

East Ayrshire School Counselling Service
Impact Report
August 2023-June 2024

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1. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Over the course of the academic year, a total of 1204 pupils from 40 primary schools, 7 secondary schools and 1 special school in East Ayrshire were referred to The-Exchange for counselling and psychological wellbeing support.
- Anxiety continues to be the most common reason for requesting assistance from The-Exchange in East Ayrshire. Referrals in Secondary schools continue to be highest in S3. In Primary schools, requests were highest in the P7 year group. Females in East Ayrshire Secondary schools are much more likely to seek support from the service than males with females accounting for 64% of referrals whilst only 31% of referrals were from males. However, in Primary schools the gender split of referrals is much more balanced with females accounting for 47% of referrals and males accounting for 52% of referrals.
- 83% of secondary school pupils supported by The-Exchange reported an improved outcome following their intervention using the YP-CORE assessment.
- 85% of all primary pupils accessing support registered an improvement in their psychological wellbeing using the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM).
- 84% of primary parents/carers noted an improvement in the psychological wellbeing of their child through completing the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) measurement tool.
- Following engagement with The-Exchange, 100% of pupils in primary schools stated that they found counselling helpful and 66% of pupils in Secondary schools found counselling helpful. Benefits from attending the service included being able to talk about feelings, having a space to open up in, being able to talk to someone confidentially and without being judged and being given strategies to help cope with worries.
- 100% of teachers said they found it easy to request assistance from the School Counselling Service and 81% said that young people were seen quickly by the service. 100% of teachers said they wanted to see the service continue.
- There have been challenges with capacity in the Primary Service this year. Average wait time from referral to first appointment for Primary schools was between 6-8 weeks which exceeds our target time of 2 weeks. This was due to the service receiving 28% more referrals than in the agreed contracted capacity. This number of referrals was not manageable within the academic year. As a result, referrals to the Primary service had to be put on hold in May and June 2024. Measures have been put in place to ensure the target waiting time of 2 weeks is achieved in the next academic year.
- The number of re-referrals in 2023-2024 was almost half of the previous academic session. The Counselling Coordinator and Counselling managers have worked closely with school staff to ensure that Young People (YP) are being referred to the service that best meets their needs. When a YP is re-referred quickly, counselling managers have a discussion with guidance staff to ensure that counselling is the right support for the YP and also that strategies suggested by the counsellor are being used.
- The number of requests for care-experienced young people were significantly higher than last years (almost 4 times) and reflects the work done by the Exchange to change how this is recorded. The recording of this is now far more accurate at point of referral and we have also worked closely with schools to ensure they understand the importance of recording this information.
- D-EXY was launched by the Exchange in 2023. D-EXY is an online support for the mental health of YP when and where they need it. We have supported non-attenders on D-EXY this year and had over 7000 views of our resources, over 100 YP have chosen to tell us they were from East Ayrshire (EA) and have booked sessions online. D-EXY has made self-referrals to the Service more confidential and Young People appear to prefer this method of self-referral.

2. INTRODUCTION

School Counselling in East Ayrshire continues to be provided by The-Exchange. This report gives an overview of the usage, spread and impact of the service over the past academic year. Due to the School Counselling Co-ordinator being off on maternity leave, many of the improvement priorities were put on hold. However, there were still some significant developments within the service. This report will focus on reporting on these developments and will outline the improvement priorities for the academic year ahead.

Aims of the Service:

The mental health and well-being of every child and young person is priority throughout The-Exchange principles of building resilience. In partnership with East Ayrshire Council, The-Exchange deliver support to children, young people, parents and carers in the form of:

1-2-1 Counselling

Group Supports

Online Chat Support

Workshops

The Exchange provides age-appropriate therapeutic interventions with a view to support managing present issues and developing resilience for coping in later stages. The team works to minimise waiting times and involve the young people in the therapeutic process, assessing success frequently through the CORE score framework. They work collaboratively with Schools across East Ayrshire Council to deliver a seamless service to all accessing support.

The Exchange is commissioned to provide 28 days of counselling support to secondary schools and 13 days to primary schools across East Ayrshire. Currently there are 16 counsellors in post, providing 210 hours of counselling/psychological wellbeing sessions per week. The delivery and impact of School Counselling continues to be reviewed on a monthly basis by a multi-agency group. This group includes colleagues from Education and the Health & Social Care Partnership. The table below shows the allocation of counsellors to secondary schools over the past academic year. The Primary counsellors provide a peripatetic service based on need.

School	No of days	School	No of days
Grange Academy	5	Park School	1
RBA	6	Loudon Academy	3
Stewarton Academy	4	Doon Academy	2
Kilmarnock Academy	5	St Joseph's Academy	2

The service continues to provide psychological wellbeing support for children under the age of 10 (Age 5+). This is in addition to the over 10 service which is funded indefinitely by the Scottish government. The under 10 service is currently funded through local authority resources for 2 more years. It has been extremely well utilised by all Primary schools in East Ayrshire and data gathered over the past 2 years shows the positive impact it is having in terms of early intervention and preventative approaches towards improving the resilience of younger children. Referrals from Primary schools in the 23-24 session exceeded capacity and measures have been put in place to ensure this is managed more efficiently in the next academic session.

Over the past academic year, the service has supported/delivered:

1204 pupils

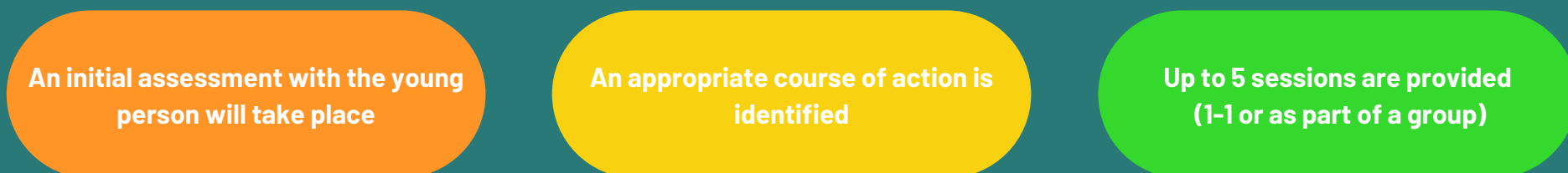
7140 1-1 counselling or psychological wellbeing sessions

Secondary School Service - What support is offered?



The Exchange model is highly collaborative, focusing on resilience building interventions aimed at developing emotional intelligence, self-regulation, confidence, self-esteem, optimism, problem solving, and social competence in the young person. The Exchange focus on the protective factors and the strength resources a young person needs to manage adversity, “bounce back” and strengthen their psychological wellbeing so as to thrive into the future, managing their own mental health and emotional wellbeing

What is the process?



Primary School Service - What support is offered?

Feeling angry, confused or rejected

Panic Attacks/Anxiety

Bullying

Problems at home

Death of someone close

Transition

What is the process?

An initial meeting with the parent will take place

We will contact the school to arrange an initial meeting with the child

An appropriate course of action is identified and shared with school and parents

Up to 8 sessions are provided (1-1 or as part of a group)

Improvement Priorities for 2023-2024

1. Continued Promotion and Effective Communication about the School Counselling Service to all Children & Young People (C&YP), Parents, School Staff and all other relevant parties

- Ensuring C&YP, parents, school staff and other services are kept well informed about the service. Information about criteria and processes for access to counselling should be provided to all children and young people in accessible formats. This should include information about how to make a self-referral.
- School counsellors should be included in school induction, making them a visible part of school life and reducing stigma.
- School Counselling Leads to work closely with Pupil Groups to ensure they are involved in the promotion of the service, including self-referrals.

2. Continued Involvement of Young People to support Inclusion of Pupil Voice and Co-production of the School Counselling Service

- Local authority Pupil Group with representatives from each school established and meetings to be held on a termly basis, this should link with wider local authority Wellbeing groups
- Pupil Improvement Plan to be produced which will include opportunities for co-production
- Good practice from Stewarton Academy to be shared and built on
- School Counselling Coordinator to work with Local Authority Pupil Group to identify any barriers to accessing counselling services, and how they might be overcome. The outcomes should be reported directly to children and young people.

3. Effective use of data to inform wider, local authority decisions about Universal Wellbeing Supports

- Robust Qualitative and quantitative data showing the usage, demographics and impact of the service is collected and analysed on a termly basis. This data should be used to inform decisions about appropriate Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) to provide for school staff, Personal & Social Education (PSE) Programmes and targeted interventions, where appropriate.

4. Supporting the Psychological Wellbeing Needs of C&YP with Additional Support Needs (ASN)

- Developing and adapting current service delivery to meet the needs of C&YP with more complex additional support needs including Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and non-verbal C&YP
- Development of more effective triage for C&YP with complex ASN with support from the Exchange and Educational Psychology Service
- Building Capacity amongst school staff to support the wellbeing of C&YP with complex ASN

5. Building Capacity Amongst School Staff

- Continue to embed the resilience framework in all schools within East Ayrshire and the resilience toolkit in Primary schools and provide staff with the tools, resources and strategies to confidently assess and support the psychological wellbeing of children and young people
- Continue to support P7 teachers in East Ayrshire to deliver the "Adventure Programme" so that they can effectively support children through this challenging period of change



Awareness Raising and Promotion

Promotion of the service took place via multiple channels of communication:

- The School Counselling Coordinator and Service Manager met with all secondary schools and the partnership development group to remind them of the referral pathway and the support available.
- Managers distributed physical and digital assets in the form of posters and leaflets to all schools and community centres. The materials included QR codes which directed users to our websites.

In-Person

- The counselling team offered Secondary Schools drop in's during lunchtime for young people and school staff to discuss potential support options

Social Media

- Weekly social media campaigns advertised our support options.

The Exchange
COUNSELLING & SUPPORT SERVICES
A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE


WHAT IS COUNSELLING?
Counselling is not complicated, it's just talking. It is talking about anything you want to talk about, honestly anything. The counsellor is a person who wants to hear about what is on your mind. The counsellor will listen to you without making any judgements and will completely respect your right to privacy. Their job is to listen and help you.
It is a fact that your wellbeing will improve by talking about your worries to someone who is respectful and sensitive and that is what a counsellor does.

Whatever is going on for you, talking to a counsellor means there are now two of you dealing with it and you are not on your own. Counsellors have a lot of experience in helping young people and have helped with a wide range of problems such as:

- BULLYING
- ARGUMENTS AT HOME OR WITH FRIENDS
- FEELING ANGRY, CONFUSED OR REJECTED
- SELF-HARMING
- DEATH OF SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU
- CONCERNS ABOUT SEXUALITY, ABUSE

IS IT CONFIDENTIAL?
YES. You have the right to privacy and the counsellor will ensure that right is respected.
The only exception to this is if the counsellor is concerned that you, or others are at risk of harm. In this situation, the counsellor will need to create a plan of how to keep you safe. The counsellor will talk to you about this first before any information is shared with anyone else. There is at least one counsellor working with your school. That person is not part of the school staff; they work independently.

HOW DO I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE THE COUNSELLOR?
The best way is to speak to one of the guidance teachers in your school and they will complete an on-line referral for you. It is also possible for you to do this for yourself online or by scanning the QR code.
We use text to communicate with people so make sure we either have your number or the number of an adult you trust so that we can get back to you.
If you would just like to know more about the service please speak to your Guidance Teacher/pastoral support teacher or visit — exchange-counselling.co.uk



Psychological Wellbeing
A guide for young people in secondary schools
EASY READ

What is counselling?

- Counselling is not complicated, it's just talking about anything you want to talk about.
- The counsellor will listen to you without making any judgements and will completely respect your right to privacy. Their job is to listen and help you.
- Counsellors have a lot of experience in helping young people and can help with a wide range of problems.

What kinds of things can the counsellor help with?


- Bullying
- Arguments at home or with friends
- Feeling angry, confused or rejected
- Self-harming
- Death of someone close to you
- Concerns about sexuality, abuse

Is it confidential?

- **YES** You have the right to privacy and the counsellor will ensure that right is respected.
- The only exception is if the counsellor is concerned that you, or others are at risk of harm. The counsellor will need to create a plan of how to keep you safe. They will talk to you about this first before any information is shared with anyone else.

How do I make an appointment?

- You can speak to one of the guidance teachers in your school and they will complete an on-line referral for you.
- Or you to do this for yourself online or by scanning the QR code.
- We use text to communicate with people so make sure we either have your number or the number of an adult you trust so that we can get back to you.



If you would just like to know more about the service please speak to your Guidance Teacher/pastoral support teacher or visit — exchange-counselling.co.uk or you can scan the QR Code

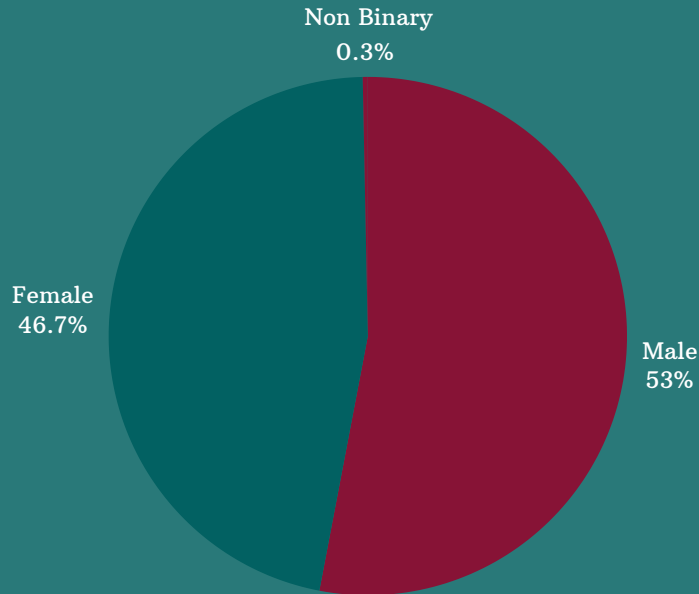
5. Core Data

Between August 2023 and June 2024 7140 counselling/psychological wellbeing sessions have been offered to CYP in East Ayrshire schools. Out of these sessions offered:

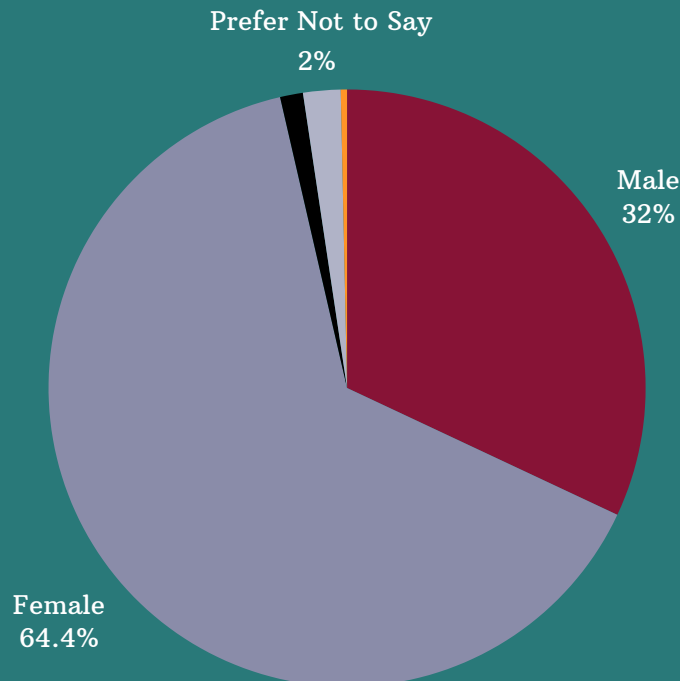
- 5224 were attended
- 17 Child protection concerns raised at point of referral.
- Average wait time from referral to first appointment for Primary schools was between 6-8 weeks. This is much longer than we would like and does not meet our target time of 2 weeks. This was due to the service receiving 28% more referrals than in the agreed contracted capacity. This number of referrals was not manageable within the academic year. Measures have been put in place to ensure the target waiting time of 2 weeks is achieved in the next academic year.
- The Average waiting time in Secondary schools was 10-12 days for assessment.
- Average attendance rate was 85% in Primary schools and 70% in Secondary schools.
- 64 Self Referrals.
- 121 Re-referrals. This figure has almost halved since the previous academic year. The Counselling Coordinator and Counselling managers have worked closely with school staff to ensure that YP are being referred to the service that best meets their needs. When a YP is re-referred quickly, counselling managers have a discussion with guidance staff to ensure that counselling is the right support for the YP and also that strategies suggested by the counsellor are being used.
- 82 Requests for Care Experienced Young People. This figure is significantly higher than last years (almost 4 times) and reflects the work done by the Exchange to change how this is recorded. The recording of this is now far more accurate at point of referral and we have also worked closely with schools to ensure they understand the importance of recording this information.
- 47 Onward Referrals to other services including CAMHS, GP, Children's 1st and Ed Psych

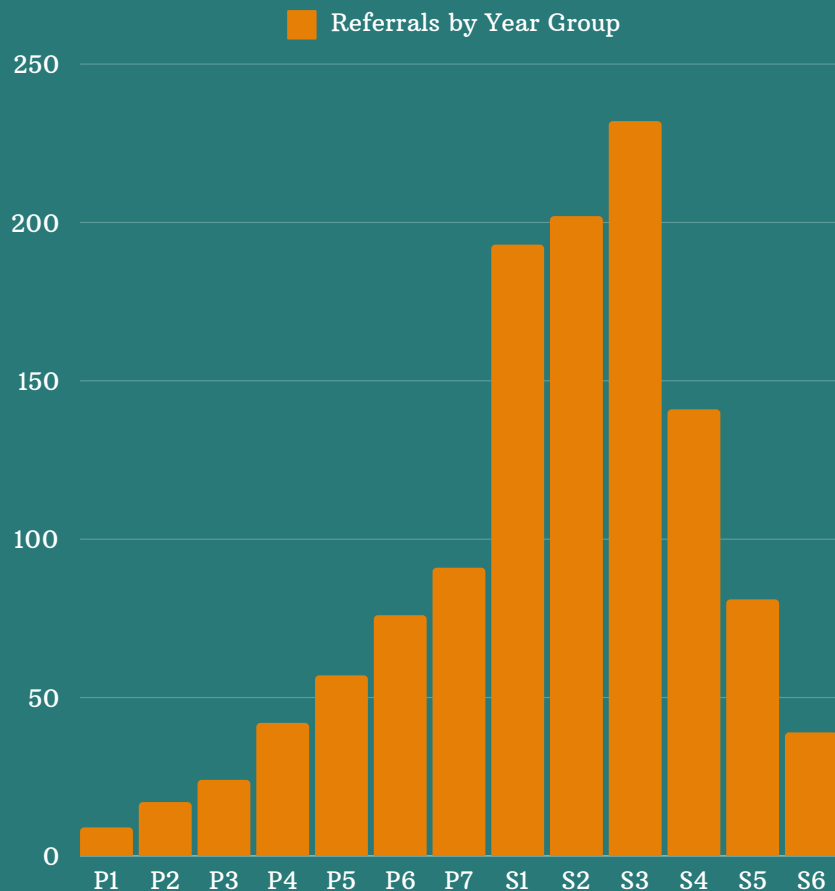
The graphs on the left illustrate request data and trends over the past academic year. In Primary schools the gender split is almost 50/50 whilst in Secondary schools the number of males attending counselling is significantly lower than females. The number of referrals for males in Secondary schools has dropped steadily since the service was launched in 2021. In 2022, the Exchange carried out focus groups with boys to try and establish the reasons for this. One finding from this was that boys preferred to access information online for MHWB rather than in person. The Exchange online app D-EXY has specific areas for males to access and uptake from males has been good. More information on D-EXY is available further on in this report.

Requests by Gender Primary Schools



Requests by Gender Secondary Schools



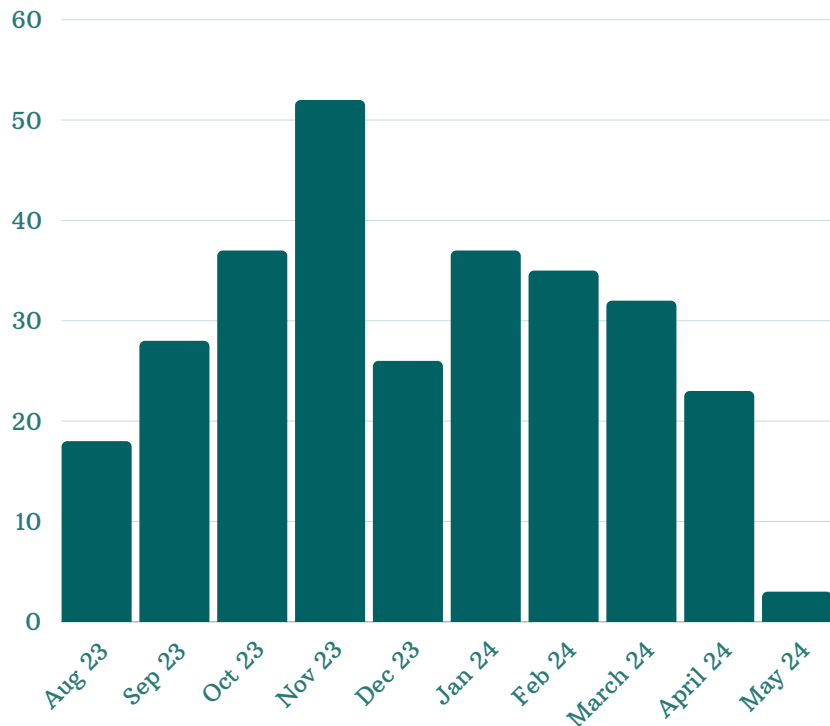


In Primary schools, over the past academic year, requests were highest in the P7 year group, closely followed by P6. For the under 10 service, P5 requests continue to be almost as high as the P6 and P7's. In Secondary schools requests continue to be highest in S3, however requests from S1 and S2 continue to remain high.

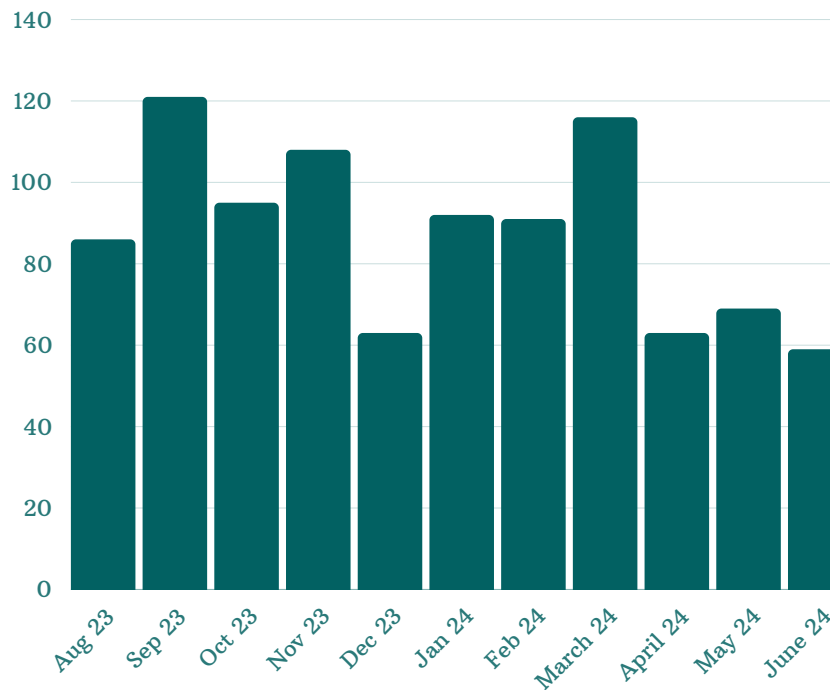


Over the past academic year, Anxiety continues to be the most common reason for requesting assistance in East Ayrshire both in Primary schools and in Secondary schools. However, when the young person begins their intervention, there are often several underlying causes of the anxiety that end up being the focus of the counselling sessions. In Primary schools requests are also high for behaviour related issues. In Secondary schools the number of young people being referred to counselling for self harm has significantly increased since last year. This data will be used to influence CLPL at both local authority and school level next year and will also contribute to the planning of school PSE programmes.

■ Requests by Month - Primary



■ Requests by Month - Secondary



In Primary schools requests have been fairly steady throughout the whole year other than in May when we had to put a hold on any new referrals as the service was working beyond capacity. There was an influx of requests in November, which doesn't correlate to any previous trends we have seen in the Primary service. The School Counselling Coordinator will monitor the data closely this year to see if any patterns begin to emerge. In secondary schools we see a huge influx in requests when Young People return to school in September after a long period of summer holidays. Many Young People present with difficulties directly linked to this holiday period whilst others struggle with the transition back to school. We also see a peak of referrals in March which is the beginning of exam season. Both of these figures reflect a trend we have seen over the past few years.

Number of YP accessing the service with Additional Support Needs (ASN)

Secondary:

- Neurodivergent (ND) - diagnosed: 37 young persons (4%)
- ND - undiagnosed: 49 young persons (5%)
- Health needs: 24 (2%)
- Learning Needs: 23 (2%)
- Poverty: 9 (1%)
- Social needs: 49 (5%)

Primary:

- ND - diagnosed: 11 (4%)
- ND - undiagnosed: 25 children (8%)
- Health Needs: 10 Children (3%)
- Learning Needs: 3 children (<1%)
- Poverty: 1 Child (<1%)
- Social needs: 11 children (3%)

Quintile	No. of children attending Counselling (Primary)	No. of children attending Counselling (Secondary)
1	27	93
2	19	128
3	8	85
4	6	130
5	3	0

56 of those attending counselling in Primary schools received a free school meal (19%)

The table above shows the SIMD demographic of YP in East Ayrshire who have attended school counselling from August 23 - April 24. However, some of the secondary data for SIMD is missing due to challenges with postcode information.



C&YP in EA Primary
schools
who registered an
improvement in
psychological
wellbeing after
support from The-
Exchange

6. Impact Data

The data provided will outline the impact of the service from August 2023 until June 2024. Seven data sources will be utilised to demonstrate the impact:

- Resilience Assessment Profile (RAP)
- Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS)
- YP-CORE
- Case Studies
- Evaluations (Pupil, Teacher and Parent)
- Pupil Focus Groups
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Data Source 1 – Pupils

Primary School Data – Resilience Assessment Profile (RAP), Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS), Case Studies and Evaluations

Over the course of the academic year, a total of 316 Primary School pupils engaged with The-Exchange from 40 primary schools within East Ayrshire. During engagement with The-Exchange, pupils complete a resilience measurement tool (a variation of the CYRM: child and Youth Resilience Measure) at the beginning and end of the support. The therapists facilitate the child to communicate their view of how the struggles are affecting them using picture cards. Each card is linked to the 15 resources of resilience. The assessment aims to generate a resilience profile, which highlights the specific areas that the child is under- resourced, as reported by the child. Support is put in place to target the resources identified. The same process is repeated at the end to capture 'distance travelled' from the perspective of the child. 85% of children reported an improvement.

Primary Case Study

Case Study Example:

Female, P7

Referral Reason:

School refuser for 3 months, Previous bullying, Multiple school changes, Panic attacks

Assessment:

Child assessment: Child and Youth Resilience Measure "low resilience" Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire: "very high difficulty"

Narrative:

Emotional intelligence, self-esteem, optimism, and self-regulation were identified as under-resourced areas. Client expressed not liking themselves due to comments from others. School environment is overwhelming and they reported feeling panicked in the building. Concerns about the future due to their transition to the academy. Client expressed fear that their panic attacks and lack of confidence will mean that they'll struggle with friendships. Concerns that their extended time off school will impact ability to adjust.

Intervention:

Theraplay sessions focusing on self-esteem, self-worth, self-acceptance, and belief. Creating strategies for their panic attacks in the school building. The first sessions were held in a room at the school reception due to the client feeling fearful of entering the school building. At the end of each session, we would take a walk around areas of the school identifying safe spaces and working on their strategies. Over the course of the intervention, sessions moved to a room in the main school building and client began spending time in their classroom and playground.

Outcome:

Child and Youth Resilience Measure increased to "moderate/high resilience".

Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire decreased to "close to average."

Emotional intelligence improved as the client was able to identify emotions and notice when particular emotions were beginning to heighten. Client reported using strategies created in sessions during these moments.

Both parents and school noticed the strategies had helped the client to self-regulate and not get as overwhelmed as previously.

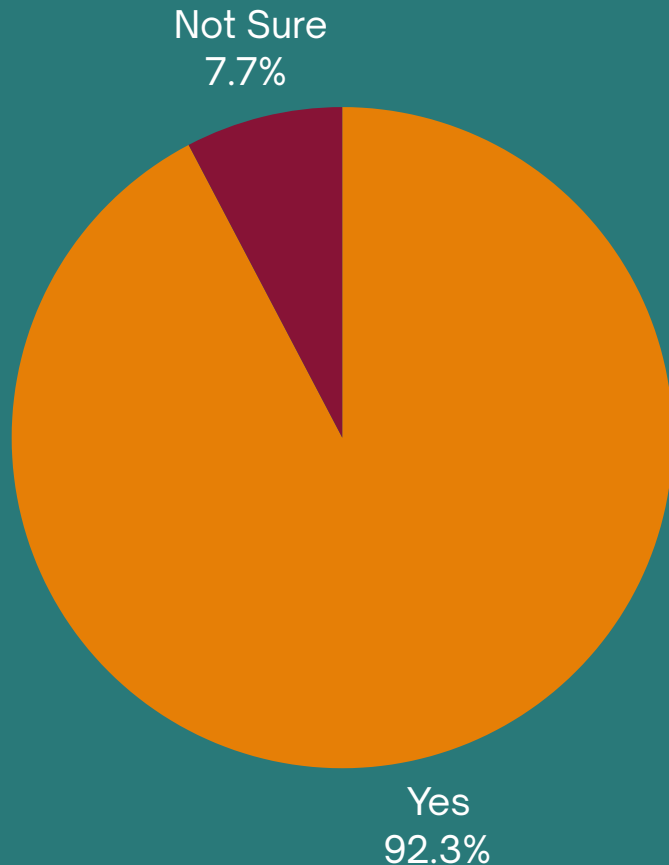
Client made a plan for the transition back into school life, mum and school were given a copy. Client and school both noticed that an increase in emotional intelligence and self-regulation has made a positive difference on peer relationships. Client found being less anxious and angry at school helped with both friendships and school attendance.

Confidence and self-esteem both increased.

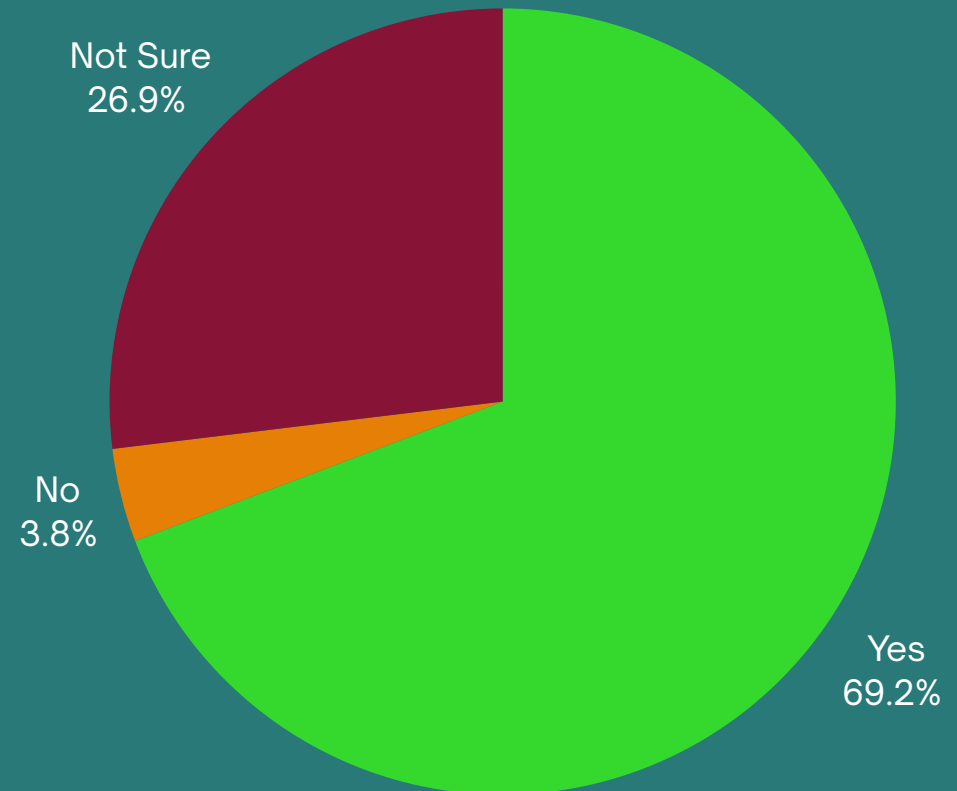
Sample of Primary Pupil Feedback (26 responses)

In order to add qualitative feedback to the clinical data from The-Exchange and to ensure Pupil Voice is paramount to the continued development of the service, we sent out our own surveys to YP who have engaged with the school Counselling Service. Response rates were much better than in previous years. Next academic session the School Counselling Coordinator will also lead pupil focus groups in Primary schools to ensure they are included in the co-production of the service.

Were you happy by how quickly you were seen by your counsellor/wellbeing practitioner?



Do you think attending sessions with the Exchange has helped to improve your mental health and wellbeing?



Sample of Feedback Quotes from Primary Pupils:

"Talking about my issues helped. I liked the fact that it was private."

"I didn't feel pressured into talking about private things. The person was easy to talk to so I felt able to open up to her."

"It was calming and it gave me techniques to stop feeling angry."

"They helped me learn to find out about how other people are feeling. It helped me feel stronger to deal with my emotions."

"She helped me to think about my emotions more clearly. She gave me strategies to cope with things".

"Talking about feelings with the genie helped. Fun activities helped."

"It helped me have time out of the class to think".

"It helped me improve my confidence. It helped me show my emotions more".

"It has made me feel better about myself".

"I know that I can ask for time out without being scared. It has helped me to cope a bit better with losing my dad."

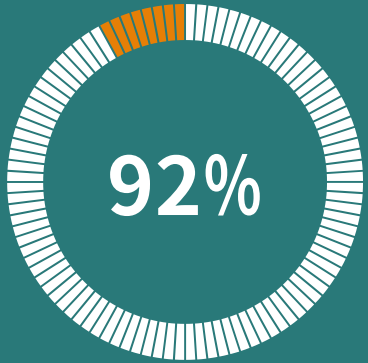
"I like it because its made me understand that my feelings are normal"

"So when he came in I thought that he would only talk about the worries but no we played games/drowed and when we made our own game and then talked and laughed and sung a song and when he made funny faces it made me laugh and I need you again"

"It has made me think about my actions and how I listen and react to everyone."

"It helped me with my mental well being. It has helped me a lot everywhere."

"I feel it helped me, I want to attend school now whereas before I didn't."



Primary Children in East Ayrshire want to see the counselling service continue in their school

Secondary School Data



83%

of Secondary
C&YP in EA
registered a
reduced clinical
score following
sessions with
The-Exchange

Secondary School pupils who have engaged with The-Exchange, are supported to complete YP-CORE forms. The YP-CORE form is a 10-item session-by-session monitoring tool designed for use with 11-17 year olds measuring items including anxiety, depression, trauma, physical problems, functioning and risk to self. YP-CORE forms are used with young people at the beginning, middle and end of counselling, but can be used at every session if the young person has scored particularly low or the Counsellor has risk concerns. The YP - CORE form asks pupils to rate how things are for them in four dimensions:

- Subject Wellbeing
- Problems/Symptoms
- Life functioning
- Risk/harm

YP-Core is an important indicator of how each young person is feeling about their life and importantly their happiness and wellbeing as well as highlighting any experiences of distress. Clinical distress, as described above, is indicated when YP-CORE scores are 10 or above with scores above 25 being classified as severe distress.

The average start score for young people in East Ayrshire over the past academic year was 21, which is moderate to severe clinical distress. The average end score at the end of the counselling intervention was 13, which is a mild clinical distress score.

SECONDARY CASE STUDY

Case Study Example:

S3-identifies as Male, referral from school

Referral reason:

Gender identity struggles, sexuality and sense of self, parental illness.

Assessment:

Core YP reduced from Moderate to Mild

Resilience audit:

Under resourced in guidance, optimism and security

Focus:

Talking about gender related issues without judgement embarrassment and shame. Resilience cards were used to assess client's hierarchy of needs. Exploration of self through use of strength cards. Exploration of self-worth using scaling questions linked to self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation.

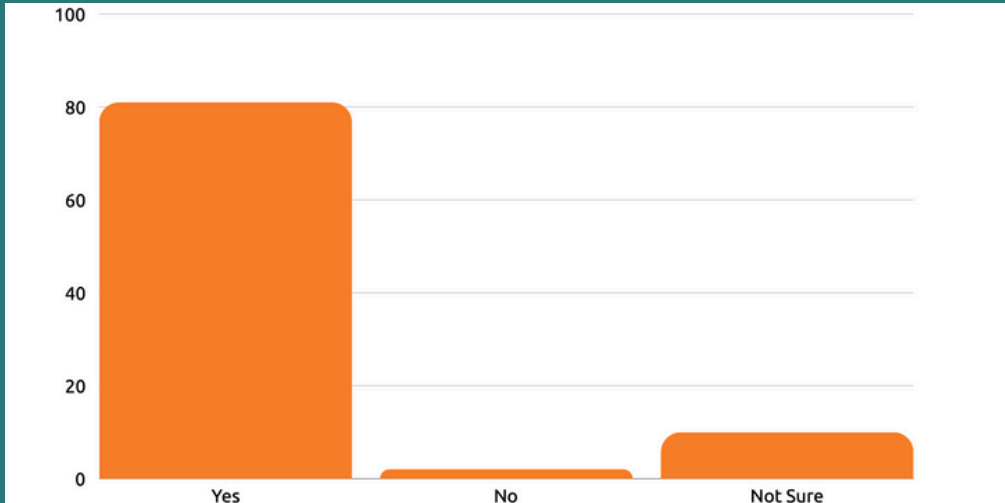
Outcome

Client reported feeling more secure in life and a more robust support network , increased energy levels and self-understanding. YP reported empowerment through the choices and improved engagement. YP was supported to connect with the LGBTQI+ community in school.

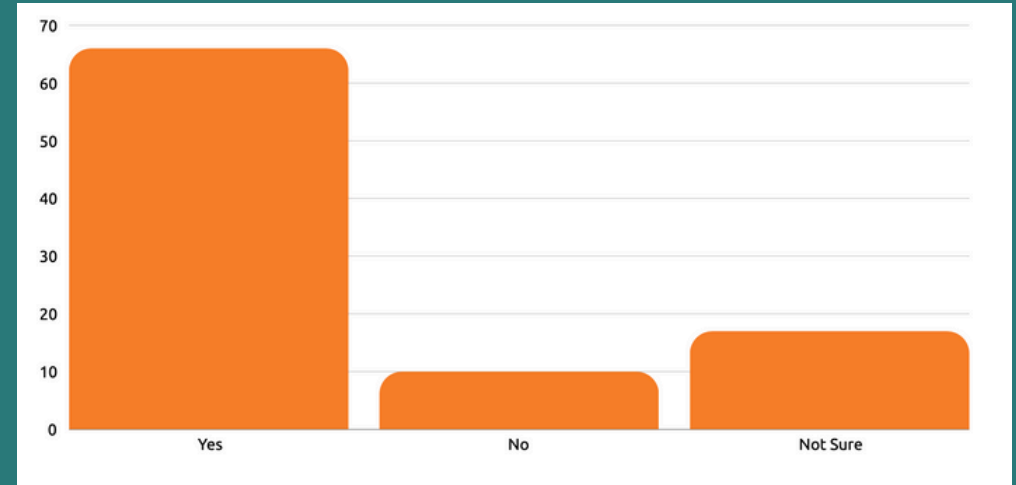


Sample of Secondary School Feedback from Glow Surveys (93 Responses)

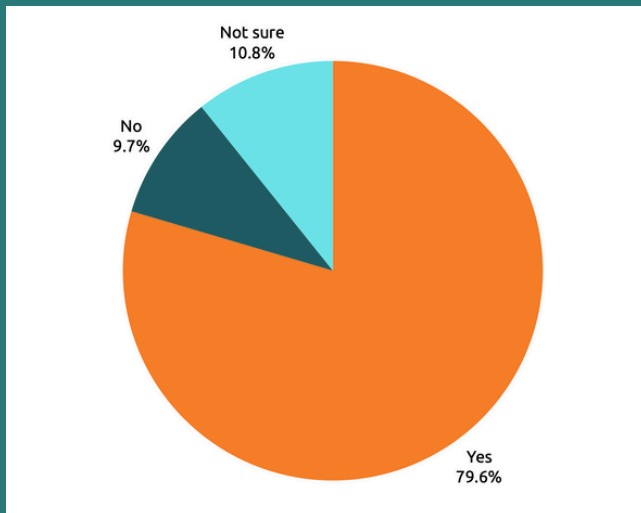
Were you happy with how quickly you were seen by a counsellor?



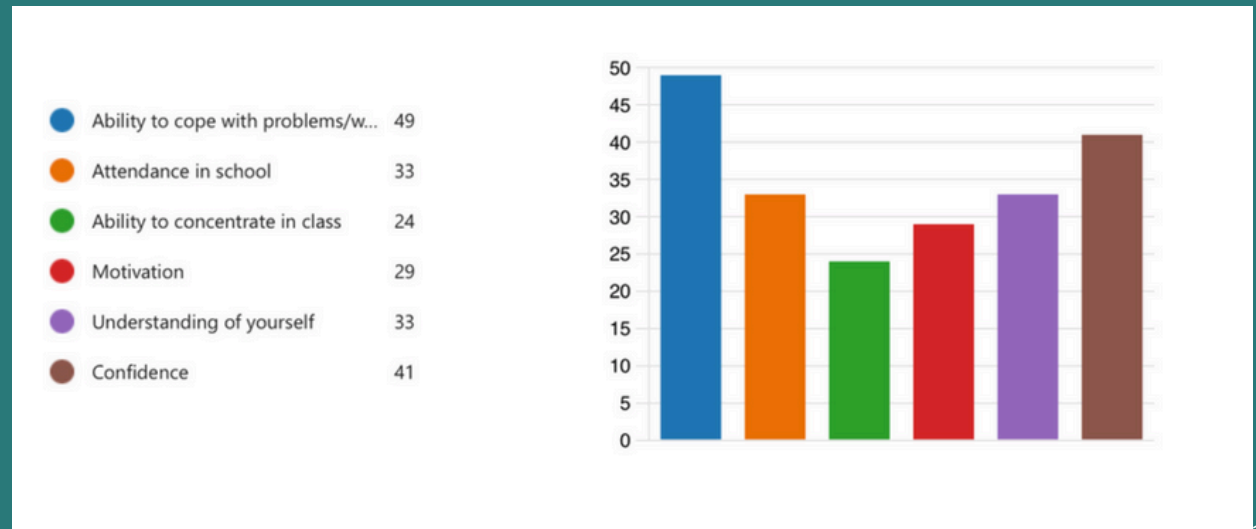
Were the Counselling sessions helpful?



Do you think attending counselling has had a positive impact on your mental health and wellbeing?



Do you think attending counselling sessions has had a positive effect on any of the following? Please tick all boxes that are true for you.



Sample of Feedback Quotes from Secondary Pupils:



of Secondary
C&YP in East
Ayrshire would
recommend the
service to a
friend

"It was your own space to open up"

"She doesnt get in my buisness"

"They don't tell anyone what you have said"

"It gave me somewhere to let my emotions out and let my mind ease"

"I didn't feel judged"

"It made me have a safe space and someone to talk to"

"I liked being able to do the questionnaire before sessions, so I was able to update the counsellor how I was."

"Helped me open up to people I trust and help gain trust with others"

"It was a great way to talk about things that worry you"

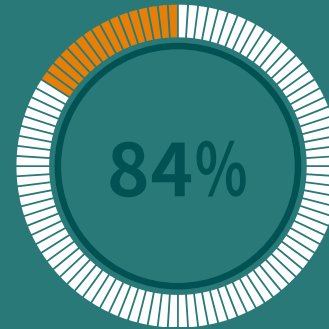
"It made me feel better about going to classes."

"I liked it, i feel like it helped me cope during school."

Data Source 2 - Parents

Parents of pupils in Primary Schools receiving support from The-Exchange were asked to complete the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire at the initial parent screening and again once counselling sessions had been completed in order for comparisons to be drawn.

**Improvement in
SDQ Scores**



Parent Glow Surveys (25 responses)

To ensure parental views and feedback are paramount to the continued development of the service, we took the decision to send out our own surveys to parents. In Primary schools, these were targeted at parents where staff knew their child had accessed the Exchange. In secondary schools these were shared on school websites, on schools apps etc and parents who were involved in their child's counselling journey could respond. Out of the responses received 11 were from parents of young people in secondary school and 14 were from parents of Primary aged children. Responses were received from parents of children in all age groups apart from P1 and S2.

**Were you happy by how quickly your child
was seen by a counsellor?**

Yes	15
No	4
Not Sure	3



Sample of Feedback Quotes from Parents :

"He deals with his emotions better and understands them." (Parent of P4 pupil)

"He has been so much happier and more confident. He's also been very open about how he feels." (Parent of P7 child)

"With her anxiety she gets sore necks and stomach to the point she thinks she's going to be sick. After her sessions she only comes to me with a sore neck maybe once a week now. Whereas before it was every day and she would cry and scream if I even left the house" (Parent of P3 Pupil)

"My son has gained so much more confidence, and also an understanding of why he is feeling certain emotions" (Parent of P7 Pupil)

"His mood & overall manner has improved. He's made an effort to get out to school on time." (Parent of S4 Pupil)

"It really improved after the work - helped her to pause and consider her own feelings - she was able to relate the learning to a topic of interest - she used the calming items she created with the service" (Parent of P5 Pupil)

"The service is paramount and I would highly recommend it. It's a small drop in the ocean but it's something that is fun, it grips their interest and provides knowledge and understanding." (Parent of P5 Child)

"This service had been needed for over a year but with the help and support from this was amazing and helped so much" (Parent of P4 Child)

"It was extremely valuable to my son, the counsellor and the sessions had such a positive impact on his mental wellbeing." (Parent of P7 child)

"It's valuable for the parent knowing someone is listening to their child" (Parent of S1 Pupil)

"Very valuable! I don't know where I would be or doing without the help she received" (Parent of P3 child)

"Extremely valuable, as a parent there will always be things that you can't always help your child deal with. That is where the counselling stepped in, in my case it also helped me to help my child better" (Parent of P7 child)

Parent Case Study

Pupil Information: Male, P6 (At time of counselling intervention)

Overview of challenges the pupil was experiencing prior to contacting the Exchange:

The child was affected by a parental separation which initially he appeared to cope quite well with. However, about a year later he began to have emotional outbursts. He became very emotional for no apparent reason and struggled to understand why he was feeling this way. He began to socially isolate himself and stopped attending clubs and playing with his friends. He then developed anxiety about going to school and would regularly get upset when Mum left him in the playground in the morning. Teachers reported that he would often burst into tears in class.

Strategies/Interventions used:

The child attended 8 sessions with a primary wellbeing practitioner from the Exchange. The sessions focussed on helping him to understand why he was feeling the way he was. He learned to identify the emotions he was feeling and communicated that he knew it was due to the parental separation. In the first session he struggled to open up but Mum commented that the counsellor worked hard to build a trusting relationship with him and as the sessions progressed he began to open up more and more. He understood the sessions were confidential but also felt able to share some of what he was discussing in the sessions with Mum. With the counsellors support, he recognised he didn't want to worry Mum and this was often the reason for him being upset.

The counsellor gave him tasks and strategies he could use at home and in school when he started to recognise that he was feeling anxious.

Impact on Child and Family:

Mum commented that the service has had a huge impact on her son and the whole family and that he had managed to sustain this, even after the sessions ended. She said there was a huge difference in her son's emotional wellbeing and he went from a boy who couldn't manage his feelings and didn't want to go to school to a happy, confident boy.

Parent Quote:

"I couldn't believe the change in him. He went from being so unhappy in P6 to a confident, happy boy in P7 after he completed the intervention with the Exchange. He is back to the happy boy he was before we separated. The Exchange is a fantastic service, thank you."

Data Source 3 – Teachers

Following engagement with The-Exchange, teachers were asked to give their feedback on the service. In total responses were received from 27 members of School Staff. Out of the responses received, 17 of them were from staff in Primary schools and 10 were from staff in Secondary schools. In Primary schools the form was completed either by a Head Teacher or Depute Teacher and in secondary schools the form was completed either by the PT of Pupil Support or Pupil Support/Guidance Teachers.

Feedback was gathered using a Glow form. The form was not anonymous to allow us to follow up on any issues brought to our attention in the survey.

100% of teachers stated that they wish to see the service continue.

Sample of Teacher Feedback from Surveys:

“The impact on some of the young people who have worked with the Exchange has been great - motivation, strategies in place that they can use. Referral system is easy to use. Staff are friendly and professional.”

“We REALLY value this service and cannot state strongly enough how much it is needed by pupils, parents and staff to support our young people.”

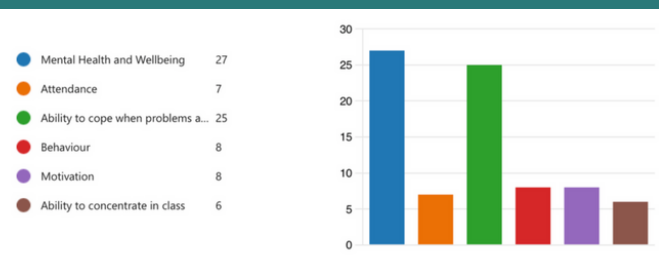
“A very valuable resource that is helping to support the wellbeing needs of the children and young people. Kieran is an excellent partner of the school and I think having a young, positive male role model for many of our boys is valuable.”

“Counsellors are fantastic, always communicate well with the school and parents. Very child centred and skilled.”

More examples of Teacher feedback can be found in Appendix 5.



Do you think the school counselling service has had a positive impact on any of the following?



7. Opportunities & Enhancements

D-EXY was launched by the Exchange in 2023. D-EXY is an online support for the mental health of Young People when, and where they need it. D-EXY provides on-demand support to young people with proven therapeutic content, activities and practical strategies that work – all available online at the touch of a button. D-EXY also offers, safe, moderated online community discussions, and access to counselling – so they have real people to talk to and helpful information they can work through in their own time.

This digital application has been developed in collaboration with young people and is a one stop shop' for mental health – available at young people's fingertips – designed to give immediate support as early as possible in someone's help-seeking journey, wherever they are. D-EXY offers a continuum of support: at one end is mental health promotion – 'mental fitness'– and at the other end there is direct counselling support. In between there are ideas and guides for managing every day emotional distress and wellbeing challenges.

D-EXY is available on both desktop and mobile. The platform has been optimised for use on different devices including tablets and phones. The D-EXY app is also available to download on both the Google Play Store & Apple App Store. The library is available 24/7 365 days a year. Young people can browse and download as many resources as they want at their leisure. Safe Space Forum is available 24 hours 365 days a year. The online chat function is available between 10am and 10pm 365 days a year.

D-EXY offers the young person a choice of three areas they can use:

Independent – I GOT THIS – a library of resources that users can choose to access by themselves wherever and whenever they want to.

Interactive – GUIDE ME– guided self-help programmes which have an interactive text element to support the process.

Interdependent – TALK TO ME – specialised support in the form of planned counselling online and online chat for instant support provided by a fully qualified counsellor.

D-EXY works within the Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory framework. Moderation on the portal is carried daily by trained moderators and we have a safeguarding team who are available to all counselling and digital staff each day. The platform has security features built in to the peer-to-peer forums to prevent misuse D-EXY promotes itself to young people as a confidential safe space in which users are free from judgment. When a young person chooses to engage in guided self-help (text support) or planned counselling, D-EXY request minimal but critical information for safeguarding purposes.

D-EXY has a designated area for care-experienced young people. There is a designated help button for care experienced young people. This takes the young person through to a specific domain which has tailored resources and a separate live chat which has a personalised welcome message letting the young person know that they can speak to one of our care-experienced leads.

We have supported non-attenders on D-exy this year and had over 7000 views of our resources, over 100 yp have chosen to tell us they were from EA and have booked sessions online. We have also engaged more in telephone sessions for yp who are not in school, liaising with schools to make this possible. D-EXY has made self-referrals to the Service more confidential and Young People appear to prefer this method of self-referral.

There has been an increase and further interest on boys Mental Health on D-EXY. The Exchange and the School Counselling Coordinator will work in partnership with schools in the next academic session to further promote this.

D-EXY

Digital Wellbeing Platform
for Young People

In partnership with
EXCHANGE YOUTH
EXCHANGE RESOURCE

The Exchange

The Property of Therapeutic Counselling Services © 2022

FEATURES

LEVEL 1
The Library
Mental Fitness
Calm Den
Mental Health Pit Stop

LEVEL 2
The Roadtrips
The Portal
Mood Journal

LEVEL 3
Safe Space
Live Counsellor Chat
Book a Session

Summer Transition Support Partnership

Background:

In July and August 2023, The Exchange and Children's 1st worked in partnership to provide support to families of children/ YP who are suffering with anxieties around transitioning from primary school to secondary school. 12 YP and their parents attended.

Structure of Sessions: Both services came together to provide the targeted family support. They worked with both the child/ YP & their family member to support them across 3 weeks, one session per week for 2 hours. These 3 weeks were the 3 final weeks of the summer holidays, to be able to provide the support as they prepared to transition.

The sessions started off informally with breakfast club and a group check-in. The groups then split into 2: the Children and Young People worked with the Exchange Primary Manager whilst the group of parents worked with Children's 1st and the Exchange's Secondary Manager.

Content of Sessions: Whilst apart, family members had the space to discuss their worries and concerns in confidence while developing active listening skills. The C/YP had this time to explore their anxieties in a creative way. Each week they focused on building different resources, such as security & safety (support networks), emotional literacy, empathy, optimism, confidence, self-regulation & co-regulation.

The 2 groups then came together again for the final hour of the session and completed a group activity where they spent time building and practising active listening skills, sharing emotions and developing co-regulation.

Impact: The families that attended these sessions commented that they'd found the whole experience very supportive. Parents, in particular, commented that it had been beneficial to be able to share their experiences in a confidential environment with other parents who were dealing with similar experiences.

The success of the group has led to a similar transition programme being planned for Summer 2024. So far uptake has been really high and currently the group is sitting at full capacity.

P7 Online Transition Groups

Aim: The online transition group connects children across different schools (and services) who are all experiencing anxiety towards transition and change. The programme promotes security & safety by focusing on support network, builds confidence & emotional intelligence, and develops self-regulation. The programme is delivered by experienced practitioners who can adapt the session to the needs of each individual in the group, for example we had one child who did not feel comfortable speaking out during the group so he would type all of his answers/ responses in the chat, but by the final session he was openly talking and no longer needed to type.

Attendance: 7 attended from Dunlop, Galston, Shortlees, St Andrews & Newmilns. 8 more were contacted & offered, 2 closed due to no contact and 6 declined.

Feedback:

- "At the beginning I agreed to the online group as I just wanted any support for my child but I really wasn't sure how successful it would be. I now cannot believe the difference in my son, he is happier and a lot more open about his feelings. He is also taking time now to think about his choices and actions before doing them. He has been sending quotes to his friends encouraging them to open up about their feelings" - **Parent**
- "It's been good to know that other children feel the same as I do" - **Child**
- "I've now been using the daily check in sheet with my mum and I feel it really helps" - **Child**
- "It is like night & day with my child since completing the group, there's a clear difference in the way he deals with his emotions and his thought process about transitioning to the academy." - **Parent**
- "I've been using the strategies & worksheets in between sessions, which has been making me less angry and less worried" - **Child**

Counselling Environment & Modalities

In response to feedback received from Young People, the Secondary Counselling Manager worked closely with the team of Secondary counsellors and school leads to ensure the counselling environment was welcoming, informative and felt like a relaxing, safe space for all young people. Counselling rooms were revamped, using ideas directly from the Young People and also counsellors created their own counsellors toolkit, again containing lots of items that were suggested by the Young People to help them settle into their session. Counsellors also reviewed their modalities and, where appropriate used art therapy, drama therapy and other creative approaches to help young people feel more at ease.



Counselling Room at Stewarton Academy

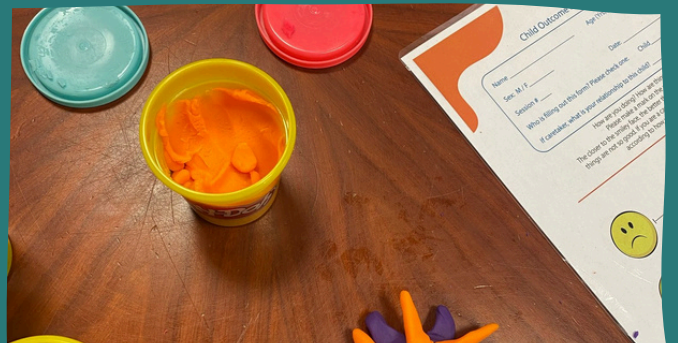
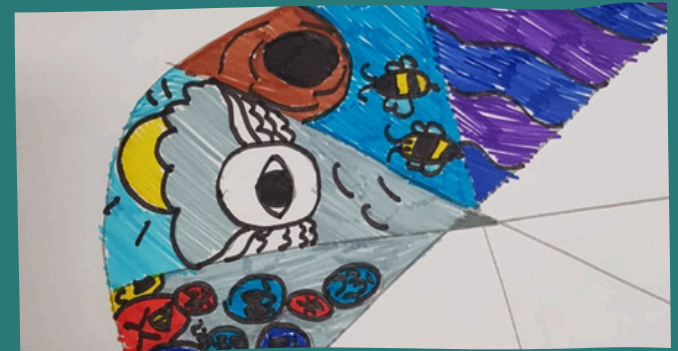


Counselling Room at Robert Burns Academy. Space is very limited in this school but the Counselling Lead and Counsellor worked well together to make this small space as private and comfortable as possible.

Examples of Counsellors "Toolkits."



Examples of activities used during counselling sessions



The Whole School Approach

As well as delivering 1-1 counselling and group work sessions, The-Exchange Counsellors have continued to embed themselves in the school community and ensure they are visible and approachable. Counsellors across the local authority have attended PSE classes, delivered assemblies, delivered workshops at Whole School Wellbeing days and for "World Suicide Prevention Day", attended parents evenings and attended transition events.



Parent Information Session at Robert Burns Academy

Support for Children and Young People with ASN, complex home lives and/or trauma

In response to extensive data gathered last academic year, measures were put into place to ensure that the School Counselling Service met the needs of all Children and Young People in East Ayrshire, including those with Additional Support needs, complex home lives and/or trauma. Engagement with YP with ASN has always been of the utmost concern for The Exchange, providing fluidity, flexibility and inclusivity for all yp in EA. The counsellors will consult with manager over yp needs, this can consist of offering more sessions, doing walk/talk therapy in school grounds, cutting length of the sessions and going at the yp pace and capacity. Feedback from schools has been positive and there has been a notable increase in referrals for YP with ASN over the past academic year.

P7 Transition Programme at Park School

In response to an identified need, the counsellor at Park school decided to run a transition programme for those P7's anxious about starting secondary school. It was agreed by the counsellor and the guidance teacher that the mainstream transition programme would not meet the needs of all of the pupils at Park. The guidance teacher also felt it would help build relationships between the counsellor and some of the more vulnerable young people who were anxious about seeing a counsellor. Previous data has shown that individual referrals tend to follow group work, especially when the young people understand who the counsellor is and what they do, particularly for young people with ASN.

Before the program began, the counsellor spent some time getting to know the young people and observing the dynamics of the group.

Week 1 - Solar system:

Each child created their own solar system, which represented connections that they have in their life. Some engaged more than others, sharing who they had in their solar system. Others were content to sit, listen, or work on their drawings, which weren't always directly related to the task. One boy drew an alien, his favourite subject, while another drew a panda, his go-to drawing. These two, who always sat together, were generally quiet but engaged, taking what they needed from the experience.

Week 2 - Memories and dreams:

The teacher had to prompt them to recall enjoyable events from the past year. One girl kept showing the teacher her work, which stated that her best memory was the teacher herself, indicating her strong attachment. Most of the young people looked forward to having their friends with them in secondary school.

Week 3 - Comfort menu:

Creating a comfort menu helped each child explore things that bring them comfort and make them feel safe. The group then discussed what things they could take from the comfort menu if they felt sad, anxious, angry, stressed etc. swimming, walking on the beach, eating ice cream, spending time with family and friends, and getting hugs.

Week 4 - Recent Achievements

It was noted that two of the boys who were usually very quiet within the group were more active, giggling and smiling. The guidance teacher also noticed the change and parents feedback to the school how more talkative their children had been since starting the program.

This was meant to be the last session, however, we wanted to be as flexible with this group as possible, catering to their needs, they seemed disappointed and, after a vote, most wanted another week to reflect on what we had done.

Impact of Programme:

After delivering the programme, the counsellor noticed that much more of the Young People felt confident talking to her around the school.

A group rating scale was completed at each session looking at aspects such as: how well the group felt that they were listened to and whether they felt the content was important/relevant to them. This was displayed in keeping with the school's visual language of happy/sad faces.

This score increased at the end of each session and the group provided positive feedback about the session and the content and activities. The Guidance teacher noted that more of the children were now happy to talk about going to High school, where previously they would close up and not want to discuss the subject.

8. Moving Forward

As the School Counselling Coordinator was off on maternity leave for the majority of the 22-23 Academic year and the post was not covered, work on the improvement priorities was minimal therefore the following improvement priorities, that have been identified for the 2024-2025 session are largely carried forward from the 22-23 Academic session.

1. Continued Promotion and Effective Communication about the School Counselling Service to all C&YP, Parents, School Staff and all other relevant partners

- Ensuring C&YP, parents, school staff and other services are kept well informed about the service. Information about criteria and processes for access to counselling should be provided to all C&YP in accessible formats. This should include information about how to make a self-referral.
- School counsellors should be included in school induction, making them a visible part of school life and reducing stigma.
- School Counselling Leads to work closely with Pupil Groups to ensure they are involved in the promotion of the service, including self-referrals.

2. Continued Involvement of Young People to support Inclusion of Pupil Voice and Co- production of the School Counselling Service

- Local authority Pupil Group with representatives from each school/education group established and meetings to be held on a termly basis, this should link with wider local authority Wellbeing groups
- Pupil Improvement Plan to be produced which will include opportunities for co-production
- Good practice from Stewarton Academy to be shared and built on
- School Counselling Coordinator to work with Local Authority Pupil Group to identify any barriers to accessing counselling services, and how they might be overcome. The outcomes should be reported directly to C&YP

3. Effective use of data to inform wider, local authority decisions about Universal Wellbeing Supports

- Robust Qualitative and quantitative data showing the usage, demographics and impact of the service is collected and analysed on a termly basis. This data should be used to inform decisions about appropriate Professional Learning for school staff, Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Programmes and targeted interventions, where appropriate.

4. Ensuring requests to the Primary Service are manageable throughout the academic year

- Provide opportunities for Primary School Counselling leads to meet face to face and share good practice
- Support all Primary School Leads in their understanding of what an appropriate referral looks like
- Support parents in their understanding of how they can support their child's emotional wellbeing at home

5. Building Capacity Amongst School Staff

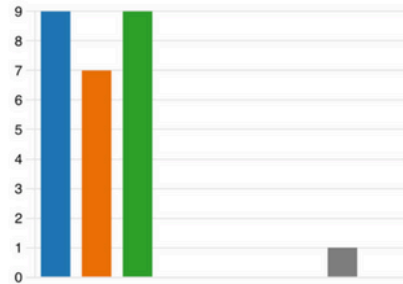
- Continue to embed the resilience framework in all schools within East Ayrshire and the resilience toolkit in Primary schools and provide staff with the tools, resources and strategies to confidently assess and support the psychological wellbeing of C&YP.
- Continue to support P7 teachers in East Ayrshire to deliver the "Adventure Programme" so that they can effectively support children through this challenging period of change
- Build capacity amongst school staff to support the wellbeing of C&YP with complex Additional Support Needs (ASN)

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Primary Pupil Glow Form Survey Feedback (26 Responses)

Q2. How did you find out about the Exchange?

Teacher in my school	9
Other adult in my school	7
Parent	9
Other adult outside of school	0
Friend	0
Leaflet/Poster	0
Social Media	0
Internet	1
Other	0



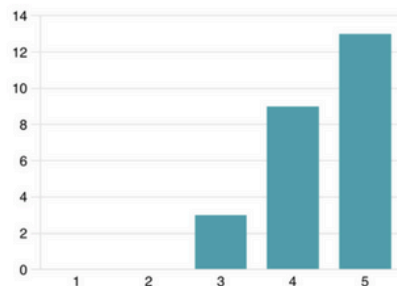
Q3. Were you happy with how quickly you were seen by your counsellor/wellbeing worker?

Yes	23
No	0
Not sure	2



Q5. How helpful were your sessions with the Exchange? 5 being most helpful and 1 being least helpful

4.40
Average Rating



Q4. Do you think attending sessions with the Exchange has helped to improve your mental health/wellbeing?

Yes	18
No	1
Not sure	7



Can you list 2 things you found helpful about your sessions?

"Talking about my issues helped. I liked the fact that it was private."

"It gave me some confidence. I was able to speak to her and tell her my feelings".

"I didn't feel pressured into talking about private things. The person was easy to talk to so I felt able to open up to her."

"Talking about my feelings knowing stuff won't be repeated"

"IT WAS CALMING AND GAVE ME TECHNIQUES TO STOP GETTING ANGRY"

"Talking to someone that I could trust. The breathing exercises."

"They were fun in a way that never scared me and instead let me do my interests (drawing, reading and more) while helping with my mindset"

"I was able to express how I felt with things and I was able to feel like I could speak freely". "* explored more strategies * strategy menu to refer to when needed"

"When we were playing with the playdough and making little men. Asking questions about school and my family".

"They helped me learn to find out about how other people are feeling. It helped me feel stronger to deal with my emotions."

"She helped me to think about my emotions more clearly. She gave me strategies to cope with things".

"Talking about feelings with the genie helped. Fun activities helped." "It helped me have time out of the class to think".

"Using the playdough to express how I was feeling. I found the check in helpful". "It helped me improve my confidence. It helped me show my emotions more".

Can you list 1 thing that could have been better about your sessions with the Exchange?

"To have more than 6 sessions"

"Longer"

"Nothing its amazing"

"The area we were working in it was too noisy"

"The weeks could be longer and longer time in the session because he made me sad when he left"

"A bit more help when I didn't understand what he was talking about."

"Being able to express a bit more (express my feelings and understand them)"

"More help about stress."

"Maybe a bit more arty stuff and more stress toys, list goes on but this is just my opinion"

Q8. Do you think the Exchange should keep on working with your school?

Yes	22
No	2
Not sure	2



Please use this space to share any other feedback/thoughts you have on The-Exchange counselling service and the difference it has made to you.

"It has made me feel better about myself".

"I know that I can ask for time out without being scared. It has helped me to cope a bit better with losing my dad."

"I like it because its made me understand that my feeling are normal"

"So when he came in thout that he would only talk about the worries but no we played games/drowed and when we made our own game and then talked and laughed and sung a song and when he made funny faces it made me laugh and i need you agen"

"It has made me think about my actions and how I listen and react to everyone.."

"I felt a bit nervous about it to begin with but it was fun to do. I enjoyed the wordsearches and the activity with marshmallows. It made me feel happier."

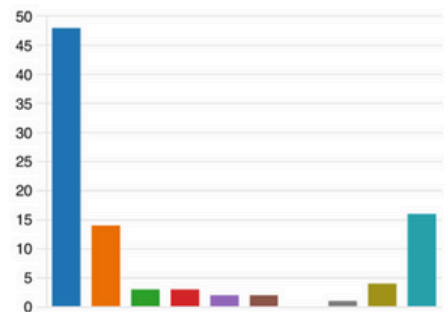
"It helped me with my mental well being. It has helped me a lot everywhere." "The Exchange service made me feel happier and not so scared about things." "I feel it helped me, I want to attend school now whereas before I didn't."

"I found it helpful and and I love being able to talk about my feelings about something to a professional counsellor."

"I'm just happy I got to have a counsellor and i could have someone to talk to that is not friends/family thank you!!!!"

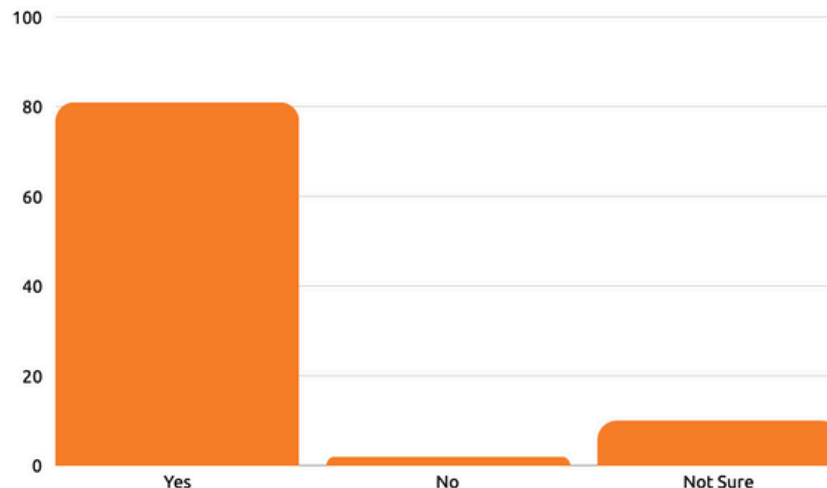
Q3. How did you find out about the School Counselling Service?

Guidance Teacher	48
Other Member of School Staff	14
Parent	3
Friend	3
Other Adult outside of school	2
Leaflet/Poster/Online Newsletter	2
Social Media	0
Internet	1
Didn't know about it	4
Other	16

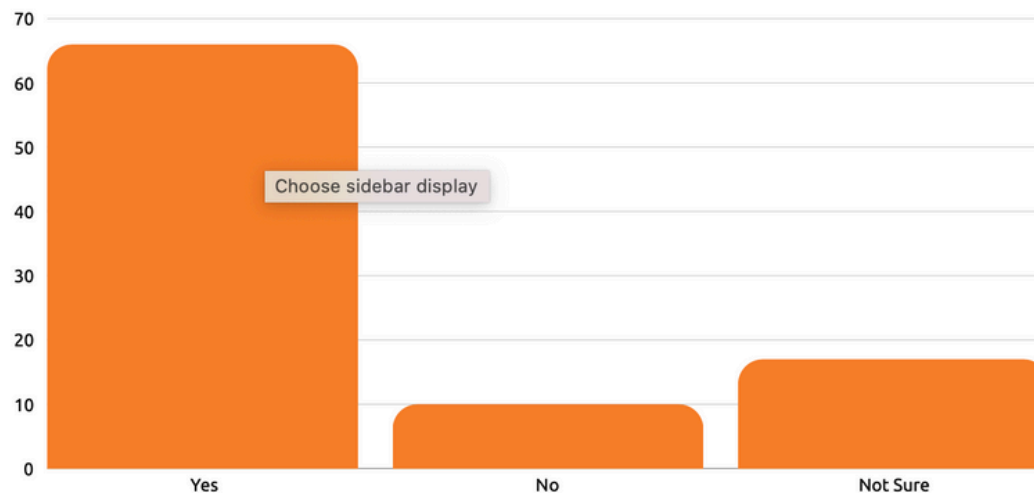


Out of the 16 Young People who selected "Other" 14 said they found out about the service at a School Assembly and 2 of them from a Deputy Head

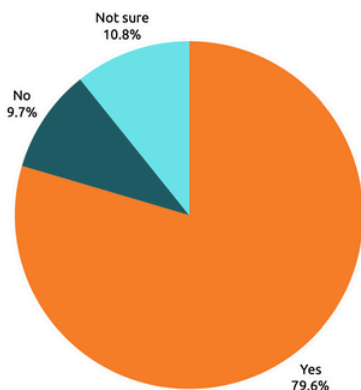
Q4. Were you happy with how quickly you were seen by a counsellor?



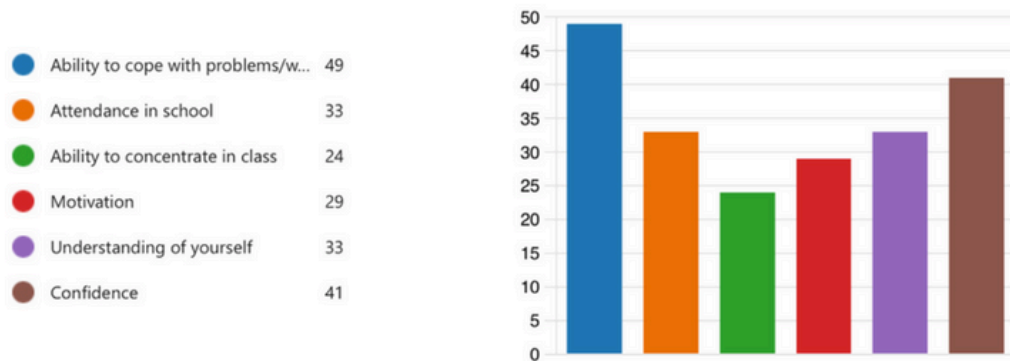
Q5. Were the counselling sessions helpful?



Q6. Do you think attending counselling has had a positive impact on your mental health and wellbeing?



Q8. Do you think attending counselling sessions has had a positive effect on any of the following? Please tick all boxes that are true for you.



Q10. Would you like to see this service continue?



Q11. Would you recommend this service to a friend?



Q9. What were the things you liked about the counselling sessions?

- "The counsellor and talking about my feelings" "Her open nature"
- "Everything"
- "It was your own space to open up" "She doesnt get in my buisness"
- "They don't tell anyone what you have said" "Just being able to talk and not feel judged".
- "It gave me somewhere to let my emotions out and let my mind ease" "Coping with worries techniques"
- "I didn't feel judged"
- "Freely talk without others being informed"
- "That it help build my mentality and confidence"
- "How they always made me feel heard"
- "It was fun and the person was nice" "Talking about worries"
- "It made me have a safe space and someone to talk to" "Being close to the counsellor"
- "I liked being able to do the questionnaire before sessions, so I was able to update the counsellor how I was."

Q12. Is there anything you feel might make it difficult for someone to access the School Counselling Service? If so, please give examples.

"Having to talk to guidance about getting referred"

"In case someone found out"

"Confidentiality"

"Maybe they could feel ashamed of asking for it".

"Waiting lines which I know you can't fix"

"If they don't have access to a phone"

"People might not know about it"

"Not wanting to say they want it"

"People might be too nervous because the school needs to do a better job at letting people know that they shouldn't be ashamed to go to counselling"

"If it's in class and someone is scared to ask their guidance teacher with people around"

"Not wanting their parents to know or being scared to ask"

"If they don't know how to reach out to someone to refer"

"They might be scared to talk to people"

"They could not want anyone else to know"

"They might think they will tell someone"

"Understanding the purpose"

Q13. What improvements, if any, would you like to see made to the School Counselling Service?

"None it's very enjoyable"

"Fit the right Counsellor with the right pupil. Some click some don't"

"The woman went on talking quite a lot and she got me to do some drawing that was irrelevant to the reason that I was there so I'd say stick to being relevant to the actual problem."

"More counsellors"

"More advertising"

"Tell people about it"

"More than one room"

"None cause they're already good at their job as it is"

Q14. Additional comments about your experience with the School Counselling Service and the impact it has had on you

Helped me open up to people i trust and help gain trust with others

Made me feel better about myself

It was a great way to talk about things that worry you

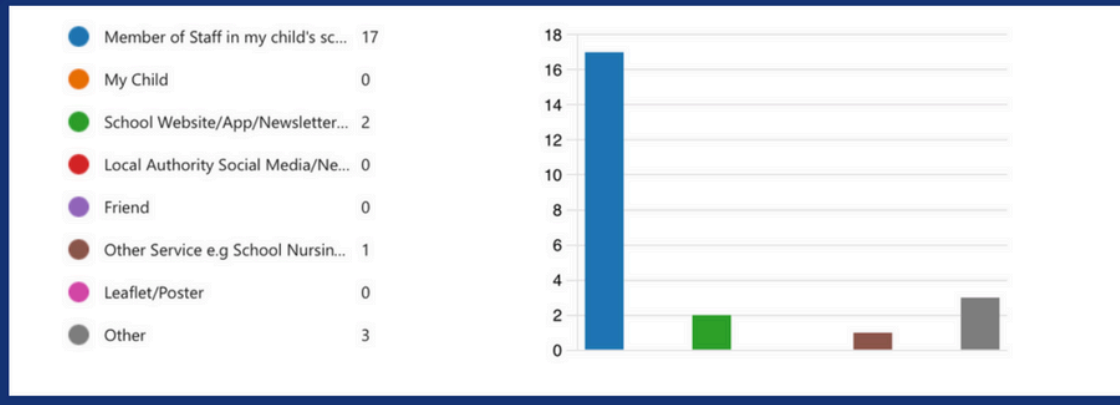
I liked it, i feel like it helped me cope during school

made me feel better about going to classes

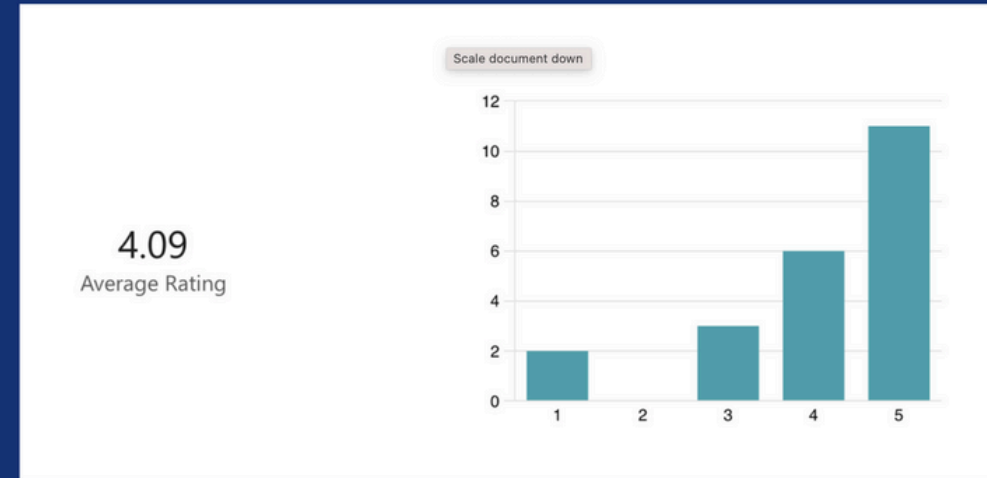
Appendix 3 Glow Form Parent Survey Feedback (June 2024)

Responses were received from 23 parents across the local authority. Out of the responses received 11 were from parents of young people in secondary school and 12 were from parents of Primary aged children. Responses were received from parents of children in all age groups apart from P1 and S2.

Q2. How did you find out about the Exchange?



Q3. How useful was the information you received about the Exchange?



Q4. Is there any additional information that would be useful for parents/carers to receive about the service? What is the best way for us to share this with parents/carers?

"More advertising"

"School app or teachers having direct conversations about the benefits of the service"

"Advertise in school and social media"

"Had a conversation with guidance teacher only."

"Perhaps giving leaflets out to the children to bring home to advertise the service"

"Communication with parents would be helpful. My son spoke of suicide and self harmed due to bullying. I know nothing about what was discussed with the counsellor."

"Face to face talks, emails"

"Tell parents the service is available. Create an Information leaflet describing the service, how to enrol in it, what the sessions will entail etc. Get posters in the schools on notice boards so all the children are aware it exists."

"The counselling my daughter got was amazing, I see a big difference in her and she had 5/6 sessions. I can't say anything to fault them"

"Information on the boards or windows"

"More information about it on the school app"

Q5. Were you happy with how quickly your child was seen by The Exchange?



Q6. Since attending counselling/psychological wellbeing sessions with The Exchange, I have noticed improvements in my child's overall mental health/wellbeing



Q6. If stated in Q5 that your child's overall mental health/wellbeing has improved since attending counselling/psychological wellbeing sessions with The Exchange, can you please give some examples of how things have improved?

"He deals with his emotions better and understands them." (Parent of P4 pupil)

"He has been so much happier and more confident. He's also been very open about how he feels." (Parent of P7 child)

"My daughter has only had one but she really likes her counsellor and has said she feels good knowing she's started." (Parent of S3 Pupil)

"I was made aware how much my son was struggling at school, plan was put in place with all his support teachers and we were able to establish personalised plan of action to help settle my son." (Parent of S1 Pupil)

"With her anxiety she gets sore necks and stomach to the point she thinks she's going to be sick. After her sessions she only comes to me with a sore neck maybe once a week now. Whereas before it was every day and she would cry and scream if I even left the house" (Parent of P3 Pupil)

"My son has gained so much more confidence, and also an understanding of why he is feeling certain emotions" (Parent of P7 Pupil)

"Have helped her go into school now and not cry when a was leavin her" (Parent of P3 Pupil)

"His mood & overall manor has improved. He's made an effort to get out to school on time." (Parent of S4 Pupil)

"It really improved after the work - helped her to pause and consider her own feelings - she was able to relate the learning to a topic of interest - she used the calming items she created with the service" (Parent of P5 Pupil)

Q7. Since attending counselling/psychological wellbeing sessions with The Exchange, my child seems happier attending school

Strongly Agree	6
Agree	4
Not Sure	7
Disagree	5



Q8. Since attending counselling/psychological wellbeing sessions with The Exchange, my child seems more settled at home

Strongly Agree	7
Agree	3
Unsure	8
Disagree	4



Q9. As a parent of a child who has attended counselling/psychological wellbeing sessions with The Exchange, how valuable do you believe this service to be?

"The service is paramount and I would high recommend it. It's a small drop in the ocean but it's something that is fun, it grips their interest and provides knowledge and understanding." (Parent of P5 Child)

"This service had been need for over a year but with the help and support from this was amazing and helped so much" (Parent of P4 Child)

"Very much as other avenues are a long wait so having this can be all that is required for my child's mental health and bring them to a point that they understand their emotions and how to deal with them properly rather than lashing out or being scared." (Parent of P4 child)

"It was extremely valuable to my son, the counsellor and the sessions had such a positive impact on his mental wellbeing." (Parent of P7 child)

"It's valuable for the parent knowing someone is listening to their child" (Parent of S1 Pupil)

"It's needed, kids are struggling with MH and unfortunately there is a long waiting lists from nhs, not everyone can also afford private care so this service is much needed at schools" (Parent of S1 Pupil)

"Very valuable! I don't know where I would be or doing without the help she received" (Parent of P3 child)

"Extremely valuable, as a parent there will always be things that you can't always help your child deal with. That is where the counselling stepped in, in my case and helped me too help my child better" (Parent of P7 child)

"It's extremely important that this service is always available. It's expensive to use a private counselling service & children may not get the help they need." (Parent of S4 Pupil)

Q10. Do you have any suggestions for how we could improve the service?

"I think it needs to be more flexible to the number of sessions offered, my son was recommended to have a second lot of sessions however altho re referred again this has never happened so he has not had them." (Parent of P7 Child)

"Longer counselling sessions not just 6 weeks" (Parent of S1 Child)

"The 6 sessions could be extended (depending on required) or even monthly check ins to remind the young person of their previous learning" (Parent of P5 Child)

"Listen to what the parents are telling them as children with additonal needs masks at times" (Parent of P6 child)

"To be able to contact the exchange programme after the 6 weeks if anything may trigger the child and unable to control things" (Parent of P4 child)

"Offer a Toolkit & practical advice as opposed to someone who just listens". (Parent of S1 Pupil)

"Give parents feedback" (Parent of S1 Pupil)

"A designated space within the school is required instead of hunting up a different classroom for each session. More counselors are required, there are only 2 for the entire academy." (Parent of S5 Pupil)

"I can only speak for our situation, but perhaps being situated in a room in the school that is next to an external door might have helped. This would avoid having to walk through the school." (Parent of S6 Pupil)

"Just to advertise it more". (Parent of P7 Child)

"Child being seen quicker after referral is the only improvement I think is needed" (Parent of P7 Pupil)

Q11. Are there any barriers, in your opinion which may get in the way of some children/young people accessing the service?

"They don't know it's there" (Parent of P7 Pupil)

"It's really inclusive, it doesn't make the child stand out differently from others, the commutation between the service and home was brilliant also" (Parent of P5 Pupil)

"Waiting lists" (Parent of P6 Pupil)

"A small wait from telephone conference call to starting programme" (Parent of P4 Pupil)

"Shame and peer-group bullying". (Parent of S1 Pupil)

"Shame for the child because once other kids know where they are going, they can get bullied worse." (Parent of S1 Pupil)

"Kids can feel ashamed attending it, breaking down a stigma will help" (Parent of S1 Pupil)

"Very few students know the service exists. Those who do face long wait times to be seen and then only have 6 sessions to try and make some progress." (Parent of S5 Pupil)

"I think many teenagers suffer from social anxiety so it just may not suit them. Also if school is the cause of anxiety then meeting a counsellor in school won't help, at least in early sessions." (Parent of S6 Pupil)

"I never knew anything about it till the hospital told me. Not sure if the schools could maybe pop a leaflet in the kids bags or even put it on their learning journals. (Parent P3 Pupil)"

"Until I approached the school I had never heard of the service, so more information in general being available" (Parent of P7)

"If the child doesn't want to go, even when they require help". (Parent of S4 Pupil)

Q12. Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about this service and the impact it has had to your child and/or family, where relevant.

“The referral process is not clear or easy, or maybe it’s my school that’s just not good” (Parent of P7 Pupil)

“It’s been a great service, lots of techniques for my child to use to help his mental health” Parent of P4 Child)

“Every person I spoke to when my child couldn’t come to a session was absolutely lovely and I believe it is a valuable service for many children.” (Parent of S6 Pupil)

“My daughter is so much happier now and she now understands these feelings and the things she done at the counselling she goes back to when she’s feeling anxious. I genuinely can’t thank the woman who seen her enough” (Parent of P3 Pupil)

Appendix 4 - School Staff Glow Form Survey, June 2023

Responses were received from 27 members of school staff in East Ayrshire in total. Out of the responses received, 17 of them were from staff in Primary schools and 10 were from staff in Secondary schools. In Primary schools the form was completed either by a Head Teacher or Depute Teacher and in secondary schools the form was completed either by the PT of Pupil Support or Pupil Support/Guidance Teachers.

Feedback was gathered using a Glow form. The form was not anonymous to allow us to follow up on any issues brought to our attention in the survey.

1. Do you find it easy to request assistance from the Exchange?

[More Details](#)

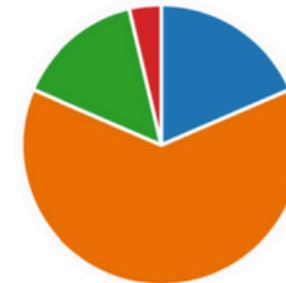
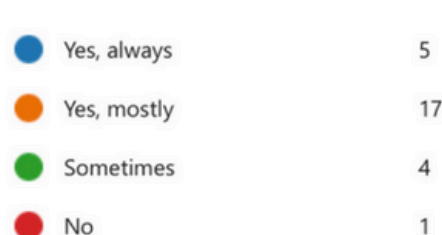
 Insights



2. Were children and young people seen quickly by the Exchange

[More Details](#)

 Insights



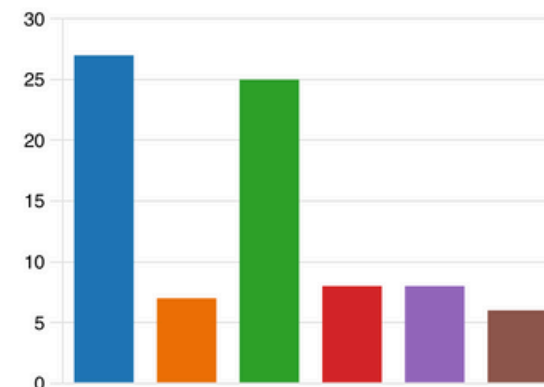
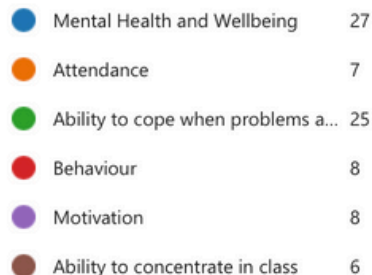
3. Would you like to see this service continue?

[More Details](#)



4. Do you think the School Counselling Service has had a positive impact on any of the following? Please tick all boxes that are true for your school/young people.

[More Details](#)



Q5. What aspects of the service have worked particularly well for pupils in your school?

Sample of Feedback from Primary School Staff on aspects of service which have worked particularly well

"Individual 1 to 1 counselling service to help pupils cope with bereavements, break ups, and difficult transition periods. Makes pupils feel heard and supported, particularly from adults out with their daily routine a fresh new face to hear events from their perspective only without the interference of other adults."

"Providing children with strategies to help them address their wellbeing needs"

"Having a consistent person to talk to in a safe space"

"Following sessions pupils seem to be able to deal more positively with difficult situations, particularly around friendships and conflicts with peers. Behaviour has definitely improved for pupils who can regulate their emotions more effectively."

"Being able to re-refer quickly and for children to be seen when a particular situation has arisen. Children being able to have follow-up sessions. Helping the children has also helped some parents manage when they have been in crisis or worried about a situation. The service is bespoke to the child and their needs. The children know, unless a Child Protection matter, that what they say is between them and the counsellor."

"The impact on some of the young people who have worked with the Exchange has been great - motivation, strategies in place that they can use. Referral system is easy to use. Staff are friendly and professional."

"Reducing anxiety levels and providing coping mechanisms and strategies children can use in class and at home".

"The one-to-one sessions are pivotal in helping the children talk freely and openly about their problems".

"It has provided a safe space for children to have a voice. Pupils have benefited from having tools to help them manage their emotions and reactions."

"Giving the young person the opportunity to discuss their thoughts, feelings and emotions with someone other than school staff. This has allowed a more honest discussion, and a tool box of strategies to use without directly involving the teacher, promoting ownership and responsibility."

Sample of Feedback from Secondary School Staff on aspects of service which have worked particularly well

"Pupils who have attended counselling with The Exchange always say it was helpful. Pupils' education is no- longer impacted by attendance at The Exchange since staff started ensuring pupils are not taken from the same subjects every week."

"F2F counselling, the relationships built between the counsellors and the pupils, quick turnaround."

"Ease of access and the comfort of familiar surroundings are a big bonus for pupils. Generally the speed at which counselling support can be accessed is excellent."

"Quick and easy access Flexible booking and taking on the needs of the pupils (requests) Counsellors who connect with our pupils and understand the area from which our pupils come from"

"The pupils have enjoyed the ability to see the counsellor 1:1 during the school day."

"This year lead times have been less than in previous years which I know has been appreciated by pupils and parents."

"When spaces become available our counsellors are pro-active in seeking kids from the waiting list to fill the space and have initial consultations. Our counsellors are warm, friendly, and approachable which young people really like and respond well too."

"Having the counselling service in school for 4 out 5 days has made a difference for both staff and pupils. The waiting lists have been shorter and staff are reassured knowing that young people are being supported by professionals. Staff also speak with the counsellors in school if they are looking for a bit of advice about pupils/situations and the counsellors are always happy to help, often going above and beyond to source extra information or to check in with us."

"Often with pupils with ASN they have to experience something practically to know if it would be suitable for them, also for some 1-1 counselling is not likely to be the best approach, thereby small groups approaches have been utilised. These have had the additional benefit of pupils building a relationship with the counsellor and therefore feeling more able to access the supports offered by 1-1 counselling."

Q6. How has the school counselling service helped you as a practitioner to better understand pupils' wellbeing?

Sample of Feedback from Primary School Staff on how the school counselling service has helped them to better understand pupils' wellbeing.

"Sharing strategies and how they can be implemented."

"Being part of the Counselling Leads Meetings is extremely beneficial in understanding the services available. The follow up resources are a great tool to remind pupils of strategies they can use and it's useful to get the follow up report."

"I have undertaken the training using the BEAR cards. It has helped us all as a staff to better understand the need to help children develop their resilience and coping mechanisms. It compliments the work we have done on nurture/ACES/ Trauma and DDP."

"We now have two staff members trained in using the Resilience Bear Cards - which is having a positive impact on the school. I have adapted my approach to wellbeing due to the School Counselling Service."

"Provided staff training and provided follow up strategies which staff can use with identified pupils in school."

"The training that was provided for the BEAR cards was very helpful and allowed us to have something concrete to assess the Well-Being of the children that we support in our WB room."

"Excellent materials available for all staff to support pupils."

"The exchange have provided strategies and resources that can be used in and around the school with many of our pupils. Resources and reading materials have been shared to allow for a greater understanding."

Sample of Feedback from Secondary School Staff on how the school counselling service has helped them to better understand pupils' wellbeing.

“The counsellors in school are proactive in letting me know if there are supports that may benefit my pupils in school.”

“Yes, information particularly around resilience and wellbeing. The counsellors are always on hand to provide information and sign post information.

Additional go to for tiered support”

“The service has given me a better overview of the areas in which our pupils are struggling to cope.”

“Information sharing between counselor and pupil support teacher (where consent given by pupil) has allowed key pieces of information to be shared to better support young people. For example, issues a young person may be having in a particular subject/ department.”

“Support via HWB events to whole school gives a greater understanding for all.”

“It has increased my confidence in having wellbeing conversations with young people. The counselling leads meetings have allowed me to listen to ideas from other schools that I can then discuss at our school and also to other agencies and what they can offer. It has also encouraged me to seek out more information to enhance my knowledge when supporting young people both 1-2-1 and within our PSE curriculum.”

“Yes absolutely, as the sole Guidance Teacher at Park School, it has been helpful to have the school counsellor to work with in a collegiate fashion.”

Q7. What improvements would you like to see made to the School Counselling Service?

Sample of Feedback from Primary School Staff on improvements they would like to see made to the School Counselling Service

"As above perhaps a way to communicate sessions, suggestions and strategies between the different services as often teachers in class and don't get to share with the counsellor what child has disclosed or shared."

"It would be easy to say, more counsellors please, but in reality we do have a good level of resource. More opportunities for the counsellors to share the strategies with class teacher/ parents"

"More information shared about success/outcomes. More counsellors so that more children can be seen Inset activities for teachers and parents to gain full understanding of the services Exchange can offer Is the 6 week cap long enough for some children?"

"An email re start dates and worker's name consistently to support with transferring start dates to our tracking and monitoring system."

"After making the RfA, I am often just told when the sessions will begin. I don't always receive an end date so it makes it difficult to keep track of who is being seen by the service and when. I haven't had any written feedback on impact or strategies to support for any pupils this session. These were issued last session."

"Just to have the service continuing, particularly for our primary school age pupils.

"It would be great to have more counsellors to reduce the waiting time."

"More regular updates - can take a wee while for some children to be seen (understandably) and regular check ins about where they are in the waiting list would be helpful. Receipting referrals has been a positive change made."

"We would love to refer more children as CAMHS are not providing any support at the moment and there is also very little for Care Experienced children

Sample of Feedback from Secondary School Staff on improvements they would like to see made to the School Counselling Service

"When doing a re-referral, would it be possible to access a previous application rather than completing a new one? Staff do feel it would be beneficial to know a bit more information about how a pupils are getting on in counselling but understand the confidentiality procedures around this."

"The diary has been problematic to access this year since the addition of two factor authentication from The Exchange. This has impacted my ability to update the Monitoring and Tracking tool for EAC."

"Less questioning of re-referrals."

"Some pupils worry about peers knowing they attend counselling sessions. Due to the layout of the school and availability of space this can be difficult to avoid."

- "1) Improvements to the diary system as I cannot access it, this would be my biggest plea!
- 2) Time to be scheduled for the counsellors to visit PSE/Assemblies each session (school to organise this along with Wilma- more consistently)
- 3) Could the exchange provide leaflets to keep at reception, hand out at assemblies?
- 4) Parents evenings- continue with this for all S1-S6 next term. Added to the diary to ensure someone attends along with me.
- 5) Regular pupil focus groups to gain pupils experiences and feedback."

"Perhaps dates and times of appointments shared"

"Inputs to assemblies or PSE."

"Perhaps some upskilling opportunities for all staff."

"A counsellor present in school 5 days to become part of our pastoral team moving forward. More flexibility for group work/PSE inputs (understand that 1-2-1 must take priority)."

Q8. Additional comments about your experience with the School Counselling Service and the impact it has had on your school and young people.

Counsellors are fantastic, always communicate well with the school and parents. Very child centred and skilled.

A vital service, HWB and mental health is in crisis in schools at the moment and we desperately need more help for these students, exchange has been a life line for many students. I would love to see a trained mental health practitioner in every partnership if not every school!

The counselling service has had a positive impact on the life of our school and has very much become part of our offer of support at Team with the Family meetings or during phone meetings with parents. Attendance and wellbeing will remain our priority moving forward and the service that The Exchange provides is integral to our success with this.

We REALLY value this service and cannot state strongly enough how much it is needed by pupils, parents and staff to support our young people.

A very valuable resource that is helping to support the wellbeing needs of the children and young people. Kieran is an excellent partner of the school and I think having a young, positive male role model for many of our boys is valuable.

The counselling service has supported identified pupils to manage anxiety and has provided valuable support in a timely manner. Staff are friendly, approachable and able to give advice and training to staff. This benefits the health and well-being of all pupils as well as the identified child. It is an essential service in education and has developed the confidence of pupils and reduced their anxieties, making them more ready to learn and raising their attainment.

Improved scores on GMWP and/or greater perception of feelings and emotions and moods. Improved attendance. A child with multiple school moves did not move so much more settled. Realise better to develop skills than keep 'running away' from difficulties. This was one package of supports that helped a parent to help their child develop skills rather than 'run away'. Children with ASN - more relaxed, more engaged with school work, developing positive peer relationships. Children more able to cope with change. Fits in and compliments other in-school supports e.g. LIAM/Seasons for Growth. The staff are brilliant and I have really enjoyed working with this service. The staff are astute and perceptive. The children love working with them.

Our young people are more reflective and more likely to seek assistance out with their support network in the school. Our pupils can become very reliant on the staff they know and have a strong relationship with. They are used to those members of staff aiding them and assisting them to co-regulate.

Having the service available in school, coupled with ease of access and prompt response times has been invaluable to us. I believe that the pupils appreciate having access to this support if and when they require it and we have regular requests from both pupils and parents who are looking to access support.