

## Impact Report 2023 - 2024

The incredible results recorded this year continue to indicate that Family Compass services have a consistently positive impact on children, young people and families. For the 7<sup>th</sup> year running, the majority of those we support told us that things had improved between starting and completing a programme of support.

This year, as well as looking at the whole service, we have also separated out our contracted and community provision, giving us the opportunity to identify any differences in impact. It was heartening to see a similar picture of positive progress across the board, although the amount of change was slightly higher with our Inhale/Exhale provision for both improving confidence and self-belief and managing strong feelings effectively.

Family Compass monitors the achievement of outcomes for every child we support in three areas:

1. Confidence and self-belief
2. Positive relationships with others
3. Managing strong feelings effectively

### Outcome 1: confidence and self-belief

	Average starting score	Average ending score	Average change
<b>Contracted</b>	5.88	7.37	+1.49
<b>Inhale/Exhale</b>	5.20	7.27	+2.07
<b>All</b>	5.60	7.33	+1.73

### Outcome 2: positive relationships with others

	Average starting score	Average ending score	Average change
<b>Contracted</b>	5.80	7.71	+1.91
<b>Inhale/Exhale</b>	6.11	7.75	+1.64
<b>All</b>	5.93	7.72	+1.79

### Outcome 3: managing strong feelings effectively

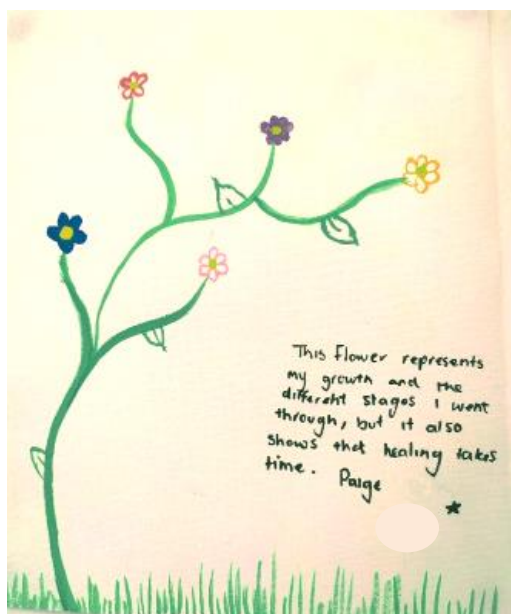
	Average starting score	Average ending score	Average change
Contracted	5.78	7.26	+1.48
Inhale/Exhale	4.02	6.70	+2.68
All	5.07	7.04	+1.97

For all our support, **93%** of children and young people who responded indicated that they had made progress in at least one of our three outcomes areas; **82%** felt that they had made progress in two or more areas. These figures were slightly higher for those receiving Inhale/Exhale support. It is possible to theorise that one of the reasons for this, and the overall larger increase in several outcome areas, may be that supporting families with their mental health challenges earlier, before they become entrenched, results in a greater positive impact. We will need to review the data over the years to come to assess whether this holds true.

After a review, this year we have stopped using the Goodman Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and have begun to use Goal Based Outcomes which better reflect children’s individual goals and experiences. We will be able to report on these next year.

As well as these quantitative measures, we also value the qualitative feedback which really illustrates the impact we have. Below are a few examples of the experiences of children, families and referrers for whom the support offered by Family Compass has made a life-changing difference, followed by a case study for a specific project.

#### Feedback from children



*“This flower represents my growth and the stages I went through, but it also shows that healing takes time”*

“I have a better mood and am a bit more chill. I’m less anxious, because we’ve talked about my story.”

“Whenever I feel scared now I know what to do.”

“I definitely can control things when I’m angry or sad now.”

*“Not all cakes are perfect, but all cakes are yummy”*



#### **Feedback from parents/carers**

“We feel he’s come a long way, and your sessions have been an important part of that progress. You made him feel so safe. We know there will be ups and downs but your time with him has been invaluable, especially as you actually ‘saw’ him as an individual.”

“A has been struggling with emotions, self-esteem and confidence, and finding school difficult particularly. He’s been able to self-regulate more with breathing, and has been able to talk about his emotions. These sessions have helped him understand and talk about things more.”

“B is happier in herself and getting on better at school.”

“It has been an absolute pleasure to have D work with you. He has such a great admiration for you, and we both feel buckets of admiration for your hard work. Your words are truly inspiring, and I might need a few days before I’m able to read your poem without crying, but will do so with love and pride. You have helped D on so many levels and he has finally found his voice. Words cannot express how proud I am.”

“It’s been incredible to see F’s progress; it has been so inspiring to see how her confidence and ability to articulate her thoughts have improved over the weeks since she started coming to see you. The art has clearly been a huge influence. I wish there was something similar for adults!”



## Feedback from referrers

“Just thank you...C’s support worker has been a pleasure to work with. The level of support Family Compass have provided has been invaluable to improving C’s wellbeing and access to school.”

“Thank you again. Schools are limited in how much they can support parents at home, so having a service that acknowledges that the needs of the child cannot be separated from the needs of the family has been so powerful.”

“S is much more regulated at school and home. She has begun to name emotions and understand herself more. She has an improved ability to build relationships with others.”

## Case Study

### **Project Spotlight : Ilfracombe Police and Crime Commissioner/Devon Community Foundation Safer Communities Grant**

This grant provided support for young people in the Ilfracombe community who presented with antisocial behaviour, providing two options to engage through either **one-to-one** sessions or **group support**. In addition to the presenting needs, the majority of the young people were from families experiencing one or more of the following: financial hardship; family breakdown; parental drug/alcohol misuse; contact with youth justice services; parental involvement with police.

### **One-to-One Support**

We provided six tailored one-to-one support packages for young people aged 12 to 18 in the community. Our standard approach involved weekly one-hour sessions over 12 weeks. However, session duration often increased, averaging 2.5 hours, including planning and recording time. The level of engagement varied, with young people receiving between 2 and 16 sessions. While one young person chose not to continue, overall participation exceeded our initial expectations, given the potential challenges in engagement.

Each support package was personalised based on individual needs, focusing on relationship-building, confidence, and personal strengths. Activities included:

- Connecting with the National Trust to explore volunteering opportunities
- Supporting access to and participation in local gym sessions
- Facilitating safe reconnections with family members
- Using creative techniques to express emotions and develop coping strategies

Sessions took place in various settings, including schools and the local community, ensuring accessibility and relevance to each young person’s circumstances.

### **The Next Wave Transition Group**

We facilitated a transition group for seven young people moving from primary to secondary school in partnership with Ilfracombe Junior School and Ilfracombe Academy.

Participants were identified based on early indicators of challenges such as anti-social behaviour, school difficulties, or family involvement with the police. Recognising that the transition to secondary school can be particularly challenging—especially for children who struggle with change, boundaries, and emotional regulation—the group aimed to provide preventative support.

Using a strengths-based approach, the programme helped participants:

- Build confidence and recognise their strengths
- Develop a sense of control when facing difficult choices
- Identify trusted individuals to seek help from when needed

The group's activities were hands-on and engaging, including music, art, gardening/nature, and sports. Projects were designed to encourage community involvement, such as working on a forest school area at the primary school. Alongside these activities, guided discussions addressed the challenges of transition, helping young people navigate this crucial stage with greater resilience. By supporting a structured and strengths-based transition to secondary school, the group helped young people develop self-regulation skills, build confidence, and form positive peer relationships—all key protective factors against future involvement in antisocial behaviour. Activities such as music, art, and outdoor projects engaged participants in constructive ways while allowing for important discussions around managing change, boundaries, and making positive choices.



*Photographs from the community forest school project carried out by the group*



### **What went well?**

Several aspects of the project were particularly successful in its delivery.

Building trusting relationships was a key strength, as young people were given the time and space to talk and connect with a trusted adult. This support was essential in helping them process their experiences and feel heard.

The project's flexibility and responsiveness also played a major role in its success. Being able to adapt to the needs of young people and respond to requests within the community was invaluable. The involvement of two therapeutic mentors, Jim and Beth, allowed for strong links with key services, including schools and the police. This multi-agency collaboration not only enhanced the support provided but also strengthened Family Compass's relationships with local organisations, leading to a shared use of space at the family hub.

The Next Wave Transition group created a safe and open environment for young people to express their thoughts and feelings. While school can often feel restrictive, the group provided a space where they felt safe to share and be themselves. The energy levels were high at times, but structured activities helped contain and develop this energy into positive engagement.

A particularly interesting aspect of the group was the way young people bonded over shared experiences, particularly around the transition to secondary school. Some began to identify the group with labels. While this could have been seen as self-stigmatising, it often felt more like a way for them to connect and find common ground. The group fostered a sense of belonging, which was particularly valuable for those struggling with change.

Finally, there were many inspiring stories from young people who had faced significant adversity yet engaged well and showed progress throughout the project. Their journeys highlight the importance of early intervention and demonstrate the real impact that this support has had on their lives. There is an example of this below.

### **What were the challenges?**

Over the course of delivering the project, we gained valuable insights into how best to support young people facing complex challenges. One key learning point was the need to provide support for transport. While the young people lived in the local community, many still needed assistance with getting to the sessions. This often meant arranging for them to be collected to ensure they could attend. In the future, factoring in time and resources for transport would help improve attendance and ensure all young people are able to access the support available.

We also recognised the importance of building stronger relationships with parents and carers. Many of the young people involved had limited support at home, not due to a lack of willingness from their parents but because they were often struggling with their own challenges. In the future, dedicating more time to parental engagement—through meetings, regular check-ins, and additional support—could help strengthen their involvement and reinforce the benefits of the programme beyond the sessions themselves.

Throughout the project, we worked with a cohort of young people who are often seen as “hard to reach” due to their backgrounds or challenges. However, despite some obstacles, the young people who engaged with the project did so without reluctance. They were genuinely happy and eager to have sessions with their mentors, showing great willingness and potential. It was inspiring to see the positive energy and engagement they brought to the sessions. We truly feel honoured to have had the opportunity to spend time with these young people, and we hope the project has made a positive impact on their lives. Their openness and enthusiasm demonstrated the possibility of positive change, and we believe this project has helped to nurture that potential.

Another key learning was the value of ongoing support beyond the initial intervention. While the sessions had a positive impact, it became clear that many of the young people would benefit from continued check-ins and one-to-one support to help them maintain progress and navigate any new challenges they face. Securing follow-up funding to extend the sessions and provide longer-term support would be a priority for future projects.

If additional funding were available, we would be keen to expand the cohort area across North Devon, offering one-to-one support for up to 10 young people, with the option to access group sessions if desired. This approach would enable us to reach more young people in need of support across the region. While there were enough referrals for this project, we know from our wider Inhale Exhale programme that demand far exceeds capacity, with many young people still waiting for support. The number of referrals we receive suggests that the spaces allocated for this project could have been filled many times over, reinforcing the need for expanded provision.

### **C’s experience**

*“A young person, living in a challenging environment with limited opportunities, spent much of his time at home, playing video games and watching online videos. At school, he attended only two hours a day, focusing mainly on Maths and English GCSEs. He dreamed of becoming a carpenter, but was uncertain about how to move forward.*

*When we first began working together, C seemed unsure and overwhelmed, struggling to find a path forward. We started by getting outside, walking and talking about his challenges and aspirations. Over time, we explored the idea of joining a gym to improve his physical and mental wellbeing. Despite financial concerns, we were able to arrange a gym pass and induction, which he really enjoyed.*

*He soon connected with a gym support person who shared their own weight loss journey, which inspired him to start developing a healthy eating plan. Although he couldn't get financial support from home, we helped cover the cost of a two-month gym membership to keep him motivated.*

*This confidence grew, and he applied for a job in the local community, securing work in a kitchen. Not only did this help with his family’s finances, but it also allowed him to continue going to the gym.*



*By the end of the sessions, he had completed his exams, found a job, and continued his gym attendance. More importantly, he gained self-confidence and a sense of direction. What started as a young person feeling stuck at home ended with him taking courageous steps to build a more positive future.*

*While our support has ended, I am confident that C will continue to build on the strength he's discovered within himself. He has proven that with the right encouragement, support, and determination, there is no limit to what he can achieve."*

***Jim, Therapeutic Mentor***