A PATHWAY TO WORK

Year Two Interim Evaluation Report
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Building Better Opportunities is a national programme aimed at tackling poverty and social exclusion by assisting the most disadvantaged people throughout England.
Executive Summary

This is a second year interim evaluation report, summarising the progress of Opportunity and Change throughout 2018.

Opportunity and Change, led by Framework, is an employability project for people with multiple and complex needs, delivered by a partnership of fifteen community-based organisations across D2N2.

The project supports individuals (referred to as participants) experiencing multiple and complex issues, including homelessness, substance misuse, offending, mental ill health and domestic abuse.

The project is part of the Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programme, which is jointly funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the National Lottery Community Fund. The Department of Work and Pensions is the programme’s Managing Authority.

There are three strands of BBO in D2N2. In addition to Opportunity and Change, Towards Work, led by Groundwork Greater Nottingham, is an employability programme, and Money Sorted, led by Advice Nottingham, is a financial inclusion programme. All three lead organisations work together as part of the People First Alliance (PFA).

By the end of 2018, Opportunity and Change had supported 687 individuals with multiple and complex needs to move closer towards the workplace; 37 more than the total target. Of this number:

- 57.9% were male and 41.9% were female
- 42.3% participants were unemployed when they first started accessing the project and 53.7% were economically inactive
- The majority of participants (78.3%) are White British, and 19.1% participants are from BAME groups
- The most common age group of participants was people in their 30s (26.9%)
- 75% of participants said they had a disability or chronic health condition

84.57% participants accessed Opportunity and Change with two (45.41%) or three (39.16%) support needs. The remaining 15.43% of participants had four (12.95%) or five (2.47%) support needs when they first accessed the project.

At the end of 2018 there were 36.97% actively engaging participants. 47.31% participants were not engaging at the end of 2018, and 15.73% had been exited from the project after entering into education, training, employment or job searching.

Analysis of data on participant engagement and support needs, indicated that:

- Participants who saw their Navigator regularly and completed a support needs assessment approximately every three months, had improved circumstances and required less support over time
- Unstable housing and problematic substance misuse had a greater adverse impact on participant engagement than other areas of need.

Qualitative in-depth interviews with participants revealed a series of common shared themes in their life experiences prior to accessing the project, including:

- Traumatic life experiences: domestic abuse, childhood and/or historical abuse, physical and mental health issues, housing issues.

The impact of these traumatic life experiences included:

- Poor mental and physical health, repeated patterns of abuse and/or difficult relationships with others, and long-term unemployment.

Positive life experiences that participants shared included: having children, going to work, accessing education or training, and supportive social networks.

Participants demonstrated high levels of personal resilience and said they were motivated to enter voluntary or paid employment in the future.
Participants described the following aspects of Opportunity and Change as working well for them:

- Navigators adopting a person-centred, holistic approach to support
- Opportunities to keep busy, meet new people and try or learn new things
- Practical support, including a safe environment, accessibility and funding.

Analysis of data from participant interviews and distance travelled self-assessments, indicated that Opportunity and Change was having a positive impact on participant’s lives in a number of ways, including:

- Increasing confidence and self-esteem
- Increasing self-worth and self-realisation
- Motivation and hope for the future
- Improved personal, social life and work skills
- Better understanding of where to get help and support if needed
- Increasing independence
- Improved social networks and relationships with families and communities
- Increasing engagement in meaningful activity
- Improved health and wellbeing.

The available evidence suggests that Opportunity and Change had improved its performance throughout 2018 and continues to do so. However, at the end of 2018 the project was still underperforming in relation to its results targets.

In relation to outcomes, the project was meeting and exceeding its profiled targets by the end of 2018.

Skills Plus for Change remains well attended despite low numbers of participants (54.9%) enrolling on the programme when they first access Opportunity and Change.

There is evidence to suggest that an increasing number of economically inactive and unemployed participants are engaging with employment-related support.

As a result of engaging with the Opportunity and Change Care Team, by the end of 2018, 36 participants had been allocated provision under The Care Act (2015). Within this group, 20 individuals had been awarded a personal budget to pay for additional care and support.

Observations and recommendations for the project lead to note, include:

- A need to reiterate the core aim of the project: to deliver employment-related support to people with multiple and complex needs
- More information is required about participants who stop engaging
- Navigators require support to develop their skills and confidence, in relation to delivering employment-related support
- The Navigator Group Supervision model has limitations and requires reconsideration
- If project funding is extended beyond 2019, a number of improvements to internal systems and processes are recommended
- The Local Authority Stakeholder Managers are making positive contributions to BBO across D2N2, despite being appointed more than one year into project delivery.

In 2018, Opportunity and Change received 335 new referrals and of those who started receiving support:

- 17.62% were self-referrals
- 38.70% were internal referrals
- 43.68% were external referrals.

Opportunity and Change, led by Framework1, is an employment-related project delivered by a partnership of fifteen community-based organisations across D2N22. It aims to provide ‘a pathway to work’ for unemployed and economically inactive people with multiple and complex needs; adopting a collaborative approach to provide better access to support, training and employment opportunities. The project is part of a national initiative called Building Better Opportunities (BBO). Match-funded by the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) and European Social Fund (ESF), initially until December 2019, Opportunity and Change aims to support those who are disengaged and furthest away from the labour market across the D2N2 region.

About the Evaluation

The evaluation of Opportunity and Change, led by Jess Smith (Framework), began in January 2017. It seeks to capture and share learning on an ongoing, formative basis, to help improve management and delivery of the project. The summative findings of the evaluation will identify and promote effective ways to deliver support to individuals with multiple and complex needs, with the ultimate aim of informing how future employability programmes of this kind are designed and delivered.

The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the impact and effectiveness of Opportunity and Change in:

1. Providing a service that makes a lasting contribution to the personal, social and economic stability of participants
2. Establishing a lasting partnership of voluntary sector organisations across D2N2 to enhance the quality of service provision and strengthen funding capacity for future collaboration.

The purpose of this interim report is to provide an evidence-based overview of the progress Opportunity and Change made during 2018; its second full year of delivery2. As stated in the first annual report the main objective of the evaluation moving forward into 2018 was to gain a better insight and understanding of the needs and experiences of those who access the project. Section two of the report is dedicated to these findings.

Sections three and four of this report focus on the project’s overall performance and present some of the key issues and learning that has taken place in terms of project management and delivery.

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1. For more information, visit: http://www.frameworkha.org
2. The D2N2 LEP region includes Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. For more information visit: http://www.d2n2lep.org
3. A more detailed introduction and overview of the project, including performance and challenges faced during the first fourteen months of delivery, can be found in the first annual evaluation report accessible via the Opportunity and Change website: http://www.opportunityandchange.org
Methodology

The evaluation has a mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative) design. It draws upon a range of secondary data including:

- The Opportunity and Change Project Plan
- ESF and BLF (BBO) Guidance
- Data entered onto the project’s MIS, Hanlon
- Meeting minutes
- Monitoring reports
- A variety of procedural documents.

Primary data for this report has been generated from the following methods:

- Observation and participation in meetings
- Film making featuring specialist providers and participants
- Consultation with the Local Authority Stakeholder Managers
- One-to-one interviews with participants and the project lead
- Focus groups with partner managers and navigators.

Peer Research:

Unfortunately it has been difficult to maintain regular contact with the peer researchers, most of whom were already involved in a number of evaluation projects elsewhere. One peer researcher, who was at the time an Opportunity and Change participant, provided excellent feedback on a series of evaluation questions, and helped to facilitate a participant focus group. Although he was enjoying the peer research, he could no longer commit when he secured full-time employment. There will, however, be more opportunities for participants to develop their skills and experience as peer researchers throughout 2019.

Film Making:

In spring 2018 the Opportunity and Change project lead commissioned a local film maker to work with the evaluation lead and create a series of films capturing good news stories, outcomes and specialist provision across the partnership. The films in production to date have explored the following themes:

- The Skills Plus for Change provision
- The role of group-based activities and therapeutic interventions in improving mental wellbeing of participants
- The impact of support and provision under the Care Act (2015).

A final 20-30 minute film will be shown at the Opportunity and Change impact briefing event at the end of the programme.

Participant Interviews:

In autumn 2018 the evaluation lead began collecting data for her PhD project which explores how people with multiple and complex needs engage with and benefit from employment-related support alongside other provision. The main source of data for the study will be a series of in-depth interviews with participants over an 18 month period. Eight participants have been interviewed to date: seven were female, and accessed the same host organisation. In the next series of interviews, a further eight participants from other locations across D2N2 will be invited to take part, in order to make the feedback as representative as possible. The initial findings of this study are presented in the following section of the report.

Opportunity and Change Partnership

There are currently thirteen organisations delivering end-to-end Navigator support to participants across the D2N2 region. These are:

- Acorn Training
- Derventa Housing Trust
- Double Impact
- Emmanuel House
- Framework
- Improving Lives
- Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NRF)
- Nottingham Women’s Centre
- Nottinghamshire YMCA
- Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire (RCAN)
- Riverside Group
- Women’s Work Derbyshire
- YMCA Derbyshire

In addition to the Personal Navigator provision, there are five partners offering specialist support: Derbyshire Law Centre and Nottinghamshire YMCA (The ‘Care Act Team’), Framework (Skills Plus for Change), Improving Lives (Counselling), Nottingham Contemporary (The Loudspeaker Programme).

5 - By the end of 2018, Awaaz, Nottinghamshire Women’s Aid and POW, and specialist providers, SEA and The Training Centre (Framework), were no longer delivering support on behalf of Opportunity and Change. All former partner organisations continue to deliver other services. In the last twelve months the number of staff delivering on behalf of the project has reduced by 18.75%, a reflection of these changes.
6 - Navigators offer a range of holistic, person-centred support to meet individual participant needs, identified through quarterly Support Needs Assessments, and regular Change Plans. During one-to-one meetings, Navigators provide participants with information, advice and guidance, BMPI-The equivalent of specialist support services, sharing information (i.e. training, education, volunteering, employment), and providing encouragement and motivation to engage with opportunities.
7 - An overview of the performance of SP4C and The Care Act Team is presented in Section Three of this report.
8 - Improving Lives also provide a counselling service on a part-time basis. With 29 new participant referrals in 2018, the number of participants exceeded demand by 3:1. In response, Framework have pledged to increase this provision and make the counsellor post full-time if continuation funding is received.
9 - See Annex A

The purpose of this interim report is to provide an evidence-based overview of the progress Opportunity and Change has made during 2018.
SECTION TWO:

Understanding the Needs and Experiences of Participants

This section of the report summarises the learning that has taken place about participants accessing Opportunity and Change during its first two years of delivery. The data has been compiled to increase understanding of the client group this project supports, and includes: the demographic profile of participants, the complexity and range of issues they face, and their views and opinions of what is helping them most. What emerges from this data is a series of themes illustrating the diversity of need amongst unemployed and economically inactive people with multiple and complex needs across D2N2. This section draws upon data from a range of sources, including:

- Monitoring data provided to BBO funders
- Participant Support Needs Assessment data
- Discussions with the Project Lead Team and attendance at meetings
- Data from eight in-depth qualitative interviews with participants
- Participant Distance Traveled self-assessment data.

Participant Demographic Profile

Gender

By the end of 2018, Opportunity and Change had worked with a total of 687 participants. Of this number, 398 (57.9%) were male and 288 (41.9%) were female. The remaining individual (0.2%) described their gender as ‘other’.

Economic Status

Opportunity and Change participants must be unemployed to be eligible to access the project. According to the BBO Guide to Delivering European Funding, an unemployed participant is defined as someone who is not working, but is available for and actively seeking work. An economically inactive participant is defined as someone who is not available for work and is not currently seeking work.¹⁰

At the end of 2018, 318 (46.3%) participants were unemployed (including long-term unemployed) when they began accessing the project. There were 369 (53.7%) economically inactive participants, including those not in education or training (NEET).

¹⁰ This can include full-time carers, people in receipt of benefits such as Employment Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Income Support, full-time students, those not claiming any welfare benefits, and people who are distant from the labour market and require additional support, skills and confidence to enable them to move towards employment.
Ethnicity

Analysis of the ethnicity of participants shows that 538 (78.3%) are White British, with 131 (19.1%) from BAME groups. The most popular BAME groups include: Multiple Ethnic Group: White and Black Caribbean (18.3%), Black/African/Caribbean/Black British-African (16.0%), and White: Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma (12.9%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White English/Welsh/Northern Irish/Scottish/British</td>
<td>538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group: White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British-African</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British-Any other Black/African/Caribbean Background</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other White Background</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British-Indian</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British-Pakistani</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other BAME Groups</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer Not to Say</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age

The majority of participants (64%) were between the ages of 25 and 50 when they first accessed Opportunity and Change, and the most common age group were people in their 30’s (26.9%). At the end of 2018, the project had supported 127 participants (18.5%) over the age of 50. The youngest participant to access the project was 15 years old, and the oldest was 68 years old.

Disability

Opportunity and Change is supporting a far greater number of individuals (75%) with either a disability or chronic health condition than was originally profiled. One explanation for this high number could be that individuals are asked at induction if they think they have a work-restricting health condition or disability. Participants are not asked to specify whether they are registered disabled, or have a diagnosed health condition, for example. There are also a significant number of participants accessing the programme with a mental health condition (94.91%), but again, this figure is based on the disclosure of the individual at their assessment.

What does the existing data tell us about the support needs and engagement of participants?

Participants are required to complete a Support Needs Assessment (SNA) with their Navigator when they first access the project, and subsequently every three months throughout their engagement. To meet eligibility requirements for the project, an individual must be experiencing, and be willing to engage with support, in relation to at least two of the following:

- Homelessness or unstable housing
- Substance (drug or alcohol) misuse or abstinence
- Offending or risk of reoffending
- Mental ill health
- Domestic abuse, including historical abuse.

The support needs of participants, and all activities relating to their engagement with Opportunity and Change, are recorded by Navigators onto the project’s online MIS, Hanlon. By the end of 2018, participants were typically completing around three support needs assessments over an average of 12 months.

The table below illustrates the support needs identified by participants at their initial support needs assessment; their frequency and commonality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Need Identified on SNA</th>
<th>MENTAL HEALTH</th>
<th>HOUSING</th>
<th>SUBSTANCE MISUSE</th>
<th>DOMESTIC ABUSE</th>
<th>OFFENDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Identified</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The vast majority (94.91%) of participants said they had a mental health-related support need when they first accessed Opportunity and Change
- More than half (61.72%) required support in relation to their housing
- Almost half (42.94%) of participants disclosed issues relating to substance misuse
- More than half (54.88%) had experienced or were at risk of domestic abuse
- Almost one quarter (22.56%) of participants said they needed support to help prevent them from offending or re-offending.
Other reasons why participants are ‘disengaged’ on Hanlon, include: the participant states they no longer wish to engage with support in relation to either their complex needs or entering into education or training, employment or job search. Furthermore, a small number of this group may no longer be receiving support from their Navigator, but are still engaged in follow-up support from the Care Act Team in relation to a previous assessment.

Results include: entering into education or training, employment, or, commencing job search and other activity relating to ‘increasing employability’. In order to claim a ‘job search’ result, in addition to providing evidence of their engagement with employment-related support, the Navigator must acquire a signed declaration from the participant, confirming that their economic status has changed from ‘economically inactive’ to ‘unemployed’.

The column chart indicates that the majority of participants (581; 84.57%) had two (45.41%) or three (39.16%) support needs when they first accessed Opportunity and Change.

This confirms that participants are facing multiple, complex issues when they access Opportunity and Change.

Participant engagement with the project is grouped into three categories on Hanlon:

- **Engaging Participants**: have regular, face-to-face contact with their Navigator at least once a month
- **Disengaged Participants**: are unreachable by their Navigator, typically after 3-4 attempts made to re-engage with the participant over a period of 4-6 weeks. Occasionally, participants lose touch and then later re-engage with their Navigator after several months
- **Exited Participants**: have left the programme upon achieving a ‘result’ claimable by the project team. A result can only be claimed at the point a participant has exited from the programme, which means there are a small number of engaging participants (an estimated ≤ 8.0% at any given time), who choose to continue receiving support from the project after they entered into education or training, employment or job searching.

On the Support Needs Assessment, participants are asked to indicate the level of support they require in relation to each identified area of need, providing a ‘support score’ on a scale of 1 to 9. Participants who saw their Navigator regularly and completed an SNA approximately every three months, tended to score lower over time. This suggests that regular engagement improves participant’s individual circumstances, and reduces their need for support.

Interestingly, participants who stopped engaging, initially said they required less support, on average, than those who continued engaging. However, ‘disengaged’ participants appear to have more complex needs; with a higher number (60.62%) having three or more support needs, compared with engaging participants (50.39%) and exited participants (46.30%).

We can only speculate why individuals with more support needs, who disengage, tend to say they require less support, because data on ‘reasons for leaving’ the project is limited. If monitoring was improved in this area, it would help to increase our understanding of how effectively the project is helping those with the most complex needs, and could subsequently improve their levels of engagement. In addition, it may be useful to observe and review the induction process taking place with participants, to ensure that appropriate information is being shared about the project.

Further analysis of the data revealed one other notable finding. Participants who disengaged, indicated higher levels of need in relation to Housing and Substance Misuse, than those who continued to engage or achieve a result. This may suggest that unstable housing and problematic substance misuse are the greatest risk factors to engagement with the project.
Participant Interviews

Alongside the secondary analysis of data captured and recorded onto Hanlon, meeting with participants face-to-face to complete qualitative interviews provided a more detailed understanding of their needs.

Participants were asked how and why they initially became involved with Opportunity and Change; how they heard about the project, and to describe some of the problems they were facing at that time. With the exception of one male participant interviewed, the majority were women accessing the same host organisation. The information participants shared about themselves indicated they had differing social backgrounds and experiences prior to accessing Opportunity and Change. However, thematic analysis of the data revealed some common, recurring themes in their lived experience:

### Traumatic life experiences and difficulties, and support accessed prior to engaging with Opportunity and Change

- **Domestic Abuse**: emotional, physical and financial abuse, sexual coercion, rape, abuse from former and/or current partner(s) and other family members i.e. siblings, parents
  - **Support from**: women’s services, counselling services, social care, GPs, mental health services

- **Childhood and/or Historical Abuse**: rape and sexual assault, sexual coercion, grooming, neglect, emotional abuse from parent(s), carers and former/current partners
  - **Support from**: GPs, counselling, women’s services

- **Physical and Mental Health Issues**: neurological impairment, learning disability, clinical depression, PTSD, bereavement, early life trauma, personality disorder
  - **Support from**: social care teams, secondary/clinical mental health services, GPs, counselling services

- **Housing Issues**: hoarding, homeless or fleeing domestic abuse, rough sleeping due to relationship breakdown, poor housing and illegal landlord activity, harassment and financial abuse from within the community
  - **Support from**: local authority, social care, psychologist, counselling

### The impact of traumatic life experiences prior to accessing Opportunity and Change

**Physical and Mental Wellbeing:**
- Situational anxiety, i.e. using public transport, leaving baby without monitor
- Social anxiety
- Low self-confidence
- Low self esteem
- Lack of motivation and self-efficacy
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Suicidal feelings
- Self-harm

Despite the range of difficult and challenging experiences that participants had faced prior to accessing Opportunity and Change, they also described a number of positive and supporting factors in their lives:

### Positive ‘protective’ factors prior to accessing Opportunity and Change

- **Children**: having and raising a family
- **Going to work**: previous employment included voluntary (retail) work, midwifery, local authority, phlebotomist, personal and social care, teaching, mental healthcare assistant
- **Education and training**: basic food hygiene, IT, nursing, psychology, education, midwifery
- **Supportive family members**: sister, children, new partner, nephew.

The data from these interviews are part of a longer-term study about the role of employment-related support in services for people with multiple and complex needs, that will continue throughout 2019. In summary of these initial findings, regarding how and why this group of participants first came to access the project:

- They had all experienced trauma in their lives, some of which began in early life and continued for many years into adulthood
- These experiences commonly led to longer-term problems affecting mental health and wellbeing
- Personal resilience and the ability to ‘bounce back’ was something all participants demonstrated through their stories. For example, having motivation to reach out for help when needed; being optimistic about the future and making positive changes; and coping with ongoing problems whilst managing ‘everyday’ activities, such as taking care of children, or maintaining a home
All participants had accessed Opportunity and Change seeking support in relation to mental ill health and domestic abuse.

Five of the eight participants interviewed had accessed higher education, and had previously worked in either a teaching, local authority or healthcare setting. These five individuals said they had to leave work or education because of a decline in their mental health.

All participants, including two with no work history, said they wanted to enter some form of voluntary or paid employment in the future.

All participants made some reference to positive, ‘life affirming’ experiences they had prior to accessing Opportunity and Change. Examples of these included having children, volunteering, going to work, and accessing education or training.

Participant Reflections on Opportunity and Change: What has been working well for you?

Responses were grouped into three categories: The Role of the Navigator, Opportunities, and Practical Support.

The Role of the Navigator

For participants, developing a positive relationship with their Navigator was essential. An effective relationship was based on the Navigator’s person-centred approach, and their ability to establish:

- Trust
- Empathy
- Respect
- Patience
- Understanding
- Impartiality
- Professionalism

“We have a really good relationship I think, I hope that she would say the same, and I do trust her. I have told her things that I would normally probably not share, but in doing that, it’s helping me to actually get better, so I’m glad I’m doing it.”

“My Navigator is just like… a professional friend? That might be the easiest way of putting it. Like, she’s a professional, but I can confide in her like a friend. But she’s still professional.”

In addition to a person-centred approach, the holistic range of skills and attributes of the Navigator valued most by participants included:

- Flexibility
- Empowerment
- Knowledge and advocacy skills to move things forward i.e. health, housing

Being Solution-focused:

“If I’ve got any problems I can say, ‘Yeah I wanna do it but I’ve got this or that’. And then they’ll help you work out a solution rather than saying, ‘Actually don’t do it then’.”

Encouraging ownership:

“My previous worker was like, ‘If you want to go back into work we’ll help you, if you don’t you don’t’ […] With my Navigator it’s more intensive, which is why at the beginning I felt a bit pushed […]”

Knowledge and advocacy skills:

“With the mental health system I’ve noticed if you’re not in a mental state to sort it out yourself, you’re just left at the back of the queue, you get left on a waiting list somewhere. I’d been waiting quite a few years on and off for therapy. The psychiatrist kept saying I could have it then I couldn’t, then it was the wrong therapy and I needed something else. When I saw [my Navigator] for the first time, she asked me how long I’d been waiting and I said about a year. And she said, ‘Oh no, that’s too long to be on a waiting list’, and then when she phoned up it had actually been eighteen months. But with her phoning them, and asking them why I’d been left waiting and everything else, within a week I had a letter through saying, here’s when you start therapy […]”

Motivation and Empowerment:

“They do a lot for you […] but I think I’d be nowhere if I hadn’t had my Navigator sort of showing me forwards and saying, ‘You’re better than this, you can do it’ […] and that’s what they do, they say ‘You can do that, you’ll be fine’, and I’m thinking, can I? And they’re like ‘Yeah of course you can, just go for it!’”

Flexibility:

“It’s good for me to have structure now as that’s something I didn’t have before at all, and if I don’t have structure I just go into freefall, and that’s not a good thing […] but to know there’s a bit of flexibility […] so if you’re not feeling great you don’t feel like you’re going to be chas****ed or put down for it, because we’re all humans and we have good days and bad days, and that means a lot to me […] I just think, [sighs] why couldn’t one of these women have been my manager […] I would still have been at work now.”

“With my Navigator it’s more intensive, which is why at the beginning I felt a bit pushed […]”

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“If there’s something I don’t know I can ask her and she will explain […] she breaks it down for me so I can understand what’s she saying. Sometimes I’ll have a letter through the post from DWP or housing and she’ll explain what it is, and why, things like that […]”
Opportunities

Participants valued opportunities to:

- Keep busy
- Meet new people
- Try or learn new things.

Through effective Navigator support, participant’s motivation to engage increased, and they became more actively involved in what the project had on offer.

Being provided with a variety of activities, coupled with practical support and encouragement to schedule and attend these, provided participants with unique opportunities to meaningfully occupy their time; to ‘keep busy’ and ‘stay focused’. With a range of provision available participants were able to pick and choose activities to suit their individual circumstances and interests:

There are so many things to do, and for me, keeping busy and engaged helps me every day, [it’s] what I need […]

By accessing group-based activities, participants had opportunities to meet and interact with new people, and develop peer networks:

I get so much from coming here, even the coffee morning, which is just a bunch of us sat around a table having a coffee while the kids are playing […] when I’m struggling I get so much from that, ’cause it’s got me out of the house to start off with.

I felt as though this was my normal place […] because everybody was going through similar things, and it’s okay to not be okay – I think that’s what I’ve learned […] it was nice interacting with other women and building my confidence.

Attending a range of activities created opportunities to try new things and learn new skills:

I’ve got a meeting tomorrow to get my name on the Survival Skills for the Home course, and then I’m going to an IT drop in session to brush up on my computer skills, so it’s all good. […] Oh, and Upcycling! I thought, I’ll go to that one as well, you know, ’cause I’m working hard on all these courses, so I thought I’d go to one that’s a bit more fun […]

Practical Support

Participants also referred to several practical resources and measures available through the programme that helped them to move closer to achieving their goals:

- A safe and welcoming environment
- Time, availability and accessibility
- Funding

‘A safe haven’:

It’s just so relaxed and chilled here […] where else can you go and feel safe? There’s not many places you can go and feel completely safe, and that’s what I like about it.

Time, availability and accessibility:

When you have a [Community Psychiatric Nurse] who hardly ever shows up and a social worker who never answers the phone [laughs], it’s nice to have someone I can talk to. Even though [My Navigator] is busy, and she helps other people, I’m still… I don’t feel like I’m any less important than anybody else, which I tend to feel with other […] I mean for example my CPN will say ‘I can’t see you today because I’ve got other people who are really ill’, whereas I’ve never heard anything like that coming from [my Navigator].

I can ring whenever I like, drop a text whenever I like, even if I’m struggling with something that’s not to do with here, I can still talk to [my Navigator] about it.

Funding:

You fund my lad going to nursery so I can come here - without that I wouldn’t be able to come. So that’s a biggie.

I’ve had the opportunity to access things that I wouldn’t have been able to afford to do myself […]

I was finding it hard to get answers, and that’s when [my Navigator] stepped in and that’s when everything was picked up, hence, why I’m having this surgery soon, so it’s all sort of […] they helped with my physical stuff and my mental health I’d say.

I like to learn new things, because I think the more we know, the better equipped we are to deal with what life throws at us. And if you have a load of qualifications under your belt you’re going to look more appealing to employers. So yeah, I might have had all this time off since becoming really poorly and then having my son and now having another one, but while I’m not looking for work, I can still be doing things that make me more employable.
Participant Reflections on Opportunity and Change:
What impact is the project having?

If I’ve got any problems I can say, ‘Yeah I wanna do it but I’ve got this or that’. And then they’ll help you work out a solution rather than saying, ‘Actually don’t do it then’.

To broaden our understanding of how Opportunity and Change is having an impact, we asked participants to tell us about the positive difference the programme was making, by describing some of the key changes that were happening for them.

Revisiting the Theory of Change/Logic Model developed in the early stages of the programme evaluation14, there were three overarching impact aims of the programme, in relation to participants:

- **Living independently and securely**: participants will be better equipped to manage crises and less dependent on support services
- **Better health and wellbeing**: participants will have reduced or better managed complex needs
- **Increased economic and social inclusion**: participant engagement in job search, education or training, volunteering, or employment; contributing more broadly to the economic regeneration of local communities.

These impact aims can be broken down into outcomes, as illustrated in the table below. The outcomes provided a useful framework for analysing and interpreting the interview data. They can be seen as factors that underpin or contribute to the broader impact aims of the programme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive attitudes and beliefs</th>
<th>Improved Knowledge and Skills</th>
<th>Lifestyle and behavioural changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence and self-esteem</td>
<td>Improved personal, social, life and work skills</td>
<td>Improved social networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased self-awareness and self-realisation</td>
<td>Better understanding of where to get help and support if needed</td>
<td>Improved relationships with families and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation and hope</td>
<td>Individuals better equipped to manage crises and less dependent on support services</td>
<td>Engagement in ‘meaningful activity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improved health and wellbeing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Positive attitudes and beliefs

Increased confidence and self-esteem:

I feel like I’m a different person already, from when I started […] I’ve got loads more confidence. I might still get anxious, [but it’s] sometimes, instead of all the time. And just recently I’ve been able to stand up for myself a little bit more. Yeah, I think the confidence thing is the biggest.

Increased self-awareness and self-realisation:

When you have some value of yourself, if you learn your true value, you realise you don’t have to put up with anyone’s crap and you can walk away and be the better person […] then you […] receive off people what you deserve really.

You can always sit there and say, ‘I’m not ready’, but people are just scared of change I think […] I’m still taking those steps, but it’s no longer a bad thing in my head, it’s exciting because I’m on a journey, it’s a learning curve. At the end of the day I believe I can, I can do these things.

Motivation and hope for the future:

I have plans now. I’ve got more ambition, focus and aims, and I didn’t have that before […] I just started to feel a bit better in myself, a bit more awake […] alive, it’s like I just woke up in myself one day […] I started focussing on what I can achieve, rather than staying where I shouldn’t really be.

I think if you really want to do something, you will find a way of doing it […] I want to change, I don’t want to have repeat bad relationships, and risk my own mental and physical health as well as my son’s […] Because I want them to live happy, healthy lives.

[My Navigator] said to start thinking about work and what I enjoy doing, but I’d never actually sat and thought about it. So she just said to think about, if you could have a job, what would it be, or what do you enjoy doing? So that’s my next thing to do, to see what sort of job I would like to do, when I’ve got to where I need to be to get a job […]

Improved knowledge and skills

Improved personal, social, life and work skills:

I have learned new ways of coping with my mental health, like meditating, reading […] I do all this now just to keep my mind occupied, keep feeding it with stuff I want it to throw back at me.

Better understanding of where to get help and support if needed:

I’m starting a new job soon. I’m a bit nervous and scared, I’m thinking, will I manage financially? What do I do if it all goes wrong? And you know, things like that […] But I know I can still come back to [the host organisation] for support if I need to.

14 - See Annex C
Lifestyle and behavioural changes

Improved social networks:

[I’ve been] getting out, and meeting new people […] Now my son’s started at nursery and is making new friends, I’m going out and having some time for me as well.

Improved relationships with families and communities:

I’m doing so well and I’m seeing a difference in my home life and with my son […] I think it’s because I’m more positive […]

I can speak to people now, like if someone at the bus stop asks me, ‘Has the bus gone?’ I’ll reply, whereas before I’d think, ‘I can’t be bothered to tell you’. It was a horrible feeling, I used to think, ‘Just leave me alone!’ And it was like that everywhere I went, I didn’t communicate with anybody. But now I do.

Engagement in ‘meaningful activity’:

When I completed the nail tech course, that was something I’d wanted to do for a really long time […] Doing that course was the point I thought, I’m gonna be somebody again, and it just made me feel good, you know, that self-worth […]

[In the next six months] I’m going to learn a bit more reading and writing, then hopefully I’m going to go round and see if there is something voluntary I can do.

Improved health and wellbeing:

It makes me happy when I go home, I like to just stay in some days. When I lived in my old house I used to walk the streets just to get out of there […] it made me feel like I wanted to die […] now I don’t, I want to live a long time now […]

Better able to manage independently:

I would say I’m seeing less people, professionals I mean. I’m still with the psychiatrist, but I only see him about twice a year, I get a bit scared about having no support but I will be alright I’m sure […] so there’s less people involved with me now, and I’m trying to be more independent […]

Distance Travelled Questionnaire

In February 2018, an additional set of ten questions were added to the support needs assessment. These questions were designed as a tool for participants to assess and then reflect, through discussion with their Navigator, upon their own ‘distance travelled’ in relation to:

• Confidence and self-esteem
• Communication skills
• Self-awareness

The trends identified in the distance travelled scores are in line with the qualitative feedback provided by participants during their in-depth interviews. Of the eight participants whom were interviewed, six had completed three distance travelled self-assessment questionnaires over an average period of six and a half months.

Analysis of their distance travelled scores revealed that over time:

• All participants had increased confidence and self-esteem
• Most participants felt increasingly able to respond to difficult or challenging situations, and felt more confident interacting with other people
• Most participants had a better understanding of how and where to access support when needed
• The majority were motivated to try new things such as group activities, training, volunteering and hobbies. For four individuals, accessing education or training became an increasing priority
• All participants felt better equipped to find a job: with a range of practical tools and resources, as well as personal and transferrable skills.

In order to more comprehensively assess the impact of engaging with Opportunity and Change, in the next year the Evaluation Lead and Quality and Monitoring Officer will be undertaking a more in-depth analysis of the distance travelled data alongside SNA and engagement data, across the entire cohort of Opportunity and Change participants.
This section of the report provides a review of the overall performance of Opportunity and Change up to the end of 2018, against its profiled targets, and includes:

- Project Referrals
- Project Outputs, Results, and Outcomes

### Project Referrals

In 2018, 335 individuals were referred to Opportunity and Change and 277 started receiving support. Of those who started:

- 17.62% were **Self-Referrals**
- 38.70% individuals already engaging with a partner organisation, accessed Opportunity and Change as **Internal Referrals**
- 43.68% individuals were referred in to the project, as **External Referrals**.

In 2016-17, there were fewer people self-referring to the project (6.8%), more internal referrals (50%), and around the same number of external referrals (43.2%). The table below shows the agencies that made the most referrals into Opportunity and Change in 2018. In the ‘other’ category, referral agencies included: Occupational Therapy, Counselling services, and Citizen’s Advice Bureau:

*Most common external referral agencies across the partnership in 2018*

In 2018 there was a 10% increase in referrals from the Local Authority (Children and Families) and 5.5% more referrals from Mental Health Services (statutory and non-statutory). In comparison to 2016-17, there was a reduction (of around 5.0%) in referrals from Employment and Skills Services, Women’s Services, and the Local Authority (Housing).
Project Outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUTS AT END OF DECEMBER 2018</th>
<th>PROJECT TARGETS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>+/- TO TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>37 (+5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of men</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>73 (+22.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of women</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>37 (-88.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who are unemployed,</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>-7 (97.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who are economically</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>44 (+13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inactive, including long-term</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>15 (+14.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployment</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>386 (+296.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number from ethnic minorities</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>53 (+67.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the end of 2018, Opportunity and Change was on its way to meeting or exceeding all project output targets; supporting 687 participants across D2N2 against a profile target of 650. Similarly to the first year of delivery, the project had supported more males (57.9%) than females (41.9%) 15. At the time of writing, the project had worked with more unemployed and economically inactive participants than profiled, as well as individuals over the age of 50. A proportionally high number of individuals from BAME groups and people with disabilities and chronic health conditions, continued to access the project in 2018. These figures illustrate the demand for projects like Opportunity and Change across D2N2.

Project Results against Profile

Outcome One: Reducing Complex Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>TARGET NUMBER SEPT. 2019</th>
<th>END OF DECEMBER 2018</th>
<th>+/- TO TARGET NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who move into education or training on leaving</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who move into employment, including self-employment, on leaving</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number that were economically inactive move into job-searching on leaving</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An exercise undertaken by the project lead towards the end of 2018, revealed that a total of 54 participants who started Opportunity and Change with an ‘economically inactive’ status, had completed some employment-related activity but were continuing to engage with support. Although this activity is not claimable against the project results targets, it does provide some reassurance that work is being completed to support participants to increase their employability and commence job searching.

By the end of 2018 Opportunity and Change was still working towards their overall targets, and had faced a number of challenges. For example, in autumn 2017, BBO Funding Officers confirmed that attendance of Skills Plus for Change could not be counted towards a training result. Subsequently this led to a reduction in the project’s targets around training and education, from 195 to a more achievable 85.

The number of economically inactive participants commencing job-search or other employment-related activity at the point of exiting the project has remained consistently low. It has been suggested this could be due to concerns raised by participants that declaring a change in their economic status upon exiting the project might have an adverse impact on their welfare benefits later down the line.

At the end of 2017 there were very few outcomes being recorded onto Hanlon. In response to this, the Project Lead and Auditors provided more intensive support to Navigators regarding the outcomes process, which led to an increase of recorded outcomes in 2018. However, capturing and monitoring progression in relation to reducing complex needs, remains problematic for a number of reasons:

- The process of recording and monitoring outcomes onto numerous Change Plans and Hanlon is widely regarded by delivery staff as overcomplicated and time consuming. This has caused frustration, particularly for Navigators. The project lead has acknowledged this feedback, and committed to making improvements to monitoring systems and processes if funding for the project is extended beyond 2019.
- The difficulties encountered by participants are, by definition, multiple and complex; with many problems and needs fluctuating, resurfacing or changing shape over time. It is therefore a challenge for Navigators and participants to decide when an outcome has been achieved, and the most appropriate point in the participant’s journey to record this onto Hanlon.
- The quality of data entered onto Hanlon in support of outcomes claimed is inconsistent. Given the complexity of need amongst participants, individual circumstances leading to an outcome can be quite subjective, therefore evidence can appear disparate. To enable a more robust analysis of outcomes to take place, however, it would be beneficial to improve the quality of information entered onto Hanlon.

15 - By 31/03/19, the total number of female participants to access the project had increased to 313, reaching 96.3% of the project’s profile target in relation to females.
The following series of examples illustrate the diversity of participant need, and relative milestones of achievement. They have been extracted from notes recorded onto Hanlon by Navigators in support of outcomes claimed during 2018. This information also serves to highlight the dynamic, intersecting nature of multiple and complex problems, and the need for a holistic and flexible approach to addressing them.

**Housing-related Outcomes**

### Example 1:
Roland now has more appropriate and secure housing. Housing Benefit is in place along with discretionary Housing Benefit. He has received support to get a cooker, carpets, a bed and bedding to furnish his new flat. Roland has also received help to set up a bank account, and arrange direct debits to pay his bills.

### Example 2:
Callum has managed to declutter and make more space in the house, by clearing out old furniture and baby items. Callum is no longer at risk of losing his home due to obstructions causing a fire risk, and the council are satisfied with the progress he has made.

### Example 3:
Through attending the Skills Plus for Change Housing and Money Matter modules, Lisa has gained a better understanding of her finances and how to budget, which will help her to sustain her tenancy and keep up to date with her housing-related costs.

**Substance Misuse-related Outcomes**

### Example 1:
Jane states that since attending Skills Plus for Change (Shopping on a Budget), not only has she learned how to save money when buying groceries, she also felt encouraged to buy lower percentage alcohol, and has since been buying 4% alcohol instead of 7%. Jane stated this was a positive change that she was unable to do by herself, for 25 years. I asked Jane how she felt after reducing the percentage: she said she feels lighter, clearer in her thinking and not as groggy with more energy. Jane has also been trying to reduce her daily intake of alcohol - instead of drinking every day, she has been trying to drink every other day and so far has been able to do this consistently. Jane states that, since engaging with Opportunity and Change, she feels happier and has something positive to work towards.

### Example 2:
Paul has been attending Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous and Alcohol Anonymous meetings regularly for the past 6 months, and now considers himself to be ‘abstinent’ rather than ‘drug and alcohol dependent’. Although Paul has continued to request full support on his needs assessment, this is in relation to education and training as a way of moving forward from his previous drug and alcohol-dependent lifestyle.

### Example 3:
Luca has been working on a healthier lifestyle with the swim/gym membership, and also attending the drug and alcohol abstinence group on a regular basis. Luca continues to work with his Community Psychiatric Nurse to improve his mental well-being, and states that his regular engagement with this support has increased his ability to manage his substance misuse issues.

**Mental Health-related Outcomes**

### Example 1:
Ryan successfully enrolled and completed a short course facilitated by the Princes Trust. He enjoyed the course and says he now feels less anxious in social situations as a result. Ryan was very proud of his achievements: showing staff and friends his certificates and talking about what he had been doing. Since completing the course Ryan has said he is open to looking at other training and qualifications.

### Example 2:
With financial and practical support to use public transport, Ella feels more independent, as she is no longer relying on her husband or friends to travel to appointments. Ella says that with the help she has received from her Navigator, she also feels empowered and more confident in responding to her son’s challenging behaviour. After completing some meditation and mindfulness sessions, Ella has recognised that taking time out for herself is important for her mental wellbeing. Ella is looking forward to starting her counselling and is feeling more positive and motivated overall.

### Example 3:
With financial assistance from Opportunity and Change, Ruby has joined and now regularly attends a local gym, and feels more positive about her physical and mental wellbeing. Ruby has attended Skills Plus for Change, which she says makes her feel valued and listened to, as others seem to gain from her contributions in the sessions. Ruby has also learned new ways of coping with anxiety when issues occur in her everyday life. Ruby has been finding counselling really beneficial as she is able to talk through her past experiences.

**Domestic Abuse-related Outcomes**

### Example 1:
Ian feels that his current relationship is going well and he doesn't feel at risk of domestic abuse. Ian is motivated to engage with support now, in relation to the historical sexual abuse he experienced as a child. He feels happy that he has been referred to [a local men's charity] for support in relation to this.

### Example 2:
Greta is living with her long-term partner of 20 years who she states, has on occasion been physically abusive in the past, and is now verbally and psychologically abusive. Greta struggled to accept that her partner’s behaviour could be deemed as abusive, but that his behaviour had left her feeling inadequate, overly dependent and lacking in confidence. Greta was referred to and attended the Freedom Programme, but struggled with the topics discussed as she related them to her own relationship. Although Greta did not feel able to complete the Freedom Programme whilst having counselling, she stated that she felt more empowered to challenge her partner when he made negative remarks, and was proud of herself for being more assertive in their relationship. Hearing other participants describing their experiences of abuse had made Greta realise that her partner was behaving in a similar way.

### Example 3:
Amy previously suffered from abuse in childhood, and up until last year suffered from emotional abuse and stalking from her mother. Through the help and support of her Navigator, Amy was able to make a statement to the police to help stop the abuse she was facing from her mother. Amy started accessing counselling and found it extremely beneficial. Amy has ‘cut out’ the negative family and friends in her life and is on the right path to turning her life around completely.
Offending-related Outcomes

Example 1: Gill is currently on probation following an arson offence. With support from her Probation Officer and myself (Navigator), Gill has successfully managed to comply with all the requirements of her probation order and has ultimately reduced her risk of re-offending by adopting a more positive outlook and willingness to try new things. Gill has attended Equine Assisted Therapy, a theatre workshop and has completed a Makaton course, all of which have helped Gill to stay focused and to think more positively about her future.

Example 2: Gary explained that now he feels settled in a safe, warm and comfortable home after being housed by the District Council (support provided by Navigator with this process), his life is more stable, and therefore he is less likely to get himself in the wrong kind of situation.

Example 3: Simon stated that with a reduction in his alcohol intake, and what he feels is an improvement in his mental health (although still experiencing anxiety), this has helped him to remain out of trouble with the police. Simon does believe that he will commit any further offences, and does not want to be in that situation again.

Outcome Two: Improving Confidence, Skills and Independence

Skills Plus for Change (SP4C) is a specialist service that delivers a life skills training package to Opportunity and Change participants. Modules include: Housing, Money Matters, Positive Wellbeing, Healthy Living, Employability and Skills for Life. Session attendance continued to improve throughout the second year of project delivery, with the most popular modules being Positive Wellbeing and Healthy Living. However, by the end of 2018, only 51.97% of all participants had enrolled to attend Skills Plus for Change.

Analysis of feedback indicates several contributing factors, including:

- Insufficient ‘buy-in’ from Navigators. For example, some have said the programme does not meet participant need because it is ‘too basic’, while others consider participants they support to be ‘too unwell’ or ‘not ready’ to engage in group-based learning.
- Although Navigators are required to provide information to participants about SP4C at their induction, it is ultimately the participant’s decision whether or not they enrol and attend the programme.
- Participants gave mixed feedback about their experiences of attending SP4C. Some felt encouraged by their Navigator to attend but found the sessions were ‘a step back’ as they did not ‘challenge’ them enough, whereas others had initial anxieties about attending group-based learning, but found the experience to be highly rewarding.

As well as helping participants to develop their skills and confidence, SP4C also provides opportunities for participants to gain work experience by training as Volunteer Learning Assistants and helping to facilitate SP4C sessions. One volunteer described some of the benefits of attending SP4C, initially as a learner, and more recently in her role as a Volunteer Learning Assistant:

- I was losing my house when I first started coming to the sessions, and my children were on the Child Protection Register […] but they’re not anymore, and I’m not losing my home, I won the battle with the council. [Skills Plus for Change] has given me the strength to do that, I can fight things face on now. I know what I need to do, and that’s what being here has done.

- […] You learn how to help other people without even knowing that you’re helping them. I mean [the SP4C Worker] would say, ‘We’ve got a new starter, can you just sit with them today and help them?’, and I didn’t realise it was part of a bigger picture, you know, and that person needed a boost with their confidence, and that’s something [I’ve realised] I’m really good at!

- […] I need to give back now what I’ve gained. Eventually I would like to work in hostels, so I can help other people learn that they can change from where they’ve been”.

Outcome Three: Increasing Employability

In relation to Outcome Three, 1-2-1 job coaching and support consists of any employment-related activity or intervention recorded onto the MIS. By the end of 2018, this included:

- 57 participants attending a job interview (of whom 30 were economically inactive when they first accessed Opportunity and Change)

In relation to Outcome Three, 1-2-1 job coaching and support consists of any employment-related activity or intervention recorded onto the MIS. By the end of 2018, this included:

- 57 participants attending a job interview (of whom 30 were economically inactive when they first accessed Opportunity and Change)

17 - Since we interviewed the Volunteer Learning Assistant as part of the evaluation of Opportunity and Change, we were very pleased to hear recently that she has achieved her aim of securing paid employment as a Support Worker in a local hostel.
• 75 participants completing a job search activity (of whom 39 were economically inactive)
• 30 participants starting a volunteer placement (of whom 18 were economically inactive).

There is increasing evidence of participant’s engagement in employment-related support whilst accessing Opportunity and Change. There are, however, a number of issues impacting on performance and the recording of results, and we begin to explore these in more depth in Section Four of this report.

**Outcome Four: The Care Act**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>TARGET NUMBER</th>
<th>TOTAL AT END OF 2018</th>
<th>% TO TARGET NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants screened for eligibility to undertake a full Care Act Assessment</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authorities are fulfilling their duties under the Care Act</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is growing evidence that people with multiple and complex needs are not being adequately assessed for entitlement to additional provision under The Care Act (2015). Simply put, the ultimate aim of the Act is to support vulnerable people to live as independently as possible, and prevent existing problems from escalating further. Examples of successful allocation of provision under The Care Act (2015) include: a personal budget to help finance additional care and support, being signposted to specialist community mental health services or occupational therapy, and receiving equipment or adaptations for the home.

In order to increase the number of participants being assessed for this provision, a dedicated Care Act Team was appointed on behalf of Opportunity and Change, and includes:

- In Derbyshire: 1 x Social Worker and 1 x Advocate, employed by Derbyshire Law Centre
- In Nottinghamshire: 1 x Social Worker (‘Personal Budget Assessor’) and 1 x Community and Social Work Manager, employed by Nottinghamshire YMCA.

Since the start of Opportunity and Change, the Care Act Team has:

- Supported 160 eligible participants (23.29%) to undertake a full Care Act Assessment
- Made a further 96 participant referrals (13.97%) to additional specialist services.

Following these interventions:

- 36 participants (22.50% of those deemed eligible) were successfully allocated provision by Adult Social Care
- 20 (12.50%) of these were awarded a personal budget to pay for additional care and support.

Across D2N2, the four Local Authority Stakeholder Managers have supported the work of the Care Act Team by promoting it to a wide range of stakeholders, and have helped develop relationships with key members of staff within Local Authority Social Care teams. Their involvement to date has helped to break down complex barriers in the process of making referrals to Adult Social Care, improve communication, and increase understanding of processes to encourage more cohesive partnership working.

The Care Act Team have faced and overcome considerable challenges in the first two years of project delivery. In 2019 a joint evaluation of the Care Act related work taking place across D2N2 will be undertaken, focusing in particular on Nottingham City, where Framework’s Street Outreach Team and Opportunity Nottingham have adopted a similar Care Act delivery model to Opportunity and Change.

In addition, the evaluation team are currently making a short film to promote the work of the Care Act Team, and present some real life case studies demonstrating the impact this work is having on participant’s lives.

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18 - For more information, visit: [http://www.opportunitynottingham.co.uk](http://www.opportunitynottingham.co.uk)
This concluding section of the report summarises some of the key challenges encountered by the project management team and delivery staff during the second year of Opportunity and Change; the subsequent learning that has taken place; and a series of recommendations. This section draws upon a range of data, including:

- Secondary analysis of 2018 Project Progress Reports: compiled by Framework and submitted to BBO funders on a quarterly basis
- Focus groups with Partner Managers, Local Authority Stakeholder Managers, and Navigators: autumn 2018
- Interviews with the Project Lead Team: December 2018
- Consultation with Local Authority Stakeholder Managers: January 2019

The aim of Opportunity and Change, is to support people with multiple and complex needs across D2N2 to move closer towards the labour market. This aim is clear from the results and outcomes targets set out in the Project Plan; Opportunity and Change: A Pathway to Work (2016). However, feedback from partners and stakeholders indicates it could be beneficial for the Project Lead to reiterate this message as we progress further into 2019.

People with multiple and complex needs deserve to have access to high quality employment-related support, including: help to access training, education, volunteering, job searching, or paid work. People with multiple and complex needs should not have to repeatedly hear from services that are not providing a holistic package of support, that they must address their complex needs before even thinking about employment. The Opportunity and Change project was developed on the principle that people with multiple and complex needs should be offered support to address their problems, alongside support to move closer towards the labour market. There is a strong evidence base to suggest that engaging in employment or work-related activity helps - not all, but many people to make positive, lasting changes in their lives and progress with their recovery in relation to mental ill health or addiction, for example.

In autumn 2018, Navigators took part in a focus group and were asked whether they saw Opportunity and Change primarily as ‘an employability service, a multiple and complex needs service, or both’. Few Navigators acknowledged that the project offers support in relation to both; with the majority referring to a perceived ‘shift in focus’ across its lifetime, driven by the project lead. They explained, what initially felt like a service to help people with multiple and complex needs to overcome their barriers, had over time become more ‘targeted’ towards supporting people into training, education and employment. A small number of these staff said they felt under pressure to discourage participants with the ‘highest need’ from engaging, and instead focus their attentions on participants more apparently ready to enter work, training, education or job search.

In their communications with the partnership, the project lead have increasingly emphasised the importance of supporting participants towards achieving an ‘outcome’ or ‘result’, and ensuring that progression is recorded effectively. At the same time, the project lead has also stressed to partners that improvement in results targets should not occur at the expense of limiting access to the project for those with ‘higher’ complex needs. Opportunity and Change has relatively low results targets in comparison to other employment-related support initiatives; enabling Navigators to work intensively and holistically with smaller caseloads, and remain flexible with their time. Therefore the project should have the capacity to continue supporting individuals furthest away from the labour market and still achieve its results targets.

Although most Navigators recognised the importance of offering flexible support over a longer period of time, and ‘including employment as part of the discussion’, a few said that the client group they supported were ‘unemployable’, or ‘not ready’ to go to work. Further to this, some Navigators said they had experienced difficulty in promoting and communicating the project aims to new participants and referring agencies:

- It’s difficult to promote the service to people openly, by talking about the end points at the beginning, because people aren’t there yet, but that’s what we are required to do.
- When you first start working with someone they will say ‘I’m not ready for employment’, but as you get to know the person you can then discuss it further down the line.
- Whilst promoting to external agencies, they ‘zone in’ on the complex needs provision and they don’t hear the [employability] side, so we get quite a few referrals for people who aren’t in a position to work.

This feedback implies that not everyone is confident or in agreement with the concept that individuals can move closer towards work, alongside addressing their multiple and complex problems. Perhaps engagement with employment-related support and activity is more commonly regarded as something that takes place at the end of a perceived linear pathway towards recovery or resettlement, rather than embedded as part of an ongoing, often life-long, process.

In order to ensure the aim of Opportunity and Change is communicated clearly and effectively moving forward, the following recommendations are suggested:

- A review and update of all promotional literature and communications, including information on the Opportunity and Change leaflets, banners, website and social media
- Navigator support via caseload reviews facilitated by the project lead, to ensure project aims and objectives are being met consistently through effective provision
- Observations carried out to ensure the project aim is being communicated clearly with participants during their induction
- Further clarification and guidance from the Managing Authority and the National Lottery Community Fund, in relation to the ‘job search’ result target would be useful. Participants need firmer reassurance that signing a declaration about job seeking will not have any adverse impact on their welfare benefits.

Disengaged Participants: although large amounts of data are collected as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of Opportunity and Change, the majority of this information relates to engaging participants, with less known about those who disengage. This includes:

- a) Participants who started receiving support and later stopped (excluding those ‘exited’ after a result was claimed)
- b) Referred individuals who never started receiving support.

By the end of 2018, 325 participants (47%) had a ‘disengaged’ status on Hanlon; almost half of all starts since 2016. And in 2018 there were 58 individuals known to have been referred to Opportunity and Change who never started; almost one fifth (17.31%) of all 2018 referrals. It is important to increase our understanding of why individuals disengage, in order to:

- Ensure the project continues to meet its aim and the individual needs of participants
- Monitor and improve access to provision for those with the most complex barriers

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The capacity of Navigators to deliver employment-related support remains an area for development. Navigators reported that they wanted support to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver employment-related information, advice and guidance:

- Navigators should be provided with training on their overall approach to employability with participants. For example, strengths or asset-based coaching, and motivational interviewing, within the context of employability, are both useful approaches. In line with the project’s aim to develop capacity and a new support model is likely to be implemented if Opportunity and Change continues beyond 2019.

Although it can be difficult to obtain feedback directly from individuals if they stop engaging, Navigators and other front-line delivery staff often carry key pieces of information which, when shared, can provide a better understanding of the participant’s circumstances. It is therefore recommended that the Evaluation Lead and Quality and Monitoring Officer meet with the project lead and Hanlon, to establish more efficient processes of capturing data about why participants disengage.

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It is therefore recommended that the Navigator Group Supervision model is revised. At the time of writing, discussions had already taken place between the project lead and the clinical group supervision provider, and a new support model is likely to be implemented if Opportunity and Change continues beyond 2019.

Reviewing and improving systems and processes. Members of the project lead team and partners have suggested a number of improvements to deliver paperwork and the processes involved in recording and monitoring outcomes and results. For example, it was almost unanimously agreed that creating and reviewing multiple change plans is an onerous task that does not reflect the intersecting nature of complex needs and barriers. The project lead has agreed to develop this document, taking on board feedback and suggestions offered by partner managers and Navigators during autumn 2018. Other internal delivery paperwork, including the Support Needs Assessment and Care Act Screening Questionnaire, will also be revised in the event of an extension of funding.

In addition, improvements to the MIS, Hanlon, are recommended in order to streamline the process of recording activities, outcomes and results, and improve the quality of data that is captured for monitoring and evaluation purposes. For example, it would be advantageous to:

- Revise and refine understanding and definitions of activities and their relation to outcomes and results; sharing any written guidance across the partnership
- Regroup activities, and ‘narrow down’ options of how and where to record data on Hanlon; to avoid information being lost or duplicated in reporting, and to make the MIS more user-friendly
- Enable more qualitative data to be captured using free text boxes. The information provided by some Navigators in support of participant outcomes claimed, for example, was extremely valuable to this evaluation. It could be beneficial to provide Navigators with additional guidance, to ensure that qualitative data is recorded in a more standardised format.

Local Authority Stakeholder Managers: In November 2017, four Stakeholder Managers were appointed at a strategic level within their D2N2 local authorities (Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Derby, Derbyshire), to work with the three strands of BBO. Their role is to engage, and work collaboratively with the public, private and third sector stakeholders to:

- The sessions lack structure: printouts are shared and themes are planned in advance, but these aren’t always followed
- Not all Navigators appear to be invested in the sessions, and as one Navigator commented, ‘You get out what you put in - it only works if you participate’
- Navigators having to travel long distances or out of their delivery area to access group supervisions, feel their time could be utilised more effectively.
Since being in post, the Stakeholder Managers have been involved in a broad range of activity, including:

- Represent the three strands of BBO at operational and strategic meetings to promote the programme, create opportunities to work collaboratively, and share best practice
- Ensure that BBO complements and adds value to existing provision and avoids duplication, sharing information about the programme with the Local Authority and LEP
- Understand the local employment landscape and identify gaps in provision to support D2N2 commissioning of future ESF funding.

Since being in post, the Stakeholder Managers have been involved in a broad range of activity, including:

- Developing links between Nottingham City Council Adult Social Care, and Care Act teams (Opportunity and Change, Framework, Opportunity Nottingham) delivering across Nottingham City. This is a move towards a model whereby a single Care Act assessment is carried out by the Care Act teams on behalf of the Council, to avoid duplicating work
- Establishing data sharing agreements with Derbyshire County Council across Troubled Families, NEET support services, and also Derbyshire Police
- Working with Public Health teams to develop stronger links between health and employment
- Establishing links with Nottingham City Housing to create referral routes, as employment has a role in helping to sustain tenancies
- Establishing links with Children’s Centres to create referral routes into provision, for example for women who have completed the Freedom Programme
- Creating and distributing a BBO D2N2 Referral Guide, sharing this with DWP and the National Careers Service.

Analysis of participant feedback on their experiences of attending Loudspeaker, indicates they have benefitted from the programme in a number of ways:

**Improved social networks:**
- It’s improved my confidence a lot. It’s given me some drive and motivation to get up and do things with my life. It’s brought back the spark of enjoyment from doing art and made me want to pursue it further. Also it’s made me want to volunteer and help other women.

**Increased Self-Esteem:**
- I’m going to take away the happy faces from today. I’ve spent a few years feeling invisible – but now I realise that people do see me – that I am actually here. I [don’t feel] bullied here and I feel accepted, it’s non-judgmental here and people are so nice to me.

**Improved Health and Wellbeing:**
- At the beginning of Loudspeaker I explained that I have problems with my mental health. So today, this is the first time that I have travelled on public transport in years. Loudspeaker for me is not just about being part of an art group although I love that, it’s about pushing my boundaries, and I’ve done that and I love the art.

**Improved Communication and Social Skills:**
- Before, I would avoid small talk, but coming here has made me comfortable with chatting to others.

**Increased Self-Awareness:**
- I’ve had to learn to be more tolerant – to take on board other people’s voices and opinions, and not say ‘no, it’s this way’ […] Normally I’m a bit of a loner but I’ve chosen to sit back more and listen to other people […]
# Annex B: Opportunity and Change Support Needs Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name:</th>
<th>Signature:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Contact No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigator Name:</td>
<td>Signature:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please select one of the following statements that applies to you in each support need box.

## Housing Stability
Please select one of the following:

- Sleeping Rough (8)
- Sofa Surfing or vulnerably housed (6)
- Living in short term/temporary accommodation (supported housing) (4)
- Issues with sustaining tenancy (2)
- In stable accommodation (0)

What level of support do you require?

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<th>1</th>
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## Mental Health
Please select one of the following:

- Recurring/persistent mental health condition with significant impact on everyday life (8)
- Recurring/persistent mental health condition with moderate impact on everyday life (6)
- Recurring/persistent mental health condition with limited impact on everyday life (4)
- Mild and moderate mental health issues with limited impact on everyday life (2)
- No mental health issues (0)

What level of support do you require?

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## Substance Misuse
Please select one of the following:

- Drug or alcohol dependence – daily abuse that causes severe impairment of functioning (8)
- Recurrent use of alcohol or drugs with significant effect on functioning (6)
- Some use of alcohol or drugs with some effect on functioning (4)
- Occasional use of alcohol or drugs without impairment (2)
- Abstinence – no use of alcohol or drugs (0)

What level of support do you require?

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## Offending
Please select one of the following:

- Currently serving sentence or awaiting sentencing (8)
- Prolific recent record of offending and anti-social behaviour (6)
- At risk of offending (4)
- No recent offending but have a previous conviction (2)
- No offending history (0)

What level of support do you require?

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## Substance Misuse
Please select one of the following:

- Currently living in an abusive relationship or living in a refuge (8)
- Repeated experience of abusive relationship (6)
- Previous experience of living in an abusive relationship (4)
- At risk of abuse from others (2)
- No experience of Domestic Abuse (0)

What level of support do you require?

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**Total Support Needs Assessment Score**

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[92] OPPORTUNITY AND CHANGE
Project Aims:
- The overall project aim is to support 650 people across D2N2 with multiple and complex needs to move closer to the labour market.
- In addition the project aims to improve partnership working and collaboration in the D2N2 region across the voluntary, public and private sectors.
- Furthermore the project aims to influence system change by ensuring Local Authorities meet their duty to people with multiple and complex needs under the Care Act (2015).

Participant Activity:
- Engagement in a range of support and interventions reflecting the individual’s Change Plan; aiming ultimately to reduce complex needs and increase employability.
- Building positive social networks.
- Involvement & participation (SEA, Mentoring, Volunteering Peer Research).

Navigator/Delivery Staff Activity:
- 1 to 1 and group support: holistic; flexible; person-centred; consistent; reliable; trust building; empowering.
- Navigators working intensively with small caseloads.
- Navigators investing time listening to participants, and enabling them to work ‘at their own pace’.
- Signposting, advocacy & partnership working.
- Care Act Referrals.
- Ongoing training and clinical group supervision.

Partnership Activity:
- FHA as lead partner developing robust and effective performance management systems and processes, providing ongoing training and support, and frequent engagement/communication with partners.
- Partners engaging with the support available from the lead.
- Collaborative work across the partnership.
- Social Workers and LA Stakeholder Managers collaborating to maximise access to provision under the Care Act.
- Ongoing training & supervision of Navigators facilitated through the partnership.

Participant Outcomes:
- More positive attitudes and beliefs:
  - Confidence & self esteem.
  - Self awareness & self realisation.
  - Motivation & hope.
  - Resilience & empowerment.
  - Trust in services.
  - Belief in own capacity.

- Improved knowledge/skills:
  - Improved personal, social, life & work skills.
  - Better understanding of where to get help and support if needed.
  - Better able to manage independently.

- Lifestyle/behavioural changes:
  - Improved support networks.
  - Improved relationships with families and communities.
  - Engagement in ‘meaningful activity’.
  - Improved health & wellbeing.

Navigator Outcomes:
- Improved knowledge, skills & confidence to support people with multiple & complex needs including delivering employment-related support.

Partnership Outcomes:
- Improved knowledge and capacity to deliver National Lottery Community Fund/ESF funded contracts.
- Improved collaborative working.
- Raised profile of smaller organisations.
- Improved capacity to deliver employment-related support to people with multiple & complex needs.
- Increased number of Care Act assessments taking place.

Participant Impacts:
- Living independently and securely: Individuals better equipped to manage crises and less dependent on support services.
- Better health and wellbeing: Reduced or better managed complex needs.
- Increased economic and social inclusion: Engagement in job search, education/training, volunteering or employment, contributing more broadly to the economic regeneration of local communities.

Better Partnership Working:
- Collaboration across partnership and geographies becomes embedded and part of future organisational cultures. All partners have improved capacity through knowledge and skills transfer.

System Change:
- An effective, transparent process in place to ensure Local Authorities are meeting their duty to vulnerable people under the Care Act so people with multiple and complex needs have access to long term support beyond Opportunity and Change.