



IThrive Plus Report

July '25 to June '26



Bolton

Together

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1.0 Summary

Thanks to National Lottery funding, the Thrive Plus programme has continued to provide accessible, flexible emotional health and wellbeing support for children, young people and their families across Bolton. Delivered in partnership with Breaking Barriers Northwest, Fortalice, Urban Outreach (RISE) and Bolton Lads & Girls Club, the programme has responded to a wide range of emotional wellbeing needs through one-to-one support, group interventions, drop-ins and whole-club approaches.

Across 2025/26, the programme supported a total of 211 children and young people, alongside significant engagement with parents and carers, demonstrating the reach and value of early intervention and preventative support within communities.

Throughout the year, delivery remained responsive to the changing needs of young people. Partners adapted services to overcome challenges including non-attendance, school holidays, venue restrictions and accessibility barriers, ensuring support continued in schools, homes, community venues and youth-friendly spaces. This flexibility enabled young people to remain engaged, often progressing from intensive one-to-one interventions into group activities and lower-level community support as their confidence and resilience grew.

The programme achieved significant levels of delivery across all partners. Urban Outreach delivered one-to-one and group sessions supporting both young people and parents through the RISE programme. Fortalice provided specialist support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse, alongside therapeutic group programmes and the introduction of the successful Empowering Parents initiative, helping parents develop greater confidence in supporting their children's emotional wellbeing. Breaking Barriers and Bolton Lads & Girls Club complemented this offer through targeted emotional wellbeing interventions, youth groups, drop-ins and school-based provision, adapting delivery models where engagement challenges emerged.

National Lottery investment has delivered clear improvements in young people's wellbeing. Participants reported increased confidence, resilience, self-esteem, emotional regulation and improved ability to manage anxiety and everyday challenges, including bereavement, health issues and social isolation. Overall, 91% achieved the goals they set, while 100% felt listened to, taken seriously and able to talk openly with their practitioner. Many also developed healthier relationships, stronger communication skills and greater participation in education and community life.

Individual stories brought these outcomes to life. One young person who had become isolated from family and peers developed the confidence to join a local football team following tailored one-to-one support. Another rebuilt emotional resilience after difficult experiences at school, secured part-time employment and demonstrated healthier coping strategies following bereavement. Participants in therapeutic group work described feeling listened to for the first time, developing stronger peer relationships and gaining greater understanding of healthy boundaries and emotional wellbeing.

The programme also recognised the vital role of families in sustaining positive outcomes. Parents accessed dedicated support through drop-ins, informal cafés and Empowering Parents sessions, reporting increased confidence in understanding and responding to their children's emotional needs while reducing isolation through peer support.

Although challenges remained around engagement, attendance and referral pathways, partners responded proactively by increasing school-based delivery, creating more informal engagement opportunities and co-designing services with young people and families. This commitment to continuous improvement has strengthened accessibility and ensured the programme remained relevant to local need.

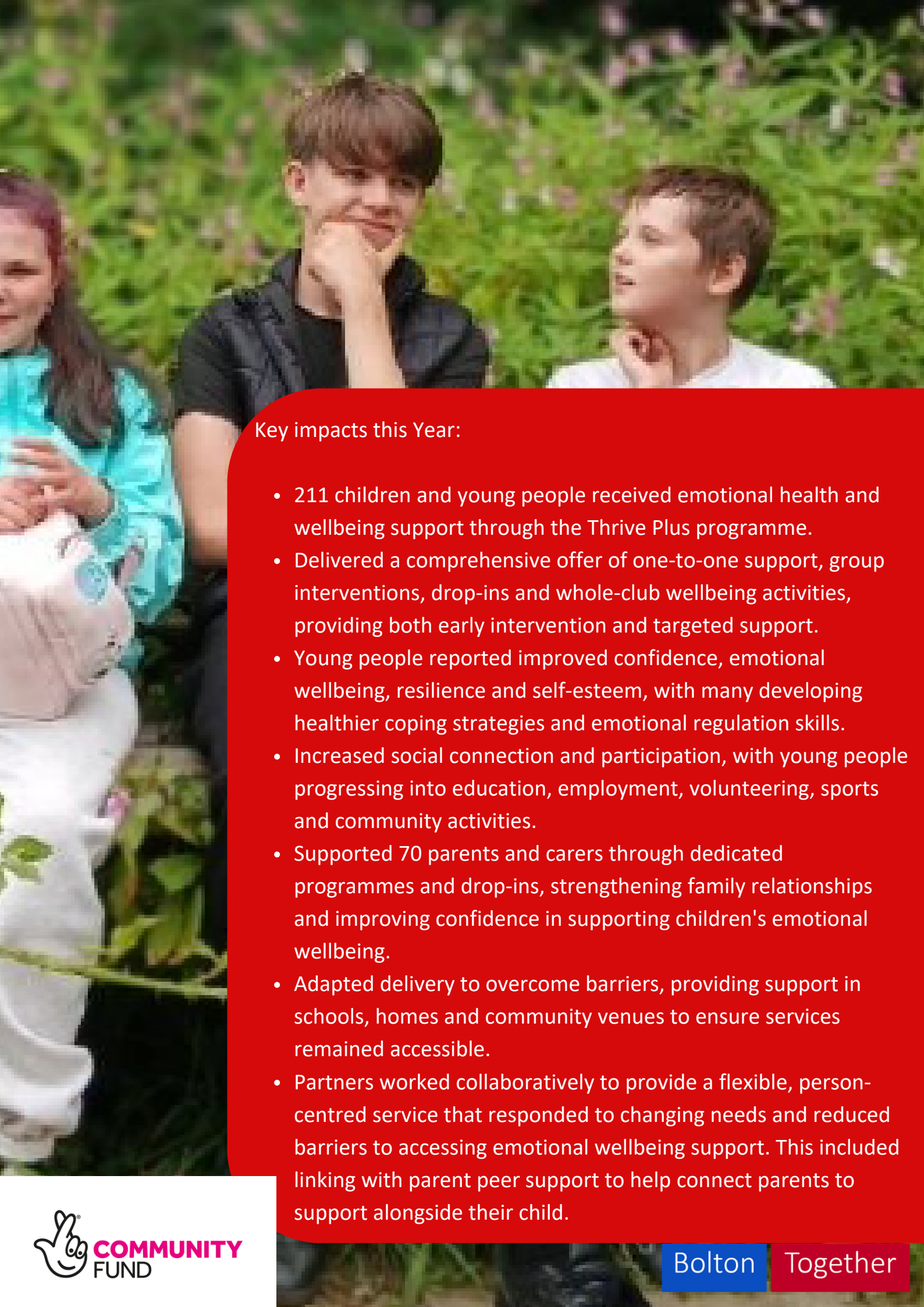
Overall, National Lottery funding has enabled our partners to deliver a high-quality, collaborative and preventative emotional wellbeing service that has reached hundreds of young people across Bolton. By providing timely, person-centred support in safe and welcoming environments, the programme has helped children and young people build resilience, improve mental wellbeing, strengthen relationships and develop the confidence to thrive within their families, schools, and communities.

Several consistent themes emerged from those accessing IThrive support:

- Emotional Wellbeing: Young people faced anxiety, low mood, low self-esteem, and poor confidence, impacting their mental health.
- Family and Relationship Challenges: Many were affected by domestic abuse, family conflict, bereavement, and difficulties in forming healthy relationships.
- Social Isolation and Engagement: Numerous young individuals struggled with withdrawal, school attendance, and peer relationships, indicating a need for safe spaces to build confidence and a sense of belonging.

- Young people seeking 1:1 support typically face multiple issues, such as anxiety, low self-esteem, trauma, and the effects of domestic abuse or family breakdown.
- Consistent, relationship-based support is crucial for building trust, helping young people open up, engage, and address personal challenges at their own pace.
- 1:1 interventions supported improvements in confidence, coping strategies, emotional regulation and resilience, with many young people progressing into group work, re-engaging with education, or increasing social participation.

- Drop-ins attract young people and families who may not engage with structured 1:1 or referral-based support, showing the importance of informal, flexible entry points into emotional wellbeing services.
- They often capture issues at an earlier stage—such as stress, anxiety, family pressures or school-related difficulties—before they escalate into more complex needs requiring intensive intervention.
- Drop-ins provide a safe, consistent space where individuals can seek help when ready, often acting as a gateway into longer-term support.

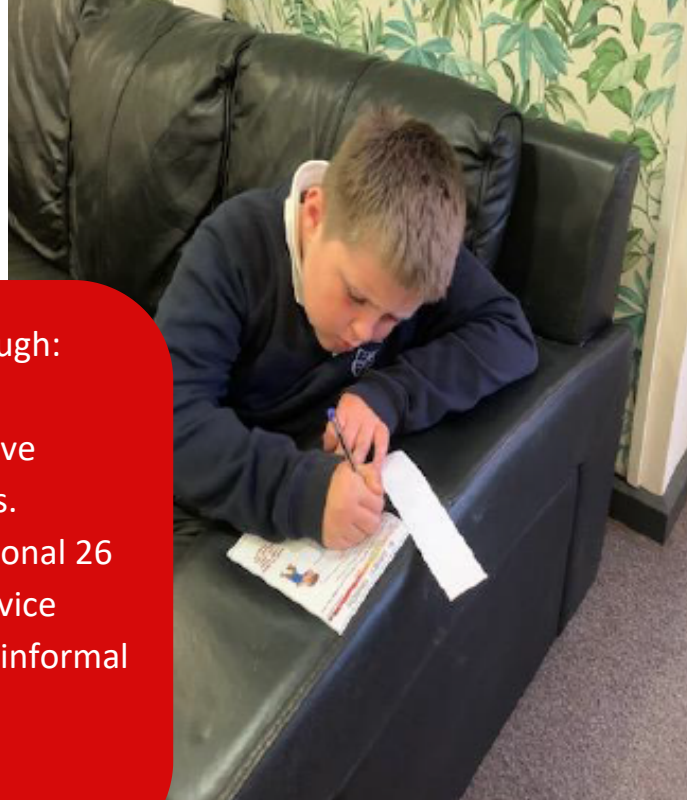


Key impacts this Year:

- 211 children and young people received emotional health and wellbeing support through the Thrive Plus programme.
- Delivered a comprehensive offer of one-to-one support, group interventions, drop-ins and whole-club wellbeing activities, providing both early intervention and targeted support.
- Young people reported improved confidence, emotional wellbeing, resilience and self-esteem, with many developing healthier coping strategies and emotional regulation skills.
- Increased social connection and participation, with young people progressing into education, employment, volunteering, sports and community activities.
- Supported 70 parents and carers through dedicated programmes and drop-ins, strengthening family relationships and improving confidence in supporting children's emotional wellbeing.
- Adapted delivery to overcome barriers, providing support in schools, homes and community venues to ensure services remained accessible.
- Partners worked collaboratively to provide a flexible, person-centred service that responded to changing needs and reduced barriers to accessing emotional wellbeing support. This included linking with parent peer support to help connect parents to support alongside their child.

2.0 What Has Been Delivered This Year

This year, funding from The National Lottery Community Fund allowed partner providers to offer targeted wellbeing and early intervention support, detailed below.



Bolton Lads & Girls Club supported 66 young people through:

- Group interventions that helped young people improve confidence and progress towards their personal goals.
- Whole-Club Wellbeing Approach support to an additional 26 young people using a safe, youth-friendly drop-in service offering wellbeing workshops, creative activities and informal support, helping young people build resilience, social connections and emotional wellbeing.

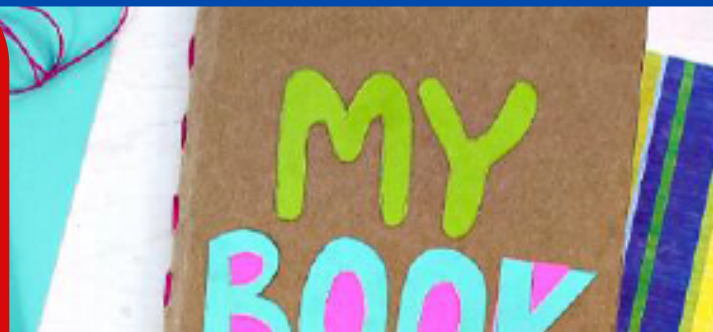


Breaking Barriers North West supported 30 children through:

- A mix of 1:1 listening, drop-in, and group-based support.
- Safe, flexible spaces including 1:1 rooms, sensory spaces, and informal drop-in settings where young people choose how and where they engage.
- Social opportunities through groups and activities, such as Tavern drop-ins and creative/play-based sessions that build confidence, peer connection, and communication skills.

Fortalice offers supported 49 children through:

- Therapeutic group sessions in schools to enhance emotional awareness, self-esteem, resilience, and relationships.
- 93 parents supported through Empower Parent group to build confidence and develop strategies for supporting their children's emotional well-being.



Urban Outreach supported 66 children through:

- Implementing practical, CBT-informed strategies to help young people develop coping mechanisms, enhance emotional regulation, and engage positively in education, employment, and community life.
- 70 parents supported via café-style drop-ins and direct support.

579

SESSIONS DELIVERED OVER THE YEAR

3.0 Case Studies



“Being able to talk about things has helped as I know I’m not carrying everything on my own anymore”

Quote provided by YOUNG PERSON



Progress in Emotional Regulation, Safety and Reconnection Following Trauma-Informed Support

Support provided by Fortalice

Katie has experienced domestic abuse, anxiety, bullying and significant isolation, leading to panic attacks, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. She withdrew from friendships and struggled to leave the house without support. Through nine 1:1 sessions, Katie explored healthy relationships, emotions and self-esteem using tools such as the feelings wheel and anger iceberg. She developed greater emotional awareness, recognising that anger masked fear, grief and helplessness, which reduced outbursts. Katie accessed GP support for additional intervention. She has begun reconnecting with trusted friends, increasing social engagement and building coping strategies. Katie is now working towards starting college and improving confidence, wellbeing and independence.

“The support for my child was consistent and fulfilled the targets set.”

Quote provided by PARENT

Dealing with Bereavement

Support provided by Urban Outreach



Felix's father recently passed away, leaving him grieving and struggling with focus, confidence, and overthinking. He experienced shock, sadness, guilt, and regret. In one-on-one sessions, they discussed grief stages, shared memories through a handout, and explored strategies to manage overthinking and improve self-esteem. Felix has made progress in processing his grief and accepting his loss, while learning strategies to cope with overthinking. The journey towards acceptance continues.



Bolton

Together

“Has helped me on my transition to high school. I was worried and felt I always had somewhere to go when I'm struggling.”

Quote provided by YOUNG PERSON



“Finding My Voice: A Young Person’s Journey Through Support and Change”

Support provided by Breaking Barriers Northwest

A 12-year-old received support from Breaking Barriers Northwest while transitioning to Year 7, facing issues like anger management and conflicts at home and school. Regular drop-in sessions from July 2025 to June 2026 fostered a trusting relationship with staff. The young person noted that being listened to significantly helped them manage their anger, leading to feelings of value and being heard. Positive outcomes were observed in school, family life, and overall well-being. They continue to use the service, describing it as “excellent” and recommending it to others in need.



Breaking Down Barriers to Mental Health Support Through Trusted, Youth-Friendly Spaces

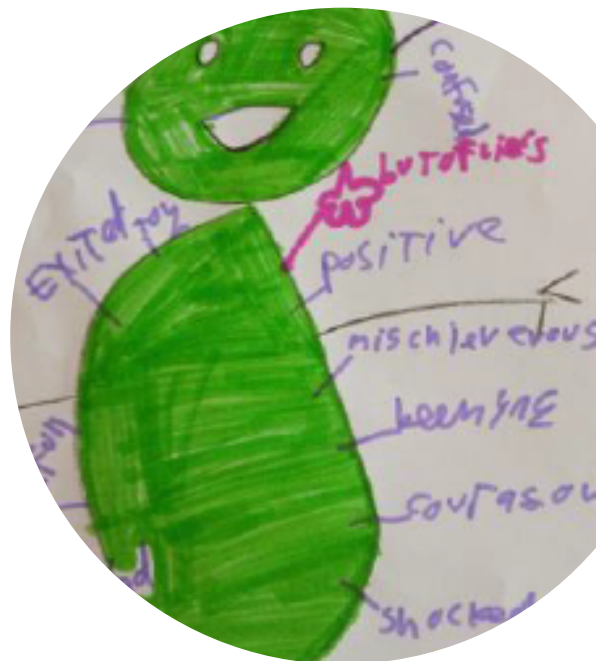
Support provided by Bolton Lads & Girls Club

A young person attended a drop-in wellbeing workshop after first speaking with a practitioner during a youth club session. They initially felt nervous about group support and disclosed this was their first experience of mental health services, despite ongoing personal and family challenges where they felt their emotional needs were often overlooked. Staff offered a flexible 1:1 check-in after the session, providing a safe, informal space to talk. The young person shared their experiences in more depth and agreed, with consent, to a referral into counselling for ongoing support. This case highlights the importance of accessible, non-judgemental, youth-friendly support embedded in trusted community settings, enabling early identification of need and effective signposting into appropriate services.

4.0 What Parents and Young People Tell Us

“Everyone listened to me and it was nice to talk”

“Thank you so much for your email and for coming to deliver the workshop. It was lovely to meet you.”



“I actually felt listened to and supported throughout the process. The support has made a real difference to my child, who is now doing much better and is less anxious. The consistency of the worker and the understanding shown has been amazing.”

Fortalice

We are here

25th February
4th March
18th March
25th March
1st April
10am - 12pm

At
Harvey Children's Centre,
Shaw Street,
BL3 6HU

What support can we offer?

- Support and guidance for parents who are not feeling confident following a breakdown in relationship.
- Tips for managing your own and your children's feelings.
- Rebuilding relationships with your children following family conflict.

Empower Parents

Positives we aim to achieve:

- Parents to feel equipped to manage difficult situations.
- Parents to understand their children's perspectives and have new strategies to support them.
- Building a parent peer support community.

COMMUNITY FUND

Bolton Together

Fortalice

01204 584682

www.fortalice.org.uk

Flyer for Parent Drop-in

infinity

blgc

ME and my WELLBEING

DROPIN SESSIONS

FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH
From 5-7pm

Take control of YOUR WELLBEING!

For more information please contact
wellbeingprojects@blgc.co.uk

Community Fund

Flyers for CYP Wellbeing Drop-ins

Bolton Together

URBAN OUTREACH

RISE

Emotional Health Group

Please join us to explore emotions and resilience in a relaxed, welcoming and fun setting through discussion and activity.

11/09/25 Emotions

18/09/25 Self Esteem

25/09/25 Anxiety

02/10/25 Wellbeing

09/10/25 Friendships

16/10/25 Emotional Health Toolkit

The Amber Centre, Snowden St., Bolton, BL12PU

3.45 p.m. to 4.45 p.m.

nicola.gillard@urbanoutreach.co.uk

01204 385848

5.0 How We Met Our Outcomes

Across Thrive Plus, children and young people made progress towards the programme outcomes through one-to-one support, group work, drop-ins and whole-club wellbeing activities. Overall, 91% achieved the goals they set, while 100% reported feeling listened to, taken seriously and able to talk openly with their practitioner. This combination of relational practice, early intervention and CBT-informed approaches supported improvements in emotional wellbeing, coping skills and resilience.

Increased awareness and understanding of self-help strategies, tools and techniques

Session notes and practitioner feedback show that young people were introduced to self-help strategies such as grounding techniques, breathing exercises and cognitive reframing, and were able to describe how and when to use them. With support, many also identified their personal triggers and early signs of distress, demonstrating increased emotional awareness. Improvements in wellbeing were reflected in outcome measures, with 75% showing an increase in their ORS score and 61% showing an increase in their CORS score.

Increased ability to engage in and adopt self-help strategies

Practitioners recorded repeated use of coping strategies both within sessions and reported between sessions. Feedback from young people indicated they were increasingly applying tools in daily life, particularly during anxiety or low mood, showing growing independence in using self-help approaches.

Improved ability to cope and recover

Case notes and observation showed some young people demonstrated improved recovery following distress, with reduced escalation time and quicker return to emotional stability. This was supported by increased use of coping strategies and greater willingness to seek support when needed.

Reduced distress and improved ability to self-soothe

Young people frequently reported feeling calmer after using techniques such as breathing exercises and grounding activities. This is reflected in outcome data, with 100% showing a reduction in worry as measured by GAD scores. Practitioners also observed improvements in emotional regulation over time, particularly among those engaged in longer-term support.

Reduction in risk-taking behaviours and feelings of crisis

In some cases, early engagement through drop-ins and school-based support enabled timely intervention and reduced escalation of need. Practitioners recorded instances of safety planning and improved ability to manage periods of crisis.

Improved wellbeing, resilience, motivation and outcomes

Self-reported feedback indicated improved mood, confidence and emotional stability, alongside increased participation in positive activities. Practitioners noted increased confidence in planning for the future, with some young people progressing into education, employment or structured activities. Improvements were also observed in resilience, social skills, motivation and goal achievement where engagement was sustained.

Increased awareness and understanding by parents and carers

Parent feedback from drop-ins and support sessions indicated improved understanding of emotional wellbeing and increased confidence in supporting their child at home, supported by qualitative feedback and engagement in parenting-focused activities.

6.0 What We Have Spent This Year

Our application budget for this year was £120,960, which has been fully allocated and spent to deliver the range of support outlined above.

This funding enabled us to provide targeted emotional wellbeing services through our Thrive Plus partnership, including one-to-one sessions, group workshops, creative drop-ins, and sensory-based support across multiple community venues.

Every pound was used to ensure young people in Bolton had access to flexible, youth-led, and inclusive mental health support when they needed it most.

7.0 Next Steps

In the final year of delivery, learning from Thrive Plus will be embedded to further strengthen impact and build on what has worked well across the programme. The evidence shows that flexible, relationship-based support in trusted settings such as schools and community spaces is key to engaging young people, alongside accessible informal and early intervention approaches.

There is also clear value in supporting progression between drop-in, 1:1 and group work, and this will continue to inform how pathways are understood and developed across partners.

Work to strengthen consistency in how outcomes are captured will support a clearer understanding of distance travelled in emotional wellbeing, resilience and confidence. The importance of engaging parents and carers has also been evident, with whole-family approaches continuing to inform delivery.

Overall, learning from across the programme will be used to strengthen practice and ensure impact is clearly evidenced for future sustainability and investment.



**We extend our thanks to our providers, funders, and partners
for their support and collaboration in working towards our
shared goal to improve mental health for children and young
people in Bolton.**

For further information contact

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