Step Up Programme (Pilot)

October 2013 – October 2014

Evaluation Report
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Executive Summary

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide the background to the Step Up pilot in Kirklees, to give an explanation of the programme and how it has been facilitated, to explain the outcomes from the pilot and to make recommendations for the future.

The evaluation is aimed at services working with families where adolescent violence and abuse to parents is prevalent and to any service wishing to see further support put in place for these families.

The evaluation has been conducted as a result of the Step Up programme being delivered by a number of practitioners who would like to see it continue and the need to evaluate whether this is the preferred support given to families where adolescent violence and abuse to parents is taking place.

Background – What led to Step Up being delivered?

The Stronger Families programme in Kirklees aims to promote ‘strong and resilient communities, where families are encouraged and supported in bringing up their children responsibly, so that all members of the family realise their full capabilities and strengths to contribute positively to society and economy’.

The key objectives for the programme are:

- Improving collaboration across sectors and agencies to use resources effectively through:
  - Assessing and planning interventions which address the needs of the whole family
  - Improved information sharing between agencies
  - Increased co-location and improved pathways
- Increased understanding and use of evidence based approaches
- Providing early help to prevent problems from escalating and strengthen resilience
- Interventions which encourage families to find their own solutions and to become self-reliant
- Promoting and developing community based and informal channels of support for families
- Enabling individuals and families to participate fully in society and economic activity
- Smarter commissioning

The Stronger Families Team use these objectives as core values for their work and using data and shared information about the families on the cohort, have aimed to identify programmes of work that support them.

As part of their work, the team receive daily police intelligence regarding families on the cohort to share with key partners who are working with them. In October 2013 police data was beginning to indicate that there was a high proportion of Stronger Families where domestic violence or abuse between adolescents (male and female) and their parents/carers was widespread. In October 2013 we found that 17% of the 666 eligible families had experienced domestic abuse, either verbal altercations or violence from a teenager within the household. One third of the young people, who attended Northorpe Hall for mentoring, had disclosed that they were violent towards their parents. From initial discussions with some other agencies (IDAT, Women’s Centre), it was apparent that it was a widespread issue which needed further investigation.
At the time, Kirklees did not provide a targeted programme that addressed adolescent violence/abuse against family members. We investigated evidence based programmes which could be adapted to meet the needs of the families in Kirklees and concluded that STEP UP was well suited to this purpose. A small group of practitioners and managers from the Stronger Families Team, Early Intervention and Targeted Support (EITS), Targeted Youth Support (TYS) and Integrated Domestic Abuse Team (IDAT) met to consider how best to initiate a pilot. The most cost effective and timely approach was to engage a small number of practitioners working with families to deliver the programme on a 1:1 basis and to meet regularly with this group to record progress and discuss any issues for future delivery with a view to rolling the programme out to group delivery in the future. The following referral criteria were established:

1. Young person over the age of 11 years (younger if assessed as being able to understand)
2. There had to be no current domestic abuse between adult members of the household
3. The assessment revealed that the young person has been abusive towards their parent(s)
4. There had to be an allocated worker who was able to undertake the 1:1 work if needed. There was no referral pathway into a group or link worker.
5. The parent had completed and signed the referral form and was willing to engage with the programme.
6. The young person had signed the referral form or had been ordered to attend as part of an order (within YOT)

The Step Up Programme

The Step-Up programme was developed by a team in King County (Seattle) in response to adolescent domestic violence/abuse against their parents and siblings. Violent behaviour includes threats, intimidation, property destruction, degrading language and physical violence. The main goal of the Step-Up programme is for the young person to stop using violent and/or abusive behaviour and to replace that behaviour with respectful behaviour so that all family members feel safe at home. Step-Up believes respect is at the heart of all healthy family relationships. In the USA, the Step Up Programme is a compulsory part of an order for a young person who is committing such violence and abuse.

The programme contains 21 parent and young person sessions which include the following:

- Identifying positives in yourself and the young person or parent
- Understanding each other including the reasons for your adolescent’s behaviour or the parenting styles of your parent.
- Understanding warning signs
- Introducing the idea of “Time out”
- Making safety plans
- Empowering each other to change

The programme uses a restorative practice model of accountability, competency development and family safety to restore family relationships. Restorative inquiry is used to help the young person recognise the effects of their actions on others, cultivate empathy and take steps to repair harm done. Usually, the programme is delivered in a group setting. The parents and young people begin each session together, visiting both the “abuse wheel” and “respect wheel” together each week and then separating into 2 individual groups to complete the rest of the session.
Key findings of an evaluation of Step-Up conducted by Organizational Research Services, Seattle, Washington in 2005 include the following:

- “Our analysis of short term teenager and parent outcomes demonstrated significant improvements in attitudes, skills and behaviours over the course of the intervention. Specifically, the assessment of the Teenager Behaviour scales related to different types of behaviour indicated significant declines in the extent to which youth engaged in such behaviours in family situations.”
- “Those youths who completed the Step-Up interventions have lower recidivism rates (into the youth offending teams) than youths who did not complete the intervention or dropped out prior to completion. At 18 months we found that the rates of Referrals, DV Referrals and DV Filings are substantially lower for the Completers. In fact, the average number of DV Referrals and DV Filings is less than half that of the Non-completers. After 12 months, the average number of Filings among Non-Completers is twice as high as the average among Completers.”

Delivery

On further reading of the Step Up programme, it was felt that it could be adapted and delivered to meet the needs of the families in Kirklees where adolescent to parent abuse was prevalent. Because we hadn’t recruited any facilitators to deliver the programme and thinking about the cost of this type of delivery, we decided to trial delivery of the programme on a 1:1 basis, using only practitioners who felt confident about delivering the programme in this way. The manuals were adapted for these sessions and the Stronger Families Project Manager became the co-ordinator and point of contact for the programme.

Families were selected who met the referral criteria (page 4) and who were already engaged in family intervention work through Stronger Families, EITS, TYS and YOT. Since January 2014, 10 families have embarked on the programme. 8/10 of the families have one child, 7/10 of the families are single parent families (single mothers) and 2/10 of the families have female young people causing the abuse. Of the families recorded, 3/10 families were on the Stronger Families cohort.

The practitioners were mostly Family Support Workers, with one YOT Parenting Officer; most having some previous experience of delivering parenting type programmes. On the whole, the teen violence was identified after several months of intervention. Only in one case was adolescent to parent abuse the presenting issue on the referral.

Outcomes

Overall, findings indicate that the Step Up programme has had a positive impact on all families who have completed the programme. Based upon the results of the pre, interim and post self-assessment questionnaires, and case studies, families were most likely to have reported improvements in the following aspects of their lives:

- Fewer or no recorded incidents of domestic violence or abuse.
- No recorded incidents of other ASB incidents or crimes that the young people were previously taking part in.
- Positive educational outcomes.
- Changes in attitudes, both from young people and parents. The young people being more respectful, the parents listening and responding better to their adolescent.
- Better relationships with the wider family.
• The family environment being less stressful.

Practitioner feedback

Progress meetings have been held with practitioners delivering the programme approximately every 3 months to discuss the delivery and implementation of the programme, to update on progress, to discuss any changes that are needed, to discuss recommendations for further delivery and to gain support from colleagues. The following challenges were identified:

• Time taken to complete sessions due to reactive work required relating to immediate issues or depths of relationship difficulties, or sessions cancelled by family member.
• Challenges in getting both parent and young person to work constructively together
• Preparation work needed with family members on relationships, power and control to tactics to try and calm the situation down
• Level of maturity needed for a young person to engage with the material

However, the following positives have been identified:

• Programme flexibility as sessions can be delivered in any order, and some can be left out altogether if necessary.
• The programme can be delivered to only the parent or young person, even if the other party disengages.
• The programme is free to use, requires no special training and we have written permission from King County to deliver this programme. The development work has already been done (changing language and examples from U.S. to U.K.)
• It is evidence based, endorsed by managers and being used by other councils in England so that peer support is available.

Recommendations

The following recommendations reflect the factors that have worked well in the pilot, with feedback from both practitioners and parents who have been involved, discussions with those practitioners on their experiences of delivering other types of programmes, and from researching how other areas have delivered similar programmes.

1. A definition of adolescent to parent violence/abuse should be developed and agreed locally, leading to a better understanding of the nature and prevalence of the problem, and development of a multi-agency strategy to quantify and tackle the issue in Kirklees.

2. A specific referral route into the programme – for practitioners who identify a need to be able to refer a family for support from the programme

3. To create a pool of trainers to deliver the programme on a 1:1 basis with referred families

4. Specific training for the practitioners before delivering the programme, particularly around supporting the family with wider issues that occur as a result of some of the sessions which can be sensitive and intense.
5. The worker to be allocated enough time to work with the family embarking on the programme.

6. The course to continue to run as 1:1 sessions with families. However, the opportunity for the individuals to be brought together as a support group after every 5 sessions to review progress to date and to be able to gain support from others.

7. A regular peer support group for practitioners to discuss progress and any issues they are encountering.

8. Regular reflective supervision for practitioners to discuss the wider issues affecting the families.
Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to report on the Step UP pilot programme, explaining the rationale and background to the pilot project and to show that the early findings demonstrate positive outcomes for families involved. It shows how practitioners can use a cost effective package to improve the support offered to families, thereby improving their relationships and the quality of family life. It considers why there is a need for a programme to address adolescent to parent abuse in Kirklees and if the Step Up programme is worth using in the future as a programme which supports changing this behaviour.

The evaluation is not intended to compare Step Up to any other adolescent violence/abuse to parent programme and is not intended to suggest that Step Up is the best of these programmes. Moreover, it aims to prove that following a specific programme helps families to reduce this kind of behaviour.

Methodology

This evaluation has been produced by the Kirklees Stronger Families Project Manager who has used evidence from the following sources:

1. Behaviour checklists completed with some families both at the beginning, interim period and the end of the programme.
2. Case studies completed by practitioners delivering the programme with the families.
3. Parent discussions
4. Practitioner discussions.
5. Evidence/discussions from other groups in neighbouring authorities running similar programmes

The Step Up programme has been delivered by Family Support Workers and YOT Officers working with the YOT Parenting Officers. The workers have chosen to use the programme as they identified the adolescent violence/abuse to parents as an issue within the family after starting their work with them and saw the Step Up programme as an opportunity to use a structured piece of work with them to address the issue. The use of the programme has relied on practitioners feeling confident to deliver the programme on a 1:1 basis with families as no specific training has been given before delivery.

Evans, J (2014, October). Parent abuse: where has it come from? Presenting at the Child to Parent Abuse Practitioner Forum in Wakefield, suggested that young people being violent towards a parent can often have suffered earlier childhood trauma, such as witnessing DV between their parents or suffering neglect or having a bereavement which has not been acknowledged, for example. A small number of practitioners, decided not to participate because they did not feel equipped or skilled to address all the potential issues which could have emerged during the delivery of a programme.

At the time of writing this evaluation, the families are at different stages in the programme so some of the final "behaviour checklists" have not been completed. Therefore, some of the evidence of success has come from qualitative data for example, ongoing discussions with the practitioners and anecdotal evidence from the parents and young people. Because the Step Up programme has been part of another intervention for most of the families, it has been difficult to prioritise the completion of interim questionnaires and case studies as often the workers have had limited time with the families and have sometimes had to focus on other incidents that have occurred. For example, the YOT workers primary focus has had to be the statutory YOT order. For some Family Support Workers, the focus of some sessions
has been to address attendance issues or home environment issues. These factors need taking into account when looking at the sample of quantitative data.
Results

From the 10 families who started on the programme, 4 families have now completed it. All families complete a “behaviour checklist” at the beginning and end of the programme. There are individual ones for both parent and teen. The questions are rated out of 5, 5 being that things are happening almost every day and 1 being things that never happen. The final results below are from 2 families who completed both checklists, before and after the programme.

Family 1 – Parent

![Graph showing behavior checklist results for Family 1 (Parent)](image)

Family 1 – young person

![Graph showing behavior checklist results for Family 1 (Teen)](image)
Though the parent in this family never called the police herself; the Family Support Worker felt that the turning point was when he called the police and the young person was arrested for assaulting his Mum and left in a cell overnight. He was not allowed to return to his Mum on release from custody until Mum felt able to take him back. The young person was charged and is currently serving a YOT order; however, this was a significant turning point in his behaviour which may have happened without the use of the Step Up programme. However, since completing the programme Mum has reported (through a case study) that:

“It has helped a hell of a lot. It has helped him calm down and not be so aggressive. The guidance that Step Up has given has been vital in helping me make the change”. 
“Now I am always thinking ahead about things that might go wrong, how to fix them and how to stay safe”
“We now talk a lot more and I am much better at listening to him”
“I understand that I was a pushover and would do anything to avoid conflict with him”
“I can now recognise and praise his positive change and am much more willing to challenge disrespect or attitude”

The young person did not complete the whole course as he changed workers from a mentor to a YOT worker in the middle of the programme and didn’t engage in the programme as well at that point. However, the Family Support Worker and Mum felt it would be beneficial to continue with their part of the programme, hence the dramatic change in results and the change in the way she feels. From a case study produced by the worker, he reports the following with regards to the young person:

- There have been no recorded incidents of DV against Mum since we started undertaking the Step Up Sessions.
- The YP started a Build course at Kirklees College after the summer break and he is thoroughly enjoying this with full attendance at the time of writing. (27/10/14)
- There have been no recorded incidents of hate or knife crimes over the last several months.
- The YP hasn’t been charged with any offence (to my knowledge) since starting the Step Up Programme in February of this year.
Family 2: Parents’ results

The Family Support Worker involved in this case tracked the scores from the “Abuse wheel” with parents almost every month instead of completing the checklist as a progress measure. There is a significant change in scores for the parents with some dropping from 5 to 1 over the course of the programme. The young person would discuss the changes using the wheel but would not commit to scoring himself, although, he admitted at the end of the programme that he could see the changes he had made.

Quotes from before and after from both the young person and the parents are shown below:

Young person

Before: “I do all the behaviours in the abuse wheel, but I never asked my parents to be servants they did that themselves so why should it change.”

“Time out doesn’t work my parents follow me when I walk away.”

After: “I now enjoy family gatherings”.

Parents

Before: “I really find it hard to think about any positives about my child.”

“I didn’t realise how differently we were parenting”.

“My goal is losing my fear. I am scared of my son and what he will do next.”

After: “A change I have made within the first 7 sessions is to be more consistent.”
“There is no way I am going back to how things were before.”

“I have noticed that my son's good traits are becoming more frequent.”

“We haven’t had a physical assault for 4 months now.”

“I feel safer now we have a safety plan in place.”
Family 3

Results for this family are illustrated in the following case study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family details (anonymised details of family members- give pseudonyms not initials : age, gender, ethnicity)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single parent with two children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mum – Fiona- aged 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son – Mark- aged 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter – Alison - aged 17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Background and reason for referral to Step Up** (Illustrates the range and complexity of problems faced by the family)

Mark suffers with anger issues and wasn’t able to manage this when in school. This resulted in him having a series of outbursts towards teaching staff resulting in a fixed term of exclusion. His anger issues have also resulted in a referral to the ASB team due to anti-social behaviour. Fiona (Mum) stated that hundreds of complaints had been made against this Mark from neighbours when playing ball games out in the street. As a result police started patrolling the area which resulted in a referral to the Targeted Youth Support Service. Mark needed to be able to control his anger so he was able to stay in full time mainstream education and achieve his goals in school in getting the required grades to attend college. The behaviour he was displaying hindered his access to learning due to the time spent in isolation. His pupil support worker was supporting him in school in focusing on rebuilding relationships with other teaching staff members also ensuring that a structure was in place for when poor behaviour was displayed. Mark was a positive and motivated individual who admitted when he’d done wrong and was very much aware of when he was feeling stressed and angry and knew that he needed to be able to spot this early and control it before it became difficult to keep under control. Family members within the home tried to support him with this and were able to recognise the signs of anger early and keep Mark calm when at the family home; however, professionals struggled to do this when in school. It was felt that a structured programme would help the Mark to understand his emotions and be able to deal with them in all situations.

**Your analysis – What have been the benefits of the programme? What impact has it had on the family (both adult and YP). What improvements have been made?**

Step Up – The Family Support Worker visited Mark on a weekly basis to complete some of the Step Up modules. From completing sections of the Step up programme Mark is now able to recognise when he’s becoming stressed and angry and is now using the “Time out” technique to walk away from situations where he’s becoming upset and feels that his anger is going to take control. The goal setting sheets were very useful in getting him to set weekly goals for when he’s in school so that he’s able to achieve days were he’s not getting negative points against his name in school for behaviour or any isolations or detentions. The resources have proven useful in helping him to stay calm and focused when in school. Resources such as the relationship task in discussing who’s a positive influence within the family and which relationship isn’t positive and may possibly need working on have been extremely useful. This activity showed family members that Mark can at times lash out and says things that he regrets however he’s very loving and appreciative of the support in which he receives from his family. This activity was an emotional time for the family. Mark has since gone on to receive awards in school for good behaviour and making the most progress. Cards and praise letters now take pride of place in his bedroom. No further support was needed by the Pupil Referral Unit and he is now on target to achieve in school. Family members have noticed a shift in behaviour from not wanting to attend school to enjoying school and coming across motivated and determined in achieving his dream job as a police officer. Fiona states that she no longer worries about receiving calls from school to inform her of her son’s behaviour.
What have the family or others said about the difference this intervention has made?

Family members are no longer worried about Mark as to whether he’s disturbing other pupils in class and having serious outbursts towards teaching staff. They now feel positive about this boy’s future due to him now feeling more motivated and determined in achieving the needed grades to attend college due to feeling school are giving him another chance to prove that he’s capable. The programme helped show that anger is manageable and it’s ok to take time out and walk away from heated situations. Family members have seen a difference in that he now enjoys attending school and they do not have to have disagreements about going to school and having to persuade him to get out of bed which use to lead to heated arguments. Mark received numerous letters and cards from teaching staff in informing him of how proud they are with his progress in school. This programme has helped in keeping this young person focused in making the needed changes at home and in school and putting a plan in place to calm him down when feeling angry and stressed.

What has been learned by using the programme? Have you any recommendations for future use? Include any parent or YP comments.

Children can feel angry and sometimes they don’t always know where it has stemmed from. Putting time aside to talk to the child about how they feel when they become angry helps them not to feel scared and alone. Doing this will ease the stress and anger resulting in very few outbreaks. If children are left to deal with anger alone it can be too much, this programme helped me as a worker and this family understand how important it is to talk about feelings and emotions as a family.

This worker used the materials in a different way, mainly with the young person but picking out certain activities to complete with the whole family. However, again, it gave some structure to her work and a programme to follow to address some of these issues which aren’t necessarily just about anger management. The scores from before and after showed a significant change in behaviour and relationship between mother and son. (Mum’s scores: reduced from 44 to 26, the young person’s scores: reduced from 41 to 23)
Family 4

Again, the results are illustrated in a case study as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family details (anonymised details of family members- give pseudonyms not initials : age, gender, ethnicity)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single parent – three children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mum – Evelyn - aged 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son - Andrew - aged 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daughter - Melanie - aged 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daughter – Amelia - aged 4</td>
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<tr>
<th>Background and reason for referral to Step Up (Illustrates the range and complexity of problems faced by the family)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anger issues – Andrew - aged 11 years is unable to control his anger issues and at times can lash out at Evelyn (Mum) and siblings in a violent manner. Evidence shows that Evelyn has hit Andrew when in school in an angry and aggressive manner which resulted in a referral to children’s social care. Andrew has previously witnessed numerous domestic violence incidents and was threatened by his step-father. Family members and school professionals have found it very difficult in managing Andrew’s behaviour and as a result school staff have had to use restraining methods in order to protect other children and school staff from violent outbreaks. This family was at breaking point prior to the family support referral, family members and school staff had evidence to suggest that Evelyn was possibly self-harming and had very little self-esteem. Andrew didn’t have a good relationship with extended family and school staff and wasn’t achieving in school. Positive relationships with peers were not being built.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your analysis – What have been the benefits of the programme? What impact has it had on the family (both adult and YP). What improvements have been made?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Since completing the programme Andrew is now able to recognise his anger at an early stage and able to manage this and keep it under control due to completing the Step Up programme. Professionals have seen an improvement in Andrew’s behaviour in that his self-esteem has improved dramatically; he is now a happy boy who enjoys home life and school life. Family life is much more organised due to the family following a routine and having clear routines and boundaries in place in managing the children’s behaviour. Evelyn is no longer self-harming and feels very confident for the future in terms of her job prospects and her children’s education and future. All aspects of the family support referral are now completed. Whilst completing the programme Andrew was able to reflect on positive aspects of each family member, overall building on relationships with them. He is aware that it’s good to take time out away from stressful situations and have a set period of time to reflect and try and understand why he may be feeling angry and upset. Skills are now in place such as talking about feelings to close family members as well as writing down thoughts and feelings. Relaxation time is also used within the family home which is a set period of time in which Andrew listens to music when feeling agitated or stressed. This time was not previously made available and so there was nowhere for him to relax and de-stress when needed. Evelyn is also aware of the importance in giving her son time to have relaxation and time out and ensure that she’s able to take time out to sit with Andrew and discuss any concerns or worries when needed. Family members are now fully aware on how Andrew’s negative experiences such as witnessing domestic violence have had some impact on his behaviour.</td>
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<tr>
<th>What have the family or others said about the difference this intervention has made?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family members have stated that they now see a happy young boy who’s enjoying life. Professionals feel that they have seen a change in behaviour and that if the techniques are continued to be used Andrew will succeed educationally and do really well in school. Family life is now relatively stress-free.</td>
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<tr>
<th>What has been learned by using the programme? Have you any recommendations for</th>
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Young children are not always aware of how to keep themselves calm when in a stressful situation and often follow what is learnt behaviour through their childhood. For example, if a child has witnessed domestic violence when growing up they are more likely to lash out in anger when feeling angry upset and stressed because they have seen adults act in such a way. Talking to children about calming themselves down helps them to understand that it’s ok to walk away from a stressful situation in order to do this. Family members are not always able to support with this especially if the family is a complex family with other issues that are influencing family life. Parents are focusing more on trying to make the needed changes for their family. This can lead to parents dealing with behavioural issues in the wrong way such as using negative discipline rather than sitting down and discussing the root of the problem.

The Step Up programme for this family helped the parent to understand how behaviour the young person had witnessed had an effect on him. It helped them to focus on getting through this together and so they could then move on with other issues separately.

Qualitative data

Two particular families started the programme, one with a Targeted Youth Support Worker and one with a Family Support Worker, whose work had to be abandoned when the children were taken into care. However, they still reported benefits of using some of the sessions of the programme particularly with the young people who were trying to understand some of their own behaviours; what were the triggers for their anger, for example.

Another Family Support Worker supporting a family where a child was using threatening behaviour, including threatening parents with knives and being obsessed with violent games, has worked with him and both parents and has seen slow but positive results. She reiterates the facts that the programme has provided her with some focused work to tackle the subject but has also helped her to deal with some wider issues which have included wider family relationships, educational and learning issues for the young person.

Although we have worked with a small number of families in our pilot, those families that have completed the Step Up programme and the practitioners delivering it feel that it has contributed significantly to changing the behaviours of the young people involved towards their parents and has improved relationships within the families. The practitioners involved have also all said that if the programme wasn’t available, they were unsure how they would have addressed the adolescent violence/abuse to parent issue in the household. They have reported the following strengths and challenges of the programme being delivered on a 1:1 basis:

Strengths:

- Programme flexibility as sessions can be delivered in any order, and some can be left out altogether if necessary.
- The programme can be delivered to only parent or young person, even if the other party disengages.
- The programme is free to use, requires no special training and we have written permission from King County to deliver this programme. The development work has already been done (changing language and examples from U.S. to U.K.)
- It is evidence based, endorsed by managers and being used by other councils in England. (Derby, Hull, Rotherham and adapted in Wakefield)
- Workers who are part of a larger MAST have been able to communicate the positives from the sessions to all the other workers who relay the positives back to the family on home visits.
• 1:1 sessions can often be tailored to that individual/family

Challenges:
• Time taken to complete sessions due to reactive work required relating to immediate issues or depths of relationship difficulties, or sessions cancelled by family member.
• Challenges in getting both parent and young person to work constructively together
• Preparation work needed beforehand with family members on relationships, power and control and tactics to try and calm the situation down
• Level of maturity needed for a young person to engage with the material
• Some sessions have lasted 2-3 weeks because of some issues that have been uncovered or conflicts
• 21 weeks is a long time to try and keep the family engaged
• Most facilitators felt it would be better to work on a case jointly with the programme to get the best out of it as well as being less time constraining. Managers need to be aware of the time needed and allow for this with the wider caseloads. The course could also take longer than 21 weeks due to some of the other issues it brings up and other issues that have to be dealt with in the household in general.
• Some of the sessions are quite dry and would benefit from extra tools and resources to use with them; however, time is needed to prepare the extra resources.

Costs and Benefits

The pilot

The pilot programme has been delivered at almost no additional costs, only printing of some hard copies of the booklets.

Because the workers were already in place and they were using the Step Up programme as part of their usual work, there were no extra staffing costs involved. They also delivered sessions either in the family home or within a school or service setting, so there were no other venue costs to pay for.

Initially approximately a week was spent adapting the programme into the English language (removing all the Americanisms and adapting scenarios used in the exercises to make more sense to our young people). There was some initial preparation time involved in delivery, practitioners making sure they can deliver the sessions and preparing extra resources if needed. Also, preparation was needed to make sure they were ready for supporting anything else that might arise in the sessions.

Costs for future programme

If proposals are carried forward from this evaluation, the following costs will need to be considered:

• Cost of back filling the role of the workers involved in the pool of trainers delivering the programme. (4 x family support or parenting support role)

• Cost of training courses to be delivered to trainers before delivering the course (payment of trainers, venues, refreshments, release of staff)
• Time allocated to deliver the programme effectively (21+ weeks)

• Cost of delivering a support group for parents after every 5/6 sessions (venue, refreshments)

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although based on a small pilot study, the programme has delivered positive results in all cases. Our results show that both the violent and verbal abuse reduced significantly by the end of the programme. The case studies and quotes also show that there have been significant positive changes within the families.

A previous evaluation conducted in Seattle by the Organisational Research Services showed that the programme has reduced recidivism in young people involved in youth offending where violence and abuse towards their parents is also prevalent. Findings as follows:

Organizational Research Services 2005 Evaluation of 151 Step-Up participants:

• “Those youth who completed the Step-Up interventions have lower recidivism rates than youth who did not complete the intervention.
• At 18 months, the rates of Referrals, Filings, DV Referrals and DV filings are substantially lower for the Completers.
• The average number of DV Referrals and DV filings is less than half that of Non-Completers.
• After 12 months, the average number of Filings among Non-Completers is twice as high as the average among Completers.

We have researched alternative approaches to tackling family violence which have had equally positive results. We visited Wakefield where they have adapted the Step Up programme, now called “Do it Different”. We heard directly from parents and their children how taking part in the programme had changed their relationship and the impact were such that it had made their environment a much happier and safer place to be. Before embarking on the Step Up Programme in Kirklees other avenues had also been explored, for example, the work of the Women’s Centre in Calderdale, the programme used in Leeds – PACT, however it was felt that the Step Up programme would be the most cost effective and practical way to pilot approaches to tackling teen violence in Kirklees. Practitioners have continuously said how flexible the programme is, it can be tailored to individual needs, it’s free to use and is evidence based.

Therefore I would like to make the following recommendations for the future of the programme based on the elements that have worked well in the pilot, feedback from both practitioners and parents who have been involved, discussions with those practitioners on their experiences of delivering other types of programmes, and from the research conducted in other areas:

1. A definition of adolescent to parent violence/abuse should be developed and agreed locally, leading to a better understanding of the nature and prevalence of the problem, and development of a multi-agency strategy to quantify and tackle the issue in Kirklees.

Bright, J (2014, October). Introduction and overview of child to parent abuse, Presenting at the Child to Parent Abuse Practitioner Forum in Wakefield told us that the only definitions of adolescent violence/abuse come from abroad. Canadian researcher, Barbara Cottrell (2001) defines it as “an act committed by a child done to
intentionally cause physical, psychological, or financial pain to gain control and power over a parent”.
Australian researcher, Rosemary Paterson (2002) defines it as follows: “behaviour of one family member is considered violent if others in the family feel threatened, intimidated and controlled”
A message that came from the forum as a whole is that local authorities and services within, have found it hard to define adolescent violence/abuse towards parents as a form of domestic abuse and therefore have been slow to respond to it. Now it’s starting to be identified in Kirklees, a response is needed across a wider arena.

2. **A specific referral route into the Step Up programme – for practitioners who identify a need to be able to refer a family for support from the programme.**
Since the Step Up programme has been advertised on the Kirklees Council Service Menu and through the Stronger Families Programme, 6 practitioners have wanted to refer families onto the programme as a means of support for families experiencing violence and abuse from their adolescents. However, a specific referral route has not been identified and as such, practitioners are delivering the programme if they feel they are able and receiving support from the Stronger Families Project Manager and their peers in the form of network meetings. A referral route needs to be established which is similar to the referral route into other programmes.

3. **To create a pool of trainers to deliver the programme on a 1:1 basis with referred families.**
Delivering the Step Up programme as a pilot has relied on practitioners, mainly within the Family Support Service, to firstly identify the issues and then feel confident to deliver the programme with the family. They have also had to deal with other issues that have occurred throughout the programme. Some of the sessions have brought about other issues that need discussing and there have often been wider issues that the worker has had to deal with on some of their visits. Feedback from the Family Support Workers, and indeed, some practitioners who have wanted to refer families to the programme, is that to run the programme in the future it would be better to have a specific pool of trainers who are confident in delivery and can focus solely on a small number of families allowing the time to deliver it and deal with other issues that might occur. It would also allow for the programme to be run in a much more structured way. After visiting the Rosalie Ryrie Foundation in Wakefield, discussions were held within our progress group as to whether the programme should be delivered as group sessions. This is how the programme was originally designed and how most other local authorities use it. However, we concluded that it would be very costly, needing at least 4 facilitators per session, a weekly venue with refreshments and wouldn’t allow the sessions to take a different course if necessary when other family issues occur as there would be time constraints.

4. **Specific training for the practitioners before delivering the course, particularly around supporting the family with wider issues that occur as a result of some of the sessions which can be sensitive and intense.**
Although the workers delivering the programme have felt confident when embarking on it, they have expressed a need to have more skills on dealing with some of the issues that have occurred. Through experience of delivering the Step Up programme, practitioners have identified further training needs such as: knowledge and skills to address wider family issues; training in programme delivery (train the trainers); basic counselling and enhanced skills in developing resilience in families. This would need to be explored more as to what they felt they needed.
5. The worker to be allocated enough time to work with the family embarking on the programme.
   This element is key to the delivery of the programme for all the reasons mentioned above. If there was a pool of trainers they would be able to focus exclusively on delivery of the Step Up programme, while others worked on wider family issues. They would have time to work more flexibly as required, focusing on a specialised caseload.

6. The course to continue to run as 1:1 sessions with families. However, the opportunity for the individuals to be brought together as a support group after every 5 sessions for example, to review progress so far and to be able to gain support from others.
   It was clear from our visit to the Rosalie Ryrie Foundation in Wakefield that the parents in the group we visited gained a huge amount by being with other parents in similar situations. Although we would like to deliver the programme on a 1:1 basis, we feel it would benefit parents and young people to have the support of other parents in similar situations and so propose that they have network sessions after every 5/6 sessions delivered to talk to others, gain support and to be able to continue that support network when the programme has drawn to a close. Parents in Wakefield told us that “it was vital for them to know that they weren’t alone in their situation.”

7. A regular peer support group for practitioners to discuss progress and any issues they are encountering.
   From experience over the last 12 months of the pilot, not only is it important for parents and young people to gain support from a network of others, it is important for the practitioners delivering the programme to gain support from each other. Over the course of the year, we have held regular progress meetings for practitioners to be able to get together and discuss how things are going with their families, share ideas and “feel safe in the knowledge that I am doing it right”. These meetings need to continue for practitioners if the programme is rolled out.

8. Regular reflective supervision for practitioners to discuss the wider issues affecting the families.
   If a pool of trainers is established, it is vital that they continue to receive reflective supervision as they are currently within their own teams. The programme is dealing with an extremely difficult and sensitive issue which the practitioners need to discuss at length and gain support from a supervisor where necessary. The supervision of the trainers needs to be negotiated and discussed further with the above proposals.