



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



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Introduction from the CEO



What a year it has been! Over the past twelve months, in line with our organisational strategy to expand and extend the service we provide, Chance UK has **more than doubled the number of children** we have been able to support. This has meant mentoring 247 children and **expanding geographically to work across eight Local Authority Areas.**

We have also developed and adapted our mentoring programmes in response to the needs of children. **We now offer four programmes**, all of them drawing on our deep understanding of solutions-focused approaches. This approach together with an emphasis on positive adult-child relationships enables children we serve to develop their social and emotional skills, their resilience and self-esteem. Each programme is also tailored to address the needs of particular groups of children during times when they might need additional help and support.

One key focus for us this year has been that **transition phase when children move from primary to secondary school.** This period brings additional challenge and rapid change for children. In addition to providing intensive mentoring and parent support to twelve children during their transition to secondary school, we have been able to support **just under 400 children via our Year 6 school-based workshops.** These fun and interactive sessions give children the time and space to reflect on the change ahead, and to equip themselves with useful tools and skills. This new service has got off to a terrific start with positive feedback from both students and teachers, and is likely to be an area of growth for us going forwards.

The COVID 19 pandemic affected Chance UK significantly. We moved quickly to adapt our services so that all mentoring relationships and parent support could be delivered online. This was no easy feat. I am incredibly proud of how the team pulled together to adapt content and support mentors and children, so that **more than 100 relationships could move online within weeks of the lock-down.**

We see uncertain times ahead but believe we are well placed to meet the challenges in front of us. We are committed to learning from how we have had to deliver services differently and to remain agile in responding to changing needs. We believe that our work will be vital in supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of children and families during the pandemic and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geethika Jayatilaka". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Geethika Jayatilaka, CEO

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

247



children on our mentoring programmes



250

mentors recruited, trained and supported

3,705



hours of mentoring



398

children attended our Year 6-7 transition workshops

57



children graduated from Chance UK programmes



203

parent 1:1 sessions with our Parent Programme Managers

18/20



child's average score rating for their relationship with their Chance UK mentor

(using the Mentor Youth Alliance Scale)



Key achievements

In our programmes

This year we grew the critical support offered to vulnerable children and their families: a new model of parent work and three new mentoring programmes were launched alongside the existing "Explore and Empower" model. We also expanded service delivery to eight London boroughs..

Parent work

A whole family approach strengthens the impact of Chance UK's mentoring. Helping a parent understand the needs of the child, while exploring solutions to ease parental pressures, promotes a supportive family environment.

A new framework has been created over the last year. The refreshed structure contains more group activities while retaining the flexibility to offer intensive support to those who need it. The programme is comprised of one-to-one sessions, ten weeks of group work, family Activity Days (to build social networks and reduce isolation), and parent-led Information Clinics (on topics such as education rights) .

"What you guys have done for us is outstanding."

Parent

Safer Space Plus

One in seven children are estimated to be affected by domestic violence with devastating consequences for mental health.

A new partnership with Victim Support addressed the specific needs of children affected by domestic violence. Supported by a grant from the Home Office, this programme provides bespoke mentoring and family support to fifty children.

"Was really useful! Definitely something we can revisit in the build up to SATS and secondary school."

Teacher response to our school transition workshop.

Supporting Transition & Empowerment Programme (STEP)

The move from primary to secondary school is an anxious time for most, and especially challenging for those already struggling with other issues.

In response to this support gap, and in partnership with *Barnardos*, we launched classroom workshops to help children prepare for the school transition. A 3-year grant from the Department of Health is enabling us to expand the work to cover the period before and after the move to Year 7. The project will deliver targeted support to sixty children across Islington, and the evidence generated will help us develop a secondary school readiness scale.

Rebuild, Ignite, Succeed, Empower (RISE)

A documented rise in mental health problems for girls as they reach adolescence is troubling and indicates the need for a targeted approach.

In partnership with the University of York, further research was invested over the last year in redesigning the RISE (formerly Girls) Programme. We anticipate launching our revised service offer in 2020.

My Future

Using innovative rapid-cycle testing methodology we are evaluating and adapting lessons from this mentoring programme in real time.

An evolution of our original Explore and Empower programme, My Future develops the child's social and emotional skills. The service combines one-to-one mentoring with group sessions to increase understanding and awareness of emotions.

We are working alongside Dartington Service Design Lab in testing and adapting the programme as we deliver it, and look forward to sharing our final evaluation in the coming months.



Covid-19

With year-end came the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, a crisis which saw us transform our services from face to face service provision to a virtual one. Our staff – including our new youth workers - volunteers, funders and supporters have enabled us to respond to the needs of our families through this difficult time. At the time of writing, **138 children** are receiving **weekly mentoring remotely**, using phone and digital platforms.

Our voice and influence

Influencing policy and debate

- Last year Chance UK was invited to speak at the *Centre for Youth Impact* annual forum, advancing evaluation, evidence and impact in service provision for young people.
- CEO Geethika Jayatilaka advised on the Government's Character Advisory Group for schools, providing a framework for how schools can develop character and resilience in children.
- We submitted evidence to local authority reviews on school exclusions and on youth violence prevention.
- London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden, supported a Chance UK event and recognised the organisation's valuable contribution as an early intervention and prevention service.

Organisational developments

The organisation continues to pursue wider corporate engagement and support for our work. In 2019 we launched **Corporate Parenting Sessions**. This is a new traded income stream whereby private sector companies can commission solution focused parenting skills sessions for their employees - an exciting initiative that has received excellent client feedback and that we hope to grow.

Scoping work for a professional training function in solution focused approaches began. A business case for this initiative will continue to be developed into next year, in collaboration with a potential funder.

In December 2019 Chance UK held its inaugural **Christmas fundraiser** which raised £1,700. We look forward to hosting a similar event in 2021 at the end of our 25th anniversary year, and in conjunction with the launch our new organisational strategy.

CASE STUDY 1: ROBERT

Robert was 5 years old when school referred him to Chance UK. They were concerned about his aggression towards other children, his poor concentration in class, and uncontrollable distress at the school gates when parting from his mother. From a young age Robert had witnessed extreme levels of violence by his father towards his mother.

Robert could be quiet and withdrawn. But with the right mentor we knew he could build a strong, trusting relationship and grow his confidence. Emily was the perfect match. She worked with Robert to draw up a plan of weekly trips and activities that would interest him, build his self-esteem and open him to positive new experiences.

During their mentoring journey they visited a fire station, went ice-skating and made a trip to the theatre – among many other activities that Robert would not ordinarily have been able to do.



Along the way Robert changed. He became more comfortable travelling beyond his immediate neighbourhood. He put his hand up to ask a question during a workshop at the Science Museum – a major step forward in Robert's confidence.

And that's because our sessions are more than just fun trips out. They give mentors the space and time to talk to the child about their feelings, their responses, their strengths and how they can build on those. Emily, for example, drew on Robert's love of super heroes to create a scaled reward chart, and so was able to monitor the progress in his emotions and behaviours over time. By the end of mentoring, not only had Robert established a strong, trusting relationship with Emily, but his behaviour, attitude and creativity had all improved.

Outcomes

(Using the Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to measure emotional issues, conduct problems, peer relationship problems.)

Prior to mentoring: Overall score **28**

(Indicates very high levels of emotional and behavioural difficulty.)

After mentoring: Overall score **16** (placing Robert within the average range).

"Robert is more settled and alert in class. More assertive, participating with activities and less inclined to become angry and argumentative. He's a happier, calmer child." Teacher

CASE STUDY 2: ROBERT'S MOTHER

We take a whole-family approach in the services we provide. Improvements in a child's ability to manage their behaviours and emotions are more pronounced, and more likely to last, where the family is involved and supported in that journey. The story of Robert's mother shows the importance of working with the family to promote longer lasting change.

Being a single parent of two while coping with the impact of domestic violence on the family was overwhelming for Robert's mother, Sarah. But she had not previously sought help because of her lack of confidence.

One of Chance UK's dedicated Parent Programme Managers (PPM) worked alongside Sarah, giving encouragement and reassurance in one-to-one meetings. With the trust that emerged, alongside the positive start she observed in Robert's mentoring sessions, Sarah accepting a referral to specialist organisations *Victim Support* and *Advance*.

Our Parent Programme Manager also worked with Sarah to support her in the everyday challenges of parenting. As a result, Sarah began building in 'special time' with each child to help improve communication within the family. She also started creating stronger routines and boundaries for the two boys. This helped her feel less overwhelmed, more in control, and also complemented the approaches taken in Robert's mentoring sessions.

As the time approached for the release of Robert's father from prison, Sarah and the PPM worked together to prepare the children for this news. They also considered strategies to manage the potential impact of future contact between father and sons.



We helped Robert's mother in other practical ways. On her behalf Chance UK applied for and secured a grant to buy furniture for the boys' bedrooms and for summer holiday activities.

After twelve months of mentoring for Robert and support for his mum, Sarah reported real improvements in home life with far fewer episodes of challenging behaviour from Robert.

Sarah feels she has become more assertive and confident in her parenting skills and is now undertaking a teacher training course and working part time in a school.

OUR IMPACT*

89%

of children on our programmes showed improved behaviours after mentoring

average SDQ score improvement at the end of mentoring
(scores out of 40)

9
points

67%

of children showed improved prosocial behaviours after mentoring eg. sharing, helping, being kind

of children moved from high levels of difficulty into the range of "average" behaviour after mentoring

54%

*Using Goodman's *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ) to measure emotional issues, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer relationship problems and prosocial behaviour.



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