

# REACH OUT

## IMPACT REPORT

2023/24



# Welcome

## from the CEO



**The social and educational landscape for young people is constantly changing. Because of this, there are questions that youth-focused charities like ReachOut need to ask ourselves. Why do we do what we do? Who do we do it for? How do we do it?**

These are questions we've been asking this year as we've been working to develop a new organisational strategy. Alongside our young people, their parents and carers, as well as teachers and other stakeholders, we're developing a strategy that positions ReachOut as a key strategic partner for schools.

We're not quite finished yet – there's more work to do – but we have made a number of decisions that are shaping our programmes as we've moved into the 2024/25 school year, ahead of launching our new strategy for 2025/26.

At the end of this report, you can find an overview of some of the key changes we're going to be making, such as targeting our support for young people aged 9-14 and a new focus on socio-emotional skills development.

None of the changes would be possible though, without the work that's preceded them and the impact we've had during the last school year. In this report, you can find out how we've supported our young people to develop their confidence, character and personal wellbeing.

As you'll see at the end of this report, we will be moving away from using some of these metrics – such as measuring what have previously been our key character strengths – in favour of a more robust impact measurement system, developed in partnership with the Centre for Youth Impact. The figures in this report though, represent our focus for the last school year, and what the young people we work with have achieved.

I'd like to finish by extending my thanks to everyone who has been involved with ReachOut over the last year – from our young people, mentors and Project Leaders, to our school contacts, funders, corporate partners, our board of trustees and of course our dedicated staff team – we wouldn't be able to do any of this without you.

Best wishes,

*Ben*

**Ben Hilton, CEO**

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# About ReachOut

ReachOut is a strategic partner for schools. We build socio-emotional skills that transform outcomes for 9-14-year olds.

We define these skills as empathy, responsibility, problem-solving, initiative, teamwork and emotion management.

We exist because not all children have the opportunity to just 'pick-up' socio-emotional skills. The 9-14 age bracket is an especially crucial juncture in childhood development, so we focus our

efforts on helping children in this range.

Within this bracket, we further focus our efforts on helping young people constrained by circumstance.

Our programme delivery is informed by an evidence based curriculum and delivered through collective mentoring with trained practitioners and volunteer mentors. This combines positive peer support with trusted adult role models, allowing us and the young people we work with to create the most impact.

In 2023/24, we supported young people in London, Manchester and Liverpool through our ReachOut Club and Academy programmes.

## ReachOut Club

- ✓ Primary schools with young people aged 9 - 11.
- ✓ We focus on building academic confidence and a growth mindset.
- ✓ Mentees are prepared for the transition to secondary school.

- ✓ 1-2-1 and group mentoring with ReachOut's volunteer mentors.
- ✓ Development of key socio-emotional skills.
- ✓ Engaging group activities focusing on things like goal setting, public speaking and well-being habits.
- ✓ Classroom career talks.
- ✓ Workplace experience visits.

## ReachOut Academy

- ✓ Secondary schools with young people aged 11-14.\*
- ✓ We help young people navigate their teenage years socially and academically.
- ✓ Mentees are prepared for GCSEs and the transition to work, higher education, dealing with everyday challenges and decision-making.

## Our methodology for this report

The information from this report is a summary of the results of our 2023/24 impact review process. Quantitative data is collected through a combination of post-programme surveys completed by young people, mentors, school contacts and parents as well as case study interviews and qualitative research collected by our project team over the course of the year. The impact review process is overseen by our Senior Management Team and is reviewed by our Board of Trustees.

\*In 2023/24 we also worked with young people aged 14-16. As part of our strategic review process, which you can read about on page 10, we are now focusing our intervention on young people aged 9-14.

# Key Outputs

In 2023/24 we:

**Supported**

**696** young people.

**Provided**

**17,448** hours of mentoring and activities.

**Delivered**

**55** mentoring projects.

**London:** 27 projects - 13 primary schools and 14 secondary schools.

**Greater Manchester:** 22 projects - 10 primary schools and 12 secondary schools.

**Liverpool:** 6 primary school projects.

We recruited trained and supported 618 volunteer mentors. 103 were returning mentors from previous years.

## Why were mentees referred to ReachOut?

**35%** - to improve their confidence.

**32%** - to improve their self-esteem.

**13%** - because they could benefit from an additional role-model.

**12%** - for support with their behaviour.

**8%** - to improve their academic attainment.

*Figures adjusted to account for non-responses.*



**58%** of the schools we worked with were located in the 30% most deprived communities in England. **71%** were located in the 40% most deprived areas.

*Information based on the [Index of Multiple Deprivation data](#).*

**"I believe ReachOut really helped my child with their social confidence and ambition. The sessions were aspirational and opened up the possibilities of educational and personal development."** **Parent of a ReachOut Mentee**



Mentees identified with **32 different ethnic backgrounds.**



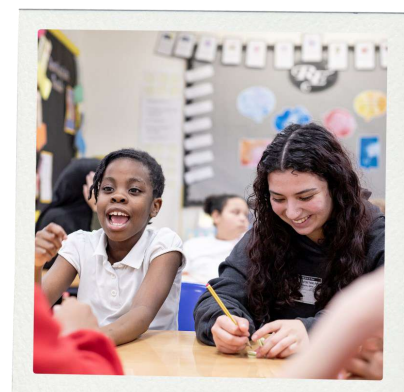
**61%** of young people were **eligible for pupil premium which includes those on free school meals.**



**55%** female

**42%** male

*3% preferred not to say or didn't provide a response.*



# Outcomes for Mentees

This year, the key areas of our impact measurement looked at how our programmes had a positive impact on the development of young people's confidence, well-being and key character

strengths of staying power, fairness, good judgement and self-control.

We also looked at their engagement with school, including their academic confidence and attendance.

**84%** of mentees said they enjoyed coming to ReachOut.



## Self-Confidence

**65%** of mentees said ReachOut improved their self-confidence.

**89%** of mentors and Project Leaders said they saw an increase in their mentee's self-confidence.

**81%** of parents said they saw an increase in their child's self-confidence.



*"Before I came to ReachOut, I wasn't very confident, but now I can see the bright side of myself and I know I can actually be confident! This makes me feel amazing."  
Year 6 Mentee*

**When Reggie, a year 8 mentee in London, started at ReachOut, he set himself a goal of improving at maths.** He struggled with putting a lot of pressure on himself – pressure that meant he was nervous and which often affected his work.

"My mentor helped me understand that it's not the end of the world if I don't get into the top set," Reggie told us. "I know it's still really good to be in the middle set and I know I'm doing the best I can. Now my grades are a lot higher because I feel a lot less nervous!"

"He's really learned how to apply himself this year," said Peter, Reggie's mentor. "I really think his confidence levels have improved – he's also taken up activities outside of ReachOut like drama club and has set himself a target for getting his guitar grades! I've really seen the impact of what encouragement and spending time with a young person will do – he's come so far and is willing to step outside of his comfort zone."

"I'm more confident in class now, and also outside of school," said Reggie. "I still get a bit worried sometimes, but now I've learned how to handle it."

# Outcomes for Mentees

## Character

**78% of mentees** said they improved one or more character strengths.

**89% of mentors and Project Leaders** said they felt their mentee had improved one or more character strengths.

**62% of parents** said they felt their child had improved one or more character strengths.

## Positive Impact

Considering whether there had been an increase in character, confidence or emotional well-being....

**85% of mentees** said ReachOut had a positive impact on their lives.

**96% of mentors and Project Leaders** said ReachOut had a positive impact on their mentees.

**85% of parents** said ReachOut had a positive impact on the lives of their children.

**95%** of mentees said their mentor helped them this year.

## Youth Participation

**At ReachOut, having the voices, ideas and insights of young people at the heart of our decision-making is a key part of how we work.**

As well as asking for regular feedback from all mentees, we also have a youth panel where a group of young people from London and Manchester come together each month to work on structured projects. Last year, this included feeding into the development of our strategic review.

**85%** of mentees felt they could make changes to what happened at ReachOut.



**Take a look at an end-of-year message from our CEO to this year's youth panel.**

*"Taking part in ReachOut makes me feel better after having a hard day. I know I can go somewhere where I can make friends and share my opinions. It's shown me I can be part of something."* **Year 9 Mentee**



## Academic Confidence

**52% of mentees** reported an increase in their academic confidence.

**71% of mentors and Project Leaders** said their mentee had increased their academic confidence.

**65% of teachers** said their students had increased their academic confidence.

**69%** of mentees improved their attendance at school.

## What do teachers say?

**91%** saw an increase in the confidence of students who attended ReachOut.

**80%** said they had seen an improvement in students' behaviour.

**80%** said they had seen improvements in students' attitude to learning.

**90%** would recommend ReachOut to other schools.

***"They have become much more confident communicating with other students and with adults. They are also able to advocate for themselves much more than previously."** Secondary School Teacher*

**"Callum\* has been with us at ReachOut for a couple of years now, but the progress that we've seen from him this year has been astounding.** He was originally referred to us for a number of different reasons. He's had some challenging life experiences which have had a knock-on effect on his self-esteem, social confidence and also his engagement with school. He's struggled with anxiety in the past, and it was clear to us that he needed support with his social confidence and feeling included. At the start of the year, he was very quiet during the sessions, he really struggled to engage with the activities that we had planned and found it difficult to connect with

his mentor. Week by week, though, we've seen his confidence grow both in his ability to speak to adults, but also in his relationships with his peers. His mentor has helped his confidence greatly, and the two of them have formed a really impactful relationship where he can speak about his social anxiety and any problems he's facing at school. His Project Leader described him as a completely different person from the beginning of the projects and his teacher told us that ReachOut has been a lifeline." **A highlight from one of our Project Officers.**

\*The name of this young person has been changed.

# Employability and Careers

334

mentees  
attended a  
workplace visit  
or career talk.

ReachOut's workplace experience visits and career talks are designed to inspire the young people we work with to see that every and any career is a career for them. The visits and talks aim to highlight different options beyond school for our mentees, introducing them to a variety of career paths with advice and insights into how they might pursue them. Mentees visit a wide variety of organisations from **software engineering** to **insurance, financial services, hospitality, renewable energy, the arts** and **further education**.

65% of secondary school mentees said that ReachOut helped them think about what options are available to them after leaving school.

To celebrate International Women's Day, ReachOut partnered with MoneySuperMarket to run a workplace experience visit for a group of year 8 and 9 mentees from Lostock High School. After a tour around their central Manchester office, the mentees heard from Marie and Vienna – apprentice software engineers about their paths into coding as well as the challenges and benefits of their jobs. Mentees also took part in an activity designed to simulate the fast-paced environment of software engineering - building a house out of Lego with regular updates to the brief, thinking on their feet and working as a team.



Find out more about this workplace experience visit.

*"The best thing about the day is that it showed us it's possible for girls to work in tech."* Year 8 Mentee

*"I feel informed about a career choice I didn't know about before, which is really useful for my future."* Year 10 Mentee

*"I learned that anyone can do this job, no matter how they grew up."* Year 9 Mentee



# Outcomes for Mentors

Our volunteer mentors are at the heart of our projects. As well as ensuring they are equipped with the skills and training they need to support their mentees, we also want mentoring to have a positive impact on their skills and futures.

**90%** of mentors felt our **mentor training** prepared them well for mentoring.

**95%** of mentors felt that our **online safeguarding course** prepared them well for dealing with safeguarding concerns whilst mentoring.

## Which of their own skills did mentors say they improved through volunteering with ReachOut?

**98%** improved their **confidence**.

**98%** improved their **communication**.

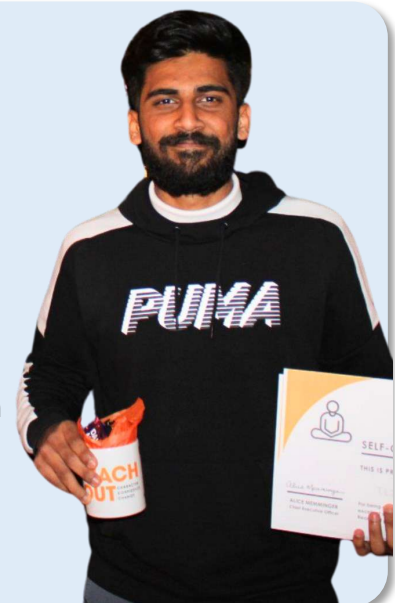
**99%** improved their **ability to motivate others**.

**96%** improved their **behaviour management**.

**98%** improved their **leadership**.



**“People generally don’t look forward to Mondays, but that’s when my project was so I couldn’t wait!** Mentoring was something I looked forward to each week. It was a great way to get involved in my community and it was really fun. Initially, my mentee was very shy and didn’t get involved. By the end of the year though, he was confident enough to get up and read something he’d written in front of the whole class. It just showed how much his confidence and ability to express himself had evolved. **If you’re thinking about becoming a mentor, I’d say jump into it and grab the opportunity!** I’ve learnt a lot during my time as a mentor, skills that can help me in the future, and it’s been an opportunity to give back to a community that’s embraced me.” **Tej, Volunteer Mentor**



# Looking to the future

This year, we've been working with young people, their parents and carers as well as teachers, volunteers and other stakeholders to develop a new vision and strategy for ReachOut.

We'll be launching our new strategy for the 2025/26 school year, but we've made a number of decisions that are shaping our programmes as we've moved into 2024/25.

## We're going to be narrowing the criteria for the young people we work with.

At ReachOut, we're focusing our support for 9-14 year-olds who go to school in the 20% most deprived UK communities.

Research indicates that young people within these communities are particularly negatively impacted by social and economic factors. For some, this means a greater risk of poor educational outcomes and being in poverty when they're older. It's also where other school and extra-curricular opportunities are most limited. In the [Fair Education Alliance Priorities to Government](#) - which we helped contribute to this year - they highlight the need for investment in youth services that fill the gaps that schools are unable to.

That's why we exist - to work with young people at a crucial, formative age where the right intervention can help unlock their futures.

## Our work will be underpinned by a focus on socio-emotional skills development.

As part of our strategic review, we've been working with the Centre for Youth Impact to develop an evidence-based framework focused on socio-emotional skills development.

Research has shown that the strong development of these skills at a young age - when the brain is in a key stage of its development - is one of the strongest indicators of a young person's success at school and their happiness in life.

In shifting our focus from our traditional metrics of character strengths to the six key socio-emotional skills, we're aligning ourselves with the Centre for Youth Impact's outcome frameworks. They show that well developed socio-emotional skills increase the likelihood of achieving positive outcomes in later life. For example, they're key indicators of attaining qualifications, securing, sustaining and progressing in employment and developing physically and mentally healthy life-styles.

They're foundational skills for young people, but we believe they're often taken for granted because it's assumed that everyone has equal access to developing them - and that's not true.



Take a look at our short explainer video to find out more about our approach to socio-emotional skills development.

## What are the six key socio-emotional skills?

**Responsibility:** reliably meeting commitments and fulfilling obligations.

**Empathy:** relating to others with compassion, acceptance and understanding.

**Problem Solving:** planning, strategising and implementing complex tasks including critical thinking, goal setting and responsible decision making.

**Initiative:** the ability to take action, sustain motivation and persevere through challenges.

**Teamwork:** leadership, and the ability to collaborate, communicate and coordinate with others.

**Emotion Management:** being aware of, naming, understanding and constructively handling positive and negative emotions.

Just like with Maths or English, developing these skills depends on a wide range of factors and can be influenced, formally or informally, by access to a range of different learning opportunities.

That's what makes a focus on socio-emotional skills education – and equity – so critical and why we're putting it at the heart of everything we do, working with young people constrained by circumstance who don't always have those same opportunities.

We believe this will have a significant impact on the efficacy of our programmes, as well as positive implications for future funding and wider educational partnerships. In making this change, we have also been working with the Centre for Youth Impact to develop a robust, evidence-based framework to measure and evaluate the impact of these changes, and of our programmes, as we move forward.

### We're testing our ideas to make sure they work.

To achieve these goals, we're adapting the way we deliver our interventions to make them more targeted and impactful.

We've got some ideas on how we want to do this, so during the 2024/25 school year, we're testing these ideas in our projects – evaluating and comparing their impact over time.

For some projects, this might mean having

fewer mentors, but ones who are able to devote more time to their mentees.

In others, it might mean splitting a standard-length project into two separate cohorts to try and reach more young people with more intensive interventions.

We're also looking at the timings of the sessions and if this changes how young people feel during their time with us and attendance rates.

We want to ensure that any changes we make as part of our new strategy are backed up by clear evidence that they work.

Whatever tests we're putting in place though – we'll be ensuring that the young people who take part have a fantastic ReachOut experience, with improved curriculum and engagement opportunities for everyone.

**We want to guarantee that ReachOut is a thriving and dynamic organisation, well placed to develop and deliver the best possible services for the young people who need us most. This new strategy is our first step in doing that.**



# Support ReachOut

# REACH OUT

It's an exciting time at ReachOut as we continue to develop our new organisational strategy and look to the future.

If you want to join us and help make a difference to young people constrained by circumstance, here are some of the ways you can get involved:



### Volunteer as a mentor

As a volunteer mentor, you can be part of a community of volunteers making an enormous difference to the lives of young people.



### Connect us with your company

We work with fantastic corporate partners to create bespoke partnerships that have an enormous benefit for ReachOut and the organisations we work with. Why not connect us with your company?



### Take part in a sponsored event

There are so many ways you can fundraise for ReachOut including taking part in some fantastic fundraising events.



### Donate to ReachOut

Whether it's a one-off donation, a monthly contribution or if you're interested in philanthropy, your support will make a huge difference to our work.



**Get Involved** 

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### Manchester

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020 80871849

***"ReachOut didn't just change my life - it gave me the tools to build a future I didn't think was possible. They listened when no one else would. They invested in my potential when others turned away."*** Glorious, ReachOut Alumnus