



# **Evaluation Report August 2023:**

The Stronger Edmonton Programme funded by Violence Reduction Unit set up by the Mayor of London under the Stronger Futures programme

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### 1. Introduction and context:

The Stronger Edmonton Programme was the result of a successful bid to the Violence Reduction unit set up by the Mayor of London under the Stronger Futures programme. This report is based on the extension of the programme for 20 weeks in 2023. The focus has continued on providing free after-school activities to vulnerable children and young people who could be at-risk or involved in criminal activity. Providing more positive outlets as many children and young people (CYP) do not attend extracurricular activities for a variety of reasons including financial restrictions and access. By offering these activities for free we hoped to engage those most in need of this additional support. This programme of extracurricular activities was delivered by a variety of practitioners across four hub schools and allowed young people to learn new skills, express themselves in new ways and receive tailored mental health & wellbeing support. The referred young people receive 2--six hours per week of extracurricular provision. The purpose of the project is for the young people to learn skills and lessons that they are able to take with them beyond the 20-week provision, our aim is for longevity in the lessons learnt. Extracurricular clubs funded by the project like functional cooking and chess club are imperative for this mission as these are skills and discipline young people are able to apply to their lives even when the programme is over. We feel young people need the best quality support when planning their career, so we offer in-depth video production or journalism sessions and football skills sessions. As part of the provision, ECP's two Youth Mentors work in schools to deliver tailored 1-2-1 and group mental health and well-being workshops, where they touch on topics like anger, peer pressure and transitioning into Secondary School. We know how difficult it can be as a young person to navigate these feelings which is why our mentors endeavour to equip children with the tools needed to deal with adversity and challenges in a nurturing and engaging environment. This safe space enables young people to reflect on their behaviour and decisions and how these may impact their lives in the future.

### 2. Partners:

**Edmonton Community Partnership (ECP)** is an alliance of schools and members of the local community. Managing a range of local programmes and events that help improve the lives of children, young people, their families and the wider community in the local area of Edmonton. ECP began in 2011 when a group of local schools came together to address some of the issues facing shared communities. "Together we have run many local programmes to address the complex needs that exist within Edmonton, providing support for our schools and the local community". ECP manage the mentoring element of the programme which supports vulnerable young people who are at risk: Two Mentors working with 60 C&YP across the programme, with weekly scheduled sessions in school as well as contact out of school with families. The children were referred to the mentors by the partners targeting those children who would find it very beneficial.

**British DJ and MC Academy** founded in February 2008: youth arts organisation aimed at improving the lives of young people through participation in music and the creative arts. The main focus is on helping young people to transform their lives by creating opportunities for them to engage in various aspects of music industry. Mentoring these young people to help achieve their goals. There uniqueness is their ability to reach young people in their own social environment through their fully customised DJ Vans.

**Bling wear Street Art** offers an opportunity for creative expression using art on a variety of materials. **Bling wear UK** are world famous for graffiti art, mural, graffiti workshops.

**Perfecting Potential** - Perfecting Potential providing Leader Within Me football skills sessions for girls and lead on our chess clubs supported by school staff. - Local community group Perfecting Potential have been running football sessions for children and young people in Edmonton since 2018 across several locations. Their aim is to use sport to improve social and emotional outcomes.

**Funny Feet (Galliard)** - Funny Feet have been running extracurricular clubs in Edmonton for over 13 years, providing after-school and holiday provision for children and young people. ECP have partnered with them in the past to extend their offer to the most vulnerable in the community and achieved positive results.

**MA Learn Educational Services (Eldon)** - MA Learn have been providing educational services and extracurricular activities for young people in North London for many years. They have been working with Eldon school to provide an after-school club. ECP partnered with them for this programme due to their existing relationship with Eldon school and familiarity with the community and the issues they face. Eldon Primary school is one of the largest in the country with a roll of 1146 and is based in the centre of Edmonton, just off Bounces Road.

**Churchfield School** -Working with their Deputy Headteacher, Julie Dowling, who has designed her own programme of activities utilising school staff and existing provision. ECP approached the school to become involved in **#StrongerEdmonton Programme-** as they had good systems in place at Churchfield with our extra-curricular provision to facilitate this collaboration. Through the programme and with the funding received they could ensure their low-income families were not excluded from accessing the extra-curricular club's provision. With the funding received and the support of ECP they have been able to partner with high quality, reliable external providers to ensure their extra-curricular provision is excellent.

**St John & St James** - Working with Deputy Headteacher, Shani Glover, who has engaged a range of local organisations as well as utilising existing provision to create a varied programme for the programme for low-income families.

### 3. Leadership and Management:

ECP are managing this project –Isra Zulfiqar leading with support from Trevor Blackman and our project evaluator Selina Rice. **The budget was £35,000** enabled a continued diverse and wide enrichment opportunities to be delivered via an After-school model, supplemented by Mentoring support. An outreach strand such as Platinum Performing , an offsite activity as this was an extension of the original programme.

## Levering in any additional funds:

The support we received from the VRU was not just financial; it represented trust and validation of our efforts. This backing allowed us to leverage additional funding from the

National Lottery Fund. The genesis of this success can be traced back to our afterschool-creative workshops funded by the VRU at two of our schools and at Platinum Performing Arts. These workshops became the foundation for the #N18rising project. Aimed at the holistic development of disadvantaged youth in Edmonton, especially from the BAME/GRT communities, our project is tailored to address the pressing issues of poverty, exclusion, and unemployment. By focusing on media and the creative arts, we are opening doors for these young voices, often marginalized, to be at the forefront of journalism and storytelling. Recognising the profound influence of music in echoing the struggles faced by the youth, our initiative offers them a platform in music production. Our new comprehensive 20-week programme (starting in November 2023) encompasses a myriad of skills, right from on-air presenting to audio-visual editing. The pinnacle of our efforts will be the ECP's N18Rising podcast, broadcast through a dedicated app, encapsulating the spirited North-London youth voice. This initiative, in essence, ensures that these young voices aren't just heard, but amplified, bridging gaps and fostering growth.

## 4. Evaluation Methodology:

The evaluation of the programme was meticulously conducted, relying heavily on insights from Senior Leaders. They provided in-depth reflections on the outcomes and overall impact of the programme within the school hubs. In addition, interviews were also held with a select group of partners, including representatives from DJMC, PPA, and Blingwear, offering a broader understanding of the collaboration and its effectiveness. To ensure a comprehensive assessment, we collated a diverse range of data. This encompassed direct outputs, feedback from mentors, findings from the Warwick wellbeing survey, and a detailed review of narrative reports from the last quarter. The collective insights from these varied sources provided a rich tapestry of information, helping us gain a holistic view of the programme's impact and areas for potential enhancement.

### 5. Inputs:

This consisted of the following:

To deliver the programme it including all the partners identified on page one

- A range of activities available across Edmonton in four school venues and outreach work on local estates and areas young people are known to congregate.
- Signposting information and other local programmes were made available.
- 20 weeks after school programme at Platinum Performing Arts which included vocals, and drumming with a subsequent live performance opportunity at Millfield Theatre.
- Two to Six hours of free extracurricular activities a week offered to all young people referred to the programme who were vulnerable children indicators included free school meal pupils, looked after children and any pupils with behavioural needs in Year 5 and Year 6. (And siblings Year 3 and 4 where appropriate)
- Activities offered included Sports Sessions, Music Workshops, Arts & Crafts Sessions. Graffiti Arts Workshops, Dance workshops, Pokémon, Weavers Coding workshops, Drama Workshops, Chess Club, Ceramics Mentoring Group Sessions (in-school), Mentoring 1:1 session, Outreach-, Music & production workshops, Football Clubs, Food preparation, Yoga, Steel Pans Lessons, and Gymnastics.



# 6.Outputs:

Outputs	What was achieved
250-325 Children & Young people	280 CYP were involved in provision.
5 - 10 schools in our community benefit from additional extracurricular provision 20 weeks of outreach workshops in local community spaces	6 schools from the community were part of the programme building on the success of last year.
375 sessions (including youth mentoring, outreach and school hubs)	350 sessions - this lower figure was that an individual provider decided not to take up the offer Referrals took slightly longer than expected, so it was not able to start quite as early as planned and catch up wasn't feasible.

## 7: Outcomes

This year there were specific outcomes identified for the scheme below are some specific examples of what was achieved from the partners involved:

Intended Outcomes	What was achieved.
Improved attendance	There were a number of examples provided within the school settings where the scheme had increased attendance. At one school as the scheme was held on Mondays it meant that the participants attended school on Mondays as they wanted to be involved in the afterschool "Never sick on Mondays so attendance is good"
	The longevity of the scheme has helped attendance for instance attendance for one child was very low and now this has increased to 80% and also helped by the regular support of a mentor. (See case study)
	The scheme has helped with attendance in one school as there was low attendance with a group of girls: they want to be in school to attend the after-school provision concerning football.
Improved attainment and behaviour	For this outcome there are a number of case studies that demonstrates this (see appendix re sample:) as well as a range of activities that engaged the young people such as the DJMC workshop at Eldon school as the feedback from the school was very positive.
	At another provider one young boy said:" I have difficulty with my behaviour. Funny Feet has helped me. It helps me to work towards coming here if I have a good time in school, I get to come so I try really hard to get here". The feedback from the school is that his behaviour has improved which has improved his attainment.
	One assistant head reported: Some children struggle to regulate behaviour and this scheme has helped regulate behaviour and there is improved discipline in class.
	Parents have also commented: "Thank you so much for including my son and daughter hope you keep this up as they have made a lot of progress "As sometimes behaviour at

home can be challenging however the Parents notice the positive effects of the scheme as the children's attitude is more positive and healthier.

Child A has shown significant improvement over the course of the programme. Higher engagement not only in after school club but also in lessons too. We have found that in previous years Child A has joined clubs but has not continued with them but she is really enjoying girls' football and feels like she is part of a team.

"Having the Mentoring support is very beneficial as there has been a regular mentor, this has helped with transition issues and regulating emotions" The mentor has the skills to manage escalating difficult behaviour as had a good rapport with the mentees. This has made a different in the development of the young people.

### **Improved Health and Well being**

This scheme helps children who are shy and lack confidence by developing their self-esteem. By taking part in a range of activities: "children take part in sports and cookery activities we would take for granted and they shine"

"A and L have gained a lot of confidence since coming to the scheme keep up the good work"

Furthermore, children are learning about nutrition making juices rather than drinking fizzy drinks and the parents ask for the recipes.

"The young people made friends with other young people from different schools which helped build confidence."

Part of the experience at PPA was to put on a live show and for C&YP to be aware of all what is involved in such a process, when performing in a live show their confidence grew and behaviour improved. From this experience one young person had the opportunity to audition for a west end show.

"We have encouraged conversations about safe friendships, situations and seeking help and support in difficult or worrying situations. We have found that meditation and quiet reflection has also helped children who can be a little anxious for a variety of reasons". **Improved Physical Health** Coming out of Covid it was important to continue on developing the physical health as it had been affected. A number of the activities within the scheme are based on sports and games which also help had to eye co-ordination and regular fitness. Being able to hire skilled coaches in a variety sport has meant that C&YP receive good coaching which has improved their fitness, alongside having positive role models which is a crossover to the outcome improved attainment. Part of the PPA programme involved warmup activities with the young people which were linked to movement and dance so their physical health improved over the 20 weeks. Having Professional Dance teachers on the scheme has given the C&YP more confidence and skills in Dance, they also have learnt a range of dance rather than just focusing on one style. **Improved Relationships** This outcome has been reinforced by the Parents "My three children attend FF and always have positive things to say: they have so much fun and laughter made amazing friends and built great relationships with the staff" Feedback from PPA identified that Parents commented on improved behaviour and motivation at home, alongside improved communication between Parents and young people as they had another activity to talk about outside of school life. "The pupil has come such a long way has improved relationships in school and he is a different boy"

Has helped to foster good relationships with Parents as they see the benefits and the children have grown in confidence at St Johns and St James

# **Increased engagement**

The opportunities offered at PPA meant that when it came to an end Parents explored other opportunities for their children at the organisation which led to increased engagement, also PPA would send out details of different schemes to these parents.

"Through ECP we have partnered with 'Effective Transition' and 'Perfecting Potential' to offer more sports clubs after school and chess. This term we extended our offer to include: Actors Club, Pokémon Club, Wonderful Weavers and Athletics. Pupils worked with an experienced art teacher on some beautiful artwork to be displayed around school and launched an interactive weaving art installation in our playground". This meant there was increased take up in our afterschool programme.

I am particularly thrilled with the extension of our provision to include more high-quality external providers running sessions this term. This term we partnered with Art Teach who ran an 'Actors Club' for YR5 and YR6; this club was hugely successful.

"The Art teacher did fantastic work and we have a legacy as the work hangs in the school".

# Safe environment for children's young people

The schemes provide a safe environment for children especially at a time when Parents are struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis and they wouldn't be able to afford the fees. They know that the afterschool activities are a safe environment where children grow and develop. There is also more trust within the communities as this is year 2 of the funding so barriers presented in Year 1 have been alleviated. Also, children from a range of communities attend the scheme and have fun which ensure understanding and integration of different cultures such as the

range of food that has been offered in the cooking activity.

"Overall, you see them grow by being in a safe environment so they can express themselves"

DJMC: Worked really well in Pym's Park, managed to do a lot of outreaches with the Bulgarian community who came back each week to use the DJ van and learn skills.

The children who were in the scheme last year recognised the safe environment and came back as Year 7's to volunteer and assist in the programme. This has led to two year 7's being involved in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme as part of their placement.

The outreach provides by DJMC identified the need for safe spaces such as Joyce Avenue where a 5-week pilot project took place and the young people were very receptive.



### 8: Challenges and Emerging themes:

Challenges: Building on last year's report below are some of the issues that were raised in Italics with a follow up from this year in normal text.

• The providers recognised the impact that Covid had on C&YP and this was considered when planning the programme. One aspect was allowing time for C&YP

to express their emotions and thoughts as on occasions for some C&YP it was ok not to be ok, yet exploring positive ways to deal with such emotions.

This continued to a be an issue but slowly the children and young people are moving on from the pandemic, however the backdrop of the cost-of-living crisis is now having an impact as children at home don't have access to pens, paper and books let alone devices.

- A number of families who accessed provision had siblings across a wide age range that was outside of the provision age remit. So, they couldn't sign up to the programme for instance it was not feasible for parents to do two pick-ups from school at different times especially during the winter months. One provider suggested doing pick-ups and drop off from school to alleviate this issue especially those considered to be vulnerable and on an Educational Health Care Plan. However, the key issue is the flexibility concerning age ranges attended the provision. This issue was resolved partly this year as siblings were allowed from year 3 upwards which did help concerning collection of children from the same families especially in the winter so that more of the children who met the criteria could attend and take part in the scheme
- As this was the first year of the programme, a number of practitioners were involved that ECP had not worked with before. Some activities that had never been provided in our schools before. We have learnt a lot about which activities are likely to be well-attended, and have identified several high qualities, good value practitioners. This will be valuable information for the development of future provision. In addition, we will encourage schools to recommend and share practitioners more across the hubs, which has happened predominantly through ECP this year.
  Based on last year's programme there was a lot more understanding as to what the programme was by the Parents and what was being offered so there was a good take up across the partners of the programme. For instance, PPA had to put in place a wait list as there 20-week programme off site was oversubscribed.
- The programme was very varied and it was positive that the schools could develop
  the provision accessing external providers when required based on local need. So,
  this element should continue. This approach has continued this year and new
  activities have been included such as Dance, Pokémon, Weavers club, Coding and
  much more.
- The mentoring took longer than envisaged to set up, but once established it has been a worthwhile element to the programme as Schools and Parents have been very happy with this provision, once parental consent was obtained. All were very receptive to the mentor's holistic approach engaging both in and out of school time. The mentors have an allocated time they are one school site each week (generally after lunchtime) where they are able to observe their caseload in lessons, take them out for 121s or conduct group work. Moving forward it would be helpful if the referral forms were filled in with as much detail as feasible as assists with the

speed at which the mentoring can be set up and an appropriate level of support provided.

The mentoring support once started was identified at the schools as very beneficial for the C&YP behaviour and development, also this year as Parents were aware of what the potential outcome was so the take up was greater. Feedback included it would be useful to develop the website concerning the benefits of mentoring. However, staff recruitment impacted in two of our school hubs.

### Emerging Themes for This Year:

- Focused Implementation: The hiatus in funding, coupled with a reduced grant amount, necessitated a highly concentrated approach over a 20-week period. Maintaining access to the Stronger Edmonton Programme for schools proved beneficial, as it allowed them to allocate other funds to areas not covered by our programme, like supporting Year 4 students outside the sibling policy. This ensured a holistic approach to enrichment activities for all pupils.
- Flexible Grant Utilization: The versatility of the grant facilitated effective cost management, offering more tailored solutions to meet the needs of the C&YP in various schools. This allowed the recruitment of tutors, freeing up teachers and the SLT to tackle other pressing concerns, especially with the increasing workload. As one feedback emphasized, "The continuity was invaluable since parents trusted our delivery."
- Sustained Funding Impact: While interim funding gaps caused initial disruptions, schools stepped in to underwrite some activities until the grant was disbursed. Feedback underscored the significance of long-term funding to realize its full potential. By Year 2, we observed enhanced trust and comprehension amongst parents and the community.
- Long-Term Outreach Vision: While our programme displayed early positive outcomes, sustaining this momentum demands a more extended commitment, ensuring the continued progress and welfare of the involved young individuals.
- Seamless Transition to Secondary Education: Transitioning to secondary school is a pivotal phase. Several interviewees accentuated how some young participants returned to their primary schools, volunteering in after-school activities. Furthermore, our mentorship proved instrumental in smoothing this transition, especially for specific C&YP transitioning to secondary education.

### 9.Conclusion

The Stronger Edmonton Programme stands as an essential beacon for community enrichment, offering pivotal, cost-free interventions to the children and young people (C&YP) and families in Edmonton. Our aim is simple but impactful: to enhance life chances by presenting a robust enrichment programme that demands no financial burden on its beneficiaries.

Given the alarming rise in crime rates, grooming, and the vulnerable state of many young people with low self-esteem and well-being, the need for diversionary activities cannot be

overstated. These interventions offer crucial alternatives, steering C&YP away from potential threats and towards a path of personal growth and security. Our initiative emphasizes nurturing C&YP's social and emotional skills, ensuring they're future-ready, capable of recognizing risks, and adept at making informed decisions for their well-being.

Furthermore, the sanctity of safe spaces, like schools and local clubs, becomes even more pronounced. Parents and guardians inherently trust these establishments, owing much to the dedicated teachers and staff who often go beyond their duties, sometimes with minimal financial incentives, to guarantee that children receive comprehensive enrichment and extracurricular activities.

Our multi-agency collaboration has been instrumental, allowing C&YP not only to learn and express in unprecedented ways but also to benefit from bespoke support. We, along with all our partners, express immense gratitude for the opportunity to craft and execute this provision, undeniably amplifying the positive outcomes for the C&YP in Edmonton.



### 10: Appendix: Sample Case studies

### About the young person

ECP Intervention			Stronger Edr	nonton Project	
Gender	Male	Age	10	Ethnicity	White British
Name	C.J		Date	02/05/23	

How did the young person get involved with the ECP project - Appendices: What were their main needs and issues? What did they want help with?

This young man is a LAC child but in the care of his older siblings. He is a popular child but with home, family difficulties. These have a huge impact on his behaviour. CJ lives with his older sibling and older disabled sibling. No parent is at home. At school CJ receives 1-2-1 support throughout his school day this includes playtime's s part of his EHCP. CJ displays extreme, impulsive behaviour with a wide range of vocabulary and finds it difficult to distinguish between adults and peers when speaking to them, refusing to stay in class and complete any school work. He displays extreme behaviour in class which means he was often out of class for lessons, playing or doing what he wanted to do and becoming angry if he was asked or made to follow what the other children were doing in class. He attended the Funny Feet for one day during the October holiday through a Social Services placement. He attended without 1-2-1 support and from this it was clear that he needed an environment to just play and explore. The holiday was a huge success for him. When we were successful in gaining the funding, we thought of CJ but at this time his behaviour was a huge concern. CJ has a wide vocabulary and a good understanding so we worked with the school, family and his social worker and offered CJ a place with us on a Monday.

If Which intervention(s) did the young person take part in?

What changed for the young person as a result? What did they achieve? Try and describe a 'before and after' to illustrate how things made a difference.

He has a social worker but no further interventions on offer at this time

At Funny Feet, CJ has clear boundaries in place that are different to school boundaries. He understands that Funny Feet is not school and he will go home if he chooses the wrong behaviour. We work extremely closely with the family and with their agreement, his has only not attended once because of his behaviour during the school day. CJ totally understood the reasons for him not being able to attend and this has not to happen again. He has very clear boundaries e.g., positive behaviour during the school day, must be in English and Maths and produce work in these lessons, must choose positive vocabulary at school and all these positives will mean that he attends Funny Feet on a Monday. This has worked really well and the family are delighted with how things are progressing. We speak to them on collection and CJ understands that we work closely and liaise with them. This has worked so well that Social Services have agreed to fund an additional day for him to attend. He now attends on a Monday and a Thursday. His school life is more settled,

he produces work. He still has bad days but these are not a frequent and speaking to him reminding him of our
agreement can often calm situations as we have gotten to
know CJ very well through a play environment and the
strong bond, we have built with him.
We are hoping that they will fund his Monday place when
the program ends.

#### 'In their own words'

When possible, please include a statement from the young person. You might want to use the questions below as prompts:

How were things for you before you started bond, how did you first hear about xxx? What has changed since being involved? (e.g., health, skills/knowledge, new activities, relationships with friends and family) What are your hopes/plans for the future?

I have difficulty with my behaviour. Funny Feet has helped me. It helps me to work towards coming here if I have a good time in school, I get to come so I try really hard to get here. I like to play with all the toys. I play football matches outside but also like to play dressing up and playing with all the other toys. I play with lots of children from different year groups and I like it. Funny Feet is the best!

When possible, please include a statement from the young person's referral agency or the young person's parent(s). You can use the questions below as prompts:

What were the main difficulties the young person faced at the start? What did they want help with? How did xxx help? What changes have you observed in the young person since their engagement with the project? What did they achieve? What did you learn from working with this person? What might you do differently next time?

### About the young person

Name	AL		Date	19.6.23	
Gender	Female	Age	11	Ethnicity	Other mixed background
ECP Intervention			Stronger Edr	monton Project	

How did the young person get involved with the ECP project? What were their main needs and issues? What did they want help with?

AL was referred by her class teacher when I reached out to KS2 teachers regarding weekly youth mentoring provided by ECP. She was referred because she was frequently absent and late for school; mum struggles to manage her and siblings (4). She had a lack of concentration and focus in class. She was often very concerned about her mum(pregnant). She is the oldest of the siblings and has automatically assumed some responsibility for them and mum.

Which intervention(s) did the young person take part in?	Weekly youth mentoring with ECP through Stronger Edmonton Project and free extra-curricular sessions after school for two terms.
What changed for the young person as a result? What did they achieve? Try and describe a 'before and after' to illustrate how things made a difference.	AL has developed her resilience in her negative self-talk and has worked with her mentor to have a healthier relationship with her mum.  In September Alessia struggled to concentrate in class and lacked motivation. We have seen a marked improvement in her concentration and motivation. Her teacher has made some lovely comments on her school report regarding the improvements she has made in showing determination in her learning.

#### 'In their own words'

When possible, please include a statement from the young person. You might want to use the questions below as prompts:

How were things for you before you started bond, how did you first hear about xxx? What has changed since being involved? (e.g., health, skills/knowledge, new activities, relationships with friends and family) What are your hopes/plans for the future?

AL said "Before mentoring I didn't feel as close with my mum, Portia helped me by making m me closer with my mum".

When I asked her what she had learned she said "I have learned to use positive affirmations- sometimes when I feel upset or insecure, I say 'you are enough' this makes me feel better".

Hopes and plans: "I hope I achieve my dream of being a Neuro surgeon. I want to have my own family (2 children). I will start my family once I am successful. I want to be comfy and not struggle'

# When possible, please include a statement from the young person's referral agency or the young person's parent(s). You can use the questions below as prompts:

What were the main difficulties the young person faced at the start? What did they want help with? How did xxx help? What changes have you observed in the young person since their engagement with the project? What did they achieve? What did you learn from working with this person? What might you do differently next time?

Mum is very appreciative of the extra-curricular opportunities and mentoring.				

