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**NOA  
SCHOOLS  
MENTORING  
FINAL REPORT**

JULY 2019 - JULY 2020

**your own place**



**Norwich**  
Opportunity Area



## OUR VALUES

**EQUALITY**

**ASSET BASED**

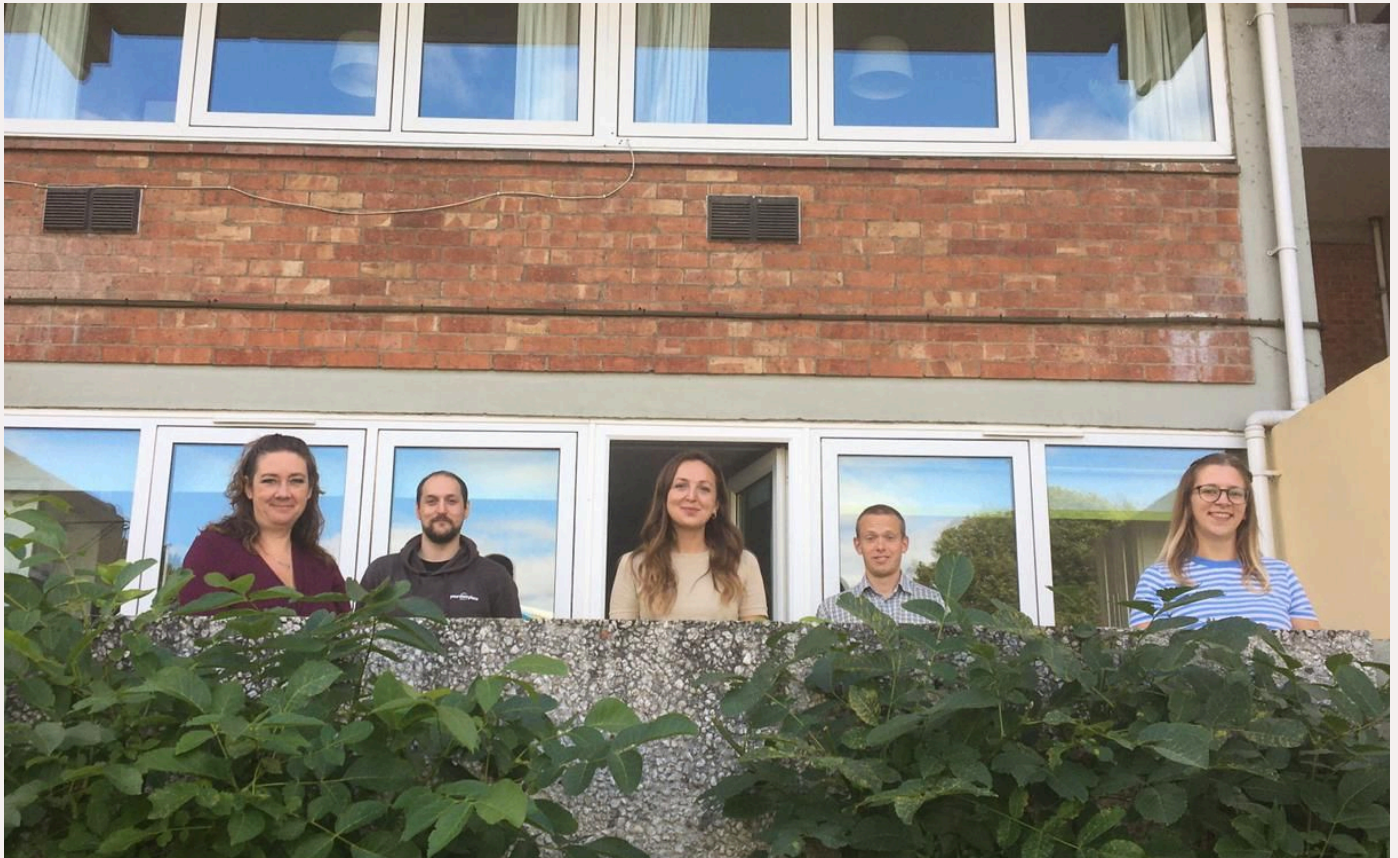
**HIGH QUALITY**

**RESTORATIVE**

**INNOVATIVE, ENERGETIC  
AND FUN**

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# YOUR OWN PLACE



*Your Own Place CIC is now in its seventh year of business and it's clear that our mission hasn't changed.*

*Due to external factors, the needs facing many people are growing, changing and becoming more complex. This means we too must continue to adapt, evolve and be more innovative than ever.*

*This last year has been one no one could have expected, but as innovators, we have continued to move forward, evolve and develop our service. In the past five months alone we have digitised Mentoring creating eMentoring. Allowing us to continue to support the most vulnerable people at this crucial time.*

*Thank you for reading, continuing to support us and being part of our year!*

**Team YOP**

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## OUR AIMS



*'We value every person as an individual. All people have aspirations. Our task is to liberate them, remove the barriers and allow their aspirations to be achieved. We will be as innovative, imaginative and engaging as we can be.'*

*'We will never give up on seeking new solutions to old problems. The aim of Your Own Place is to prevent homelessness and every intervention is delivered with this as the final outcome'*

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## KEY DELIVERABLES

CURRENT STATUS UPDATE AND MILESTONES:

**END JULY 2020:  
CELEBRATION EVENT  
(INCLUDING MENTEE  
EVALUATION) - NOT  
HELD**

**CERTIFICATES  
SENT TO THE  
YOUNG PEOPLE**

**PROJECT  
REPORT  
COMPLETED**

**CASE-STUDIES  
COMPLETED**

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## YOUR OWN PLACE APPROACH



All schools have children who face barriers to learning and academic achievement. The comprehensive education system does not work for many and schools become safety nets for many societal deficits that are much broader than education.



Children bring their home life, poverty, abusive family lives, low expectations and other cards they have been unfairly dealt into the classroom. In classes of 30 students and a stretched and neglected sector, many fail to thrive from day one and spiral downwards into low educational attainment from then onward.



Much is known about the impact that low educational attainment has on later life outcomes, so it is right to find all possible evidence-based interventions to support students for whom education will always be difficult. Mentoring is one such intervention.



We quickly devised referral pathways, overcame data protection obstacles and undertook to complete workshops with both staff and potential mentees.



## YOUR OWN PLACE APPROACH



The project started well, albeit from a low baseline of outputs, outcomes, handover detail and damaged relationships from the previous provider. We managed to make contact with all three schools before the end of the summer term 2019 and all were welcoming and open to the proposal to provide the project.



Your Own Place quickly re-developed its mentoring training into a refresher course for existing mentors. The two-day training was also easily adapted - our techniques work with people from all backgrounds and motivations to mentor.



Mentors often want all the answers, but making them ersatz support workers is not true mentoring or our preferred and more impactful and restorative approach.



We already had some very good and well trained mentors - passionate about volunteering with the young people.



## MENTORS



**18th and 19th March training dates had been full before cancellation.**





## MENTEES



**Mentees waiting to be matched: Zero in current circumstances and with Hewett withdrawing both.**



### MENTEES REFERRED THIS QUARTER:



## PROPOSED NOA OUTCOMES



### SHORT TERM:

#### 70% of students involved report:

- Increased confidence about **their future**
- Improved **clarity of plans** after Year 11
- Students have better informed **aspirations**
- Increased confidence in accessing **help and support** to plan their next steps
- Increased confidence in taking up **opportunities** that **develop soft skills**

### Medium term:

- Increase in sustained **successful destinations** after year 11

### Long term:

- More children go onto **ambitious and successful destinations**
-

## PROJECT OUTCOMES



We invited mentees to provide start and end comments with Likert scale questionnaires. We devised statements based on the desired outcomes of the project above.

### We asked:

- About confidence about **their future**
- About clarity about what they **wanted to do after year 11**
- About knowledge how to **get help to take the next steps**
- About confidence about **my next steps**
- About confidence about **developing new skills**
- About confidence that **their aspirations are the right ones**

### And at the end, we asked:

- Whether their mentor had **been helpful** in deciding what to do after year 11
  - Whether they **enjoyed** having a mentor
  - What about mentor support was particularly **useful**
  - Whether there was there anything else would you have liked **support** with
-

## PROJECT OUTCOMES



Due to the nature of the end of the project we were unable to get the data or outcomes any of us would have wanted and only had one questionnaire completed by a mentee.

- We have collated a case-study of a mentee and a mentor
- Below is a short account from a mentor:

### **What changes did you see in your mentee during your time working together?**

*Tom said to Tony*

“

He would like to stay in touch. He's found that there are people out there to help him go forward.

”

### **In what ways do you think he benefited from your support?**

We did some work on what assets he's got and how he could best use them. Tom was in Great Yarmouth with his family. He called me whilst he was there to tell me about his trip out.

“

”

### **What are you most proud of in terms of being involved with the project?**

The fact that Tom has recognised that the support he's been given is of value to him. It's justified me continuing mentoring. I helped him to access support at MAP. He thought he could only go there for help once. *Tony said you won't know unless you try again.* They have accepted him for further support.

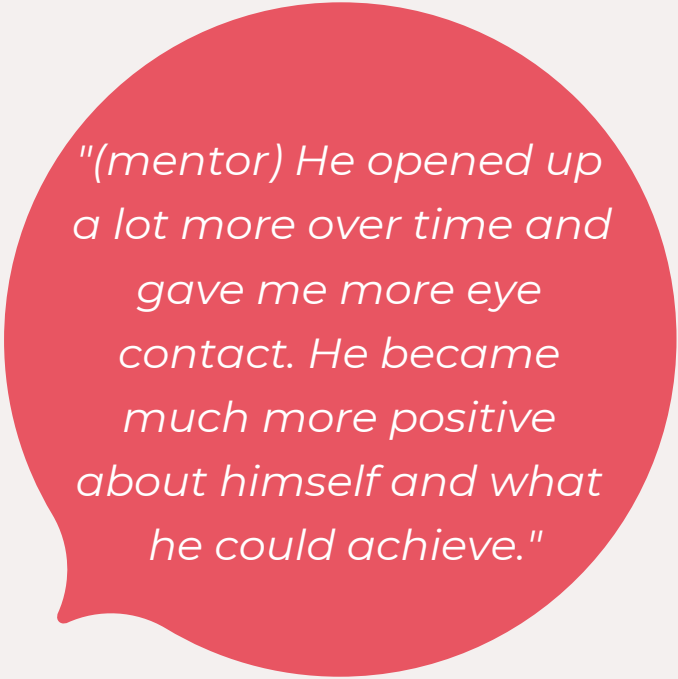
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## QUOTES

And some more quotes:



*"(mentor) He opened up a lot more over time and gave me more eye contact. He became much more positive about himself and what he could achieve."*

*“(mentor) As I got to know her more I noticed her becoming more confident in herself and what she was passionate about. She became more comfortable talking about a variety of topics.”*



*"(mentee) My mentor helped me to read more about the army and police before joining"*

*“(mentor) We hit it off in the first session over his deep interest in primates – not that I know much about them, but I know research has been done into whether they can respond to symbols of our human language. Anyway, that seemed to open up a good conversational space, and it continued like that in all the sessions we met. He seemed open, willing to look up new avenues of research. He actually did research on the internet about what was needed to get a qualification in primatology as he wanted to know if he was on track with the right GCSEs and thereafter choosing the right A Levels.”*

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## QUOTES

*(mentor on what the mentee gained)*

*Someone independent of school and family able to therefore advance his wishes and not dictate.*

*“(mentor on what worked in taking the asset-based approach)*

*He felt less ‘bad’ about saying he was good at things in front of me which he had previously not felt comfortable doing. He talked about several different options he wanted to achieve although his main aspiration was to make a lot of money. ”*

*“(mentor on what worked in taking the asset-based approach)*

*Allowing my mentee to lead the discussion and encouraging the continuation of the dialogue with the mentoring questions we learned made a noticeable difference in her confidence and enthusiasm about her future plans and the necessary steps to reach them. ”*

*(mentor on what the mentee gained)*

*"A companion with whom she could confide in. Someone to talk to who was an outside source (eg not family or a close friend)."*

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## QUOTES

*(mentor on what the mentee gained) He was able to share some of the thoughts going around his head, he checked out a couple of these with me to see what I thought. He was able to discuss the various pro's and con's of the options he had in front of him.*

*“(mentor) I am thankful to have been a part of this amazing mentoring program. I would have benefited from better communication between YOP and the school to avoid confusion and missed opportunities for meetings with my mentee.”*

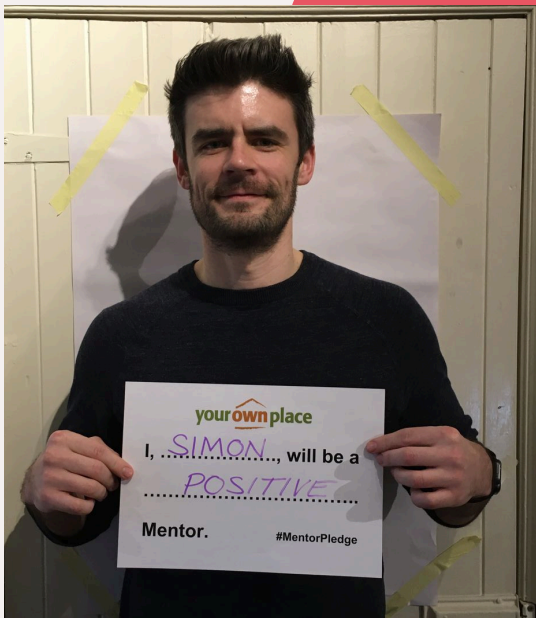
*“(mentor) Youngsters like him need support. He was relatively new to the school and they were passing him to college because of no 6th form option. Family support was minimal as they are grandparents. No parental input. Can be scary for a 16 year old.”*

*(mentor) I wish I could have had longer with him - I was invested in him and would love to know how he is doing and what he goes on to next. He had the ability to achieve great things.*

*“(mentor) Seeing the difference that mentoring made for me and my mentee. Seeing our relationship grow stronger with each meeting made it very rewarding.”*

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## SIMON'S STORY



Simon heard about Your Own Place mentoring at his workplace. He wanted to offer a young person support using his life and work experience so signed up to attend the 2 day training course.

Simon's management style fit really well with YOP's asset based and restorative approach and he was excited to get started.

“ I was told that my mentee struggled to say anything positive about himself in the group session so I was a little nervous, but also excited, to use the asset based approach to see if he would be able to talk positively about anything he had achieved. ”

Initially Simon was matched to his mentee, T, by a YOP worker. Simon and T, from University Technical College (UTC), then met once a week for an hour.

This was possible thanks to funding from Norwich Opportunities Area. Throughout the relationship Simon was supported by a Your Own Place Mentoring Support Worker. Unfortunately these meetings did not continue after the school was closed due to Covid19.



## SIMON'S STORY

“We talked about so many different options for what to do after he finished school, he said he didn't talk to anyone else about 'this stuff'. This really surprised me - his parents had opinions he told me, but his friends didn't discuss their next steps at all.”

## WHAT WAS THE PROCESS?



**Matched**

**13th December  
2019**



**7**

**Meet Ups in  
person**



**8**

**Hours  
Together**



**Goodbye**

**9th March  
2020**



STOCK IMAGE

“After a few meetings I was overjoyed to hear T tell me about all the things he enjoyed and was good at during his time at an out of school club. He had started off by saying things like "I don't want to sound big headed but ..." but after a while he understood I didn't consider it a negative and became more and more confident in saying things he was good at and enjoyed. It was so brilliant to hear.”

## LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS



This was always going to be a difficult project to complete successfully, due to the circumstances of the award of the contract.



Your Own Place feels proud of the speed at which they moved to make contact with the schools, launch a marketing campaign for mentors, meet the schools' needs and recruit and train mentors.



We were unconcerned by the target of 45 mentors for the project when we locked down, but due to the low referrals, had already decided to put a halt on further recruitment.



As discussed in the previous report, this project came to an abrupt halt when Covid19 locked schools down on 23rd March. Without consents in place, most relationships ended around this time.



Whilst numbers of mentee referrals were already low, the final date for referrals was 15th March due to the short-term nature of the funding.



## LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS



We moved quickly to support a number of matches with meetings virtually - contacting the schools for permission to share details. One of the two schools that had made referrals helped with this during lockdown.



Students being largely connected or actually attending the school make it easier to pin them down than our community projects. This and good marketing makes it easier to engage them from day one.



When mentoring works we know it works very well in providing a space for different conversations.



Our matching of mentors and mentees (albeit a small pool of mentors) still works well.



1-2-1 personal time with mentees to get to know them was valuable and vital for a successful match.



Even short matches have impact.



## LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS



We know the techniques and systems we use work well.



Where the mentoring relationships continued they may have not wanted it at first, as it wasn't always effectively communicated. Many later recognised the value of having a mentor once gently coerced into it.



We are always impressed by the willingness and perseverance of mentors. They try hard to make it work and are invested. Some mentors lacked smartphones and this caused difficulties in contacting them.



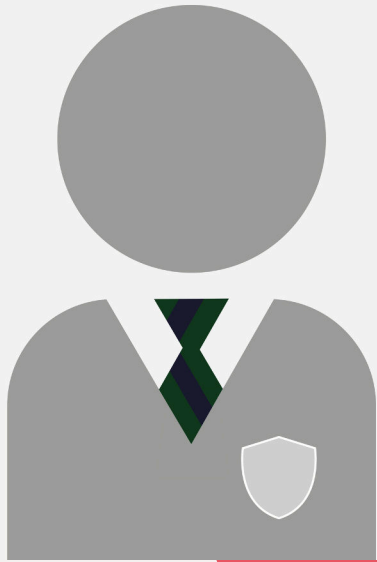
However, we are only one tiny part of a mentoring project. Like any project that is imposed, there is only so much will. We never sensed the schools really wanted mentoring or had had its benefits conveyed across the school strategically. We would want to involve schools at a high level in the design of any project at the commission stage to ensure it meets their modus operandi. They are too busy to have interventions imposed upon them.





## SHANE'S STORY

“I want someone to help me cope and make my tasks more manageable”



Shane is a student at Sewell Park Academy in his final year. At 15 he is studying for his GCSEs. Shane is going through an important transitional period in his life:

- He is coping with a recent breakdown in his family home
- He is struggling to manage his ADD which causes him to lose focus
- He has decisions to make about what he would like to do after leaving high school

Shane was offered to be part of the Norwich Opportunities Area School Mentoring Project. He was given the opportunity to be matched to a Your Own Place volunteer mentor. He would meet with his mentor once a week. He could chat with his mentor about things that interested him as well as things that concerned him.

Shane chose to get involved. He expressed an interest in being matched to someone who could "help him cope" with breaking down tasks and making things more manageable.



## SHANE'S STORY

“We did some work on what assets he's got and how he could best use them”

### WHAT WAS THE PROCESS?



**Matched**

15th January  
2020



**4**

Meet Ups  
in person



**9**

Virtual  
Meet Ups



**8.5**

Hours  
Together



...

They are  
still  
chatting!



MENTOR TONY

Shane was matched to one of our trained NOA school mentors, Tony. The meeting took place at Sewell Park Academy. It was great match; highlighting mutual interests in maths, animals and especially dogs.

They were meeting weekly at Sewell Park Academy prior to lock down. Covid-19 forced the school to shut. Tony and Shane continued their relationship virtually through phone calls and messages, allowing Shane the opportunity to discuss the changing situation. It reduced Shane's feelings of isolation as he wasn't able to see many people during lockdown.

## LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS



The power of open ended conversations that young people don't often have - people rarely ask them the 'why', 'how' and 'what' questions without agenda.



Sadly the project never had enough mentee referrals, which means that enthusiastic mentors get lost. This is a waste of time/money, reputation and lost impact.



Working with the schools is always hard and in this case perhaps too much damage was done and there was insufficient time to rebuild the relationships.



For 45 mentee matches we expect to need around 70 referrals.



The referrals we did get were perhaps not always appropriate. Mentoring can be used as a catch-all when schools lack other support services.



We were surprised at the lack of knowledge by teachers about some of the students, which made referrals additionally difficult.



## LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS



One mentor was a teacher at another school and was surprised at the contact we allowed (WhatsApp etc).



We learnt of young people saying that they don't talk to anyone else about their ambitions and this tells us of the vital need for this impartial support and place to reflect.



We needed more clarity from the schools re logistics, access, data sharing, trouble-shooting, DBS requirements, timings etc.



Mentors are sometimes anxious that mentees might not want them and this leads us to consider this management of expectations in our training.



We would recommend that with more time schools shadow the training to understand mentoring better.



More case-studies and success stories to share with the schools over time would result in more referrals due to the understanding of impact.



## LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS



More of a focus (joint workshops), following training shadowing, on how the service is marketed to students.

This could include students telling their story in newsletters, assemblies and social media. To get the whole school excited about the project and 'wanting' a mentor.



Through workshops, more time to identify the right students where we can have more impact.



Having a committed lead in each school that is held accountable.



We would want more discussion about parental engagement, contact outside of school hours and the aims of the young people.



Not starting just before the summer holiday. It would work well to start in term 1 (winter) to give planning and school engagement time/workshops as well as recruit mentors and then start officially matching in term 2 (spring). A whole term would lead to a better project overall.



## SUMMARY

OUR FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
SCHOOLS MENTORING:



Engaged, resourced and accountable **schools leads**



**Workshops with** the schools to define the project and expectations



A co-produced (with the school) **understanding of the mentee referrals**



A comprehensive **Engagement Strategy** with the schools to recruit mentees



Sharing of **impact strategy** as a virtuous circle to maintain and continue good working practices and referrals





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