(Draft)
Your Life You Choose
Evaluation Report
2018

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INTRODUCTION

YLYC is a Schools Educational project primarily aimed at 11 and 12-year olds. The project began in 2008 in Ealing and has developed and been introduced to other regions since. The webpages associated with the project include some evaluation data from teachers and pupils, all of which is extremely positive. The student testimonials explain how engaging with the range of services changed their perspective on crime in a number of ways.

The Project is a day-long programme of sessions delivered by a range of agencies involved in criminal justice (typically, the magistracy, victim support, the youth offending service, the police and prison service; there is also an accompanying DVD). It is normally hosted by a local school and so a large number of students can be accessed in a day.

The Project Day focuses upon both the impact and consequences of crime with a key underlying message, that it is Your Life and Crime is a Choice. The speakers talk to the students about the consequences and impact of crime on the young offender, the victim, and the families of both, together with how crime affects the wider community.

The programme (which is available on the YLYC website) states that the day culminates with the distribution of a 'helpline' card with details of where students can seek help and advice.

Both pupil and teacher feedback is gathered at the end of the day, with a view to evaluating their experience of the day using a bespoke evaluation form. The form asks for student's knowledge about each service before the sessions and then feedback on the usefulness of sessions using 4-point rating scales. There is also an opportunity for students to comment briefly on what they learned, found most surprising, liked the best and what they would do differently now. The YLYC founders provide help and advice for others who wish to start the project in their area.

Background Information

Dr Julie Taylor was approached via Dr Alison Spurgeon-Dickson JP to evaluate the raw evaluation data from 19 schools in the (   ) area of London who had participated in the project day in the academic year 2016-17 and to produce a summary report. In so doing, I was mindful that a recording system was needed to enable on going data entry and analysis. In a situation such as this where data is routinely collected in an anonymised format being able to analyse trends on an ongoing basis may be particularly useful for providers. Moreover, it is important to note that in the present format the data reflects short term responding to a learning experience; which whilst useful only provides a limited view of the value of this intervention. A longer term evaluation may be in order given the potential significance of this work for individuals and communities. The recommendations at the end of the report include a suggestion for a time and cost efficient way to achieve ongoing short and medium term evaluations.

Method

Numerical data derived from 2578 questionnaires was coded and input onto an excel spreadsheet. The schools were coded numerically to preserve anonymity. Gender was coded 1-male and 2-female. All other codes followed a basic numbering system, with pre-session knowledge of the 5 services a code of 1 for no knowledge up to 4 for a lot of knowledge. Usefulness of sessions was managed similarly, with a 1 for not at all useful through to a 4 for very useful. 0 was used to indicate no score attributed. The required data was copied to SPSS (a statistical package for the social sciences) for correlational and chi square analysis.

The latter part of the evaluation form includes an opportunity for students to have their say, whilst brief this was very informative. Students were asked to comment briefly what they learned, found most surprising, liked the best and what they would do differently now. This data was subjected to a thematic analysis (please refer below for details).

It is important to note that all data is collected anonymously so no names are attached to any of the evaluation forms. Given the importance of ethical practice and the data protection legislation it would be helpful to know what the students and teachers are told about the use of their data following collection.

Results

The ratings of knowledge before the session and the rating of learning from the session was analysed for 2578 responses received from young people aged between 11 and 12 years from 19 schools in the (   ) London area.

Summary Data

•   45% of respondent's reported their gender as male, 41% reported female and 14% did not respond to the gender question but answered all of the other questions on the questionnaire. A number of young people responded that gender is not a binary or stated other. Gender as a binary construct is being increasingly challenged particularly amongst younger people and despite this being a young age group it is clearly something some individuals within this cohort are giving some thought to and consequently something those working with and researching with need to as well (Frohard-Dourlent, Dobson, Clark, Doull, & Saewyc, 2017).

Service Knowledge pre-session

•   The services most familiar to the young people before the session were the police and the prison service.

•   The service the young people reported knowing least about prior to the session was victim support but their knowledge of the magistracy and youth offending service was also relatively low. The use a 4-point scale (where 1=nothing and 4= a lot) makes mean scores somewhat artificial (see Figure One below).

The mode or most frequently reported ratings for each service were as follows:

Service	Modal Value	Meaning
Magistrates	2	A little
Police	4	A lot
Prison	4	A Lot
Victim Support	2	A little
Youth Offending Service	2	A little

Figure One: Bar chart to illustrate mean knowledge ratings prior to session.

Knowledge ratings pre-session

Police 3.19
Prison 2.92
Magistrates 2.19
Victim Support 2.12
Youth Offending Service 2.21

RATING
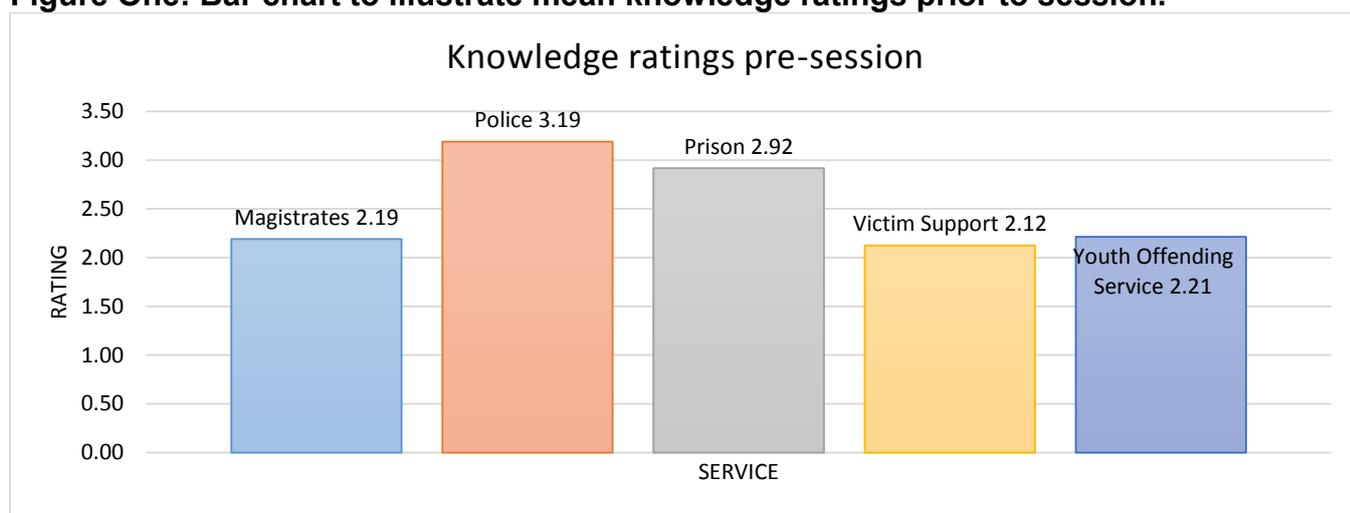
SERVICE

<u>**Session usefulness**</u>

•   The workshop rated the most useful was the police session, followed by the prison session. The remaining three service sessions were relatively similar (refer table one below).

•   The youth offending service was rated the least useful – rated not very useful or not useful at all by 31% of students compared to the police session where 62% of respondents reported that session as very useful and 29% as quite useful, so 91% of the students found the police session useful or very useful in contrast to the YOS session where 69% of students found it quite useful or useful.

Table One: Differences in session usefulness ratings in percentages (%)

Session	0 Not rated	1 Not useful at all	2 Not very useful	3 Quite useful	4 Very Useful	Total Ratings of 3+
DVD	2	2	8	39	49	88
Magistrates	1	4	23	43	29	72
Police	1	2	6	29	62	91
Prison	2	3	8	28	59	87
Victim Support	2	5	18	37	38	75

Youth offending service	3	9	19	37	32	69

- The mean ratings for sessions are summarised in Figure 2 below, which demonstrates that the Police, Prison, Victim Support and DVD sessions were on average rated as being useful. The magistrate's session and youth offending sessions achieved average ratings just below the others. However, it is important to note that in more than 2/3rds of cases all sessions were rated as somewhat or very useful. It is also important to note that usefulness may mean different things to different people and so it might also be worth rating sessions for how informative they were, how enjoyable and how much was learned.

- As with knowledge ratings the modal values or the rating most frequently given for session usefulness may be helpful here:

Service	Modal Value	Meaning
Magistrates	3	Quite useful
Police	4	Very useful
Prison	4	Very useful
Victim Support	3	Quite Useful
Youth Offending Service	3	Quite Useful

Mean ratings of usefulness of sessions
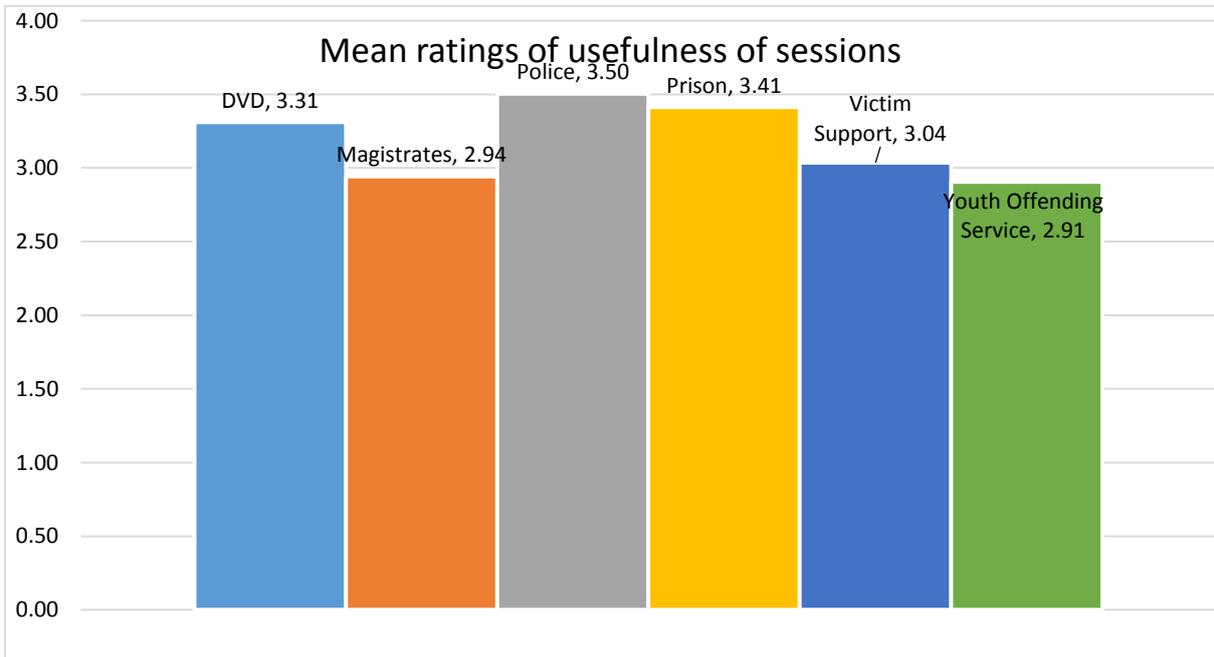
- Prior overall knowledge of the services was not correlated with total usefulness ratings meaning that students pre-existing knowledge did not positively or negatively influence their view on how useful the day was. The correlation between overall workshop knowledge (M =12.40; SD =3.06) and overall usefulness of the day ratings (M=19.11; SD=3.62) was not significant, r (2576) =.18, p>.05. Moreover, how much the students knew about the each of the services individually before the workshops was not significantly correlated with how useful they found the

corresponding sessions (refer Table two for correlation coefficients, significance levels and means and standard deviations). This is helpful to know as it means prior knowledge does not negatively or positively impact on perceived utility which makes it potentially worthwhile for all attendees regardless of their previous experience.

Table Two: Session knowledge prior to day and session usefulness ratings: correlation data

Session	Knowledge		Usefulness				
	Mean *(M)*	Standard deviation *(SD)*	Mean *(M)*	Standard deviation *(SD)*	Degrees of freedom *(df)*	*R* value	*P* value
Police	3.20	.82	3.49	.79	2576	.19	>.05
Prison	2.84	.96	3.37	.88	2576	.19	>.05
Magistrates	2.13	1.00	2.92	.89	2576	.18	>.05
YOS	2.12	1.09	2.89	1.05	2576	.18	>.05
Victim Support	2.13	1.06	3.02	.95	2576	.19	>.05

- There were no associations between gender and usefulness ratings, being male or female did not significantly affect the perceived usefulness of the day.

The principal message is that the days were considered quite useful or very useful by the majority of respondents irrespective of school, existing knowledge or gender.

Qualitative Analysis

Data from the same 2578 questionnaires were subjected to a thematic analysis. The quantity of data requested by the evaluation form was minimal, with space left for a sentence in response to each question posed. The evaluation form is one side of A4 and has been designed so as not to be overly arduous for respondents. This is good practice and particularly important when it comes at the end of a very full schedule. However, the amount of information gathered using this technique is limited and at times the lack of context given did mean that conclusions could not be confidently drawn.

The questions posed were:
What did you learn today?
What did you find most surprising?
What did you like the best?
What will you do differently now?

Thematic analysis
Questionnaires were analysed using thematic analysis to explore and describe patterned responses within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The analysis began with identifying basic themes from the data and ascribing codes to the content of the feedback forms, these codes were revisited and refined and clustered to produce themes. Hierarchical organisation enabled codes to be examined at

different levels of specificity; higher order codes (Global) were broad and relevant to the body of data whilst those lower down (Basic) allowed distinctions to be drawn across and within participant contributions (King, 2004). The global themes sought to fully represent the basic themes with the aim of representing the principal allegories in the data as a whole (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The rationale for this approach was to capture as much of the data as possible, many of the young people used different terms to describe similar things, a theme analysis enables these similarities to be captured within a single category whilst not losing all of the subtleties in the data. Moreover, once all of the evaluation sheets have been reviewed and no new codes emerge saturation can be said to have been reached.

Each question was treated distinctly, although there is overlap because in some cases the principal learning point was also a point that was a surprise to the student. A good example of this was the number of young people who learned the age of criminal responsibility was 10 years and reported this as the most surprising feature of the day.

Question one: What did you learn today?
5 global themes were identified from the range of responses reported, many of the points made were very brief and underdeveloped interpretation is therefore limited.

Basic Themes	Examples from questionnaires	Global Themes
Items you can and cannot have in prison	*Hair bands* *X-box* *TV*	Life in prison
Facilities in prison	*Size of cells very small* *Sharing toilets* *Clothing not your own you have to share*	
Food	*Food is disgusting*	
Education	*You have lessons in prison*	
Scissors	*Scissors are a weapon and you shouldn't carry them*	Weapons
Knives	*The size of the knife is not important*	
Compass	*Even a compass is a weapon*	
Lot of crime	*There is a lot more crime that I thought* *You can be guilty at 10 years of age* *The age of criminal responsibility is just 10 years old*	Laws
Easy to break the Law	*Carrying scissors is illegal*	
You can get in a lot of trouble	*If you carry even a small knife you can get into trouble*	
Making your own choices	*I learned that I have to make my own choices and these need to be good choices*	Choices
Your choices affect other people's lives	*Sometimes the things you do can really affect other people's lives*	

Basic Themes	Examples from questionnaires	Global Themes
	Your actions have consequences for you and for other people	
Your choices have consequences so you need to think before acting	*Think before you act*	
Police	*What the police do* *I learned a lot about the police and I want to know more now*	Roles in the criminal justice system
Prison	*Life in prison and what prison officers do*	
Youth Offending Service	*Learned about young offenders*	
Magistrates	*That a magistrates job is an important one*	
Victim support	*I didn't know victims could get help I think this is a good thing* *I never knew there was a support service for people who are victims* *I am glad victims can get some support*	

Question Two: What did you find most surprising?

6 global themes were identified as with question one there were many cases where only a single word was reported and so any discussion is limited to a small number of cases where students did elaborate on their response.

Basic Themes	Examples from questionnaires	Global Themes
Facilities	*Limited to three showers a week* *You can have an x-box and a TV if you behave well in prison* *Lots of restrictions in prison* *Clothes are shared so you may wear someone else's underwear and even when they have been washed they might not be clean* *You have to share a toilet in a cell* *The food is horrible* *You can buy things to eat and drink from the prison shop* *The cells are really small* *You can be in the cell a very long time every day*	Life in prison
Sentence length	*sentences can be really long*	
Education	*You can get education in prison*	
Police	*Surprised at what the police do and they are not like I thought*	Police

Learned nothing	*Nothing was surprising*	Nothing
There are lots of risks	*So many people carry knives* *Some people punch other people for fun* *You can get in the wrong group so you have to think before you act* *Gangs are easy to get into* *15 boys died because of knives*	People can be dangerous
Number of people in custody	*There are 89,000 people in prison* *The number of people in prison is not all the people who commit crimes*	Size of criminal problem
Some people never get released	*Some people do things that mean they never get out of prison*	
The number of phones stolen	*Thousands of phones get stolen every year*	
Victims	*The victims of crime can get support which was a surprise*	Empathy

Question Three: What did you like best?

The students overwhelmingly reported the police and prison sessions as the best. Each session however was reported as the best by someone in the data set which shows how important having a range of sessions is. However, the police and prison sessions were clearly interesting to a significant proportion of the students who reported finding them engaging and surprising. It would be interesting to know how these are run because whilst the topics covered may have intrinsic interest value, the sessions clearly had a genuine impact according to the responses to the next question. Responses that suggest that exposure to police in these educational contexts may for example have distinct benefits for the future.

Question four: What will you do differently now?

When this question was completed it was encouraging to see that a considerable number of students had given some real thought to what they would need to do, for some this was around changing a current risky behaviour e.g. getting into fights; whilst for others it was more about active citizenship and being prepared to take responsibility for their safety and avoidance of crime or reporting rule breaches and criminal behaviour. One message that was particularly encouraging was an apparent attitude change when it came to reporting to the police and to teachers, the phrasing in some questionnaires was ambiguous i.e. it was not clear whether they would have already reported but in a number of instances there was a clear change being noted e.g. *I would go to the police now and report crimes, I would tell a teacher now if I saw bad behaviour.*

Basic Themes	Examples from questionnaires	Global Themes
Keep safe	*I need to keep myself safe* *I need to avoid strangers* *I need to be careful when talking to strangers*	*Personal responsibility*

	Don't hang about with people you don't know	
Be careful	I need to be more careful	
Make good choices	Make right choices Don't break the rules	
Think carefully before acting	I need to think more before I act Be careful make better choices	
Behave better	I am going to try and stop being bad now I am going to try and behave better outside of school now I am going to listen more I am going to stop breaking rules	***Behaviour change***
Avoid fights	I am going to try not to get into fights anymore	
Keep away from gangs	Keep away from people you don't know Keep away from gangs	
Don't carry a knife/weapon	Don't take a knife in public Don't carry scissors	
Help police and school	I would try and help the police now if I could Report bad behaviour	***Attitude change***
Report crime to police	I will tell the police now if I see a crime being committed	
Tell teachers more	If I see somebody doing something wrong I would tell a teacher now	
Nothing	I don't break the law so I am not sure what I will change	***Not sure***

Conclusion and recommendations

The evidence from this evaluation overwhelmingly supports the YLYC Project day's as positive learning experiences. The quantitative data helps to show which sessions are most valued and the qualitative goes some way to explain why. The most important finding is perhaps that the day did elicit plans to change behaviour in many of the respondents.

The police and prison sessions were rated most highly and reported in the qualitative data as having the most impact on planned behaviour. It may be valuable to explore the delivery styles and activities within these sessions further to share good practice. The evidence suggests that the youth offending session was the least well received and the least likely to be commented upon in the qualitative data positively or negatively. In the absence of student feedback there could be any number of reasons for this. The victim support session was the least well known service prior to the day and what was noteworthy here was that people either seemed to know a lot about victim support or nothing before the session. A number of students made positive comments about victims being able to get support and the qualitative responses suggested high levels of empathy for victims amongst some students – whether these feelings existed before the day cannot however be inferred from the

data. Looking at the data as a whole having victim support involved is clearly valuable, afterall these young people may well be victims or know people who have been or may be victims and so raising the awareness of this service is perhaps just as important as raising their awareness of the consequences of crime for the perpetrators.

10 key messages from the students were:

1. You can be held responsible for a crime from age 10 years.
2. That many objects as well as knives can be used to stab people.
3. That you need to take responsibility for your actions and that these actions may have significant consequences for other people as well as yourself.
4. That you need to think before you act.
5. That you can and should report criminal or concerning behaviour to school or the police.
6. That whilst you can have a TV and x-box in prison, the cells are small, you can't shower every day, you have to share clothes and toilets, you may have to stay in the cells for hours and the food is poor.
7. That gangs are dangerous and associating with gangs is likely to get you in trouble.
8. That there are services available to support victims
9. That the magistrates have an important role
10. That it is easy to get in trouble if you are not careful.

There are a small number of recommendations with respect to evaluation of the work going forward, including a couple that are based on the need to produce evaluation data that is robust and includes sufficient differentiation for meaningful analysis and one relating to propositions for evaluating longer term impact. Whilst enjoying the day is extremely important and sets the stage for learning, to be confident that this learning is impactful over time and not a response to a day off normal timetable may make the collection of some follow up data particularly useful.

Recommendation	Specific suggestion
1. **Reconsider gender as a binary construct**	Whilst 11 or 12 years of age is young, the evidence that is emerging suggests that this age group are challenging the traditional categorisation of people as either male or female. Whilst adding an alternative option may encourage some respondents to report falsely, recognising this change in thinking would be responsive and inclusive. Gender differences were not observed in the data set explored so it might be that gender does not need to be recorded (it is too early, however, to draw this conclusion from one academic year's data set). What is noteworthy is that 14% of respondents answered every question except gender and a small proportion of these respondents in each school commented that either they did not fit the categories available or that gender was not binary. Perhaps the form could be amended to simply say

	gender and then leave a space for responses so that the students can self-identify.
2. Consider Modifying Rating Scale for Usefulness	Rating scales of 4 make drawing out differences challenging. The sessions mean ratings are a useful example here, where there was quite a big difference in how many students found the police session very useful compared to that of the YOS but the difference in mean scores was deceptively small 3.5 to 2.91 respectively. Whilst seeking minute gradations of utility may be unnecessarily arduous for students, having a scale as follows would stretch the scores a little without making the task too challenging. It is worth noting that 5 point scales can lead to a tendency to select the mid-point but much controversy surrounds the optimal number of points on the scale (e.g. Croasmun, & Ostrom, 2011). Perhaps the best way to decide is based on how meaningful a neutral category might be, in this case a neutral position could be argued to be meaningful. It might also be worth considering reframing the items to be rated as statements and having a more traditional strongly disagree to strongly agree rating attached. **The (name of session) was?** 1 2 3 4 5 Useless Neither useless Very useful or useful **or** **The prison session was useful** 1 3 5 Strongly Strongly disagree Neither Agree
3. Include a pre and post knowledge quiz	One of the main areas for development lies in the ability to make claims beyond the day. A school event much like a school trip offers a day out of routine and so appreciating its true impact in terms of knowledge and usefulness is a challenge especially if the evaluation is on the day itself. To assess whether the key intended messages have been received, understood and retained may require a post day evaluation. A simple knowledge quiz at the start and end of the day based on the 10-15 key messages of the day, followed up via an e-survey 6 months later may work as a crude but effective measure of learning. E surveys are easy to distribute via each school's internal communication systems and can be completed anonymously within a PHSE session. Whilst individual student performance would not be measured, this would enable a pre, post and medium term global assessment of learning to be made.
4. Key messages	There were 10 key messages identified regularly by respondents. Review these in context of intended learning

		and if there are additional messages e.g. around technology assisted sexually harmful behaviour or cyber bullying for example, then review how to make these points more impactful.
5.	**Consider restructuring the qualitative element**	In many cases the students wrote very little, left the section blank or wrote single words with no context. Perhaps you could just ask a single qualitative question here related to their key learning point and then add a scale to rate overall enjoyment of the day and ask them to pick their favourite session and circle reasons why or state other. This may increase the usefulness of the data whilst reducing the burden on the student. For example: **How much did you enjoy the day overall?** 1 10 Not at all Very much **Please circle your favourite session** Prison, Police, DVD, Youth Offending Service, Victim Support, Magistrates. **Why** was it your favourite? (please circle) • Most interesting • Best activities • Could ask lots of questions • Funny • Good presenters • Other _____
6.	**Add data as it is collected into a revised spreadsheet (assuming some changes to format follow)**	Given the potential utility of this data especially if augmented by a follow up e-survey, it would be good to receive data regularly as it is collected in order to avoid a backlog and to keep on top of trends as they change. It would also be useful to be able to add some of the student comments (in anonymised form) to the webpages, provided the appropriate permissions had been sought in advance.

Finally, it is abundantly clear from the data that the project day is impacting positively on the majority of those who participate and perhaps most heartening is the way the students report proposed changes to their behaviour or where no specific behavioural change is required the evidence of an increased awareness of why keeping out of crime is a choice that can be actively made. Whilst there are a number of challenges in terms of collecting evaluation data, the data that is available suggests that project days are well received and have the potential to influence attitudes and behaviour as well as raise awareness.

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<u>KEY REFERENCES</u>

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