

Grandmentors Programme

At Volunteering Matters, we bring people together overcome society's most complex issues, building stronger communities through the power of volunteering. We do this because stronger communities means that everyone has an opportunity to thrive.

Grandmentors

Grandmentors, is an intergenerational mentoring project for care experienced young people. The outcomes for young people leaving care across the UK are poor. If young people are not engaged and supported to be autonomous, capable and empowered adults then there are many risk factors that could lead them to rely much more on statutory services and the local authority for support throughout their lives.

Volunteering Matters believes that this group of young people are amongst the strongest and most resilient in any community and that we all have a much larger role to play in unlocking these strengths and levelling up the playing field for care leavers.

This is through the skill of mentoring and through funding, enabling opportunities and opening up networks.

National Evidence Relating to Care Leavers

There is a wealth of evidence that shows that care experienced young people experience significantly worse outcomes than the rest of the population:

- 30% of care leavers aged 18 are NEET. This increases to 39% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 and compares to a National average of 12% (Department for Education, 2019).
- Roughly one third of care leavers become homeless within the first two years of leaving the care system. Similarly, approximately a quarter of homeless people are care experienced (Home for Good, 2020).
- The Care Leavers Association, in conjunction with the Department for Health, surveyed care leavers in 2017. Their research found 'The health and wellbeing needs of care leavers of all ages are largely ignored'. After leaving care 83% of care leavers experienced low self-esteem, 79% experienced anxiety, 75% experienced Depression and 75% experienced loneliness (Care Leavers Association, 2017).



Covid Snapshot

During Covid-19 lockdown 5 mentees started university and many of the young people volunteered in their community.

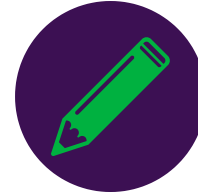
168 young people were supported through the Grandmentors programme during Covid-19.

The Impact of Grandmentors

The outcomes for the mentees are closely tracked. Grandmentors projects place a support plan created by the young person with their mentor at the centre of tracking the changes mentees are making in their lives.

The framework covers three broad areas:

- Housing and Finance
- Education, Training and Employment
- Health and Wellbeing



In each area, there are a number of sub-indicators and, in discussion with the young person, these trigger volunteer support in those areas. The level of support required for the mentee is based on their views, Social Work colleagues' and our own assessment of their needs.

Movement through these are regularly reviewed as a live process between the mentor, mentee and the Volunteer Manager.

Community Support

Volunteering Matters recruits, trains and supports volunteer mentors who use their skills and experience to provide bespoke mentoring for young people leaving care during their transition into adulthood and independence. No special skills or qualifications are needed for this voluntary role, just life experiences as well as a willingness to support someone who is need of a bit of help, for two hours a week.

There are also other ways that the local community can play a significant role in enabling young people leaving care to achieve their potential. A key part of any Grandmentors project is to enable the wider community to engage with care leavers when they wouldn't have previously done so. The project has a number of ways that this can happen:

- Sitting on the local Board
- Hosting or supporting a soft matching event of mentees and mentors
- Providing employment or apprenticeship opportunities
- Opening networks and contacts to mentees
- Funding or donations

'When I see her (my mentor) I just feel less anxious. She's the reason I go out of the house'

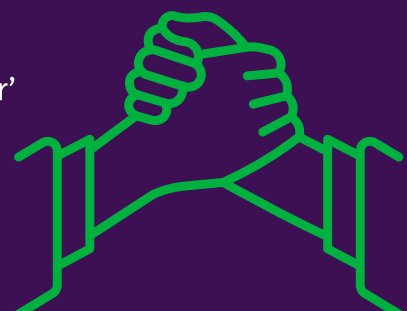
- Mentee

'His self-belief and focus have gone through the roof..... I couldn't be prouder'

- Mentor

'I feel we are both getting a lot out of mentoring now'

- Mentor



Where Does Grandmentors Operate?

Grandmentors currently operates in 10 locations in England:

- Bradford
- Brent
- Hounslow
- Islington
- Milton Keynes
- Suffolk
- Wandsworth
- Wiltshire
- Wolverhampton
- Warwickshire



New projects are coming on board all the time.

Awards and Accolades

Grandmentors has had widespread acclaim. This includes being winning the Third Sector category at the National Mentoring Awards in 2019. The programme was also featured in the Innovation Zone at the Local Government Association conference of the same year.

