

Programme Evaluation Report 2005



chance uk



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Section 1 - Introduction to Chance UK

Chance UK provides specific and targeted solution focused mentoring for children aged 5-11 years, based on individual needs. Our programmes are delivered by carefully screened and trained volunteers, who are closely supervised and supported by our professional staff team.

Our Mission

- To identify primary school children with behavioural difficulties who are at risk of developing anti-social or criminal offending behaviour in the future
- To improve their lives by offering them individually tailored, one-to-one mentoring with a carefully screened, trained and supervised adult volunteer
- To offer support and guidance to the children's parents and/or carers

Our Objectives

- Introducing more stability into the children's lives
- Reducing the isolation the children and their families may experience
- Directly addressing the difficulties experienced by each child
- Supporting the children as they find the motivation and life skills they need to move forward
- Channelling the children's disruptive energy into projects that encourage a sense of personal achievement
- Engendering in the children a sense of self-worth

The kind of children that we work with

The children we work with are typically very difficult to manage, unable to concentrate on their schoolwork, and/or have problems making friends and following instructions from adults. According to our most recent referral statistics, 78% of the children that we work with are from single parent¹ families and 58% receive free school meals due to low income. 32% of our children have already faced exclusion² from school and many more are at risk of exclusion due to their behaviour. At referral, we also ask about addiction and criminal history in the family. Of those referrals that had this information, 19% indicated that the referred child had a family member with an addiction problem, and 13% that the child had a family member with a criminal history, although anecdotal evidence suggests that the figures are much higher.

How our child mentoring programme works

Children are referred to Chance UK by primary school teachers and, to a lesser extent, by social services and other agencies. We assess their behaviour using Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). If there are a number of significant factors within the child's school or home environment that are causing stress, we also consider these during our assessment. An

SDQ score of 16 or over³ indicates that a child has a behavioural difficulty and is likely to be suitable for the Chance UK programme.

If a child meets our referral criteria, we visit the child and his or her parent at their home to carry out a further assessment. This gives us an opportunity to answer any questions that they may have about the Chance UK mentoring programme, and to discuss their reasons for participating. We agree to accept a child onto the programme only when there is clear evidence of willingness to participate on the part of the parent and the child.

Katie Gonzalez-Bell - Learning Mentor, Moreland Primary School

"As part of my role as a Learning Mentor at an inner London primary school I regularly refer children to Chance UK for assessment for a Chance mentor... and I have found that those children working with Chance UK gain confidence in themselves and their learning and behaviour improves. The fact that the children are given an opportunity to develop a trusting, fun and rewarding relationship with an adult in 1:1 time I believe helps them to trust other adults and have faith in themselves which in turn impacts their learning and behaviour... I feel the Chance UK programme is particularly successful as the staff work closely with all those involved with the child. This is particularly valuable to me as a

¹ Throughout this document the word 'parent' is used to represent parents and main carers for the children. Many children do not live with their parents but are cared for by other relatives.

² This includes fixed term and permanent exclusions.

³ Out of a possible score of 40. A maximum of 10 points are assigned each for each of the following categories: conduct problems, hyperactivity and inattention, emotional symptoms and peer problems. The SDQ also measures pro-social behaviour.

Learning Mentor as it means we are working together towards appropriate targets and we are able to share information about the progress of each child. The programme also places a great emphasis on supporting parents, which is an important aspect of my role, and this work has led to parents I work with feeling more confident and willing to accept help from other agencies, which is an incredible step."

Once a child has been accepted, she or he is matched with a volunteer mentor. The choice of mentor takes account of the child's interests, needs and circumstances, and any other relevant factors pertaining to either the child or mentor. A Chance UK programme manager then briefs the child, parent and mentor separately about any relevant issues before arranging an introductory meeting. After this, mentoring begins.

The mentor and child meet once a week for a year. Each meeting lasts two to four hours. Meetings take place either in the child's home or at other agreed and appropriate places such as public libraries, community centres, sports halls, museums and public parks.

At Chance UK we work in a solution focused way. This means that we train our mentors to help empower the children to find their own solutions rather than spending time focusing on their problems and why they came about. All our staff are trained in Solution Focused Brief Therapy and adapt the techniques learned to be appropriate to the mentoring situation. By finding competence in the children and focusing on positive behaviours,



we encourage them to develop positive social behaviour. In this way they become more able to deal with situations that may in the past have triggered their poor behaviour.

The first three months of the mentoring relationship constitute the 'engagement' phase, during which the mentor and child build a trusting relationship. The next nine months constitute the 'goal oriented' phase, during which the child and mentor work towards achieving agreed goals. A meeting

takes place between the mentor, child, parents and programme manager at the end of the 'engagement' phase to review progress, to identify and agree realistic goals for the next phase, and to reinforce strengths and resources that can be built on. The mentor is required to meet the programme manager a minimum of once a month for supervision and support.

At the end of the mentoring year, every child and mentor attend a graduation, where their

achievements over the year are celebrated with family and friends. This gives everyone the chance to acknowledge the progress that has been made and provides a positive ending to the mentoring relationship.

After each child and mentor pair graduates, Chance UK staff conduct debriefs with all parties involved so that we can evaluate the progress of each child. These debriefs take place with the referrer, child, mentor and parent, and look at the changes in



Section 2 - Method

relationships, behaviour and social development.

We revisit the SDQ at this point. The referrer's original score from the SDQ shows us whether a child is suitable for the programme. At the start we also ask the parent to complete the same questionnaire and then at the review stage the mentor completes another. This gives us a broad base from which we can measure change. At the debriefs, all parties involved complete the SDQ again. Together, all the scores give us a measurable indicator of change in a child's behaviour.

The mentors

Our mentors are volunteers who have a genuine interest in working with children. In order to be selected for the role, they have to undergo a rigorous screening process, including an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure, and they have to successfully complete an intensive three-day training course that prepares them for their mentoring role. They must also undergo an in-depth interview with two of our programme managers. Once mentoring begins, they are closely supervised and supported by a programme manager.

Our mentors come from all walks of life, from different races and from different cultural backgrounds. However, they all share the same important personal qualities: friendliness, common sense, an ability to listen and not judge, a sense of responsibility, and a deep commitment to Chance UK's mentoring programme.

The purpose of this internal evaluation was to get up to date information about the impact that our programme is having on both children and their families. Funding is currently being sought for an independent longitudinal evaluation, but it was felt that in the meantime we should look at the difference that mentoring can make and share these results with stakeholders and other interested parties.

It was decided to limit the cases examined to those that graduated within the last calendar year. Debriefs and SDQs for all these cases were compiled and analysed to provide a picture of the impact of the Chance UK mentoring programme on children. This report focuses on the changes to the lives of the children; although information is collected through the debriefs on the processes of the programme, this information has not been evaluated here.



Section 3 - The results

A-Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

The SDQ provides us with our main quantitative results for the mentoring programme. As indicated previously, children must score 16 or over on the SDQ to qualify as having a behavioural difficulty and to meet the requirements of our programme. By the end of the mentoring programme we are hoping to see a reduction in that score and ideally a drop of ten or more points and/or a reduction of the score to under 16. Table 1 below shows the analysis of the scores.

It is the referrer's initial SDQ score that gains a child's place on the programme, meaning that every child starts with a referral SDQ of over 16. It is therefore very positive to see that almost half of the children on the programme ended up with a score under 16. It is clear that, according to the referrer, the majority (68%) have achieved a reduction in the SDQ score, with 27% achieving a reduction of 11 or more.

Both parent and mentor results show positive changes in the children, with 81% and 68% seeing reductions respectively. In considering the mentor scores it is interesting to note the range of starting values. In completing the initial SDQ after three months of mentoring, many mentors give the child a very low SDQ score. This means that it is often quite difficult for the child to get a large reduction in the mentor SDQ score.

Table 1: Change in SDQ scores at end of programme

| SDQs | 1-5 reduction | 6-10 reduction | 11+ reduction | Under 16 at end |
|----------|---------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Referrer | 23% | 18% | 27% | 45% |
| Parent | 62% | 15% | 4% | |
| Mentor | 41% | 18% | 9% | |
| Average | 59% | 26% | 4% | |

Looking at the wider picture, the average scores give a very good indication of change. For each child's individual evaluation we look at the three separate scores at the beginning and end and also the average of these three scores. The figures shown in Table 1 show the percentage of children whose average score reduced. 89% of children achieved a reduction in their average SDQ score by the end of mentoring.

B-Referrer interviews

A debriefing interview is conducted with the referrer for all cases. In interviewing the referrer we look at a number of areas, as outlined below.

1. Relationship with peers

The majority saw improvements in the children's relationship with peers, even if these had been only small steps. A well repeated phrase was that the child had "settled down" in the classroom and many children were also more able to concentrate on the task in hand; in fact 73% showed an improvement in concentration over the mentoring period.⁴ For some children this improvement was shown through being able to participate in whole class discussions (as opposed to trying to dominate them) or through showing more respect to others.

Learning how to develop positive relationships is key for many of the children with whom we work - in fact 15% of referrers⁵ cite a difficulty in forming relationships with peers as one of the primary reasons for referral. Table 2 shows that 64% of children were better at communicating with others and 45% of children were better at sharing and taking turns.

Improvements have also been seen in the playground. One teacher stated "[he] is much less involved in conflict; he has started to stop and tell before it escalates." These actions are really important in the development of behaviour and are the main focus of the work that mentors do with the children on the Chance UK mentoring programme. Table 2 shows that 64% of children have better anger management, 62% better self control and 59% better frustration management. These improvements show that the solution focused approach that Chance UK uses with children is having an impact upon the way they manage their own behaviour, which has a knock-on effect in the way they relate to their peers.

Dwayne and John⁶

Dwayne was referred to Chance UK when he was 10. His initial SDQ was 21, clearly showing that he had a behavioural difficulty. In the six months prior to mentoring, Dwayne had been excluded from school for a total of 5 days. He was unable to deal with his frustration and anger and would react inappropriately. He also did not have any close friends and tended to dominate groups.

Dwayne was matched with John, a volunteer mentor who met regularly with him for 2-4 hours a week for a year. They worked on specific goals as well as going swimming, attending a football match and building models.

At the end of the mentoring period, Dwayne's teacher saw many improvements in his behaviour. He had become much

more settled in the classroom and much more focused on his work. He was also able to form more balanced relationships with his peers. His communication skills had generally improved, and he was starting to negotiate. Dwayne's anger management and self-control had also improved; he was no longer "flying off the handle" and making inappropriate comments.

Dwayne's mother also felt that there had been positive changes. "Dwayne opens up more and talks about school and his feelings." She felt that the opportunity to talk in a one-to-one situation had given him the opportunity to learn to listen.

At the end of the mentoring, Dwayne's SDQ score had dropped to 10; this brings him out of the behavioural difficulty category. As it is also a drop of more than 10 it shows significant change that should be more easily sustained by the child. It was also reported that during the 12-month period of the mentoring he had not been excluded from school, a clear sign that his behaviour has improved.

2. Relationship with adults

Many of the children with whom we work find it difficult to follow instructions from adults. As Table 2 shows, 64% of the children have improved in their communication with others, both peers and adults. Many teachers have commented upon how this area has improved, particularly in relation to teaching staff, for example "far less back chat!"

This showed through not only in relation to work but also more socially. It was reported that some

⁴ See Table 2

⁵ Internal assessment of referral information, June 2005

⁶ Names have been changed in all case studies in this report.





children became more open with the adults at school, such as sharing a piece of news and more particularly talking about the mentoring and the activities that they had done. This improved attitude towards teachers obviously has a greater impact upon the learning environment for the whole class.

A Teacher

“He is more approachable and will have a conversation with you. He coped with the change of teachers this term, whereas previously he would not have.”

3. Social & behavioural development

Table 2 shows how the referrers rated the children’s development of social and behavioural skills. 59% of children improved their confidence. Many of the referrers who said that there was no change in the child’s confidence stated that this was because the child did not have a problem with confidence to start with.

In relation to the self-management of behaviour, the results are positive. Just over half the children are more able to deal with criticism or reprimand and 62% have better self-control. The solution focused work that mentors do with the children helps them to improve in this area and to manage their own behaviour in situations that may have previously ended with conflict. Related to these figures are those for anger management and frustration management, which see improvements in 64% and 59% of children respectively.

4. Academic progress

Chance UK’s mentoring programme has shown that a positive change in behaviour can have a knock-on effect on academic progress. Developing communication skills, particularly negotiation and listening skills, can assist in the learning environment.

Table 2 shows that 55% of children became more willing to take risks in learning after mentoring and, particularly encouraging, 82% are more interested and questioning. This

Table 2: Social and behavioural development

| | Better | No Change |
|---|--------|-----------|
| Confidence: willingness to speak up, negotiate, express needs | 59% | 41% |
| More interested / questioning | 82% | 18% |
| More willing to take risks as a learner | 55% | 45% |
| Sharing / turn taking | 45% | 55% |
| Ability to cope with criticism / reprimand | 55% | 45% |
| Communicating with others | 64% | 31% |
| Concentration | 73% | 22% |
| Anger management | 64% | 27% |
| Self control | 62% | 24% |
| Frustration management | 59% | 36% |

also showed through in many of the comments from teachers at the debrief interview. Children “would have a go” where previously they would not.

The improvement in concentration is obviously very beneficial to the learning environment and many teachers did find that children who previously had an incredibly short attention span were more able to stick with a task after the mentoring.

Many children have seen an improvement in literacy and numeracy throughout the year. Some of these children will be getting extra support specifically in these areas, so the mentoring is not wholly responsible for this, but these skills are encouraged by mentors and are often incorporated into the fun goals that the children work towards, for example, keeping their spending within budget, reading set amounts of a book, researching and creating a project on local facilities for children.

It was also observed that the general attitude to learning had improved; one teacher noticed that the child had a “more organised approach, [and was] better at getting down to work without fussing”. This came through in a few debrief interviews with children who had started to see themselves as learners and had started to want to achieve.

A Teacher

“It definitely helped. It took him to a different world and gave him something he did not have before. It helped his attitude to learning as he felt that he had something to contribute. [His mentor] gave him some self-esteem and it was a positive experience for him.”

5. The benefits of mentoring

Referrers were asked directly what they believed to be the benefits of the Chance UK mentoring programme to the child. This open-ended question gave us the opportunity to see the primary benefits that the referrer saw for the child. Seven main themes seemed to come through in their responses:

- 33% saw increased confidence and/or self-esteem
- 28% felt that the child had gained new experiences
- 22% had seen improvements in relationships
- 22% believed having a neutral adult to relate to and the one-to-one attention were the primary benefits
- 17% cited that the child was now calmer and better able to deal with conflict
- 11% said that the child had matured
- 11% saw an improvement in attitude to learning

All responses that were received to this question were very positive and reinforced the findings mentioned in previous sections. Every referrer felt that the Chance UK mentoring programme had been of benefit to the child.

6. Exclusions

Unfortunately the data that we have for exclusions is not complete. We have not been able to get all the information that we need from every school with which we work. From the data we have we can tell that 47% of this cohort had faced exclusion prior to the mentoring and only 21% had faced exclusion during the mentoring. In all cases where there had been exclusions during the mentoring the total amount of days had reduced from prior to the mentoring. This report recommends further research in this area.

Rex and Thomas

Rex was referred to Chance UK when he was 5 because of his behaviour at school - he had been excluded from school for a total of 20 days within six months. His educational attainment was low, he was unable to read, and had an unstable home life. It was felt that a lot of the problems he was facing started after he witnessed domestic abuse.

Rex was matched with Thomas, a volunteer mentor who met regularly with him for 2-4 hours a week for a year. They worked on specific goals as well as working on his reading, creating a scrapbook and trying lots of different activities.

At the beginning of the relationship, Rex’s mother was unsure if it would help. “But by the end of the year there had been a lot of changes. Thomas was Rex’s role model - he looked up to him. His relationship with Thomas improved his communication skills and self-esteem.”

At referral Rex’s SDQ score was 16, but by the end of the mentoring it was 9, meaning that Rex no longer has a behavioural difficulty. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at his school commented on his improved attitude towards teachers as well as his gain in confidence and self-esteem. During the twelve months of mentoring, Rex was excluded from school for only one day, a great improvement.



C-Parent interviews

All parents completed their debrief interview but the depth of their answers varied. Some gave very full and detailed responses while others gave single word responses or no response at all to some questions. This is due to the fact that many of the parents with whom we work are themselves disengaged, hence the complementary work that is done with the parents alongside the child mentoring.

1. Relationship between parent and child

Many of the families with whom we work have difficult relationships at home. As shown in section B2, the majority of children improved their relationships with adults generally, but from speaking with the parents we found that in 96% of cases, the relationship between the child being mentored and his/her parent had improved. Some of the main things parents said had changed were:

- The child had calmed down (53%)
- More open communication between them (21%)

- The child had matured / grown up (11%)
- The child had more confidence (5%)

Parents

“At the beginning he was selfish and angry all the time. Lately he has not been so bad and has calmed down a lot.”

“He is much more approachable, opens up more and talks about school and his feelings, also listens more.”

We then asked the parents if they could identify why this change had happened. The majority of those that responded put it down to the mentoring but were no more specific than that. Those that did give more detail felt that it was due to:

- The one-to-one attention the child had gained through mentoring
- Having a positive mentor / role model
- The mentor improving the child's confidence and self-esteem

Parents

“It was to do with the mentoring. He started looking forward to it. [The mentor] got him to calm down; he's a different child.”

“We talk more; there is a conversation. He is expressing himself.”

“A person having time for her every week; less stress for me.”

The parents were asked what activities that had started in mentoring would be continued within the family. These included:

- Playing board games
- Cooking together
- Swimming
- Healthy eating
- Bowling
- Museum visits
- Library visits
- Going to the park
- Cycling

The fact that many of the parents are choosing to start/continue these activities with their child is a very positive step forward. Before the mentoring, the relationships in many of these families were so poor that parents and children



could not spend quality time together. By committing to continue these activities, the parents show how much the relationships have improved.

2. Progress

The parents were asked what they had seen since the start of the mentoring that they would term progress or development. The parents identified a broad range of areas in which the children had improved:

- Communication
- Self-esteem
- Happiness
- Calming down
- Behaviour at home
- Behaviour at school
- Confidence
- Willingness to try new things
- More care for siblings
- Sense of understanding right/wrong
- Listening to instructions
- Less anger
- Healthy eating
- More interest in learning
- Not telling lies
- Interaction with other children

A lot of these improvements meet the aims of the Chance UK mentoring programme. Obviously the main focus is behaviour improvement, which many of the parents identify outright. Linked into that are understanding how far you can push a situation, understanding right from wrong and not telling lies - all things that





a mentor may work on with a child. Then there are the social skills that are a knock-on effect from the mentoring, such as better communication skills, listening to instructions, trying new things and being more caring.

Again, the parents were asked if they could identify why these changes had come about and the main response was the one-to-one attention provided by the mentoring, and having another adult setting boundaries and reinforcing good behaviour. Throughout the mentoring year the child and mentor take part in a variety of activities, such as going to the park and the library, playing games, visiting museums and galleries and trying new things. We asked the parents what they felt their child had gained from these activities. Almost half of parents (47%) felt that they had gained confidence through the mentoring activities, 16% felt that they had gained someone to talk to, 11% saw that their child had gained in knowledge, had something to do and had improved in reading skills, and 5% saw their child's relationships with peers improve.

These results obviously throw out very similar responses to those previously outlined and reinforce the benefit of the variety of activities that the mentors undertake with the children.

23% of parents interviewed felt that there was a drawback to the mentoring programme - the fact that it lasted only a year. The Chance UK mentoring programme provides one-year transforming relationships and has a fixed end point to ensure that children and families are empowered to take charge of their lives rather than form a dependence upon the mentoring and support that Chance UK provides.

Parents

"He would sit and talk more. It broadened his horizons. He would sit and hold a conversation and started talking about different things."

"It gave him the opportunity to express what he has inside - a person not from the family or at school. It gave him the confidence to talk to other people not just people close to him."

Every parent felt that there were benefits to the Chance UK mentoring programme. These benefits included those previously mentioned (rise in confidence and self-esteem, improved behaviour, one-to-one attention) but also some other interesting benefits:

- Learning about Lego
- Extra support for the whole family
- Gaining trust in others
- Improved SATs results
- No more stealing

Rachel and Rosie

Rachel was referred to Chance UK for her withdrawn and disruptive behaviour. She had had an unsettled family life; her parents had split, with her mother having children with another partner and now showing no interest in her. Rachel currently lives with her father, who is an alcoholic.

Rachel was matched with Rosie, who met regularly with her for 2-4 hours per week for a year. They went to lots of new places and, using worksheets, talked about some of the difficulties that Rachel had. One of their goals was to do more active sessions; by the end of the mentoring Rachel felt that she had learned how to be healthy.

Rachel's teacher saw improvements in her confidence, sharing, communication, concentration and self control. She felt that the mentoring gave Rachel "the experience of social interaction out of school. It gave her opportunities for learning and activities out of school that would have been unfeasible otherwise." At the start of the mentoring Rachel's SDQ score was 26 - by the end this had come down to 19.

The mentoring gave Rachel a chance to get away from her home environment, have fun, express her own ideas and feelings and receive help for her emotional and behavioural problems. Both qualitative and quantitative evaluation showed improvements in her behaviour.

D - Child interviews

The Chance UK mentoring programme is conducted in a child-led manner; the children make decisions about the activities that they will undertake with their mentors and set their own goals with the support of the mentor, Chance UK and parent. It is therefore important that we get feedback from the children on how they think they have progressed through the mentoring.

1. Relationship with mentor

When asked what their mentor had praised them for the children came back with a mix of answers. Many identified some of the activities that they had taken part in that they had obviously done well at (such as swimming, running, football, naming cars and making a Christmas card); others did identify social skills that they had developed or examples of good behaviour, some of which are detailed in the box below.

Children - My mentor praised me for ...

"Being good and listening to him. I was quiet when he asked me to be when we went somewhere."

"Getting better at controlling my temper"
"Being kind, polite and patient"

"When I behaved well."
"Kindness"

"Not spitting, not swearing, not dropping litter."

Similarly, when the children were asked what the best time was during the mentoring the majority remembered a specific activity (e.g. Natural History Museum, ice skating, top of the London Eye), but a few (15%) identified that talking with their mentor was the best time they had together. This

shows that these children really valued the opportunity to get to know their mentor and to talk one-to-one with someone who was really engaged in their life - something that does not happen for every child at home.

One thing that the children really valued was the fact their mentors were volunteers, i.e. they chose to spend their free time with the child rather than for financial gain. To the children this is important as it shows that these adults value them for who they are.

2. Goals

Every child sets his/her own goals at the three-month review. These goals vary from child to child as they decide on their own goals, but all children are encouraged to include at least one goal around behaviour and often something educational. All goals are specific,

achievable and measurable. Some of the areas that goals focused around are listed below:

- Reading
- Going to the library every month
- Writing a poem
- times tables
- Maths
- Healthy eating
- Stopping moaning
- Negotiating
- Telling news
- Listening, responding and telling the truth
- Doing what mum tells me
- Talking to mum
- Speaking politely
- Being more respectful
- Good behaviour
- Keeping their temper
- Swearing less
- Not dropping litter
- Controlling their anger
- Sitting still





This shows the breadth of work that mentors undertake with the children. Other things that children identified that they had also worked on with their mentors included drawing, keeping fit, cycling and being proud of their own achievements. One mentor taught the child how to use a knife and fork.

The goals are set so that they are challenging for the child yet realistic and achievable. With the support of Chance UK, the mentor and the parents, the children work towards their goals over 8-9 months, and at graduation are presented with a certificate outlining all their achievements.

3. Progress

When asked 'What has gone well?' the children answered with a range of responses. A third said that everything had gone well; others managed to identify specific outcomes for themselves:

Children

"My behaviour, because before I used to get into a lot more trouble before but not now."

"I got better at dealing with my anger."

"I am better at reading."

"My schoolwork is better."

"My listening skills."

We also asked the children what they had learnt during the mentoring. Again, their answers were very diverse, as can be seen from the sample on the next page:

Children

"Stop throwing paper on the floor."

"Going to the library - it is quiet there."

"Don't moan when something goes wrong."

"Being nice to people, not losing my temper."

"I hated badminton and now I know how to play."

"Not to swear and spit."

"To listen."

"I like school more now, I am better at reading."

"To sit still, share things and speak politely."

"Healthier choice of food."

"How to control my anger."

"Not to make a fuss."



These responses are interesting as they show how much change within themselves the children are able to identify. Most of the children (64%) have identified at least one way in which their behaviour has improved during the mentoring. This is a really good response, as behaviour change is the main focus of the programme. It also shows that children have a clear perception of their own shift in behaviour, which will help the children to identify and value further positive changes that they make.

Sean and Debbie

Sean was referred by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at his school as he was regularly getting into fights at school and generally found it difficult to manage his anger. He also has a troubled family background - his parents are separated, and there has been considerable domestic violence.

Sean was matched with Debbie, a volunteer mentor who met regularly with him for 2-4 hours a week for a year. For her, the most positive aspect of the mentoring relationship was the trust and friendship that developed naturally. They worked on managing Sean's anger and by the end of the programme improvements could be seen.

Sean's teacher:

"Sean has got much better at reflecting on his anger, although he still gets angry. Sean has a lovely side to him that I see more and more of. The mentoring relationship has really helped him as he does not have the support he needs at home...He liked the feeling that someone was doing something special for him."

Sean's parent:

"Sean now thinks before he opens his mouth, tries a lot more

with everything, and knows how far he can push it."

E - Mentor interviews

The mentors do not know much about the child's behaviour before mentoring and so can assess only what they see during the year of mentoring. What we do learn from the mentors is what they felt was the most positive aspect of the mentoring relationship.

40% of mentors felt that they had got on well, and 20% said that seeing the child happy was a positive aspect of the relationship. 8% saw the one-to-one time as very positive for their child, reflecting the fact that many of the children don't get that attention at home. 16% felt that they had trust between them; 24% felt that the child opened up to them and a further 4% felt that the honesty in the relationship was very beneficial. An increase in the child's confidence, the fact that the child became 'less hyper' and new experiences were also cited as positive aspects to the relationship.

Many of the mentors also felt that some of the best activities they had done were the lower-key activities, such as playing board games or going to the park. This was because they gave the mentor and child a chance to talk, and a chance for the child to talk about what they wanted to talk about. These are the moments in which some of the best work happens in mentoring. Providing space for the child and mentor to get to know each other and form an open, honest and trusting relationship allows them to talk about the things that matter to the child, and by using solution focused tools and techniques the mentor is able to help the child to take back control of his/her own behaviour.

Kwame & Esther

Kwame was referred to Chance UK for emotionally based behavioural difficulties - he had been known to cry for the duration of an afternoon - and it was thought that he might have been suffering from physical abuse. He also had two younger siblings and it was felt that there might have been a level of jealousy. These difficulties were having an impact on his behaviour and therefore his learning at school. His referral SDQ score was 23.

Kwame was matched with Esther, a volunteer mentor who met regularly with him for 2-4 hours a week for a year. They worked on specific goals as well as undertaking a variety of activities including climbing, running and reading.

During the mentoring period, Kwame's mother noticed that her relationship with him changed slightly in a good way and that his hyperactivity decreased. By speaking with Esther, she learnt what they had done and got a better feeling for what Kwame liked. She felt that the whole programme was positive, particularly the graduation.

Kwame's learning mentor at school saw a considerable change in how he handled his emotions. "It was good seeing him come into school with a smile on his face. He was able to talk about it [the mentoring] and it gave him confidence to tackle things. His relationship with his mum has improved; they definitely seem to have more of a conversation and there is more closeness... He doesn't have his 'angry face' any more. He can deal with his rage and better employ the strategies he has been taught."

Section 4 - Conclusions

Kwame's end SDQ was 11. Not only does this show a significant drop, meaning that the change is more likely to be sustained and developed, but the score has also dropped below the level of 16, meaning that he is no longer classed as having a behavioural difficulty.



The results of the evaluation have shown great improvements for the majority of the children who complete the Chance UK mentoring programme. The main outcomes for children can be summarised into four main areas as outlined below.

A - Behaviour

An improvement in behaviour is the main focus of the Chance UK programme. Children are referred because they have a behavioural difficulty and are at risk of developing anti-social or criminal offending behaviour later in life.

When referred, all children score over 16 points on the SDQ; by the end of the programme, almost half have reduced their score to under 16 and just over a quarter⁷ have reduced their score by 11 or more points, showing a significant reduction that is more likely to lead to further behaviour change. An overwhelming majority (89%) of the children on the Chance UK mentoring programme reduced their average SDQ score, showing an improvement in behaviour.

A common response regarding the children's behaviour is that they have 'settled down'. This came from referrers, parents and mentors. Specifically, referrers saw an improvement in anger management, self control and frustration management, as well as the children being better able to cope with criticism. Even some of the children were able to recognise that they were now better at controlling their anger.

Some interesting improvements in behaviour were noted by parents. These included understanding the difference between right and wrong, not telling lies and no longer stealing. For the parents this behaviour was obviously a

cause for concern prior to the mentoring but through the Chance UK mentoring programme's solution focused approach there have been positive changes in children's behaviour.

B - Relationships

One of the secondary benefits of the Chance UK mentoring programme is improvements in relationships. One goal of the programme is for the child and mentor to build a trusting and positive relationship. This has a knock-on effect on other relationships for the child. Both children and mentors saw the relationship itself as a positive benefit of the mentoring and many parents and referrers felt that the impact of having the relationship with the mentor had, in itself, benefited the child.

Referrers and parents saw improved relationships with peers; 45% of referrers saw an improvement in sharing and turn taking - key skills in building positive relationships. Children's relationships with adults have also improved. The overwhelming majority of parents see that their relationship with their child has got better. In some families this is really key to improving whole family situations, and as such is included in the goals set for the children at review. Relationships with teachers have also improved.

C - Social skills

Another secondary skill, and very closely related to improvement in behaviour, is the development of social skills. Confidence is the one attribute that parents, referrers, children and mentors all believed had increased in the children during the course of the mentoring.

⁷ According to referrers



Referrers also saw improvements in sharing, turn taking, ability to cope with criticism and relationship skills. Parents have noted that their children are kinder, particularly to siblings. In fact the children have noted their own improvements in these social skills themselves. Children have chosen to work on some of these skills in their goals and have noticed that after the mentoring they are better able to listen and are more nice and kind.

D - Academic attainment

The improvements in behaviour, relationships and social skills resulting from the Chance UK mentoring programme do impact upon academic attainment. As the

child interviews showed, by the end of the mentoring programme, some children are starting to like school and some of the goals that they chose to work on supported their educational development.

Parents also saw this change in the children. They could see that reading skills had improved and that their children were more interested in learning. In one case, the parent noted that the child had gained much better SATs results than expected.

Unsurprisingly the majority of the feedback in this area comes from the schools. Referrers remarked on children's improvements in concentration, on their increased willingness to take risks as

learners and on the fact that they were more interested and questioning. Many referrers saw an improvement in literacy and numeracy, as well as improved attitudes to learning. There is also an indication that the mentoring has aided a reduction in school exclusions.

A Teacher

"His level of emotional literacy has increased substantially. He can talk through situations with maturity, empathy and a deepened understanding of cause and consequence. He seems a much happier child in general ... and I think Chance has played a major part in this."

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