

# **Words that Count**

**Evaluation of in-person session delivery 2022-  
2024**

## Executive summary

Words that Count aims to support young people across the UK with financial literacy. Working with local community organisations, primarily sports-providers, the programme consists of in-person financial-literacy sessions for young people identified as most in need of support, working in tandem with a wider-reaching national digital campaign.

This evaluation report looks at the benefits of the in-person sessions for two funding years during the period from October 2022 to July 2024.

In the past two years we have:

- Worked with 15 organisations
- Trained 25 facilitators from local sports and community organisations
- Supported 986 young people aged 14 to 24 with sessions across the UK with particular interest in Birmingham, Nottingham and Manchester

The feedback we received from young people and facilitators was very positive. Highlights included:

- 9 in 10 young people had an increased understanding of how to manage their money after taking part in Words that Count
- Twice as many young people felt confident managing their money following Words that Count
- 4 in 5 facilitators felt more confident to support young people's financial literacy as a result of the programme

“It is instrumental for young people to understand how to manage their money. The Words that Count model provides activities and examples to help prepare them for everyday life and managing their money. This is something a lot of people do not have access to or understand.” **(Deliverer, 2023-2024)**

## Introduction

Since 2020, Experian and the National Literacy Trust have worked together to support young people with financial literacy across the UK. Words that Count began as a digital campaign in 2020 and a programme element was added in 2021. Since then, Words that Count has worked with organisations such as football foundations, community sports providers and non-sporting community support groups to deliver in-person sessions focused on financial literacy to run alongside the digital campaign.

Over the last two years, Words that Count has recruited community organisations to deliver sessions directly to nearly a thousand young people. Aimed at young people aged 15 to 19<sup>1</sup>, the programme provides literacy resources and interactive tools to empower young people with the confidence and ability to improve their financial wellbeing by developing their literacy and financial-capability skills, treating them as mutually reinforcing skill sets.

As part of the programme delivery, 25 facilitators across 15 organisations participated in virtual or in-person training. This training provided an opportunity for facilitators to get hands-on with the resources and strategies used in the programme to maximise the effect that their sessions can have on the young people, as well as understand the wider literacy challenges the UK is facing and how this programme plays a role in addressing them. The training also allowed different organisations to work together and share their existing knowledge and experiences.

The programme consists of six sessions, five of which focus on key financial topics, allowing participants to learn new information. The final session allows young people to put their learning into action. Throughout the delivery, organisations have access to various support such as a glossary of key financial vocabulary and day-to-day support from a National Literacy Trust project manager.

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<sup>1</sup> The campaign, as well as the first year of session delivery, targeted young people aged 16 to 24, while the second year of session delivery targeted young people aged 15 to 19.



## Learning from year one

After the first year of delivery, we reviewed all feedback collected and adapted the programme to better respond to the needs of the young people and facilitators. Some of the key adaptations that we built into the second year of delivery included:

- We provided an expanded training offer to support all deliverers with awareness of the literacy challenges around the UK, as well as how they can deliver the programme to suit their learners and their own delivery styles.
- As deliverers were working with young people from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs, we redeveloped each session to be more flexible and adaptable to accommodate needs of the young people better. Specifically, we ensured the activities could be broken down into smaller chunked tasks that were accessible and inclusive by design. Our training and lesson plan notes also provided guidance to deliverers regarding scaffolding.
- While we had plenty of positive feedback about how engaging the physical activities were, we were conscious that the programme was delivered by both sporting and non-sporting settings. We therefore responded with lesson plan notes and training around how activities could be adapted to be delivered in both a physical and active manner and in a classroom environment.

## Evaluation of the in-person sessions

Insight was collected from young people and facilitators delivering Words that Count once delivery had ended. Facilitators were also asked to provide feedback following the Words that Count training. In total, we collected data in the following ways:

- Facilitator training feedback surveys (n = 31 from 13 settings)
- Post-delivery surveys from facilitators (n = 25 across 11 locations/settings)
- Post-delivery surveys from young people aged 12 to 26<sup>2</sup> (n = 314<sup>3</sup> across 13 settings)

As delivery was largely the same across the two years, this report combines data across both.

## Insight from young people and facilitators

### Impact on young people's money management

**9 in 10 young people rated the programme as 'good' or 'very good' and their feedback shows they found the activities valuable for learning about finance. Many had not been taught about the topics before in this way. The scenarios and activities that involved discussing and writing plans were seen as particularly useful. Crucially, more young people understood and felt confident in managing their money following Words that Count.**

Young people told us that the programme had improved their understanding of financial concepts and managing their money:

- 9 in 10 (90.7%) had an increased understanding of why it is important to save money and of how to manage their money (90.0%)

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<sup>2</sup> Though resources were designed for those aged 16+, some settings chose to deliver the programme with younger people who were identified as likely to benefit from the programme and able to access the content.

<sup>3</sup> n = 104 were female, n = 199 were male, n = 7 did not disclose their gender.

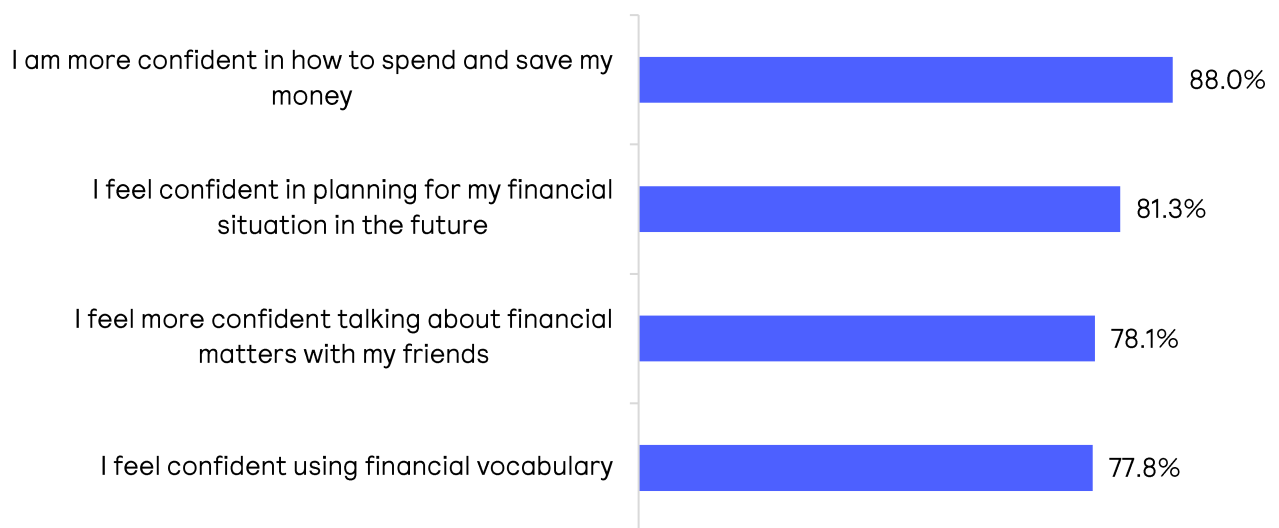
- More than 4 in 5 had an improved understanding in all financial concepts, such as security and saving (87.3%) and debt and credit (86.5%)
- More than 4 in 5 (85.8%) said they were better at managing their money and 80.6% increased their knowledge about where to get financial advice

“It taught me things we don’t necessarily get taught at school and it’s helpful for the future. It helped me identify key terms and what they mean.” (16-year-old, 2022-2023)

Words that Count also improved young people’s confidence to manage their own money. For example, twice as many young people were confident in managing their money following the programme (increasing from 48.8% to 96.0%).

In 2023-2024 we explored young people’s confidence in more detail and saw that more than 3 in 4 felt more confident in all areas of money management (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Percentage of young people who agreed that their confidence in money management had increased after taking part in Words that Count in 2023-2024**



Young people’s comments highlighted how taking part in Words that Count increased their knowledge of money and money management:

“I found the Words that Count sessions to be incredibly valuable. The workshops were well structured and covered essential topics like budgeting, saving, and financial planning in a way that was easy to understand. The practical tips and hands-on activities helped me grasp the concepts better and apply them to my own situation. Overall, the sessions gave me more confidence in managing my finances and provided useful skills that I’ll carry forward.” (17-year-old, 2023-2024)

“[Going forward, I will] forecast and plan my income and my spending.” (17-year-old, 2022–2023)

“Learning about finance will really help my future planning – gained confidence.” (15-year-old, 2023–2024)

Feedback from the facilitators echoed the positive changes for the young people. Across the two years, all but two facilitators (n = 29) felt Words that Count helped the young people they worked with to:

- Understand the importance of financial literacy
- Feel confident in how to save and spend their money sensibly
- Have productive conversations with their peers about money

“These young people are now equipped with information before they are thrown into adult scenarios and with this are now able to make more informed decisions.” (Facilitator, 2022–2023)

### Examples of young people who benefited from Words that Count

There were a number of young people for whom Words that Count was particularly effective. Facilitators told us about these young people and how the programme had supported their confidence, widened their perspective and given them a better understanding of their financial situations.

“A young male in our group has completed the course and is due to start a part time job in a cafe during the summer holidays and he will now be able to check his payslip with confidence knowing what to look for. He has also opened a bank account, with assistance, and is aware that he needs to budget his account sensibly.” (Facilitator, 2023–2024)

“He comes from a single parent household and witnesses his mother go through hardship financially and wants to help out. He is leaving school and is now investing in part-time work along with studying in college. He sees both as an investment and would like to progress into university to pursue a law degree. It was amazing to see him construct a vision board and understand the logistics of what he will encounter and how he could support his mother financially in the meantime. AMAZING!!!!!!” (Facilitator, 2022–2023)

“Yes we had one particular young man who was very engaging and has previously been under strain due to financial issues. He was elected by his head teacher to attend the sessions as he felt he would benefit the most as [he] was a victim of abuse financially. He is now more confident and understands the financial matters more. Being a vulnerable young adult with additional needs he was taken advantage of and this programme has helped him be more aware and full of knowledge.” (Facilitator, 2023–2024)

## Impact on facilitators' confidence and knowledge in supporting financial literacy

**Facilitators had positive experiences overall with the programme and would recommend it to other settings. The programme was clearly beneficial for their own practice as it supported their understanding of financial concepts and their confidence to teach young people financial literacy.**

The feedback from the training was positive and many enjoyed the opportunity to discuss and share their learning with others. We also saw that the training was successful in achieving its aims of equipping coaches to deliver financial literacy support as:

- All but two facilitators (n = 29) felt the training improved their understanding of the importance of financial literacy and helped them understand their role in delivering the project
- All but two also told us they were confident to put what they had learnt in the training into practice

Looking at changes for facilitators after they'd put their learning into practice, 80.0% (n = 20) had increased their confidence to support young people's financial literacy, indicating their potential to continue delivering financial literacy support more effectively to future cohorts.

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## Conclusion



Words that Count was designed to empower young people with the financial-literacy skills they need in life. This report shows that the programme has been successful in supporting young people's understanding and confidence around money management, providing them with the foundation they need in the future. In addition, facilitators gained confidence to support the young people they work with, ensuring the potential for supporting further cohorts after the programme delivery has ended.

Looking ahead, our aim is to work with over 10,000 young people within the next five years. Through both digital and programmatic workshops, we aim to continue providing opportunities for young people – with a focus on those from disadvantaged areas – to receive financial-literacy education. We will continue our in-person delivery through engaging workshops delivered by inspiring community figures such as coaches, further-education teachers and other community-focused deliverers.