

The Yard

Social Return on Investment Technical Report 2016/17

Contents

Foreword by The Yard.....	3
Summary table.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Chapter 1 Scope and beneficiaries of the SROI	8
Chapter 2 Theory of Change	10
Chapter 3 Measuring and valuing outcomes.....	21
Chapter 4 SROI calculation.....	29
Chapter 5 Results from the SROI analysis	36
Appendix 1: Findings from focus groups with parents and carers.....	40
Appendix 2: Findings from the parent survey	41
Appendix 3: Findings from staff and volunteer interviews.....	50
Appendix 4: Findings from staff and volunteer survey.....	52
Appendix 5: Findings from activities with children and young people	56
Appendix 6: Findings from interviews with stakeholders.....	60
Appendix 7: Recommended optimism bias reductions	61

Foreword by Celine Sinclair, CEO at The Yard

Scotland's third sector is operating in the toughest financial climate in decades, with a greater number of charities than ever competing for increasingly scarce resources. It has never been more important therefore for us to demonstrate our value, not only in terms of social benefits, but also financially and economically. At a time when charity funding cuts may be proffered as an easy way to achieve savings, this report demonstrates that as false economy, and a potentially damaging decision that would have significant negative impact on vulnerable people who rely on our services.

The Yard runs adventure play services for disabled children, young people and their families in the east of Scotland. We offer creative, adventurous indoor and outdoor play experiences in a well-supported environment. We provide care, support, and opportunities for fun and friendship. We encourage families to let go, promoting challenge, adventure, personal growth and independence.

In July 2016, The Yard commissioned Rocket Science to conduct a Social Return on Investment (SROI) impact analysis, which calculated the social, economic and financial benefits generated from every £1 The Yard invested in 2016/17. Underpinning the SROI is extensive primary research – focus groups, interviews, surveys, and play-based activities with children and young people – as well as accounting and management data analysis. Rocket Science also conducted a Cost-Benefit Analysis of the investment statutory services, such as local authorities, made in The Yard during this period.

In 2016/17, social return on investment at The Yard was valued at over £20 for every £1 spent. Every £1 invested by statutory services achieved a saving of over £12. In creating a much-needed safe space for disabled children to play, The Yard has become much more; our wraparound support service for the whole family offers not only a space to play, free of judgement, but also to seek advice and support from staff and other families. The SROI findings confirm our unique culture of building communities with our families in group settings creates happier and more resilient families.

- **Disabled children and young people** have better self-esteem and more confidence, are happier, have more friendships, improved physical health and increased social skills
- **Parents and carers** have reduced stress, improved social networks and reduced social isolation, and a sense of belonging to an accepting community; they are better informed
- **Siblings** are happier, and have a greater understanding of disabilities and difference

This report evidences that investment in The Yard equates to highly effective preventative spend. It also illustrates to supporters a measurement of our value derived from robust and credible methodology, adding weight to consistently positive anecdotal feedback from children and families.

The Yard flagship centre in Edinburgh is much loved, and benefits hundreds of children and families who travel from all over the Central Belt. Now that The Yard Dundee and The Yard Fife are both established and running successfully, our plans for the future include a purpose built centre to house The Yard Dundee. As a first step towards securing that future, we want to share why The Yard is so highly valued by families, but also what the model is really worth to statutory services financially. We encourage anyone interested in learning more about The Yard model to get in touch.

Summary table

The Yard's investment in 2016/2017, including in-kind inputs, totalled £653,153. The social value of the benefits achieved over that same year was £13,552,111. This means a Social Return on Investment of £20.50 per £1 invested.

Service analysed	Family Sessions	Youth and Respite Clubs	Preschool Groups	Total
Total investments	£258,514	£331,969	£62,680	£653,163
Social value produced	£11,294,284	£1,422,786	£666,001	£13,413,830
Social Return on Investment	£43.70	£4.30	£2.00	£20.50

Of this £20.50 of social return:

- £8.30 is for disabled children and young people
- £7.90 is for parents and carers
- £3.50 is for statutory services
- 50p is for siblings
- 40p is for staff and volunteers.

A Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) of investments from statutory services, which isolates the benefits from the Yard that lead to cost savings to these services, yields a **financial return of £12.60 per £1 invested**.

Statutory services investments	
City of Edinburgh Council	£ 89,390
Scottish Government	£ 93,112
Total	£ 182,502
Savings produced by The Yard	
Reduced use of Council-funded soft play and leisure services	£ 796,230
Reduced use of Council-funded respite care	£ 1,238,484
Reduced use of CAMHs (children and young people)	£ 31,639
Reduced use of CMHTs (adults)	£ 149,473
Reduced costs to NHS related to injuries and self-harm	£ 85,309
Total	£ 2,294,135
Financial return to statutory services	£12.60

Introduction

About this report

In July 2016, The Yard commissioned Rocket Science UK Ltd (Rocket Science) to undertake quantitative and qualitative research on the impact of their Edinburgh services. In particular, we were asked to analyse three distinct services run by The Yard: Family Sessions, Respite and Youth Clubs, and Preschool Groups.

To do this we have conducted a Social Return on Investment (SROI) impact analysis, which measures the financial and economic impacts of The Yard. We have also conducted a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) of the investment made in The Yard by statutory services.

Underpinning the SROI is extensive primary research conducted between July 2016 and December 2016, the findings from which are included in the appendices. This research involved:

- An outcomes mapping workshop with staff, volunteers, and parents/carers to identify the main outcomes that The Yard delivers for the different beneficiary groups
- 5 focus groups with parents
- Interviews with a range of staff and volunteers
- A survey of parents and carers
- A survey of staff and volunteers
- Interviews with children and young people through a series of play-based activities
- Analysis of management data and accounting data provided by The Yard.

This report is the Technical Report for the SROI analysis. It details the underpinning research, analysis, assumptions and calculations used to determine the Social Return on Investment of The Yard and the return to statutory services. Inputs and outputs, and therefore the overall rate of investment, are measured for the financial year 2016-2017.

About The Yard

The Yard is a charity that runs adventure play services for disabled children, young people and their families in the East of Scotland. It aims to *'offer disabled children and their siblings the chance to experience creative, adventurous indoor and outdoor play in a well-supported environment.'*¹

The Yard's approach is child-centred and child-led, encouraging fun, challenge and adventure. The Yard has a purpose-built playground where disabled children and young people can enjoy themselves and play safely, whilst learning to take controlled risks.

The Yard also supports disabled children and young people's families. Parents and siblings can participate in the weekly Family Sessions and Preschool Groups, enjoying valuable family time. Additionally, Youth and Respite Clubs offer parents a much-needed break.

About SROI and the methodology used

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a framework for measuring and accounting for value. It measures the extent, intensity and value of outcomes resulting from an intervention. This SROI has investigated economic and social impacts resulting from The Yard Edinburgh's activities and has used monetary values to represent these impacts.

The analytical method for SROIs is similar to Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA), or other return on investment analyses. Where SROIs differ, is in their focus on the social and/or environmental impacts of the intervention. While CBA and other return on investment approaches are theoretically capable of including social and environmental impacts, they tend to focus disproportionately on the fiscal and economic costs and benefits. SROI starts from the basis that social and/or environmental impacts matter just as much.

SROI produces a single social return on investment figure for each project analysed – in the case of The Yard, one for each of three services reviewed. While this is a useful summary figure, the potential of an SROI analysis goes much beyond this. It allows us to understand and describe: the impacts of each service; who the beneficiaries of those impacts are; and why the impacts happen (this more comprehensive picture is referred to as the Theory of Change).

¹ The Yard website. <https://www.theyardscotland.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-believe-in>

The methodology behind SROI is not an exact science, as ascribing monetary values to qualitative experiences requires evidence-based value judgements and rigorous justifications to be made. To obtain values that are robust and reliable, the process has to be objective, transparent, replicable and compatible across the outcomes for all service users. To ensure rigour, a standardised approach needs to be applied wherever possible. Rocket Science's approach follows UK Government Cabinet Office guidelines and the Social Value UK methodology. In particular, there are two principles that we strongly believe in:

- **It is better to be 'approximately right than precisely wrong'.** SROI requires professional judgement and evidence-based estimates and assumptions, as ready-made exact figures are rarely available. What matters is that estimates and assumptions are well-informed, consistent and transparent. This Technical Report lists and explains all the assumptions made throughout the process of producing this SROI.
- **Extensive involvement from stakeholders in the process is crucial.** The more primary evidence is gathered and used from the project's stakeholders, the greater the rigour and credibility of the SROI. Through focus groups, interviews and surveys, we have worked closely with our beneficiary groups to identify the impacts The Yard has on them, measure these impacts, and understand what value they place on them. Details of the primary research undertaken are included in the appendices.

Chapter 1 Scope and beneficiaries of the SROI

Scope of the SROI

We have calculated a Social Return on Investment figure for three of the services offered by The Yard in Edinburgh: **Family Sessions, Youth and Respite Clubs, and Preschool Groups**.

These services are interlinked – many families attend more than one of these services regularly. To avoid double-counting impacts, we have used management data to understand how many beneficiaries attended more than one service. We have then apportioned the benefits, taking this into account. (More information on this method is found in Chapter 3 – Measuring and valuing outcomes).

Although many of the impacts have been found to be the same across the three services, both the extent of the benefit and the assumptions made in the SROI calculation are service-specific, based on differences between services that have emerged in the research.

For example, Youth and Respite Clubs involve parents and carers dropping their children off at The Yard, rather than staying with them (as in Family Sessions or Preschool Groups). Therefore, parents and carers benefit from reduced stress through respite, but less so from other outcomes that arise from being physically present at The Yard, such as staff, parents and carers sharing information and guidance.

The SROI calculation corresponds to a year of input costs and a year of output social and economic value. Specifically, we have used input costs relating to the financial year **April 2016 to March 2017**. Some of the outcomes identified will last for longer than a year. However, because the service is not a one-off intervention but an ongoing project (with some parents attending The Yard for over 10 years), we have decided to focus on a one-year snapshot only. Nevertheless, these cumulative, long-term impacts, and their indicative values, are included for reference in Chapter 3.

The five beneficiary groups

Beneficiary groups were first identified through an initial outcomes mapping workshop with staff, volunteers and parents/carers at The Yard. They have then been confirmed and refined through focus groups and interviews.

The five beneficiary groups that have been included in the SROI analysis are:

- **Disabled children and young people** who attend The Yard
- **Parents and carers** of children and young people who attend The Yard
- **Siblings** of children and young people who attend The Yard
- **Staff and frequent volunteers**
- **Statutory services**, which provide respite care, soft play and leisure services, and mental health services.

Chapter 2 Theory of Change

A Theory of Change is a framework which causally links an organisation's inputs (what it invests in time or money), its activities, and the outcomes it achieves for its beneficiaries.

The Theory of Change for The Yard was developed alongside stakeholders at the initial outcomes mapping workshop and has been refined through focus groups, interviews and further analysis. It includes both the outcomes that have been quantified in the SROI calculation and those which have not been quantified but are still deemed relevant.

The Yard's inputs

We have researched three distinct services offered by The Yard in Edinburgh. **Family Sessions** run twice per week during term-time. They are open play sessions; open not only to disabled children and young people up to age 18, but also to their families. Playworkers and volunteers are present, but families can use the facilities as best suits their needs. During school holidays, Family Sessions run every day except for Sunday, when The Yard is open to the public.

There are 7 Youth and Respite Clubs every week which run Monday-Saturday in the evenings and are aimed at specific age groups between 8 and 25. Young people attend the clubs on their own, which gives them a chance to interact with peers independently from their parents. For parents, clubs offer valuable respite time. There is a maximum number of 16 young people who can attend a club at any one time and there are often waiting lists. Clubs are more structured than Family Sessions.

The **Preschool Groups** running on Mondays and Tuesdays are aimed at children aged between 2 and 8, as well their parents and siblings, who stay at The Yard with them during the session.

Figure 1 overleaf shows the *economic* costs of each of the three services, as included in the SROI calculation, rather than financial costs. Financial costs include only the explicit fiscal costs of running these services. Economic costs are the broader costs to the economy, which also include non-monetary inputs, such as volunteer time and the subsidised cost of the complementary therapies offered at The Yard.

Volunteer time has been valued at the minimum wage for over 25s of £7.20/hour, to reflect the opportunity cost of volunteers working elsewhere.² In addition, The Yard spent £8,160 in 2016/2017 on complementary therapies such as massage, equating to approximately £25 an hour. This is a subsidised cost, as specialist massages can cost around £50 an hour. Therefore, we have added an in-kind subsidy cost in the SROI calculation of £8,160, apportioned by services (using the percentages of payroll costs apportioned to family sessions and preschool groups where this occurs).

² We think a minimum wage for over 25s is an appropriate proxy for the value of volunteer time, even though The Yard is a Living Wage Employer, because the opportunity cost relates to what individuals might be doing elsewhere if they were not volunteering at The Yard.

In addition, we have apportioned The Yard's full overhead costs to each of the services, based on the percentage of total payroll costs allocated to each service.³ This is because the three services analysed all rely on The Yard's unique, purpose-built infrastructure, and to not include all overheads would be to underestimate the implicit costs of running the services.

Service	Family Sessions	Clubs	Preschool Groups	Total
Project costs	£8,975	£17,156	£1,903	£28,034
Apportionment of Project Payroll	£85,163	£110,711	£20,645	£216,520
Apportionment of Overheads	£150,407	£196,218	£36,581	£383,205
Volunteer time* ⁴	£7,401.60	£7,884	£1,958	£17,243.60
Subsidy on complementary therapies*	£6,567.80	£0.00	£1,592.20	£8,160
Total cost per year	£258,514	£331,969	£62,679	£653,163

*Figure 1. Economic costs of each of the three services. *In-kind contributions. [Source: The Yard accounting data for accounting costs and management data for volunteer hours].*

³ These percentages were provided by The Yard accountant and are: Family Sessions 40%; Youth and Respite Clubs 28%; Preschool Groups 4%.

⁴ Apportionment of volunteer hours by service was provided by The Yard, for every month over four months. We then worked out a yearly total, taking into account differences between term-time volunteer hours and holiday volunteer hours.

The Yard's outcomes

In the outcomes mapping workshop, we started by asking stakeholders to explain what outputs or activities at The Yard they benefited from (outputs) and how they benefited from them (outcomes). We identified both Intermediary outcomes and Final outcomes. Intermediary outcomes are narrower in scope and more concrete; they lead to Final outcomes which are broader. Often, more than one Intermediary outcome contributes to a Final outcome. The causal sequence is therefore:

The Yard's inputs → The Yard's outputs → Intermediary outcome → Final outcome

This causal sequence, for each of the outcomes, is what makes up the Theory of Change – shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 overleaf.

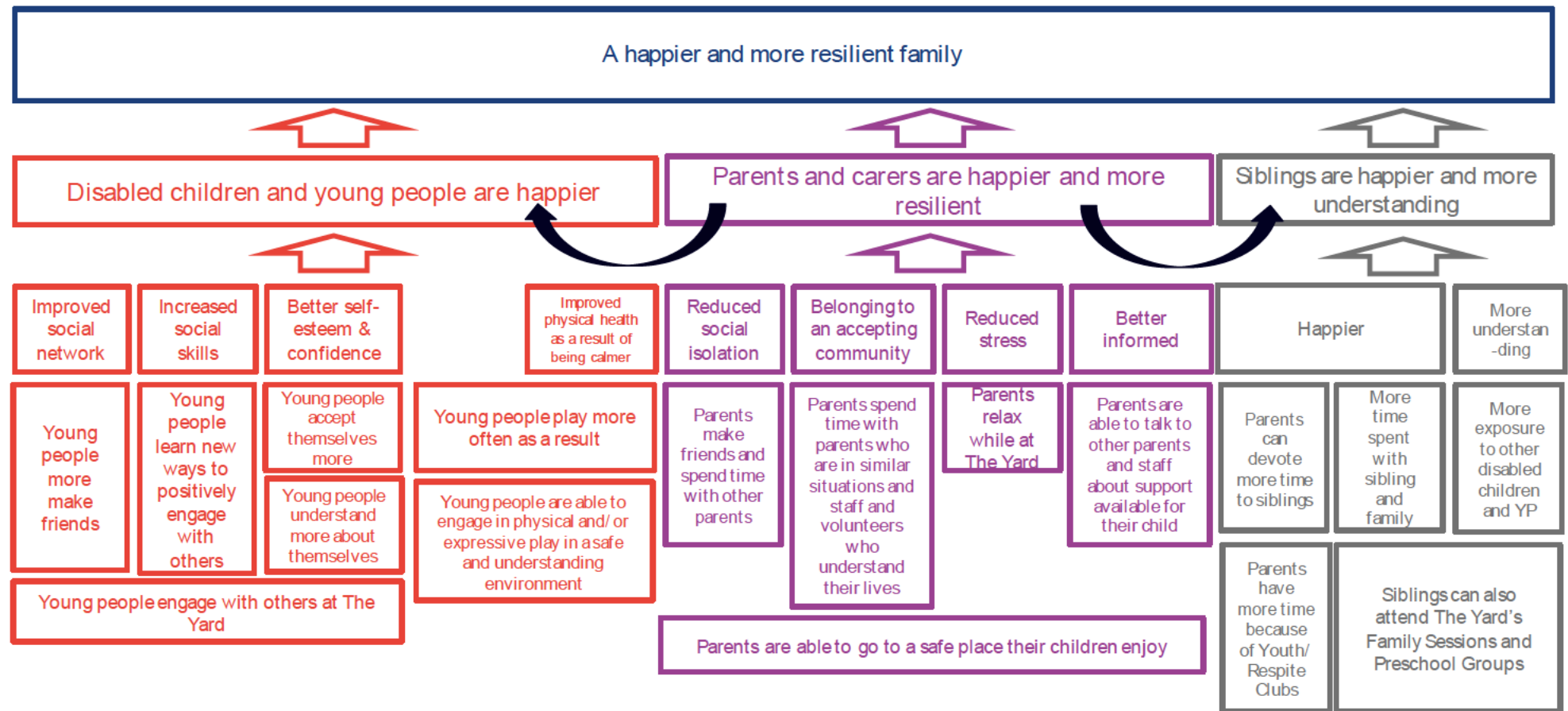


Figure 2. The Yard's Theory of Change – Outcomes for disabled children and young people, parents/carers, and siblings. Black arrows show indirect benefit to children and siblings arising from an increase in parental wellbeing.

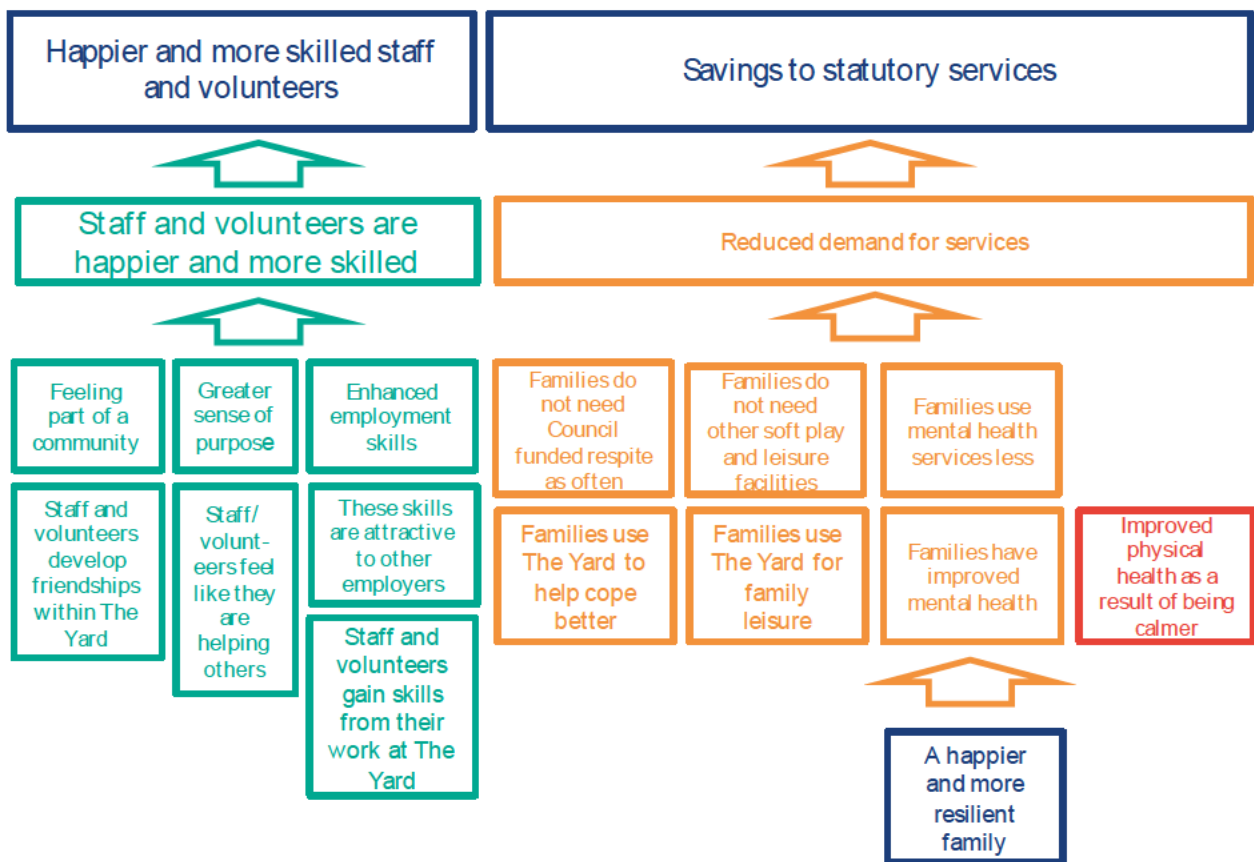


Figure 3. The Yard's Theory of Change – Outcomes for staff, volunteers and statutory services

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people were identified by parents and carers during the outcomes mapping workshop and focus groups. They were then tested in the activities with children and young people themselves. Because we are looking at a one-year snapshot for the SROI, we have only quantified short-term benefits, although longer-term benefits are pointed out below. The main short-term outcomes identified were:

- **Better self-esteem and confidence** – Children and young people feel more accepted and able to be themselves at The Yard. This leads to them having better self-esteem and confidence, which improves their mental health.
- **Happier** – The Yard gives disabled children and young people the opportunity to have fun and positive experiences, and parents note that their children generally look forward to coming to The Yard every week.

Having a bespoke playground, as well as skilled and experienced staff who know how to support them, allows children and young people to enjoy activities that they would not normally be able to do in other settings. Again, this contributes to improving children and young people's mental health.

- **Improved social network**– Children and young people interact and play with their peers when they are at The Yard. This is particularly true for the Youth and Respite Clubs where they interact with peers of the same age. This also leads to improved mental health.
- **Improved physical health as a result of being calmer** – Because they are engaging in physical exercise at The Yard, children and young people experience improvements in mood, are less agitated and sleep better. This in turn reduces incidences of self-injury for children with ADHD and autism.
- **Increased social skills** – By spending time at The Yard, disabled children and young people improve their communication and social skills. This reduces difficult behaviour in the long term.
- **Indirect benefits from parental wellbeing** – Recent academic research suggests that 32% of children's wellbeing is a direct consequence of their mother's emotional wellbeing.⁵ We have used this finding to assume that children and young people benefit from one third of their parents and carers' reduced stress.

Attending The Yard brings important longer term, cumulative benefits to children and young people. These are not included in the one-year snapshot but appear important when considering the wider impact of The Yard.

- **Better long-term physical health** – Studies show that engagement with physical activities as a child or young person increases the chances of being physically active in adulthood. In particular, children with access to an adventure playground are more likely to be physically active in adulthood than children with access to a simple playground.⁶ This in turn contributes to better physical health.
- **More independence in the long term** – Children and young people at The Yard develop a network of support which may last for years. In addition, they learn valuable skills, which will help them become more independent adults.

⁵ Treanor (2016), *The Effects of Financial Vulnerability and Mothers' Emotional Distress on Child Social, Emotional and Behavioural Well-Being: A Structural Equation Model*

⁶ Matrix Evidence (2010), *Play England: An economic evaluation of play provision*

Outcomes for parents and carers

Outcomes for parents and carers were identified in the initial outcomes mapping workshop with stakeholders and then developed in the 5 focus groups held as part of the primary research stage. The outcomes which emerged most often in focus groups are:

- **Reduced stress** – Parents and carers stay at The Yard while their children play in Family Sessions or Preschool Groups. They can have a cup of tea, talk to other parents, spend time with the whole family and even receive a massage from the complementary therapist, whilst knowing that their children are safe. Parents whose children attend the Youth and Respite Clubs have respite time which enables them to do other things, such as run errands, exercise, meet with friends, or spend time with their other children. Parents and carers often describe The Yard as being vital to their wellbeing.
- **Improved social network and reduced social isolation** – This outcome applies most strongly to parents and carers who use Family Sessions or Preschool Groups, as they stay at The Yard during this time. The Yard provides them with the opportunity to meet other parents and carers in a similar situation, who understand what they are going through. This reduces isolation and brings emotional support and comfort to parents and carers, who realise that they are not alone. Hearing of other parents getting through difficult situations helps parents feel more hopeful. This is particularly important for parents and carers of younger or recently diagnosed children. It has also been noted that staff at The Yard often contribute to bringing emotional support and comfort to parents and carers.
- **Sense of belonging to an accepting community** – Parents and carers reported that they feel accepted and not judged at The Yard. They feel part of a distinct ‘Yard community’. This outcome applies equally to all parents and carers regardless of what service they are using.
- **Better informed with relevant knowledge and advice** – One parent described this outcome as *‘having more tools for the job’*. The Yard offers parents and carers the opportunity to share knowledge and advice about caring for a disabled child or young person. Staff also play a key role in giving specific advice. This sharing of knowledge helps parents and carers better understand their child’s diagnosis, have a wider range of strategies for coping, and more knowledge and awareness of other services they can access in the city. One parent pointed out that staff at The Yard helped her apply for disability benefits, which increased her family’s income. This impact is more important for parents who use the Family Sessions and drop-in Preschool Groups than for parents using the Youth and Respite Clubs.

Outcomes for siblings

There were two main outcomes for siblings that emerged in the parent focus groups:

- **Improved wellbeing** – As a result of Youth and Respite Clubs, parents and carers have more time to spend with their other children. In addition, Family Sessions and Preschool Groups mean that siblings can come to The Yard and enjoy the play area alongside their brother or sister, or simply spend time at The Yard with the family as a whole. For the purposes of the SROI, we have quantified this outcome as **indirect benefits of parental wellbeing** using the research by Treanor (2016) which allows us to assume that siblings benefit from 32% of their parents and carers' reduced stress.
- **Becoming more understanding of difference** – It was noted that coming to The Yard and meeting other disabled children and young people makes siblings more aware, and more sensitive to the fact that disabled children are all different and that their needs will be different too. This outcome, though important, has not been quantified as part of the SROI due to insufficient data being available.

Outcomes for staff and volunteers

Staff at The Yard receive training, and both formal and informal support, which helps them develop in their role. Volunteers can attend these training sessions too. There are quarterly volunteer induction nights for new volunteers, and members of staff often start out as volunteers and then progress into a paid role.

We identified outcomes for staff and volunteers at The Yard through the outcomes mapping workshop and the staff and volunteer interviews. The three main outcomes that emerged were:

- **An increased sense of purpose** – Staff and volunteers feel they are helping others, which gives them a sense of purpose and makes their work more meaningful and rewarding.
- **More and better employment opportunities** – As a result of volunteering or working at The Yard, staff and volunteers have opportunities for progression in their roles, both within The Yard and elsewhere.
- **Feeling part of a community at The Yard** – Formal and informal support helps foster a community within the workplace. Within this, staff and volunteers gain a support network and friendships with colleagues, parents/carers and young people.

Savings to statutory services

Statutory services in this context include the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Scotland. There are four main cost savings that have been identified as a result of The Yard's activities:

- **Cost savings from reduced use of Council-funded daytime respite services –**
This outcome was identified in focus groups with parents and confirmed through interviews with stakeholders and the City of Edinburgh Council.
- **Cost savings from reduced use of Council-funded soft play and leisure services**
– Leisure centres were identified as the most commonly used 'other service' by parents and carers who use The Yard (see Appendix 2). We believe, following professional observations by The Yard staff, that demand for leisure services would increase without The Yard. In addition, stakeholder interviews identified that other organisations supporting disabled children and young people utilise The Yard's infrastructure regularly. Without The Yard, there would be increased demand for the Council to provide more soft play facilities.
- **Cost savings from reduced use of mental health services for children and adolescents, and adults** – Many of the outcomes identified for children and young people, as well as for parents and carers, lead to improved mental health. This reduces demand for NHS Lothian Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs).
- **Cost savings from reduced incidence of injury and self-harm amongst disabled children and young people** – Parents indicated that children and young people are calmer as a result of attending The Yard. This in turn reduces the incidence of health costs associated with injuries, self-injury and other challenging behaviours.⁷

Quantified outcomes

A principle of SROI is that outcomes included should be material. The Cabinet Office guide to SROI states: *"A piece of information is material if missing it out of the SROI would misrepresent the organisation's activities."*⁸ We have set three conditions for materiality, which all the quantified outcomes included in the SROI meet:

⁷ Emerson and Baines (2010) *Health Inequalities & People with Learning Disabilities in the UK*. Available at: https://www.improvinghealthandlives.org.uk/uploads/doc/vid_7479_IHaL2010-3HealthInequality2010.pdf.

⁸ Cabinet Office (2009), *A guide to Social Return on Investment*. Available at: https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Cabinet_office_A_guide_to_Social_Return_on_Investment.pdf

- The outcome emerged as important in focus groups or interviews
- Over half of respondents in the parent or staff survey agreed or strongly agreed with the outcome or output that leads to it. This applies to all outcomes for children, parents and staff/volunteers⁹
- The outcome can be attributed to at least one of the three services analysed.¹⁰

Figure 4 overleaf shows the intermediary outcomes which were quantified and included in the SROI. Note that for children and young people we have merged ‘better self-esteem and confidence’ with ‘happier’. This is because the indicator of change for both is improved mental health.

⁹ We performed a sensitivity test – a test to see what happens when an assumption is made keeping everything else constant – using a 75% threshold of respondents as a new condition for materiality, and found that three outcomes did not meet the new threshold. However, we believe that 50% is a reasonable threshold and there was sufficient evidence in our qualitative research for all the outcomes included in Figure 4.

¹⁰ For example, we have not included outcomes derived from The Yard offering training sessions, as we consider this to be separate to the three services analysed.

Beneficiary	Outcome
Children and young people	Better self-esteem and confidence; happier
	Improved social network
	Improved physical health as a result of being calmer
	Increased social skills
	Indirect benefits from improved parental wellbeing
Parents and carers	Reduced stress
	Better informed with relevant knowledge and advice
	Improved social network and reduced isolation
	Sense of belonging to an accepting community
Siblings	Indirect benefits from improved parental wellbeing
Staff and volunteers	An increased sense of purpose
	More and better employment opportunities
	Feeling part of a community
Statutory services	Cost savings from reduced use of Council-funded daytime respite services
	Cost savings from reduced use of Council-funded soft play and leisure services
	Cost savings from reduced use of mental health services for children and adolescents, and adults
	Cost savings from reduced incidence of injury and self-harm amongst disabled children and young people

Figure 4. Intermediary outcomes quantified and valued in the SROI analysis

Chapter 3 Measuring and valuing outcomes

Measuring the number of beneficiaries

The numbers of beneficiaries included in the SROI calculation are derived from management data provided by The Yard for the period between April 2016 and March 2017, and are shown in Figure 5. We only have the full numbers of beneficiaries for Family Sessions. For Youth and Respite Clubs and Preschool Groups, only the numbers of children and young people attending are recorded.

We have used the ratios of beneficiary groups in family sessions to estimate the numbers of parents/carers and siblings attending Youth and Respite Clubs and Preschool Groups. Estimates are indicated with an asterisk.

Numbers of beneficiaries	Parents and carers	Children and young people	Siblings
Family Sessions	1110	852	601
Youth and Respite Clubs	184*	141	99*
Preschool Groups	155*	91	73*
Both Family Sessions and Clubs	117*	69	55*
Both Family Sessions and Preschool Groups	138*	81	65*
Both Clubs and Preschool Groups	0 ¹¹	0	0

*Figure 5. Numbers of beneficiaries included in the SROI calculation. *Estimates based on a ratio of 1.6 parents to children and 0.75 siblings to children. [Source: Management data provided by The Yard for the period April 2016 to March 2017.]*

¹¹ Because the ages of children and young people attending Preschool Groups and Youth Clubs are different, it is safe to assume there is no overlap between these. (This would only be the case if a parent had more than one child using The Yard, but this is not very likely and in any case will only affect the measurement of parents' outcomes).

As of May 2017, The Yard Edinburgh had 75 staff and frequent volunteers:

- 13 office staff (managerial and administrative staff)
- 9 playworkers and play team leaders
- 23 sessional playworkers
- 30 frequent volunteers.

We have included all volunteer hours as part of the inputs, but we have only counted the 75 frequent volunteers as beneficiaries.

To ensure that we counted each beneficiary only once, for each of the three services we have attributed 100% of the benefit for beneficiaries who only attended that service, and 50% for beneficiaries who also attended another service. This method is illustrated in Figure 6 overleaf (columns D to F), which shows an extract from the full SROI calculation spreadsheet.

Measuring the extent of the benefit

After preliminary outcomes were identified through qualitative research, we asked parents/carers and staff/volunteers to complete a bespoke survey, through which the extent of each benefit was measured. 7% of all parents and carers – but probably at least 10% of those who use The Yard regularly – completed the parents and carers' survey. 62% of staff and frequent volunteers completed the staff and volunteers' survey. We take the results of these surveys to be roughly representative of the wider beneficiary groups.

In both cases, we asked beneficiaries to strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each outcome. Survey results are included in the appendices. If an outcome is a combination of more than one question in the survey, we have taken an average of the results from both questions. For example, the outcome for parents of '*sense of belonging to an accepting community*' is a combination of the percentages of parents and carers who said they '*feel they belong somewhere*' and those who said they '*have somewhere that understands and accepts [them] and their family*'.

We awarded 100% of the value of the impact to beneficiaries who strongly agreed with the outcome, and 50% to beneficiaries who agreed. The division of 50% and 100% arises from the survey design, and is likely to underestimate the extent of benefits, however, we have preferred to be conservative. For an example of how survey results have been used to measure the extent of the benefit in the SROI calculation, see columns G and H in Figure 6 overleaf. Column H shows the percentages of beneficiaries who strongly agreed or agreed with the outcome, respectively.

Where survey results were not available to measure outcomes, we estimated a likely proportion of the impact based on observations made by staff at The Yard:

- '*Improved social network*' for children and young people – we have assumed that all children and young people who attend The Yard have an improved social network

- *'Increased social skills'* for children and young people – we have assumed that all children and young people who attend The Yard have improved social skills
- *'Indirect benefit from increased parental wellbeing'* for children/young people and siblings– we have assumed that all children benefit from this outcome but the percentage of parents/carers with reduced stress is taken from the parent/carer survey
- *'Reduced use of Council-funded soft play and leisure services'* and *'reduced use of Council-funded respite care'* – we have assumed, based on a sample analysed by staff at The Yard, that 50% of parents and carers would otherwise use these services more
- *'Reduced use of mental health services for children and adolescents, and adults'* – we have assumed, based on a sample analysed by staff at The Yard, that 1/8 or 12.5% of parents and carers would otherwise use these services more.

A. Service	B. Beneficiary	C. Intermediary outcome	D. Number of beneficiaries	E. Service attribution	F. Rationale	G. % of benefit	H. % beneficiaries (from survey)
Family Sessions	Children/ Young People	Better self-esteem & confidence and happier	711	100%	Only use Family Sessions	100%	37%
			711	100%		50%	44%
			60	50%	Also use Youth/ Respite Clubs	100%	37%
			60	50%		50%	44%
			81	50%	Also use Preschool Groups	100%	37%
			81	50%		50%	44%

Figure 6. Methodology for measuring number of beneficiaries and the extent of the benefit. [Source: extract from The Yard SROI Tool].

Valuing outcomes

The third step, after measuring the number of beneficiaries and the extent of the benefit, is to assign a value to each outcome. Outcomes for parents have been valued using choice modelling, which is explained below. Outcomes for other beneficiary groups have been valued using financial proxies. This section provides a detailed explanation of both these procedures.

Choice modelling

Choice modelling is a method for valuing particularly intangible outcomes, such as ‘reduced isolation’ and ‘sense of belonging’. In the focus groups with parents, we applied this method and asked them to rank a number of things – such as a house, a car, a holiday, and so forth, based on how much value each thing has *for them as a group*. We then asked them to place the intangible outcomes in the ranking and used the market values of the tangible things as reference points.

In general, we found that parents and carers valued the outcomes they had from The Yard very highly. This is consistent with the fact that they see The Yard as an essential service in their lives. However, UK Government Green Book for valuation techniques also refers to a ‘hypothetical bias’, which may occur if *‘the hypothetical nature of the good in question and the payment mechanism... lead[s] to inflated values in surveys.’*¹² In this case, parents and carers may have tended to compare these intangible outcomes to particularly expensive things because they know it is a hypothetical exercise. Another bias that may occur is a ‘strategic bias’, which may occur if beneficiaries have a strategic interest in misrepresenting their true preferences. For example, if parents and carers were deliberately inflating the value of the outcomes of The Yard.

As a check, we have compared the resulting values with those that would have been obtained using financial proxies from other similar studies and have found that all choice modelling values are lower than financial proxy values, which gives us confidence that they are appropriate. Figure 7 overleaf shows both the choice modelling values and financial proxy values, and the reference points that parents and carers identified themselves in the focus groups. Approximate market values were suggested by participants, whilst the accurate market values for each reference point have been determined through additional research.¹³

¹² Fujiwara and Campbell (2011), Valuation Techniques for Social Cost-Benefit Analysis.

Available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209107/greenbook_valuationtechniques.pdf

¹³ Reference points were arrived upon by parents and carers themselves through group consensus. Often the reference points first identified were too low to be comparable to the value of the outcomes, and more valuable ones had to be identified by participants.

Beneficiary	Outcome	Choice modelling value	Reference points	Financial proxy	Final value
Parents and carers	Reduced stress in life (parents and carers)	£15,056 per person per year for <i>'reduced stress/greater peace of mind'</i>	One year's supply of food for 5 (£10,912); 4-bedroom house and garden – annual rent (£19,200)	Average cost of general group short-respite provision for disabled children and their families: £367 per person per session. ¹⁴ Assuming 4 sessions per month, £17,616 per year	£15,056 per person per year
Parents and carers	Improved social network/ Reduced isolation (parents and carers)	£13,800 per person per year for <i>'improved social network'</i>	3 x weekly respite sessions (£25,000); 1 hour weekly advice sessions (£2,600)	Cost of 'not being able to meet up with friends a number of times per week' £17,300 per person per year ¹⁵	£13,800 per person per year
Parents and carers	Creation of a community at The Yard (parents and carers)	£7,886 per person per year for <i>'I have a place or people that understand me and my family - and I belong'</i>	1 x weekly activity - zoo, Dynamic Earth, cinema, music therapy, drama, swimming (£3,255); 4 hours a week tutoring (£12,516)	Positive perception of local community and area for individuals - £11,600 per person per year ¹⁶	£7,886 per person per year
Parents and carers	Better informed with relevant knowledge and advice (parents and carers)	£2,205 per person per year for <i>'more tools for the job'</i>	1 x weekly evening support (£4,247); zoo family membership (£162)	Average cost of group delivery of a parenting programme for the prevention of a persistent conduct disorder, £972 per person per course ¹⁷	£ 2,205 per person per year

Figure 7. Choice modelling values for parent outcomes, with reference points and financial proxies for comparison.

¹⁴ PSSRU (2016) Unit Costs of Health and Social Care, Personal Social Services Research Unit, p85. Available at: <http://www.pssru.ac.uk/project-pages/unit-costs/2016/index.php?file=full>

¹⁵ Fujiwara, Oroyemi, McKinnon (2011), *Wellbeing and civil society: Estimating the value of volunteering using subjective wellbeing data*.

¹⁶ Global Value Exchange, GHK (2010), *A brief guide to economic analysis: living well west midlands*. Available at: <http://www.livingwellwestmidlands.org/downloads/LivingWell-ABriefGuidetoEconomicAnalysis.pdf>

¹⁷ PSSRU (2016) Unit Costs of Health and Social Care, Personal Social Services Research Unit, p87. Available at: <http://www.pssru.ac.uk/project-pages/unit-costs/2016/index.php?file=full>

Financial proxies

For the other outcomes, we used relevant literature to identify values. These are called financial proxies. In the case of the savings to the City of Edinburgh Council from reduced use of respite care, we used the hourly cost of respite care provided by the Council. We understand this hourly rate is drawn from the Self-Directed Support cost estimate. These values are shown in Figure 8 below, with the sources of the proxies in the footnotes.

Beneficiary	Outcome	Associated proxy
Children and Young People	Better self-esteem and confidence, and happier	£270 p.a. for cost of treating mental health in adolescents ¹⁸
Children and Young People	Improved social network	£17,300 p.a. for willingness to pay to meet up with friends a number of times per week ¹⁹
Children and Young People	Improved physical health as a result of being calmer	£1,318 p.a. average cost to the NHS related to injuries and self-harm ²⁰
Children and Young People	Increased social skills	£340 p.a. healthcare savings associated with a reduction in disruptive behaviours ²¹
Statutory services	Reduced use of Council-funded respite care	£2,652 p.a. of 3 hours per week ²² respite at £17 per hour. ²³ Assuming 1 to 1 respite
Statutory services	Reduced use of Council-funded soft play and leisure services	£1,690 per person p.a. from cost of renting a mainstream soft play area for one session per week (£325). Assuming 10 people per session ²⁴
Statutory	Reduced use of CAMHS (children and	£271 per person p.a. average cost of service provision for children/

¹⁸ Manchester New Economy CBA unit cost database

¹⁹ Fujiwara, Oroyemi, McKinnon (2011), *Wellbeing and civil society: Estimating the value of volunteering using subjective wellbeing data*.

²⁰ Telford et al (2013), *Estimating the costs of ongoing care for adolescents with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder*. Available at: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00127-012-0530-9>

²¹ Clarke, Morreale, Field, Hussein, Barry (2015), *What works in enhancing social and emotional skills development during childhood and adolescence?* Available at: <http://www.eif.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Review-of-Social-and-Emotional-Skills-Based-Intervention-Report-WEB-VERSION.pdf>. And Investing in Children Database (Dartington, 2016). Available at: <http://investinginchildren.eu/interventions/families-and-schools-together-fast>

²² 3 hours each week is the estimated amount of respite that families need to prevent escalation which leads to family deterioration and an increase in the demand for emergency and more acute respite care.

²³ Hourly cost of respite provision to Edinburgh Council as part of a Self-Directed Support cash payment – information provided by the Council

²⁴ Playspace Indoor Play and Party Centre, Bristol <http://www.playspace.co.uk/childrens-party-venue-in-bristol>

Beneficiary	Outcome	Associated proxy
services	young people)	adolescents suffering from mental health disorders - total fiscal cost ²⁵
Statutory services	Reduced use of CMHTs (parents and carers)	£1,002 per person p.a. mental health community provision - average cost per contact. ²⁶ Assuming 6 contacts per person per year, ie every 2 months
Statutory services	Reduced incidence of injury and self-harm	£1,318 per person p.a. average cost to the NHS related to injuries and self-harm ²⁷
Staff and Volunteers	Increased sense of purpose	£14,604 p.a. relating to the value that frequent volunteers place on volunteering. ²⁸ This is used for both staff and volunteers as it relates to the sense of purpose of doing something regarded as helping others
Staff and Volunteers	Better employment opportunities	£377 p.a. associated with the yearly increment in salary due to work progressions for Teacher Assistants (the closest available skillset) for playworkers and frequent volunteers. ²⁹ £794 p.a. associated with the yearly increment in salary due to work progressions for local government Administrative Officers and Project Managers ³⁰
Staff and Volunteers	Sense of belonging to a community	£17,300 p.a. for willingness to pay to meet up with friends a number of times per week ³¹

Figure 8. Financial proxies used for valuing outcomes for children and young people, staff and volunteers, and the City of Edinburgh Council.

²⁵ Manchester New Economy Unit Cost Database.

²⁶ Manchester New Economy Unit Cost Database.

²⁷ Telford et al (2013), *Estimating the costs of ongoing care for adolescents with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder*. Available at: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00127-012-0530-9>

²⁸ Fujiwara (2011) and Campbell (2011). From SROI Network VOIS Database.

²⁹ UNISON, *Pay progression in the public sector*. Available at:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/09/briefings-and-circularsIDS-report-on-progression3.pdf>

³⁰ UNISON, *Pay progression in the public sector* suggests a 2.7% median annual increase for local authority staff. Current local government salaries are £21,783 for an administrative officer and £37,045 for a project manager. (Source: http://www.payscale.com/research/UK/Industry=Local_Government/Salary#by_Job). We have assumed a 50-50 split at The Yard between operational staff and project managers, so the resulting £794 is 2.7% of the average of the two.

³¹ Fujiwara, Oroyemi, McKinnon (2011), *Wellbeing and civil society: Estimating the value of volunteering using subjective wellbeing data*.

Outcomes not included in the SROI

The SROI does not include long-term outcomes for children and young people, or ‘*becoming more understanding of difference*’ for siblings. For reference, Figure 9 below shows an indication of the values associated with these outcomes.

Beneficiary	Outcome	Associated proxy
Children and Young People	Better long-term physical health	£465 p.a. per child for the long-term monetary benefit from increased physical activity as a result of playing in an adventure playground rather than a simple playground as a child. ³²
Children and Young People	More independence in the long term	£447 per week (£23,244 p.a.) Average gross weekly cost of home care packages for adults aged under 65 with a learning disability, England. ³³ Savings to local authorities
Siblings	Becoming more understanding of difference	£454 for cost of equality/disability awareness training. Based on cost of course for one person. Courses delivered to staff in the workplace to raise awareness of equality issues ³⁴

Figure 9. Relevant financial proxies for the unquantified outcomes.

³² Matrix Evidence (2010), *Play England: An economic evaluation of play provision*. This figure seems low but because it is the difference between typical playgrounds and adventure playgrounds it would have negligible deadweight.

³³ Manchester New Economy Unit Cost Database. Original source: Personal Social Services: Expenditure and Unit Costs, England - 2013-14, Final Release: Unit Costs by CASSR.

³⁴ SROI Network VOIS Database (2010) - Sense-Ability.

Chapter 4 SROI calculation

The Theory of Change assumes a causal relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes. This is rarely a perfect relationship, ie it is unlikely that 100% of the inputs will account for 100% of the outcomes. Therefore, Cabinet Office guidance suggests applying reductions for **deadweight, displacement, attribution and drop-off**.

Only deadweight and attribution really apply to this SROI analysis. Displacement is used when the outcomes measured are displacing other outcomes. A typical example used is if reduction of crime in one neighbourhood leads to an increase in crime in another ie criminals are simply moving (being displaced) from one area to another. This concept is not relevant to The Yard, which is not competing with other services for ‘good’ clients, for example.

Secondly, drop-off only applies if outcomes are measured over more than one year and their intensity is expected to diminish over time. Because this SROI is only a one-year snapshot of impacts, there is no reason to apply drop-off.

Deadweight, attribution and other reductions

We have made adjustments for deadweight and attribution for each outcome and for each service. We have also made further reductions to avoid overestimating impacts, for example if there is some overlap between outcomes.

Deadweight accounts for the fact that some of the impacts would have occurred without The Yard. For example, we have assumed that 20% of the outcome of parents being *‘better informed with relevant knowledge and advice’* would happen regardless of The Yard.

Attribution is similar to deadweight, but takes into account that beneficiaries might achieve the same outcome from multiple services or activities. For outcomes that were measured through surveys, it is safe to assume a high attribution. This is because the survey questions for parents/carers and staff/volunteers were worded in such a way that the impact of The Yard was isolated. They all began by stating *“As a result of The Yard...”*.

The only exception is that we have acknowledged that children and young people might have friends and social networks elsewhere than The Yard, such as at school. We have therefore assumed that only 40% of the outcome *‘improved social networks and more friends’* can be attributed to The Yard.

We have made further reductions to avoid overestimating impact when appropriate. For example, we recognised that there is an overlap between the parents’ outcomes of *‘improved social network and reduced isolation’* and *‘belonging to an accepting community’*. Hence, we applied a 50% reduction to each of them to avoid double-counting.

In addition, we have applied further reductions to account for **optimism bias**, as recommended by HM Treasury guidance.³⁵ This guidance advises adjusting for the fact that *'commissioners and practitioners are often overly optimistic about the outcomes that will be achieved by the project or programme'*.³⁶ The higher the uncertainty in the data or assumptions used, the higher the bias. The level of correction needed depends on the type of source of the proxy, its age, and known data error. The table showing recommended reductions is included in Appendix 7.

Figure 10 overleaf shows the full list of adjustments made to each outcome. This includes, deadweight, attribution, additional reductions and optimism bias corrections.

³⁵ HM Treasury (2014), *Supporting public service transformation: cost benefit analysis guidance for local partnerships*. Available at: <http://www.neweconomymanchester.com/media/1443/2765-pu1617-cba-guidance-020414-1312-final.pdf>

³⁶ Ibid., p32.

Beneficiary	Impact	Deadweight	Attribution	Other Reductions/ optimism bias corrections
Parents and carers	Reduced stress in life	50% deadweight assumed as we anticipate that if The Yard did not support parents then half of them would utilise other respite care which would alleviate some stress	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	40% optimism bias correction because the value is derived from choice modelling
Parents and carers	Improved social network/reduced isolation	<p>Family Sessions - No deadweight as no other service is available that provides parents with reduced social isolation</p> <p>Preschool Groups – assumed 40% deadweight as the parents spend more time looking after their children due to the child's age than in the Family Sessions</p> <p>Youth and Respite Clubs – assumed 80% deadweight as the opportunity to socialise with other parents is reduced, as parents do not stay at The Yard for this service. Assume that some socialisation occurs as a result of The Yard but not to the same extent as the other services</p>	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	<p>50% reduction in the benefit allocated to this impact to avoid over-counting benefit</p> <p>40% optimism bias correction because the value is derived from choice modelling</p>

Beneficiary	Impact	Deadweight	Attribution	Other Reductions/ optimism bias corrections
Parents and carers	Belonging to an accepting community	No deadweight assumed as The Yard was identified as unique in this aspect	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	50% reduction in the benefit allocated to this impact to avoid over-counting benefit 40% optimism bias correction because the value is derived from choice modelling
Parents and carers	Better informed with relevant knowledge and advice leading to better outcomes, and less time and hassle spent finding information	20% deadweight assumed because if The Yard was not there, there are other places that parents can receive some information. Parents noted there was information available but it wasn't as useful or as easy to access as it was at The Yard Youth and Respite Clubs – assumed additional 30% deadweight as there are reduced opportunities to receive informal and peer-to-peer learning, as parents do not stay at The Yard during this service	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	Further reduction of one third to reflect the assumption that one third of families are 2-person, and information produces the same benefit as if only one person in the family knew 40% optimism bias correction because the value is derived from choice modelling
Children and Young People	Better self-esteem and confidence, and happier	No deadweight as in focus groups with parents we heard there were no other options available	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	40% optimism bias correction applied as data is >5 years old.
Children and Young People	Improved social networks	No deadweight identified.	40% attribution of this outcome to The Yard as there are other opportunities – for example at school	25% optimism bias correction applied as data is 4-5 years old

Beneficiary	Impact	Deadweight	Attribution	Other Reductions/ optimism bias corrections
Children and Young People	Improved physical health as a result of being calmer	80% deadweight assuming that only 20% ³⁷ of children and young people are estimated as likely to injure themselves when stressed and upset	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	10% optimism bias correction applied as data is 2-3 years old
Children and Young People	Increased social skills	No deadweight identified.	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	20% optimism bias correction as data comes from a report which uses secondary evidence
Children and Young People	Indirect benefits from improved parental wellbeing	No reductions made directly but all reductions for parental reduced stress are applied prior to taking one third of that figure.		
Siblings	Indirect benefits from improved parental wellbeing	No reductions made directly but all reductions for parental reduced stress are applied prior to taking one third of that figure.		
Statutory services	Reduced use of Council-funded respite care	Assume 50% of The Yard members seek additional Council funded respite in the absence of The Yard	100% attribution assumed as The Yard impact was isolated	No other reductions
Statutory services	Reduced use of Council-funded soft play and leisure services	Assume 50% of The Yard members seek additional soft play and leisure services in the absence of The Yard	100% attribution assumed as The Yard impact was isolated	No other reductions

³⁷ 10-15% of children and young people with learning disabilities self-injure. We have assumed a higher rate given the larger proportion of children with ADHD and children on the Autistic Spectrum in The Yard population.

Beneficiary	Impact	Deadweight	Attribution	Other Reductions/ optimism bias corrections
Statutory services	Reduced use of CAMHs (children and young people)	Assume one in eight of The Yard members make more use of mental health services in the absence of The Yard	100% attribution assumed as The Yard impact was isolated	No other reductions
Statutory services	Reduced use of CMHTs (adults)	Assume one in eight of The Yard members make more use of mental health services in the absence of The Yard	100% attribution assumed as The Yard impact was isolated	No other reductions
Statutory services	Reduced incidence of injury and self-harm	80% deadweight assuming that only 20% ³⁸ of children and young people are estimated as likely to injure themselves when stressed and upset	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	10% optimism bias correction applied as data is 2-3 years old
Staff and Volunteers	Increased sense of purpose	80% deadweight assumed as staff and volunteers have other available employment and volunteering opportunities	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	25% optimism bias correction as data is 4-5 years old
Staff and Volunteers	Better employment opportunities – playworkers and staff	80% deadweight assumed as staff and volunteers have other available employment and volunteering opportunities	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	10% optimism bias correction because data is 2-3 years old

³⁸ 10-15% of children and young people with learning disabilities self-injure. We have assumed a higher rate given the larger proportion of children with ADHD and children on the Autistic Spectrum in The Yard population.

Beneficiary	Impact	Deadweight	Attribution	Other Reductions/ optimism bias corrections
Staff and Volunteers	Better employment opportunities – office staff	80% deadweight assumed as staff and volunteers have other available employment and volunteering opportunities	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	10% optimism bias correction because data is 2-3 years old
Staff and Volunteers	Sense of belonging to a community	80% deadweight assumed as staff and volunteers have a social network and community outside of The Yard	100% attribution assumed as our survey isolated the impact The Yard had	25% optimism bias correction because data is 4-5 years old

Figure 10. Adjustments made to avoid overestimating impacts.

Chapter 5 Results from the SROI analysis

The Yard's investment in 2016/2017, including in-kind inputs, totalled £653,163. The social value of the benefits achieved over that same year was £13,413,830. **This means a Social Return on Investment of £20.50 per £1 invested.**

Of this £20.50 of social return:

- £8.30 is for disabled children and young people
- £7.90 is for parents and carers
- £3.50 is for statutory services
- 50p is for siblings
- 40p is for staff and volunteers.

Figure 11 overleaf shows the breakdown of the return, broken down by service and beneficiary group.

Outputs per year

Beneficiaries	Family Sessions		Youth/ Respite Clubs		Preschool Groups		The Yard Total	Percentage of total benefit	Total Yard return apportioned by % of total benefit
Children/ Young People	£	4,632,550	£	634,963	£	143,829	£ 5,411,343	40.3%	£ 8.3
Parents and carers ²	£	4,376,362	£	407,054	£	351,169	£ 5,134,585	38.3%	£ 7.9
Staff/ Volunteers	£	136,742	£	117,207	£	25,116	£ 279,065	2.1%	£ 0.4
Statutory services	£	1,907,215	£	260,209	£	126,711	£ 2,294,135	17.1%	£ 3.5
Siblings	£	256,795	£	18,731	£	19,177	£ 294,702	2.2%	£ 0.5
Total adjusted return expressed as a Net Present Value	£	11,294,284	£	1,422,786	£	666,001	£ 13,413,830	100%	£ 21

Inputs per year

Beneficiaries	Family Sessions		Youth/ Respite Clubs		Preschool Groups		The Yard Total
Project costs	£	8,975	£	17,156	£	1,903	£ 28,034
Apportionment of Project Payroll	£	85,163	£	110,711	£	20,645	£ 216,519
Apportionment of Overheads	£	150,407	£	196,218	£	36,581	£ 383,206
Volunteer Time	£	7,402	£	7,884	£	1,958	£ 17,244
Subsidy on complementary therapies	£	6,568	£	-	£	1,592	£ 8,160
Total Investment expressed as a Net Present Value	£	258,514	£	331,969	£	62,680	£ 653,163
Social Return on Investment	£	43.7	£	4.3	£	2.0	£ 20.5

Figure 11. Summary of The Yard SROI calculation. [Source: The Yard SROI Tool].

Explaining the return on investment figure

£20.50 is a high return on investment. We attribute this high return to The Yard's delivery model, and to three distinctive elements:

The Yard supports the whole family, not just children and young people

The Yard actively supports and involves the entire family, not just disabled children and young people. This means that children and young people, their siblings and parents all benefit from The Yard. As a result, there are a high number of beneficiaries. Following this logic, it makes sense that Family Sessions, which attract the largest numbers of beneficiaries, have the highest return on investment.

Group and peer-to-peer support is a cost-effective way of delivering support

Unlike other services, The Yard offers group support rather than one-to-one support. The physical infrastructure of The Yard, and its skilled staff and volunteers, mean that a large group of children and their families can all use it at the same time.

In addition, many of the outcomes identified for parents and carers – such as being better informed, being less isolated and feeling part of a community – arise from peer-to-peer support. This further contributes to The Yard's low staff to beneficiary ratio.

The outcomes The Yard achieves are highly valued by beneficiaries

The outcomes The Yard achieves really matter to beneficiaries, particularly families. Impacts such as reduced stress and isolation for parents, or friendships and improved self-worth for children and young people, are things that people tend to value most in life. This was made clear in the choice modelling workshop, where the only comparable items that parents were willing to trade these outcomes for were those which achieved similar results – and were often very expensive, such as personal one-to-one care support for a year.

For example, parents valued reduced stress at £15,000 per year, and the literature indicates a value of £17,300 per year of people making social connections.

Cost Benefit Analysis

The outcomes identified for statutory services are all fiscal cost savings due to reduced use of services. Total benefit/savings to statutory services equal £2,294,135. Comparison with the financial contribution that statutory services – namely, the City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Government – make to The Yard, yields a return of £12.60 per £1 invested. The breakdown of the calculation is shown in Figure 12.

Financial return to statutory services

Savings	Total Savings (across all services)	
Reduced use of Council-funded soft play and leisure services	£	789,230
Reduced use of Council-funded respite care	£	1,238,484
Reduced use of CAMHs (children and young people)	£	31,639
Reduced use of CMHTs (adults)	£	149,473
Reduced costs to NHS related to injuries and self-harm	£	85,309
Total	£	2,294,135

Statutory services investments

City of Edinburgh Council	£	89,390
Playschemes	£	17,500
72% of Core Grant allocated to services	£	56,328
New Early Years Service	£	15,562
Scottish Government	£	93,112
Fairer Scotland Early Intervention	£	90,112
CashBack for Communities	£	3,000
Total	£	182,502

Financial return to statutory services **£12.6** / £1 invested

Figure 12. The Yard Cost-Benefit Analysis of return to statutory services. [Source: The Yard SROI Tool].

Appendix 1: Findings from focus groups with parents and carers

As part of our fieldwork we conducted 5 focus groups of approximately 1 hour 45 minutes with parents and carers who use The Yard. We used these focus groups to understand the difference The Yard makes to the parents, and the children and young people for whom they care.

21 parents and carers attended these focus groups. The sessions included parents whose children were attending the 3-8s group, and the 8-12s, 10-14s and teen clubs respectively.

Although there were some differences in the extent to which each of the following outcomes affects parents, which depended their child's age and ability, there was enough consensus across the focus groups to identify 4 main outcomes for parents and carers as a result of attending The Yard:

- Reduced stress
- Improved social networks and reduced social isolation
- Sense of belonging to an accepting community
- Better informed with relevant knowledge and advice.

Parents also identified the main benefits for children and young people as being:

- Better self-esteem, more confidence
- Being happier
- Improved social networks and more friendships
- Improved physical health as a result of being calmer
- Increased social skills.

Benefits for siblings included:

- Parents spending more time with them
- Spending more time as a family
- Further understanding disabilities.

Appendix 2: Findings from the parent survey

We invited parents and carers to respond to a bespoke online survey to measure the extent to which the benefits we identified in the parent focus groups were true for all parents. Paper copies of the survey were also distributed to parents and carers present at The Yard during the activities with children.

63 parents and carers completed the survey. This represents approximately 7% of the total number of parents who attended The Yard over one year in 2016/2017. This percentage is not as high as we would have hoped, but we understand the difficulties and time pressures faced by parents and carers at The Yard, which might reduce the response rate.

The first part of the survey asked questions about: the background of the parents and carers and their children; how long they have been coming to The Yard; and what services they use at The Yard and elsewhere in Edinburgh.

Around one third of parents said that a member of their family comes to The Yard on average once a week, although this is less during school holidays. 12% of respondents said their family uses The Yard twice a week on average. The median for how long parents had been bringing their children to The Yard is 3 years, with some coming for over 10 years.

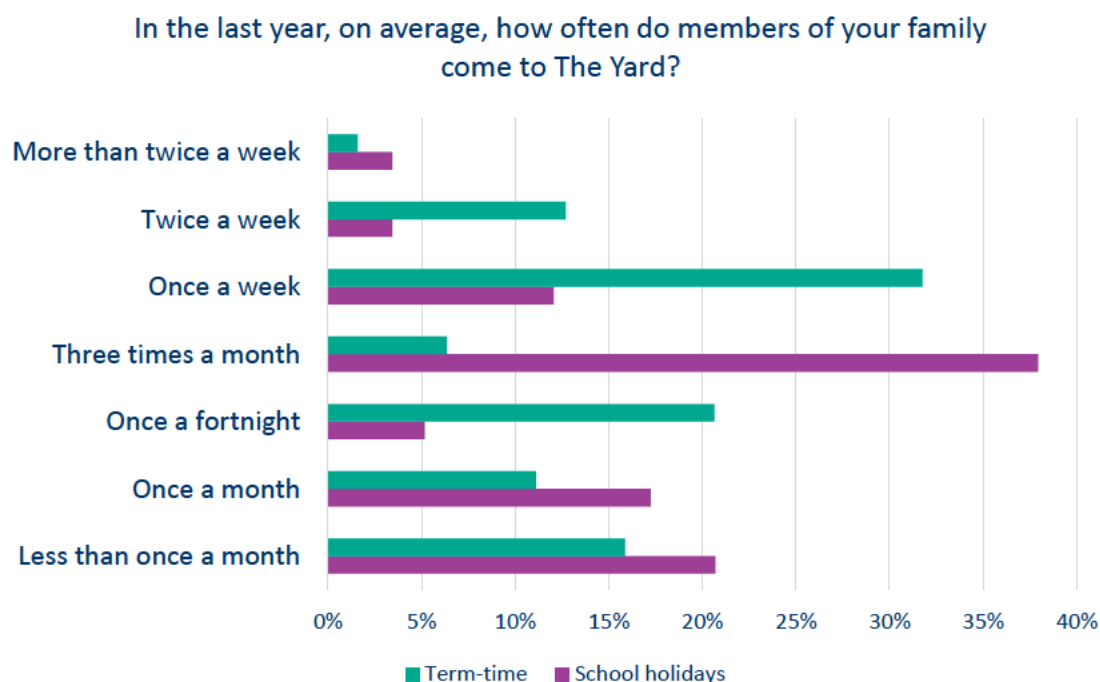


Figure 13. Around one third of parents say members of their family come to The Yard once a week during term-time. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the parents and carers' survey.]

As shown in Figure 14 and Figure 15, Family Sessions are by far the most used services, used by 87% of respondents. 10% of respondents use Youth and Respite Clubs, whilst 3% use Preschool Groups.

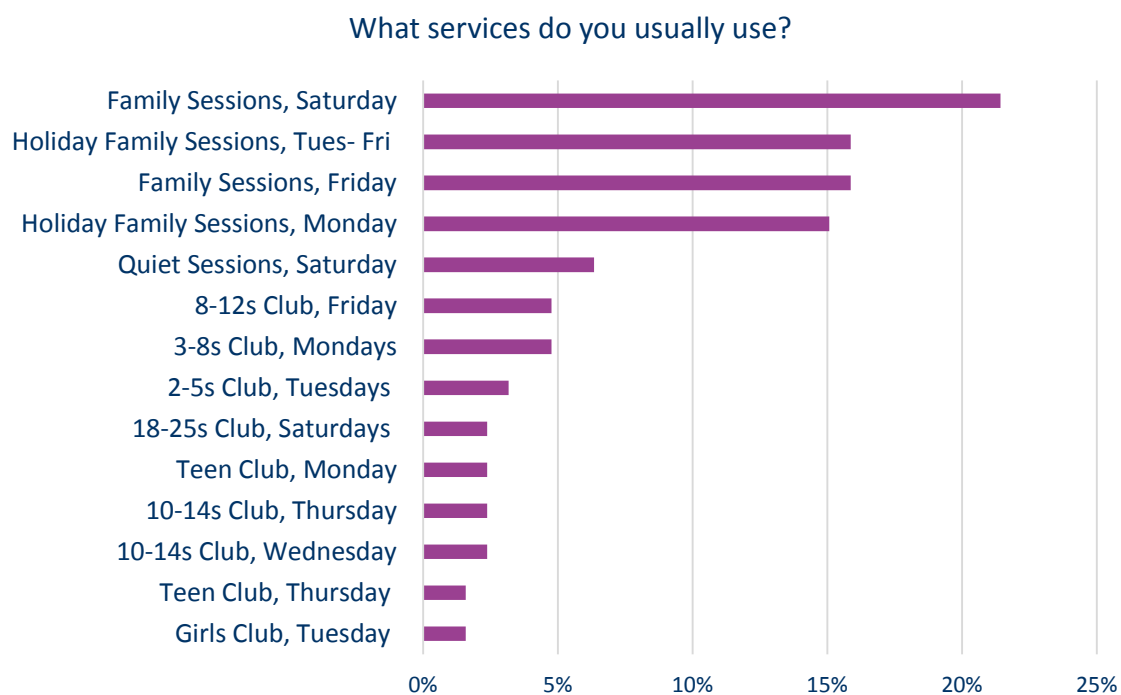


Figure 14. The Saturday afternoon Family Sessions are the most attended, followed by the other Family Sessions. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the parents and carers' survey.]

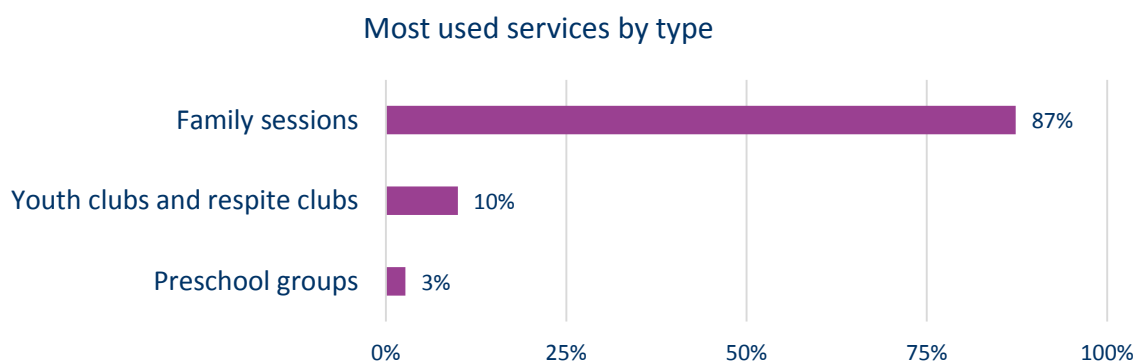


Figure 15. We have aggregated all the services shown in Figure 14 above into the three types of services that we are analysing. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the parents and carers' survey.]

We asked parents which other services listed in Edinburgh Choices (the City of Edinburgh Council’s database) they used. The most common were leisure centres, playparks and Lothian Autistic Society. The full list of services included in the survey and the percentages of parents who use each, as well as other services that were named by parents are included in pages 48-49. However, when asked to compare The Yard’s services with other services they use in Edinburgh, 85% of respondents stated that The Yard’s services are unique.

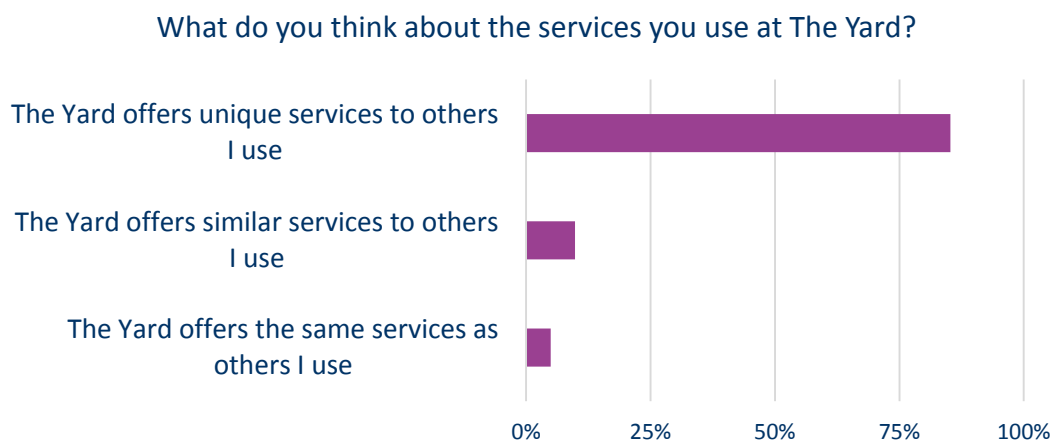


Figure 16. Most respondents believe The Yard’s services are unique compared to other services that they use. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the parents and carers’ survey.]

The difference The Yard makes

In the second part of the survey we asked parents the extent to which they agreed with a list of possible outcomes for themselves and for their children that they experience as a result of attending The Yard. We based this list on the findings of the earlier focus groups with parents. We separated the outcomes into three broad groups:

- Outcomes for parents and carers
- Wellbeing outcomes for disabled children and young people
- Lifeskills outcomes for disabled children and young people.

We asked parents to choose between ‘Strongly disagree’, ‘Disagree’, ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly Agree’. For the purposes of the SROI calculation, we only wanted to know the percentages of beneficiaries for whom the outcomes apply. Therefore, to avoid overstating the percentages of positive impacts, we apportioned respondents who left a question blank, although they completed the survey, to the ‘disagree’ category.

Outcomes for parents and carers

Over 50% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with 6 of the 8 outcomes for parents. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that, as a result of attending The Yard, they feel they have a place that understands and accepts them and their family. This is in line with the findings of the focus groups, where a sense of feeling accepted and not judged emerged as a major difference The Yard makes. Additionally, having reduced stress or greater peace of mind was the second most agreed with outcome, again in line with the findings of the focus groups.

As a result of attending The Yard...

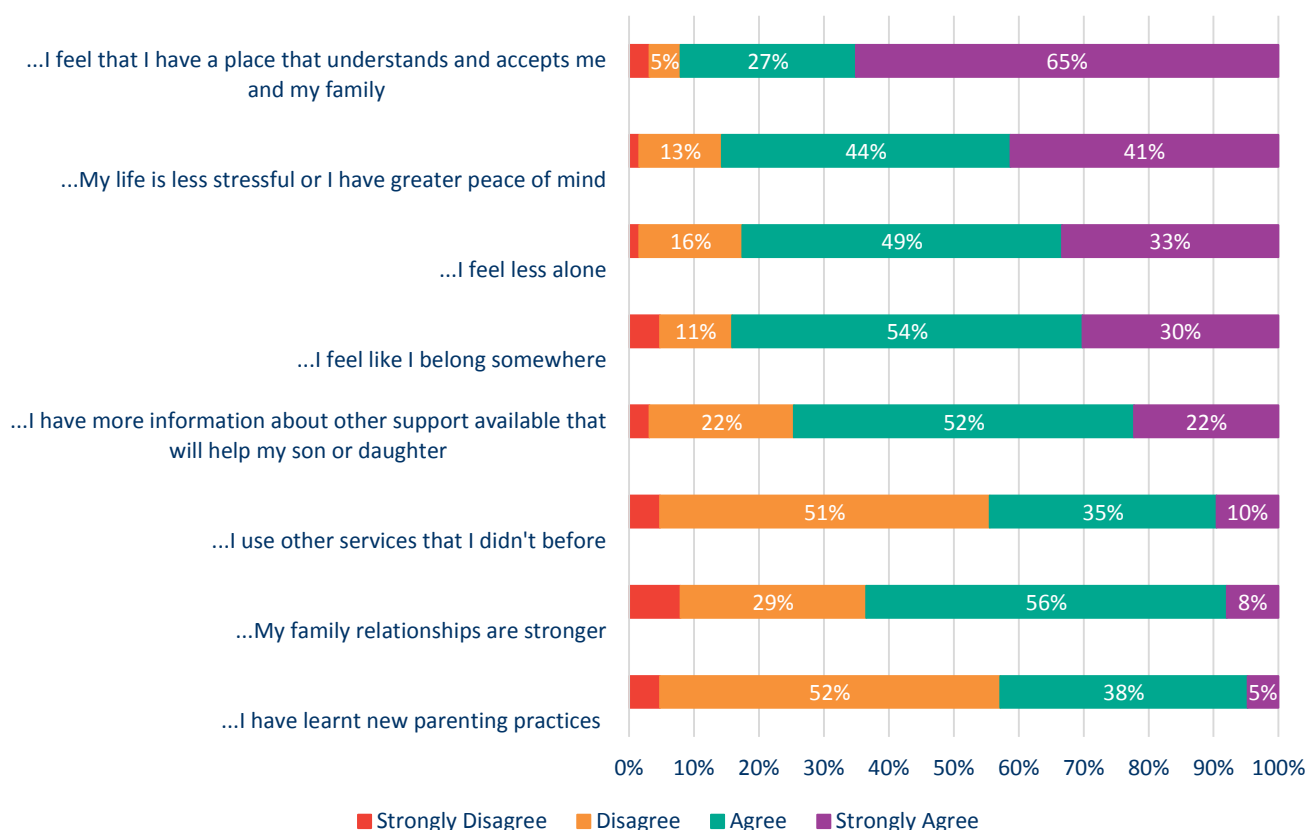


Figure 17. Impacts for parents and carers. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the parents and carers' survey.]

There were two outcomes with which less than 50% of parents agreed or strongly agreed: 'I use other services that I didn't before' and 'I have learnt new parenting practices'. This suggests that, although 74% of parents believe that, as a result of The Yard, they have more information, in about a third of cases this does not necessarily lead them to use more services or to learn new parenting practices.

Outcomes for disabled children and young people

Next, we asked parents to state the extent to which they agreed with a series of outcomes for their children because of attending The Yard.

Over half of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the outcomes relating to wellbeing. 93% believe that their child is better able to be themselves because of The Yard and 71% believe that they are more physically active. Outcomes around being calmer and sleeping better have lower percentages of agreement – just over 50%.

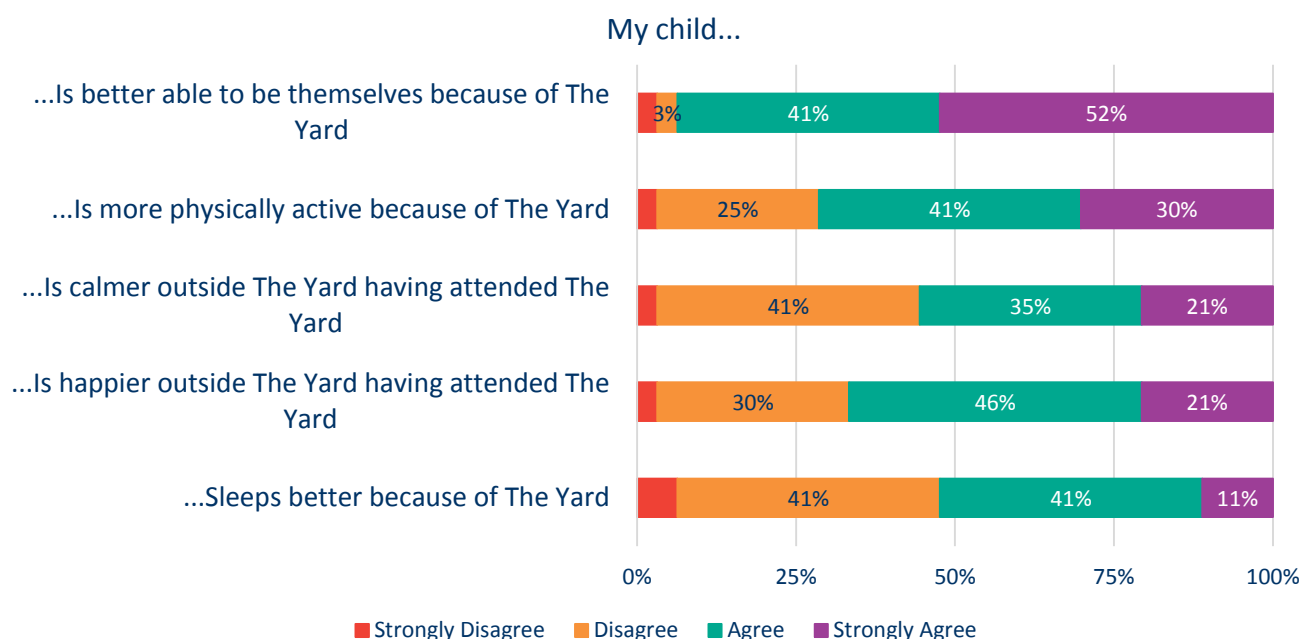


Figure 18. Impacts for children and young people. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the parents and carers' survey.]

There was a lower level of agreement with outcomes around children and young people learning lifeskills at The Yard (see Figure 19 overleaf), and we are aware that this partly depends on the needs of each child or young person, and on their age. The only outcome with which over half of total respondents agreed is that their child is more willing and able to play/interact with peers and others as a consequence of attending The Yard.

Questions about independent travel, managing personal care or thinking about employment, volunteering or training are not applicable to younger children or to children and young people with complex needs. These outcomes emerged more strongly in the focus groups we ran with parents and carers of older children, such as those attending Youth and Respite Clubs.

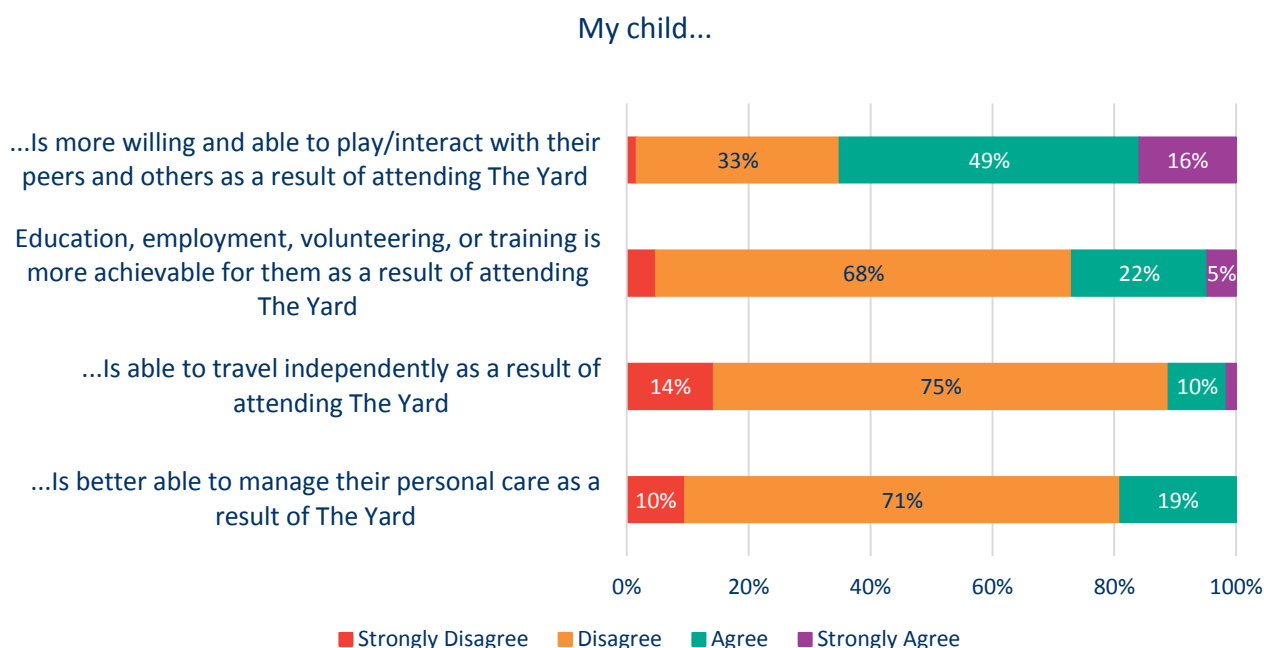


Figure 19. Impacts for children and young people (continued). [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the parents and carers' survey].

Overall view of The Yard

The main positive outcomes for parents and carers that emerge from the survey confirm those outcomes identified in the focus groups, such as:

- Reduced stress
- A sense of being accepted and understood
- A sense of belonging to a community
- Being better informed with relevant knowledge and advice
- Feeling less lonely.

Comments left by parents at the end of the survey support these further. One parent for instance said: *'One other great benefit of [The Yard] is providing a place where parents can meet and share knowledge and information in a non-judgmental place.'* Another stated: *'[The Yard] is unique because there is nowhere else we can play and be accepted without risk, difficulty or judgement.'*

Finally, another parent said: *'It's great for me knowing that she's having a great time creating something in the supervised craft room... it's a great peace of mind for me knowing that both my kids are happy and enjoying themselves.'*

In terms of the outcomes for children and young people, the survey results indicate that outcomes relating to life-skills vary substantially according to age and needs, as some of these comments show:

'My teenage daughter loves attending The Yard as she is treated like an adult and is able to interact with people of her own age and abilities in a caring, secure and fun environment.'

'Although it's not as beneficial to my son as it is to older members this does not mean that it won't be in the future!'

'Our son is older and uses The Yard only on Saturdays as a social activity; he is profoundly disabled so most of the questions do not apply.'

Overall, both survey responses and comments show a very positive view of The Yard and the difference it makes to parents/carers and children/young people.

Other services used

The survey asked parents and carers to identify what other services in Edinburgh they use 'twice a year or more'. The most commonly identified one was Edinburgh Leisure services, as shown in Figure 20 overleaf.

What other services does your family use twice a year or more?

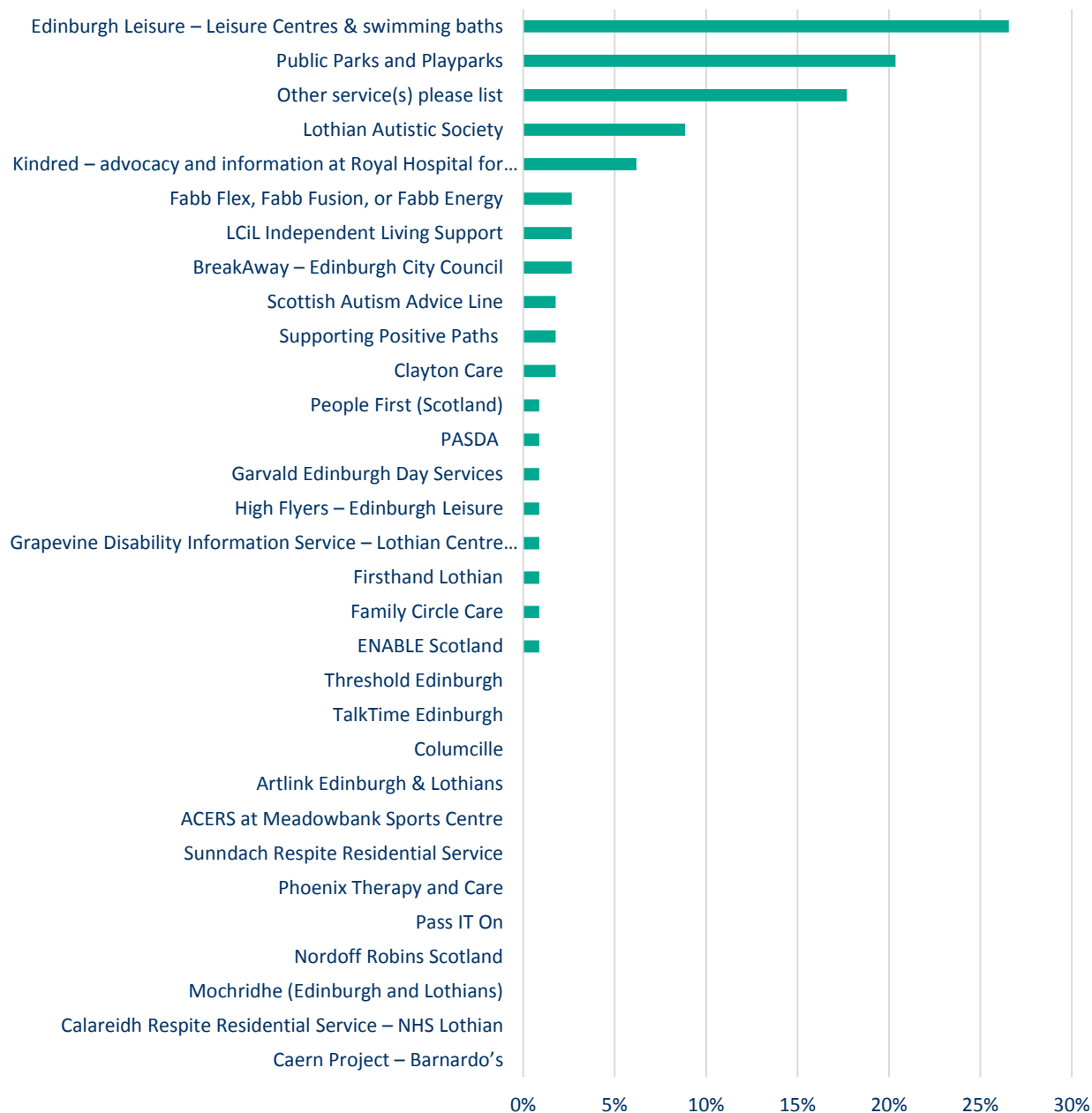


Figure 20. Other services used by parents and carers who use The Yard. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the parents and carers' survey].

‘Other services’ identified were:

- Action group
- Active 8
- All Ability Bicycle Centre
- Allied Children’s Support Service
- Autism Rocks
- BIBSS Barnardos
- Bright Sparks
- CAMHS
- Castle Crag- City of Edinburgh Council
- Citadel Youth Centre
- Edinburgh Eagles Athletics Club
- ELCAP
- FAIR
- Fife Council Sport
- Forward Vision
- Hyper club
- Intensive Behaviour Support
- Mindroom
- Muirfield Riding Therapy
- Orcadia
- RDA Horse Riding
- Seal Club
- Tailor Ed
- Upward Mobility
- Visual.

Appendix 3: Findings from staff and volunteer interviews

We interviewed staff and volunteers in August 2016 to gather insight into the services, and understand their roles and activities. This helped us understand the impact The Yard has on staff and volunteers. An agreed topic guide was used to semi-structure the interviews.

We interviewed 7 staff members including playworkers, sessional playworkers, volunteers, and other staff. This represents a cross-section of roles undertaken within the three services of interest at The Yard Edinburgh. Interviews were conducted in person or over the telephone and lasted between 30 minutes and an hour, reflecting staff availability. Those interviewed had a variety of current and previous work or volunteer experience both within and outside of The Yard. Most had been involved with The Yard for three years or less, though one staff member had been there for more than 10 years. Several were able to compare the operation of The Yard with other similar services in Scotland.

Staff and volunteer interviews produced a number of outputs:

- Interviews helped identify prevalent outcomes for staff and volunteers which are material and as such should be included in the social return on investment. Materiality is a central principle of any SROI, as it ensures the model includes relevant and crucial information³⁹
- Interviews helped describe in detail the unique roles of staff and volunteers working with children and young people in Edinburgh
- Interviews gave us an inside view on the relative strengths, challenges and areas for improvement within The Yard.

Staff identified strengths

Firstly, staff and volunteers identified that their way of working allows them to make a difference to others. Making a difference to families is at the core of what The Yard does and part of what makes it unique; staff and volunteers felt they were an integral part of this mission. Staff and volunteers feel able to take ownership of their roles, making them rewarding and meaningful.

Secondly, staff and volunteers identified key strengths in The Yard's approach, which those who had experience elsewhere in the sector saw as particularly true for The Yard:

- A holistic approach to children and young people and their families
- A child-led approach to play, with staff in a facilitating role

³⁹ Cabinet Office (2009) A Guide to Social Return on Investment
https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Cabinet_office_A_guide_to_Social_Return_on_Investment.pdf

- The fostering of a close-knit and supportive environment.

Thirdly, the relationships established between staff/volunteers and children, young people and their families were highlighted as an important feature of The Yard. These relationships are mutually beneficial. Staff and volunteers see a strength in the way their work allows relationships to build over time. With experience, this enables them to work better with children and young people and their families.

Behind these relationships is a culture of support. Volunteers and sessional playworkers feel adequately supported through the challenging aspects of their roles. This happens informally in staff interactions, and more formally in set training sessions and training materials.

Outcomes for staff and volunteers

The in-depth nature of these conversations allowed us to talk about and test our thinking about outcomes for staff and volunteers. This was then used to inform the survey and SROI model. Our initial ideas built on a knowledge of general work and volunteering outcomes, and incorporated the contributions made by staff and volunteers in the outcomes mapping workshop.

We found there were 3 clearly defined outcomes for staff and volunteers which make their work rewarding and meaningful. The material outcomes identified for staff and volunteers are that they have:

- An increased sense of purpose and are being supported along a progression route within The Yard
- More and better employment opportunities for those looking to become more employable in current or future roles. Opportunities for work experience, and formal and informal training activities, result in staff and volunteers becoming increasingly better qualified, which improves their overall employability
- Increasing sense of workplace community involving all those staff and volunteers they interact with when at The Yard. This includes other staff and volunteers within the team, parents, and children and young people. Time spent in the company of others fosters a greater understanding within the workplace, allowing individuals to support others and be supported, and develop friendships with peers, parents and young people.

Appendix 4: Findings from staff and volunteer survey

Staff and volunteers at The Yard were asked to complete a survey to measure the extent to which some of the outcomes identified through the interviews with staff and volunteers are true across the board.

38 staff and volunteers completed the survey. The breakdown by roles is shown below in Figure 21. Over two thirds of all staff/volunteers at the time completed the survey and 81% of 'Other Staff Members' responded. Therefore, we can take the results of the survey to be representative of the general views of staff and volunteers at The Yard.

Role	Number of respondents	Total Yard	Percentage of total
Playworker	4	5	80%
Sessional Playworker	7	15	47%
Volunteer	14	25	56%
Other Staff Member	13	16	81%
Total	38	61	62%

Figure 21. 'Other Staff Member' includes office staff and Play Team Leaders. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the staff and volunteers' survey compared with information provided by The Yard on numbers of staff].

76% of those who completed the survey have been working or volunteering at The Yard for one year or more and 35% have been working or volunteering there for over 3 years.

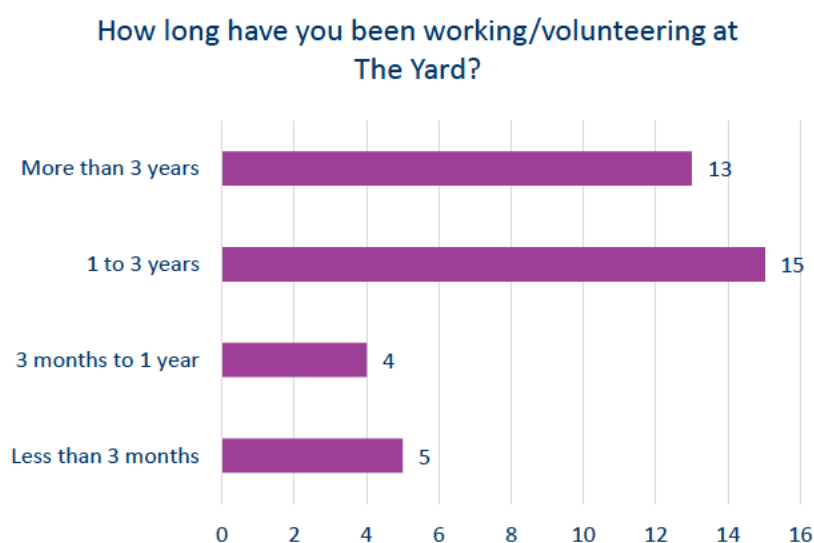


Figure 22. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the staff and volunteers' survey].

Outcomes for staff and volunteers

As in the parents' survey, we asked staff and volunteers to indicate whether they strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed or strongly agreed with a series of statements reflecting possible outcomes resulting from working or volunteering at The Yard.

Results confirm the outcomes identified through interviews: 100% of respondents feel they are helping others and have a greater sense of purpose in life, 97% feel part of a community, 97% feel they are more credible employees or volunteers to other organisations, and 95% feel they are better skilled or qualified to progress in their chosen career.

As a result of working/volunteering at The Yard...

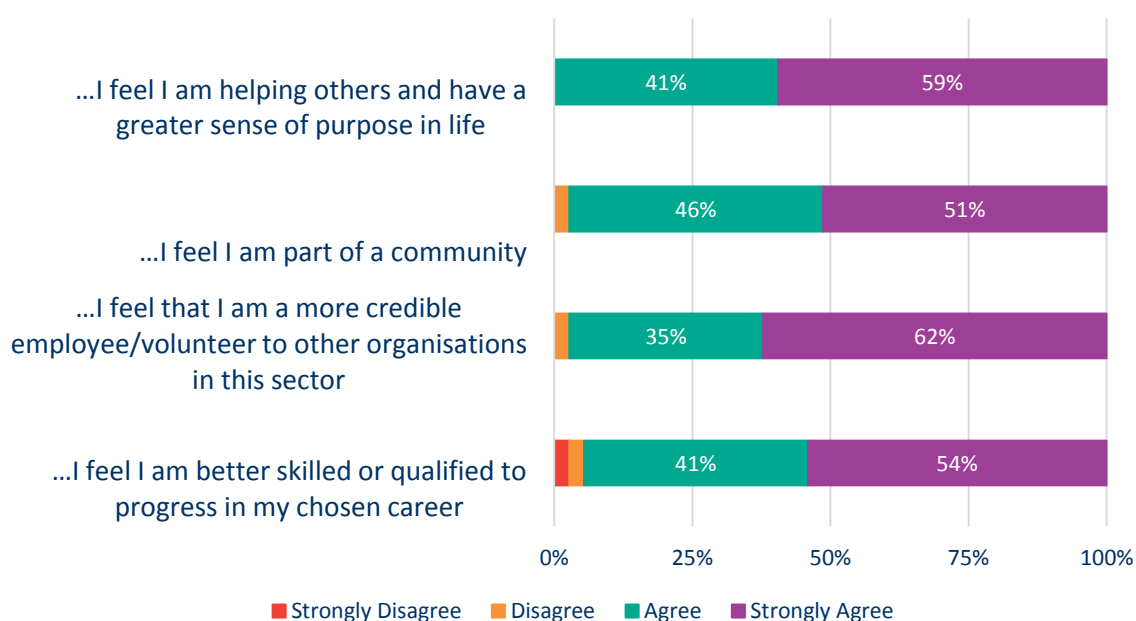


Figure 23. There was a high percentage of agreement with the outcomes included in the survey. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the staff and volunteers' survey].

We also asked whether, due to their involvement in The Yard, staff and volunteers are now employed or volunteering for other organisations alongside their role at The Yard. 44% of respondents – 16 in total – said that they were. There is therefore strong evidence supporting the idea of The Yard creating other employment and volunteering opportunities for those who work or volunteer there.

Views on working/volunteering at The Yard

As part of the process evaluation, the survey asked staff and volunteers their views on their experience of working/volunteering at The Yard. This was overall positive, as shown in Figure 24 below:

- 97% of staff and volunteers feel they are able to manage tasks set by The Yard
- 95% of staff and volunteers feel they are able to voice their opinion and be heard in terms of how The Yard operates
- 87% feel they have been given opportunities to take on more responsibility in their role
- 86% feel adequately supported to undertake the tasks their role requires.

On the other hand, 59% of respondents say their role at The Yard can be stressful – 43% agree and 16% strongly agree with this statement. For over a third of those who ‘strongly agreed’ that their role can be stressful, responses to a further question showed it can be stressful more than once a week.

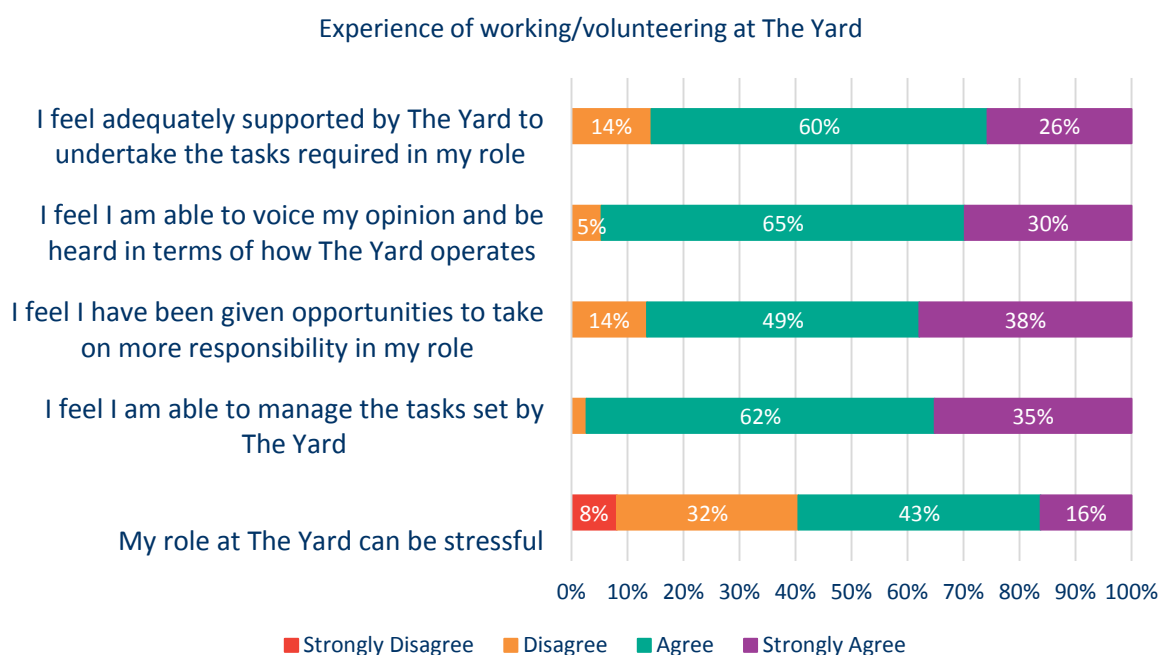


Figure 24. The experience of working or volunteering at The Yard is generally very positive, although over half of respondents say their role can be stressful. [Source: Rocket Science analysis of responses to the staff and volunteers' survey].

In general, there seems to be a recognition that, to some extent, stress can be part of the role – be it taking clubs out for trips as a playworker or having a senior management role with a lot of responsibility. A respondent stated:

'I don't mind feeling pressure at The Yard as it reminds me I am dealing with peoples' lives and that I want to do the best I can at work for myself and the children and parents I support.'

The fact that, by their nature, some of the roles at The Yard can be stressful, emphasises the importance of having an adequate support structure. In that sense, the result in Figure 24 is supported by comments at the end of the survey where many respondents highlight that they feel supported in their roles.

However, there were a couple of suggestions for improvement worth noting. One respondent said: *'It would be less stressful if we were given set office time - not allocated it on each day'*. Another mentioned they would like to see more sessional staff involvement in team meetings, more opportunities for sessional workers to mix with office/operational staff, and the introduction of supervision.

Appendix 5: Findings from activities with children and young people

We sought to understand the difference The Yard makes for children and young people and the value of this impact for them. To do this we conducted qualitative research in the form of informal interviews and activity-assisted discussions with children and young people. In total, we gathered insight into the experiences and opinions of over 55 children and young people. We joined each of the three services which form part of the study, and stayed for the duration of the club, or for up to three hours.

Notes from these sessions provide insight into three areas we believed it would be most valuable and appropriate to explore with children themselves. We then used these insights, alongside initial findings from parent and carer focus groups, to build the Theory of Change for children and young people:

- **Enjoyment** – investigating how children and young people describe The Yard
- **Activities** – to understand in detail what children and young people like doing at The Yard, the range of activities they engage in, and why
- **Social opportunities** – to explore areas including whether they have met and made friends at The Yard and how they may have continued friendships outside of The Yard.

Research method

During sessions, those who wished to engage with us were asked a range of questions either as a conversation, during another shared activity, or as part of our interactive activities which involved pictures, art materials, and ranking-scales.

We provided pictures of a range of possible activities children and young people could engage with at The Yard. We had customisable images of emoticons reflecting a range of individual faces and emotions which were used during the activities as avatars. The scale used extended from 1 to 5, where 1 represented 'no fun' and 5 represented 'fun'. Once explained, this could be used to assist children and young people in their answers, using the emoticons and activity pictures to indicate their place on the scale.

The variation between sessions required a degree of flexibility in our approach. This was dependent on the level of attendance at the club; how appropriate our interactive activities were to everyone; the opportunities to engage in a meaningful way with children; and the ability of children and young people to engage with our activities or questions. As such, in several sessions we engaged with parents and carers too, as a proxy for those they had brought to The Yard.

Our notes differentiate between data to account for the fact that proxies will hold their own views and opinions.⁴⁰ We sometimes spoke with children with the assistance of their parent or carer. In some sessions, we also played more interactive games using either the scale described above, or a simpler scale of 1 to 3, to ask similar questions of ranking.

In designing these activities, we were assisted by similar methodological guidance found in the literature. The ‘draw, write and tell’ method improves upon more standard research practices of this sort, by making the process more child-centred. This method advocates that research takes place in the child’s chosen environment, with freedom to interact with others, and without making constraints on their contribution or setting time limits.⁴¹ We offered children the opportunity to express an opinion and ‘tell’ about their contributions. We felt these efforts to enable communication and interaction, and break down imbalances in power, were in keeping with The Yard’s own approaches.

The Yard staff gave us guidance and assistance in planning for and engaging with the sessions in order to conduct our research. There were two individuals at any one time helping conduct the research with the children and young people in all of the sessions apart from the last, when one researcher was present due to the smaller numbers of young people in attendance. We were assisted by dedicated staff from The Yard in most instances when only one Rocket Scientist was in attendance. Other staff and volunteers at The Yard helped us approach and introduce children and young people to the aims of the study and involve them in our research.

⁴⁰ Nind, M, 2008, *Conducting qualitative research with people with learning, communication and other disabilities: Methodological challenges*, ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper, NCRM/012, pp. 9-11

⁴¹ Angell, C, Alexander, J, & Hunt, JA, 2015, ‘Draw, write and tell’: A Literature review and methodological development on the ‘draw and write’ research method, *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 13(1), pp. 17-28

Service	Date and Time	Rocket Scientists	Yard Staff support
Family Session	Friday 16 th Sep, 13.00-16.00	2	1
8-12s Club	Friday 16 th Sep, 16.30-19.30	1	1
3-8s Preschool Group	Monday 19 th Sep, 15.00-17.00	1	1
Teen Club	Monday 19 th Sep, 17.45-20.15	2	1
2-5s Preschool Group	Tuesday 20 th Sep, 12.00-14.00	1	1
Girls Club	Tuesday 20 th Sep, 17.45-20.15	1	1
10-14s Club	Wednesday 21 st Sep, 16.30-19.00	1	1
10- 14s Club	Thursday 29 th Sep, 16.00-18.00	1	1
Teen Club	Thursday 29 th Sep, 18.15-20.45	2	0
Family Session	Saturday 1 st Oct, 12.00-17.00	2	0
18–25s Club	Saturday 1 st Oct, 18.00-20.30	1	0

Figure 25. Services and individual sessions at The Yard during which qualitative research was carried out with children and young people.

Findings

The Yard achieves many of their own aims and objectives in the eyes of those who attend. Children and young people describe their creative and adventurous indoor and outdoor play. Many feel included in the activities of others, be they staff and volunteers or other attendees. Particular activities which take place within Preschool Groups, Youth and Respite Clubs and Family Sessions ensure children can practice and experience independence and confidence building tasks.

The Yard receives an overwhelmingly positive response. This is due to its underlying approaches and how these allow staff to make the best use of their time and environment. For children and young people, there are a wide variety of activities on offer, and where individuals feel less enjoyment in an activity, or feel less confident or less able to engage, this is met with flexibility towards the individual's needs. Several children prefer attending school to attending The Yard, but still profess enjoyment of certain activities and aspects which The Yard offers them.

We found that different sessions reflected the ages of the children who attend, or the personalities and needs of those around the same age. It should thus be expected that different outcomes will result for children and young people from different sessions. In many cases, parents, children and staff indicated that a fit had actively been found between attendees and clubs. This strategy ensured that only a small minority of children and young people suggested there were negative aspects about the session they had attended or how it met their needs.

A number of activities are central to enjoyment of The Yard by those who attend. Key among these is the use of the outdoor wheeled equipment like bikes, scooters and pedalled go-karts. A wide-ranging group prioritised these activities in terms of fun and enjoyment. The activity meant different things to different individuals. We heard that using this equipment allowed them to play imaginatively, to learn the skills involved, to push their limits, and to act independently. We saw this equipment facilitate sharing, foster interactions between children and staff, surprise parents in their children's abilities, and bring people into the outside environment. This is an example of an activity which many who attend found uniquely at The Yard.

Another activity which illustrates the impact The Yard has on children, is the opportunity to cook and share a meal during club sessions. Again, this activity found favour among many children and young people. Although not always unique within their lives, they expressed enjoyment at every aspect of the process from baking, to serving and eating. These activities frequently brought individuals together within the clubs who were not previously acquainted. It exemplified the capacity of The Yard to facilitate activity which worked well across a range of different ages and abilities, and which involved the learning of new social and practical life-skills.

Friendships are often strengthened for those attending Youth and Respite Clubs and Family Sessions. There were notable cases where friendships were fostered by The Yard. We found that this tended to happen in clubs and increased in likelihood with age, and the duration for which they had attended sessions. The Yard allows friendships made at school or college to flourish and develop.

The majority of children and young people view The Yard as a social opportunity. For many, the staff and volunteers provide children with playmates and company. For others, the opportunity is more about interacting with peers to different extents. For some, these opportunities are a rarer occurrence in their everyday lives than others.

The club system causes some concern for a minority whose friendships cut across different age categories. Children and young people were aware of the waiting lists and potential to be separated from their friends in these cases. Some parents shared concerns about their children outgrowing clubs and sessions.

Appendix 6: Findings from interviews with stakeholders

We conducted 6 stakeholder interviews to explore how wider systems of service provision within Edinburgh interact with The Yard. Through this we aimed to:

- Place the activities and processes of The Yard in the wider context of provision in Edinburgh
- Understand the impact of The Yard for other stakeholders.

Interviewees work in a range of different capacities with the same or similar groups as those who attend The Yard Edinburgh. We contacted one Edinburgh school, 3 third sector support organisations, and 2 local authority and voluntary sector staff.

List of organisations interviewed
City of Edinburgh Council
International Play Association
Mindroom
St Crispins School
Tailor Ed Foundation
Shared Care Scotland

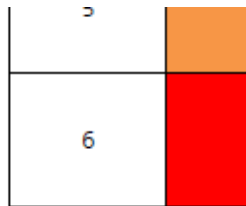
The Yard contributes to the wider sector, through:

- Being an advocate for disabled children and young people, and their families
- Offering play facilities which are readily used by other organisations
- Offering bespoke training sessions around play-based care for disabled children and young people.

The Yard is viewed by other organisations and stakeholders as an integral part of the landscape of provision of play and respite. Stakeholders highlighted the extent to which there is unmet demand for this kind of provision and the role The Yard plays in meeting this demand. The implication is that without The Yard there would be a serious gap in provision.

In addition, The Yard's qualitative contribution to the landscape of provision was noted. This involves The Yard's unique approach and quality of service, and the training provided to other organisations and stakeholders.

Appendix 7: Recommended optimism bias reductions



3	
6	

Figure 26. Confidence matrix and associated optimism bias reductions. [Source: HM Treasury (2014), Supporting public service transformation: cost benefit analysis guidance for local partnerships] The guidance states: ‘The confidence grade which the CBA model applies to the data is determined by the lowest assessment in any of the descriptive columns. The optimism bias correction factor for the data is then determined based on the lowest confidence grade found in relation to each individual outcome.’ (p3)

