

VOLUNTEERING **MATTERS**



Grandmentors Impact Report **2025**

Forewords

From a Mentee

I was referred to Grandmentors when I was trying to research routes to pursue my dreams of being a dentist.

I don't have the common required qualifications most people have for the course, so I felt like I didn't have a chance. But then I met the lovely Farzana at Volunteering Matters, who matched me with Peter.

Grandmentors has been a game changer for me. My mentor, Peter, has helped in more ways than I imagined initially. He helped me to find a perfect course and he also helped me sketch up a timeline and compare university courses.

We meet every other week, as a debrief and to refocus on the future. We discuss and share ideas, schemes, and resources that might help me in my journey. I am now enrolled on an access to higher education course in medicine/dentistry alongside retaking my GCSE's.

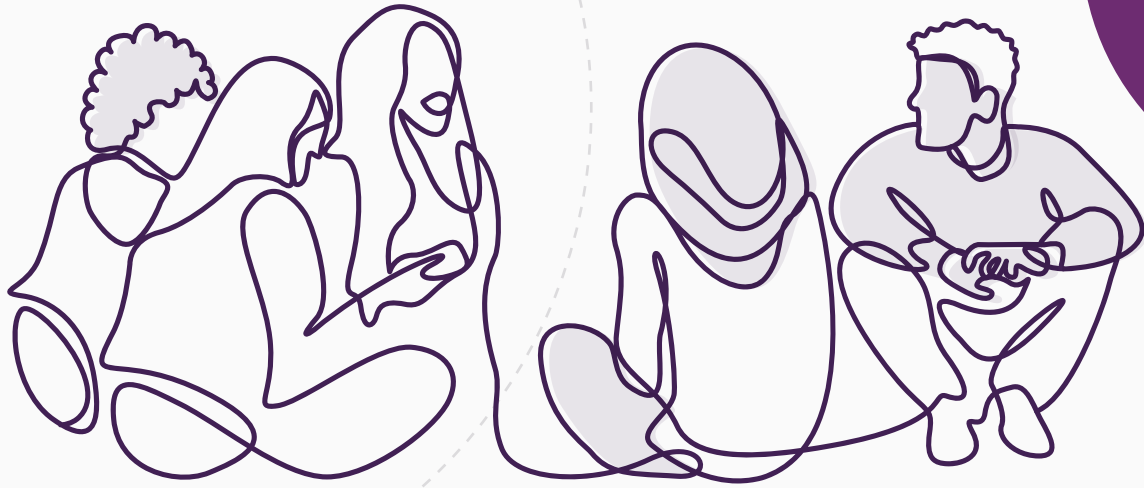
Along the way, I have also had changes in my personal life. When I moved house, Peter helped me with websites and apps where I could get furniture. I also had some arrears to pay off which meant that I had to create a budget plan. This is when I realised that having a mentor like Peter was so much more than a career advisor or a key worker.

“ I feel so grateful and lucky to have met Peter through such a wonderful and impactful programme and I am thankful for the support I receive. ”

I'd always recommend Grandmentors. The fact that these are volunteers, with great life experience, speaks volumes about their willingness and motivation to genuinely help. I also want to say a huge thank you to the funders of this programme, the managers, and especially the volunteers and everyone else involved. This programme is life-changing, unique and so profound.

KK

**Mentee on the Grandmentors Programme
Brent, London**



From a Volunteer Grandmentor

I must say that I really enjoy using my knowledge, skills and experience to help others improve their confidence in their daily lives.

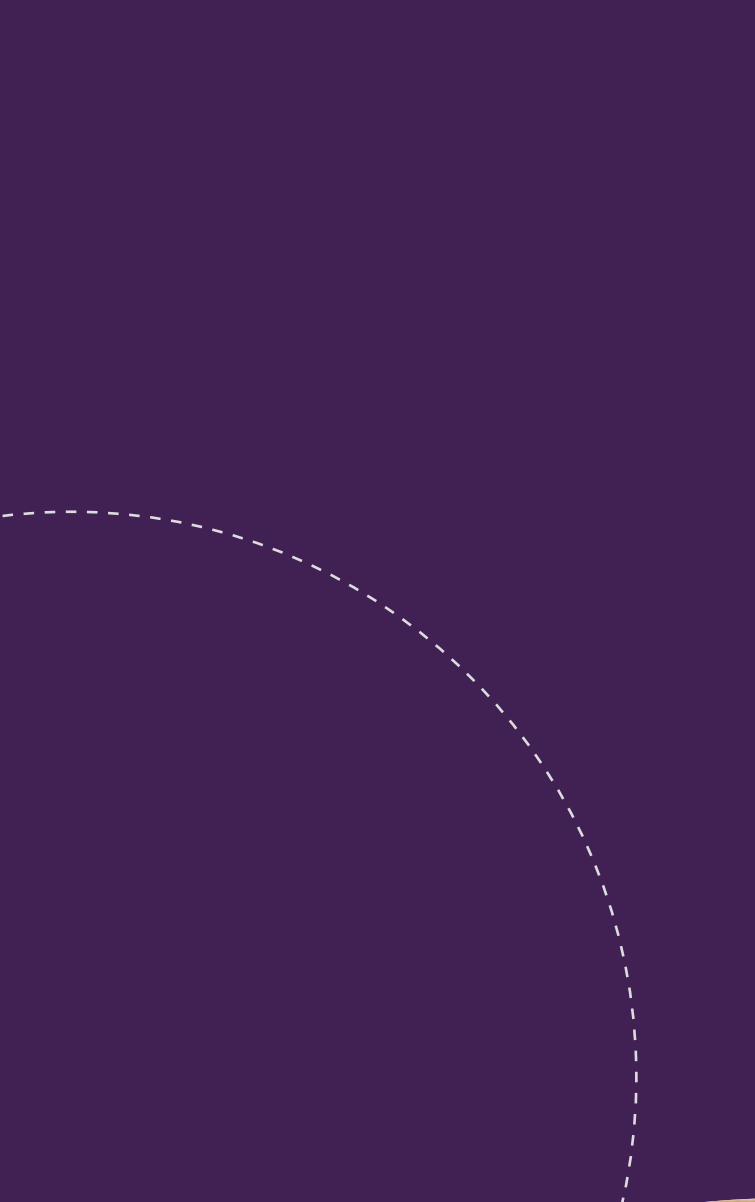
I began volunteering as a Grandmentor in June 2023 and I joined because I thought that my previous roles at work would prove useful.

Much of my role has been to provide support and encouragement to help my mentee to achieve their goals. When I started as a Grandmentor, I met with them, their mother and staff from Grandmentors and we worked up a broad outline for a course of action. My mentee and I have met regularly, and we've worked together on things such travelling independently to college and building confidence in social spaces. Make no mistake, these things have a huge impact in someone's life and contribute to a bigger picture.

I get such satisfaction knowing that I am helping others and making a positive impact. Of course, there are challenges, but it is also hugely rewarding knowing you can make a difference.

Lindsay

**Volunteer Grandmentor
Perth and Kinross, Scotland**



Contents

What's inside the report

A Snapshot of our impact

1

Who we are

2

The Grandmentors programme

3

The impact of the Grandmentors Programme

4

Impact on the young people

5

Impact within the wider community

6

The impact of individual projects

7

Brent Grandmentors

Camden Grandmentors

Greenwich Grandmentors

Hounslow Grandmentors

Islington Grandmentors

Lewisham Grandmentors

Merton Grandmentors

Midlothian Grandmentors

Milton Keynes Grandmentors

Perth and Kinross Grandmentors

Southend Grandmentors

Suffolk Grandmentors

Surrey Grandmentors

Telford and Wrekin Grandmentors

Warwickshire Grandmentors

Wolverhampton Grandmentors

The impact on volunteers

8

Looking forward

9



260

Active volunteers in 2024

(total number engaged in a mentoring relationship during 2024)



296

Active young people in 2024

(total number engaged in a mentoring relationship during 2024)



146

New volunteers in 2024

(joined the project in 2024 and completed recruitment and training)



312

New young people in 2024

(referred to the project during 2024)



139

Total number of new matches made during 2024

of our impact

Overall data



296

Total number of all active matches during 2024

(new matches + matches already in place before 2024)



70

Matches ended successfully in 2024



172

Matches ongoing as of January 2025



116

Volunteers awaiting a match as of January 2025



79

Young people awaiting a match as of January 2025

The Grandmentors Programme

Our Grandmentors programme transforms the lives of young adults through emotional and practical support from volunteer mentors. Grandmentors provide a vital link for young people as they navigate life after care. Trained volunteers aged 50+, forge trusting and positive relationships that support, challenge and empower care experienced young people to unlock their own skills and to shape their own futures.

There are **17** Grandmentors projects across  **England** and  **Scotland**, representing steady **growth** since the first project in **2009**. Volunteer Grandmentors support care experienced young people in Brent, Camden, Greenwich, Hounslow, Islington, Lewisham, Merton, Midlothian, Milton Keynes, Perth & Kinross, Southend, Suffolk, Surrey, Telford and Wrekin, Warwickshire, Wiltshire and Wolverhampton.



At **Volunteering Matters**

Volunteers drive change in their communities, helping to create stronger, more connected communities. Their voices are at the heart of everything we do, sharing lived experiences and unique insights into the social challenges communities face.

We leverage funding, partnerships, and local engagement to support individuals and to foster meaningful social change.

The impact of the Grandmentors Programme



Impact on the young people

Once trained, Grandmentors work together with a care experienced young person at their own pace to forge trusting and positive relationships that support, challenge, and empower young people to unlock their own skills and to shape their own futures.

With the help of their Grandmentor, the care experienced young people work through goals and/ or concerns, usually around the areas of employment, education and training, housing and finance, and health and wellbeing. Grandmentors are encouraged to schedule regular contact with the young person and to plan some fun activities that will offer them new opportunities and broaden their horizons.

Impact within the wider community

The Grandmentors programme provides a true place-based approach by recognising that the challenges young people face is different in each location the programme is run, and therefore each location tailors its support to their community needs. The volunteers and care experience young people often become more active in their own local community, which fosters relationships between individuals and promotes awareness of the Grandmentors programme to wider audiences.

“

I think it's a brilliant programme that benefits both young people who have left care and older people who want to learn from new experiences. It's an absolutely incredible programme, and I've been privileged to be able to listen to mentors and mentees to learn more about it.

”

Ellie Reeves MP,
Lewisham West and East Dulwich

“

For the past 15 years, we've been proud to support this exceptional mentoring programme, which has transformed the lives of care-experienced young people. The commitment to building trusting relationships, fostering resilience, and creating opportunities for these young people through the volunteering power of Grandmentors is truly inspiring

”

Lord David Freud, JECDA



The impact of





individual projects



Brent Grandmentors



**Snapshot
Data**



13 Volunteers

1 young person

Impact Story

Since being matched with her mentor Angela in November 2024, Ozifa has made impressive progress, becoming more confident and optimistic about her future. With Angela's support, she has taken proactive steps to improve her financial situation, mental wellbeing, and overall stability.

One of Ozifa's key achievements has been gaining control over her finances. She has successfully created a detailed budget, allowing her to track her expenses more effectively. By sticking to her plan, she has already started repaying her rent arrears and remains committed to clearing the debt entirely by 2026. Working full-time, she has developed better spending habits, ensuring she remains financially stable and avoids further financial strain.

Beyond finances, Ozifa has also been prioritising her health and wellbeing. Although she initially found her GP unhelpful, she is taking charge of her healthcare by seeking a second opinion. In addition, through discussions with Angela, she has learned about other support networks, such as MIND and resources available through her employer. She is actively exploring these options to ensure she has the necessary support to continue moving forward.

Angela has been a constant source of guidance and encouragement throughout this process, helping Ozifa recognise her own strengths and resilience.

With her determination and a clear plan in place, Ozifa is steadily building a brighter future, equipped with the tools and confidence to overcome challenges and achieve long-term stability.

“

Seeing Ozifa make such significant progress has been incredibly rewarding. As a volunteer mentor, it's inspiring to see the difference we can make through consistent support and encouragement. I feel privileged to be part of her journey, and her determination continues to motivate me in my own role.

”

Angela

Camden Grandmentors

NEW Project

2024/25



**Snapshot
Data**



22 Volunteers

7 young people

Impact Story

Princess and Rhonda were matched in November 2024 and immediately connected over their shared experience of the time they had each spent in Philadelphia. Through having Rhonda as a mentor Princess has started to think about her long-term goals and is working on putting a plan in place. Rhonda hopes to work with Princess on being “more structured and allocating time to tasks and then keeping to her schedule.”

Princess is currently a film student who is passionate about making films and short poetry pieces and so they have both spent time exploring artistic destinations such as the Tate Modern and a bubble exhibition to support Princess’s creative interests, whilst experiencing new spaces.

“It’s refreshing to spend time with somebody who is vastly different to me. Initially, I felt that because we are so different we might not have that much to talk about or anything to connect on, but I was dead wrong.

Honestly, Rhonda is such an amazing individual. She’s quite inspirational and I love that she has wisdom that I need in my journey because she’s travelled so much, and travelling is a desire of mine, but she’s managed to travel and still have stability in you know like her money and in her mind and stuff like that.

So, I’d say that I’m really enjoying it, and this is just in the beginning of knowing her. I’m grateful and I’m sure that we will be able to achieve things together”

Princess

“I am already gaining exposure to new ways of looking at things. My mentee is doing a film course and it was interesting to hear her reaction to a recent show we saw at the Tate”

Rhonda

Greenwich Grandmentors

NEW Project

2024/25



**Snapshot
Data**



28 Volunteers

19 young people

Impact Story

Alex was matched with their mentor at the end of November but has already achieved a great deal. Together, they set four key targets for the year ahead: passing their driving test, enrolling in a business analysis apprenticeship, saving a set amount each month towards moving out, and paying the electricity bill at their mother's house—where they are currently staying—to learn financial responsibility and budgeting.

In January 2025, Alex successfully passed their driving test, celebrating the achievement with their mentor. Although they faced rejection from two apprenticeship applications, they remain determined and are actively exploring new opportunities with their mentor's support. To strengthen their skills and improve their employability, Alex has also started a business analysis course recommended by their mentor.

The £1000 budget provided through DfE funding has enabled Alex to purchase a new laptop, which has been invaluable for their coursework and job applications. It has also allowed them to save more of their own money towards their third and fourth goals. Despite financial challenges, Alex's mentor is helping them explore short-term income options, such as restarting their small nail clinic and tutoring.

Reflecting on their progress, Alex shared:

“I’ve been feeling a lot more confident” and particularly values “talking about things and different options.”

Hounslow Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

20 volunteers

19 young people

from the 11 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

54.5%

were **independent or stable** in sustaining
education, employment and training

↑ an increase from **27.3%** at the start of their mentorship

72.7%

were **independent or stable** in
having their **health needs met**

↑ an increase from **54.5%** at the start of their mentorship

63.6%

were **independent or stable** in their
financial independence

↑ an increase from **36.4%** at the start of their mentorship

90.9%

were **independent or stable**
in their **effective communication skills**

↑ an increase from **27.3%** at the start of their mentorship



Impact Story

Grandmentor Elaine, like her mentee Suzie is also care experienced. Having experienced the care system herself, she understands the challenges first-hand. Her background, combined with her extensive experience in mentoring, made her a perfect match for Suzie, who was looking for direction and new opportunities. When they first met, Suzie lacked confidence, had little structure in her week, and was still engaging in self-harm, but now says she is feeling much better in herself.

One of the biggest transformations in Suzie has been her newfound confidence. “Since mentoring began, I have gained 100% confidence in going out, and it has opened my eyes to new opportunities and how to achieve them,” she shares. Suzie is now part way through her Level 3 Health and Social Care Course with the aspiration of becoming a paramedic.

With Elaine’s guidance, she completed a DBS check, secured a volunteering opportunity at Teddington Riding for Disabled Association, and even had the chance to ride a horse—an experience she never thought possible.

Beyond volunteering, Suzie has also developed practical skills, such as CV writing (a skill she passed on to her Mum), using AI and even got started with a 6-month gym membership.

Mentoring has proven to be a life-changing experience for both mentor and mentee. Through their journey together, Suzie has gained independence, while Elaine has found fulfilment in helping another young person navigate the complexities of life beyond care.

Islington Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

28 volunteers

17 young people

from the 17 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

52.9%

were **independent or stable** in sustaining
education, employment and training

↑ an increase from **47.1%** at the start of their mentorship

64.7%

were **independent or stable** in having
positive relationships and activities

↑ an increase from **35.5%** at the start of their mentorship

52.9%

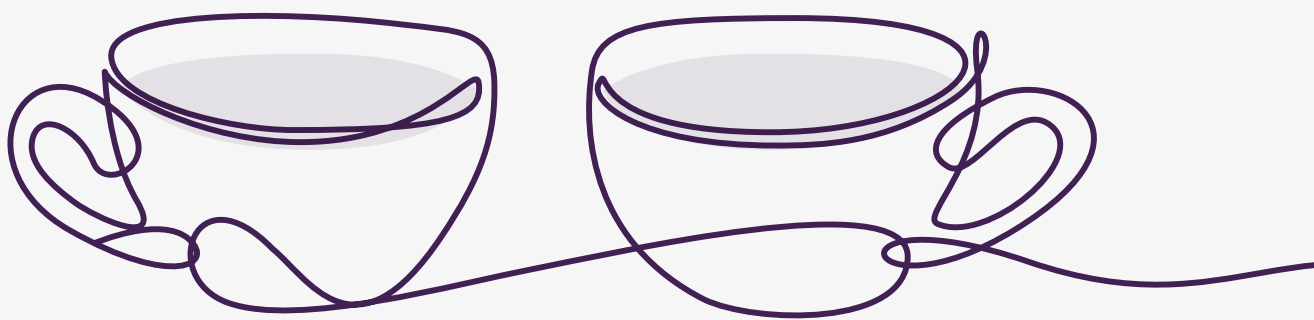
were **independent or stable** in having
access to **housing**

↑ an increase from **41.2%** at the start of their mentorship

58.8%

were **independent or stable**
in their **organisaion and time management skills**

↑ an increase from **5.9%** at the start of their mentorship



Impact Story

Keshav and Andrew have been meeting regularly for two years for coffee and chats, with Andrew supporting Keshav through the ups and downs of life as a refugee in London. Andrew took Keshav to exhibitions that broadened his horizons, helped him manage his bills, supported him in applying for work, and helped him develop his understanding of his new country—taking him to the Old Bailey to observe a court case.

Even during the most chaotic times in Keshav's life, including when he was in a difficult relationship, Andrew remained in contact. Whenever life was tough, Keshav knew he could always meet Andrew for coffee and work out a plan to improve things. For instance, Andrew helped him establish a better routine, encouraging him to go to bed before midnight so he wouldn't miss college the next day.

Andrew also encouraged Keshav to consider sixth form college to pursue his passion for drama and then to apply for university—something Keshav had never thought possible. With Andrew's support, he applied to universities and is receiving offers to study.

Now, Keshav has a job in a takeaway, working three days a week. He has his own flat and is looking forward to starting university.

“

Having an experienced and educated person in my life helped me find my own pattern of life. Being more aware of the opportunities in London. Things I should do and things I should avoid. Most important is getting advice for my relationships, getting rid of toxic relationships was one of the most helpful advice that I got from him. Learning English from an educated English-speaking gentleman was also helpful.

”

Keshav

Lewisham Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

56

volunteers

9

young people

from the 8 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

62.5%

were **independent or stable** in accessing
education and training

↑ an increase from **25%** at the start of their mentorship

50%

were **independent or stable**
in their **wellbeing**

↑ an increase from **12.5%** at the start of their mentorship

87.5%

were **independent or stable** in their
housing stability

↑ an increase from **62.5%** at the start of their mentorship

37.5%

were **independent or stable**
in having **effective communication**

↑ an increase from **12.5%** at the start of their mentorship

Impact Story

Javon was matched with June in August 2023, seeking additional support in his final year as a care leaver. He was eager to connect with someone in person on a regular basis, providing him with consistency and guidance as he navigated his transition to independence.

With June's support, Javon has participated in the Peckham Hope Hack community workshop, contributing to youth-led solutions for a more equal and fair society in memory of Damilola Taylor. He has also developed skills to manage his crochet and knitting business, securing a market stall and a small store. Additionally, June has helped him expand his crochet and knitting community workshops, which have been attended by local residents. Javon successfully graduated from the Read Easy programme and received guidance in applying for a community trustee position. Throughout this journey, June has been a constant source of support, helping Javon transition from the care system to independent living.



“It can feel that you are doing very little but actually just being a constant and a sounding board does make a difference.”
Keshav

“The benefits of having a mentor doing work has been positive because my PA and social worker changed a lot. Having a reliable role model that I don't have to worry about changing and telling my life story to again and again is good.”

Javon

“Working with Grandmentors is making a huge difference to the lives of our care leavers, in terms of their growth and confidence, skills development. Their aspirations are growing and they're seeing more potential in themselves.”

Mana Gondora, Participation Manager, London Borough of Lewisham

Merton Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

18 volunteers

13 young people

from the 5 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

100%

were **independent or stable** in sustaining
education, employment and training

↑ an increase from **60%** at the start of their mentorship

80%

were **independent or stable**
in their **wellbeing**

↑ an increase from **40%** at the start of their mentorship

100%

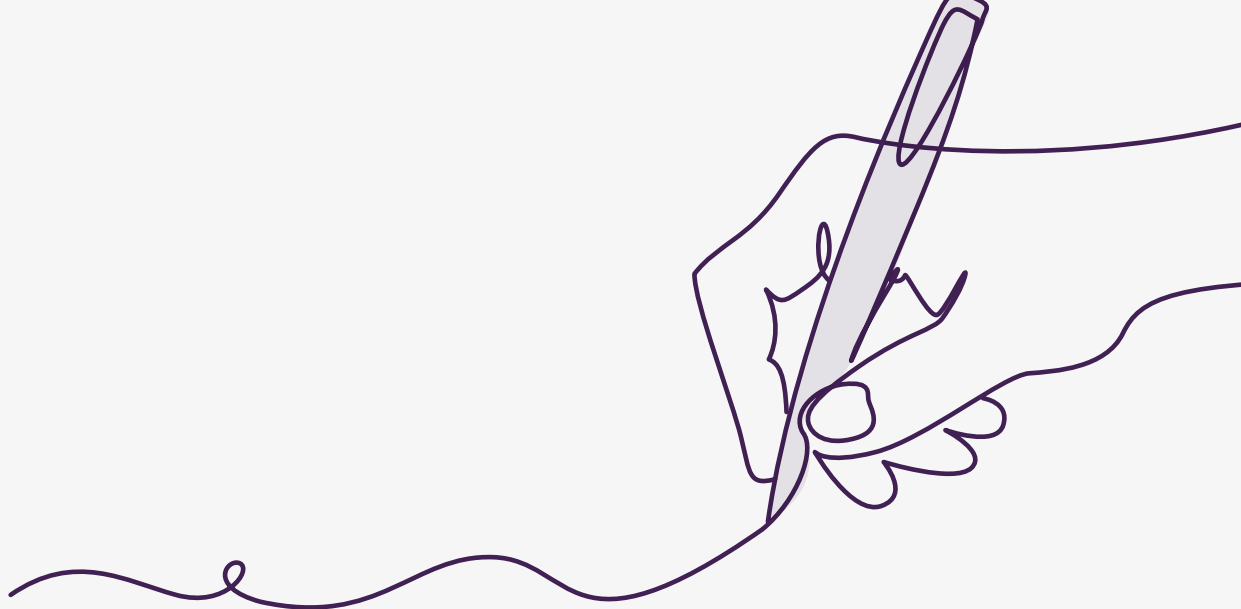
were **independent or stable**
in having access to **housing**

↑ an increase from **60%** at the start of their mentorship

80%

were **independent or stable**
in their **organisation and time management**

↑ an increase from **60%** at the start of their mentorship



Impact Story

In April 2024, Mark was matched as Grandmentor to two sisters, Yara and Seema, who were living together in a one-bedroom temporary accommodation after fleeing their family home.

The sisters required support in gaining employment, training, and applying for benefits. Mark played a crucial role in assisting them by securing a work placement for Seema at a coffee shop. Seema expressed a strong interest in becoming a barista, and through her mentoring journey, she was enrolled in a barista training programme. She plans to complete the training and pursue a career in the industry.

During Mark's mentorship, Yara was able to secure paid employment at a nursery, where she continues to work. She also showed an interest in jewellery-making, prompting Mark to introduce her to a friend who makes and sells jewellery.

The mentoring relationship continued throughout 2024, with regular meetings that helped foster a strong bond between them. As a result of this connection, Yara and Seema have agreed to stay in touch with Mark beyond the formal mentoring programme.

"We have met on a weekly basis near where they are living and have had long conversations, usually with both present. We have talked about their specific family issues, such as how it feels to be separated from parents and siblings; we have also talked about wider issues regarding religion—what is allowed and what is not, what is good and what is bad.

Both can talk about their feelings, which have sometimes been angry, sad, and even hopeless. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to get to know them and to be allowed to share a little in their world."

Mark, Grandmentor

Midlothian Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

12 volunteers

13 young people

from the 6 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

83.3%

were **independent or stable** in sustaining
education, employment and training

↑ an increase from **50%** at the start of their mentorship

66.7%

were **independent or stable** in having
positive relationships and activities

↑ an increase from **33.3%** at the start of their mentorship

100%

were **independent or stable** in their
housing stability

↑ an increase from **33.3%** at the start of their mentorship

50%

were **independent or stable**
in their **organisaion and time management**

↑ an increase from **33.3%** at the start of their mentorship



Impact Story

Mark is a dedicated mentor to Liam, a mentee navigating life changes. Their shared love for football, particularly Hibernian FC, played a central role in fostering a bond that introduced Liam to new experiences and helped him rediscover ways to enjoy life sober. Beyond football, Liam overcame personal challenges such as difficulty eating and maintaining employment.

Early on, Mark noticed Liam's struggle with eating, often skipping meals due to anxiety. To address this, Mark prioritised sharing a meal during each mentoring session, creating a relaxed and supportive environment.

As their sessions progressed, Mark suggested attending a Hibs FC match together—an opportunity for Liam to experience a football game sober

The match was a turning point. They travelled to Easter Road Stadium, enjoying the atmosphere and sharing a meal afterward, reinforcing the importance of both physical well-being and positive experiences. Liam discovered he could enjoy the excitement of a live game without substances, reshaping his perspective.

Mark's mentorship supported other significant milestones for Liam: improved eating habits, the removal of his electronic tag due to positive choices and securing employment. With Mark's support, Liam built a sober, stable life, proving that change was possible.

“

Owen was pleased at the thought of attending the game, as he has not experienced one since parting from his Dad. At the last game he attended, there was a drunken altercation with a police officer, which resulted in a conviction.

”

Mark

Milton Keynes Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

25 volunteers

18 young people

from the 18 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

38.9%

were **independent or stable** in sustaining
education, employment and training

↑ an increase from **33.3%** at the start of their mentorship

88.9%

were **independent or stable** in having
positive relationships and activities

↑ an increase from **50%** at the start of their mentorship

72.2%

were **independent or stable** in their
housing stability

↑ an increase from **50%** at the start of their mentorship

72.2%

were **independent or stable** in their **confidence skills**

↑ an increase from **44.4%** at the start of their mentorship



Impact Story

Charlie, a 21-year-old care leaver, recently achieved a First in Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Mansfield College, Oxford. Determined, focused, and fiercely intelligent, she is also neurodiverse, which makes forming connections challenging and often leads to feelings of loneliness. She tends to see situations in black and white and worries excessively. At times, she masks her autism in social interactions.

Her Grandmentor reassures her that life isn't so black and white and that excessive worry can make challenges seem worse. Together, they have developed a mindset to navigate life's ups and downs.

Charlie recently completed a successful internship with Rolls Royce, earning positive feedback. However, the company noted she is highly self-critical. Her mentor supports her in recognising her intelligence and wonderful personality. They meet weekly, exchanging texts in between, as Charlie prefers not to speak on the phone. Their meetings often involve countryside walks and lunch, and they plan outings like last December's Christmas Market at Waddesdon Manor.

Charlie's mentor says:

“Being Charlie’s mentor is an absolute privilege.” Their discussions on current affairs and personal experiences have been mutually enriching. “She sometimes tells me, ‘I don’t know what I’d do without you.’ In a way, I feel the same.”

Charlie is an advocate for care leavers and intergenerational mentorship. She will soon meet with two care leavers working for the council to help improve support for young people leaving care.

Perth and Kinross Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

33 volunteers

17 young people

from the 7 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

42.9%

were **independent or stable** in
accessing **education and training**

— this has **remained stable** since the start of their mentorship

71.4%

were **independent or stable** in
having their **health needs met**

↑ an increase from **28.6%** at the start of their mentorship

85.7%

were **independent or stable**
in having access to **housing**

↑ an increase from **28.6%** at the start of their mentorship

57.1%

were **independent or stable** in their **confidence skills**

↑ an increase from **28.6%** at the start of their mentorship



Impact Story

Adrian first met Matthew in May 2023. At 16, Matthew was living in long-term foster care, unsure of his future but unhappy with his current situation. Despite this uncertainty, he had shown leadership potential as a senior member of a local Officer Cadet company, guiding younger cadets. His main

interests were gaming and his foster family's dogs, but he had little engagement beyond that.

Having decided to leave school, Matthew had enrolled in a Business Administration course at a local college. Adrian encouraged him to make the most of his studies, but the course failed to inspire him. By March 2024, Matthew lost his place and was asked to leave his foster home. Social services arranged safe shared accommodation, but his future remained uncertain.

At this stage, Adrian and Matthew had built enough trust for honest conversations. "You need to take control of your life," Adrian urged, encouraging Matthew to take ownership of his choices. These discussions, though challenging, gradually shifted Matthew's outlook.

By September, there was a noticeable change. He had chosen a Game Development course, secured temporary work, and was learning programming in preparation. His newfound confidence was evident, and their mentoring relationship evolved into open, constructive discussions.

"The Grandmentors scheme continues to provide a positive impact to all the young people assigned a mentor. The nurturing and support from the mentors have assisted many of our young ones to 'feel better connected' with someone who they begin to trust. Links can then be made with relevant support networks or just talking over a worry or concern helps deescalate situations they may be facing."

Susan Cassidy, Senior Practitioner in the ThroughCare/ AfterCare team Perth and Kinross

"Mentoring is a relationship somewhere between supportive friend, coach, champion and critic. At times you may be called on to be all four at once! Key is to first build trust. Coaching them to see their potential and all the world has to offer is hard, but be patient. When you see them start to achieve, then it all becomes so worthwhile."

Adrian Grandmentor

Southend Grandmentors



Snapshot
Data



13 Volunteers

4 young people

Impact Story

Mark had never considered himself a mentor until he stumbled upon an opportunity with Volunteering Matters a year ago. When he met Gary, a young man balancing work, social services, and a new relationship, he wasn't sure what to expect. But over time, their meetings became something they both looked forward to.

At first, their sessions were structured and formal, held in quiet settings with a clear agenda. But it didn't take long for Mark to realise that a different approach might work better. They soon switched to meeting at a local café with a pool table in the back. There, over omelettes and milkshakes, they played a few games and chatted about life. The game made conversations flow naturally, allowing Gary to open up without feeling like he was in an interview.

Eventually the pair moved on to more practical skills and advice when Gary asked Mark for help updating his CV. He hadn't touched it since college, and together, they worked on refining his experience and structuring it for future opportunities. It was a small but significant moment—Mark saw in Gary a growing confidence, a willingness to prepare for the future.

Mark often reflects on how much he's learned through this experience.

“
You don't realise what some of these young people go through,” he says. “But being there for someone, even just once a month, can make all the difference.”

Suffolk Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

15 volunteers

15 young people

from the 6 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

100%

were **independent or stable** in
accessing **education and training**

↑ an increase from **33.3%** at the start of their mentorship

100%

were **independent or stable** in
having their **health needs met**

↑ an increase from **66.7%** at the start of their mentorship

100%

were **independent or stable** in their
housing stability

↑ an increase from **50%** at the start of their mentorship

66.7%

were **independent or stable** in their **confidence skills**

↑ an increase from **16.7%** at the start of their mentorship



Impact Story

Cade was referred to Grandmentors by his support worker. Cade had become involved with the wrong crowd, which led to him being coerced into criminal activities. His behaviour at home worsened and as a result Cade was placed into care. Cade's experiences had shaped his mindset and behaviour – as such he developed a lack of trust in authority figures and became frustrated with the criminal justice system. Resulting in him feeling misunderstood and isolated.

At the beginning of November 2024, Cade was matched with a mentor. That first meeting took place in an informal setting and Cade was supported by his support worker and the Grandmentors project coordinator to make him feel more comfortable. This first meeting was a gentle introduction to the programme, allowing both the mentor and Cade to build rapport and establish trust. Cade came to the meeting with a positive mindset and was determined to turn his life around.

One of the key areas where Cade showed strong determination was in his career aspirations, particularly his goal of securing apprenticeship to become a plumber. Graham and Cade are currently working together on goals and targets to help Cade achieve this.

Since the match, Cade's relationship with his Mum has improved and he has returned home. He has distanced himself from those individuals who were leading him astray. His resilience is growing and he is regaining hope for the future.

**Graham describes the mentoring journey as
'An enriching experience for both the mentee and mentor'**

Surrey Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

15 volunteers

9 young people

from the 13 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

46.2%

were **independent or stable** in sustaining
education, employment and training

↑ an increase from **38.5%** at the start of their mentorship

69.2%

were **independent or stable** in their **wellbeing**

↑ an increase from **53.8%** at the start of their mentorship

46.2%

were **independent or stable** in their
financial independence

— a decrease from **61.5%** at the start of their mentorship

69.2%

were **independent or stable** in their **confidence skills**

↑ an increase from **15.4%** at the start of their mentorship



Impact Story

Kristina and Grayson were matched in January 2023. Grayson was referred by his therapist as he needed the support of a role model. He was experiencing social isolation and was hoping to eventually find work but due to his mental health, was struggling to do so.

Grayson has a keen interest in Astrology and Spirituality and so does Kristina. The two have bonded through this shared interest. Kristina and Grayson have been meeting regularly with Grayson always being punctual and never missing a meeting. They usually meet in a coffee shop and communicate regularly outside of these meetings via text/WhatsApp.

In the 2 years that they have been matched, Grayson has experienced many highs and lows. Highs included obtaining and sustaining a job. Grayson has grown in confidence and even managed to quit taking cannabis. Kristina has been a constant for him throughout all of this.

Kristina has supported in Grayson with identifying what support is available to him and helping him tap into this. She has recently shared information about the 'Right to Choose' scheme which allows adults to access ADHD assessments. Kristina also continues to encourage Grayson to access talking therapies through the NHS.

Kristina and Grayson have worked incredibly well together and continue to do so. Grayson completely trusts Kristina and knows that she is always there to signpost and answer any queries.

Telford and Wrekin Grandmentors

NEW Project

2024/25



**Snapshot
Data**



8 Volunteers

6 young people

Impact Story

David, a newly appointed Grandmentor, has recently started mentoring Cara, a young person transitioning out of care. Reflecting on his experience, David shared:

“I have only been a Grandmentor for a few weeks, so I’m still learning a lot. I have been introduced to a young person who I would never have met in my normal life. The process of getting to know each other has been fascinating, and I feel so privileged to be trusted with helping them on their journey through leaving care and into adult life. Volunteering Matters have set me up with all the training I needed, but nothing quite prepares you for the real-life challenges that young people in this situation are faced with.”

Over several meetings, David supported Cara through challenges, including navigating employment opportunities and exploring college enrolment. Cara, who recently moved in with her nan, Paula, has expressed uncertainty about her future plans. She is eager to find work and explore volunteering opportunities, particularly in animal care. Together, they have worked on her CV and identified potential places to apply.

Cara’s living arrangements have provided her with stability, though she still struggles with sleep and financial concerns. David has been helping her process the necessary forms for transitioning to adulthood, including discussions about educational goals and financial independence. Their meetings often include general conversations to build trust, alongside more practical planning.

David remains committed to supporting Cara as she faces the complexities of leaving care, offering guidance and encouragement for her next steps in life.

Warwickshire Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

36 volunteers

25 young people

from the 28 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

71.4%

were **independent or stable** in sustaining
education, employment and training

— a decrease from **78.6%** at the start of their mentorship

75%

were **independent or stable** in their **wellbeing**

↑ an increase from **67.9%** at the start of their mentorship

85.7%

were **independent or stable** in their
housing stability

↑ an increase from **78.6%** at the start of their mentorship

82.1%

were **independent or stable** in having
effective communication skills

↑ an increase from **60.7%** at the start of their mentorship



Impact Story

Hana, a young refugee, has been supported by her mentor, Karen, for over a year. Their relationship has been built on trust, understanding, and mutual respect, allowing Hana to thrive in her personal and academic journey. Initially, Hana faced numerous challenges, including adapting to life in the UK, navigating her education, and working towards independence. Karen has been a consistent source of encouragement and guidance throughout this period.

Together, they have worked on various goals, from improving Hana's English skills to helping her explore career aspirations in social care. Karen introduced Hana to local dance classes and community groups, which fostered her confidence and sense of belonging. A memorable highlight of their mentoring journey was their trip to an Eritrean restaurant in Coventry, where Hana delighted in the opportunity to enjoy food from her culture. She described the experience as a meaningful connection to her roots and expressed

gratitude for Karen's thoughtful gesture.

Karen also supported Hana during critical milestones, such as passing entry-level exams, attending college, and preparing for a move to independent living. Her patient approach and personalised support have been transformative for Hana. Whether assisting with homework, accompanying her to cultural events, or simply listening during challenging moments, Karen has become a trusted ally. Hana reflected on their relationship, saying:

“She’s a nice person, she understands me very well, and she helps me with my homework. Really, when I talk to her I feel my family is here, and I’m glad you know her. Thank you so much.”

This mentoring partnership highlights the profound impact of sustained, empathetic support in empowering young refugees to overcome adversity and build brighter futures. Hana's growth is a testament to her resilience and Karen's unwavering dedication as a mentor.

Wolverhampton Grandmentors

Snapshot
Data

29 volunteers

29 young people

from the 23 young people that have completed an impact tracker

01st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

43.5%

were **independent or stable** in sustaining
education, employment and training

↑ an increase from **30.4%** at the start of their mentorship

47.8%

were **independent or stable** in their **wellbeing**

↑ an increase from **26.1%** at the start of their mentorship

60.9%


were **independent or stable** in their
financial independence

↑ an increase from **39.1%** at the start of their mentorship

56.5%

were **independent or stable** in their **confidence skills**

↑ an increase from **8.7%** at the start of their mentorship



Upon the 50th Anniversary of the creation of
the County of West Midlands

**50 FOR
WM 50**

Celebration of Vol

Awarde

Impact Story

Chris, a former headteacher, retired in 2019 with plans to travel. However, the COVID-19 lockdown changed those plans. With 43 years in education, Chris felt compelled to give back and found Grandmentors online, drawn by the opportunity to support young people in care.

“
What motivated me the most
was the chance to utilise my
skills, particularly empathy, to
assist young people who may be
more vulnerable than others.
”

In September 2020, Chris was matched with twins, Maria and Anna, who requested joint mentoring. Initially, due to lockdown restrictions, their interactions were limited to brief phone calls. The twins were hesitant to appear on screen, so when restrictions eased, they met in a local park, marking the start of a stronger connection.

Originally, the focus was on gaining volunteer experience and preparing CVs. However, as their challenges with mental and physical health became evident, mentoring shifted towards building self-esteem and trust. Chris provided emotional support, helped them navigate medical appointments, and encouraged a healthier lifestyle.

As the twins live apart, loneliness is a concern. Regular meetings and weekly texts help ease their transition towards independence, especially as Local Authority support ends at 25. Chris also assists with practical life skills like budgeting and completing forms.

Despite challenges, the twins bring joy to Chris's life. Their bond is built on trust, patience, and understanding. One moment stands out—while shopping, they said, “You are better than a mum.” This sentiment underscores the impact of consistent, unbiased support. Chris encourages others over 50 to consider becoming a Grandmentor, recognising the profound difference it can make.

“

We built up a strong and trusting relationship through regular meetings. I enjoyed our wide-ranging and mostly amusing chats over coffee and snacks. It was a learning and rewarding process for me as well as Zia's enthusiasm in achieving her goals made the match extremely worthwhile for me.

”

Angus, Mentor

The impact of

In addition to those supported by Grandmentors also has an impact on the community by giving their time and skills in

“

I think the most important thing was increasing my knowledge and understanding of refugees - what helps and hampers their personal journeys.

”

Jan, Mentor

“

I'm grateful to VM for the opportunity to have met such extraordinary people I hope they have gained as much from this experience as I have!

”

John, Mentor

on volunteers

supported by the programme,
impact on the volunteers who
in supporting young people.

“

The challenge was great but I'm grateful for the challenge' - Being a Mentor for Grandmentors has been both an eye-opening experience and a rewarding challenge. A challenge as it enabled and pushed me to challenge myself in ways I had not anticipated. Being a mentor made me look back on my own personal growth, it made me revisit my journey as a care leaver; to look back and see where I have been and what I have learned along the way and seeing myself through the eyes of my mentee was a humbling experience. Grandmentors has not only helped me to guide my mentee but has also given me the confidence and has inspired me to continue to progress and embrace new opportunities.

”

Paula, Mentor

A decorative graphic featuring several colored circles (green, purple, grey) and dashed lines connecting them, creating a network-like pattern in the background.

“

For me, I learned about the experiences of a UASC [unaccompanied asylum seeking children] and I have enjoyed supporting E very much.

”

Henrietta, Mentor

“

Volunteering as a Grandmentor has been a truly transformative experience. The impact of this work is profound - helping young people gain confidence, achieve their goals; and develop skills for independence. It is a privilege to be part of a program that makes such a tangible difference in young people's lives.

”

Rav, Mentor

“

Mentoring a young person is so rewarding in so many ways. We're at an age where we have more time on our hands and have had more experience. We have children they've grown up, and it's lovely to give something to a young person. For me I've recently been poorly... he's been on that journey with me getting better. What's been lovely is we've built up this bond, he's been very caring thoughtful by text and by chats. It's nice to see him coming into this person that he is. I feel like I've been a little part of that.

”

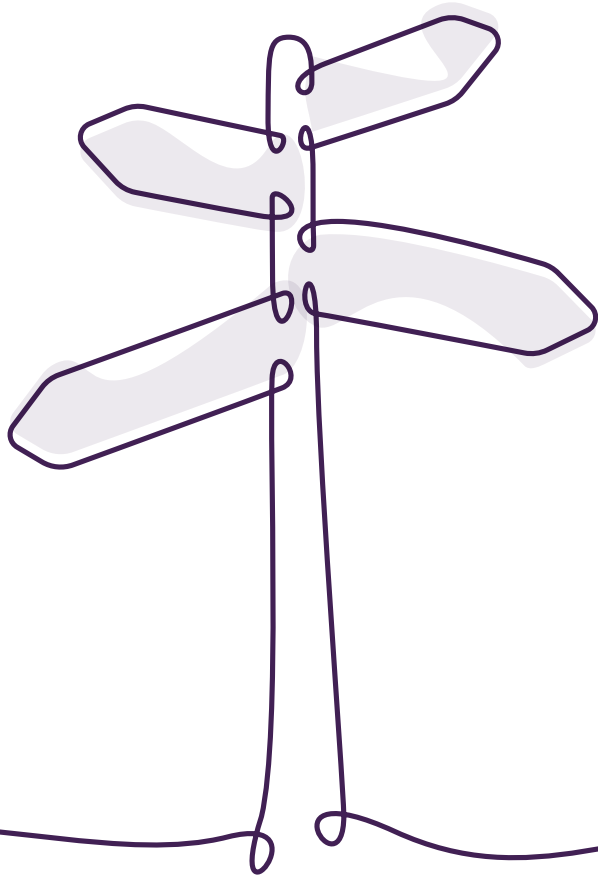
Jo, Mentor

“

I think I have got at least as much out of being a part of the scheme as my Mentee; I have learned so much about the life of a young care leaver and refugee. We have continued to meet since the end of our time in the scheme

”

Annelise, Mentor



Looking Forward

The Grandmentors Programme exemplifies Volunteering Matters' approach to supporting communities to lead and sustain their own change. Looking forward, we aim to continue to work with local partners and charity partners to ensure that care experienced young people have the futures they deserve, focusing on the issues that matter most to them. We will also continue to support volunteers to navigate their roles as Grandmentors and to get the best of out the experience for themselves too.

Setting our sights

Volunteering Matters has set our sights on the future with a **five-year strategy**, due to be unveiled in 2025. The charity is embarking on an **ambitious journey** to **enhance** its **impact** across the UK. This new phase prioritises **diversifying partnerships** and **funding streams**, **strengthening Government connections**, and **solidifying** its role at the **heart of civil society** sector development.

We will continue to **enable people** on our programmes to **directly engage** with both **local and national leadership**, ensuring the voices of lived experience influence national and local strategies. Aligned with the DCMS National Youth Strategy, Grandmentors creates spaces for **care-experienced young people** to **thrive** through **community connection**, **leadership development**, and **consistent, trusted relationships**.

Future of volunteering

Volunteering Matters will help to **shape the national dialogue** about the future of volunteering. **Working with partners across the UK**, we will continue to lead the **#iWill Movement** making sure **Youth Social Action** is something **everyone** can take part in. As co-chair of the Vision for Volunteering, the charity will reimagine how **volunteering can adapt to meet the needs of the future**. We will also continue to contribute to initiatives such as **Shaping the Future for Volunteering** and the **Big Help Out**. And in Scotland, to strongly support the Volunteering **Action Plan**, which aims to enable everyone to volunteer throughout their lives.

Relationships

Relationships will continue to remain **at the heart of the Grandmentors** programme, with none so important than that of the **volunteer with the care** experienced young person, **working together to create new futures**.



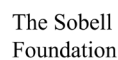
Peta Foxall CBE
Chair of Trustees



Amanda Naylor OBE
Chief Executive Officer

A special thank you

We would like to say thank you to the following funders and supporters of the Grandmentors Programme:



“For the past 15 years, we’ve been proud to support this exceptional mentoring programme, which has transformed the lives of care-experienced young people. We’ve witnessed firsthand the difference this programme makes, not just in empowering individuals, but in strengthening communities. Supporting this initiative has been one of the most impactful investments we’ve made, and we encourage others to join us in ensuring its continued success and growth. Together, we can create a brighter future for care-experienced young people.”

JECDA Foundation

A special thank you

for the support from players of People’s Postcode Lottery, awarding funds from Postcode Support Trust, which has supported our work across England, Scotland and Wales.



VOLUNTEERING MATTERS