



Cornish+Grey
Helping organisations
achieve their social purpose

Impact Report

For Summer Hype

November 2022

anna@cornishandgrey.org
+44 7887 856131
www.cornishandgrey.org
@cornishandgrey

Content

Executive Summary	2
1. Background and approach	4
2. Detailed Findings	
2.1 Adult leaders' experience of Summer Hype	5
2.2 Outcomes for the adult leaders	6
2.3 Adult leaders' views of the outcomes for young people	7
2.4 Young people's experience and outcomes as participants	9
2.5 Young people's experience and outcomes as leaders	10
2.6 Ideas for future development	11
3. Conclusions and Recommendations	13

Executive Summary

Background and objectives

1. Summer Hype is an annual one week residential summer camp for disadvantaged young people from Hackney. It supports young people to grow in confidence, build resilience, express themselves and learn new skills initially through informal education alongside a range of outdoor adventure opportunities, and later through providing access to a leadership development opportunity. A short, independent evaluation was commissioned to build a deeper understanding of the experience and outcomes of the Summer Hype programme through gathering feedback from adult leaders and from previous participants who had progressed on to becoming junior leaders.

Adult leaders' experience and outcomes

2. The four adult leaders interviewed for this research were very committed to the values and purpose of Summer Hype – and in particular, to its ultimate goal to become youth led. Three were involved in work with children in their day jobs and found it served both as inspiration and as a useful reminder of why they'd chosen this career path. The fourth felt that he had benefited from the support from people in his community and was keen to give something back. All felt that they learnt a lot from their experience at Summer Hype and that it helped them develop skills that were useful both personally and professionally.

Adult leaders' views of the outcomes for young people

3. All the adult leaders thought that Summer Hype gave the young people opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have, built their confidence to try new things, and to feel pride in their achievements. Whilst they acknowledged that the transition from participant to leader could be quite challenging, they felt that all in all, the first year of including junior leaders on the team had been a success both in terms of developing their skills and in acting as role models/being an inspiration for the new cohort.

Junior leaders' experience and outcomes

4. The junior leaders felt that going on the annual trips had enabled them to broaden their horizons, develop strong friendships and build their confidence. Whilst they talked first and foremost about the fun they had had getting involved in new outdoor activities, it was clear that they valued the informal educational elements for helping them understand different perspectives, learn from their peers, and build their confidence to voice their opinions.
5. Coming back as junior leaders, some said that initially they had missed the opportunity just to take part in the activities and enjoy themselves. However, all said that they had enjoyed the experience and got more out of it than perhaps they had initially expected, building their confidence and calming any initial nerves they had had about their ability to take on the role. They appreciated having had the opportunity to develop important work

and life skills, and felt a sense of reward from helping the young people who came through the programme behind them.

Conclusions and Recommendations

6. On the evidence of this research, the combination of outdoor activities and informal educational elements seems to have worked well for building young people's confidence to express themselves and try new things. It has also worked as an effective gateway for those young people who have wanted to take advantage of a leadership development opportunity in a safe and familiar space.
7. In the last couple of years, Summer Hype has made some progress in recruiting adult leaders who are more representative of the communities it serves. That said, realising Summer Hype's ambition to become user led undoubtedly presents a significant challenge. Our suggestions (building on some of those from the interviewees) include: recruiting junior leaders from underserved communities from outside Summer Hype (potentially through collaboration with other charities working towards similar goals); involving youth leaders in strategy and planning throughout the year; and being able to offer a progression route for young volunteers – ideally though to paid employment opportunities.

1. Background and approach

1.1 Summer Hype Programme

Summer Hype is an annual one week residential summer camp for disadvantaged young people from Hackney. Its varied programme supports young people to grow in confidence, build resilience, express themselves and learn new skills, all whilst having fun in a safe and nurturing environment. It aims to go beyond simply providing the opportunity to experience a range of outdoor adventure activities, to providing the opportunity for involvement in: informal education sessions (where they are able to explore their identities, values, and the challenges they face); and small group discussions about societal issues they are passionate about (giving them a safe space to learn, explore their ideas and feel empowered to make positive change).

Each year it takes around thirty young people on its residential, nominated by their schools and youth groups on the basis of need. These young people have various vulnerabilities including: living in poverty; experiencing poor mental health; being at risk of exclusion or exploitation; and experiencing abuse, neglect or other challenges at home. Almost all are from Caribbean or African backgrounds, with some participants coming from other ethnic minority groups.

Summer Hype was founded in 2015, with a cohort of thirty children who were aged ten at the time. This year, nine of the original cohort, now 17 years old, returned as Junior Leaders for the first time having attended summer camp every year since and having successfully completed a leadership training course. A key aim for these young people is that their Summer Hype journey will have given them skills and experience to support them into employment or further education.

1.3 Research objectives

Summer Hype commissioned some in-depth research to build a detailed understanding of the experience and outcomes of the programme – with a specific focus on the nine young people returning to this year's summer camp as junior leaders.

More specifically, the aims of this consultancy support were to:

- Summarise experience and outcomes of Summer Hype – from the perspective of adult leaders and the junior leaders themselves.
- Identify keys to success and areas for improvement.

1.4 Sample and methodology

Seven in depth interviews were conducted over Zoom (or telephone) between 13th and 27th October 2022. These included:

- Four adult leaders – two of whom who had been involved for more than three years, and two who had become involved in the last couple of years.
- Two junior leaders who had been part of the original Summer Hype cohort.

All nine junior leaders were invited to contribute to the evaluation in a way that they felt comfortable with and worked best for them. Those who were less keen on taking part in the interviews were invited to contribute to the evaluation through responding anonymously to five open ended questions shared through a Smart Survey link – or to submit a voice recording giving some feedback on their experience. Five young people submitted anonymous written responses through the Smart Survey link – so, in total, 7 out of 9 junior leaders contributed to the evaluation.

2. Detailed Findings

2.1 Adult leaders' experience of Summer Hype

It was clear that all the adult leaders were very committed to the values and purpose of Summer Hype. Two had been involved with Summer Hype since near the beginning (four years or more). They had been part of the same youth group as the co-founders whilst they were growing up – a shared experience that had been the initial inspiration for Summer Hype. As a result, they had a deep understanding of and 'really believed' in the vision. The other two adult leaders had got involved more recently - within the last couple of years. They identified with the communities that Summer Hype was supporting and felt it was important the team included people that the participants could relate to.

All four leaders seemed particularly committed to Summer Hype's ultimate goal to become youth led – 'by, with and for' the communities it supported. They liked the fact that it was centred around the needs of its service users. In particular, they thought that the opportunity for the participants to progress on to becoming junior leaders (and potentially adult leaders) themselves and the training that came with it gave these young people an opportunity they wouldn't otherwise have.

"Empowering young people to lead their own communities - where I work with these kids in school and seeing how few kids do feel empowered - that's just been the best part really."

"We use this term in my day job - 'You can't be what you can't see' - and I think Summer Hype do an amazing job of trying to recruit senior leaders who have lived experience of the young people that come on Summer Hype."

"I think that kind of leadership support, you don't really get it until you kind of have your first job or you do like after school clubs and it can be a bit difficult depending on your relationship with school. So I think it's a space that does actually develop those skills that they might not get in school."

All the adult leaders thought that Summer Hype was organised, well structured and well run. The two adult leaders who had joined more recently said it had exceeded their expectations

– and that they had felt well supported in their roles. All thought it was reaching the right people in that the participants seemed representative of those young people living in Hackney who were most likely to benefit from this type of opportunity and least likely to have the opportunity elsewhere.

“It was very organised. They seem to have like a procedure for everything and line of call. So I know that I've got a resources team and I've got health and safety and I know who to call in what scenario.”

“It actually was much better than what I expected. I think it's really catered to young people and what they want to do. “

One mentioned that she thought that the success of the trips was influenced by the skills and experience of the site staff and their understanding of ‘what we're trying to do’.

“One of the sites that we're now at is run by London Youth and they're so good with the young people. You know, it's as simple as having crash helmets that are like suitable for afro hair ... Simple things like that makes such a difference to making young people feel really, really, accepted.”

One or two observed that the fact that about three quarters of the participants had returned year on year – and nearly half had progressed on to training to become junior leaders – was a clear sign of how much they enjoyed it and got out of it. Nine out of 15 of the young people who came on the training had come back as junior leaders – and they thought that this number would have been higher if all those who had wanted to come back as leaders had been able to (see section 2.6 below). One observed that almost all of the new cohort of young people coming for the first time in summer 2021, had come back in summer 2022 - and put this down to the fact that there were now junior leaders on the team.

“I think that the retention of young people on this year's campus really shows the power of the junior leaders that have lived experience”.

2.2 Outcomes for the adult leaders

Three of the four adult leaders were involved in work with children in their day jobs: one a social worker, another a youth charity worker, and the third a Maths teacher now working in alternative provision with young people excluded from school. All liked being able to support children in a different way in a different environment to their day job – and found it served both as inspiration and as a useful reminder of why they'd chosen their particular career path. The fourth adult leader was an architect who felt that he had benefited from the support from people in his community and was keen to give something back.

“I think in social work there's a lot more doom than like happy moments because you're dealing with a lot of trauma all the time... This kind of gives me my spark back. I'm drowning in admin, then I go and Summer Hype, it just really breaks up that stress and it just really helps me feel relaxed. I'm just doing my work in another way.



So I think when it comes to taking it back to my work, it just works as a more creative ways to work with young people sometimes, like focussing on social mobility..."

"For me personally, it's just it gives me some fulfilment that like, I'm giving something back to the community. I come from a relatively rough area and I tend to think that I've done okay for myself, but I'm very aware that I've had support along the way, whether it be older people in my area or teachers or parents. And I've seen through others who was just as talented as I was and unfortunately have taken other routes and didn't have that kind of support."

All felt that they learnt a lot from their experience at Summer Hype– from the children and from the other leaders – and that it helped them develop skills that were useful both personally and professionally. One said the experience had been key in helping her to secure a job with a youth charity. She particularly liked that there was a development route for the adult volunteers who were given the opportunity to progress on to becoming a senior leader.

"I'm learning to be adaptable. Sometimes you're trying to get, a point across. And it's not coming across, learning that you don't need to be so hard-headed and just try to step outside of the box and come from another angle... Adaptability, learning to think on your feet, learning to be resourceful in situations you don't have the resources that you would ideally want."

Above all, the adult leaders clearly just really enjoyed being involved. All were interested in continuing to play a part in the immediate future, or longer – even though they had to take five days holiday from their day jobs to do so.

"It's really one of the best things I've ever, ever done."

"I care a lot about the project and I love having something that I care a lot about outside of my professional work."

"I want to do it for the foreseeable future. I'll do it hopefully for the next two, three, four or five years if they invite me back."

2.3 Adult leaders' views of the outcomes for young people

All the adult leaders thought that the week of activities outside London gave the young people opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have, built their confidence to try new things, and to feel pride in their achievements. A couple observed that the forming of bonds between people who might not usually hang out together meant that they developed social skills and learnt from each other.

"In terms of like the outdoor activities, most parents can't afford them. So I mean, it's a whole week of outdoor activities and things like that. So I think definitely those are experiences that they haven't had and just opportunities of like adventure and you know, with building resilience, beating their fears, meeting new people, those are like

a lot of things that it throws them into the deep end socially as well for their social development.”

“I think confidence... especially when we're doing some more of the physical activity, such as rock climbing, it's the absolute best when there's a child who's petrified of heights, etc., and over time through encouragement, mostly from their peers, they end up getting up and they overcome it. And you can feel the excitement. They're almost like a couple inches taller once they've done the exercise. I think that building of confidence is huge for children, especially from backgrounds or from communities such as Hackney, where you're not really - through the media, etc., it's not promoted that you have a lot to be confident about.”

They thought that those who progressed on to becoming junior leaders felt a particular sense of pride and achievement – and one mentioned that the ‘Good leadership box’ worked well as a mechanism for helping the young people recognise these achievements.

“Coming from a school setting like where you have to ask to go to toilet etc. and put your hand up, we're trying to give them that responsibility and also make them aware of what that responsibility means. And you can see that they wear that like a badge that they're very, very proud that they're a leader.”

“I think that genuinely they're really, really proud of the community that they're part of and seeing how much care they took over making a camp that was fantastic for the young participants, really, really summarised that for me like they cared so much about the young ones having an amazing time.”

“Sometimes they don't really recognise the positive skills that they're bringing to the table... And we're like, ‘Well, hold on a minute. Did you not realise that you calmed the whole room down when you done that?’ ‘Oh did I really. Oh yeah. When I think about it, I did’. It just kind of reinforced to them that they do have the ability and have the skills to do that. Again, it's just a confidence thing.”

Whilst they acknowledged that the transition from participant to leader could be quite challenging and didn't come without hiccups, they felt that all in all, the junior leaders had managed really well – and that they had ultimately found it to be a rewarding experience.

“Seeing their reactions to seeing how quickly they had an impact on the young people they were leading and how well they listened to them and how much they were taking just from being around other young people who are slightly older than them, I think it really fuelled the young leaders' ambitions to do it more.”

“There was times where, I don't know, maybe I think they took it a bit too seriously... And it's like ‘you don't need to raise your voice like that’. Again, this is their first experience at trying and I didn't think that it wouldn't be small hiccups along the way, but they performed above and beyond expectations from my perspective.”

2.4 Young people's experience and outcomes as participants

The two junior leaders interviewed for the research said that going on Summer Hype when they were younger had given them the opportunity – and the encouragement - to do things they wouldn't have had the opportunity to do otherwise. For these young people who didn't usually have the opportunity to go on holiday – let alone experience a range of different outdoor activities - the opportunity simply 'to be somewhere outside of Hackney' and the fun they had getting involved in these new activities was clearly a primary draw.

“Usually in the holidays I just stayed at home with my family so of course I was quite excited to go there, meet new people, experience new things, get out of my comfort zone.”

“It was like a second home to me and somewhere where I could escape and have fun endlessly.”

“There was a lot of activities like rock climbing and abseiling. So I remember getting into those and thinking they were really fun...”

(Which activity did you enjoy the most that that first time?)

“I'd have to say canoeing. It was very scary and there was a lot of jellyfish in the water. But it was very interesting and exciting.”

While the informal education elements were not their core reason for going – particularly the first time – they clearly viewed these as an added benefit and something that they learnt to appreciate more on subsequent trips, perhaps once their confidence for getting involved in activities like the 'Big Chats' had grown. They echoed the views of the adult leaders that these were really useful mechanisms for understanding different perspectives, learning from their peers, and building their confidence in voicing their opinions. Respondents to the interviews and the questionnaires talked about how Summer Hype activities had helped push their boundaries, 'learn new things' and 'explore new minds'.

“(The Big Chats) had a lot to do with the issues of our age group, so it's easy to talk about them... I feel like at school we stay in our own little groups, only we know a little more by each other... But to meet new people and find out new perspectives for different topics is interesting. “

“At the time the Big Chat sessions seemed boring but as I got older I realised that they were teaching us things we don't get taught in school.”

(What difference do you think that being involved with Summer Hype has made to you, if any?)

“More open to ideas, more vocal on opinions, hopeful for the future.”

Both interviewees said that they had been keen to come back year on year because of the friendships they had built – with other participants and the adult leaders. They – and the respondents to the questionnaire – said that going on the annual trips and progressing on to becoming junior leaders had helped build their confidence.

“I’ve definitely grown in confidence. I was pretty shy, was pretty reserved to myself. But now I think I’m more open and more excited to engage with people and talk to people and go to them and initiate conversations.”

“Summer Hype has given me the chance to make life long friends and has helped me boost my confidence, it has made me want to work with children even more or just help people in general.”

2.5 Young people’s experience and outcomes as leaders

Feedback in the interviews and in the questionnaires suggested that some had found the transition from participant to youth leader initially challenging. Some had clearly missed the opportunity just to take part in the activities and enjoy themselves, and others were nervous about their ability to take a leadership role. However, all said that they had enjoyed it more and got more out of it than perhaps they had initially expected – and had felt well supported by the adult leaders.

“It felt very weird and upsetting that I couldn’t play around anymore but overall exciting.”

“All of a sudden, I’m the people that I looked up to. So it was hard to become a role model for the participants this year... It was very hard to get like a lot of like teenagers to sit down and talk calmly. But over this summer, it was very interesting to see how you could engage with them and the things that they’re interested in. And I found it exciting. It was relieving knowing that I could do it. “

“At first I was nervous and kind of confused as how it would all work out, but the senior leaders did a great job in supporting us and always making sure we’re aware of what’s happening and what to do.”

The two junior leaders who were interviewed were very positive about the leadership experience and had felt genuinely involved in the design, planning and delivery of the activities. They felt that this experience had helped them develop important work and life skills.

“The leaders were really prompting us to lead the sessions, plan the sessions. And when we would have our leader meetings at the end of each day, they were really prompting us for our contributions and how we felt about the day and just to give ideas, just any small ideas, anything that we could do for the next day.”

“I think I’d gain a lot of skills, like the communicative skills, because with their age group, sometimes it’s hard to communicate with them and sometimes they’re very reserved in themselves. But I think I could gain skills like communicative skills. I think creative skills to come up with sessions.”

One of the junior leaders was looking to train to become a paediatric nurse and the other to do an apprenticeship in Business Management or Business and Sales. Both thought that

their experience with Summer Hype would help them realise their ambitions. When asked if they would like a certificate in recognition of their achievements, one said that she thought that the experience was valuable in itself – she didn't need the formal recognition to verify or benefit from it. Both said that they would be keen to come back for a second year as a junior leader.

“Just being there and having done it. And knowing that I've done what I could to help the children of the community, I think that would always be in my heart. So I feel that - just to know that I did it, is always amazing.”

“It was a new experience for me and I feel like the experience was well needed... and I really liked the outcome of it. So I think it's something that I'd really want to get back into next year.”

They felt that having junior leaders on the Summer Hype team helped the young people who came through the programme behind them – and found this very rewarding.

“It was easy to notice that I had been in their position before, so I knew how it felt. I could empathise with them if they were struggling in any way, I could help them because I've been in the situation.”

2.6 Ideas for future development

Adult leaders felt that the first summer of running the programme with junior leaders and adult leaders had revealed some of the challenges around supporting young people to transition from participant to junior leader.

“It was like quite a fragile thing like for a lot of them and quite challenging to lead suddenly, such as young people when they kind of hadn't really let go of the fact that they wanted to be the young people that it was made for.”

“I think we had to have quite a lot of conversations on overstepping. They have to remember they're not young people anymore. And like they are carers for the kids. They're in a position of power, in a position of care over the young people and I think that was the transition for them. I think that kind of like presuming responsibility is obviously a difficult thing to know as a 17 year old.”

This challenge had become a particularly stark reality when some of the boys had not been able to come back as leaders because of their behaviour on the training camp that preceded it.

“That was a shame because some of those boys had great leadership potential and actually were leaders in loads of other ways in their lives. This potentially could have been the most positive way that that was channelled.”

They acknowledged that in subsequent years they might need to make more allowances for just how tiring the young people found it – perhaps by shortening the days.



“I think they got exhausted. They don't have the stamina that perhaps the senior leaders do, that was kind of like a real logistical learning. They get knackered.”

All felt that working out how Summer Hype could sustain itself in the longer term was the biggest challenge – particularly when it was run by volunteers and everyone was doing it on top of their day job. Now that the first cohort had progressed to becoming junior leaders, the challenge of being reliant on former participants to continue to be involved and to eventually take over the running of the programme was being brought sharply into focus.

“If these particular young people who have taken this journey with Summer Hype, obviously they just might decide that they're done with it in a couple of years time, which is completely fair enough. But it really relies on a couple of them seeing the longevity of the project and wanting to commit to that. And whether that will happen or not is just unknown...”

One acknowledged that there was an inherent conflict in supporting young people to lead successful lives in that the more successful they were in supporting them to do this, the less likely they might be to have the time and space to continue to commit to Summer Hype.

“It's kind of interesting as well because potentially the young people who are most likely to be able to keep this running and organise it are the ones who are most likely to go off to university and have loads of other things come into their lives.”

She thought that the more that adult leaders were representative of the communities, the more young people would be encouraged to stay, and also suggested that developing a paid employment route would be a good way to keep young people engaged.

“I think the idea is that as more of the young people can actually lead the camp and be the ones who are setting an example, who are leading the way, then that will inspire different young people to stay involved.”

“I think it would be amazing to have some kind of paid employment for the kids to keep them involved and some real incentive for them to want to stay and working with them to make it kind of a very solid and good youth environment... I think paid employment needs to come into it soon-ish to guarantee the kids continued involvement and I think that's quite fair to them.”

Suggestions on the adult leaders' 'wish list' for Summer Hype's future development included:

- Being able to offer more consistent support throughout the year to meet the full benefits of the intervention eg. touch in sessions or day trips during the holidays in between. One adult leader and one young leader mentioned that there had been a catch up session in April in the first year and felt that this had had real benefits.
- Being able to support vulnerable children by providing different pathways in – eg. from PRUs or for care leavers – with the recognition that the model might need to be adapted slightly to enable this (eg. a higher staff/young person ratio).

- Expanding Summer Hype to areas beyond Hackney.
- Having a bigger budget to draw upon for resources to facilitate activities.

One of the junior leaders suggested that they expand the pool of younger leaders by including people who hadn't been through Summer Hype themselves – and including people outside Hackney.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

On the evidence of this research, Summer Hype has been successful in providing access to new opportunities, not least, providing young people with something purposeful to do during the summer holidays outside of Hackney. The combination of outdoor activities and informal educational elements seems to work well for building confidence to express themselves and try new things. It also works as an effective gateway for young people who want to take advantage of a leadership development opportunity in a safe and familiar space.

In the last couple of years, Summer Hype has made progress in recruiting adult leaders who are more representative of the communities it serves. That said, realising Summer Hype's ambition to become user led presents a significant challenge. Being user centred means supporting individuals to achieve their own aims and ambitions – and this may not include continuing to be involved with Summer Hype as a leader. Junior leaders are still very much beneficiaries – and it will be a long time before there are enough young people coming through the programme who want to stay on to lead and to potentially run Summer Hype themselves.

Last year, Summer Hype took in a new cohort of children – this time aged 14-15 rather than 10-11. There were reportedly some issues with recruitment and a couple of places went unfilled. A key challenge is that Summer Hype is not yet in a position to take a full new cohort every year which makes it very difficult to build a profile and establish an on-going relationship with schools. Taking a new cohort periodically requires a lot of outreach work to establish new connections and secure buy in – and, as a result, a longer lead in time.

It will be important to explore some different options for achieving the ambition to become 'by with and for'. Our suggestions (building on some of those from the interviewees) include:

- Recruiting junior leaders from underserved communities from outside Summer Hype. It is arguably more important that they are interested in supporting young people and identify with the target group rather than that they have had experience of Summer Hype themselves. One option, for example, could be to offer placements to beneficiaries of other youth development charities. Collaboration with other charities working towards similar goals could offer progression routes for Summer Hype participants too. This could include:

- Charities focusing on supporting young people to express themselves and feel empowered to make positive change (eg. [Jack Petchy's Speak Out Challenge](#) or [Kent Refugee Migrant Network's Youth Forum](#)).
- Or charities who use involvement in physical activities as a gateway to building skills and confidence (eg. [The Running Charity](#)).
- Once a group of youth leaders is established, involving them in strategy and planning throughout the year – ie. in discussions about where and how to recruit participants and other youth leaders, which site to book, which activities to offer and so on.
- Being able to offer a progression route for young volunteers – ideally though to paid employment opportunities. Being able to offer paid employment opportunities will be, without doubt, one of the most effective mechanisms for achieving the ambition to become 'by, with and for'.