

Appendix A - Formative Evaluation Report

The evaluation below sets out the performance of the South Somerset Families Project (SSFP) for 2020/21. The SSFP provides one-to-one tailored support offered by Outreach Link Workers and Volunteer Mentors to support the client and show them there is a chance that life can be different both now and for generations to come.

The project aim is to provide support across South Somerset to struggling families to help them to be in a better position to help themselves. The target outcomes for the three years of the project are:

- Creation of a more stable environment within families
- Improved mental and physical health
- Increased attendance and educational attainment of children
- Decreased engagement of families with public services
- Reduce the number of children living in poverty
- Improve the chances that a person born into disadvantage will do well in school and get a well-paid job
- Improve the quality of life for struggling families
- To reduce the number of families reaching the point of struggling 18.

In the long term, subject to the project's success and continuation beyond the first three years, the target outcomes are:

- Reduced rates of child poverty
- Increased rates of social mobility
- Improved educational attainment of children from poorer families – closing the gap on those from non-poor backgrounds
- Higher skill levels amongst South Somerset's young people that had better match the needs of local employers and the modern economy
- Contribution towards reducing deprivation in South Somerset and a reduction in the number of neighbourhoods in the top 20% most deprived nationally

SSFP works with all types of families and individuals whether there are children and young people, cared for by one or two adults regardless of faith, identity, race, disability, marital status, social class, age or sexual preference

The highlights from the first year are:-

- Dedicated teams of link-workers are now in post and operating in the more disadvantaged areas of Chard, Wincanton and Yeovil East (Westfield and Birchfield). These teams are working with local partners such as schools, health visitors, primary health care and community organisations to identify and work with families at risk of entering into a period of crisis.
- The biggest drivers of need identified during recent delivery have been parental mental health, loss of control, social isolation, child mental health, school attendance and debt.
- Referrals are received from local agencies and such is the demand that there is now a waiting list.
- Targeted pieces of additional work are being developed to respond to particular issues that have emerged in recent months. This includes:-

- new provision for teens in families facing challenges (including links with Yeovil Rugby Club)
- post-Covid nature-based wellbeing work
- Targeted pilot work in Crewkerne to improve wellbeing, as approx. 40% of those currently on the waiting list live in Crewkerne.

Project Outcomes

In 2020/21, South Somerset Families program (SSFP) received 145 requests for support (121 families and 24 individuals). Referrals came from a diverse group of professionals as outlined in the table below:

Table 1 Referral Sources to SSFP year ending 31st March 2021

Referral Source	Families	Singles	Total
School	49	1	50
Family Intervention Service	22	2	24
Abri	5	6	11
CSC	9	1	10
Health Visitor	10		10
Surgery	5		5
Counseling4Yeovil		4	4
MIND		4	4
Balsam Centre	2		2
Church	1	1	2
Citizens Advice	2		2
Holly Court	2		2
Police	1	1	2
Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service	1	1	2
Y4F Outreach Community Fieldworker	1	1	2
Bournemouth Charitable Housing Association	1		1
CAMHS	1		1
Community Council for Somerset	1		1
Education Safeguarding (EWO)	1		1
EHA Hub	1		1
Escapeline	1		1
Homeless/Community Fieldworker	1		1
Housing - Stonewater	1		1
Self-referral	1		1
Second-Step		1	1
South Somerset District Council		1	1
Yeovil District Hospital	1		1
Youth Group	1		1

Of the 121 family clients supported this year:-

- 49% indicate feeling improved mental health and wellbeing.

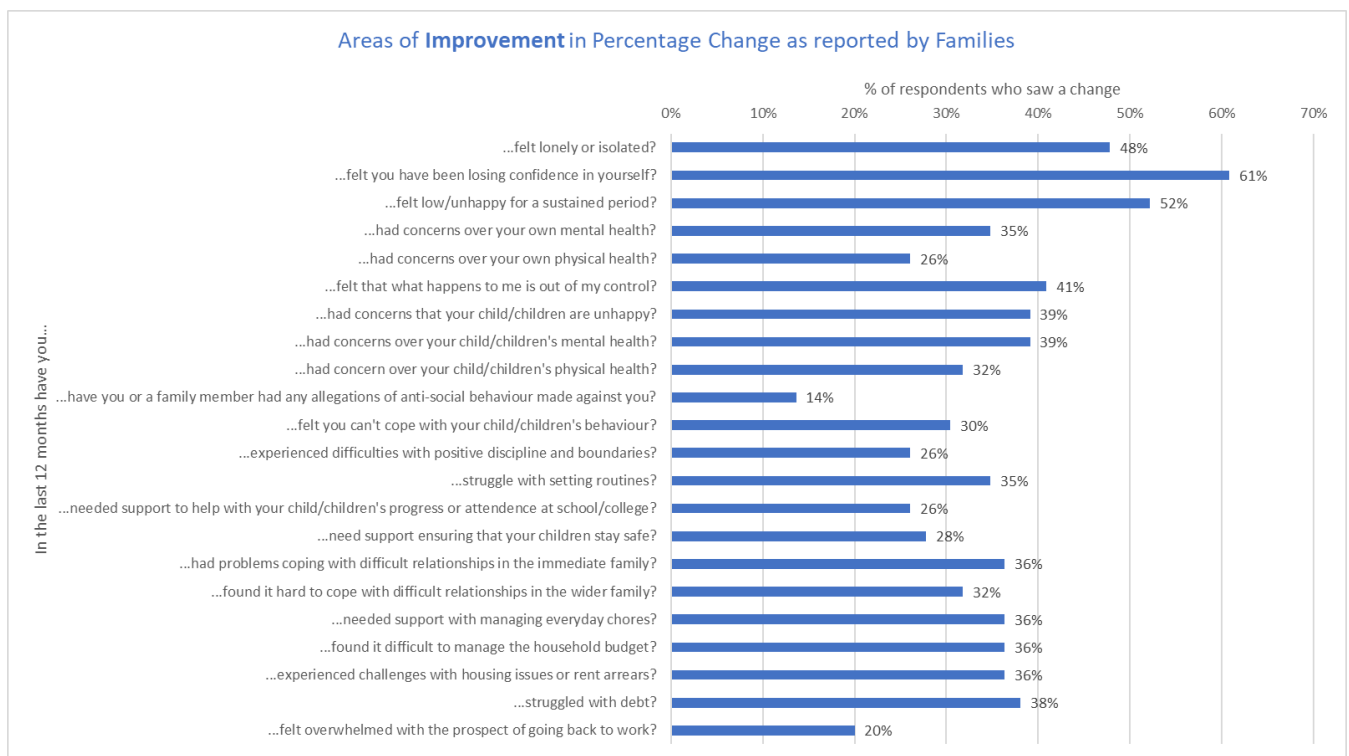
- Aggregated family reports show 61% stated that they have seen a positive change in their confidence levels
- 48% showing reduced feelings of isolation
- 52% reporting improved mood.
- 39% of families indicate that they have noticed improvement in their children's mental health and wellbeing too.

These figures are incredibly positive, bearing in mind the challenging year with the COVID-19 pandemic has presented for many in terms of mental health.

Many families, on joining the project report struggling with their children's behaviour. Link workers can support parents with establishing routines and boundaries for their children. 30% of all families reported improvement in this area.

37% of all families supported throughout their year with SSFP reported improvement with housing issues, rent arrears, managing a budget and debt. Of note is the 41% improvement observed in feelings of regaining a sense of control over family lives

Table 2 Outcomes Data for Families 2020/21 – Areas of Improvement



Of the 24 singles supported by the project-

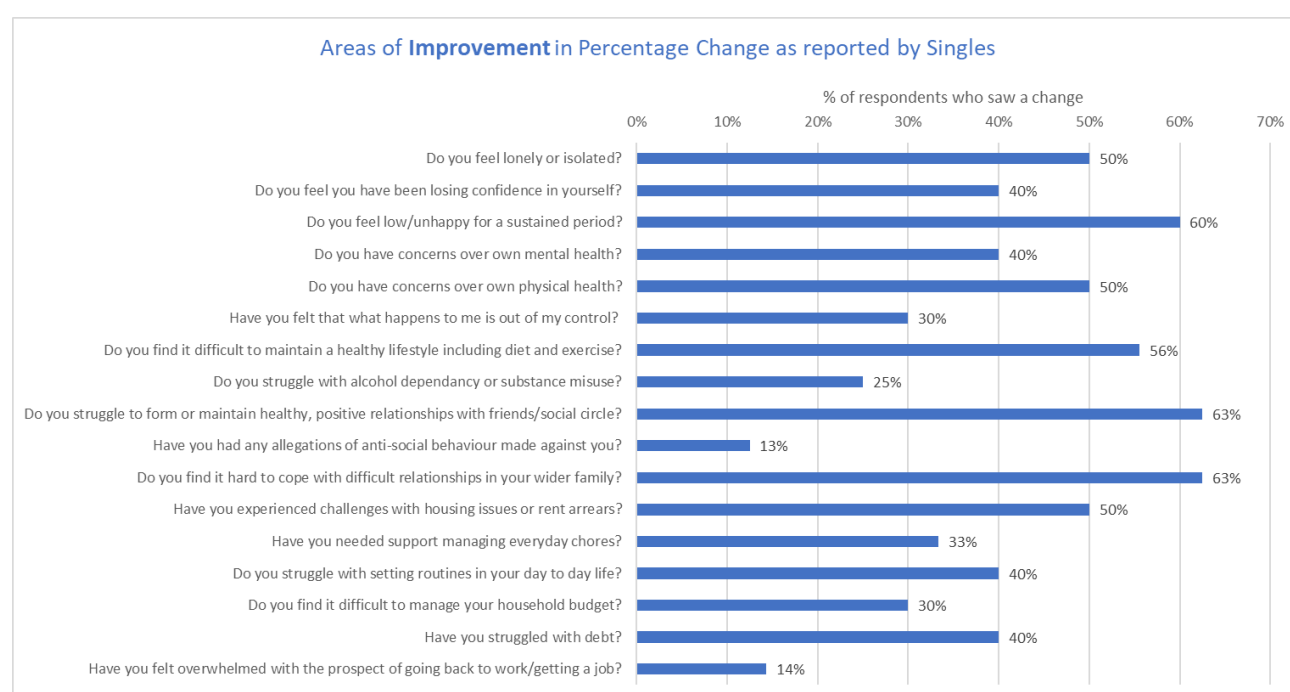
- 48% reported an overall improvement in their mental health
- 60% reported there has been significant improvement in low mood with
- 50% said they feel less lonely and isolated.

On exiting the project 63% of all respondents report improved feelings around maintaining positive, healthy relationships within their family and wider social networks. Connection to others is an important protective factor for resilience and the ability to cope with many life challenges.

56% of singles indicate they have observed a change in their concerns over their physical health and their ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Anti-social behaviour and substance misuse, including alcohol dependency, can be recurring problems particularly for some of our single clients. 25% report improvement in management of this area of their lives.

43% of all singles supported throughout their year with SSFP reported improvement with housing issues, rent arrears, managing a budget and debt.

Table 3 Outcomes Data for Singles 2020/21 – Areas of Improvement



Summary

The key outcomes achieved as reported by program participants in exit assessments include:

- 83% of parents reported an improvement in control
- 75% an improvement in their mental health.
- 82% of parents reported an improvement in child mental health
- 27% an improvement in school attendance.
- 67% of parents reported an improvement in managing the household budget
- 50% an improvement in coping with debt.
- 42% reported a reduction in their social isolation and loneliness.