to be formalised and related data collection has become standardised.

The referral partner typically acted as a broker between VIY and at risk/NEET young people. VIY would contact those partners who would then contact young people directly to inform them of the opportunity, outlining the project details and what participation would involve, to align expectations. If the young person showed interest the referral partner would go back to VIY to signal their interest.

The referral partner typically filled out a registration form for the young person and once it was uploaded that individual would be on the VIY MI system. VIY would then let the referral partner know and would ask them to alert the young person to expect a call from VIY.

Onboarding

VIY staff highlighted that the intention was for every participant to receive a call to welcome them to the project, and to make sure they knew the project dates and what to expect from participating. The staff also aimed to determine participants' aspirations for taking part in the programme and if there were any special considerations that needed to be considered for project suitability. VIY flagged that they are not always able to get through to young people to have this initial conversation. Indeed, MI data showed that welcome calls were held with 60% of participants in the evaluation period.

Qualitative interviews highlighted that, although formal, written workplans were not part of the design. Some delivery staff logged aspirations (if determined from the welcome call or on the first day), and tried to match the nature of projects to a young person's interests (for example, if a young person was interested in carpentry, they would try to find a project that involves woodwork).

Training for VIY staff on how to talk to young people in terms of selling the project to them, collecting the information needed whilst ensuring the young person feels comfortable and asking for potentially sensitive information, such as disability status, became more formalised throughout the evaluation period.

The process for data collection has changed and information gathering on a young person's status, such as age, contact details, NEET/EET status, and whether they are interested in progressions, is now collected through the registration form. The welcome call is now predominately focused on process elements as VIY staff felt that light-touch communication in the first instance is best; it is too soon to explore progression ambitions.

The data collected through the registration form is now logged on the MI platform, which logs all interactions with those young people and the stage on the project they are currently at.

Young people's experience of recruitment and onboarding

Where young people first heard about VIY

In line with referral channels, in qualitative interviews participants typically described finding out about VIY from PRUs, charities, organisations they were volunteering with, case workers and Jobcentre Plus.

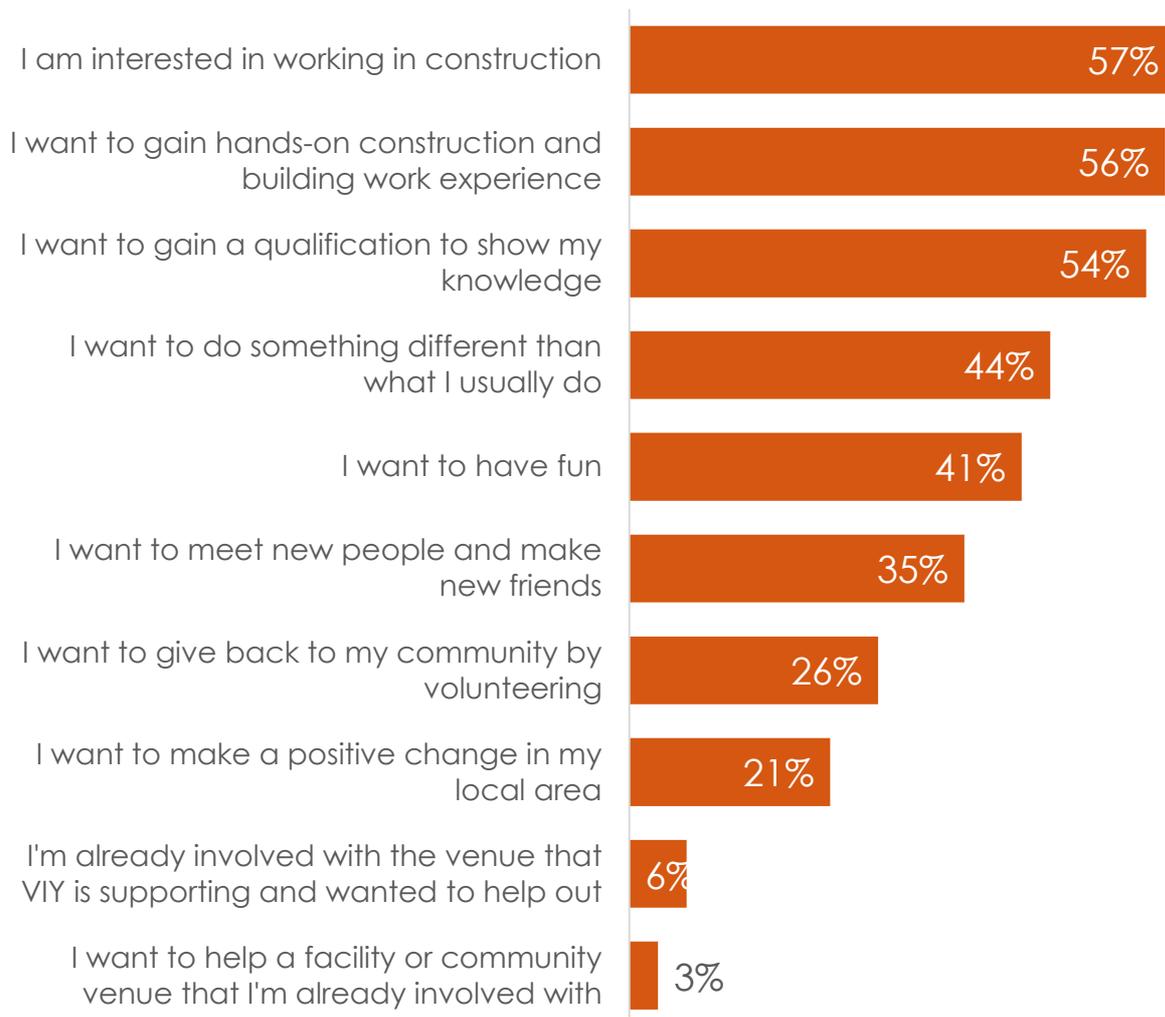
Participants' initial impressions, built predominately upon information provided to them by referral partners, were that VIY was a volunteering programme where they could develop skills, learn about health and safety, and potentially gain the opportunity to gain practical qualifications/experience in construction work.

Motivations for taking part in VIY

In the baseline survey, more than half of participants discussed wanting to take part in the VIY project because they were interested in working in construction (75%), wanted to gain hands-on construction experience (56%) or wanted to gain an accreditation (54%). Around two-fifths were motivated to take part because they wanted to do something different than what they usually did (44%) or because they wanted to have fun (41%).

Over one-quarter (26%) of participants wanted to give back to their community by volunteering and one-fifth (20%) wanted to make positive change in their local area.

Figure 4.5 Motivations for wanting to take part in VIY



Source: Baseline survey. Question: B1 What are your main reasons for wanting to take part in VIY? Base: All in baseline survey (264)

Qualitative interviews provided greater insight into the outlook of participants entering the programme, and the relative importance of some of the reasons cited for taking part. Many highlighted that they were motivated to take part because it was something to pass the time, something they were partly interested in, because they were looking to get out more or because it offered an opportunity to learn new skills.

“I thought it might be a good idea, do something different.” – Female, 17, EET on entry

“It was relevant to me in other ways because at the time I wasn't really all too social, I'd just been stuck in my room for months. It was really nice to get out and talk to people.” – Male, 21, NEET on entry

Whilst one highlighted that it might not be relevant to their target profession, there were elements, such as health and safety training, teamwork and communication, that were relevant. They highlighted that participation would be a good addition to their CV, something that they could bring up in interviews as evidence of their skills/experience.

The importance of volunteering and ‘giving back’ came through more strongly in qualitative interviews than in the survey. Where this was a motivator, it was a particularly powerful one.

"I've always been someone to give back – even if I'm not from that area – always just kinda give back to other places. I actually think it's a really good idea that they're taking on somewhere that is really run down and needs the work, the place hasn't got enough money or time to do it themselves." – Female, 20, NEET on entry

"Just helping people really" – Male, 17, EET on entry

In addition to the motivations explored in the survey, participants very commonly discussed the importance of participation being voluntary and flexible, and of being able to leave the programme if they didn't like it, compared with other options they were offered, like summer schools, which had stricter attendance requirements.

"What drew me to VIY was that if you didn't like it, there was no shame in just not being there, it was optional." – Male, 21, NEET on entry

This ‘low pressure’ option was particularly attractive for individuals who had caring responsibilities or poor health, which meant they were more likely to need to miss the odd day.

Lastly, participants also highlighted a motivation to attend in order to meet new people and meet with project mentors, who they were interested in engaging and having discussions with to better understand what it was like to work in construction.

Welcome calls

In qualitative interviews, participants that received welcome calls discussed that whilst these calls had been of an informal nature and primarily covered simple logistical details, they had held value, describing themselves as ‘reassured’ after receiving them, and that they were glad they received a call rather than just an email.

"There was a lady who said she was overseeing the project, she called me to let me know what I would be doing and that there would be a short test at the end to see what we've learned... also just making sure that there weren't any problems with me getting there and that sort of thing." – Male, 18, NEET on entry

"A week before there was another call fully outlining 'we've got X to build, we're building these planters, this wire fence... you'll be doing XY and Z and you'll be helping out by building these things... you have to do this for at least three days to get the qualification'" – Male, 19, NEET on entry

Young peoples' accounts of welcome calls were fairly inconsistent, however, and highlighted issues in this communication. For example:

- One participant did not receive a call from VIY before the project began, just a no-reply email.
- Another participant discussed how they did not hear from VIY for a while before the start of the project and that this meant that they were not able to complete the full three weeks of the project because VIY communicated the dates too late, and they had other commitments arranged by that point.
- Another participant who, whilst being satisfied with the information given in their welcome call, was frustrated that the project was delayed, and this was not communicated until two weeks before the project was due to start.

These varying accounts, alongside the value of welcome calls as outlined by both VIY staff (e.g., understanding participant aspirations and support needs) and young people (e.g., reassurance and logistical information ahead of participating) point to the need for greater consistency in making contact prior to a project starting, ensuring young people have adequate notice and understanding of what participation entails.

A staff member described how the number of welcome calls held is significantly impacted by VIY staff being unable to reach young people when they attempt to make contact. This may have been the case in some of the young people's accounts outlined above.

Access to contact details (passed on by referral partners) in good time, ahead of a project has also been a key barrier to VIY conducting these calls; this challenge has been addressed over time and VIY are able to conduct more welcome calls as a result.

VIY core programme delivery

Overview of project work

Nature of project work

The project work forms the core programme offer of VIY activities. Young people work on making improvements to a local venue. The scoping interviews suggested that VIY initially anticipated project work to last between three weeks and two months. VIY outlined that young people are usually offered one week (four days) of project work. MI data shows that, taking into consideration project length and absences, in practice young people tend to attend an average of three days on site. Although projects last longer than this, VIY prioritise having *more* young people able to experience projects (i.e., greater reach) over fewer participants being able to participate for longer. Often, this means participants on a particular project change every week or so. There is some variation in how these days are delivered – for example, VIY describe how arrangements with some referral partners mean that young people work one day per week for five weeks. In these instances, a different referral partner fills a different day of project work within each week.

The availability of longer projects was also a barrier. Mentors said that this was a characteristic of the current programme they would like to change moving forward; being able to support young people participating in project work for longer. Speaking to central staff, however, this is unlikely to change soon. The aim is for each project to last three weeks, with a target of 20 young people, so between five and seven young people per week.

While on site, most young people have the opportunity to complete an entry level City & Guilds accreditation. This is voluntary, and only takes a few days to complete. Young people must complete a workbook on the relevant skill (with support from mentors) and give a demonstration of the developed skill to an on-site assessor. The main barrier to VIY offering an accreditation was the availability of assessors, although this was rare. Barriers to completion, such as young people not being on site for the necessary number of hours to complete their Guided Learning Hours, or not attending on the assessment day, were more common.

Young people's experiences of VIY project work

First day on site

The first day of the project predominately focused on health and safety, setting out the expectations of participation, and learning how to properly use the necessary equipment. This induction is delivered by on-site mentors.

One mentor described the importance of letting participants know early on that it's fine to make a mistake because that is how you learn, as the young people can tend to think that they will be a failure if they cannot perform the tasks straight away.

Participants' accounts of their first days were overwhelmingly positive. Many attributed their positive experience to how welcomed mentors made them feel, and how relaxed the atmosphere was.

"On the first day I was happy and excited because they were so kind and supportive. I felt good." – Male, 20, NEET on entry

Description of project work

Participants described days as typically lasting between five and seven hours.

Participants tended to be assigned different areas to work on in groups throughout the project. They described performing a wide range of tasks that often shifted so that they gained experience in different construction skills and received on-the-job training.

Attendance

In the survey, the vast majority of participants (92%) stated that they completed the VIY project work they were registered on. MI data (which is more likely to present an accurate picture of all participants), however, shows that one-third (33%) of participants had at least one day of absence in their allocated days. For 10%, the number of days absent exceeded the number of days present, meaning that one in ten young people were more likely to miss than attend a day on site.

In qualitative interviews, VIY staff described how, whilst they did not have official numbers on the volume of dropouts (due to not always having information on referrals), every project experienced a couple of young people that either did not turn up or just came for one day and did not finish the project. However, staff regarded this as a small proportion of participants and were unsure about what more could be done to avoid it. Typically, the

process in these cases would be for VIY to notify the referral partner that the young person had not attended, which was felt to be all that the organisation could do.

In qualitative interviews, some young people explained how they were unable to attend all days due to other commitments, such as caring duties or appointments, or due to poor health.

What young people liked

Mentioned earlier as a motivation for young people taking part in the project, staff/referral partners highlighted how participants discussed the hands-on work and practical experience forming one of the aspects of the projects that they liked the most.

"I think [the most attractive aspect of the programme for young people] to get them out of the classroom doing some practical work experience is such a great thing, and actually in construction especially, that's extremely difficult to get with any sort of mainstream employer, because they need to have you know, the health and safety CSCS card⁶..." – Referral partner

Mentors were an element of the project work that participants were particularly positive about; the welcoming and supportive attitude of mentors was central to many participant's experiences of the project work, as well as the time they took to carefully explain/demonstrate skills to the young people.

"The second I went there, nice, lovely faces. Very friendly faces, made me feel very welcome." – Male, 21, NEET on entry

"They taught us the basics... It was quite educational, I was expecting it to just be 'go there, do that' but they actually took the time to educate us. I really appreciated that because I didn't genuinely believe that I would learn anything." – Male, 21, NEET on entry

Participants described mentors as approachable and as delivering individually tailored mentoring. Some young people valued the informal discussions they had with mentors about the industry and felt exposure to tradesmen in this context had reassured them as to what it might be like to work on a construction site outside of VIY.

Others also discussed that it gave them some insight/experience into construction work, and offered them the opportunity to gain important entry qualifications. This and other outcomes of the programme are discussed further in Chapter 5 (Outcomes and next steps for young people).

Participant views on areas for improvement

Participants had difficulty identifying elements of project work that they did not like.

⁶ CSCS is the leading skills certification scheme within the UK construction industry. CSCS cards provide proof that individuals working on construction sites have the appropriate training and qualifications for the job they do on site.

For those that could, this was often a desire for the project to have more job-focused/practical experience opportunities. Many indicated that they would have liked more support developing their CV, guidance on what their next steps could be, and support identifying and reaching out to potential employers. These were all elements VIY intended to deliver but did not do so consistently.

One participant highlighted only knowing about the programme because they were contacted by their local authority and thought that the project should be advertised more. He also thought that people would be more willing to participate if it was advertised in the summer.

"Not much. I guess the advertisement of it could be better because I didn't know it existed." – Male, 18, NEET on entry

Another issue raised by participants was a lack of clarity at the start on dates/timelines of participation due to the project delays, which they described as frustrating.

One participant highlighted that they were the only participant on their project and that they found it intimidating and "disheartening". As a consequence, they felt like a burden to the project in the beginning because they were the only person there doing work experience, working alongside more experienced staff.

Progression and employability support

The progressions support offered throughout the programme varied amongst individuals and was impacted by a variety of external factors including their personal circumstances, what they were looking for next and their levels of engagement with the process.

Nonetheless, in the end of programme (EOP) survey, most participants reported receiving one of the elements of progressions support that was offered.⁷ The most successful cases were those that built upon engagement from potential employers.

Progressions Manager support

The initial intention was to offer up to six months of progressions support for participants who explicitly expressed a desire for this type of support. It was intended to be run by a small progressions team (three to four people) that would speak to participants about their desires following their experience with VIY.

"One: where is their understanding of the construction industry? Two: Are there any limitations or barriers in their approach to apply for any type of work?" – VIY staff

In the EOP survey, around one-third (21 of the 61) of young people reported having had discussions with VIY about progressions support. Just under half (49%) did not recall having any kind of progressions discussion.

⁷ Note that MI data on progressions support is not complete enough / does not have the necessary coverage to report on progressions support delivered.

The qualitative interviews echoed these findings, with only some of the participants reporting having received progressions support because they had expressed more interest and willingness to engage.

Some staff members suggested that the prerequisite of expressed interest was necessary given the limited resources of such a small progressions team and the difficulty that they faced when trying to establish continued engagement following the end of the programme.

“After the project, it’s quite hard to engage a young person.”- VIY staff

Some of the partner organisations suggested that the reason for lower uptake in progressions support from VIY was that this was something that referral partners, such as colleges themselves, were providing.

“There is lots of progressions support within [our organisation].” – Referral partner

“The college provide a lot internally, so they [young people] have not asked VIY for much in terms of progressions support.” – Referral partner

In the survey and qualitative interviews, those who received progressions support said that the main topics discussed were how ready they felt to start working, further training opportunities and what they were doing now.

This is supported by the MI data, which provides insight into what progressions opportunities participants expressed an interest in. MI progressions data is available for 39 participants. Of these, 26 are recorded as seeking an employment outcome, 19 sought employment or training opportunities, and eight sought job-searching / signposting support. Detailed breakdowns of the types of outcomes sought are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Number of participants in EOP and their sought outcomes from progressions support

Sought outcome		Yes
Employment	Seeking employment: apprenticeship	18
Employment	Seeking full-time employment	13
Education/training	Seeking education: Level 2 qualifications	13
Education/training	Seeking education: Level 1 qualifications	12
Education/training	Seeking education: further education	9
Education/training	Seeking training: long term	9
Education/training	Seeking training: short term	3
Employment	Seeking part-time employment	3
Education/training	Seeking education: higher education	2
Job seeking	Seeking signposting	2
Education/training	Seeking training: day training	2

Source: MI data. Base: All with detailed progressions MI data (40). * Caution, low sample size.

Of those participants from the EOP survey who engaged with the progressions support offered by VIY, the levels of satisfaction were positive with all participants reporting being satisfied with the support that they received from VIY (21 of 21). The majority reported being very satisfied (15 of 21).

This is illustrated by one of the participants in the qualitative research who found the progressions support to be very helpful, particularly in relation to options for future work.

“They told me about stuff I didn’t really think about, it opened my eyes more to more choice.” – Female, 19, NEET on entry

When probed further as to whether the progressions support meetings helped them decide what to do next, the results were also positive, with most (18 of 21) finding the support helpful, rating it at least 6 out of 10 in this regard.

The original programme design outlined follow-up calls from a progressions manager throughout the 13 weeks immediately following the core programme, and again at 26 weeks.

Some participants reported receiving a follow-up call as part of their progressions support after the conclusion of their VIY project work, but this was not a universal experience.

“Yeah, I’ve been contacted a few times by them because my situation has changed... there’s been [opportunities] offered.” – Male, 20, NEET on entry

VIY stated that this was likely because not all young people wanted or needed a progressions call. This notion was supported by some accounts from young people.

One participant reported that he initially expressed interest in the progressions support that was offered in the follow-up call. However, in the meantime he found a job. He

therefore did not interact with the progressions support as he no longer felt it was relevant.

“I didn’t answer them as I didn’t want to waste their time.” – Male, 18, EET on entry

This, and views of some VIY staff, pointed to those engaged with progressions support (or initially showing interest) being the most motivated and likely to progress regardless. This highlights the importance of offering/promoting progressions support to all, not just those who indicate some interest.

From a VIY perspective, one staff member expressed difficulty in finding placements for those whose interests lie outside of the field of construction as this is where their expertise and contacts are situated.

“I would make a note on the profile and try to find something for them – but it is harder.” – VIY staff

This was also reflected by participants in the programme, with one reporting that they had turned down the further support offered in the follow-up calls as they had their mind set on another industry altogether.

“I think if I was entering the construction industry there wouldn’t be enough words to describe how good and useful that would have been. Because you know for someone who actually didn’t really know what to do, knowing that was there if I wanted to enter construction would have been useful.” - Male, 18, EET on entry

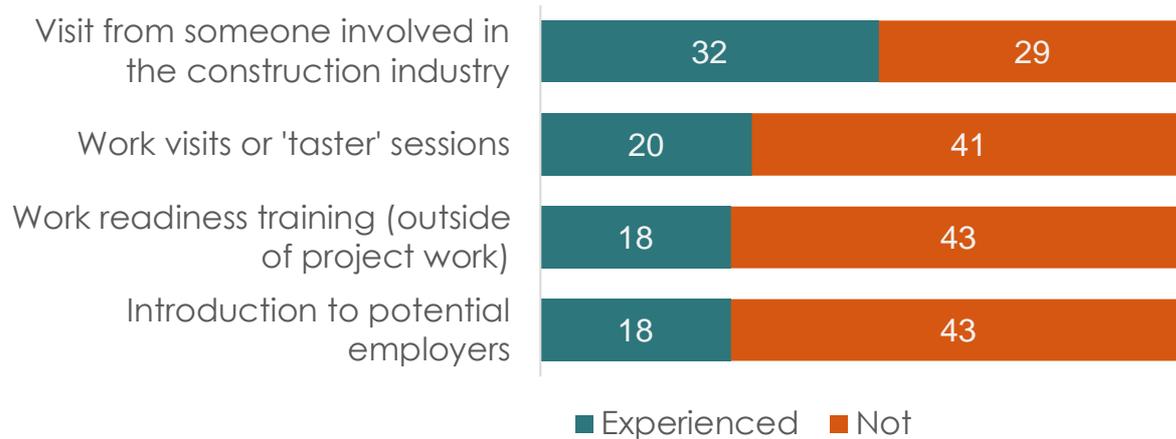
One of the participants, when probed about post-project contact with VIY, reported not having received any support but suggested that they would have been open to the opportunity and/or knowledge that can be gained through further discussions with VIY. This sentiment was also expressed by a few other young people in in-depth interviews.

“I said that I’d be happy to take a call and talk to anyone who would help me with that, but I am still getting help with the jobcentre and some people who work with [an organisation], so I don’t know if they thought that I’m already getting help so they don’t need to.” – Male, 19, NEET on entry

Other employability activities

Outside of direct progressions discussions with VIY staff, the intended design of the programme was for young people to have exposure to a variety of other employability activities. Namely, work readiness training, visits to local employer sites, visits to the project site from employers / someone in the industry and introductions to potential employers (for example, via telephone or email). Figure 4.6 shows the number of young people (out of 61 who completed the EOP survey) who engaged with these activities.

Figure 4.6 Other employability activities experienced



Source: EOP survey. Question: C4. Which, if any, of these activities did you take part in, as part of your VIY experience? Base: All in EOP survey (61) *Caution, low sample size.

Data on engagement with other employability activities was not available through the MI for the evaluation period.

Please note, there were no examples of work visits / taster sessions in the qualitative interviews, so no insight on these elements have been provided below.

Work readiness training

The initial, intended programme design included ensuring that participants had access to work readiness training whilst on the project. To VIY, work readiness training involved any talks/sessions helping to inform young people about the construction industry, local job market and preparing for it (for example, through CV writing).

In the discussions with referral organisations, one recounted a very positive experience of a student because of the work readiness training. The participant had a criminal background and was surprised to find that the potential employer was not dissuaded by this and instead focused on the quality of their work.

“And he says [...] I don’t believe that just because you’ve got all that [referring to being a young offender], you should never be given a chance. And he inspired this kid so much that this kid went back to college – he wanted to be a plumber, and he wanted to get a plumbing apprenticeship, but he needed his maths qualifications. And so, he managed to enrol himself back into college.” – VIY staff

It was accepted by those involved in delivering the programme that work readiness training did not always happen. This was proved further by the previously outlined finding that 18 of 61 participants in the EOP survey stated that they had received work readiness training.

The main barrier to delivering this element of the programme was usually VIY lacking connections with local employers and potential speakers in some areas. VIY staff described how it was important for them to understand local networks and build these connections

more consistently, acknowledging how engaging and valued this element could be for participants based on feedback they had received when this was delivered.

“I think it’s important for our staff to understand their network, so what’s available within their region [...] Employability and work readiness is one of our major barriers when it comes to engagement with learners.” – VIY staff

In the staff interviews, it was acknowledged that the work readiness training was not as formalised or as universal as intended, as delivery was dependent on the connections and resources available on a project. This consisted of internally produced presentations that help to build upon softer skills.

“They do a presentation about goal setting, getting any job, career, dream job – thinking about what is important – using that time to help a young person reflect on what they want in life – and maybe CV writing.” – VIY staff

Visits from construction industry employers and tradespeople

VIY has established working relationships with large construction and construction supply companies, as well as with smaller local employers and tradespeople.

“We have a database of opportunities that then are linked [with learners] depending on region and availability.” – VIY staff

Over half (32 of 61) of participants received a visit from someone involved in the construction industry during their VIY experience. Sometimes these visits were part of a talk from the employer, but sometimes they created opportunities for networking. One of the qualitative participants reported that this visit allowed them to establish contacts within the industry, with a potential employer taking down their details based on the work they had produced as part of the VIY project.

“One of the people there took my number and told me he would keep me in mind.” – Male, 18, NEET on entry

Through the connections that they have established in the area, VIY staff consider that the candidates they put forward receive more attention from employers (although there is nothing to validate this assumption from the evaluation).

“When you talk about employability opportunities for our learners a big thing I have been stating to them is [...] how we can make sure that they send in their CV, that its being flagged that it has been sent by VIY, because clearly we’re a referenced organisation.” – VIY staff

Initially, as part of the programme, it was intended for these employers to go to the projects to engage with participants and tell them more about the industry. This gave young people insight into the variety of job options in the sector, what was needed to enter the sector, and what working at their company would be like.

“Those talks have been more impactful than a lot of things.” – VIY staff

In the EOP survey, 18 of 61 participants reported having been introduced to potential employers as part of their VIY experience. In the qualitative research, none of the participants interviewed reported having received any official introductions/talks with employers. In interviews with VIY, staff suggested that these occurred on an ad hoc basis across projects, when employers were available to come to site and be introduced to young people, or where a progression opportunity was available for a young person to be introduced to an employer outside of project work time (i.e., as part of their progression support). VIY acknowledged that this support was not universal due to the staggered start times of participants on project work, and it was not possible for employers to come on site every day, nor did they always have enough connections with local employers to offer this on each project.

Evidence from the qualitative interviews with staff, referral partners and young people suggests that having direct access to employers is a big 'selling point' of the VIY programme and could be used to support better engagement.

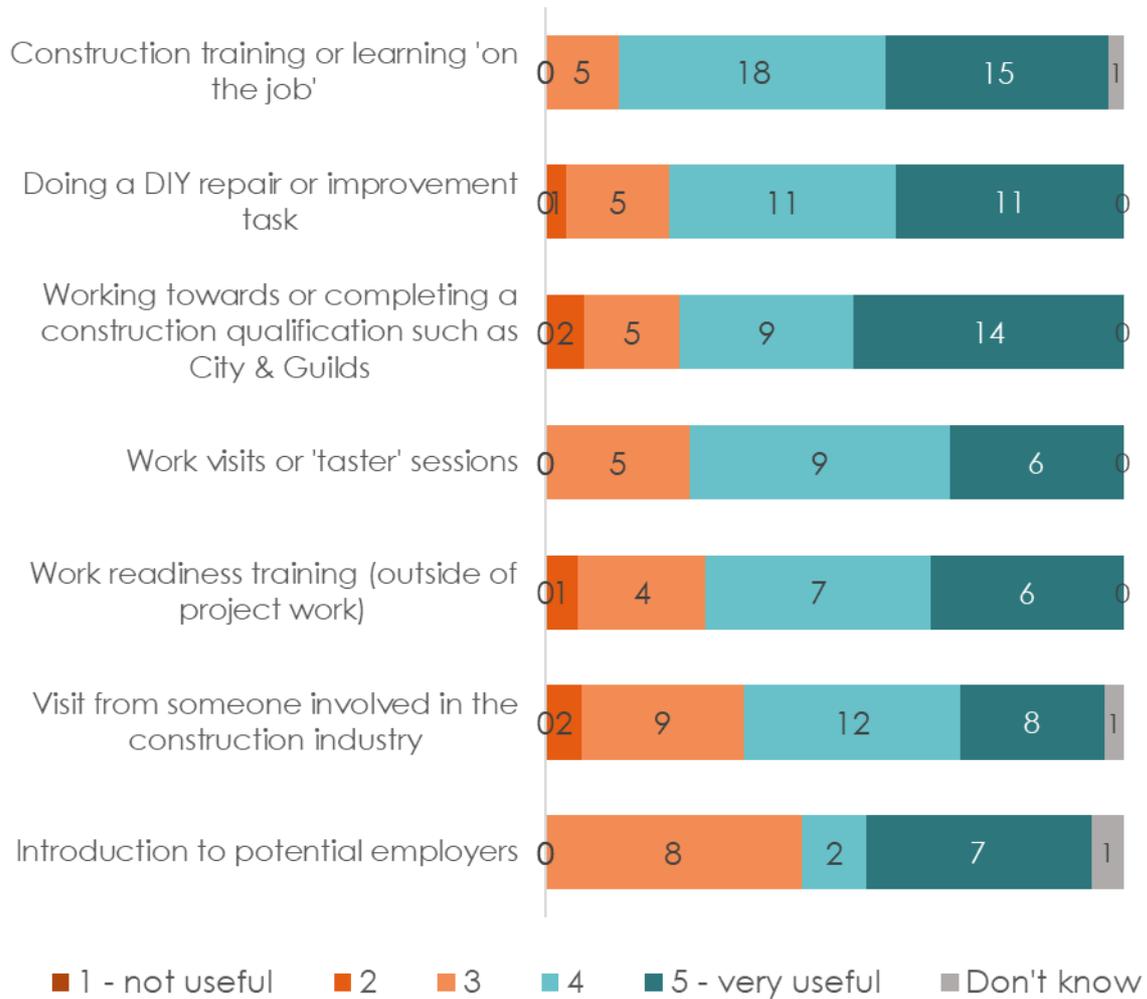
Referral organisations that were interviewed spoke about the opportunities that had been presented to their students because of their VIY experience. One referral organisation reported that their students were introduced to a major construction supply company through their involvement as sponsors on the project.

Perceived usefulness of programme elements

Respondents to the EOP survey were also asked about how useful they thought specific activities they took part in were for supporting their career goals. There was broad agreement that they were useful (see Figure 4.7; sample sizes vary based on how many people took part in each activity). This was particularly the case for the more practical elements of project work: 'on-the-job' DIY tasks were considered the most useful (scores of 4 and 5 on a 5-point scale, shown in Figure 4.7). Young people described how they would be able to add the skills gained to their CV and talk about the work undertaken in construction-related interviews.

Introductions to employers and visits from someone involved in the construction industry were the activities considered useful by the smallest proportion of respondents. However, as this element of the programme was delivered inconsistently, it is difficult to draw conclusions from this.

Figure 4.7 Usefulness (on a 5-point scale) of project activities in supporting career goals, EOP survey



Base: EOP survey, respondents who took part in activities - Construction training or learning 'on the job'(39); Doing a DIY repair or improvement task (28); Working towards or completing a construction qualification such as City & Guilds (30); Work visits or 'taster' sessions (20); Work readiness training (outside of project work)(18); Visit from someone involved in the construction industry(32); Introduction to potential employers (18)

5. Outcomes and next steps for young people

This section sets out the outcomes achieved by the participants as well as looking at their stated future plans having taken part in a project. It will cover the City & Guilds accreditations awarded, technical trade skills gained, EET status, attitudinal and behavioural changes, their future plans and their connectedness to their local community.

It is important to note that, due to low sample sizes, subgroup analysis is not possible and therefore conclusions in terms of who the support worked for, and which activities are most likely to lead to positive outcomes are not possible.

Furthermore, due to challenges in sample volumes and attrition, it was agreed that individuals did not have to have completed the preceding survey to take part in the EOP or 13-week surveys (to maximise information gathered more broadly). Only 19 participants completed a survey at each stage. This means that the descriptive wave comparisons contain bias, as they are not based on matched samples.

Furthermore, low sample sizes and the resulting exclusion of a 26-week survey meant it was not possible to explore the whole Theory of Change, in terms of longer-term, sustained outcomes.

Gained City & Guilds accreditations

The majority of participants achieved the outcome of gaining a City & Guilds accreditation through VIY.

In the MI data, 192 of 300 participants (64%) were recorded as having been awarded a combined total of 311 entry level 3 City & Guilds accreditations. This is an average of 1.6 accreditations for those recorded as achieving them. Participants achieved the following entry level 3 City & Guilds accreditations:

- '345 Painting and Decorating' – achieved by 129 participants
- '348 Carpentry' – achieved by 109 participants
- '341 Health and Safety' – achieved by 73 participants

As well as these qualifications, survey respondents reported that they had passed City & Guilds units in Finishing Skills (plastering), Pipework Skills, Tiling Skills, and Brickwork Skills.

Some participants from the qualitative research reported having worked towards City & Guilds. However, many were confused as to whether they had achieved the accreditation and/or received the physical certification when probed further about it.

“I think I got a qualification, but I’m not sure. I haven’t had any documents.” – Male, 18, EET on entry

“I don’t actually think I received it in the post or anything.” – Male, 21, NEET on entry

This confusion could account for the proportionately lower number of participants in the survey stating they had achieved an accreditation (around half – 29 of 61 participants) and highlights the importance of VIY clearly communicating the outcome of this work and sharing the certificates with young people.

In qualitative interviews, participants who gained an accreditation tended to view it as something useful to have that could aid them going forward.

“It’s like something you’ve done, and you can use it even if you don’t want to go into that sort of role you’ve got the life skills and you can tell an employer that you can do that kind of thing.” – Female, 20, NEET on entry

Many of the referral partners that took part echoed this, and they felt that the biggest take away from the accreditations was increasing levels of confidence and motivation amongst participants. It was also the first chance that some of them got to undertake work-based assessments, so it helped to improve confidence levels about this in the future.

“It is really beneficial for their confidence levels.” – Referral partner

“[these qualifications] invigorated them to complete their courses at school.” – Referral partner

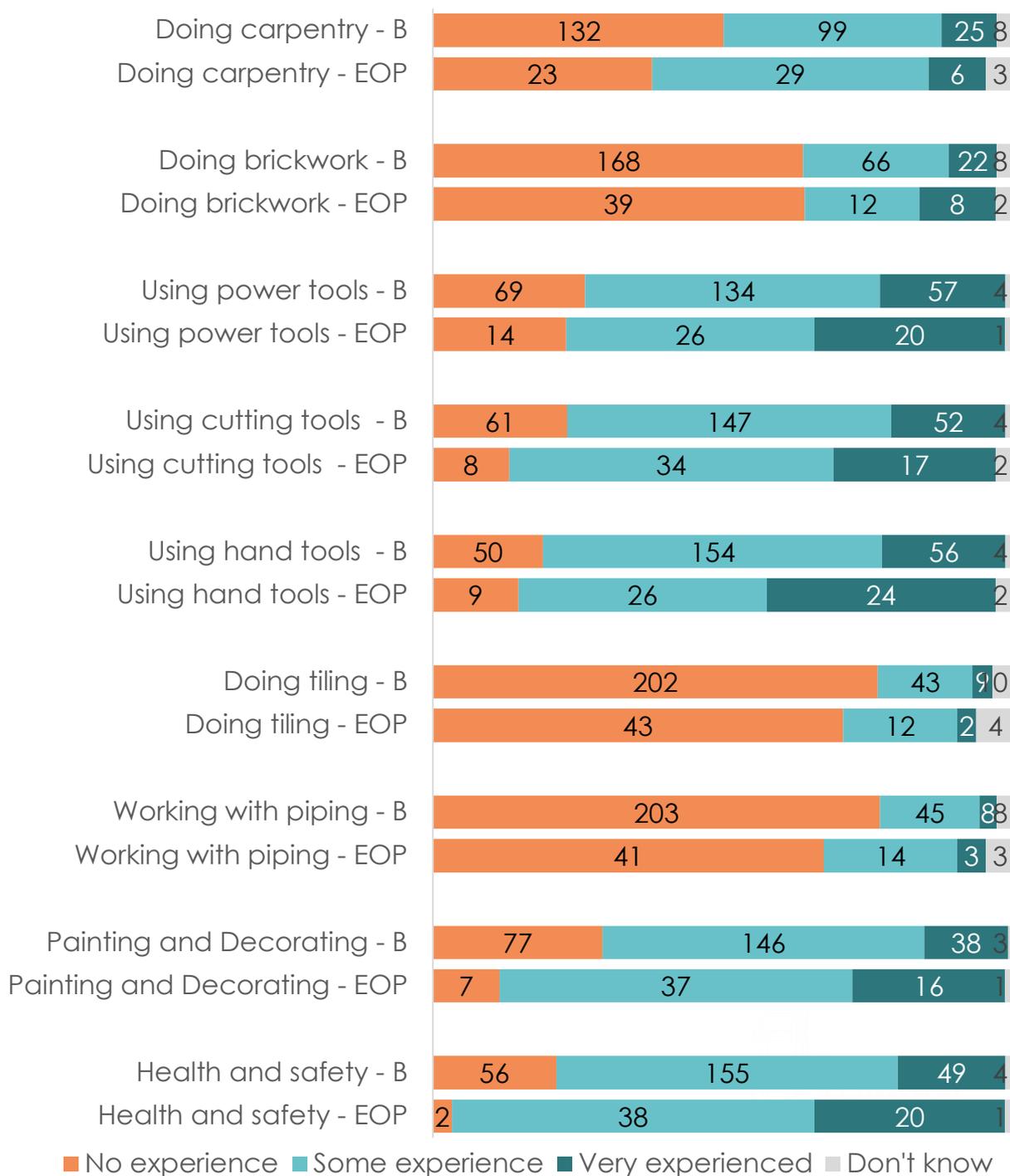
For some of the participants, getting an accreditation through the project gave them the option to apply for a higher level course than they would otherwise done at college.

“It was five that went to college that went on VIY, and without that they would have gone on a foundation level course. But because they’ve done VIY, they went on the Level 1.” –Referral partner

Gained technical trade skills

As shown in Figure 5.1, the proportions of respondents saying that they have ‘some experience’ or that they are ‘very experienced’ in a variety of technical skills increased between the baseline and EOP surveys. In line with the City & Guilds accreditations that participants gained – carpentry, painting and decorating, and health and safety – were the technical skills for which there was the biggest proportionate increase in experience (providing some support to the link between the accreditation process and skill development in the Theory of Change). However, for most of the technical skills asked about, the proportionate difference was small.

Figure 5.1 Changes in experience in technical skills, between baseline and EOP surveys



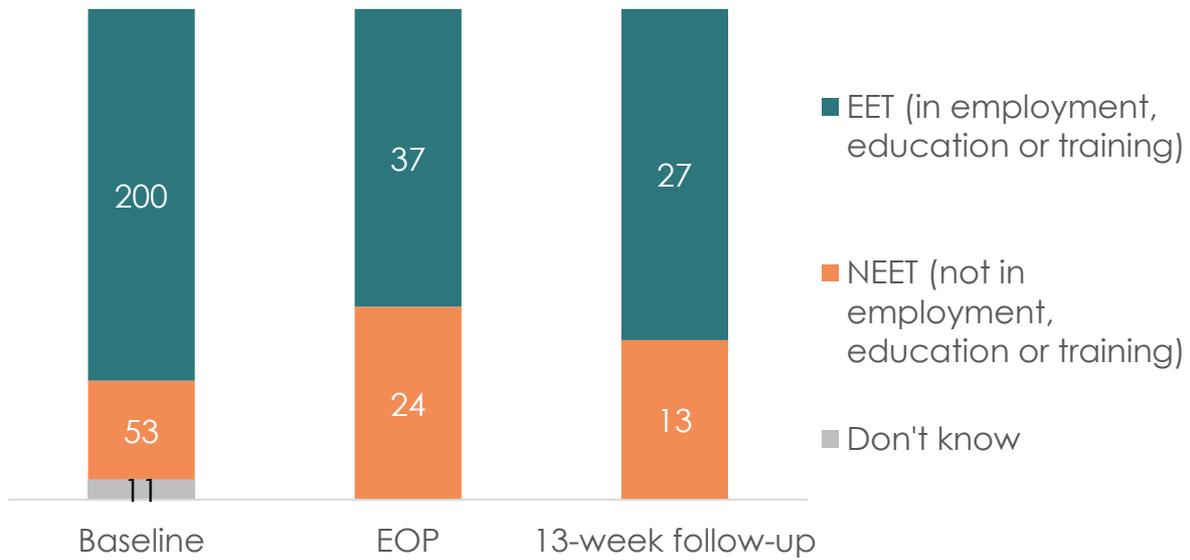
Source: Baseline and EOP surveys. Question: Please rate your confidence in the following personal skill... Base: All – Baseline survey (264), EOP survey (61)

**(Sustained) Progression outcomes: Employment, Education and Training
Progression to further training, work placements, apprenticeships, and other
employment opportunities**

Between the baseline and 13-week follow-up surveys, there was relatively little change in the proportion of survey respondents who were in employment, education or training (EET, see Figure 5.2). Across the three surveys the most common EET activities that respondents were involved in were education towards GCSEs, at sixth form/college, or on another training course; few were in full-time or part-time employment.

There was a slight dip in the proportion of respondents who were EET in the EOP survey (see Figure 5.2). The survey data would suggest the reason for this was that participants were going through a transitional phase in which they had finished their education and were currently seeking or securing their next EET opportunity. There was a lower proportion of respondents studying for GCSEs or studying at sixth form/college and a higher proportion of respondents who were unemployed and seeking employment in the EOP survey in comparison to the other surveys. There was also a higher proportion of respondents who were in full-time or part-time employment in the EOP survey, which would also suggest that this was a transitional period in which participants moved from education into employment. The subjectivity/assumptions introduced when interpreting this data highlight the challenge in evaluating EET outcomes among such a large range of young people, particularly with the low sample sizes available – it is difficult to interpret the extent to which this pattern is expected and/or influenced by VIY. There are many external factors that could be influencing movements in EET among participants. Limitations in terms of sample size and resulting gaps in evidence make it difficult to determine how much influence VIY has on any changes seen.

Figure 5.2 EET status at baseline, EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys



Source: Baseline and EOP surveys. Question: Are you currently in employment, education or training? Base: All – Baseline survey (264); EOP survey (61); 13-week follow-up survey (40)

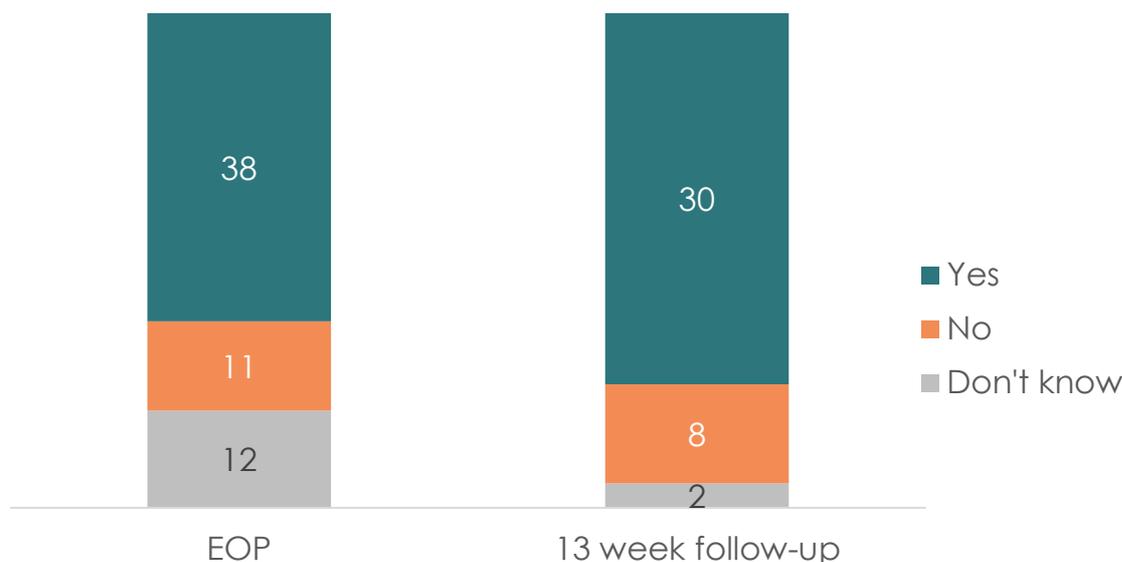
In the qualitative interviews, there were some who felt that their experience with VIY did not help them in their future EET status. Some attributed this to the short duration of VIY and felt that it needed to be longer to have a more substantial impact.

Taking into consideration data limitations, whether VIY is contributing to positive EET outcomes or not is inconclusive, but among those that answered the survey, there was little impact in this regard.

Repeat volunteering with and beyond VIY

The majority of respondents in the EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys said they would continue to volunteer in the future (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 Number of participants considering volunteering in the future, at EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys



Source: EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys. Question: Do you think you will continue to volunteer in future? Base: All – EOP survey (61); 13-week follow-up survey (40)

This was echoed in the qualitative interviews, with some of the participants expressing an openness to taking part in a VIY project again if the opportunity presented itself and if it fitted with their personal circumstances at the time.

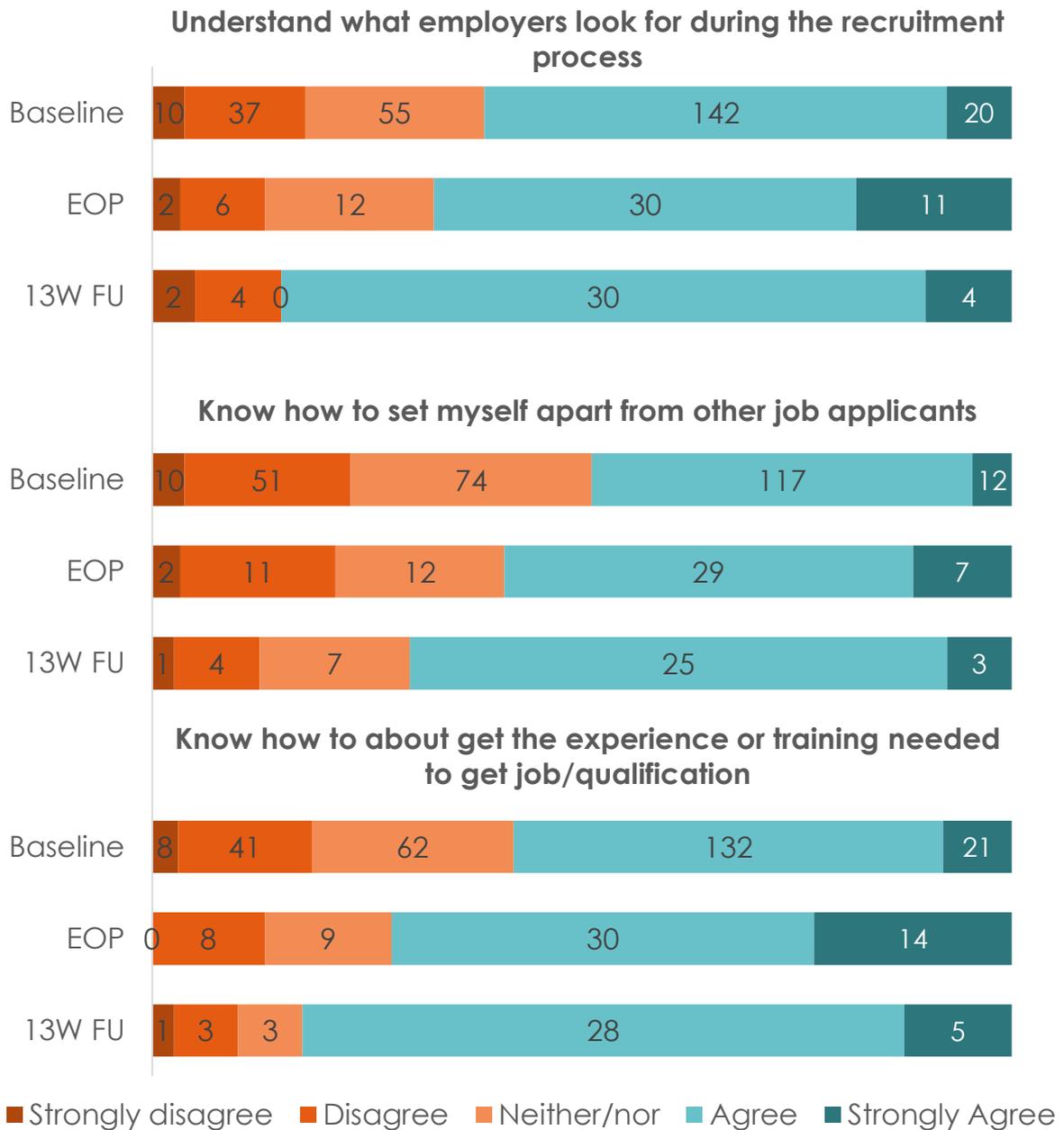
“The only reason I didn’t go back [to VIY] was because I had work lined up, if I hadn’t I would have gone back there.” – Male, 18, NEET on entry

Some participants attributed this desire to the enjoyment they had on site, and the sense of satisfaction and achievement gained through contributing to the local community and seeing the tangible output of work put in.

Employability

Survey data shows a positive pattern of change in participants’ perceptions of their own employability. As shown in Figure 5.4, the proportion of respondents agreeing with three employability metrics – ‘understand what employers look for’, ‘know how to set myself apart from other applicants’ and ‘know how to get experience or training needed’ – increases between each survey. That said, sample sizes mean this change over time cannot be established as significant. Furthermore, the connection between activities undertaken and a positive change for these metrics cannot be established from survey data (due to low sample sizes) and there is little evidence in qualitative interviews as to how these outcomes have been supported through VIY delivery. As such, the mechanisms for this change are unclear.

Figure 5.4 Employability related skills at baseline, EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys



Source: Baseline, EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys. Question: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement... Base: All – Baseline survey (264); EOP survey (61); 13-week follow-up survey (40)

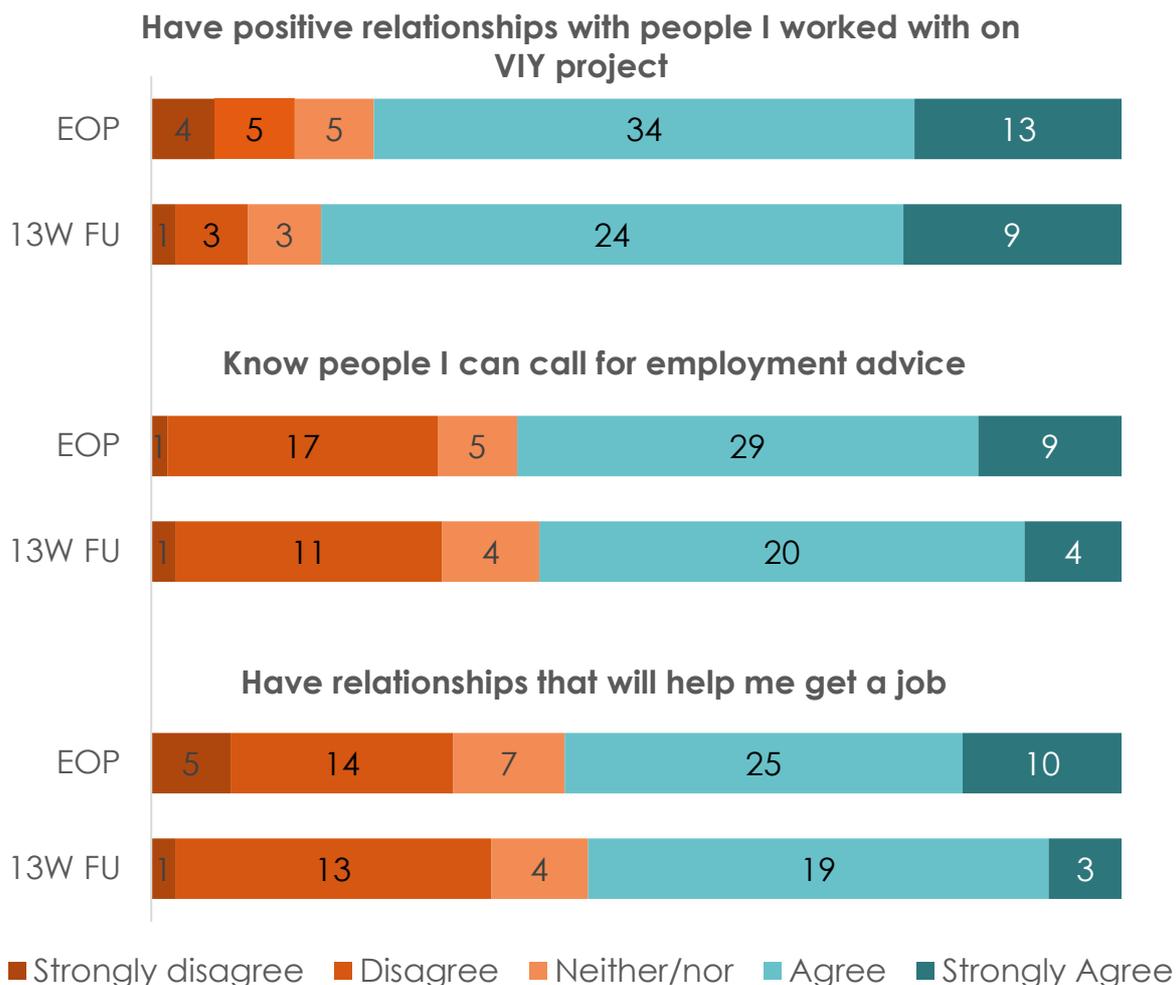
Some felt that the biggest thing that VIY offered them was the experience. It gave them something to put on their CV.

“The opportunity to gain more experience in a field that I was already involved in.” – Male, 19, NEET on entry

“It was just getting more experiences, getting new experiences.” – Female, 17, EET on entry

While there is evidence of a positive change in perceptions on employability-related metrics, the survey evidence does not indicate that the programme addressed some of the underpinning mechanisms of this change well, namely by providing useful networking opportunities to participants. As shown in Figure 5.5, the proportion who agreed with statements related to networking – ‘have positive relationships with people worked with’, ‘know people I can call for advice’, ‘have relationships that will help me get a job’ – between the EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys did not increase.

Figure 5.5 Personal network at EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys



Source: EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys. Question: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement... Base: All – EOP survey (61); 13-week follow-up survey (40)

Barriers to these outcomes being achieved cannot be determined from the survey data (sample sizes prohibit comparisons between activities undertaken and outcomes achieved). However, they could be linked to the aforementioned challenges VIY have faced, and outlined in staff interviews, in consistently offering progressions support (due to resource barriers to doing so) and/or introductions to employers (due to limited connections with employers in new areas, and availability of employers in existing areas). The extent to which these barriers to delivery impacted on these outcomes being achieved was not explored

explicitly in qualitative interviews with young people; many would not have known these were potential options or why they were not available to them, so it was not appropriate to explore their anticipated impact.

Attitudinal and behavioural changes

Education attendance and behaviour

The numbers of survey respondents who were in education and were therefore asked questions about their school behaviour, attitude and attendance were very low.⁸ This meant that it was not possible to analyse any trends in the data and for that reason, these results have not been included in the report.

In the qualitative stage, some of the referral partners reported that VIY had a wider impact on some of their pupils. They felt that it revitalised their motivation, which improved things such as confidence, school attendance and general engagement. One reported that the programme helped a pupil to stay in college by giving the young person some direction and resulting motivation. This positively impacted on their engagement with school – whether they decided to go into construction or not.

“One of them was in mainstream but had attendance below 20% – really worried about him. His attendance this term so far is above 90%. And he is really working very hard. Is very clear, he knows what he wants to do. He wants to work in some kind of construction vocational course. And it’s given him that, kind of, drive to do that” – Referral partner

For some participants, VIY was the difference between staying in school or dropping out.

“So, one of our students had a really rough time. He’s just... Throughout school, he never achieved anything. He was 18 years old. He’s been in trouble with the police. He has SEN needs as well, but people don’t recognize that, so he, you know, he can get quite vocal, but it gave him some sort of discipline as well. He was beaming, he passed his English, he passed his maths, and he passed his vocational and his social worker said that’s the first time he’s ever passed anything in his life. We kept him the whole year. He didn’t drop out.” – Referral partner

Wellbeing

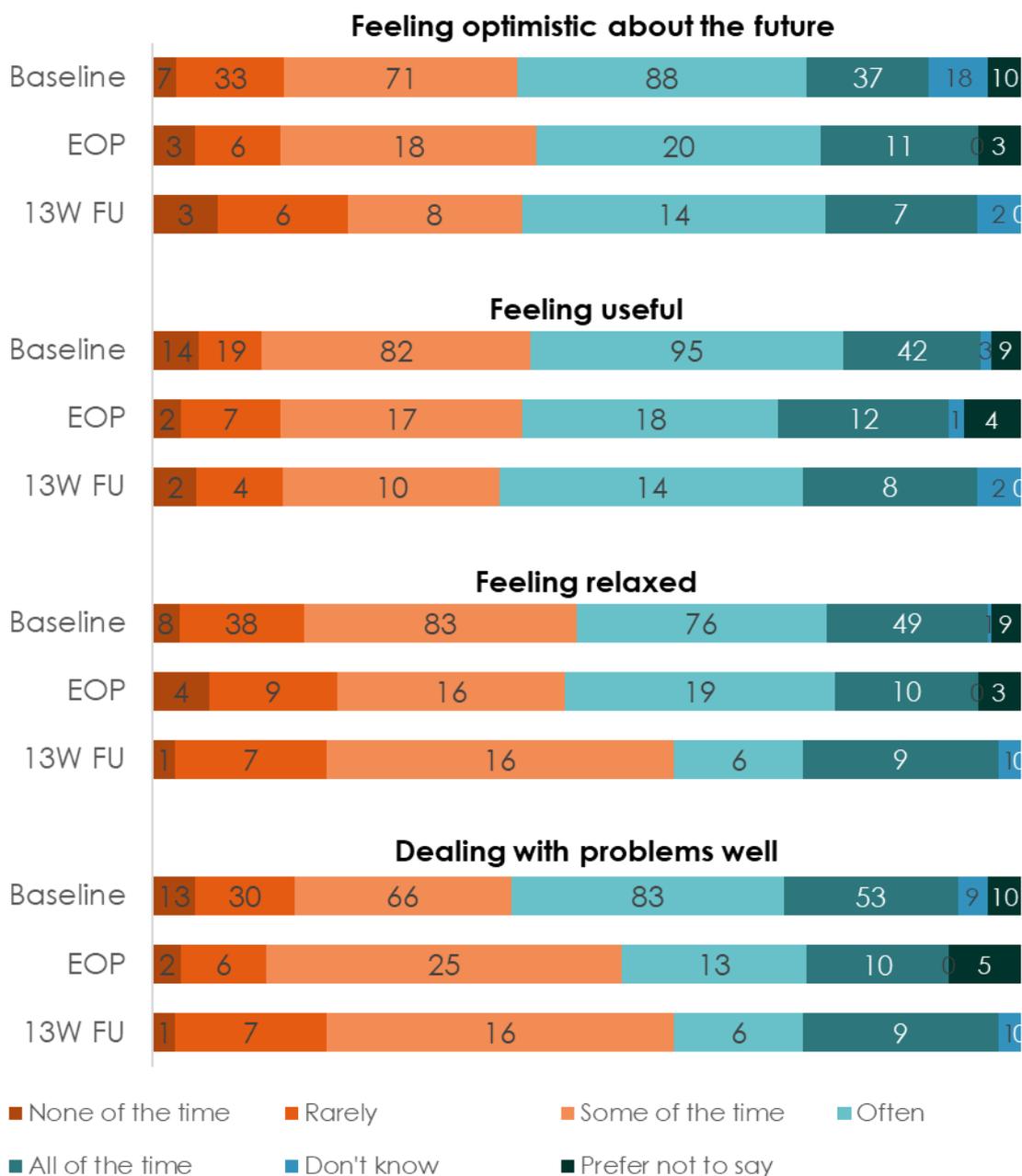
Evidence from the end of programme survey would suggest that taking part on the VIY programme had immediate positive impacts for a large proportion of participants. Thirty out of the 61 survey respondents said that participation on the programme had contributed positively to their physical health, and 44 out of 61 said that participation had contributed to increased general happiness or wellbeing.

However, when looking at a range of standardised wellbeing metrics (shown in Figure 5.6) asked across all three surveys, and how responses to these changes over time, there are no

⁸ Under 16s, who would have made up the majority of the cohort in school, were not included in survey sample.

clear trends either in a positive or negative direction for these measures of wellbeing. In fact, the one metric for which there is a clear change is ‘dealing with problems well’, which moves in a negative direction. This could be attributed to wider reasons that are discussed earlier in the chapter, namely the transitional point of time that many of the young people were at when surveyed. As these metrics ask about how the young person has been feeling over the previous two weeks, it is very time dependent and reflective of what they are going through in the moment. If some young people are going through transition periods, their outlook for the future and general optimism could be temporarily challenged.

Figure 5.6 Wellbeing at baseline, EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys



Base: All – Baseline survey (264); EOP survey (61); 13-week follow-up survey (40)

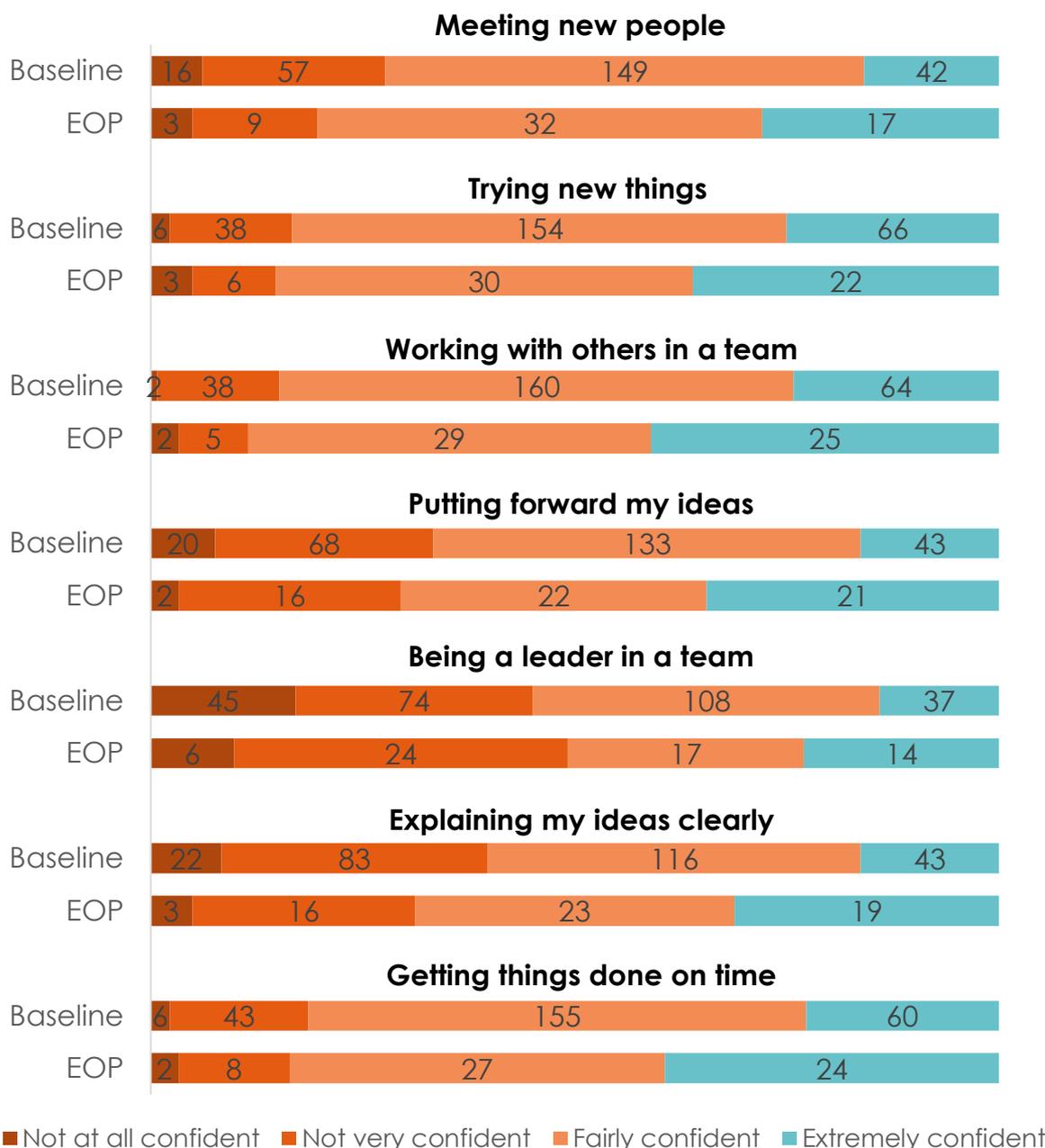
These patterns could indicate that, although participants may feel like the programme has positively impacted their happiness/wellbeing, either these changes aren’t sustainable, or

they are not substantial enough to cause shifts along the measured scale. With the potential of a ‘transitional period’ influencing feelings too, it is difficult to draw a conclusion on the programme’s impact on wellbeing.

Confidence

Figure 5.7 shows the level of confidence that participants had across seven measures at baseline and then at the EOP survey. There was a trend across all statements for the proportion of participants citing ‘extremely confident’ being higher at the EOP survey than at the baseline. This data was not collected at the 13-week follow-up, so we do not know if these changes over time were sustained.

Figure 5.7 Confidence levels across seven areas, at baseline and EOP surveys



Base: All – Baseline survey (264); EOP survey (61)

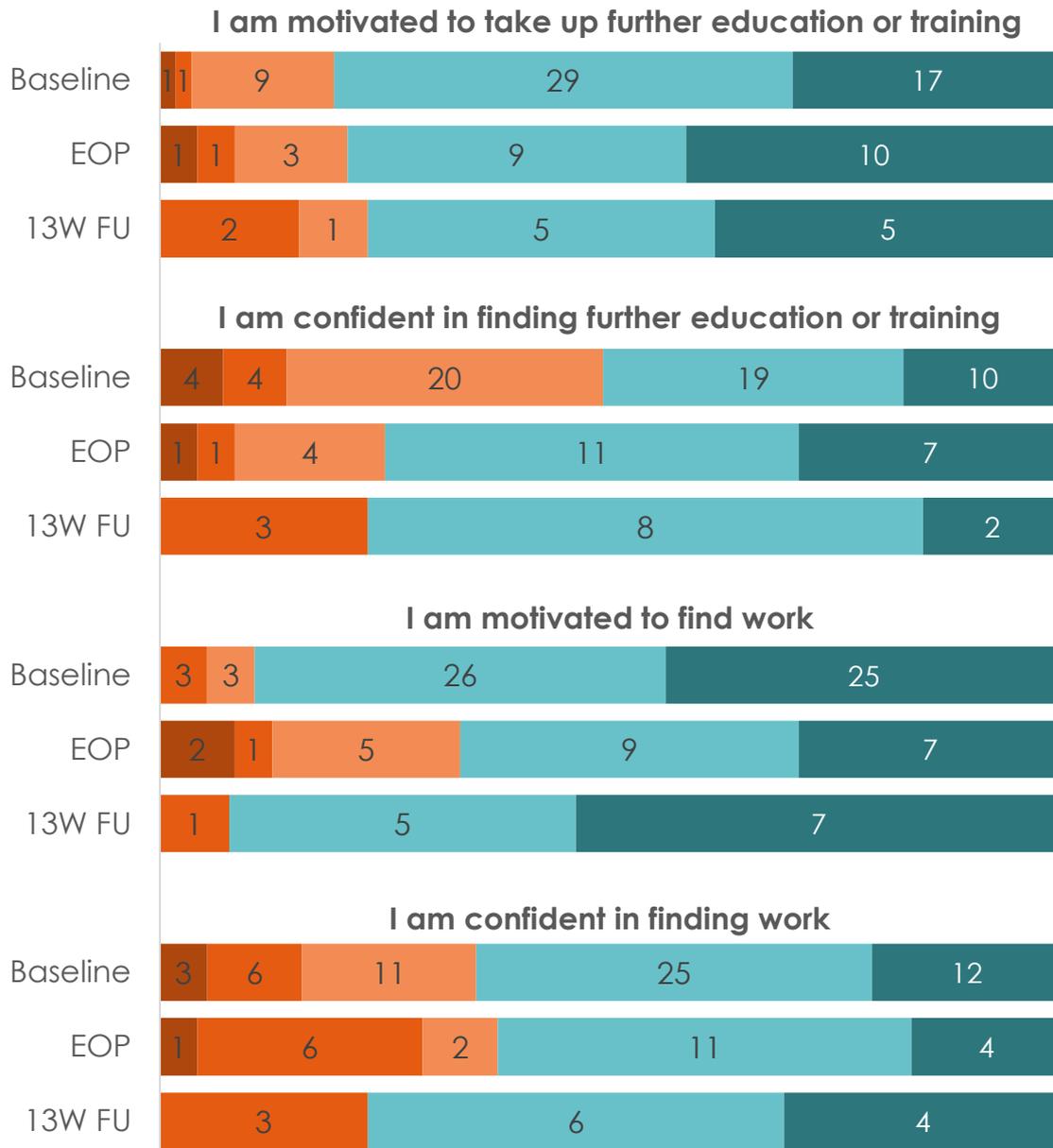
Future plans

Aspirations and outlook

For VIY, improved confidence in one's ability and motivation for next steps are the first steps in raising aspirations. Survey respondents who were NEET were asked to what extent they were motivated to find employment, education or training. They were also asked to what extent they were confident that they would be able to find employment, education or training. While the sample sizes are low, the responses to these questions do show generally high levels of motivation and confidence in finding employment, education or training at all time points (see Figure 5.8).

There does appear to be indications of improvement in survey respondents' confidence in finding education or training between the baseline and 13-week follow-up survey. This is not significant, however, likely due to the low sample size.

Figure 5.8 Motivation and confidence in finding employment, education or training at baseline, EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys



■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither/nor ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Source: Baseline, EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys. Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statement... Base: Respondents who were NEET – baseline survey (57); EOP survey (24); 13-week follow-up survey (13)

The qualitative data shows similar findings, in that participants expressed the positive impact that VIY had on elements such as motivation and confidence.

Many of the participants reported that VIY gave them a purpose and that it gave them something to do, which had a positive impact on their attitude and behaviour in other aspects of their life.

“It was quite good, I was glad to learn more things and I think it helped my mental health, doing something different.” – Female, 17, EET on entry

“I think it had an impact on how I felt generally at the time, it made me happier having somewhere to go at the time and to feel like I was doing something productive.” – Male, 19, NEET on entry

Others felt that it helped improve their confidence more generally (i.e., not specifically relating to employment, as measured in the survey), and that it pushed them outside of their comfort zone.

“I think it definitely gave me more confidence about trying stuff that may be helpful to me, and just working in a group.” – Male, 18, NEET on entry

“I think I’m more confident going and speaking to new people. Before, I didn’t like talking to people I didn’t know... Again, the life skills.” – Female, 21, NEET on entry

The importance of the softer skills gained through the experience was echoed by the referral partners who said that for some participants it was getting them busy that helped them to find their motivation.

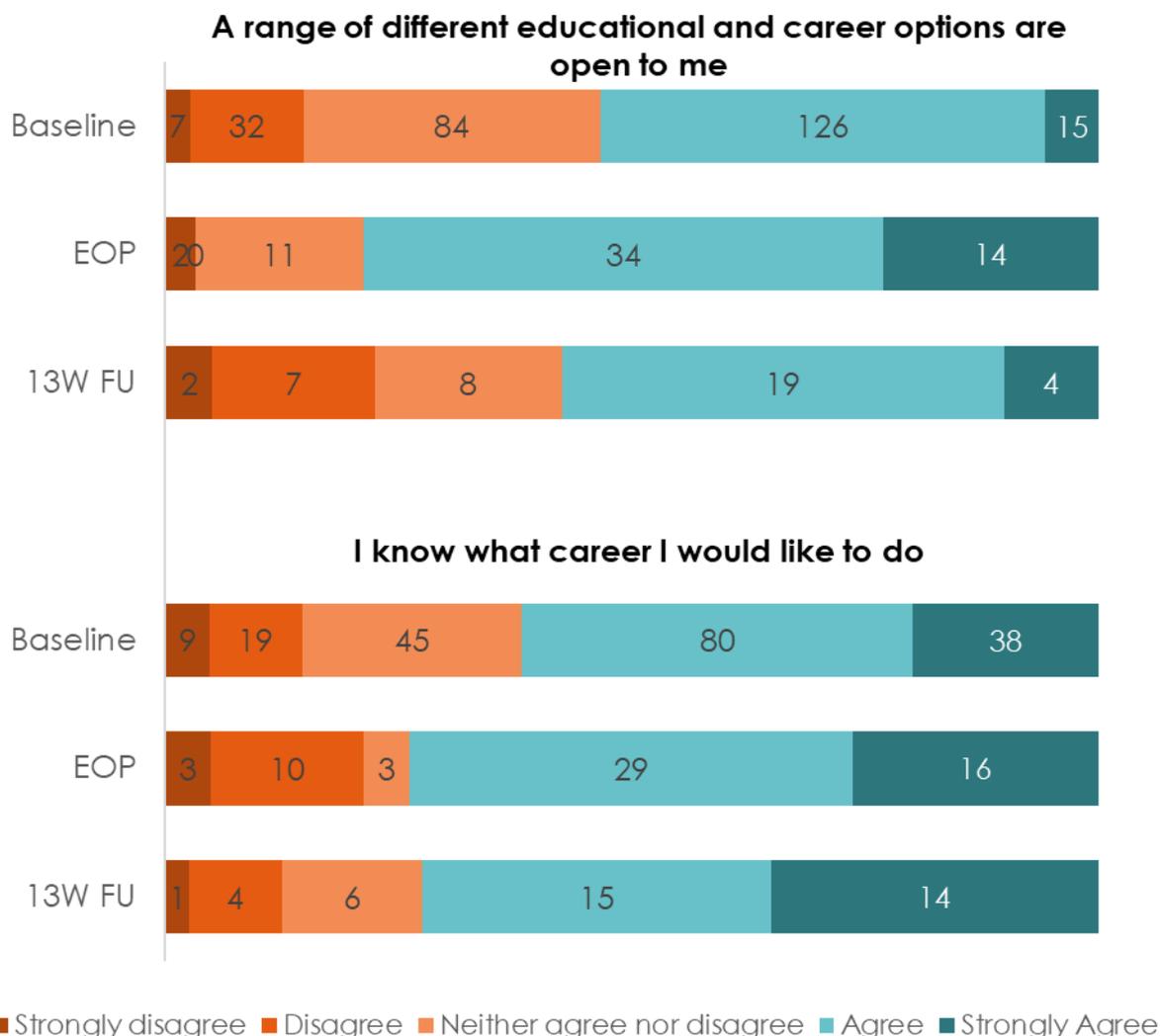
This gives strength to the theory that VIY is contributing to positive attitudes that underpin aspirations.

Partly due to the low sample sizes, the surveys do not give a strong indication as to whether taking part on a project helps participants to choose and pursue EET opportunities that are right for them.

As shown in Figure 5.9, for the metric ‘a range of different educational and career options are open to me’, there is positive change between the baseline and EOP surveys and then in the 13-week follow-up survey the proportion of respondent agreeing falls back to the baseline level. This finding may relate to the relatively low delivery of progressions support available through the programme.

Also, there is little change in agreement with the metric ‘I know what career I would like to do’. However, an important caveat for these two metrics is that they may be more likely than the other metrics discussed in this section to be affected by economic and social factors outside of the programme.

Figure 5.9 Educational and career prospects at baseline, EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys



Base: All – Baseline survey (264); EOP survey (61); 13-week follow-up survey (40)

When respondents to the EOP survey were asked how much they thought their involvement in the VIY programme had helped them decide what to do next, on a scale from 0 to 10 with 10 being ‘helped a lot’, they were generally positive. As shown in Figure 5.10, of the 56 who were asked the question, 17 gave the top score of 10, and 27 gave a score of between 7 and 10. Seven respondents gave a score of between 0 and 4.

Figure 5.10 Extent to which VIY helped participants decide what to do next



Source: EOP survey. Question: C11 On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is ‘not helped at all’ and 10 is ‘helped a lot’, how much do you think your involvement in the VIY programme has helped you in deciding what you want to do next?
 Base: All who completed VIY, in EOP survey (56).

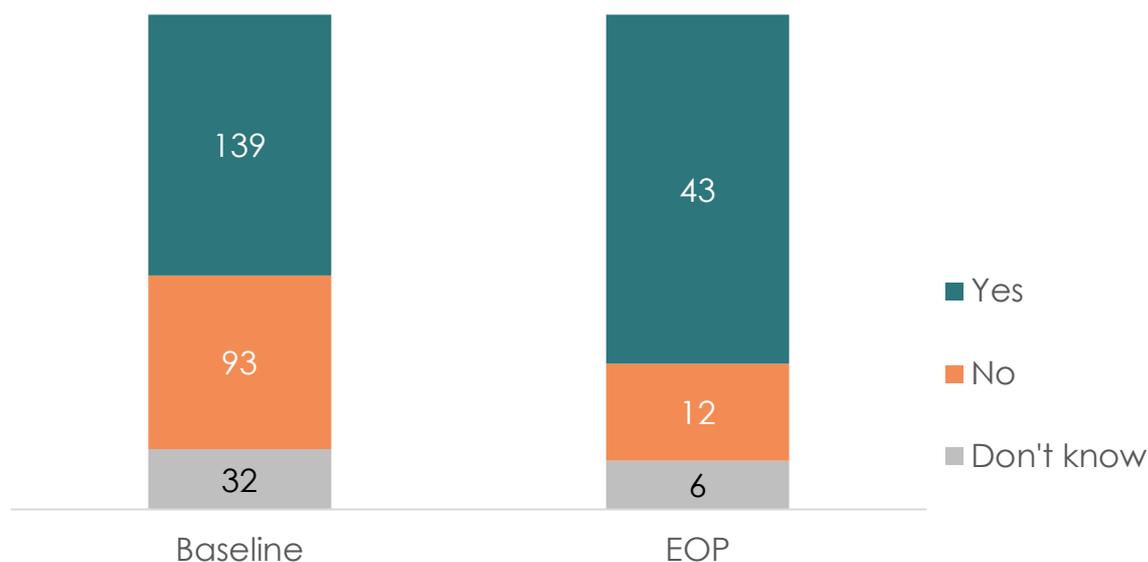
In qualitative interviews, one referral partner described the direct link they had seen between a young person and their decision regarding next steps in education.

“So, we had a young lady who was NEET, and we managed to meet her on an open event. So, she started our programme. Didn’t really know what she wanted to do next, was a little bit lost. She was up for giving the [VIY project] a go, and she went to the Boxing Club [a VIY project], and she was there, for I think she did five or six days. And she really enjoyed it, really loved the carpentry side of things. So, I helped her to apply for carpentry. She’s still here at the college, but she’s now on a mainstream carpentry course, which is great definitely a success story.”- Referral partner

Interest in construction

As shown in Figure 5.11, the proportion of survey respondents who said that they were considering a career in construction increased from the baseline to the EOP surveys, from just over half who were considering it to approximately seven in 10.

Figure 5.11 Number of participants who were considering career in construction at baseline and at EOP surveys



Base: All - Baseline survey (264); EOP survey (61)

In qualitative interviews, some participants expressed that the experience at VIY gave them good insight into the construction industry and allowed them to choose, with that experience, whether it was something they would like to go into long term.

“I might have been more open to working in the construction sector [after the project] but now I’ve got this apprenticeship in the Civil Service, it’s gone a very different direction,” - Male, 20, NEET on entry

One participant suggested that VIY was something that all young people looking to go into construction careers should participate in, to give them the opportunity to actually experience it prior to deciding.

“It probably deserves to be a prerequisite for anyone wanting to enter say carpentry, actually experiencing it.” – Male, 19, NEET on entry

Others that took part in VIY expressed that although they still had other initial plans, the experiences they gained through VIY gave them a good back up option in terms of career choices should they need it.

Some participants expressed a lack of interest in going into the industry after taking part, however, they acknowledged that VIY had a positive impact on helping them decide what they wanted from a job.

“It’s given me some ideas about this lifestyle that I want to be part of. I never knew that there was something like this, so it was definitely positive for me.” – Male, 20, NEET on entry

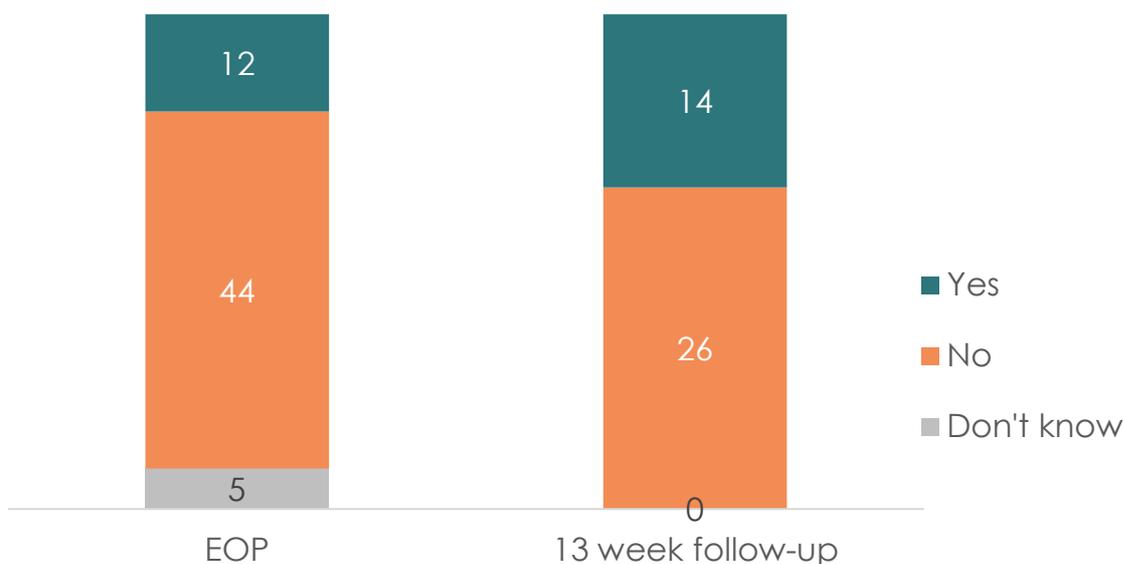
“I think it’s helped me understand that I should be more open to a group role and its almost guaranteed that I’m going to be working in a group. Whereas,

before I was trying to get a job where I'd be by myself" – Male, 18, NEET on entry

Take-up of construction specific EET opportunities

This increase in interest in the construction industry has been acted upon in a number of instances. In the EOP survey, 12 out of 61 respondents had taken up construction training or employment, and in the 13-week follow-up survey, 14 out of 40 respondents had taken up construction training or employment (see Figure 5.12).

Figure 5.12 Number of participants who have taken up construction training or employment at EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys



Base: All – EOP survey (61); 13-week follow-up survey (40)

This provides some indicative evidence that VIY has positively impacted on participants' interest and consideration for working in the construction industry.

Connection to the local community

From the outset, there appears to be a strong sense of belonging to the local community among participants. Across all three surveys, approximately two thirds of respondents said they felt fairly or very strongly connected to their local community.

There is also some evidence that working on a project increases the use of the community facilities among participants. Once their participation on the project ended, just under half of respondents to the EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys said that their connection to the facility they worked on had increased. Similarly, just over half of respondents to the EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys said that their use of the facility had increased since participating. This provides some evidence of the programme contributing to its intended outcome of young people having increased affiliation and engagement with a local facility.

Outcomes that were difficult to assess

Some outcomes of the programme were not reported on. Table 5.1 summarises which outcomes these are, and why this is the case.

Table 5.1 Overview of current delivery and future plans across programme elements

Outcome	Description of current delivery
Uptake of peer mentoring	This was not asked in the surveys, and there were not examples of this occurring in the small sample of qualitative interviewees.
Attitudes towards employment	As with educational attitudes, the numbers of respondents who were asked questions about how satisfied they were in their employment were very low and have not been included in the report.
Long-term outcomes	We could not assess these robustly, as sample sizes did not support a longer-term outcomes survey.

6. Refined programme theory

The findings about how the programme has been delivered to date allows us to revisit the programme theory and identify core areas of delivery and associated outcomes.

Table 6.1 summarises current activities, their prevalence and plans moving forward. Those labelled as ‘core’ are now offered to all, but not necessarily taken-up by all. The current Theory of Change is presented in Figure 6.1.

Table 6.1 Overview of current delivery and future plans across programme elements

Activity	Description of current delivery	Plans for the future
Recruitment	This was mostly done through referral partners, with potential participants confirmed to VIY usually within the week leading up to a project starting.	It is difficult to change this process due to the demand for quick action from venues, and subsequent quick turnaround for recruits. VIY have found that young people who sign up more than 1–3 weeks before a project are more likely to drop out, so attempting to recruit sooner may also have an impact on participation.
Welcome call / workplan	<p>This is now part of the core programme offer. Quality of contact details has vastly improved, and the youth engagement team is in place to make these calls.</p> <p>These calls take place 1–2 days before a project. They are usually light touch / informal, to make sure the young person feels comfortable ahead of a project start.</p> <p>No formal workplans are created, but any preferences or additional needs (flagged</p>	There are no plans to change this approach – it is difficult to increase the likelihood of contacts answering the call.

Activity	Description of current delivery	Plans for the future
	<p>by referral partners or in welcome calls) are logged.</p>	
<p>Project work</p>	<p>This is the core programme offer. Young people work on making improvements to a local venue. They are usually offered one week (4 days) of project work. There is some variation – for example, young people can work on a Thursday for 5 weeks (different referral partners fill each day of a week).</p> <p>Within this, young people get taught skills on-the-job by on-site mentors from the trade industry.</p>	<p>This model is unlikely to change moving forward.</p> <p>VIY have stated it would be difficult for them to scale up the number of days offered to each participant in the near future.</p>
<p>City & Guilds accreditation</p>	<p>This is the core programme offer. Participants need to attend a minimum of 2 days to achieve accreditation. Accreditations are usually entry level 3, in Carpentry, Painting and Decorating, or Health and Safety.</p>	<p>The range of accreditations available may change moving forward – VIY are looking to diversify the accreditation available. VIY are also considering offering entry level 2 accreditation.</p>
<p>Progressions support</p>	<p>This is now the core programme offer (although our evidence shows it was taken up / achieved for a minority). It starts with a call from the youth engagement team or progressions manager to explore next steps and offer signposting to local training and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Prevalence of this support is likely to increase, as changes are offered to all proactively.</p> <p>It will involve a minimum of 3 calls, within 3 months of a project ending.</p>
<p>Work readiness training</p>	<p>Currently light touch / ad hoc work readiness support (as opposed to more formalised ‘training’), such as mentors on the ground helping young people with their CV.</p>	<p>VIY have started working with an organisation called Futures to deliver some of these talks.</p> <p>VIY are keen to have one talk per week per project on work readiness options, from local employers and partners.</p>

Activity	Description of current delivery	Plans for the future
		Prevalence of this offer is likely to increase, as VIY aim for one session per week per project.
Introductions to employers	<p>Partner volunteers and volunteer mentors sometimes come on site. This is different from broader work readiness training – it involves much more informal introductions between local professionals/companies and the young people.</p> <p>Introductions to / site visits from employers have not been as common as originally expected due to the move into new geographical areas, and relationships not being established yet.</p>	Prevalence of this element is likely to increase as VIY establish new connections and relationships with local employers. This is unlikely to be an element that is delivered consistently though.
Sector-relevant work visits	Visiting workplaces remains aspirational as an activity, as it is very complex logistically. VIY suggested we remove from activities as it is not consistently or commonly delivered.	Although this is still an aspiration for VIY, it is not currently planned / built into near future programme design.

In the original programme theory, young people were expected to achieve outcomes through four **mechanisms of change**:

- a **friendly, supportive environment** created by mentors;
- an educational setting that **makes young people feel valued and respected**;
- exposure to the **world of work**, in the context of construction;
- **personalised progressions support** and guidance.

The evaluation identified that the first two mechanisms, relating to the **friendly environment** and approach taken by mentors / VIY staff to make **participants feel valued and respected**, were key mechanisms for change for young people. These were evidenced in the young people’s account of what taking part in project work was like. The welcoming and relaxed atmosphere this created, encouraged young people to come back to site and left them with positive anticipation for what the world of working would be like.

Young people also felt that this atmosphere combined with the non-mandatory nature of the programme alleviated some pressure, which was welcomed. The **relaxed and non-committal quality of the programme** is highly attractive to young people looking for programmes to participate in. The **quality of mentors appears very high**, with many

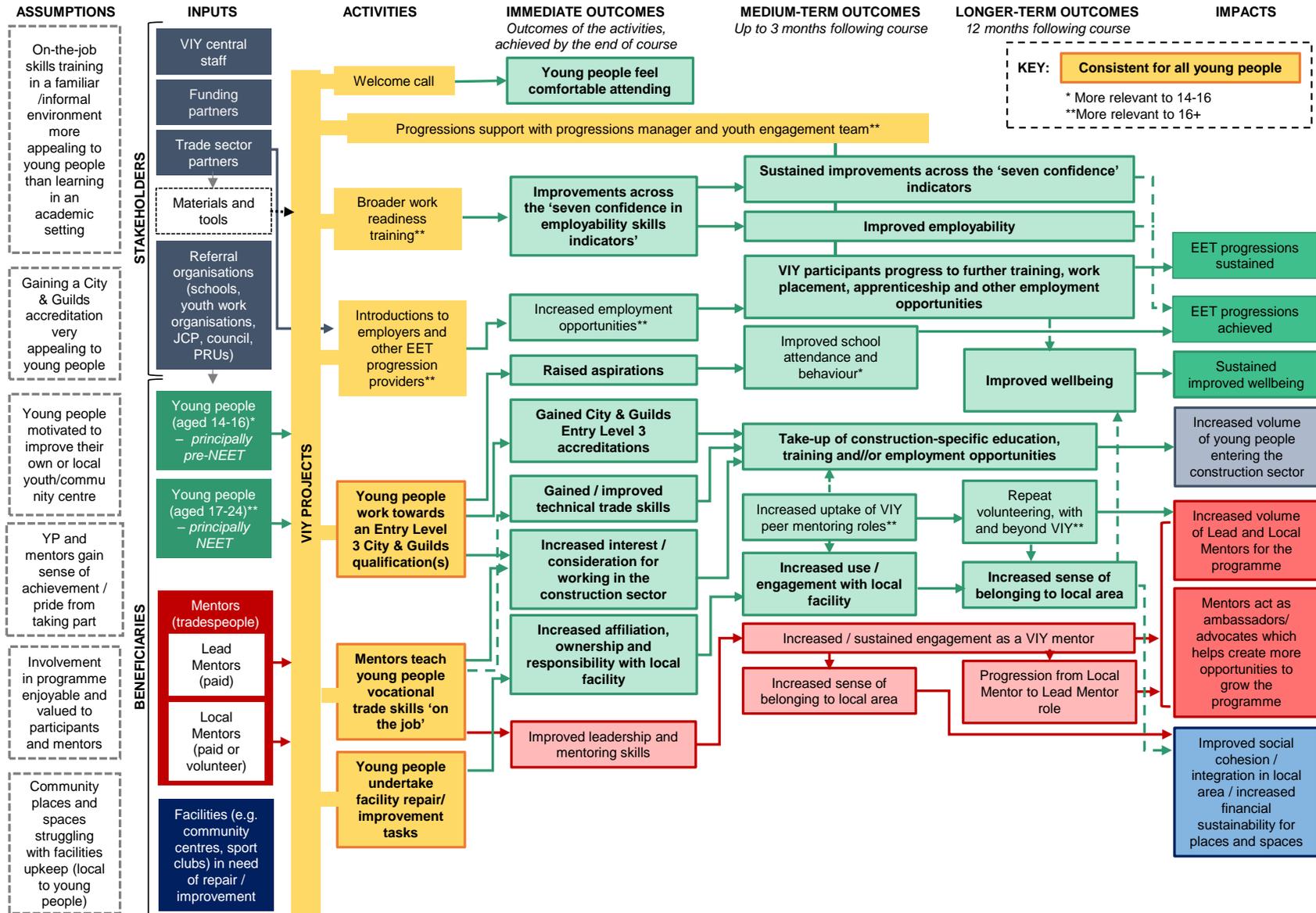
young people attributing their positive experience to the welcoming, supportive environment set by, and attitude of, these staff members. Many young people felt that this set VIY apart from other skill development and employability programmes available to them. This was particularly attractive for individuals who had caring responsibilities or poor health.

The **option to achieve an accreditation** was another attractive quality of the programme for young people. Entry level 3 accreditations further support the relatively low commitment (i.e., days on site) needed for young people to achieve a tangible outcome.

Personalised progressions support was not delivered consistently or frequently enough to evaluate as a mechanism for change. However, **informal conversations with mentors** went a long way in attracting young people to broader construction work (both through a sense of what tradesmen would be like, and through discussions about their experiences in the industry).

Volunteer It Yourself Evaluation: Pilot study findings

Figure 6.1 VIY current Theory of Change



7. Readiness for further evaluation

This chapter summarises the findings from the feasibility study which explored two aspects of feasibility: intervention feasibility (i.e. the extent to which an intervention is deliverable as intended); and feasibility for an impact evaluation (e.g. randomised controlled trial / quasi-experimental design). Please note, what is included in this section is a summary of more in-depth analysis.

Intervention feasibility

The first aspect that the feasibility evaluation explored was 'intervention feasibility'. Intervention feasibility refers to the extent to which the proposed intervention (or programme) is deliverable as intended.

As part of this, intervention feasibility explores the following key questions:

- What are the key factors/components of the intervention, and how consistently are these delivered (fidelity and adherence)?
- What is the volume (e.g., sessions by hours/weeks/months) of support needed to be effective (dosage)?

Analysis of these two aspects of intervention feasibility – fidelity of the intervention to its delivery standards and representing quantity of support dosage – highlighted a number of challenges to conducting an impact evaluation.

- Project work duration varies, with an average of three days:
- The young people value the low commitment pressure, but this means **dosage of the core programme is variable and unpredictable** at an individual level.
- For many young people, contact with VIY ends after this point, so **programme engagement is very short.**
- Furthermore, some young people are given the option of working on multiple projects (availability dependent on local projects and availability of 'new' participants). This adds more **variability to the dosage core element.**
- Progressions support relies on **initial 'opt-in' and continued contact** after face-to-face support has ended. Dosage of this element is **relatively low and unpredictable** at an individual level. Although uptake may increase with VIY offering the support to all, anecdotal evidence shows that **maintaining post-**

project contact with young people is difficult. Delivery of this element was also variable (i.e., there was also poor fidelity), with a progressions manager unavailable for a large period of the evaluation.

- Availability/dosage of work readiness training is currently low. VIY intend to deliver one session/week per project, but this currently has low fidelity, and the future fidelity is unknown.
- Introductions to employers are unlikely to be delivered consistently, as this relies on connections/links in new geographies. Delivery of this element is **variable**, with low fidelity.

Impact feasibility

The VIY programme was funded by YFF as an ‘impact pilot’, meaning that one aim of the evaluation was to establish feasibility for a future impact evaluation. There are three main elements of the impact assessment feasibility study. These are, to:

- Establish the required programme scale to detect change in any future impact evaluation.
- Explore potential comparative data sets for the programme.
- Make recommendations for a feasible evaluation methodology.

The feasibility of various impact assessment approaches was considered, alongside programme characteristics and potential. The options for impact evaluation were appraised looking at the three criteria described above.

Findings against each option are presented below, with the most robust approach explored first, down to the least robust.

A randomised controlled trial

A randomised controlled trial involves randomly selecting potential participants who are out of support, to provide a control. There are various challenges to delivering a randomised control trial with the VIY programme, namely:

1. Defining ‘business as usual’ is very difficult because of the range of participants on VIY programmes (by age and resulting status on entry). For example, some may be in school due to start GCSEs, others may be long-term unemployed.
2. Identifying a suitable randomisation point is a challenge.
 - A randomisation point that was considered was at the start of projects, but the reactive nature of project allocation means there is no time gap between recruitment and project starts for some young people (i.e., no clear time for randomisation to occur);
 - A second randomisation point that was considered was at the referral stage, but the wide range of referral partners means it is difficult to identify one that could become a strategic partner and deliver the required sample size.

3. VIY is unlikely to be able to achieve the sufficient numbers of applicants needed to enable enough individuals to be randomised out (at least 350 participants need to be randomised out and power tests suggest that this may be as large as 4,000 for some effects, with the actual minimum determined by the exact design of the study).
4. The costs (for example, with the application process) of randomising out would be considerable for VIY.

Quasi-experimental designs

Quasi-experimental designs use a non-random, often statistical, method, to develop a counterfactual. There are two key challenges to delivering a randomised control trial with the VIY programme, namely:

1. A quasi-experimental design requires not just outcome data for the supported individuals, before and after the interventions, but also consistent data about non-participants so that comparable individuals can be tracked to provide a counterfactual. To enable the construction of a counterfactual, evaluators are increasingly benefiting from new data sources. Two such sources are considered in Table 7.1. Each are longitudinal and so can be used to understand changes. However, each have limitations that make them unsuitable for constructing a counterfactual for the VIY programme.

Table 7.1: Sources of evidence for the counterfactual

Source	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
Longitudinal Labour Force Survey (LFS)	LFS is an ONS survey that uses a rotating panel sample design. Respondents are interviewed five times, on consecutive quarters, about outcomes including training over time to analyse gross flows between economic statuses.	Detailed on qualifications and occupations. Easy access to data. Timely data.	Small sample of young people (250 per wave aged 16–25) This means a counterfactual could only be constructed for VIY participants aged 16+. Survey of participants required, which is subject to attrition.

DWP Employment Data Lab	Linked administrative data about benefits, employment and educational outcomes for UK population, used to evaluate interventions, with participants linked in and propensity score matching used to identify comparators.	Matches and tracks participants. Statistical output robust, from dedicated team. Incorporates LEO dataset.	Any use of lab for evaluation needs to meet criteria set out by DWP and DFE, and would only provide aggregate outcomes.

2. VIY are unlikely to be able to achieve the required sample sizes. The number of participants has been modelled using the current levels of participation and forecasts. This was then combined with a review of past studies to determine how many participants would be enough to statistically pick up effects. Modelling indicated that significant scaling or a considerably extended recruitment period would be required to reach the sample size required to estimate effects on key outcomes.

Designs identifying comparator groups non-randomly, without using statistical matching were also considered during the feasibility study. These could be applicants or potential applicants that did not then go on to the VIY programme. The challenges here were practicalities, given the different referral partners.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter reflects on the Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) programme and its delivery, drawing conclusions on the extent to which the programme is being delivered as intended, the participant experience and outcomes, and key programme elements and drivers for positive outcomes. Throughout the chapter, recommendations and considerations for future delivery are highlighted.

For context, the evaluation experienced the following limitations:

- Baseline survey responses were very low in the early months of the evaluation;
- Low sample sizes at the EOP and 13-week follow-up surveys limit the extent of analysis possible, particularly for subgroups. This made it difficult to draw conclusions about what worked for whom;
- The decision to drop the 26-week follow-up meant that we could not explore whether longer-term outcomes were sustained;
- Individuals did not have to have completed the preceding survey to take part in the EOP or 13-week follow-up surveys (to maximise data gathered generally). Only 19 participants completed a survey at each stage. This means that the descriptive wave comparisons contain bias, as they are not based on matched samples.
- Recruitment during COVID-19 caused low programme uptake among potential participants between November 2021 and February 2022;
- There was high variation in experience of programme (progressions support, length of project), making it difficult to identify a consistent and comparable experience of support, even at a 'core programme' level;
- One of these strands of programme improvement related to MI systems and processes. Implementation of these processes (such as ongoing centralisation of all information held on individuals) means there are still some gaps in the MI data that IFF Research and Belmana received within the evaluation timeframe.

Findings should be considered in light of these limitations.

What elements of the VIY programme are working particularly well?

Overall, **VIY is an enjoyed and valued programme** for participants and referral partners. Participant experiences were generally very positive.

Evidence in this evaluation points to a number of key mechanisms underpinning the attractiveness, engagement with and outcomes for the programme:

- When introduced to VIY, young people are particularly attracted to the **relaxed and non-committal quality of the programme**; they understood that they could just ‘try the programme out’ for a day, with no obligation to turn up subsequently. Many young people felt that this set VIY apart from other skill development and employability programmes available to them and was a big attraction to participation as it reduced pressure going in (which could often be off-putting). This was particularly attractive for individuals who had caring responsibilities or poor health, which meant they were more likely to need to miss the odd day. This approach was a big hook for the VIY programme, which should be maintained in the future.
- The **option to achieve an accreditation** is another attractive quality of the programme for young people. Entry level 3 accreditations further support the relatively low commitment (i.e., days on site) needed for young people to achieve a tangible outcome.
- Many young people attributed their positive experience to the welcoming, **supportive environment set by, and attitude of, mentors. Informal conversations with mentors** went a long way in attracting young people to broader construction work (both through a sense of what tradesmen would be like, and through discussions about their experiences in the industry). For many, the relaxed and friendly atmosphere created by mentors was a reason to go back each day.

To what extent is the programme being delivered as intended?

VIY have been **successful in reaching their intended audience**. On entry to the programme, the vast majority of YFF-funded participants aged 16–24 were either not in employment, education, or training (NEET), or demonstrated characteristics that are common among ‘at risk of NEET young people (for example, poor school attainment and engagement, disadvantaged characteristics). This is largely due to the referral partners/routes used to recruit young people onto the programme; organisations supporting these young people – PRUs, those engaging with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus, to name a few – have identified suitable participants for the programme well.

Various aspects of the intended programme delivery have not been achieved, however. These include, the length of time on projects being substantially shorter, progressions support being offered to a few young people as opposed to all, and limited connections with / access to local employers and other potential industry partners in new geographical areas, meaning that activities relating to employability and work-readiness have been variable/limited.

To what extent have the intended outcomes for young people been achieved?

As a reminder, the anticipated **immediate outcomes** for young people (i.e., by the end of core programme delivery) were skill development and attitudinal/motivation change to support positive future EET outcomes. Anticipated **medium and longer-term**

outcomes (intended to be achieved within a year of taking part) were predominantly a range of EET outcomes. It was also anticipated that participation in the programme would have a positive impact on individuals' wellbeing (both directly and indirectly, as a result of positive EET outcomes).

It is important to note that, due to low sample sizes, it is difficult to draw conclusions about subgroups and what has worked for whom from the data available.

Evidence suggests that VIY has been successful in some, usually the softer, intended outcomes of the programme, while hard EET outcomes are less likely:

- The majority (64%) of young people achieved an accreditation, showing that construction skills had been developed and provided a tangible outcome for the programme. Referral partners felt that one of the most beneficial outcomes of this was increased confidence and a sense of achievement among these young people.
- Generally, improved confidence and motivation was a key outcome achieved for many participants. For EET young people, many describe having greater motivation to stay in and engage with school/studies. Among NEET young people, it was common for them to report more confidence going into the job market and applying for jobs with some more experience on their CV and a better understanding of what it might be like to work in construction.
- EET outcomes were relatively uncommon and difficult to draw conclusions from due to limitations such as sample sizes. Some young people felt EET outcomes would be difficult to achieve through the programme they experienced alone, due to the light-touch short engagement period of the programme. That said, VIY seems to have provided some young people with greater direction/clarity for what they might want out of their future. It either vindicated ideas about going into the construction industry or showed young people it may not be the pathway for them.
- The programme was relatively unsuccessful in terms of creating connections and opportunities between young people and local/potential employers. As outlined in the previous section, providing more exposure to employers and employment opportunities should be a key focus for VIY moving forward.
- Qualitative interviews pointed to improved wellbeing (both mentally and physically) among participants. Many described how the programme had given them structure and motivation to get out the house, which had often been lacking (particularly among those who had been NEET for a while). Survey data on wellbeing outcomes was more mixed, however.

How feasible is future impact evaluation?

For impact feasibility, a randomised control trial (RCT) and quasi-experimental design (QED) do not seem possible. The various challenges to delivering an RCT include difficulty in identifying a comparator and a randomisation point, potential participant volumes to

'randomise out', associated cost of doing so, and tracking outcomes longer term. A QED approach is challenging due to the required large sample sizes, weaknesses in available datasets, and limitations with the outcomes that can be analysed.

What should VIY consider for future delivery of the programme?

With all recommendations in this section, the balance between improving engagement and outcomes whilst maintaining the relaxed and non-committal quality of the programme so valued by participants should be carefully considered.

The referral process improved throughout the life of the evaluation, particularly in terms of greater obtainment of contact information for potential participants upfront to support the delivery of welcome calls. However, **there is scope to create more consistency and coverage in these welcome calls**. As it stands, these are predominantly used as a touchpoint to make sure young people know the logistics about their first day, and only in some situations is it used to explore progression intentions. A formalised workplan could be off-putting for young people, but welcome calls are a good opportunity for VIY to explore a young person's aspirations and needs going into project work in a relatively informal way. This is particularly important in the context of VIY catering to a wide range of young people and circumstances. To support this, a **greater lead-in time to project work and with the recruited young people** is needed.

Young people's engagement with VIY is relatively low – participants deliver on-site project work for an average of three days, and, for many, this is the only engagement they have with the organisation. This low engagement appears to feed into difficulties in maintaining contact with young people after concluding their project work. Although the shorter project input time for each young person allows for wider reach for the programme and contributes to the 'low commitment' needed for the programme, some consideration should be given to **increasing project work time to some extent for each young person** (for example, into two weeks). This would require finding a greater number of local projects and/or longer, more involved projects. The anticipated benefit of this would be greater skill development, a stronger relationship between participants and VIY (for better progression communication post-project), and greater likelihood of being exposed to employers and employability activities on site.

Where experienced, young people valued support with application work (e.g., interviewing and CV writing), and exposure to local employers and other employability activities on the programme. However, these elements were inconsistently available and relatively uncommon. Inconsistency with the latter is largely due to local networks and connections to employers still being built in new geographical areas that the programme has moved into. Investment in building these networks, to **support increased and consistent delivery of employment and employability activities** while a young person is on site is key.

As mentioned, many young people were attracted to the idea of achieving an accreditation, but some also mentioned that they did not know if they had done so or if they should have a 'certificate' for proof. **Greater clarity on the attainment of accreditations, and also discussions around what doors this could open** / how young people could use the accreditation, could help young people with their next steps.

Progressions support was relatively low and inconsistent throughout the evaluation period. VIY have already outlined how they intend to offer and deliver progressions support more consistently; a change we consider key to improving the outcomes of young people on the programme. Focus should be given to building connections with local employers and training providers, **understanding what feasible next steps could be for young people in specific localities**, in order to signpost and guide them towards these opportunities.

Likewise, VIY have already made strides towards strengthening their management information and data collection. Harnessing this data to understand what is working and for whom will be central to future programme improvements.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Volunteer it Yourself Evaluation Framework

	Variable / Outcome	Expected timescale	Indicator	Data collection tool / source	Timing of data collection
DEMOGRAPHICS	Gender	-	Analysis cross-break	Registration form	Registration
	Age	-	Analysis cross-break	Registration form	Registration
	Location	-	n/a	Registration form	Registration
	Contact details	-	n/a	Registration form	Registration
	NEET status (at registration)	-	Analysis cross-break	Registration form	Registration
	NEET status (baseline)	-	Analysis cross-break	Survey	Baseline
	Whether long-term NEET	-	Analysis cross-break	Survey	Baseline
	Nature of job role on entry (if applicable)	-		Survey	Baseline
	Ethnicity	-	Analysis cross-break	Registration form / Survey	Follow-up
	Disability or health condition	-	Analysis cross-break – learning difficulty or disability	Registration form / Survey	Registration / Baseline
Analysis cross-break – physical disability or health condition			Registration form / Survey	Registration / Baseline	
Analysis cross-break – mental health condition			Registration form / Survey	Registration / Baseline	
Analysis cross-break – any disability or health condition			Registration form / Survey	Registration / Baseline	

	Education	-	n/a	Survey	Baseline
	Socio-economic status (household)	-	n/a	Survey	Baseline
	Receipt of benefits/universal credit etc.	-	n/a	Survey	Baseline
	Additional needs	-	n/a	Survey	Baseline
YOUNG PEOPLE OUTCOMES	Improved employability / related softer skills	I + MT + LT	(Sustained / further) improvements across the 'seven confidence' indicators	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Baseline Project end Follow-up
	Increased employment opportunities	MT	Participants engaging with people from professional networks	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Project end
			Participants knowing the how and why of getting employed and what is available to them. Participants also have more clarity about what careers they would like to do and how to get into them.	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Baseline Project end Follow-up
	Raised aspirations	I	There is a shift towards EET in young people's future plans.	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Baseline Project end Follow-up
			14–16 year olds (those studying towards GCSE or equivalent) are motivated to complete qualification, and pursue further education / training on completion	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Baseline Project end Follow-up
			16 + (those who have completed GCSE or equivalent) and are currently in education / training are motivated to complete qualification, and pursue further education / training / employment on completion	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Baseline Project end Follow-up

		Young people not satisfied with their current work are motivated to find better work.	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Baseline Project end Follow-up	
		NEET young people are motivated to take up, and confident in finding, further education / training / work.	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Baseline Project end Follow-up	
	Improved school attendance and behaviour	I	14–16 year olds (those studying towards GCSE or equivalent) have a decreased rate of being late / truancy	Survey	Baseline Project end Follow-up
			Those in school / college have an improved attitude towards, and behaviour in, their educational setting	Survey and qualitative interviewing	
			Those in school / college have improved behaviour in their educational setting	Survey	
	Increased interest in / consideration of working in the construction sector	I	Increased consideration of construction / perception of it as a desirable career	Survey	Baseline
				Survey and qualitative interviewing	Project end
	Gained / improved technical trade skills	I	Young people have done new skills, or have increased experience in specific skills (# of skills overall, levels of experience for individual skills)	Survey	Baseline
					Project end
	Gained City & Guilds Entry Level 3 accreditations	I	Interest in gaining accreditation prior to course	Survey	Baseline
Accreditation gained during course			Survey	Project end	
VIY participants progress to further training, work placement, apprenticeship and other employment	MT + LT	Current status	Survey	Baseline Project end Follow-up	

opportunities (NEET status)				
Take-up of construction-specific education, training and/or employment opportunities	MT + LT	Young person has gained employment / taken up further education or training in the construction sector	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Project end Follow-up
Increased uptake of VIY peer mentoring roles	MT	Interest in taking up VIY peer mentoring role	Survey	Project end
		Take-up of peer mentoring role		Follow-up
Repeat volunteering, with and beyond VIY	MT	Interest in taking up further (VIY) opportunities in the future	Survey	Baseline Project end
		Take-up of peer mentoring role	Survey	Follow-up
Improved wellbeing	LT	Whether there has been an improvement on participants general happiness, life satisfaction and mental health	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Baseline Project end Follow-up
		Whether VIY has increased feelings of physical health and/or happiness/wellbeing	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Project end
Increased affiliation, ownership and responsibility with local facility	I	Young person thinks VIY involvement has increased use of and connection to the facility	Survey	Project end Follow-up
Increased use of / engagement with local facility	MT			

	Increased sense of belonging to local area	LT	Young people have (sustained) increased sense of belonging to local area	Survey and qualitative interviewing	Baseline Project end Follow-up
			Young person thinks VIY involvement has increased use of / engagement with local facilities	Survey	Project end Follow-up
PROGRAMME SUPPORT	Whether completed programme	MT	Dates attended	MI data	Project end
	Start date	MT		MI data	
	End date	MT		MI data	
	Hours per week on project site	MT		MI data	
	Whether accessed support from progressions manager	MT		MI data	
	Dosage of progressions manager support	MT		MI data	
	Other activities engaged with as part of programme	MT		Survey	Project end Follow-up
	Satisfaction with programme overall, and specific elements	MT / LT		Survey	Project end Follow-up
	Extent positive outcomes attributed (if	MT / LT		Survey	Project end Follow-up

	applicable) to participation in programme				
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Appendix 2 : Volunteer it Yourself Baseline Questionnaire

Welcome to the Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) pre-programme survey.

This survey is run by IFF Research, an independent research agency, we are working with the VIY team to find out more about your experiences of taking part and what you get out of the programme.

We’d love you to help us by answering a few short questions about yourself so we can understand your situation and skills going into the programme.. The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. Everyone who completes the survey will be given the opportunity to enter a prize draw to win an iPad Mini.

This survey is part of the VIY Programme Evaluation, which is funded by the Youth Futures Foundation. You can find out more about the evaluation on the IFF website here:

<https://www.iffresearch.com/viy-privacy/>.

You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to iffresearch.com/gdpr.

CATI SCREENER

S1 **Good morning / afternoon. My name is and I'm calling from IFF Research, an independent market research agency on behalf of Volunteer It Yourself. Please can I speak to [NAME IN SAMPLE]?**

IF NEEDED: We’d love you to help us by answering a few short questions about yourself so we can understand your situation and skills going into the programme. The survey should take around 15 minutes to complete.

IF NEEDED: We appreciate it is the start of your programme, we are interested in hearing your views at the start.

Transferred	1	CONTINUE
Speaking	2	
Hard appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft Appointment	4	
Engaged	5	CALL BACK
No reply / Answer phone	6	
Refusal	11	CLOSE
Nobody at site able to answer questions	12	
Not available in deadline	13	
Fax Line	14	

Residential Number	15	
Dead line	16	
Company closed	17	

ASK IF CORRECT PERSON / TRANSFERRED (S1=1/2)

S2 **Good morning / afternoon. My name is and I'm calling from IFF Research, an independent market research agency on behalf of Volunteer It Yourself and Youth Future Foundation. Please can I speak to [NAME IN SAMPLE]**

The survey should only take around 15 minutes. Would now be a convenient time for you to take part?

IF NEEDED: We'd love you to help us by answering a few short questions about yourself so we can understand your situation and skills going into the programme. The survey should take around 15 minutes to complete.

IF NEEDED: We appreciate it is the start of your programme, we are interested in hearing your views at the start .

IF AGREE TO TAKE PART NOW – COMPULSORY GDPR REQUIREMENT

Before we begin, I just need to read out a quick statement based on GDPR legislation. The interview will be conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights by going to iffresearch.com/gdpr. You can also read the privacy notice for this research at <https://www.iffresearch.com/viy-privacy/>.

Continue	1	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	4	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft appointment	5	
Not correct contact – won't refer / put through	6	THANK AND CLOSE
Refusal –	7	
Not available in deadline	8	

IF ASK ALL

S3 **Before we begin, please could you write in your date of birth and initials?**

This will only be used to ensure that you see the right questions in the survey, as well as to match your answers with project information held by ViY and with any follow up surveys you decide to take part in for this evaluation, carried out by IFF Research. This will help IFF to do more analysis on

people’s experiences of the programme and the support they get. It will not be used for any other reason.

Date of birth (DD/MM/YY):

First Initial: [WRITE IN 1 DIGIT FORMAT]

Last initial: [WRITE IN 1 DIGIT FORMAT]

Prefer not to say	1
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A Information about you

Firstly, we’d like to know a few things about you.

ASK ALL

A1 Thinking back to before you started the programme, were you in employment, education or training?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don’t know	3	

ASK IF NEET (A1=2)

A1a Roughly how long had you not been in employment, education, or training?

Please select one option.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Less than a month	1	
1 - 3 months ago	2	
3 - 6 months ago	3	
6 - 12 months ago	4	

More than 12 months ago	5	
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ASK ALL

A2 Again, thinking back to before you started the programme, which of the following activities best describes your situation? Please select the activity that most of your time was dedicated to.

Please select one option.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Studying for GCSEs or equivalent	1	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Studying at sixth form or college	2	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Attending university	3	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Doing an apprenticeship	4	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Other training course	5	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Full-time employment	6	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Part-time employment	7	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Unemployed seeking employment	8	
Unemployed not seeking employment	9	
Looking after family	10	
Doing voluntary work	11	
Other (please specify)	12	

ASK ALL

A3 What is your highest level of GCSE gained or current target grade in the following subjects?

Please select the grade that applies for each subject listed. The letters in brackets are the equivalent grade pre-2018.

READ OUT GRADES/CONVERSIONS IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE PER ROW

_1 Maths	U	1 (F/G)	2 (E/F)	3 (D)	4 (C)	5 (B)	6 (B)	7 (A)	8 (A)	9 (A*)	Don't know	Prefer not to say
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_2 English	U	1 (F/G)	2 (E/F)	3 (D)	4 (C)	5 (B)	6 (B)	7 (A)	8 (A)	9 (A*)	Don't know	Prefer not to say
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IF STUDYING TOWARDS GCSES OR EQUIVALENT (A2=1)

A4 The next few questions explore your feelings about school or college. Taking part in things like VIY can sometimes influence how some young people feel about these things. We are asking these questions before and after you take part in VIY, to see if there are any changes. There are no right or wrong answers, please just be honest.

Thinking back to before you started the programme, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Note: To be motivated means to really want to do something, even if it is difficult or challenging at times.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ROW

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_1 I am motivated when it comes to completing my current qualifications	1	2	3	4	5
_2 I am motivated to do further education / training (including Apprenticeships) after completing my current qualifications	1	2	3	4	5
_3 I know which subject / courses I would like to do next	1	2	3	4	5

IF STUDYING TOWARDS GCSES OR EQUIVALENT (A2=1)

A5 About how often...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

	Never	Less than once a month	1 or 2 times each month	1 or 2 times each week	3 or 4 times each week	Everyday
_1 Are you late to school/college?	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 Do you miss an entire day of school/college (without authorisation from the school/college)?	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF IN POST-16 EDUCATION OR TRAINING (A2=2, 3, 4 OR 5)

A6 Thinking back to before you started the programme, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am motivated when it comes to completing my current qualifications.

Note: To be motivated means to really want to do something, even if it is difficult or challenging at times.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Strongly disagree	1	
Disagree	2	
Neither agree nor disagree	3	
Agree	4	
Strongly agree	5	

A6b. REMOVED.

IF STUDYING IN SCHOOL OR COLLEGE (A2 =1 OR 2)

A7 To what extent do agree or disagree with the following statements.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_1 I get along with staff at my school / college	1	2	3	4	5
_2 It is important to act respectfully towards staff at my school / college	1	2	3	4	5

IF STUDYING IN SCHOOL OR COLLEGE (A2 =1 OR 2)

A8 Thinking about the two weeks in [IF A2=1: school IF A2=2: sixth form / college] prior to starting the programme, had you:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	YES	NO
_1 Been praised by staff for your behaviour	1	2
_2 Been praised by staff for your work	1	2
_3 Been told off by staff about your behaviour	1	2
_4 Been told off by staff about your work	1	2

IF IN EMPLOYMENT (A2 = 6 OR 7)

A9a Thinking about the employment you were in when starting this programme, in total, roughly how many hours a week did/do you normally spend in paid work or self-employment? If you had/have more than one job, please include the combined total of all your jobs. If your hours differ each week, please think about your average number of hours.

READ OUT IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE

Less than 10 hours	1	
11-20 hours	3	
21-35 hours	5	
36+ hours	8	
Don't Know	10	
Prefer not to say	11	

IF IN EMPLOYMENT (A2 = 6 OR 7)

A9b Thinking about this job, was/is it...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

On a permanent or open-ended contract. By this, we mean you have a consistent job with this employer with no defined end point / date.	1	
On a fixed-term, temporary or casual basis contract. By this, we mean agreements with either a fixed end point / date and/or where the employer does not need to offer you set hours each week, and you do not have to work on hours offered.	2	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	8	
DO NOT READ OUT: Prefer not to say	9	

IF IN EMPLOYMENT (A2 = 6 OR 7)

A9c Is this job role related to the building or construction industry?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

IF IN EMPLOYMENT (A2 = 6 OR 7)

A9 All things considered, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the job you were in prior to starting this programme:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ROW.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_1 I was/am satisfied with this job	1	2	3	4	5
_2 I would like to progress (i.e. increase responsibilities, get a promotion) in this employment	1	2	3	4	5

A9d REMOVED.

IF NOT SATISFIED WITH CURRENT JOB (A9_1 =1 3)

A10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Note: To be motivated means to really want to do something, even if it is difficult or challenging at times.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_1 I am motivated to find alternative work	1	2	3	4	5
_2 I am confident in finding alternative work	1	2	3	4	5

IF NEET (A1=2) OR THEY WANT TO DO FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING OR FIND WORK (A6B = 1-2)

A11 At this moment in time, to what extent to would you agree or disagree with the following statements:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_1 I am motivated to take up further education or training (SHOW IF NEET (A1=2) OR (A6B =1))	1	2	3	4	5
_2 I am confident in finding further education or training (SHOW IF NEET (A1=2) OR A6B =1)	1	2	3	4	5
_3 I am motivated to find work (SHOW IF NEET (A1=2) OR A6B =2)	1	2	3	4	5

_4 I am confident in finding work (SHOW IF NEET (A1=2) OR A6B=2)	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

ASK ALL

A12 Do any of the following apply to your situation?

Please select all that apply.

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

English is an additional language for me	1	
I have an EHCP	2	
I require additional SEN support	3	
I have been home schooled either in the past or currently	4	
I have received free school meals in the last 12 months	5	
I have been excluded from school in the past 12 months	6	
I am currently pregnant or I am a parent	7	
I have been under the care of the local authority within the last 12 months	8	
I am a carer for a vulnerable member of my family	9	
I have been involved with the youth justice system within the last 12 months	10	
I have been in custody within the last 12 months	11	
DO NOT READ OUT: None of these / prefer not to say	12	FORCE SINGLE CODE

ASK ALL

A13 Have you volunteered before?

By volunteering we mean giving your time for free to benefit others outside your family.

NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

DO

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

B Personal goals for participating in VIY

ASK ALL

Now we'd like to understand your motivations for taking part in VIY and determine your current skill levels in certain areas.

ASK ALL

B1 What are your main reasons for wanting to take part in VIY?

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

I am interested in working in construction	1	
I want to gain hands-on construction and building work experience	2	
I want to gain a qualification to show my knowledge	3	
I want to give back to my community by volunteering	4	
I'm already involved with the venue that VIY is supporting and wanted to help out	5	
I want to make a positive change in my local area	6	
I want to have fun	7	
I want to meet new people and make new friends	8	
I want to do something different than what I usually do	9	
DO NOT READ OUT: None of these	10	

ASK ALL

B2 If you have other different reasons for taking part in your VIY project, please let us know below.

INTERVIEWER: WRITE IN VERBATIM

WRITE IN		
DO NOT READ OUT: No other motivations	1	

ASK ALL

B3 Please rate your confidence in the following personal skills:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Not at all confident	Not very confident	Fairly confident	Extremely confident
_1 Meeting new people	1	2	3	4
_2 Trying new things	1	2	3	4
_3 Working with others in a team	1	2	3	4
_4 Putting forward my ideas	1	2	3	4
_5 Being a leader of a team	1	2	3	4
_6 Explaining my ideas clearly	1	2	3	4
_7 Getting things done on time	1	2	3	4

ASK ALL

B4 Please rate your past experience of trade and building work on a scale from "No Experience" to "Very Experienced".

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	No experience	Some experience	Very experienced	DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know
_1 Health and safety	1	2	3	4
_2 Painting and Decorating	1	2	3	4
_3 Working with piping:	1	2	3	4
_4 Doing tiling	1	2	3	4
_5 Using hand tools (e.g. wrenches, pliers)	1	2	3	4
_6 Using cutting tools (e.g. handsaw)	1	2	3	4
_7 Using power tools (e.g. drill)	1	2	3	4
_8 Doing brickwork	1	2	3	4
_9 Doing carpentry	1	2	3	4

ASK ALL

B5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_2 A range of different educational and career options are open to me	1	2	3	4	5
_3 I know how to go about getting the experience or training I need to get the job or qualification I want	1	2	3	4	5
_4 I know how to set myself apart from other job applicants	1	2	3	4	5
_5 I understand what employers look for during the recruitment process	1	2	3	4	5
_6 I know what career I'd like to do	1	2	3	4	5
_7 I know or have met someone in the career I'm interested in pursuing	1	2	3	4	5

C Your future

ASK ALL

In this section, we would like to know what your future career plans are and views on building and construction.

ASK ALL

C1 What would you like to do in the future?

Please select all that apply.

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Finish my current studies (GCSE/sixth form/college/university/apprenticeship)	1	
Start studying at sixth form or college	2	
Start attending university	3	
Start an apprenticeship	4	
Other training course	5	

Full-time employment	6	
Part-time employment	7	
Unemployed and apply for state benefit	8	
Doing voluntary work	9	
Looking after family	10	
Other (please specify)	11	

ASK ALL

C2 Before volunteering with VIY, had you ever considered a job or career in the building or construction sector?

Note: By sector, we mean the type of work. For example, other sectors include transport, banking, retail.

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

D Community and wellbeing

ASK ALL

These questions are about your feelings on aspects of your life. We understand that these questions are personal and can be difficult to answer. If you don't want to give an answer to any of these statements, just [IF CAWI: select / IF CATI: say] "prefer not to say".

ASK ALL

D1 Here are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please select the answer that best describes your experience on starting the programme:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time	DO NOT READ OUT : Don't Know	DO NOT READ OUT Prefer not to say
_1 I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
_2 I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
_4 I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
_6 I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ASK ALL

D2 How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area / neighbourhood?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Not at all strongly	1	
Not very strongly	2	
Fairly strongly	3	
Very strongly	4	

E Recontact

ASK ALL

Finally, we would like to ask you some questions about your health and ethnicity. We are asking these questions to help us understand the experiences of different types of people.

The answers will only be used to help us analyse the results, but if there's anything you would rather not share, you can choose not to answer that question. The data will be stored securely on our systems, will not be shared with any 3rd parties without your permission and will be permanently deleted after June 2023.

Please remember the information you give will only be used in an overall way and we ask these questions to understand how to better serve the needs of people in similar situations to yours in the future.

ASK ALL

E1 Do you consider yourself to have any learning difficulty or disability?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No	2	
Prefer not to say	3	

ASK ALL

E2 Do you consider yourself to have any physical disability or health condition?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No	2	
Prefer not to say	3	

ASK ALL

E3 Do you consider yourself to have a mental health condition (this includes, for example, anxiety, depression)?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No	2	
Prefer not to say	3	

ASK ALL

E4 Which one of the following best describes your ethnic group?**Please select one option.**

READ OUT IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.

White British	1	
White Irish	2	
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	3	
White Other	4	
Indian	5	

Pakistani	6	
Bangladeshi	7	
Chinese	8	
Other Asian	9	
Black African	10	
Black Caribbean	11	
Black Other	12	
Arab	13	
White and Caribbean	14	
White and African	15	
White and Asian	16	
Other Mixed	17	
Don't know	18	
Prefer not to say	19	
Other (please specify)	20	

IF AGE 16 OR OVER [SAMVAR=2 OR OVER 16 AT s3]

E4A Do you currently receive any of the following {IF CATI} benefits?

You only need to select those you claim, not any claimed by other members of your household

READ OUT. MULTI CODE.

Universal credit	1	
Housing or Council Tax Reduction	2	
Sickness or disability benefits (including Personal Independence Payments or Employment and Support Allowance)	6	
Child benefit	7	
Carer's allowance	8	
Other (specify)	9	

None of these	10	FORCE SINGLE CODE
Don't know	11	FORCE SINGLE CODE
Prefer not to say	12	FORCE SINGLE CODE

ASK ALL

E5 Thank you for completing this survey, it is really important in helping us understand the impact of participation in VIY. As part of this, would it be ok for IFF to contact you again at the end of your involvement with VIY to ask what you thought about it and if anything has changed?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No	2	

IF HAPPY TO TAKE PART IN FUTURE (E5 = 1)

E6 What is the best email address to reach you on? Preferably this would be a personal email (as opposed to a school email).

WRITE IN		
Prefer not to say	1	

IF HAPPY TO TAKE PART IN FUTURE (E5 = 1)

E7 What is the best number to contact you on, if we need to call you about this survey?

WRITE IN	
Prefer not to say	1

E9 And finally, if you'd like to enter the prize draw to win an iPad Mini, please provide an email address to contact you on if you win.

WRITE IN		
I do not want to enter the prize draw	1	

Appendix 2 : Volunteer it Yourself End of Programme Questionnaire

Welcome to the Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) end of programme survey.

This survey is run by IFF Research, an independent research agency. We are working with the VIY team to find out more about your experiences of taking part in VIY and what you got out of it.

[IF COMPLETED IN WAVE 1: You may remember doing a survey when you started VIY. This one has some similar questions (to see if any of your views have changed), as well as asking more about what you thought about the project you worked on and any training or support you might have had through VIY.] Your views are really important to help us see what is working well and what could be improved. The survey should only take 10 minutes. Everyone who completes the survey will be given the opportunity to enter a prize draw to win an iPad Mini.

This survey is part of the VIY Programme Evaluation, which is funded by the Youth Futures Foundation. You can find out more about the evaluation on the IFF website here:

<https://www.iffresearch.com/viy-privacy/>.

You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to [iffresearch.com/gdpr](https://www.iffresearch.com/gdpr).

CATI SCREENER

S1 Good morning / afternoon. My name is and I'm calling from IFF Research, an independent market research agency on behalf of Volunteer It Yourself. Please can I speak to [NAME IN SAMPLE]?

IF NEEDED: We'd love you to help us by answering a few short questions about yourself so we can understand your situation and skills going into the programme. The survey should take around 15 minutes to complete.

IF NEEDED: You may remember doing a similar survey at the start of the programme. We are interested in your views now that the programme has ended.

Transferred	1	CONTINUE
Speaking	2	
Hard appointment	3	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft Appointment	4	
Engaged	5	CALL BACK
No reply / Answer phone	6	
Refusal	11	CLOSE

Nobody at site able to answer questions	12	
Not available in deadline	13	
Fax Line	14	
Residential Number	15	
Dead line	16	
Company closed	17	

ASK IF CORRECT PERSON / TRANSFERRED (S1=1/2)

S2 **Good morning / afternoon/evening. My name is and I'm calling from IFF Research, an independent market research agency on behalf of Volunteer It Yourself and Youth Future Foundation. Please can I speak to [NAME IN SAMPLE]**

The survey should only take around 15 minutes. Would now be a convenient time for you to take part?

IF NEEDED: We'd love you to help us by answering a few short questions about yourself so we can understand your situation and skills going into the programme. The survey should take around 15 minutes to complete.

IF NEEDED: You may remember doing a similar survey at the start of the programme. We are interested in your views now that the programme has ended.

IF AGREE TO TAKE PART NOW – COMPULSORY GDPR REQUIREMENT

Before we begin, I just need to read out a quick statement based on GDPR legislation. The interview will be conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights by going to iffresearch.com/gdpr. You can also read the privacy notice for this research at <https://www.iffresearch.com/viy-privacy/>.

Continue	1	CONTINUE
Hard appointment	4	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Soft appointment	5	
Not correct contact – won't refer / put through	6	THANK AND CLOSE
Refusal –	7	
Not available in deadline	8	

A Information about you

Firstly, we'd like to know a few things about you. [IF COMPLETED BASELINE SURVEY: Some of these questions may feel familiar from the survey you completed at the start of the programme. We are asking them again now to see whether there has been any change.]

ASK ALL

A1 Are you currently in employment, education or training?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

ASK ALL

A2 Which one of the following activities best describes your current situation? Please select the activity that most of your time is dedicated to. Please select one option.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Studying for GCSEs or equivalent	1	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Studying at sixth form or college	2	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Attending university	3	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Doing an apprenticeship	4	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Other training course	5	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Full-time employment	6	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Part-time employment	7	ONLY SHOW IF A1 =1
Unemployed seeking employment	8	
Unemployed not seeking employment	9	
Looking after family	10	
Doing voluntary work	11	

Other (please specify)	12	
------------------------	----	--

IF HAVE NOT DONE BASELINE (SAMPLE VARIABLE “COMPLETED BASE”= 2)

A2b. Thinking back to the time when you started the VIY programme on [PROJSTARTDATE], Were you in employment, education or training?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know / I don't remember	3	

IF HAVE NOT DONE BASELINE (SAMPLE VARIABLE “COMPLETED BASE”= 2)

A2c. Again, thinking back to the time before you started the VIY programme on [PROJSTARTDATE], which of the following described your situation?

Please select the activity that most of your time was dedicated to.

Studying for GCSEs or equivalent	1	
Studying at sixth form or college	2	
Attending university	3	
Doing an apprenticeship	4	
Other training course	5	
Full-time employment	6	
Part-time employment	7	
Unemployed seeking employment	8	
Unemployed not seeking employment	9	
Looking after family	10	
Doing voluntary work	11	
Other (please specify)	12	
Don't know / I can't remember	13	

IF STUDYING TOWARDS GCSES OR EQUIVALENT (A2=1)

A3 The next few questions explore your feelings about school or college. Taking part in things like VIY can sometimes influence how some young people feel about these things. There are no right or wrong answers, please just be honest.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Note: To be motivated means to really want to do something, even if it is difficult or challenging at times.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ROW

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_1 I am motivated when it comes to completing my current qualifications	1	2	3	4	5
_2 I am motivated to do further education / training (including Apprenticeships) after completing my current qualifications	1	2	3	4	5
_3 I know which subject / courses I would like to do next	1	2	3	4	5

IF STUDYING TOWARDS GCSES OR EQUIVALENT (A2=1)

A4 About how often...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

	Never	Less than once a month	1 or 2 times each month	1 or 2 times each week	3 or 4 times each week	Everyday
_1 Are you late to school/college?	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 Do you miss an entire day of school/college (without authorisation from the school/college)?	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF IN POST-16 EDUCATION OR TRAINING (A2=2, 3, 4 OR 5)

A5 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am motivated when it comes to completing my current qualifications.

Note: To be motivated means to really want to do something, even if it is difficult or challenging at times.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Strongly disagree	1	
Disagree	2	
Neither agree nor disagree	3	
Agree	4	
Strongly agree	5	

A6 This question has been removed.

IF STUDYING IN SCHOOL OR COLLEGE (A2 =1 OR 2)

A7 To what extent do agree or disagree with the following statements:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_1 I get along with staff at my school / college	1	2	3	4	5
_2 It is important to act respectfully towards staff at my school / college	1	2	3	4	5

IF STUDYING IN SCHOOL OR COLLEGE (A2 =1 OR 2)

A8 Thinking about the last two weeks in [IF A2=1: school IF A2=2: sixth form / college], have you:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	YES	NO
_1 Been praised by staff for your behaviour	1	2
_2 Been praised by staff for your work	1	2
_3 Been told off by staff about your behaviour	1	2

_4 Been told off by staff about your work	1	2
---	---	---

IF IN EMPLOYMENT (A2 = 6 OR 7)

A9 All things considered, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ROW.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_1 I /am satisfied with this job	1	2	3	4	5
_2 I would like to progress (i.e. increase responsibilities, get a promotion) in this employment	1	2	3	4	5

A9d This question has been removed.

IF IN EMPLOYMENT IN THIS WAVE AND WERE IN EMPLOYMENT IN WAVE 1 ((A2 = 6 OR 7) AND (A2 IN WAVE 1 = 6 OR 7) OR A2c = 6 OR 7)

A9e. Can we just check, is this the same job you had before you started the VIY programme on [INSERT MONTH AND YEAR OF START OF PROGRAMME]?

Yes – It’s the same job as before	1	
No – I’m with the same employer but in a new job	2	
No – It’s a new job with a new employer	3	
Don’t know	4	

A9f. This question has been removed.

IF THEY ARE IN A NEW JOB (A9E=2 OR 3)

A9g Thinking about this new job, is it...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

On a permanent or open-ended contract. By this, we mean you have a consistent job with this employer with no defined end point / date.	1	
On a fixed-term, temporary or casual basis contract. By this, we mean agreements with either a fixed end point / date and/or where the employer does not need to offer you set hours each week, and you do not have to work on hours offered.	2	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	8	
DO NOT READ OUT: Prefer not to say	9	

IF THEY ARE IN A NEW JOB (A9E=2 OR 3)

A9h. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The time I spent on the VIY programme helped me to get this job	1	2	3	4	5

IF AGREE THAT VIY PROGRAMME HELPED THEM GET THIS JOB (A9H = 4 OR 5)

A9i In what ways do you think your time on the VIY programme helped you to get this job?

Please select all that apply.

It gave me confidence	1	
I got a qualification at the end of the programme	2	
I met/worked with my employer on the programme	3	
It convinced me that I want to work in construction	4	
I learnt new skills on the programme which I use in this job	5	
Other (please specify)	6	
Don't know	7	

None of these	8	
Prefer not to say	9	

IF THEY ARE EMPLOYED IN THE SAME JOB AS BEFORE (A9E = 1)

A9j Have your responsibilities in your current job changed since the start of the VIY programme in [INSERT MONTH AND YEAR OF START OF PROGRAMME]?

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

IF RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE CHANGED (A9j=1)

A9k Did your experience with VIY contribute to taking up these new responsibilities?

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

IF THEY ARE EMPLOYED IN THE SAME JOB AS BEFORE (A9E = 1)

A9a In total, roughly how many hours a week do you normally spend in paid work or self-employment? If you have more than one job, please include the combined total of all your jobs. If your hours differ each week, please think about your average number of hours.

READ OUT IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE

Less than 10 hours	1	
11-20 hours	3	
21-35 hours	5	
36+ hours	8	
Don't Know	10	
Prefer not to say	11	

IF THEY ARE EMPLOYED IN THE SAME JOB AS BEFORE (A9E = 1)

A9b Thinking about this job, is it...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

On a permanent or open-ended contract. By this, we mean you have a consistent job with this employer with no defined end point / date.	1	
On a fixed-term, temporary or casual basis contract. By this, we mean agreements with either a fixed end point / date and/or where the employer does not need to offer you set hours each week, and you do not have to work on hours offered.	2	
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	8	
DO NOT READ OUT: Prefer not to say	9	

IF NOT SATISFIED WITH CURRENT JOB (A9_1 =1 3)

A10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Note: To be motivated means to really want to do something, even if it is difficult or challenging at times.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_1 I am motivated to find alternative work	1	2	3	4	5
_2 I am confident in finding alternative work	1	2	3	4	5

IF NEET (A1=2)

A11 At this moment in time, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

_1 I am motivated to take up further education or training	1	2	3	4	5
_2 I am confident in finding further education or training	1	2	3	4	5
_3 I am motivated to find work	1	2	3	4	5
_4 I am confident in finding work	1	2	3	4	5

B Personal goals for participating in VIY

ASK ALL

Now we'd like to understand your current skill levels in certain areas now that your VIY programme has ended.

ASK ALL

B1 This question has been removed

ASK ALL

B2 Please rate your confidence in the following personal skills:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Not at all confident	Not very confident	Fairly confident	Extremely confident
_1 Meeting new people	1	2	3	4
_2 Trying new things	1	2	3	4
_3 Working with others in a team	1	2	3	4
_4 Putting forward my ideas	1	2	3	4
_5 Being a leader of a team	1	2	3	4
_6 Explaining my ideas clearly	1	2	3	4
_7 Getting things done on time	1	2	3	4

ASK ALL

B3 Please rate your experience of trade and building work now from “No Experience” to “Very Experienced”

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	No experience	Some experience	Very experienced	DO NOT READ OUT: Don't Know
_1 Health and safety	1	2	3	4
_2 Painting and Decorating	1	2	3	4
_3 Working with piping	1	2	3	4
_4 Doing tiling	1	2	3	4
_5 Using hand tools (e.g. screwdrivers, wrenches, pliers)	1	2	3	4
_6 Using cutting tools (e.g. handsaw)	1	2	3	4
_7 Using power tools (e.g. drill)	1	2	3	4
_8 Doing brickwork	1	2	3	4
_9 Doing carpentry	1	2	3	4

ASK ALL

B4 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_2 A range of different educational and career options are open to me	1	2	3	4	5

_3 I know how to go about getting the experience or training I need to get the job or qualification I want	1	2	3	4	5
_4 I know how to set myself apart from other job applicants	1	2	3	4	5
_5 I understand what employers look for during the recruitment process	1	2	3	4	5
_6 I know what career I'd like to do	1	2	3	4	5
_7 I know or have met someone in the career I'm interested in pursuing	1	2	3	4	5
_8 I have relationships that will help me get a job / apprenticeship	1	2	3	4	5
_9 I know people I can call on for employment advice	1	2	3	4	5
_10 I have positive relationships with people I worked or volunteered with on the VIY project	1	2	3	4	5

C Experience of VIY programme

In this section, we would like to ask you about your experience on the VIY programme.

Please be reassured that the answers to these questions will only be shared with VIY anonymously, so they won't know how you answered.

ASK ALL

C1 Did you complete the VIY programme you were registered on?

SINGLE CODE, DO NOT READ OUT

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

ASK ALL

C2 On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not at all worthwhile and 10 is completely worthwhile, how worthwhile did you find your VIY experience overall?

SINGLE CODE, DO NOT READ OUT

0 – Not at all worthwhile	1	
1	2	
2	3	
3	4	
4	5	
5	6	
6	7	
7	8	
8	9	
9	10	
10 – Completely worthwhile	11	

Don't know	12	
Prefer not to say	13	

C3 This question has been removed

ASK ALL

C4 Which, if any, of these activities did you take part in, as part of your VIY experience?

Please select all that apply.

MULTI CODE. READ OUT

Visit from someone involved in the construction industry	1	
Introduction to potential employers	2	
Work readiness training (outside of project work)	3	
Construction training or learning 'on the job'	4	
Working towards or completing a construction qualification such as City & Guilds	5	
Work visits or 'taster' sessions	6	
Doing a DIY repair or improvement task	7	
Don't know	8	
None of these	9	
Prefer not to say	10	

ASK IF C4=(1-7) ONLY SHOW CODES SELECTED AT C4

C5 From a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not useful and 5 is very useful, to what extent do you think the activities you took part in have been useful in supporting your future career goals?

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't
Visit from someone involved in the construction industry	1	2	3	4	5	6

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't
Introduction to potential employers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Work readiness training (outside of project work)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Construction training or learning 'on the job'	1	2	3	4	5	6
Working towards or completing a construction qualification such as City & Guilds	1	2	3	4	5	6
Work visits or 'taster' sessions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Doing a DIY repair or improvement task	1	2	3	4	5	6

ASK ALL

C6 Would you recommend VIY to other young people?

SINGLE CODE. READ OUT

Yes – Definitely	1	
Yes – Maybe	2	
No	3	
Don't know	4	

ASK ALL

C7 Did you have any meetings discussing your future plans with VIY about progressions support?

These meetings would have been about future education/training or employment opportunities after you finish your VIY programme.

SINGLE CODE. DO NOT READ OUT

Yes	1	
No	2	

Don't know	3	
------------	---	--

IF YES AT C8 (C8=1)

C8 What did you discuss in your conversation(s) with VIY about progressions support?

Please select all that apply

MULTICODE. READ OUT

Further training you can do after VIY	1	
Further education you can do after VIY	2	
Employment opportunities you can apply for after VIY	3	
Your current interests, aspirations and goals	4	
How ready you feel you are to work	5	
What are you doing now in terms of employment or education	6	
Other (please specify)	7	
Don't know	8	EXCLUSIVE
None of these	9	EXCLUSIVE
Prefer not to say	10	EXCLUSIVE

IF YES AT C8 (C8=1)

C9 How satisfied are you with the support provided by VIY staff?

READ OUT, SINGLE CODE

Very satisfied	1	
Satisfied	2	
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	
Dissatisfied	4	
Very dissatisfied	5	
Don't know	6	

Refused	7	
---------	---	--

IF YES AT C8 (C8=1)

C10 On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not helped at all and 10 is helped a lot, how much do you think these progressions support meetings with VIY have helped you in deciding what you want to do next?

SINGLE CODE, DO NOT READ OUT

0 – Not helped at all	1	
1	2	
2	3	
3	4	
4	5	
5	6	
6	7	
7	8	
8	9	
9	10	
10 – Helped a lot	11	
Don't know	12	
Prefer not to say	13	

ASK IF THEY HAVE COMPLETED THE VIY PROGRAMME (C1=1)

C11 [IF C8=1 More broadly], On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not helped at all and 10 is helped a lot, how much do you think your involvement in the VIY programme has helped you in deciding what you want to do next?

SINGLE CODE, DO NOT READ OUT

0 – Not helped at all	1	
-----------------------	---	--

1	2	
2	3	
3	4	
4	5	
5	6	
6	7	
7	8	
8	9	
9	10	
10 – Helped a lot	11	
Don't know	12	
Prefer not to say	13	

ASK ALL

C12 Has your experience with VIY made you consider a job or career in the building or construction sector?

Note: By sector, we mean the type of work. For example, other sectors include transport, banking, retail.

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

ASK ALL

C13 How desirable would you say a career in the building or construction sector is to you?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Not at all desirable	1	
Slightly desirable	2	

Quite desirable	3	
Very desirable	4	

ASK ALL

C14 Did you work towards a City & Guilds qualification during your time with VIY?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

IF YES AT C14 (C14 =1)

C15 Did you successfully complete the qualification?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

IF YES AT C14 (C14 =1)

C16 Which of the following City & Guilds units did you pass?

READ OUT. MULTICODE

Health and safety in places of work - Introduction to Site Health and Safety	1	
Introducing Finishing Skills (plastering)	2	
Introducing Pipework Skills	3	
Introducing Tiling Skills	4	
Introducing to brickwork skills	5	
Introducing site carpentry skills	6	
Introducing Paint Finishing Skills	7	

Recognise and use hand tools and materials used in construction	8	
Other (please specify)	9	

D Your future

ASK ALL

In this section, we would like to know what your future career plans are and views on building and construction.

ASK ALL

D1 What would you like to do in the future?

Please select all that apply.

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Finish my current studies (GCSE/sixth form/college/university/apprenticeship)	1	
Start studying at sixth form or college	2	
Start attending university	3	
Start an apprenticeship	4	
Other training course	5	
Full-time employment	6	
Part-time employment	7	
Unemployed and apply for state benefit	8	
Doing voluntary work	9	
Looking after family	10	
Other (please specify)	11	

ASK ALL

D2 Since participating in VIY, have you taken up any construction-specific education, training and/or employment opportunities?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

IF YES AT D2 (D2 =1)

D3 What was the nature of this construction-specific education, training and/or employment opportunity?

Please select all that apply.

READ OUT. MULTI CODE

Full time employment in the sector	1	
Part time employment in the sector	2	
A traineeship	3	
An apprenticeship	4	
Other education or training	5	

IF TRAINEESHIP/APPRENTICESHIP OR OTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING (D3 =3-5)

D4 Have you completed this [traineeship/apprenticeship/education or training]?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. ASK EACH ITERATION IN TURN.

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

IF APPRENTICESHIP OR OTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING (D3 =4-5)

D5 What level of qualification is/was this [Apprenticeship / other education or training] in? If you have completed more than one level of qualification, please select all that apply.

READ OUT. MULTI CODE

No formal qualification	1	
Level 1-2 (Level 2 is also known as Intermediate apprenticeships, equivalent to GCSE passes)	2	

Level 3 (Advanced apprenticeships, equivalent to A level passes)	3	
Level 4-5 (Higher apprenticeships)	4	
Level 6+ (Degree apprenticeships)	5	

D6 This question has been removed.

IF THEY ARE LOOKING FOR WORK AT A2 (A2=8)

D7 Which of the following, if any, have you done in the last three months in order to find work? Please select all that apply.

Created/updated my CV	1	
Browsed on employment websites e.g. Indeed, LinkedIn etc	2	
Created a LinkedIn profile	3	
Applied for a job by handing over a physical copy of your CV	4	
Applied for a job by completing an online application	9	
Interviewed for a job	5	
Don't know	6	
None of these	7	
Prefer not to say	8	

D8 This question has been removed.

IF THEY HAVE APPLIED FOR A JOB (D7=4 OR 9)

D9 Have you received a job offer for any of the jobs you've applied for?

Yes	1	
Currently waiting to hear back from employer	2	
No	3	
Prefer not to say	4	

ASK ALL

D10 Do you think you will continue to volunteer in future?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

ASK ALL

D11 This question has been removed.

ASK ALL

D12 Would you be interested in becoming a VIY Peer Mentor in the future, to help support new VIY participants?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

E Community and wellbeing

ASK ALL

These questions are about your feelings on aspects of your life. We understand that these questions are personal and can be difficult to answer. If you don't want to give an answer to any of these statements, just [IF CAWI: select / IF CATI: say] "prefer not to say".

ASK ALL

E1 Here are some statements about feelings and thoughts. Please select the answer that best describes your experience at the end of the programme:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE PER ITERATION.

	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time	DO NOT READ OUT : Don't Know	DO NOT READ OUT Prefer not to say
_1 I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
_2 I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
_4 I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
_6 I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ASK ALL

E2 How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area / neighbourhood?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Not at all strongly	1	
Not very strongly	2	
Fairly strongly	3	
Very strongly	4	

ASK ALL

E3 Do you think your participation in VIY has increased any of the following?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

	YES	NO	DON'T KN OW
Your overall feeling of physical health	1	2	3
Your overall feeling of happiness or wellbeing	1	2	3
Your use of the facility / club where you volunteered	1	2	3
Your connection to the facility where you volunteered	1	2	3
Participation in sports or other fitness activities (either at the VIY facility or elsewhere)	1	2	3
Your involvement in other community initiatives	1	2	3

F Recontact

ASK ALL

F1 Thank you for completing this survey, it is really important in helping us understand the ongoing impact of taking part in VIY projects. As part of this, would it be ok for IFF to contact you again in about three months' time to ask you a similar set of questions? DO NOT

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1	
No	2	

F5 We are also hoping to do interviews with people like you so we can understand your experience of VIY better. They would last for around 30 minutes. Would you be willing to take part in an interview if you were selected? The interview would take place in June this year at a time convenient to you. Yes	1	
No	2	

IF HAPPY TO TAKE PART IN FUTURE (F1 OR F5 = 1)

F2 Is this still the correct email address to reach you on?

[INSERT EMAIL FROM SAMPLE]
NO (PLEASE TYPE IN THE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS)

IF HAPPY TO TAKE PART IN FUTURE (F1 OR F5 = 1)

F3 What is the best number to contact you on, should we need to with regards to this survey?

[INSERT TEL FROM SAMPLE]
NO (PLEASE TYPE IN THE NEW TEL NUMBER)

F4 And finally, would you like to enter the prize draw to win an iPad Mini?

Yes	1	
No	2	

Appendix 3 : Volunteer it Yourself Wave 1 and 2 Participant Qualitative Topic Guide

A Interview purpose and principles

- A1** This guide is for use with **c. 30 participants** who have taken part in the VIY programme since October 2022. These individuals will have completed their end of programme survey, so we have an idea of what they are doing 3 months after starting their VIY programme. We are aiming to speak to individuals with a range of outcomes, to explore their experience of the programme, what they got out of it, and the extent to which it influenced / made a difference to what they are doing now. We should be able to create a participant 'journey map' for each individual, with a roughly accurate timeline of their involvement and support received.
- A2** These individuals would have agreed to a follow-up interview in the survey, and will be given £30 (Paypal, Amazon e-voucher or physical Love2Shop) as a thank you.
- A3** Interviewing and recruitment will be somewhat rolling to make sure we explore the experience of people who took part in early and later YFF-funded VIY projects (interviewing July – October 2022).
- A4** This guide is intended to be used with a mix of VIY participants with varying characteristics and backgrounds. As such, it does not contain pre-set questions, but rather lists the key themes and sub-themes to be explored with participants. Words or short phrases are instead used to indicate the study issues and allows the researcher to determine the formulation of questions and how to follow up. This encourages the researcher to be responsive to the situation and most crucially to the terms, concepts, language and behaviours used by the participants.
- A5** This guide does not include follow-up questions like 'why', 'when', 'how', etc. as participants' contributions will be fully explored in response to what they tell us throughout to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between interviews but the key areas for discussion are the same.
- A6** Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand participants' situations as they view them. Interviewers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics.
- A7** **The interviewer will need to review the participant's survey response before the interview, as their responses will determine which questions are asked and some questions require you to follow-up/probe on their survey response. Text subs from the survey are in blue text.**

B Researcher introduction (c. 5 mins)

B1 Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today.

First, I am going to go through some key information about the conversation today (who we are, why we want to speak with you etc.) and give you a chance to ask us any questions. You can also decide you don't want to talk to us, if you don't want to.

B2 **Introduction:** I work for IFF Research, an independent research agency. This means that we find out and look for new information about a range of topics to help organisations make better decisions. We have been asked to do this current research on the VIY programme by the Youth Futures Foundation, an organisation focused on understanding programmes and support which helps young people overcome barriers in the labour market. They want to understand how young people have experienced VIY, the support they received through it, and what they have done since taking part. You've already kindly taken part in a few surveys as part of our research.

B3 **About the evaluation and purpose of the interview:** We are speaking to you now to explore your survey responses and experience of VIY in more depth. We are particularly keen to understand your journey through the programme, and what you have been doing since. The answers you provide will help us, YFF and VIY understand what young people value in support like this, and potentially improve this and other, similar types of programmes for people like yourself in the future. It is up to you how long this conversation will take and if you want to stop or take a break at any time, just let me know. For most participants, the conversation will last 45 minutes, but that depends on what you have to say.

B4 **It is up to you whether to take part:** This discussion is voluntary, so it is up to you if you want to take part. If you change your mind at any point during today's conversation, you can stop talking to me and we will not include anything you have told me in the research. You can also change your mind about taking part in the research after today's conversation by emailing us at viyevaluation@iffresearch.com. We will then delete your information from the research. Your decision about whether or not to take part in the research will not affect any support you receive from VIY now or in the future.

B5 **Reassurances:** There are no right or wrong answers - we are simply asking your thoughts. You may not know or have a view on something – just let me know and we can move on. We will not ask you to tell us anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. Please let me know if you'd like a break at any time.

B6 **What happens to what we discuss:** After all the discussions have been completed, the research team at IFF will write up the findings into a report. The report may include examples of participant's experiences and any benefits taking part in the VIY has had. The report will not include any information that could identify you or anyone else, such as names or personal details. We will not share any information directly with anyone else.

B7 **Reassurances:** IFF Research is an independent market research company, operating under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. All of the information you give us will be stored in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). GDPR is a set of rules governing the privacy and security of personal data. It is designed to give people greater power over their data and how it is used, and means you have the right to see data we hold about you or have it deleted. If you want to find out more, you can go to our website at www.iffresearch.com/gdpr.

B8 **Do you have any questions for me about anything I have just said?**

B9 **Are you happy to still have a conversation with me today?**

B10 Request to audio recording: We would like to record the conversation today so that we can accurately capture your views, and so researchers can listen back when analysing the data. The recording is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings. It is up to you whether or not we record the conversation today.

B11 Are you happy for the conversation to be recorded today? It is up to you.

B12 Start recording if agreed: acknowledge consent for being recorded.

C Participant introduction and background (c. 5 mins)

Ask all

C1 Interview to ask some warm-up questions to put respondent at ease. Examples:

- How is your week going?
- What kinds of things do you like doing in your spare time?

C2 Thinking back to before you took part in VIY (in MONTH YEAR), what were you up to?

IF NEEDED, PROMPT WITH A2 RESPONSE FROM SURVEY.

- If studying, explore subject, how they felt about school / college / university
- If working, explore job role, whether they liked it / what they did or didn't like about it
- Did you have an idea of what you wanted to do next?
- How were you feeling at this time?

D Introduction to VIY (c. 5 mins)

I'd now like to talk to you about how you found out about Volunteer it Yourself and what you initially understood the programme to be.

Ask all

D1 Interviewer to use response from baseline survey question to understand more about how they first heard about the opportunity to take part in a VIY project.

- From whom?
- Roughly when?
- What were told about the programme?

Ask all

D2 Thoughts about VIY when first heard about it

- What information were they given and by whom?
- What appealed to you?
- What did you think it would involve?
- How relevant did you think it was to you?
- What (if any) worries or concerns did you have?
- What (if any) other information would have been useful?
- What was your main reason for taking part? What were you looking to get out of it?

E Experience of VIY (c. 15 minutes)

I'd now like to move on to talk about your experience of ViY. We're interested in your whole experience, not just the construction project that you worked on.

Ask all

E1 Interviewer explore what happened after they first heard about ViY, to arriving on site on their first day of their project

- What happened after they first heard about VIY?
- How did they then 'sign-up'? Did someone do this on their behalf?
- Roughly how long was it between first hearing about VIY and taking part in the project?
- Whether they had any contact with VIY staff prior to turning up on site
- IF HAD WELCOME CALL:
 - When this happened
 - What this conversation covered – probe for as much detail as they can remember
 - Experience of the call

Ask all

E2 Interviewer explore their project experience

Note: If YP took part in multiple projects, explore each in chronological order

- How they were feeling ahead of their first day
- Where their project was (i.e. what kind of venue they were working on)
- How long they worked on their project for (try to get timeline, e.g. *if they worked a few days a week for 3 weeks, one week but only for 4 days etc.*)
- What kinds of tasks they were doing, ask for a "usual day / week" walk through
- Overall, how they found their project
- IF NOT SATISFIED: What could have been different for them to be more satisfied
- What they enjoyed / didn't enjoy about their project work

Ask all

E3 Interviewer to check responses from survey about elements of programme experienced.

Support from VIY for what they wanted to do next

Visit from someone involved in the construction industry

Introduction to potential employers

Work readiness training (outside of project work)

Construction training or learning 'on the job'

Working towards or completing a construction qualification such as City & Guilds

Work visits or 'taster' sessions

FOR EACH ELEMENT EXPERIENCED EXPLORE:

- When in the programme this happened
- Who delivered the element (e.g. VIY / employer)
- How many times
- What it involved
- Their experience of it – how valuable / useful it felt and why
- PROBE for specifics relating to outcomes (skills, confidence, teamwork, clearer idea about next steps, improved chance of getting a job or apprenticeship/ traineeship)

IF RECEIVED PROGRESSIONS SUPPORT:

- How many conversations they had about next steps / when
- What was the support about/ what type of support was it
- What changed / happened as a result of receiving this support – what did they do as a result?
- Are they still receiving this support
- How useful has this been to them? Probe for specific examples if possible

IF EXPOSED TO EMPLOYER (VISIT, INTRODUCTION, TASTER SESSION)

- Whether they had any further contact with the employer, if so what sort of contact, how useful it has been and why

F Outcomes and future plans (c. 10 minutes)

Ask all

F1 Thinking about your experiences taking part in VIY, what if any difference do you think this has made to you?

PROMPT if needed: Has it led to any changes for you, do you think?

- Positive?
- Negative?

Note to interviewer: please allow spontaneous responses first and then probe.

- Employability
- Enhanced career prospects
- Employment opportunities
- Created connections with potential future employers
- Changes in how they feel day to day
- Changes to social connections / relationships / friendships
- IF RELEVANT: Changes in how they feel about school / college / education setting

Ask all

F2 In the survey, you said that you are currently SURVEY RESPONSE. Could you tell me more about this?

- How did this come about?
- Are you enjoying this?
- Has involvement in VIY influenced this at all? If so, in what way?

Ask all

F3 In the survey, you said that in the future / next you want to SURVEY RESPONSE. Could you tell me more about this?

- Why do you want to do this?
- Has involvement in VIY influenced this at all
- Do they think taking part in VIY will make this more likely to happen? Why/ why not?
- How are you feeling about your future? Is this more or less positive than you felt about your future before taking part in VIY?

CHECK IF THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT THEIR FUTURE THEY HAVEN'T MENTIONED THEY WANT TO MENTION

G Final comments and wrap-up (c. 5 mins)

I just have a few final questions I want to ask you before we finish.

Ask all

- G1 Are you still in contact with VIY staff?**
- G2 What was your favourite thing about VIY?**
- G3 What was your least favourite thing?**

- G4 Was ViY what you expected? Did you get what you wanted to out of taking part? Why/ why not?**
- G5 Would you recommend it to other young people like you? Why/ why not?**
- G6 If you were in charge, what if any change(s) would you make to the VIY programme to make it better?**
- G7 Anything else to add**

Thanks, and reminder of confidentiality and anonymity and that they can get in touch if they think of anything else that is important for the evaluation.

Appendix 3 : VIY Wave 3 Participant Qualitative Topic Guide

A Interview purpose and principles

- A1** This guide is for use with **participants** who have taken part in the VIY programme. These individuals will have completed their 13W survey, so we have an idea of what they are doing 3 months after ending their VIY project. Some young people we speak to will already have participated in a qualitative discussion as part of the project, while for others, this will be the first time they are interviewed.
- A2** These individuals all have agreed to a follow-up interview in the 13W survey, and will be given £30 (Paypal, Amazon e-voucher or physical Love2Shop) as a thank you.
- A3** This guide is intended to be used with a mix of VIY participants with varying characteristics and backgrounds. As such, it does not contain pre-set questions, but rather lists the key themes and sub-themes to be explored with participants. Words or short phrases are instead used to indicate the study issues and allows the researcher to determine the formulation of questions and how to follow up. This encourages the researcher to be responsive to the situation and most crucially to the terms, concepts, language and behaviours used by the participants.
- A4** This guide does not include follow-up questions like 'why', 'when', 'how', etc. as participants' contributions will be fully explored in response to what they tell us throughout to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between interviews but the key areas for discussion are the same.
- A5** Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand participants' situations as they view them. Interviewers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics.
- A6** **The interviewer will need to review the participant's 13W survey responses before the interview, as their responses will determine which questions are asked and some questions require you to follow-up/probe on their survey response. Text subs from the survey are in blue text. The interviewer will also need to check if the participant has already taken part in a qualitative interview for this project, in order not to ask the same questions, and to take note of previous answers.**

B Researcher introduction (c. 5 mins)

B1 Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today.

First, I am going to go through some key information about the conversation today (who we are, why we want to speak with you etc.) and give you a chance to ask us any questions. You can also decide you don't want to talk to us, if you don't want to.

B2 **Introduction:** I work for IFF Research, an independent research agency. This means that we find out and look for new information about a range of topics to help organisations make better decisions. We have been asked to do this current research on the VIY programme by the Youth Futures Foundation, an organisation focused on understanding programmes and support which helps young people overcome barriers in the labour market. They want to understand how young people have experienced VIY, the support they received through it, and what they have done since taking part. You've already kindly taken part in a few surveys as part of our research.

B3 **About the evaluation and purpose of the interview:** We are speaking to you now to explore your survey responses and experience of VIY in more depth. We are particularly keen to understand your journey through the programme, and what you have been doing since. The answers you provide will help us, YFF and VIY understand what young people value in support like this, and potentially improve this and other, similar types of programmes for people like yourself in the future. It is up to you how long this conversation will take and if you want to stop or take a break at any time, just let me know. For most participants, the conversation will last 30-45 minutes, but that depends on what you have to say.

B4 **It is up to you whether to take part:** This discussion is voluntary, so it is up to you if you want to take part. If you change your mind at any point during today's conversation, you can stop talking to me and we will not include anything you have told me in the research. You can also change your mind about taking part in the research after today's conversation by emailing us at viyevaluation@iffresearch.com. We will then delete your information from the research. Your decision about whether or not to take part in the research will not affect any support you receive from VIY now or in the future.

B5 **Reassurances:** There are no right or wrong answers - we are simply asking your thoughts. You may not know or have a view on something – just let me know and we can move on. We will not ask you to tell us anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. Please let me know if you'd like a break at any time.

B6 **What happens to what we discuss:** After all the discussions have been completed, the research team at IFF will write up the findings into a report. The report may include examples of participant's experiences and any benefits taking part in the VIY has had. The report will not include any information that could identify you or anyone else, such as names or personal details. We will not share any information directly with anyone else.

B7 **Reassurances:** IFF Research is an independent market research company, operating under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. All of the information you give us will be stored in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). GDPR is a set of rules governing the privacy and security of personal data. It is designed to give people greater power over their data and how it is used, and means you have the right to see data we hold about you or have it deleted. If you want to find out more, you can go to our website at www.iffresearch.com/gdpr.

B8 **Do you have any questions for me about anything I have just said?**

B9 **Are you happy to still have a conversation with me today?**

B10 Request to audio recording: We would like to record the conversation today so that we can accurately capture your views, and so researchers can listen back when analysing the data. The recording is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings. It is up to you whether or not we record the conversation today.

B11 Are you happy for the conversation to be recorded today? It is up to you.

B12 Start recording if agreed: acknowledge consent for being recorded.

C Participant introduction and background (c. 5 mins)

Ask all

C1 Interview to ask some warm-up questions to put respondent at ease. Examples:

- How is your week going?

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet

C2 Thinking back to before you took part in VIY (in MONTH YEAR), what were you up to?

IF NEEDED, PROMPT WITH A2 RESPONSE FROM SURVEY.

- If studying, explore subject, how they felt about school / college / university
- If working, explore job role, whether they liked it / what they did or didn't like about it
- Did you have an idea of what you wanted to do next?
- How were you feeling at this time?

D Introduction to VIY (c. 5 mins)

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet

I'd now like to talk to you about how you found out about Volunteer it Yourself and what you initially understood the programme to be.

D1 Interviewer to use response from baseline survey question to understand more about how they first heard about the opportunity to take part in a VIY project.

- From whom?
- Roughly when?
- What were told about the programme?

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet

D2 Thoughts about VIY when first heard about it

- What information were they given and by whom?

- What appealed to you?
- What did you think it would involve?
- How relevant did you think it was to you?
- What (if any) worries or concerns did you have?
- What (if any) other information would have been useful?
- What was your main reason for taking part? What were you looking to get out of it?

E Experience of VIY (c. 15 minutes)

Ask those who have already been interviewed

Interviewer to note any relevant points from previous interview

E1 When we last spoke, you told me you received [LOOK AT RESPONSES TO QUESTION ABOUT elements of programme experienced FROM PREVIOUS QUAL INTERVIEW]. Does this cover everything you experienced as part of the VIY programme?

E2 Have you had any FURTHER contact with VIY since?

Note to interviewer: probe/ check if this was definitely ViY or some other organisation.

IF RECEIVED FURTHER PROGRESSIONS SUPPORT:

- What type of further progression support this was (could be related to employment, education, training)
- What prompted this further support – was this requested by the young person or prompted by VIY?
- How many conversations they had about next steps / when / with whom?
- What was the support about/ what type of support was it
- What changed / happened as a result of receiving this support – what did they do as a result?
- Are they still receiving this support / How long did it last?
- How useful has this been to them? Probe for specific examples if possible
- What if anything could be improved?

IF EXPOSED TO EMPLOYER (VISIT, INTRODUCTION, TASTER SESSION)

- What could make this experience better
- Whether they had any further contact with the employer, if so what sort of contact, how useful it has been and why

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet

I'd now like to move on to talk about your experience of ViY. If you did more things other than your time on site, we're interested in your whole experience, not just the construction project that you worked on.

E3 Interviewer explore what happened after they first heard about ViY, to arriving on site on their first day of their project

- What happened after they first heard about ViY?
- How did they then 'sign-up'? Did someone do this on their behalf?
- Roughly how long was it between first hearing about ViY and taking part in the project?
- Whether they had any contact with ViY staff prior to turning up on site

IF HAD WELCOME CALL:

- When this happened
- What this conversation covered – probe for as much detail as they can remember
- Experience of the call

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet

E4 Interviewer explore their project experience

Note: If YP took part in multiple projects, explore each in chronological order

- How they were feeling ahead of their first day
- Where their project was (i.e. what kind of venue they were working on)
- How long they worked on their project for (try to get timeline, e.g. if they worked a few days a week for 3 weeks, one week but only for 4 days etc.)
- What kinds of tasks they were doing, ask for a "usual day / week" walk through
- Overall, how they found their project
- IF NOT SATISFIED: What could have been different for them to be more satisfied
- What they enjoyed / didn't enjoy about their project work

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet

E5 Interviewer to check responses from EOP survey about elements of programme experienced. Please note not every respondent will have completed this. IF NO survey answers, just ask.

Support from ViY for what they wanted to do next

Visit from someone involved in the construction industry

Introduction to potential employers

Work readiness training (outside of project work)

Construction training or learning 'on the job'

Working towards or completing a construction qualification such as City & Guilds

Work visits or 'taster' sessions

FOR EACH ELEMENT EXPERIENCED EXPLORE:

- When in the programme this happened
- Who delivered the element (e.g. ViY / employer)
- How many times
- What it involved
- Their experience of it – how valuable / useful it felt and why
- What if anything could be improved?
- PROBE for specifics relating to outcomes (skills, confidence, teamwork, clearer idea about next steps, improved chance of getting a job or apprenticeship/ traineeship)

IF RECEIVED PROGRESSIONS SUPPORT: [CONFIRM THIS WITH R]

- What type of further progression support this was (could be related to employment, education, training)
- What prompted this further support – was this requested by the young person or prompted by ViY?
- How many conversations they had about next steps / when / with whom?
- What was the support about/ what type of support was it
- What changed / happened as a result of receiving this support – what did they do as a result?
- Are they still receiving this support / How long did it last?
- How useful has this been to them? Probe for specific examples if possible
- What could be improved

IF EXPOSED TO EMPLOYER (VISIT, INTRODUCTION, TASTER SESSION)

- What could make this experience better
- Whether they had any further contact with the employer, if so what sort of contact, how useful it has been and why

F Outcomes and future plans (c. 10 minutes)

Ask those who have already been interviewed

Interviewer to note any relevant points from previous interview

F1 Last time we spoke, you told me you were [insert what they were doing at the time, working/studying/etc]. Is this still the case or has anything changed in your situation since?

F2 Last time we spoke you told me that you thought VIY [had any impact on your current situation]. Would you say your opinion has changed or do you still think that?

- Why is that?
- Has being part of the VIY programme impacted you in any other way since the last interview?

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet

F3 Thinking about your experiences taking part in VIY, what if any difference do you think this has made to you?

PROMPT if needed: Has it led to any changes for you, do you think?

- Positive?
- Negative?

Note to interviewer: please allow spontaneous responses first and then probe.

- Employability
- Enhanced career prospects
- Employment opportunities
- Created connections with potential future employers
- Increased skills (probe for what)
- Changes in how they feel day to day
- Changes to social connections / relationships / friendships
- Changes in attitude towards the construction industry?
- More receptive to pursue training or employment opportunities in this area?
- IF RELEVANT: Changes in how they feel about school / college / education setting

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet and who are NOT in education

F4 In the survey, you said that you are currently SURVEY RESPONSE. Could you tell me more about this?

[IF UNEMPLOYED/ NOT WORKING AND NOT IN EDUCATION]

- Are you looking for a job or apprenticeship?
- Why/Why not?
- How much if at all would you say this was influenced by your VIY experience?
- How?
- IF LOOKING FOR JOB/APPRENTICESHIP What sort of jobs/ apprenticeships are you looking for?
- IF LOOKING FOR JOB/APPRENTICESHIP What if any support are you getting to help you look for a job/ apprenticeship?

[IF LEFT FT EDUCATION AND NOW IN WORK OR TRAINING]

- How did this come about?

- Are you enjoying this?
- Has involvement in VIY influenced this at all? If so, in what way?

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet

F5 In the survey, you said that in the future / next you want to **SURVEY RESPONSE C1 IN 13W SURVEY**. Could you tell me more about this?

IF MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE What would you most like to do out of all of these things?

- Why do you want to do this?
- Has involvement in VIY influenced this at all
- Do they think taking part in VIY will make this more likely to happen? Why/ why not?
- How are you feeling about your future? Is this more or less positive than you felt about your future before taking part in VIY?

Ask all

F6 Have you received any support from other organisations since you finished the VIY programme?

IF RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

- Name and brief overview of organisation and type of support received
- Whether they think this has had any impact on their current situation
- Was this more helpful in driving [whatever change happened]?

CHECK IF THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT THEIR FUTURE THEY HAVEN'T MENTIONED THEY WANT TO MENTION

G Final comments and wrap-up (c. 5 mins)

I just have a few final questions I want to ask you before we finish.

Ask all

G1 Are you still in contact with VIY staff?

G2 Has your opinion of VIY changed at all since the last time we spoke?

IF YES. ASK QUESTIONS BELOW

Ask those who have not been interviewed yet

G3 What was your favourite thing about VIY?

G4 What was your least favourite thing?

G5 Was ViY what you expected? Did you get what you wanted to out of taking part? Why/ why not?

G6 If you were in charge, what if any change(s) would you make to the VIY programme to make it better?

Ask all

G7 Anything else to add

Thanks, and reminder of confidentiality and anonymity and that they can get in touch if they think of anything else that is important for the evaluation.

Appendix 4: Volunteer It Yourself Wave 1 Central Staff Topic Guide

A Interview purpose and principles

- A1 A1 This guide is for use with 1-2-1 depths / paired interviews taking place with staff supporting the YFF funded VIY programmes, in Wave 1 of the evaluation in January 2022.
- A2 This guide is intended to be used with a range of roles, so look for the routing/section headers which will note which audience the questions are for.
- A3 The guide does not include follow-up questions like ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘how’, etc. as participants’ contributions will be fully explored in response to what they tell us throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between groups but the key areas for discussion are the same.
- A4 Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand staff situations as they view them. Researchers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics.
- A5 For any specialist terms used, please prompt for definitions.

B Researcher introduction (c.5 mins)

- B1 **Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and IFF Research – independent research agency
- B2 **About the client:** YFF, funding the Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) Evaluation and delivery.
- B3 **About the research and purpose of the interview:** Purpose is to understand during the early stages of delivery, and will explore views of setting up the programme and of delivering support, as well as expectations of the programme and perceived risks.
- B4 **Anonymity and confidentiality:** Please be assured that anything you say during the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence and results will be anonymised in any reporting so that they cannot be linked back to you.
- B5 **How their information will be used:** IFF Research operates under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society’s Code of Conduct. Only the core members of the research team will have access to any of your details. We will not pass any of your personal details on to the client or any other companies and all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.
- B6 **Right to data:** You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to iffresearch.com/gdpr. The privacy notice is available on our website at <https://www.iffresearch.com/VIY-Privacy/>. We can also email these links to you if you’d like.
- B7 **If multiple individuals involved in the discussion:** Ask individuals to respect each other’s confidence and not to share outside this discussion, what individuals contributed within it.
- B8 **Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people’s views and opinions; you may not know or have a view on something – just let me know and we can move on; comfort – let me know if you’d like

a break at any time. This guide has been developed to be suitable for a range of VIY colleagues; some questions may not be relevant to your role or you may feel someone else is better suited to talk about a certain topic area – just say if this is the case and we can move on.

B9 Duration: 60 minutes

B10 Reminder about audio recording: the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back when analysing the data. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings.⁹

B11 Confirm happy to proceed on this basis of recording.

B12 Any questions/concerns?

B13 Start recording: acknowledge consent for being recorded

C Participant introduction and understanding of aims (c.5 mins)

ASK ALL

C1 What is your job role for Volunteer It Yourself?

- Day-to-day responsibilities (high-level for now)
- Length of time involved on VIY projects

ASK ALL

C2 How did you first get involved with VIY?

- How long ago did you first get involved?
- Where did they hear about it?
- What prompted them/got them interested?

ASK ALL

C3 What do you think YFF-funded Volunteer It Yourself projects are trying to achieve?

- How, if at all, were YFF funded projects meant to differ from other projects VIY in what they are trying to achieve?
- What are the key problems/issues they are seeking to address?
- What does success look like?

D Setting up the YFF funded programme (10 mins)

The next few questions explore what VIY have done since being awarded the YFF funding, what changes have been implemented and how this process has been from your perspective.

D1 How involved were you in the original application and assessment process for YFF funding?

⁹ If using Zoom, remember to use a business account and save the recording to the cloud.

- IF INVOLVED: Could you briefly talk me through this process and any feedback / conversations you had with YFF during this time?

D2 How involved have you been in setting up the VIY programme to incorporate YFF funding?

- What has your role in this setup been?

D3 What was your understanding of what was going to be changed / adapted / added, following YFF funding?

- How, if at all, were YFF funded projects meant to differ from other projects VIY in their delivery?

IF INVOLVED IN SETUP

D4 Please could you talk me through the steps VIY have taken to implement these changes? INTERVIEWER NOTE: If respondent only involved in a specific element, get them to focus on this element

PROBE FULLY FOR EACH CHANGE – we want to understand all the changes that have been implemented and how this process has been:

- What was the intended outcome for this change? Why was it implemented?
- How easy has this change been to implement?
- What have the main challenges been? Have you been able to overcome these? How?
- What are your reflections on this change, to date? Has it been successful? Are there still ways it could be improved?

D5 Are there any areas in the intended changes that are still outstanding?

- Why?
- When do you think this will happen?

E Recruitment and onboarding (15 minutes)

Now I'd like to move on to the recruitment and onboarding process for young people onto YFF-funded programmes.

E1 Please could you give me an overview of the current process for recruiting a young person. For now, I would like you to focus on the initial recruitment and then all stages prior to them starting project work. If you aren't involved in this stage, just say.

PROBE FOR:

The referral process:

- What roughly what proportion is referrals, and what proportion is from direct marketing?
- What is their approach to direct marketing
- How they source referral partners – who approaches who; how are partners identified
- How they work with referral partners
- How referrals communicated to VIY
- What data is given to VIY
- Timescales in the lead-up to a project starting

- Whether this process has changed at all follow-ing YFF funding. IF SO: Why and what the outcome of this change has been, reflections on this change to date
- E2** What the criteria/characteristics for a young person selected for a YFF-funded project is, if/how this differs from non-YFF funded projects, why
- To what extent they feel this criteria is being met. IF NOT: Why they think this is the case, what they are doing to address this
 - Contact VIY have with the young person prior to starting
 - What communications occur between the young person and VIY prior to them starting a project
 - Which staff engage with young people prior to a project start
 - Purpose of each communication
 - Whether this differs for different young people
 - Information collected on a young person before a project start
 - How VIY explore potential support needs
 - Information provided to a young person before a project start
- E3** Are there any elements of this process which are new / have changed, i.e. since YFF funding, that we haven't already discussed?
- Why was this introduced / changed
 - Intended outcome of this change
 - Experiences of this change to date
- E4** How is recruitment going in regards to volumes into YFF-funded projects?
- E5** Have you had any challenges in reaching your target volumes? What do you think is driving this? How is this being addressed?

F Programme and support (20 minutes)

Now I'd like to understand a participants journey throught the programme, from their first day on a project through to the end of their 3 months of core support.

- F1** Starting with the project work itself. Please could you talk me through what YFF-funded projects look like for a young person? I appreciate the specific of projects can differ quite a lot, so do bring in the range of activities that can happen.
- The first day / induction
 - Day-to-day responsibilities
 - If/how YFF-funded projects differ from other projects, how they are selected if so
 - How long projects run for
 - How many young people participant in multiple projects in their time on the programme
 - Intended outcomes for young people specifically from project work, evidence to date of these outcomes being achieved
- F2** Now moving onto support beyond the specific project work. What support and opportunities are available to young people while they are on the programme?

ALLOW FOR ALL SPONTANEOUS RESPONSES, THEN ENSURE THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN COVERED:

- Level 3 Accreditation
- Introduction to potential employers
- Work readiness training and support
- Support from progressions manager

FOR EACH ELEMENT MENTIONED:

- What does this look like?
- When does this happen? How frequently?
- Who is involved (from VIY, external) in the delivery of this?
- Intended outcomes of this activity, evidence to date of this activity leading to these outcomes
- Does everyone have access to this? Who does / doesn't? Why?
- Whether this has always been available, or introduced / increased following YFF funding
- Impact of this change to date, if applicable
- What is working well with this element so far?
- Have you faced any challenges in delivering this element? How are these being addressed?

F3 Thinking about potential employers for young people, how are you sourcing these?

- How you have built relationships with employers in the past? Are you using these same routes?
- Is it always the same pool of employers?
- What challenges do you experience building relationships with potential employers?
- What kinds of potential employers do you work with? Size etc.
- What kinds of opportunities are available to young people through these routes? E.g. work placements, structured training employment (i.e. apprenticeship, traineeship), permanent jobs?
- How / to what extent do you try and access networks or groups to ensure the pool of employers are accessible for young people and/or there is potential for employment with?

F4 What levels of drop-out are you seeing in the programme?

- What points do young people tend to drop out?
- Do you have a sense of what is driving these drop outs?
- What do you do to try and prevent drop-out?

G Outcomes (10 minutes)

We have discussed outcomes linked to specific activities already, but now thinking about outcomes more broadly...

G1 What education, employment and training outcomes are you aiming for as a result of the YFF-funded VIY programme?

- What different routes do young people tend to want to pursue?
- How are they supported by the programme to pursue these routes?

- What elements of delivery do you think are particularly effective in this regard?

G2 What EET outcomes have you observed from YFF-funded projects to date?

- Are there any factors that you feel were present where these outcomes have been achieved? E.g., project characteristics, elements of additional support, characteristics of young people?

G3 What risks are there to a young person achieving an EET outcome?

- Are there any factors that you feel were present where these outcomes are at greater risk of being achieved? E.g., project characteristics, elements of additional support, characteristics of young people?

G4 What skills outcomes do you hope to see as a result of the YFF-funded VIY programme?

- How are they supported by the programme to gain these skills?
- What elements of delivery do you think are particularly effective in this regard?
- What evidence is there of these skills being obtained?

G5 What other outcomes do you hope to see as a result of the YFF-funded VIY programme?

- How are they supported by the programme to achieve these outcomes?
- What elements of delivery do you think are particularly effective in this regard?

G6 How comprehensive do you feel your MI data is currently in monitoring outcomes?

- Do you have all the information you want / need to track progress and identify potential issues?
- What actions are taken if someone is going “off-track”, i.e. in achieving the qualification, low attendance, etc.? How do you identify individuals with these risks?

H Reflections and perceived risks (5 minutes)

Finally, I'd like to explore final reflections of the VIY programme since being awarded YFF funding.

H1 Firstly, how do you feel development of the programme has gone to date? What have your main successes been? What have your main challenges been?

H2 What do you think is working particularly well in programme delivery at the moment?

H3 What do you think is working less well / what could improve? What steps are you taking to address this?

H4 What do you think are the main risks to the programme currently? What is the potential impact of this? What can be done to mitigate this?

I Wrap up (5 mins)

I1 If you could change something about VIY delivery, what would it be?

- What would be needed to achieve this?

I2 Do you have any other reflection you'd like to share?

Appendix 5: Volunteer It Yourself Wave 1 Mentor Topic Guide

A Interview purpose and principles

- A1** This guide is for use with 2x mini groups taking place with VIY lead and volunteer mentors on the YFF funded VIY programme, in Wave 1 of the evaluation in January 2022.
- A2** This guide is intended to be used with both lead and volunteer mentors, so look for the routing/section headers which will note which audience the questions are for.
- A3** The guide does not include follow-up questions like ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘how’, etc. as participants’ contributions will be fully explored in response to what they tell us throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between groups but the key areas for discussion are the same.
- A4** Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand mentors’ situations as they view them. Researchers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics.
- A5** For any specialist terms used, please prompt for definitions.

B Researcher introduction (c.3 mins)

- B1 Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and IFF Research – independent research agency
- B2 About the client:** YFF, funding the Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) Evaluation and delivery.
- B3 About the research and purpose of the interview:** Purpose is to understand during the early stages of delivery, and will explore views of setting up the programme and of delivering support, as well as expectations of the programme and perceived risks.
- B4 Anonymity and confidentiality:** Please be assured that anything you say during the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence and results will be anonymised in any reporting so that they cannot be linked back to you.
- B5 How their information will be used:** IFF Research operates under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society’s Code of Conduct. Only the core members of the research team will have access to any of your details. We will not pass any of your personal details on to the client or any other companies and all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.
- B6 Right to data:** You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to iffresearch.com/gdpr. We can also share with you our privacy note and data sharing agreement if you would like. We can also email this to you if you’d like.
- B7 If multiple individuals involved in the discussion:** Ask individuals to respect each other’s confidence and not to share outside this discussion, what individuals contributed within it.
- B8 Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people’s views and opinions; you may not know or have a view on something – just let me know and we can move on; comfort – let me know if you’d like a break at any time.

B9 Duration: 60 minutes

B10 Reminder about audio recording: the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back when analysing the data. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings.¹⁰

B11 Confirm happy to proceed on this basis of recording.

B12 Any questions/concerns?

B13 Start recording: acknowledge consent for being recorded

C Participant introduction and understanding of aims (c.5 mins)

ASK ALL

C1 What is your involvement as a mentor in Volunteer It Yourself?

- Role in VIY project (lead mentor/volunteer mentor)
- Length of time involved on VIY projects

ASK VOLUNTEERS

C2 How did you first get involved with VIY?

- How long ago did you first get involved?
- Where did they hear about it?
- What prompted them/got them interested?

ASK ALL

C3 What do you think the Volunteer It Yourself programme is trying to achieve?

- What are the key problems/issues the programme is seeking to address?
- What does success look like?

D Setting up the project (5 mins)

ASK ALL / lead mentors if only would apply to them?

D1 At what stage in a project do you first get involved as a mentor?

- What information do you receive when a project starts?
- What initial set up work do you do?

D2 Can you talk me through how inducting a new cohort works on the first day of a programme?

- What does this involve?
- Who else is involved?
- How are the young people on the first day?

¹⁰ If using Zoom, remember to use a business account and save the recording to the cloud.

- How do you feel on the first day?

D3 As a mentor, how do you prepare the young people for starting the project?

E Delivering the project (25 mins)

ASK ALL

E1 Can you tell me a bit about the project(s) you have worked on in the last 2-3 months?

- What does that mean for you day to day?

ASK ALL

E2 Can you tell me a bit about the young people on the programme?

- Why do you think they might have been recruited for a VIY project?
- How engaged are they in the project?
- What sort of tasks do they carry out on a typical day?

ASK ALL

E3 What sort of support do the young people on the programme need to complete the projects?

- Learning the hard skills/construction tasks?
- Softer skills – e.g. teamwork?

ASK ALL

E4 If you were to induct a new mentor / volunteer mentor onto the VIY programme, what would you tell them was the main thing they could do to support young people on the programme?

- Anything you find difficult to deal with?
- Anything the young people find particularly difficult? Why is this?
- How does the programme seek to address those needs?

E5 Moving on now to speak talk about the qualification and training element of the programme that the young people go through. What has your involvement been in delivering this part of VIY?

E6 What does the qualification and training element of your project look like? What's involved for the young person?

- Is the qualification at a appropriate level for the young people? Why / why not?
- How engaged are the young people in this element?
- Are they motivated to complete the qualification?

E7 What do you think about the inclusion of the qualification and training element to the programme?

10. Is it important? Why / why not?

ASK ALL

E8 Thinking broadly now about your current project, what is working really well?

- Engagement/attendance?
- Young peoples interest in the projects?
- Delivering the skills elements
- Delivering the qualification elements

ASK ALL

E9 Are there any parts of the project that young people particularly enjoy?

- What is it about this element that the young people like?
- How could this be replicated in other VIY projects in other sectors?

ASK ALL

E10 What isn't working very well at the moment?

- Engagement/attendance?
- Young people's interest in the projects?
- Delivering the skills elements
- Delivering the qualification elements

ASK ALL

E11 Are there any parts of the project that young people particularly dislike?

- What is it about this element that the young people dislike?
- Does it risk them becoming disengaged?
- How have you / the team worked to negate this issue?

F Skills for volunteers (5 mins)

ASK ALL volunteer mentors

F1 When you first joined VIY as a volunteer, had you done any volunteering like this before?

- What did this involve?
- How was this different to VIY?

ASK ALL volunteer mentorS

F2 Do you have previous experience of acting as a mentor for young people?

- How about young NEET people?
- Tell me about this (e.g. looking after apprentices etc)

ASK ALL volunteer mentorS

F3 Were you offered any training when you joined VIY as a volunteer mentor?

- What did the training you receive involve?
- Was it enough training?

- Is there anymore training you'd like? What in particular would you like training on?

ASK ALL volunteer mentors

F4 Would you recommend being a volunteer mentor?

- Why is that?
- How would you persuade someone else to get involved?

G Head mentor specific questions (5 mins)

ASK ALL HEAD MENTORS

G1 What is your experience of recruiting volunteer mentors to join the VIY programme?

- What is your method for recruiting and creating interest around volunteer mentor roles? Any particular networks (professional/personal?)
- Are there any difficulties you've faced recruiting volunteers?
- How have you got around this?

G2 How have you found training volunteer mentors on the VIY programme?

- What are their typical training needs?
- What area is the largest training gap across volunteers?
- Is there any more training you'd like to be able to offer?

G3 What about managing volunteer mentors throughout the project lifespan?

- What works?
- **G4** What is your experience of retaining volunteers? How long do they tend to volunteer for?
- What reasons are given for leaving?

G4 What is the safeguarding process with young people on the projects?

H Early indicators of outcomes (15 mins)

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Listen for the following throughout the section and probe on them specifically when heard:

- Improved employability
- Improved employment opportunities
- Raised aspirations
- Improved school attendance
- Interest in construction
- Increased take up of construction education and employment in the future
- Improved YP wellbeing
- Increased sense of belonging to the local area

ASK ALL

H1 What are the key outcomes that you expect the young people on the VIY programme to achieve?

- What about for the organisations where the projects are taking place?
- What about for you?
- What about for wider society?

ASK ALL

[FOR EACH POSITIVE OUTCOME MENTIONED] **How specifically do you think taking part in VIY leads to XXXX outcome for young people?**

- What makes you think this outcome will happen?
- How or why could it not happen?
- Do you have any evidence of it happening already?
- How long do you think it will take to achieve that outcome?
- How would you know the programme has 'worked'?

ASK ALL

H2 How will you know when the outcome has been achieved?

ASK ALL

H3 What have you seen in the past that has stopped a young person succeeding?

- Are there any outcomes which feel unlikely?

ASK ALL

H4 Are there any negative outcomes you can think of, for taking part of the programme for young people?

- How do these come about?
- How often does this happen?
- How is/could this be fixed?

I Wrap up (5 mins)

I1 If you could change something about VIY delivery, what would it be?

- What would be needed to achieve this?

I2 Do you have any other reflection you'd like to share?

Appendix 6: Volunteer It Yourself Wave 2 Central Staff Topic Guide

A Interview purpose and principles

- A1** This guide is for use with 1-2-1 depths / paired interviews taking place with staff supporting the YFF funded VIY programmes, in Wave 2 of the evaluation.
- A2** This guide is intended to be used with a range of roles, so look for the routing/section headers which will note which audience the questions are for.
- A3** The guide does not include follow-up questions like 'why', 'when', 'how', etc. as participants' contributions will be fully explored in response to what they tell us throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between groups but the key areas for discussion are the same.
- A4** Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand staff situations as they view them. Researchers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics.
- A5** For any specialist terms used, please prompt for definitions.

B Researcher introduction (c.5 mins)

- B1 Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and IFF Research – independent research agency
- B2 About the client:** YFF, funding the Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) Evaluation and delivery.
- B3 About the research and purpose of the interview:** Purpose is to understand their role in delivering the programme, specifically on projects funded between October 2021 and June 2022. This will include understanding how the programme has been delivered, the outcomes it has achieved and how the programme will be delivered in future as well as reflections on what has worked well and any challenges encountered.
- B4 Anonymity and confidentiality:** Please be assured that anything you say during the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence and results will be anonymised in any reporting so that they cannot be linked back to you.
- B5 How their information will be used:** IFF Research operates under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. Only the core members of the research team will have access to any of your details. We will not pass any of your personal details on to the client or any other companies and all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.
- B6 Right to data:** You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to [iffresearch.com/gdpr](https://www.iffresearch.com/gdpr). The privacy notice is available on our website at <https://www.iffresearch.com/VIY-Privacy/>. We can also email these links to you if you'd like.
- B7 If multiple individuals involved in the discussion:** Ask individuals to respect each other's confidence and not to share outside this discussion, what individuals contributed within it.

- B8 Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people's views and opinions; you may not know or have a view on something – just let me know and we can move on; comfort – let me know if you'd like a break at any time. This guide has been developed to be suitable for a range of VIY colleagues; some questions may not be relevant to your role or you may feel someone else is better suited to talk about a certain topic area – just say if this is the case and we can move on.
- B9 Duration:** 45-60 minutes
- B10 Reminder about audio recording:** the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back when analysing the data. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings.¹¹
- B11** Confirm happy to proceed on this basis of recording.
- B12** Any questions/concerns?
- B13** Start recording: acknowledge consent for being recorded

C Participant introduction and understanding of aims (c.5 mins)

ASK ALL

- C1** What is your job role for Volunteer It Yourself?
- Day-to-day responsibilities (*high-level for now*)
 - Length of time involved on VIY projects

ASK ALL

- C2** How did you first get involved with VIY?
- How long ago did you first get involved?
 - Where did they hear about it?
 - What prompted them/got them interested?

ASK ALL

- C3** What do you think YFF-funded Volunteer It Yourself projects are trying to achieve?
- How, if at all, were YFF funded projects meant to differ from other VIY projects in what they are trying to achieve?
 - What are the key problems/issues they are seeking to address?
 - What does success look like?

¹¹ If using Zoom, remember to use a business account and save the recording to the cloud.

D Recruitment and onboarding of young people (15 minutes)

I'd like to talk through the journey for a VIY project and understand how each stage has been working from your perspective. If you aren't involved in some stages, please just let me know and we can move on.

I'd like to start with recruitment on onboarding of young people to projects.

D1 Thinking about projects that were funded between October 2021 and June 2022, could you please give me an overview of the process for recruiting a young person?

PROBE FOR:

The referral process:

- Roughly what proportion were referrals, and what proportion were from direct marketing, are there any other routes?
- What was your approach to direct marketing
- How did you source referral partners – who approaches who; how are partners identified
- How did you work with referral partners
- Have there been any challenges with referral partners / processes (if so, if and how these have been overcome)
- How referrals communicated to VIY
- What data is given to VIY
- Timescales in the lead-up to a project starting
- Whether this process has changed at all from the initial plan. IF SO: Why and what the outcome of this change has been, reflections on this change to date

D2 What were the criteria/characteristics for a young person selected for a YFF-funded project, if/how this differs from non-YFF funded projects, why

- How are these criteria assessed / at what stage?
- To what extent they feel these criteria were met. IF NOT: Why they think this is the case, what they are doing to address this in future
- Contact VIY had with the young person prior to starting
- What communications occurred between the young person and VIY prior to them starting a project, when do they happen?
- Which staff engaged with young people prior to a project start
- Purpose of each communication
- Whether this differed for different young people
- Information collected on a young person before a project started
- How VIY explored potential support needs and how these were met
- Information provided to a young person before a project started

D3 Which elements of the process of recruiting a young person onto VIY (i.e. from finding young people to them starting a project) do you think have worked particularly well?

- Have there been any particular referral partnerships or direct market approaches that have been successful

- Have there been any pre-project communication approaches that have worked particularly well? Less well?
- Any elements of recruiting a young person that have been particularly challenging

D4 Are there any elements of this process which differed from the initial plan for YFF funded projects?

- Why was this introduced / changed
- Intended outcome of this change
- Experiences of this change
- How well the actions have worked
- When did these changes occur (probe for: during funding period / since June 2022?)

D5 Thinking about recruitment for projects between October 2021 and June 2022, how easy or difficult was it to meet your target volumes into YFF funded projects?

- Were targets met
- If yes, what were the key factors in being able to do this
- If no, what was driving this and what actions were taken and how well did they work

E Programme support (20 minutes)

Now I'd like to understand a participants journey throughout the programme on YFF funded projects run between October 2021 and June 2022. This will include their first day on a project through to the end of their 3 months of core support.

E1 Starting with the project work itself. Please could you talk me through what YFF-funded projects looked like for a young person taking part during this period? I appreciate the specific of projects can differ quite a lot, so I'd appreciate it if you could talk about a range of experiences.

- The first day / induction
- Day-to-day responsibilities
- If/how YFF-funded projects differed from other projects, how they are selected if so
- How long projects ran for
- How many young people participated in multiple projects in their time on the programme (October 2021 – June 2022)
- The intended outcomes for young people specifically from project work and any evidence of these outcomes being achieved

E2 Now moving onto support beyond the specific project work. What support and opportunities were available to young people while they were on the programme?

ALLOW FOR ALL SPONTANEOUS RESPONSES, THEN ENSURE THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN COVERED:

- Entry Level 3 Accreditation
- Introduction to potential employers
- Work readiness training and support
- Support from progressions manager
- Sector relevant work visits

- Mentorship

FOR EACH ELEMENT MENTIONED:

- What did this look like?
- When did this happen? How frequently? Over what period of time (just on project, beyond project time – for how long)
- Who was involved (from VIY, external) in the delivery of this?
- Intended outcomes of this activity, evidence of this activity leading to these outcomes
- Did everyone have access to this? Who did / didn't? Why?
- Whether this had always been available, or introduced / increased following YFF funding
- Impact of this change to date, if applicable
- Whether this is still available on projects since June 2022
- What worked well with this element during this period?
- Did you face any challenges in delivering this element? How were those addressed?
- What value did this activity add for YP?

E3 How well would you say the programme handled progressions support for young people taking part on YFF funded projects during this time?

- Roughly what proportion of young people received follow up support after the on-site element ended?
- Are there are groups / types of young people there were more likely to receive this than others?
- What kind of progression support did they receive?
- What were the challenges in providing this support?
- Have any changes been made to delivery of progression support since June 2022? What impact has this had?

E4 Thinking about introducing young people to potential employers during this period, how well would you say this element of support worked?

- Was this element of the programme delivered as expected?
- What kinds of potential employers did you work with? Size etc.
- Were these from existing relationships or a new pool of employers? How were new connections made?
- What challenges did you experience in building relationships with potential employers during this time?
- Are there are groups / types of young people there were more likely to be introduced to employers?
- What kinds of opportunities were available to young people through these routes? E.g. work placements, structured training employment (i.e. apprenticeship, traineeship), permanent jobs?
- Are there any success stories you can share with me?
- And any examples or where this did not work as planned?

E5 What levels of drop-out did you see in the programme over the period of October 2021 and June 2022?

- At what points did young people tend to drop out?
- Do you have a sense of what was driving these drop outs?
- What did you do to try and prevent drop-out?

F Outcomes (10 minutes)

We have discussed outcomes linked to specific activities already, but now thinking about outcomes more broadly...

- F1** What education, employment and training outcomes have you observed as a result of the YFF-funded VIY programme?
- What different routes (training, employment opportunities, subject / sector) have young people wanted to pursue?
 - How were they supported by the programme to pursue these routes?
 - What elements of delivery do you think were particularly effective in this regard?
 - Did you try anything that worked less well?
 - **KEY QUESTION:** Are there any factors that you feel were present where these outcomes have been achieved? E.g., certain programme elements, project characteristics, elements of additional support, characteristics of young people?
- F2** What skills outcomes have you observed as a result of the YFF-funded VIY programme?
- **Interviewer listen and note following skills: Meeting new people, trying new things, Working with others in a team, Putting forward my ideas, Being a leader of a team, Explaining my ideas clearly, Getting things done on time**
 - How were they supported by the programme to gain these skills?
 - What elements of delivery do you think were particularly effective in this regard?
 - What evidence is there of these skills being obtained?
- F3** What other outcomes have you observed as a result of the YFF-funded VIY programme?
- Interviewer, after spontaneous response, probe for wellbeing outcomes, raising aspirations, sense of belonging to local area, engagement with facility.*
- How were they supported by the programme to achieve these outcomes?
 - What elements of delivery do you think were particularly effective in this regard?
- F4** What risks were there to a young person achieving an EET outcome?
- Are there any factors that you feel were present where these outcomes are at greater risk of not being achieved? E.g., project characteristics, elements of additional support, characteristics of young people?
- F5** IF TIME: Can you give me any examples of specific projects that met the intended outcomes? I don't need identifying details here, just any examples of how a project supported young people to meet the outcomes.
- What was the project
 - What outcomes have been evidenced
 - What were the key drivers for success in this project
- F6** IF TIME: And were there any projects that you feel were less successful in meeting intended outcomes?
- What was the project
 - What outcomes weren't/ were met
 - What were the key barriers for success in this project

- F7** How comprehensive do you feel your MI data was in monitoring outcomes for projects run during this period?
- Do you have all the information you want / need to track progress and identify potential issues?
 - What actions are taken if someone is going “off-track”, i.e. in achieving the qualification, low attendance, etc.? How do you identify individuals with these risks?

G Reflections and future delivery (5 minutes)

- G1** Finally, I'd like to explore final reflections of the VIY programme since being awarded YFF funding and future plans for delivering the programme.
- G2** Firstly, how well do you feel delivery of the programme funded by YFF has gone? What have your main successes been? What have your main challenges been?
- G3** What do you think worked particularly well in programme delivery during this time?
- G4** What do you think worked less well / what could have been improved?
- G5** What, if any, changes have you made to programme delivery since June 2022? What impact do you hope these changes will have?
- G6** Are you planning any other changes to programme delivery? If so, what and why?
- G7** What do you think are the main risks to the programme currently? What is the potential impact of this? What can be done to mitigate this?

H Wrap up (5 mins)

- H1** If you could change something about VIY delivery, what would it be?
- What would be needed to achieve this?
- H2** Do you have any other reflection you'd like to share?

Appendix 7: Volunteer it Yourself Wave 2 Employer Topic Guide

A Interview purpose and principles

- A1** This guide is for use in the in-depth interviews taking place with VIY employers on the YFF funded VIY programme, in Wave 2 of the evaluation.
- A2** The guide does not include follow-up questions like ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘how’, etc. as participants’ contributions will be fully explored in response to what they tell us throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between groups but the key areas for discussion are the same.
- A3** Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand employers’ situations as they view them. Researchers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics.
- A4** For any specialist terms used, please prompt for definitions.

B Researcher introduction (c.3 mins)

- B1 Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and IFF Research – independent research agency
- B2 About the client:** YFF, funding the Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) Evaluation and delivery.
- B3 About the research and purpose of the interview:** Purpose is to understand experiences of employers working with the VIY programme team and young people on projects funded between October 2021 and June 2022. I’d like to understand your involvement in the programme, how well things worked from your perspective, what impact you think VIY has had on young people, and how the programme could be improved.
- B4 Anonymity and confidentiality:** Please be assured that anything you say during the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence and results will be anonymised in any reporting so that they cannot be linked back to you.
- B5 How their information will be used:** IFF Research operates under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society’s Code of Conduct. Only the core members of the research team will have access to any of your details. We will not pass any of your personal details on to the client or any other companies and all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.
- B6 Right to data:** You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to iffresearch.com/gdpr.
- B7 Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for your views and opinions; you may not know or have a view on something – just let me know and we can move on; comfort – let me know if you’d like a break at any time.
- B8 Duration:** up to 45 minutes

- B9 Reminder about audio recording:** the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back when analysing the data. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings.¹²
- B10** Confirm happy to proceed on this basis of recording.
- B11** Any questions/concerns?
- B12** Start recording: acknowledge consent for being recorded

C Participant introduction (c.3 mins)

- C1** Can you tell me a little about your organisation?
- Name, location, size
 - What does the organisation do?
 - What are its main aims?
- C2** What is your role?
- What areas do you focus on?
 - How long have you worked there?

How long have you been engaged in the VIY programme?

D How they got involved with VIY (10 mins)

- D1** How did you first hear about the VIY programme?
- Who told you about it?
 - What did they tell you about the programme?
 - When was this?
- D2** When you first heard about it, what did you think about the programme?
- What did you think it would involve?
 - What did you think the purpose of the programme was?
 - What impact did you think the programme might have on the young people taking part?
 - How did the programme align with your organisation's priorities?
- D3** What encouraged your organisation to take part in the programme as an employer organisation?
- What were the main reasons for taking part?
 - What was your understanding of what you would need to do?
 - Did you have any questions or concerns? If so, were these addressed by VIY?

¹² If using Zoom, remember to use a business account and save the recording.

E Engagement with the programme (15 mins)

E1 As part of your engagement with VIY, were you involved in...

- Taster sessions for young people to come visit your organisation?
- Talks to young people?
- Work experience for young people?
- Anything else?

E2 Can you talk me through what your involvement was like in practice?

- What did you need to do?
- How was this explained to you?
- How clear was the process?
- Would any further information / assistance have been useful?

E3 And has the process worked as expected?

- Have there been any changes to the process?
- Any changes in extent of your involvement?
- Any issues?

E4 Thinking about the young people you engaged with as part of VIY between October 2021 and June 2022...

- What activities, if any, did you do with/for VIY in this time? PROBE FOR: How many, how often
- How many young people would you say you engaged with in this time?

E5 Once you engaged with young people as part of VIY, what happened next?

- What did you do?
- Did you keep in touch with any young people?

F Perceived impacts and suggested improvements (10 mins)

Note to interviewer: the employer's ability to answer these questions will depend on their level of engagement which should have been clarified at E1/E2. So this section may be very light touch for some.

F1 What were the key outcomes that you expected the young people on the VIY programme to achieve?

- What about for wider society?

F2 And based on your experience, how well do you think the programme has helped young people meet these outcomes?

- Which have been met? How? PROBE for any differences for particular groups of young people
- Which haven't been met? Why?

F3 IF ENGAGED IN THIS PERIOD: Can you think of any young people you engaged with from October 2021 to June 2022 that have had positive outcomes from taking part?

- Can you tell me a bit about how taking part in VIY led to these outcomes?
- F4** And are there any negative outcomes you can think of, for taking part of the programme for young people?
- How do these come about?
 - How often does this happen?
 - How is/could this be fixed?
- F5** As an employer, would participation in VIY be attractive in prospective job applicants? PROBE: Why do you say that?
- Are there any skills or qualities gained through VIY you see as particularly valuable?
- F6** What outcomes, if any, has your organisation experienced from being involved in VIY?
- F7** Have you experienced any negative outcomes for taking part, or outcomes that have not been met that you expected?
- F8** Thinking about your experience of VIY as whole, how well do you think the programme is working?
How could it be improved?

G Wrap up (5 mins)

- G1** If you could change something about VIY delivery, what would it be?
- What would be needed to achieve this?
- G2** Do you have any other reflection you'd like to share?

Appendix 8: Volunteer It Yourself Wave 2 Mentor Topic Guide

A Interview purpose and principles

- A1** This guide is for use with 1x mini groups taking place with VIY lead and volunteer mentors on the YFF funded VIY programme, in Wave 2 of the evaluation in November 2022.
- A2** This guide is intended to be used with a mix of mentors.
- A3** The guide does not include follow-up questions like ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘how’, etc. as participants’ contributions will be fully explored in response to what they tell us throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between groups but the key areas for discussion are the same.
- A4** Questioning and probing will be framed to ensure we understand mentors’ situations as they view them. Researchers will adapt the approach, as much as possible, to suit the needs of each participant. The prompts provided are not exhaustive, but rather indicate the types of content we would expect to be covered – this may vary across participants with different characteristics.
- A5** For any specialist terms used, please prompt for definitions.

B Researcher introduction (c.3 mins)

- B1 Thanks & Introduction:** Introduce yourself and IFF Research – independent research agency
- B2 About the client:** YFF, funding the Volunteer It Yourself (VIY) Evaluation and delivery.
- B3 About the research and purpose of the interview:** Purpose is to understand the later stages of delivery and what it looks like now, and will explore views of setting up the programme and of delivering support, as well as outcomes of the programme and future plans.
- B4** We would have spoken to you earlier in the year about the programme and how it was being delivered. We are speaking to you again, now, to see if/how delivery of the programme has changed since then, and focus a bit more on outcomes for young people and the future of the programme.
- B5 Anonymity and confidentiality:** Please be assured that anything you say during the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence and results will be anonymised in any reporting so that they cannot be linked back to you.
- B6 How their information will be used:** IFF Research operates under the strict guidelines of the Market Research Society’s Code of Conduct. Only the core members of the research team will have access to any of your details. We will not pass any of your personal details on to the client or any other companies and all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only.
- B7 Right to data:** You have the right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. You can find out more information about your rights under the new data protection regulations by going to iffresearch.com/gdpr. We can also share with you our privacy note and data sharing agreement if you would like. We can also email this to you if you’d like.
- B8 If multiple individuals involved in the discussion:** Ask individuals to respect each other’s confidence and not to share outside this discussion, what individuals contributed within it.

- B9 Reassurances:** No right or wrong answers - we are simply asking for people's views and opinions; you may not know or have a view on something – just let me know and we can move on; comfort – let me know if you'd like a break at any time.
- B10 Duration:** 60 minutes
- B11 Reminder about audio recording:** the discussion will be recorded so that we can accurately capture their views, and so researchers can listen back when analysing the data. The recorder is encrypted and only the research team will have access to the recordings.¹³
- B12** Confirm happy to proceed on this basis of recording.
- B13** Any questions/concerns?
- B14** Start recording: acknowledge consent for being recorded

C Participant introduction and understanding of aims (c.5 mins)

ASK ALL

C1 What is your involvement as a mentor in Volunteer It Yourself?

- Role in VIY project (lead mentor/volunteer mentor)
- Length of time involved on VIY projects

C2 How did you first get involved with VIY?

- How long ago did you first get involved?
- Where did they hear about it?
- What prompted them/got them interested?

ASK ALL

C3 What do you think the Volunteer It Yourself programme is trying to achieve?

- What are the key problems/issues the programme is seeking to address?
- What does success look like?

D Setting up the project (5 mins)

ASK ALL

D1 At what stage in a project do you first get involved as a mentor?

- What information do you receive when a project starts?
- What initial set up work do you do? For example, contacting participants before they start

D2 Can you talk me through how inducting a new cohort works on the first day of a programme?

- What does this involve?

¹³ If using Zoom, remember to use a business account and save the recording to the cloud.

- Who else is involved?
- How are the young people on the first day?
- How do you feel on the first day?

D3 As a mentor, how do you prepare the young people for starting the project?

E Delivering the project (25 mins)

ASK ALL

E1 Can you tell me a bit about the project(s) you worked on between October 2021 and June this year? For context, this was the funding period for YFF projects.

- What does that mean for you day to day?

ASK ALL

E2 Can you tell me a bit about the young people on the programme?

- Why do you think they might have been recruited for a VIY project?
- How engaged are they in the project?
- What sort of tasks do they carry out on a typical day?

ASK ALL

E3 What sort of support do the young people on the programme need to complete the projects?

- Learning the hard skills/construction tasks?
- Softer skills – e.g. teamwork?

ASK ALL

E4 If you were to induct a new mentor onto the VIY programme, what would you tell them was the main thing they could do to support young people on the programme?

- Anything you find difficult to deal with?
- Anything the young people find particularly difficult? Why is this?
- How does the programme seek to address those needs?

E5 Moving on now to speak talk about the Level 3 accreditation and training element of the programme that the young people go through. What has your involvement been in delivering this part of VIY?

E6 What does the accreditation and training element of your project look like? What's involved for the young person?

- Is the qualification at a appropriate level for the young people? Why / why not?
- How engaged are the young people in this element?
- Are they motivated to complete the qualification?

E7 What do you think about the inclusion of the qualification and training element to the programme?

- Is it important? Why / why not?

E8 Now moving onto support beyond the specific project work. As far as you are aware, what support and opportunities were available to young people while they were on the programme?

ALLOW FOR ALL SPONTANEOUS RESPONSES, THEN ENSURE THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN COVERED:

- Introduction to potential employers
- Work readiness training and support
- Support from progressions manager
- Sector relevant work visits
- Mentorship

FOR EACH ELEMENT MENTIONED:

- What did this look like?
- When did this happen? How frequently? Over what period of time (just on project, beyond project time – for how long)
- Who was involved (from VIY, external) in the delivery of this?
- Intended outcomes of this activity, evidence of this activity leading to these outcomes
- Did everyone have access to this? Who did / didn't? Why?
- Whether this had always been available, or introduced / increased following YFF funding
- Impact of this change to date, if applicable
- Whether this is still available on projects since June 2022
- What worked well with this element during this period?
- Did you face any challenges in delivering this element? How were those addressed?
- What value did this activity add for YP?

ASK ALL

E9 Thinking broadly about VIY projects, what do you think works really well?

- Engagement/attendance?
- Young peoples interest in the projects?
- Delivering the skills elements
- Delivering the qualification elements

ASK ALL

E10 Are there any parts of projects that young people particularly enjoy?

- What is it about this element that the young people like?
- How could this be replicated in other VIY projects in other sectors?

ASK ALL

E11 What isn't working very well at the moment?

- Engagement/attendance?
- Young peoples interest in the projects?
- Delivering the skills elements
- Delivering the qualification elements

ASK ALL

E12 Are there any parts of the project that young people particularly dislike?

- What is it about this element that the young people dislike?
- Does it risk them becoming disengaged?
- How have you / the team worked to negate this issue?

F Indicators of outcomes (15 mins)

INTERVIEWER NOTE: Listen for the following throughout the section and probe on them specifically when heard:

- Improved employability
- Improved employment opportunities
- Raised aspirations
- Improved school attendance
- Interest in construction
- Increased take up of construction education and employment in the future
- Improved YP wellbeing
- Increased sense of belonging to the local area

ASK ALL

F1 What are the key outcomes that you expect the young people on the VIY programme to achieve?

- What about for the organisations where the projects are taking place?
- What about for you?
- What about for wider society?

ASK ALL

- **[FOR EACH POSITIVE OUTCOME MENTIONED] How specifically do you think taking part in VIY leads to XXXX outcome for young people?**
- What makes you think this outcome will happen?
- How or why could it not happen?
- Do you have any evidence of it happening already?
- How long do you think it will take to achieve that outcome?
- How would you know the programme has 'worked'?

ASK ALL

F2 How do you know when the outcome has been achieved?

ASK ALL

F3 What have you seen in the past that has stopped a young person succeeding?

- Are there any outcomes which feel unlikely?

ASK ALL

F4 Are there any negative outcomes you can think of, for taking part of the programme for young people?

- How do these come about?
- How often does this happen?
- How is/could this be fixed?

G Wrap up (5 mins)

G1 If you could change something about VIY delivery, what would it be?

- What would be needed to achieve this?

G2 Do you have any other reflection you'd like to share?