

Take Charge – early findings

In 2018 we invited a group of people to take part in a study to help us set up Take Charge.

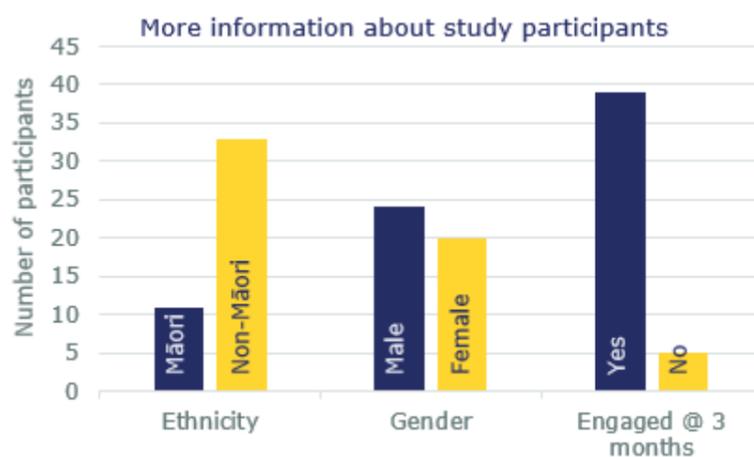
What was the 2018 Take Charge study about?

Getting into work is a goal for many young people who are coping with mental health or drug and alcohol addictions. Finding a job can be hard and support to find work can help.

We wanted to try out a new work support service, and we wanted to start out small at first to make sure we got it right. The Take Charge study helped us do this.

44 young people agreed to participate

All the participants were 18-19 year olds receiving a Jobseeker Support benefit with a medical deferral.



Most young people who participated got jobs, and some enrolled in education and training

Two in every three participants started a job at least once within a six-month follow-up.

Half the jobs were full-time and half were part-time.

We can't say whether job starts were better than they would have been if Take Charge wasn't available, but we hope to answer this question as we move forward.

Some participants decided they wanted to pursue tertiary study and were helped towards this goal.

What is happening now?

A bigger study got underway in 2019 with changes that respond to these study findings, and build on the successes and what we learned. It is open to more people.

Where you can find out more

[Read the full report available online.](#)

Some thank you's

Special thanks to the people who have agreed to participate in the Take Charge studies and to allow anonymous information about their experiences to help us develop the service.

We are also grateful to members of the Community Youth Mental Health Service, Take Charge, and MSD teams who helped develop and deliver the service, and to the many people who helped with the study.

The study team

People really appreciated the support that Take Charge provided

26 of the 44 young people who participated in Take Charge agreed to be interviewed about how they found it.

Everyone interviewed supported having the group workshops as part of the service:

- many said that they initially felt anxious about being in a group setting
- but they often said they found the experience better than they expected
- many said they gained confidence and new knowledge about mental health.

Everyone valued the care provided by the Take Charge Co-ordinator:

- they spoke of the Take Charge Co-ordinator with gratitude and enthusiasm
- for some, the support and care provided was transformative

“When they had felt themselves blocked and unable to find a way forward, the supportive environment of Take Charge helped people see a way towards managing their mental health and embarking on employment search.”

Māori participants were positive when they were asked about cultural inclusivity and respect.

Evaluators thought better connections with whānau and family could be developed.

Some of the young people liked the work support provided by the Employment Consultant. Others found it too hard for their current levels of mental health.

This suggested employment support could be better matched to individual needs. Changes are being made in response to this finding.

Expert reviewers made some useful recommendations

These included:

- improving the integration of employment support with mental health care
- increasing the size of the Take Charge team
- increasing the use of training and expertise

The reviewers were positive about the 'whatever it takes' attitude and commitment of the Take Charge team, and the collaborative approach with Work and Income.