



**GREATER
MANCHESTER**
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Atlas Project – Pilot Evaluation

Three-Month Follow-Up

August 2023

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Involved	Consulted
Emma Dean, Research & Evaluation Emma Potts, Prevention Education Lead WM Pete Fitzpatrick, WM Prevention Dr Jennie Potts, Clinical Psychologist for the Atlas Project	

1. Introduction and background

This evaluation was commissioned to understand the effectiveness and impact of the Atlas project pilot. The Atlas project is a collaboration between Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) and Greater Manchester Probation Service (GMPS). It is a tailored intervention for adults who set or use fire to harm themselves, others, or property, threaten to use fire or use of incendiary devices. The Atlas project pilot was delivered between 27th February and 10th March 2023.

Further information about the aims, objectives and deliverables can be found in the Atlas project proposal.¹

2. Methodology

2.1. Evaluation Questions

An evaluation plan² was created for the Atlas project, which included several evaluation questions, outcomes, and indicators. The purpose of the evaluation plan was to set out what will be measured, when it will be measured and how it will be measured. A number of evaluation questions were set, which were closely linked back to the original aims and objectives of the project. This provides an understanding of whether the aims and objectives were met, and the impact and effectiveness of delivering them. The evaluation questions for the Atlas evaluation are as follows:

- To what extent has the Atlas project been targeted effectively towards the intended audience?
- What are participants perceptions of the Atlas project?
- What are the impacts of the Atlas project from the participant's perspective?

¹ The project proposal for the Atlas project can be found of the GMFRS evaluation portal: <https://greatermanchesterca.sharepoint.com/sites/EvaluationPortal>

² The evaluation plan for the Atlas project can be found on the GMFRS evaluation portal: <https://greatermanchesterca.sharepoint.com/sites/EvaluationPortal>

- Impact on participants' understanding of the impact of fire and interest in fire.
- Impact on participants' confidence, resilience, and wellbeing.
- What are the key lessons learned from staff that may influence future delivery of the Atlas project?

2.2. Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation uses mainly qualitative measures to collect evidence to address each of the evaluation questions. Feedback was collected from participants and staff to understand their thoughts about different elements of the intervention. In addition, participants engaged with a psychologist before the intervention to assess their levels of fire interest, levels of fire safety awareness, levels of anxiety and depression and levels of wellbeing. This was completed again at the end of the intervention to understand whether there had been any immediate change.

The psychologist used the following assessments during their semi-structured interviews with participants:

- Adapted Firesetting Assessment Scale (AFAS): This was used to understand levels of fire interest.
- The Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): This was used to understand measures of wellbeing.
- The Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS): This was used to understand levels of anxiety and depression amongst participants.

The psychologist used the same assessments with participants as part of the three-month follow-up evaluation to understand whether there has been any lasting change.

3. Findings

The following section of this report presents evidence in response to each of the evaluation questions. Each evaluation question will be presented in turn.

3.1. To what extent has the Atlas project been targeted effectively towards the intended audience?

A total of seven individuals were referred to GMFRS for participation in the Atlas project pilot. Six of these individuals were selected for the intervention because they met the criteria outlined in the proposal. One individual was not selected. This is because they were not released in time for the intervention start date. This individual has been deferred to the next intake. There were no individuals declined because they did not meet the specified criteria.

Six individuals started the course, and five individuals completed the course. One individual did not complete because of ill health.

The attendance rate during week one of project delivery was 100%. Attendance during week two of project delivery was 96%³

3.2. What are participants perceptions of the Atlas project?

Feedback from participants was collected throughout the project pilot to understand what they thought about the sessions delivered and the delivery of the intervention overall.

At the end of the project pilot, participants were asked to fill in an 'exit survey'. This provided feedback about whether they enjoyed the course, whether their expectations were met, whether the content was appropriate and whether they were treated in an appropriate manner by the facilitators. Participants were unanimous in their feedback, with all participants stating that taking part in the Atlas project met their expectations, with one participant commenting that the course exceeded their expectations. Participants were asked to rate the course using a smiley face scale. All participants rated the course with a smiley face, suggesting that they were satisfied with it.

³ The individual who did not complete because of ill-health dropped out of the course at the end of week one. Their attendance has not been included within the figures for week two.

Participants were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- The course was well organised.
- I understood the information that was presented during the course.
- The information was pitched at the right level (e.g., not too simple / not too complex).
- The activities were useful for my learning and development.
- I felt included during the course.
- I was given the opportunity to ask questions.
- I felt like I was being listened to.
- I was treated with respect by the staff members running the course.
- I didn't feel like I was being judged.

All participants agreed with the statements above.

Participants were asked what they liked most about the course. Some participants reflected on specific elements of the course that they enjoyed. This included:

- Session about the boxing gym.
- The Giving Back community project.
- The practical sessions.

Other participants reflected on the support received from GMFRS staff throughout the course. Participants commented that Atlas staff and operational crews were respectful to participants and provided them with support. One participant commented that participation in the programme and support from Atlas staff meant that their license conditions with GMPS had been reduced. Finally, some participants commented that there was value in participating in the course because it provided

them with an opportunity to meet new people (especially people who had similar experiences) and get to try new things.

Participants were also asked what they liked least about the course. Two participants commented that they enjoyed the course and there was nothing that they disliked. However, one participant commented that the timing of the course was challenging because they had to go to work after attending the course; therefore, they had long days, which make it difficult to get to the course on time in the mornings. Another participant commented that there was a lot of paperwork, for example consent forms, DPIA, privacy notice etc., which is something they disliked. Finally, one participant commented that they disliked the fire observation session but recognised that it was needed to show the impact that fire can have on individuals, crews, and the community.

Participants were asked whether there was anything that could be done differently the next time this course is delivered. Three participants commented that they didn't think anything should be done differently. One participant commented that more practical sessions should be considered as this was the most enjoyable part of the course. Another suggestion was to include some content about the danger of wheelie bin fires. A final suggestion was to streamline or consolidate the paperwork so there is less to complete.

Finally, participants were asked what they will do differently now they have attended the course. One participant commented that they now have an appreciation of the impact of fire setting on blue-light services and will be more respectful towards firefighters and fire crews. Another participant commented that they have more awareness of the fire service and a better understanding of the dangers of fire. This participant also commented that participating in the course has made them feel more positive and confident as a person. One participant commented that they will now stop and think about the potential consequences and impact of their actions. Another participant commented that they feel like they have more focus and will keep busy to maintain this focus. Finally, one participant commented that they will never set a fire again. This will be followed up during the three-month evaluation to understand whether participants have continued to do anything differently following participation in the course.

3.3. Impacts of the Atlas project from the participant's perspective

Participants engaged with a psychologist before the intervention started to assess their levels of fire interest, levels of fire safety awareness, levels of anxiety and depression and levels of wellbeing and self-esteem. This was completed again at the end of the intervention and as part of the three-month follow-up to understand whether there had been any immediate change and lasting impact.

In addition to this, feedback from participants was collected throughout the delivery of the programme to understand how they were feeling, what they thought about different elements of the programme and their key achievements each day.

To what extent has participation in the Atlas project had an impact on participants' understanding of the impact of fire and interest in fire?

The Adapted Firesetting Assessment Scale (AFAS) was used to assess participants level of interest in fire setting. The scale was developed to be accessible for people with learning difficulties. There is currently limited data to establish norms, but higher scores on the scale represent greater levels of fire interest.

Findings from the AFAS showed that four participants did not have an interest in fire before joining the Atlas project. Their offenses were linked to either an impulsive anger response, drugs and alcohol or mental ill-health rather than related to a specific interest in fire. The assessment completed as part of the three-month follow-up indicated that these participants continued to have no interest in firesetting. These four participants did not have any learning difficulties.

However, one participant did show an interest in fire before joining the Atlas project. At the end of the pilot, this participant showed less interest in fire, and a greater understanding of the potential risks and consequences. During the three-month follow-up, this participant continued to show less interest in fire and a greater understanding of the consequences of firesetting. However, their score remained higher than other participants during this period. Feedback from the course psychologist indicated that this individual had a learning difficulty.

During the AFAS assessment, three participants agreed with the statement “I can stop a fire from getting too big” at pre, post and three-month assessments. This suggests that there may be a continued poor understanding of how quickly fire can spread or an increased knowledge of how to put fire out post intervention.

As part of the feedback at the end of each session, participants were asked to reflect on their achievements for the day. Following the fire observation session, most participants commented that their achievement of the day was learning about fire and its impact. Throughout the programme, participants reflected on working with firefighters as being a key achievement, suggesting that engagement with GMFRS had a positive impact on participants’ understanding of the impact and consequences of fire.

Case Study – Fire Observation Session

One of the main objectives of the Atlas Project was to embed fire safety education and awareness throughout the course. Previous evidence-based research identified that most individuals were not aware of the aftermath or the consequences of their firesetting behaviour. Findings also suggested that most firesetting incidents lacked “social imagination”, which refers to the ability to imagine what another person or persons may be feeling, thinking, or experiencing. The fire behaviour observation was an element of the course that was rigorously researched, due to a common belief that ‘arsonists’ should not be shown how to start a fire. To ensure the session did not trigger any previously experienced trauma, further collaborative work was completed. Dr Emma Barrowcliffe from Canterbury Christ Church University, and clinical psychologist Dr Jennie Potts, indicated that under controlled conditions and correct supporting mechanisms in place, the fire observation would offer a practical way to learn about the unpredictable nature of fire.

The group engaged with the BA training staff who detailed the fire development stages. This allowed the group to learn and experience the fire in real time, from the combustion process to potential flashover, including the growth stage, high heat build-up, pyrolysis, and rollover.

To what extent has participation in the Atlas project had an impact on participants' confidence, resilience, and wellbeing?

The Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was used to assess levels of wellbeing amongst participants. Higher scores indicate more positive wellbeing. Feedback from the course psychologist indicates that the average wellbeing scores across the UK population is 23.5. In addition, 15% of the population scores greater than 27.4; therefore, a score of 27.5 or above is considered a 'high wellbeing' score. This is indicated by the green line in Figure 1. Fifteen percent of the population score less than 19.6; therefore, a score of 19.5 or lower is considered a 'low wellbeing' score. This is indicated by the red line in Figure 1.

Findings from the WEMWBS assessment shows that four participants reported higher wellbeing scores following completion of the Atlas project, suggesting an improvement in their wellbeing. Two of these participants reported scores within the high wellbeing range.

During the three-month follow-up, three participants reported lower wellbeing scores when compared with the assessment completed immediately after completing the Atlas project. However, two of these participants still reported wellbeing scores that were within the high wellbeing range.

The wellbeing score for one individual was in the low range pre-Atlas. It improved slightly immediately after the project but fell to the pre intervention level at 3-month follow-up. This participant was dealing with a number of personal issues during the course. However, the course psychologist reported that this individual felt that the Atlas project had been a 'huge support' and made them 'more hopeful' about the future.

One participant reported the same score before and after completing the intervention. During the three-month follow-up, this participant reported lower wellbeing scores; however, they were slightly above the UK average.

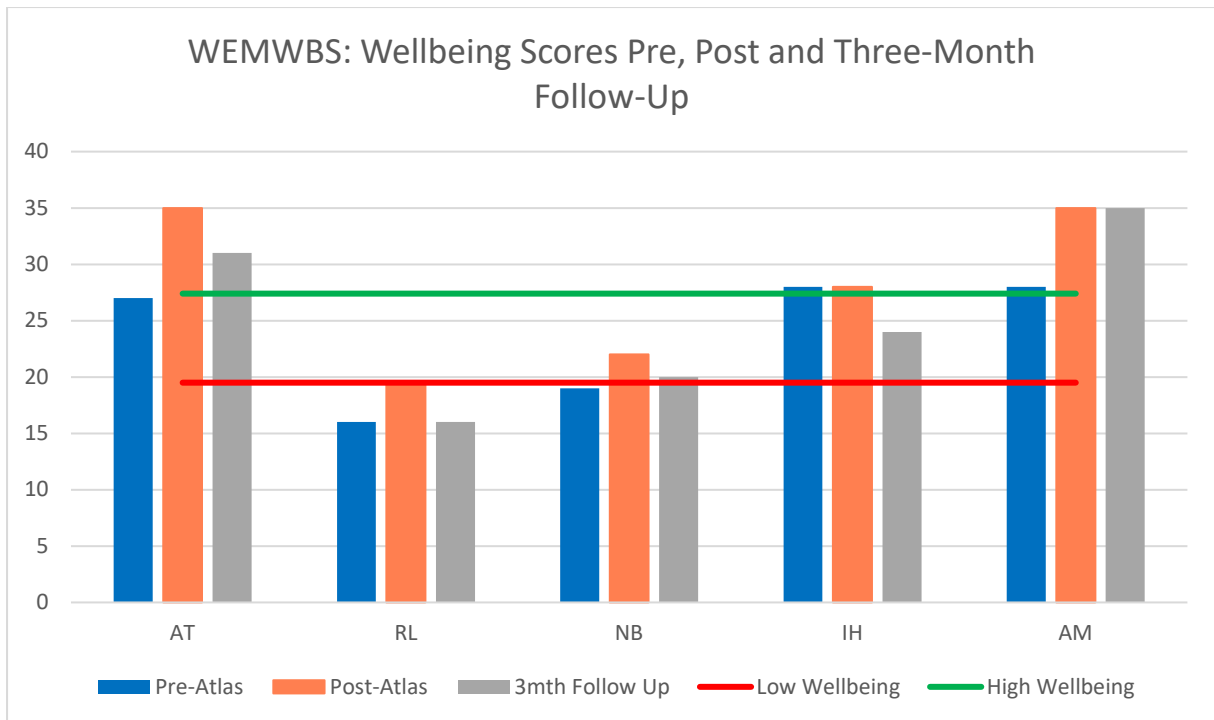


Figure 1 - WEMWBS scores pre, post and at three-month follow-up

At the end of each session, participants were asked to rate how they were feeling that day. As part of the evaluation, these emotions were classified into 'positive' emotions (for example, feeling happy or excited), neutral emotions (for example, just feeling ok) and 'negative' emotions (for example, feeling nervous). Table 1 shows a table tracking the emotions of Atlas participants throughout the programme. Cells highlighted in green indicate positive emotions, cells highlighted in yellow indicate neutral emotions and cells highlighted in blue indicate negative emotions.

Table 1 - Emotions tracker for the Atlas programme participants

Learner ID	27.02.23	28.02.23	01.03.23	02.03.23	03.03.23	06.03.23	07.03.23	08.03.23	09.03.23	10.03.23
TAP1	Green	Yellow	Green	Blue	Green	Blue	Green	Green	Green	Green
TAP2	Blue	Blue	Green	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Green	Green
TAP3	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
TAP4	Blue	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Green
TAP5	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
TAP6 ⁴	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black

Overall, participants were more likely to report positive emotions rather than negative emotions. In addition, participants were less likely to report neutral or negative emotions towards the end of the programme when compared with the start. All participants who completed the programme said indicated they felt positive at the end of the programme because they felt a sense of accomplishment from completing the programme and receiving their certificate.

⁴ This participant did not complete week two of the course due to ill-health.

The Atlas Project Learner Case Study

A 31-year-old male was referred to The Atlas Project by Greater Manchester Probation Service. He had been convicted of arson with intent to endanger life and received a two-and-a-half-year custodial sentence. His offence had been an attempt to harm himself and no one else. Prior to his offence, he was diagnosed with PTSD and anxiety. Within 24 hours of entering prison, he attempted suicide for a second time. On release, he completed 84 days temporary accommodation, then found himself to be homeless, with no access to his children and could not access his GP for his medication.

On attending the Atlas Project, he engaged immediately with all aspects of the course, sharing details of the offence and time in prison with both Atlas staff and learners. He played an active role in each session, particularly enjoying his involvement with operational firefighters. Post course, he shared how attending the Atlas Project enabled him to regain his self-worth, confidence and motivation to continue with his positive rehabilitation. Following his 100% attendance of the project, with support from GMFRS Atlas Team and GMPS who were able to show a reduction in risk level, he secured long-term accommodation through GMCA's A Bed Every Night (ABEN) Scheme and access to his children. He has since returned to GM Probation to present his experience of the Atlas Project to a group of Probation Officers, giving the following feedback:

"I have recently been involved in The Atlas Programme run by Greater Manchester Fire Service. I found it was very helpful for me because I was sleeping in my car, and it was stopping me from moving forward with my life due to having an arson offence on my record. This was a big barrier for getting accommodation, but the support from staff on the programme and Probation, I am now in my own flat. The things we did on the programme was stuff like boxing, doing some woodwork in the local Fire Service Garden. We were shown how the Fire Service train for large scale fires. The part I really enjoyed was getting involved with the Fire Service using some of the equipment to dismantle a car to rescue someone out of the car if they ever crash. If anyone else has got an arson offence on their record, it would be really helpful for them to move forward with their lives if they did this programme because it could help you get accommodation."

The Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) was used to assess levels of depression and anxiety amongst participants. The 14-item scale consists of two subscales: anxiety and depression with each being rated on a four-point scale. The maximum score on this scale is twenty-one, where a higher score indicates higher

levels of anxiety or depression. Scores of zero to seven represent a healthy range. Scores between eight and ten represent borderline anxiety or depression. This is illustrated by the green line in Figure 2 and Figure 3. Scores of eleven or above indicate a clinical level of anxiety or depression. This is illustrated by the red line in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Findings from the anxiety assessment, as illustrated in Figure 2, shows that three participants' anxiety scores were within the healthy range during pre, post and follow-up assessment. This indicates the participating in the Atlas project did not trigger any anxiety for these individuals.

One participant reported feeling more anxious post intervention. The course psychologist reported that this is because the individual became more aware of the impact of their offence. However, while their anxiety score increased, it did not meet the criteria for borderline or clinical anxiety.

One participant's anxiety score improved post intervention, taking them from the clinically anxious range into the healthy range. This gain was maintained at the three-month follow-up. This participant reported feeling more confident as a result of attending the Atlas Project.

Finally, one participant remained clinically anxious throughout the course and at the three-month follow-up. This participant was dealing with a number of personal issues throughout the course, which may have impacted on their assessment score.

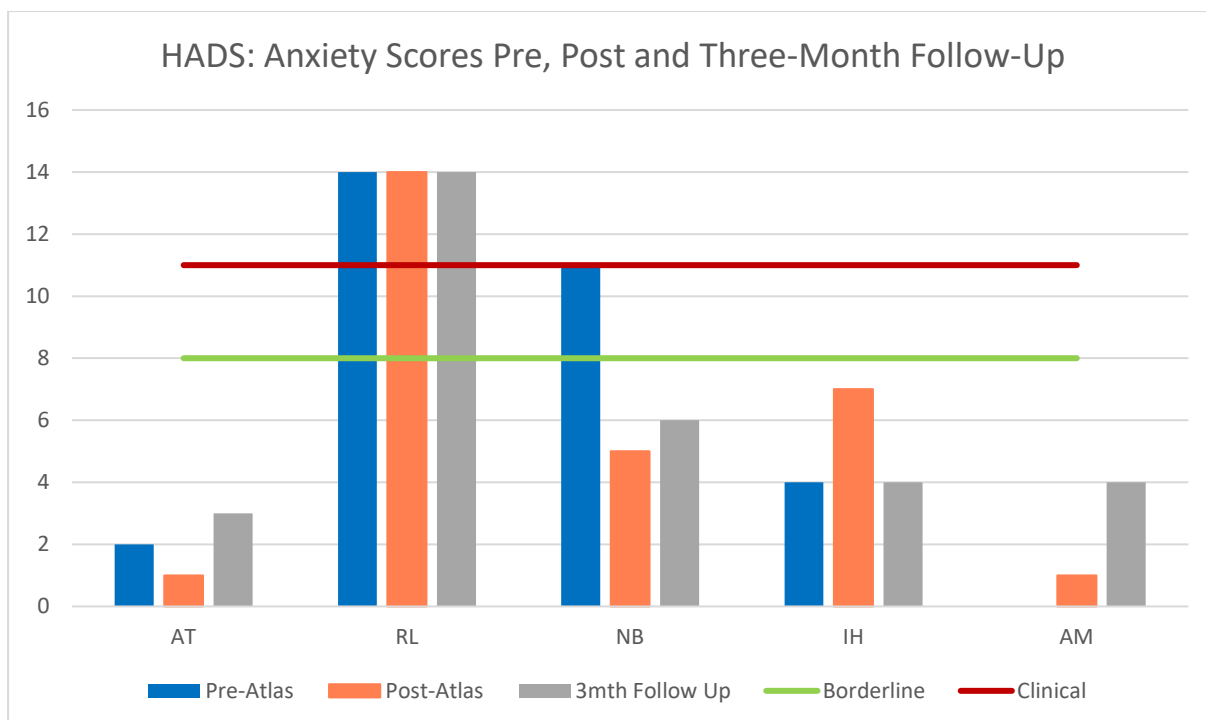


Figure 2 - Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale scores for anxiety pre, post and at three-month follow-up

Findings from the “Hospital Anxiety and Depression” scale for depression, illustrated in Figure 3, shows that three out of the five participants who completed the programme showed no significant change in depression scores following the intervention or at the three-month follow-up. These three participants’ scores remained in the healthy range. This suggests that participating in the programme had no adverse effect.

One participant’s depression score improved post intervention, from borderline depressed to within the healthy range. This individual was clinically anxious and had experienced a trauma response during the fire behaviour task. At the three-month follow-up, this individual’s depression score remained in the healthy range. They stated that, participating in the Atlas Project made them feel respected, listened to and more hopeful about the future.

One participant’s depression score improved slightly at the three-month follow-up, taking them from the borderline range to the healthy range.

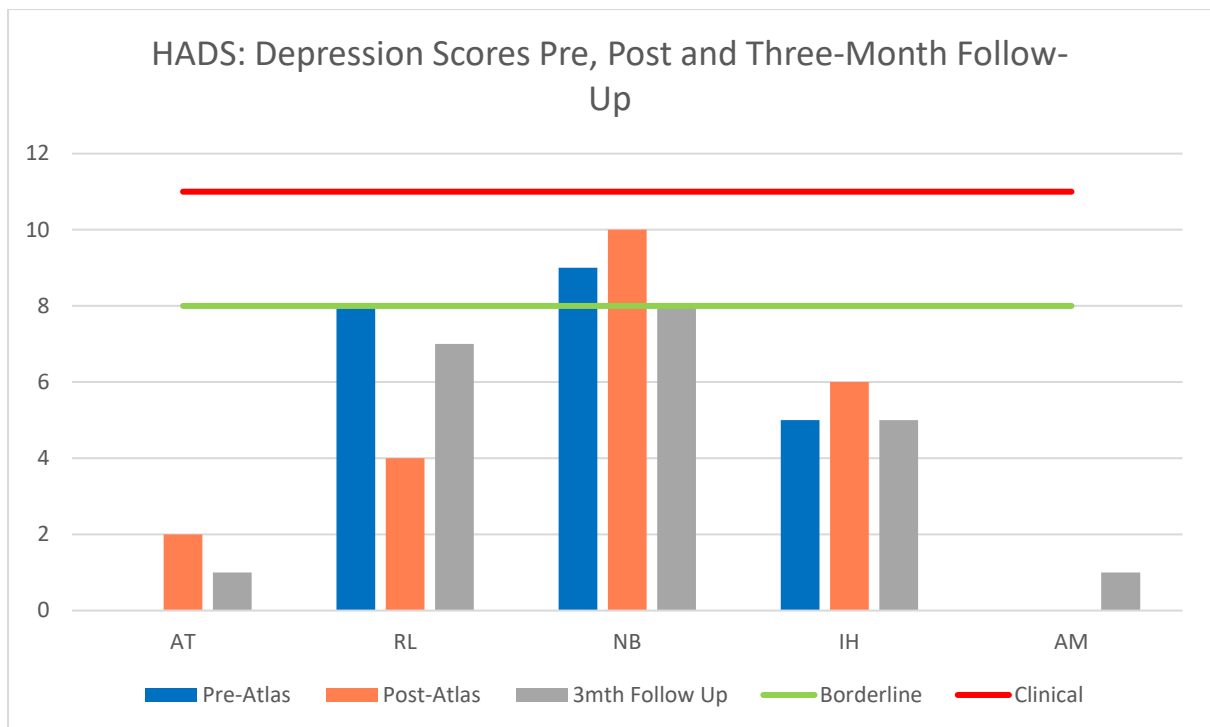


Figure 3 - Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale scores for depression pre, post and at three-month follow-up

As part of the feedback at the end of each session, participants were asked to reflect on their achievements for the day. Throughout the programme, participants commented on achievements related to meeting new people, such as other participants, Atlas staff and crews and talking to others. In addition, some participants commented on meeting the wellbeing dog and engaging in the associated session as having a positive impact on building confidence and resilience.

Reflections from course psychologist Dr Jennie Potts

The pre-Atlas project screening showed a combination of risk factors for fire setting (e.g. poor mental health, learning disability, limited understanding of the consequences of fire setting, impulsive behaviour). The format of the Atlas programme allowed us to address these through incorporate things such as goal setting, building resilience and recognising consequences into course delivery.

Post project screening indicated changes in all clients, including improvements in wellbeing and mood, reduced interest in fire setting and greater understanding of the risks and consequences. At the three-month follow-up, there was no evidence of reoffending or the urge desire to set fires.

The Atlas pilot programme demonstrated that a two-week, intensive, experiential course for people convicted of fire setting offences can produce positive change in the short term, and at three-month follow-up and has the potential to reduce reoffending.

3.4. What are the key lessons learned from staff that may influence future delivery of the Atlas project?

Staff members participating in the Atlas project reflected on aspects of the project that felt worked well. The following feedback was received:

- **Good levels of engagement:** There was good levels of engagement from all involved. The programme participants engaged with sessions throughout the course and there was positive engagement from crews. It was felt that crew involvement and participation was vital for achieving successful course outcomes. In particular, the BA sessions and sessions working with crews were enjoyed by participants. There was also feedback from crews to suggest that they also thought they sessions they delivered were valuable and expressed an interest in being involved in future sessions.

- **Building relationship and trust:** Participants developed trusted relationships with Atlas staff and operational crews. This is something that both Atlas staff and course participants reflected upon in their respective feedback forms. Participants commented that they were treated with respect and listened to throughout the course.
- **Peer support:** Atlas staff commented that participants developed good relationships with each other and provided peer support and encouragement. Again, this is something that participants reflected on within their feedback and said it was positive to engage with people who had similar experiences.
- **Open and honest feedback:** Atlas staff commented that they received open and honest feedback from participants, which may be an indicator of developing positive, respectful, and trusted relationships with participants.
- **The delivery of some sessions was impactful:** Atlas staff commented that the delivery of some sessions had a positive impact for participants. In particular, there was feedback to suggest that more input from Blue Paw and continued engagement with crews would be valuable during future programme delivery.
- **Closing event:** Atlas staff commented that the closing event was a real success of the course as it allowed participants to see the value in attending the programme and allow them to appreciate their achievements.

Staff participating in the Atlas project also reflected on things that did not go well during the delivery of the course. The following feedback was received:

- **Some course content was traumatic:** Atlas staff commented that the restorative justice session was quite traumatic for some participants; however, there was good support in place to ensure this was managed in an effective way.
- **Support from leaders during closing event:** Atlas staff commented that there would be value in having more support and attendance from senior leaders across partner organisations at the closing ceremony; however, it was

recognised that this is something that the Chief Fire Officer is working on and will hopefully be in place for future programmes.

- **Some problems with logistics and equipment:** Atlas staff commented that there were some issues with logistics and equipment during the programme. In particular, staff commented that there were issues with ICT, issues related to not having enough drivers for travel, problems with the room acoustics for the closing event and lack of access to changing facilities following practical sessions.
- **Need to have a 'Plan-B':** Atlas staff commented that it was positive to have the involvement of crews during the programme; however, there is a need to have a 'Plan-B' to ensure activities can continue in case the crew is mobilised to an incident.
- **Community project could be perceived negatively:** Atlas staff commented that they had some feedback from participants who said that the community project was perceived as community service / payback; therefore, it is important to be mindful that the project could be viewed in a negative way.
- **Need to be considerate of needs and abilities:** Atlas staff commented that in some cases there were barriers in participation due to the physical nature of some activities (e.g., the community project and working with crews); therefore, it was identified that there should be consideration to abilities and needs to ensure that everyone is able to participate with the activity in some way.
- **Session timings and course timetable:** Atlas staff commented that there was not enough time allocated to some sessions to facilitate fully. In addition, some days had a lot of classroom-based content and there may be some benefit to adjust the timetable so there is a balance of classroom and practical activities each day.

Atlas staff were asked to comment on aspects of the course they would consider changing for next time. The following feedback was received:

- **Create detailed timetable for the course:** As discussed previously, Atlas staff commented that it would be beneficial to review the timings for each session to ensure there is enough time to facilitate it fully. They also commented that the content for each day should be reviewed to ensure there is a better balance between classroom and practical activities. This should result in a timetable with a clearer structure of activities, timings, etc.
- **Ensure session leads have confirmed their attendance:** Atlas staff commented that some sessions were cancelled at short notice; therefore, it is important to ensure that session leads have confirmed their attendance (or the attendance of a deputy).
- **Consider whether a different mindfulness session could be offered:** There was feedback from staff and participants to suggest that the mindfulness session was not as impactful as anticipated; therefore, different options could be explored to see if something more relevant could be offered as part of future courses.

The course psychologist also provided some feedback factors that could be considered for future course delivery. Feedback received is as follows:

- **Consider whether it is viable to offer separate courses: one for those with learning difficulties and one for those without:** Individuals with a diagnosed learning difficulty have different needs and responses. This was demonstrated within the AFAS scores for this programme – one participant had a learning difficulty, and their score was consistently higher than other participants. People with learning difficulties may benefit from extra support, different learning style and memory aids to help them retain information. They may also need more help to manage their emotional response and refresher sessions to maintain the gains made.
- **Consider extending the semi-structured interview to explore assessment scores in more detail:** The semi-structured interview would be a good opportunity to explore responses from the AFAS assessment. For example, four participants agreed to the statement ‘I can stop a fire from getting too big’ at pre, post and three-month follow-up, indicating either

continued poor understanding of how quickly fire can spread or an increased knowledge of how to put fire out post intervention. Further discussion in the interview would offer clarification. Further to this, the AFAS items may provide key elements to focus on and reinforce during sessions, for example, discussion about the speed at which the fire grew during fire behaviour exercise could help people to rethink their ideas about the danger of fire.

- **Consider whether additional support is available for participants with mental ill health:** Some participants had offences linked to mental ill health rather than primary fire interest. Some of these participants were experiencing mental ill health at the start of the course. Attending Atlas had the potential to exacerbate their ill health. This is not because of the content of the programme, but because of participants' experiences prior to attending Atlas. For example, the fire behaviour task triggered feelings of panic for some participants. While supporting mental ill health fits with the Atlas project's values, the primary priority for the programme is to reduce fire setting behaviour. The Atlas project was not designed to be a mental health intervention; therefore, it would be worthwhile to generate a network of organisation who may be able to provide further support to participants post intervention.
- **Ensure the right data is being collected to evidence impact:** A number of assessment tools are utilised to evidence the effects and impact of the Atlas project. There may be value in reviewing the measures used to ensure they are generating the data required to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the intervention fully.

Reflections from Andrew Scott – Senior Operations Support Manager, GMPS

Working with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service has allowed us to plug a gap for a difficult to reach cohort of People on Probation (PoP's). The aims of the programme are to protect the public, prevent victims, reduce reoffending, and respond efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of our communities, therefore reducing risk.

Since the completion of the programme, some of the learners have gained employment, gained accommodation, had contact with their children and all of them have felt empowered to move on with their lives, ridding the 'arsonist' label. Two of the learners have given briefings to Probation staff and one has made a video of the impact the programme has had on his life. Looking forward, we are very excited to receive the evaluation of the programme and to then roll out the programme across Greater Manchester in the summer.

4. Summary

This evaluation report highlights the effectiveness and impact of the Atlas project pilot, delivered between 27th February and 10th March 2023. The findings from this evaluation identified that there was a significant, positive impact for the participants involved. Further evaluation will be completed three months post intervention to understand longer term impacts.

Based on the evidence presented during this evaluation, some recommendations have been identified. These are as follows:

Recommendation one - Continue delivering the Atlas programme: Feedback following the programme was positive from both staff and participants. Initial evidence indicates that the programme had a positive impact from the participants perspective.

Recommendation two - Continue evaluating the programme: It is recommended that future programmes are evaluated in the same way (i.e., evaluation evidence collected immediately after completion, then again after three months) so a robust evidence base about impact and effectiveness of this programme can be developed and published.

Recommendation three – Continue to engage with crews to support the delivery of the programme: Feedback from both participants and staff suggested that the support of crews was vital for ensuring that the programme was delivered successfully. It is recommended this continues so participants can benefit from the input of operational crews.

Recommendation four – Create a timetable with amended session timings: Based on feedback received from staff, it is recommended that the course timetable is reviewed to ensure that each session is allocated the right amount of time. It is also recommended that the timetable review considers the appropriate balance of classroom and practical sessions throughout the programme. Finally, this review should also consider 'Plan B' activities as a back up should crews be mobilised to an incident, last minute session cancellations, etc.

Recommendation five - Ensure that sessions are accessible to all participants: There was some feedback to suggest that there were barriers to participation to some activities, particularly those of a more physical nature. It is recommended that individual needs and abilities are considered, and activities adapted where appropriate.