

The Identity Pathway (IP) - Your IP to Success **Programme Report (HMPYOI Brinsford)**

Compiled by: Virtual Elevation
Date: 25/09/2024

Programme Objective

In collaboration with HMPYOI Brinsford, West Midlands Police (Sandwell), and secondary schools, this initiative aimed to combat the school-to-prison pipeline through prevention and intervention workshops. The focus was on engaging young males aged 12–16 who were either at risk of exclusion or had already been excluded from mainstream education, as well as those involved with youth offending services. Unique to this programme was its setting—within HMPYOI Brinsford—allowing participants to observe correctional life firsthand, providing an immersive experience that offered a clear deterrent. Through direct exposure to daily routines in a correctional facility, participants gained a stark understanding of the consequences of poor choices, promoting positive decision-making and shifting their life trajectories away from incarceration.

A key feature of the workshops was the co-facilitation by young adults currently serving time at HMPYOI Brinsford. These individuals, trained by The Invested Man, used their lived experiences to connect with the participants and offer relatable and impactful insights into their journeys, thus fostering a sense of empathy and understanding.

Engagement

Between 12/06/2024 and 10/07/2024, the programme engaged seven schools and 64 students. Workshops were delivered by The Invested Man team and co-facilitated by four young adults who had undergone rehabilitation and development training. The West Midlands Police (Sandwell) Young Person Officer, Hubert Treasure MBE, played a crucial role in the organisation.

The logistical elements included pre-approved risk assessments and consent forms from parents/guardians facilitated by Virtual Elevation. Security protocols were followed upon each visit to ensure the safety of all involved, with thorough briefings conducted by The Invested Man team before each session.

Participating Schools and Workshops

School Name	Student Total	Workshop Date	Follow-Up Session
Ormiston Forge	6	12/06/2024	-
Shireland Academy	11	19/06/2024	-
St Michaels	8	24/06/2024	-
Holly Lodge	10	26/06/2024	01/07/2024
Wood Green	School Cancelled	01/07/2024	-
Wodensborough	11	03/07/2024	05/07/2024
Q3 Academy	6	08/07/2024	24/09/2024
Tipton			
Ellowes Hall (Dudley)	12	10/07/2024	-

Key Programme Statistics:

- **Sixty-four students** from **seven schools** participated in prison workshops.
- Workshops were conducted by a team from The Invested Man and supported by four young adults (former beneficiaries).
- **Three schools** have received follow-up sessions at their institutions.

Programme Delivery

Workshops revolved around three core pillars: **Identity, Purpose, and Wisdom**, aiming to reshape mindsets and disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.

1. **Identity:** Encouraged students to reflect on their current sense of self and explore how past events have shaped them. Discussions explored the harmful masks created to fit into peer groups and how change is rooted in identity transformation.
2. **Purpose:** Students were guided through activities highlighting the importance of purpose-driven actions. Through interactive games like "Snakes in the Water," they learned about decision-making, risk-taking, and the consequences of their actions.
3. **Wisdom:** Introduced as the application of experience, students learned the importance of making informed decisions. Young adult co-facilitators shared their personal lived experiences, offering powerful insights into the repercussions of criminal involvement.

Stages of Workshop Delivery:

1. **Setting the Context** – The Invested Man shared personal experiences of overcoming NEET status (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and pursuing alternative, positive pathways.
 2. **Student Introductions** – Participants discussed why they thought they were at risk, citing issues such as suspension or poor behaviour.
 3. **Brotherhood Principle** – Emphasised building a circle of trust and strength through mutual support.
 4. **Life Map Exercise** – Participants anonymously (life notes) shared pivotal moments in their lives, understanding that while the past cannot be changed, the future can be shaped by present choices.
 5. **Young Adult Experience** – Co-facilitators shared their experiences of crime, incarceration, and the impact on themselves and their families, fostering a deeper understanding of prison life.
 6. **Identity Discussion** – Explored the concept of identity, including the prison identity (prison number), and how the students' identities were evolving.
 7. **Vision** – Discussed the importance of envisioning a different future and the challenges of behaviour change.
 8. **Purpose** – Through activities like "calculated risk-taking," students learned the importance of purpose and long-term decision-making.
 9. **Wisdom** – Emphasised the application of knowledge and experience to make better decisions.
 10. **Change** – Students reflected on what changes they could make to avoid negative outcomes and were encouraged to commit to small, impactful changes.
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Impact on Participants

Students:

Feedback surveys indicated that participants showed a positive shift in attitudes towards change and life choices. Responses suggested that students were particularly moved by the personal stories shared by the young adults. Many reflected on how their life circumstances mirrored those of the co-facilitators and expressed a desire to make better choices to avoid a similar path.

The National Crime Agency found that being excluded from school is a contributing factor leading to a young person's risk of criminal exploitation. Furthermore, the [Institute of Public Policy in 2017](#) estimated that out of the 85 975 people in UK prisons, **54,164 were excluded when at school**. The Youth Safety Taskforce notes that disengagement with school and exclusions are strong indicators for those at risk of being involved in youth violence. Early intervention initiatives like the IP programme aim to reduce this statistic by providing students with alternative pathways.

Schools:

Of the seven schools involved, three have requested follow-up sessions to build upon the wisdom and skills shared at Brinsford, and students have expressed a return to Brinsford for another session. The willingness of schools to continue these conversations is an indicator of the programme's success in engaging at-risk youth and fostering dialogue about crime prevention.

Follow-up sessions were conducted at the schools to reinforce the lessons from the workshops and dive deeper into the principle of wisdom. Three schools took up this offer: Holly Lodge, Wodensborough, and Q3 Academy Tipton.

Key Themes of Follow-Up Delivery:

- **Wisdom Principles** – Students learned about knowledge, understanding, and wisdom and how they apply to their lives and future decisions.
- **Encouraging Literacy** – Students were introduced to the benefits of reading and accumulating knowledge, including statistics on how literacy impacts income and well-being.

Community Impact:

The programme strengthens community ties by bridging gaps between youth, law enforcement, and educational institutions. With youth crime in the West Midlands continuing to be a pressing issue, preventative measures such as this workshop serve as a foundation for long-term solutions.

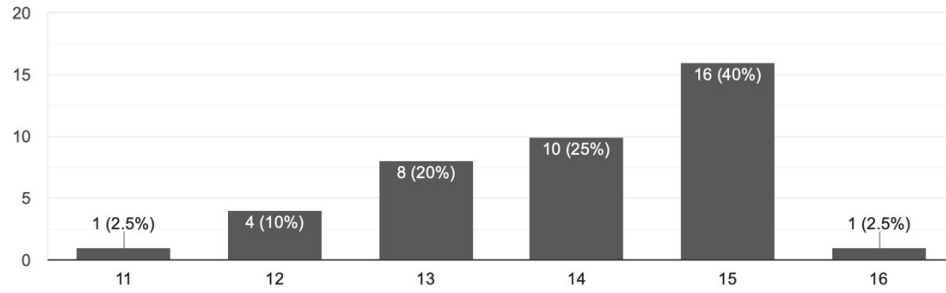
Feedback and Evaluation

To date, feedback has been collected from students (40 Surveys), staff (10 surveys), and young adults (4 surveys). The evaluation team is working on gathering responses from the outstanding participating schools.

Student Feedback

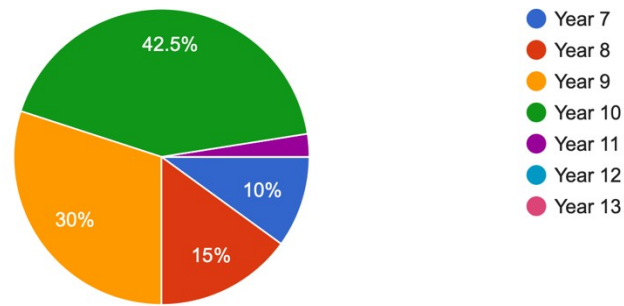
Age

40 responses



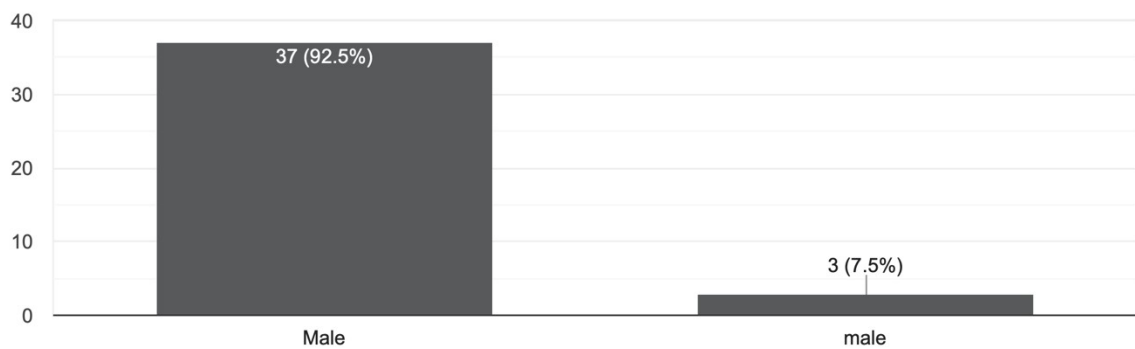
Year Group

40 responses



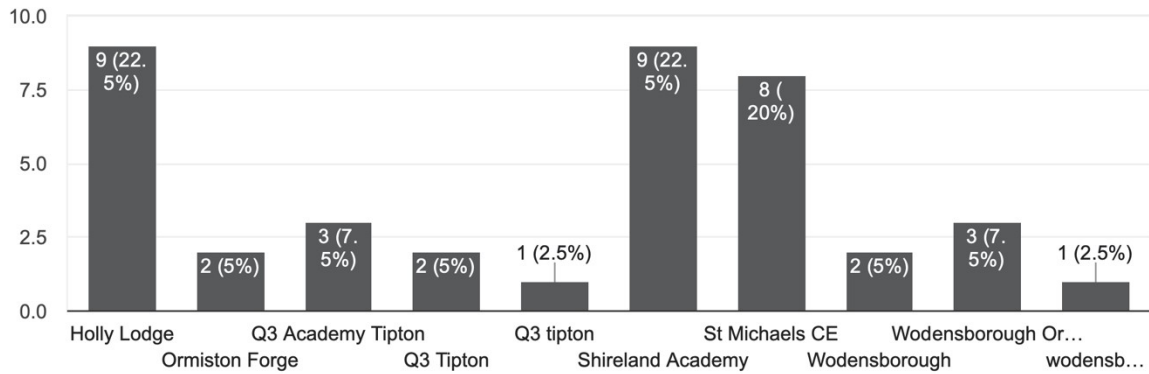
Gender

40 responses



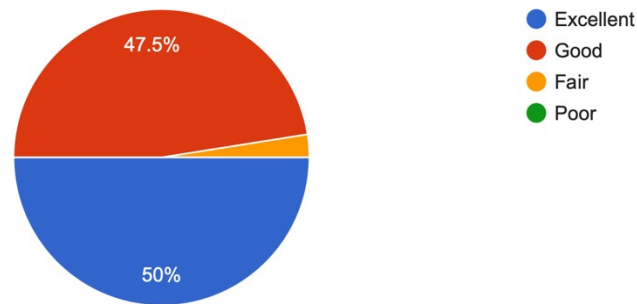
School/Pupil Referral Unit Name

40 responses



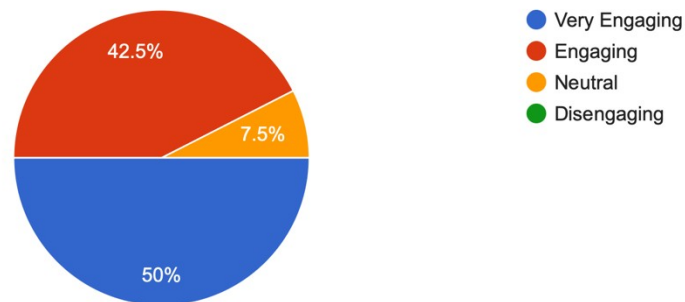
1. How would you rate the overall content of the workshop?

40 responses



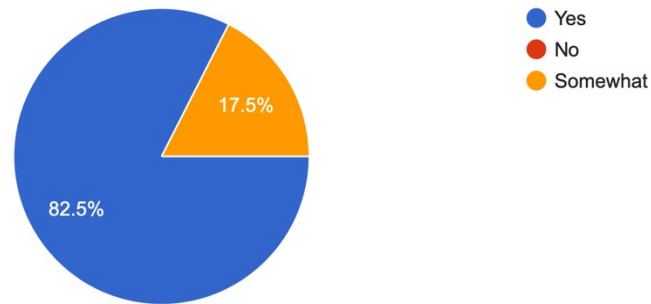
2. How engaging did you find the facilitators (Brinsford Young Adults)?

40 responses



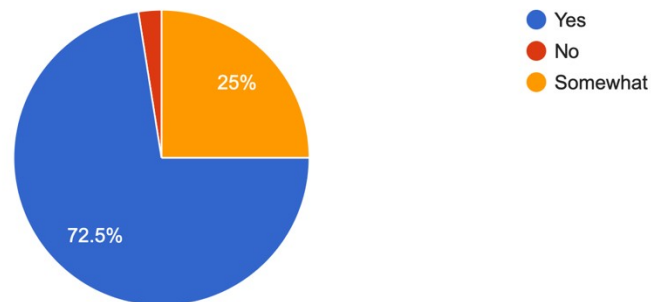
3. Were the themes of identity, vision and purpose communicated?

40 responses



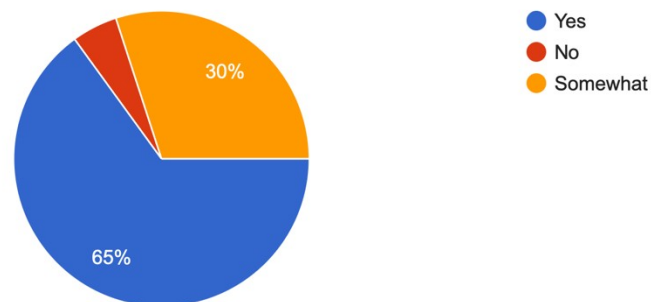
4. Did the workshop help you understand and embrace your sense of identity?

40 responses



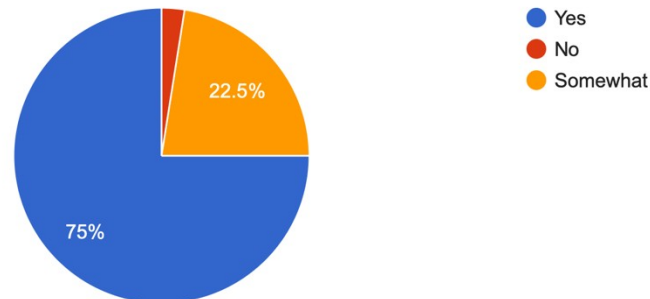
5. Did you discover a sense of purpose or direction from the workshop?

40 responses



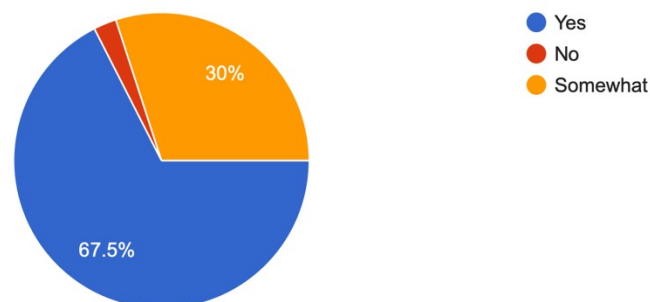
6. Do you feel more equipped with the knowledge (wisdom) and skills to navigate life's challenges?

40 responses



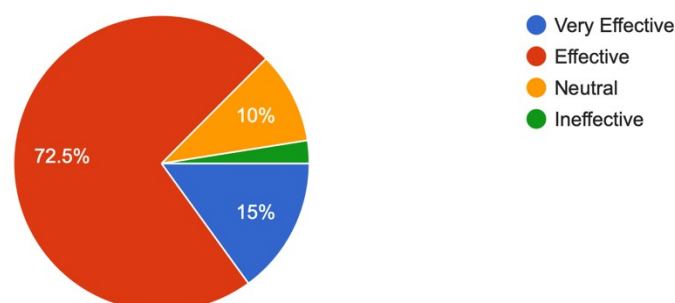
7. Did the visit to HMPYOI Brinsford impact your perception of the consequences of negative life choices?

40 responses



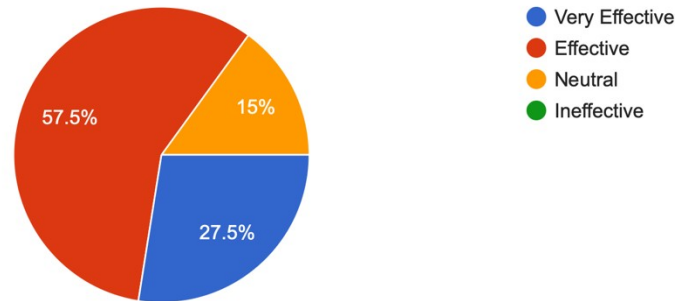
8. How effective was this experience in deterring you from engaging in negative behaviours?

40 responses



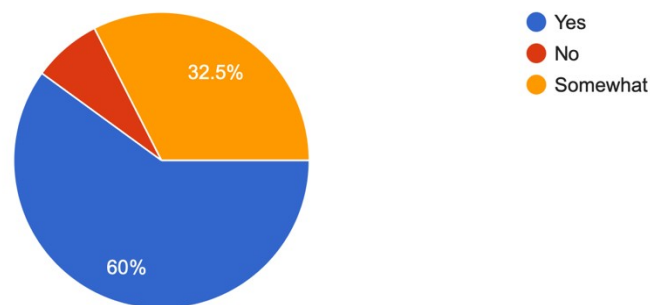
9. How would you rate the effectiveness of having young adults (prisoners) as co-facilitators?

40 responses



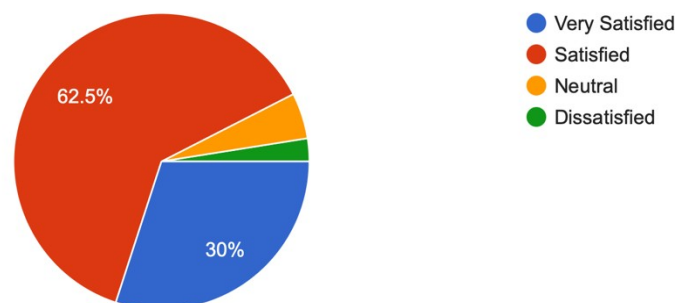
10. Did the stories shared by the young adults inspire or positively influence you?

40 responses



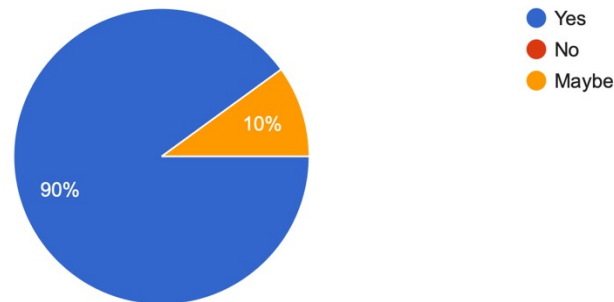
11. How satisfied are you with the Identity Pathway programme?

40 responses



12. Would you recommend this programme to others?

40 responses



Question 13: What did you like most about the workshop?

Summarised responses:

1. **Hearing Prisoners' Stories (Major Theme):**

- o Many participants appreciated hearing the personal stories of prisoners about their lives, mistakes, and experiences.
- o Responses emphasised how prisoners explained their paths to incarceration, inspiring self-reflection.
- o Example responses:
 - "Prisoners talking about their life"
 - "The stories they shared how they ended up there and what helped them."

2. **Interaction with Prisoners (Engagement Theme):**

- o A significant number highlighted the value of direct interaction with prisoners, such as asking questions and hearing their perspectives.
- o Example responses:
 - "Speaking to the inmates"
 - "Being able to speak to the prisoners and hear them talk about their experiences."

3. **Games and Activities (Engagement Theme):**

- o Many mentioned enjoying games and activities, including the "Calculated Risk Taking" game and appreciated how they tied into life lessons.
- o Example responses:
 - "The games we played with the facilitators"
 - "The activity we did as a group."

4. **Life Lessons and Realization (Impact Theme):**
 - o Several responses focused on the impact of the workshop, especially the realization of how poor decisions can lead to serious consequences.
 - o Example responses:
 - "The impact and realisation of poor decisions"
 - "Seeing how you have to live when you get in prison."
5. **Facilitators and Environment (Atmosphere Theme):**
 - o Some noted the importance of the facilitators' role, the inclusivity, and the overall experience of talking to young adults.
 - o Example responses:
 - "The time the facilitators spent with us"
 - "They included everyone."

Question 14: What could be improved in future sessions?

Summarised responses:

1. **More Time with Prisoners (Major Theme):**
 - Many participants expressed the desire for extended time to speak with prisoners, including one-on-one conversations and longer overall sessions.
 - Example responses:
 - o "More time speaking to the prisoners and more time in general."
 - o "More time to talk to the prisoners, do a one-to-one."
2. **More Prisoner Diversity (Variety Theme):**
 - Participants wanted to meet a wider range of prisoners with different experiences and offences to better understand varying life paths and consequences.
 - Example responses:
 - o "Get people that have done different things (offences)."
 - o "Maybe a swap around of prisoners for the type of behaviours students are doing or looking up to."
3. **Explore More of the Prison (Engagement Theme):**
 - Several responses mentioned wanting to see more of the prison, including cells, food, and daily life inside the facility.
 - Example responses:
 - o "See inside cells."
 - o "Meeting different facilitators, seeing the cells and the food that they eat."

4. Longer Sessions (Duration Theme):

- Some participants felt that the session length could be extended to allow for more in-depth conversations and activities.
- Example responses:
 - "The session could be longer."
 - "Staying there longer."

5. More Games and Activities (Engagement Theme):

- Some participants requested more games and interactive activities to complement the storytelling and discussions.
- Example responses:
 - "More games."
 - "To have more activities."

6. Satisfaction with Current Format (Positive Feedback):

- A notable number of participants expressed that no improvements were necessary and felt the workshop was already well-structured.
- Example responses:
 - "Nothing, it was great."
 - "Nothing in my opinion."

Question 15: What does change look like for you?

Summarised responses:

1. Improving Behaviour and Choices (Major Theme):

- Many participants view change as making better decisions, particularly around behaviour and avoiding trouble.
- Example responses:
 - "Making better decisions."
 - "Change of behaviour."
 - "Behaving and making the right choices."

2. Focusing on Education and Self-Improvement (Growth Theme):

- Change is often seen as focusing on school, improving performance in lessons, and avoiding negative outcomes like suspension.
- Example responses:
 - "Focus and work in lessons and avoid being suspended."
 - "Behaving in school and getting my education."

3. Mindset Shift (Mental and Emotional Growth Theme):

- Participants highlighted that change involves a shift in mindset, thinking before acting and adjusting one's personality or behaviour for positive reasons.
- Example responses:
 - "Change in mindset and behaviour."
 - "Thinking before acting and wanting to actually change and trying to change."

4. Avoiding Negative Influences (Self-Control Theme):

- Some responses focused on distancing oneself from crime, bad decisions, and negative peer influences.
- Example responses:
 - "Stop doing crimes."
 - "Change my bad decisions and not hang with the wrong people."

5. Becoming a Different or Better Person (Transformation Theme):

- Change was described as personal transformation, becoming a better version of oneself, and having a positive impact on others.
- Example responses:
 - "Being a different person."
 - "Changing for the better."

6. Learning from Mistakes (Reflection Theme):

- Participants linked change to recognising past mistakes, learning from them, and taking steps to improve.
- Example responses:
 - "Being able to see where you have gone wrong and learning from it."
 - "A series of steps."

7. Uncertainty About Change (Miscellaneous Theme):

- A few participants expressed uncertainty about what change means for them or did not provide a clear response.
- Example responses:
 - "Not sure."
 - "N/A."

Question 15: Any other comments or feedback:

Summarised responses:

1. Positive Feedback (Major Theme):

- Many participants expressed that the workshops were enjoyable, effective, and well-structured.
- Example responses:
 - "It was great."
 - "It was very good."
 - "Good/effective session."

2. No Additional Comments (Neutral Theme):

- A significant portion of responses indicated no additional comments or feedback, with many simply saying "no" or "N/A."
- Example responses:
 - "None."
 - "No."

- o "N/A."

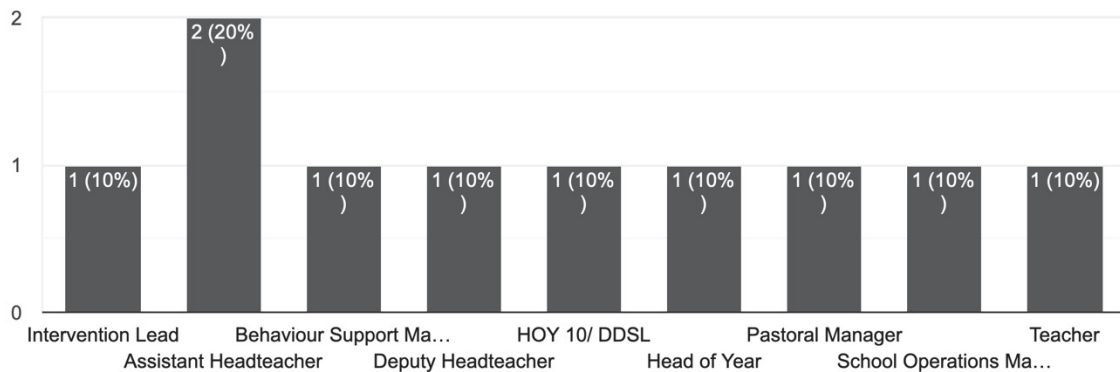
3. **Suggestions for Improvement (Minor Theme):**

- A few participants suggested improvements, such as a more detailed prison tour or longer sessions.
 - Example responses:
 - o "Have a better tour of the prison."
 - o "The sessions could be longer."
- ### 4. **Fun and Engaging Experience (Engagement Theme):**
- Some participants mentioned that the workshops were fun and engaging, especially when interacting with the young adults.
 - Example responses:
 - o "It was a fun experience because you get to understand the morals."
 - o "It's great, want to go again."

Staff Feedback

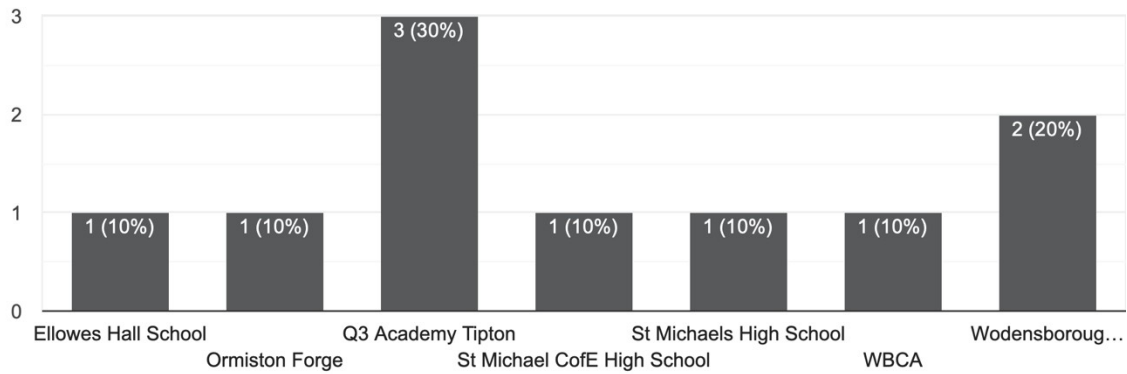
Role/Position

10 responses



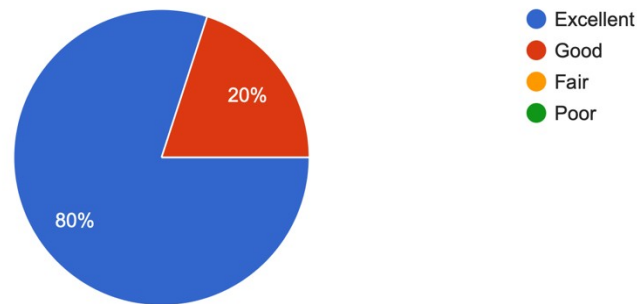
Institution Name (School/Pupil Referral Unit)

10 responses



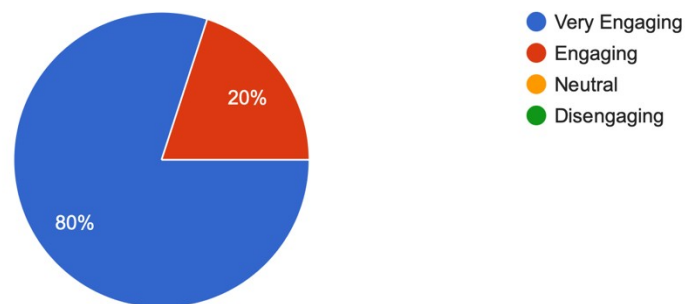
1. How would you rate the overall content of the workshop?

10 responses



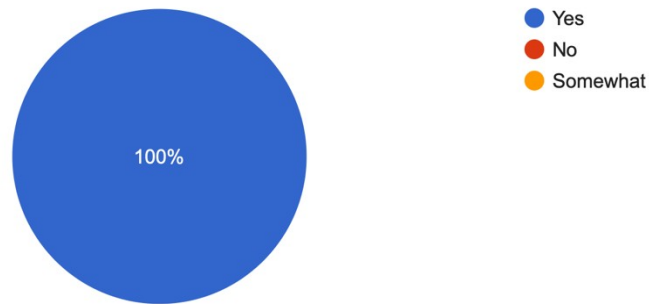
2. How engaging did you find the facilitators?

10 responses



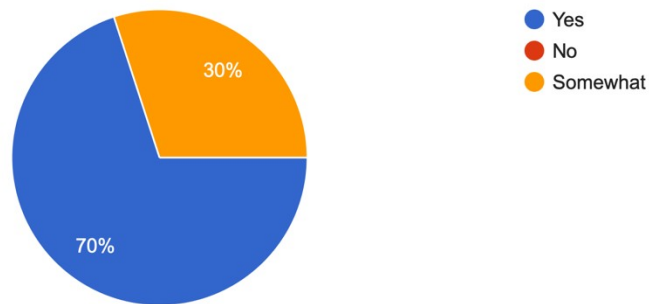
3. Were the themes of identity, vision and purpose communicated?

10 responses



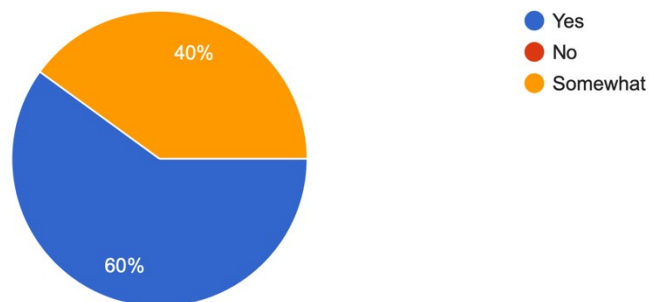
4. Did you observe any changes in participants' understanding and embrace of their sense of identity?

10 responses



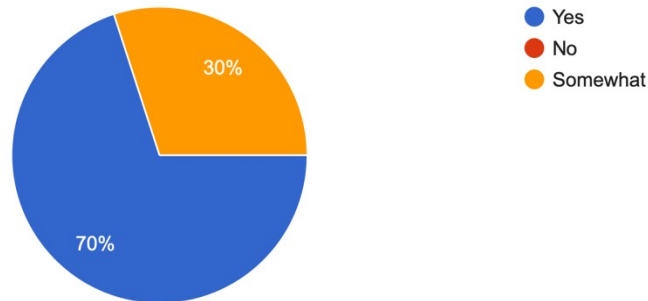
5. Did the workshop help participants discover a sense of purpose or direction?

10 responses



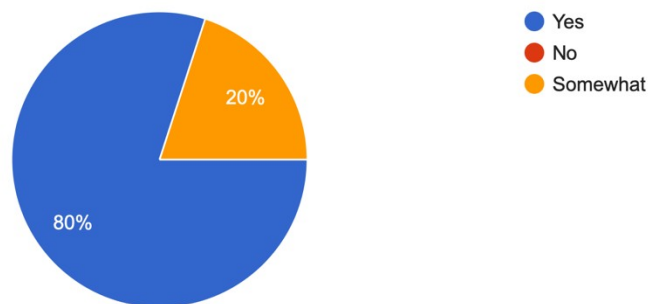
6. Do you feel the participants are more equipped with the knowledge and skills to navigate life's challenges?

10 responses



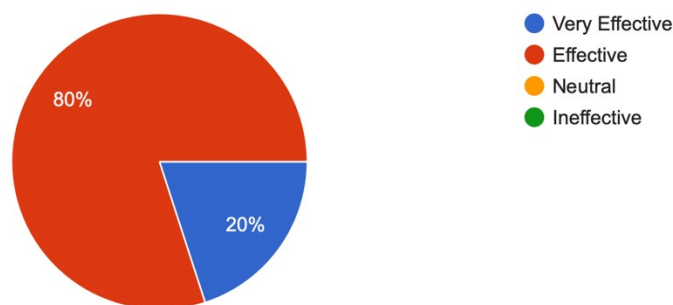
7. Did the visit to the correctional facility impact the participant's perception of the consequences of negative life choices?

10 responses



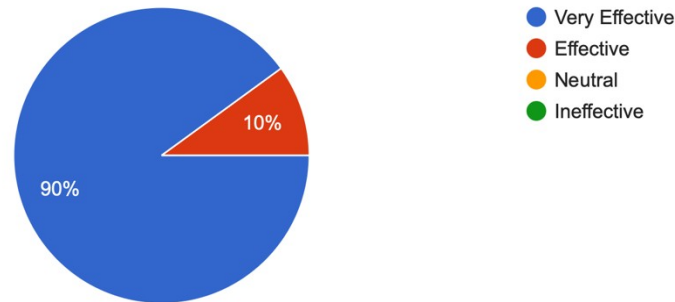
8. How effective was this experience in deterring participants from engaging in negative behaviours?

10 responses



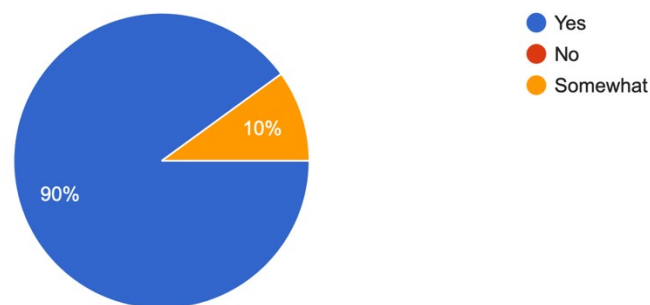
9. How would you rate the effectiveness of having young adults (prisoners) as co-facilitators?

10 responses



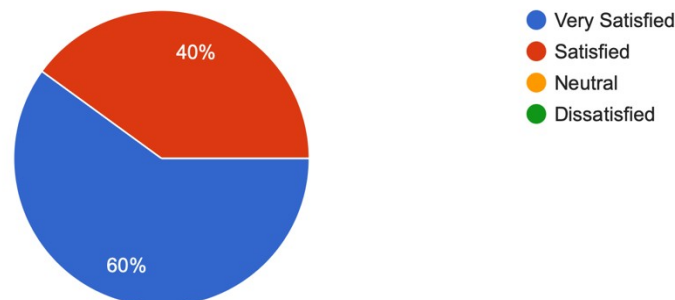
10. Did the stories shared by the young adults inspire or positively influence the participants?

10 responses

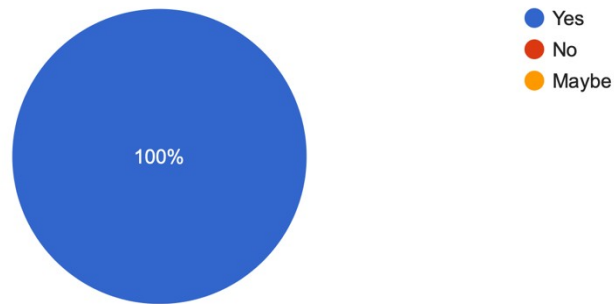


11. How satisfied are you with the Identity Pathway programme?

10 responses



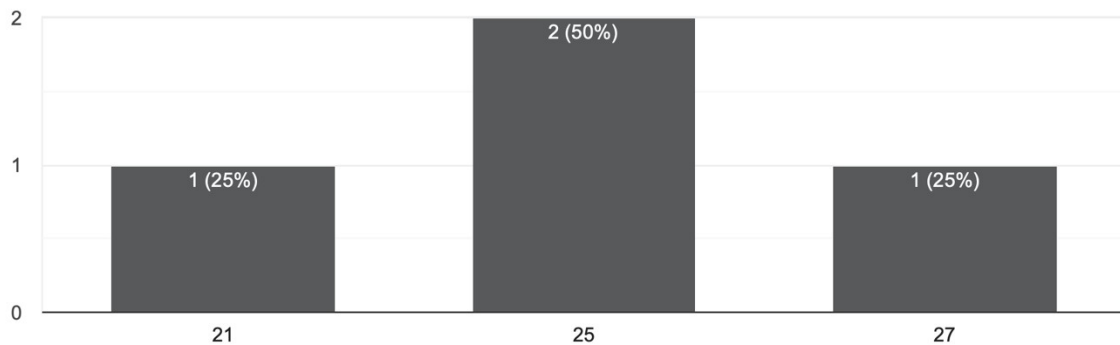
12. Would you recommend this programme to other institutions?
10 responses



For questions 13 – 16 and additional comments, full survey response data is available on request.

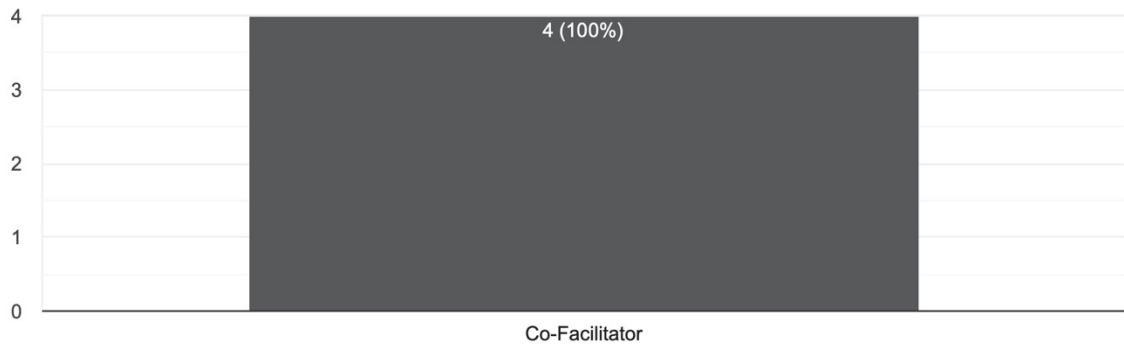
Young Adults (Co-facilitators) Feedback

Age:
4 responses



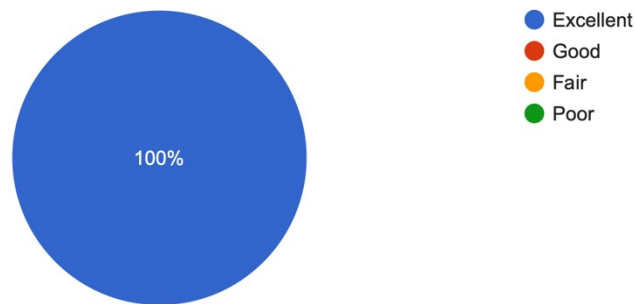
Role/Position:

4 responses



1. How would you rate the overall content of the workshop?

4 responses

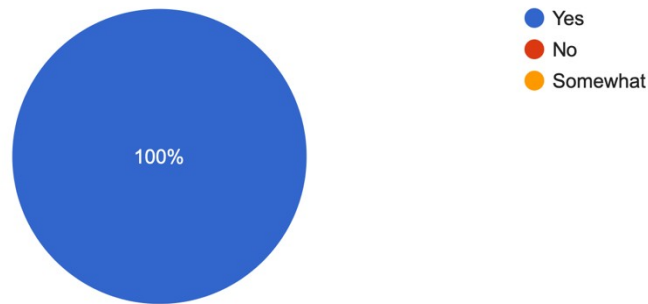


2. How comfortable did you feel delivering the workshop content?

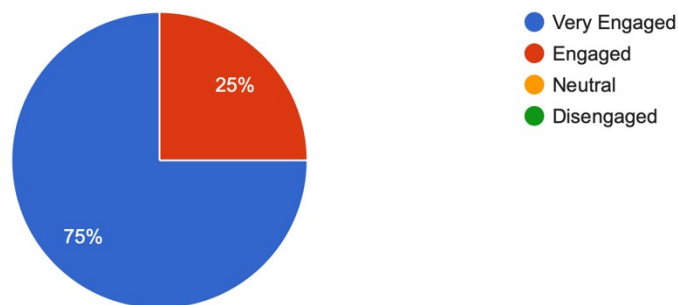
4 responses



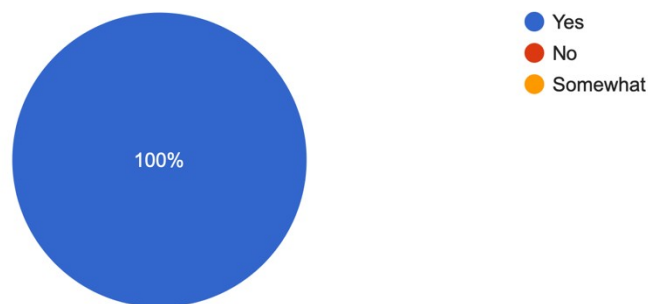
3. Were the themes of identity, vision, and purpose effectively communicated to participants?
4 responses



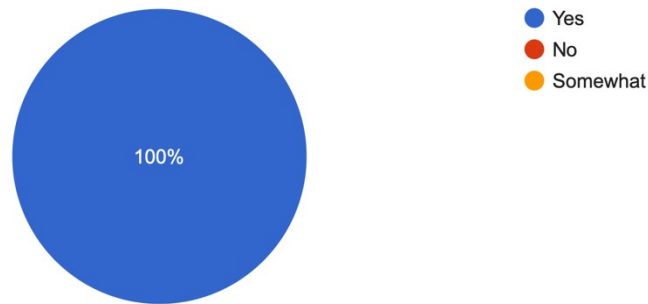
4. How engaged were the participants during the workshop?
4 responses



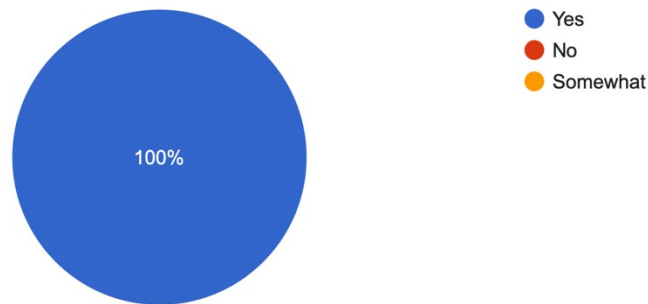
5. Did you notice any changes in participants' understanding and embrace of their sense of identity?
4 responses



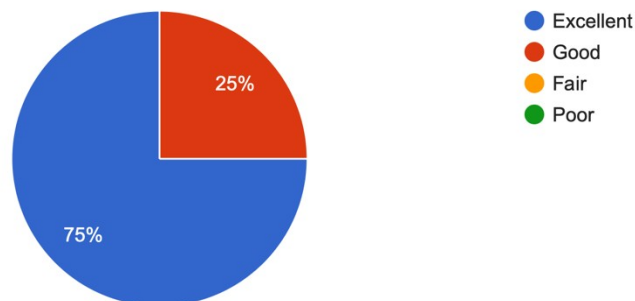
6. Did participants show progress in discovering their sense of purpose and direction?
4 responses



7. Do you feel the participants are more equipped with the knowledge and skills to navigate life's challenges?
4 responses

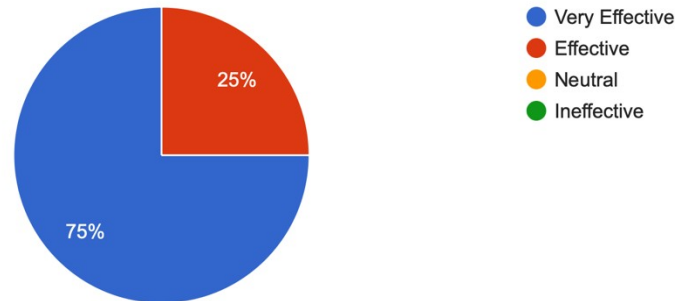


8. How would you rate your overall experience as a co-facilitator?
4 responses



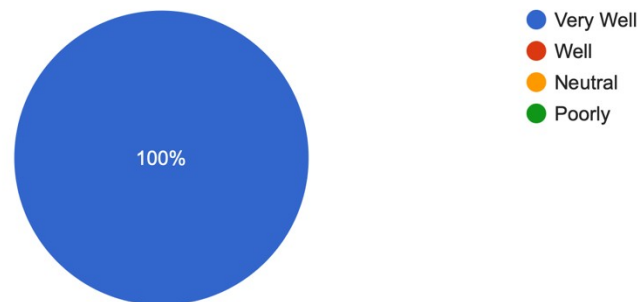
9. How effective do you think your personal story was in inspiring and positively influencing the participants?

4 responses



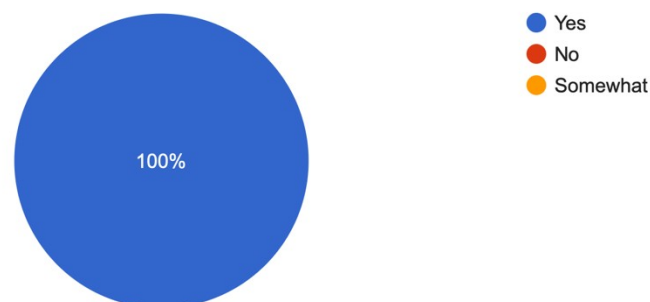
10. How well did the programme structure support your role as a co-facilitator?

4 responses



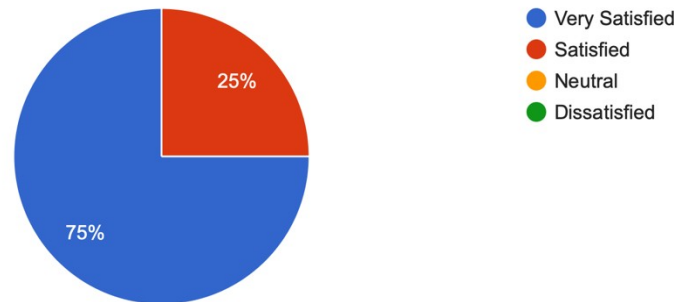
11. Did you feel adequately prepared and supported by the program coordinators?

4 responses



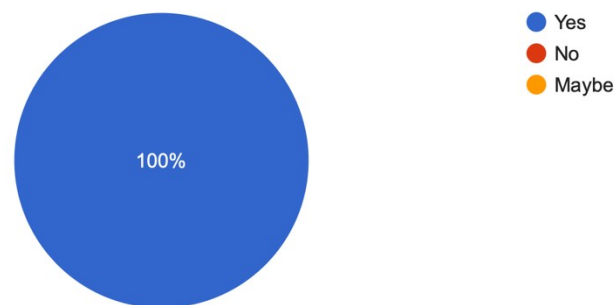
12. How satisfied are you with the Identity Pathway programme?

4 responses



13. Would you recommend this programme to others as a co-facilitator?

4 responses



For questions 14 – 17 and additional comments, full survey response data is available on request.

“We were just talking about the visit in the team office this morning. We are really grateful for the opportunity and hope that we can build it into our support programme for students – moving forward.” — Senior Assistant Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead, participating school (email received 4 July 2024; contact details withheld for data protection)

Challenges

While the programme achieved significant success, it faced several logistical challenges:

1. **Timing:** Workshops were scheduled during the exam period, which led to the cancellation of Wood Green's session. Schools struggled to commit to follow-up sessions due to summer term deadlines.
2. **Feedback:** Limited time in prison meant that feedback surveys had to be completed electronically. Only four schools managed to collect feedback from students, highlighting a need for more efficient feedback collection methods.

Legacy

The IP programme has laid the groundwork for future initiatives at Brinsford and beyond. By developing the young adults who co-facilitated the workshops, the programme helps prevent crime and nurtures leadership skills in those who have already been through the criminal justice system. This dual approach ensures a ripple effect as participants become role models for future cohorts.

Over the summer, The Invested Man engaged an additional eight young adults (12 in total) who have benefitted from six development sessions co-delivered by First Class Foundation, MADE CIC, Alex Leon Fitness, and EY Outreach. Plans are underway to integrate these young adults into upcoming school workshops in Dudley.

Furthermore, collaborations with HMP Drake Hall open the door for expanding the programme to female participants students.

Recommendations

To ensure future programmes are even more successful, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Improved Timing:** Align workshops with school calendars, avoiding peak periods like exam season. Engaging with schools earlier in the academic year could prevent scheduling conflicts.

2. **Expanded Reach:** Incorporate more regional schools, particularly in high-risk areas. The engagement of additional schools in Dudley is a step in the right direction, but scaling the programme further could enhance its long-term impact.
 3. **Enhance Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish more structured feedback channels within the prison setting to gather immediate responses. Consider the use of digital platforms that are accessible to students while on-site.
 4. **Female-Focused Sessions:** Expand the programme to female students through partnerships with institutions like HMP Drake Hall. This will ensure that all at-risk youth, regardless of gender, receive the benefits of the intervention.
 5. **Continuous Development of Young Adults:** Continue to offer training and development to young adults within Brinsford. Their involvement as co-facilitators is vital to the programme's success, and their ongoing growth will ensure the sustainability of future workshops.
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Conclusion

The Identity Pathway Programme has made a significant difference in the lives of its participants, offering a transformative experience that steers them away from negative influences and toward a brighter future. By focusing on identity, purpose, and wisdom, this intervention disrupts the cycle of criminal behaviour and creates lasting change in both individuals and communities. Going forward, this model can serve as a blueprint for future interventions across the UK.

Compiled by: Virtual Elevation