



**“Future Men is the single best outside intervention I have seen in my 7 years as a teacher.” (Primary School in Wandsworth)**

Clearly, we are thrilled to have such a resounding endorsement of our work and support we provide to boys and young men in schools. What does this statement relate to, however?

In this article, we want to share information about the programme of support we deliver, who we support and how they are selected, the outcomes we achieve and what young people, parents and schools say about our work.

### **Who are Future Men?**

Working With Men (WWM), the previous name of the charity, was founded in 1988 after the suicide of a teenage boy in his home. This raised questions for them over the behaviour/needs and support of boys and young men and how these are addressed in wider society. At this time, under the heading of boys and men’s development, much of the work consisted of reports, publications, developing resources and research around the subject of boys/men’s development including consultations with communities which resulted in the production of numerous reports, for a wide audience. WWM provided support to men’s groups in the local area and worked with the local authority.

Future Men strives to promote a better future for every boy, every man and everyone, through inspiring boys and men to become dynamic future men, by giving them the confidence to discover what it means to be a man. Through our practice-led services we encourage boys and men to explore, celebrate and build on the seven characteristics that we believe contribute to positive masculinity.

### **What work does the Schools’ Team deliver?**

Our schools work supports boys as they go through key transitions in their lives, inspiring them to make positive choices for their futures. The Boys’ Development Programme is delivered to boys in the final years of primary school, preparing for transition, and to boys at varying stages of secondary school. The programme of support is designed to be preventative meaning that Future Men most frequently supports boys who are at risk of negative outcomes, such as school exclusion, though they may not have experienced them. Combining one-to-one mentoring and group sessions, the programme encourages boys to improve their skills in effective communication, conflict management and emotional literacy. The programme facilitates positive peer mentoring and is tailored to be inclusive of all school aged boys including those who may be at risk of disengagement or exclusion. Through meaningful activities and discussions, boys are encouraged to thrive in education, develop their aspirations and to navigate the challenges of male adolescence.

Boys and young men are referred for support by the school. The criteria is young people at risk of poor outcomes and needing improvement in positive engagement with staff and families, while also seeking mixed groups to best facilitate peer learning. The makeup of service users in the academic year 2020/21 the vast majority of service user were aged 10 to 11. We do not capture the ethnic profile of service users in groups settings in line with the General Data Protection Regulations act but a good estimate would be that 80% of service users are of minority ethnic backgrounds. We are currently delivering support in the boroughs of Wandsworth, Lambeth, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and Southwark Across the breadth of service users, 76% hold postcodes in the three most deprived deciles by the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

### **How have you responded to the pandemic?**

The pandemic has thrown up numerous challenges with school closures, social distancing, Health and Safety Risk Assessments meaning reduction in group and face-to-face work while adapting service delivery around home schooling. The Schools Team has responded remarkably. The Project Coordinators have maintained contact with service users through phone calls, texts and video conferencing where possible.

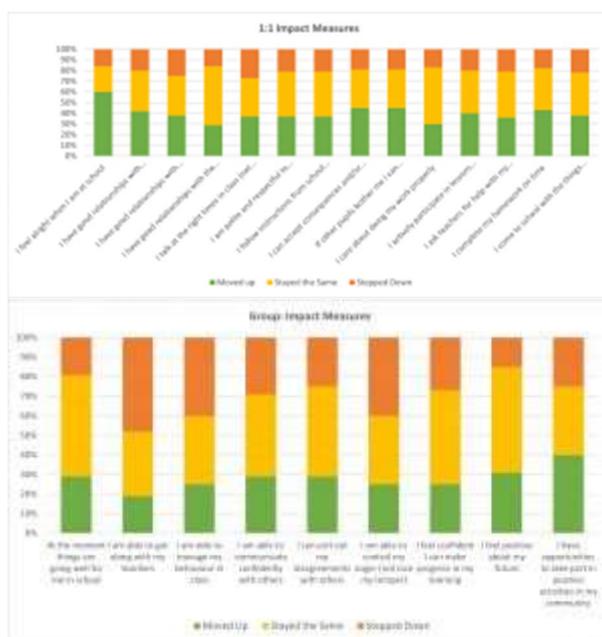
In July 2020, we surveyed parents of service users to understand how they felt about the support we delivered during the height of the lockdown and their observations of their children, with 95% agreeing that the support provided had a positive impact on their children during the period of school closure. “He enjoys talking on the phone to someone that’s not from the family, his attitude picks up and he’s a bit more relaxed after speaking on the phone,” was the statement of one parent/carer. Demotivation was noted by a number of parents but this parent noted, “At first my son did not understand why he had to this but then changed his mind as found it helpful. Future Men gave my son encouragement and confidence to get things done.”

Young people themselves noted a lack of motivation and stated that Future Men had supported them to find it again, “It has been so good for me talking with this guy, he really helps me and gets me. He pushes me to be the best person of myself and tells me how it is.”

Schools also gave positive feedback of the remote support with one school responding to say, “the support that the children have received, despite the challenges faced due to COVID-19 has been fantastic. The children were supported remotely following lockdown and the continuation of provision for these children has meant a lot for these children, particularly as they will be transitioning to secondary school, and the fact they have been at home/missed school for a prolonged time.”

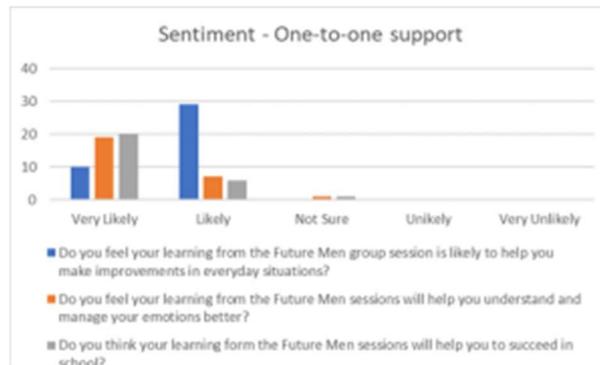
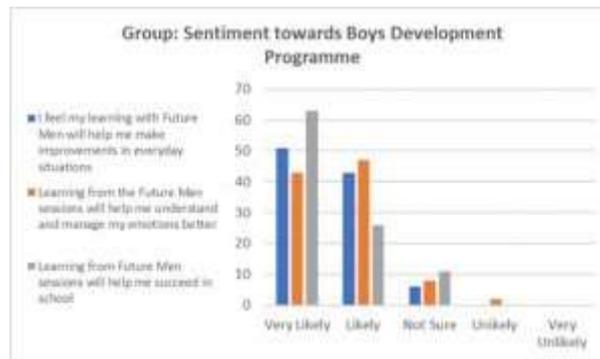
### How do you measure what you deliver?

It is important to evidence the change made by our support and we use pre and post-questionnaires to track and tabulate. The following chart show the self-reported statements of service users in group and one-to-one contexts:



Many looking at these charts will note that a significant proportion of service users “stay the same”, i.e. they do not change. These results fit right in line with the programme’s expectations of prevention and maintaining positive behaviour while navigating daily challenges faced in school.

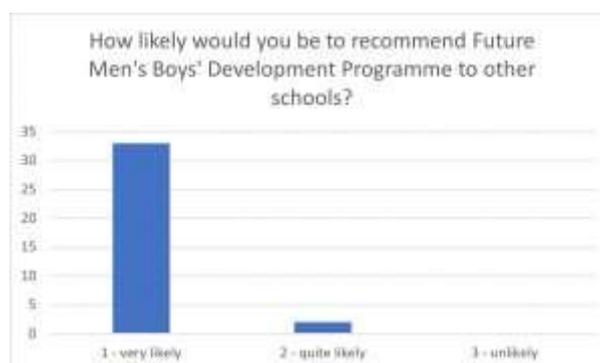
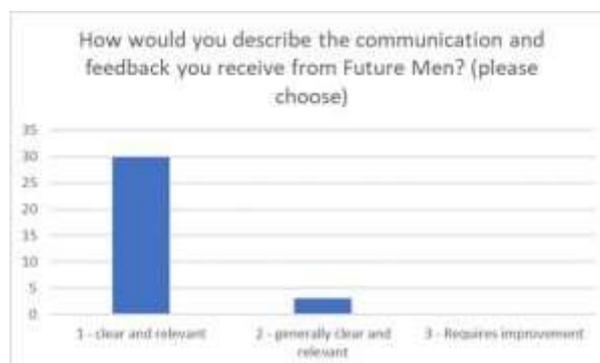
We also ask service users for their sentiments about the possible long-term benefits of the programme. The responses in 2020/21 were:



These figures indicate that service users feel very positive about the programme’s support for change over their long-term.

### What do the schools say about your work?

It goes without saying that none of these outcomes could be recognised without the support of our largest partners; schools. In June 2021, we gathered feedback from them across a number of areas, asking them also for open feedback about our programme and the impact we have had. This was what they had to say:



In more depth, teachers say:

“Consistently clear and helpful feedback with myself and relevant teachers in the school. Communication is always clear and with notice which helps make the working relationship effective.”

“Ronan has had considerable impact on the boys he has supported 1-1 – he supports them well pastorally whilst also holding the line on expectations. He uses very good language for describing how to manage their emotions. The groups have also gone very well and all boys involved have benefitted from them.”

“Referral process is straight forward and parents understand what they are engaging with. Referrals help develop a quick idea of what the boys’ needs are and who both the school and Future Men can begin to support.”

“Working with Tiara has been amazing. She is very kind, considerate and extremely flexible especially with bubbles shutting down. The spreadsheets are always very detailed and it really supports me and the other year 6 teachers with the boys.”

“The impact is clear in the feedback Ben gives, but also in how they transfer the skills/learning to class and different situations.”

“The programme fits in with the school’s inclusive provision. Courtney works with the school to ensure that conversations he has with pupils are relevant and address the school’s concerns.”

“Stefan communicates weekly with us about the boys and we also share anything which we feel is relevant. It is a very positive experience.”

### **How do you get in touch with us?**

This article has given you, the reader, insight into what the Schools Team of Future Men delivers, how we measure impact and the outcomes we achieve. Are we proud of our work? Unquestionably, we are and we are consistently motivated to deliver the best outcomes for those we work with.

If you represent a Local Authority or school in London and want to find out more about partnering with us, please visit, <https://futuremen.org/work-with-us/>.

(Written June 2021)