

start

2025
REVIEW

Starting Point :: Impact Report

"EVERYBODY IS WELCOME
HERE, BEING HERE YOU MAKE
MEMORIES, MAKES YOU WANT
TO COME AGAIN AND AGAIN TO
HAVE FUN WITH EVERYONE"

- Young person at The Hub



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Starting Point Impact Report 2025

Starting Point enables young people aged 11–25 who are facing barriers to achievement to see transformation in their lives – we passionately believe every young person should have the chance of a brighter and more hopeful future.

Throughout 2025 the young people have faced increasing challenges with securing work within the current employment landscape, alongside with their wellbeing during the mental health crisis. We have continued to provide support through mentoring, the Hub, creative opportunities, and amplifying their voices – empowering them to make and sustain positive change in themselves and their community.

We have seen the young people reduce their loneliness through making friends at the Hubs, increase their qualifications by gaining AQA awards with creative opportunities, and achieving their goals within education, employment, and volunteering through 1:1 mentoring.

'I REALLY APPRECIATED OUR TIME JUST GETTING TO TALK THROUGH SOME STUFF AND FEELING SO SUPPORTED!'

Young person, 20

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2025 In Numbers

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

221

Young People

65

Volunteers

2900

Volunteer hours

98

Hub sessions

12

Partnerships

Mentoring

!:! RELATIONAL, TAILORED AND HOLISTIC SUPPORT, ENABLING YOUNG PEOPLE TO SEE A 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

In Numbers

72

YP mentored

45

Volunteer mentors

90% Reported mental health struggles

55% Low or no qualifications

63% Diagnosed neurodiverse

OF THOSE WHO ARE NEET:

43% Got into education, employment, or training

91% Felt an increase in work ready skills

19% Began volunteering

82% Saw an increase in confidence

73% Felt that they have a healthier lifestyle

OF THOSE IN EDUCATION:

75% Improved school engagement

50% Felt more positively about their education

75% Felt their relationships with others improved

50% Saw an increase in confidence

50% Felt an improvement in their wellbeing

CASE STUDY

Joel* (18) hadn't been in formal education since age 11. He is full of energy, loves playing games, and has an extensive knowledge of tv and film. The arts is something he is super passionate about, he just didn't know what he could do with those talents.

Joel was matched with a local mentor, to figure out what he wants to do and how he can access that. Through mentoring, Joel and his mentor worked on establishing an overarching goal, and then broke this down into smaller parts. As Joel had been out of education for so long, he wasn't aware of what was out there for him to do, as well as wasn't confident using technology to be able to access the opportunities.

Joel and his mentor applied for a college course, to study drama. Joel was really excited by this, eager to be around others his own age again, and by getting to act every day, which he loves. As the time grew closer, Joel's anxiety grew about this – he was nervous about having to make and sustain relationships as he hasn't had a consistent one in his life. Joel and his mentor focused on this through the months leading up to the course, helping

him access an employability course to gain some skills around the world of work and connecting with others, as well as a local drama club to get used to meeting new people and being confident acting around them. Joel thrived at this, and his anxiety reduced.

Joel has now been at college for a whole term, and is excelling. He exercises his newfound social skills by signing up for additional activities around the college, using any opportunity to make new connections. Reflecting on mentoring, Joel reported that he has felt a grown in his skills and wellbeing, particularly relating to his education and new friendships. Joel stated 'Meeting with [my mentor] has been great, he's just one of those people that care'

*Name changed to protect young person's identity.

'ALL THE THINGS I'M DOING OR THINKING ABOUT I WOULDN'T HAVE CONSIDERED WITHOUT MENTORING'

– Young person (20)



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

98

Hub sessions

72

Young people

6

Volunteers

HUB OUTCOMES:

79% said The Hub is their reason to leave the house

74% reported the Hub helps them build routine

58% said they don't feel alone anymore, and have made friends

54% felt they have grown positively in confidence

54% said that The Hub is their safe space

CASE STUDY

Lily* (17) has increasingly grown her confidence since attending the Hub. She has struggled during education, leaving NEET without having gained her GCSE's and becoming socially isolated. When first attending, she was visibly reserved, particularly being uncomfortable around others her own age.

With encouragement, Lily became more receptive to others inviting her to get involved with their activities, over time she became much more confident communicating with others. Lily was also struggling with her physical health, which contributed to the social isolation she was facing. Through attending the Hub more and gaining more confidence

around others, Lily's physical health began improving as she felt much more comfortable being out and about.

Lily has now been encouraged to get back into education, having just completed her first term at college – and loving it! Lily has made friends with others and brought them along to the Hub, too – it's so evident how much her wellbeing has improved. When reflecting on attending the Hub over the past year, Lily has said that she has made friends as well as built confidence and a routine. She said: 'I like how the people care about you and I enjoy the community feel'.

*Name changed to protect young person's identity

"I LIKE THE COMMUNITY FEEL"



Navigators

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

SUMMARY

In July 2025, we had to make some changes to the Navigators due to an end in funding – we don't run regular volunteer shifts anymore, however have maintained positive links with the hospital to accept direct referrals to ensure the young people are still offered community support.

In Numbers

38

Young people

9

Volunteers

100% of young people spoken to found it helpful having a conversation with a Navigator

100% of young people supported have not reattended

97% were signposted and connected up with services within the community

61% journeyed outside of hospital

PRIMARY REASON FOR ATTENDING A&E:

33% Self-harm or suicidal ideation

50% Mental Health

8% Violence

3% Substance Abuse

3% Abuse

3% Other

CASE STUDY

Eliza* (19) was referred to Starting Point having been in A&E due to struggling with her mental health. She was increasingly struggling with college, which was having an impact on her mental health as it all felt like too much to cope with. Things were cyclical, as Eliza felt socially isolated due to her mental health, however it was also a barrier to her engaging with education, as she didn't feel accepted there by the other students.

Eliza was matched with a local mentor, with the goal of wanting to make changes to help herself feel better. Things started off slow, as Eliza got comfortable with the process, and thinking about what she would like for the future. After a few months, Eliza figured out that she would like to go

back into education, as she enjoys being creative and thinks a course where her talents are being utilised would suit her skills much better. Her and her mentor built up different skills around this to ensure she was able to access it come September, with Eliza building new skills in travelling independently and being comfortable talking to new people.

With her mentor, Eliza has begun opening up more about how she feels, and asking for help organising her time with college, to ensure she keeps on top of her tasks. As well as in education, she has taken many steps, including pursuing music as a hobby and has learnt to drive - which has opened up a world of freedom and continued confidence for her!

*name changed to protect young person's identity

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



Creative Opportunities

EMPOWERING YOUNG CREATIVES
TO IMPACT THEIR COMMUNITY.

SUMMARY

Starting Point Creative Opportunities helps young creatives build confidence, develop technical skills, and make their voices heard. Participants work on real projects with local clients, creating meaningful change in their communities.

We support over-16s through a creative collective that delivers commissioned work and provides targeted skills training sessions.

We also offer alternative provision for schools in nurturing small group environments..

"IT HAS BOOSTED MY INTEREST IN
PHOTOGRAPHY. IT MADE ME PICK
BACK UP MY ART GCSE"

Young Person on summer creative week



In Numbers

79

Young people

12

Creative Projects

25

Young People
receiving AQA
Unit Awards

32

AP sessions

2025 in projects:

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION:

We held four terms of AP in 2025, working on the following projects:

[Olly Stephens Trust](#) – Creating branding and presentation materials for the Olly's Work team.

Identity project – project working with pupils to explore how they see themselves as a young person in Reading today.

[Young Voices Safety Summit](#) –

Working with the Young Voices group, creating branding for, and capturing footage from, their second safety summit.

SUMMER CREATIVE EVENT

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

STARTING POINT STUDIO CREW

[over 16s]:

Think Autism – we worked with SCAS Ambulance service to create a training film for them showing best practice for helping patients with autism.

NHS Link conference – filming on the day and producing a highlights video.

No.5 transitions event – working with young people across Easter and Summer projects

SPSTUDIO SKILLS SESSIONS [16+]

Specific skills sessions for those over 16 interested in being a part of the SP Studio crew and the commissions we receive. We held sessions on 3 different topics..

Schools Mentoring & Activities

In November 2025, we began our Schools Mentoring and Activities Programme – for secondary schools in South & West Reading. This will launch properly in Jan 2026, supporting students to improve their wellbeing, reduce loneliness, build confidence, and increase hopefulness for the future through:

- 1:1 mentoring sessions
- Wellbeing Hubs
- Mental Health Workshops
- Creative Design courses
- Sports Activities

Through November and December, we have held focus groups with young people, ensuring the work is co-produced to the needs of the young people – creating support alongside them, to best support them. Through working in school, and collaborating with local community partners, we will deliver an offer to fit the needs of the young people to improve their wellbeing and decrease their risk of becoming NEET post-16.

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THANK YOU!

Our impact in 2025 would have been impossible without our amazing extended team:

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are supporting young people in and around Reading 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 looking for new volunteers. If you know anyone that would like to [GET INVOLVED](#) please get in touch.

DONORS & FUNDRAISERS

Donations, 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

Berkshire Community Foundation	Osborne Clarke
Coop Community Fund	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Deloitte	Reading Borough Council
Earley Charity	Saint Laurence
Festival Republic	Society of the Holy Child Jesus
Garfield Weston	St James Place
Greyfriars	TVVPP
Kiriath Trust	The National Lottery Awards for All
Leigh Trust	University of Reading
Mountain Healthcare	Wokingham Borough Council
NHS BOB	