

PROMISE works



IMPACT REPORT

2022-2023

Delivering inspirational mentoring to Somerset's most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people.

"Every Child who winds up doing well has had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult."

- Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

WELCOME

2022-23 has been an exciting year for PROMISEworks as we continue our steady and purposeful growth.

The transition from a Trustee managed organisation to an employee-led one is now complete. This has allowed the management team to flourish and for the charity to grow and develop a distinct identity.

We have seen an increase in the number of disadvantaged children and young people we mentor, and we have expanded into new areas of Somerset.

Thanks to the hard work of our employees and volunteers, there is a growing awareness and understanding of the valuable work of PROMISEworks, and this positive reputation has helped us with our fundraising and volunteer recruitment.

Government cuts to other services, however, mean that the pressure on this charity to fill the gaps has become more acute. We are cautious not to become all things to all people and remind ourselves that our loyalty remains with the children we support and to give them the best one-to-one long-term mentoring that we can.

Our goals last year were to refine and improve our operations, to learn lessons from the previous year, and to grow our charity at a sensible pace. We believe we have achieved these objectives and would like to share some of our 2022-23 highlights with you.

The PROMISEworks Team



OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

16%



By the end of 2023, we had 130 active mentors supporting 141 ongoing relationships, up 16% on the previous year



Volunteers have dedicated more than 20,000 in mentoring hours



Our referrals increased 11% in 2023



49 young people successfully graduated – an increase of 44% on the last year



We recruited two new members of staff, increasing our case holding capacity by 85 mentees

THE BIGGER PICTURE



**366 vulnerable children
and young people have
been mentored by
PROMISEworks
since 2017**



**95% say that
mentoring has
helped them**



**Reduce
risk taking
behaviour**



**Increase
self-esteem
and well-being**



**Reduce feelings of
isolation and improve
relationships
with friends
and family**



**Increase
confidence and
independence**



**Reduce school
absenteeism**



**Improve
resilience**



**We don't wonder what's wrong with you,
we wonder what's happened to you.**

OUR VOLUNTEERS

The success of PROMISEworks relies on our volunteers, our rigorous training, and the careful matching of mentors with mentees. We have always been proud of our mentor training, it is regularly praised by referral agencies, and is a major benefit of being a PROMISEworks volunteer.



In 2023, we successfully trained 49 new volunteer mentors, a record number for 12 months, 47 of whom are now matched with mentees



100% of volunteers are satisfied with volunteering with PROMISEworks



87.5% of volunteers say they would recommend volunteering with PROMISEworks to others



100% of volunteers feel well supported and valued by the charity

This is what our mentors say

"I've seen the damage that can be caused by having a difficult upbringing, and I would like to try and be part of the solution."



"I like helping people. I could have done with a mentor!"



"The chance to have even a tiny impact on someone else's life is compelling."



"I really wanted to do something hands on, something that would help my local community."



"The 2-3 hours per week I spend with my mentee are rewarding and flexible. I can always fit it into my life."

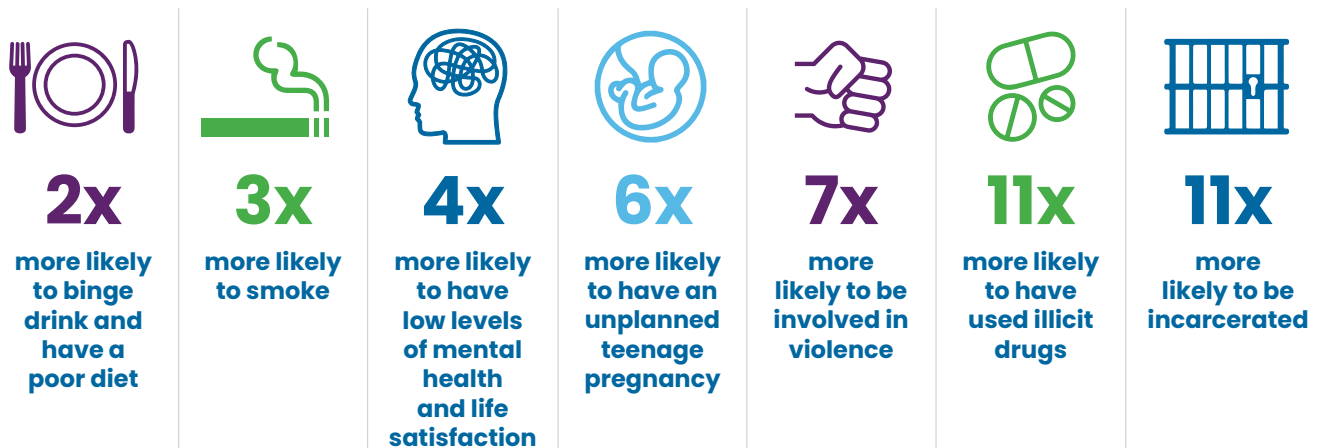


"My mentee has enabled me to see the world through a teenager's eyes, remember how I felt at that age, and realise that the world is very different now. It's been fun finding out what we like to do together; flat walks are fine, but uphill is a bit tough, if you're not used to walking lots. Nature and animals are a big love for both of us so exploring the outdoors has been great."



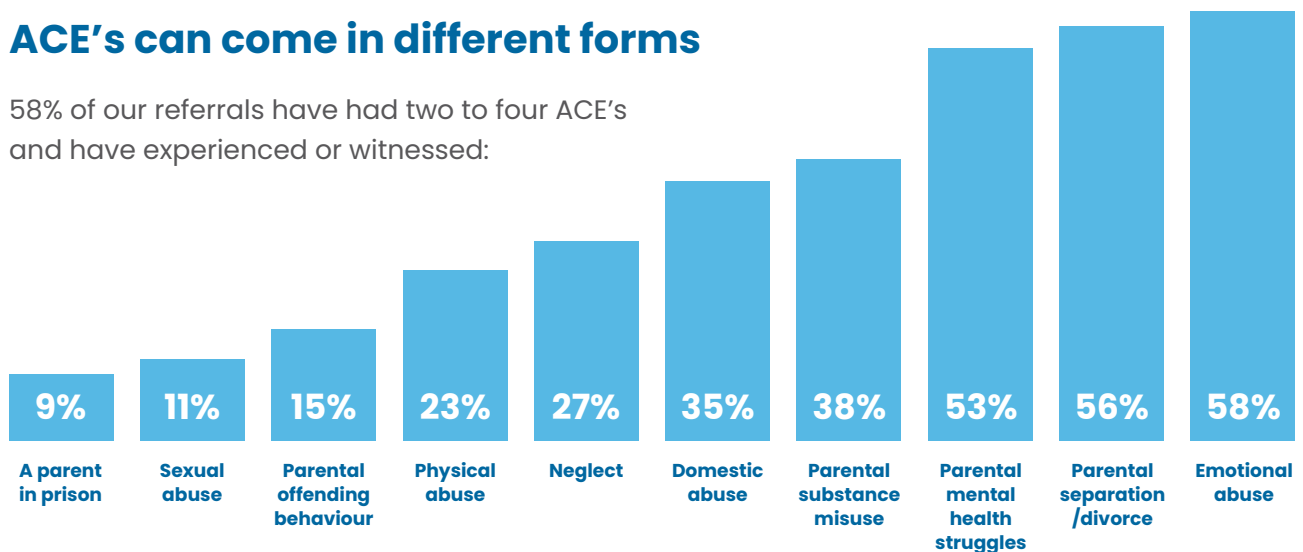
DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) can have a dramatic effect on a young person's life. Children and young people who have experienced two to four ACE's are:



ACE's can come in different forms

58% of our referrals have had two to four ACE's and have experienced or witnessed:



What makes children get better following trauma is connection to other human beings who are present, patient, kind and sensitive. These sorts of interactions are much more therapeutic and healing than other things we try to do with kids.
 – Dr Bruce Perry, The Child Trauma Academy (CTA) in Houston, Texas.



We were awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service in 2021 the equivalent to an MBE for voluntary organisations

WHERE OUR REFERRALS COME FROM

Referrals come to PROMISEworks from a variety of places, including but not limited to;

Children's Social Care	30%
Leaving Care Teams	3%
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service	6%
Health Professionals	8%
Schools/Colleges	38%
Avon and Somerset Police	4%
Voluntary Sector Organisations	6%

During 2023 we have seen an increase in the number of referrals from families themselves recognising the value of long-term independent support for a young relative.

In 2022-23, we have seen an increase in the number of volunteer applications come to us through our social media channels helping us to attract a wider group of volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

Approximately 60% of our mentor applications now come via social media and the PROMISEworks website, with 40% coming via word of mouth



80% of mentors re-engage with a new mentee



Our mentors range in age from 25 to 84





A head teacher from a Somerset school wrote:

Two of the most important and successful aspects of PROMISEworks is their ability to match Mentors to young people, and the longevity of a mentor's involvement. I am aware that the matching process is key to PROMISEworks' success and that this, combined with the thorough training PROMISEworks offers its Mentors, as well as the professional ongoing support they receive will often result in Mentors staying in the young person's lives for the full two years that is offered. This then offers young people the chance to build genuine and real relationships with an adult. I have found repeatedly that young people can thrive when they have access to weekly meetings with someone who becomes a safe and trusted adult in their lives.



Ali, Mendip

Ali was referred to PROMISEworks by the Young Carers Service.

She has witnessed her mother attempt suicide and because of this she was reluctant to leave her for any length of time. This was impacting on Ali's school attendance, peer relationships and her confidence when out in the community.

Over the course of her mentoring relationship, Ali struggled with an eating disorder, periods of self-harm and extreme anxiety.

As Ali and her mentor approached the two-year mark in their relationship, things were turning a corner. Ali had started college and was finding that environment a lot easier to manage than school. Mum's mental health had been stable for over two years, and she was able once again to take charge of things at home.

Ali's mentor had supported her to get a part time job, giving Ali her own spending money.

Even though the mentoring relationship has ended, the pair have remained in text contact. Ali messages her mentor every time she has a success at work or college.



A letter from a mentee to her mentor:

To Kate,

Just sending you a card as a gesture to say a huge thank you for the 2 years now that our time has come to an end. Over the past 6 years, I have worked with so many different professionals, and it's not actually often you get the good ones. In these 2 years, I have been at various different stages of my recovery and now I'm walking away as a better person, and I feel like I have come so far and just want to say thank you for everything and for the part you played in my story. You have always gone the extra mile and have been so kind and helpful. The world really does need more people like you. Thank you so much for all you have done.

P.S I feel just as privileged to have met Cooper as he is one of the only dogs Roxi has felt safe with on walks.

RECRUITMENT

2022–23 saw the recruitment of two new members of staff. Sam Paull is our new case holder in support of the Mendip and South Somerset areas and focuses on matching and supporting ongoing relationships. Sue Bill joined us as Area Coordinator for the newly created Somerset Coast region including Exmoor, Minehead, Williton and Watchet areas. We know that this area is one of the worst in Somerset for social mobility and outcomes for children and young people (Indices of Deprivation 2019 Somerset Summary). This made it a primary target for the establishment of a PROMISEworks service in this area.

With our plans for expansion, we understand the importance of supporting our mentors, case holders and area coordinators. All operations staff have one-to-one supervision sessions with our General Manager, Ali Hart and regular team supervision provided by Somerset Counselling Centre (SCC). Staff also have access to private counselling through the same organisation should they feel the need for additional support.

OTHER INITIATIVES

PROMISEworks maintains two smaller funds to allow us to offer additional support in 2 specific areas:

Mental Health Fund

Sometimes young people matched with a mentor struggle to overcome a particular traumatic event or a series of events, using the mainstream interventions available through schools/colleges or the health service. This can result in unhelpful behaviours, or an inability to engage with the support being offered. In these instances, we can offer sessions with a Human Givens Coach.

This fund is supported in part by the sales of the “My Brain” series of books available through the PROMISEworks website.

Hardship Fund

In these times of economic crisis, we find that a mentor is often the person a child will speak to about a lack of food or heat or the fact that their school shoes no longer fit. Sometimes a parent will reach out to a mentor or their case holder and ask for help with applying for food vouchers or household support grants. PROMISEworks will signpost families to specialist agencies who can provide longer term help, but our hardship fund means that in an emergency we are able to purchase items or vouchers to bridge the gap.

Both these additional initiatives allow PROMISEworks to react more flexibly to a young person’s immediate needs.

A YEAR OF SUCCESSES

We don't like to blow our own trumpet, but we feel humbled by the extraordinary support we have received from our staff, volunteers, partners, and the wider Somerset community.



Mar '23 - PROMISEworks signs the Armed Forces Covenant, recognising the importance of supporting forces personnel across the county and their families.



Apr '23 - Steve Atkinson, a PROMISEworks mentor, cycled around Somerset promoting our volunteering opportunities as well as raising funds.



May '23 - Stewart Cursley, the Mayor of Wells selected us as his charity for the year. This provided a variety of awareness and fundraising opportunities.



May '23 - Once again we were grateful recipients of financial support from The Sherborne Castle Country Fair.



Sept '23 - Leonardo UK's Apprentice/ Trainee Fundraising committee have supported us this year with merchandise sales and events.



Sept '23 - Charles Dowding's Open Day at Homeacre selected PROMISEworks as one of the charities they support.



Sept '23 - Our very own Christell and Sarah walked 35 miles over two days on the Southwest Coast path starting from Minehead raising £800.



Nov '23 - Kilver Court selected PROMISEworks as their chosen cause at both their 2022 and 2023 Pop up Christmas Fairs.



Dec '23 - PROMISEworks' Christmas party for mentors and mentees saw over 80 mentors and their excited young people getting into the festive spirit.

LOOKING AHEAD

Recruitment of mentors

Our focus for 2024 will be volunteer recruitment. We now have the staff in place to enable us to reach our goal of 225 matched relationships by the end of 2025, a 58% increase in relationships to date. This means we need to attract around 67 new volunteers over the next two years.



To reach that target, we will publicise the charity more widely through information sharing sessions both face to face and on-line, social media, print and web-based advertising. Our mentors have historically been a modest bunch, quietly providing life-changing support across the county, reticent to shout about their achievements. Moving forward, we will take every opportunity to share the amazing efforts of our mentors and the positive impact mentoring has had on both young people and volunteers.

Targeted funding

Our current fundraising goal is to build long-term, reliable funding partners who will help us to grow the charity in a responsible way. Every new relationship means we need financial security for a minimum of two years at a cost of £4,800, so a healthy funding pipeline is imperative. Alongside major grants, we aim to continue to diversify our funding streams.

Evaluation

We understand the importance of measuring the impact of our work and that this requires research and data analysis. In 2024, the PROMISEworks team will work on our Theory of Change to develop a meaningful impact evaluation model.

Advisory group

2024 will see the formation of a small advisory group made up of ex-mentors, mentee graduates, parents/carers, a trustee, referrers, and a member of staff. The group will bring a wealth of valuable lived experience to discussions on proposed changes to strategy and service delivery.

Upcoming Events in 2024

We continue to be delighted by the overwhelming offers of support from local businesses and individuals to raise awareness and funds on our behalf. Next years' calendar is already filling with exciting and unique events in support of PROMISEworks. Please visit our website for more information.

THANK YOU

As always, we reserve our greatest thanks and appreciation for the volunteer mentors upon whom our service depends. It is their dedication and commitment that improves the life chances of our children and young people in Somerset.

To read our latest Financial Statements and Annual Report (charitycommission.gov.uk)

For more information on volunteering
www.promiseworks.org.uk/volunteer

“Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story”

– Josh Shipp, The Power of One Caring Adult

PROMISE *works*

[WWW.PROMISEWORKS.ORG.UK](https://www.promiseworks.org.uk)

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