



# SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI) EVALUATION REPORT OF THE STEPPING STONES SERVICE IN NORTH WALES

Part of the Social Value Cymru project

*“I didn’t know who I was – I’ve now found myself”*



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## Executive Summary

Stepping Stones is a charity and offers individual counselling and group work to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. They are an independent and confidential service with around 20 counsellors, all of whom are professionally qualified. The next steps project supports victims of childhood sexual abuse. Referrals can be self-referrals or can be through GP, CMHT, police and more. Once a referral is received Stepping Stones will get in contact to gather some information about their individual's needs.

The project was analysed using the Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework to understand the total value created for individuals who were referred to the programme. The results demonstrate that significant value is created through the project.

**The result of £4.98:1 indicates that for each £1 of value invested, £4.98 of Social Value is created.**

There is a growing need for an alternative in our communities to support the growing concerns around mental health, poverty and to reduce isolation. This model offers individuals the opportunity to create changes in their own lives and to empower them to make positive decisions. The outcome of the project experienced by the individual is being **better able to cope (Improved mental health), improved relationships/reduced isolation and improved self-esteem.**

## Acknowledgements

This report would not be possible without involving key stakeholders to understand what changes have taken place and establish their impact. For those who have accessed the support services, their involvement was key and we're extremely grateful to them for feeding back on their experiences and their willingness to help us understand what happens.

A huge thank you to Sue, Shirley and the whole team, who are clearly passionate about their work, and their enthusiasm and support to help the individuals was a crucial input in the chain of change. As they are part of the Social Value Cymru project it demonstrates their commitment to both understand the impact of their work, but to also look at how they can maximise that impact.

Diolch yn fawr / Thank you

Social Value Cymru

## 1.0 Introduction

This evaluation report will analyse the value of the counselling service provided by Stepping Stones in north Wales and funded by all the Local Authorities, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Ministry of Justice and the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. The impact of this programme on individuals will be considered, but also the value to other potential stakeholders.

Through engagement with the organisation and the individuals receiving the support, and by examining the information and data that was available, appropriate estimations have been made supported by secondary evidence.

The report will initially set out the background of this programme, followed by a discussion of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework used to evaluate the service. The SROI results will then be discussed in detail to explain the 'story of change' and value for key stakeholders. The report will look at the social value created for activities from January until December 2019.

## 1.1 Background & Context

### Key Organisation(s)

Stepping Stones is a charity and offers individual counselling and group work to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. They are an independent and confidential service with around 20 counsellors, all of whom are professionally qualified.

Stepping Stones was established in 1984 and became a registered charity in 1995, the aim being to achieve the following objectives;

- To protect and preserve the good health, both mental and physical, of persons who have been victims of sexual abuse and in particular by the provision of therapeutic intervention and individual and group counselling.
- To advance the education of persons working with those who have been victims of child sexual abuse.

### Project Outline

This evaluation is done as part of the Social Value Cymru project managed by Mantell Gwynedd and led locally through Medrwn Môn. The focus of the project is internal decision making, and therefore this report will mainly focus on the value to those who matter the most – our clients / beneficiaries. These results will then be used as a baseline for trustees so they can start to embed social impact measurement to inform their decision making.

The project supports victims of childhood sexual abuse. Referrals can be self-referrals or can be through GP, CMHT, police and more. Once a referral is received they will contact to gather some information about their individual's needs.

An initial Assessment will be made with one of their counsellors to assess need, discuss the services available and decide what is best suited to the needs of the individual.

Following the assessment they will be placed on a waiting list until a place becomes available on the service agreed. Some clients choose individual counselling which is usually one hour a week for the first six weeks. Reviews are undertaken at six weekly intervals and clients are supported for as long as is needed.

Stepping Stones also offer group work. Stepping Stones believes Group Therapy is very successful in dealing with issues. This is from research and 30 years' experience.

The groups are closed single gender groups. Once they have started, each group keeps the same members until all the sessions are completed. Each group has between four and eight participants with two group leaders and runs as 3 blocks of 10 sessions and meets weekly for two hours. All those who attend groups are seen individually by one of the group leaders at least once before they attend. Each group session is planned and led by the group leaders.

Some will complete individual counselling and then move on to the group activities but this is optional and depends on individual circumstances and preferences.

## Identifying the need

The Office of National Statistics considers a range of different data available from across government and the voluntary sector. In their 2020 report<sup>1</sup> some of the key points were as follows:

- The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimated that one in five adults aged 18 to 74 years experienced at least one form of child abuse, whether emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or witnessing domestic violence or abuse, before the age of 16 years (8.5 million people).
- In addition, an estimated 1 in 100 adults aged 18 to 74 years experienced physical neglect before the age of 16 years (481,000 people); this includes not being taken care of or not having enough food, shelter or clothing, but it does not cover all types of neglect.
- An estimated 3.1 million adults aged 18 to 74 years were victims of sexual abuse before the age of 16 years; this includes abuse by both adult and child perpetrators.
- Prevalence was higher for females than males for each type of abuse, with the exception of physical abuse where there was no difference.
- Many cases of child abuse remain hidden and do not enter the criminal justice system; around one in seven adults who called the National Association for People Abused in Childhood's (NAPAC's) helpline had not told anyone about their abuse before.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/childabuseinenglandandwales/march2020>

In the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner Police and Crime Plan 2017 & 2021<sup>2</sup> one of the priorities was sexual abuse. It was also recognised here that these crime were still under reported. This report recognised the need to have a more straightforward support for victims as also having the same level of support available to men as well as women.

One of the fundamental principles of the Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is prevention and early intervention. In response to this legislation, the North Wales Population Needs assessment 2016<sup>3</sup>, acknowledged that victims of domestic abuse will often experience repeat victimisation and is likely to experience threats and problems after they leave their abuse partners.

A number of the actions in this plan is a response to the Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014<sup>4</sup> which transforms the way Social Services are delivered. This also is a response to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015<sup>5</sup> which aims to;

- Think more about the long-term
- Work better with people and communities and each other
- Look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.

These actions and recommendations will be considered when evaluating this service.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.northwales-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Information/Publication-Scheme/What-are-priorities-are-and-how-we-are-doing/Police-and-Crime-Plan/Police-and-Crime-Plan-2017-2021.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/NW-Population-Assessment-Full-Report-1-April-2017.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government (2016) <http://gov.wales/topics/health/socialcare/act/?lang=en>

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government (2016) <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

## 2.0 Social Return on Investment (SROI) Framework

By explicitly asking those stakeholders with the greatest experience of an activity, SROI is able to quantify and ultimately monetise impacts so they can be compared to the costs of producing them. This does not mean that SROI is able to generate an 'actual' value of changes, but by using monetisations of value from a range of sources it is able to provide an evaluation of projects that changes the way value is accounted for – one that takes into account economic, social and environmental impacts. Social Value UK (2014) states;

*'SROI seeks to include the values of people that are often excluded from markets in the same terms as used in markets, that is money, in order to give people a voice in resource allocation decisions'*

Based on seven principles, SROI explicitly uses the experiences of those that have, or will experience changes in their lives as the basis for evaluative or forecasted analysis respectively.

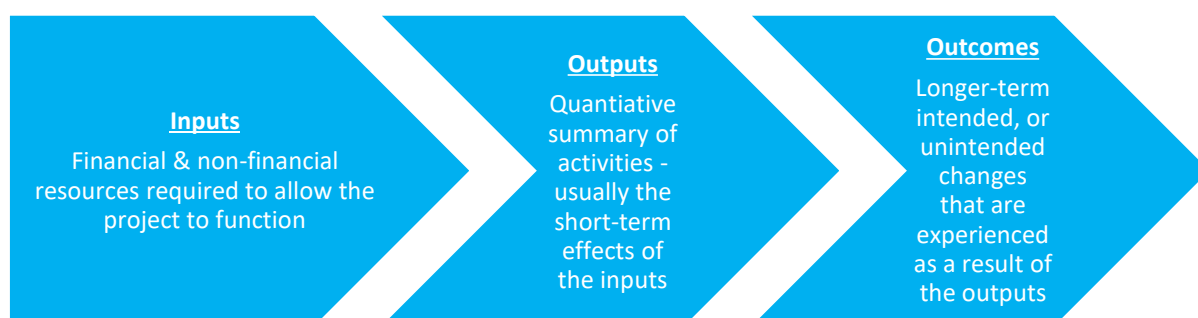
### Social Return on Investment Principles

1. **Involve stakeholders** Understand the way in which the organisation creates change through a dialogue with stakeholders
2. **Understand what changes** Acknowledge and articulate all the values, objectives and stakeholders of the organisation before agreeing which aspects of the organisation are to be included in the scope; and determine what must be included in the account in order that stakeholders can make reasonable decisions
3. **Value the things that matter** Use monetisations of value in order to include the values of those excluded from markets in the same terms as used in markets
4. **Only include what is material** Articulate clearly how activities create change and evaluate this through the evidence gathered

5. **Do not over-claim** Make comparisons of performance and impact using appropriate benchmarks, targets and external standards.
6. **Be transparent** Demonstrate the basis on which the findings may be considered accurate and honest; and show that they will be reported to and discussed with stakeholders
7. **Verify the result** Ensure appropriate independent verification of the account (socialvalueuk.org)

The guiding principles ensure that *how* value is accounted for remains paramount. To ensure a consistent approach is used, chains of change are constructed for each material stakeholder explaining the cause and effect relationships that ultimately create measurable outcomes. These chains of change create the overall Value Map (attached separately as appendix 6), and these stories of change are equally as important as the final result of analysis. In fact, SROI is best thought of as a story of change with both quantitative and qualitative evidence attached to it. Figure 2 summarises the different elements for each chain of change included within the SROI analysis (before the impact of outcomes is calculated).

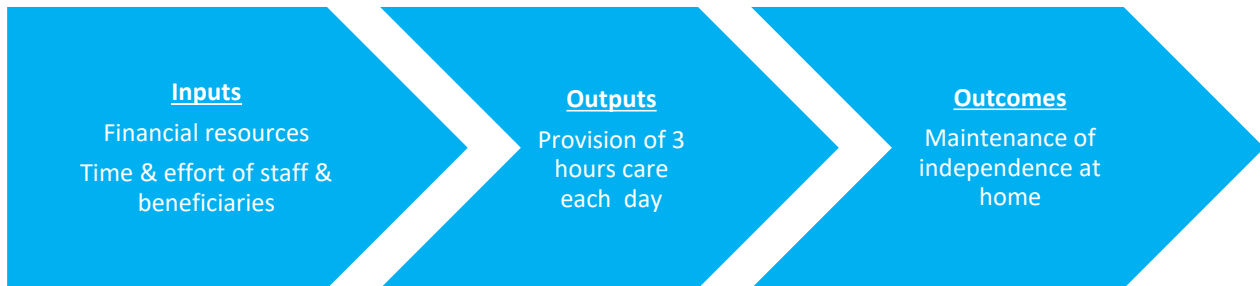
**Figure 2 – Outline of the Chain of Change**



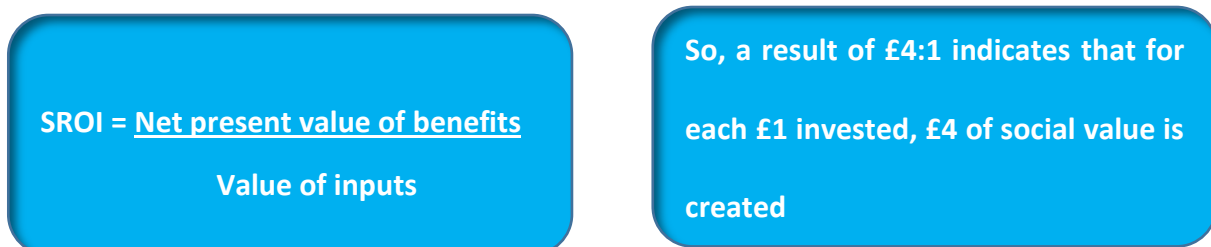
SROI is an outcomes-measurement approach, and only when outcomes are measured is it possible to understand if meaningful changes are happening for stakeholders. To illustrate this idea, figure 3 displays a brief theory of change for a domiciliary care programme to assist people to remain in

their own home - only by measuring the final outcome, is it possible to understand the impact of the care-programme.

Figure 3 - Example Chain of Change –



As will be discussed at the point of analysis, SROI also incorporates accepted accounting principles such as deadweight and attribution to measure the final impact of activities that are a result of each particular activity or intervention. Importantly, SROI can capture positive and negative changes, and where appropriate these can also be projected forwards to reflect the longer-term nature of some impacts. Any projected impacts are appropriately discounted using the Treasury's discount rate (currently 3.5%). The formula used to calculate the final SROI is;



Overall, SROI is able to create an understanding of the value of activities relative to the costs of creating them. It is not intended to be a reflection of market values, rather it is a means to provide a voice to those material stakeholders and outcomes that have been traditionally marginalised or ignored. Only by measuring impacts are organisations able to not only demonstrate their impacts, but also importantly improve them. This thereby strengthens accountability to those to which they are responsible, which in the third sector is fundamentally the key beneficiaries of services.

### 3.0 Stakeholder Engagement & Scope of the Analysis

Including stakeholders is the fundamental requirement of SROI. Without the involvement of key stakeholders, there is no validity in the results – only through active engagement can we understand actual or forecasted changes in their lives. Only then can SROI value those that matter most.

In order to understand what is important for an analysis, the concept of materiality is employed. This concept is also used in conventional accounting and means that SROI focuses on the most important stakeholders, and their most important outcomes, based on the concepts of relevance and significance. The former identifies if an outcome is important to stakeholders, and the latter identifies the relative value of changes. Initially, for the evaluation of the Stepping Stoned service, a range of stakeholders were identified as either having an effect on or being affected by the project – table 1 highlights each stakeholder, identifying if they were considered material.

#### Materiality

**If a stakeholder or an outcome is both relevant & significant, it is material to the analysis. Being important to stakeholders and of significant value, means that if the issue was excluded from analysis it would considerably affect the result.**

Table 1 – Stakeholder List & Materiality

Stakeholder	Material stakeholder?	Explanation
Service Users	Yes	As key beneficiaries of the service these are the most important stakeholders and some changes experienced will be both relevant and significant.
Friends and Family members	No	Friends and Family members are likely to experience some positive impact and changes experienced will be both relevant and significant. Some family member won't be aware that their loved ones are receiving support. However, this is beyond the scope of this analysis.
Stepping Stones	Yes	Provides material inputs of finance, skills and other resources to ensure the strategic direction of the project, so must therefore be included.
Volunteers	Yes	Volunteers offer their support to run some activities and also provide some mentoring. Their inputs is important, and they are also likely to experience some material changes.
NHS	No	Many experienced positive changes in their mental health. If they don't receive counselling here also they may have accessed counselling through their GP. The potential impact on health will be considered but it is beyond the scope of this analysis.

<b>Local Authorities</b>	<b>No</b>	All the Local Authorities in north Wales contribute financially towards the service. It is possible that the service will have an impact on Social Services and Community Mental Health Teams, however, this was beyond the scope of this analysis.
<b>Police</b>	<b>No</b>	It is likely that by working with Stepping Stones more victims are confident to report these crimes. However, this was beyond the scope of this analysis.

Having identified the material stakeholders for analysis, table 2 highlights the size of the populations, the sample size engaged with and the method of engagement.

Initial discussions were held with the Operations Director to understand the scope and potential list of stakeholders. Further activities were held as part of the Social Value Cymru project to do further stakeholder mapping and to start to identify any potential characteristics that can possibly provide some insights in the results.

Engaging with the individuals themselves is essential so ensure we adhere to principle 1 of SROI (involving stakeholders) and then through them we can get a better understanding about the outcomes. All qualitative data was gathered by telephone interviews depending as it was seen as the most appropriate method due to the sensitivity and confidentiality required. There are different ways of engaging with stakeholders and gathering qualitative data, and each option offers different advantages and disadvantages.

Although a great deal of thought was given to the questions being asked to the individuals about their experiences, in order to adhere to the SROI principles and to understand what

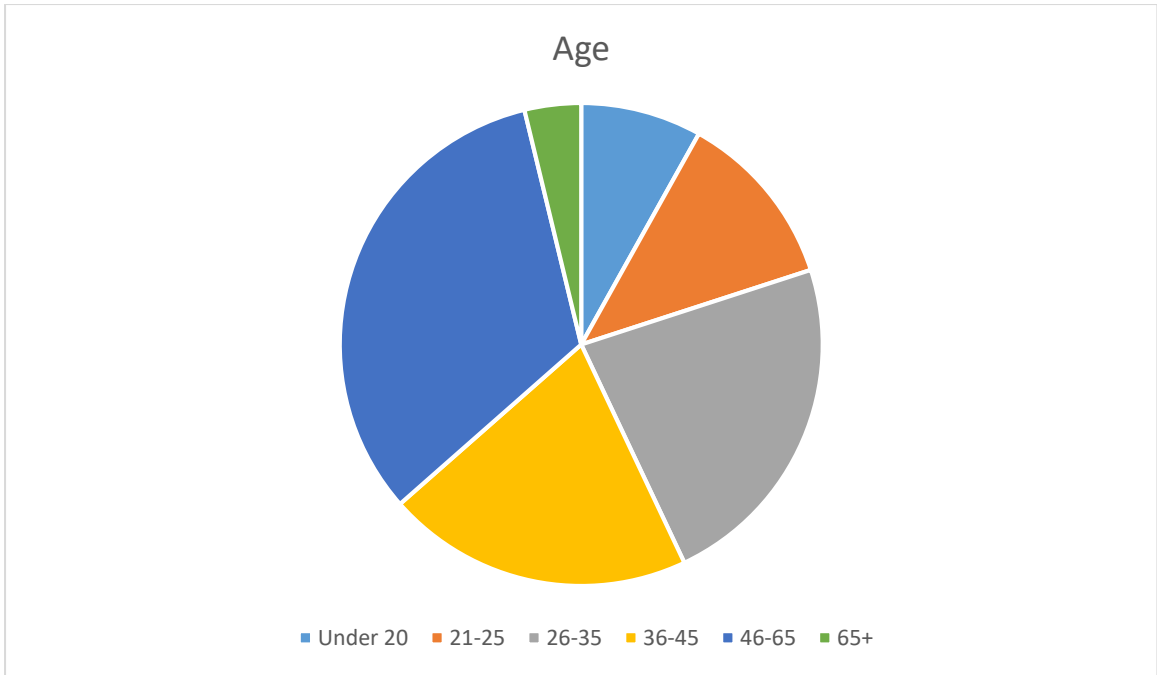
had changed, a loosely structured approach was taken that allowed them to tell us what happened as a result of the support given by the organisation. The added flexibility of semi-structured probing questions, such as asking people what they now do differently because of the change they had experienced, how long they believe the change will last, and importantly if they had any negative experiences allowed them to tell their story from their own perspective. The interviews lasted approx. 40 minutes each. Service users were extremely open and eager to speak about their experiences and they were also able to provide an insight into what had changed for them, but also what they think might have happened without the service and the possible difference it would have made. Questions were also asked around impact such as who else contributed to any changes, and would they have support from somewhere else if this service wasn't available?

Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative interviewing does not have a statistical method for identifying the relevant number of interviews that should be conducted. Rather, it is important to conduct sufficient number until a point of saturation is reached – this is the stage at which no new information is being revealed.

## Potential Subgroups of Stakeholders

It's important to recognise that not all individuals are the same. Understanding if different characteristics have an impact on the data can help us to manage and inform decision making. Consideration is therefore given to the different characteristics below, which are age, gender, and county of residence. The diagrams below demonstrate the groups represented in this project.

### Age



### Gender

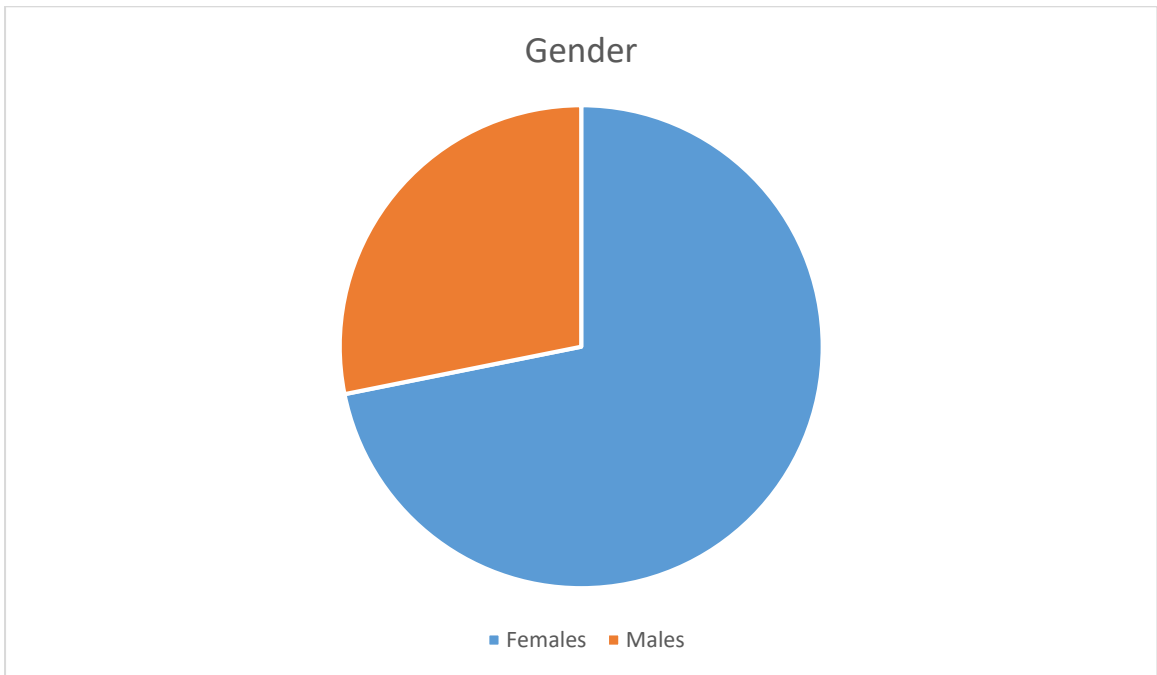


Table 2 – Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder	Population size	Method of engagement
Service users	344 supported (505 referrals were made)	12 x phone interviews 4% of individuals completed the survey
Stepping Stones		Many meetings with the Operations Director and Trustee

## 4.0 Project Inputs

This section of the report describes the necessary inputs from multiple stakeholders. Some inputs are financial, whereas others are not – yet where possible inputs are monetised.

### Individuals

This service is free to those that receive it, but some non-financial inputs are also necessary to ensure any changes. Their time and willingness to travel to the counselling or group sessions is important for many. Including the contribution of the travelling could be considered, however, they have been excluded here. Counselling sessions are provided in various communities across north Wales to avoid too much travelling.

The service users are opening up about a very traumatic time and therefore establishing trust with the service, staff and counsellors is important and could take a long time. For many, this might have been kept secret for a long time and therefore undoubtedly some anxiety will be caused when opening up.

In order for any change to happen they will need to be ready to open up and also to start implementing some changes themselves. Counselling and group activities can assist them to have the tools to be better able to cope, but the individual will need to be ready to take action.

### Stepping Stones

The financial input for the service provided and managed by Stepping Stones is with secured funding from various sources including Local Authorities, Health Board, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner North Wales, Ministry of Justice, North Wales Commissioners, The Lloyds Foundation, the Welsh Government and also donations made to the charity. For this analysis the financial input for January – December 2019 is £281,790.

This income pays for the salary of the support staff and training, counselling fees, the Next Steps activities, and all of the overheads.

The skills of the staff was crucial – the service users explained how they made them feel at ease and really had the ability to motivate them and made them feel better about themselves. Building trust in the service and process is the first big step and many commented on how the staff had been helpful. Many also explained how any positive change was a combination of both the counselling but also the whole support package that offered a holistic service by looking at their need as individuals.

The costs of running the Next Steps service is approx. £28,500 but is included in the total inputs here. A proportion of the funding for Next Steps was given by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner North Wales during 2019.

As well as the costs above, volunteers also provide their time to support with some activities as well as some 1:1 mentor sessions. It is important to include their time here as a financial input. In total, 306 hours of volunteer time was recorded in 2019 which included Trustees time, administration support as well as mentors and activities.

To avoid over-claiming, this financial input will be included for the total number of hours. It is possible to look at different rates here to represent the different roles, however, as a breakdown wasn't available the living wage for 2019-2020 is used which is £8.21 an hour.

**306\* £8.21 = £2,512**

### **Total monetised inputs**

The total inputs for the project over the one-year period have been calculated as £284,302 created by both financial and non-financial inputs from the range of stakeholders above. This

information is displayed in table 3 and is compared to the costs per individual supported (whatever the key stakeholder is you can identify the input value per key stakeholder).

**Table 3 – Total Monetised Inputs for Stepping Stones**

Stakeholder	Financial input	Non-financial input	Cost per individual
<b>Service Users</b>	N/A	Willingness to take part.	N/A
<b>Stepping Stones including volunteers time</b>	£284,302	Strategic management, time, expertise, support costs	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£284,302</b>		

## 5.0 Outputs, Outcomes & Evidence

The immediate outputs for the Stepping Stones evaluation, is the number of people accessing the service. From January until December 2019 there were 505 referrals to the service. 144 of these referrals were re-referrals, and these could be re-referred within the last few months or they might have accessed service a long time ago. This demonstrates the complex nature of the service and also how long some individuals will need support before they start to identify sustainable change due to the nature of their traumatic experience. Many will have lived with what they went through for many years before they access support. From these referrals, 344 went on to be supported. Many might be referred but will opt –out or fail to attend appointment for whatever reasons. In total 5,700 counselling sessions were provided during this time which is 16.5 counselling sessions on average per service user.

The length of service will vary. Some will have counselling sessions for a few weeks and will then leave service, and others will be involved with the organisation for many years. One Service User who took part in the interviews had been receiving support for over 3 years, first receiving therapy and then accessing the Next Steps programme.

Membership of the Next Steps programme continues to grow and the two main groups currently are in Wrexham and Denbighshire with 45 members reported in March 2020. The Next Steps programme is optional to all service users and depending on their needs and preferences they might decide to attend. Many of those who took part in the interviews were attending the sessions and had found these to be beneficial. Activities are planned around the needs and request by the group and includes activities such as craft, cake decorating, jewellery making, horse riding and much more. They are also to have access to National Trust passes and they are able to have days out.

As well as counselling and Next Steps groups there are volunteer mentors that are available to support vulnerable adults and individuals to have support with personal issues such as housing and finances, dental visits, social visits or shopping, things most of us take for granted but great barriers to some of our service users to overcome.

As well as the service available to the victims, family members are also offered support through group activities. This helps them to better understand what their loved ones are going through. Engagement with family members was not possible for this analysis and therefore not included in the value map but measuring the impact here is something Stepping Stones could build into their monitoring in future.

To understand the success of any project, we must understand the outcomes experienced by the participants, in this project those are the service users being supported by Stepping Stones. Outcomes are those things that change and are sustainable. Table 4 below summarises all the stakeholders and their outcomes considers their materiality.

Consideration is given to what will be included and excluded and can then be seen in the Theory of Change.

A full Theory of Change can be seen in Appendix 1, and those that are highlighted in green are those included in the value map. To ensure we are not over claiming, it is only those final three outcomes that are given a value. However, this section will look at each stage to understand the importance of every step in the client journey, and to recognise what are the indicators for these changes. Consideration will also be given to potential negative outcomes.

Stakeholder	Outcomes	Included / Excluded	Materiality test	Indicator
Service Users	Develop trust	Excluded	This was relevant to most stakeholders; however, this is an intermediate outcome that leads to the well-defined outcomes	
	Realisation that client is not alone in what they went through	Excluded	This was relevant to most stakeholders; however, this is an intermediate outcome that leads to the well-defined outcomes	
	Realisation that what happened was not their fault	Excluded	This was relevant to all stakeholders during the qualitative stages, and the quantitative data demonstrated a lot of change.	. .....
	Increased confidence to take part in activities	Excluded	This was relevant to most stakeholders; however, this is an intermediate outcome that leads to the well-defined outcomes	
	Able to reduce negative behaviours	Excluded	This was relevant to most stakeholders; however, this is an intermediate outcome that leads to the well-defined outcomes	

	Feeling safe	Excluded	This was relevant to most stakeholders; however, this is an intermediate outcome that leads to the well-defined outcomes	
	Improved emotional well-being	Excluded	This was relevant to most stakeholders; however, this is an intermediate outcome that leads to the well-defined outcomes	
	Improved self –confidence	Excluded	This was relevant to most stakeholders; however, this is an intermediate outcome that leads to the well-defined outcomes	
	Negative change – mental health worse	Excluded	For some, there was no change. As there was only a small sample that took part in the analysis it is reasonable to consider that for some the programme did not work either because they weren't ready or because they needed a different support programme. These have not been included in the value map but should be closely managed by Stepping Stones.	
	Feeling less isolated and improved relationships with others	Included	This was relevant to all stakeholders during the qualitative stages, and the quantitative data demonstrated a lot of change	Qualitative: Individuals spoke about spending more time with others, and able

				to form relationships as they had struggled to trust previously. Quantitative: Questionnaire results.
Better able to cope (mental health)	Included		This was relevant to most stakeholders; however, this is an intermediate outcome that leads to the well-defined outcomes	..... Qualitative: Individuals spoke about how they are able to cope now and have the tools to be able to deal with various challenges they face. ..... Quantitative: Questionnaire results.
Improved self-esteem	Included		This was relevant to most stakeholders; however, this is an intermediate outcome that leads to the well-defined outcomes	Qualitative: Many spoke about how they had been living with guilt and felt that what happened was their fault. ..... Quantitative: Questionnaire results.

## Material Outcomes for each stakeholder

### 5.1 Service Users

#### Outcome 1 – Reduced Isolation and improved relationships with others

During the qualitative interviews, many explained how they had kept what had happened “in a box” for many years. Some had not told anybody what had happened to them and therefore understandably they felt very alone. For many this made it difficult to trust others and had a negative impact on relationships.

One explained how she lived in a women’s refuge and was referred to Stepping Stones from there. She explained how she struggled to go out at all.

“You forget how to enjoy yourself.”

She explained how the counselling and group activities had helped her to improve her confidence and develop trust in others. Over time she started to forgive people.

“I don’t know where I would be without them, probably still staying inside.”

Many others that we had engaged with had also been in abusive relationships afterwards and this is something that often happens for victims of child sexual abuse. In the Office for National Statistics 2020 it was noted,

“Around half of adults (52%) who experienced abuse before the age of 16 years also experienced domestic abuse later in life, compared with 13% of those who did not experience abuse before the age of 16 years.”<sup>6</sup>

Another service user explained how the counselling had helped her to face some of what that had happened to her, but the group activities helped her to start communicate with others and be more able to socialise. She explained that this took a long time and has been accessing the group now for 4 years.

In the survey, 100% of those who answered said that relationships with others had improved and 86% said that they felt less isolated. However, as the sample was small a lower percentage was included in the value map to avoid over claiming. The amount of change on average was 43%, meaning that there was a 43% change in this outcome. Considering the trauma that many had changed, this was seen as very positive but does demonstrate how recovery does take a long time.

### **Outcome 2 – Better able to cope (mental health)**

Many explained how they had struggled with their mental health for a long time. During the interviews many talked about anxieties, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and many also referred to self-harm and feeling suicidal in the past.

One service user explained how she felt very low for a long period of time. As well as her abuse she had also faced other tragedies in her life and this left her very low and suicidal at times. She

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/childabuseinenglandandwales/march2020>

went through therapy and was involved with Next Steps for about 2 years. She has now stopped attending but know that if she needs to she can get in touch and that help her to cope.

The client she is now much more able to cope with what had happened and has much more confidence in herself. She has since started a University degree course, something she explained she never thought she could do,

“I feel more determined now, I have direction. They had faith in me so now I have faith in myself.”

This outcome was seen as the most important change during the qualitative and quantitative analysis. 100% in the survey said they had experienced a positive change here with a distance travelled of 61%. Again as we only had a small sample a lower percentage was included in the value map to avoid over-claiming.

### **Outcome 3 – Improved self-esteem**

Many had been living with what had happened to them for many years, and explained how for a long time they had feeling of guilt and shame. This had a negative impact on their confidence and how they saw themselves. Some explained they didn't feel like they deserved to have success and struggled with trusting others.

One explained how she struggled to find her identity had had very low confidence. She explained how the therapy and group sessions had helped her feel “Human” again,

“I didn't know who I was – I've now found myself.”

“My journey would not have started without SS, and I thank god that SS is available and for some of us it is life changing from the moment we apply. Thank you for this service and for giving some of us a chance to live life instead of just exist!”

86% of service users in the survey said they had experienced positive change here, with a 41% distance travelled.

## **What could be better?**

Stakeholders were given the opportunity to say about any negative changes or if they felt anything could be better. Although the feedback was all highly positive, the organisation recognises that there is always room for improvements and how important it is to listen and be responsive when possible to the voice of the stakeholder.

### **Length of Service and dependency**

It was clear from the stakeholder engagement and from the nature of the service that many needed support for a long period of time. Many had hidden their trauma for a long time and therefore many require therapy and support for a long time. Many who took part in the service had been involved for many years but the group activities helped them to ensure any positive change from therapy continued.

Some no longer attended the group sessions, but knowing they were available and knowing they could pick up the phone made them feel better.

### **Long wait**

As discussed, for many of the service users, asking for help was a big step for them as many had kept their abuse hidden for a long time. The demand for the service is very high with 500-700 referrals every year and therefore there sometimes is a long wait for counselling. Many did see this as a negative and created some anxiety. Some felt that some support before therapy would have been helpful, even on the phone.

Some also felt the next steps sessions were too short and felt that by the time they settle it is time to start packing up.

## 6.0 Valuing Outcomes

The difference between using SROI and other frameworks is that it places a monetary value on outcomes. By using monetisation, it allows us to not only give the story of what's changed in people's lives, but also allows us to put a value on those changes so we can compare costs and outcomes. This is not about putting a price on everything, but it allows us to demonstrate what impact the service has on other stakeholders, and the possible savings an intervention can create. It also goes beyond measuring and allows organisations to manage their activities to ensure the best possible impact is created for those that matter to them the most: the service users receiving support from Stepping Stones.

### Impacts of the Stepping Stones service in North Wales

SROI analyses use accepted accounting principles to calculate the overall impact of activities. Taking into account any deadweight, attribution, displacement and drop-off factors, means that SROI analyses will avoid over-claiming value that is not a result of the project activities. The boxes below outline each of the impact factors.

#### Deadweight

This asks the likelihood an outcome could have occurred without support taking place. So for example if it is believed that there was a 10% chance that someone just out of a sexual abuse situation could become less isolated, or have better mental health without the Stepping Stones project, the value of that outcome is reduced by 10%.

#### Attribution

Considers what proportion of an outcome is created by other organisations/individuals, so can therefore not be legitimately claimed by the SROI analysis. For example, if external agencies also support someone receiving training, that organisation is responsible for creating some of the value, not just the training organisation.

#### Displacement

This asks if an outcome displaced similar outcomes elsewhere. This is not always a necessary impact measure yet must be considered. For example, if a project reduces criminal activity in one area, which results in increases in other locations, there is a need to consider the displaced outcomes.

#### Drop-off

Outcomes projected for more than one year must consider the drop-off rate. This is the rate at which the value attributable to the focus of the SROI analysis reduces. For example, an individual who gains employment training may in the first year of employment attribute all of the value to the training organisation, but as they progress in their career less value belongs to the initial initiative owing to their new experiences.

**Service Users**

There are a range of approaches to monetise outcomes including using financial proxies – that is using a market-based alternative as an approximation of a stakeholder’s value. However, some would argue that these do not represent the value that the particular stakeholder with experience of the change would attribute to it. Therefore, where possible, this analysis has applied the first SROI principle to involve stakeholders as much as possible. During the qualitative interviews, following an understanding of the changes and the outcomes gained, clients were asked to rank and rate their outcomes. Therefore, they were asked to put their outcomes in order of importance, and then to rate their importance out of 10. In the quantitative data, service users were also asked to confirm their importance of any changes in the survey. This is where we stopped with their involvement in valuing their outcomes and when it comes to placing a monetary value of their outcomes it was decided to use other techniques other than the value game. The value game identifies their material outcomes, and asks them to prioritise, and subsequently value them against a list of goods or services available on the market to purchase. However, it was decided that using well-being valuations was more appropriate for this analysis.

The weighting of the values is summarised below;

**Table 5 – Weighting of the outcomes**

Stakeholder group	Outcomes	Average Weighting
Service Users	Better able to cope (mental health)	9

	Reduced isolation / Improved relationships with others	8.5
	Improved self-esteem	8

All the outcomes were very closely related with improved mental health having slightly greater importance. Many explained how they are now able to cope better every day and that the tools gained from therapy and group meant they could now deal better with everyday life.

The valuations for the outcomes identified to the individuals were taken from HACT'S Social Value Calculator (version 4)<sup>7</sup> that identifies a range of well-being valuations. However, the data from the questionnaire results and provided a distance travelled on how much change had been experienced, therefore a proportion of the wellbeing valuations were used accordingly.

Much consideration was given as to what best well-being valuation reflected the changes identified by the stakeholders. Many explained how the programme had helped them to deal with anxieties and stresses in their lives and therefore consideration was given to use the well-being evaluation from HACT social value calculator -Relief from depression and anxiety (adult) was used which has a value of £36,766 per individual. Another value considered was for 'feel in control of life' valued at £15,894. As many felt more empowered to make decisions, this was seen as appropriate and also avoided over-claiming by using the mental health well-being valuation. Many explained how they had felt they were not able to cope and therefore this value was considered appropriate to reflect how they now felt they were able to make decisions and that they were worthy of having control over their own lives. Following the principle of not

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<sup>7</sup> Community investment and homelessness values from the Social Value Bank, HACT and Simetrica ([www.hact.org.uk](http://www.hact.org.uk) / [www.simetrica.co.uk](http://www.simetrica.co.uk)). Source: [www.socialvaluebank.org](http://www.socialvaluebank.org). License: Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives license([http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.en\\_GB](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.en_GB))

over-claiming, we only took the amount of value that represents the amount of change. So, for all service users, for those with a positive change, there was a distance travelled of 50% for the outcome of Better able to cope (mental health), and therefore that percentage of the value was used in the value map, which gave a value of £6,834.

This value is our anchor value, and from here the weighting of the outcomes was then used, so for the MH outcome it was weighted at 9 therefore for the other two outcomes, the same value was used but only taking the weighting as soon in the table above.

**Table 6 – Examples of Outcome Valuations**

Outcome	Weighting	Identified value	Value of average distance travelled	Quantity of stakeholders experiencing outcome
<b>Better able to cope (mental health)</b>	<b>9</b>	Used HACT well-being valuation, Feeling in Control of life valued at £15,894 for unknown area. Took 50% of this value based on the distance travelled, therefore £6,834 per service user.	Taking the lowest point for our questionnaire scale – asking individuals to rate against measures (not applicable / no change =0%, little change = 25%, some change = 50%, quite a lot of change = 75%, a lot of change = 100%). The average movement was equal to 50%. Although based on a sample size the results were in line with the tone of interview comments – this was cited as a significant change.	From the data in second review, 100% had experienced change here, however, as only a sample of client had responded only 50% was included, so 172 individuals.
<b>Improved self-esteem</b>	<b>8</b>	Used HACT well-being valuation, Feeling in Control of life valued at £15,894 for unknown area. Took 50% of this value based on the distance travelled, therefore £6,834 per service user for the outcome of Better able to cope. This was weighted lower at 8/10 and therefore 80% of this value was used £6,075.	Taking the lowest point for our questionnaire scale – asking individuals to rate against measures (not applicable / no change =0%, little change = 25%, some change = 50%, quite a lot of change = 75%, a lot of change = 100%). The average movement was equals 41%. Although based on a sample size the results were in line with the tone of interview comments – this was cited as a significant change.	From the data in second review, 86% had experienced change here, however, as only a sample of client had responded only 40% was included, so 137 individuals.

## 7.0 Establishing Impact

In order to assess the overall value of the Stepping Stones outcomes we need to establish how much is specifically a result of the project. SROI applies accepted accounting principles to discount the value accordingly, by asking;

- What would have happened anyway (deadweight)?
- What is the contribution of others (attribution)?
- Have the activities displaced value from elsewhere (displacement)?
- If an outcome is projected to last more than 1 year, what is the rate at which value created by a project reduces over future years (drop-off)?

Applying these four measures creates an understanding of the total net value of the outcomes and helps to abide by the principle not to over-claim.

### Deadweight

Deadweight allows us to consider what would happen if the service wasn't available. There is always a possibility that the individuals would have received the same outcomes through another activity or by having support elsewhere.

All stakeholders were asked during the stakeholder engagement process and in the quantitative data collection to consider what could have happened anyway. Many had accessed other support previously but didn't feel that it helped. Many mentioned one service in particular that had made them feel very anxious and felt worse that they did before.

Other organisations are offering similar support and Stepping Stones does work closely with local partners.

In the questionnaire results the average deadweight is 30%. As discussed during the focus group many felt these changes wouldn't have happened without Stepping Stoned. The combination of the therapy, Next Steps group activities and the practical support from staff with practical things such as filling out forms, accessing food banks, signposting and much more all contributed to what percentage of deadweight that was included in the value map.

To have a consistent approach, the different levels of deadweight and attribution will be considered using the rates below;

**Low = 30%**

**Medium = 60%**

**High = 90%**

Through the interviews with individuals and other stakeholders, and the results of the questionnaires, a reasonable estimate is given of 30%.

### **Attribution**

Attribution allows us to recognise the contribution of others towards achieving these outcomes. There is always a possibility that others will contribute towards any changes in people's lives, such as family members or other organisations. Attribution allows us to see how much of the change happens because of the support by this project.

Considering the results of the survey, a low rate of attribution was given by all stakeholders. During discussion, many felt the changes was a result of the counselling and for those that attended, the Next Steps programme was a big support.

Others did have support from other organisations such as Women's Aid or other third sector organisations. However, for what they had gone through with sexual abuse, this service was seen as the main contributor towards any change.

A low rate of 30% was used here to avoid over claiming.

### Displacement

We need to consider if the outcomes displace other outcomes elsewhere. For example, if we deal with criminal activity in one street, have we just moved the problem elsewhere? This programme is an innovative and therefore does not displace anything.

### Duration & Drop-off –

As this programme is evaluated as part of the Social Value Cymru project, the evaluation considered 12 months of value only, and therefore no drop-off rate is needed. Many had started therapy many years ago and many mentioned lifestyle changes such as accessing education, starting new relationships, being able to go on family holidays for the first time in a long time. Many discussed how it took a long time for them to start seeing change but over time they felt they had the tools and support network to help maintain these changes.

## 8.0 SROI Results

This section of the report presents the overall results of the SROI analysis of the Stepping Stones support for child sexual abuse victims in north Wales. Underpinning these results are the seven SROI principles which have carefully been applied to each area of this analysis. The results demonstrate the positive contribution that the Stepping Stones service makes through the dedication of staff, counsellors and volunteers to create a positive change in the lives of those who need inspiration to be empowered to make important decisions in their own lives.

The results in Table 8 indicate a positive return for service users who accessed the counselling course and group activities and experienced positive outcomes. This is based on current data but also secondary research.

**Table 7 - Present Value Created per service user Involved**

Stakeholder	Average value for each individual involved
Service users	£4,119

The overall results in Table 8 highlight the total value created, the total present value, the net present value, and ultimately the SROI ratio.

**Table 8 – SROI Headline Results**

Total value created	£
Total present value	£1,417,041
Investment value	£284,302
Net present value (present value minus investment)	£1,132,739
Social Return on Investment	<b><u>£4.98</u></b>

The result of £4.98 indicates that for each £1 of value invested in the Stepping Stones service, a total of £4.98 of value is created.

## 9.0 Sensitivity Analysis

The results demonstrate highly significant value created by the Stepping Stones service and is based on application of the principles of the SROI framework. Although there are inherent assumptions within this analysis, consistent application of the principle not to over-claim leads to the potential under-valuing of some material outcomes based on issues such as duration of impact.

Conducting sensitivity analysis is designed to assess any assumptions that were included in the analysis. Testing one variable at a time such as quantity, duration, deadweight or drop-off allows for any issues that have a significant impact on the result to be identified. If any issue is deemed to have a material impact, this assumption should be both carefully considered and managed going forward. To test the assumptions within this analysis, a range of issues were altered substantially to appreciate their impact. A summary of the results is presented in table 9.

Although some of the sensitivity tests indicate changes to the result, owing to the scale of the amendments made and the verification of assumptions and data with stakeholders, the results still indicate that if a single variable were significantly altered, the overall results remain highly positive. The sensitivity test uses a relatively large change, and although there is a great deal of confidence in the figure employed, it nevertheless indicates the importance for Stepping Stones to carefully manage this issue in the future.

As seen in section 6, different steps were taken to support the assumptions for the deadweight and attribution percentages. If all of the outcomes were to have one element changed this significantly changes the result as seen in table 9. This is due to using a high value financial proxy however as discussed in the Value section it was considered that this proxy was

appropriate but will need to be managed carefully. From the sensitivity analysis table on the following page, the social value evaluation can be estimated to be between £3.25 and up to £5.64 for every £1 invested. The assumptions used in the value map estimate the social value is £4.98.

**Table 9 – Sensitivity Analysis Summary**

Variable	Current assumption	Revised assumption	Revised SROI	Proportion of change
<b>Outcome – Better able to cope (mental health)</b>	Quantity: 172	Quantity: 90	£4.02	<b>19.2%</b>
	Deadweight: 30%	Deadweight:60%	£4.12	<b>14.2%</b>
	Attribution: 30%	Attribution: 90%	£3.25	<b>34.7%</b>
	Value: £6,834	Value: £3,500	£4.00	<b>19.6%</b>
<b>Outcome – Reduced Isolation and improved relationships</b>	Quantity: 137	Quantity: 70	£4.24	<b>14.8%</b>
	Deadweight: 30%	Deadweight: 90%	£3.68	<b>26.1%</b>
	Value: £6,484	Value: £3,000	£4.17	<b>16.2%</b>
<b>Outcome – Improved self-esteem</b>	Quantity: 137	Quantity: 200	£5.64	<b>13.2%</b>
	Value: £6,075	Value: £2,500	£4.14	<b>16.8%</b>

## 9.0 Conclusion

This report has demonstrated that Stepping Stones has created over £1,417,000 of value and for each £1 invested, £4.98 of value is created;

**What that means in practical terms is that people's lives have been positively changed.**

Stepping Stones supports adults who were victims of sexual abuse in childhood. This traumatic experience had a huge and devastating impact on their lives. Many had not shared their experiences for many years and therefore going through counselling and support was an extremely difficult time for them. The combination of counselling, support from the Stepping Stones staff, Step into Wellbeing and the Next Steps programmes helped many to experience positive changes in their self-esteem, mental health and in their relationships with others. With the Step into Wellbeing programme development also demonstrating Stepping Stones listening and acting upon their stakeholder's input.

Key finding includes;

- For every £1 invested there is £4.98 of social value created
- Many had been involved with the service for a long period of time. As the abuse had been hidden for a long period of time very felt they needed a long time to start recognizing any positive changes in their lives, and therefore the flexibility of the service helped them.
- For those involved in the Next Steps groups, interaction with others who had similar experiences helped them to realise they were not alone, but also helped to increase their confidence to interact.
- All service users who took part in the analysis felt they were now better able to cope.

- The support helped them to realize that what had happened was not their fault and helped them to improve self confidence and self-esteem.
- The findings are aligned with that needed for a 'Healthier Wales' in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, "A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximized and in which choices and behaviors that benefit future health are understood."
- As of result of engaging with stakeholders Stepping Stones have developed a new programme called Step into Wellbeing, an evolution of their First Steps programme. This programme was originally suggested by a service user waiting for counselling. This will enable clients to access a range of services offered by Stepping Stones North Wales including specific information on trauma and abuse and wellbeing packs as well as courses that are tailored to sexual violence and will be the start of their recovery. This does demonstrate Stepping Stones listening to their stakeholders and managing the social impact created.

## 10.0 Recommendations

- 1) **Data collection** – in order to realise how much change and impact the programme is having on all stakeholders we need data to understand if there is any change, but also how much change, and whether there are differences in the needs of different individuals. It is therefore recommended that any continuation of this scheme, needs to **invest the time and finances into ensuring suitable systems and processes are in place to measure social value**, and also to extend this to include other important stakeholders. When such data is collected over a period of time, the potential to use the resultant information to inform decision making is possible. Ultimately, this means that value is not just being measured, but it is being managed to improve the impacts of the project. Stepping Stones are part of the north Wales Social Value Cymru project, and therefore will be moving on to having their own impact management system and putting these changes in place.
- 2) Only a small percentage of service users took part in the Next Steps group. This is of course optional and should continue to be. It would be beneficial to measure the impact for those who are involved in the groups and those who aren't to identify what the impact is. Many of those who took part in this analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, were involved with the group work and therefore including more who accessed counselling only could help managers and trustees to identify the difference.
- 3) As with any project, great care must be taken to ensure individuals do not become dependent on a service or support workers, but ensure that steps are taken to build resilience and ensure they are signposted to other services. It was apparent that many had taken positive steps to integrate into the communities and many had returned to work which suggest many were moving on.

11.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Theory of Change

