



HEADSTART REPORT

April 2022



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BACKGROUND

YLF's History of Mentoring – Kent and current districts

The Young Lives Foundation have been supporting vulnerable young people in Kent since 2008. We have partnered with Kent County Council to provide mentoring support to young people across a range of districts since 2013. Our mentoring is uniquely different to other support as it is volunteer led and takes place both in schools, and in the community during evenings and at weekends. We are well known in our local communities, with a strong reputation for delivering positive outcomes to young people who need the support of a trusted, independent adult. We have recruited 236 volunteer mentors since YLF HeadStart began in 2017 and currently have over 101 volunteers operating across Kent districts.

YLF's Involvement in HSK

In 2017 we were awarded the contract for HeadStart Mentoring in Swale and Gravesham, this was the commencement of the YLF HeadStart programme. Since this point we have continued the programme and expanded across the county as the different phases of HeadStart evolved. As a commitment to the success of this programme, volunteers were recruited and trained in relevant skills to build resilience and improve the emotional wellbeing of the young people they mentor. This set of skills and knowledge as well as the skills and experience of the individual mentors has led to a successful mentoring programme.

Some of this valuable upskilling and training has been made possible through the HeadStart Kent programme itself.

As a commitment to upskilling staff and volunteers YLF have provided valuable training too. Training provided in 2021 includes:

- SELF CARE
- SEXUAL HEALTH
- ADHD AWARENESS
- SELF HARM - SPOTTING THE SIGNS AND TRIGGERS
- MHFA - RELATE (3 X SESSIONS DELIVERED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR)
- COUNTY LINES AND GANG CULTURE (2 X SESSIONS DELIVERED)
- DUST - DRUG AND ALCOHOL AWARENESS
- DOMESTIC ABUSE, SUPPORTING A YOUNG PERSON WHO HAS WITNESSED DB
- EATING DISORDERS

And we have more of this training planned for 2022 with added training topics such as:

- Children in Care
- LGBTQ+

Since the start of the programme we have given over **15,000 hours** of volunteering to the project to date. The levels of skill and experience continue to grow, and the skills and approaches developed during the YLF HeadStart Volunteer Mentoring programme will be sustained in our future work.

DATA, TARGETS AND OUTCOMES

Data and Targets

	Overall	Including current contract
Total target	810	1050
Total referrals received	837	1148
Total accepted/matched	741	867
Total successfully completed	589	686



"Total of Referrals accepted by YLF over the whole programme" excludes withdrawals;
"Total of Successfully completed Mentorships over the whole programme" excludes "started and withdrawn arrangements", meaning only considering those arrangements with 24 sessions completed.

Some further explanation of the figures:

- Some districts like Swale, Gravesham and T&M, the start was a slow, however, YLF continued servicing these areas after the end of the contract to achieve target.
- Phase 6 (current contract) is due to end August/September 2022

Referrals and Complexity

- Phase 3 and 4 - mostly friendships, mental health issues (mostly anxiety, but also self-esteem)
- Phase 5 and 6 - Behavioural issues, mental health issues (mostly anxiety), self-harm

The most common reasons for referrals include and have goals set around social skills, school pressures, stability in the home environment, awareness of emotions and young people who would benefit from the influence of positive activity programmes.

Add to these an equally common diagnosis of ASD, ADHD and anxiety, where social skills are already heavily limited, and an even bigger need for support is apparent. This support will still be required for young people after the programme and YLF are looking at ways to find more opportunities and would value any support from HeadStart with this.

The majority of referrals have been from Early Help, closely followed by SALUS, Schools and Social Services. There is an opportunity for parents to refer and there have been some instances where this has happened, because the support is not being covered anywhere else.

In 2022, we are also receiving significant referrals from CAMHS linked services, whilst young people await assessment.

Outcomes

An example of the outcomes YLF mentorships achieve...

Young person referred as anxious, isolated and too attached to mum. Mentor found the actual issue was that since young person's parents separated he didn't want to leave mum as worried something would happen to her or she would leave.

Once the mentor established this the mentor took baby steps, meeting in the house for 5 mins, or in the garden or by the front door etc. By 3 months the mentor had managed to get the young person to go to the end of the road, through being calm and consistent and going at a pace that was right for the young person. At the end of mentorship the mentor and mentee visited a local McDonalds, 30 mins away.

Mentors usually work solely with the young person, but if there is something that can help the young person's situation and if the young person is happy to, the mentors/YLF can work with the family if appropriate. In cases like this YLF make it clear to the young person that any discussion or support with family is separate from their mentoring and not about them.

Mentors are clear they are there for the young person.

In this case the mentor spoke to Mum as some of the anxiety for the young person was coming from the behaviours/worries from mum as she was unclear on how to act for their needs and was also now single and with him alone.

The YLF mentor offered advice that the young person needed to feel Mum would be safe when alone and to recognise the time they spend together is something the young person wanted. Instead of pushing the young person into situations, no matter how well meaning, the mentor showed the parent how to tailor this to the child's needs and do it in their time.

WEMWBS over the lifetime of the YLF HeadStart programme, have on average shown a 25% improvement at the end of mentorship



Outcomes include:

- Improved school attendance
- Improved social skills and friendships – loneliness reduced
- Improved behaviour at home and/or school
- Improved relationships
- Improved confidence to try new things
- Improved wellbeing – reduced anxiety, improved mood
- Reduced incidence of offending
- Reengagement with school/further education



PROGRAMME SUCCESSES

Consistency for Young People

We are proud of the YLF HeadStart Programme and the consistency we have been able to offer young people across the county, building their resilience at a time where it was recognised that mindfulness, mental health and online safety are key part of supporting young people. With the YLF offer we were able to widen this support in the community too, which we feel was incredibly beneficial to enabling a consistent, stable and accessible support network for young people in all areas of their lives.

To have access to independent support outside of home and school, is what makes the mentoring service so successful, and referral levels over the life of the programme have highlighted a clear need for intervention outside the normal support offer.

Another element of the success of the programme, was being able to offer young people a level of support during a time where waiting lists for services were at an all-time high, and Social Services, Early Help and Young Carers were under strain. We recognised the ability to focus on social skills and integrate a young person into the community independently often comes with a time scale, something our mentoring scheme allowed for with a longer duration of support for each young person and the option to refer into a group, offering further stability to a young person's support network.

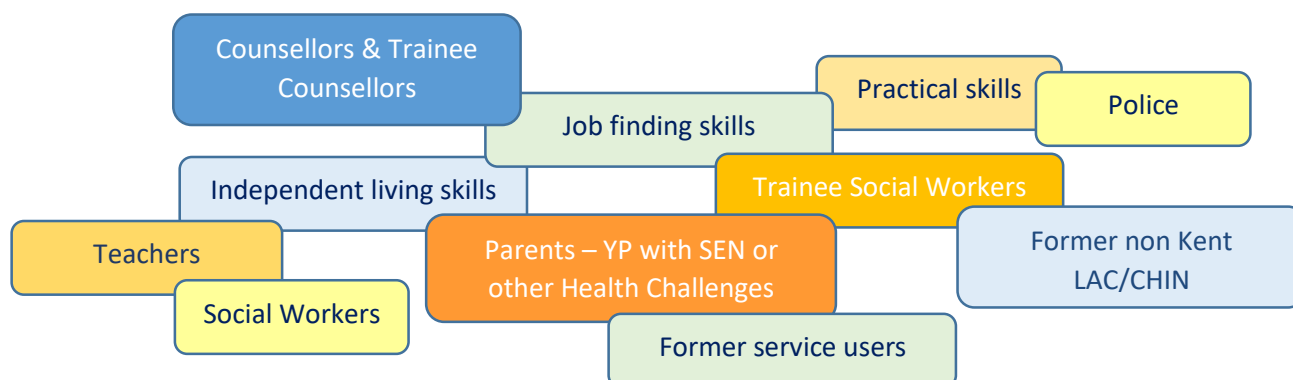
The Value of Volunteer Mentors, Community Fixing its Own Issues

Young people regularly tell us they are tired of professionals deciding for them and telling them what to do. In addition to this we are aware that often, vulnerable young people have no one to talk to at home, and some young people are highly isolated, even at school, and have nobody to share their worries, fears and concerns with. The connections that can be built with a volunteer mentor who cares, does not judge, and is there to listen, are both powerful and long lasting.

Our HeadStart volunteer team currently consists of 101 active mentors.

Who Are Our Volunteers?

Our volunteer mentors are from a wide variety of backgrounds offering diversity in terms of ethnicity, disabilities, age, gender, skills and experience. Here are a few examples of background and skillsets:



This gives us a strong, knowledgeable and experienced base of volunteers. With valuable learning of what good mentorships look like and great experience of supporting a young person in a way that is different to other schemes and support, means we are well placed and ready to continue this work in Kent if there are agencies and partners who want to utilise this.

We wanted to talk to members of the team and mentors to get an understanding of their experience of YLF HeadStart programme and approach. Here are some key points highlighted by them.

YLF MENTORS...

- Offer flexibility in the support and adapt this to the specific needs of the young person and what they want
- Allow young people to take control of what the goals should be and develop their independence and responsibility to achieve their goals
- Offers a unique trusted adult who advocates for the young person no matter what
- Offer support that is separate to family and other services
- Are very diverse in their makeup and have a wealth of experience and skills, which allows unique and meaningful relationships and role modelling
- Are consistent and reliable for the young people they work with and they are on their side
- Build resilience, confidence and independence and give young people the tools for when they are ready
- Offer ways to direct young people on to the right path and support them with this e.g. encouraging and supporting young people to complete job & Uni applications, this is really positive especially as some young people may not have anyone else to support with this
- Offer a chance for young people to become independent, going out making decisions without their parents or carers
- Helps to improve young people's mental health and builds the confidence to do things - young people feeling like they can or want to do things

- Making sure young people are listened to, and building their skills to communicate what they want better using baby steps
- Offers someone who is really there for them, with not too many set ideas, and more freedom for what the sessions are used for, than other support
- Will keep on trying and doesn't give up, young people notice this even when they can't show it (and they often don't)
- Are giving their time for free, which means a lot to young people

THE YLF HEADSTART PROGRAMME...

- Explains to young people that someone is willing to give their time to be with them. It's a unique and important part of the relationship building. It makes the young people feel special and that they deserve it and that the relationship is meaningful. These smaller details make an impact on the mentoring
- Balances managing the commissioned targets with an understanding of what the young people needs and prioritising that, and when this happens the support falls into place and is positive
- YLF HeadStart were able feedback to the HeadStart team to look at ways to adapt and improve the offer of support to better suit the young people's needs. For example, being flexible about the frequency of the mentoring as for some having a session each week was overwhelming. YLF and HeadStart worked together to adapt this to offer flexibility to suit the young person

Headstart Experience from Mentors and Team...

Overall the feedback was that working on the HeadStart programme has been a positive experience.

"Really positive experience – love being able to see a positive impact on the young people being worked with"

Coordinators felt the approach has been flexible. Some noted, at the start, guidelines of how to deliver the work and build resilience were quite fixed and professional, but that HeadStart has allowed flexibility to change aspects of the programme to make it an offer that really works for the young person. This flexibility and willingness to change and adapt from HeadStart was valued by the team.

Sometimes professionals and services can be too structured and prescriptive in the support offered, and it is important to really listen to what young people want and adapt as needed.

The information and training available from HeadStart was valued by the team, who noted the skills and knowledge gained about emotional wellbeing and resilience will be used in future work, sustaining the HeadStart approach in their “business as usual” for mentoring.

“Really felt the training offered through HeadStart YLF Programme has been key and liked how the training for the mentors is focused on the HeadStart way of doing things – resilience etc.”

“Learning in HeadStart had much more of a focus on YP support network, resulting in more specific goals through the Resilience Conversations.”

Team members noted they appreciate the amount of young people being supported through the programme and the HeadStart commissioning.

The team noted referrals were over capacity, indicating there is a need for the unique support mentorships offer, and that often the complexity of the issues are varied and have increased as the programme has developed since 2017. In some cases YLF Mentorships needed to be stepped up and were signposted to more intensive services, however the majority would be taken on board at YLF.

Interestingly there have been mixed feelings about the Resilience Conversations and the WEMWBS here is some feedback from the coordinators in the team:



Resilience Conversations (RC)/Domains Wheel

Sometimes using the RC gave a false idea of the issue, i.e. a young person struggling at school but all ok at home so the focus for the support is in school. However, sometimes young people say everything is fine, even if living in a toxic environment at home, because they are used to it. Within YLF support, once the mentorship starts, the mentors are looking for signs in all areas of the young people’s life and often pick up when something at home is not right, even if the parents/carers are trying to put a good image forward, there are little signs there. A consideration going forward is that when support is set up in school only, this can take longer or could even be missed.

The original resilience domains wheel was a good mapping tool; however, the resilience conversation has worked much better in a mentoring scenario.

Sometimes the goals at referral aren't what the young people want, YLF and young person will look at these together and make sure the goals are what they want and if not change them. This lets them know they are in charge of their goals.

Talents and Interests were a great offer and the team wanted to utilise this, but not always a good match for the mentorships. It could be hard to find the right thing, as mentors were mindful that if the talent or interest was something that couldn't be continued and sustained after the support, that could in itself cause a new issue for the young person and family.

Having a mix of community and school support is essential. There are very different environments working with young people in schools and in community, each offers different opportunities and challenges. For example, engagement from young people in school mentorships is easier, with more structure and greater focus from the young person, but community mentorships often offer an escape from a difficult or complex environment, toxic relationships and busy home with siblings etc.

What Our Mentors Say...

"I have found mentoring extremely satisfying. I started working with YLF 3 years ago, after working in marketing for a long time and just wanted to give something back. I wanted to switch careers into something more care based."

Were you well supervised?

"Extremely. I started with zero experience working with young people, but I went through training and then worked with YLF staff in the group. I told my Coordinator I wasn't yet confident enough to work with young people on a one to one basis. He kind of took me under his wing at the group mentoring sessions, and I always felt he was watching what was going well, he would listen to conversations I would have when I started, and then debrief me with advice on what I did well and what could have been improved at the debrief which I found very helpful. He encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone, and after 5 – 6 weeks I felt well prepared to undertake a one to one arrangement. This only stopped for a while when I got my first job working with young people in part thanks to his training."

Do you feel you made a difference to the young people you worked with?

"Once I became more confident, for sure. The one that stands out to me was working with a young lad who had witness domestic violence, who didn't trust males and got nervous around them. We facilitated this by getting him to join the group, becoming his 1-to-1 at the YLF group setting and then once he became comfortable, moving the arrangement into the community. We built a brilliant rapport by the end of it. After the community arrangement, he rejoined the group, and I'll still occasionally pop in to catch up with him."

Anything you would have changed?

"Perhaps making the mentoring fortnightly rather than weekly, it would make it easier to fit into my schedule and it would give us more material to talk about in the sessions."

“I feel a sense of pride when I look at how she feels and all she has achieved from when I first met her 6 months ago. It has allowed her to believe in herself and increase her self-confidence majorly. She is no longer the insecure and withdrawn girl I believe that I saw in our first few sessions. I genuinely believe that she received help at the time that she needed it and it is lovely to see what a significant impact that can have on a young person. It really reminded me why I chose to do this.” - **Gravesham Mentor**

“I would encourage anyone to do mentoring as a volunteer. It has bought me out of my shell, young people get you to look at things differently and vice versa, when there is trusted relationship there.”

“Was worried about being older but it really hasn't been a barrier the young people haven't looked at it like this or a negative – feel experience and things we enjoy has helped build relationships.”

How have you found your mentoring journey?

Very rewarding, been doing a year

Do you feel you made a difference to the young people you worked with?

Would hope so, covered lots of different topics over mentorships. Current mentorship (with a young asylum seeker) we have had about 25 – 30 session to help settle in to UK and find his way, build confidence and resilience. We have talked about relationships with opposite sex, how to behave and respect. Talked about confidence to step outside his comfort zone and how to honor his religion and being Muslim and how to adapt to being in UK, finding his own path.

Can you give me an example of the impacts your mentoring has had on young people you have mentored – some outcomes/case studies

Impact: Mentor noted that the YP feels he is more settled and feels better. YP got his A Levels and is going to University. He will be away from home so that takes confidence, he also got a job. He asked a girl out, which he had wanted to do but was too worried to do, this has helped to instill a confidence in him that it is ok to try even if it doesn't work out.

Supported and encouraged his career aspiration and worked together on University application and CV. Trust was built in the mentorship and YP disclosed the traumatic things he witnessed in Syria. YP did not want support with these but was positive that he spoke to mentor about this.

Mentor and YP talked about having focus, sense of purpose, motivation and belief. They built a good relationship of trust. The mentor has helped to instill some confidence to try things also YP confided in mentor and they built a relationship where he felt he could talk to the mentor about things he hasn't told other people. YP told the mentor that to him happiness was being safe.

YP is studying business at University, mentor discovered this is because he wants set up his own business so he can better his life but also so he can give back at some point and help others like he has been helped by YLF – this is motivation.

YP was upset that the mentoring was finishing and said he will stay in touch with his mentor and will visit when back from University.

What Young People and Parents Say...

How are you finding your mentoring session?

I am really enjoying it. My mentor isn't like other people I've met. She has done so much in her life like touring the music scene and seems to know everyone around here.

What do mentoring sessions look like?

They've changed as it has gone on. It started with dog walking while we got to know each other. Then we started working on things in my life that we could work at changing. I want a job so we looked at that, and my mentor is helping a lot with that. I want to be a bit more confident with people so the job we looked at deals with customers.

Has this mentoring helped your emotional well-being?

It has a lot. After what happened last year, I haven't really done much, I've been trying to get my head straight. It has given something to look forward to each week. My mentor's enthusiasm and kindness have woken me up a bit. She takes me to this one coffee shop that I absolutely love. She said she might even be able to get me a job there! Looking back on it now, I'm in a much better place than I was.

Do you feel better able to cope if unexpected bad things were to happen?

Yes, now that I feel things are starting to look better, it makes me more confident to be able to handle the next thing.

Anything else to add?

Not really.

- *Young people*

"It has given something to look forward to each week. My mentor's enthusiasm and kindness have woken me up a bit."



What a mentor means to me 1.amr

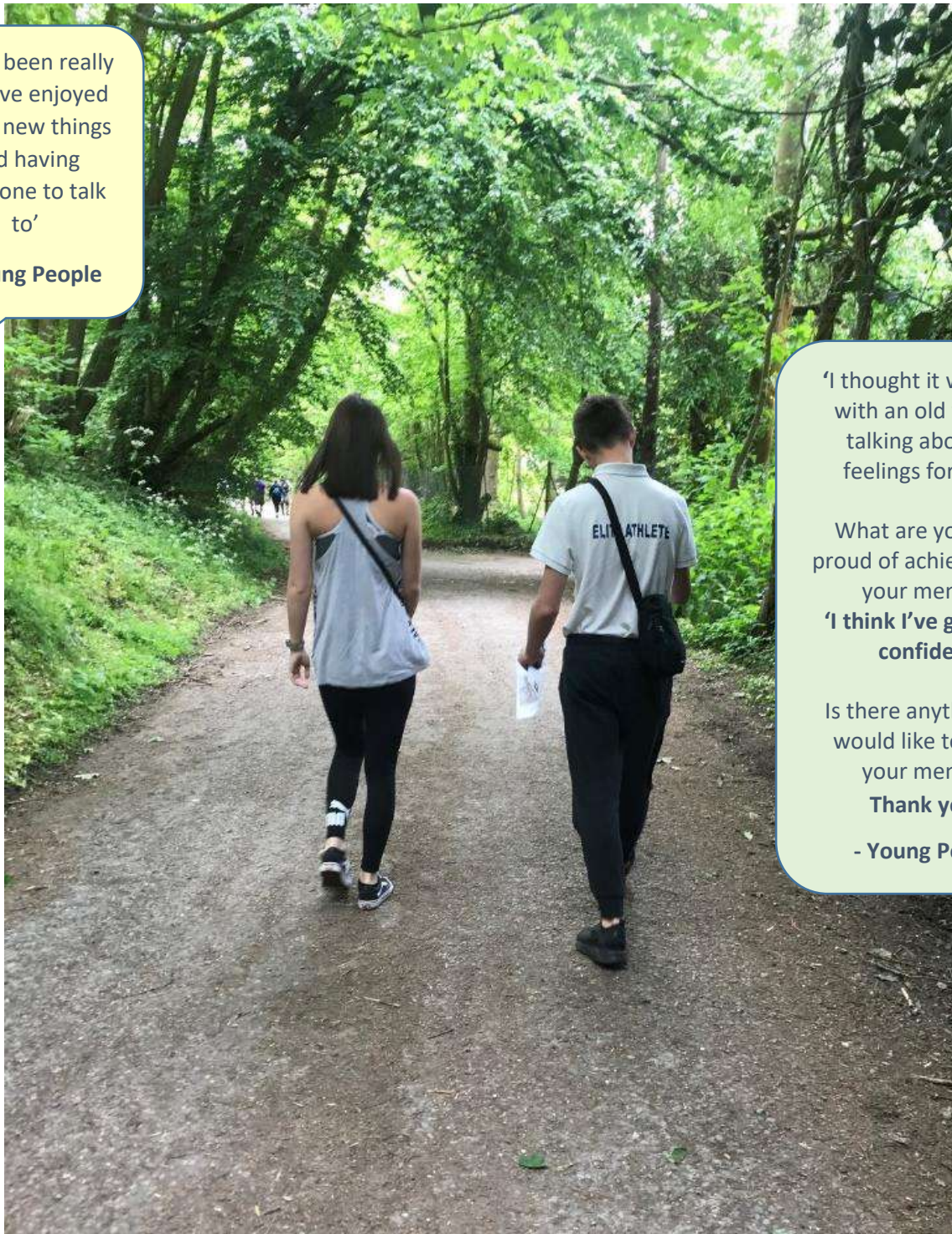


'He is much happier and has come out of his shell, he has really benefitted from a male role model' - Parent

"I'm getting on with Mum better now and I go to youth club"

"I am more positive, handling my anxiety, looking at the good things in my life and feeling more confident"

"It has given me a lot of strength and I don't feel as insecure as I did" - Young people



'It has been really fun, I've enjoyed trying new things and having someone to talk to'
- Young People

'I thought it would be with an old woman talking about my feelings for ages'
What are you most proud of achieving with your mentor?
'I think I've got more confident'
Is there anything you would like to say to your mentor?
Thank you ❤️❤️
- Young People



Do you feel he/she is benefiting from having a mentor?

Strongly agree

Please provide a reason for the above response:

Because they have bonded well, they both get on with each other and my daughter feels confident in letting her mentor Alex know when she is worrying about things. Alex responds appropriately and in my daughter's best interest. She has supported my daughter with every worry or wish she has shared with her, Alex is thoughtful in her time spent with my daughter and communication has been kept with me so I've never had to worry about their contact arrangements.

Have there been any other positive changes as a result of the mentoring?

My daughter has grown in confidence, she is an inside person and doesn't like to walk but is always very happy to go out for walks with Alex, so it is improving her physical fitness.

How satisfied are you with your overall mentoring arrangement so far?

VERY SATISFIED

Please provide a reason for the above response:

Because of the positive effect it is having on my daughter. - *Parent*

'To be honest I didn't think having a Mentor would help but it has'

'Having a mentor is having someone you can talk to when you need to'

- *Young People*

Do you think mentoring is helping with these goals?

YES, A LOT

YES, A BIT

I'M NOT SURE

NO

Why do you think this?

I have someone to talk to about things.

CASE STUDIES & FEEDBACK

Valley Park School – An Example of Mentoring Case Study

Reasons for referral: Student is very emotional, has some concerns regarding mother finding out about speaking to someone. School have put through and early help referral. Her speech is very fast and she can be very difficult to understand, we suspect she may be ASD but there is no confirmation of this. There has been a report from French teacher as she was crying throughout a recorded assessment. She said to head of year that her mother can care for her but not emotionally and she needs someone to talk to. Throughout sessions, student also discussed gender and identity confusion and low self-esteem.

Sessions held: 15

one
MONTH

What has your Mentor been helping you with so far? *Please highlight.*

EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

ANXIETY AND MENTAL HEALTH

FAMILY

SELF-ESTEEM/CONFIDENCE

SOMEONE TO TALK TO

"I have someone to express my emotions to and not bottle them up like I have done most of my life.

Knowing someone is there to talk to weekly and I have a safe space."

How satisfied are you with your overall mentoring arrangement so far?

VERY SATISFIED

SATISFIED

NOT SURE

DISSATISFIED

VERY DISSATISFIED

SESSION 12

What goals have you been working on?

1. Have someone to talk to
2. Share and process emotions
3. Support self esteem

Do you think mentoring is helping with these goals?

YES, A LOT YES, A BIT NOT SURE NO

"It's going good and I express myself without having to worry. I hadn't told anyone about some of the things I've shared. I realise more about myself and have been able to talk to someone."

How satisfied are you with your overall mentoring arrangement so far?

VERY SATISFIED

SATISFIED

NOT SURE

DISSATISFIED

VERY DISSATISFIED

"I feel better, it's helping. Thank you!"

Our Vision is that every young person in need shall have access to the resources and opportunities needed for them to achieve their potential and lead fulfilled lives



What has your Mentor helped you with during your time together? *Please highlight.*

- EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS
- ANXIETY AND MENTAL HEALTH
- FEELING POSITIVE
- FAMILY
- SELF-ESTEEM/CONFIDENCE
- SCHOOL
- SOMEONE TO TALK TO
- HOBBIES
- FEELING GOOD ABOUT MYSELF
- UNDERSTANDING ME AND OTHERS
- OPENING UP

Do you feel you have achieved your goals? What makes you feel this way?

"I've grown quite a bit from where I was at the start, I'm more comfortable and confident with things."

What other positive changes do you feel have happened as a result of your mentoring?

"I feel completely different for releasing my anxieties and have started new hobbies."

Do you have any comments for your mentor?

"You good!! (thumbs up)"

	03.06.2021	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
FIRST SESSION	I've been feeling optimistic about the future			X		
	I've been feeling useful	X				
	I've been feeling relaxed		X			
	I've been feeling interested in other people			X		
	I've had energy to spare			X		
	I've been dealing with problems well	X				
	I've been thinking clearly	X				
	I've been feeling good about myself		X			
	I've been feeling close to other people		X			
	I've been feeling confident		X			
	I've been able to make up my own mind			X		
	I've been feeling loved			X		
	I've been interested in new things		X			
	I've been feeling cheerful			X		
FINAL SESSION	30.09.2021	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
	I've been feeling optimistic about the future				X	
	I've been feeling useful			X		
	I've been feeling relaxed			X		
	I've been feeling interested in other people					X
	I've had energy to spare				X	
	I've been dealing with problems well				X	
	I've been thinking clearly				X	
	I've been feeling good about myself			X		
	I've been feeling close to other people				X	
	I've been feeling confident				X	
	I've been able to make up my own mind			X		
	I've been feeling loved				X	
	I've been interested in new things				X	
I've been feeling cheerful				X		

Making a Difference

- Haley and YP were matched on the Community Mentoring programme and met once a week over a 3 year period. They spent time together doing some fun activities such as; visiting museums, playing games, going on walks, bike rides, playing tennis, going swimming.
- YP was referred as she was going through a tough time, struggling with her mental health, school and her anxiety which was preventing her from going out.
- "I wouldn't go out unless it was with Haley" - YP
- "You listened to me when no one else did. It felt strange at first as no one else was like you" - YP
- "You helped my daughter to stop self-harming as you were there for her when no one else was" - Mum
- "Haley distracted me from the bad times in my life and made me feel comfortable. She never made me feel that I was a burden and didn't judge me" - YP
- "Haley helped us when we were broken. It is thanks to her that we are a family now. We need more Haley's in this world!" – Mum
- "I have seen adults in a different way now. They can be trusted and were kids once too. Haley has helped me and I don't know what I would have done without her" - YP
- "It has been an incredible, life changing experience being a Mentor. It has changed my outlook on young people and made me want to do more to help. I never realised before just how much young people have to deal with now." Mentor - Haley

Do you think mentoring is helping with these goals?

YES, A LOT

YES, A BIT

I'M NOT SURE

NO

Why do you think this?

because I have gotten better at all of them through the weeks.

4. Have there been any other positive changes as a result of the mentoring? (This can be anything from how you've been feeling, school, friends, and family). *I have been more confident and out there.*

5. How satisfied are you with your overall mentoring arrangement so far?

VERY SATISFIED

SATISFIED

NOT SURE

DISSATISFIED

VERY DISSATISFIED

Why do you feel this way?

the mentoring is really helping me learn how to deal with things better.

Arrangement review – for the young person

This is for you to let us know how you feel about your mentoring. For each question, please circle the answer that is closest to how you feel.

1. Are you finding having a mentor helpful?

YES

NO

2. What has your Mentor been helping you with so far?

EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

FRIENDSHIPS

ANXIETY

ANGER

FAMILY

SELF-ESTEEM

CONFIDENCE

SCHOOL

SOMEONE TO TALK TO

HOBBIES

3. Do you remember your agreed goals?

1. feel better about myself.
2. Control emotions.
- 3.
- 4.

Do you think mentoring is helping with these goals?

YES, A LOT

YES, A BIT

I'M NOT SURE

NO

Why do you think this?

He makes me feel better about myself and my objectives. Especially with cricket and trying new things.

4. Have there been any other positive changes as a result of the mentoring? (This can be anything from how you've been feeling, school, friends, and family).

Starting a cricket club. Feeling more confident.

5. How satisfied are you with your overall mentoring arrangement so far?

VERY SATISFIED

SATISFIED

NOT SURE

DISSATISFIED

VERY DISSATISFIED

Why do you feel this way?

NICE is very nice and I feel he is approachable. We have fun and similar hobbies.

WIDER IMPACT – YLF AND OTHER AGENCIES

- Strengthened relationship with schools and YLF is very well known in schools as a result of HeadStart
- Built good and strong relationships in community too, also very well known as a service
- HeadStart has offered the opportunity to work and build relationships in new districts and to grow YLF's reputation and the offer for young people. It has given opportunities gain an understanding of the intricacies of districts needs and build relationships. We hope this will help open the door to future working in the districts where YLF HeadStart has been
- Schools are aware of what YLF do and the importance of a mentor. Because of mentoring places in schools funded by HeadStart, Schools are becoming more willing to offer mentoring as part of their support options
- HeadStart has allowed us to provide a range of services – we have a different umbrella now – we can shape the offer for the young person based on their individual needs, offering school mentoring, group mentoring, or 1:1 community mentoring (or a combination of all)
- It has been useful to have more opportunities to mix with other professionals to share ideas and approaches
- HeadStart has improved relationships with other partners, for example we have good links with services like Salus and Kooth and share information about Kooth as part of the mentoring work with young people
- YLF is well known and has a very good reputation among partners

“YLF mentors have been extremely beneficial to us as a school. The support they have provided our students has improved attendance as well as the mental wellbeing of our most vulnerable. The mentors are very understanding to our students and provide lengthy support on a one to one basis. They are very good at time keeping and are excellent with the communication between school staff.” - **Highsted Grammar, Referrer**

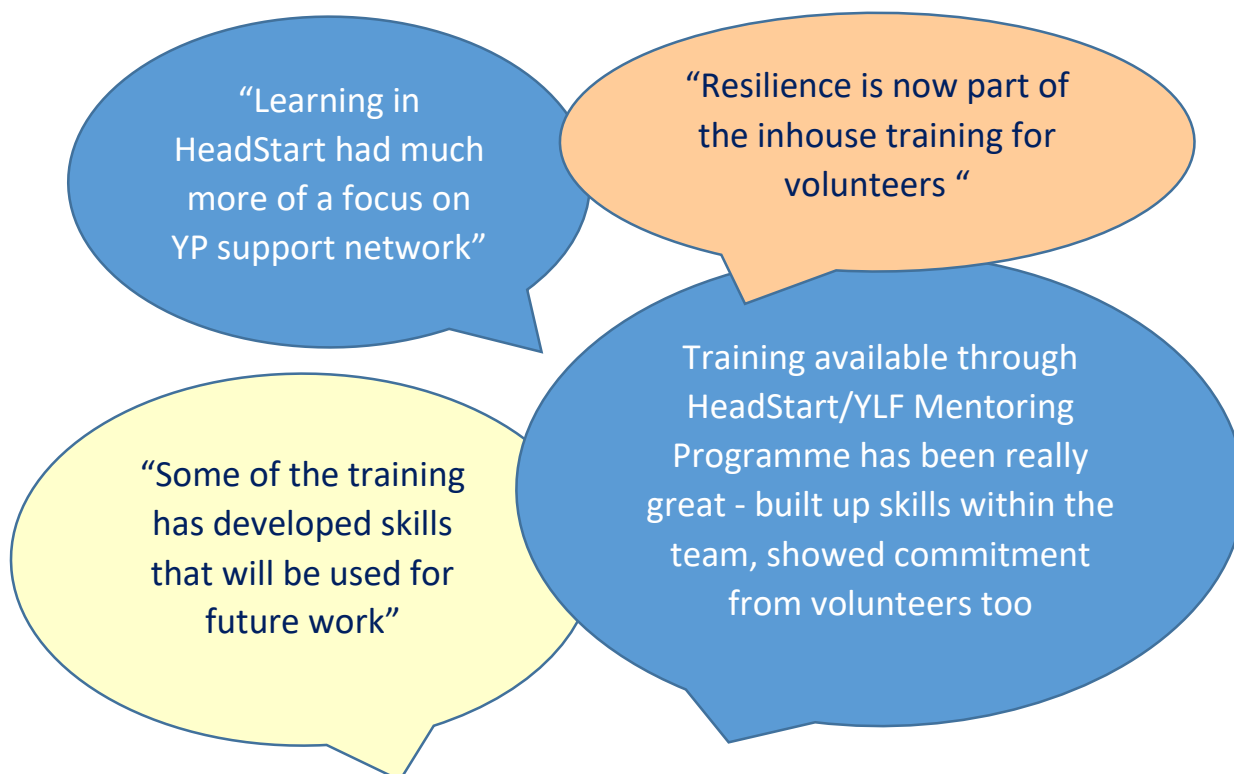
The Young Lives Foundation has had a big impact on our pupils.

- YP having less 'meltdowns' in school, able to cope with social times a lot better, recognising what their triggers are and will now access help before he gets angry
- YP & mentor built an amazing relationship, YP is able to access support when she needs it, relationships at home have vastly improved and YP is getting on better with mum and talking to her about her feelings
- Two SEND YP have both been a lot calmer this year regarding their options
- Pupils with mentors have become more open and are able to talk to staff about how they are feeling. This is a vast improvement on how they used to behave.

I could keep writing about individual cases. Overall YLF have had a massive impact on the pupils at St John's and I am hoping that we can keep working with them even when the funding stops. - **St John's, Referrer**

WHAT NEXT – WHAT LEARNINGS WILL WE TAKE FORWARD IN FUTURE WORK

When speaking to members of the team about their HeadStart experience there was a high recognition of the training offer from both HeadStart and Young Lives Foundation, and the impact this had on their work and support with young people.



Noting also that ways of working and specific skills learnt will continue to influence their approach to supporting young people, beyond the life of the programme.

- Resilience building as an approach will continue in work – an awareness of emotional wellbeing, mental health, resilience building
- Mindfulness training and resources will be carried forward
- Knowledge from resilience and trauma training will help to keep the way of working ... ‘HeadStart’ approach
- Resilience conversation tools and focus will be useful in future work
- HeadStart could allow further mentoring opportunities to continue as the framework for this is already there, e.g. Volunteers accessed the training so now more volunteers trained, which can widen the offer from YLF

AND FINALLY...

We have been proud to be part of the HeadStart Kent journey and to support and help make a difference to so many young people over the lifetime of the programme.

It is great to be able to benefit and have positive impacts on the young people we mentor in all the ways noted in this report but what really stands out for us with the Mentoring is the unique and valued relationships between the Mentor and Mentees and most importantly all the **fun** they have!



Thank you for this opportunity from HeadStart!

Here is a link to some more of the things young people, parents and other agencies have to say about our Mentoring:

<https://sway.office.com/xTDxfAClv4bhA38e?ref=Link>