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



High proportions of respondents reported improvement in their overall wellbeing since interacting with a 24-7 YouthWorker, and having been helped by them to a large extent. These results have remained very consistent over time, with similar proportions being reported in 2014 and 2017. Given the challenges presented over the last three years by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health response, the consistency of these results is rather remarkable, and speaks to a concerted effort on the part of 24-7 Youth Workers to maintain a stable, positive influence on these young people during highly unpredictable circumstances.

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Pollowing on from previous YouthVoice surveys undertaken in 2014 and 2017, school students who had been involved with 24-7 Youth Workers in the last 12 months were invited to take part in an anonymous online survey about their experiences with the programme. Like the previous evaluations, the overall aim of the current research was to gather evidence that will assist 24-7 YouthWork in demonstrating the value of the service, and to inform future practice.

A total of 772 students from 48 schools took part. While this was smaller in scope than initially planned, the participating schools were largely representative of the 84 schools 24-7 YouthWork currently operates in with respect to socio-demographics and geographic spread. Respondents represented a range of age groups, a reasonably even balance of gender, and an ethnic breakdown which fairly closely resembled that of the general population of young people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Overall feedback on the effectiveness of 24-7 Youth Workers was overwhelmingly positive, and remarkably similar to findings from 2014 and 2017. Over three-quarters of respondents reported an improvement in their overall wellbeing over the time they had been interacting with their Youth Worker, and more than half reported having been helped by their Youth Worker 'a lot' or 'very much'. Feedback on specific outcome areas was also encouraging, with evidence of strong relationship building and support mechanisms.

Statistical analysis of the factors which were most strongly associated with more positive impact suggested one-on-one sessions and out of school activities were the most effective types of interaction students experienced, and the longevity of a student's relationship with their Youth Worker was also a significant factor. These findings were supported by qualitative analysis of free text feedback on the most positive aspects of respondents' 24-7 experience, in which 'having someone to talk to' stood out as the most prominent theme. In line with findings of the previous surveys, greater levels of impact were reported by non-European/ Pākehā respondents. Socio-economic status, as measured by the Ministry of Education's new Equity Index, also had a small but significant effect, with slightly greater positive impact experienced by students from less equitable backgrounds.

In terms of what could be improved, the most substantial theme to emerge from qualitative analysis of free text feedback was 'more contact' (in terms of frequency, duration, and availability), suggesting that what 24-7 Youth Workers are currently doing is working well, and greater impact could be achieved by expanding the current model. More emphasis on integrating students with out of school activities may also be beneficial, as this was shown to be a strong predictor of positive impact, but only around half of respondents reported being supported in this outcome area specifically.

Overall, the results described in this report are very encouraging, especially given the challenges of the last three years experienced by schools and young people in particular.

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For many students, 24-7 YouthWork
is clearly an immensely valuable
component of their high school
experience, and the consistency of
findings across time suggests the model of
support is well established and effective
in achieving its aims.

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1. Introduction

Established in Christchurch in the early 1990s, 24-7 YouthWork is a Christian-based organisation connecting local churches with schools to encourage the holistic development of young people. In 2021 it employed 188 Youth Workers in 88 schools throughout New Zealand, connecting over 170 churches across 17 denominations. According to the 2022 Annual Report, 24-7 YouthWork is best described as a 'low intensity preventative and early intervention service': "24-7YW is for all young people within a school and is for any school. It is not just aimed at young people perceived as 'at-risk', or available only in low decile schools."

24-7 Youth Workers are active Christians expected to live out Christian ideals in-school and out-of-school. However, they 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, and are committed to students being able to make their own free choices.¹

Whilst all 24-7 Youth Workers are volunteer youth leaders, the background of each Youth Worker 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. Following a thorough orientation, newly recruited 24-7 Youth Workers complete a compulsory Level 3 Youth Work Certificate on the job over their first year, covering areas such as Te Tiriti o Waitangi, risk management, ethics, and the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa. Ongoing training is

available and encouraged through the national network and local Youth Leadership Teams. A three to five year commitment is expected.¹

24-7 YouthWorkers typically belong to a church youth community and are employed by the associated charitable trust. While they are employed and managed by groups external to the school, they remain accountable to the schools they work in. The school and the church delivering the service (along with the liaising charitable trust and 24-7 YouthWork Network) sign an agreement which defines mutual expectations, with one school staff member assigned as an ongoing liaison with the Youth Work team. All Youth Workers are required to keep a diary of in-school activities, and to produce written reports each term. While the activities undertaken across different workers and different parts of the school year vary greatly, overall a Youth Worker's time averages about 10 hours per week over the school term. In 2021, Youth Workers recorded 340,304 engagements with students. This included 61,734 one-on-one sessions, and covered 65,673 hours of work in schools.

1.1 Background to the Research

2014 Study

'Youth Worker in Schools' programme | Phase 1 Evaluation In 2014, the first evaluation of the 24-7 'Youth Worker in Schools' programme was conducted by the Collaborative Trust for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development (The Collaborative). It took the form of an online survey which was responded to

by a total of 1,308 students from 51 schools. This evaluation showed that the overwhelming majority of respondents rated their involvement with the 24-7 Youth Worker(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 Youth Worker(s). Seventy-four percent of young people reported that they were 'a little better' or 'much better' than when they first started with their 24-7 Youth Worker. Māori and Pacific students were more likely to report that their 24-7 Youth Worker 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 Youth Workers.³

2015 Study

'Youth Worker in Schools' programme | Phase 2 Evaluation In 2015, it was the turn of the school staff to provide feedback on their perceptions of the 'Youth Worker in Schools' programme. In total 160 school staff responded to at least some of the questions in the survey from 47 different schools, which was reasonably representative of schools in which the 24-7 Youth Worker operates. Overall, staff were exceptionally complimentary in their feedback, and results were similar to those found in 2014 from student reports of the effectiveness of the '24-7 Youth Worker in Schools' programme. Staff from lower decile schools rated the 24-7 Youth Workers 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.⁴

2017 Study

'Youth Worker in Schools' programme | Phase 3 Evaluation

Although the previous research demonstrated that 24-7 YouthWork had produced excellent results, by its nature such an organisation cannot rest on its laurels. As part of assessing the service provided by its workers, 24-7 YouthWork again commissioned The Collaborative to survey students on their involvement in 2017. The overall aim of this research project was to gather evidence to assist 24-7 YouthWork in informing both the community and funders about the effectiveness of their programme, and to inform future practice. A total of 1,135 students from 61 schools responded. Results were again overwhelmingly positive, with over half of respondents (57.1%) reporting their Youth Worker had helped them 'a lot' or 'very much.' Analysis again suggested the 24-7 YouthWork programme was particularly effective in lower decile schools, and qualitative analyses showed an increased reporting of assistance with mental health issues.⁵

1.2 The Current Research

A third survey of students accessing 24-7 YouthWork services was commissioned via the Collaborative in 2020, with the intention of providing a three-year follow up on findings from 2014 and 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted these plans however, and the survey had to be postponed twice, finally being deployed in September 2022.

The scope of this evaluation encompasses the perspectives of students involved with 24-7 YouthWork about the impact of 24-7 Youth Workers in schools. It provides a partial repeat of the 2014 and 2017 student surveys, and also adds new areas of interest; specifically, insight into the effectiveness of 24-7 YouthWork with respect to the following five outcome areas (refer to Appendix A):

- · supporting students
- · building positive relationships
- · cultivating school spirit
- · leadership development
- · integrating students with out-of-school activities

It was also intended to extend the scope of the survey to a greater number of schools and students to reflect the growing reach of the 24-7 Youth Worker in schools relationship. This proved challenging, however, due to the ongoing pandemic and associated school disruptions and competing priorities for Youth Workers, school staff and students. Despite concerted and extended recruitment efforts, a smaller number of schools and students were able to participate than in previous years.

2. Method

The YouthVoice survey was initially undertaken in 2014³ and replicated in 2017.⁵ The current methodology repeated these previous student surveys, with minor changes and the addition of new questions pertaining to the specific five outcomes identified on page 9. Following the initial questionnaire development, qualitative testing was undertaken in May 2021 with students at a Christchurch secondary school, to ensure respondents' understanding of the questions aligned well with the researchers' intentions. Following a series of minor amendments, the final questionnaire was piloted in August 2022 with students at a different Christchurch secondary school, prior to deployment nationwide in September. The questionnaire, as it was presented to students via the SurveyMonkey platform, is appended to this report.

From September to November 2022, 24-7 Youth Workers in 84 New Zealand schools were asked to:

- a) invite 10 students whom they had worked with in the last 12 months to participate in the online survey, and
- b) arrange for a member of staff (usually the guidance counsellor) to invite an additional 10 students who had worked with a 24-7 youth worker on a one-on-one basis in the last 12 months to participate, while
- make an effort to invite students from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible

24-7 YouthWork first obtained permission from the Principal and Board of Trustees of each school to approve the youth workers

surveying students. Selected students were then invited to take part in the survey, which was administered via SurveyMonkey and completed in a group setting within normal school hours (often during lunchtime). 24-7 Youth Workers facilitated the survey completion but were instructed to allow students to complete the questionnaire on their own and without assistance or influence. Refreshments were usually provided as an incentive/token of appreciation to students for their time, and school-level incentives were provided by the National 24-7 YouthWork administrative team to encourage as many schools to participate as possible.

Data collection was initially planned for the four weeks leading up to the end of Term 3 (i.e. the whole month of September), but was subsequently extended into the term break and Term 4 in order to maximise response rates.

2.1 Ethical Considerations

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

Before taking part, each invited student read an information sheet outlining the project. They 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 Youth Workers. It was also explained that all information collected would remain confidential and secure, and that only members of the research

team would have access to their anonymous data (not their Youth Workers, teachers, or anyone else).



3. Findings

A total of 772 responses were recorded over 11 weeks, from September 3, 2022 to November 23, 2022. Forty-two were excluded prior to analysis due to non-completion (no answers entered beyond demographic questions), leaving 730.

3.1 School Characteristics

Students from 48 schools participated in the survey, representing 57% of the 84 schools serviced by 24-7 Youth Workers at the time. The following section summarises the characteristics of those schools, drawn from publicly available data from the Ministry of Education.⁶

Location

Twenty participating schools were located in the Canterbury region, 10 in Auckland, four each in Wellington, Waikato, and Nelson, two each in Tasman and Taranaki, and one each in Northland and Marlborough. Figure 1 (pg 14) shows the locations of each of the schools represented (dark green markers).

An 'Isolation Index' is used by the Ministry of Education to determine the relative isolation of schools and early learning services. It uses weighted distances from population centres of 5,000 and 20,000 and 100,000 people, based on 2001 census data and old road data. The index ranges between 0.01 (schools located in the centre of a large urban area – e.g. Otago Girls' High School) and 25 (Pitt Island School in the Chatham Islands), and has



a mean of index score of 1. The average isolation index for schools represented in the survey was 0.58, with a standard deviation of 0.61, indicating that on average, the schools surveyed are less geographically isolated than New Zealand schools on the whole.

Type and Size

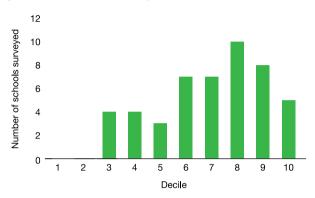
The majority of schools participating in the survey were secondary (Years 9-15, 7-10, or 7-15), with these comprising 31 schools in total. Seven were composite or restricted composite, six were intermediate, and four were full primary. The majority (44) were co-educational, with three single-sex boys schools, and one single-sex girls school. Their average roll as at October 2022 was 1,033.9, with a standard deviation of 517.8.

Socio-economic indicators

The 'school decile' model was developed by the Ministry of Education in 1995 to determine funding levels for schools based on relative socio-economic deprivation in their surrounding geographic areas. Figure 2 shows the distribution of deciles of schools represented in the survey (where a higher score indicates lower socio-economic deprivation).

Figure 1: Locations of schools represented in survey

Figure 2: Deciles of schools surveyed

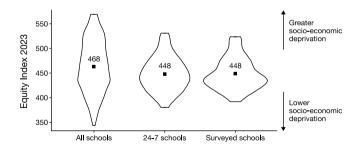


This decile system has recently been supplanted by a new funding model, based on an improved measure of socio-economic equity. The Equity Index (EQI) is a statistical model that estimates the extent to which a school's students might face socio-economic barriers that could prevent them achieving at school. The model uses information held in Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). It takes data from cohorts of children from the last 20 years, who have already been through the school system, and looks at how, at different ages, various socio-economic factors impacted their achievement at NCEA levels 1 and 2. It then looks at the socio-economic characteristics of students enrolled at schools for the last three years to identify which of those factors are present in their lives. Student numbers are averaged at an individual school

level to produce an EQI number for each school between 344-569, where a higher EQI number indicates that a school or kura is likely to have a higher number of students facing greater socio-economic barriers relative to another school or kura.⁷

The mean EQI for schools surveyed was 448, with a standard deviation of 32. Figure 3 compares the distribution of EQI scores for surveyed schools (right) to the distribution of all schools 24-7 YouthWork operates in (middle) and all New Zealand schools (left). Mean EQI is indicated by the black squares. These were similar across all three groups. The range of schools covered in the survey was also similar to that represented by all 24-7 YouthWork schools, though this covered a slightly narrower range of equity than New Zealand schools overall.

Figure 3: Equity index 2023 - surveyed vs 24-7 vs all schools



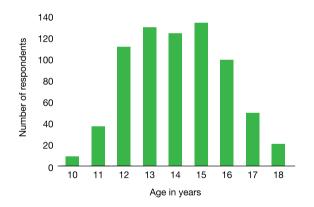
3.2 Respondent Characteristics

The following section summarises the demographic characteristics of survey respondents.

Age

The mean age of respondents was 14.1 years, with the most common age being 15; 83.6% of respondents were aged between 12 and 16. Figure 4 shows the distribution of ages represented.

Figure 4: Age distribution of survey respondents

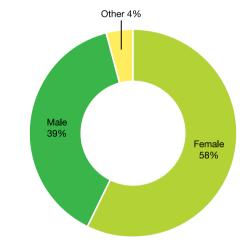


Gender

As shown in Figure 5, the majority (57.8%) of survey respondents were female. 38.5% were male, and 3.7% identified as 'other'

(the majority of whom reported being non-binary, where this was specified).

Figure 5: Gender of survey respondents

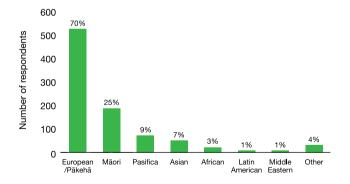


Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to indicate the ethnic group(s) they belong to from the prescribed list shown in Figure 6 below, from which they were able to select more than one response. 'Other' responses were recoded where appropriate based on open-text responses given. Respondents who only provided an 'other' response that could not be straightforwardly coded to a high-level

ethnic group or groups remained counted as 'other', with most of these comprising ethnically indeterminable nationalities (e.g. 'Kiwi', 'New Zealander', 'USA', 'South African'). The most common ethnic group represented was European/Pākehā, accounting for 70.1% of respondents, followed by Māori (24.8%). This was fairly representative of the general European and Māori populations aged 10-19 at the 2018 Census (which were 68.0% and 25.1%, respectively), while Pasifika and Asian populations were slightly underrepresented (these comprising 13.2% and 14.2% of the general population, respectively).8

Figure 6: Ethnicity (total response) of survey respondents



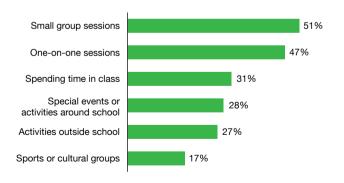
3.3 Interaction with 24-7 Youth Workers

The following section summarises responses to questions pertaining to respondents' interactions with 24-7 Youth Workers.

Types of interaction

Respondents were first asked to indicate all the ways in which they had interacted with 24-7 Youth Workers. Responses were selected from the list shown in Figure 8 below, with an option to enter an open text 'other' response also. These were recoded to the prescribed categories where appropriate. The most common interaction type was 'small group sessions', as reported by just over half of respondents (51.0%), followed by 'one-on-one sessions' (46.7%).

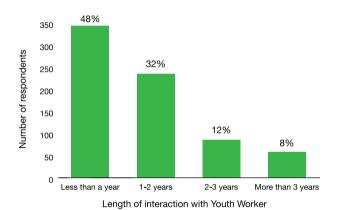
Figure 8: Types of interaction with 24-7 YouthWorkers



Length of interaction

Respondents were next asked how long they had been interacting with 24-7 Youth Workers. Their responses are summarised in Figure 7. Almost half (47.7%) had been interacting less than a year, and a further third (32.5%) between one and two years.

Figure 7: Length of interaction with 24-7 Youth Workers



3.4 Impact of 24-7 Youth Workers

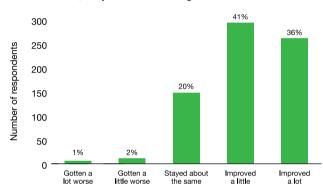
The next section summarises responses to questions pertaining to the impact 24-7 Youth Workers have had on students' lives.

Overall wellbeing

Respondents were first asked to indicate how their wellbeing had changed over the time they had been interacting with their 24-7 Youth Worker. Though this question did not explicitly pertain to the impact their Youth Worker may have had on their wellbeing, responses were very positive. As shown in Figure 9, just over three quarters (76.7%) reported an improvement in their overall wellbeing, 20.4% reported no change, and just 2.3% reported a decline. This response pattern very closely resembled that of the similarly-worded question from the 2017 survey: 'Compared with how you were when you were first started working with your 24-7 Youth Worker how are you now?' to which 77.8% responded 'a little better' or 'much better', 20.0% responded 'about the same', and 2.3% responded 'a little bit worse' or 'much worse'.

Figure 9: Overall wellbeing change

Over this time, has your overall wellbeing ...



Impact of Youth Workers on overall wellbeing

Having established a baseline change in overall wellbeing, respondents were next asked, 'How much do you think your 24-7 Youth Worker has helped you?' This question was identical to that asked in the 2014 and 2017 YouthVoice surveys, and serves as the main dependent variable in the inferential analyses reported in section 3.5 below, as a proxy for overall Youth Worker impact (this was chosen over the 'overall wellbeing' question since other factors may have impacted students' wellbeing, for better or worse, aside from interactions with their Youth Worker).

Figure 10 shows the distribution of responses, and Figure 11 compares response distributions over the last three iterations of the YouthVoice survey.

More than half (55.8%) of respondents felt their Youth Worker had helped 'a lot' or 'very much' in 2022, compared with 53.9% in 2014 and 57.1% in 2017. Just 2.3% of respondents felt their Youth Worker had not helped them at all, a decline from 3.0% in 2017 and 6.3% in 2014. As shown in Figure 11, the overall distribution of responses to this question has remained relatively consistent over time, with response patterns to the 2022 survey very closely resembling those from 2014.

Figure 10: Extent to which Youth Worker has helped

How much do you think your 24-7 Youth Worker has helped you?

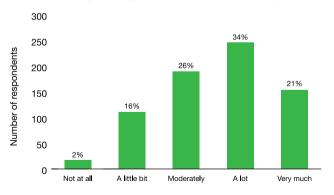
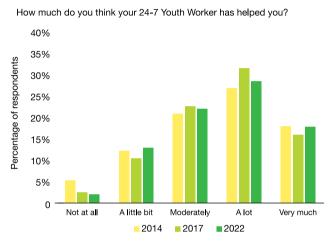


Figure 11: Extent to which Youth Worker has helped: time series



(52.8% 'agreed' or 'strongly a

Impact of Youth Workers in specific life areas

Respondents were next asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about some specific ways in which their 24-7 Youth Worker may have helped them, which aligned with specific outcome areas of interest. Statements and response distributions are shown in Table 1, where darker cell shading indicates a higher percentage of responses in that category.

was "My Youth Worker has built a positive relationship with me" (92.4% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'), followed by "My Youth Worker has helped support other students at my school" (85.2% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'). The statements which had the lowest levels of agreement were "My Youth Worker has helped me build positive relationships with school staff" (51.6% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed') and "My Youth Worker has helped me become more involved with out-of-school activities (sports, clubs etc)" (52.8% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed').

The statement which attracted the strongest level of agreement

Table 1: Impact of 24-7 YouthWorkers in specific life areas		Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My Youth Worker has built a positive relationship with me	1%	0%	6%	44%	48%
My Youth Worker has helped me build positive relationships with my friends	0%	1%	23%	52%	23%
My Youth Worker has helped me build positive relationships with other students at my school	1%	3%	34%	44%	18%
My Youth Worker has helped me build positive relationships with school staff		7%	41%	39%	12%
My Youth Worker has helped me develop my leadership skills	1%	5%	30%	45%	20%
My Youth Worker has helped me become more involved with out-of-school activities (sports, clubs etc)	2%	8%	37%	36%	16%
My Youth Worker has helped me feel more connected to my school community	1%	4%	28%	49%	17%
My Youth Worker has helped me enjoy school more	2%	3%	20%	47%	27%
My Youth Worker has helped support other students at my school	2%	1%	12%	32%	54%



3.5 Factors affecting impact of 24-7 Youth Workers

The following section describes the results of a series of statistical analyses undertaken to determine which factors were most strongly associated with 24-7 Youth Workers having had a greater level of impact. Ordinal responses to the question, 'How much do you think your 24-7 Youth Worker has helped you?' were taken as the dependent variable in these analyses (i.e. the factor to be predicted – see outcome categories in Figure 10). Other variables collected in the survey, or obtained from the Ministry of Education, were analysed to determine which factors most consistently predicted how respondents answered this question overall.

First, each predictor variable was compared against the 'Youth Worker helped' question one at a time, using the appropriate statistical analysis for each comparison (determined by the type of data recorded). Results of these analyses are shown in Table 2. Those variables which yielded a statistically significant association are highlighted in green. This is indicated by a p-value less than 0.05, which implies a less than 5% probability that a result this extreme or more occurred just by chance. For significant results, an indication of effect size (relevant to the statistical test in question) is also provided.

Variable	Statistic	p-value	Effect Size
School Characteristics			
Equity Index 2023 (EQI)	Spearman's rho	<.001	0.139 (small)
Decile	Spearman's rho	<.001	-0.135 (small)
Isolation index	Spearman's rho	<.001	0.143 (small)
School roll	Spearman's rho	0.641	
Respondent Characteristics			
Age	Spearman's rho	0.017	0.089 (small)
Gender	Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA	0.112	
European/Pākehā ethnicity	Mann-Whitney U	<.001	0.162 (small)
Māori ethnicity	Mann-Whitney U	0.017	0.114 (small)
Pasifika ethnicity	Mann-Whitney U	0.010	0.182 (small)
African ethnicity	Mann-Whitney U	0.180	
Asian ethnicity	Mann-Whitney U	0.741	
Latin American ethnicity	Mann-Whitney U	0.241	
Middle Eastern ethnicity	Mann-Whitney U	0.179	
Other ethnicity	Mann-Whitney U	0.588	
Youth Worker Interactions			
Length of interaction	Spearman's rho	<.001	0.185 (small)
One-on-one sessions	Mann-Whitney U	<.001	0.266 (moderate)
Small group sessions	Mann-Whitney U	0.483	
Spending time in class	Mann-Whitney U	0.106	
Sports or cultural groups	Mann-Whitney U	<.001	0.212 (moderate)
Special events or activities around school	Mann-Whitney U	0.038	0.095 (very small)
Activites outside of school	Mann-Whitney U	<.001	0.196 (small)
Overall Wellbeing			
Change in overall being	Spearman's rho	<.001	0.565 (strong)

Table 2: Factors affecting extent to which Youth Worker helped

In terms of school characteristics, socio-economic factors were significantly associated with greater perceived levels of Youth Worker help. Ordinal correlational analysis (Spearman's rho) showed a significantly positive relationship with EQI, indicating that students in more socio-economically deprived schools tended to report being helped by their Youth Worker to a greater extent. This result was reiterated by a significant negative correlation with school decile, where level of perceived help decreased as decile (i.e. socio-economic status) increased. There was also a significant positive correlation between isolation index and perceived level of help, indicating that students attending more isolated schools reported being helped by their Youth Worker to a greater extent. These were all small effects, while the correlation between school roll and perceived level of help was not significant.

With respect to respondent characteristics, age was significantly positively correlated with perceived level of help – indicating older respondents felt they had been helped to a greater extent than younger respondents – though this effect was very small, and could be a function of length of interaction (discussed below). Mann-Whitney U groupwise comparisons found respondents of European/Pākehā ethnicity reported significantly lower levels of perceived help on average than non-European/Pākehā respondents, while respondents of Māori and Pasifika ethnicity reported being helped to a greater extent on average than respondents not in these respective groups. The effect sizes for these ethnicities were small, and there was no significant difference with respect to gender or other ethnic groups.

Length of interaction was significantly positively correlated with perceived level of help, indicating the longer a student had been interacting with their Youth Worker, the greater the extent to which they felt they had been helped by them. Of the types of interaction reported, significantly higher levels of perceived help were reported among students who had participated in one-on-one sessions, sports or cultural groups, special events or activities around school, and activities outside school, with the largest effects seen for one-on-one sessions and activities outside school (moderate for Mann-Whitney U).

Overall wellbeing had a moderately strong positive correlation with Youth Worker help, indicating that as wellbeing changed for the better, so did the extent to which Youth Workers were perceived to have helped. While this is encouraging, it is important to note that correlations cannot determine the existence or direction of causation between two variables. The extent to which 24-7 Youth Workers helped may therefore have contributed to improvement in overall wellbeing, but equally, independent improvement in overall wellbeing may have increased the extent to which Youth Workers were perceived to have helped (or indeed, some combination of the two). Whichever is the case, a strong positive correlation would be expected between these variables.

Having established which factors had a significant association with the extent to which respondents felt they had been helped by their 24-7 Youth Worker, an ordinal regression was conducted to determine the strongest predictors of this outcome, relative

to other factors. Because predictor variables are analysed all at once, this analysis has the advantage of controlling for any potential confounds (i.e. overlap) between factors, which may have accounted for some of the results described above.

Each variable that yielded a significant association/difference as reported in Table 2 was entered into the regression model as a predictor. Because EQI and decile are themselves highly correlated (since they essentially measure the same thing), EQI was included as the single socio-economic predictor in this analysis (since it is the more up-to-date measure, and had a slightly stronger correlation with the outcome of interest). The dependent variable – i.e. the thing that we are looking to explain variation within – was again the question pertaining to how much respondents felt their 24-7 Youth Worker had helped them. Change in overall wellbeing was not included in the model, as this is of interest as an outcome in and of itself, rather than a predictor of the outcome in question.

Results are shown in Table 3. Statistically significant predictors are highlighted in green, as indicated by a p-value <0.05. The odds ratio indicates the odds of increased levels of perceived help associated with each predictor variable (where an odds ratio >1 indicates greater odds of increased perceived help, and <1 indicates lower odds). The 95% confidence interval specifies the range of uncertainty associated with each odds ratio estimate, where a wider interval indicates greater uncertainty.

Table 3: Ordinal regression on extent to which Youth Worker helped

		95% confidence interval		
Predictor	p-value	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
Equity Index 2023 (EQI)	0.004	1.007	1.002	1.011
Isolation index	0.093	1.237	0.965	1.588
Age	0.712	0.984	0.906	1.070
European/Pākehā ethnicity	0.026	0.696	0.505	0.957
Māori ethnicity	0.954	1.010	0.722	1.413
Pasifika ethnicity	0.093	1.502	0.936	2.418
Length of interaction	0.017	1.221	1.037	1.440
One-on-one sessions	<.001	2.492	1.880	3.312
Sports or cultural groups	0.055	1.456	0.993	2.139
Special events or activities around school	0.734	1.057	0.767	1.457
Activites outside of school	0.009	1.550	1.115	2.159

After controlling for confounding factors, just five predictors were associated with a significant increase in the extent to which respondents felt their Youth Workers had helped them. These were: EQI, where an increase in the school's EQI (i.e. socio-economic deprivation) was associated with higher odds of increased perceived help (though this effect was very small, with an odds ratio of just 1.007); European/Pākehā ethnicity, where students belonging to this ethnic group had lower odds of reporting increased perceived help (0.696 times those of

non-European/Pākehā students); length of interaction, where an increase in duration was associated with an increase in perceived help by a factor of 1.221; one-on-one sessions, with students who had participated in these having 2.492 times the odds of reporting increased perceived help compared with students who hadn't; and activities outside school, whose participants had 1.550 times the odds of non-participants of reporting increased perceived help.

In terms of interpreting these results, we can conclude that 24-7 Youth Workers had the greatest positive impact (with respect to the extent to which students felt they had been helped) on students who had participated in one-on-one sessions, and to a slightly lesser extent on those who had participated in activities outside school. The longer a student had been interacting with their Youth Worker, the greater the positive impact they had. Youth Workers also had greater impact among non-European/Pākehā students, and to a small extent, among students attending more socioeconomically deprived schools.

3.6 Qualitative responses

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked: 'Thinking about your experience with your 24-7 Youth Worker overall, what was the most positive thing about it?' and additionally, 'how could things be improved?' Finally, they were also asked: 'Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience with your 24-7 Youth Worker?' The following section summarises qualitative analysis of responses to these questions.

Most positive thing about experience with 24-7 Youth Workers

A total of 644 responses to the question, 'What was the most positive thing about [your experience with your 24-7 Youth Worker]?' were received. Figure 12 shows a word frequency visualisation of these responses, where larger word size indicates greater frequency with which it appeared.

Thematic analysis was undertaken to identify the most prominent themes among these responses. Each response was first read and potential themes abstracted from it. The most common themes were consolidated and ranked, then each response was analysed again and mapped against the themes most frequently identified. As illustrated by some of the quotes provided below, there was often overlap between two or more themes within a single response and responses could be coded to more than one category. Quotes provided are verbatim.

Having someone to talk to

As alluded to in Figure 12, having someone to talk to was the most commonly specified 'most positive thing' about students' Youth Worker experience, being mentioned in about one quarter of responses.

Sub-themes included:

- · trustworthiness/confidentiality
- · perceived lack of judgement
- having someone to talk to other than friends/family/ counsellors/teachers

Figure 12: Word cloud of responses to most positive thing about 24-7 Youth Worker experience



· being able to talk openly about a range of issues/topics.

Selected quotes:

"Having someone to talk to that isn't a counselor so it doesn't feel as serious and scary, but they can still give you advice and talk to them."

"Being able to talk about my issues and not being judged about it."

"Like being able to talk about things that I can't talk about with friends and stuff"

"that i can trust them and can talk to them about everything"

"Building a connection with someone and having someone to talk to outside my friend group about things in my life not having to worry about it getting spread across the school"

"Having one-on-one chats help me the most"

Fun and games

The second-most frequently occurring theme, featuring in around one in seven responses, was fun and/or games, including food.

Selected quotes:

"The treats and the fun games!"

"just doing fun stuff all the time and him always having a really great attitude when ever he come to school"

"We play fun games at lunch times with my friends"

"Being able to share jokes and brighten each other's moods"

"Playing uno in the library and doing fun things."

"playing fun games and haveing a lagh"

Learning new things/self-improvement

Learning new things and/or self-improvement featured in around one in ten responses.

Selected quotes:

"Support to grow my leadership and wellbeing and social skills."

"She made me find my voice and helped me a lot with my confidence and with school."

"Talking to me about my personal problems and helping me get better at my sports"

"Getting to learn a new skill so that I can go outside rather than just stay in the library."

"Learning to be more open about my problems also helping me with settling into class and make my mental thoughts about school better and how I interact with my teachers and friends"

"learning how to work as a team"

Friendship/connection with Youth Worker

Around one in ten respondents mentioned the friendship or connection they had established with their Youth Worker.

Selected quotes:

"getting to know them as friends not just youth workers"

"I've made a really good friend that has helped me enjoy school a lot more"

"I love how whenever my youth worker walks by me she will smile and wave at me which brings a big, bright smile to my face."

"just getting to know him and building a good relationship and getting to trust him"

"Personally, the most positive takeaway has been the relationship I developed with our youth work team"

"Just having a new connection with someone older"

Building relationships with others

In addition to the relationships built with Youth Workers themselves, another positive aspect (again mentioned in around one in ten responses) was the relationships built with others, especially peers.

Selected quotes:

"I was taught how to build relationships with people I didn't even think of talking to and we were even able to get along very well."

"Spending and playing games with everyone and meeting new people through it"

"I've had more interactions with people outside of my class and friends"

"The team building games that helped me grow relationships with my peers"

"playing with kids that don't have that much friends and helping them make friends"

"I have made friends all around my community"

Advice/Help with problems

Providing advice and help with specific problems was identified in about one in ten responses also.

Selected quotes:

"Having someone to talk to whenever I need to and actually getting decent advice. It is also good to just have a friend to hang out with when I am lonely."

"My youth worker helped me to realise that it is ok to feel anyway that I feel. The most positive part is that I always leave her feeling much better about any situation that Im in"

"they have helped me with drama happening in my friend group"

"helping me deal with my family problems"

"Being able to talk to someone about my experiences during school without them having any relative or teacher biases, and them being able to listen and give feedback that helps me improve on and make sense of my problems."

"Connected me with resources to help improve my mental health"

Feeling supported/safe

Often overlapping with some of the themes already described, a common factor in around one in ten responses was feeling supported and/or safe.

Selected quotes:

"they have given me a place and people i can go to and feel safe"

"The consistency of their love and support"

"Having someone who will support me no matter what and is always willing to listen and talk"

"Knowing I can count on her, with anything"

"Having people I can go to no matter how I'm feeling, people who will do anything to help me feel safe and loved"

"That I can come to school knowing theres someone that I trust and I can be myself."

Sports and activities

While it featured less frequently than the themes above (and sometimes overlapped with 'fun and games'), sports and activities were specifically mentioned in around one in 13 responses.

Selected quotes:

"Being able to leave class and play volleyball"

"spikeball club is the main thing i have done with dave, and it has been one of my favorite after school activities!"

"Working with our 24/7 youth workers to plan a school disco"

"he taught lots of us how to play sports"

"Having opportunities to do activities I never would've thought about and getting to learn and know my peers better."

"Going on camp with them."

How things could be improved

There were 523 non-blank responses to the question 'how could [your experience with your 24-7 Youth Worker] be improved?' These are represented in the word cloud shown in Figure 13. Just over half were variations on 'don't know' (80) or 'nothing' (201) (this was very much in line with the 2017 survey)⁵, leaving 242 substantive responses.



Figure 13: Word cloud of responses to how 24-7
YouthWork could be improved



Thematic analysis of these responses, undertaken using the same method described above, revealed the following themes.

More contact

More contact overall was the most commonly identified theme, featuring in around half of substantive responses. This encompassed:

- · Being at school more often
- · Increased frequency of interaction
- · More opportunities for interaction
- · Longer interactions
- · More Youth Workers

Selected quotes:

"maybe he could be on site more often."

"It feels so long in between every session"

"would like more youth workers and more days"

"More opportunities to go to the youth worker and talk about something"

"be more in my classes "

"More one on one time with my youth worker"

More and increased variety of activities

Around one in ten substantive responses suggested an increase in the number and variety of activities offered.

Selected quotes:

"By having a more varied variety of games"

"More activities at lunch times"

"Maybe having more activities out of school and conecting with other youth groups."

"go to different places. Away from school"

Increased awareness

A small number of respondents highlighted a need for greater awareness of the support offered by Youth Workers in their school.

Selected quotes:

"Pretty good already, but it would be awesome if I had known more about them at the start of the year and how to connect with them"

"Having more support from the school to give more resources to the 24/7 Youthworker, having funding to have more than one on site for such a large school. Having more awareness, education and advertising as to what their role is and where they can be found etc."

"More support and advertisement that there is help and vouth workers"

A range of other topics featured among the remaining responses, but none were frequent enough to constitute a theme in and of themselves (except the provision of food – in particular 'Maccas' – which was surprisingly common). Some practical suggestions however included:

- Allowing girls to interact with male youth workers, and vice versa
- · More opportunities for online interaction (other than email)
- Having a dedicated, private space to talk indoors that isn't the church
- · Mental health check-ins
- · Options for private tuition

Other comments

Finally, respondents were asked 'Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience with your 24-7 Youth Worker?'; 407 responses were recorded. These are visualised in Figure 13.

179 responses were variations on 'no' or 'nothing', leaving 228 substantive remarks. Almost all expressed general positive sentiment, with many reiterating comments made in the previous

questions. Apart from general praise and gratitude, no explicit themes emerged that have not been already covered.

Selected quotes:

"[Youth Worker] has really helped me through some hard times at school and out of school."

"She was incredible and honestly one of the kindest and easy going people I've ever met. I really appreciated our chats and I will miss her dearly when I leave school."

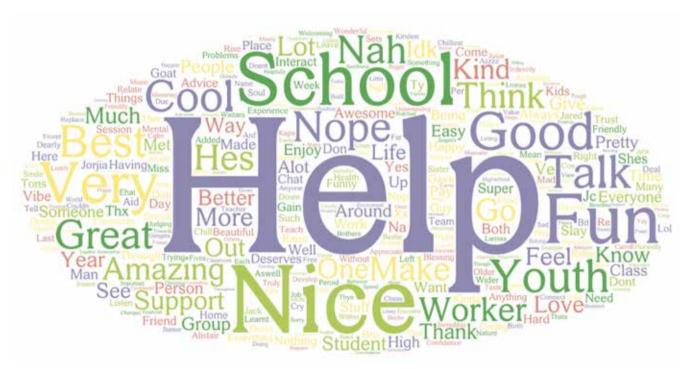
"The youth worker knows how to make me happy and enjoy life"

"Seeing my youth worker just gave me a better point of view on everything"

"She became a friend and a supporter, and I am so happy me and her got our little one on one conversations"

"When I came to highschool, I was struggling a bit with friendships and finding my place in school and then when I found out about the youth workers, I was able to gain confidence and support which has got me to where I am today"

Figure 13: Word cloud of other comments on 24-7 YouthWork





L survey is overwhelmingly positive. Most respondents described favourable experiences with their 24-7 Youth Workers, and there is evidence of impact with respect to several outcome areas of interest. High proportions of respondents reported improvement in their overall wellbeing since interacting with a 24-7 Youth Worker, and having been helped by them to a large extent. These results have remained very consistent over time, with similar proportions being reported in 2014 and 2017. Given the challenges presented over the last three years by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health response, the consistency of these results is rather remarkable, and speaks to a concerted effort on the part of 24-7 Youth Workers to maintain a stable positive influence on these young people during highly unpredictable circumstances.

he overall picture that emerges from the 2022 YouthVoice

The multivariate statistical analysis reported in Section 3.5 helps shed light on which specific aspects of 24-7 YouthWork are working most effectively. Most notably, one-on-one sessions stood out as the single strongest predictor of overall impact, with students who had participated in these having almost 2.5 times the odds of reporting being helped to a greater extent. This finding was reinforced in qualitative analysis of open-text responses regarding the most positive aspect of students' experiences with their 24-7 Youth Worker, in which 'having someone to talk to' was the most common recurring theme. It was apparent from this analysis that 24-7 Youth Workers occupy a niche for many young



people in terms of providing a safe, stable source of support that is distinct from professional counsellors, school staff, family and peers. 'Activities outside school' was also strongly associated with increased levels of perceived help, with those involved having just over 1.5 times the odds of those who had not indicated this type of interaction. The activities offered by 24-7 Youth Workers (both in and outside of school) were also commonly identified in qualitative responses as being the most positive part of students' experience. As was found in the 2014 and 2017 surveys, longer length of interaction with 24-7 Youth Workers was associated with increased odds of having been helped to a greater extent. This finding, in conjunction with a positive theme in the qualitative analysis being the friendship/connection established with Youth Workers, suggests that building strong relationships with students over time is crucial to the success of the programme.

With respect to whom 24-7 YouthWork is having the greatest impact on, multivariate analysis showed non-European/Pākehā students reported being helped the most. This was consistent with results from 2014 and 2017, in which Māori and Pasifika students in particular reported being helped to a greater extent. Socioeconomic status (as measured by school EQI) had a significant but small impact on this outcome, once potential confounding effects of other factors had been controlled for (most likely ethnicity). As noted in the 2017 report, "the quantitative results are consistent with previous research (Noonan, Bullen, & Farruggia, 2012) suggesting a "ceiling effect" whereby vulnerable youth may

have more room for change."⁵ It is well documented that Māori and Pasifika rangatahi in particular face greater exclusion and disadvantage than their Pākeha peers,⁹ thus there may be more opportunity for Youth Workers to have positive impact among these students.

In terms of specific outcomes, the survey was intended to provide insight into the effectiveness of 24-7 YouthWork with respect to the following five areas (refer to Appendix A):

- · supporting students
- · building positive relationships
- · cultivating school spirit
- · leadership development
- · integrating students with out-of-school activities

With respect to supporting students, 'feeling supported/safe' was a common theme identified among open-text responses to the question 'what was the most positive thing about [your experience with your 24-7 Youth Worker]?' Additionally, 85.2% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'My Youth Worker has helped support other students at my school' (the second-most strongly agreed-with statement among those proposed).

'Building relationships with others' was also identified as a key theme among open-text responses; 74.8% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'My Youth Worker has helped me build positive relationships with my friends.'

61.8% with the statement that 'My Youth Worker has helped me build positive relationships with other students at my school, and 51.6% with the statement that 'My Youth Worker has helped me build positive relationships with school staff.' Helping to build strong relationships, especially among peers, is therefore clearly a strength of the programme.

In terms of cultivating school spirit, two-thirds of respondents (66.7%) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'My Youth Worker has helped me feel more connected to my school community,' and just under three-quarters (74.7%) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that 'My Youth Worker has helped me enjoy school more.'

With respect to leadership development, 64.9% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'My Youth Worker has helped me develop my leadership skills.' Leadership skills were also mentioned as part of a wider identified theme of 'learning new skills/self improvement' among open-text feedback on the most positive aspect of students' experience.

Integrating students with out-of-school activities is also a clear strength of the 24-7 YouthWork programme, with students who participated in these being significantly more likely to report being helped by their Youth Worker to a greater extent (around 1.5 times). This is a potential area for expansion, however, with just over half (52.8%) of respondents 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with the statement 'My Youth Worker has helped me become more involved with out of school activities (sports, clubs etc).'

In terms of what could be improved, the main theme identified among open-text responses to the question 'how could [your experience with your 24-7 Youth Worker] be improved?' was more contact. This took almost all conceivable forms, including greater frequency, duration, and opportunity for contact, as well as the desire for more Youth Workers in general. It was clear that for those students for whom 24-7 YouthWork is working, there is a desire for more availability. Relatedly, the only other discernible common theme was a desire for more activities (both in and out of school) and more free food. Various specific issues and concerns were identified by individual students, but none of these constituted a recurring identifiable theme, or specific cause for concern.

In conclusion, this research contributes to eight years of consistently positive feedback on the impact 24-7 Youth Workers are having in the lives of the students they work with. It sheds light on the aspects of the programme which are having the most impact, and the students and schools which are benefitting most from the service. Evidence of impact in specific outcome areas has also been established. School-level reports for those schools which had 10 or more complete responses have been provided alongside this report, summarising demographic characteristics and quantitative results for questions pertaining to impact and outcomes.



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6. Appendix A 24-7 YouthWork Five Outcomes

Supporting Students

To help provide a holistic support network for students which complements and enhances the role of teachers.

Building Positive Relationships

To help build positive relationships for students. This includes student relationships with staff, with their peers and with significant adults such as our youth workers.

Cultivating School Spirit

To enhance the spirit, vision and values of the school by working alongside students, student groups and staff in creating a safe and friendly environment; developing a sense of whanaungatanga (connection and belonging).

Leadership Development

To encourage, strengthen and grow students in leadership roles.

Integrating Students with Out-of-School Activities

To help connect young people with suitable out-of-school activities, which develop their strengths and enhance their community connections.

7. Appendix B Survey Questionnaire

Youth Voice Survey 2022

Kia ora.

We're an independent research team working with 24-7 Youth Work on a project to understand the impact of their mahi on young people across Aotearoa.

You've been selected to help us with this project. You can do this by taking part in a short survey about your experience with youth workers in your school. You don't have to complete the survey, but if you do, your responses will help make sure 24-7 youth workers are doing the best possible job of supporting you, and other students around the country.

The survey is anonymous and 100% confidential - the information you give us can't be linked to you personally, and will only be seen by the independent team conducting this research (not your teachers or youth workers). Anything we report from the survey will be written in a way that doesn't identify the students who took part and who said what. You should answer as honestly as you can.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete, and you can pull out at any time.

Hit the 'next' button below if you're happy to proceed.

	Female
1. What school do you go to?	Male
\$	Other (tell us if you would like to):
2. How old are you?	
3. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to? Select as many	In what ways have you interacted with a 24-7 Youth Worker? Select as many as you need.
as you need.	☐ One-on-one sessions
☐ European/Pākehā	☐ Small group sessions
□ Māori	☐ Spending time in class
☐ Pasifika	☐ Sports or cultural groups
☐ African	☐ Special events or activities around the school
☐ Asian	Activities outside school
☐ Latin American	Other (please tell us):
☐ Middle Eastern	
Other (please tell us):	

Worker?	following statements.
Less than a year	My Youth Worker has built a positive relationship with me
1-2 years	Neither agree Strongly disagree Disagree not disagree Agree Strongly agre
2-3 years	O O O O
More than 3 years	Add a comment if you like:
7. Over this time, has your overall wellbeing:	
☐ Improved a lot	10. My Youth Worker has helped me build positive
Improved a little	relationships with my friends Neither agree
Stayed about the same	Strongly disagree Disagree not disagree Agree Strongly agree
Gotten a little worse	
Gotten a lot worse	Add a comment if you like:
8. How much do you think your 24-7YW Youth Worker has	11. My Youth Worker has helped me build positive
helped you?	relationships with other students at my school Neither agree
	Strongly disagree Disagree not disagree Agree Strongly agree
Not at all A little bit Moderately A lot Very much	

	with schoo	I staff Neither agree			my so	hool com	munity				
Strongly disagree		not disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly	disagree [Disagree	Neither a		Agree	Strongly agree
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Strongly disagree		Neither agree not disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly	disagree [Disagree	Neither a		Agree	Strongly agree
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•	niooi activit	ies (sports,	ciubs etc)	Strongly		Neither			Strongly	
4. My Youth Wo with out of so		Neither agree	Agree	Strongly agree	disagree	Disagre	e not dis	agree	Agree	agree	Don't knov
 My Youth Wo with out of so Strongly disagree 		not disagree				\cup	C)	0	0	O
with out of so			Ŏ	\circ							
with out of so			_	0	Add a	commen	t if you li	ike:			

Almost done! A couple of final questions	20. Do you l
18. Thinking about your experience with your 24-7 Youth Worker overall:	
What has been the most positive thing about it?	
How could things be improved?	
19. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience with your 24-7 Youth Worker?	
That's the end of the survey questions, thanks for your responses! Before you go, a couple of quick questions about how you found the survey itself:	
20. How easy or difficult did you find this survey to complete?	
Neither easy nor Very easy Easy difficult Difficult Very difficult	

In conclusion, this research contributes to eight years of consistently positive feedback on the impact 24-7 Youth Workers are having in the lives of the students they work with.

