

# REPORT FROM THE LOTHIANS BOYS PROJECT

MAYFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

FEBRUARY - APRIL 2019



WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF £1,871 FROM THE PONTON HOUSE TRUST FOR MAKING THIS PROJECT POSSIBLE.

# PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Lothians Boys Project (LBP) was created by EPIC Assist as an educational project aimed at encouraging disadvantaged young boys to engage with topics that are important for social inclusion in society but which are less likely to be addressed at school and at home. The Project built on the Edinburgh Girls Project, which was developed by EPIC Assist Charity Scotland in 2017 and focused on encouraging young girls to make informed choices about social, mental and physical health. This was the third time the Project ran, following successful pilots in Tranent and Livingston in late 2018.

During the Project, new topic areas related to healthy living, communication skills and self-development were addressed each week, with the group exploring the topics through interactive activities and discussions. The following topics were addressed in the different sessions: Daily Life Physical Exercise, Relaxation and Stress Relief, Relationships and Communication Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Gender Stereotypes and Healthy Eating. There was also one session assigned for rounding up the Project.



# LOCAL PARTNERS

EPIC Assist initially partnered with the local charity Midlothian Sure Start. The partners quickly identified the benefits of also bringing a local school into the Project to maximise not only the the cost-effectiveness of the grant but also the outcome for participants. Mayfield Primary School in Mayfield readily agreed to provide a venue for the project sessions and support teachers who could assist with delivery. The school also took on the responsibility of recruiting participants and cooperated alongside Midlothian Sure Start throughout the whole planning and delivery process.

Due to its nature of being a vital local institution, Mayfield Primary School provided EPIC Assist with a clear link to, and legitimacy within, the local community. Thus, they enabled EPIC Assist to reach the target group that would benefit directly from being involved in the LBP. The partners also trialled running the Project during school hours, which meant that participants already had to be at the premises during the time of the project sessions. Consequently, the possibility of maximising the number of participants was increased. Due to the specific needs and wishes of the school, the Project was specifically targeted at boys the school felt would benefit the most from the topics addressed. Mayfield Primary School identified the participants of the LBP through distributing flyers and talking to the parents of this specific target group.



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The LBP has a flexible, person-focused design which means that the topics and activities covered can be adjusted and tailored to fit the needs and interests of the group. The Project was advertised as a 7-week course from February to April, where one session was held each week. Despite being a coherent course in its own right, the sessions were independent of each other. As a result, the boys were freely able to choose which sessions they wanted to participate in. By choosing how many and which sessions to attend, the boys were also able to engage with the topics they were most interested in.

The flexibility of the LBP meant that attendance numbers varied from week to week. Nevertheless, the amount of boys who were participating each week was reasonably stable; between five and nine boys participated in each session.



# METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO DATA MONITORING

The participants were given an initial survey at the end of the first session. This comprised questions related to whether the sessions were being enjoyed so far and what issues the participants identified as most important to their health and well-being. The participants were also asked about what kind of group activities they enjoyed doing the most and the least and if there was anything specific they wanted to do or learn about over the course the Project.

A summative evaluation also took place at the end of the Project by distributing questionnaires to participants in the final week. As well as this, Midlothian Sure Start and Mayfield Primary School were involved in the evaluation process both through providing constant feedback and through a follow-up meeting after the final session.



# THE FINDINGS

100% of the participants who completed the questionnaires in the last session stated that they were 'very satisfied' with the LBP. The creation of new relationships was limited as most of the boys knew each other from before but two boys still said they had met new friends through the Project. Another participant said he felt he had become closer to the other participants through the LBP.

Some challenging behaviour from the participants resulted in the sessions having to be strongly modified throughout the duration of the Project. Thus, the learning outcomes were not as many as initially hoped. Nevertheless, the boys said that they had improved several skills and knowledge areas. For instance, 74% stated through the final survey that they had learned more about teamwork and 50% reported that they had learned more about physical activity. As well as this, 50% said that their attitudes to physical activity and teamwork had changed. The physical activity session was the session enjoyed the most by the majority of the participants. 84% stated that this was their favourite session.

**100%**  
**Satisfaction rate**



# **BUDGET BREAKDOWN**

The LBP was awarded £1,871 by the Ponton House Trust. This was used in the following ways:

- £823 for salary for EPIC staff administering and delivering the Project
- £67 for materials and snacks used in the project sessions
- £24 for the production and printing of certificates
- £192 for the production, printing and binding of reports
- £55 for planning meeting costs
- £710 for the design, production and printing of workbooks to accompany the project sessions

## ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The LBP has proved to encourage boys to adopt some good behaviours and habits which are important in order to live as a healthy young man. However, most importantly, these behaviours and habits are likely to continue later in life and the Project thus has the capacity to make an impact on participants' lives for a long time after the completion of the Project. This is also one of EPIC Assist's goals with the LBP; to create sustainable and active communities.

EPIC Assist Charity Scotland will continue being in contact with Midlothian Sure Start and Mayfield Primary School and hope to be able to run another project in the future. We are currently in the initial discussion stages of planning another project.

The positive experiences from the three LBPs run to date have additionally motivated EPIC Assist to replicate the Project elsewhere. Another version of the Project is already set to run in Clydebank this year. As well as this, requests have been received for running another level of the Project and we strongly hope we will be able to do this in the future.