

# Street Cones work with young men in South Lanarkshire



Children and Young People's  
Centre for Justice



IAP part funded creative arts organisation Street Cones to carry out a 12 week\* programme with a group of young men involved in criminal justice support services. These supports include LINK project, Action for Children WSA project and the Structured Deferred Sentence Team. The sessions were designed to facilitate a creative output from the experiences these young men have had with various services and supports. The sessions were optional and over the weeks a group has formed of 5 young men who have regularly attended 2 hour online weekly workshops.

The evaluation aims to capture the journey of the project and the learning about working in this way. It also explores ways this work could be developed in future. A short evaluation session was held online with the young men who have been working with Street Cones towards the end of the programme. Feedback was collated from the young men's workers and the Street Cones facilitators.

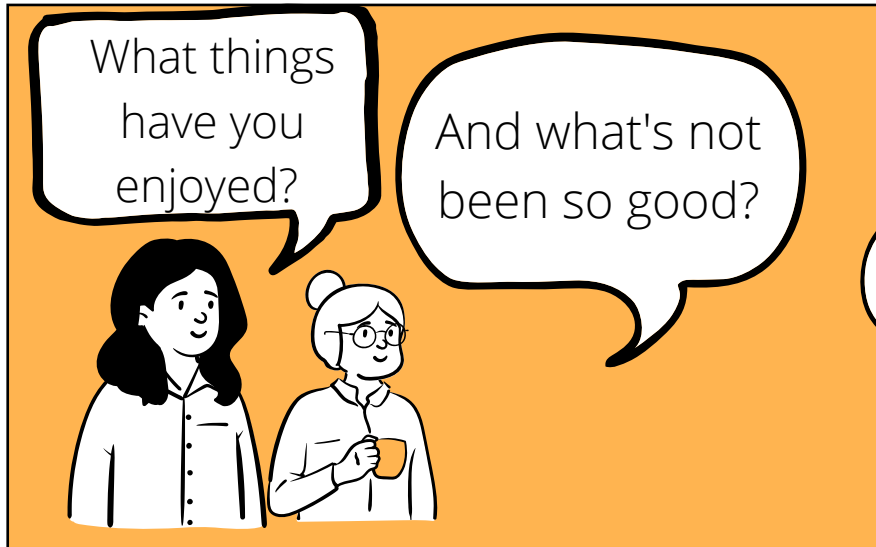
Thanks and credit goes to the young men who have taken part, who were described by facilitators as *incredible young people with something important to say*.

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The young men found it hard to articulate why they got involved in the project. Most identified that the offer and encouragement from a trusted worker was enough to entice them to give it a try. For some there's been nothing else to do during lockdown so it passed the time, gives their day purpose. Workers reflected that in the initial weeks there was a lot of support required to get the young people online and motivated to participate. This same level of support is no longer required and the engagement of the young men has been prolonged and is increasing in each session which shows they are motivated and clearly enjoy the sessions. They were keen to take part in the evaluation and give feedback which shows additional commitment to the work and confidence.

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It was clear that the young men enjoy the opportunity to work creatively, developing film material and music. The facilitators noted how articulate and 'naturally descriptive' they are when reflecting on experiences. Another positive aspect was noted as creating something they have ownership and direction of which further validates their experiences. While the food was a big incentive for taking part, this could be seen as recognition of their efforts and contribution each week. Workers reported that at times, the young men could feel under-prepared for games or tasks or uncertain about what was involved prior to the call, and sometimes activities were seen to be immature. As the sessions were online there had been technical difficulties getting and staying online, charging devices and having access to data. Participating from 'home' or in a personal/private space could mean there were interruptions. These are common complexities of running these sorts of groups online. However the young men said they enjoyed the sessions being online, as they didn't have to travel.

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It was hard for the young men to reflect on what they had gained, although they had enjoyed learning more about the creative process of film making and increased their interest in creative methods (eg music & rap). Their continued motivation to attend and contribute is testament that engagement has been positive. Both workers, facilitators and young people noted a marked increase in confidence of the young people who initially would participate with cameras off, or only when asked to contribute directly. As the weeks have went on they are considerably more confident and engage in ways they previously wouldn't have. Workers have observed that for some it appears provides an opportunity to take on an increased leadership role, and the group are clearly very motivated to effect change, particularly within their peer group.

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Overwhelmingly, the young men agreed they would like to continuing working with IAP on the themes in the film and would take part in a creative programme or opportunities like Street Cones again. Their desire for the film was for it to be used primarily as a resource for other young people, to steer them in the right path and inform them. They were motivated by the possibility of making change for other young people through peer learning and could envisage the film developing to be an online resource for young people which could be used in schools. They were open to it being used for practitioner development when this was put to them but were more sceptical about how effective it would be in developing skills and understanding, and questioned practitioner motivation to change. There was a strong feeling from the workers if the group continue to work together, building on the relationships and skills which have been developed, the group can be supported in various ways to continue to develop opportunities to shape and deliver change, with a range of audiences.