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# **Evaluation of TD1 Youth Hub: Thinking Differently Project**

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Report to The  
Robertson Trust

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## FUNDERS' FOREWORD

The Thinking Differently programme was funded by a partnership of five grant-making organisations: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Robertson Trust, The Tudor Trust, Comic Relief and BBC Children in Need. Together they made £1.2m available to organisations to trial innovative, preventative interventions designed to reduce alcohol-related harm in young people in Scotland. We saw this as an opportunity to:

- reach grass-roots youth and community-led projects
- try out innovative community approaches to reducing harmful drinking by young people, with an emphasis on peer and family learning, informed by findings from research
- add value by creating learning networks between the individual projects
- influence Scottish Government policy and funding
- enable a group of experienced independent funders to learn from each other.

The four organisations funded as part of the Thinking Differently programme were TD1 in Galashiels, MYPAS in Midlothian, Healthy n Happy in Rutherglen and Cambuslang, and YMCA Glenrothes. TD1 Youth Hub joined the programme in 2014, a year after the other three projects. For this reason, TD1's project was evaluated separately.

The two evaluations evidence that the Thinking Differently programme's objectives were mostly fulfilled. The delivery organisations and young people who participated in the projects worked very hard and tried a range of new approaches. The projects achieved many of their individual outcomes, and made a big difference to the lives of some of the people they worked with. We are hugely grateful to the organisations for all the hard work and expertise they put into the programme.

The programme-level outcomes we set were ambitious and long-term in nature, and we didn't expect the projects to be able to achieve these within the lifetime of the programme. However we were very pleased to see that the organisations achieved many of the steps of change that are likely to achieve these outcomes in the longer-term.

A significant lesson for all the funders involved has been that if projects are to be truly youth-led and meaningful to young people, it's the young people rather than the funders who should choose the issues they will focus on. On reflection, we feel it would have been better to set the outcomes in collaboration with the delivery organisations and the young people they worked with.

The funders also learnt about issues to consider when adopting a partnership funding approach. These include the need to:

- ensure a clear understanding of each partner's culture, processes and capacity to implement a shared vision
- allocate time and resources to enable application and reporting processes to be aligned
- designate a lead partner who can provide a leadership and co-ordination role.

We are very grateful to Arrivo Consulting for their valued contribution. We hope that the

learning detailed in this evaluation report will provide some useful information for practitioners, commissioners and policymakers working in this field.

The evaluation report for the other three projects can be found here:

[www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/innovation-and-learning/publications/thinking-differently-evaluation](http://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/innovation-and-learning/publications/thinking-differently-evaluation).

A summary guide for practitioners, based on that evaluation report, is available here:

[www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/innovation-and-learning/publications/thinking-differently-lessons-for-practitioners](http://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/innovation-and-learning/publications/thinking-differently-lessons-for-practitioners).

The learning from the evaluations is currently being disseminated to practitioners and policymakers, so that it can be considered and incorporated into future youth work projects.

# Introduction to the report

## Background to the project

TD1 Youth Hub (TD1) is a small third sector youth work organisation, which works with young people aged 11 to 19 year old in Galashiels in the Scottish Borders. It was a relatively new organisation (launched in January 2013) at the point of receiving its first award from the Thinking Differently Programme .

TD1 initially received funding from the 'Thinking Differently Programme' (TDP) to address the issue of increasing incidences of street drinking and risk-taking behaviours among young people on Saturday nights.

The project sought to provide a safe place for young people to go on a Saturday night – to some extent it is a diversionary project, but the project model aims to inform young people (and the wider community) about the harm associated with alcohol and provides direct support to reduce the risk of harm. The project aims to provide young people with the confidence and motivation to make positive choices around the use of alcohol and, in the longer term, to influence the culture of alcohol use.

Following the early success of the project, TD1 was successful in attracting further funding from 'Thinking Differently' to extend the duration of the Saturday night drop-in and also to fund a dedicated worker to provide one-to-one support to young people who are at risk through alcohol/drugs etc.

## The Thinking Differently Programme

The Thinking Differently programme was a strategic funding partnership made up of a consortium of UK funders: BBC Children in Need (Scotland), Comic Relief, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Robertson Trust, The Tudor Trust and the Scottish Government. It was also supported by Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland as an Advisory Partner.

The Fund was developed in response to research and work undertaken by funders with stakeholders across the country and aimed to identify new ways of reducing alcohol-related harm in young people, their families and communities in Scotland. All projects funded by the Programme worked towards two long term outcomes:

- To reduce alcohol related harm and associated risky behaviour by young people;
- To build practical sustainable skills and knowledge to empower young people, their parents/ carers and communities to take action to address local alcohol concerns

## The project model

The initial award from the Thinking Differently programme enabled TD1 to trial the Saturday night drop-in sessions and provide activities aimed at providing an alternative to alcohol.

Since the first funding award in April 2014, the delivery of the service has changed in response to changing circumstances and lessons learned from early implementation. The

project has attracted further funding from the Thinking Differently programme to extend the scope and duration of the project.

The key elements of the project model are:

### **Saturday night drop-in sessions**

The funding from the Thinking Differently programme enabled TD1 to provide a Saturday night drop-in session at their premises in central Galashiels. The format and content of sessions has developed over time, but the core purpose is to provide an alternative activity to drinking for young people on Saturday nights. The drop-in also provided an opportunity for workers to educate (informally) young people about the harm caused by alcohol, provide practical support to reduce the risks associated with drinking and provide a place of safety for young people who need help due to alcohol related incidents.

### **Positive activities**

Additionally, the Thinking Differently programme provided funding toward an activity programme. TD1 offers access to a range of activities and outings as an incentive for young people to engage with the project and (indirectly) to reduce involvement in alcohol-related activity. The trips/outings also provide young people with more opportunities to participate in positive activities in an locality where opportunities for young people are limited.

### **Targeted One- to-one support**

Young people who are identified as requiring additional support (identified through TD1 or partners) have been offered bespoke one-to-one support. The purpose of the one-to-one intensive service was to support young people who are using (or at risk of using) alcohol/drugs to develop an awareness of the impact of alcohol/drugs, to build the young people's confidence and personal skills to deal with the challenges in their lives and support their transition to adult life.

### **Awareness raising in the community**

There was a further element to the project aimed at raising awareness in the community of the issues affecting young people and improving the perception of young people in the community (as young people are seen as the cause of the problems in communities). The original activities planned for this strand were changed and the strand of activity focused on working with partner organisations to raise awareness of issues influencing young peoples' lives.

The funding from the Thinking Differently Programme is summarised below.

Date	Award
April 2014	Awarded £5,926 to deliver a six month trial (Saturday night session activities)
November 2014	Awarded £6,500 to extend the Saturday night sessions and associated activities to July 2015
July 2015	£10,426 awarded to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend Saturday night opening for a period of one year July 2015-July 2016</li> <li>• Provide activities and opportunities for young people</li> <li>• Engage with community to build understanding of issues affecting young people and the culture of alcohol use</li> </ul>
November 2015	Awarded £29,351.50 for an 18 month project which would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Saturday night sessions and activities for a further 26 weeks (July 2016 – January 2017)</li> <li>• Employ a worker ( 28 hours/week post) for 18 months to provide one to one support to young people               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The application anticipated supporting 15- 20 young people aged 15 – 19 year old who are most vulnerable and at risk of their alcohol use becoming a dependency.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Purpose of the evaluation

The Thinking Differently Programme (TDP) commissioned an external evaluation of the other three projects which were funded by the programme. However, TD1 Youth Hub joined the Thinking Differently programme a year after the other three projects, and was not part of the programme level evaluation.

However, the TDP was keen to learn the lessons from this project and commissioned Arrivo Consulting to support the evaluation of the project.

## Methodology

Arrivo Consulting worked with TD1 to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan at the start of the funding period. This included developing a logic model identifying short term outcomes and indicators.

As the activities and outcomes for each strand were different, we developed logic models for each strand of activity. These were developed in an attempt to identify the short term outcomes for each strand, so that the project could demonstrate progress toward the longer term outcome. TD1 has collected monitoring and evaluation data based on the plan.

The external evaluation has involved:

A review of documentation:

- Review of the monitoring data collected by TD1
- Review the evaluation data
- Review the six monthly reports produced for the funder

An interview programme which included interviews with:

- TD1 Manager and key delivery staff
- Six young people who had participated in services
- Three parents of young people who had participated in services
- Interviews with partner and stakeholder organisation:
  - Community Learning and Development, Scottish Borders Council (two interviews)
  - Galashiels Academy (two interviews)
  - Social work department, Scottish Borders Council
  - The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

A survey with other staff involved in delivery of services at TD1 to gather views of the issues, challenges and successes of the delivery model.

## Evaluation issues

### **Attribution**

The TDP funding was used to fund specific activities but these activities were not delivered as a stand-alone project but were integrated into the wider programme of support which TD1 delivers for young people. As such, it is difficult to assess the impact of participation in the specific activities funded by TDP from the impact of involvement in TD1's wider services.

As TD1 has grown and developed over the years, it has also raised funding from other sources to provide an extensive range of activities. These are not funded by Thinking Differently programme, but are accessed by young people who also access the Saturday night drop-in sessions and one-to-one support and therefore contribute to the wider outcomes identified by young people.

Young people interviewed for the evaluation had participated in a range of activities:

- A 6 week vocational education programmes delivered by RUTS which teaches motorbike maintenance skills, and provides opportunities to learn to ride trial bikes safely. Participants work towards a MotoLearn Award which is an SCQF Level 5.
- Mountain Bike Project – young people participated in weekly mountain biking classes and bike maintenance lessons. This is delivered by TD1 both in house (with young people who attend TD1) and to groups of young people from Galashiels Academy.
- Cool Down Crew – young people identified as 'at risk' (by the school/CLD/TD1) are invited to join a six week programme delivered by Scottish Fire and Rescue Services where they learn about the work of the Fire Service and develop a

range of practical skills (firefighting skills, first aid) and teamwork and communication skills. Young people received Bronze Youth Achievement Award to recognise their skills and commitment.

- Music project.
- A range of volunteering opportunities. Some young people were working towards Saltire Awards.
- The Youth Committee/ Participation Group.

Young people reported that they had increased their skills and confidence through their involvement in a range of activities through TD1. They also reported that they had developed new friendship groups which they valued.

#### Skills

*"I've done the RUTS Programme this summer. I got a qualification. It's a Nat 5 level. I'm interested in doing engineering at college, so that's going to help me"*

Young people involved in the 'Cool Down Crew' training reported that they had learned practical skills but could also identify the increase in soft skills, in particular teamwork and the communication skills.

#### Confidence

*"I've had to speak in front of people, at committees and things. I could never have done that before".*

The outcomes of the Thinking Differently Programme activities must be considered in the context of the wider approach delivered by TD1.

#### **Measuring impact on attitudes/behaviours in relation to alcohol use**

Furthermore, it has been difficult to assess the impact on attitudes/behaviours associated with alcohol as young people and stakeholders do not associate the support received from TD1 solely with addressing alcohol use.

- In practice, the Saturday night drop-in is a universal service (not targeted at young people at risk of drinking). Over time, the Saturday-night drop in has become regularised as part of the broad suite of activities which TD1 offers for young people.
- Young people who have been referred to the one-to-one (targeted) service were referred for a range of issues, and although alcohol could have been one of the issues which affected young people's lives, it was not always the reason for referral or focus of the intervention. As such the anticipated outcomes were, in some cases, not directly related to reducing alcohol use.

#### **Effectiveness of the evaluation plan**

The logic model was developed in the early stages of the project and based on the initial understanding of the delivery model. The delivery model has changed over time in response to changing circumstances and lessons learned from early implementation.

- This has resulted in a 'drift' between the logic model and the delivery model.

- Some of the indicators chosen at the time have not provided good 'measures' of change.

As a result, the evaluation has relied on qualitative data drawn from interviews with stakeholders and young people.

### **Scale and complexity of evaluation plan**

The scale of the evaluation plan was driven by the desire to explore learning which would inform the Thinking Differently Programme (TDP). While the evaluation approach followed good practice (development of a logic model, identification of short, medium and long term outcomes), it has become clear that:

- the expected outcomes were overambitious for the scale of the project, and
- the scale of evaluation was disproportionate to the scale of funding and the resources available to TD1.

## What did the project achieve?

The project delivered three different strands of activity:

- The Saturday night drop-in and associated activities (these are 'open to all' and attendance is voluntary)
- The one-to-one support (which is targeted – young people are identified by TD1 or referred by other partners)
- The 'influencing communities' strand

In this section we present the analysis of the data collected by TD1, and supplemented by qualitative data collected through interviews with young people, parents and partners and staff of TD1, and comment on the extent to which the data suggest progress toward the outcomes.

### Saturday night drop-in and associated activities.

#### Activities

The core of the original project supported by the Thinking Differently Partnership provided funding to allow TD1 to offer a drop-in service at their premises on a Saturday night, and some funding to deliver 'positive activities' for young people which were both an incentive to engage in TD1 and a reward for positive behaviours (reduction/abstinence from drinking).

Over time, the format of the delivery has changed to reflect changing circumstances and needs of young people. TD1 has trialled Sunday morning activities, Saturday afternoon activities and activities on Friday evenings to act as a deterrent to Saturday night drinking. TD1 has also trialled a range of interventions to increase safety and reduce the risk of harm such as free bus tickets to ensure young people can get home safely. The provision of a hot meal has become an integral part of the 'Saturday night offer' and young people are involved in the preparation of the meal.

The activity programme has also developed and TD1 now delivers an extensive Summer Programme of activities (3 trips per week which are designed in conjunction with young people). As previously mentioned, TD1 has raised funding from other sources to extend the provision of activities beyond those delivered through funding from the Thinking Differently programme.

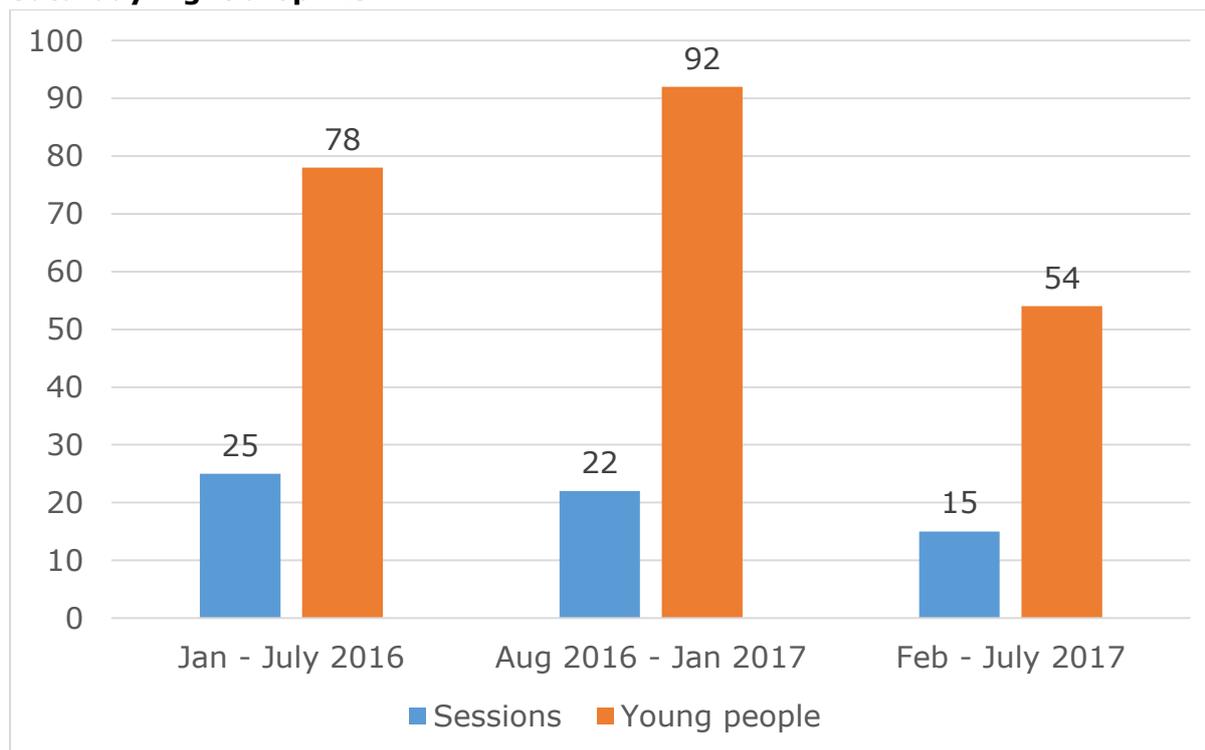
TD1 has been very successful in engaging young people on Saturday evenings. While attendance varied due to weather/other opportunities, the average attendance at drop-in sessions on a Saturday night was 23 people.

Table 1 shows the number of Saturday night sessions delivered and the number of individuals who attended in each of the six month periods. Over the period January 2016 to July 2017, TD1 delivered 62 Saturday night sessions.

- January to July 2016: 25 sessions
- August 2016 to January 2017: 22 sessions
- February to July 2017: 15 sessions

It should be noted that the number of sessions in the period February – July 2017 (15) was lower than in both of the previous 6 month periods. This is due to the cessation of funding from the Thinking Differently programme for the Saturday night drop-in (the TDP funding for this activity ran out in January 2017). Since that date, TD1 has continued to deliver the Saturday Night drop-in through small funds raised through the Silverhill Trust and by re-arranging core staff hours to cover the Saturday night. TD1 has managed to sustain the service at a lower level during this period.

**Table 1: Number of sessions delivered/ number of young people attending Saturday night drop-ins**



### Outcomes

The logic model for this element of the project is below.

ACTIVITIES	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES
Saturday night sessions at TD1	<b>Outcome 1:</b> More young people choose positives alternatives to alcohol on Saturday night	<b>Outcome 4:</b> Increased ability to make better choices in relation to risky behaviour
Staff provide advice/support to reduce harm	<b>Outcome 2:</b> More young people access information/advice on how to stay safe	
Positive activities offered as incentives	<b>Outcome 3:</b> More young people engage in positive activities	

## Outcome 1: More young people choose positives alternatives to alcohol on Saturday night

In April 2016 TD1 started to record the reasons/motivations for attending the Saturday night drop-in.

Table 2 shows the motivations/reasons for attendance at 52 sessions over the 16 month period April 2016 to July 2017.

**Table 2: Motivations for attending**



The data suggests that the Saturday Night Drop-in sessions have had a significant impact on young people's behaviour:

- 68% of young people said that they attended as 'an alternative to drinking'
- 20% reported that the drop-in allowed them to delay drinking
- 10% had no history of drinking/attended just to meet friends
- 2% of attendances (32 occasions) young people attended because they needed help/a place of safety.

This analysis is supported by interviews with staff, young people and with stakeholders.

### Staff

*"By providing the young people with a safe space to go to on a Saturday night and having structured activities I feel this has had an impact on reducing alcohol use. Instead of spending the night hanging around the streets they are coming to us instead where they are aware of our rules around alcohol use and being in the drop in. I feel this has given them an option of something to do on a Saturday night other than drinking alcohol."* TD1 Staff member

### Young people

*"It's something to do on a Saturday night - it definitely cuts people's drinking"*

*"There are rules – you don't get in if you're drunk."*

**Stakeholders/partners**

*"It absolutely affects drinking behaviours – It draws young people off the street. There's a place to go, there's always food. The young people know the rules about when you're allowed in and when you're not. If they are drunk they don't get in. So it definitely lessens the impact of alcohol."* Stakeholder/partner/referral agency

**Outcome 2: More young people access information/advice on how to stay safe**

TD1 has collected data on the number of interventions delivered around safety on a Saturday night and the number of young people who required advice/support over issues/incidents that occurred over the weekend.

Interventions around safety included:

- Specific interventions aimed at educating/informing young people about the dangers of alcohol misuse, and other risky behaviours.
- Interventions aimed at increasing awareness of safety when drinking – ensuring young people's phones are charged; that TD1 knows where they are drinking in case of accidents/emergency; ensuring that they have bus fares home; ensuring that they had eaten/were hydrated.

**Table 3: Number of interventions aimed at keeping young people safe**

	January to July 2016	Aug 2016 to Jan 2017	February to July 2017
Number of Saturday night sessions	25	22	15
Number of interventions delivered on Saturday nights	8 (April–July 2016 only)	18	6
Number of young people who required advice/info due to incidents happening that weekend.	27	49	27

These indicators do not provide any evidence of a trend, but do highlight the number of preventative interventions delivered by TD1 and the number of young people who required interventions after issues/incidents occurring at the weekend.

Interviews with young people demonstrated how the 'interventions' worked to keep young people safe. A critical success factor is that young people do not feel that they are being told what to do or judged for their behaviour.

*"they sit you down, they tell you what the dangers are, but they don't tell you what to do"* Male 14

*"they give you information, but they don't tell you what to do – you make up your own mind - but they don't judge you"* Female 16

*"if you were drunk at the weekend, they would sit you down later [in the week] and tell you that it was out of order but they talk to you to tell you about the risks and the damage you're doing and things, they don't just shout at you"* Male 14

The case study below describes from a parents perspective how an intervention by TD1 reduced the risk of harm for a young person on a Saturday night but also how TD1 continued to support the young people to address the challenges in her life.

### **A parent's story.**

#### **Background to daughter's involvement in TD1**

We moved to Galashiels about 4 years ago. My daughter had no confidence at all and really struggled to settle into a new school.

She was introduced to TD1 and started to go along - they had so many different activities for them to get involved in. She got involved in the dance group and in a music group. It really boosted her confidence and her social skills too.

#### **TD1 as a place of safety**

When she was about 15 she started hanging about with a group of young people who were drinking. One night – a Saturday night - she got really drunk. Her friends took her to TD1 and the staff took her in.

The staff were great. They called me to tell me what had happened asked me to go and collect her. They were very good - were very calming – really calmed a difficult situation. They made sure she was safe - that was the priority at the time - and then they followed up with her later in the week. They got her in and talked to her. She really trusts them and she told them lots of things that I didn't know about. They found out that there were other problems she was dealing with – bullying at school, and other things. They gave her lots support – the staff are great. They genuinely care and go beyond the call of duty to help the young people.

They create a very safe place – a place where the young people can talk. They also kept me involved. They gave me their phone number so I could speak to them confidentially about her.

It's a great place - I tell other parents about it . Some parents are a bit judgemental - they think that TD1 lets people into the premises when they are drunk. But that's not the case. There are very clear boundaries. It's made clear to young people that they can't get in if they are drunk – and the young people know that. They respect the staff. It's a very safe place.

### **Outcome 3: More young people engage in positive activities**

As previously reported, TD1 has delivered a range of positive activities as a hook to engage in TD1 and as a reward for positive behaviours (young people who modify their drinking behaviour get to choose activities). Trips and activities have proven very popular in a community which has few facilities for young people, and levels of poverty which mean that many young people have little access to positive activities.

The original project model aimed to introduce young people to new activities, which would raise aspirations and motivation. It was anticipated that young people would sustain their involvement in activities (as an alternative to alcohol). While that has been successful to some extent (young people have been introduced to 'sustainable' activities such as the gym and more recently to mountain biking through TD1's mountain bike project) the reality has been that many young people do not have the money to sustain their involvement positive activities.

The other aim of the activities programme was to introduce young people to new activities to widen their experiences and aspirations. The recent summer Programme has been more focused on giving tasters of activities that young people from Galashiels ordinarily wouldn't access, such as surfing, horse riding, visits to places of interest, visits to a comedy show, and to Edinburgh during the Festival.

Of 21 young people accessing these activities, 18 said they had never done the activity before.

Interviews with parents and with other stakeholders identified the activities, especially those delivered over the summer as important in providing alternatives to engaging in drinking.

*"There's absolutely nothing for young people to do – the summer activities are absolutely brilliant and they're free"* Parent

*"The summer Programme has been absolutely great. They [young people] have no structure to their day, so the programme gives them alternatives to alcohol"* Stakeholder

Young people also reported that the summer Programme had an impact on preventing alcohol use.

*"We'd be hanging around with nothing to do. People can't afford to go out or up to Edinburgh – we'd be drinking during the week just out of boredom. It definitely stops people drinking".* (Young person who self-identified as weekend drinker)

## Outcome 4: Increased ability to make better choices in relation to risky behaviour

There were three indicators for this outcome.

<b>Indicator 1: Reduction in incidents of alcohol-related incidents for individuals</b>	Data collected by TD1 shows that there is no discernible trend in alcohol related incidents. The occurrence of these incidents appears to be more influenced by external events (such as the Common Riding, Rugby 7s or birthday parties).
<b>Indicator 2: Young people reporting alcohol as a less important factor in their lifestyles</b>	TD1 carried out a survey on two occasions. While the second showed a slightly reduced percentage of young people reporting 'alcohol as an important factor in their lives', it is difficult to conclude anything as the second survey was carried out with a different group of young people.
<b>Indicator 3: Reduction in number reported of youth disturbances</b>	TD1 has collected police call out data, but again the trends are inconclusive (due to small area stats).

The indicators shows little evidence of trends and provide insufficient evidence to conclude whether young people have an increased ability to make better choices in relation to risky behaviour.

However, while the chosen indicators are not particularly good measures for this outcome, qualitative data collected through interviews demonstrates that young people **have** increased their ability to make better choices in relation to risky behaviours.

Young people could demonstrate that they were making choices to reduce the risk of harm associated with alcohol.

*"We tell them where we're going drinking [outdoor drinking] – the street work team come and check up on you."* (Male 15)

Young people also reported that, in the case of any trouble associated with drinking, they knew they could go to TD1 because 'they will look after you, they know what to do'.

*"If I was drunk, It'd be the first place I'd go – they look after you"* Female 14

*"They make sure you're safe: they feed you before, they give you water, they check up on you. They will call your parents or emergency services if anything goes wrong. They know what to do".* Male 14

In relation to dealing with other risky behaviours, one young person reported that “*TD1 actually teach you real stuff, practical stuff that will keep you safe not like school where the stuff they tell you isn’t useful.*”

## Intensive one-to-one support

### Activity

In September 2015, TD1 made a further application to the Thinking Differently programme to extend the scope of the project. TD1 had identified a need for ‘in-depth support’ for young people who were struggling with transitions to adult life and who were normalising the use of alcohol as a coping mechanism. The project sought to take a preventative approach – providing in depth support to targeted young people to help them to build the awareness of how alcohol/dugs impacted on their lives and to build the skills and confidence to make alternative choices.

The application funded the post of a ‘transitions worker’ who would provide one-to-one support 15-20 of the most vulnerable young people.

The one-to-one support is very bespoke and therefore different with each young person. TD1 often engages young people through an activity to build the relationship and the create a safe place to have the ‘conversations’.

*“often the most important conversations are had in the car, driving back from the activity”* (TD1 staff member)

TD1 has also designed group interventions for young people receiving one-to-one support. Recently TD1 identified that four young people receiving one-to-one support (aged 13 to 15) were at risk of drinking on Friday nights. They designed a Friday night session which provided an exciting alternative to alcohol for this targeted group. The young people come to TD1 directly after school, have food, and do a structured activity.

### Numbers engaged

Over the project life, 32 young people were referred for one-to-one support. Some of the young people were identified by TD1, others were referred for support through TD1’s partners including the school, social work department and CLD. A small number were also directly referred through the police.

Of the 32 young people who were referred, 14 have engaged in a ‘long-term’ relationship with the one-to-one support. A further six young people engaged in 2-4 sessions, and the remaining 12 did not engage with the support beyond initial meetings.

While the numbers are too small to demonstrate trends, it would appear that young people who already knew TD1 were more likely to sustain one-to-one support. This reflects the supposition that the success of the one-to-one support is based on trust based relationships.

### Outcomes

The logic model identified the following short and intermediate outcomes for young people engaged in one-to-one support.

ACTIVITIES	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES
1-to-1 support to targeted young people	Young people have greater awareness of the impact of alcohol/drugs/legal highs on their lives	Young people have improved confidence/self-esteem and soft skills (communication, problem-solving, reliability)
Support to engage in other activities	Young people more motivated to engage in positive activities	Young people increase engagement in positive activities that support transition to adult life

We worked with TD1 to identify a number of indicators and tools to measure progress toward outcomes. However measuring outcomes of this type of work is challenging.

It is also important to note that many of the young people referred to TD1 were not referred as a direct result of behaviours associated with 'alcohol misuse' but were identified as vulnerable or at risk due to a range of life circumstances or because they were identified as requiring interventions to prevent involvement in alcohol use/misuse. In these cases, some of the indicators (see indicators for outcome 2) have been less relevant as measures of progress.

In recognition of the challenges in measuring outcomes, and the relatively small number of young people within the service, we suggested at the mid-term evaluation that case-studies might provide a more effective mechanisms to demonstrate progress and learning.

TD1 has continued to test different methods of measurement, and has had some success in demonstrating 'distance travelled'. The results are shown below in table 4. Result are shown for 14 young people who sustained their engagement in one-to-one support.

**Table 4: Outcomes of one-to-one support**

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	RESULTS
Outcome 1: Young people have a greater awareness of the impact of alcohol/drugs/legal highs on their lives	Increase in score against awareness	27 of 32 young people who did test showed greater awareness of impact of alcohol on their lives.
Outcome 2: Young people are more motivated to engage in positive activities	Increase in score against motivation	Scoring tool (the happiness survey) shows that a sample of young people increased confidence and motivation
	Reduction in alcohol related incidents	12 out of 14 young people have self-reported a reduction in alcohol related incidents
	Young people reporting alcohol as a less important	10 of 14 report that they feel alcohol is a less important factor in their lives

	factor in their lifestyles	
	Young people engage in positive social activities	The project uses 'activities' as a hook for engagement. All 14 young people have positively participated in activities which included golf, cycling, football, rugby, visits to art galleries etc.
Outcome 3: Young people have improved confidence, self-esteem and soft skills (communication, problem solving, reliability, etc)	Young person has personal action plan/identified goals/achieve goals	Challenging to develop personal action plans, but TD1 has used a 'pathway' tool to young people visualise where they are and where they want to be. Some can identify where one-to-one support has helped them to move along the pathway.
Outcome 4: Young people increase engagement in positive activities that support transition to adult life	Evidence of increased engagement in positive activities that support transition to adult life	All young people have participated in positive activities as part of the support package.  4 have sustained their involvement in activities outwith the support sessions.

Stakeholders valued the ability of TD1 to offer bespoke one-to-one support.

*"If someone has a crisis at school - TD1 will support them in the community. They provide an additional layer of support for vulnerable young people. So the support is joined up. They are a brilliant resource in the community."*

*"The one-to-one support provides a great way to support vulnerable young people in a way that we can't support them - for example, out of hours, supporting them to engage in social activities, and in an environment that is 'young person oriented'."*

Stakeholders identified that a key strength in the approach as TD1 ability to engage with young people and develop relationships with them.

*"They will try to find a way to engage with the young person when the young person needs it or wants it"*

*"I referred one boy who wasn't engaging in school. It was hard for TD1 to engage with him because he didn't come to school much. But they went the extra mile - they kept on trying different things with him until he did engage. He's not the kind of boy who engages with offers of support"*

In many cases, the one-to-one support had been successful in supporting young people through a crisis (being made homeless, a serious criminal charge) and stakeholders provided several examples of 'hard outcomes' which had been achieved for these

young people. However, in other cases the one-to-one service was aimed at providing long term support to young people with challenging life circumstances. In these cases, it was harder to 'evidence' the effectiveness of the approach.

*"It's hard to know if its effective. It's not always clear what the outcomes are – but when I see [pupil] at school, I often think he probably wouldn't still be at school if not for that support from TD1"* Teacher

*"It's hard to measure impact of that type of support. I'm not sure if all of them got something out of 'talking' but getting them out of school was definitely a good thing – it's something positive, changes their perception of school, gives them a cool-down period"* Stakeholder

However, information collected through interviews demonstrates the impact of the approach.

*"They [TD1] took him out of school for his one-to-one sessions. It gave him a 'safe space to talk about it' which was out of the school."*  
(A parent of a child who was being bullied at school.)

*"They took me out of school. It helps me cope (with school.) My behaviour is better"* (Young person)

*"X used to be excluded frequently from TD1 because of behaviour incidents. Over the last six months he has not had a behaviour incident"* (TD1 staff)

*"He used to be in trouble all the time. Now he stays away from it. It's a huge relief for us"* (Parent)

The two case studies below demonstrate the impact of one-to-one support and wider involvement in TD1.

#### **Case study: Impact of one-to-one support**

X was referred to TD1 when he was in S1. He had been identified as 'at risk' by the school/CLD partnership in school. He has a very challenging home environment (parental addictions) and was under a supervision order.

He did not engage in well with his education, had frequent absences, and would not engage with pastoral care or any other support.

He did not use TD1 and was not known to staff. TD1 staff initially went into school to meet with him, to try to establish a relationship and encourage him to come into TD1. Initially, he was unresponsive did not engage well with TD1.

However, during the Easter holidays he turned up at TD1 and asked if he could come along to one of the trips (to a trampoline park). Staff welcomed him to the trip, and following this introduction to TD1, he started to attend the drop-in sessions.

During the summer holidays (2016) he was referred to the 'Cool Down Crew' a 6 week long training programme delivered by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. He attended consistently throughout the Summer and received his bronze Youth Achievement Award. He engaged well with the Programme and with the firefighters and 'came out of his shell' during the programme. It was clear that his confidence had increased and he had developed a friendship group among other young people who attended TD1.

He continued to attend TD1 drop-in sessions over the next year, but by the following spring he was beginning to dabble in alcohol and his attendance at school began to drop off.

At this time TD1 offered one-to-one support to X. By that time he knew and trusted the staff and has engaged positively in one-to-one sessions.

X reports that the one-to-one sessions gave him the opportunity to 'just talk' - "*they take you out to the golf range - just to help you when things get too much - just to talk to you*" - but it's clear that that he trusts and respects the TD1 staff member, and that his relationship with the staff member has been a significant factor in modifying his behaviour and 'cutting down' on alcohol use.

*" I know that [staff member TD1] doesn't want me to drink"*

He reports that his involvement in TD1 has a lot more confidence "*able to talk to people*" and has done lots of things that he wouldn't otherwise have done. As a result, he says he's developed new skills "*I learned first-aid on the Fire Skills Course, and teamwork - you really understand about team work in a real situation - it makes you understand responsibility*".

He also has a different peer group.

*"If it wasn't for TD1, I'd probably just be hanging around getting into trouble"*

He also reports that the support has helped him to 'feel more positive' and that has resulted in better engagement in school. His attendance at school has improved but he also has greater aspirations for his future.

*"Before, I just hated school and wanted to leave as soon as I was 16. But now I feel better about school, I want to stay on and get some qualifications."*

### **Impact of involvement in TD1: A parents story**

X started to go to TD1 when he was in P7, just for 'something to do'.

When he transitioned to high school, he found it very difficult to fit in, and was badly bullied. He started self-harming at this time. Going to TD1 provided an opportunity to socialise with a different peer group and a 'safe place' for him during this time.

TD1 encouraged X to attend the 'Cool Down Crew' in the summer of 2016. The programme is delivered by the Fire and Rescue Service and is delivered one day a week over the summer holidays. TD1 supported him to attend.

His mum reports that the Cool Down Crew was "absolutely brilliant for him. He loved it. It gave him discipline – he was getting up on time to make sure he wasn't late."

He has also benefited from one-to-one support from TD1. He was still struggling at school, and with agreement of the School, the TD1 staff member took X out of school for the sessions and tried to create a safe space for him to talk about what was happening in his life.

X has been since been diagnosed with ADHD and now has medication which impacts on his behaviour, but X's mum also credits TD1 with a significant role in 'creating a safe place for him' when things were very challenging for him, and building his confidence and his resilience.

*"There was a time when he was getting excluded from TD1 all the time because of his behaviour. But they didn't give up on him – and his behaviour is much better now. Now he goes away trips with them. The trips are great. They don't just shut down over the holidays like a lot of other things. They take them go-karting, and to M and D's and cycling and all sorts of things. There's nothing for them to do around here and the trips have made a real difference."*

*"Before, he was on his own a lot – but TD1 gets them out doing different things. Its mixed age groups so it's a different group he's mixing with. He's a lot more confident, he's socialising more – he just feels better about everything."*

*"He used to be in trouble all the time. Now he stays away from it. It's a huge relief for us."*

*"The staff have a good way with them – kids are always pushing the boundaries and although there are consequences, they didn't give up on him – they gave him another chance. The kids have respect for TD1"*

## Community involvement strand

### Background to the strand

The original application to the Thinking Differently Programme included a strand of activity aimed at informing and influencing community attitudes towards young people. The activities identified in the early application included:

- Deliver community awareness sessions on young people at risk
- Community consultation in relation to perception of young people
- Involve community/parents in project delivery.

At the interim evaluation, it was recognised that the original community involvement plans were unrealistic within the scope of the project.

It was also clear at that point that TD1 was focusing on developing partnerships with key agencies in the area, and that these partnerships had a much greater potential to influence attitudes towards young people.

### Activities

A number of key pieces of partnership work demonstrate how TD1 has influenced perceptions and attitudes towards young people and is influencing the work practices of other agencies.

#### **Partnership work between Scottish Fire and Rescue Service/CLD and TD1**

In 2016, TD1 and Community Learning and Development (CLD) worked in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Service to explore how they could improve the engagement between local young people and the Fire and Rescue Services.

The programme developed by the partners brought together the resources of each of the three partners to develop a new opportunity for young people. A programme (aimed at the most vulnerable young people) was delivered over the summer holidays and gave young people the opportunity to take part in training alongside local Fire Fighters in hose drills, ladder drills, first aid etc. As well the practical skills young people learned, they also developed team work and communication skills and built positive relationships with the firefighters.

TD1 supported young people to attend. Seven of the nine young people who attended the first course (delivered over six weeks in the summer ) completed the course. CLD supported young people to use their learning to work towards Bronze Youth Achievement Awards.

The partnership between TD1, CLD and the Fire and Rescue Services has continued to develop.

- TD1 takes groups of young people to visit the fire station and firefighters visit TD1 and 'play pool with the young people'. The Fire Service reported that this has helped to break down barriers between the Fire Service and local young people which in turn is expected to reduce the likelihood of those young people involving themselves in fire-raising/anti-social behaviour against the Fire Service.

- In 2017 CLD and TD1 delivered 'First Steps to Youth Work' training to all of the firefighter crews in Galashiels. The Fire Service Reports that the training has helped to increase their understanding of young people, to *'get into the minds of young people - understand how young people operate'* and to build the skills and confidence of firefighters in engaging with young people. In particular, the training has helped the Fire Service to consider different ways of engaging with more challenging young people.

In 2017, the Fire and Rescue Service delivered the Fire Skills programme for a second time. On this occasion, Firefighters who had been on the 'First Steps to Youth Work' training took on mentoring roles with young people – giving them a greater understanding of the issue affecting young people and giving young people a positive role model.

TD1's approach to partnership working has been recognised as an example of good practice. TD1 won the Best Partnership Award at Youthlink Scotland's Youth Worker of the Year Awards in 2017 for their innovative partnership work with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and CLD.

TD1 has been proactive in trying to work with other agencies to influence their attitudes and approaches to working with young people. TD1 provide some introductory youth work training to staff in the Transport Interchange in Galashiels where young people 'hang out' in the evenings and are deemed to be 'causing trouble' by the staff. This work was less effective than the training provided to the Fire Service, but highlights the proactive and innovative approach that TD1 takes to addressing issues in the community.

### **Partnership in practice: Partnership between school and TD1**

This brief case study highlights partnership working between TD1 and the local high school.

X was referred to TD1 (one-to-one service) by the school when he was 15. The school was concerned about many aspects of X's behaviours, but in particular his non-attendance at school.

X already had a relationship with TD1 (he attended drop-in sessions) and engaged readily. TD1 supported him over a period of over a year, developing his awareness of the issues affecting his life and developing coping mechanisms. (X was dealing with a number of complex family issues which were affecting his attitude and behaviour).

One of the major concerns for the school was that X was about to leave school with no qualifications. He refused to re-engage with school, but the school agreed that he could complete his assignments at TD1. A teacher came to TD1 twice a week to work with him to complete the outstanding work. As a result, the young person completed the assignments and was presented for a qualification.

Partnership working between TD1 and the school resulted in a positive outcome for the young person.

### **Agent Purchase Project**

In 2016 the Borders Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) commissioned a piece of work on perceptions of alcohol in the community. Through this work, young people involved in the consultation (supported by CLD and TD1) identified that adults in the community not only promoted alcohol use (at community gatherings etc) but also implicitly supported young people to drink through supplying alcohol. The young people identified that supply of alcohol was a key issue which influenced young people's drinking habits, and that this issue should be addressed to impact on young people's alcohol use.

The partners involved in the Community Learning Partnership worked together to develop a proposal and identified key partners who would need to be involved in addressing 'supply of alcohol'. As a result, the ADP funded TD1 to develop a youth led campaign aimed at informing and influencing the behaviour of adults (agents) who buy alcohol for young people.

TD1 worked in partnership with the school to identify a group of young people to work on the campaign.

As part of the development of the campaign, young people researched the law in relation to 'agent purchase' and designed a poster and leaflet (aimed at adults) highlighting the danger to young people and the legal issues in supplying alcohol to young people.

The Safer Communities Unit within Scottish Borders Council has now 'adopted' the campaign. The poster and leaflet (designed by the young people) is being professionally produced and will be used to roll-out a campaign across the Border aimed at influencing adult's behaviour in terms of buying alcohol for young people.

## Conclusions and learning from the project

### Did the project achieve its expected outcomes?

This section summarises the findings of the evaluation and comments on the extent to which the project achieved its expected outcomes.

#### **Saturday night-drop in and activities (open activities)**

TD1 has been very successful in engaging young people through Saturday evening sessions.

Over the period January 2016–July 2017, TD1 delivered 62 sessions. Average attendance at sessions was 23 young people.

The data suggests that the Saturday Night Drop-in Sessions have had a significant impact on young people's behaviour:

- 68% of young people said that they attended as 'an alternative to drinking'
- 20% reported that attendance at the drop-in allowed them to delay drinking (therefore reducing consumption).

This analysis is supported by interviews with staff, young people and with stakeholders.

#### **Evidence of outcomes**

The expected intermediate outcomes from this intervention was:

- **Increased ability to make better choices in relation to risky behaviour.**

While the indicators in the evaluation plan were not particularly good measures to demonstrate achievement of this outcome, qualitative data collected through interviews suggests that young people **have** increased their ability to make better choices in relation to risky behaviours.

The evidence demonstrates:

- Young people choosing alternatives to alcohol of Saturday nights

Young people described how they drop-in facility gave them choices on a Saturday night - something else to do which gave them a choice about drinking.

The extent to which the Saturday night drop in has become a popular alternative is demonstrated by the fact that young people reported that they chose not to drink (to excess) because they knew that they wouldn't be allowed into the drop-in.

- Young people are more aware of the risks and are making better choices to reduce risk.
- Young people recognise TD1 as a place of safety. They trust TD1 to help them if they are in trouble.

#### **Targeted one-to-one support**

Approximately half of the young people who were referred for one-to-one support (14 of 32) sustained their engagement with the service.

Stakeholders valued the service and recognised that the success of the one-to-one support was based on the ability of the TD1 staff to develop trust-based relationships with young people.

*“What they [TD1] are great at is developing trust – they will develop a relationship with the young person – that might be by playing pool with them – we can’t do that, we don’t have that environment.”*

Stakeholders also recognised that engagement was voluntary and it was hard to engage with young people who ‘didn’t want to engage’.

While stakeholders placed a high value on the service, they recognised that it could be difficult to demonstrate the impact of one-to-one support.

- There are recognised challenges around the measurement of ‘soft outcomes’.

There have been particular challenges in measuring the impact of the intervention in relation to reduction in harm associated with alcohol.

- Young people were referred to TD1 by stakeholders for a variety of issues. The expected ‘outcomes’ were not always associated with reduction in alcohol use.
- The issues faced by young people were varied and the indicators in the evaluation plan were not effective as they had been designed to measure progress against reduction in alcohol use.

However, this does not mean that the one-to-one intervention has not been effective. Interviews with young people, parents and stakeholders identified that the one-to-one support had delivered hard outcomes (progress into college, into employment, progress out of homelessness) and provided young people with coping mechanisms which were helping them to sustain their attendance at school, to manage their behaviours, to sustain positive friendship groups and relationships with their families and with other services.

### **Influencing the community strand**

The original plan included activities aimed at engaging members of the community to raise awareness of the issues influencing young people’s behaviour.

These activities were not delivered, and instead TD1 has focused on influencing key local partners. TD1 has developed partnerships with key agencies in the area which have influenced partners’ understanding of the issues affecting young people and their approaches to working with young people.

- Partnership work with CLD and the Fire and Rescue Service has increased the Fire Service’s understanding of issues affecting young people and their approach to engaging with young people.
- TD1 also has a strong partnership with the local school.
  - TD1 provides intelligence on young people at risk and supports the school to engage with young people who are at risk of dropping through the net.
  - Teachers refer vulnerable young people to TD1 for one-to-one support.

- TD1 is a trusted partner and is involved in the delivery of educational outcomes through projects such as the Bike Project (which takes young people out of school.)

*"There is a greater understanding that learning can take place out of school. The school is realising that TD1 can enhance the curriculum"* Stakeholder

The 'power of partnership' has been demonstrated through the Agent Purchase Project. The project has been delivered by TD1, but the reach and impact of the project will be significantly greater due to the partners involved in the delivery of the project.

- The poster/leaflet campaign has been adopted by the Scottish Borders Council with the result that the campaign will be delivered across the entire Borders region.
- This project has the potential to influence adult's behaviour in terms of buying alcohol for young people – contributing to a change in culture across the Borders region.

## Has the project contributed to Thinking Differently Programme outcomes?

All projects funded by the Thinking Differently Programme worked towards two long term outcomes:

- To reduce alcohol related harm and associated risky behaviour by young people;
- To build practical sustainable skills and knowledge to empower young people, their parents/carers and communities to take action to address local alcohol concerns.

The evaluation demonstrates that the approach delivered by TD1 has been successful in contributing to reducing alcohol related harm and associated risky behaviour by young people.

The second outcome of the Thinking Differently programme has been challenging to deliver: there is little evidence from across the Thinking Differently portfolio that projects have been able to demonstrate significant progress against this outcome and the funders recognise that the outcomes were perhaps over-ambitious for the scale and duration of the Programme. However, TD1 has demonstrated that a small project can influence the culture and practices of other organisations through effective partnership working, and has therefore contributed to building the capacity of the community to take action to address local alcohol concerns.

## Learning from the project

This section explores the critical success factors in TD1's approach and the issues and challenges which limited the impact of the project. It also identifies lessons for funders and practitioners.

## Critical success factors

### Working with young people's reality

The critical success factor in TD1's approach was that it started from the point of recognising that young people **do** drink.

- TD1 offered a credible alternative to drinking on a Saturday night, and popular alternative activities to incentivise 'non-drinking behaviours'.

TD1's approach also recognised that 'education' has a limited impact on young people's drinking behaviour. Young people think that they know about the impact of alcohol (or don't think that it will impact on them).

- TD1 provided very practical support to young people to reduce the risk of harm associated with alcohol rather than focusing only on informing young people about harm reduction.
- A critical success factor is that young people do not feel that they are being told what to do or judged for their behaviour. TD1 gained the trust of young people by demonstrating through practical action that they were there to help them to stay safe, not to tell them what to do or not to do.
- As a result, TD1 made it safe for young people to talk about the reality of alcohol (and other issues) in their lives. As a result, TD1 is working in the real issues which affect young people's lives.

### Trusted source of information

TD1 is a trusted source of information and advice. A number of young people reported that TD1 was their first port of call if they needed advice of help.

*"they are people that you can talk to if you're worried about something" Male 14*

*"they are the people I'd go to with any problem" Female 16*

### Working with the young person not with issue

While the purpose of the Thinking Differently Programme was to reduce the harm associated with alcohol, TD1 recognised that alcohol is just one of the many issues which affects young people. Many of the young people referred for one-to-one support experienced challenging life circumstances and TD1 recognised that alcohol was sometimes a coping mechanism. In other cases, alcohol use was not the presenting issue or reason for referral to TD1 (although it is recognised by partners that alcohol use or parental alcohol use was often a contributing factor).

*'Where there is a problem, there is usually alcohol somewhere in the mix'*  
Stakeholder

The project demonstrated that young people responded to one-to-one support. The approach was not focused on solely on 'addressing alcohol issues' but supported young people to increase awareness of the issues influencing their lives and develop alternative

coping mechanisms so that young people were better able to manage their life circumstances (and reduce reliance on alcohol as a coping mechanism).

However, the project demonstrates it is impossible to address 'alcohol issues' in isolation from the other issues which affect young people lives.

### **Relationships with young people**

The success of TD1s interventions with young people are the result of the trust the young people (and their parents/partners) have in TD1.

*"There is a respect thing for TD1 – the kids listen to them" Parent*

*"X [my daughter] really respects him [TD1 staff member]. He doesn't tolerate any of her nonsense" Parent*

*"They have very strong relationships with the kids. The kids trust them – so we use TD1 to help to re-engage kids in school" Teacher*

*"The key things are the relationships [trust] that they have with the kids and the fact that they never give up on the kids" Partner*

### **Creating positive peer groups**

Young people (and parents) identified the importance of friendship groups in influencing their behaviours but also in supporting their wellbeing.

Two of the young people (male) reported that their involvement in the drop-in sessions had given them a different group of friends (who weren't drinking) which had impacted on their own alcohol use.

One boy 15 reported that he had been 'getting into trouble' because of the crowd he was hanging about with. Since coming to TD1 he has found a new peer group. He has stopped hanging around with his previous group, and isn't getting into trouble anymore.

*"I've got a better relationship with my Mum now, because I'm not in trouble all the time"*

For one young person, finding an alternative peer group through TD1 had been significant due to bullying at school. His parent said that TD1 was 'his safe place' which had allowed him to rebuild his confidence and self-esteem.

It is interesting to note that each of the young people who were interviewed reported that one of the benefits of participating in TD1 was the development of a new friendship group.

*"you get to know different people – people of all ages".*

All except one of the interviewees said that making friends with people of different ages had built their confidence.

*"it makes you more confident about speaking to different people"*

### **TD1 as a trusted local organisation**

TD1 is now well known in the community and knows what's going on in the community. TD1 is trusted by stakeholders and by young people.

The success of TD1's approach was based on good local knowledge.

*"If there's a problem in the community, they will be out there on the street. They will know what's going on before anyone else. They are like our eyes and ears in the community"* Partner organisation

The bespoke approach to targeting particular young people and to prevention has relied on their knowledge and understanding of 'what's happening' in the community and their knowledge of the needs of particular young people.

*"They [TD1] know what's going on. They know the key times that young people will be drinking. So they put things on to 'distract them'. They don't brand it as 'alternative to drinking', but young people are gently introduced to another option."*

*"They (TD1) know the young people, they know the ones that are at risk. They develop something and encourage the particular young people to come along. TD1 is working away behind the scenes to get to the right young people - the young people won't even realise it's a targeted intervention."*

TD1 has demonstrated the unique capacity of a 'trusted local organisation' to engage with the community and to address issues in a community.

A key lesson for funders and stakeholders around the replicability of projects is that the approach is not replicable by an organisation which does not have strong links and relationships in a community.

Funders/stakeholders who wish to support community based action need to invest in local organisations over the longer term (not just project funding) to enable them to build trust and relationships in the communities in which they operate .

### **Developing effective partnerships**

TD1 was described by stakeholders as an outstanding partner. At the operational level, TD1 plays a key role in supporting other agencies to achieve joint outcomes for children and young people.

- TD1 is respected as a knowledgeable and innovative partner.  
*"TD1 manager is the go-to person on youth issues"*

*“They are a skilful, well managed team”*

*“TD1 is innovative and ‘think outside the box’ – they will always come up with a way to support what we’re trying to do”*

- TD1 is a trusted source of information for partners.

*“They know what’s happening in the community, they often know what’s happening with a specific young person who might be going along to TD1 but isn’t attending school. The ‘intel’ that they have invaluable”* Partner

*“They communicate well, they share information, they always feedback to you – they are a very reliable partner”*

- TD1 was also described as “brave” and “fearless”.  
*“They will go where other agencies won’t go. They will deal with the hard issues. There is no query that a young person makes that they won’t answer – they never shy away from an issue”*

At the strategic level, TD1 has engaged in effective partnership working which has:

- Extended the scope, reach and impact of its activities (by working with partners)
- Influenced the culture and practices of other organisations in relation to approaches to working with young people.

As a result, TD1 has ‘punched above its weight’ in terms of strategic influence.

### **Issues and challenges for the approach**

This section identifies the issues and challenges in the design and the delivery of the project which have affected the capacity of the project to achieve the expected outcomes

#### **Project design**

- **Unrealistic outcomes**

The original outcomes for the project were driven by the Thinking Differently Programme.

While TD1 has been very successful in delivering outcomes for young people, it has become clear that the original outcomes were overambitious for the scale and duration of the funded project.

- **It takes time to deliver outcomes**

It takes time to develop trust-based relationships with young people and with partners. This means that delivering outcomes takes time.

- **Long term outcomes/short term funding**

The aim of the Thinking Differently programme was to influence the culture around alcohol use. The short-term nature of funding increases the challenges for organisations in planning and delivering long term outcomes.

- **One to one work is resource intensive**

The evidence suggests that 'mentoring' young males through long-term one-to-one support has been effective in building their resilience and coping mechanisms. The duration and intensity of support means that a project of this scale can only support a small number of young people. The original application over-estimated the number of young people who could be supported.

### **Project delivery**

- **Managing risk**

A key challenge and a critical success factor in the delivery of the project has been that TD1 has managed to create both an 'alcohol free space' for young people to go on a Saturday night as an alternative to drinking but also a place where young people who have been drinking can get support to reduce the harm associated with alcohol. The Saturday night drop-in also provides a 'a place of safety' for those who are in trouble (due to alcohol use).

It has been challenging for staff to establish the 'rules' and protocols to ensure that the drop-ins can deliver both of these functions

Working with young people who have been drinking is a 'grey area' as youth work providers generally operate a strict 'no alcohol' policy.

TD1 consulted with young people to explore what they needed from the Saturday night drop-ins, and to consider what was required to ensure the safety of both the young people using the services as an alternative to drinking and the young people who were using the services to source help. This resulted in a clear set of rules and protocols which has helped to clarify young people's expectations.

Initially TD1 experienced some difficulties in dealing with young people who were drunk. Over time the 'incidents' associated with young people who have been using alcohol have reduced (the rules are now established and understood by young people) but staff identify that setting 'rules' and boundaries around working with young people who have been drinking is a key challenge in the delivery of this approach.

The approach also risked reputational damage to organisation – some organisations and parents perceived the approach as 'letting young people who are drunk come into the youth space'. TD1 has been able to 'manage' the reputational risk. There is now a clear set of rules and protocols in place which appears to be understood by young people and other stakeholders.

The Manager reported that the reputational risk to TD1 was perhaps reduced as it was a very new organisation when the project was initiated, but highlights reputational risk as a key consideration for replication of the approach.

*"Working with young people who have been drinking is a key challenge in the delivery of this approach..... I'm not sure I would make the same decision today – the risks are so much higher for an established organisation."*

- **Staffing Saturday night sessions**

TD1 is the only generic youth provider in the Galashiels area (and one of the few youth providers anywhere) that provides services on a Saturday night. Initially it was challenging to staff the Saturday night sessions. Again, TD1 has 'managed' this challenge creatively, but highlight staff issues as a challenge for replication of the approach.

- **Limited access to opportunities in the locality**

TD1 operates in a relatively remote location. Galashiels has few facilities for young people, and is relatively deprived area which means that many of the young people can't afford the cost of travel and costs of participation in activities. As a result, many of the young people have limited experiences and aspirations.

While TD1 aimed to (and succeeded) in introducing young people to new activities as an alternative to alcohol, there is a reality that many young people could not afford to sustain their involvement in other activities due to poverty. The lack of affordable opportunities for young people is a constraint on the model.

- **Effectiveness of the evaluation plan**

The TD1 project had a logic model and evaluation plan based on the original delivery model and expected outcomes. However the delivery of the project changed over time. This has resulted in a 'drift' between the delivery model and the logic model and some of the original indicators have not provided good 'measures' to demonstrate progress toward outcomes.

The scale of the evaluation plan was driven by the intention of the Thinking Differently Programme to generate evidence of approaches to address alcohol related harm. The scale of the evaluation plan was disproportionate to the level of funding received and has stretched the resources available to TD1.

While interviews and case studies have demonstrated the impact of one-to-one support, robust measurement of soft outcomes continues to be challenge.

## Legacy of the Thinking Differently programme

The Thinking Differently Programme enabled TD1 Youth Hub to test an innovative approach to reducing alcohol related harm and associated risky behaviour by young people. The activities delivered by TD1 would not have been possible without the grant funding from the Thinking Differently programme.

While the funding from the Thinking Differently programme has now come to an end, (and the funded activity has ceased) the learning from the Thinking Differently programme has influenced TD1's mainstream approach:

### **The Saturday night drop-in sessions have become integrated into TD1's offer.**

The Thinking Differently programme demonstrated the importance of Saturday night drop-in activity in providing an 'alternative' to alcohol but also in providing practical support to young people who were drinking (delaying drinking, access to food, phone chargers, and a place of safety). TD1's practical approach to harm reduction gained the

trust of young people by demonstrating they were there to help young people to stay safe, not to tell them what to do or not to do. As a result, the Saturday night drop-in not only contributed to diversion and reducing the harm associated with alcohol, but also served to build relationships with young people which have been pivotal in engaging these young people in other support and services to address the issues and challenges in their lives.

When the Thinking Differently programme funding for Saturday night drop-in ceased in January 2017, TD1 managed to raise a small amount of funding from another Trust to continue to deliver a modified programme of Saturday night drop-ins and some additional activities.

However, this funding has now expired and TD1 faces major challenges in sustaining funding the Saturday night drop-in sessions. It is difficult to demonstrate outcomes from drop-in sessions and activities programmes as stand-alone activities, and applications to other funders have not been successful.

The evaluation may be useful in supporting future funding applications by demonstrating to funders the purpose and value of the drop-in sessions and activities.

### **The one-to-one support /mentoring approach has become integrated into TD1's approach**

A key lesson that TD1 has learned from the Thinking Differently project is the efficacy of the one-to-one support, especially in supporting vulnerable young men. The project demonstrated that young people responded to a mentoring approach with a trusted adult.

As a result of this success, TD1 is aiming to integrate this approach into its mainstream programme, and is currently in negotiation with an existing funder to change the focus of currently funded activity to provide further mentoring support for vulnerable young people. TD1 also plans to incorporate one-to-one support/mentoring into future funding bids.