

AllStars – diversion learning for children

Delivering an early intervention and prevention programme to primary school children, identified by their teachers as having adverse childhood experiences.

First published
13 August 2024

Key details

Does it work?	Promising
Focus	Prevention
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Child sexual exploitation and abuse Crime prevention Cybercrime including fraud Ethics and values Vulnerability and safeguarding
Organisation	West Midlands Police
Contact	Matthew Shakespeare
Email address	matthew.shakespeare@westmidlands.police.uk
Region	West Midlands
Partners	Police Education Private sector Voluntary/not for profit organisation

Key details

Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	October 2018
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Children and young people

Aim

To intervene in the cycle of criminality by teaching children identified as having ACEs (adverse childhood experiences). This includes key skills relating to criminality vulnerabilities and overall life satisfaction.

Intended outcome

By using experiential learning, trust can be built with the young person. This puts staff in a better position to offer support and help both the young person and their wider family.

The main intended outcomes are to:

- increase confidence
- raise aspirations
- unlock their potential
- build trust
- increase their resilience

This is measured by feedback at the end of the intervention.

Description

Background

The AllStars programme has been running with primary schools in Northfield for the past five years.

AllStars is a six-week programme and is held for one day per week during the school term time. It has capacity for three children per school and five schools per course. Every session is held in a different venue. This is seen as beneficial as it takes the students out of their normal context and their traditional comfort zones. The programme initially focused on the schools within the Kings Norton impact area of the city that were identified as experiencing a disproportionate amount of crime, demand, deprivation and harm.

Referral

Each school nominally puts forward three children who they feel have adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACEs refer to highly stressful, and potentially traumatic, events or situations that occur during childhood and/or adolescence. These have ranged from a parent being in custody, to domestic violence in the family or bereavement. All of these things have a negative impact upon the wellbeing of young people and, by being part of this programme, the aim is to increase that young people's well-being and hopefully prevent them from entering the criminal justice system as either a victim or offender.

Funding

The programme is free to schools, but the school is required to provide their own transport and supply one member of staff to remain during the day. External funding was applied for and received from a local builder's merchants in the constituency. Further partner agencies were contacted and asked for their involvement, some of which involved a cost.

Current partner agencies:

- [RSPCA](#) (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)
- local sports clubs such as, tag-rugby, horse riding, martial arts, american football
- artist organisations
- mental health charities

Agenda

The AllStars sessions are normally held every Tuesday and Wednesday. They utilise different providers to give positive influences upon our pupils. The first and last days of the programme are police-led.

- Young people often start AllStars feeling apprehensive about interacting with the police and interacting with other students from different schools. The first day is identified as an important opportunity in addressing this barrier to ensure the programme is effective.
- The Police led sessions work on improving trust and confidence in the police and building trust within the group. This involves team building activities, that are ideally held outside. This is to mix the group up and ensure that the young people break out of their school friendship groups.

On the last day, which is also police-led, the young people are awarded certificates to celebrate their work in AllStars. It was identified that this is a good way to provide a tangible achievement from the programme and remind young people of what they learnt during the course.

Sessions

The sessions in-between use a range of providers to challenge and take the pupils out of their comfort zones. Each partner agency runs a session with the young people and works on different values to support their development.

- RSPCA: bespoke animal welfare sessions, focusing on kindness, compassion and confidence.
- Artist organisations: art sessions, focusing on concentration, resilience, patience. These sessions cost £375 to run.
- Local sports clubs: focusing on respect, self-control, regulation of emotions, resilience, calmness, trust, self-esteem, team building. These sessions cost between £100 - £375 to run.

Despite some organisations requiring funding, reaching out to local charities can reduce the costs. For example, in Merseyside the RSCPA runs the sessions for free.

Each session is risk assessed and providers are checked for insurance and have DBS checks. Providers send a copy of their risk assessments and DBS checks to AllStars, which can be kept on file and sent to schools promptly during the planning stage. Providers also have to agree to the founding principles of Allstars to ensure that, whatever the activity, the same consistent message is given to the children.

The sessions are also recorded and parents / carers of each child who participate are given the direct link to the corresponding video for future viewing. Written consent is always gained before sessions are recorded and shared.

Overall impact

There is a Microsoft form that schools complete with their students to ascertain the students' experiences of the program. At the mid-way point, forms are also sent digitally to parents and carers of the children to receive their feedback. At the end of each program the schools and parents complete a final evaluation form.

These Microsoft forms indicate a positive response from both school staff, parents and carers.

Feedback

Feedback gathered from school staff evaluations suggest a positive impact. At the end of the programme, school staff were asked to rate how effectively the input had changed the students behaviour. The results showed that:

- 57% of school staff gave the program 4/5 stars for helping the students make positive choices
- 57% of school staff gave the program 5/5 stars for encouraging the student to care more about others
- 42.9% of school staff gave the program 4/5 stars for helping the student manage their anger
- 57% of school staff gave the program 5/5 stars for making the student happier

Qualitative feedback was also received with multiple staff testimonials:

AllStars gives us a fantastic chance to build relationships with some of our harder to reach pupils. Being able to share opportunities and new experiences with them outside of school allows us to see and bring out another side to our pupils that they can often hide in a whole school setting. Parents are also very enthusiastic and grateful that such lengths are aimed for to help, support and encourage their child. Rather than just sitting in a room discussing or doing a work sheet about their feelings, AllStars gives pupils and staff the chance to explore those feelings of frustration when something doesn't go quite right and also celebrate their pride in achieving as they happen.

This program has been beneficial for our pupils who have attended over the years. We have had positive feedback not only from the children who have attended but their

parents and their class teachers on how well they are managing. We find that the programme is the perfect course for some of our most challenging pupils who need that more active intervention. This has also helped build relationships with the pupils and the police as they are able to see the police in a different light and trust that they are there to help and support them.

Testimonials from the providers have also been positive, highlighting the benefits to their businesses:

I feel very honoured to be a part of a programme that has so many essential values attached to it. AllStars is aligned with my organisation's work in that it places value on helping young people understand their innate mental health, resilience and well-being.

AllStars has enabled me to work with a wider range of students and young people. Plus strengthened links between my business and local schools

The officer also observed changes in the way students interacted with him throughout the course of the programme. At the beginning he found that children wouldn't look him in the eye and often express negative views of the police, as he is dressed in uniform. By the end of the programme, the officer and young people have a good relationship and feel comfortable interacting, for example high-fiving.

Learning

- Since the commencement of the programme, providers have been altered due to their availability and impact. Some venue locations have changed due to those venues being impracticable.
- Using Microsoft forms to gain feedback is helpful in guiding practice. After each course, feedback / evaluations are reviewed, and it is decided whether to continue in the same format or look to get new providers.
- It is important to keep the same officer and ask the school to send the same member of staff to the sessions every time. This helps build consistency and a rapport with the students. Consistency is key to engage effectively with attendees.
- Not only is the input beneficial to the students, it is also beneficial to the partners that take part. The sports clubs that are involved in the initiative report that they have an increase in business as more parents and students know about their organisation. This strengthening connection between

schools and local businesses is a great way to reach out to organisations and ask them to take part.

Copyright

The copyright in this shared practice example is not owned or managed by the College of Policing and is therefore not available for re-use under the terms of the Non-Commercial College Licence. You will need to seek permission from the copyright owner to reproduce their works.

Legal disclaimer

Disclaimer: The views, information or opinions expressed in this shared practice example are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or views of the College of Policing or the organisations involved.

Tags

Community engagement Crime reduction