

AIMS

The programme was designed to test the theory that:

- young people will find older peers more credible messengers of information about mental health, wellbeing and help seeking than their teachers, as older peers have faced similar has similar experiences, challenges and concerns¹.
- This higher level of credibility leads to an increased likelihood that young people will change their attitude and behaviour around mental health and wellbeing.

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

- Universal syllabus focusing on mental health awareness and staying well.
- Coproduced with students (workshops with Year 7 students (11-12 years old) at Highgate school, feedback from Peer Educators)
- Revised again following two years of piloting, feedback from staff and Peer Educators

PROGRAMME CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

There are five sessions in the syllabus, covering:

- Mental Health awareness
- Protecting mental wellbeing
- Sources of support
- Stigma and discrimination



Each session follows the same structure:



PROGRAMME DELIVERY 2016/17

- Schools located in the south of England and Channel Islands were recruited using existing connections amongst the project team.
- Peer Educators were selected by the schools and received 1.5 days' training from MHF staff and development partner Cernis. Training comprised both mental health content and teaching practice.
- A staff briefing was held at each school outlining the support Peer Educators require and giving teachers the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
- Programme delivery at each school was overseen by a local project lead. Generally these leads were teaching staff, but teaching assistants and pastoral staff also acted as project leads.

Key figures 2016/17

- Delivered in 7 schools
- 100 Peer Educators trained
- 981 Year 7 students received lessons



EVALUATION AND FINDINGS

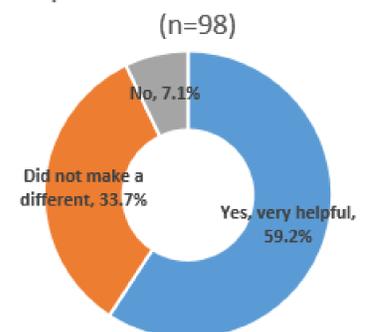
The 2016/17 programme was evaluated independently by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. Full results will be available in late September 2017.

Pre- and post-intervention data was collected from Y7 students and Peer Educators by school staff. Scales used included the School Climate Scale, Me and My School, demographic questions and questions about knowledge and attitudes around mental health.

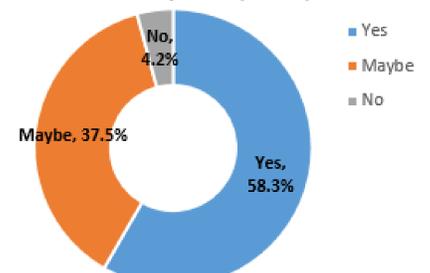
Staff taking part in qualitative process interviews reported positive change in the way mental health was discussed in school, more openness amongst students about mental health and increased confidence amongst Peer Educators.



Was it helpful to learn from Peer Educators? (n=98)



Would you recommend that other Year 12 students take part? (n=24)



For more information about the project, contact Helen Bohan, Peer Education Project Manager
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¹ Mason (2003) Peer Education: Promoting Healthy Behaviors; Advocates for Youth, Washington D.C.