

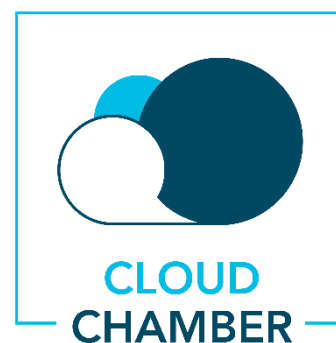
Research findings and reflections

Asset-based working with young people

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Authors: Emma Roberts and Marnie Freeman.
Illustrations by Hazel Mead

Commissioned by Paul Hamlyn Foundation



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Foreword

Ruth Pryce, Head of Programme: Young People

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Paul Hamlyn Foundation have been funding organisations who work in an asset-based way for over five years. During this time we have learnt a huge amount about what this work looks like in practice - we have commissioned an evaluation, worked alongside advisors with expertise in asset-based approaches, and explored this work directly with young people to understand the difference it makes to their experiences.

This latest commission offers case study examples of asset-based working, showcasing three organisations and sharing reflections to support others who may want to develop their practice further. This report isn't a comprehensive summary of all aspects of asset-based working, but builds on work to date and offers another entry point into these approaches and practices.

As we continue to fund work that champions and develops asset-based working with and for young people, we will continue to explore this way of working by supporting communities of practice; developing practical resources and tools; and by encouraging ongoing practice, understanding and development. As the report reflects, this is not about the label, language or conceptual framing we use, but about recognising that an explicit emphasis on how work is delivered and experienced is critically important. We hope it provides further insight and resources to support your understanding and practice in asset-based working.

1 Introduction

1.1 About this document

Paul Hamlyn Foundation commissioned Emma and Marnie at Cloud Chamber to develop three case studies from organisations funded by the Paul Hamlyn Youth Fund that work specifically in asset-based ways.

The brief was for the case studies to illuminate what works in different youth organisations, so that the 'how' and 'what' of asset-based working (ABW) feels more tangible. This builds upon an evaluation by Renaisi and Thornton (2019)¹ of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Youth Fund which articulated a framework for ABW in Youth-Funded organisations (described below in section 1.2).

What is asset-based working?

Asset-based working looks different in different contexts, but the core principle is that everyone has strengths, gifts or 'assets' that should be as a starting point for service delivery, community development and/or organisational development. Asset-based approaches are often contrasted with 'deficit-based' work which focuses on needs, problems and issues rather than strengths.

The goal of these case studies is to provide an inspiring resource for organisations hoping to work with young people in an asset-based way. While the research has been conducted with organisations working with young people, some of the lessons will be applicable to a range of settings, working with people of all ages.

This report brings together the learning from the case studies to reflect on ABW as a 'practice' which we hope will be of interest to a range of funders, practitioners and leaders.

Note to the reader from the researchers:

To delivery organisations,

Many of the organisations reading this report will realise that you're doing lots of these activities already. Exactly! We hope these case studies shine a light on what you're already doing, your strengths and organisational uniqueness. These case studies have been written in a way to give you space and motivation to think about what tweaks you can make to what you do already. We hope to bust some of the myths around asset-based working (ABW) and to demystify some of the jargon

We hope that you relate to the activities and philosophies that make ABW so do-able and find the insights useful and supportive.

¹ Renaisi (2019) Evaluation of the Paul Hamlyn Youth Fund and Thornton (2019) Asset-based working with young people, published by Renaisi.

To funders,

If you are looking to establish support for organisations to work more overtly in an asset-based way, we hope these case studies highlight that there are many ways to do this and whilst these case studies offer some amazing examples; ultimately there is no one-size fits all approach.

1.2 Reminder of the asset-based framework

According to the Renaisi Report (2019) the term ‘asset-based’ covers a range of approaches to working with young people that values their strengths, as well as addressing the challenges they face. At an individual level, the person is at the heart of asset-based working to support them to identify and reach their goals.

Informed by an evaluation of the Paul Hamlyn Youth Fund, Renaisi have designed a simple framework to help organisations identify different ways in which they can apply asset-based working. This is shown in the following figure:

Figure 1: Renaisi framework of asset-based working



Source: Renaisi (2019)

This model was developed through a process of in-depth research with a diverse group of organisations funded through the Youth Fund, who all share a commitment to asset-based work but apply these principles in a range of different ways. The framework is not intended to be used as a ‘checklist’ or incentive to box-ticking, but rather a starting point for organisations thinking about how to further embed their asset-based practices (Renaisi 2019). The framework is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather to prompt organisations to think about the different ways in which they might embed asset-based approaches throughout the organisation to strengthen their practice.

For an organisation to be fully asset-based, it has to articulate a core purpose and a belief in young people. There needs to be strong organisational values for how young people should be treated, nurtured and supported.

The parts of the framework we focused on in this case study research were:

Purpose: this is a necessary starting point for all asset-based organisations. It influences the organisation's approach in every other area of work. This was ubiquitous in our survey responses – all participants demonstrate purpose so we did not need to consider it for our sample frame.

Decision Making: This is how organisations share power with young people. It can be done in both formal and informal ways such as:

- Through formal governance structures such as a Youth Board or Young Trustees, working at an organisational level
- Through co-design and participatory decision making - designing what activities are delivered, working at a programme level
- Giving young people control over their own journey within the organisation, setting their own goals, which works at an individual level

Delivery: This is how organisations work with young people, through formal and informal approaches. It is about relationships rather than activities including:

- Involving young people as partners in delivery - training them as peer mentors, trainers or in other roles
- Drawing on family and community as assets in delivery
- Developing an approach that is built on relationships and giving young people time and space – this is the ethos of delivery

Operations: This is about ways of working internally and embedding asset-based ways of working such as:

- Ways of gathering information
- Ways of evaluating projects
- Language used: using asset and not deficit language
- Human resource policies, team structures and approaches to training and developing.

Influence: This is about speaking out, helping young people to speak out and project their principles to the outside world.

- Make a conscious effort to use asset-based language in their external communications
- Support young people to speak out and get their voices heard.

The organisations we selected for case study research all met the above characteristics. This does not mean there is a single way of doing it, or they are exemplars of best practice, but each serves to highlight the theoretical framework and move beyond it in support of young people.

2 Reflections on asset-based working

2.1 Introduction

This reflective part of the report explores some of the overarching themes emerging from the case study research. It is intended to contribute to the evolution of the framework (as described in section 1.2) and includes researcher reflections.

2.2 Language of ABW doesn't always resonate

When organisations talk about the work they do, the language they use tends to be descriptive, passionate and emotional. However, when introducing the asset-based framework as a model for what they're doing, it doesn't resonate. The language of ABW is seen as quite formal and prescriptive, whereas their work is more informal, fluid and responsive. Leaders and practitioners within organisations don't immediately identify as 'doing asset-based working' because they don't necessarily have a formal process for it. However, our research revealed that on further exploration organisations are frequently adopting asset-based principles.

Asset-based working is innovative, therefore inviting mistakes and accepting when things don't go to plan. This doesn't always chime with the traditional funding process from application to evaluation, as it is hard to box-tick when things haven't worked but have been learned from e.g., a peer-to-peer programme with lower than planned uptake in the first year. In this model, project failures need to be recognised as potential assets.

Takeaway point:

Caution needs to be taken when using ABW as a term, it won't immediately resonate with practitioners, even those who are doing ABW well! This risks leaving it open to misinterpretation and organisations becoming frustrated that they're 'not doing it right'.

2.3 Practice and principles cut across the framework

We began our research with the framework (as described in section 1.2) as a structure. However, it quickly emerged that organisation leaders and practitioners don't see their practice as fitting neatly within framework parameters.

For example:

- Peer-to-peer working at OTR impacts on the **delivery** of programmes (as young people are active in delivering services), **operations** with regards to developing young people and team structure and **decision making** by supporting young people (both mentors and mentees) to have control over their own journey.
- The Young Women's Film at The Warren Youth Project was both an example of **influence** as the film amplified young people's experience and **operations** as the project was, decided upon by the young people themselves. **Decision making** was

also important in that it enabled the film to be made in a way that felt appropriate to the young women.

It is possible that a project can embody several elements of the framework. It can therefore be confusing to try and define a project or activity within a distinct framework category.

Evolving the framework:

Based on our research, we feel it might be possible to consider the framework in terms of indicators or key questions to make it more tangible and to reflect the fact that asset-based working is a journey (see section 2.6). The table below is an example of how the framework could be evolved to be more tangible for practitioners, leaders, funders and young people:

Table 1: Reframing asset-based framework

Framework	Reframing indicators of asset-based working
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do young people have opportunities to make strategic decisions about the organisation? Do young people have choice and control over their own engagement and journey with the organisation?
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do young people have opportunities to discover their strengths? Do young people have opportunities to use their strengths?
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do young people have opportunities to inform the day-to-day running of the organisation and its programmes?
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do young people have opportunities to influence the world around them in ways that make sense for them?

Takeaway point:

Asset-based working is achievable but pinning it to a framework is difficult: it is important to acknowledge that, for practitioners, the framework could be positioned more usefully as *questions* or *indicators* rather than static categories. This recognises the fluidity of how a single project can span the network and the evolving practice (journey) of ABW.

2.4 When good practice is 'baked-in' and innate, it can be difficult to celebrate

'Purpose' is one of the features of the framework and was ubiquitous when our three case study organisations described their work. Within all three of the case study organisations, it was evident that the passion, charisma and abilities of leadership were critical to achieving asset-based practice. When asked about 'how' asset-based principles are implemented, we were often given intangible examples:

🗨️ *"We just trust gut instincts" (organisational leader).*

- 🕒 *“It’s about leaning into our values” (organisational leader).*
- 🕒 *“They [leaders] just have a really open and approachable way about them” (young person).*
- 🕒 *“We are really intentional about what we do” (leader).*
- 🕒 *“When we put something together we just fine comb it until we are happy with it” (leader).*
- 🕒 *“They [organisation leaders] just create this magic” (young person).*

Sometimes this made it difficult, for us to ‘pin down’ a specific activity, tool, action or behavior to illustrate asset-based working. This is because the principles of ABW are ‘baked in’ to the organisational ethos. This way of working is innate, instinctive and intuitive for some practitioners. As a result, it was challenging for practitioners to name and recognise as an ‘example of ABW’ because organisations see it as natural, normal or commonplace. Even more so, as they often have lived experience, meaning they’re coming to the work from a personal rather than theoretical starting point.

At the same time, the safe, nurturing spaces created in these organisations are described as ‘magical’ or ‘unique’. However, there is a risk that the skill involved in curating these spaces is ‘explained away’ as a happy coincidence rather than as a process driven by talented, skilled and hardworking leaders who adapt and resolve dilemmas as they arise.

It is possible that organisations with a strong vision and leadership (especially when this leadership includes young people), will inherently embed ABW throughout other aspects of the Renaisi Framework (delivery, decision making, operations and influence). However, it will remain tricky for them to identify this as doing anything other than ‘business as usual’.

One of the challenges with this, is that ABW can appear ‘fluffy’, light touch and intangible, when in fact, it is extremely skilled, intentional and multifaceted. There is a potential risk for some organisations who lean heavily in the charisma of strong visionary leaders that some of the ‘magic’ of their practice will not be sustained into the future. From what we’ve seen in our case studies, this risk is minimised where organisations are able to recruit from within their communities so that subsequent leaders are able to draw upon their lived experience while ‘living and breathing’ the organisational ethos.

Takeaway point:

Strong values-driven leaders may be using ABW principles but may not recognise their practice as ABW or as anything special because it occurs so innately. Care needs to be taken to celebrate the strong purpose-driven nature of these organisations. A balance needs to be struck between explaining it away as ‘magic’ whilst resisting temptation to rigidly define this practice.

2.5 Asset-based working takes place in community

Early in the fieldwork for this research it emerged that there was not a distinction between 'organisation staff' and 'young people'. This is because:

- Many of the staff are themselves young!
- Many of the staff have engaged with the organisation's programmes as a young person in the past (or present)
- Some of the young people who use the service/organisations are given paid roles (sometimes sessional, informal) within the organisations
- Staff (of all ages) acknowledge that they are on a journey themselves *with* their young people and don't see themselves as 'having all the answers'
- There is an authentic effort for the organisation to be non-hierarchical

This 'blurring' between staff and young people has several benefits including:

- Contribution to a sense of community which ensures that young people don't feel 'done to' by organisations
- Models an ethos where lived experience is key to making projects work
- Models diverse leadership styles – there is room for different ways to lead – introverts are valued!
- Establishes a sense of community and there is potential for this to be a sustainable benefit as young service users are likely to find themselves leading (sometimes in a paid role) their organisation and establishes a cycle where lived experience is valued

Takeaway point:

Everyone is learning and building on their strengths. There's no hierarchy in expertise or learning – everyone gives something and gets something from their involvement.

2.6 ABW is not a destination

There may be an implicit assumption that you are either 'working in an asset-based way' or 'not' as though they are binary opposites. However, our research suggests that organisations who adopt asset-based practice are always *working towards* improvements to their practice, sometimes using the language of assets and strengths (and often not). For example, a decision-making process may work well for one cohort of young people but future cohorts may wish to redesign the process and/or staff may identify an opportunity to push their practice further and try new things. In some organisations, it is possible that one or two projects are delivered using asset-based principles while others are not.

Takeaway point:

Care should be taken to describe organisations practice as 'asset-based working' or 'not'. It is possible that all organisations have some pockets of asset-based practice and even the most established can still learn and adapt.

2.7 Building an asset-based staff environment

Asset-based working functions best when it is genuinely adopted across the organisation, and practised between staff, management and trustees; not just with young people and volunteers. By making an asset-based staff environment, organisations create a much more embedded asset-based way of working. Staff share trust, risk taking and are more open to the cycles of learning and unlearning as they know the landscape in which they're working allows for this. Trustees also adapt, build more of a dialogue and immersive understanding of their roles on the board, taking necessary responsibility but using curiosity and respect as their starting point.

Making asset-based working a core principle across the organisation, means all staff know they can come to work, share ideas, learn and make mistakes.

Takeaway point:

A genuinely whole organisational approach to asset-based working, where staff, management and trustees also work together in this way, not only models behaviours for young people but is more likely to be sustained in the longer term.

2.8 Asset-based youth work and Asset-Based Community Development - the same or different?

Asset-Based Community development (ABCD) is a methodology in community development working with community strengths. ABCD involves a 'mapping' of community skills, resources and experiences to identify how communities can build upon what they already have. The methodology emerged in the early 1990s. While youth work has much in common with community development, we observe some subtle differences in the way the theory of asset-based theory is applied in youth organisations. These are explained in the table below.

Table 2: ABCD and asset-based working with young people

Principle of ABCD (from Rowland, 2008 ² and NESTA, 2020 ³)	What our case study research organisations would say:
Everyone has gifts which they can contribute	We all have gifts but they are not fixed. Young people learn about their strengths. They evolve. Assets emerge.
Map the assets - a collective process that creates an inventory of assets and strengths	
Leaders involve others	Young people <u>are leaders</u> . They are involved by default. There are no 'others' (although steps are taken to be inclusive and reach out).
The starting point for ABCD is with what's strong, not what's wrong	We start with what's strong and what's next – what would you like to learn? How would you like to grow? How can you be best supported to achieve that?
ABCD is place-based	We can (sometimes) have more strength, talent and power if we work across geographies. Digital technology makes this possible. We have so much to learn from each other! Imagine what a global movement would look like!
A bottom-up way to strengthen communities	This approach will strengthen our communities <u>and will also</u> strengthen our organisation, our service and the individuals who engage (reciprocity).

Takeaway point:

ABW with young people has a lot in common with ABCD. However, there are some subtle differences to be aware of including the place-based lens and the assumption that young people have fixed assets which can be 'mapped'. This reminds us of that asset-based working evolves over time, there is no end point.

² Rowland, Stan (26 April 2008). "What is Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)" (PDF). Collaborative of Neighborhood Transformation

³ NESTA (2020) Asset-Based Community Development for Local Authorities How to rebuild relationships with communities through asset-based approaches

2.9 Illustration: the building blocks of asset-based working

The illustration overleaf summarises the values expressed by research-participating organisations when they explained their approach to asset-based practice.

The building blocks of asset-based working



3 Lessons

3.1 Consideration points for funders and commissioners

Based on the above research reflections, we believe there are some interesting and important aspects for funders and commissioners to put into practice, to help facilitate a better asset-based working practice across wider range of young people organisations:

- **Avoid the temptation to rigidly define ABW** and see ‘good’ or ‘bad’ practice. What works well in one organisation might not work well in another.
- **Recognise organisations and projects who take a risk.** Sometimes things will go wrong. That is how organisations grow.
- **Understand that ABW doesn’t fit within traditional output and outcome frameworks.** The Theory of Change for asset-based practice will (and should) evolve. Theory of Change thinking is helpful but rigid output targets are not.
- Remember that **embedding this practice takes time** and should be built into every project/programme. If an organisation needs to spend several months at the beginning of a project to listen to their young people and build trust, that should be encouraged. But remember that traditional ‘outputs’ will look different during this set up phase.
- **A variety of options for young people to engage with a programme is a sign that an organisation trusts their young people** to have choice and control over their own journeys. Having a variety of service options/activity types could be an indicator of ABW.
- **Be sensitive to people sharing experience and stories.** Sharing personal stories need not be a prerequisite for receiving funding. Organisations will often share stories, even if it makes them uncomfortable, if they think it will help to secure funding. Support young people and organisation staff to share their stories if they want to in ways that feel comfortable for them, not because they’ve been pressured into it. Recognise experience as an asset and remunerate where possible.

3.2 Consideration points for organisations who want to learn more about asset-based working

The questions below have emerged from our three case studies and grouped thematically in this report. We position these as questions rather than ‘recommendations’ as we recognise that some elements will be applicable and others less so depending on the organisational context.

Purpose and trust

- How do you let people know your organisation trusts them?
- Do young people feel that their position/engagement with the organisation is special and honourable?

Delivery

- How do you let people know the service is theirs?
- How do people have choice and control over their journey and engagement with your organisation?
- What might peer-to-peer delivery bring to your services? What would you need to do to adapt to a peer-to-peer approach?

Operations

- How are things managed when they don't go to plan?
- Could you invite people to take up a position of responsibility?
- How can an asset-based mindset be modelled within your organisation by leaders?

Decision making

- What barriers would your organisation face if you wanted to change their power sharing model?
- What would happen in your organisation if people wanted actions to go in one direction but management another? What message does this give to your communities?

Lived experience

- What does 'lived experience' bring to your organisation?
- Would you (or members of leadership) feel comfortable sharing personal stories with your service users? If so, how can this be done in a meaningful way without it feeling transactional?

Creativity

- How do you use creativity to empower young people including those who would say 'they're not creative'?

3.3 Case study papers

If you'd like to find out more please read our case study reports:

- Power and Creativity: How The THING and the Young Women's Film at **The Warren** Project illustrate asset-based working
- Valuing lived experience and dreaming big: how the **GirlDreamer** Advisory Board values women's strengths
- Young people on the frontline: peer-to-peer delivery and decision making at **OTR**

3.4 Illustration: what does asset-based working actually look like

What does asset-based working actually look like?



Appendix 1: Our methodology

We devised a two-stage methodology to arrive at and explore examples of ABW:

- Stage one: questionnaire and option to opt-in to second stage of the research
- Stage two: ethnographic and qualitative research, with three organisations, carried over a period of four months

Arriving at a sample of best practice

It was agreed that the sample of three case study organisations should be selected to illustrate ABW. Our sample considered the following variables:

- Typology of asset-based working (purpose, decision making, delivery, operations, influence based on the framework described below in section 1.2)
- Region (ideally no more than one in each region or one national organisation)
- Size of organisation (ideally no more than one micro-organisation and no more than one major org)
- Theme/nature of work (a mix of service-user focus)

We started by reviewing data from 140 grant-funded organisations that included some measures of asset-based working. It was agreed that those organisations scoring strongly for asset-based working, based on grant manager assessment, would be invited to participate in our sample-informing survey. Forty-five organisations were invited to complete the survey. The aim of this survey was threefold:

- Primarily as a starting point for sample identification
- Secondly, as an opportunity for organisations to 'opt in' to the research and indicate a willingness to participate
- Thirdly, to hear more about what organisations know/would like to know about ABW

We received 29 responses to the survey representing a good mix of regions and are thought to be broadly representative of Youth Funded organisations.

Headline survey findings and what they tell us about ABW for Youth-Funded organisations:

- Most agree or strongly agree that they are delivering in an asset-based way with most aspects of the framework
- When it comes to the framework, most organisations were excited about delivery (21 out of 29)
- Respondents are least excited and confident about working in ABW for operations (7)
- While we remained 'jargon free' in the survey, it was clear that projects, processes and activities didn't always fall neatly against examples of framework components. For example, peer-to-peer projects were described as 'decision making' although in reality they are more closely aligned with 'delivery'. There was a lot of overlap between 'decision making' and 'operations' which are inseparable from some respondents perspectives.
- There is appetite for more knowledge/examples of:
 - Language
 - Peer to peer
 - Governance (beyond a board)
 - Lived experience
 - Use of digital
 - Covid 19-response

Survey responses also gave us an indication of where organisations felt proud of their practice. The following themes emerged:

Table 3: Examples of ABW which cross-cut the framework where survey respondents were proud to share

<p>Peer-to-peer working</p> <p>‘Peer mentoring - pairing an older member with a younger one [...] This has been particularly useful during lockdown when university students delivered one-to-one, remote tutoring sessions in core subjects for younger members who lacked the resources or the support to access online school work. Older members also delivered weekly remote workshops on careers, music and song writing etc’.</p> <p>‘Our Peer Navigator programme is probably of most interest to others’.</p> <p>‘We have Peer Leaders to lead youth engagement work. Our work is ongoing and relational, not time/project limited’</p>	<p>Lived experience</p> <p>‘Our approach is very much steered by our lived experience. [...] We do not position ourselves as experts but rather a platform that shares its resources, knowledge and networks with their community so the whole community can be uplifted and tackle social inequality together. We are part of the solution, not gatekeepers and that distinction is super important in our opinion. Young people have a radar and can see through any approach that is not genuine in its intent - there's no fooling your community!’</p> <p>‘Young people tell us that they value engaging in a service which respects them as experts by lived experience and which empowers them to use this experience as a strength factor in influencing service development’.</p>
<p>Challenging and supporting other organisations</p> <p>‘We challenge the organisations we partner with to adopt asset-based ways of thinking and working, and we provide guidance about the best ways for them to do this’</p> <p>‘We would encourage other youth organisations to utilise the lived experience they have within their teams and their community to drive their work from an authentic place’</p>	<p>Use of methodologies/models</p> <p>‘We are proud to be probably the first organisation in the UK to be using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) as an underpinning approach to enabling the most vulnerable young people to succeed in life by exploring their values - what gives them meaning in their life...’</p> <p>‘Our Personal Transitions Service (PTS) is a person-led, transitional and strength-based response to working with people experiencing tough times. It emerged following years of prototyping a new way of working that ensured power was passed back to the individual and uncovered the many systemic barriers people face when accessing services.</p>

Following survey analysis, a shortlist of eight organisations were identified and workshopped with the Paul Hamlyn grant managers and policy team to decide which three organisations were best placed to participate in the case study research.

The selected case studies demonstrated a range of framework strengths, region and service-user focus. They also did something ‘extra’ in the way they worked and, in some instances, this cut across the framework. This is summarised in the following table:

Table 4: Features of our case studies

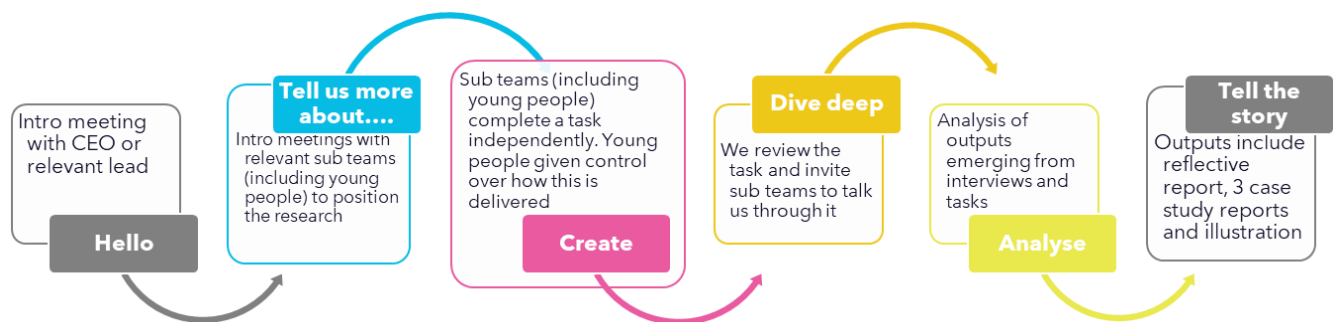
Name of selected case study organisation	Framework strength illustrated in the survey	Compelling theme of interest (which cut across framework)
GirlDreameer	Delivery and Influence	Valuing lived experience
The Warren Youth Project	Decision Making and Operations	Creative methods Digital delivery during lockdown
OTR Bristol	Delivery and Decision Making	Peer-to-peer delivery

Qualitative fieldwork

Our qualitative fieldwork was carried out with the three organisations. Our methodology was designed and implemented to mirror asset-based working, with young people, organisations and staff opting into the research, sharing their strengths and highlight the elements they felt worthy of sharing.

It was important to provide opportunities and space for respondents to engage with in the research process in ways that felt authentic to them. We didn't want our research methodology to be too prescriptive as we wanted to embrace asset-based principles and demonstrate trust for young people to share their experiences. Core to our method was to provide a 'thinking space' whereby respondents could go away and reflect in their own time, in their own way and this bookended with facilitated sessions. Each case study took a slightly different approach, to allow them to be in the driving seat for the research process. We also aligned our research to make use of any planned meetings within the organisation so that we could consult with people in a time-efficient way.

Figure 2: Qualitative method process



Researcher reflection:

The Warren have a decision making group called The THING which is led by young people. After having had the initial qualitative interviews with The Warren, I thought it would be great to go along to one The THING's sessions as a non-participant observer and so that I could meet some of the young people taking part. However, the staff said they would need to check with The THING first, get them to vote on it and let me know if and when I could go. They had one session and decided that they would invite me along to the following one.

Paul Hamlyn Foundation offered an incentive of £1,000 to each participating organisation with a view to using this to reimburse young people for their input into the research and recognising that funders and practitioners have something to learn from young people as experts in their own journeys.

Adapting our research method due to Covid 19

We had initially planned to conduct face-to-face, ethnographic sessions. These would have been organisationally led, observational, participatory, and iterative.

In light of Covid 19, the methodology design needed to change, however our approach to working with organisations continued as planned. This meant all sessions were carried out remotely and observations of meetings happened. Opportunities were given for research participants to 'do some thinking' in their own time and feedback to us in their own way.

We spent many a session with young people, volunteers and staff and are so grateful to all the input and insight they shared.

That the three organisations managed to pivot during Covid 19, continue to support their young people and engage with our research is nothing short of remarkable.

We recognised that these organisations and the people within them might not be aware of the language around ABW, and not necessarily recognise themselves as working in an asset-based way. Therefore, we therefore invited organisations to tell us 'what they are proud of', 'what they do' and 'how they do it.'

The key philosophies underpinning our research approach:

- That organisations would opt-in to take part in the phase 1 (survey) and phase 2
- That people from organisations would be self-selecting, no one would feel obligated to take part
- That young people needed to agree to us observing meetings/sessions
- That we should have verbal and/or written informed consent
- That organisations would receive a financial incentive and how they reward the young people was for them to decide
- That we would anonymise all the interviews
- That we would offer different ways for young people to contribute their thoughts and ideas
- That we would share our draft documents with people we spoke to, to ensure we've captured and represented what they told us.
- That young people and staff would be involved as much or as little as they wanted to in the creative outputs

Thanks to people in the organisations being flexible and willing to share, we believe that we have been able to capture what works within organisations and build examples to help inspire others.

Our analysis highlights that building blocks which the three case study organisations attribute to their success. These building blocks are brought to life on the accompanying illustrations and animation.