

Title

“Technology Talks?” Using an electronic wellbeing tool to increase young people’s engagement and voice, to inform more effective planning for their wellbeing

What did we ask? (Research Questions)

- Do stakeholders report that young people’s use of an electronic wellbeing tool increases their engagement and amplifies their voice in planning?
- Do stakeholders report that using outputs generated by an electronic wellbeing tool leads to more effective planning for young people?

What is the evidence base? (link to your definition of the poverty gap) 300 words

The electronic wellbeing tool, an app called “Being Me”, (APPA 2019) is based on Professor Ungar’s resilience research (2008 & 2004) with an evidence base from Hope University for Reliability/Validity (2018).

Young People’s (YP) wellbeing is of increased interest amongst those who work with them. Research from health suggests increased YP engagement with electronic versus paper measures (Cooper, Spencer, Lancaster & Titman, 2014).

YP’s use of smartphones has raised concerns but there are also benefits to the use of gamification to get YP engaging with the world around them (e.g. Direito, Jiang, Whittaker & Maddison, 2015). In a review of mental health apps for YP, Seko, Kidd, Wiljer, & McKenzie, (2014) found there were advantages to the use of smartphones/tablets. These included flexibility, interactivity, and spontaneous nature of apps in supporting users outwith school and clinic settings. Additionally, smartphones/tablets are viewed as personal and private to the person, encouraging deeper disclosure to fully assess wellbeing.

Aberdeen City’s poverty context:

Townsend (1979), discusses poverty as the exclusion of those ‘without’ what others have - ‘those severely below those commanded by the average family’.

Aberdeen is a city of mixed fortunes; the contrast between those with and those

without is marked and the 'exclusion' of those without has a significant impact on wellbeing and resilience.

Additionally, due to the city's changing socioeconomic landscape increased numbers of YP are experiencing wellbeing concerns across Aberdeen City's Integrated Children's and Family Services (ICFS). This is related to the increased economic downturn, instability to family income and income demographics within Aberdeen leading to 'Income Volatility' (Sosu & Schmidt 2018). Income Volatility is viewed as affecting YP's cognitive outcomes through stress and investment from parents due to their own poverty related stress (figure 1) variables.

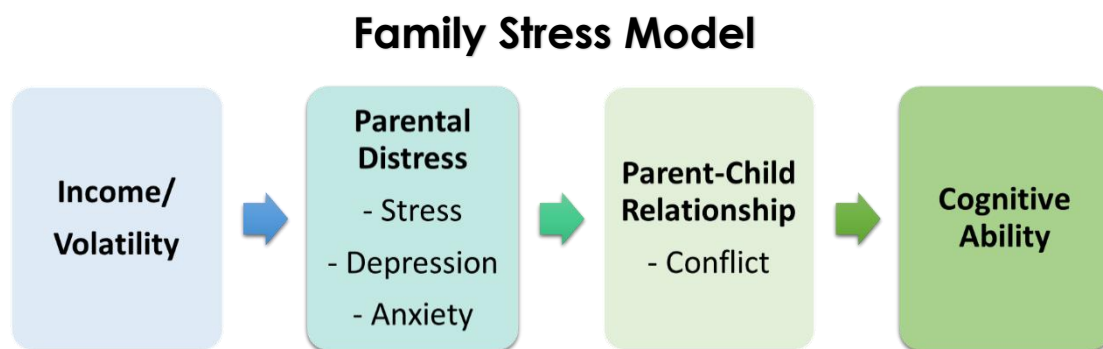


Figure 1: Family Stress Model, Sosu & Schmidt (2018)

Kopasker, Montagna and Bender (2018), discuss that "Economic insecurity is an emerging socioeconomic determinant of mental health". Aberdeen City Council's (ACC) Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) aims that at least 80% of children will report feeling mentally well by 2026. It highlights the importance and expectation of ICFS's staff in "Improving the knowledge, understanding and skill to recognise and respond to universal mental wellbeing vulnerability". ACC LOIP also details "Ensuring that Aberdeen is child friendly city where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of YP are an integral part of decisions".

Concerns around the levels of aspiration shown both by and for YP fed into the aim to improve YP engagement and future planning. Clear links exist between expectations and aspirations of YP experiencing increased poverty levels and fluctuations. Aspirations have become a key policy driver in Scotland and are considered crucial to closing the poverty related attainment gap (Treanor, 2017). Treanor discusses that the missing element is how to make aspirations real and attainable for YP and their families.

The Being Me tool was trialled with vulnerable children across ACC whose circumstances reflect the poverty affects as detailed above.

What did we do? 200 words

- Focus groups with 318 YP re the product itself – including two deprivation areas (with Scottish Attainment Challenge schools)
- Trial of electronic wellbeing tool:
 - Across different deprivation areas
 - 32 YP participated
- Practitioners as partners – Education/Social Work (ICFS)
- YP evaluation questions built into wellbeing tool (pie-charts below)
- Questionnaires for Practitioners/Parents/YP (Nil return from Parents)
- Practitioner Focus group/interviews
- Data analysis (including multi-agency partners)

What have we found? 200 words

Quantitative Data:

Evaluation Questionnaires from Young People (end of trial):

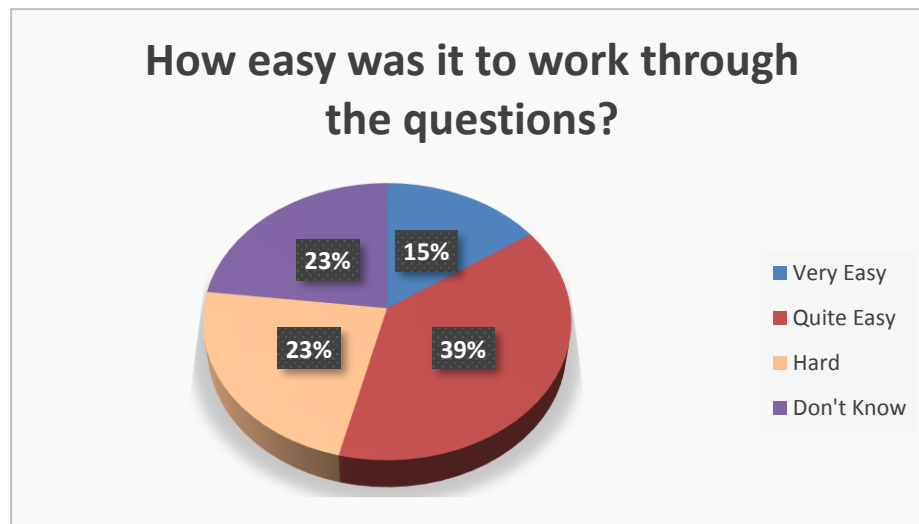


Figure 2: YP Questionnaires, Ease

Did answering the questions upset you or make you feel sad?

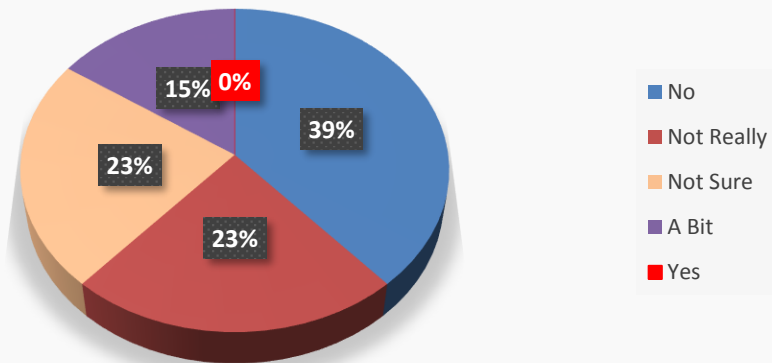


Figure 3: YP Questionnaires, Emotions

Did knowing that people would not see your individual answers help you answer more honestly?

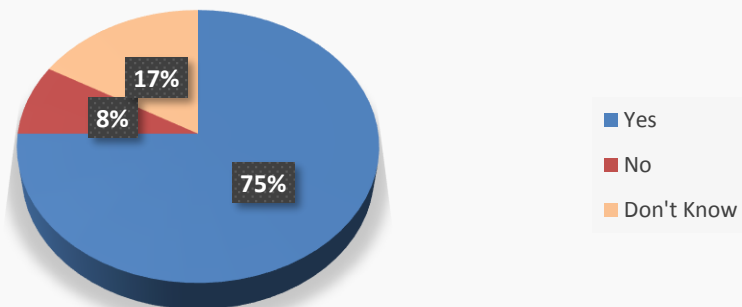


Figure 4: YP Questionnaires, Honesty

Questionnaire Responses:

At administration:

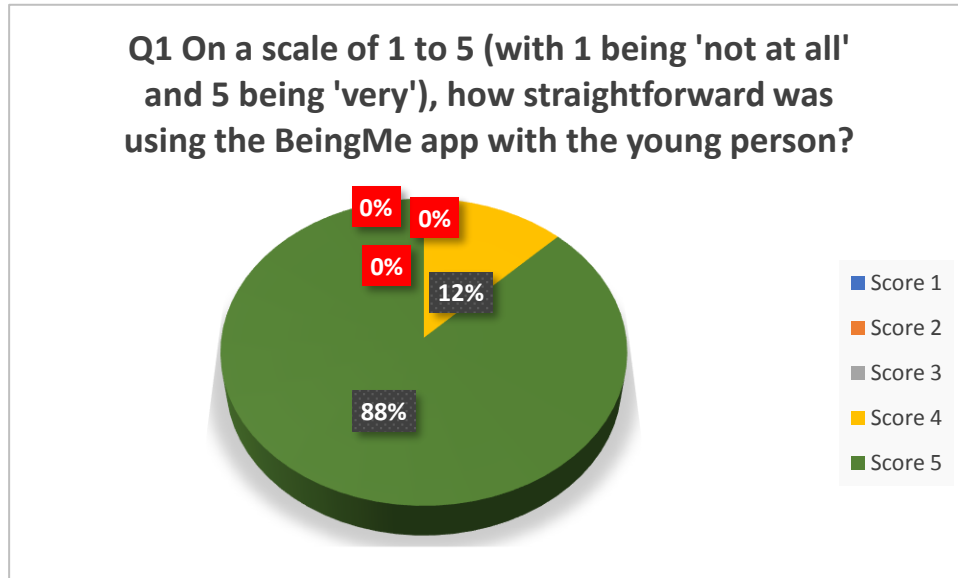


Figure 5: Questionnaires, Process

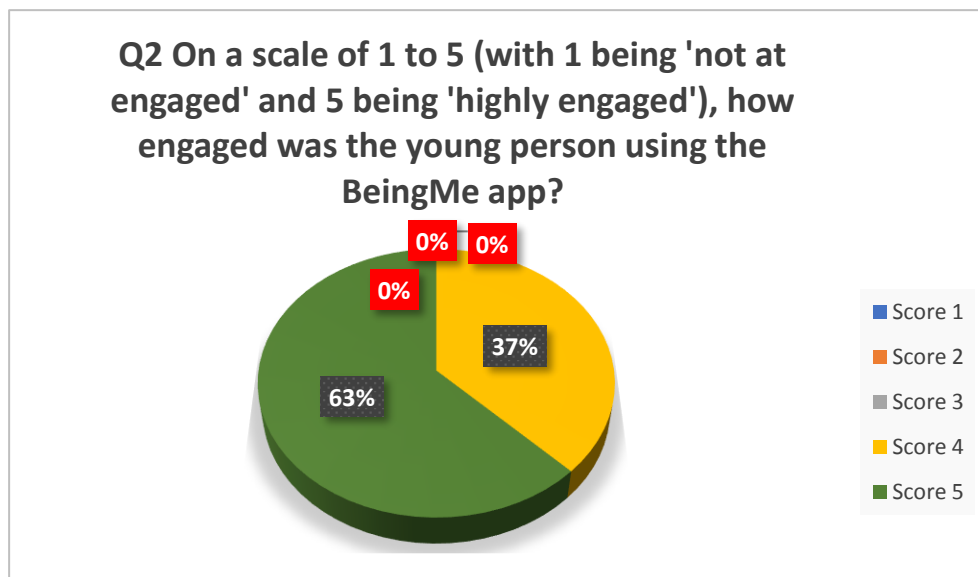


Figure 6: Questionnaires, Engagement

Post administration/planning stage:

Q1 On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'very useful'), how useful did you find the output generated by the BeingMe app?

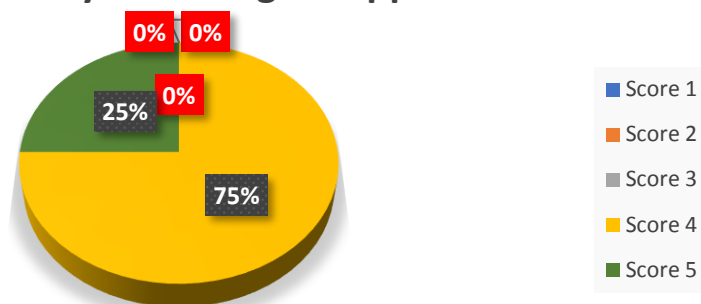


Figure 7: Post Questionnaires, Useful

Q2 On a scale of 1 to 5, (with 1 being 'not at all' and 5 being 'assisted me greatly'), how much did the APPA app assist you in planning for this young person?

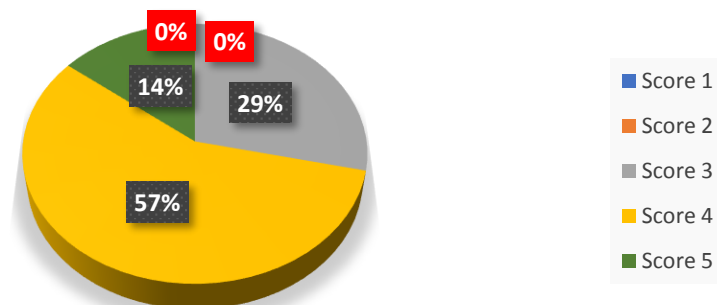


Figure 8: Post Questionnaires, Assist

Q4 Would you recommend the use of this tool to your colleagues or others?



Figure 9: Post Questionnaires, Recommend

Qualitative Data:

Post data analysis (using grounded theory) generated themes in support of our research hypotheses that stakeholders would report an increase in YP's engagement and voice, and increased effectiveness of planning, using an electronic well-being tool:

- Increased YP honesty through anonymity of tool
- Ease of use
- In-built supports for YP understanding
- Positive YP presentation
- Promoted holistic information gathering
- Reports focused supports, interventions and planning for YP
- Triangulation of data
- Gave a voice/focus on YP aspirations which were otherwise unknown

Under the main theme of "Taking Forward", codes were generated regarding future applications and factors impacting implementation.

Potential Applications of the Tool to Support YP Universally:

- Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)
- Targeted groups e.g. LAAC
- Interventions
- Mentoring
- Screening

Implementation Considerations:

- Professional capacity
- Personnel changes
- Need for development of staff understanding of analysing wellbeing
- Early intervention and choosing appropriate populations
- Collaborative working
- Specific barriers relating to Social Work usage

What Do We Plan To Do Next? (100 words)

- Potential YP Focus group
- Present to Local Authority ICFS board recommendations from findings, including two main applications:
 - Universal screening tool
 - Targeted tool to support planning at times of transition (e.g. primary to secondary, changes to care provisions/education establishments), to help measure interventions, and focused groups e.g. PEF/LAAC populations

References

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Number of words

809 (excluding pie-charts but including data labels)