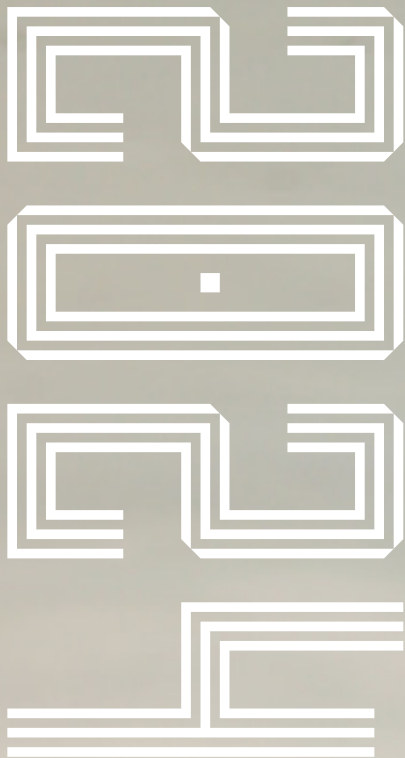


start

2024
REVIEW

Starting Point :: Impact Report



Starting Point

Impact Report 2024

Starting Point enables young people who face disadvantage to see transformation in their lives – we passionately believe every young person should have the chance of a brighter more hopeful future. We do this through mentoring, creating opportunities, and amplifying the voices of young people – empowering them to make and sustain lasting positive change in themselves and their community.

AT A GLANCE

Katherine Shepherd – The Mustard Tree CEO

There were so many things to celebrate last year: The continued growth and success of our over 18's hub has been exciting, particularly seeing the young people supporting one another and developing their skills; We had a new partnership with Royal Berks Fire & Rescue and the Thames Valley Violence Prevention Partnership enabling more young people to access mentoring; Over double the number of young people were supported through our Hospital Navigators scheme; The talented and passionate young people who make up our new Starting Point Crew... and that's just a few! It's wonderful to journey with so many amazing young people and see them achieving their goals. I want to say a massive thank you to our dedicated team of volunteers, staff and supporters who have made this possible.

startingpoint.org.uk

4 Sackville Street, Reading RG1 1NT

0118 995 2160

startingpoint@themustardtree.org

2024 In Numbers

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

286

Young People

64

Volunteers

2,032

Volunteer hours

102

Hub sessions

27

Partnerships

Mentoring

1:1 RELATIONAL AND TAILORED SUPPORT,
ENABLING YOUNG PEOPLE TO SEE LASTING
TRANSFORMATION IN THEIR LIVES

SUMMARY

The SP team and volunteer mentors provide young people with a consistent role model to support them in increasing their confidence and independence on their journey to:

- Engaging positively within education
- Attaining, sustaining & thriving within education, employment, and training
- Steering away from crime, violence, and risk-taking behaviour
- Making positive changes in their socio-emotional development and wellbeing

‘MY MENTOR GIVES
ME UNJUDGMENTAL
SUPPORT’

– Young person (17)

In Numbers

53

YP mentored

36

Volunteer
mentors

1440

Volunteer hours

81% Reported mental health struggles

69% Low or no qualifications

49% Diagnosis of ASD

26% Diagnosis of ADHD

90% Grew in confidence

72% Felt their relationships with
family and friends have improved

63% Positive increase in wellbeing

OF THOSE WHO ARE NEET:

46% Got into education, employment,
or training

83% Felt an increase in work ready
skills

OF THOSE IN EDUCATION:

59% Improved school engagement

80% Felt more positively about their
education

CASE STUDY

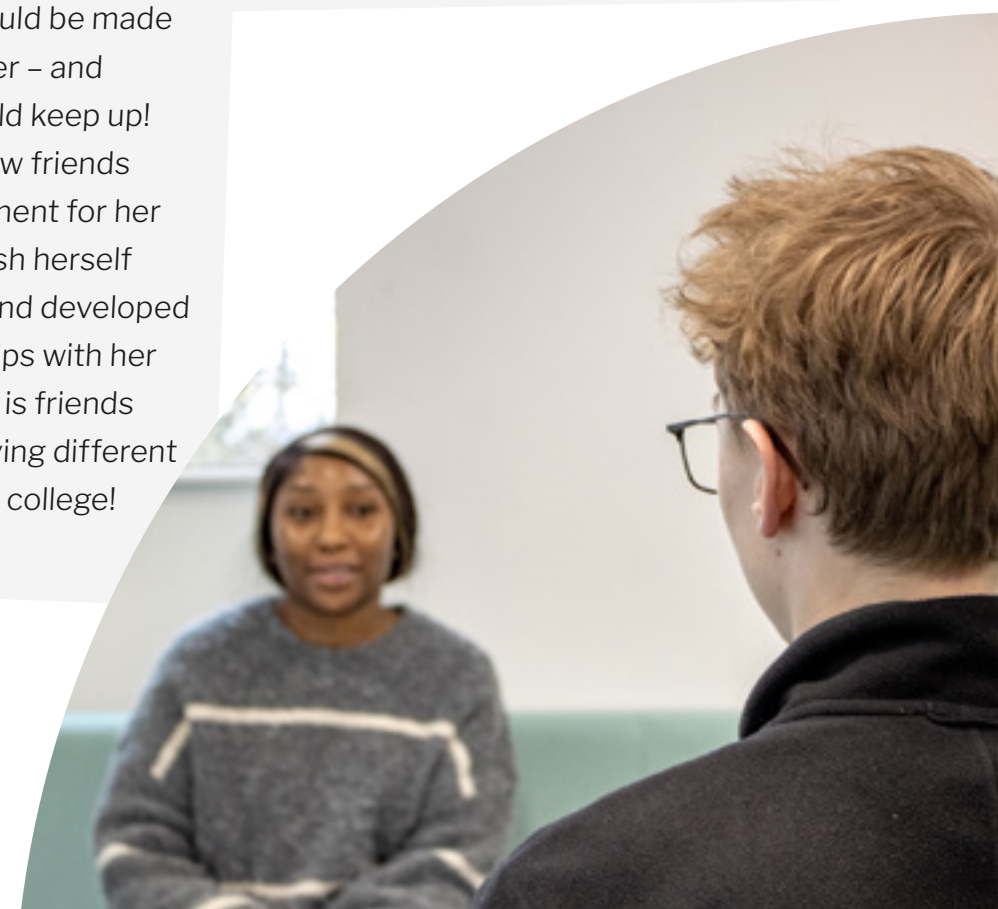
Lilly* (17) was referred for mentoring by her secondary school as she was struggling with her GCSE's. Lilly had missed a considerable amount of school due to challenges with her wellbeing, and although Lilly sat some of her exams, she did not have a confirmed post-16 place to continue her education leaving her at risk of becoming NEET. Lilly's mentoring goals were centred around building her confidence, creating & strengthening new friendships, and, to feel more self-assured in her education.

Lilly and her mentor worked on building a routine and having consistent attendance by identifying small, attainable, changes that could be made to make her mornings easier – and something she felt she could keep up! While in college, making new friends was hard. With encouragement for her mentor, she was able to push herself beyond her comfort zone and developed strong and lasting friendships with her classmates, those who she is friends with still despite then studying different courses in their 2nd year of college!

Lilly's confidence has increased significantly; she has sought out and completed a placement working in a local SEN school for her college course, which she thoroughly enjoyed. She has learnt how to become a great advocate for herself, and for others, too!

Reflecting on mentoring, Lilly recognises the amazing changes she has made. With her toolkit of techniques to support herself, alongside the confidence she has built up, she feels equipped to complete her education and enter the world of adulthood – and is motivated to do so!

**Name changed to protect young person's identity.*



The Hub

DROP IN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACCESS SUPPORT WHILE BUILDING CONFIDENCE, INCREASING INDEPENDENCE & MAKING FRIENDSHIPS IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

SUMMARY

Our moto is 'come as you are' – we encourage young people to turn up as themselves!

The Hub provides the opportunity for young people to:

- Improve on social skills and make new friends
- Access long term support from reliable and trusted adults
- Get involved in art and activities – connecting with others in similar circumstances to themselves
- Build connections and access opportunities in the community outside of their immediate social circle

In Numbers

102

Hub sessions

71

Young people

44

Volunteer hours

HUB OUTCOMES:

- 85%** said The Hub gives them a reason to leave their house
- 69%** have made new friends at The Hub
- 54%** felt that coming to The Hub helps them build confidence
- 54%** reported that The Hub is their safe space

CASE STUDY

Ella* (19) and Pheobe* (19) both started attending The Hub as they wanted to develop their confidence and social skills.

When Pheobe moved to the UK she struggled to form friendships in her new community. She relied on her family, which, coupled with her lack of confidence in her new area, impacted on her independence. She was unsure of how to navigate social situations outside of her family's protective bubble.

Ella was also considerably socially isolated, and struggled with maintaining meaningful relationships with her peers – she found it challenging to engage with others and often felt disconnected from social groups.

"I HAVE A REASON TO LEAVE MY BED NOW"

Both girls initially connected at The Hub due to their similar interests in fashion games and art. This grew into a friendship, meeting up with each other in the community, outside of The Hub. Ella encourages Pheobe to explore the local community with her, frequenting local shops and cafes.

Pheobe's dependency on her parents began to decrease, as she felt more comfortable in her new environment. Together, they have encouraged each other with their goals, both getting involved in creative media workshops with Starting Point Studio and have achieved AQA awards – achieved by building up their social skills and confidence at The Hub.

*Name changed to protect young person's identity

"AT THE HUB I'VE MADE FRIENDS IN REAL LIFE"



Navigators

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

SUMMARY

In 2024, the Navigators met 150 young people in the Royal Berkshire Hospital with the support of 20 volunteers across a total of 464 volunteer hours.

In Numbers



- 100% of young people spoken to, found it helpful having a conversation with a Navigator whilst in hospital
- 98% of young people supported have not reattended
- 56% journeyed outside of hospital
- 80% were signposted and connected up with services within the community

PRIMARY REASON FOR ATTENDING A&E:

- 45% Self-harm or suicidal ideation
- 26% Mental Health
- 17% Violence
- 6% Substance Abuse
- 3% Abuse
- 3% Other

I MET THEM IN A&E, THEY WERE NICE AND I FELT LIKE THEY CARED ABOUT ME

"SHE LOVES THE NAVIGATORS VISITING HER WHILE SHE'S ON WARD, IT'S WHAT SHE LOOKS FORWARD TO EACH NIGHT. GIVES HER SOMEONE TO TALK TO"

- parent of young person

CASE STUDY

Ali* (18) was met on the children's ward in early 2024 as a result of struggling with their mental health, which was impacting on their engagement at college. They were keen on community support and has engaged with mentoring since being discharged from hospital. Ali has been struggling for a significant amount of time, and actively wanted to improve things for themselves.

Ali was matched with a local volunteer mentor, whom they have been meeting up with weekly. Within mentoring, they worked on social anxiety, confidence in talking to other people, and goals for their education and life. Ali had improved their engagement with education, having now completed their college course (in

music production) and even was asked to perform with a choir in London for a charity event – which he managed to challenge social anxiety and do! Ali is off to university in September, so mentoring then took a focus on setting them up with the tools they would need such as budgeting, organisation and all the practicalities you need to plan before moving away to uni! Ali said that they felt they didn't need the weekly support from their mentor now, as they feel confident that they are able to manage things on their own – Ali now pops in to the Hub when they're free to say hi and give us updates on how they are doing!

*name changed to protect young person's identity



Creative Opportunities

EMPOWERING YOUNG CREATIVES TO IMPACT THEIR COMMUNITY.

SUMMARY

Empowering young people who traditionally face barriers to gaining work experience. We prepare them for future employment by building confidence, teamwork abilities, communication skills, and design/media competencies while providing insight into workplace environments.

We actively seek commissioned projects that amplify young voices and their influence on local decision-making. We have a participatory approach, where young people are recorded and also operate the equipment. This inclusive method has enabled over 30 young people to share their perspectives and engage with Starting Point Studio.

CASE STUDY

Josh has been a key part of our creative programmes for 3 years now. When he first arrived he had been suffering with depression and would readily admit to being a 'shut-in'. Through the creative projects he has increased his confidence and had loved being involved in the filming side of stuff. Quite shy at first, he would reluctantly get involved with his friend. J has thrived in the projects, and especially in those with other younger children. He enjoyed the music video project so much, that he then volunteered to be a part of the summer creative week team. He helped lead the young people in showing them how the video camera equipment works and encouraging them all to give it a try. He has been involved in 4 projects this year and has earned 3 AQA unit awards. Watch him talking about his time with Starting Point [here](#).

2024 in projects:

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION:

We ran two school terms in 2024, working on the following projects:

[#iwill](#) – Young People led project, creating an output relating to a theme of importance to them.

[Young Voices online safety summit](#)

– we were involved with the summit, creating two videos of young peoples comments around the themes touched on in the day.

STARTING POINT STUDIO CREW

[over 16s]

[BOB Perspectives conference](#) –

filming feedback from attendees at the NHS conference themed on the videos they commissioned.

[Reading Festival](#) – we were

commissioned to create a video for young people about how to stay safe at the event. To be shown locally in secondary schools.

No.5 Music video – we were delighted to be a part of their Easter transitions event – helping the young people create a music video for a song written and performed by them.

[SUMMER CREATIVE EVENT](#)

5 afternoons across a week in August with local young people exploring creative media and creating postcards around a theme interesting to them.

SPSTUDIO SKILLS SESSIONS [16+]

A series of specific training sessions for those over 16 interested in being a part of the crew for commissions we receive. Our first was an Introduction to Graphic Design. These skill sessions also enable young people to gain AQA Unit Awards linked with the subject.

In Numbers

36

Young
people

7

Creative
Projects

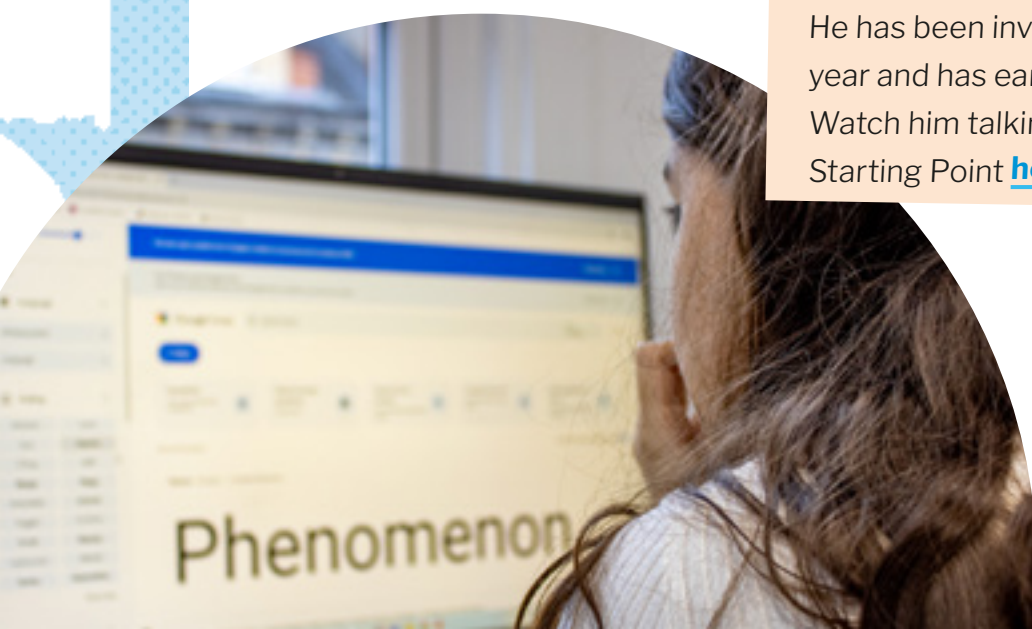
16

AQA Unit
Awards

100% of young people surveyed said they were more motivated for the future after attending a creative project

80% of young people surveyed thought they could make a difference in the community

60% of young people surveyed had increased in confidence



THANK YOU!

Our impact in 2024 would have been impossible without our amazing extended team:

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteer Mentors and Navigators are supporting young people in and around Reading and in A&E at a time and place they need them most.

THANK YOU to all our volunteers for being that consistent and trusted adult in the lives of the young people we support.

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.

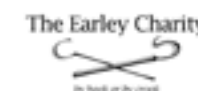
DONORS & FUNDRAISERS

Donations, physical challenges, sponsorships, community and corporate events are vital to funding our work and making a difference in the lives of local young people.

THANK YOU to all our donors and fundraisers who have supported us to deliver our programmes, and for making Starting Point such a high priority in your generosity.

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

OUR FUNDERS



STARTINGPOINT.ORG.UK

