

# start

2022  
REVIEW

Starting Point :: Impact Report



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# Starting Point – 2022 Impact Report

*Offering young people a starting point for a brighter and more hopeful future.*

We are passionate about enabling young people who face disadvantage to make lasting change in their lives. We believe this is possible by: building long term relationships, journeying alongside young people, creating meaningful opportunities and equipping the local community.

## AT A GLANCE

### Sam Lloyd – Starting Point Project Director

In 2022 we continued to mentor local young people, through local volunteers, supported by the local community. We believe this approach ensures that young people build meaningful and consistent relationships which creates a platform for long term change.

Last year presented many challenges for young people including: the effects of the cost-of-living crisis, an increase in mental health struggles, and a lack of support services and opportunities available. Listening to young people and adapting our support to meet their needs and aspirations has been essential both in 1:1 support and in creating additional opportunities. We have intentionally sought to develop our approach in co-production, creating safe spaces and empowering young people in decision making. Throughout the year we have worked closely with partners such as local authorities, the police, schools, and the NHS as we seek to ensure that young people have the relational and long-term support in place to see positive outcomes in their lives and the wider community.




**SAM**  
Starting Point  
Project Director



**ROMY**  
Programmes  
Manager

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Please note: all links within this pdf are clickable

# 2022 In Numbers

**356**

Total Young People

**25**

Partnerships

**6**

Young person led creative projects

**162**

Volunteers

We continue to reach those who are often hardest to reach and considered difficult to engage.

Of the young people we mentored in 2022:

**81%**

Reported mental health struggles

**35%**

Identified as having learning difficulties or a disability

**62%**

identify as male

**33%**

Have low or no qualifications

**36%**

identify as female

**41%**

Have a diagnosis of ASD

**26%**

Have a diagnosis of ADHD

**10%**

Have experience of the care system

**30%**

are from an ethnic minority background

# Starting Point Mentoring

**MENTORING YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11-25 WHO FACE DISADVANTAGE.**

## SUMMARY

Throughout 2022, we supported 105 young people through the support of 89 volunteer mentors, who journeyed alongside their mentee, supporting and equipping them to see lasting positive change in their lives.

Tailoring support to each individuals' unique needs and aspirations, mentoring focuses on helping young people to

- Attain and sustain education, employment, or training
- Engage positively in education
- Steer away from crime, violence, and risk-taking behaviour

Additional to these mentoring needs, young people have also faced significant challenges

with their wellbeing. We equip our mentors to support young people in this area through training and ongoing supervision. By providing a consistent role model, we have enabled young people to see an increase in their confidence, self-esteem, and feeling more comfortable within themselves within themselves.

Throughout the year we placed an emphasis on integration into the wider community as this ensures sustained positive change and provides a supportive network around each young person. Our mentors provided practical support to aid young people to identify and access positive opportunities, activities, and support groups. Encouragement in this area enabled young people who had previously been socially isolated to become more connected with their community and build positive relationships with peers.

## In Numbers

Total Young People: **105**  
Total Mentors: **89**



**GEORGIA**  
Community Mentor

## IN ADDITION // The Hub

The Hub, our under 18s drop-in social group, started in July 2022. The Hub gives space for young people to come along and play some games, do some art, or just come and chill out. We encourage the young people to come as they are, and just have some fun!

We developed The Hub as we know young people are talking about wanting to have safe places to spend time in with adults they trust outside of school. We also identified that young people could benefit from connecting with other young people, and improving on their social skills.

The Hub is also a space for young people to continue accessing support, when transitioning from their 1:1 weekly mentoring. It gives them the space to still access Starting Point, and chat to the team if they would like to do so, once they have achieved the goals within their 1:1 mentoring.



**100%** of young people who attended The Hub in 2022 said it helps them feel more confident in interacting with other young people.

**59**

not in education, employment, or training

**29**

not engaging positively with school

**17**

at risk of crime/violence/risk-taking behaviour

**81%**

reported mental health struggles

**65%**

YP accessed education, employment, or training

**75%**

of young people not engaging positively in school saw an improvement in their engagement

**81%**

felt they have healthier friendships

**75%**

of young people grew in confidence

## MIA'S STORY\*

\*Name changed to protect the Young Person's identity.

When Mia (17) first came to Starting Point she did not enjoy college, which caused her to be socially isolated as she struggled to attend regularly. Mia had anxiety around talking to new people, as well as with the uncertainty of what each day at college would bring. Mia set mentoring goals to increase her attendance at college, build on her relationships, and improve her confidence when talking with new people and within herself.

At the beginning of her mentoring journey, Mia was considerably shy and found it difficult to have confidence when speaking to her mentor. To grow their mentoring relationship and built trust, Mia and her mentor focused on meeting regularly and local to Mia's house. Over time, Mia grew in confidence and found it easy to share things with her mentor - one time asking her mentor to talk with her to her Mum about her mental health. This led to her completing a counselling referral, something she hadn't been keen on in the past. Approaching the summer before the new academic year, Mia and her mentor researched courses she could study as Mia was optimistic at the potential of choosing what she studies, which was not the case the year prior, as she was unsure of her interests and asked mum to choose a course for her. Mia chose which course she would like to study, and looked at the course in depth in her mentoring sessions to prepare herself for what was expected in the upcoming year.

Mia has now attended college every day this academic year, and has made friends on the course that she is meeting up with socially outside of college. Mia now enjoys what she studies, and is glad that she chose mentoring as she never thought that she would enjoy education, or have the confidence to make new friends, both of which she has achieved.

**SHE NEVER THOUGHT SHE WOULD HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS**

## Looking Forward

In this upcoming year, Starting Point Mentoring will continue meeting the increasing demand as the need for long-term support continues to grow. One way we are doing this is through working in partnership with other services in the local community, to best support young people to achieve their goals. Working in collaboration with others in the community allows us to link up support, to benefit young people through creating individual opportunities to continually tailor mentoring to fit their different circumstances, passions and goals.

We aim to expand The Hub next year, with the potential of adding an additional group for young people who are over 18 and could benefit from a safe environment to socialise and meet with young people of a similar age.

We will be expanding our offer of creative opportunities through a range of avenues, including... We also hope to develop a 'Peer Leader' programme based on learnings from our work with care experienced young people, expanding the programme to mentees who would like to improve their confidence and develop leadership skills. Young people will gain work experience through completing training, and assisting the running of our social groups. Through these opportunities, we aim to create additional outlets for young people to grow their skills and confidence, helping them work towards thriving in employment, education, their wellbeing, and safety in the community.

**"I FOUND THE HUB TO BE HELPFUL IN HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH PEOPLE AND MAKING A PLAN WITHIN MYSELF"**

# A&E Navigators

PROVIDING A RELATIONAL JOURNEY FROM A YOUNG PERSON'S MOMENT OF CRISIS TOWARDS THRIVING WITHIN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

## SUMMARY

Starting Point Navigators in 2022 continued to provide young people in crisis a listening ear, moment of connection and help to access support in their wider community.

Throughout the year we were able to place 21 volunteer Navigators in A&E for 2 shifts a week, supporting 60 young people. We saw a slight increase in referrals in comparison to the 6 months of delivery in 2021, despite a slight drop in referrals between June to August.

We also widened the criteria to all admissions aged 11-25 as it is only through a conversation with the Navigators that we can identify if and what support in the community the young person needs. This has allowed us to support young people who could clearly benefit from additional support but would have slipped through the previous criteria. The widening of the referral criteria also highlighted the need for ongoing relational support for those who have been admitted due to struggles with their mental health e.g., self-harm or drug overdose.



In the final quarter of 2022, additional grant funding was secured which has enabled us to commit to hiring a full time A&E and Community Navigator for 2023. This will ensure that we have the needed capacity to increase the number of Navigator shifts within A&E and provide more support within the community – such as long-term mentoring.

“VOLUNTEERING A SMALL AMOUNT OF TIME... HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE.”



## In Numbers

Total Young People supported by a Navigator: **60**

**30%**

admitted due to drugs/alcohol

**25%**

admitted with an injury (including with a weapon)

**98%**

are receiving information about support in the wider community that can be accessed outside A&E

**30%**

admitted due to self-harm or suicidal ideation

**100%**

found it helpful having a conversation with a Navigator whilst in hospital

THE SIMPLICITY OF MEETING EVERY WEEK WAS HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT

## KIERA'S STORY\*

\*Name changed to protect the Young Person's identity.

Kiera (17) was admitted to A&E following an overdose in early 2022. After being discharged, Kiera met with the Starting Point A&E Coordinator, and it became clear that being matched to a female mentor for longer-term support would be beneficial. After meeting with a Navigator, Kiera identified she felt more optimistic about the future, had increased in confidence, and felt closer to and more interested in others.

Kiera was then matched to a female volunteer mentor with Starting Point. The mentor had studied at university and now works as a solicitor. The match was tailored to Kiera's unique needs and aspirations as she was coming up to starting her second year of A-levels, which was causing her worry and she was also studying law. Her mentor gave space for Kiera to talk about what was worrying her and came up with what a realistic study/work/social life/rest balance would be.

Kiera's mentor asked the Starting Point team if she should try and understand more about the reasons that led to Kiera being admitted to hospital earlier in the year. She was curious if this would be a way of helping Kiera not be re-admitted for the same reason. However, after having a conversation with the coordinator, she understood that it was the simplicity of meeting every week for a coffee, a chat, and having clear goals to work towards, that was having a positive impact for Kiera. They have been meeting now for nearly a year and since being matched, Kiera has not been re-admitted to A&E, is coping with the challenges of Year 13, and has started a new job at a local supermarket.

## Looking Forward

As we head into 2023, we are looking forward to welcoming our A&E Navigator Coordinator starting in February. The increased capacity will enable us to connect with more young people outside of A&E, which we know has the biggest impact. Our focus will also be on recruiting more Volunteer Navigators as this will allow us to add more shifts and increase our presence in A&E and other urgent care departments.

"THE NAVIGATORS PROGRAMME HAS REALLY HELPED ME... I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER, THE PROGRAMME HAS REALLY HELPED ME COME A LONG WAY ALREADY."



# School Navigators

PROVIDING A RELATIONAL JOURNEY FROM A YOUNG PERSON'S PLACE OF EDUCATION TOWARDS THRIVING WITHIN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

## SUMMARY

Since Starting Point began working more closely with local secondary schools, it became clear that schools needed more support for young people struggling to engage positively. This was particularly true for young people starting to show signs of disengaging, as they may not meet thresholds for support with other services.

At the start of the 22/23 academic year, Starting Point were commissioned by the Violence Reduction Unit, part of Thames Valley Police, to meet 100 'at risk' young people by Easter 2023.

# SCHOOL

We were able to recruit two new Schools & Community Mentors – Emma and Fran – to cover 4 schools across Reading. The School Navigators programme is reaching young people who are at risk of crime, violence, and risk-taking behaviour, however we are also connecting with young people who are disengaged in school, for example receiving multiple detentions, fixed term exclusions, and those with low attendance, as these often correlate with an increased risk of being a victim or perpetrator of crime/violence.

Emma and Fran reach young people by meeting with them in school for an initial few sessions, then journey with them outside of school to connect them with longer term support. This could be helping them join a club or being matched to a local mentor at Starting Point.



## In Numbers

Autumn Term 2022  
Total Young People: **22**

**13**  
disengaged in education

**6**  
at risk of exclusion

**3**  
at risk of crime/  
violence

**94%**  
said they found it  
beneficial meeting with  
a Navigator in school

**FRAN**  
Schools and  
Community Mentor



**EMMA**  
Schools and  
Community Mentor



HE IS LOOKING FORWARD  
TO BEING MENTORED  
TO HELP HIM SUSTAIN  
POSITIVE CHOICES

## JAMES' STORY\*

\*Name changed to protect the Young Person's identity.

James was enrolled on School Navigators by his school for being at risk of exclusion. After getting to know him, sessions focused on the choices he was making in school and what he could do differently. James is also interested in design, so Emma was able to connect him with Starting Point's creative work experience which he comes to every week. This helps him gain creative skills and gives him a positive activity to do alongside school. Emma has now met with James outside of school and he is looking forward to being matched to a local mentor to help him sustain positive choices and think about the future.

# SCHOOL

## Looking Forward

We know that long-term support and being connected to trusted adults is so often what enables young people to make and sustain positive change. Therefore a priority for Emma and Fran over the rest of the academic year is meeting with young people outside of school and connecting them with activities and role models in their local community. Looking forward, we hope to continue being able to offer this support fully funded to schools and seeing the positive impact it is having in the lives of young people.

"I FOUND MENTORING VERY  
HELPFUL... IT HELPED TO  
BOOST MY CONFIDENCE IN  
SCHOOL WHERE I  
STRUGGLE MOST"



# Action Media

## A YOUNG PERSON LED MEDIA INITIATIVE PROVIDING MEANINGFUL WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY.



### SUMMARY

In 2022 Action Media provided 69 young people with the opportunity to work on real world creative media projects in conjunction with experienced media professionals and mentors.

Action Media supports young people who often struggle to find suitable work experience. Sessions help them prepare for future employment by building their confidence and teamwork skills, developing communication skills, and helping them understand the workplace.

Our creative projects with the Action Media crew included a look into the effects of COVID19 and how it has affected young people – [actionmedia.uk/mtg](https://actionmedia.uk/mtg) – and a big project about learning and how young people engage with education – [actionmedia.uk/renew](https://actionmedia.uk/renew)

In response to feedback from local young people and local schools, in February '22 we began offering Action Media as Alternative Provision for schools. Engaging with those on the edge of exclusion, those struggling to engage with school, and those with poor attendance and behavioural difficulties, our Alternative Provision sessions give students the chance to have their opinions heard and shape local strategy, alongside building their confidence.

Our first Alternative Provision project with this cohort captured young people's responses to a council strategy on keeping safe from harm, as well as giving them the opportunity to learn skills such as photography and design. It was so well received that we have since had two groups per week. Responding to this strategy, the Thames Valley Police Violence Reduction Unit have provided Starting Point young people with the opportunity of a youth led Amnesty Art project. The Amnesty Art project supports young people to work alongside an artist to design a local art installation that will raise awareness of the impact of knife crime.

Link to strategy [startingpoint.org.uk/uncategorized/the-young-voices-project/](https://startingpoint.org.uk/uncategorized/the-young-voices-project/)

Amnesty Art website [readingamnesty.art](https://readingamnesty.art)

### IN ADDITION // Creative research

Over the summer we were commissioned to conduct, and creatively present, a research project into the cultural offerings in the Coley area. [startingpoint.org.uk/coley\\_project/](https://startingpoint.org.uk/coley_project/)

We also continued engaging with young people to achieve Art Awards.



### In Numbers

Total Young People participated: **69**

**45**

young people (11–16) not in engaging in education

**13**

young people (16–25) not in education or employment

**20%**

have learning difficulties or a neurodiverse condition

**45%**

are from an ethnic minority background

**6**

creative projects

**10**

Arts Awards achieved

**100%**

said they would recommend Action Media to a friend

THE CREATIVE  
SMALL GROUP WORK  
AT STARTING POINT  
HELPED HIM A LOT

## MAX'S STORY

\*Name changed to protect the Young Person's identity.

Max (13) had been out of school for a couple of years since COVID, due to anxiety. He joined the Action Media alternative provision. He didn't warm to the team dynamic and didn't naturally gel with the others in the group. He had greater flexibility in his timetable and we were able to offer him extra time at the end of the session to stay on and work towards his Arts Award alone. Technically minded, he enjoyed learning new things and began to feel more comfortable in expressing and understanding his opinions. Over the term he became more confident and contributed well to the project, and stuck it out till the end. During the final session he went around helping out other members of the group in finishing their Arts Award portfolios. He was also able to accompany us to the launch of the strategy project at the Council Chambers.

He has since started studying at an alternative education provider where he is doing well. His father says: 'He's a lot less anxious and attending regularly. I feel that the small group work at Starting Point helped him a lot and also helped to show the authorities that he was very willing and able to engage given the right educational setting for him.'

# CREATIVE

## Looking Forward

We hope to continue working with local partners to deliver on real-world creative briefs that give opportunities for the young people to develop their skills. Also, through the Young Voices project, we will be enabling the young people of Reading to help shape lasting change and influence the local authority, and other key local decision-makers, on their strategies and plans that directly affect the community.

“ACTION MEDIA HAS  
REIGNITED MY PASSION  
FOR CREATIVITY”



# Starting Point Milton Keynes



## PROVIDING MENTORING AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES IN MILTON KEYNES.

### SUMMARY

In 2022 we mentored 23 young people in Milton Keynes through the support of 19 local volunteer mentors. The majority of the referrals were made by mental health services including CAMHS and many of the young people struggled with social anxiety resulting in social isolation, exaggerated by the pandemic. In response to this, mentors were trained on areas such as active listening and understanding empathy verse sympathy. This, alongside equipping the mentors with mentoring resources, enabled the mentors to support the young people with social-emotional development. Our mentors were able to offer weekly 1:1 support, providing a listening ear and building trust with their mentee, followed by exploring practical steps into education, employment, or training.

### In Numbers

Total Young People: **23**

Total Mentors: **19**

**65%**

accessed employment or education

**100%**

saw an increase in feeling more optimistic about the future

**80%**

said they'd experienced growth in confidence

## JASMINE'S STORY\*

\*Name changed to protect the Young Person's identity.

Jasmine (19) was referred to Starting Point after leaving MK College with no qualifications. Studying in an academic environment had always been a challenge for Jasmine as she was battling with many of the challenges impacted by her diagnosis of ADHD and ASD. She was working 16 hours a week but "wanted more out of life". Upon being referred, Jasmine expressed that she was constantly low in mood and found it difficult to go to work. When she began her mentoring journey, Jasmine expressed that she wanted to do accounting. Jasmine's mentor (who is in finance) was able to support Jasmine to attain her GCSE in Maths by providing her tutoring using past questions, as Jasmine faced the barrier of her age making it difficult to go to college. Jasmine was receptive to this and worked hard and now says she feels she is in a "far better place than before". This was made possible by the time Jasmine's mentor put into supporting her with her wellbeing and self-belief. This acted as a foundation for the practical steps towards becoming an accountant.

## Looking Forward

We believe in the power of locally led projects and therefore are currently working with local partners in Milton Keynes to explore what options there are to ensure local ownership of mentoring. Therefore, Starting Point will no longer deliver mentoring in Milton Keynes from April. We are supporting mentors and young people to ensure that they have access to ongoing support going forward.

# Starting Point Swindon



## PROVIDING MENTORING AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES IN SWINDON.

### SUMMARY

In 2022 we mentored 30 young people in Swindon through the support of 15 local volunteer mentors. Mentoring continued to take place at different locations across Swindon meeting young people at a café of their choice close to their home. This has made a significant difference in the engagement of young people, particularly those that are socially anxious and rarely leave the house. Meeting somewhere young people feel comfortable helps build confidence and creates a sense of ownership in mentoring that may not be the case if support was offered in offices, an education environment or community centres.

As part of this year's mentoring, we worked closely with Fernbrook College, Swindon Borough Council and the Wiltshire PCC to provide mentoring for young people leaving education without a positive destination. We were able to meet with young people in their place of education (including exam results day) as well as out in the community. Mentoring has focused primarily on accessing and sustaining college/education placements. However, some have received practical support to enable them to access employment such as CV writing and job applications.

### In Numbers

Young people mentored: **30**  
Total Mentors: **15**

**53%**

had been removed from mainstream education

**46%**

accessed employment or education

**80%**

saw an increase in feeling ready for work

## JESS' STORY\*

\*Name changed to protect the Young Person's identity.

Jess left EOTAS with a college course set up but was unsure whether she wanted to attend due to her social anxiety. Jess had found it difficult in mainstream education and was very worried about interacting with others and thought college might 'feel like school'. Jess did not have the confidence to meet with anyone from Starting Point out in the community, so she initially had regular phone conversations with her mentor. Jess spoke to her mentor every week without fail and began to trust her mentor so much so that she took the big step to meet at a coffee shop close to her house. Meeting regularly at this coffee shop, her mentor provided a listening ear for Jess as well as providing practical support that focused on overcoming barriers to accessing her college course. Jess enrolled on a beauty course at Swindon College and, despite nearly dropping out, is now really enjoying it and is committed to staying at the college long term. When asking Jess how she found having a mentor she said, "It's helped me a lot, knowing that there's someone to talk to!"

## Looking Forward

We believe in the power of locally led projects and therefore are currently working with local partners in Swindon to explore what options there are to ensure local ownership of mentoring. Therefore, Starting Point will no longer deliver mentoring in Swindon from June. We are supporting mentors and young people to ensure that they have access to ongoing support going forward.

# THANK YOU!

Our impact and achievements in 2022 would not have been possible without our amazing team of volunteers, supporters, and relationships in the local community.

We are looking forward to another year of developing new and existing partnerships as we explore exciting collaborations and creative fundraising opportunities.

Our priority is to further future-proof Starting Point so that we can continue to grow as we journey alongside young people who face disadvantage.

## Volunteer mentors

Our volunteer mentors and navigators are invaluable to the Starting Point team and the work we do.

The time, energy and commitment they give to young people is essential to ensuring young people make and sustain positive change in their lives. Thank you to all our volunteers for being that consistent and trusted adult in the lives of the young people we support.

As our referrals continue to rise we are always on the lookout for new mentors and A&E Navigators. If you know anyone that would like to [GET INVOLVED](#), please get in touch

*"OUR VOLUNTEERS PLAY SUCH A VITAL ROLE IN SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE AND GUIDING THEM TOWARDS A MORE POSITIVE FUTURE. I FIND THAT BEING ABLE TO GUIDE THE VOLUNTEERS THROUGH THEIR RECRUITMENT JOURNEY AND PLAYING MY PART IN SUCH A MEANINGFUL PROJECT EXTREMELY REWARDING."*

Lucina Pearson, Operations and Programmes Administrator

## Donors & Fundraisers

A proportion of our income this year reflects remarkable kindness and generosity.

Donations, physical challenges, sponsorships, community and office events all help to make a difference in the lives of young people facing disadvantage.

Thank you to all our donors and fundraisers for supporting us to deliver our programmes, and for making Starting Point such a high priority in your giving.

If you would like to do more, or know anyone who would like to [GET GIVING](#), please get in touch.



**ZELLA H**  
Business Engagement and Fundraising Lead



**LUCINA**  
Operations and Programmes Administrator

## Our partners

We highly value our partnerships and the many meaningful outcomes we see with their help and involvement. Grant funding, commissioning, collaboration, and skill sharing, and providing opportunities support our work alongside young people.

Thank you to all our partners for taking the journey with us in 2022 enabling us to see transformation in the lives of young people.

We look forward to continuing our work together so that we can effect long-term, sustained change and a stronger sense of community.

If you would like to find out about other ways you could [GET INVOLVED](#) or introduce us to new connections to build on our existing network, please [GET IN TOUCH](#).



"HONESTLY YOU'VE  
HELPED ME SO MUCH  
THE PAST YEAR"

Young person [16]



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