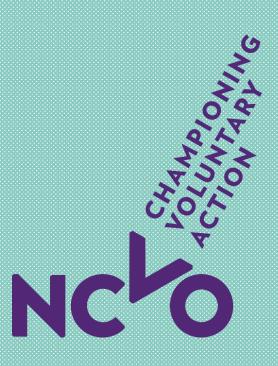
GROWING RESILIENCE IN TEENS (GRIT)

IMPACT REPORT 2022-23

NCVO Consultancy

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1. Foreword

Addressing the rise in mental health issues among teenagers requires a collective effort. It involves wider society taking responsibility, raising awareness, implementing effective policies, providing accessible mental health services, promoting healthy environments, and creating a culture of support and understanding. For the most powerful and sustainable changes to occur, we must equip our teenagers with the tools and self-awareness to take responsibility for themselves.

Addressing teenage mental health issues in this way is essential not only for the wellbeing of individuals but also for the overall economic health of the UK. By investing in early intervention programmes and support, we can reduce healthcare costs for the NHS, enhance social cohesion in local communities and ensure that teenagers are equipped with the necessary tools to thrive.

This report shows how the work of Growing Resilience in Teens (GRIT) is supporting young people to take full responsibility for their lives and the lives they want to lead. Through our innovative 'Four Corners' method, we are making a lasting impact on the mental health and wellbeing of teenagers, supporting them to navigate the challenges of adolescence, build a strong foundation for adulthood and lead fulfilling lives that are true to their authentic selves.

- Dr Louise Randall, Founder, Growing Resilience in Teens (GRIT)

2. Why we exist

Today more than ever before, we are experiencing a dramatic increase in young people reporting concerns with their mental health. High expectations and pressures on teenagers, particularly in areas such as academic performance, appearance, and social status, can lead to increases in stress, anxiety, depression, and self-harming behaviours.

- Research conducted in July 2020 showed that one in six (17%) children aged 5 to 16 years in the UK were identified as having a probable mental disorder. To put this into context, that is five children in a class of 30 children. This has increased significantly since 2017, when one in nine (12%) children were identified as having a probable mental disorder¹.
- More recent research from 2022 showed that nearly one in five (18%) children aged 7 to 16 years and over a fifth (22%) of young people aged 17 to 24 years had a probable mental disorder².
- In 2018, significant proportions of secondary aged boys (28%) and girls (42%) in Hertfordshire said that they worried about their own mental health³.
- In 2019, Hertfordshire County Council found that one in seven (14%) of 11–16-year-olds had a mental disorder (equating to roughly 12,065 children and young people in the county)⁴.

Our healthcare and education systems are struggling to meet growing demand for teenage mental health services with long waiting times⁵, insufficient resources, and a lack of accessible and affordable services.⁶ According to the Mental Health Foundation, 75% of children and young people who experience mental health problems are not getting the help they need⁷. Equally, despite growing awareness, some technology companies have been slow to address the potential effects of social media on self-esteem, body image, cyber bullying, and 'comparison culture'.

From this situation emerged Growing Resilience in Teens (GRIT). We believe that every young person should have equal access to support that helps them develop resilience in a way that celebrates their diversity, rather than focusing on labels or defining them solely by a diagnosis or condition.

 $^{^1\} https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-inengland/2020-wave-1-follow-up$

 $^{^2\} https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-inengland/2022-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey$

³ Ibid.

 $^{^4\,}https://www.hertshealthevidence.org/documents/thematic/mentalhealthyoung people-herts-briefing-2019-01.pdf$

⁵ https://mentalhealthwatch.rcpsych.ac.uk/local-area-reports/detail/hertfordshire-and-west-essex

⁶ https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/mental-health-crisis-care-services-under-resourced-understaffed-and-overstretched/

⁷ https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/children-and-young-people

3. Our vision and mission

Our **vision** is a society where young people thrive, overcome challenges and lead fulfilling lives supported by a strong sense of self-identity and resilience.

Our **mission** is to empower young people to take full responsibility for their lives and the life they wish to lead. To open them up to previously unseen possibilities and the potential that is available to them so they can envision and action a future they didn't realise existed.

Our values underpin how we work and seek to achieve our goals:

- **Equality** we ensure that young people, regardless of their background or circumstances, have an equal opportunity to take responsibility for their life. We promote a sense of belonging and acceptance for a young person and work to break down the barriers that can hinder a teenager's access to mental health support.
- Integrity we strive to openly share our successes, challenges and the impact we are making to ensure we are consistently building trust and cultivating a culture of growth and learning, both for the organisation and young people.
- Commitment we continually strive to provide consistent and long-term support to young people, where resources and efforts are directed towards creating a lasting impact on teenage mental health.
- **Wellbeing** we offer a unique, integrated approach to wellbeing which considers the whole person (eg mental, physical, emotional, etc) through the combination of coaching and physical activity and is underpinned by the most recent research.
- Freedom we create a space which recognises the importance of providing opportunities for young people to express themselves freely, embracing their individuality, and empower them to be their authentic selves.
- Safety we understand that children have a right to be safe and protected and we prioritise rigorous safeguarding practices as a core part of our commitment to the welfare and wellbeing of the young people we support.

4. What we do

Growing Resilience in Teens (GRIT) supports teenagers to improve their mental health through group boxing programmes, workshops and one-to-one coaching. Young people come to us from a variety of routes, including health care professionals, education settings and self- referrals – the majority of referrals come to us directly from schools. At the core of our work is the 'Four Corners' method, which empowers young people to use adversity as a platform for growth.

The 'Four Corners' method uses the four corners of a boxing ring to consider all aspects of a person, including their physical, mental, emotional, and energetic selves. The method encourages a young person to take responsibility for themselves and how they wish to lead their life. The corners can vary depending on the context and needs of the young person, but most often include:

- 1. **Doctors' Corner:** representing the 'physical self', this corner supports a young person to understand how their body reacts and responds to their environment and how they can master their emotions.
- 2. **Referees' Corner:** representing the rules and values by which a young person lives their life, this corner helps them to understand how it feels to be emotionally and physically safe and use this awareness to make the right choices for their life.
- 3. **Opposition Corner:** representing the challenges and adversity a young person faces, this corner encourages them to learn from these experiences and choose to take the opportunity to empower themselves.
- 4. **Home Corner:** representing a young person's relationship with self and others, this corner explores how they can foster healthy relationships with others which will serve them well throughout their life.

'The Rumble' is our early intervention group coaching programme. It runs throughout the academic year and uses principles of group therapy combined with boxing to support young people in managing their emotions. Each programme consists of up to 12 young people aged 13-18 years and is facilitated by two qualified coaches and a qualified boxing coach. Twelve 90-minute sessions are divided into two parts. The first half consists of non-contact boxing-based fitness and the second half consists of coaching using the Four Corners method. Through boxing and related metaphors, we support young people in realising their power and potential both in and outside of the ring. We also run a continuation group for those who wish to access ongoing support.

One-to-one coaching sessions provide a safe space for young people aged 11-24 years to speak openly and honestly about matters that are important to them. The coaching sessions take place in school and help young people with setting goals, problem solving, emotional regulation and personal development.

We also offer **bespoke workshops** tailored to the needs of schools and teachers, parents, young people and businesses.

5. What makes us different

- Robust approach grounded in current understanding: GRIT is led by fully qualified and experienced GPs and our ways of working are informed by the latest research.
- Our unique 'Four Corners' methodology: The Four Corners method was meticulously developed by Dr Louise Randall and is an innovative and scientifically rigorous method with a strong foundation in medical and coaching principles providing accurate and comprehensive insights into the complex challenges of mental health in young people. This methodology sits at the core of all of our activities and informs how we work with and support young people.
- Whole-person approach: Our Four Corners method underscores a whole-person approach, going beyond a narrow focus and embracing a holistic, comprehensive perspective. Our services are designed to consider the intricate interplay of a young person's mental, emotional, physical and energetic self. By addressing each of these aspects, we gain a profound understanding of the individual within their unique context. This approach enables us to tailor our support in a manner that acknowledges the full spectrum of their needs, nurturing not just their mental health but their emotional wellbeing, physical vitality and balanced energetic state.
- **Personal development:** GRIT uses coaching methodologies to help young people to set and achieve realistic life goals with an awareness of their own individual story.
- **Emphasis on responsibility:** Supporting teenagers to take full responsibility for their lives places an emphasis on empowerment and enables young people to take ownership of their own personal growth, while acknowledging the challenging contexts in which they are developing.
- Partnerships and collaborations: We pride ourselves on the relationships we hold with secondary schools, council-run services and national service providers, providing an enhanced referral network and access to resources and expertise; our collaborative approach helps to build trust and credibility and increase capacity.
- Accessible and enticing content: Our engaging approach offers a unique and empowering experience that resonates with young people's aspirations for personal growth, resilience and wellbeing.
- **Secular approach:** GRIT is not affiliated with any religion or religious belief system.

6. What we have achieved

Our reach

Highlights:

Overall, we worked with 386 young people across the academic year 2022-23 through a combination of one-to-one and group programmes.

- 176 young people took part in at least one one-to-one session.
- 210 young people took part in at least one group programme session.

Overall, completion rates for one-to-one and group programmes were very high, suggesting young people were highly engaged and responded well to our approach.

- The combined completion rate for all one-to-one coaching for young people (aged 11-24) was very high (96%) indicating our tailored approach was engaging and worked well across a wide range of ages.
- The combined completion rate for **all group programmes** (including long, short and bespoke forms of the Rumble programme) for young people was also high (87%) particularly for an intensive programme working with young people looking to address a broad range of mental health conditions.

See Appendix 1 for further details.

Our impact

For the academic year 2022/23, monitoring and evaluation activity focused on a selection of key outcome areas:

- Home life (including relationships with parents, feeling like home is a safe space)
- Education (including academic performance, missed days of school)
- **Relationships** outside of school (friendships, other)
- Managing mood (anxiety, depression, anger)
- Body image
- Relationship with **food**
- Relationship with drugs/alcohol
- Self-harm⁸

Highlights:

Across the 2022/23 academic year, attending GRIT programmes led to an increase in young people's confidence across all the priority outcome areas listed above.

⁸ The quality of the data on self-harm was not sufficient to enable any meaningful analysis.

There was a **statistically significant improvement** in young people's confidence at the end of the programme compared to before they began (see Appendix 1 for further details):

- in managing their mood
- in their **body image**
- in their relationships outside of school
- in their relationship with drugs and alcohol
- in their **education**; and
- in their **relationship to food**.

"I asked [my daughter] how she felt about how GRIT has helped her: she said it has made her feel more confident in social situations and she feels she can now make friends more easily and she is feeling more confident in social spaces." — Parent

"I've been able to get better friends. I feel more confident in managing my friendships." – Young person

The statistically significant positive changes with the largest effect were in young people's confidence in managing their mood and in their body image.

"It helped me be able to talk more openly about how I feel about certain things, and how I can manage stress." – Young person

"It made me become more disciplined and it also helped me with my anger issues." – Young person

"It's given me new ways and helped me get my anger out if I was having a bad day or week." – Young person

Of the young people who identified anxiety as a problem before taking part in a GRIT programme, the vast majority/more than nine in ten (92%) said that the programme had helped them to manage their anxiety.

"I feel more confident generally and I feel as though I am equipped with strategies that I can use when feeling anxious." – Young person

Of the young people who identified low mood as a problem before taking part in a GRIT programme, the vast majority/(just under) nine in ten (87%) said that the programme had helped them to manage it.

"Coaching has helped me manage my moods and helped to relieve my anxiety and stress." – Young person

Of the young people who identified struggling to manage their anger as a problem before taking part in a GRIT programme, the majority/over four in five/four fifths (82%) said that the programme had helped them to manage it better.

"I bring students to attend the project and the change in some of them is incredible. One has taken up boxing and has a fight coming up, and others have more control over their anger as well as taking responsibility for their actions." – School staff member

Of the young people who disclosed self-harming before they started taking part in a GRIT programme, the vast majority/nearly nine in ten (88%) said the programme had helped them to reduce or stop self-harming.

Of the young people who disclosed taking drugs before they started taking part in a GRIT programme, the vast majority/nearly nine in ten (85%, 17 out of 20) said the programme had helped them to reduce or stop taking drugs.

Of the young people who identified concerns with their body image before taking part in a GRIT programme, most/nearly two thirds (63%) said that the programme had helped to improve confidence in their body image.

Of the young people who identified concerns with their relationship with food before taking part in a GRIT programme, over half (52%) said that the programme had helped to improve their relationship with food.

"I just wanted to say how great GRIT is being for [my daughter]. She's dealt with some really tricky issues in the last couple of months. I'm so proud of the way she is taking control. She's also started eating healthily and lost some weight which she is really happy about and is choosing to work out." — Parent

Young people also mentioned that the programme helped them in other areas:

To navigate school-related issues and concerns, such as exam stresses and bullying.

"[The coach] was really supportive and the hour sessions we had really managed to lift my mood and provide tips to help get through the school stresses surrounding exams and performance." — Young person

• To be more confident to share how they are feeling.

"Coaching helped me think about the next step and be able to communicate my feelings a bit better than before. Gradually, I felt more comfortable engaging with [the coach] and letting her know about what I was struggling with." — Young person

"It's stopped me from hiding my emotions. I don't avoid questions with regards to my mum [and] it's definitely helped me process her dying. It's helped me a lot."

• With self-acceptance.

"I feel much better in accepting that I have done everything I can, and that perfectionism is no help to me. I haven't finished my exams yet, but through realising that there are more important things in life (self-care, my own interests, family), I feel a bit more prepared to take on whatever lies ahead." – Young person

• With being more positive.

"I generally feel better about thinking positively about situations and their outcomes." — Young person

• With devising ways to resolve their own issues on their own.

"It has given me good ways to think about things so I can make my own ways of helping myself." – Young person

• With motivation.

"It has motivated me to exercise and given me a reason to get out of the house." – Young person

See Appendix 1 for further details.

What those we work with say:

A young person's perspective...

"I lacked confidence and was anxious about transitioning to secondary school. I went on to attend every single one of the workshops GRIT provides. Over the course of these workshops, I have grown in confidence and by the end of my time I become a volunteer helper in the sessions.

My **anxiety has reduced**, and I am **more confident** about my transition to secondary school. Thank you, GRIT, for all your help and support."

A Deputy Head's perspective...

"As a school we are finding an **ever-increasing number of challenges to the health and well-being of the young people in our community**; with more and more demands on schools to meet those needs due to the reduction in services available.

We very much welcome GRIT to provide support in building the resilience and personal skills of our students. The option to have one-to-one support in school and/or to be able to join the 12-week Rumble programme outside of school are both having a positive impact on the lives of our students.

The team works in **close partnership** with us, providing feedback on a regular basis, maintaining professionalism and confidentiality, and engaging our young people to help them understand the challenges they face.

This is a valuable service that we hope will continue long into the future."

A Pastoral Lead's perspective...

"The coaching and mentoring being delivered to [our school] is proving an invaluable service for our students. The **programme is flexible meaning students have continuity** outside term time too, and they appreciate the flexible approach of support being student-led alongside trained coaches.

We can quantify a measure of success in that most students who complete the coaching move forward independently with little continued pastoral intervention. For the lesser number of students that need further support, the coaches communicate closely with staff sharing valued guidance and their professional opinion on most appropriate next steps. [The coach] works quite autonomously with our students, but never hesitates to communicate with staff swiftly where necessary for the best outcomes.

This type of intervention is particularly useful at a time when a lot of the students accessing the Pastoral Team don't want or need a deep-level intervention such as counselling, but rather a consistent and guided approach to reach goals — identifying strategies, learning ways to implement them to achieve their goals and evaluating with coaches what works or not."

A School Counsellor's perspective...

"The support that the young people at [our school] have received from the coach and mentors at GRIT, whether it is group work or one-to-one, has been **invaluable** to both them and us as a school.

It has enabled lots of young people to access some wellbeing support that they might have otherwise had to wait longer for.

As it is coaching it has **empowered them to set their own goals and take more ownership of their wellbeing**. The coaches from GRIT have integrated really well into [our school] and now feel part of the school team."

A parent's perspective...

"Working with [the GRIT coach] gave my daughter the **confidence to share her experience** with us (her parents) and to engage with specialised support. [The GRIT coach] also worked with my daughter to recognise the validity of her feelings, to talk through her challenges and to empower her to develop skills and strategies to deal with these.

We don't know what the future holds but **early intervention has meant this is being dealt with in the first 6 months of becoming an issue**, rather than waiting until unhealthy behaviours become entrenched and normalised, which would have serious health implications and potentially necessitate more resource-intensive and longer-term intervention.

Thank you again for this helpful and potentially trajectory-changing support."

Young people were also very positive about the approach and professionalism of our staff:

"Coaching helped me think about the next step and be able to communicate my feelings a bit better than before. Gradually, I felt more comfortable engaging with my coach and letting her know about what I was struggling with. In order for her to help me, I've tried to look deeper into how I can feel better in the current situation." — Young person

"It's given me tools to help with my goal. I enjoyed meeting with my coach and found her easy to talk to and comforting." – Young person

7. What we have learnt

Progress for young people

We have learnt that we have made **significant progress** in a range of areas for young people across Hertfordshire looking to improve their mental health.

- We know that our programmes improve young people's confidence in **managing their mood** and in their **body image** two key goals for our work.
- We know that **completion rates** for our programmes are very high suggesting strong engagement from young people and that they feel the programme benefits them.
- We know that young people, school staff and parents **agree on the importance and impact** of our work and want to continue working with us.

Gaps in our knowledge

We have also identified several gaps in our knowledge, specifically:

- Why might young people **stop attending** sessions (or attend intermittently)?
- To what extent are we **reaching the right young people**?
- To what extent are completion rates driven by programmes taking place in schools?
- What is the **differential impact** of our work on different groups of young people (ie by gender, ethnicity)? How engaged are young people?
- What is the wider impact of our programmes (eg on family relationships, missed school days, anti-social behaviour, hospital admissions, GP appointments etc).

Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL)

We have also learnt that in order to continue to improve our programmes and better achieve our outcomes for young people we need to **review our MEAL systems**.

- **Better baselining** as 19% of those who attended at least one GRIT session did not complete a baseline survey, we will review how and when we administer this survey.
- Assessing our wider impact we will develop indicators on community and societal level outcomes to be able to better gauge our wider impact.
- Improving and streamlining data capture/data quality we will focus on capturing the most relevant data at the appropriate time. In particular, we will review how we capture data on self-harm to enable us to report on our impact in this area in the future.
- Logging when young people disengage/stop attending we will assess if there are moments where efforts could be focused to keep young people involved.
- **Gathering data on why young people disengage** we will explore if there any elements of our coaching or programmes that could be improved to increase retention.
- Better utilising sex-disaggregated and ethnicity data and other equality data we will further explore who uses our programmes, as well as attrition, and what we can do to address this.

8. The future

We have identified six areas to focus on for the academic year 2023-24 and beyond.

1. Amplifying young people's voices

We will offer young people the opportunity to serve on the Board of Trustees, providing training to help platform and promote youth representation, experiences and perspectives.

2. Expanding our reach

We will continue to develop strategic partnerships with schools throughout Hertfordshire and beyond to expand our reach to more young people regionally.

3. Continuing to incorporate the latest research

We will proactively review the latest research in the field of adolescent mental health to ensure that our work and approaches are based on the most up-to-date and robust evidence.

4. Contributing to the evidence base

We will collaborate with academic institutions and mental health experts to conduct timely and robust research that contributes to the field of teenage mental health.

5. Ensuring accountability

We will publish an annual impact report alongside our annual report to ensure transparency and external accountability with regards to our activities. This impact report will provide a baseline for our work through the academic year 2023/24.

6. Strengthening our monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) systems

GRIT is committed to measuring and evaluating the impact of its programmes and services to ensure their effectiveness and to improve outcomes. We have committed to reviewing:

- Our **theory of change** articulating how we expect change to occur for young people and other stakeholders.
- Our **monitoring and evaluation framework** including prioritising outcomes for measurement and setting outcome indicators.
- Our data collection tools reviewing our pre- and post-programme assessments, feedback forms and surveys.
- Our MEAL processes overall to ensure they comply with ethical best practice.

Appendix 1

Further details on reach

One-to-one coaching:

Across the academic year 2022-23, 176 young people aged 11-24 were referred to **one-to-one coaching** with GRIT. Of those 176 young people, 169 completed their one-to-one programme – indicating very strong engagement and a very low attrition rate (4%).

Group programmes:

The **12-week GRIT Rumble programme** for 13–18-year-olds was run three times during the academic year 2022-23 – starting in September 2022, January 2023 and February 2023. 69 young people registered an interest in taking part, 39 booked onto the programme (57%) and 25 completed it (36%). Just under two-thirds of those who booked onto the programme completed it (64%) – again showing good engagement, particularly for an intensive 12-week programme with young people.

Table 1. Number of young people who enquired, booked on and completed the 12-week Rumble programme.

	Sep-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	TOTAL
Enquiries	23	21	25	69
Booked on	15	10	14	39
Completed	9	8	8	25

One **condensed 6-week GRIT Rumble programme** was delivered to small groups at one school (this was the second year of delivery with this model with this school). This year, 15 young people signed up to attend and completed the programme, with none dropping off.

Three **small group programmes** (consisting of group coaching only), with four to six young people in each group, were delivered weekly in one school across September to December 2022; January to February 2023; and April to July 2023. 72 young people registered to take part and 64 completed the programme – again highlighting strong engagement and a low drop-off rate (11%).

A number of GRIT drop-in workshops were delivered to young people **in school holidays**. Three workshops were delivered to 18 young people in the October 2022 half-term. Ten workshops were delivered to 26 young people over the summer school holiday of 2023.

One **art group programme** was delivered weekly for six weeks to groups of four young people. 10 young people registered to take part with 9 completing the programme (a drop off rate of 10%).

Further details on impact

Pre- and post-surveys were administered to young people before taking part (n=315) and on completion (n=153) of their programme⁹. A subset of completed survey responses could be matched (n=106), providing more robust insights as to the impact of the programme.

Table 2 shows the mean positive increase from before taking part in a GRIT programme to after completing it for all survey respondents.

Table 2. Change in average scores from all pre and post survey data from academic year 2022/23

Confidence in managing outcome area	Mean	score	Difference	
(0= not confident at all; 10= Confident)	Pre	Post	(descending)	
Managing mood	3.83	5.20	+1.38*	
Body image	5.17	6.12	+0.96*	
Relationships outside of school	6.67	7.59	+0.92*	
Drugs and alcohol	7.39	8.03	+0.65*	
Education	5.48	6.07	+0.58*	
Relationship with food	6.83	7.34	+0.51*	
Home life	7.72	7.78	+0.06	

Base: All pre-survey responses (N=315) and all post-survey responses (N=153). *Statistically significant difference (p=<0.05)10.

Table 3 shows the mean positive increase from before taking part in a GRIT programme to after completing it for all matched survey respondents.

⁹ Survey responses have not been split out by type of delivery (ie one-to-one, group programme etc).

¹⁰ One-Sample t-Test showed that that attending the GRIT programme elicited a statistically significant positive difference in young people's confidence to manage mood, confidence in body image, relationships outside of school, relationship with drugs and alcohol, education and relationship with food (p=<0.001;<0.001;<0.001;0.001;0.003;0.01 respectively)

Table 3. Change in average scores from matched pre and post survey data from academic year 2022/23

Confidence in managing outcome area	Mean score		Difference	
(0= not confident at all; 10= Confident)	Pre	Post	(descending)	n
Managing mood	4.16	5.09	+0.93*	103
Relationships outside of school	6.64	7.29	+0.65	45
Body image	5.25	5.80	+0.55*	101
Education	5.81	6.21	+0.40	101
Relationship with food	6.76	7.11	+0.35	100
Home life	7.57	7.86	+0.29	102
Drug and alcohol	7.75	7.92	+0.17	93

Base: Matched pre- and post-survey responses (N=106). *Statistically significant difference (p=<0.05)11.

 $^{^{11}}$ Paired-Samples t-Test showed that attending the GRIT programme elicited a statistically significant positive difference in young people's confidence to manage their mood and confidence in their body image (t=-4.124, p=<0.001; t=-2.266, p=0.26 respectively). Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test showed that attending the GRIT programme elicited a statistically significant positive difference in young people's confidence to manage their mood and confidence in their body image (Z=-3.887, p=<0.001; Z=-2.444, p=0.15 respectively).