



# Reading Borough Council Cultural Commissioning Programme

# ImproVoice

Report 2020-2021



In partnership with



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## Introduction

ImproVoice is a project in partnership with Rahab and Reading Rep Theatre. Alana House supports women who are experiencing vulnerabilities and multiple complex needs. The service offers holistic, person-centred, specialist one-to-one support, while also working in line with trauma-informed care. Rahab is a faith-based service that offers a befriending service, advice and opportunities for positive change to women who are sexually exploited in Reading. They offer daytime and nighttime support through their volunteers. Reading Rep Theatre offers theatre productions and groundbreaking community initiatives, enabling vulnerable communities to access the arts and using theatre to transform lives.

The ImproVoice project was developed in part due to feedback from a service user forum two years ago, where service users shared they would like help to develop communication, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills. The programme was developed to empower women with vulnerabilities to explore their feelings, attitudes, thinking and behaviour through performing arts, providing the opportunity to explore the following questions:

- In what ways does participating in arts enable someone to reflect on their behaviour?
- In what ways has there been a reduction in women engaging in at-risk or criminal behaviour?

In order to explore this, Alana House developed and co-facilitated with Reading Rep two series of sessions for Alana House and Rahab service users over the course of eight weeks, consisting of weekly two-hour sessions. The aims of these sessions were to enable participants, through a safe context and the use of drama and spoken voice activities, to:

- Develop improved self-confidence, communication and conflict resolution skills
- Grow in their sense of self-esteem
- Develop the ability and tools to challenge their own negative thought patterns
- Develop or strengthen aspirations for the future

The longer term vision is that, in turn, the above changes contribute to participants being able to:

- Show sustainable positive lifestyle changes and develop resilience
- Experience reduced incidents of interpersonal conflict, risk-taking behaviour and reduced offending
- Engage more effectively in services and move through the service appropriately
- Experience reduced isolation and develop the ability to engage in wider community activities.

## Programme planning and delivery

The programme was developed using spoken and performing arts, group discussions and reflection. The sessions were designed to empower service users by engaging them in exploring their feelings, attitudes, self-confidence, communication skills, behaviours, boundaries and conflict resolution skills.

Alana House's community room was the base for the weekly groups which gave the participants a safe space in which to attend the sessions. The sessions were made up of warm-up games, role play and scenarios with reflective exercises and group discussions. The scenarios were developed by Reading Rep giving the participants the opportunity to adopt the role of a character, enabling them to explore issues without disclosing personal difficulties if they so wished. If, however, they chose to play the character as themselves they were given the opportunity to do so. The characters were put into everyday situations which ranged from not having your voice heard to dealing with a friend who overstepped boundaries.

Reflective exercises were key to creating the environment for participants to develop self-reflection and to break the pattern of reacting impulsively in situations. These included using objects and placing them in order of importance and then discussing why they came to that decision.

Various tools were used to facilitate self-reflection and to enable the participants to reflect on developments in their attitudes, thinking and behaviour (explained further in the evaluation section).

1. Through participating the women were able to reflect throughout the weekly sessions using a wellbeing wheel. Each area in the wellbeing wheel was identified by the participant and was responsive to their needs, reflecting areas they wished to explore and develop in.
2. Alongside the wellbeing wheel the Rosenberg Scale was also completed at the beginning and end of each group, as well as a pre and post course survey, to capture changes in the participants' sense of their self-esteem.
3. Alana House have also used the participants' empowerment radars (based on the nine pathways to reduce reoffending) to capture their reflection of change throughout their support. Participants receiving keywork support were able to look and address other support needs alongside this group opportunity and the use of the radars provided a further means of assessing and evidencing wider impact in the participants' lives.

In addition to attending the groups, the participants all received one-to-one support which included keywork sessions. They were able to reflect on their own support needs and identify areas that they wanted to improve or explore. Service users were offered the ImproVoice group where it was identified that the approach could provide a useful space and strengthen the women's confidence and ability to reflect on changes they were seeking to make.

## Key challenges

The project delivery timeline was significantly impacted by Covid-19 and the related restrictions in place. While Alana House adapted quickly and ensured service users could continue to receive one-to-one support remotely or face to face when possible, group work was significantly delayed and activities were risk assessed to ensure delivery was Covid-secure.

The main challenges for both groups, outlined below, were related to the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on all services involved in the project, as well as on the participants.

- The requirement to work within the procedures and guidelines for Covid-19 meant there were restrictions on numbers that could meet when groups were possible. The room space meant that only six participants could attend with two members of staff.

- Alana House service users were experiencing their own challenges as a result of the pandemic. In general, Alana House found engagement from service users was more inconsistent than normal, due to an increase in women's needs such as mental health and worries about the risk of coming into groups. This, as well as the limitations on how many people could be invited, meant that for both groups, there was lower than expected attendance every week despite significant effort and encouragement by staff.
- The changing restrictions meant that the groups had to adapt continually and this affected the dynamics in both groups.
- The Reading Rep facilitator was unable to proceed with Group 1 and 2 on the initial planned dates due to restrictions in their insurance policies related to face-to-face work. Reading Borough Council also gave guidance that face-to-face groups were not expected during lockdown. It was also agreed by all partners that the purpose and aims of the group were not compatible with a virtual format, due to the need for the group to interact in person with physical role play and to read the facial expressions and body language of others.
- Due to the pandemic and the Reading Rep facilitator being unwell, five of the second group's sessions were cancelled leading to an extension of the programme so additional sessions could be offered.
- It was recognised from the planning stage that there may be some barriers to engagement for service users supported by Rahab and the hope was that the project would provide the opportunity to reduce these in order that the women would feel comfortable attending Alana House and engaging in group work. Plans agreed at the partnership planning meeting included ensuring that sessions were offered in the afternoon and that Rahab's support worker would attend Alana House prior to ImproVoice starting to ensure that any participants received an induction/assessment at Alana House and that the Rahab worker would attend the group. Unfortunately, with Rahab also being impacted by the global pandemic and the support worker furloughed, this was more challenging. Rahab informed their service users of revised dates of the groups, however ultimately no referrals were received. One Alana House service user who attended was, however, a mutual client of both Alana House and Rahab.

Despite the challenges, significant time and effort was put in to constantly review plans to ensure women received the opportunity to engage in the project and to use the funding effectively. This included adapting delivery during the second group to help ensure participants remained engaged and able to benefit from the project.

## Digital engagement

With lockdown restrictions causing several delays to group work, Alana House and Reading Rep discussed how the group could still offer some support to the participants who wanted to engage. Alana House and Reading Rep agreed that the group was not suitable for a virtual platform and the aims of the group would not be met by using Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The group would need to interact in person with physical role play and read each other's facial expressions and body language. It was therefore decided that Reading Rep would adapt some of the content of the group into 'Creative at Home' exercises, making it accessible for the participants to complete individually at home.

Reading Rep devised scenarios based on everyday examples that the participants might encounter. They were asked to devise a character that was relatable and then to consider how they would react in each scenario. Alana House sent the participants the exercises over eight weeks, until the sessions could resume face to face on 31st March 2021. Alana House was available throughout this period to support the participants and work with them through each scenario if required.

Once the groups reconvened face to face, the participants worked through the exercises as a group and role played the scenarios. Each scenario was acted out by each participant with different outcomes. These outcomes were then used as a discussion board which led to group and self-reflection.

See Appendix 1 for the 'Creative at Home' exercise.

## Key successes

Despite the challenges faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, some important successes were achieved from the ImproVoice project.

- The project provided the opportunity to strengthen and develop new, sustainable working partnerships with other organisations in the community and build on those relationships to enable further learning of each other's support and services. The problem solving in response to delivering the programme during Covid-19 further strengthened the communication between partners.
- Running two groups despite the impact of Covid-19 was a key achievement and had implications for the project. While the participants struggled at times with their anxieties about attending a group due to Covid, it helped them to have meaningful activity out of the home and some reflected it reduced their sense of isolation, as many other services in the area were still not operating face to face.
- The project developed a new approach which had not previously been offered to service users. Using drama as a way of exploring self-esteem, interpersonal skills, boundaries, conflict resolution and confidence has enabled the participants to challenge perceptions and behaviours.
- Observing the weekly sessions with the participants has been very rewarding. They started the group feeling anxious about attending but also thankful about being at Alana House with other women. Some participants had not been in to Alana House since March 2020 and it was overwhelming at first.
- The participants were open minded and committed to trying out new ways of approaching their support needs with drama-based scenarios and workshops. They discussed what areas of support they wanted to focus on and were able to work together.
- The participants' confidence in engaging with the activities grew each week. This was evidenced by the participants who had initially held back; as they completed each scenario or piece of work, they began to actively put themselves first in a group activity. They spoke out more about their feelings and thoughts and were reflective when shown new or alternative methods of dealing with conflict, boundaries and confidence.
- The participants reported positive impacts including increased confidence, self-esteem, the ability to say 'no' and future aspirations. See the evaluation below for more information on this.

## Evaluation

Alana House used both quantitative and qualitative measures to track and capture the outcomes of the group.

### Quantitative feedback

The quantitative measures used were:

1. Wellbeing wheels
2. The Rosenberg Scale
3. Pre and post group questionnaires
4. Empowerment radars

#### 1. Wellbeing wheels

As previously mentioned, the wellbeing wheel was used by the participants to cover six areas of support. These were identified by the group and then completed at the beginning of each session. The participants scaled themselves in each area from 1-5. They were given a criteria sheet, which was developed in discussion with them, to clarify each scale. In brief, 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest on each area of support. Please see Appendix 2.

In Group 1, all participants had either sustained or improved on their scores from the first week to the last week, with the majority showing a steady improvement throughout the eight sessions. For example, one participant showed low scores for anger management, self-reflection and confidence in the first three sessions. The participant then showed continuous improvement with higher scores for the last three sessions in all areas. In Group 2, the majority of participants either sustained or improved on their scores from the beginning of the group to the end, with the exception of two services users that showed in a small decrease in one or two areas. For example, two participants saw a decrease in their anger management scores, moving from a 5 to a 4 and a 2 to a 1 respectively by the end of the course. The lower scores could reflect participants struggling more with anger management but equally, the reflective nature of the group increased participant's self-awareness and the later scores may in fact reflect a more honest score. Despite these few scores that had a small decrease, the data shows that ImproVoice largely had a positive impact for Group 2. One participant showed a steady increase in her scores in most areas, scoring 1 and 2 in all areas in session one and then moving to scores ranging from 1 to 4 in all areas by the final session.

#### 2. The Rosenberg Scale

The Rosenberg Scale is used to measure the participants' sense of self-esteem. Questionnaires were completed at the start of the groups and then again at the end. Please see Appendix 3 for data.

For Group 1, three out of the four participants improved on their Rosenberg scores, with two of these participants having an increase of over 75%, demonstrating a dramatic increase in self-esteem. The other participant had an increase of 14%. This participant attended the least amount of sessions out of all the participants, which could explain the smaller increase. One of the participants had an 8% decrease from her pre and post scale.

Similarly, for Group 2, two out of the three participants improved on their Rosenberg scores. These scores did not show as dramatic an increase as Group 1; one participant showed a 58% increase and the



other showed a 20% increase. This could be due to the fact that this group's sessions were not as consistent, with a few unfortunately having been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. This meant Group 2 did not benefit from the stability of having a session every week, which may have impacted the amount they gained from the activities and their ability to build on what they had learnt week by week. The third participant in Group 2 showed a 13% decrease in her score.

For the participants that showed a decrease in their scores, this could be reflective of their own individual experiences and external factors that impacted how they scored themselves on these two separate days, but may also indicate that these participants gained a clearer understanding of themselves or felt more comfortable in the group and therefore were able to score more honestly how they were feeling.

### 3. Pre and post group questionnaires

These were completed at the beginning and end of the groups and gathered information from the participants on their opinions and knowledge of residing in Reading. This included questions on Reading's arts and culture opportunities, the quality of living in Reading and what it has to offer. Further questions related to their self-esteem and confidence and any improvements or feedback on the group. Please see Appendix 4. All of the participants in Group 1 showed improved or sustained scores on all areas of the questionnaire. The feedback comments were all positive and indicated that the sessions had enabled them all to learn and use new skills.

For Group 2, again there were a couple of participants that showed a decrease in knowledge or a lack of improvement in a few of the questions asked. This was most common for one participant, who in fact across all the evaluation frameworks has shown to be the most inconsistent with her answers. For example, she had shown a decrease in her Rosenberg self-esteem score, however showed an increase in self-esteem in her wellbeing wheel. For this participant, English is her second language. She does communicate very well in English and is confident to converse in English, however may have had lacked a depth of understanding in some of the questions in written exercises. In her post group survey she had said she felt "excited and included" about the group, and expressed a wish to do a similar group in the future. This suggests she did find the group beneficial, and that perhaps she may not have been confident with answering some of the questions.

### 4. Empowerment radars

For participants that were also receiving one-to-one support, their empowerment radars were used. Alana House uses empowerment radars to measure a service user's journey of support. The empowerment radar shows the nine pathways to reduce reoffending and provides insight into participants' progress in other areas of their life. Each service user completes a radar quarterly. Please see Appendix 5.

As explained on the radars, the pink line is the first captured scores and the blue line is the second captured score within a quarter. The three areas that are most linked to this project are Mental Health, Attitudes Thinking and Behaviour, and Families and Relationships. For these areas, 75% of the participants with an empowerment radar showed an increase or sustained score, suggesting that, combined with the one-to-one support received, the participants were able to integrate aspects from the ImproVoice sessions into their wider life.



## Qualitative feedback

As well as the quantitative measures outlined above, observations from the group and self-reflections from the participants were used to identify if there had been any improvement. Each week at the beginning of the session a group check in took place. The women could use this time to reflect on their previous week and discuss any areas which had improved or concerned them. This time was also used to revisit any of the exercises that the women felt were helpful or they needed more support with.

### Quotes from participants

“

*“Attending ImproVoice has helped me so much. I had so much fun and I feel so much better about myself. I feel I have gained skills that I didn't even know I needed”.*

“

*“I am really sad that I can no longer attend the group as it has given me my confidence back and enabled me to look at different situations. I now approach difficult situations with the things I have learnt in the group. Before I would have reacted with anger and not thought about the consequences. Now I think through what I can say that will make sure I am not the one coming off worse in the situation.”*

“

*“I have been able to be myself for the first time and felt listened too and not judged.”*

“

*“This group has given me the ability to speak out for myself in other situations especially when I am attending my child protection meetings.”*

“

*“I want to tell everyone I know about Alana House, I think so many women need this support. Going to the ImproVoice group has changed my life, I never thought I would experience feeling this confident. If someone has asked me to do those activities a year ago I would never have done them, but I feel safe in Alana house and feel I can 'put myself out there'. Now I feel I have the confidence to know how to act in certain situations, especially conflict. If someone had done this with me years ago, I don't think I would have ended up in prison.”*

“

*“I have enjoyed the session so much, I haven't laughed like this in a long time.”*

“

*“ImproVoice was really fun and welcoming. It helped build my confidence around people and articulate myself calmly.”*

“

*“I can't wait for the next one.”*

### Reading Rep Facilitator feedback

“

*“This has been really one of the most rewarding projects that I have worked on. I realise that embedding drama as a tool to examine difficult social situations and behaviour patterns is a new way for Alana House to work, but their team and the participants came with open minds and were incredibly supportive and enthusiastic to try out this project.”*

*"I feel that ImproVoice has been very successful, the women have been able to use the exercises to examine what is going on in their own lives, to try out new strategies and also to recognise old behaviour patterns which may have caused negative outcomes. The exercises allowed the participants to support each other and share experiences, which also hopefully has been even more beneficial coming out of lockdown.*

*"Having the Alana House support worker, Sarah, in the room has been a real asset, her expert knowledge and brilliant rapport with the women has meant that we have been able to explore potentially difficult subjects safely and without anyone feeling uncomfortable. She has been able to manage situations if she feels that participants might be oversharing as well as ensuring everyone's voice is heard."*

### 'Creative at Home' – Feedback from participant and professional

Regarding the home exercises whilst the group was not able to run due to lockdown restrictions, there had been some positive feedback from one of the participants and a professional. The participant said:

“*I have lots of ideas in my head and can't wait to start the exercises.*”

A probation officer contacted Alana House and expressed that she was very impressed with the 'Creative at Home' exercises her client had been given during lockdown when she couldn't attend the group. The probation officer stated that clients on probation complete their life story to help them process and reflect. She asked if she could use these exercises herself as she said they were suitable to be used as a reflection model.

### Comments on impact

While the long-term impact from the project is not yet possible to capture, evidence of positive outcomes and of some impact in wider aspects of the participants' lives was gathered not only from the women's self-evaluations but through observations and feedback of other professionals involved in their lives, both at Alana House and elsewhere. As well as this, for some of the participants who received support under the Enrich project at Alana House, data had been collected (with their consent) from the police to track how many incidents were recorded with the police before their support, and during their support. For example, one participant said that she felt if she attended this group years ago, she feels she never would have gone to prison, as quoted in the previous section. She has since followed up with this saying she feels she can now deal with her anger in an appropriate way with other people, and that close friends have commented on how impressed they are with how she has not risen to anger in certain situations. This is corroborated with the fact that she has only been in contact with the police once since starting this group, and that was to report an incident that was not relevant to her situation. Taking her scores into account from the evaluation framework, her self-esteem score had dramatically increased from 13 to 27, as well as all her scores on her well-being wheel having either sustained or improved, suggesting that the group had a clear impact on this participant, particularly in her confidence and assertiveness.

Furthermore, one of the participants who was accessing support both at Alana House and Rahab has completely stopped sex working since the group finished. She had become more aware of the negative impact on her from others she associated with while sex working and the dynamics and content of the groups enabled her to put boundaries in place and step away from this. Her Rosenberg Scale scores

indicated an improved sense of self-esteem, moving from 21 at the start of the group up to 24 after completing the group. All of her scores on her empowerment radar increased, and again her scores on the wellbeing wheel were either sustained or improved, with anger management and assertiveness showing the biggest increase. These were the two main areas she needed to work on, and the group has made a clear impact on this given her decision to stop sex working. Since then, she has been taken off the Reading Police Sex Worker Action Group meeting, and her one-to-one support has come to end positively, demonstrating how she can now continue on her journey independently.

Finally, observations were made by Alana House and Reading Rep within the group, and one participant showed a big display in change of behaviour from the first session to the last. This participant arrived in the first session with her hood pulled down over her face and did not make eye contact once with the staff or other participants. She also did not communicate much in the group, apart from some negative comments. Despite this, she stayed the whole session which was the first positive sign. With each week, she gained more confidence to speak up and contribute positively in group discussions and activities. By the end session she was an active member of the group, and was able to make eye contact and engage positively with other participants and staff. In addition to this, her self-esteem score on the Rosenberg scale was very small to begin with, at just a 5. This then improved to a 6. Despite such a small increase, self-esteem is a clear problem for this participant and even though she felt in herself she only had a small increase in self-esteem, others noted that she seemed more confident through the group. Looking at her wellbeing wheel as well, her score for confidence increased from a 1 to a 4, which supports this view. This participant is quoted saying, "Thank you to the staff as they have been great and understanding when they know things are not very easy for me", suggesting she appreciated the space and time given to allow her to grow in confidence to participate in the group.

Three women who are part of the project involving the police have had increased incidents or involvement with the police during this time. While they showed some positive changes within the group and their scores on evaluations reflected several areas of growth and increased self-awareness, the scale of this project and the long-term, deep-seated and complex nature of offending or at-risk behaviour need to be kept in mind. In this context, ImproVoice provided women with the opportunity to gain greater insight into their feelings and to begin to develop reflective processes. If further opportunities are provided where they can continue to explore their feelings, develop skills for positively managing emotions and develop interpersonal skills, they could in time transfer this more to the day-to-day reality of their lives and the challenges they face. However, within the context of ImproVoice, it is positive to see some of the women feel and show a shift in how they act or respond in certain situations and feel an increased sense of self-esteem. It is hoped that this may, in the long term, contribute to a reduction in at-risk or criminal behaviour.

## Organisational learnings and partnership working

While the hope is that this project has had a positive impact on the participants that attended, there is also the added benefit it has had on the services involved. The project provided the opportunity to develop evaluation tools with the involvement of the participants and the team were able to see the women's positive engagement with this, adding strength to their self-reflections and self-assessments. This has led to an increase of skills in the team which can be applied to future group work.

As well as this, learnings and data from the group, alongside the outcomes for the participants, strengthen PACT's ability to approach further stakeholders requesting further funding to incorporate the use of the arts within support groups for service users as a creative way of providing a context for women to explore their attitudes, feelings and behaviour. Following PhotoVoice, the previous group run at Alana House which was funded by the Cultural Commissioning Funding, further photography sessions were developed with women during the last year in partnership with The Museum for English Rural Life, exploring the women's personal experiences and reflections on places in Reading during lockdown and plans are in place to continue, in this case, to use photography with the women.

The ImproVoice project has also had an impact on partnership working. While Alana House has worked with Reading Rep before, this project has strengthened the relationship. A further series is planned with Reading Rep for the autumn, using drama or creative writing to explore themes in productions with the intention that, now the relationship is stronger and the Reading Rep premises completed, women can be encouraged to engage in their community through the Reading Rep Theatre. This will hopefully lead to positive steps for them engaging in the arts in Reading going forward. As well as this, while women known to and supported by Rahab were not unfortunately able to join due to complexities associated with the pandemic, the relationship between the organisations is in place and new opportunities for partnership working can be explored.

While the evaluation tools generally worked well, a learning is to understand the challenge for those where English is a second language and to explore if other tools could be used more in such a context.

## Conclusion

Considering the impact that Covid-19 had on not only the ability for this group to run, but also the participants' experience of it, the project has managed to achieve many positive outcomes. On completion of the project, the majority of participants reported that they were able to reflect on their own behaviour, as well as reporting an increase in self-confidence, self-esteem and assertiveness. Given the overall combination of feedback using the various evaluation approaches, there is evidence to suggest participants gained some transferable skills and that these outcomes may well enable them to sustain positive lifestyle changes. Identifying if there has been a reduction in at-risk or criminal behaviour among the women will take some time to explore, as both groups have only recently finished and many other negative factors in their wider situation may remain in place. The women will still be on a journey of processing the lessons they learnt during this group.

Following on from the positive outcomes observed so far, it is hoped the participants will continue to develop a more positive sense of self-esteem and to utilise skills learnt in a way that will lead to a reduction in at-risk or offending behaviour. All of the participants that have attended the group are continuing to attend either group work or one-to-one work at Alana House, where they can continue to grow and learn from this work.

## Appendix 1: 'Creative at Home' activities

### Activity 1

Create a character. Make them as fully rounded as possible. You can draw them or write about them if you like. It's important that you like and/or are interested in this character as you will be creating with them a lot. Consider the following questions.

- How old are they?
- Who are their family?
- What makes them special?
- What are the good things about them?
- What are they scared of?
- What are their flaws?
- What is important to them?
- What is their earliest memory?
- How are they managing with lockdown?
- Would you get on with them?
- What is their relationship status?
- What is their favourite food/colour/hobby/song/TV show/book?
- What trivial thing can they really not stand?
- What makes them laugh?
- When was the last time they cried?
- What is the hardest thing they have had to overcome?

Each week your character is going to be put in a situation. I'd like you to think of at least two different ways that they might respond, depending on how they are feeling that day. How do the choices that they make affect the situation?

**SITUATION 1** – They have been standing outside Tesco waiting to get in, but due to social distancing there can only be a few people in the shop at once. It is cold and raining. Someone pushes in front of the queue. What happens next?

**SITUATION 2** – Their friend is in the beginnings of a relationship with a new man. They have met him a couple of times and don't like him very much because you have seen him criticise your friend. Their friend says she is really happy and wants to know what they think of him. What do they say?

**SITUATION 3** – They have recently formed a friendship. This new friend is very open and talks a lot about what is going on with her and her problems. It can be quite full on and sometimes draining to hear about all these issues. How do they handle the situation?

**SITUATION 4** – They have been in a plane crash and landed on a desert island. All the passengers and crew are alive and unharmed. No one knows when they will be discovered. Food must be rationed, and a shelter should be built. It might also be a good idea to explore the island. Everyone is panicking and lots of people are shouting, trying to be in charge and be heard. What do they do?

**SITUATION 5** – They hear two people in a pub gossiping about a friend and saying things that could be damaging. They don't know if this gossip is true. What happens next?

**SITUATION 6** – It's their school reunion and they are unsure whether to go. What do they do and what happens?

**SITUATION 7** – They have been elected as Prime Minister. How do they respond to this? Is this a job that they want? Will they be good at it? What do they do in their first week/first 100 days/first year? Are they still Prime Minister in 5 years' time?

## Activity 2

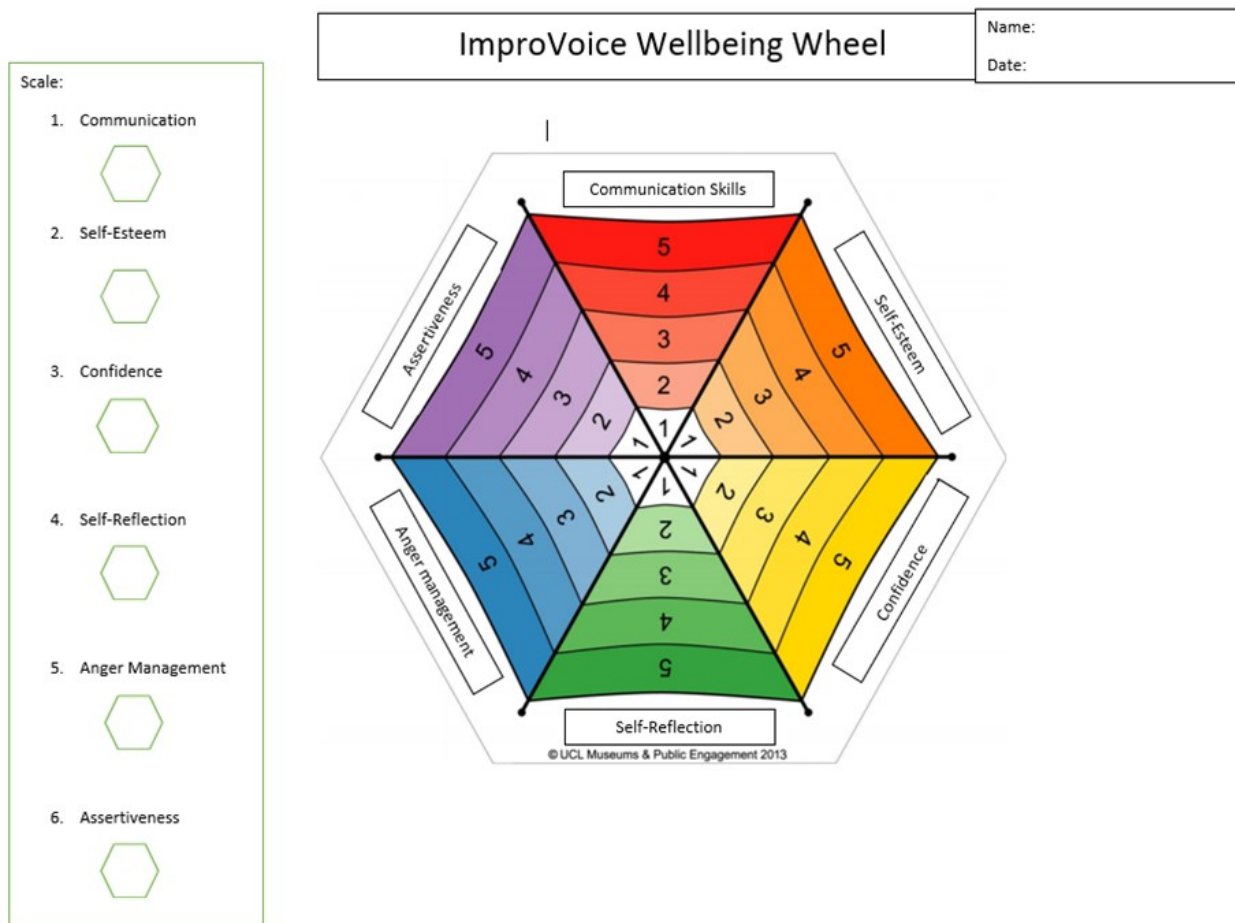
Look over the decisions that you have made for your character in each of the different scenarios.

- Can you detect any patterns?
- Is there anything that you can learn from the choices that your character has made?
- Would you be friends with your character?
- Have they been treated fairly?
- Did they ever surprise you?
- Would you have made the same choices?

## Appendix 2: Wellbeing wheels and weekly data

The areas on the wheel were decided by the participants as areas they would like to focus on and develop, using the ImproVoice sessions to help with this.

### Example Wellbeing Wheel



### Group 1 scores

Participant A	Communication Skills	Self-Esteem	Confidence	Self-Reflection	Anger Management	Assertiveness
<b>WEEK 1 - Not available</b>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>
<b>WEEK 2 - 31/03/21</b>	4	5	4	5	5	4
<b>WEEK 3 - 07/04/21</b>	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
<b>WEEK 4 - 14/04/21</b>	5	5	4	4	5	5
<b>WEEK 5 - 21/04/21</b>	5	5	4	5	4	5
<b>WEEK 6 - 28/04/21</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>WEEK 7 - 05/05/21</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>WEEK 8 - 12/05/21</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5



## Participant B

	Communication Skills	Self-Esteem	Confidence	Self-Reflection	Anger Management	Assertiveness
<b>WEEK 1 - Not available</b>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>
<b>WEEK 2 - 31/03/21</b>	5	3	3	2	2	4
<b>WEEK 3 - 07/04/21</b>	4	4	3	3	4	3
<b>WEEK 4 - 14/04/21</b>	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
<b>WEEK 5 - 21/04/21</b>	5	5	4	3	5	5
<b>WEEK 6 - 28/04/21</b>	5	4	5	4	5	5
<b>WEEK 7 - 05/05/21</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>WEEK 8 - 12/05/21</b>	5	3	5	3	3	5

## Participant C

	Communication Skills	Self-Esteem	Confidence	Self-Reflection	Anger Management	Assertiveness
<b>WEEK 1 - Not available</b>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>
<b>WEEK 2 - 31/03/21</b>	4	4	4	5	5	3
<b>WEEK 3 - 07/04/21</b>	4	4	4	5	5	4
<b>WEEK 4 - 14/04/21</b>	4	4	4	5	5	4
<b>WEEK 5 - 21/04/21</b>	5	4	4	5	5	4
<b>WEEK 6 - 28/04/21</b>	5	4	5	5	4	5
<b>WEEK 7 - 05/05/221</b>	4	4	4	5	5	5
<b>WEEK 8 - 12/05/21</b>	4	4	5	5	5	4

## Participant D

	Communication Skills	Self-Esteem	Confidence	Self-Reflection	Anger Management	Assertiveness
<b>WEEK 1 - Not available</b>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>	<i>Scale being formatted by participants</i>
<b>WEEK 2 - 31/03/21</b>	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
<b>WEEK 3 - 07/04/21</b>	5	5	5	5	3	3
<b>WEEK 4 - 14/04/21</b>	5	5	5	5	5	3
<b>WEEK 5 - 21/04/21</b>	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
<b>WEEK 6 - 28/04/21</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>WEEK 7 - 05/05/21</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>WEEK 8 - 12/05/21</b>	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA

## Group 2 scores

### Participant E

	Communication Skills	Self-Esteem	Confidence	Self-Reflection	Anger Management	Assertiveness
WEEK 1 - 30/04/2021	3	3	4	4	5	5
WEEK 2 - 21/05/2021	4	3	3	4	5	3
WEEK 3 - 04/06/2021	5	4	4	4	4	5
WEEK 4 - 11/06/2021	4	3	4	3	4	4
WEEK 5 - 18/06/2021	3	3	4	5	5	3
WEEK 6 - 25/06/2021	4	4	4	4	4	5

### Participant F

	Communication Skills	Self-Esteem	Confidence	Self-Reflection	Anger Management	Assertiveness
WEEK 1 - 30/04/2021	2	1	2	3	2	4
WEEK 2 - 21/05/2021	2	2	2	1	2	3
WEEK 3 - 04/06/2021	2	3	2	3	2	3
WEEK 4 - 11/06/2021	2	3	2	3	2	3
WEEK 5 - 18/06/2021	3	3	2	3	3	3
WEEK 6 - 25/06/2021	2	3	2	3	1	4

### Participant G

	Communication Skills	Self-Esteem	Confidence	Self-Reflection	Anger Management	Assertiveness
WEEK 1 - 30/04/2021	1	2	1	2	1	1
WEEK 2 - 21/05/2021	1	2	2	2	3	1
WEEK 3 - 04/06/2021	1	1	3	2	3	2
WEEK 4 - 11/06/2021	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
WEEK 5 - 18/06/2021	1	3	3	3	1	2
WEEK 6 - 25/06/2021	1	2	4	3	3	1

## Summary of feedback from wellbeing wheel

### All participants

	Communication Skills	Self-Esteem	Confidence	Self-Reflection	Anger Management	Assertiveness
<b>Improved</b>	2	1	4	0	3	4
<b>Sustained</b>	5	6	3	7	2	3
<b>Decreased</b>	0	0	0	0	2	0

## Appendix 3: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale with scores

Pre Group: Group 1						Participant			
Statement		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	A	B	C	D
1	I'm a person of worth, equal with others	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
2	I have good qualities	3	2	1	0	3	2	3	3
3	I'm a failure	0	1	2	3	0	2	2	2
4	I do things as well as others	3	2	1	0	2	1	2	2
5	I don't have much to be proud of	0	1	2	3	1	2	3	2
6	I'm positive towards myself	3	2	1	0	2	1	2	2
7	I'm satisfied with myself	3	2	1	0	2	1	2	2
8	I wish I had more respect for myself	0	1	2	3	1	0	3	2
9	I feel useless sometimes	0	1	2	3	2	1	3	1
10	Sometimes I think I'm no good at all	0	1	2	3	0	1	3	2
Score out of 30						14	13	26	21
<p>Typical scores on the Rosenberg scale are around 22, with most people scoring between 15 and 25. A score of less than 15 suggests low self-esteem may be an issue.</p>									

Post Group: Group 1						Participant			
Statement		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA	CA	SK	BH
1	I'm a person of worth, equal with others	3	2	1	0	3	<b>3</b>	3	3
2	I have good qualities	3	2	1	0	3	<b>3</b>	3	3
3	I'm a failure	0	1	2	3	2	<b>3</b>	2	3
4	I do things as well as others	3	2	1	0	3	<b>3</b>	2	2
5	I don't have much to be proud of	0	1	2	3	2	<b>3</b>	3	3
6	I'm positive towards myself	3	2	1	0	3	<b>3</b>	2	3
7	I'm satisfied with myself	3	2	1	0	3	<b>3</b>	2	2
8	I wish I had more respect for myself	0	1	2	3	2	<b>0</b>	3	1
9	I feel useless sometimes	0	1	2	3	2	<b>3</b>	2	2
10	Sometimes I think I'm no good at all	0	1	2	3	2	<b>3</b>	2	2
Score out of 30						14	<b>13</b>	26	21
<p>Typical scores on the Rosenberg scale are around 22, with most people scoring between 15 and 25. A score of less than 15 suggests low self-esteem may be an issue.</p>									

Pre Group: Group 2						Participant		
Statement		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	E	F	G
1	I'm a person of worth, equal with others	3	2	1	0	2	2	1
2	I have good qualities	3	2	1	0	2	2	0
3	I'm a failure	0	1	2	3	1	1	0
4	I do things as well as others	3	2	1	0	1	2	1
5	I don't have much to be proud of	0	1	2	3	2	2	0
6	I'm positive towards myself	3	2	1	0	1	1	1
7	I'm satisfied with myself	3	2	1	0	1	1	1
8	I wish I had more respect for myself	0	1	2	3	2	2	1
9	I feel useless sometimes	0	1	2	3	0	1	0
10	Sometimes I think I'm no good at all	0	1	2	3	0	2	0
Score out of 30						12	16	5
Typical scores on the Rosenberg scale are around 22, with most people scoring between 15 and 25. A score of less than 15 suggests low self-esteem may be an issue.								

Post Group: Group 2						Participant		
Statement		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	E	F	G
1	I'm a person of worth, equal with others	3	2	1	0	2	2	1
2	I have good qualities	3	2	1	0	2	2	1
3	I'm a failure	0	1	2	3	2	2	0
4	I do things as well as others	3	2	1	0	2	1	2
5	I don't have much to be proud of	0	1	2	3	2	1	0
6	I'm positive towards myself	3	2	1	0	2	1	0
7	I'm satisfied with myself	3	2	1	0	1	1	1
8	I wish I had more respect for myself	0	1	2	3	3	1	1
9	I feel useless sometimes	0	1	2	3	1	1	0
10	Sometimes I think I'm no good at all	0	1	2	3	2	2	0
Score out of 30						19	14	6

Typical scores on the Rosenberg scale are around 22, with most people scoring between 15 and 25. A score of less than 15 suggests low self-esteem may be an issue.

## Appendix 4: Pre and post ImproVoice survey responses

### Pre Group: Group 1

Question/Statement	Responses from participants					
<b>I feel confident in going along to Cultural, Art and Heritage Events in Reading</b>	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
<b>What are the things that make you proud to live in Reading and be part of the Community?</b>	Reading is a nice place to live as there is a lot to do.	No answer given	People are friendly. Plenty of support and shopping facilities	Inclusion, Multi Cultural, Green Councilor	No answer given	Plenty of shops. Walking Spaces and Forbury Gardens
<b>What are the things that make you feel LESS proud to live in Reading?</b>	There is not a lot of help with housing and finding employment	No swimming Pools	None	I don't have anything I don't feel less proud of	No answer given	Violence
<b>I like living where I live</b>	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Not Sure
<b>I have the ability to assert myself</b>	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
<b>I can put boundaries in place and keep to them</b>	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Agree
<b>I find it easy to express my thoughts and feelings</b>	Not Sure	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>I am confident that I can manage my emotions</b>	Not Sure	Not Sure	Agree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>I often say 'yes' when I want to say 'no'</b>	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Agree
<b>I feel able to reflect on my behaviour and make changes</b>	Agree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or expected to last for at least 12 months?</b>	No	Yes - Immensely	Yes - Everything in my life is limited	Yes - Very Occasionally	Yes	No



## Post Group: Group 1

Question/Statement	Responses from participants			
<b>I feel confident in going along to Cultural, Art and Heritage Events in Reading</b>	Not Sure	Agree	Agree	Not Sure
<b>What are the things that make you proud to live in Reading and be part of the Community?</b>	Alana House and the town centre	History, friendly people and shops	Not Sure	Shops and river walks
<b>What are the things that make you feel LESS proud to live in Reading?</b>	There isn't much to do	No answer given	Drug use in public areas	Violence and crowding
<b>I like living where I live</b>	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
<b>ImproVoice has increased my ability to assert myself</b>	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
<b>ImproVoice has enabled me to put boundaries in place and keep to them</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Agree
<b>ImproVoice has increased my confidence to express my thoughts and feelings</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>ImproVoice has increased my confidence to manage my emotions</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Agree
<b>ImproVoice has increased my ability to say 'no' when I often used to say 'yes'</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>ImproVoice has enabled me to reflect on my behaviour and make changes</b>	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or expected to last for at least 12 months?</b>	No	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Please describe how you feel about the ImproVoice project</b>	I feel confident and good about myself	Out of the world. I got a lot from this group	Very fun and welcoming. It has built my confidence around other people	It has given me a positive look on how to deal with situations
<b>What did you enjoy most about ImproVoice?</b>	I learnt a lot of new skills and working in a group	Everything. It was different every week	My favourite thing were the practical exercises, especially the folding paper experiment	Looking at situations in a number of different ways
<b>What did you enjoy least about ImproVoice?</b>	No answer	It was all good	The Alphabet game	I enjoyed ALL aspects of the course
<b>Do you think you have gained new skills you will use in everyday life? If so, please describe how...</b>	Yes	Controlling my anger and having the ability to now say 'no'	Yes, I have more confidence to articulate myself calmly	Just to look at things in a different way that helps to protect yourself
<b>Is there anything else you would like to share?</b>	No	Thank you for helping me to be a strong person	No	No

## Pre Group: Group 2

Question/Statement	Responses from participants		
<b>I know what is on offer in terms of arts, culture and heritage in Reading</b>	Not Sure	Agree	Agree
<b>I feel confident in going along to Cultural, Art and Heritage Events in Reading</b>	Agree	Agree	Not Sure
<b>What are the things that make you proud to live in Reading and be part of the Community?</b>	It's multi racial community, the outside spaces. The River Thames and Kennet Canal	Treated Fairly, Equality and Beliefs	No Answer Given
<b>What are the things that make you feel LESS proud to live in Reading?</b>	Litter, Bad neighbours, Cintra Park attracts not very nice women so I am unable to go there	Bullying	No community centres or places for young kids
<b>I like living where I live</b>	Strongly Disagree,	Not Sure	Agree
<b>I have the ability to assert myself</b>	Not Sure	Agree	Not Sure
<b>I can put boundaries in place and keep to them</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
<b>I find it easy to express my thoughts and feelings</b>	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I am confident that I can manage my emotions</b>	Not Sure	Disagree	Disagree
<b>I often say 'yes' when I want to say 'no'</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I feel able to reflect on my behaviour and make changes</b>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
<b>Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or expected to last for at least 12 months?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Post Group: Group 2

Question/Statement	Responses from participants		
<b>I know what is on offer in terms of arts, culture and heritage in Reading</b>	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
<b>I feel confident in going along to Cultural, Art and Heritage Events in Reading</b>	Not sure	Disagree	Disagree
<b>What are the things that make you proud to live in Reading and be part of the Community?</b>	Multi cultural, more accepting of different personalities	Equality	Oracle, restaurants Broad Street mall
<b>What are the things that make you feel LESS proud to live in Reading?</b>	Dirty streets	Bullying	Having no where for young kids to go, seeing empty buildings that could be used to teach and somewhere to go for the children
<b>I like living where I live</b>	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
<b>ImproVoice has increased my ability to assert myself</b>	Agree	Agree	Agree
<b>ImproVoice has enabled me to put boundaries in place and keep to them</b>	A	Not sure	Not sure
<b>ImproVoice has increased my confidence to express my thoughts and feelings</b>	Agree	Not sure	Agree
<b>ImproVoice has increased my confidence to manage my emotions</b>	Strongly agree	Not sure	Not sure
<b>ImproVoice has increased my ability to say 'no' when I often used to say 'yes'</b>	Not sure	Agree	Disagree
<b>ImproVoice has enabled me to reflect on my behaviour and make changes</b>	Agree	Not sure	Agree
<b>Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or expected to last for at least 12 months?</b>	I am always in pain and sometimes cannot manage tasks	Yes	Yes
<b>Please describe how you feel about the ImproVoice project</b>	I enjoy going and explaining aspects of myself plus others personalities I am not always aware of	Excited, included	I think ImproVoice is a great project, I like that the group is not very big
<b>What did you enjoy most about ImproVoice?</b>	The people and the tasks. Thought provoking discussions	The connection with people	Meeting new people
<b>What did you enjoy least about ImproVoice?</b>	None, all of it was enjoyable	Triggers	
<b>Do you think you have gained new skills you will use in everyday life? If so, please describe how...</b>	Yes, taking time to talk and find common ground, how to be more diplomatic. More socially aware, even if anxious	Not sure	Be a bit more understanding with others
<b>Is there anything else you would like to share?</b>	This was a really enjoyable course and with humour and talk helped to view what we see and how others see us	Thank you for the opportunity, I would like to participate in future classes	Thank you to the staff as they have been great and understanding when they know things are not very easy for me

## Appendix 5: Empowerment radars

Alana House captures empowerment radar data quarterly from service users. Two scores were captured during the time the ImproVoice sessions were running.

### Key

**Pink** = First captured score

**Blue** = Second captured score

**1** = Does not identify a need for help

**2** = Accepting help

**3** = Believing/starting to self-help

**4** = Learning/using skills

**5** = Self-reliance

**1** = High support needed

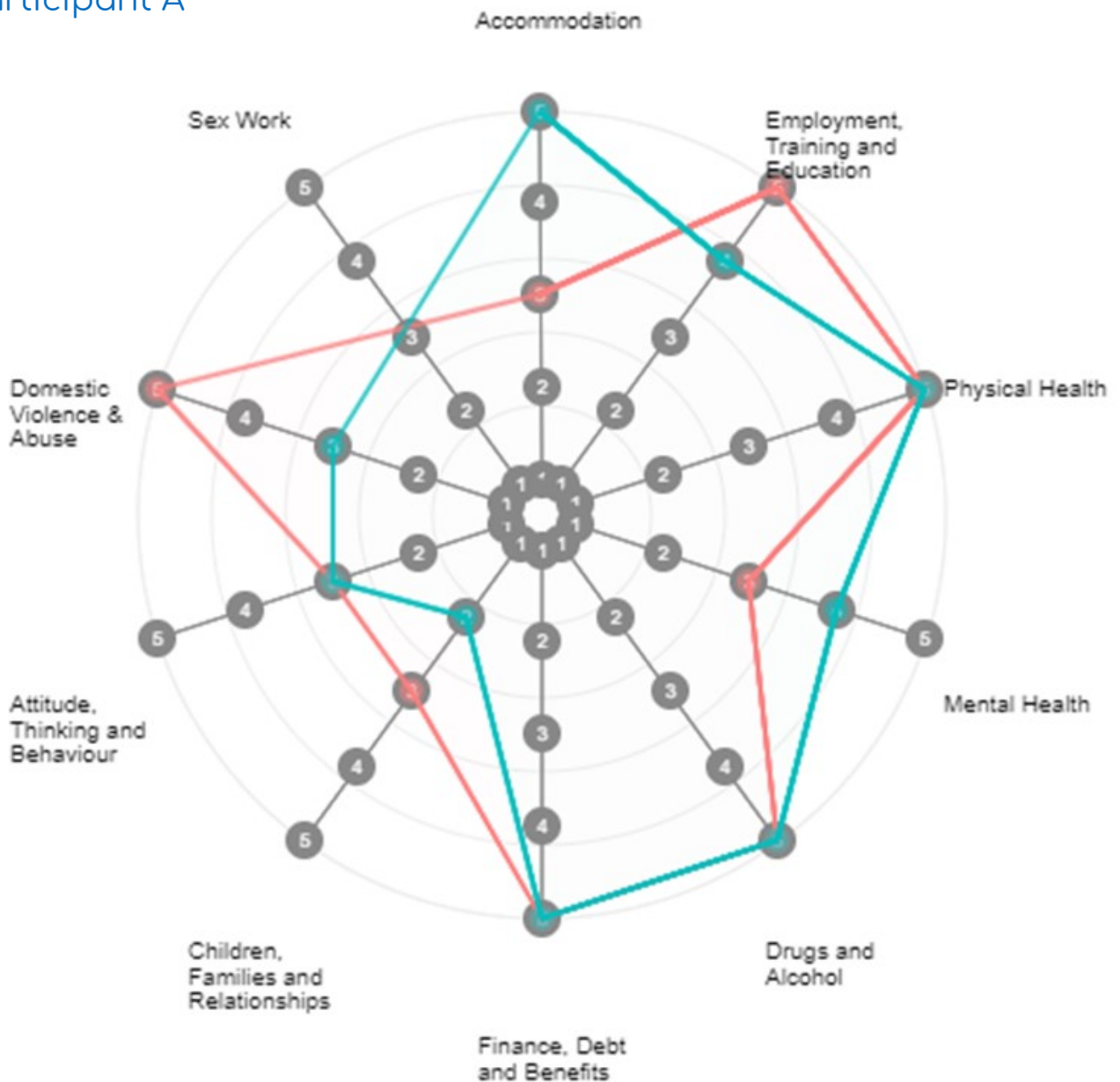
|

|

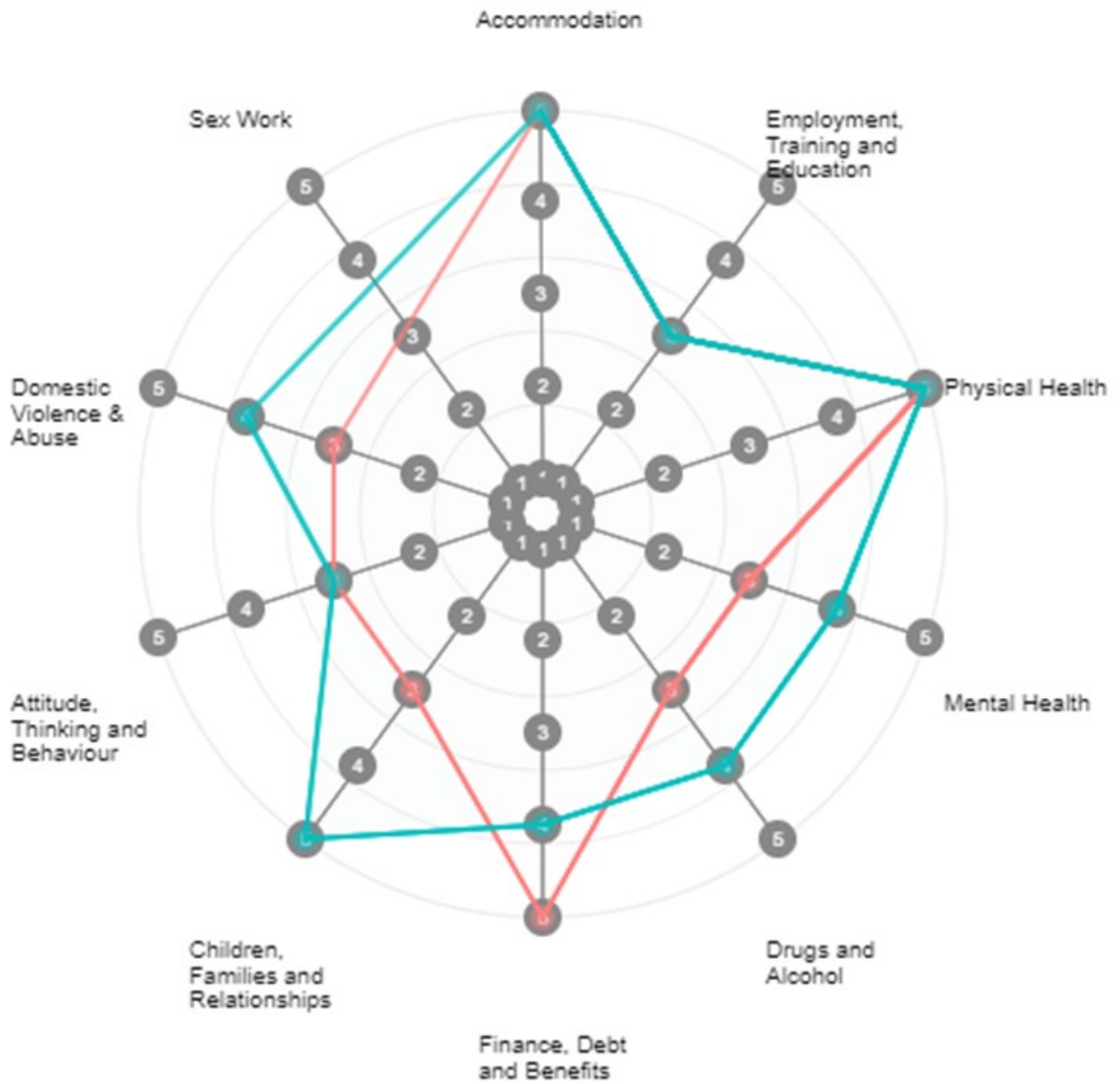
|

**5** = Low support needed

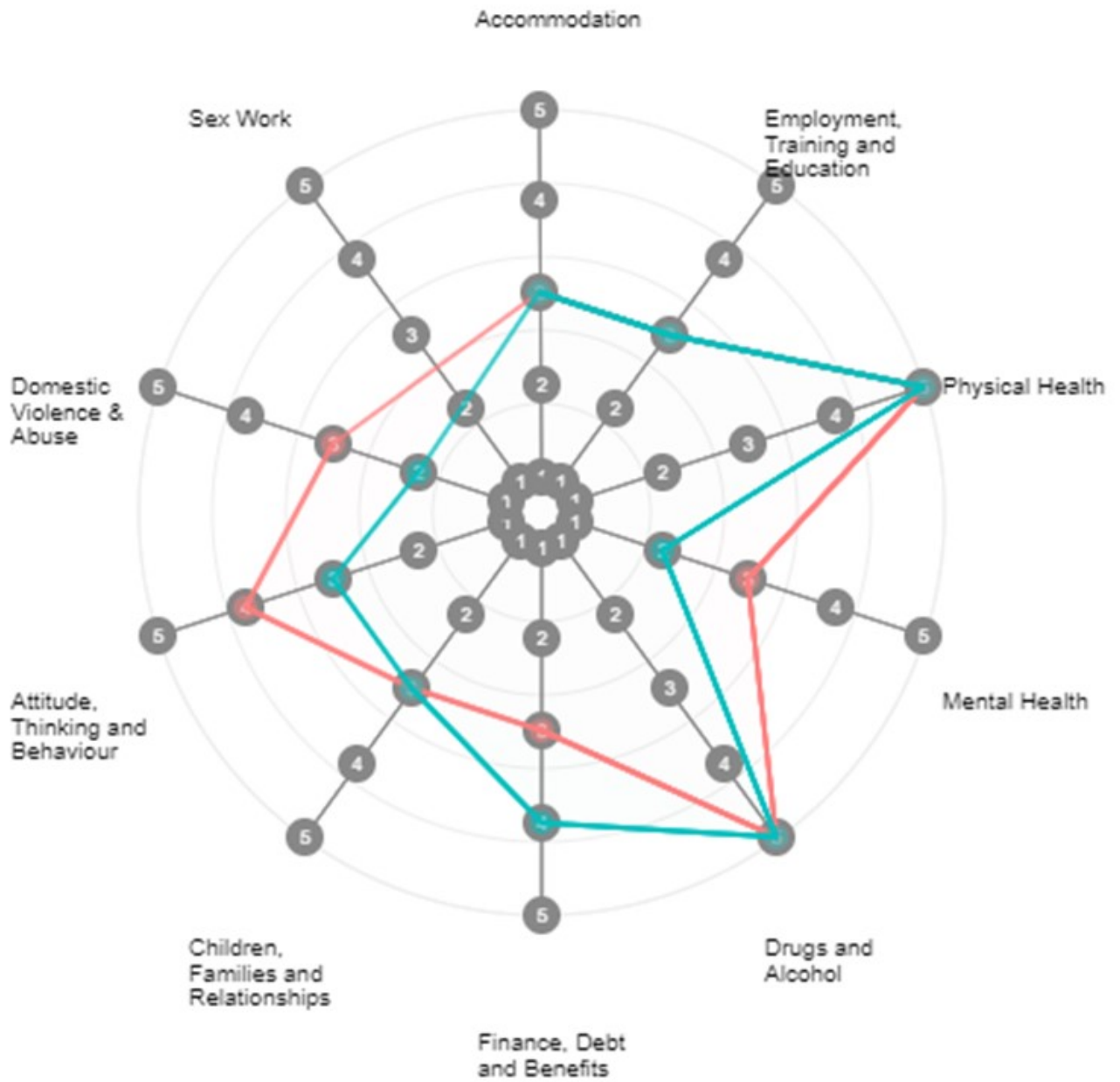
### Participant A



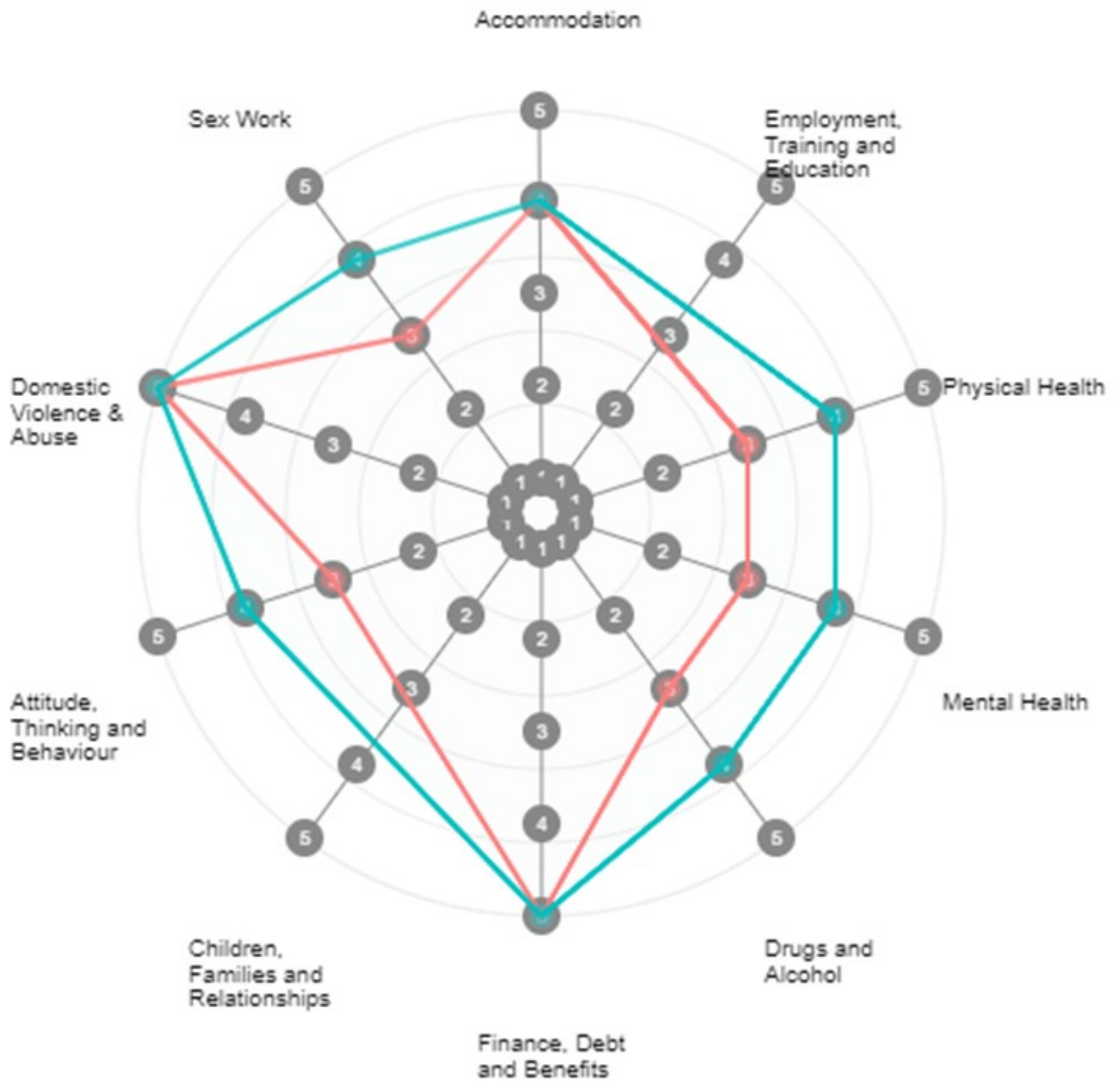
# Participant B



# Participant C



## Participant D





## Appendix 6: Demographics of participants

QUESTION	Group 1	Group 2	Total Responses
<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	-	-	-
Female	6	3	9
Prefer not to say	-	-	-
<b>Local Authority Area (Open)</b>	-	-	-
<b>In Contact with other services?</b>			
Yes	6	3	9
No	-	-	-
Which services (open)			-
<b>Which of the following options best describes how you think of your gender identity?</b>			
Male	-	-	-
Female	6	3	9
In another way	-	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-	-
<b>Which of the following age groups do you belong to?</b>			
Under 16	-	-	-
16 - 19	-	-	-
20 - 24	-	-	-
25 - 29	-	-	-
30 - 34	1	1	2
35 - 39	-	1	1
40 - 44	1	-	1
45 - 49	1	-	1
50 - 54	2	-	2
55 - 59	1	1	2
60 - 64	-	-	-
65 - 69	-	-	-
70 - 74	-	-	-
75 - 79	-	-	-
80 - 84	-	-	-
85 or older	-	-	-
<b>What is your ethnic group?</b>			
White (English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British)	4	-	4
White (Irish)	-	-	-
White (Gypsy or Irish Traveller)	-	-	-
White (Other White background)	-	1	1
Black or Black British (African)	-	1	1
Black or Black British (Caribbean)	-	-	-
Black or Black British (Other / Black / African / Caribbean background)	-	-	-
Mixed (White and Black Caribbean)	-	-	-
Mixed (White and Black African)	-	-	-
Mixed (White and Asian)	-	-	-
Mixed (Other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background)	1	1	2
Asian or Asian British (Indian)	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British (Pakistani)	1	-	1
Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi)	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British (Chinese)	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British (Other Asian background)	-	-	-
Other (Arab)	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-	-



Part of



Parents And Children Together

Email: [alana.house@pactcharity.org](mailto:alana.house@pactcharity.org)



@AlanaHousePACT

Website: [www.alanahouse.org](http://www.alanahouse.org)

Address: **2 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS.**

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