

Straightforward

Research and Development

Evaluation of the Mums Wellness Project

May 2020

Prepared for MindWise

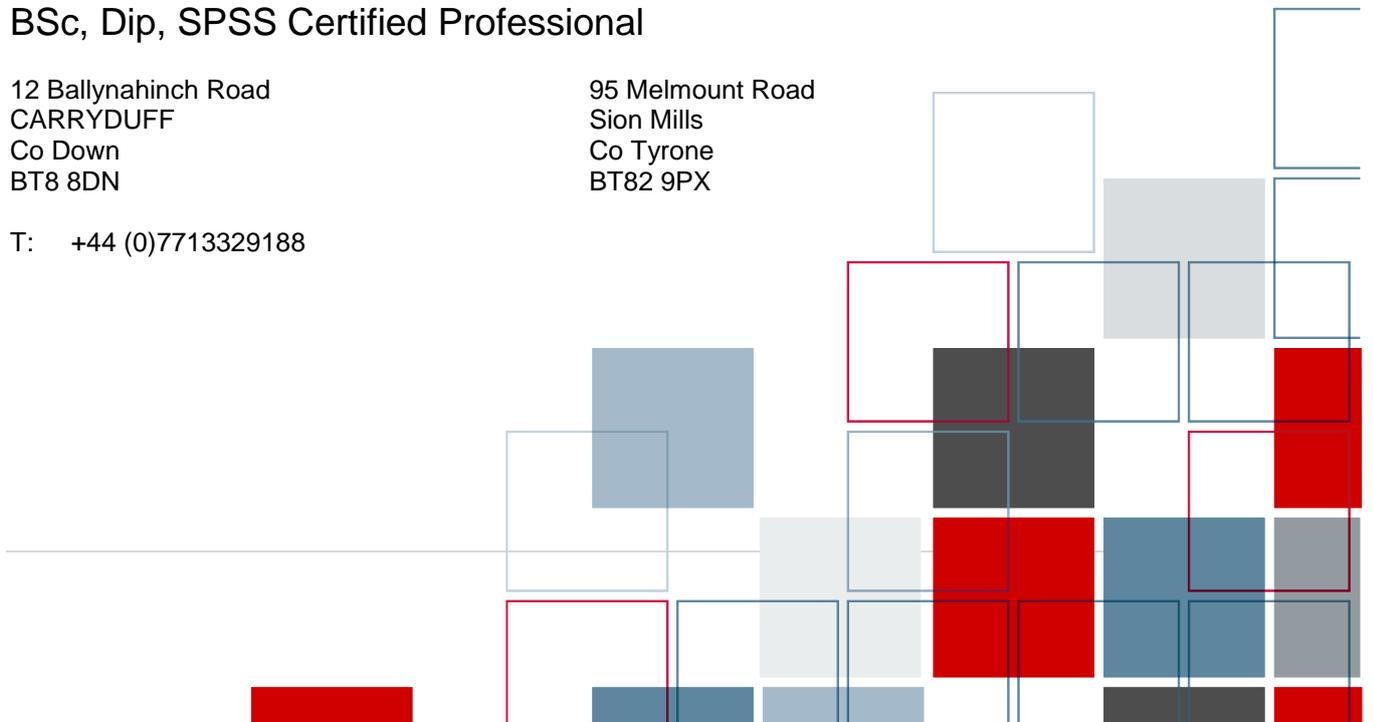
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1. Introduction

This report provides an independent evaluation of the Mum's Wellness Project. The evaluation was commissioned in Year 3 of the project and as such constitutes a summative evaluation. It should be noted that at the time of writing, the project continues to provide a level of support for mums in the Fermanagh area to assist with emotional health and wellbeing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The programme has been running for three years now and has been designed to be delivered mum's own homes or in the local areas for 8 to 10 weeks with sessions lasting approximately one hour. At the end of Year 3, support for mums was extended beyond the average 8-10 sessions to assist mums in dealing with the additional stressors of the pandemic.

The Project offers an individualised 1-1 Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) to support mothers and expectant mothers to help manage difficult feelings and develop action plans to help them feel better. We understand that this is an early intervention programme and focusses on emotional health and wellbeing for mothers who do not currently meet the threshold for mental health services.

The programme offers a Wellness Weekly Drop in and Group WRAP programmes for mums in the Fermanagh area.

2. Evaluation of programme outcomes and impact:

Mindwise received a letter of offer in October 2016 from Comic Relief to set out the terms and conditions for delivery of the programme. Mindwise received a total of £119,940 for a 24 month delivery, this was subsequently adjusted to £124,940.

The programme received an extension to the original delivery term of up to 36 month delivery within the existing finance envelope.

At the turn of the 2020 calendar year, NI experienced a pandemic which was to shape the delivery of services worldwide and also had an impact of delivery for the final year of the MWP.

The project was set the following targets against outcomes in the initial letter of offer:

Table 1 Project outcomes specified in Letter of Offer

Outcome 1		
<i>Improved mental health & wellbeing</i>		
Your indicators and targets for this outcome are:		
	Indicator	What you wanted to achieve over the course of the project:
1a	90 women	Women experiencing peri- natal mental health problems to be supported to complete their Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)
1b	72 women (80%)	Women reported improved mental health & wellbeing after completing their WRAP

3a	50 women	<i>Women becoming involved in their local peer support meetings</i>
3b	40 women	<i>Women reporting reduced isolation as a result of attending their local peer support meetings</i>
Outcome 2		
<i>Improved resilience and help- seeking behaviour</i>		
Your indicators and targets for this outcome are:		
	Indicator	What you wanted to achieve over the course of the project:
2a	8 women (remaining 20%)	Women signposted back to their GP, health visitor and/ or other support services when not reporting improved mental health & wellbeing after completing their WRAP
2b	72 women	Women reporting increased skills in relation to future resilience after completing their WRAP
2c	72 women	<i>Women reporting increased skills & awareness of how and where to access services in relation to future help- seeking behaviour after completing their WRAP</i>
Outcome 3		
<i>Reduced Isolation</i>		
Your indicators and targets for this outcome are:		
	Indicator	What you wanted to achieve over the course of the project:
3a	50 women	<i>Women becoming involved in their local peer support meetings</i>
3b	40 women	<i>Women reporting reduced isolation as a result of attending their local peer support meetings</i>

The table below summarises quantitative impact in terms of participant numbers throughout the 3 year delivery of the MWP. This data has been gathered from the three annual reports which were been collated by project management within Mindwise.

	Overall Target	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4* Q1	Total	Target Achieved
Outcome 1a Direct beneficiaries supported	90	33	55	50	11	149	165%
Outcome 1b Women completing personal WRAP	72	33	55	32	TBC	120	167%
Outcome 2a Women sign posted back to GP	8	4	9	4	TBC	17	213%
Outcome 2b Women increasing skills in resilience	72	33	55	32	TBC	120	167%
Outcome 2c Increased skills on where to access services	72	33	55	32	TBC	120	167%
Outcome 3a Women becoming involved in peer group	50	12	24	18	TBC ¹	54	108%

¹ The evaluation report was written while participants are still engaged therefore these results are not available at the time of writing.

Table 2 MWP Participant Numbers, Years 1 to 3

The table highlights that the programme exceeded its targets across all outcomes set by Comic Relief.

***COVID-19**

The MWP received additional agreement from Comic Relief in March 2020 to enable it to deliver activity for participants who would otherwise qualify for the Family Wellness Programme in the Fermanagh area due to the anticipated detrimental impact on emotional health and wellbeing in family settings caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. This programme enabled additional support to be provided to families of children aged from 5 – 12 years of age in the Fermanagh area. In Quarter 1 of Year 4, 6 Family Wellness participants have come on board from this programme.

Delivery of that aspect of the programme is ongoing for a number of participants at the time of writing this evaluation report.

3. Evaluation of the overall management and partnership approach of the entire programme

This section of the evaluation provides an independent analysis of the overall management of the project and the impact of partnership working for the MWP. It is informed by structured interviews with project stakeholders, service users and a workshop with past participants in the project.

The number of responses to the evaluation were relatively low and may be as a result of the gap between participants having completed the programme and having been contacted by the independent evaluator. It should also be noted that methodology for the stakeholder engagement had to be adjusted as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic due to this aspect of the evaluation having been completed at a time during which the UK was in various stages of 'lockdown' and social distancing measures were in place which prevented the facilitation of a standard workshop session with stakeholders. Structured interviews were therefore facilitated online to gather information on programme management and impact.

Partnership working:

A range of stakeholders were involved in the referral to, delivery and implementation of the MWP programme throughout the Fermanagh area. This enabled the programme to run effectively and bring in the expertise and resources of other agencies already operating in the Fermanagh area and with whom participants could strike a long term relationship. We interviewed 14 stakeholding organisations as part of the external evaluation to understand their experience of working with Mindwise in the programme delivery and also their experience of the impact that the programme had on project participants.

Impact:

The following section focusses on the impact of partnership working created by the programme in the Fermanagh area.

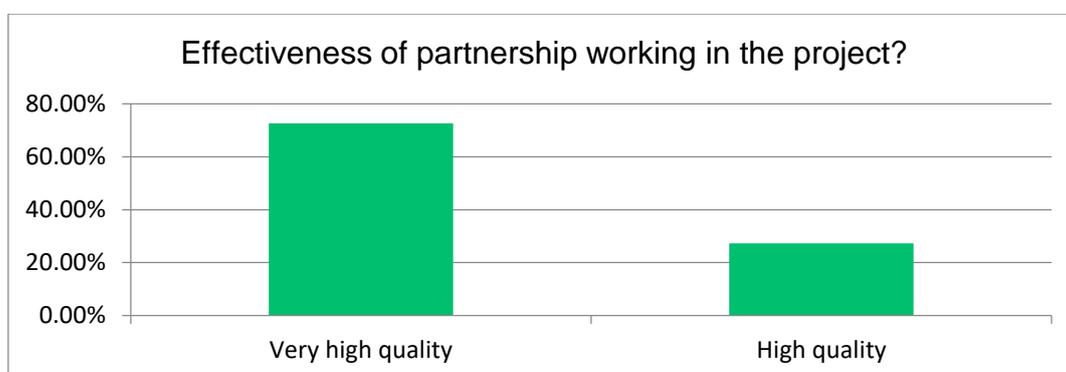


Table 3 Effectiveness of partnership working in the project

The chart above shows that 70% of partners felt that the effectiveness of partnership working in the MWP was very high quality, with the other 30% indicating it was high quality.



Table 4 Extent to which partners contributed to aims and objectives of the project

The chart above shows that 60% of partners felt that the extent to which partner contributed to the aims of the objectives of the MWP was very high quality, with the other 30% indicating it was high quality.

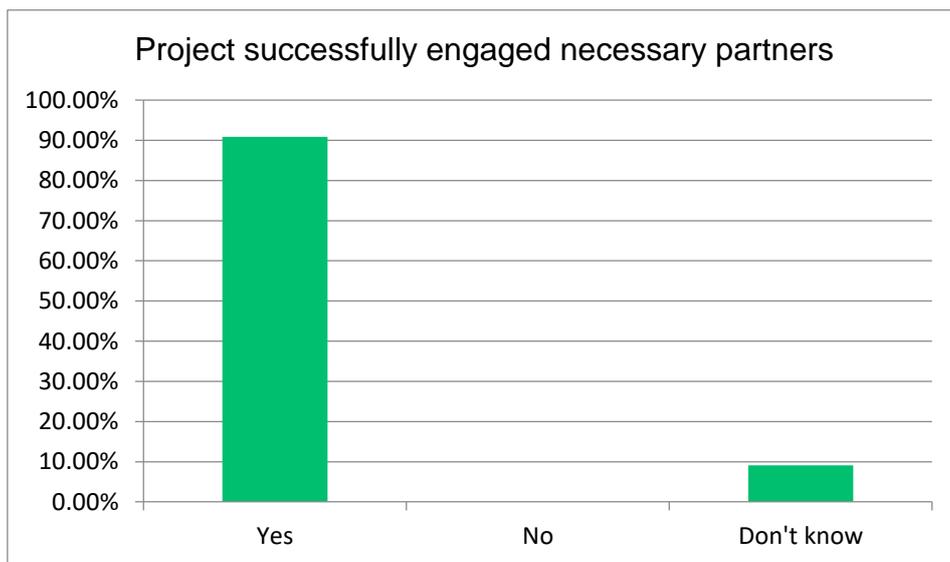


Table 5 Successful Engagement of partners?

The chart above shows that 80% of stakeholders felt that the project successfully engaged partners necessary to address emotional wellbeing challenges of expectant and new mums in the Fermanagh area.

Role:

The table below highlights respondents' role in working alongside Mindwise in delivery of the MWP:

Role	Number of respondents
Referring agency	3
Both referring and delivery agency	3
Stakeholder	2
Member of Fermanagh Family Support Hub	8
Health Visitor	2
Other	3

Table 6 Stakeholder organisations role

Eleven of the 14 organisations we interviewed made referrals to the MWP programme. When we interviewed project participants, a key issue emerging for the participants was the length of time they had to wait for any service provision to assist with their emotional health and wellbeing. The provision of timely support in emotional health and wellbeing can be key to an individual's recovery and their continued health and social wellbeing. When asked whether or not the referral to MWP helped to reduce waiting times for clients, almost three quarters of referral agents indicated that it helped reduce the length of time participants had to wait on service provision.

Health visitors in particular were very positive about the impact that the programme had in helping to reduce waiting lists that their clients would normally face and indicated that the increased capacity that the programme provided in the Fermanagh area to provide early intervention was a key component to the success of the programme in assisting individuals to recover from poor emotional health and wellbeing, one went on to suggest that they were certain that a mum's engagement in MWP in one case prevented onward referral to Statutory Mental Health Services. Health visitors indicated that they knew when referring clients to the programme that participants would be able to "avail of specialist care in emotional health and wellbeing". Some of the quotes below from health visitors and other referral agents demonstrate the impact:

"Yes not only did it reduce women's waiting times but provided them with a service that they would not receive if the project did not exist. Mental Health support for women is very important and early intervention is key"

"As we could signpost to group programme while waiting for one to one"

"It gave us an alternative to our service if we were exceeding waiting list times."

"Significantly impacted on workload as health visitor. Capacity now means prioritising families with complex high level of need. This service has gone a long way supporting the

preventative and promotion of social connection of our job which is difficult to achieve with current workload.”

“Referrals normally have to wait on long waiting lists but this was one service that did not have long waiting list-great to provide early intervention for families”

“Mums were helped and supported immediately when they were referred to this programme”

The chart below highlights that three quarters of referral agents felt that participants had an increased ability to participate in other services as a result of their participation in the MWP.

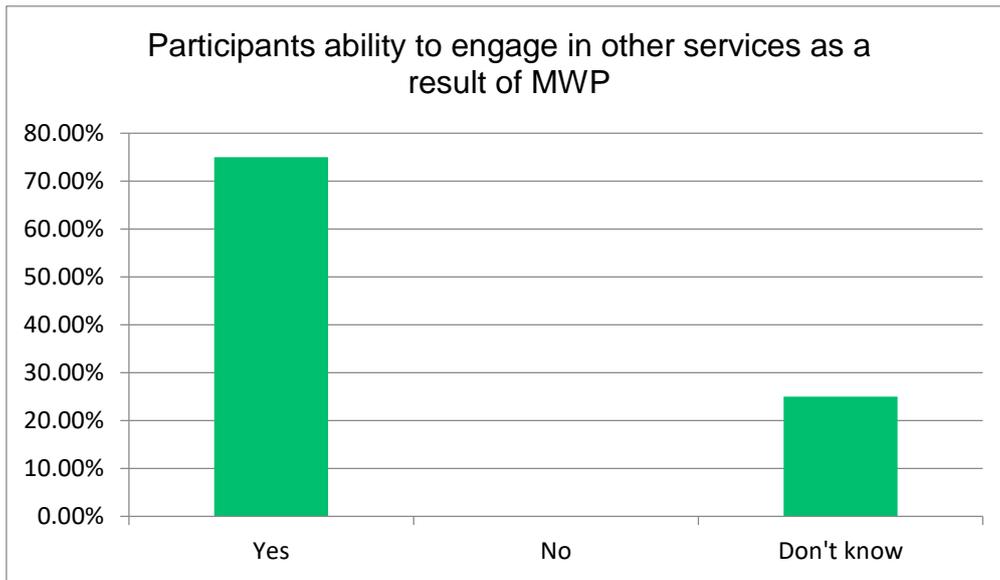


Table 7 Participants ability to engage in other services

Examples given by referral agents focussed on the role that the MWP had in building self-esteem and confidence of participants to engage in further programmes:

“Mums that received support and built relationship with allocated worker engaged in other services”

“More engaged in our service due to building self-awareness, self-care skills etc.”

“Lots of mums once referred also felt more confident to access other services particularly the fact that Lisnaskea is not a sure start area and significant lack of support services for mums”

“It increased their self-esteem and reluctance to engage with other services. “

“Relationship building is key to moving individuals and families on. “

“While attending this program in Fermanagh House they obtained help from Citizens Advice and other classes that were running regularly “

Partnership organisations were also in the position to have received referrals from other health professionals in the Fermanagh area, which were then diverted to the MWP, for example through the Fermanagh Support Hub. For those who received referrals which were then routed through to the programme, the majority were coming through from GP's or health visitors:

Referral agent	Number of organisations
GP	3
Health Visitor	3
Surestart	2
Home Start	1
Counsellor	0
Mum's Family	2
Mum's Friend	0
Action for Children	2
Recovery college	0
Arc Healthy Living centre	2
Oak Healthy Living Centre	2

Table 8 Indirect referrals to MWP

The chart below highlights that half of partner organisations felt that prior to the existence of the MWP in Fermanagh, other options were available for support for new and expectant mums.

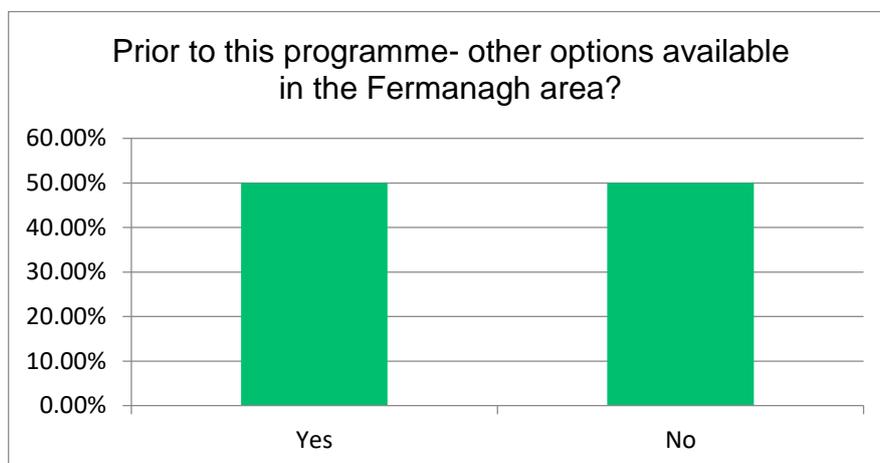


Table 9 Other options available prior to the programme

Many went on however to suggest that if support was available, it may well have been limited in the areas for which it was available. For example, the majority of respondents indicated that SureStart would be the only other option available to mums however this is very limited in terms of capacity and reach. There are two Surestart available in the Fermanagh area, but they do not cover all the geography of Fermanagh and families must be living within the catchment area to be eligible for support. It was also noted by partner organisations that Surestart can also have limited support from health visitors and midwives, purely due to capacity.

Other options were also cited by some referral agents as GP's/health visitor/midwives, however feedback from these health professionals would suggest that they can often have

significantly long waiting times for services which has a knock-on effect on their capacity to successfully impact on early intervention.

One of the service users' comments during the service user workshops highlights the difficulty in accessing services in particularly remote rural areas in Fermanagh:

“For me the only other option available to me was that my health visitor referred me to an organisation in Omagh but they did not provide a service here in Fermanagh. That was the only facility for me as I am from the Bellanaleck area (5 miles south of Enniskillen and 31 miles south of Omagh).”

Improved mental wellbeing:

90% of referral agents indicated that their clients reported improved mental health and wellbeing as a result of participating in the MWP:

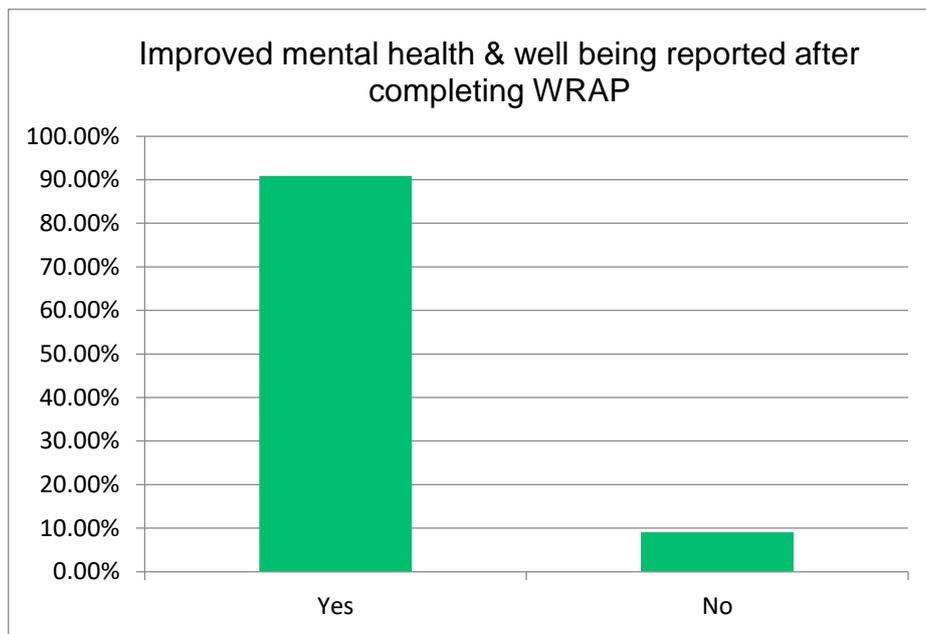


Table 10 Improved emotional health and wellbeing reported to referral agent

“If any Mum's were referred to me from Mum's Wellness project, all have said they are very pleased with support they have received to date, and are applying the skills of WRAP in their everyday lives.”

“Was clear evidence that WRAP was highly beneficial to mum's wellbeing”

“Feedback from women who completed course was very positive.”

“I am aware from feedback of allocated Workers and from hearing from other colleagues who were aware via the Hub”

“Increase of self-awareness and self-care skills “

“Excellent feedback from mothers”

“Mums I work with speak very highly of WRAP programme”

“Excellent feedback re positive outcome from WRAP”

“Yes Mum's reported that they found it was supportive to them and their families”

30% of respondents indicated that for those who did not report improved emotional health and wellbeing, clients were referred back to their GP or health visitor.

Improved resilience and help seeking behaviour:

More than 80% of referral agents indicated that their clients reported improved resilience as a result of having participated in the programme:

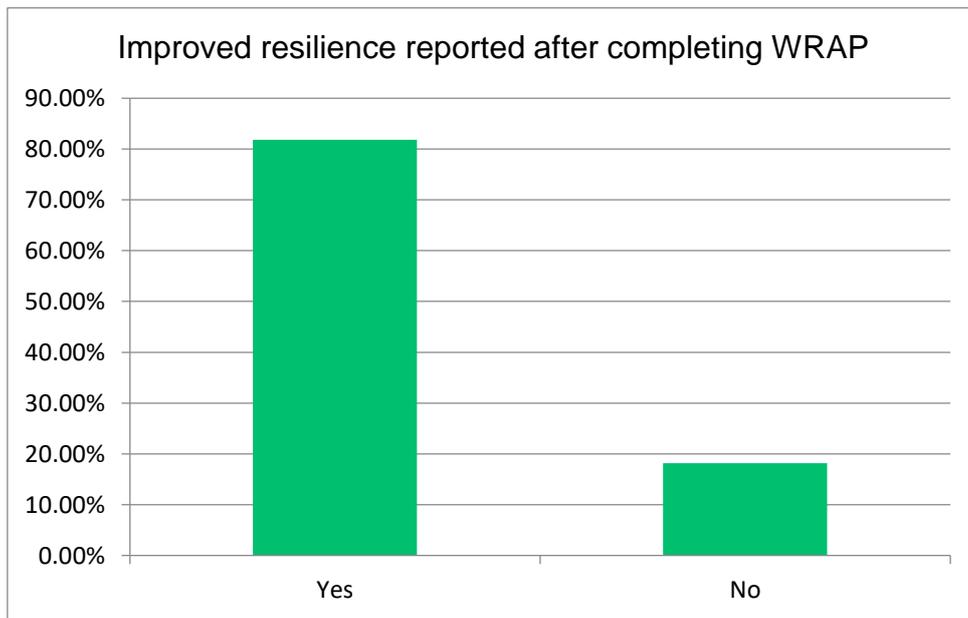


Table 11 Improved resilience reported to referral agent

The majority of positive feedback focussed around the increased confidence and self-esteem within participants following their completion of the WRA ad to MWP programme in general:

“Women reported positively after completing course.”

“Via feedback from allocated worker from evaluation forms or from Hub Partners who would have known some families that were referred to. The Mum's Wellness Project was well known and referred to a lot as people were confident in support mums receive”

“We would have seen some. Mum's attend other courses after attending wrap”

“They appeared more self-confident”

“Some mums have said they feel more confident in their ability to manage any stressful situations or situations that would impact on their mental health. “

“Found the toolkit very useful”

“Saw them participating in leisure activities with other mums”

More than 50% of referral agents indicated that their clients reported improved help seeking behaviour as a result of having participated in the programme:

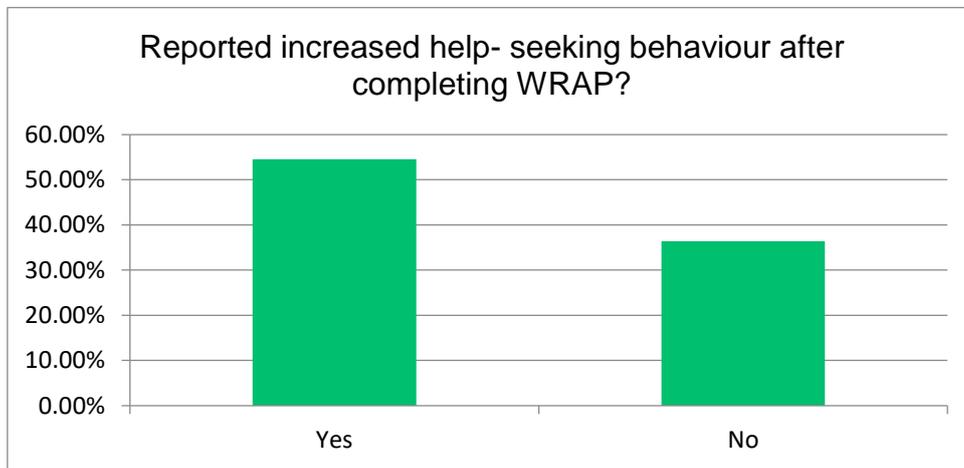


Table 12 Reported increase in help seeking behaviour

“Continued participation in activities at the Oak Healthy Living Centre”

“I am aware that mums have asked to be referred back to mum's wellness following other pregnancies”

“Would have maintained links with Oak Healthy Living Centre or mums wellness programme”

“They were well signposted by Mum's Wellness project”

“As far as I am aware Mum's had been provided with Fermanagh Hub Booklet, a directory of services in the Fermanagh area.”

“Mum's were often signposted to parenting support after initial support for their emotional health”

Referral agents also indicated that mum's had reported to them that they were much more confident in attending parents groups in their local area as a result of having completed the MWP.

Reduced Isolation:

More than 50% of referral agents indicated that their clients had become involved in local parenting support groups, and more than 60% indicated that their clients reported had demonstrated reduced isolation as a result of having participated in the programme:

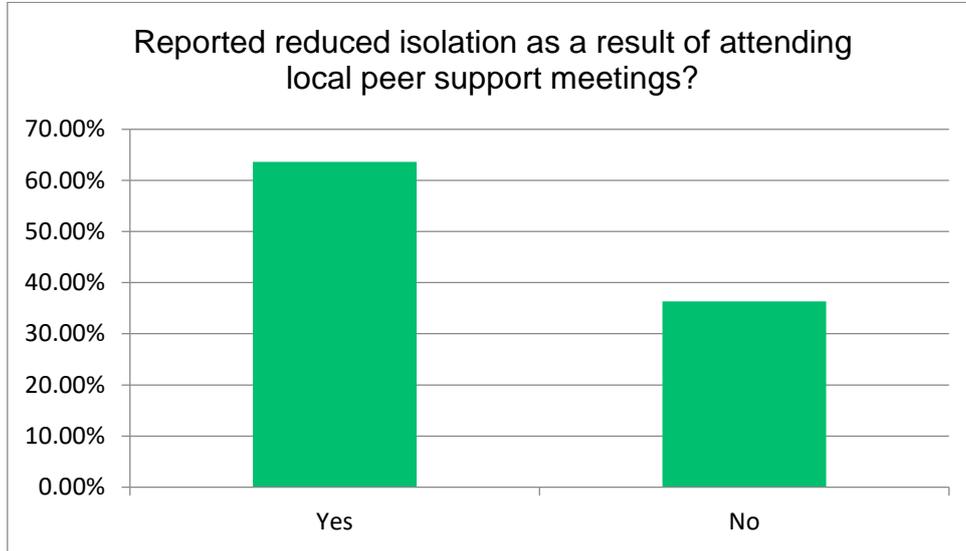


Table 13 Reduced Isolation as a result of peer support meetings

Rural isolation and family relationships were cited as issues which would have impacted on participants prior to their involvement in the programme and that they did see a demonstrable reduction in isolation by clients following their participation through linkages that were made with other mum's either on the MWP, or involved in parenting support groups which the parents felt comfortable in joining following MWP.

Overall management of the programme:

The section above highlighted the important role of partner organisations in ensuring the programme run successfully in the Fermanagh area. We do note however that only one out of the 14 responding partner agents was involved in discussion about the long term sustainability of the programme or its legacy in the Fermanagh area.

Feedback from partners involved in the overall management and delivery of the project was very positive and the impact of the project on participants has been well demonstrated in the section above.



Table 14 Effectiveness of project management

The chart above highlights that all project partners felt that the project management of the MWP was either very high quality or high quality.

There were a number of elements provided as part of the programme and the chart below illustrates partner views on which elements they thought were the most successful in the MWP:

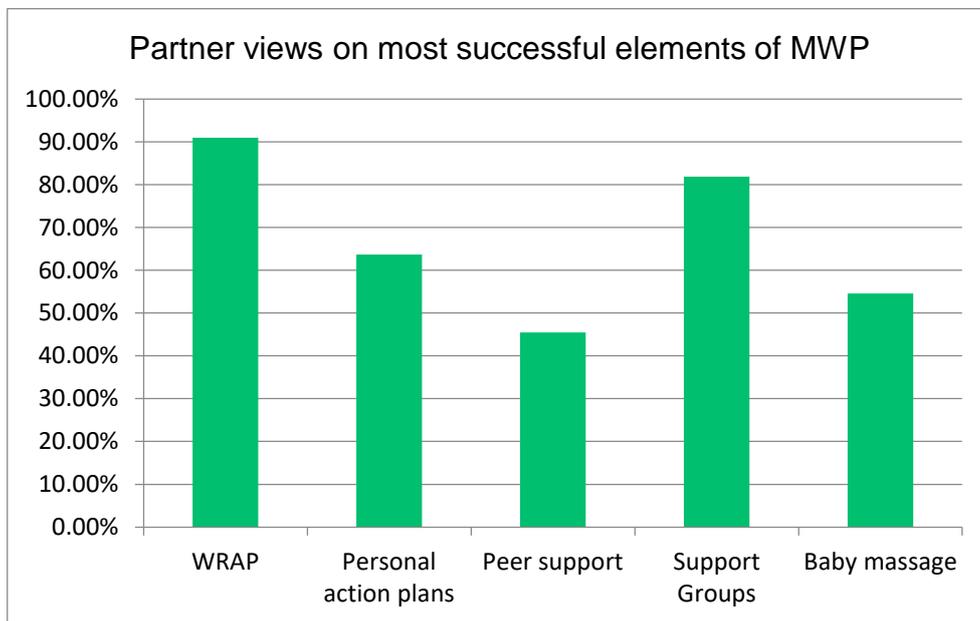


Table 15 Partner views on most successful programme elements

It is evident from the chart above that the WRAP and the peer support groups provided as part of the programme were the most successful aspects of the programme with 90% and over 80% of partners respectively indicating that these were the most successful elements.

All respondents to the service user's questionnaire rated the quality of the materials used during the project as good or very good (25% and 73% respectively). Respondents were also given the options of 'OK', 'poor' and 'very poor' although no one selected these options.

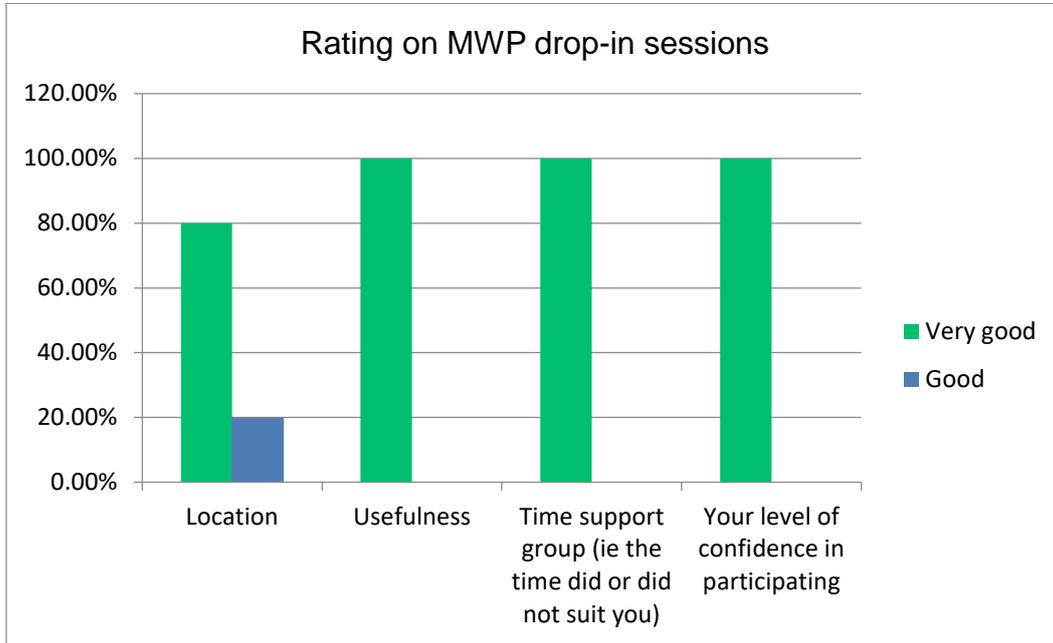


Table 16 Rating on MWP Drop-in Sessions

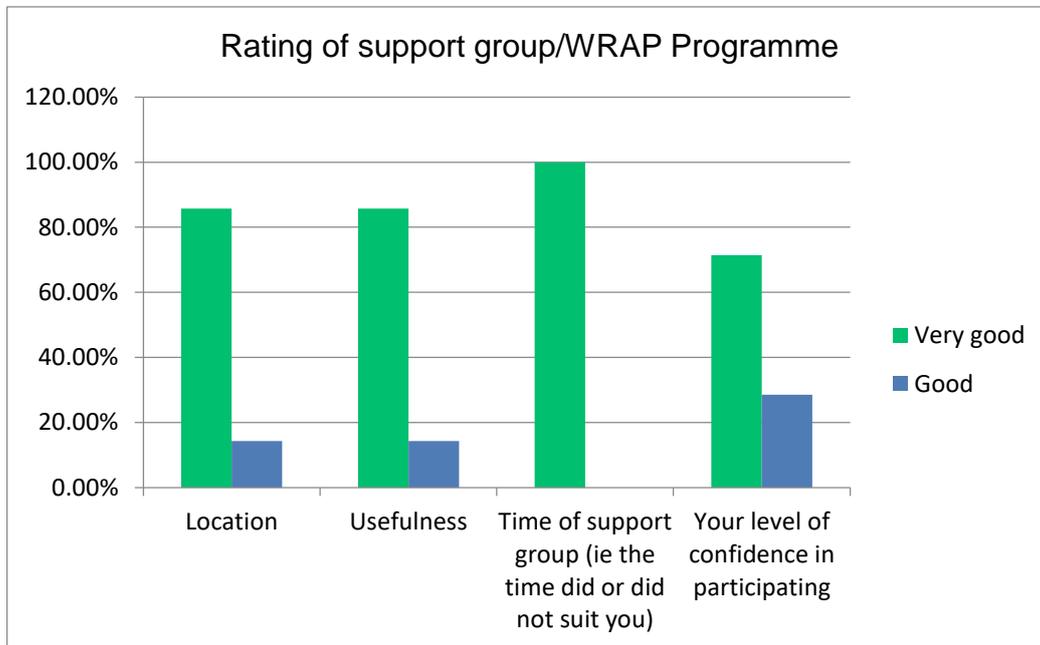


Table 17 Participant Rating of Support Group/WRAP Programme

The chart above shows that all respondents indicated that the location, usefulness, timing and confidence in the support group and WRAP programme was either good or very good. Respondents were also given the options of 'OK', 'poor' and 'very poor' although no one selected these options.

4. Review of service user experience

Past participants were contacted to engage in service user experience interviews in late 2019/early 2020.

We designed a structured interview which could be completed online by project participants and followed up with a workshop for participants to explore in some more detail issues which were raised in the online questionnaire. Participation in both the structured interviews and the workshop was low, and perhaps reflective of the gap between completing the course and commissioning of the independent evaluation (also of the treacherous weather conditions at the time of the workshop hampering driving in rural areas). Many of the participants had completed the course more than a year in advance of being contacted to complete feedback forms. Nevertheless, the extent of engagement from the participants was enthusiastic and positive.

13 project participants completed a structured interview focussing on their experience as service users and two participated in a follow up workshop. One other mum who was not able to travel to the workshop due to road conditions followed up by telephone.

As outlined in section 2 of this report, the external evaluation was commissioned in the second half of Year 3 of the project. Given there was a six month gap in delivery in Year 3 of the project, there was a significant gap between participants completing the programme and the external evaluator being able to contact participants for their views. 12 out of 13 of the participants had completed the course more than 6 months before being contacted for their opinion. A significant number (7 out of 13) had completed more than a year before being contacted for their perspectives.

The chart below highlights the aspects of the MWP that respondents participated in:

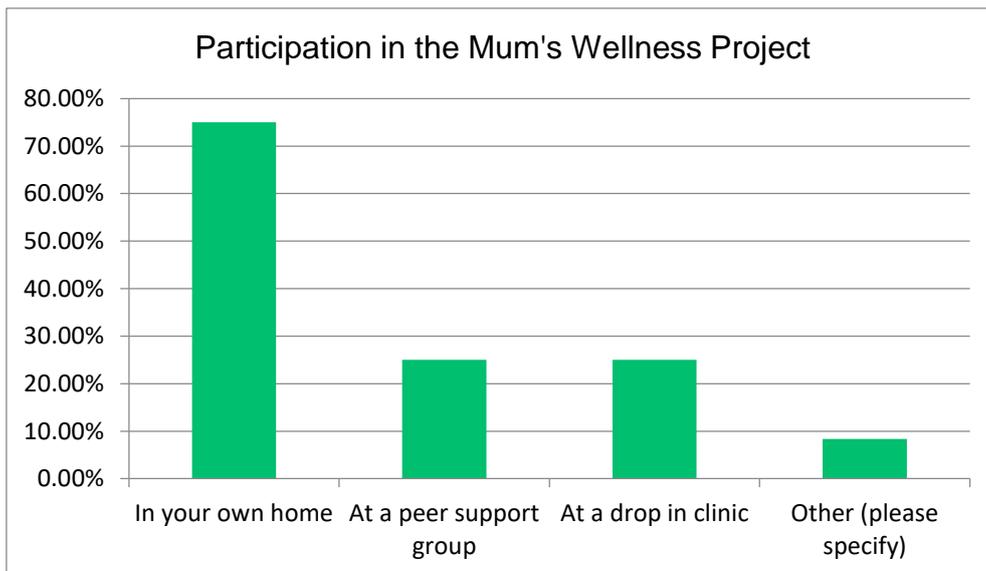


Table 18 Aspects of MWP Participated in

The chart highlights that 75% of respondents participated in the programme in their own home, 25% at peer support group, and 25% at the drop-in clinic.

The chart below highlights the age range of participant's children:

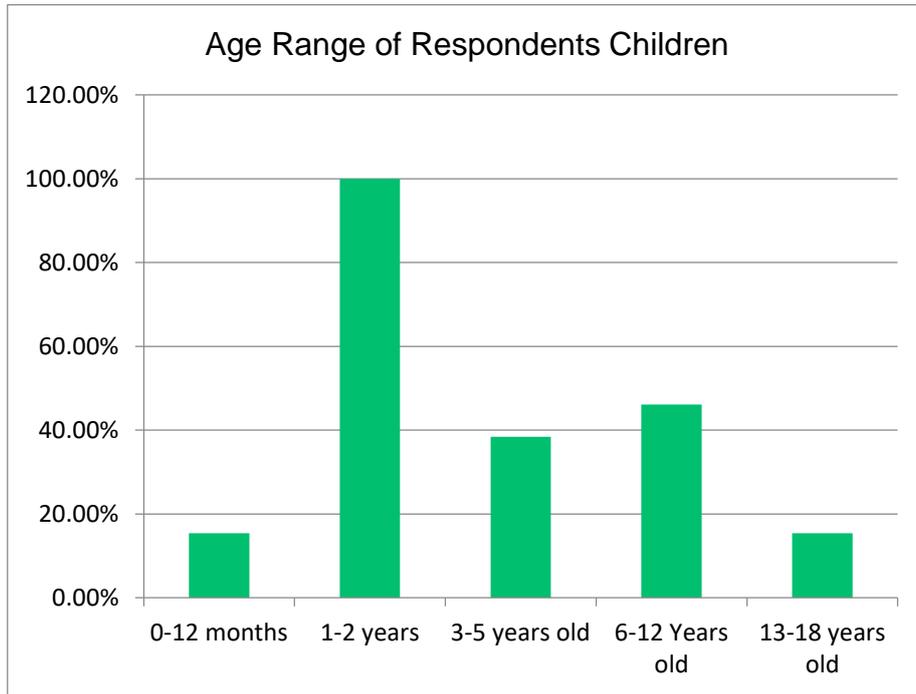


Table 19 Age range of respondent's children

The chart above highlights that while the programme was targeted at parents of new born children and children under the age of 2, many had children outside of this age range as well. This demonstrates that there was a significant opportunity to impact on indirect beneficiaries of the programme across the age ranges from 0-18 in the Fermanagh area.

Outcome 1: Improved Mental Health and Wellbeing

The chart below highlights the percentage of respondents who had experienced emotional health and wellbeing issues in the 12 months preceding participation in the MWP.

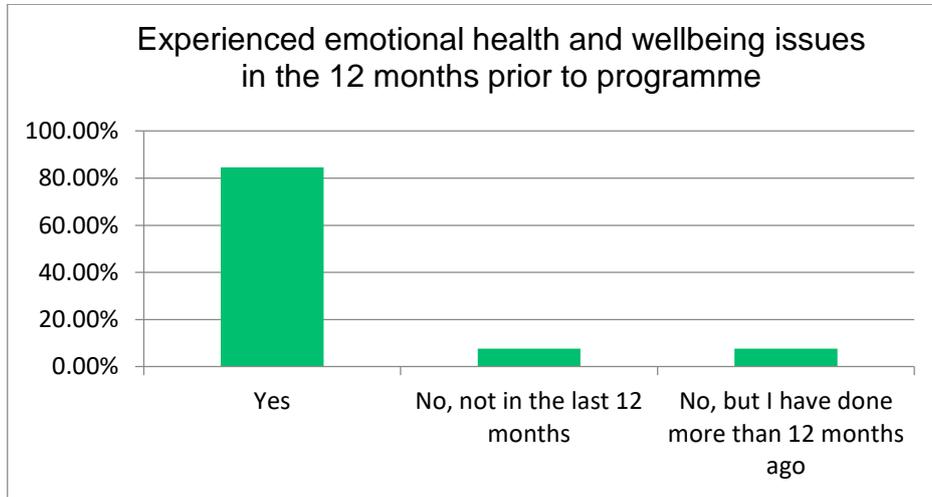


Table 20 Experience of emotional health and wellbeing issues prior to programme

The chart shows that the vast majority had experienced emotional health and wellbeing issues. Had this survey been completed on exit from the programme, we would expect it to have highlighted that all mums had experienced emotional health and wellbeing issues in the 12 months preceding their participation in the programme, based on feedback from referral agents and programme staff.

The table below shows that more than 90% of mums had previously tried to get support for their emotional health and wellbeing issues prior to participating in the MWP:

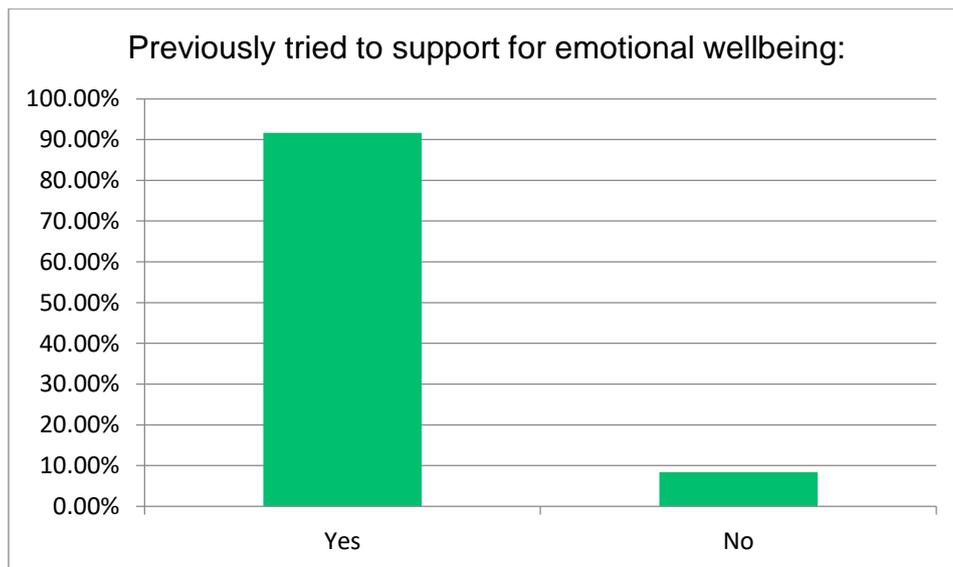


Table 21 Previously tried to support for emotional wellbeing

More than 83% of participants agreed that by taking part in the MWP, they now have increased awareness of their own emotional health and wellbeing. The other 16% indicate that they 'didn't know' if they had increased awareness.

"I find now that I was really bad, if the baby had an unsettled period I didn't realise before, whereas I know now what the triggers are. It helps you to realise what they are and identify it at the beginning.

It's actually one of these in a little pocket form. I carried it with me at work when I went back again."

Another mum commented that she uses the WRAP, but in a more personal way:

"I do refer to the WRAP, but I keep it in my head. I know when I need to take time out and go to have a shower or read a book to take time out just.

I downloaded it on an app as well and that is so very handy as it give you all the early warning signs etc. It has all your bits and pieces in it and is very handy as everybody has their phones now and you can carry it with you."

Every respondent to the service user questionnaire indicated that they felt the MWP programme enabled them to gain recovery skills that they find useful for their own emotional health and wellbeing.

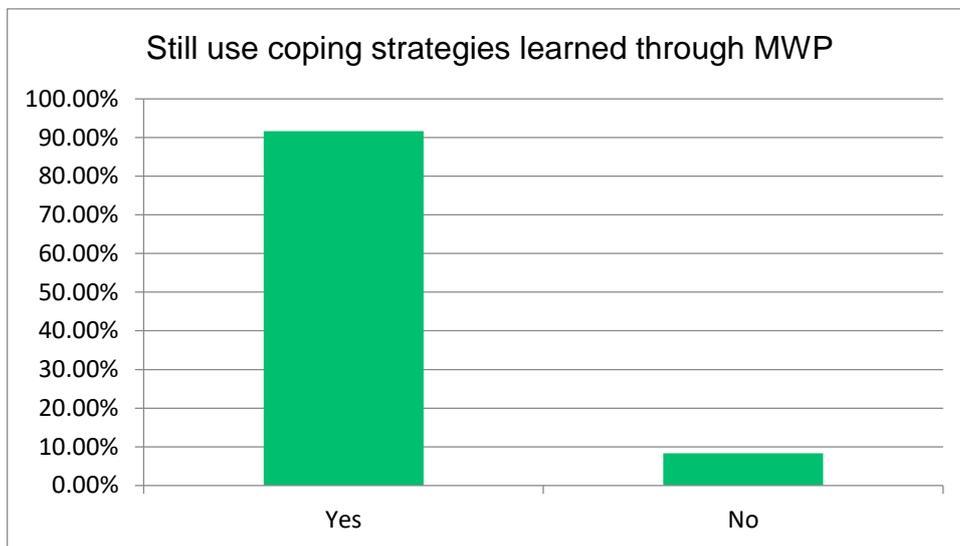


Table 22 Still use coping strategies learned through MWP

The chart above shows that the vast majority of respondents indicated that they still use the coping strategies they learned as part of the MWP. For example respondents to the survey indicated that they “take time for themselves”, practice “relaxation techniques and take ‘me’ time”, “make time for myself and my husband”.

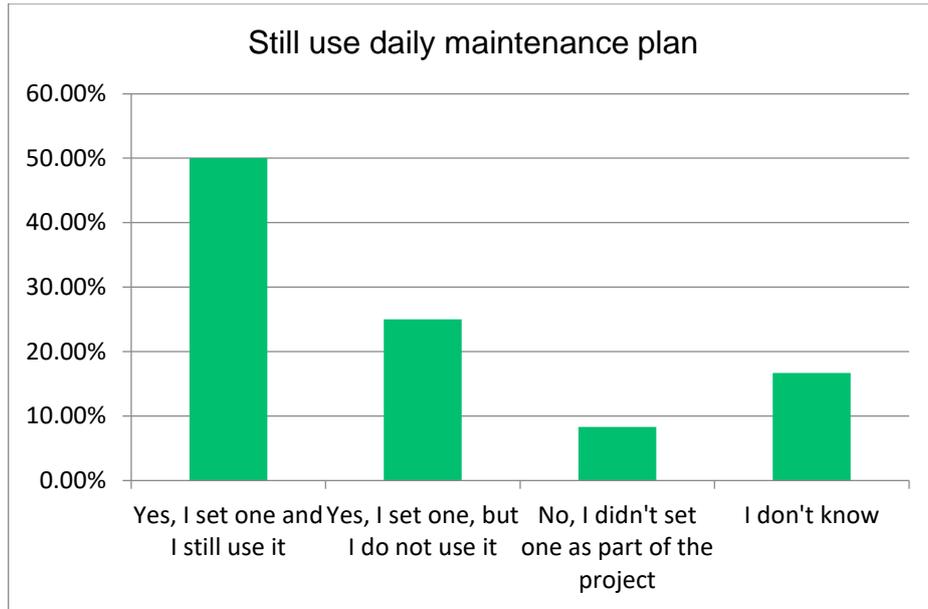


Table 23 Use of daily maintenance plan

The chart above highlights that three quarters of respondents were able to recall setting a daily maintenance plan as part of the MWP project. 50% of respondents indicated that they still use the daily maintenance plan which is encouraging given the fact that participant's perspectives were gathered in the main at least 6 months after their completion of the project and in some cases, more than 12 months after completion.

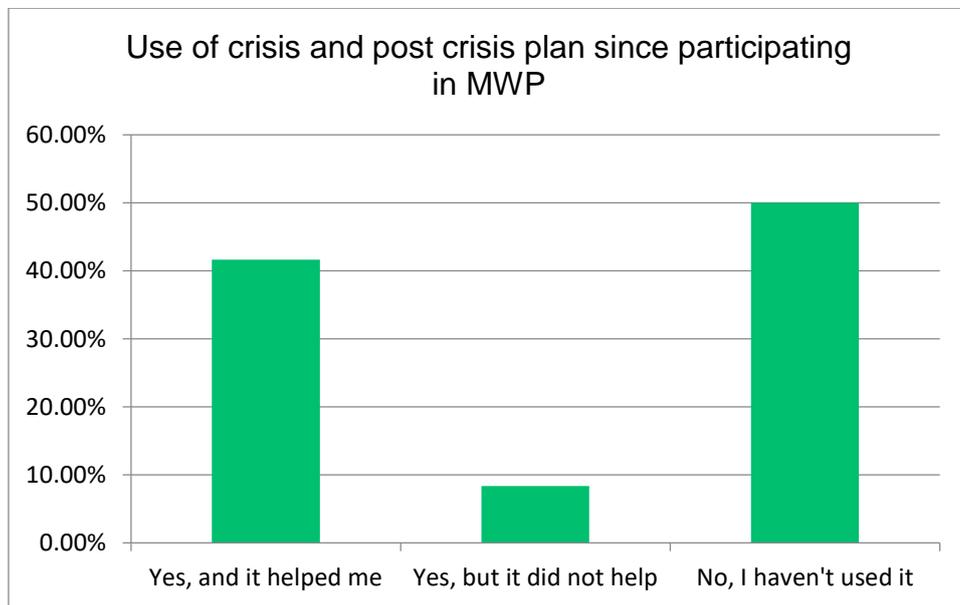


Table 24 Use of crisis and post-crisis plan since participation in MWP

The chart above highlights that half of respondents have used their crisis and post-crisis plans since participating in the MWP. The chart highlights that the plans worked for the majority of those who used them.

Outcome 2: improved resilience and help seeking behaviour

The chart below highlights who participants had approached for support for their emotional health and wellbeing in advance of the MWP:

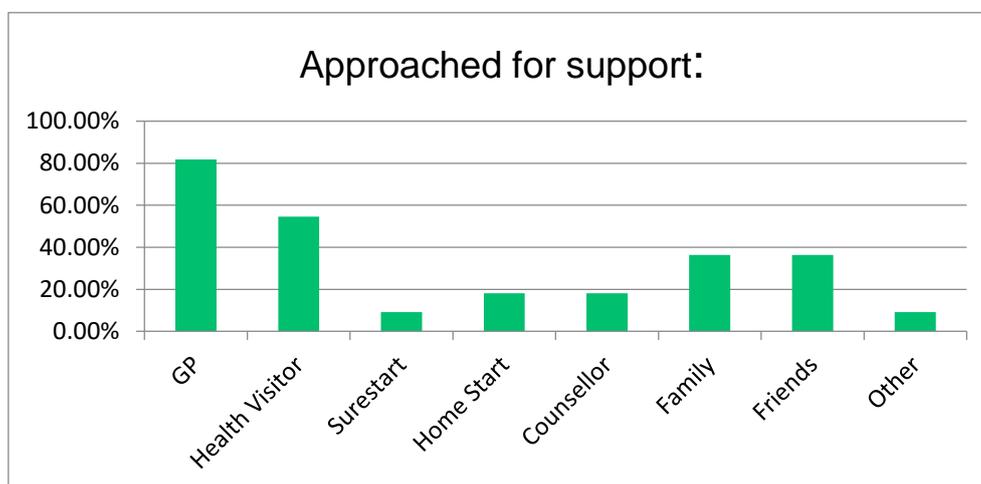


Table 25 Sources of support approached prior to the programme

The majority of participants had previously approached their GP (80%), a health visitor (55%), family (36%) or friends (36%) for support prior to the programme. Encouragingly, 55% of respondents indicated that they did receive the support they request from those highlighted in table 25 above, however 45% said that while they did received support, they required more. One respondent indicated that they had approached 'Support 2gether' in Omagh. For some participants there was a general feeling that if they could not access services from a health professional, there were very few options open to them within their family or friend circles to access support:

“One of the main things was my family did not know enough about mental health, they just did not know how to help me. Through me doing this and explaining to them why I was doing this, they have been able to understand and it has opened their eyes to things. It’s had a snowball effect.”

The MWP provided Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP) for participants as the key tool to enable them to develop personal plans to support their emotional health and wellbeing. WRAP planning is an evidence-based, self-designed process to enable people to identify their own individual and personal 'toolbox' to overcome emotional health and wellbeing issues. It is a wellness self-management intervention for those who struggle with mental health issues as well as many other life challenges. A systematic review of 253 studies published by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)² identified that, relative to inactive control conditions, WRAP was superior for promoting self-perceived recovery outcomes (demonstrating a small-but-significant pooled effect).

² Is the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Efficacious for Improving Personal and Clinical Recovery Outcomes? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Louise Canacott et al. Psychiatric Rehabil J. 2019 Dec.

WRAP was developed by a group of people with mental health difficulties (led by Mary Ellen Copeland). They learned to identify the things that they can do to feel better and stay well. These personal resources are "Wellness Tools." WRAP includes the following elements

- Wellness toolbox
- Daily maintenance plan
- Identifying triggers / Action plan
- Identifying early warning signs / Action plan
- When things are breaking down / Action plan
- Crisis planning
- Post crisis planning

WRAP was used as a central component of the Mum's Wellness Programme and was well received by Service users who responded to the structured interviews for the external evaluation.

We asked participants whether or not they had been aware of WRAP prior to their participation in the MWP. None of the participants were aware of the WRAP prior to participation in the programme. Four out of 12 respondents who answered the question on engaging friends and family in their WRAP said that they involved a family member, and 2 out of 12 indicated that they involved friends in the agreement and implementation of their WRAP plan.

"I was all over the place at that time and I remember the MWP worker witting down with me at the time and saying this is a tool that is going to help you get through this."

Another agreed, commenting:

"I remember thinking this is nonsense, this is not going to work. As a health professional I though there is now ay this sort of thing is going to help me. It just goes to show where your mind is at the time because even though I was aware of mental health issues through work, I thought there is no way this is going to happen to me, it can't. You know the signs but you try to ignore them. You are too busy looking after others."

"WRAP focusses on triggers and enables participants to put their own words around it. In my case it was when my brother died and I had the baby at the same time."

Use of the word Crisis is there because Mary Ann Copeland who authored the programme indicated that it can be used for someone who is emotionally low some days to someone who is coming out of long stay crisis support or psychosis."

I also have the 'Bill of Rights' which was given out at the course laminated and I keep it in my kitchen. I also think that my children should see this and know about it as well. It's something that self-care shouldn't be looked at as 'selfish', it should be accepted. It is a concept that is not bred into us in our culture."

I have one particular page of my WRAP on my fridge at home and I refer to it often. It helps me remember what I have to do and also to take care of myself"

Participants attending the workshop still have copies of their WRAP and said that they referred to it often, long after they had completed the programme.

"I remember looking at it at the start and thinking this is not going to help me, what is this thing! But now I still have it and it is the 'bible' for me. I would use it every day as I have now come from someone who was last in everything. I have four children, I am a nurse, and I look after others and would leave myself to be the last person who I thought about. If it didn't leave it to the last minute, I didn't do anything for myself at all, or I just glossed over my needs. When I started to go into these sessions it took a lot for me to realise that I do matter. I remember one of the sayings we looked at in the group sessions and that was 'you cannot pour from an empty jug'. I have to say that looking right back to that, that the jug was upside down all the time. It was something I was expected to do. My bother did it. My grandmother did it. Self-care for me was something that was just something someone else did, in a different class. For us, it was just one you have children you didn't matter. This changed for me when I came along to the course and Ursula changed that for me. You just fill these out weekly at first throughout the course. It stated gently at the beginning for example we look at different words and decide what they mean to you. Self-advocacy, confidence etc., what do they mean to me? I remember looking at those words and thinking I know them, but I don't know what they mean to me. I remember being in tears when I realised that and thinking I don't know what that is."

Another workshop participant agreed and commented:

"For me it was knowing that self-care could be something as small as having a shower or taking 5 minutes to myself. There were days where I never had a shower or couldn't bring myself to or anything like that. I have now integrated this into my daily living."

Participants confirmed that for them, the WRAP is a living document and has been successful in helping to start them on the way to recovery at various points in life and in different circumstances:

"It is a growing document, it grows and changes. I filled it out with different colour pens and colours representing how I was feeling at the time and when I look at it now, it reminds me on how far I have come on my journey. It really draws on your sense of being and brings out the whole point of coming to the programme in the first place and for many of us, it was because we had lost ourselves as individuals."

Others have been able to pass on what they have learned a become champions in their own family, community or workplace in relation to encouraging others to seek help:

"I can now see the signs as I've been through it myself and I now pass this on to others through my work and friends. I would even photocopy the information for others mums who come into our clinic at work and I will chat to them about it and try to get them to go along and seek a referral. I encourage them to speak to their health visitor about it. I can see it in people now all the time as I know that's where I was when I was bad. I can see the signs and know when to encourage them to get help."

Outcome 3: Reduced Isolation

Having the Mum's Wellness worker assisted clients with gradually reducing their levels of isolation through having the confidence to go along to group sessions. Participants would have a number of visits to their home initially from the worker to see if this programme was the right one for them and whether or not it would meet their needs as a parent. This would also help build confidence in getting mums to the stage where they felt that they were not overwhelmed by the feeling of going along to a group session with people they did not actually know. The Mum's Wellness worker would then be in attendance and available to support mums at the drop-in sessions.

One of the participants commented:

"I probably would not have come to the session if I hadn't met Ursula at the start of the programme. You need to find a level of trust first before you feel comfortable in telling people what your issues are. The continuation and kind of continuity of care throughout the programme made things a heck of a lot easier for me to engage."

The chart below highlights the percentage of participants who indicate they now have someone they can talk to support their emotional health and wellbeing:

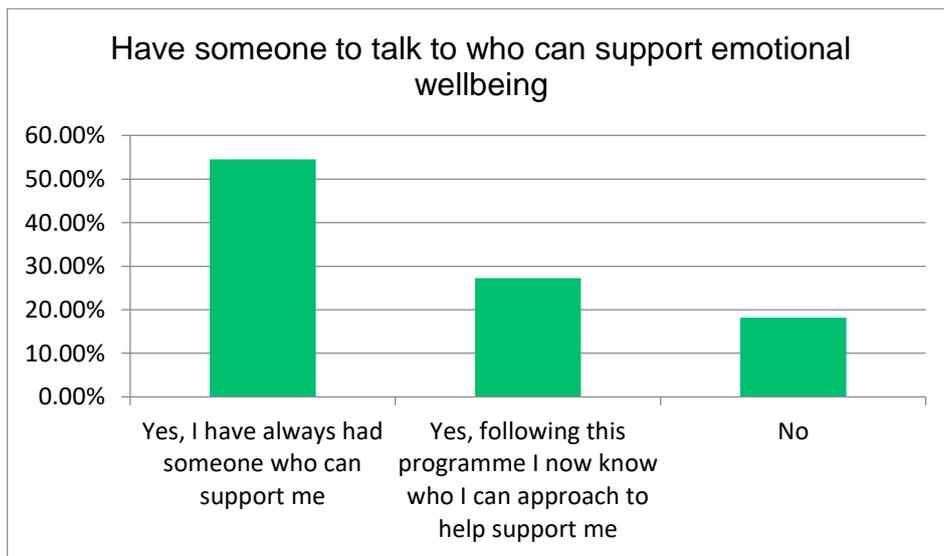


Table 26 Have someone to talk to about emotional health and wellbeing

The chart indicates that more than 80% of respondents now have someone they can talk to about their emotional health and wellbeing, which is an increase from 50% prior to participation in the programme.

One mum commented in the workshop discussion:

"When a new baby is born everyone is focussed on the baby and rightly so, but internally I was struggling about it and I wasn't think in how I was doing in the midst of it.

You feel terrible for thinking that and beat yourself up about all these different things and start thinking totally irrationally. When you then go into the group you start to hear other mothers saying they think like that too and you start to realise you're not the only one thinking like that. You can then start to ask 'how did you deal with that or get over it'. It's

very important to be around people who know exactly how you are feeling and not look down on you in any way. You can develop a pattern of feeling like this and until you and others start to give you permission to tease it out a wee bit, it kind of gets lodged with you."

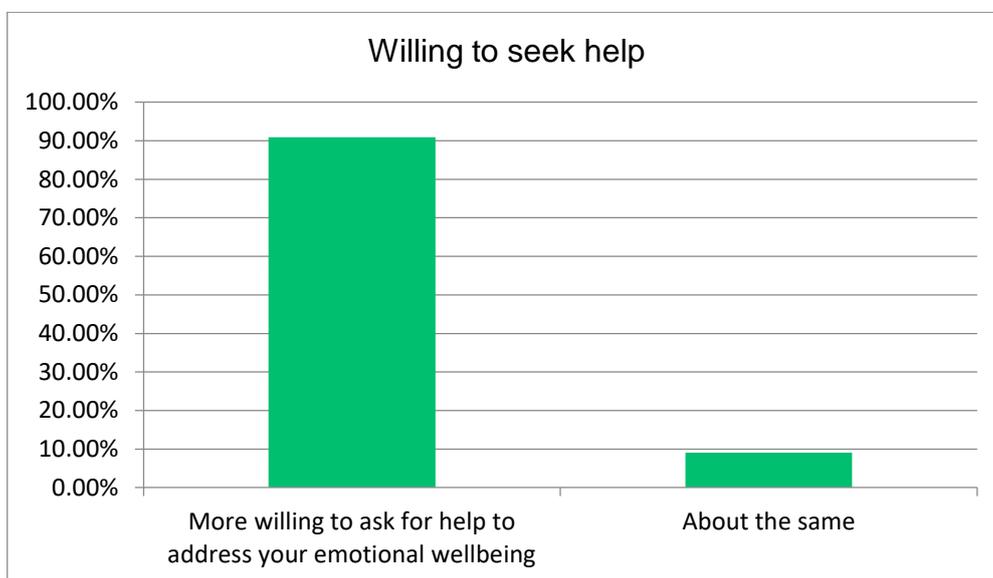


Table 27 Willing to seek help

The chart above shows that the vast majority of respondents (90%) are now willing to seek help for their emotional health and wellbeing since completing the MWP programme. Encouragingly, no respondents indicated that they were not willing to seek help for their emotional health and wellbeing.

More than 80% of respondents indicated that they were directed to other support in the community as a result of having participated in the programme. The table below highlights the organisations to which respondents were directed for further support following the programme:

Organisation	Percentage of respondents
Home Start	60.00%
Oak Healthy Living Centre	60.00%
Parent support groups	30.00%
SureStart	20.00%
Action for Children	20.00%
Food banks	20.00%
Library	20.00%
Other (please specify)	10.00%

Table 28 Source of support following programme

The table highlights that the majority of respondents indicated that they were referred to Home Start or Oak Healthy Living Centre. Both organisations were also referred to by participants in the workshop following the programme.

There was agreement among project participants and referral agents that participants did reduce their levels of isolation as they progressed through the MWP. Table 5 in the previous section of this report highlights that over 70% of referral agents felt that mums were able to engage in others services as a direct result of their participation in the MWP programme, in addition to receiving support and building relationships with their peers involved in the programme. One workshop participant commented on the methodology used by programme staff to engage mums initially on a one-to-one basis and then gently encourage them to get involved in group meetings leading to reduced isolation:

“Ursula came along at the start to do the WRAP in the house for a few weeks at the beginning. Then I came along to Fermanagh House to do it in a group setting to the end. Even after I finished doing the WRAP I felt I wanted to come along to the end of the programme for the support. I ended up coming along every Tuesday for about 6 months or so afterwards. There might have been only a couple of us at each of the sessions but it didn't matter. I started only coming along to have something to get out of the house with the wee ones, but then I stated to grow that bond with others towards the end. From that perspective it was hard when it totally stopped for us.”

This was the first time that many of the project participants had attended such a course or drop-in facility:

“For me I wouldn't go near any parent and toddler group at the time. I just did not suit me and I found it to be too 'clicky', but I felt comfortable coming here to the drop in sessions. I didn't have any other community based groups that I could go to”.

Another commented:

“I was at Breast Friends with my 3rd child and then I went along with one of my friends to this group when I was on maternity leave. I went through a tough time between by 3rd and 4th child with a death in my immediate family, the 'house of cards' just came down around me at that stage and I as I had already developed post metal depression form the 3rd child, I really needed a level of support at that time. I hadn't heard of Mindwise then but I came here through the Breast Friends group. It is run by a former health visitor so she knew what she was recommending and suggested I come here. Once I came along I started to see other groups that I could get support from in the community and this built my confidence up to go along to those for further support.

Need for ongoing support:

The need for a level of ongoing support was mentioned in all aspects of feedback for the independent evaluation, from project participants and referral agents (particularly health visitors and Fermanagh Hub staff).

Previous sections of the evaluation have illustrated that prior to the programme, there were very few services available to mums in the Fermanagh area to enable this level of service provision, for those that were available there were significant waiting lists, and for those who participated in this programme, there was a demonstrable improvement in their emotional health and wellbeing, social isolation and resilience levels.

“There is a finality about the last session. I remember going home and just being in floods of tears saying what am I going to be doing now. The truth is you make such a bond with

people in the programme. At the start you dread going. You think what am I doing going here, and at the end the reality becomes really quite different and I ended up thinking what am I going to do without this now. Having something to move forward with would be really useful and even just having the ability to check in with someone. It would be nice to know it's there if we ever needed it."

Another participant agreed:

"Ursula came along at the start to do the WRAP in the house for a few weeks at the beginning. Then I came along to Fermanagh House to do it in a group setting to the end. Even after I finished doing the WRAP I felt I wanted to come along to the end of the programme for the support. I ended up coming along every Tuesday for about 6 months or so afterwards. There might have been only a couple of us at each of the sessions but it didn't matter. I started only coming along to have something to get out of the house with the wee ones, but then I stated to grow that bond with others towards the end. From that perspective it was hard when it totally stopped for us."

I just hope the funding continues for the programme as women and families need this. When you are on your knees you struggle big time, and without this I don't know where I would be today. I was having totally irrational thoughts and thinking how could I possibly do this. The support and understanding I was able to get here in this programme and the time to sit down and talk through my feeling, just would not have been possible in a 10 minute appointment with my GP. It is invaluable."

The weekly drop in service for the programme started again on the 3rd March and ran on 10th March as a weekly provision, but as a result of COVID-19 only these two sessions were completed prior to the imposition of lockdown in Northern Ireland.

Two group programmes had already been organised, referrals sought and were due to start however had to be postponed due to COVID-19.

5. Conclusions

Mindwise received a letter of offer in October 2016 from Comic Relief to set out the terms and conditions for delivery of the programme. Mindwise received a total of £119,940 for a 24 month delivery, this was subsequently adjusted to £124,940.

The programme received an extension to the original delivery term of up to 36 month delivery within the existing finance envelope.

The programme was set targets across three outcomes:

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved resilience and help seeking behaviour
- Reduced isolation

Mindwise exceeded the targets set for each of these three outcomes by a range of between 108% and 213% (see table 2).

Partnership working:

- 70% of partners felt that the effectiveness of partnership working in the MWP was very high quality, with the other 30% indicating it was high quality.
- 60% of partners felt that the extent to which partner contributed to the aims of the objectives of the MWP was very high quality, with the other 30% indicating it was high quality.
- 80% of partners felt that the project successfully engaged partners necessary to address emotional wellbeing challenges of expectant and new mums in the Fermanagh area.

Impact:

- Health visitors in particular were very positive about the impact that the programme had in helping to reduce waiting lists that their clients would normally face and indicated that the increased capacity that the programme provided in the Fermanagh area to provide early intervention was a key component to the success of the programme
- three quarters of referral agents felt that participants had an increased ability to participate in other services as a result of their participation in the MWP
- half of partner organisations felt that prior to the existence of the MWP in Fermanagh, other options were available for support for new and expectant mum's, however referral agents suggested that if support was available, it may well have been limited in the areas for which it was available .

Improved Mental Wellbeing:

- 90% of referral agents indicated that their clients reported improved mental health and wellbeing as a result of participating in the MWP

- 80% of service users experienced emotional health and wellbeing issues. Had this survey been completed on exit from the programme, we would expect it to have highlighted that all mums had experienced emotional health and wellbeing issues in the 12 months preceding their participation in the programme, based on feedback from referral agents and programme staff.
- 90% of mums had previously tried to get support for their emotional health and wellbeing issues prior to participating in the MWP
- 83% of participants agreed that by taking part in the MWP, they now have increased awareness of their own emotional health and wellbeing
- 90% of service users indicated that they still use the coping strategies they learned as part of the MWP, with 50% of respondents indicating that they still use the daily maintenance plan they set during the programme.

Improved resilience and help seeking behaviour:

- More than 80% of referral agents indicated that their clients reported improved resilience as a result of having participated in the programme
- More than 50% of referral agents indicated that their clients reported improved help seeking behaviour as a result of having participated in the programme
- The majority of service users had previously approached their GP (80%), a health visitor (55%), family (36%) or friends (36%) for support prior to the programme. Encouragingly, 55% of respondents indicated that they did receive the support they request from those they approached.
- WRAP was used as a central component of the Mum's Wellness Programme and was well received by Service users who responded to the structured interviews for the external evaluation. None of the participants were aware of the WRAP prior to participation in the programme.

Reduced isolation:

- More than 50% of referral agents indicated that their clients had become involved in local parenting support groups, and more than 60% indicated that their clients reported had demonstrated reduced isolation as a result of having participated in the programme.
- 70% of referral agents felt that mums were able to engage in others services as a direct result of their participation in the MWP programme
- 80% of service users indicated that they now have someone they can talk to about their emotional health and wellbeing, which is an increase from 50% prior to participation in the programme.
- 90% of service user respondents are now willing to seek help for their emotional health and wellbeing since completing the MWP programme
- 80% of respondents indicated that they were directed to other support in the community as a result of having participated in the programme

Overall programme management:

- Feedback from partners involved in the overall management and delivery of the project was very positive
- all project partners felt that the project management of the MWP was either very high quality or high quality
- WRAP and the peer support groups provided as part of the programme were the most successful aspects of the programme with 90% and over 80% of partners respectively indicating that these were the most successful elements.
- All respondents to the service user's questionnaire rated the quality of the materials used during the project as good or very good (25% and 73% respectively).
- All service user respondents indicated that the location, usefulness, timing and confidence in the support group and WRAP programme was either good or very good

6. Recommendations for sustainability beyond the programme

Sustainability

The evaluation has highlighted the important role of partner organisations in ensuring the programme run successfully in the Fermanagh area. We do note however that only one out of the 14 responding partner agents was involved in discussion about the long term sustainability of the programme or its legacy in the Fermanagh area.

1. We recommend that the programme use the opportunity provided by extension of the MWP to engage in discussion with partners about sustainability options in the Fermanagh area.
2. We recommend that partner organisations use the opportunity to look at the potential to sustain the peer support groups which have been established as part of the programme given the significant emphasis on impact that they have had with participants and the desire to see structures available to mums in the Fermanagh area given the extent of rurality and lack of ability to access to equivalent structures in the Omagh area.
3. We recommend that Mindwise and partners develop a short communication based on the results presented in Section 5 of this evaluation report to highlight impact to health professionals and other partner organisations across the Fermanagh area and build a level of support for future sustainability of the programme.
4. We recommend that Mindwise harness the enthusiasm and positivity created among previous programme participants to explore possibility of developing an 'emotional health and wellbeing champions' sustainability programme in the Fermanagh area, profiling previous willing participants from MWP in their respective communities and workplaces. This would widen the provision of peer support throughout communities not covered by Surestart or Healthy Living Centre provision in the Fermanagh area, built on experience and credibility of previous participants thus reducing the impact of social and rural isolation.

Timeliness of evaluation:

This evaluation report was commissioned at the end of the project and had a significant time lag between completion of the course to interviewing participants. We would recommend that evaluations are commissioned at the beginning of programme to enable formative evaluation to be completed including a baseline and annual update reports as the project progresses. Nonetheless, the enthusiasm from stakeholders and participants who did respond demonstrated the importance they placed on the programme.