

Children, Young People, and Families Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund Impact and Learning Report (2025-26)





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Children, Young People, and Families Impact and Learning Report 2025-26



Background

The aim of the fund is to improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, with reference to the national '**SHANARRI**' framework. The Scottish Government provides funding to the North Lanarkshire Council (NLC), which is then transferred to VANL to distribute. School Cluster Improvement Integration Leads (CIILs) work alongside school staff within the 23 North Lanarkshire school clusters to identify local priorities to support children and young people's mental health, informed by a needs analysis, which commission community organisations to provide support for their children and young people.

SHANARRI sets eight key wellbeing indicators for children and young people

S

Safe

H

Healthy

A

Achieving

N

Nurtured

A

Active

R

Respected

R

Responsible

I

Included

£306k

of funding distributed



79

projects delivered by

16

organisations

Many thanks to the funded projects which provided information and to the VANL staff who prepared this report.

At the time of reporting, 52 projects had provided final reports



Distributed across all

23

North Lanarkshire School Clusters

Objectives of Fund

- Increase North Lanarkshire Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) capacity to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing in their local community
- Demonstrate the contribution of the North Lanarkshire CVS to improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing
- Improve collaboration between schools and the community and voluntary sector

Learning and Improvement

The Fund's approach to evaluation, learning and improvement is guided by the Community Solutions **Performance Management, Evaluation, Learning and Improvement (PMELI) Framework**. Funded projects are required to capture information on the support provided, the reach, and the outcomes met by their projects. This report aims to share this impact and learning.

Please see the [Community Solutions website](#) for reporting on previous phases.

*See the Community Solutions website for a supplementary report with a full list of funded projects.



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In 2025-26, the Fund has...

supported

1956

children and young people

674 primary school pupils

766 secondary school pupils

55 families

1830

CYP completed the project

When the support took place

During the school day

51

Week day

2

After school

1

Reasons for not completing project

The most common reasons that CYP did not complete the project were:

- Projects targeted young people with low school attendance
- Sickness and other absence
- Sessions clashed with other commitments
- Sessions were scheduled near the end of term

Provided support in...

delivered in

53

primary schools

delivered in

23

secondary schools

Where the support took place

A school building

45

Community based

19

Family home

0

10

20

30

40

50



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In 2025-26, the Fund has...

funded delivery of the following activities:

- 1:1 youth work and wellbeing mentoring
- ASN support
- Creative arts and music-based resilience programmes
- Cycling and physical activity programmes
- Mindfulness and stress-management training
- Multi-activity enrichment (cooking, horse riding, gardening, boxing, etc.)
- Outdoor and nature-based wellbeing activities
- Therapeutic interventions (trauma therapy, grief therapy, art/play therapy)
- Transition and re-engagement supports for pupils struggling with attendance

In 2025-26, the Fund has...

1315

children and young people
reported an improved
outcome

67% of all CYP supported

*Please note not all CYP may report back

Total Projects by Cluster

The number of projects delivered per cluster is available below.



Delivered by...

- Action for Children
- Bazooka Arts
- HOPE for Autism
- Lanarkshire Community Food & Health Partnership
- MADE4U In ML2
- Make & Create Arts
- The Health and Wellness Hub
- The Miracle Foundation
- OutLET
- Parent Action for Safe Play
- Ponies Help Children
- Reeltime Music
- Socialtrack
- The Holding Space
- VIP-Pass
- YMCA Bellshill and Mossend



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Service User Quotes

Additional, selected feedback and learning from young people, school staff, and project staff – provided in monitoring and evaluation reports submitted to VANL – is highlighted below.

Principal
Teacher,
Reeltime

“The young people have got so much out of this. It really is important for the ones who don't normally come to school. One young person's attendance has been very steady on the days you come, and he'll even come in specially for the workshop.”

“I'm now on a full time table because of the help I got from seeing you guys each week”

Young Person, The
Holding Space

“These sessions seem to have a great impact on the young people, as its a safe space for them to be able to talk to us about any issues they are having. Staff are able to support and give advice when requested”

Staff, MADE4U In ML2

“Best bit has been getting to relax”

Young Person, Make
and Create Arts

“I would recommend it. It's given me many ways to cope with bad things that are happening and also treat myself while doing it.”

Young Person, Action for
Children

Young Person, Parent
Action for Safe Play

“I used to get upset when things didn't go my way, but now I know how to calm down and keep trying.”

“As CIIL, I can see the excellent relationship that [project staff] has built with the young person. It has remained one of the few ongoing relationships at a time of immense challenge for the young person. Therefore, testament to the work that [project staff] and the project have done with her.”

CIIL, YMCA
Bellshill and
Mossend



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Impact

The impact on children, young people, and families has been identified by funded projects – provided in monitoring and evaluation reports submitted to VANL – which is highlighted below.

- 100% of participants feel they have a better idea of who to contact if they have a mental health question, problem or crisis
- 100% of participants feel the project helped me to have a better understanding of how they can be aware of and improve their mental health
- 100% of participants feel they have personally achieved something positive in the project
- 100% of participants felt they were able to work on activities that they are interested in and work in ways that bring out their strengths

Reeltime

- 11 of 11 children showed pride in completing tasks or overcoming challenges
- 9 of 11 children require less reassurance from staff
- 11 of 11 children tried new activities
- 10 of 11 children recovered more quickly after frustration or disappointment
- 11 of 11 children demonstrated fewer emotional outbursts
- 9 of 11 children expressed feelings more appropriately

Parent Action for Safe Play

Support staff have said that the pupils involved in VIP programs are more willing to engage in other school activities, their attendance overall has improved, and they are becoming more confident within themselves.

VIP-Pass

The majority of children and young people who attended the programme reported improved outcomes in relation to school engagement, emotional wellbeing, confidence, and connection.

Feedback gathered through ongoing check-ins, attendance monitoring, and evaluation forms highlighted that many participants viewed the programme as a positive and motivating factor in attending school.

The Holding Space

- 91.3% of the students stated that they enjoyed taking part in the project
- 100% of the students stated that they would like to attend more of the Positive Creation classes in the future
- 96% of students expressed positive feelings from attending the Art club



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Case Studies

YMCA Bellshill and Mossend

Student A demonstrated a significant journey of growth throughout the programme. At the beginning of the sessions, he appeared disengaged and uninterested, both in the activities and in interacting with the other pupils. During the first session, after only 15 minutes, he stated that he was finished with the task, did not want to continue, and asked to return to class.

Rather than pressuring him to participate, the tutors focused on building trust and creating a more comfortable environment for him. They encouraged him to stay by offering alternative creative materials such as colouring sheets and stickers, while also taking time to speak with him about his interests and hobbies to better understand how future activities could feel more relevant and engaging.

As the weeks progressed, a noticeable change began to emerge. Through conversations with the pupil, we discovered that he had a strong interest in art and creativity. The tutors encouraged him to use the sessions as a way to express himself, helping him feel a sense of ownership and pride in his work.

During the second session, he became more engaged and enthusiastically asked if he could create more than one super hero as part of the activity. By the third week, he arrived with his own pens and art materials and had begun sharing them with the other pupils, a small but meaningful sign of increased confidence, participation, and connection with the group.

This progression highlighted the importance of patience, relationship-building, and adapting activities to meet the individual needs and interests of young people. By creating a safe and supportive environment where the pupil felt listened to and valued, we were able to see a clear increase in his engagement, creativity, and willingness to connect with others.

VIP-Pass

This program provided support to either one or two students through play, to young people who were disengaging from the educational system due to complex issues or who were struggling in the school environment.

J's attendance in school was good but he required additional support within class. His schedule included a lot of periods out of the classroom due to his disruptive nature, and he struggled to follow a set plan. Initially, when he started working with VIP, J could only manage 20-30 minutes of play, before running off or being disruptive and trying to leave.

“Working one to one with J meant I could give him the focus and freedom to choose the play he wanted to do. His engagement was sporadic but as our relationship built and he viewed my role differently from a teacher, he was able to lead the play and show independence. J's communication about his needs developed too. Rather than running away, he could say if he needed play to move outside. I accommodated this and he was able to play his own game with his own rules, having confidence to allow me to join in and give me instructions.” - VIP-Pass Coach

Having the freedom to play and decide his own activity, whilst having the coach's attention was a positive release for J, putting him in a better position returning home from school.



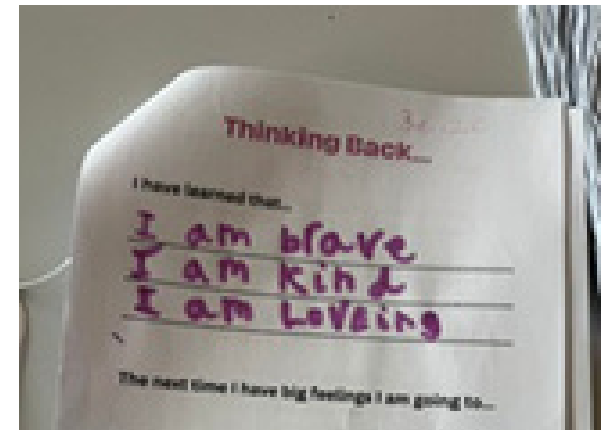
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Silk painting -
Bazooka Arts

The Holding
Space



The Holding
Space



Baking -
Action for
Children