



Impact Report

2022-2023

Welcome

From Sarah, our Chair of Trustees

I recently had the pleasure of watching some of our Chance UK children graduate as they came to the end of their nine month mentoring journey. Seeing their smiling faces, as well as a few tears, and the look of pride on the faces of their friends and family – it was a moment I'll never forget.

Behind that moment of celebration, are months of careful, compassionate work by our staff to build a relationship with children and families who may be facing many challenges in their life. Children like Yasha (whose story you can read on page 3 of this report), who was finding it impossible to leave her bedroom and felt isolated from friends and family. I'm so proud that Yasha, with the support of her youth worker Sarah, has been able to share her journey with you.

Speak to any of our fantastic youth workers and they will tell you about how important it is to listen to children, to give them time to open up and how often children are underestimated and ignored. We know that when you give children the support they need, when they need it they thrive.

In my very first year as Chair of Trustees, I have been touched by the many stories of the children we have mentored this year. Children who would still have been dealing with the challenges they face on their own if it wasn't for our support.

Throughout my career working with children and as a foster parent, I have seen how much a child's environment can affect their life chances and behaviour which is why the early intervention we provide is crucial, especially for children who have experienced trauma. ”

And it's not only children we support but their families too. Parents like Margaret (whose story you can read on page 8 of this report) who was struggling to support her son who was diagnosed with ADHD. Through our parent workshops, Margaret was able to get practical advice and begin to build a stronger relationship with her son.

Yet we want to do more. Reaching more children and families who need our support, now more than ever.

I am excited for the year ahead, as with Vanessa in place as our new CEO we look to grow and have an even bigger impact on the lives of children and families across the UK.

Sarah



“Mentoring has helped me become a more social and confident person”

How mentoring helped Yasha

When 12 year old Yasha started working with her mentor, Sarah, she was feeling very low and struggled to leave her room. This was having a big impact on her and her family. She was very withdrawn and her relationship with her parents was at breaking point. This is her story.

When I first started mentoring, it was a time where I didn't even want to live on the planet. I just found everything so boring, and I was so antisocial. I didn't want to communicate with my family... I think I had depression. For me, it was such a struggle and it was so hard to get out of the house.

“When I would be talking to my mum about what I was going to be doing with my mentor Sarah, I was like “can we just stay at home?”

The day before I met Sarah I was so sad for some reason. So, when she came the next day I was just sitting in the middle of the couch, so sad, my hair was all messy.... and mum was

like, “this is going to be your new mentor”. And the whole time, Sarah was smiling. I felt kind of uncomfortable at first because I was thinking ‘why is she smiling so much?’ but then she started speaking and I was like ‘Oh, she’s a kind person’.

My favourite part of mentoring was making memories. I enjoyed the littlest things the most, such as going on a walk, going to a cafe or a shopping mall, and making inside jokes. I think most of the time I could not figure out where I wanted to go, so Sarah was like “let’s just go on a walk”. And usually, I don’t want to go on a walk with my mum because we always have a



At Chance UK we believe all children deserve the chance to live fulfilled lives. Our 1 to 1 mentoring sessions help children aged 5-13 to develop social and emotional skills, building resilience to flourish in a changing world. We know that if we provide the right support at the right time, children, families and communities can thrive.

destination. But when I walked with Sarah we didn’t really know where to go exactly, so we just walked. I really liked that.

I feel like so many families, who have children who are struggling, keep refusing help – thinking that everything’s OK. But I’m glad my parents didn’t ignore it. Actually, at first I hated it all, but then I’m glad they actually took a moment to see how my mental health was not okay. And then they made it better. I feel like in our culture, people don’t really talk about mental health as much. And people are just so secretive because the gossip goes everywhere. And it’s been so hard because so much stuff from my life has gone to everyone.

I feel like for any other families who are struggling with the same thing, Chance UK would be great for them because instead of just keeping it all in the family you can get support.”

*names and images have been changed to protect some of the identities of the families who took part in this report

Our year at a glance

MENTORING



199 children

were supported for individual, 1 to 1 mentoring

“Mentoring allows young people access to exploring not only their own sense of self, but safely delve into what it means to partake in healthy relationships. It prompts young people to challenge their own understanding of wider worldly concepts such as community, communication, love, joy and well being. It affords them the space to question what they’ve seen and are taught and how things may be different for them, their loved ones and strangers alike.

Whilst you will most certainly hear mentors recalling lovely and interesting lessons their mentees may have provided amongst each other, the real indicator is the young people’s change in perception and the seeds that are inevitably planted” – Misam, youth worker.



144 children

began their mentoring journey this year

Why did these children need our support?

- 16 of them had been excluded
- 57 of them had experience of domestic violence
- 59 of them were struggling with poor mental health



200+ referrals

have been received in the last year

Children get referred to us by their family members, teachers, or other professionals working with them, such as social services.



This is how our referral process works:

- It is noticed that the child is struggling at home or school
- Child gets referred to us by a teacher, family member, friend, etc
- The case is assessed and we decide that we can help them

Ultimately, mentoring is an opportunity for young people to experience and consider kindness and care as valuable and viable gift to provide the world and those in it.

MISAM, YOUTH WORKER.

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GROUP SESSIONS



81 children

attended 65 group sessions

“In the groups, the young people get a chance to meet others from different backgrounds, and find connections with people they may never cross paths with in their day to day lives.

We do different activities each week, from making juggling balls to debating. We see children come into these workshops and come out of their shells, it's a space for them to explore and celebrate who they are with the people around them. They walk away after the 12 weeks with a toolkit of new skills and a feeling of pride for all they have achieved". - Leah, youth worker.

Every child holds something wonderful within them. The workshops are there to provide a space where they can let that wonderful shine.

LEAH, YOUTH WORKER

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PARENT SUPPORT



106 parents

supported, including both 1 to 1 and group activity support

“Parents are the gateway to children becoming rounded, happy individuals- this works both in access to the child and in creating the adult. If parents understand the issues, have strategies and have the capacity to provide the nurturing required then this has the greatest positive impact on a child.

Parents are the first teachers. They are there when we leave for home. If we, as practitioners, can open the gate to parents, then together we have the capacity to create a lifetime of fulfilment for a person. This is why we offer parent support at Chance UK". – Dorrett, family support manager.

We have to take parents with us.
as they are the key to change.

DORRETT, FAMILY SUPPORT MANAGER

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“The time and space we offer children and young people can be critical in helping them to overcome their challenges, and unlock their potential”

Developing relationships with children through mentoring

Sarah, one of our youth workers, tells us why mentoring is so important.

“Chance UK is unique as we go to where our children are, doing activities in their local community and working with them one-to-one. Over the ten years I’ve been working with young people, I have never had this kind of opportunity. It gives me the chance to better understand their world, as well as their specific needs.

The children I work with have so much to offer to their communities, and to the world, but the challenges they experience can limit their ability to thrive. I’m mentoring children with a wide range of needs. Some have issues around behaviour, others are experiencing difficulties at school or at home. Many of the children, particularly girls, also have fairly low self-esteem and confidence, and face challenges with their mental health. For example, one girl wouldn’t leave the house unless we were meeting for a session.



I’m mentoring children with a wide range of needs. Some have issues around behaviour, others are experiencing difficulties at school or at home”

Our weekly sessions may take place at a child’s home, or at a café or library. At first, we spend time getting to know each other. We will play cards, draw, bake – it really depends on what they like doing. Simple activities like building Lego or even going for a walk shouldn’t be underestimated as it’s a good way to start a conversation and begin building our relationship. We go at their pace – some children are willing to be quite open from the beginning, whereas others need more time.

Many of the children we see have been through a lot, and it’s a big moment when they feel safe to open up and share sensitive details about their lives. For example, one child I worked with had quite complex needs and had been in care. I was initially unsure about whether she

would respond to me as a mentor. But during one of our sessions, she started teasing me, as a younger sister would, and honestly, I felt relief – we got there! Our relationship went from strength to strength.

Once that relationship is established, we will start doing more targeted work around the challenges they are experiencing. For example, one child I work with loves acting and so we role play different scenarios to build their confidence in facing difficult situations at school. For another child, we might draw a comic strip to help them work through a situation instead. It is important that children feel like they have a voice in this process which is why we encourage them to identify their own goals. I've learnt to never underestimate children.

One day, a nine year old boy told me that he can sometimes be so focused on himself that he forgets about the other people around him. In his words, "it's not always about me". Some adults would struggle with being this self-aware.

Towards the end of mentoring, we look back and to the future. This reflection helps a child consider how they've grown and what they've learned. Many of them feel more capable and empowered – parents and caregivers often tell me about the positive changes at home and at school. The graduation ceremony is a lovely celebration of their achievements and acts as an important end to our time together. ”

*While it's often hard to say goodbye.
I feel honoured that the children
and young people I work with have
allowed me into their lives. I hope
I've enriched their lives as much as they
have enriched mine.*

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At Chance UK, we support children across London and beyond to feel happier, be healthier and pursue a brighter future. Our mentoring programme, provides weekly sessions that are structured around the child and supports them to improve their mental health, self-esteem and behaviour as well as giving them ways of coping with often difficult emotions.



“Every child is different, and Chance UK helps you think through what works for your child”

How parent support helped Margaret

Margaret was struggling to support her son, and was finding it hard to cope. She attended our parent programme earlier this year. Here she tells us how, with Chance UK’s support, everything has changed.

“My son was diagnosed with ADHD when he was three years old. He had just started nursery when his behaviour began to change. He would refuse to eat, he’d act out and the nursery recommended I get a referral to get it checked out.

After his diagnosis we had some extra support and things were going well. However he’d just started school when the pandemic hit and we went into lockdown. It was a really difficult time as all the support stopped and we were just together at home all the time, unable to go and do anything. It was a very frustrating time and I was finding it hard to cope with his increasingly difficult behaviour. Eventually I saw my GP and got some support. Part of that support was being referred to Chance UK’s parent programme.

I started going along to the parent workshops and I also had some individual time with their family support manager. I really loved the group workshops. We would do an activity like crocheting and I think that made it easier to talk and open up. As a single mum I find it quite hard as there’s just me, so going to the group was like therapy because I had some time for me and I could chat to other mums.

We’d talk and laugh - I hadn’t laughed in a long time - and I found me again.”



We know that if we are to truly support children to thrive, then we need to support parents and carers too. So, our parent’s programme provides both group sessions where people can meet other parents who are in a similar situation, as well as 1-to-1 support

The one-to-one support was really helpful because it gave me some practical advice on how to deal with particular situations and behaviours. My son would quite often get home from school and just scream and scream and it was so hard to know what to do. Now I have various strategies and I find I am shouting a lot less and he is responding a lot better. I’ve learnt when to leave him alone and when to give him some attention. He really likes to hug me and now I make sure that I stop what I’m doing and take time to hug him back. Before I used to get frustrated because he’d always ask for things when I was busy but I’m much calmer now. He is a very loving little boy and he likes going out and on the train, so we try and do that more.

Every child is different and Chance UK helps you think through what works for your child. I definitely have more peace of mind since I took part in the workshops and I don’t feel like a bad person anymore. I’ve learnt to just say to myself, ‘calm down and start again’ rather than getting angry.”

Looking to the future

From Vanessa, our new CEO



Having just started at Chance UK, I can take none of the credit for what the team has achieved in the past year. What I can do, though, is take an outsider's look at the huge strides Chance UK has taken in 12 months.

In recent years, as a society, we've discussed the crisis in young people's mental health, and watched our children struggle with the world around them more and more each year. But we can change this narrative.

This report demonstrates the fundamental difference Chance UK's mentoring can play in the lives of young people. To access this, a child doesn't need a diagnosis, and (unlike some statutory services) they don't need to wait to get worse. By reaching children earlier, offering them intensive support fast, Chance UK can help and make a huge difference.

I'm incredibly proud to have joined an organisation that puts the emphasis on the children we support.

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We focus on helping children develop a sense of themselves - building emotional language and understanding, supporting self-esteem, and helping them realise their potential. And it works. We see the change, from improved behaviour at home and school to increased school attendance and improved wellbeing... and, much more importantly, happier children who are ready to face their future.

Vanessa



Thank you

We would like to thank everyone who has made our work possible this year.

Our donors and funders, without whose generosity none of the support we provide would be possible. Our wonderful staff team, and particularly our passionate and professional team of youth workers – who work tirelessly every day to support our children. And the parents, families, carers, teachers and children we work with.

Thank you for working with us to create a society in which every child feels happy about themselves, realises their potential and is confident in their ability to build a bright future.

Before mentoring, our daughter didn't used to come out of her room. It was quite difficult for her. Chance UK came into our lives right on time. A time when our daughter was really struggling and it was very, very difficult for us. So, we are very grateful

The dad of one of the children we supported this year

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Thank you very much for reading our 2022-23 impact report. Would you like to help us create a society in which every child feels happy about themselves, and is confident in their ability to build a bright future? You can support us in three simple ways:

- ✧ Do you know of anyone that might benefit from our support? Please let us know on www.chanceuk.com/make-a-referral/
- ✧ Consider making a donation on www.chanceuk.com/donate/ to help us continue our work. Thank you.
- ✧ Meet us on social media, to be kept up to date with the change we are making in London and beyond

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