

Grandmentors Bradford



Impact Report

Foreword

'Not being able to get out and meet people in person because of the pandemic definitely had a detrimental effect on the project at the start, but I look at what we've achieved despite this and I'm thankful . We've been able to help some wonderful young people'

Jane Murphy, Project Coordinator



With Bradford being the youngest city in the UK and with a high proportion of young people out of education, employment or training, the need for support from mentors has never been greater. The intended outcomes for Grandmentors were to raise young people's aspirations, equip them with the skills to enter employment or education and to increase their self-confidence and connectedness, and we have done that. However, Covid meant that increasing young people's feelings of wellbeing and lessening their anxiety became the over-arching goals, and Grandmentors Bradford has achieved that too.

In the midst of the pandemic, many local services weren't working with young people face-to-face, referral numbers were low, and mentees who were referred were often reluctant to engage in the mentoring process online, so the number of matches has been quite low, but the quality has been high.

From the young people I worked with, the message came through loud and clear that many of them were feeling anxious about their future, needed direction and often knew what they wanted but just didn't know how to get there. Aspirations amongst the mentees were generally low but, with support from Grandmentors, they were able to look towards the future with more positivity. As things opened up and face-to-face meetings began to happen, the connections between the mentees and their Grandmentors became stronger and amazing things began to happen.

I'm proud to be able to share the Grandmentors Bradford story.

Overview

A snapshot of Grandmentors Bradford's activity in 2021

Grandmentors arrived in Bradford in the midst of the pandemic, so unable to meet referrers and young people face-to-face, the first few months were spent building relationships and networks online with referrers and young people, and recruiting and training volunteers virtually. Over the course of the year, we built up our presence in the City and achieved some positive results.

**14 young people
matched with a
mentor**

Most for a period of at least 6 weeks with some matches extended



**Worked with a further
13 young people who
were referred but not
matched**

Some secured employment through other agencies, some were not ready to engage or were in crisis and needed more specialised support.

**30 volunteers trained
and ready to be
matched**

Each volunteer received training, reference and DBS checks & ongoing support in their role. A further 29 enquiries were received.

Our team of volunteers each dedicated a minimum of 1 hour a week, for at least 6 weeks, to support our young people.

Making Connections

Building partnerships and connecting with the local community

Getting the word out about Grandmentors was a priority as no-one knew who we were at first. A lot of time was invested in making connections with potential referral organisations and letting them know how we could work together. We also reached out to organisations and used various medium to recruit volunteers.

Used social media to promote the project

Twitter, Instagram and Facebook as well as Indeed to share good news and raise our profile.

Made over 180 local connections

Including schools, health services, DWP, Social Services, Bradford Youth Development Partnership and other organisations supporting young people.

Advertised Grandmentors across Bradford District

Through our funders at Bradford For everyone, Chamber of Commerce, Bradford BID, Community Action Bradford newsletters and Bradford Volunteer Centre.



An article promoting Grandmentors was featured in the Bradford Telegraph & Argus and the Keighley News in April. Interviews were broadcast by BBC Radio Bradford in February and October

Our Mentees

The scheme was aimed at young people aged 16-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET) or on the verge of becoming NEET

Mentees were referred for a number of reasons, some were in education but in danger of becoming NEET, some were seeking employment but not sure how to go about it and some just needed someone to listen to them. All of them had been affected to some degree by the pandemic and anxiety levels were high, confidence was low and there was a real feeling of uncertainty about their future.

**67% were male
33% were female**

**59% aged 15-17
41% aged 18+**

**48% in education/verge
of NEET
45% NEET
7% volunteering**

**48% Pakistani
33% White British
15% other Asian
background
4% Black /African /
Caribbean background**

Of the young people who were matched with a mentor, almost half were from Manningham ward with the rest from Toller, City, Shipley, Bowling & Barkerend, Bradford Moor wards plus one young person living out of the area

Our Mentees

Young people aged 16-24 who are NEET

Our mentees were referred from all across Bradford District but with a particular emphasis on reaching young people in the more deprived wards. We established a relationship with Oasis Lister Park Academy, based in Manningham ward and had 13 referrals, all of whom had a mentor identified but of these, only 6 chose to engage in the process. We had several referrals through the Leaving Care Team, of which 3 were matched. The remainder of the referrals came via other organisations such as the DWP and also from family or self-referrals.

Our mentees all received....

Dedicated volunteer Grandmentor

Matching process based on mentor's skills match and shared interests. To spend around 1-2 hours with them every week for (at least) 6 weeks.

Help to set and work towards their individual goals

The mentors guide the young person to achieve positive outcomes and helps to raise aspirations and increase life choices.



An opportunity to have their voices heard

Empowering young people to lead their change is at the heart of everything we do as a project.

Our mentees were given wellbeing gift packs including stationery, goodies and chocolate, wristbands etc. with motivational messages for Care Leavers' Week in October.

Change Story - Louise & Mohammad

I've really enjoyed mentoring. It was really good to meet someone I may not normally have crossed paths with. I hope I have helped Mohammad. He seems more confident and has more idea how to respond to interview questions and seems more open to different kinds of work.

Louise Grandmentor Volunteer



Mohammad contacted Grandmentors as he had just completed a work placement and wasn't sure what to do next. He was looking for an admin job and, although he was applying for positions and getting interviews, he wasn't getting the job and this had affected his confidence, leaving him feeling demoralised after getting knockbacks. He needed help to build his confidence and to nail his interview technique.

Mohammad was matched with Louise, who has worked in various roles including promoting Higher Education to young people and also as a mentoring project manager. She felt she was in a good position to help young people get further along their journeys and to give them more confidence.

Meeting online at first, Louise set out to find out more about Mohammad and his interests and found he was very active in the local community, including volunteering at a local museum. Louise worked with Mohammad to turn examples of his experience in community activities into great interview answers. Although Mohammad hasn't got a job (yet!), his confidence has increased and since the match ended, he has signed up to a Future Leaders course with Future Ways, an organisation that we have a strong connection with, he's also joined a gym and feels he has overcome some of his trust issues.



Louise is funny. What she's done has been quite similar to what my Job Coach does but it feels like talking to a friend. I feel more confident to be able to speak up about things and be able to talk about anything. It's made me feel more open to making new friends and trusting someone new.

Mohammad, mentee

Our Volunteers

Our Grandmentors were recruited from a diverse range of backgrounds and ages (25+) and had a multitude of skills and experience. We had applications from (amongst others) teachers, medical professionals, chefs, entrepreneurs, public sector workers, retirees and even an airline pilot. All lived or worked in Bradford or had some connection to the District and had applied to be a Grandmentor for differing reasons, such as to gain additional experience or to give back to the community, but all shared a common goal of wanting to invest their time to help young people achieve their goals and increase their life chances.



Our Volunteers

How we supported our Grandmentors

Training & further opportunities

Online group training sessions covered confidentiality, safeguarding, information on the mentoring process, hints & tips, and gave mentors the opportunity to meet Grandmentors from other areas.



Ongoing supervision & support

The Project Co-ordinator contacted volunteers regularly to check on progress and was available to offer support when needed

Social events & opportunities to meet other mentors

Meet the mentor sessions, quiz night, games night, feedback sessions.

Although limited by Covid restrictions, we did manage to have a day out in Saltaire in September where mentors & mentees enjoyed a canal boat trip, lunch and a scavenger hunt.

Change Story - Ian & George

Our meetings have been relaxed and enjoyable and George has a great sense of humour. The fact that he has been successful in getting his first job, and that I have contributed to that outcome, has made the whole mentoring process very worthwhile.



Ian - Grandmentor

George was referred by his Through Care Worker who felt he could benefit from support from a mentor. George had spent some time in care but was now living back home with his family. He was diagnosed with ADHD when he was younger but felt this had improved as he got older, however he still found it difficult to talk about his problems and felt it would be good to have someone to chat to. George was out of education, employment and training but really wanted to find a warehousing job though he wasn't sure where to start or how to find relevant opportunities.

Enter Grandmentor Ian... recently retired after 25 years teaching in Further Education and wanting to utilise his skills to help young people achieve their full potential. From their very first match meeting, they discovered a shared interest in History. Although George was shy at first, he soon established a great rapport with Ian, who really appreciated George's humour and they became very relaxed in each other's company.

Meeting regularly with Ian gave George more self-confidence and the motivation to apply for jobs. Ian helped George with his CV and to prepare for interviews by going through practice question and answers. George applied for - and got - his first job at McDonalds. He's very proud of this and has already had some great feedback from his line manager. He sees this job as a stepping stone to other opportunities and his aspirations for the future have been raised. Ian has continued to support George and has helped him with planning a budget so that he can manage his earnings and, although the mentoring relationship has now ended, they will stay in touch as friends.



Meeting with Ian has helped me with getting a job as he helped me practice for my interview. It feels relaxed and we have a laugh. Having a mentor has made me feel more confident and independent. It's helped me be able to talk to people more easily and it's been really nice meeting Ian.

George - Mentee

Compliance

The safety of our volunteers and young people is at the heart of all that we do.

We know that the complex challenges many of our young people face sometimes means that they can be particularly vulnerable. That's why our volunteers are all trained on how to respond when any concerns arise.

A total of 30 DBS certificates issued

For each and every volunteer who joined our team, in line with legal requirements.

Personal risk assessments for every match

Provided to volunteers at the start of each match, to keep everyone safe throughout.

All volunteers were trained in safeguarding

Volunteers have been able to respond quickly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns

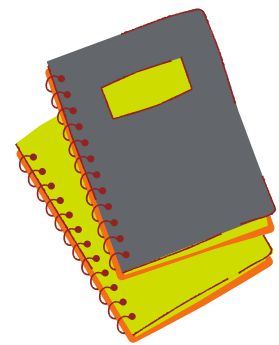


The Project Coordinator and 12 volunteer mentors completed additional local safeguarding/ child safeguarding training via Bradford Council's Virtual Learning platform and received certification.

Mentee Outcomes

14 young people were matched and 12 completed the mentoring process. Of these 12....

**3 have entered
school 6th Form**



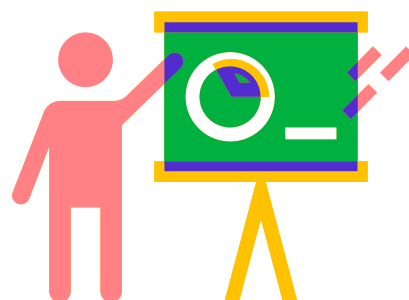
**2 are attending
college and another
has a place to start
September 2022**



**4 have gained either
full or part-time
employment**



**2 have joined training
programmes (e.g. NHS
Cadets, Future Ways
Leaders)**

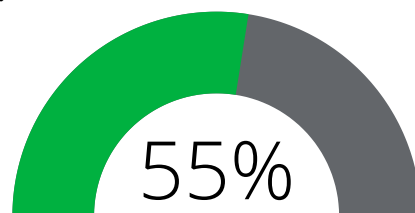


Mentee Impact

12 young people completed their matches but one mentee was unavailable for feedback. These statistics are collated from the 11 mentees who responded to the End of Match Survey.

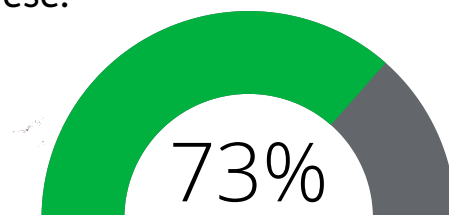
55% felt their knowledge around employment and education opportunities had increased

Especially about different routes into employment or education e.g. Kick Start, training programmes or going to University.



73% said they now have the right skills and knowledge to enter employment or education

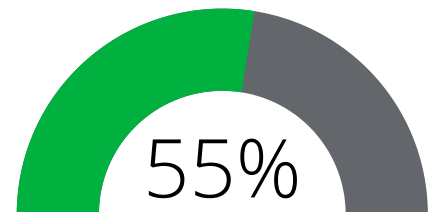
Mentees felt they had more idea on how to achieve their individual goals and had a plan in place to work towards these.



Mentee Impact

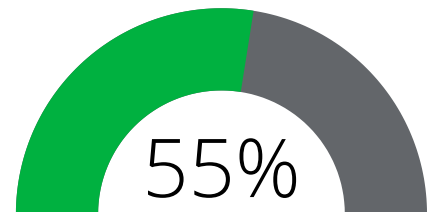
55% said they feel more connected to their local community

Meeting mentors from different backgrounds gave the mentees confidence to speak to new people and to connect more easily with their local communities.



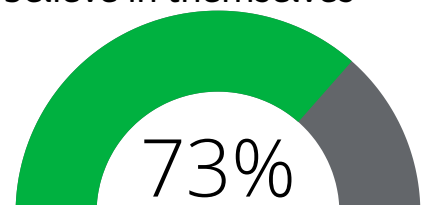
55% said they had close friends and/or family members whom they can speak to regularly

Most of the mentees felt well-supported by family / friends from the offset but felt more able to talk after being mentored. One mentee felt her brother "sees me with new eyes" after being mentored.



73% said they are more self-confident

Achieving their goals, e.g. getting a job or into college improved the mentees' self confidence. Knowing that "someone else has my back" also helped them believe in themselves more.



How our volunteers benefitted

14 volunteers were matched to young people and 12 of these matches reached completion. 2 young people who were matched did not engage beyond the introductory meeting with their mentor. These statistics are collated from the 12 respondents whose matches were completed.

75% feel their perception of young people from different backgrounds has increased

75% feel more able to use their skills to benefit others

92% feel they better understand the challenges facing young people who are NEET

42% feel their emotional wellbeing has improved through volunteering as a mentor

100% would recommend volunteering as a Grandmentor



Change Story - Izzy & Daisy

One of the most enjoyable things about mentoring Daisy was finding things in common and breaking down some of her misconceptions about people older than her, such as how we both get nervous and then fidget. It was a bit of a "me too!" moment.

Izzy, Grandmentor volunteer

Izzy and Daisy were our very first match and the two of them hit it off straight away.

Daisy was referred by her Mum, who thought that having a mentor could help Daisy with some of the issues she was facing, such as anxiety and lack of confidence. Daisy has always wanted to work with children and had completed an apprenticeship at a nursery and done various courses, but hadn't been able to get a job because she lacked experience working with children with Special Educational Needs, which is where her passion lies.

As a teacher, Izzy wanted to volunteer so that she could feel more involved in the community in Bradford and she felt the opportunity to be a Grandmentor was inspiring and aligned with what she wanted. As her Grandmentor, Izzy was able to give Daisy practical advice about her career path in education, help her to build a CV, apply for jobs and advise her how to answer interview questions confidently.

Just three meetings into the match, Daisy had an interview and got the job! She's now working as a teaching assistant at a special school! Izzy continued to support Daisy as she settled into her new role and focus shifted to confidence building and managing money. Daisy felt more confident knowing she had someone on her side and enjoyed having someone to talk to and learn from. At the end of the match she felt she had more confidence to cope with things and that she felt sad the match was ending but would keep in touch with Izzy.



Izzy has been really supportive. She helped me with my job application and gave me the confidence I needed for the interview and I've now got my dream job! A big THANK YOU to Izzy and Grandmentors

Daisy, mentee

What the mentors said

I've loved being a mentor! I really felt my mentee had potential, but he just needed help to start believing in himself. He has been growing with every meeting and his motivation has increased. I'm so pleased with him!



Shehla, Grandmentor

Being a mentor saved my sanity! I had just moved to the area, knew no one and had just retired from work so, doing this, I felt I was doing something useful, worthwhile, and very positive for me and which gave me a focus. Being a Grandmentor is absolutely worthwhile and it feels good to be giving something back whilst using your personal and professional skills to help people from a different age group.

Sue, Grandmentor

She's come a long way and we've had a good connection, especially when we've been able to meet face-to-face. We've got her CV done and printed off some copies to hand out. I've learned a lot through mentoring her and we've learned about each others' families, culture etc.



Pam, Grandmentor

What the mentors said

I felt an immediate empathy and bond with my mentee. I think, because I have a daughter of my own, I wanted her to have the same support she had. We've had some fun. I quickly learned that what she needs is someone to listen to her, so I sit and take it all in. We're from very different backgrounds and I have enjoyed sharing my experiences and giving her a view of different life opportunities. I'd like to think I have helped her to have more confidence in herself by giving her reassurance and helping her with her self-esteem. It's such a shame that the project is ending as I think there's still a lot we could do but we will keep in touch.



Alison, Grandmentor

It has been enjoyable for both of us and I really loved seeing her work out what she wanted to do. She knew what she wanted but not how to get there, so I was able to guide her. Knowing that she wants to be a paramedic meant we were able to explore her options for next year and beyond.



Shirley, Grandmentor

Mentoring has benefitted me as a Mum as, through Hafsa, I see young people's challenges and realise I need to talk to my own boys more. I'm so grateful for the opportunities this has given me. I hope all this helps her to pave her own path and be able to do amazing things. Our cultural ways don't always allow women to shine, but I know that Hafsa will do. For me, the best thing about being Hafsa's mentor has been being able to be myself and having complete honesty with her, even when conversations are difficult.



Neena, Grandmentor

What the mentees said

It's been an honour to have Emily as my mentor. Thank you. I would definitely recommend it to other young people. It's such a great opportunity to find out about your mentor's experience and to learn from them. It's been a really positive experience and I'm sure our friendship will carry on.

Sabah, Mentee



Robert, Mentee

I definitely I think it's improved my motivation and confidence as before I was just in my shell and not willing to go out. I was getting by day-to-day and just not doing anything. People would say try this or try that and I would just put it to one side but with Zahra it was comfortable and easy. Doing practical things was good as it didn't feel forced e.g. going for walks or playing pool. It felt more natural which really helped. Zahra is very understanding and took the time to listen which was really nice.

It's been great. The best thing has been our talks about everything. It's lovely that I can be myself. Neena got me to look at apprenticeships and has really opened my eyes to other options and what's possible for me. We've talked about University and I was worried that I'd end up in debt but Neena told me that's not the case. Before meeting Neena, I was quite negative and messed about but now I feel more positive and really want to make something of myself. I've got a part-time job as a banqueting server, which I'm enjoying.



Hafsa, mentee

What the mentees said

It's helped me build my confidence, so I feel I've achieved something. Shehla gave me tasks to complete, and I did some research which helped me find a part-time job. Shehla encouraged me and I have done well in my exams, which I'm very happy about. I was much more optimistic that I was going to do well. I told myself my results would be good and they were.

Mohammed T, Mentee



Huma, Mentee

It has been good and I'm very positive. It was a good match and I enjoyed talking to Shirley. It has had an impact and I feel differently now than before. I just got my exam results and got the passes I need to get on to the course I want to do. I signed up to NHS Cadets, which I'm really enjoying and has improved my confidence. I wouldn't have known about it if it hadn't been for Grandmentors.

It's helped me get a lot of things out of my head by talking. I feel like I've known Alison forever, we started as complete strangers and now we're best friends. It's been a really good match. Alison has been a calming influence. I can block out everything else when I talk with her. It's good to know there are nice people out there who volunteer, are non-judgmental and have got your back. It was nice to get the little care packs too. I feel happy.



FW, mentee

What our partners said

I want to thank you and your mentors for the brilliant work you have carried out with FW. She suffers social anxiety and depression, she refuses to go to school, isolates herself and finds it extremely difficult to leave the house. Her attendance was increasingly low and has impacted on her overall academic performance. Since referring FW, I have seen a huge change in her outlook. She has formed a bond with her Mentor and talks very positively about her. She is listened to, Alison does not judge her and motivates her to think about her future aspirations. Last week FW was excited to tell me that she had attended an open day at College and signed up to continue further studies post year 11. The Grandmentor scheme and Alison have helped FW to open up about her struggles, think about her future aspirations and goals, as well as motivate her to register at Bradford College.

Shabnam Kauser, Family Support worker



Grandmentors has been fundamental in raising hope and aspirations for our young people who need and deserve someone to guide them as they prepare for the world of work – they need someone to believe in them. Luckily this innovative project did just that and 6 students from Oasis Academy Lister Park were given the amazing opportunity to have their very own mentor. The impact of the mentoring has been a huge confidence boost for young people from Manningham who are often overlooked and misrepresented. One student found a job and another applied for an NHS scheme...this would have been unthinkable prior to this project. I would like to say a HUGE thank you for this project – it has been incredible for our students at such a crucial time in their lives and Jane has been an absolute delight to work with. I hope this project continues as we have so many young people that would really benefit from a mentor and I know the mentors loved getting to know our young people too!

Jade Ibegbuna, Oasis Lister Park Community Hub Leader

Thanks to the mentoring programme, my daughter has confidence and drive and has got into college.

Lisa, mentee's parent

Snapshots



Snapshots



Covid-19 - challenges and successes

Throughout Bradford, the community really pulled together and our amazing volunteer Grandmentors really stepped up by being incredibly flexible in their approach and ready to adapt to changing circumstances in order to give the mentees the support they needed.



We couldn't hold in-person training sessions, but we were able to hold joint sessions online with other Grandmentors projects, which gave volunteers the opportunity to meet other prospective mentors from all across the UK.

Not being able to meet mentors and mentees in person meant we couldn't hold soft-matching events and look at natural chemistry when making matches. Instead we had to allocate mentors and did this based on shared interests rather than just skills and experience. That way there was common ground from the outset. This actually worked really well with all the pairs saying that they felt they had been well-matched.



Mentors were happy to offer online mentoring to start but, as soon as things began to open up again, they were happy to meet with mentees face-to-face. Although it was challenging getting young people to engage in the mentoring process, especially online, once they did, the relationships with their mentors quickly developed and this meant they already knew each other by the time they were able to meet in person.

Although some young people did engage initially and attended information sessions, there were quite a few who did not turn up for their introductions to their mentors, which was frustrating for the mentors who were keen to get started and meant that their expectations needed to be carefully managed by the Project Coordinator.

During lockdown, some of our volunteers weren't able to work as normal and became mentors to help others in their community. They made their employers aware and this allowed us to promote the idea of employee volunteering /mentoring to companies such as Yorkshire Building Society (YBS) and BP.

More challenges and successes

Not being able to network face-to-face with referrers and other organisations was difficult. Emails and phone calls were helpful but once in-person contact was made, responses and interest from referrers increased and relationships developed more fully. We joined the Youth Partnership Hub and made connections with DWP staff, local colleges and other Third Sector groups and had regular virtual meetings.

A small number of mentee referrals but a high number of volunteer applications meant a constant balancing act. We needed to have a varied selection of mentors available so had to recruit not knowing whether would be able to match the mentor to a young person. We needed to keep volunteers informed and enthused without unrealistically raising their expectations, so this actually had a beneficial effect insofar as there was increased contact with volunteers and we were able to get to know them really well & build a relationship of trust. When Grandmentors Bradford ended, we put volunteers in touch with other local organisations who were looking for mentors and with Bradford Volunteer Centre.

As referrals didn't come through in the quantity we had hoped for, as we neared the end of the funding period and time was running out to make matches that would be long enough to be meaningful, emphasis was switched away from primarily making new matches, to promoting wellbeing amongst young people who were already engaged. We provided motivational/ wellbeing packs to our mentees to let them know that they matter.

We had a wonderful relationship with Oasis Lister Park Academy, which could have developed further if we had been able to go into the school from the start. We would then have been able to structure the meetings around term dates, exams etc.. However, most of the student from Oasis who were matched with a mentor, did eventually meet their mentor in person.

We were only able to hold one in-person session, the rest needed to be online. However, when we met in Saltaire in September, we had a good mix of mentors / mentees (but only one pair actually matched with each other). By then, they were really happy to be out and about and really enjoyed the day. The mentees got to engage with other people they wouldn't normally have met and to participate in new activities.

We had fantastic support from our funders at the Bradford for Everyone Team, who fully understood the difficulties that Covid-19 presented and allowed us flexibility to deliver the project. They also made introductions, suggested contacts and ideas and even volunteered!

We registered as a provider with Citizen Coin Bradford, to promote project activities. This scheme recognises and appreciates positive social activity. Individuals earn digital reward "coins" which are exchanged with local retailers for discounted goods and services in order to stimulate local activity.



Afterword

'There have been many challenges in delivering this much-needed project in Bradford, not least working around Covid, but it's been an absolute pleasure meeting the wonderful young people and amazing volunteers. We got there in the end and I'm proud of what we've achieved'.



Jane Murphy, Project Co-Ordinator

The mentor /mentee matches have each been unique and had their individual highs and lows, but there has been a feeling of real optimism around each of them. The pandemic has been a challenge for us all and young people have had to cope with all the restrictions, fear, anxiety and uncertainty at what is already a difficult time in their lives, but they are resilient. Whilst Grandmentors Bradford hasn't turned out quite the way we anticipated, the mentees have been supported to achieve different outcomes, such as meeting people from different backgrounds, participating in new activities, seeing things from a different perspective and recognising their own unique talents and skills. It's been such a boost to see these inter-generational relationships develop. Grandmentors Bradford, it's been a pleasure.

I will leave the last words to Grandmentor Alison who sent this (abridged) message to her work colleagues:

"I am so proud to share my volunteering story this year. Grandmentors is run through Volunteering Matters and aims to give young people help with CV writing, interview skills support, securing work experience or a job. The young girl I was matched with was only 15 and still in her last year at school due to take GCSE's next year. She has had an extremely troubled life and suffers social anxiety and depression which impacts on her day to day life. She struggles to attend school due to her situation. We would meet weekly and usually go for a coffee and cake. I built up a trusting relationship with her, not judging just listening and trying to encourage her to go to school.

Being involved in such a worthwhile programme has been both educational and inspiring. Just imagine the impact the society could have if just one person in each branch could make a difference.

I challenge you to consider what's on your personal plan for 2022 to change people's lives!"

Recognitions

deliver in partnership
with and funded by



We want to thank all of the following for your support and partnership opportunities.

Bradford for Everyone
Oasis Lister Park Academy
Empowering Minds - Future Ways
The Leaving Care Team
DWP Job Centre Plus
Paul Beecroft at Upshot
Skills House Partnership
Citizen Coin
Bradford Council Workforce Development Service
Bradford BID
Bradford Chamber of Commerce
Telegraph & Argus
Keighley News
Children's Service - Family East Hub
Community Action Bradford (CABAD)
Bradford Vibe at Forster College
CNET
Artworks Bradford

VOLUNTEERINGMATTERS.ORG.UK

Volunteering Matters is a registered charity in England and Wales no. 291222 and in Scotland no. SC039171. Volunteering Matters is a company limited by guarantee no. 1435877. VAT regd. 480 852432.

@volunteering_uk

