




24-7
YouthWork

24-7 YouthWorker In Schools Programme Phase 3 Evaluation: Student Follow Up



THE COLLABORATIVE TRUST
For Research & Training in Youth Health & Development.





"... all our YouthWorkers are amazing.
They care so much and always have kind, encouraging things to say.
Mentoring is often the highlight of my week and it seriously helps!"



Executive Summary ■ ■ ■

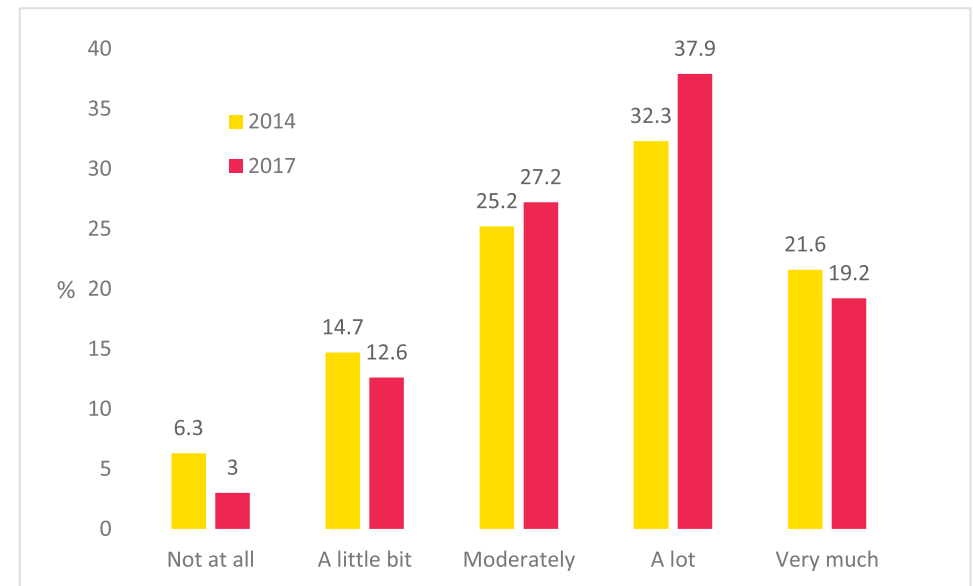
The overall aim of this evaluation is to gather evidence that will assist 24-7 YouthWork in informing both the community and funders about the effectiveness of their programme. It will also be used to inform future practice.

Students who had been involved with 24-7 YouthWorkers were invited to take part in an anonymous online survey asking them questions about their experiences with 24-7 YouthWorkers. A total of 1,135 students from 61 schools responded to the survey.

This evaluation shows that, consistent with the 2014 student survey, the overwhelming majority of respondents rated their involvement with the 24-7 YouthWorkers positively, with almost all describing a number of positive changes that had occurred in their lives.

Over half (57.1%) of the young people who responded thought that their YouthWorker helped them ‘a lot’ or ‘very much’. Only 3% felt that their YouthWorker had not helped them at all. This compares to 6.3% who felt that their YouthWorker had not helped them at all when this survey was first run in 2014.

Answers to the question: ‘**How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has helped you?**’



In the 2014 and 2017 survey show similar results.

A new and extremely encouraging finding in 2017 was the increased reporting of assistance with mental health issues. At the same time there was less student comment of feeling stigmatised in 2017 compared to 2014.

As with previous years, the overwhelmingly positive responses from students make it difficult to single out issues for improvement. While bearing in mind that the vast majority of responses were positive and students reported no improvements were required, several themes stood out that 24-7 should follow-up:

- Taking time away from school work
- Not listening
- Make sure students are not over-reliant on their 24-7 YouthWorker
- Check strategies and suggestions have been helpful and understood properly
- Talk with all students
- Spend more time with students

The survey was reasonably representative of the schools in which the 24-7 YouthWorker Programme operates. Overall, students were extremely complimentary in their feedback. This reaffirms that the 24-7 YouthWorker programme is beneficial

to students and backs up the findings of the 2014 survey of the students and the 2015 survey of staff. This survey again suggests that the 24-7 YouthWorker in schools programme is helping a higher proportion of students in low decile schools.





Contents . . .

P04. Executive Summary

P08. Introduction

Background / Study 'YouthWorker in Schools' programme – Phase 1 Evaluation / 2015 Study - 'YouthWorker in Schools' programme - Phase 2 Evaluation / Context of 2017 Study

P12. Method

Ethical considerations

P14. Findings

School characteristics / **Description of student responders** / Ethnicity / **Results of categorical questions** / Compared with how you were when you were first started working with your 24-7 YouthWorker how are you now? / How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has helped you? / Summary of students reporting not helped at all or worse than when they started / **Results for open-ended questions** / Compared with how you were when you first started working with your 24-7 YouthWorker, how are you now? / Since working with a 24-7 YouthWorker, what are some of the things that have changed for you for the better? / Since working with a 24-7 YouthWorker, what are some of the things that have changed for you for the worse? / In what ways could your 24-7 YouthWorker do things differently to help you? / General comments

P36. Discussion

Areas for improvement / Concluding comments

P40. References

P41. List of Figures

P42. Appendices

Appendix I: Results for 'How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse?'

Introduction ■ ■ ■

The goal of 24-7 YouthWork is to encourage the holistic development of young people. 24-7 YouthWork is Christian-based and connected with local churches. The youth workers are employed and managed by groups external to the school but remain accountable to the school. In each school one teacher serves as an ongoing liaison with the youth workers. All youth workers are required to keep a diary of in-school activities, and to produce written reports each term.

The youth workers are active Christians expected to live out Christian ideals in-school and out-of-school. However, the youth workers are committed to all students regardless of their background, beliefs or the choices they make. The youth workers operate in schools without proselytising though they are happy to respond to questions and share from their own experience and journey. They are committed to students being able to make their own free choices.

24-7 YouthWork is an integrated approach to youth work. 24-7 YouthWork provides accessible holistic, wrap-around support to all young people in the area. Locally 24-7 YouthWork is independent and supported by a collaborative network.

(Wayne Francis Charitable Trust – Youth Advisory Group, 2011)

As of January 2017, there are 175 24-7 Youth Workers in 72 schools throughout New Zealand.

Whilst all 24-7 YouthWorkers are volunteer youth leaders, the background of each 24-7 YouthWorker is different. Some have a high level of training, such as being qualified in Youth Work, Counselling, Teaching, Outdoor Education etc, while others are fresh out of school themselves. All 24-7 YouthWorkers have the backing of a reputable network which will help them keep to 24-7 YouthWork standards and will ensure training needs are met. This includes a thorough orientation, then compulsory Level 3 Youth Work National Certificate for them to complete on-the-job over their first year¹.

The qualification covers the following topics:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi in youth work
- profile and work with young people
- group work and leadership
- deliver a youth development project
- ethics
- the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa

¹ <https://www.careerforce.org.nz/new-zealand-qualifications/nz-cert-youth-work-level-3/>



Background

2014 Study 'YouthWorker in Schools' programme – Phase 1 Evaluation

In 2014, the first evaluation of the 24-7 'YouthWorker in Schools' programme was conducted. A total of 1,308 students from 51 schools responded to at least some of the questions in the survey. This evaluation showed that the overwhelming majority of respondents rated their involvement with the 24-7 YouthWorker(s) positively, with almost all describing a number of positive changes that had occurred in their lives as a result of working with 24-7 YouthWorker(s). 74% of young people reported that they were 'a little better' or 'much better' than when they first started with their 24-7 YouthWorker. Māori and Pacific students were more likely to report that their 24-7 YouthWorker helped them 'a lot' or 'very much'. Associated with this finding was that the lower the school decile, the more students reported that they were helped by 24-7 YouthWorkers.



2015 Study - 'YouthWorker in Schools' programme - Phase 2 Evaluation

In 2015, it was the turn of the school staff to provide feedback on their perceptions of the 'YouthWorker in Schools' programme (Turner & Schroder, 2015).

In total 160 school staff responded to at least some of the questions in the survey from 47 different schools. The survey was reasonably representative of schools in which the 24-7 YouthWorker Programme operates. Overall, staff were exceptionally complimentary in their feedback. Results from the 2015 survey were similar to those found in 2014 from student reports of the effectiveness of the '24-7 YouthWorker in Schools' programme. For example, over three quarters of responding staff rated the 24-7 'YouthWorker in Schools' programme seven out of seven for:

- Cultivating positive student - student relationships
- Supporting Students, and;
- Assisting student well-being

Staff from lower decile schools rated the 24-7 YouthWorkers programme more highly on cultivating positive teacher – student, and student - student relationships, than staff from higher decile schools. While this may have occurred because staff and students from lower decile schools are more grateful

for any help, this may also indicate a genuine improvement in these more vulnerable groups that are at risk of poor outcomes.

Context of 2017 Study

24-7 YouthWork is an established and effective approach. It has been a forerunner to emerging national trends in youth work and has research that affirms its value for young people and schools.

(Wayne Francis Charitable Trust –Youth Advisory Group, 2011)

The youth workers are required to deliver excellent service to young people and the school. 24-7 YouthWork constantly evolves to reflect youth culture. Although previous research has demonstrated that 24-7 Youthwork has produced excellent results, by nature the organisation cannot rest on its laurels. As part of assessing the service provided by its workers, 24-7 YouthWork has again commissioned The Collaborative Trust for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development (The Collaborative) to survey students on their involvement. The overall aim of this research project is to gather evidence that will assist 24-7 YouthWork in informing both the community and funders about the effectiveness of their programme. It will also be used to inform future practice.



Method . . .

This survey was initially undertaken in 2014 (Turner, Schroder, & McKay, 2014). The current methodology has repeated the 2014 student survey in order to examine changes and update 24-7 YouthWorker's understanding of how its service is experienced by the students that it works with.

In order to generate outcome information, students who had been involved with 24-7 YouthWorkers were invited to take part in an anonymous online survey asking them some questions about their experiences with 24-7 YouthWorkers. Before taking part in the survey each student read an online information sheet outlining the project.

Potential participants were informed that participation was voluntary and would not in any way impact on the services provided to them by the school or by 24-7 YouthWorkers. The information sheet also explained that all information collected would remain confidential and anonymous.

During August 2017, 24-7 YouthWorkers in 67 New Zealand schools were asked to:

a) invite 10 students who they had worked with in a group setting to participate in the on-line survey, and;

b) arrange for a member of staff (usually the guidance counsellor) to invite an additional 10 students who have worked with a 24-7 youth worker on a one-on-one basis in the last 12 months to participate in the on-line survey.

In order to achieve this, YouthWorkers first had to obtain permission from the Principal and Board of Trustees of each school to approve the youth workers surveying students.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the New Zealand Ethics Committee in 2014 and as the present work replicated the previous design and questions, no further approval was sought.



Findings ■ ■ ■

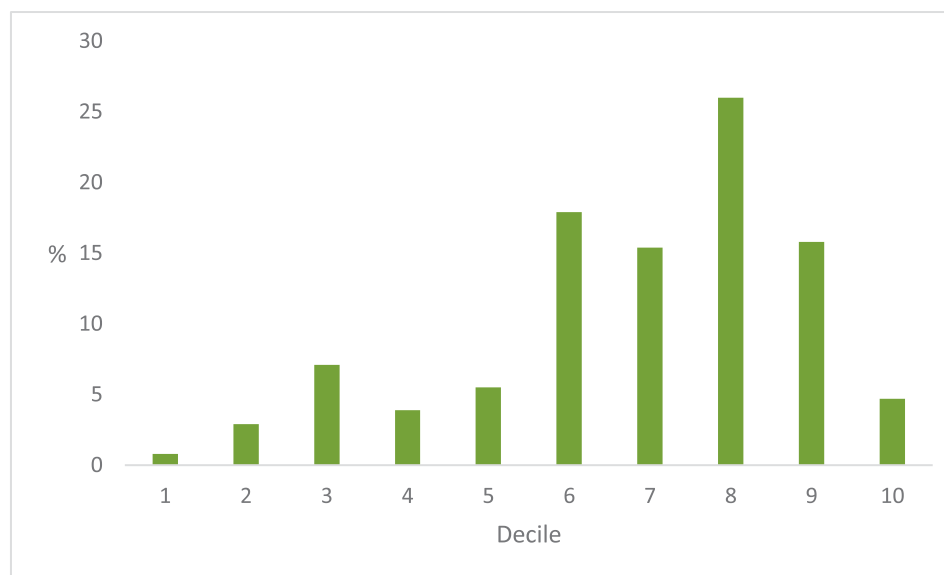
School characteristics

Decile is not an indicator of school quality. It does, however, indicate the socio-economic status of the area, and the likelihood that a higher proportion of students will face challenges that are often associated with lower income² (*Education Review Office, 2013*). Lower decile schools may therefore present more issues for youth workers to deal with than higher decile schools.

In total, 67 schools were invited to participate in this study. A total of 1,135 students from 61 schools responded to at least some of the questions in the survey. This represented responses from ten more schools than answered in the 2014 student survey.

The mean decile of the schools invited to participate is 6.5, ranging from 1 to 10. The mean decile of the 1,064 students who responded to this question was 6.8 indicating that the study was fairly representative of the range of school deciles that 24-7YW works with. The results indicate that while 24-7YW works with slightly higher decile schools, the students who completed this survey are generally representative of the schools that the '24-7 YouthWorker in Schools' programme works with.

Figure 1: Decile of School of students that responded



Student responses per school ranged from 2 to 36. By contrast, in 2013, one school had over 100 responses. The lower responses per school in 2017 indicates that most schools better understood the instructions to only include 20 students from their school in total.

² It should not be forgotten that students at high decile schools can also be affected by health, social and learning issues.

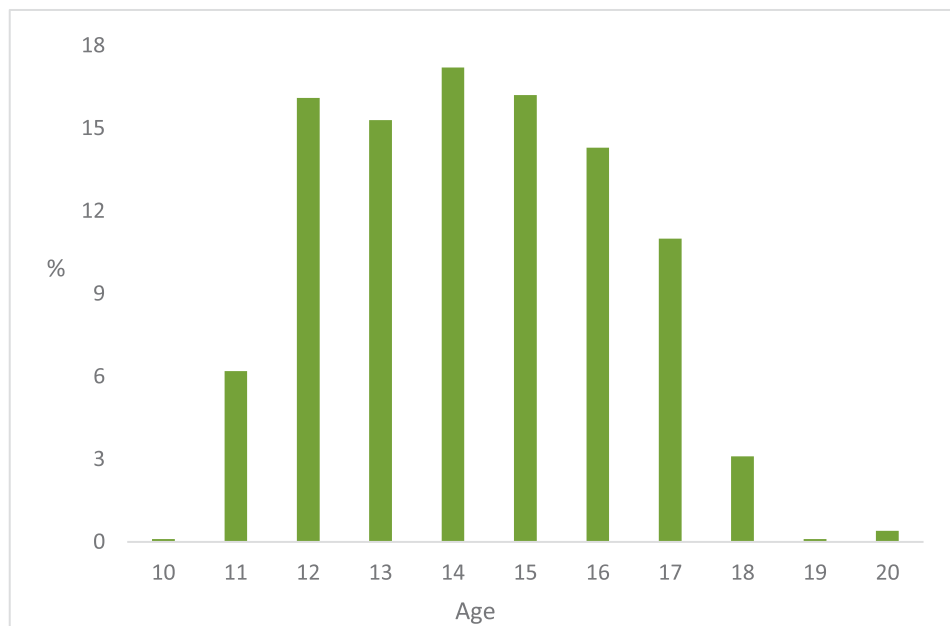
Description of student responders

A series of demographic questions were asked in order to examine the characteristics of the students that responded to this survey.

Significantly more females (58.5%) than males answered the survey in 2017. In the 2014 student survey, approximately half the respondents were male (51%).

The median age of respondents in this survey was 14 years, the same as in the 2014 survey, with an age range of 10 to 20 years.

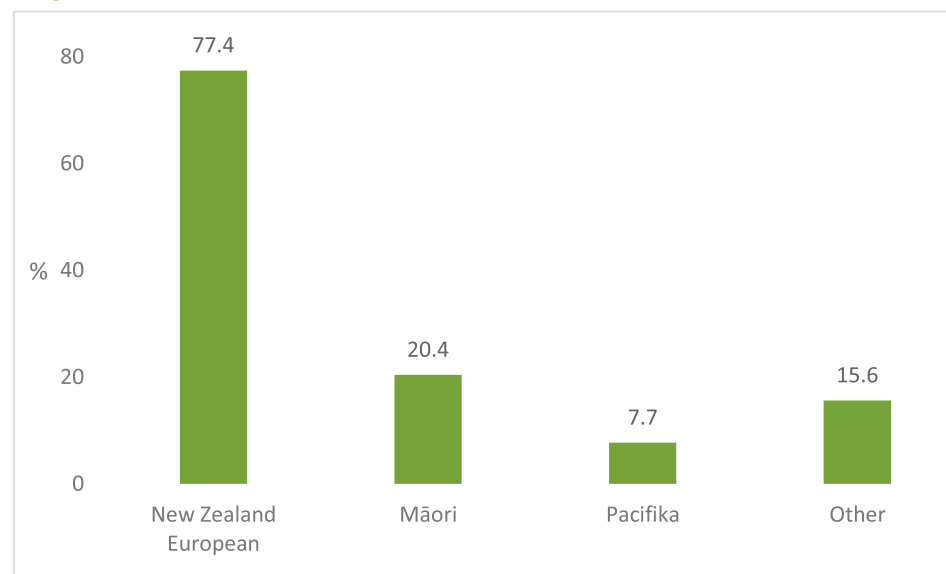
Figure 2: Age in years of students that responded in 2017



Ethnicity

Over three-quarters of respondents (77.4%) reported their ethnicity as New Zealand European and one-fifth (20.4%) Māori. In the 2014 survey, only 12% of students reported their ethnicity as Māori.

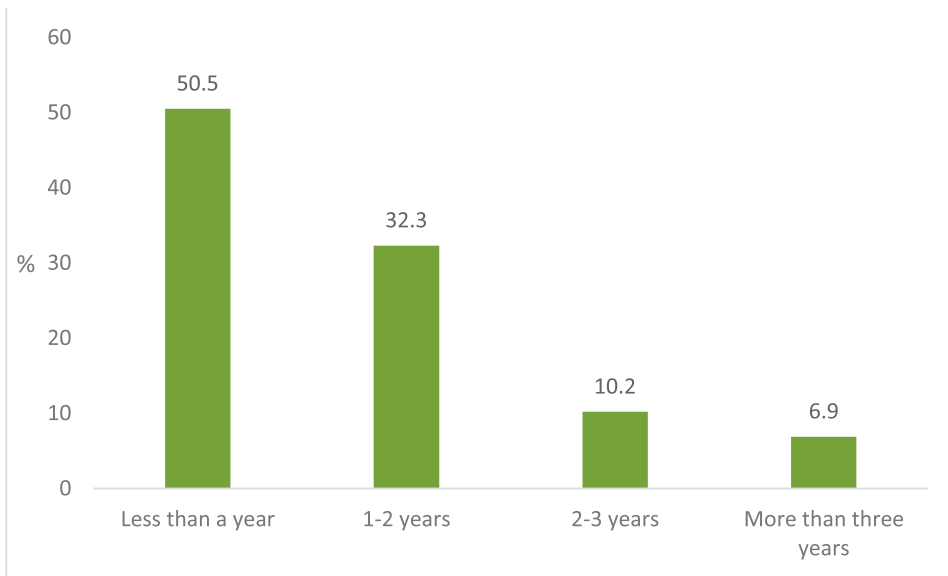
Figure 3: Ethnicity of students that responded in 2017



Note that students could choose more than one ethnicity, so this graph adds up to more than 100%.

Over half the respondents (50.5%) had been working with a 24-7 YouthWorker for less than a year and approximately 80% less than two years.

Figure 4: Amount of time reported working with 24-7 YouthWorker



Results of categorical questions

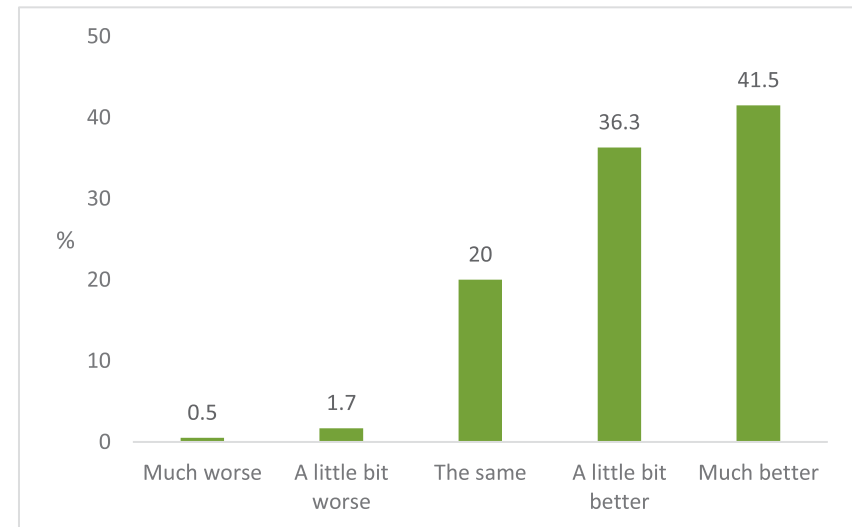
There were three categorical ('discrete ordered') questions asked in the survey. Students answered the following questions on a scale of 1-5 where lower scores indicated less positive change:

- i. Compared with how you were when you were first started working with your 24-7 YouthWorker how are you now?
- ii. How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has helped you?
- iii. How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse?

Compared with how you were when you were first started working with your 24-7 YouthWorker how are you now?

From Figure 5 below, it can be seen that over three-quarters (77.8%) of young people reported that they were 'a little bit better' or 'much better' than when they first started with their 24-7 YouthWorker. This compares to 74% in the 2014 survey.

Figure 5: How are you compared to when you first started?



For further analyses, scores on this question were coded from "1=much worse" to "5=much better". Therefore, higher scores indicated a positive change. The average score from the 992 students that answered this question³ was 4.2 out of 5, indicating most students who answered felt better than when they first started with a 24-7 YouthWorker.

³ 143 students did not answer this question.

Only 17 students indicated that they were 'a little worse' and 5 'a lot worse' than when they first started with their 24-7 YouthWorker. Of these 22:

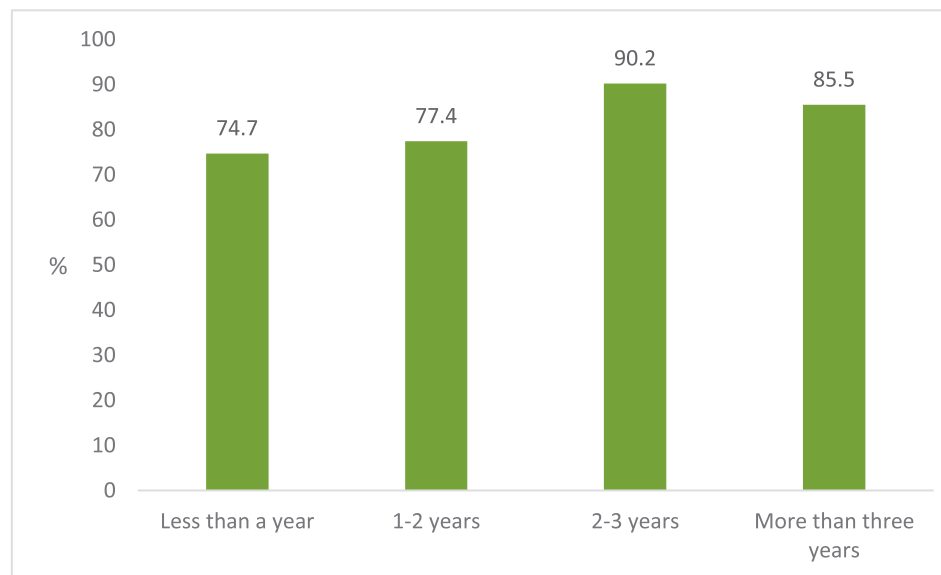
- six answered 'yes' to the question: 'Is this due to working with a 24-7 YouthWorker?'
- Ten answered that it was not due to their 24-7 YouthWorker,
- one said 'yes and no'

In order to see if there were any differences between those who reported they were 'a little better' or 'much better' than when they first started with their 24-7 YouthWorker compared with others, a series of chi-squared analyses were undertaken. Māori (83.5%) were more likely than non-Māori (76.5%) to report that they were 'a little better' or 'much better' than when they first started with their 24-7 YouthWorker. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between Māori ethnicity and feeling better. The relation between these variables was significant, $X^2(1, N=990) = 4.6, p = .018$. No other associations with ethnicity or sex were observed.

As with the 2014 survey, a statistically significant 'dose response' pattern was observed. A higher percentage of those working with a YouthWorker for 2-3 years (90.2%) or longer (85.5%) reported they were 'a little better' or 'much better' than

when they first started with their 24-7 YouthWorker compared to those who reported working with a YouthWorker less than a year (74.7%) or 1-2 years (77.4%) $X^2(3, N=987) = 14.3; p = .002$. Similarly, the older the students the more likely they were to report they were 'a little better' or 'much better' than when they first started with their 24-7 YouthWorker ($r_s = 0.18; n = 987; p > .001$).

Figure 6: The longer students had worked with a YouthWorker the higher percentage felt they were better than when they started



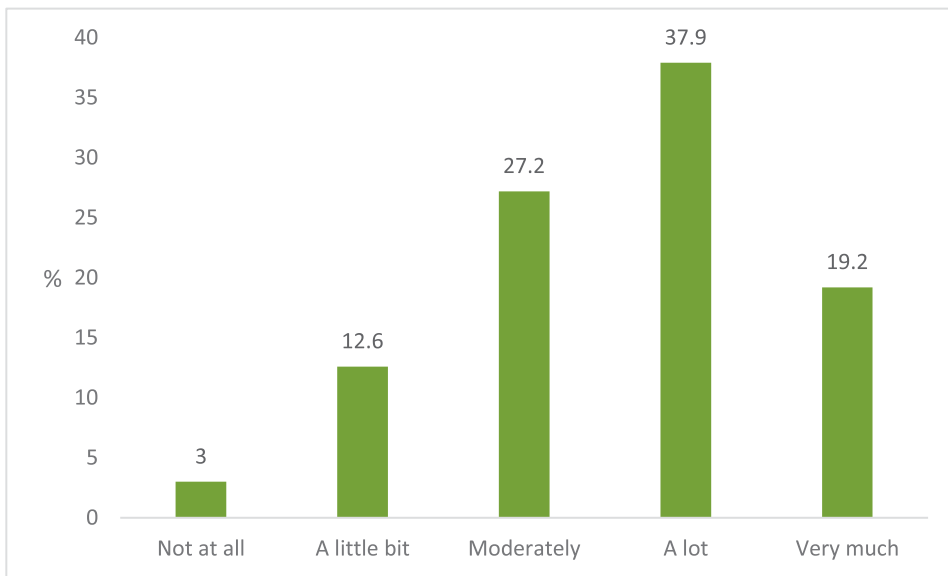
The spearman correlation between school decile and how much the student perceived they had been helped was significant $r_s = -0.09; n = 978; p = .006$. This indicates that the

lower the school decile, the more students indicated they were 'better than when they first started working with a 24-7 YouthWorker'.

How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has helped you?

Over half (57.1%) of the young people who responded thought that their YouthWorker helped them 'a lot' or 'very much'. Only 3% felt that their YouthWorker had not helped them at all. This compares to 6.3% in 2014 who felt that their YouthWorker had not helped them at all.

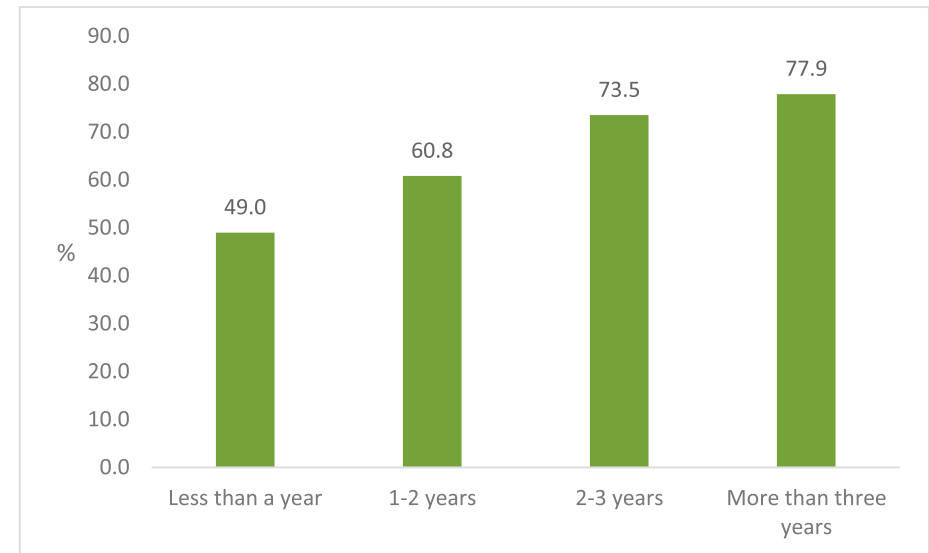
Figure 7: How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has helped you?



Significantly more (66.8%) older students aged 16 to 20 years reported that their YouthWorker helped them 'a lot' or 'very much' compared with half (54.0%) of 14-15 year olds or 10-13 year olds (51.9%) $X^2(2, N=963) = 15.8, p < .001$.⁴

A similar pattern⁵ was found for number of years working with a YouthWorker $X^2(3, N=976) = 38.3, p < .001$. Over three quarters of those who reported working with a YouthWorker for more than three years reported that their YouthWorker helped them 'a lot' or 'very much' compared with just under half of those who had worked with a YouthWorker for less than a year.

Figure 8: The longer students worked with a YouthWorker, the higher percentage felt they were helped a lot



⁴The Spearman correlation between age and how much the student perceived they had been helped was significant $r_s=0.13; n=963; p>.001$.

⁵The Spearman correlation between time (years) with a YouthWorker and how much the student perceived they had been helped was significant $r_s=0.22; n=976; p>.001$.

There were no significant differences by sex. There was a trend ($X^2(1, N=982) = 2.4, p = .07$) towards more Pacifica reporting they were helped but no significant differences were found by ethnicity. The Spearman correlation between school decile and how much the student perceived they had been helped was significant $r_s = -0.07; n = 970; p = .04$. This indicates that the lower the school decile, the more students report that they were helped.

Summary of students reporting not helped at all or worse than when they started

Very few students didn't answer the survey in an extremely positive manner.

In answer to the question: 'Compared with how you were when you were first started working with your 24-7 YouthWorker how are you now?' only 17 students indicated that they were 'a little worse' and 5 'a lot worse'.

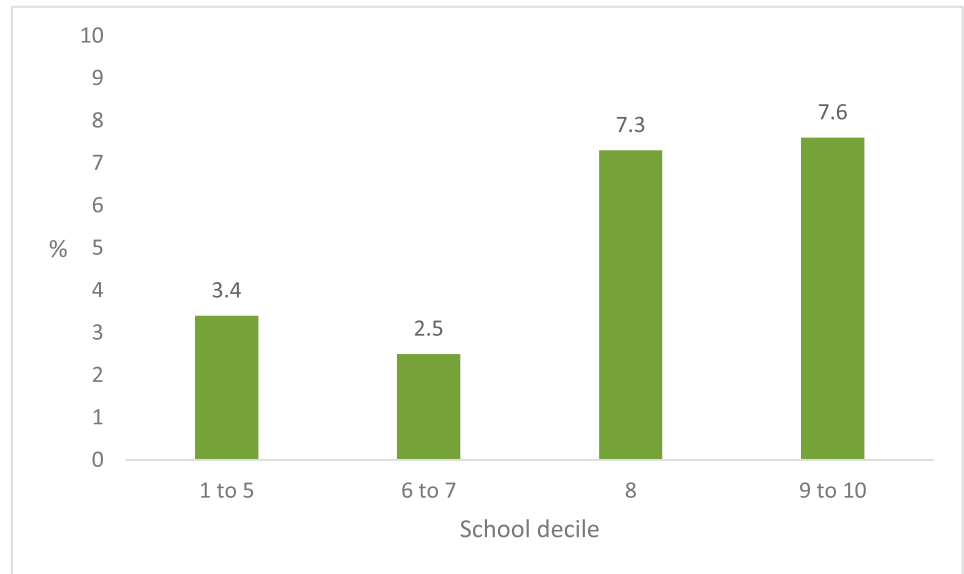
In answer to the question: How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has helped you?, 30 students reported that their 24-7 YouthWorker had not helped them at all.

In total, 51 students (5.1%) indicated their 24-7 YouthWorker had not helped them at all or that they were worse than when they started with a 24-7 YouthWorker. In order to see if there were any differences between these students compared with others, a series of chi-squared analyses were undertaken.

Significantly more males (7.5%) than females (3.5%) indicated their 24-7 YouthWorker had not helped them at all or that they were worse than when they started ($X^2(1, N=995) = 8.0, p = .006$).

Students in higher decile schools (8 to 10) were significantly more likely to report their 24-7 YouthWorker had not helped them at all or that they were worse than when they started ($X^2(3, N=983) = 11.0, p = .012$).

Figure 9: Lower decile of school shows lower percent of students report not helped at all or worse than when they started



There was no difference by age or ethnicity. There was a strong trend showing the longer students had been working with a 24-7 YouthWorker the less likely they were to report their YouthWorker had not helped them at all or that they were worse than when they started ($X^2(3, N=989) = 7.62, p = .054$).

Results for open-ended questions

In addition to the demographic and multi-choice questions above, a series of open-ended questions were asked to gain more information on how the students felt about working with 24-7 YouthWorkers. Open ended questions were analysed using content analysis. Content analysis is a method for summarising any form of content, usually written words, by counting various aspects of this content (*Lee, Dinis, Lowe, & Anders, 2016*). This enables a more objective evaluation than comparing content based on the impressions of a reader.

Initial structural coding (*Saldaña, 2012*) based on the questions revealed a number of minor categories that were summarised into preliminary themes. Further analysis based on descriptive coding (*Saldaña, 2012*) resulted in these preliminary themes being condensed into the major themes discussed in this report. Comments from students which have been included as examples in this report are transcribed directly as recorded from the survey complete with colloquialisms, typos and errors.

Compared with how you were when you first started working with your 24-7 YouthWorker, how are you now?

Of the 412 students that answered they feel 'much better' than when they started with a 24-7 YouthWorker, seven said it wasn't because of the 24-7 YouthWorker, eleven said it was partly due to the 24-7 YouthWorker, and the remaining 329 (80%) that answered said it was due to their the 24-7 YouthWorker. None of those who said 'feeling better wasn't due to their YouthWorker', had anything negative to report about their YouthWorker or the 24-7 YouthWork programme.

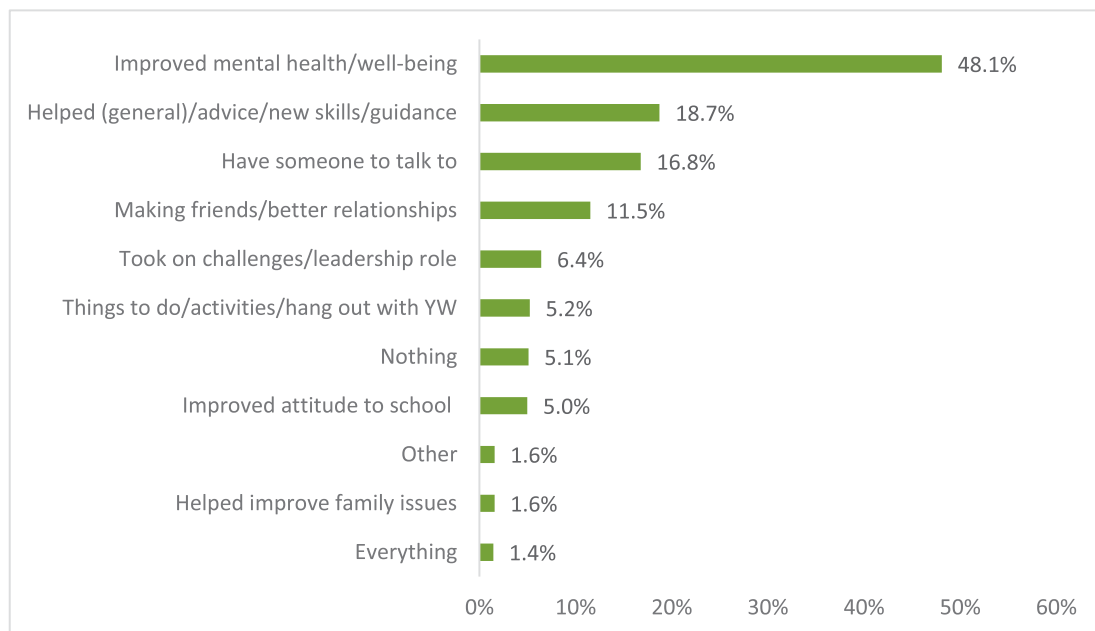
22 students said they feel 'a little bit' or 'lots' worse than when they started. Five said it was because of their 24-7 YouthWorker. Three of these five commented on how the 24-7 YouthWorkers could improve by:

- Talking to the teachers
- Mentoring more
- Having more time together

Since working with a 24-7 YouthWorker, what are some of the things that have changed for you for the better?

In total, 763 students provided codable free text comments to this question.⁶ These comments were coded into 889 answers that were further classified into nine core themes.

Figure 10: Percentage of students indicating things that have changed for the better



Note that if students mentioned more than one aspect where things had changed for the better they would be counted in each theme.

⁶ Answers such as “abc” or “don’t know” were excluded from this analysis.



• **Improved mental health/well-being**

From Figure 10 it can be seen that almost half the students (48%) who responded to this question reported improved mental health/well-being as a result of working with a 24-7 YouthWorker. Assisting student well-being is one of the key objectives of '24-7 YouthWorker in Schools' programme. The results of the 2015 Phase 2 evaluation of school staff suggested staff strongly felt 24-7 YouthWorker helped student wellbeing (Turner & Schroder, 2015).

A thread of positive optimism and self-belief inspired by the YouthWorker's presence and advice to the students runs throughout the comments to this question. Comments in this theme included:

i can control myself better i can cope with hard times

My thoughts have changed as I used to want to kill myself alot and now I am much happier and want to live life. I have learnt how to not think bad things about myself and not to doubt myself.

One thing that has changed is the way I think of myself, as I use to put myself down quite a lot. But the youth workers taught me how special and unique I am.

My out look and judgement has improved alot because my youthworker is such a positive and optimistic person, that it helped me to look at things in a better light and to feel less stressed about things I couldn't change, which is something I found difficult before.

I've been able to open up on some of my problems and they helped me to be able to work through these ... They have helped me through a heap of issues I have had through my time knowing them.

A note of caution was sounded by one student around the limits of YouthWork in this context:

If someone is in need for mental help I recommend going to a councilor not a youth worker and not councilors in school. I think in school counseling/ youthworkers is a good step but if someone is searching for proper help I think its best to go to organisations such as CAMHS

Within the theme of improved well-being was a strong sense of improved self-confidence as a result of working with a 24-7 YouthWorker:

Being able to help myself with situations that can sometimes be challenging! Having more confidence in myself in being able to achieve with things!

I have more confidence around people.

The level of confidence they bring to you with helping out and introducing themselves to everyone brings more self confidence to others and brings more life to the environment of the school.

• General help and advice

Another major theme to emerge from the responses to this question is general help and advice. This theme was mentioned in 16% of responses and comments

my focus has improved, from being able to have someone to talk to about things I'm struggling with. Also it's a safe place i can go when i am having a hard time

Also making me feel safe to where I could trust telling her things that I was unsure about or needed advice on.

I have someone to talk to who understand how i'm struggling with my family and school problems

• Friends

As with the previous 24-7 YouthWorker evaluations, an area that students reported help with was relationships with friends. One of the key objectives of 24-7 YouthWorker in schools programme is to cultivate positive student – student relationships. The results of the 2015 evaluation of school staff suggested staff strongly felt 24-7 YouthWorkers helped cultivate student relationships.

Making friends was mentioned by 11.5% of students in answer to what things 'have changed for you for the better'.

I'm less angry, and cope better with bad situations. I have more friends after doing group things with them.

Making friends, and helping me be more confident.

Another key objective of 24-7 YouthWorker in schools programme is to cultivate positive teacher – student relationships. An improved attitude to school was mentioned by 5% of students:

Passing school, not getting in as much trouble, better with my coaches and teachers

my behaviour towards teachers

They bring such a positive impact into the school,
that brings a new out look on the school environment.

The 24-7youth workers are so helpful and make
the school a much better place

• Leadership

Another key objective of the '24-7 YouthWorker in Schools' programme is to develop leadership and take on challenges and this theme was mentioned by 6.4% of students.

I feel more comfortable taking a leadership role and
feel more confident in doing so and helping others.

I have become more adventurous and am
more comfortable in my leadership skills.

Feeling way much better about myself and that I should
give everything ago and ask for help when I need it

Generally, the results of this question are similar to those reported in the 2014 survey. The main difference is the increased comments relating directly to mental health well-being as opposed to just general well-being.


I have become more confident in myself.
I have more self love. I haven't self-harmed

i have been a lot more stable mentally and emotionally

Since working with a 24-7 YouthWorker, what are some of the things that have changed for you for the worse?

There were 701 free text answers to this question. Of these, 518 (73.9%) said 'nothing' has changed for the worse and a further 24 (3.1%) said 'don't know'. A number of students (73) put down things that had got better in this free text and they have therefore been removed from the analysis, for example:

To hold me head up high and to
remember what i've learnt from them



"My circumstances haven't necessarily changed for the better but I am more supported, I am healthier and mentally happier. I have a bit more self confidence and school is that little bit easier."



Of the remaining responses, personal matters unrelated to 24-7 YouthWorkers had become worse for 49 respondents, these included:

- Family relationships
- Mental health issues
- Issues with friends

Even in these situations, students generally appreciated the help they received:

My circumstances haven't necessarily changed for the better but I am more supported, I am healthier and mentally happier. I have a bit more self confidence and school is that little bit easier.

The remaining 24 responses that referred to something potentially related to a 24-7 YouthWorker were coded into four core themes.

Figure 11: Some of the things that have changed for the worse



Figure 11 shows a number of themes for things that have got worse for students. These are:

- **Having to discuss problems**

I overthink some of the things we talk about

- **Too reliant on youth worker**

It made me a bit dependent on the help the youth worker gave.

- **Time management/school workload**

miss out on a class so I'm sometimes behind

- **Don't like the YouthWorker**

one is sarcastic

- **Other**

privacy;

A few of his strategies don't quite work out.

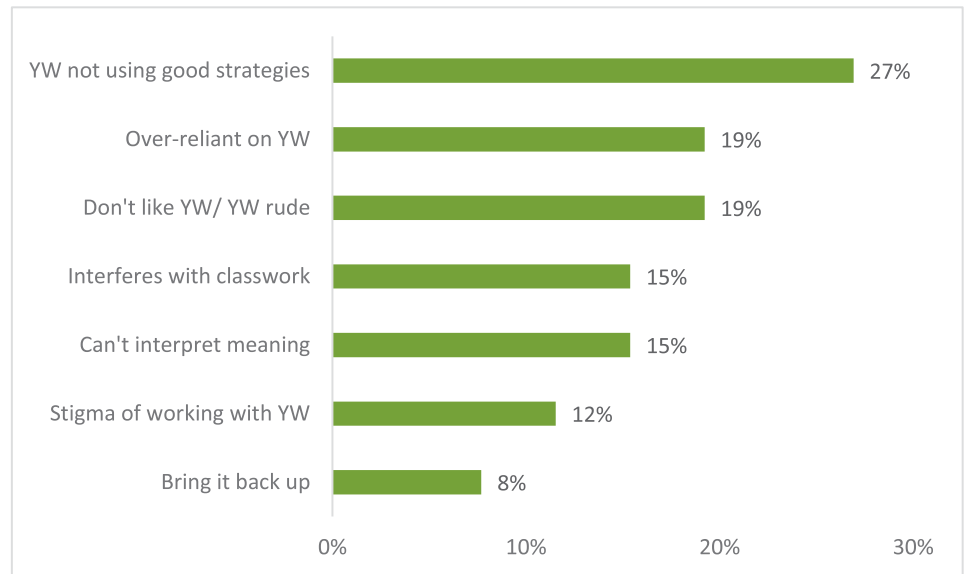
A separate question was asked on 'How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse?' This question was poorly answered and generally misunderstood by students (See Appendix I), but comments from students on 'why your 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse' helped to further develop the above themes.

Two-thirds (67%) of the 443 comments to this question showed that students misunderstood the question as they said something to indicate the 24-7 YouthWorker had made things better:

They are very nice and super supportive towards us

A further 22% of the comments stated that nothing the 24-7 YouthWorker had done made things worse or that they 'don't know'. This left 26 comments.

Figure 12: Why do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse?



The theme most often mentioned was that the 24-7 YouthWorker was not responding/picking up on things accurately and therefore not using the best or most appropriate strategies. Several students reported not worrying about things that perhaps they should - inferring that advice from the 24-7 YouthWorker changed their behaviour - and resulted in them trusting people more than they should:

I feel like i have started to put other people
before me way to [sic] much.

A few of his strategies don't quite work out

Sometimes she didn't get what I was trying
to say and that made [me] a little less inclined
to put ideas forwards.

A related issue was a perceived over-reliance on the 24-7
YouthWorker:

I find myself relying on them for a lot

Finally, a number of students reported not liking the 24-7
YouthWorker:

one will just ignore what people say
and it is very roud [rude]

not many like being nice

While it is entirely understandable that not all students are
going to like a given YouthWorker, consideration must be given
to the impact of a student's bad experience on their future
relationships with another 24-7 YouthWorker:

The awkward relationship with a few of the
other workers, that makes me wary of opening
up to a different one.

In what ways could your 24-7 YouthWorker do things differently to help you?

In total, 618 students provided free text answers to this
question.

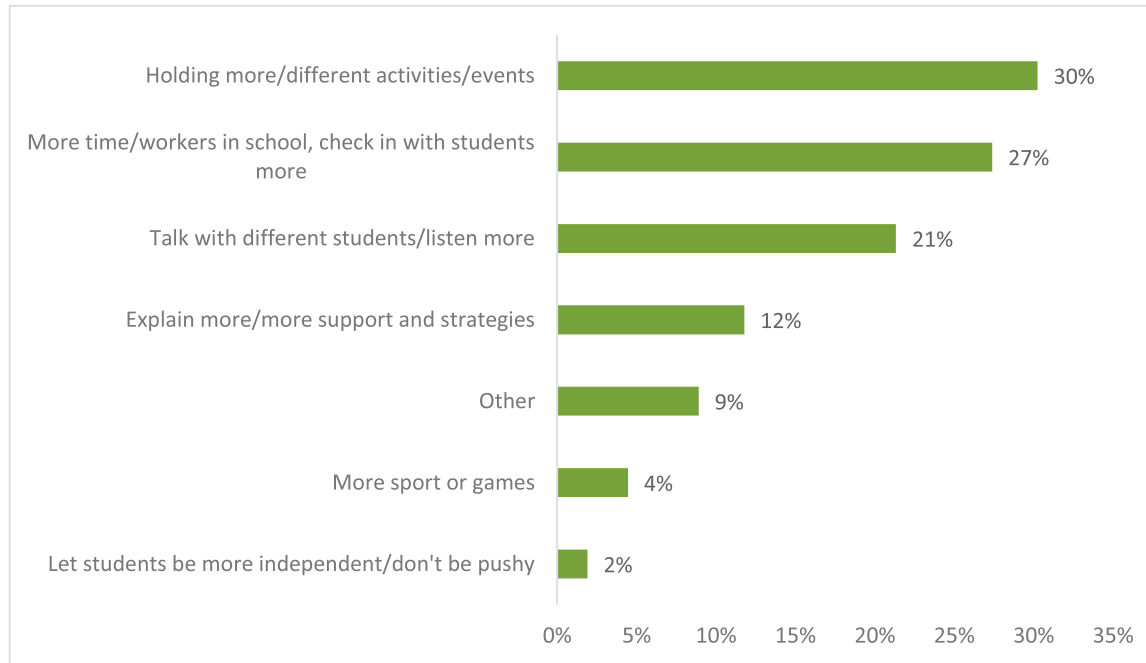
In total, 73 (12.5%) said they were unsure of what could be
done differently and 231 (39.7%) said they were doing a great
job and there was nothing that needed to change:

"I honestly can't think of anything,
they're too incredible!"

"nothing I think there people skills are very high, and
no matter the challenge they always try to make things
work, there presence is powerful be there kindness and
I think they should just keep up the hard work."

The remaining 314 students' responses were coded into five
core themes, as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Percentage of students suggesting how 24-7 YouthWorkers could improve

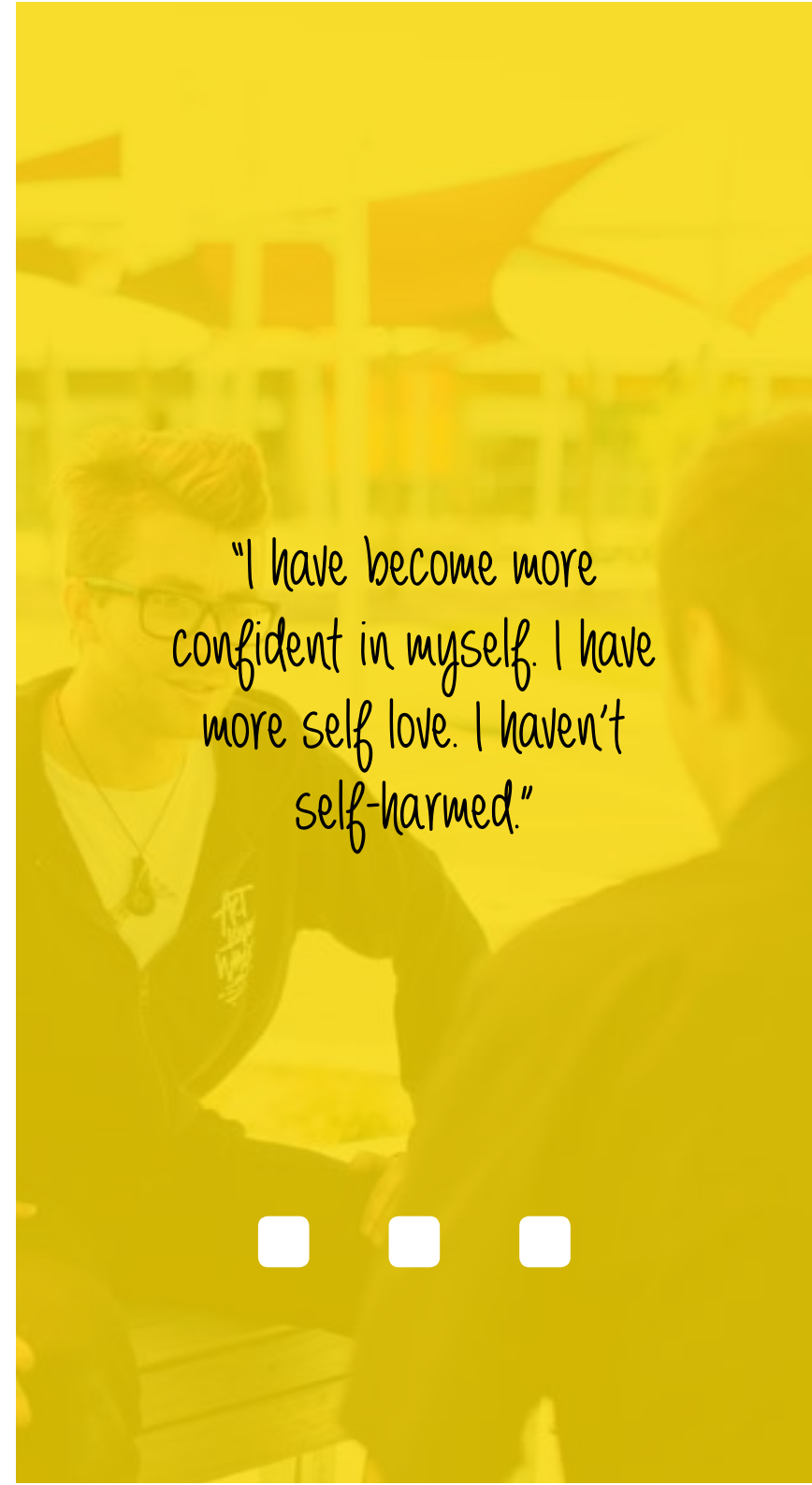


Note that students could make more than one comment and they would therefore be counted in each theme.

• **More activities**

The largest number of comments centred around holding more activities. This is similar to the 2014 survey (Turner, Schroder, & McKay, 2014) where 'more activities' was also the main suggestion.

Perhaps running events in school or meet ups outside of school





we could go out for coffee, or go out somewhere instead of school.

Would be awesome to Go out for lunch or even things after school hangouts beach trips etc

• **Spend more time at school**

A main theme widely reported by students this year, and by both students and teachers in the 2014 and 2015 surveys, was a request for more YouthWorker time:

Work with you [the student] longer to help you get the help you need.

Regular catch ups even after I leave school. I know I will still need the support and have someone that will listen instead of judging.

Maybe catch up with us a little more, check in on us and help with planning events in our school.

Take time in class to have talks with every student about situations and life lessons.

Nothing they are great as they are if anything you should have more of them at each school so more people in the school could experience the youthworkers.

• **Talk with all/different students**

The second largest theme (21% of those who responded to this question), which was also evident in the 2014 survey, was requesting the 24-7 YouthWorkers talk with all (or different) students within the school, and that 24-7 YouthWorkers should interact more with all students and not just a select few.

Well our youth works [sic] are great, however they mainly focus on the younger students, and when they do interact with the older students they just tend to stuck [sic] to one group so more involvement would be cool

try to talk to all the other students instead of just one spend more time with different people through-out the school

maybe try include some of the people you don't really talk to.

...maybe connecting more with some of our more in-need kids around [town]. Youth that are being persuaded by others to do negative things, kids that think its okay to do drugs, students who go to school without any lunch...maybe helping out with those kind of things would be more than good.

• **Explain more; More options and support**

A number of students (12% of those who responded to this question) were seemingly confused by advice, strategies or suggestions given to them by the 24-7 YouthWorker:

Provide more detailed explanations to things I don't understand.

Talk to me about things going in my life and help me get through all my rough situations

Give you other ways to do things if it feels better too

• **Other**

- Two students asked that YW respect privacy and that any discussions remain confidential. Trying to keep issues with students on the down-low as it causes a lot

of drama within student groups.

- A number of students suggested the YW provide food. It is not clear in many cases if this is just said for a laugh, but a number of students mentioned this in 2014 also.

• **Higher visibility in the school:**

A theme emerged of students wanting the 24-7 YouthWorkers to be easier to find/clearer about what they do or generally be more available:

Maybe be a bit more certain in times they will be at school, have a clear description of what they are here to achieve, and to be a bit more outgoing into the student body.

introduce yourself to more people because in classes when you come in some people think your weird

Tell people that they are the youth worker.

Be more outgoing to the outer crowd - in a lot of cases I see youth workers only talking to students they've met in the pass [past] or students that has [sic] come up to them

On the other hand, several students wished that the YouthWorkers would be more discrete.

Arrange a time with me before -Make getting a notice more secretive

Maybe sometimes take a bit more of a step back and force us to lead more when we should be, if things are going bad we need to learn how to get back on track ourselves without others help.

General comments

A final open-ended question asked students to provide any final comments. Of the 566 responses, some provided general and thoughtful advice, but on the whole included some very positive and thankful comments praising the 24-7 YouthWorkers. It is evident from these comments, as well as the responses to other questions, that the work the 24-7 YouthWorkers do, especially the positive contribution they may have made to the students' lives, is very much appreciated.

• More visibility

Increase promotion for group, and individuals. Students have heard of the 24-7 YouthWorkers, but don't approach them because they can not recognize them. It could be easier if there was a go-to spot where all

students could if they need a chat, just to make it easier to approach and make it a comfortable environment, but not exactly like student councillors because that's what most students try to avoid.

Maybe advertise things more, around the school so that more people may know about them

• Changed lives

I am so glad to have such a wonderful youth worker like her in my life. She has changed me so much and is just wonderful! words do not explain how thankful I am to have her!!

Our 24-7 youth workers rock!! The inspire (girls talk group) they implemented has made a huge difference and helped me a lot as a teenage trying to find her way! big ups to everyone for their amazing work

Overall I really working with the 24-7 YouthWorkers as they gave me more confidence in my life and helped me to achieve things I didn't think I could achieve.

A photograph of two young women sitting on a bed in a library, talking and smiling. The background is filled with bookshelves. The image has a yellow overlay.

"Our 24-7 YouthWorkers rock!! The inspire (girls talk group) they implemented has made a huge difference and helped me a lot as a teenager trying to find her way! big ups to everyone for their amazing work"



How could you face your own problems if a youth worker wasn't there?

They are amazing. They are way better than the school guidance councillors in my opinion. They don't take sides and they get both sides of the problem before saying their opinion. They help you and give you advice on what to do next and I find that amazing and very important.

No but I think that the youth workers are doing an amazing job at there job. And helping a lot of us out. Really don't know where I would be with out them. The have helped me through a lot. They have seen me at my highest and lowest. No matter what there always there for me. THANK YOU

I love having a youth worker to talk to and it makes me feel like there really is someone out there that could listen to my ranting without judging me in any way

I just wanted to say thank you because they have really helped me through all the hard times

I think that they need a lot more recognition for what they do within the schools, they are very valuable and people need to know that

This evaluation shows that, consistent with the 2014 student survey, the overwhelming majority of respondents rated their involvement with the 24-7 YouthWorkers positively, with almost all describing a number of positive changes that had occurred in their lives.



Discussion ■ ■ ■

An interesting observation was that Māori students were more likely to report that they were ‘a little better’ or ‘much better’ than when they first started with their 24-7 YouthWorker compared with others. Associated with this finding was that the lower the school decile, the more students report that they were helped. While this may have occurred because lower decile/Māori were more grateful for any extra help, this may also indicate a genuine improvement in these more vulnerable groups that are at risk of poor outcomes (*Ministry of Social Development, 2004*).

While this is consistent with the 2014 findings, this observation would benefit from further examination. The quantitative results are consistent with previous research (*Noonan, Bullen, & Farrugia, 2012*) suggesting a “ceiling effect” whereby vulnerable youth may have more room for change.

Regardless, it is a positive finding for a group that feature highly in mental health statistics (*Baxter, 2008*). As one young Māori student commented:

... keep doing what you're doing, you are an inspiration for our rangatahi and we are so lucky to have you [name] to always put us on the right track.

Areas for improvement

Due to the positive nature of many of the responses, it is instructional to focus on some of the negative themes that emerged in order to further improve the service provided. However, the following discussion should not detract from the impressive endorsement given to the 24-7 ‘YouthWorker in Schools’ programme by the vast majority of students who completed this evaluation.

Recommendations for 24-7 YouthWorkers on how they could improve their practice were limited, with the majority of respondents affirming the way the YouthWorkers currently work.

Similar to 2014, a small number of students reported being over-reliant on their 24-7 YouthWorker and not having anyone else to turn to when they weren’t around.

you don't always see them around so when they aren't there you don't have people to seek help from

While one solution would be to increase the 24-7 YouthWorkers presence in schools, this is not always possible and therefore strategies should be put in place to highlight other student resources (school councillors etc.).

This may be something that 24-7 YouthWorkers can look to address, given there will always be a certain amount of student or YouthWorker turnover. In relation to maximising time in schools and maintaining a seamless 'status quo' with more vulnerable students, it would be beneficial to make room for succession planning or handover of the role to a new YouthWorker.

Since my first one moved away I've become a more closed person

There were some interesting differences in the types of things students reported that have changed for the better between this survey and the 2014 version. In 2014, students reported being non-specifically supported and more positive due to the involvement of 24-7 YouthWorker. In 2017, for a larger number of students there was specific mention of positive improvements in the students' mental health and behavioural issues. Many reported feeling happier mentally, and able to cope with school and other aspects of their lives. This was due to learning strategies to cope with their issues and change their behaviour, making them feel better in themselves.

My thoughts have changed as I used to want to kill myself alot and now I am much happier and want to live life.

My views on life, school and relationships.
They have helped me sort through all the stress
I have and have had.

It may be that mental health issues are more recognised in schools following the report of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee (*Gluckman & Hayne, 2011*) and the extension of the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project⁷. There has also been an increased reporting in mainstream media of mental health issues and discussion around suicide.

In the 2014 survey, a theme reported by students was the feelings of stigma experienced by some who visited 24-7 YouthWorkers. These students felt this stigma might be reduced if more people knew what 24-7YW was about. In the present study, stigma was not as widely reported and it may be that the programme is more widely known and accepted in schools. This would be an interesting avenue to follow up in future research, to see what the general perception of 24-7 YouthWorkers is in the student population and/or any stigma associated with seeking help.

The question 'How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse?' was added to the survey in order to check more thoroughly for any issues with the 24-7 YouthWorkers. This question was not correctly

⁷ <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/mental-health-and-addictions/youth-mental-health-project>

answered by a number of students and the instructions were clearly not good enough. Further research looking at any issues with 24-7 YouthWorkers should adequately pilot the questions and look at specific issues raised in this survey.

Concluding comments

The survey was reasonably representative of schools in which the 24-7 YouthWorker Programme operates. Overall, students were extremely complimentary in their feedback and only 3% felt that their YouthWorker had not helped them at all. This reaffirms that the 24-7 YouthWorker programme is perceived as beneficial to students and backs up the findings of the 2014 survey of the students and the 2015 survey of staff. This survey again suggests that the '24-7 YouthWorker in Schools' programme is perceived as helping a higher proportion of students in low decile schools. In 2015, staff from lower decile schools rated the '24-7 YouthWorker in Schools' programme more highly on cultivating positive teacher-student, and student-student relationships, than staff from higher decile schools.

A new and extremely encouraging finding in 2017 was the increased reporting of assistance with mental health issues. At the same time there was less student comment of feeling stigmatised in 2017 compared to 2014.

As with previous years, the overwhelmingly positive responses from students make it difficult to single out issues for improvement. While bearing in mind that the vast majority of responses were positive and students reported no improvements were required, several themes stood out that 24-7 should follow-up:

- Taking time away from school work
- Not listening
- Make sure students aren't over-reliant on YW
- Check strategies and suggestions have been helpful and understood properly
- Talk with all students
- Spend more time with students

As with the 2015 evaluation, the final words should belong to the students who took the time to fill in the survey and these three quotes sum up the tone of the responses:

They have seen me at my highest and lowest. No matter what there always there for me

I only hope that youth workers around New Zealand get the acknowledgement and respect that they deserve

Please don't take youth workers away from schools. I'm a student currently on my last year, if it hadn't been for youth workers through out primary to high school, I really don't wanna imagine where I'd be. They are true people kids need in their lives in and out of school!



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List of Figures ■ ■ ■

P14. Figure 1

Decile of School of students that responded

P15. Figure 2

Age in years of students that responded in 2017

P15. Figure 3

Ethnicity of students that responded in 2017

P16. Figure 4

Amount of time reported working with 24-7 YouthWorker

P16. Figure 5

How are you compared to when you first started?

P17. Figure 6

The longer students had worked with a YouthWorker the higher percentage felt they were better than when they started

P18. Figure 7

How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has helped you?

P18. Figure 8

The longer students worked with a YouthWorker, the higher percentage felt they were helped a lot

P19. Figure 9

Lower decile of school shows lower percent of students report not helped at all or worse than when they started

P21. Figure 10

Percentage of students indicating things that have changed for the better

P26. Figure 11

Some of the things that have changed for the worse

P27. Figure 12

Why do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse?

P29. Figure 13

Percentage of students suggesting how 24-7 YouthWorkers could improve

Appendices ■ ■ ■

Appendix I: Results for ‘How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse?’

In order to check that students felt they could easily report any negative outcomes from working with a 24-7 YouthWorker, a new question was added in 2017 asking if ‘your 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse’. Almost 90% of students reported their YouthWorker had not made anything worse. While only a small proportion of students reported their 24-7 YouthWorker has made things worse, it is nevertheless instructional to look further at these students. Unfortunately, it would appear that the instructions for this question were not clear to students, resulting in students misunderstanding the question.

In total, 105 students reported their 24-7 YouthWorker had made things worse:

- 68 a little bit
- 19 moderately
- 12 a lot
- 6 very much

Of the six that reported their 24-7 YouthWorker had made things ‘very much’ worse, five also answered the question: ‘How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has helped you?’. Four out of the five responded that their 24-7 YouthWorker had helped them ‘Very much’ while one said they had helped ‘a bit’. Two of these students left comments to ‘explain’ why their 24-7 YouthWorker had made things ‘very much’ worse. Both of these comments were extremely positive, another indication that the students incorrectly answered the question:

- “They are very nice and super supportive towards us”
- “Because they [sic] awesome”

Only one student who said their 24-7 YouthWorker had made things ‘moderately worse’ (and none that said they had made things ‘a lot’ or ‘very much’ worse) answered Q9 *How much do you think that your 24-7 YouthWorker has helped you?* by saying ‘not at all’ helped. This suggests that the results are due to misinterpreting the question, rather than a feeling that the 24-7 YouthWorker had made things worse. For this reason, no analysis has been undertaken into the characteristics of students who reported their 24-7 YouthWorker had made them worse.



24-7 Youthworker In Schools Programme Phase 3 Evaluation: Student Follow Up

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The Collaborative for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development Trust

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THE COLLABORATIVE TRUST
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