

## Nesta/DCMS Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund Phase 2 Evaluation Report Summary Sheet

Grantee Name	Volunteering Matters
Programme Name	Grandmentors
Fund Name	Second Half Fund
Stage of Development	Scaling
Evaluation Partner	Policy, Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)
Date Completed	January 2020
Budget	£22,000

<p><b>Project Overview</b></p> <p>Established in 2009, the Grandmentors (GM) programme delivers intergenerational mentoring projects for young people transitioning from care. A 'grandmentor' will typically be aged 50 years or over and a mentee will typically be aged 16-24. The programme recruits older volunteers to use their life experience and skills to provide emotional and practical support to young people transitioning from the care system to independent living. The programme aims to bring positive change in the young people's lives by improving their mental health and wellbeing; progress in education, employment and training; and independence, confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>In autumn 2016, Volunteering Matters received funding to scale up the Grandmentors programme, increasing the number of local areas in which the programme is delivered from four to nine.</p>
<p><b>Headline Findings</b></p> <p>The Theory of Change identified that helping young people transition from care to become thriving adults, is achieved by contributing to positive outcomes in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved education, employment and training (EET)</li> <li>2. Increased autonomy</li> <li>3. Increased wellbeing</li> </ol> <p>The evaluation found that young people who had a Grandmentor appeared to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be more likely to go into, or remain in, education, employment, or training.</li> <li>● Develop greater autonomy.</li> </ul>

Young people who participate in the programme see positive changes in their lives in terms of improved education, employment and training (EET) outcomes. The distance travelled analysis indicates that the proportion of mentees in EET increased over time (25 out of 30 care leavers in EET) and that those dropping out of education moved into employment. It appears that mentees joining the Grandmentors programme are more likely to be in education, employment and training than other care leavers (over a third of care leavers aged 19 are not in employment, education, or training) and that during their participation in the programme they see further improvements in this area.

Most mentees increased their autonomy scores, with over two thirds of participants (22 out of 30) reporting some level of progress over time.

Results regarding wellbeing are less clear, with over half experiencing some progress and around a third experiencing some decline over time.

## Evaluation Approach & Methodology

The key aim of the evaluation was to understand the difference that the Grandmentors programme makes to the lives of young people leaving care (its impact), and how this difference is achieved. It used two methods to gauge the programme's impact (distance travelled, and Qualitative Comparison Analysis) to answer the following questions:

1. What is the progress towards life goals achieved by care leavers enrolled in the Grandmentors programme; and
2. Through what combination of resources and ways of delivering the programme is this difference achieved?

In addressing these questions, this report draws on two previous reports, one presenting findings of a process evaluation (Ozan et al., 2019), the other outlining the Grandmentors Theory of Change (Ozan et al., 2018).

The evaluation included a performance analysis using pre- and post-intervention measures from the Grandmentors cohort in order to gauge distance travelled by care leavers enrolled in the programme. Although Grandmentors planned to recruit a reasonable number of participants, the actual number for whom data were collected was small (n = 30). There was also a high level of variation in how each of the projects was rolled out and delivered across the sites. For these two reasons, it would be difficult to infer the impact of the Grandmentors programme if standard approaches were utilised.

Consequently, the evaluation used Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to measure impact and identify which combination of conditions was more likely to generate positive outcomes. The evaluation considered which factors were possible conditions for successful mentoring outcomes, such as gender and ethnicity match between mentor and mentee. Findings from the QCA analysis did not identify any strong patterns in the data.

☐ Quantitative

☒ Qualitative

☐ Mixed

☒ Impact Evaluation

☐ Process Evaluation

☐ Economic Evaluation

☒ One-off evaluation

☐ Developing internal

### Evaluation Implementation Challenges and Limitations

- In designing the evaluation, the research team was cognisant of a number of contextual factors around the Grandmentor programme and its expansion which presented challenges for the evaluation:
  - Firstly, there was considerable variation in implementation between the different projects. These in part reflected differences between local authorities in their requirements when commissioning programmes such as Grandmentors.
  - Secondly, the programme engages with small numbers of care leavers, partly because at any given time, there are small numbers of children in care, and leaving care, in many local authorities. Small numbers present particular problems in measuring the impact of interventions and programmes like Grandmentors.
  - Thirdly, many approaches to measuring impact rely on the use of comparators to understand what would be achieved in the absence of the intervention or programme being evaluated (known as the 'counterfactual'). Because of differences between local authorities, in how local Grandmentors projects are being implemented, and the small number of young people leaving care who join the Grandmentors programme, there were issues in terms of identifying an appropriate comparator group.
  - Finally, it is likely that young people who engage with the programme will be receiving a number of other interventions and support services to help their transition from care (and, again, these might vary between local authorities). This makes it difficult to identify which of these different services might be generating any impact observed.
- Distance travelled analysis has its limitations. It does not allow for any changes in observed or self-reported behaviour or outcomes to be attributed to individual programmes or interventions. Such analysis does not involve comparing the progress of programme participants or intervention recipients with similar individuals who are not engaged in the programme or receiving the intervention; it does not involve controlling for factors beyond the intervention or programme that might affect the observed changes; nor does it involve examining average changes overall for programme participants.
- The findings of the Qualitative Comparative Analysis outlined in the evaluation report did not meet the consistency threshold and are therefore interesting but not empirically significant enough to trigger recommendations for change.

### Key Recommendations and Next Steps

Based on the evaluation, Volunteering Matters has worked with staff, volunteers, and young people to establish an impact framework based on the mentoring activities that the mentor undertakes with the young person.

These are split into three overarching impact themes:

- Housing and Finance

- Health Needs Met
- Education, Training and Employment

Under each of these areas, Volunteering Matters has established a number of impact indicators – for example 'achieve financial independence' or 'in stable accommodation'. These indicators are monitored live by the support plan process the mentor is using with the mentee and tracked through supervision sessions with the Volunteer Manager.

Volunteering Matters is also establishing a set of primary impact measures against the three overarching areas and these are then pegged to the wider outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) in that local authority area and to the national statistics for LAC outcomes. For example, EET outcomes in the Grandmentor cohort versus all LAC in that Local Authority and nationally.

Finally, the Volunteering Matters team is working on a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system being in place to enable it to track the above in real-time from the mentor straight into the system.

# Grandmentors programme

## Impact evaluation

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January 2020

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 2009, the Grandmentors (GM) programme delivers intergenerational mentoring projects for young people transitioning from care. A mentor will typically be aged 50 years or over and a mentee will typically be aged 16-24. The programme recruits older volunteers to use their life experience and skills to provide emotional and practical support to young people transitioning from the care system to independent living.

Recent data and published research on care leavers confirms that they have significantly poorer outcomes than the general population. Over a third of care leavers aged 19 are not in employment, education, or training. For those in education, their attainment is lower than for the general population. Similarly, care leavers have significantly lower scores of wellbeing compared to young people with no care experience. Their wellbeing scores also appear to drop once they leave care. Unaccompanied asylum seekers are an important sub-population of care leavers, with particular needs and vulnerabilities relating to their experiences prior to claiming asylum in the UK and, in some cases, to ongoing uncertainty as to their immigration status.

In May 2018, the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) was appointed by Volunteering Matters to conduct the evaluation of the expansion of the Grandmentors programme. The key aim of the evaluation was to understand the difference that the Grandmentors programme makes to the lives of young people leaving care (its impact), and how this difference is achieved. The evaluation had three parts. This report, presenting findings for the impact evaluation, is the third part. It uses two methods to gauge the programme's impact (distance travelled, and Qualitative Comparison Analysis) to answer the following questions:

- what is the progress towards life goals achieved by care leavers enrolled in the Grandmentors programme; and
- through what combination of resources and ways of delivering the programme is this difference achieved?

In addressing these questions, this report draws on two previous reports, one presenting findings of a process evaluation (Ozan et al., 2019), the other outlining the GM Theory of Change (Ozan et al., 2018). The Theory of Change identified a key overall outcome objective of helping young people transition from care to become thriving adults, through contributing to positive outcomes in three specific areas:

- **improved education, employment and training (EET)**, by providing practical support to improve employability and readiness for continuing education, and by working to improve the self-efficacy (motivation) of mentees;
- **increased autonomy**, by providing emotional support (listening, encouraging, expressing interest), and increasing trust and self-esteem, to increase independent living skills; and
- **increased wellbeing**, by supporting mentees to engage with cultural and social events, and broaden their social networks.

Mentees' progress was measured against these outcomes at two points in time (with an average of 11 months apart).

Young people who participate in the programme see positive changes in their lives in terms of improved education, employment and training outcomes, their sense of autonomy, and (to a lesser extent) their sense of wellbeing. It appears that mentees joining the Grandmentors programme are more likely to be in education, employment and training (EET) than other care leavers and that during their participation in the programme they see further improvements in this area.

The distance travelled analysis indicates that the proportion of mentees in EET increased over time (25 out of 30 care leavers in EET) and that those dropping out of education moved into employment. Most mentees increased their autonomy scores, with over two thirds of participants (22 out of 30) reporting some level of progress over time. Results regarding well-being are less clear, with over half experiencing some progress and around a third experiencing some decline over time.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) seeks to identify which combination of conditions is more likely to generate positive outcomes. The evaluation considered the following factors as possible conditions for successful mentoring outcomes: gender match between mentor and mentee, ethnicity match, mentees having a care history that includes being in foster care, having a care history that includes having been an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, length of mentorship, and hard or soft matching.

Findings from the QCA analysis did not identify any strong patterns in the data. However, configurations in the data point towards the role of ethnicity matching in the Grandmentors programme. This particular condition appeared to be relevant as mentees that were matched with a mentor of similar ethnic background are less likely to be successful in terms of employment. However, the condition appears to play a positive role when considering education, as female mentees that were ethnically matched were more likely to remain in, or start, education.

Furthermore, the QCA analysis revealed an interplay between ethnicity match and unaccompanied asylum seekers. Indeed, where mentees are asylum seekers and have an ethnicity match, there is a decrease in levels of autonomy. When they are not asylum seekers, the ethnicity match does not appear to have an impact on the outcome. The evidence presented here is not substantial enough for us to draw any conclusions or make recommendations on changes. Nevertheless, ethnicity match appears to nevertheless have a role in influencing outcomes. The report recommends that Volunteering Matters keep practice and evidence in this area under review.

The evaluation concludes overall that:

1. The Grandmentors programme is well thought out, with clear outcomes expected from participation in the programme and a plausible logic to how the programme contributes to achieving these outcomes.
2. The programme is delivered by a team of staff and volunteers who are committed to making it work as demonstrated through changes made following formal and informal feedback.
3. Young people who participate in the programme see positive changes in their lives in terms of improved education, employment and training outcomes, their sense of autonomy, and (to a lesser extent) their sense of wellbeing.

This report concludes with a number of recommendations for the programme that consider the time and resources required for successful implementation, the importance of networks for successful delivery, Grandmentors eligibility criteria, the benefits and limitations of soft matching, the beginning and end of a mentoring relationship, mentor training and support including goal setting, and outcome and performance data collection.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Young people leaving care face a number of significant challenges as they transition to independent adulthood (Bengtsson et al, 2018). These challenges arise both because of their experiences before and through the care system, and because their transition to adulthood is shorter and occurs at a younger age, compared to their peers, in a form of ‘instant adulthood’ (Rogers, 2011). Young people leaving care often lack access to family support during this transition. They face significant challenges and often achieve poorer outcomes than other young adults (Adley and Jupp Kina, 2017). Evidence demonstrates that young people with a history of local authority care have poorer social outcomes in adulthood when compared with peers who have not been under local authority care (HM Government, 2016). They often experience instability in their housing, and are over-represented in the homeless population (O’Leary et al., 2018).

There has been a considerable policy and practice focus in recent years on developing and improving support services for young people during this transition period. The UK government has published a number of strategies aimed at improving the support given to care leavers during their transition to independent living (including the first cross-government care leaver strategy in 2013 and the introduction of Staying Put duty in 2014). The UK government’s latest strategy (Keep on Caring) recognises that care leavers are one of the most vulnerable groups in the UK; their outcomes being much worse than the general population, and the quality of leaving care services varying greatly between different local authorities (HM Government, 2016). The strategy identifies how the government intend to achieve five key outcomes to support care leavers, namely: (1) be better prepared for independent living; (2) improve their access to education, employment and training; (3) experience stability in their lives, feel safe and secure; (4) improve access to health support; and (5) achieve financial stability.

One type of support that is increasingly of interest is mentoring. Mentoring as a means of assisting at-risk youth has been developed since the beginning of the 20th century, initially in the US via initiatives such as the Big Brothers/Big Sisters programme. Mentoring programmes for young people in or leaving care usually draw on the assumption that the challenges they encounter are “at least partially related to the lack of strong, healthy, and stable relationships, which are key ingredients for any adolescent’s successful transition to adulthood” (Spencer et al, 2010). Mentoring comes in many forms and is defined in a number of ways. Differences can be identified in terms of whether the mentoring relationship is planned, the extent to which it is formalised, whether the relationship is one-to-one or group-based, and differences between peer, interventional, and intentional. Some definitions emphasise the voluntary engagement of young people, others focus on how the mentor is supposed to guide a mentee towards achieving personal growth and development (Dolan and Brady, 2011). Philip (1997, cited in Philip, Shucksmith and King, 2004) defines mentoring in very broad terms as “a process within a relationship or set of relationships that embodies elements of trust, reciprocity, challenge, support, and control and which has the power to empower partners”. Specifically, intergenerational mentoring (which is the focus of this research) can be thought of as “the relationship between a young person (mentee) and an older person (mentor) who is not related to them” (Dolan and Brady, 2011).

Intergenerational mentoring forms a small part of more general intergenerational programmes (Fox et al., 2013) which are defined as “vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations for individual and social benefits” (Hatton-Yeo and Ohsako, 2000).

## 1.2 THE GRANDMENTORS PROGRAMME

The Grandmentors programme is one example of these developments. Established in 2009, the Grandmentors programme was jointly developed by the national charity Volunteering Matters and the Jecda Foundation. The programme delivers intergenerational mentoring projects for young people transitioning from care. The projects involve a mentor, who will typically be aged 50 years or over and a mentee, a young person transitioning from care who will typically be aged 16-24. The programme recruits older volunteers to use their life experience and skills to provide emotional and practical support to young people transitioning from the care system to independent living. The programme aims to bring positive change in the young people’s lives in the following areas as outlined in Nesta’s Second Half Fund Grantee Evaluation Specification (2018):

- mental health and (subjective) wellbeing;
- progress in education, employment and training
- independent living skills;
- personal resilience;
- personal relationships;
- community membership; and
- confidence and self-esteem.

Grandmentors started operating in three locations: Islington, Hounslow and Kent. In April 2017, it was estimated that the three projects would achieve around 180 mentoring relationships, also called matches (Nesta baseline, April 2017). A fourth area (Suffolk) began slightly later and was expected to make about 30 matches per annum.

In autumn 2016, Volunteering Matters was one of a number of organisations that secured the support of Nesta and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) through the Second Half Fund<sup>1</sup>. Volunteering Matters was granted around £250,000 to scale up the Grandmentors programme, increasing the number of local areas in which the programme is delivered from four to nine. This involved implementing the programme in three new areas from April 2017 (Stockton-on-Tees, Wiltshire, and Milton Keynes), and a further two areas from October 2018 (Wolverhampton and Warwickshire).

In December 2018, one of the four established projects (Kent) was discontinued due to funding withdrawal from the local authority. As of May 2019, the Grandmentors project is implemented in eight locations: Hounslow, Islington, Suffolk, Milton Keynes, Stockton-On-Tees, Wiltshire, Wolverhampton, and Warwickshire.

For the purpose of this report, a distinction will be made between established projects which have been operating for several years (Islington, Hounslow, and Suffolk), new projects that have been recently commissioned (Milton Keynes, Stockton-On-Tees, and Wiltshire), and emerging projects that were just recruiting coordinators at the time of the evaluation (Wolverhampton and Warwickshire).

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<sup>1</sup> More information about this fund and organisations receiving funds is available at <https://www.nesta.org.uk/project/second-half-fund-sharing-time-and-talents-life/second-half-fund-meet-the-grantees/>

Both new and emerging projects are funded by Nesta's Second Half Fund. Figure 1 presents the eight Grandmentors projects currently running.

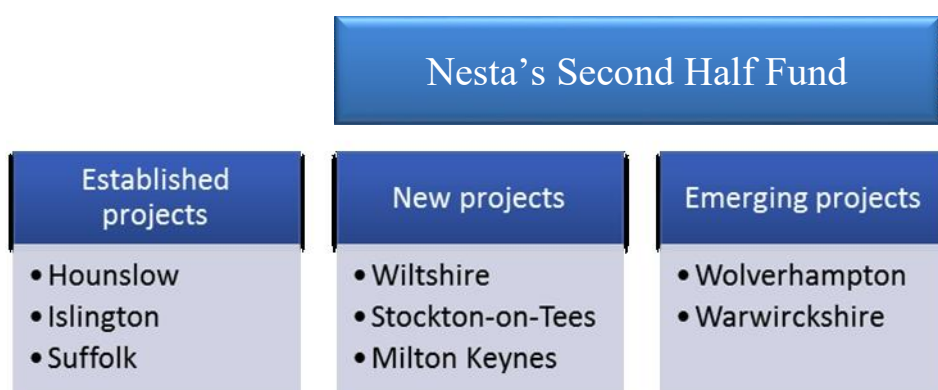


Figure 1: Grandmentors projects

### 1.3 THE EVALUATION

In May 2018, the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) at Manchester Metropolitan University was appointed to conduct the evaluation of the expansion of the Grandmentors programme. The key aims of Volunteering Matters in commissioning this evaluation were to understand the difference that the Grandmentors programme makes to the lives of young people leaving care (its impact), and how this difference is achieved. In particular, the objectives of this evaluation are to:

- appraise the Grandmentors' Theory of Change, key outcomes, and internal data gathering;
- assess the effect the programme has on care leavers' outcomes (impact evaluation);
- explore under which conditions the programme is most likely to have a positive impact (impact evaluation);
- understand how key factors influence quality and performance (process evaluation);
- engage with care leavers and ensure their views are included in the evaluation (process evaluation); and
- establish ongoing performance measures (monitoring).

The evaluation was conducted between May 2018 and October 2019 and was commissioned by Volunteering Matters and funded by Nesta. The research included both process and impact evaluations. The focus of this report – which is the fourth and final report of the evaluation - is on the impact evaluation.

In designing the evaluation, the research team has been cognisant of a number of contextual factors around the Grandmentor programme and its expansion. First, there is considerable variation in implementation between the different projects (e.g. the extent to which mentors engage with other services, and delivery of training). These in part reflect differences between local authorities in their requirements when commissioning programmes such as Grandmentors.

Secondly, the programme engages with small numbers of care leavers, partly because at any given time, there are small numbers of children in care, and leaving care, in many local authorities. Small numbers present particular problems in measuring the impact of interventions and programmes like Grandmentors.

Thirdly, many approaches to measuring impact rely on the use of comparators to understand what would be achieved in the absence of the intervention or programme being evaluated (known as the 'counterfactual'). Because of differences between local authorities, in how local Grandmentors projects are being implemented, and the small number of young people leaving care who join the Grandmentors programme, there are issues in terms of identifying an appropriate comparator group. Finally, it is likely that young people who engage with the programme will be receiving a number of other interventions and support services to help their transition from care (and, again, these might vary between local authorities). This makes it difficult to identify which of these different services might be generating any impact observed.

These challenges were also recognised by Volunteering Matters in its invitation to tender for this work. The invitation to tender set out that a counterfactual approach would not be feasible, and that an alternative approach would be needed which would be consistent with level 2 on the Nesta standards of evidence (Nesta, 2013). Such approaches show some change amongst those receiving or using an intervention, usually using some pre and post survey or outcomes data, but do not involve a comparator or counterfactual.

Given these contextual issues and the requirements for the evaluation, the research team proposed an approach that would (a) satisfy the requirements for a level 2 evaluation design and (b) provide a deeper understanding of whether and how the Grandmentors programme makes a difference to the lives of young people leaving care and transitioning to independent adulthood.

Taking account of these challenges and the aims and objectives outlined above, the evaluation has been designed as follows:

### **1. Initiation and project design**

This phase ensures a shared understanding of the evaluation's scope and purpose. It involves setting up contracts and submitting ethics applications. It is also used to develop research tools and assess the data currently collected by Grandmentors.

### **2. Process evaluation**

The process evaluation aims to answer the following questions:

- what factors are affecting the implementation of Grandmentors; and
- what factors trigger high-quality relationships between the care leaver and Grandmentor?

Drawing on information previously gathered during the Grandmentors review (O'Leary et al., 2017), the process evaluation is intended to map out contextual differences, and differences of implementation, between individual Grandmentors projects. It includes a critical review of the current theory of change that is presented separately (Ozan et al., 2018).

The process evaluation considers the implementation of the programme in different locations. It uses traditional qualitative methods such as workshops and interviews to capture the views of strategic stakeholders (i.e. Volunteering Matters staff, mentors and mentees). It also explores the conditions necessary to create a high quality (e.g. trusting and supportive) relationship between a mentor and young person and the purpose of goal-setting in mentoring.

The fieldwork took place in two waves (the more established projects first) in order to allow newer projects to bed-in. Consequently, the interim process evaluation presented findings mainly based on the experiences of established projects. The second wave of data collection captured the experiences of new projects in the early stages of implementation. It was not possible to conduct fieldwork with emerging projects, as they did not have a coordinator in place at the time of the evaluation. This process evaluation report builds on both waves of data collection, providing a comprehensive picture of the Grandmentors programme. A more detailed explanation of the data collection and analysis methods used is given in section 2 of this report.

### **3. Impact evaluation**

Findings from the impact evaluation will be presented in the final report. The impact evaluation aims to address the following questions:

- what is the progress towards life goals (distance travelled) achieved by care leavers enrolled in the Grandmentors programme; and
- through what combination of resources and ways of delivering the programme is this difference achieved?

The Policy Evaluation and Research Unit team assessed the data internally collected by Volunteering Matters in order to establish a set of performance measures to capture the programme's anticipated outcomes. In accordance with Nesta's Standards of Evidence Level 2 (Puttick and Ludlow, 2013), the evaluation included a performance analysis using pre- and post-intervention measures from the Grandmentors cohort in order to gauge distance travelled by care leavers enrolled in the programme. Although Grandmentors planned to recruit a reasonable number of participants, the actual number for whom data were collected was small. There was a high level of variation in how each of the projects is rolled out and delivered. For these two reasons, it would be difficult to infer the impact of the Grandmentors programme if standard approaches were utilised.

Consequently, the evaluation team used Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to explore impact. This method enables us to explain how Grandmentors generates positive outcomes. Utilising available relevant data, the evaluation team used QCA to explore under which combinations of conditions (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, approach taken to matching mentors and mentees) Grandmentors is most likely to have a positive or negative impact on the anticipated outcomes. QCA is a method that bridges qualitative and quantitative analysis and provides powerful tools for the analysis of causal complexity (Rihoux and Ragin, 2008). It offers the possibility of assessing causation that is complex, involving different combinations of causal 'conditions' that can generate the same outcome. QCA is used in small to intermediate size evaluations, where there are too many cases for standard qualitative research, but too few cases for most conventional statistical impact evaluation techniques. QCA is appropriate here because, in a context where the data are unlikely to allow large scale analysis, it offers the potential to identify the multiple factors which, when combined in a mentee's life, produce positive or negative outcomes.

## 4. Findings and implications

This phase considered findings from the process and impact evaluation and analysed them through cross-cutting themes that considered different areas of the projects, groups of care leavers, and other interventions aspects. Final findings were presented during a workshop with key internal stakeholders to discuss implications and identify recommendations. The aim of this workshop was to co-produce recommendations on the implementation and delivery of Grandmentors to ensure that they are useful and realistic, and thereby increase the chances of their being implemented.

### 1.4 THE IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT

This is the fourth of four reports from the evaluation. The first, published in November 2018, provided insight to the ‘theory of change’ underpinning the Grandmentors intervention (Ozan et al., 2018). The second was an interim process evaluation report setting out the findings from our evaluation work in the four established areas (not funded through the Second Half Fund grant). The third report was a process evaluation report focusing on the three new Grandmentors schemes implemented since April 2018, (funded through the Second Half Fund grant provided by Nesta and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport). It did not capture the experiences of the two emerging schemes launched in October 2018 which were still in the very early stages of implementation. The report presented new findings from field research conducted in each of the three schemes in the spring of 2019 and combined them with the findings from the interim process evaluation report to create a comprehensive standalone report (Ozan et al., 2019).

This fourth and final report focuses on the impact of the Grandmentors programme. A key requirement for this evaluation was to develop an understanding of the difference made by Grandmentors, and how that difference was achieved. The report brings together elements from the Theory of Change (Ozan et al., 2018), key findings from the process evaluation (Ozan et al., 2019) and new findings from the distance travelled analysis and Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA).

This report will first outline the evaluation’s methodology. **Chapter 2** provides an overview of the methodology used throughout the evaluation, including its Theory of Change, process evaluation and impact evaluation methods (i.e. distance travelled and QCA). Qualitative Comparative Analysis is an approach using theory and describing it can quickly become very technical. To ensure that this report remains accessible, we offer a simplified version of the methodology in the core report and a more detailed version in the appendix. The report details how the outcomes and factors associated with them have been conceptualised. **Chapter 3** outlines the most recent statistics and publications regarding care leavers in England. It considers their wellbeing, their education, and also focuses on an important sub-population: unaccompanied asylum seekers. **Chapter 4** presents key findings. It summarises the findings from the previous process evaluation and presents those generated through the distance travelled analysis and the QCA. **Chapter 5** reflects on the implications of those findings and draws recommendations for the Grandmentors programme.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

During the early stages of the evaluation, the research team focused on establishing the ‘theory of change’ that underpins the Grandmentors programme. A theory of change articulates ‘how and why’ an intervention or programme is expected to work. (Weiss, 1995). It can be defined as “a systematic and cumulative study of the links between activities, outcomes and contexts of the initiative” (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). By using a theory of change approach, evaluators examine the intervention’s intended outcomes, the activities it expects to implement to achieve those outcomes, and the contextual factors that may impact on the implementation and/or outcomes (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). It provides a “framework within which it is possible to construct a narrative of the process of implementation and its consequences” (Mason and Barnes, 2007).

To articulate the Grandmentors theory of change, a workshop was conducted to pull together informal assumptions held by stakeholders, and literature was reviewed to support the identification of mechanisms. The theory of change workshop took place in London in July 2018. It involved four Grandmentors staff, three mentors, and one funder. This work was outlined in the first research report delivered as part of this evaluation (Ozan, et al., 2018), and is represented diagrammatically in Figure 2 on page 15.

The theory of change underpins the design of both the process and impact evaluations. For the impact evaluation, the theory of change enabled the research team to identify the outcomes that the programme was expected to achieve, and that would need to be measured to undertake the distance travelled analysis. This was used by the evaluation team to assess and advise on outcome and monitoring data proposed by Volunteering Matters. It also provided insight around the mechanisms through which these changes might be delivered, and the conditions that are important to these changes, which is an important part of the Qualitative Comparative Analysis.

### 2.2 PROCESS EVALUATION

Overall the work conducted for the process evaluation gathered experiences and opinions from 61 stakeholders. This comprises 11 interviews with Volunteering Matters staff (9 different people as some were interviewed twice for the purpose of this study) and workshops or interviews with 37 mentors and 15 mentees across seven locations (Hounslow, Islington, Suffolk, Kent, Wiltshire, Stockton-On-Tees, and Milton Keynes).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Volunteering Matters staff over the phone or face-to-face. They focused on the recruitment of mentors and mentees to the programme, the training and support provided, the matching process and successes and challenges encountered in the implementation of the programme. Building on findings from the interim report, interviews with staff from the new sites also focused on goal-settings and its purpose.

Workshops and interviews with mentors and mentees were adapted throughout the evaluation to maximise participation (see Ozan et al., 2019). The evaluation design drew on the assumption that mentees were more likely to participate in workshops if the mentor was present. However, despite the presence of mentors, mentees’ participation in the first phase of the evaluation was low.



For the second phase, which focused on new projects, the evaluation team took a more flexible approach, taking the coordinators suggestions into account, and was able to capitalise on events that were already taking place in some of the projects (e.g. a training event for mentors and a day trip for mentees). Utilising an event organised by the coordinators was a particularly successful approach as it allowed for a significant number of care leavers (i.e. seven in one location) to engage with the evaluation. This means that workshops and methods of data collection varied slightly between locations. Some workshops gathered mentors and mentees, whilst others were held separately. The number of participants also varies between sites. In one of the new projects, no mentees were available to participate as the number of matches was still very low. Several participants were waiting to be matched at the time of the fieldwork. Others had been matched relatively recently (from two weeks to six months). Interviews were also conducted with mentors (face to face or telephone), including a mentor whose mentorship had been discontinued.

Table 1 sets out the gender split of mentors and mentees involved in the process evaluation across new and established sites<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 1: Workshop participants by area and gender**

Location	Male Mentor(s)	Female Mentor(s)	Total mentors	Male Mentee(s)	Female Mentee(s)	Total Mentees
New project A	7	6	13	0	0	0
New project B	3	0	3	2	0	2
New project C	1	3	4	4	3	7
Established project D	3	2	5	1	0	1
Established project E	2	7	9	1	2	3
Established project F	0	3	3	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>

Amongst the participants in this study, there were slightly more female mentors than male mentors (n= 21 and n=16 respectively) and about the same amount of male and female mentees (n= 8 and n=7 respectively). In this sample, male participants represent 53% of the mentees. This number is comparable to the gender balance amongst mentees involved in the Grandmentors programme (n=49 males out of 91 mentees, i.e. 54%).

<sup>2</sup> Workshops with mentors and mentees could not be organised in the location of the Grandmentors project that was discontinued. Consequently, table 1 presents information relative to three established and three new projects.

## 2.3 IMPACT EVALUATION

There are two strands to this part of the evaluation; distance travelled analysis and Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA).

### 2.3.1 DISTANCE TRAVELLED ANALYSIS

A range of outcome data – hard and soft, objective and subjective<sup>3</sup> – have been collected by Grandmentors mentors and project co-ordinators at two time points during the implementation of the expanded programme. These data provide the evaluation with measures of pre- and post-intervention outcomes from the Grandmentors cohort, which have been used to assess the distance travelled by care leavers enrolled in the programme. Distance travelled analysis is a means of understanding the progress made by individual participants in a programme or intervention. It is particularly focused on soft outcomes. Distance travelled analysis is an appropriate tool to use in this evaluation both because of the contextual factors outlined previously, but also because it recognises the importance of understanding the whole journey of young people as they transition from care to independent adulthood. This journey includes building confidence and self-esteem, overcoming specific challenges, improving skills, and becoming ‘job ready’, and Grandmentors is one of a number of interventions that contribute to this journey.

Distance travelled analysis has its limitations. It does not allow for any changes in observed or self-reported behaviour or outcomes to be attributed to individual programmes or interventions. Such analysis does not involve comparing the progress of programme participants or intervention recipients with similar individuals who are not engaged in the programme or receiving the intervention; it does not involve controlling for factors beyond the intervention or programme that might affect the observed changes; nor does it involve examining average changes overall for programme participants. Despite its limitations, when combined with other elements of the evaluation carried out by the authors – the work to establish and critically evaluate the ‘theory of change’ underpinning the programme, and the Qualitative Comparative Analysis – it provides a basis from which to judge whether and how the programme makes a difference to the lives of young people who participate in it.

The results from the distance travelled analysis are outlined in section 4.2 of this report, and details on how we have undertaken the analysis are set out in appendix 1 to this report. The national picture in relation to care leavers is set out chapter 3.

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<sup>3</sup> Hard outcomes are generally considered to be clearly defined and easy to measure. For Grandmentors, such outcomes include being in education, employment or training (EET). Soft outcomes are less tangible and more difficult to measure. For Grandmentors, such outcomes include increased self-esteem or improved wellbeing. Subjective outcomes rely on mentees’ experiences and views, such as responses to questions on wellbeing or self-esteem. Objective outcomes rely on observations undertaken by others, including project staff and mentors.

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### 2.3.2 QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS (QCA)

While distance travelled analysis provides insight to the progress made by individual mentees, it does not provide analysis of the contribution made by Grandmentors to that progress, or about the elements of the programme that make the most significant contribution. Although the nature of the programme – how it is organised and delivered, and the number of people it benefits – means that a counterfactual approach to impact evaluation is not feasible, such approaches are not the only form of impact evaluation available. The evaluation team used Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) (Ragin, 1987) to explore impact.

We have used the outputs from the distance travelled analysis to identify those cases (individual mentees) with positive and negative outcomes, comparing these cases to understand what conditions and what combination of conditions are most associated with success.

The QCA analysis followed five distinctive steps to explore the interaction between the different conditions and positive outcomes. The analysis being a “dialogue between ideas and evidence” (Ragin, 1987), those steps were not always linear and involved some going back and forth between them. The analysis was repeated for each programme outcome identified. Those outcomes and conditions were identified from the Theory of Change and qualitative work undertaken for the process evaluation (see section 2.4 for outcomes and conditions). A simplified overview of the QCA analysis is provided in Appendix 1.

A final step of the QCA analysis is to assess the consistency and coverage of the configuration. Consistency describes the percentage of configurations of similar composition that generate the same outcome. It is the QCA equivalent of significance in statistical analysis (Theim, 2010). Low consistency means that the configuration is not supported by empirical evidence (Roig-Terno, et al., 2017). The threshold is usually set at 80 percent. Coverage is a measure of empirical relevance, similar to an  $R^2$  value in statistical analysis (Theim, 2010), and describes the number of cases for which the configuration is valid. Low coverage is not an issue in QCA as it can still be useful to explain a set leading to a particular outcome (Roig-Terno, 2017; Ragin, 1987). Findings with low coverage rates are of interest, but do not provide an empirical basis from which to make recommendations for change in the organisation, or delivery of an intervention or programme. Coverage can be assessed through three measures (raw coverage, unique coverage, and solution coverage) as described by Rihoux and De Meur (2009). These two tests (of consistency and coverage) are fundamental to the process as they demonstrate the empirical and real world ‘weight’ of findings. As we set out in the findings section of this report, the findings outlined here did not meet the consistency threshold and are therefore interesting but not empirically or economically significant enough to trigger recommendations for change.

## 2.4 MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Through the theory of change work undertaken during this research (set out in Figure 2), the evaluation team identified a key overall outcome objective of helping young people transition from care to become thriving adults, through contributing to positive outcomes in three specific areas:

- **improved education, employment and training**, by providing practical support to improve employability and readiness for continuing education, and by working to improve the self-efficacy (motivation) of mentees;
- **increased autonomy**, by providing emotional support (listening, encouraging, expressing interest) and increasing trust and self-esteem, to increase independent living skills; and
- **increased wellbeing**, by supporting mentees to engage with cultural and social events, and to broaden their social networks.

The outcomes used to measure progress made by the young people in the programme drew first and foremost on the Theory of Change. There were nevertheless some limitations on what could be measured associated with the data made available. As is often the case for evaluations, the quality of the data was quite uneven and some cases had to be discounted. Furthermore, an alternative measure could have been more appropriate in some cases. For example, the evaluation considered mentors and mentees ethnic background (see below for more detail) to assess whether they matched. Yet a subjective measure of the mentees' opinion on whether they shared a common cultural identity with their mentor could have provided a more accurate picture of the situation. Finally, the evaluation team took into account comments regarding the conceptualisation of some outcomes (e.g. EET) from strategic stakeholders during a workshop. The following sections outline the data made available to the evaluation team and the way outcomes and conditions were conceptualised.

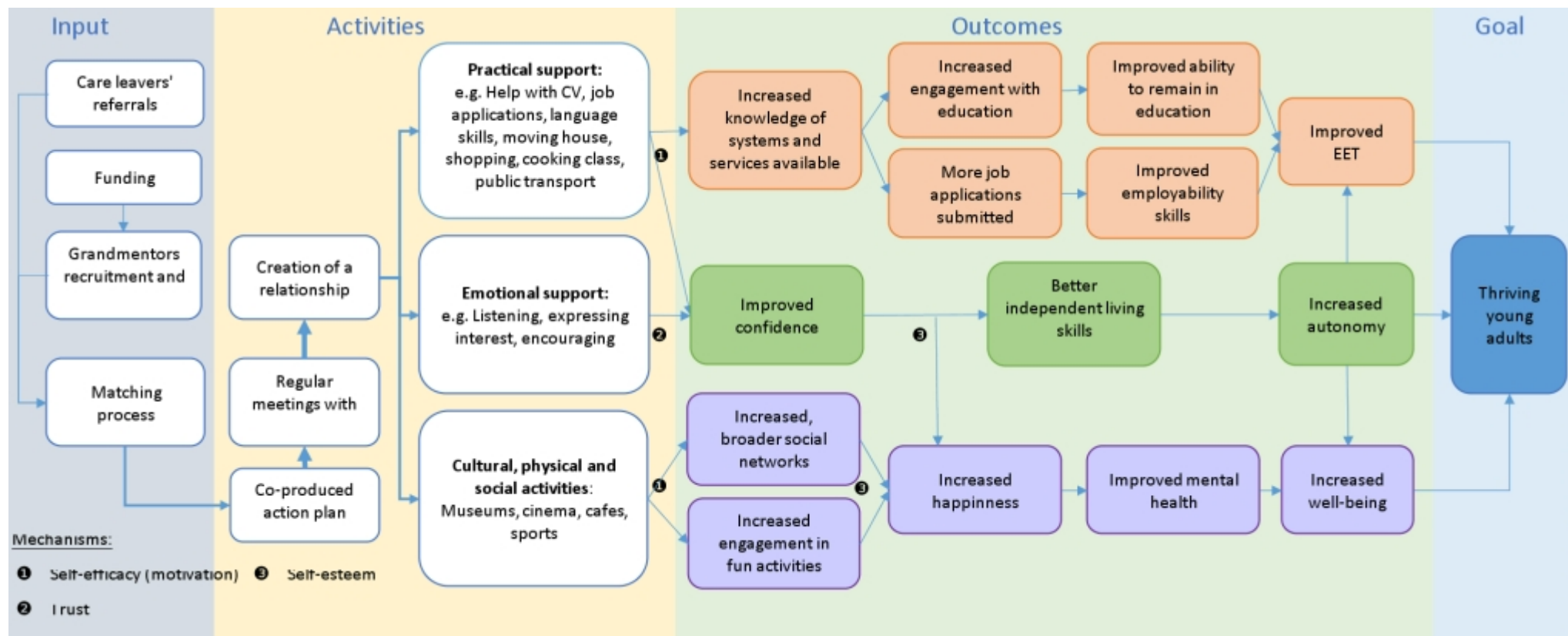


Figure 2: Theory of change underpinning the Grandmentors programme

### 2.4.1 DATA

Volunteering Matters provided two datasets to the evaluation team as part of this research. The first dataset covered outcome and monitoring data. These were collected from mentees at two points during their participation in the programme. The first round of data were collected between January 2017 and July 2019, at an early point in each mentee's participation in the programme. The second round of data were collected between October 2017 and August 2019, with the aim of measuring at two points in each mentee's participation in the programme, at least six months' apart. On average, there was around eleven months between the two data points, with the shortest time being just over four months, and the longest being over two and half years. Figure 3 illustrates the number of days between the two data points. Whilst the baseline gathered information on over seventy-five mentees, thirty (n=30) mentees completed the questionnaires at both data points.

A second data set provides information about mentees' ethnicity and religion, their care history, and their mentor's gender and ethnicity. This dataset covers twenty-six mentors, of whom twenty-three (n=23) are also included in the outcome and monitoring data.

The distance travelled analysis draws on the outcome and monitoring data., and presents the distance travelled by thirty (n=30) mentees. The Qualitative Comparative Analysis uses both datasets, and therefore covers twenty-three (n=23) mentees.

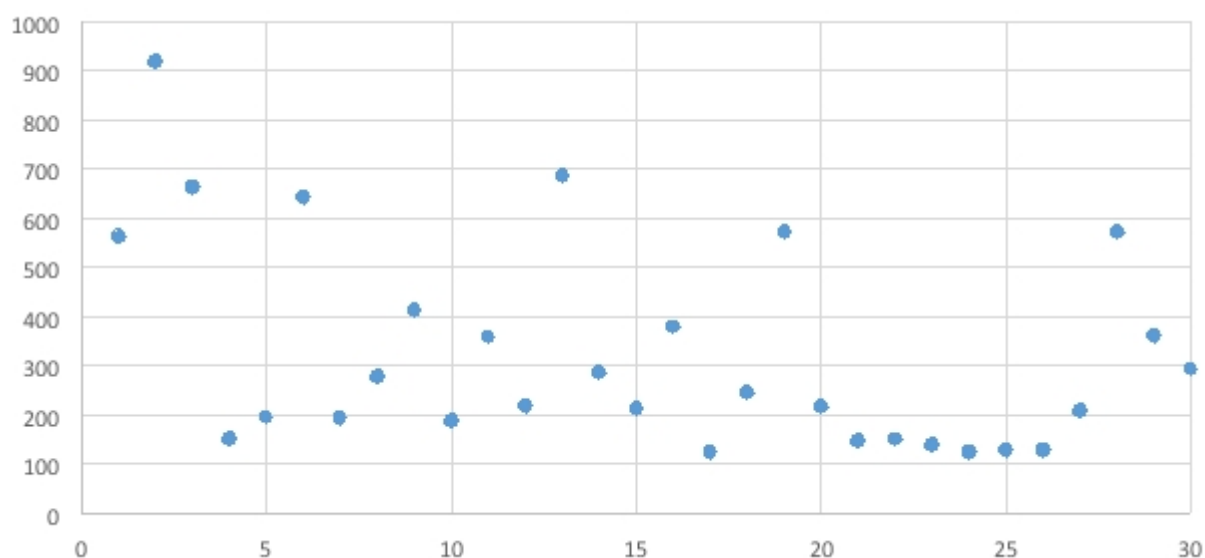


Figure 3: Number of days between first and second data collection points for individual programme participants, outcome and monitoring data

One third of the distance travelled evaluation cohort identified as female. Of the twenty-six mentees for whom we have data, five provided their religion, of whom four were Christian and one Muslim. Thirteen (n=12/26) identified themselves as white British; four as Black African, one Arabic and one Asian. Seven of the cohort entered the care system as unaccompanied minors. All twenty-six had some experience of foster care.

The Grandmentors programme is delivered in a number of local authorities across England. Eighteen of the distanced travelled cohort (n=18/30) were from one site – Islington, which has been up and running for over a decade. Four other sites were represented in the dataset, with two mentees from Milton Keynes, three from Hounslow, three from Stockton, and four from Suffolk.

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## 2.4.2 OUTCOMES AND CONDITIONS

Factors that might be associated with successful mentoring outcomes

The conditions explored for the QCA were built mostly from discussions with key stakeholders and previous evaluation report, the extant literature on inter-generational mentoring programmes, and qualitative work undertaken for the process evaluation (Ozan et al., 2019). Those ‘conditions’ (in QCA terms, or otherwise variables to factors) that might be associated with successful outcomes. This research identified six factors or conditions for investigation, namely:

- **gender match between mentor and mentee.** Several research participants suggested that having a gender match between mentor and mentee could be associated with successful outcomes, as mentees would feel more comfortable and at ease and therefore likely to better engage in the programme if they were mentored by someone of the same gender. Through early stages of the data analysis, it appeared that there was a difference between male and female mentees – that female mentees seemed to do better when matched with a mentor who was a woman, but that male mentees did not do better when matched with a mentor who was a man. The evaluation team therefore created two conditions to examine the role of gender matching, one that included all gender matches and a second that included female to female matches;
- **ethnicity match** between mentor and mentee. A key theme that emerged from the qualitative research was the idea that mentees would better respond to, and connect with, their mentor if there was some shared cultural background, specifically if mentor and mentee were from a similar ethnic background;
- having a care history that includes being in **foster care** as this can be associated with more stability and therefore better outcomes for care leavers. Fieldwork with mentees also captured the fact that some of them enjoyed the social events as they did not have much contact with other youth with shared experiences of care. This would be more likely for young people who were in foster care as those in residential care lived with other children in care. However, there is limited variation in the dataset around foster care; for those mentees for whom we have a care history, all have been in foster care at some point before they left care. A key requirement of the cross case comparison is that there is a sufficient level of variation between the cases; as this is not the case for this variable, the analysis does not cover this specific condition;

- having a care history that includes having been an **unaccompanied asylum-seeking child** (UASC) (sometimes called unaccompanied minors). Over the past decade, there has been an observed increase in the number of asylum seekers who are unaccompanied minors (individuals aged under 18 who travel to the UK and claim asylum, who are not with their parents or adult guardian). Since 2014, unaccompanied children are considered to be looked after children; many are placed in foster care (ADSC, 2016), and they are an increasing part of the care leaving population. Evidence suggests that most unaccompanied young people will have undertaken perilous and protracted journeys. They may have experienced violence, exploitation, destitution and many other hardships on their journey to the UK (Reed et al, 2012). The journey to the UK may have taken months or years and could have included quite lengthy periods in other countries (Griffiths, 2013). Participants in this evaluation suggested that, despite this background, unaccompanied minors were likely to have fewer challenges than young people with a long history of being looked after, were more motivated to succeed, and were more likely to see positive outcomes from participation in the programme;
- **length of mentorship.** Both through our previous research on the Grandmentors programme, and through our field research for this evaluation, the duration of the mentorship (and how to bring the relationship to a conclusion) was raised by several participants as being important.
- **hard or soft matching** between mentee and mentor. As the programme has developed, different arrangements for the process of matching young people with a mentor have developed, which Volunteering Matters refer to as hard and soft matching. Hard matching involves a desk-based matching by the project co-ordinator, whereas soft matching involves mentees meeting potential mentors before making decisions themselves about their mentor. The programme includes schemes that use either approach and a key question raised during the research was whether one type of matching was more associated with successful outcomes. A key requirement of the cross case comparison is that there is a sufficient level of variation between the cases; unfortunately, the evaluation dataset included only three individuals who were soft matched with their mentors, which did not provide a sufficient number of cases to undertake the analysis.

Through the Qualitative Comparative Analysis, the evaluation team aimed to identify which of these conditions/factors – or which combination of conditions/factors – was most associated with successful outcomes.

#### Conditions

The first step in the QCA analysis is to calibrate the data. Calibration is the process by which evaluators make decisions about the presence or absence of conditions and outcomes in the cases being studied (Legewei, 2017). Such decisions are systematic, theoretically informed, and reflect a deep understanding of the data. It is essential that clear and transparent rules are used for making these decisions (Glaesser and Cooper, 2014).

Each individual cases (mentee) was assessed for each of the five conditions included in the analysis (gender match, female to female gender match, ethnicity match, whether unaccompanied asylum seeking child, and length of mentorship). Cases with the presence of these conditions were assigned '1', those where the condition was absent were assigned '0'. Table 3



Table 3 below sets out how each of these conditions were calibrated.

Table 3: Calibration of conditions for QCA

Condition	Assigned	Interpretation	Comment
UASC	1	YES	
	0	NO	Where no data assumed no
Gender	1	Female	
	0	Male	
F to F gender	1	Female mentee matched with female mentor	
	0	Other	
Ethnicity	1	Match between mentee and mentor	Where no data assumed 0
	0	Other	
Length of mentorship	1	6 months and under	
	0	Over 7 months	

#### Outcomes

As outlined in the distance travelled analysis, participation in the Grandmentors programme is intended to contribute to a successful transitions from care to being a thriving adult through three outcomes, namely (1) improved education, employment or training (EET) (2) increased wellbeing, and (3) increased autonomy. During their participation in the programme, data are collected from mentees around these three outcomes. EET is a 'hard' outcome; mentees either stay in or move into EET during the participation in the programme (calibrated as '1' for this analysis), or they are not or move out of EET over this period (calibrated as '0'). For the twenty-three individuals included in this analysis, twenty (n=20/23) saw a successful EET outcome. Following discussions with key stakeholders during a workshop, education and employment were separated for the QCA analysis. This made the data more granular, which is positive for QCAs, and built on the acknowledgment that pathways could be different to achieve progress in employment and education.

The increased wellbeing and increased autonomy outcomes are both 'soft' outcomes, and the calibration of these is more complex than for improved EET. The increased wellbeing is measured by two scales used in the outcome data. These are:

1. Relationships and Networks
2. Happiness

Each scale consists of a number of questions, where respondents answer using a Likert scale. These are quantitised to create an overall score for each scale, and are then compared over the two data points. A detailed explanation of how responses to these scales were quantitised and calibrated for the analysis is provided in Appendix 1.

The increased autonomy is measured using two scales used in the outcome data. These are:

1. Self-esteem
2. Confidence

Both scores must be positive for the outcome to be positive. If one is negative, then the overall score for increased autonomy is negative. For crisp set QCA positive is 1 and negative is 0.

The two outcomes and the scales used to measure them are interconnected and arguably all fall under the concept of well-being. Well-being research can be divided in two approaches, one (hedonic) that focuses on subjective well-being such as life satisfaction. The other (eudaimonic) focuses on psychological well-being and domains such as self-acceptance and autonomy (see Rees et al., 2013 for more detail). Conceptually, the wellbeing outcome covers hedonic approaches whilst the autonomy outcome links to eudaimonic approaches. Here, the conceptualisation of outcomes were mostly empirically based and theory driven as we have used the Theory of Change to decide which scale would be used for which outcome.

### 3. CONTEXT

#### 3.1 THE NATIONAL PICTURE

It is widely acknowledged that children in care and young people leaving the care system have poorer outcomes regarding health, education, mental health, and well-being (Stein, 2012; Brady et al., 2020). The transition from care to independent adulthood can prove to be particularly difficult (Kersley and Estep, 2014) especially given its accelerated and compressed nature (Stein, 2006). In this section, we present the most recent evidence on care leavers' well-being and education. We also focus on unaccompanied asylum seekers as an important and distinctive sub-population.

##### 3.1.1 CARE LEAVERS AND WELL-BEING

Limited data are available regarding care leavers' well-being. The literature provides a strong sense that young people leaving the care system generally do less well than the general population. The data available in the UK tends to focus on the educational achievements of children in care and outcomes in terms of education and employment for care leavers. The Bright Spots Programme has been collecting the views of care leavers on their well-being across England and Wales (Baker et al., 2019). Their latest publication summarises the views of 474 care leavers aged 16 to 25 from six English local authorities in 2017/2018. The report indicates that young people leaving care have poor outcomes regarding relationships and well-being. For instance, 1 in 5 care leavers (19%) who participated in the survey reported being often/always lonely. This compares to 10% of 16-24 years old in the general population. Care leavers are less likely to have someone they can trust, and who helps them and sticks by them no matter what (87% of respondents compared to 98% in the general population). Furthermore, 23% of the care leavers had low well-being, this is more than young people who are in care (of whom 15% had low well-being) (Baker et al., 2019). Previous research has established that physical and mental health issues increase when young people leave care (Dixon et al., 2015). Nevertheless, fluctuation in wellbeing across time is also a common occurrence in the general population. The national statistics on young people's wellbeing (ONS, 2017) show that young people aged 20 to 24 have lower well-being scores than those aged 16 to 19 when it comes to life satisfaction and happiness. More specifically, 26.8% of young people aged 20 to 24 scored 'very high' for life satisfaction, compared to 36.4% of those aged 16 to 19. Happiness scores show similar disparity with 32.7% of 20 to 24 years old scoring very high compared to 39.6% of 16 to 19 years old.

##### 3.1.2 CARE LEAVERS AND EDUCATION

In England, 32% of care leavers aged 19 are in higher education or other forms of education and 36% are NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) (Rees and Stein, 2016). Care leavers have generally lower educational attainments than the general population, with about 6% of them progressing to higher education compared to 42% in the general population (DfE, 2018).

However, this figure has recently been challenged by Harrison (2019) who explains that care leavers tend to access higher education at a later age and who argues that accounting for this delay 11.8% of them attend higher education. Despite the proportion of care leavers accessing higher education being significantly higher than official statistics, they still have “very low rates of participation in higher education (HE) – potentially the lowest of any identifiable social group” (Harrison, 2019: 2). Rees and Stein (2016) note nonetheless that care leavers’ educational outcomes have been improving in recent years.

Once in HE, care leavers have similar outcomes to the general population (Jackson et al., 2005). However, as they tend to enter HE with lower qualifications, they remain overall more likely to withdraw (Harrison, 2019). Salazar and colleagues (2016) identify mentoring and educational advocacy as important factors supporting positive educational outcomes. They further argue that mentors’ characteristics should include being consistent, reliable, and building trust with young people. This is consistent with the consensus that supportive adults, alongside self-reliance and determination, are important factors contributing towards positive outcomes for care leavers in higher education (Pinkney and Walker, 2020).

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### 3.1.3 UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKERS

In England, in 2018, around 6% (n= 4,480) of looked after children were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (DfE, 2018). Rees and Stein (2016) indicate that a great majority of them are male and aged 16 and over. The proportion of unaccompanied asylum seekers amongst care leavers varies greatly between local authorities. For example, in their study of the wellbeing of unaccompanied asylum seekers leaving care, Broad and Robbins (2006) found that out of 2039 young people leaving care and eligible to leaving care services in six different local authorities (five London boroughs and one shire county in the Midlands), almost half were unaccompanied asylum seekers. This sub-population of care leavers have specific needs and encounter specific challenges. For some of them, their uncertain immigrants status negatively affects their mental health and motivation (Parhar, 2018). This is particularly the case regarding education as those young people arrived in the UK with very limited or no financial means or social capital. Some asylum-seeking children struggle to access school as they cannot find a place and some schools are reluctant to admit them. Gaps in formal education is one of the many barriers to accessing HE faced by unaccompanied asylum-seekers (Alberts and Atherton, 2018). Nevertheless, research captured that unaccompanied asylum-seekers have “an intense drive to pursue their educational goals” and that their aspiration to higher education puts some local authorities (in London and the South East) resources under strain (Alberts and Atherton, 2018: 39).

## 3.2 THE GRANDMENTORS COHORT

Grandmentors is a voluntary programme that provides support to care leavers with a wide range of needs. Previous evaluation reports indicate that the programme targets young people that are first and foremost interested in having a mentor. It is recognised that the programme may not be beneficial or appropriate for young people going through a crisis. This means that some care leavers may not be at a point in their life where they can join the programme. The voluntary basis of the programme is paramount to the successful engagement of mentees as asserted in previous evaluation reports (e.g. O’Leary et al., 2017). It means that the care leavers who sign up for the programme are likely to be keen to progress and receive support. This is reflected in high proportion of mentees that are in education, employment, or training when they join the programme. Indeed, 68% of the 75 mentees<sup>4</sup> for which we have data in the baseline are students and 20% (15 mentees including two full time mothers) of the cohort is NEET. The Grandmentors cohort is therefore much more likely to be in education and employment than the general population of care leavers (see section 3.1.2. where it is argued that 12% access higher education). The mentees are nevertheless much more likely to be NEET than the general population of young people (20% of the cohort compared to 11.3% of young people aged 16 to 24 (ONS, 2019b).

The baseline data also indicates that the Grandmentors cohort have much lower scores than the general population of young people when it comes to their wellbeing. Indeed, amongst the mentees, 9% (n=9/75) have ‘very high’ scores for life satisfaction compared to approximately a third of young people from the general population (ONS, 2017) and 19% (n=14/75) have ‘very high’ scores for happiness compared to over a third of young people in the general population (ONS, 2017). It is important to note that personal well-being scores vary greatly across the country. In fact, a recent report from the ONS (2019) uses Wolverhampton (one of the Grandmentors sites) as a case study for low wellbeing (based on measures of life satisfaction, happiness, and worthwhileness, amongst others). Islington is another local authority identified by the ONS (2019) as having persistently low scores of wellbeing.

Regarding gender, the general population of care leavers is constituted of about 55% males and 45% females. The Grandmentors baseline mirrors this gender balance with 54% of males and 46% of females. However, the gender balance breaks down when considering mentees that have filled in both questionnaires allowing us to measure their progress (and therefore generating the data used for the impact evaluation) as only 26% (n=6/23) are females.

The Grandmentors cohort is therefore doing better than the general population of care leavers in terms of education and employment but compared to the general youth population as a whole it is scoring lower when it comes to wellbeing and has higher proportions of young people NEET. This means that the Grandmentors cohort is not directly comparable to either the general population of young people, nor that of care leavers.

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<sup>4</sup> Data on education and employment was missing for two mentees.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PROCESS EVALUATION

This section summarises the key findings from the process evaluation report (see Ozan et al., 2019 for a more detailed account). The recruitment and training of mentors across the programme's various sites appears to be working well, with no major issues identified and no material differences between the existing sites and the new sites. Volunteering Matters is currently in the process of getting accreditation for the training. The recruitment of mentees is very dependent on the referrals received from professionals working with them (e.g. Personal Advisors and social workers). Consequently, time and the coordinators' capacity to build relationships with statutory services are key for the programme's implementation. Without an upfront investment in building those relationships, there is a risk that schemes would not receive a sufficient number of referrals and therefore would not be able to reach their target number of mentees.

The shift in the approach to matching mentors and mentees is probably the biggest change experienced by the Grandmentors programme since its establishment. Traditionally, mentors and mentees were matched using a formal approach, or 'hard' matching. In this approach, the match is decided by the coordinator who gets to know mentors and mentees individually through various meetings and training sessions. They attempt to match mentees' ambitions, needs, and/ or interests with mentors' skills and competencies. Soft matching is now used in the new projects as the preferred approach. It consists of organising events structured around an activity (e.g. Bake off, Story telling, or Lego building) where mentees and potential mentors can meet. Findings from interviews and workshops indicate that this approach gives greater agency to the care leaver as it provides them with some level of choice. Staff noted that the approach is more informal and relaxed. However, the approach is not compatible with all circumstances. It does not work for young people with very specific needs or when the programme covers large geographical areas. In those cases coordinators have to use hard matching to ensure that mentors have certain competencies or that the mentor and mentee do not live too far from each other. Consequently, the matching approach is not implemented consistently across all sites.

Personalised goals are supposed to be discussed and agreed by mentors and mentees at the outset of their relationship. Different groups of interviewees (staff, mentors, and mentees) appear to have different understandings of the role of goal-settings. Overall, the care leavers involved in the research struggled to remember their goals. It may be the case that with time, the relationship between mentor and mentee becomes less explicitly goal orientated and becomes characterised by the continuity of relationship that it brings to young people. Those who had recently joined had a clearer idea of what they wanted to achieve and how the mentor would help them reach those targets. The goals they identified were all well aligned with the outcomes outlined in the Theory of Change. The process evaluation pointed out that the purpose of goal-setting had been clarified amongst staff members during the course of the research. It serves different purposes such as ensuring that the relationship does not fall into the remit of befriending, providing direction to the relationship, and ensuring that young people remain engaged and progress towards outcomes that they have identified.

The new sites featured a shared understanding of the purpose of goals setting between staff and mentors. A few mentors still suggested that they could be negatively perceived by the mentees as they are associated with paperwork and the 'system'. The process evaluation pointed out towards a lack of exit strategy for the mentorships, with some of the relationships going on for years and shifting towards befriending.

Trust is key to establishing high quality relationships between mentors and mentees. Establishing reciprocal trust between mentors and mentees takes time. Findings indicated that honesty, patience, reliability and consistency were key to building trust, as well as a clear understanding of boundaries. Mentors characteristics (i.e. over 50 and volunteers) and personality traits (e.g. warm, funny, etc.) support the establishment of a trusting relationship. Whilst sharing a common identify or cultural background can facilitate a trusting relationship, those who come from different backgrounds appear to enjoy learning about the mentee's culture or country of origin and use it as a way of establishing a connection.

Overall, the geographical coverage of some schemes appears to one of the biggest challenges for the programme. It seems to impact the establishment of good working relationships with relevant services (e.g. Leaving Care Team, Children and Family Team, or Corporate Parenting), which in turn affects the number of referrals received. Wide geographical areas also make it more difficult for mentors and mentees to meet, and has cost implications in terms of their traveling budget. Time is another key challenge as it is a pre-requisite to establishing relationships, for both staff / relevant services and mentors / mentees.

Those findings supported the following recommendations:

**Recommendations made in the process evaluation report (Ozan et al., 2019: 48-49)**

**“Recommendation 1:** Volunteer Matters should recognise the demands of, and commit sufficient resources to, schemes as they establish and develop networks and relationships with agencies that engage with young people leaving care. This might mean having dedicated time for networking, establishing and managing new relationships, and promoting the scheme in the local area. Once schemes are established, it is still important to manage these relationships (recognizing that key individuals may move on); but during the implementation period, extra time and resources committed to this work could increase the likelihood of implementation success.

**Recommendation 2:** Schemes should consider whether their established networks should be widened and refreshed, to include other agencies that work with young people leaving care, including those outside of the care system.

Data provided to the evaluation team suggests that established sites are achieving higher than targeted number of matches, and that the new sites are achieving lower than targeted number of matches. Staff in the new schemes suggested that this was because the target was high compared to the relevant eligible population, and that eligibility criteria could be widened to include young people who have not had recent or direct experience of the care system.

At this stage, given that the new sites started their implementation less than a year before field research for the evaluation was conducted, the match data do not indicate significant implementation failure issues. We would expect the number of matches to pick up as the schemes become more established and as the resources invested in building networks begin to pay off. At this stage, there does not appear to be sufficient reason to widen the eligibility criteria to include

young people who have not experienced the local care system, which risks diluting the primary objective of the programme, to support young people leaving care as they transition to independent adulthood.

**Recommendation 3:** Volunteering Matters should not widen the eligibility criteria for the programme to include young people who have not experienced the care system. It should continue to monitor actual versus target matches for new and existing sites, and examine the effectiveness of relationships with referral agencies if targets are not met on a consistent basis.

Both existing and new schemes use hard and soft matching processes, the choice of which appears to depend on local circumstances. Overall, soft matching appears to have many advantages, although it may not always be appropriate or feasible. (We will be exploring soft versus hard matching through the impact evaluation.)

**Recommendation 4:** While overall it appears that soft matching has a number of benefits and should be the favoured approach, it should be recognised that there may be circumstances under which hard matching is more appropriate or feasible. Volunteering Matters should enable local Grandmentors schemes to make decisions about the form of matching they use. Local schemes should continue to monitor the effectiveness of the preferred approach to matching, by engaging with stakeholders (including mentors and mentees, as well as commissioners and referral agencies) to capture their views of the matching process.”

**Recommendation 5:** Entering, exiting and ending the mentor/mentee relationship. In the review we completed in 2017, we recommended that a more formalised and articulated process was needed around the referral and assessment process, recognising the role it played both in the process of matching mentors and mentees and to the outcomes achieved through mentoring. Evidence generated through this evaluation would suggest significant progress has been made in this area. We also previously recommended that clarity was needed around the process of ending a mentoring relationship, particularly when the relationship developed into something more akin to befriending or a familiar/friendship relationship. We would recommend that work on exit strategies is still needed, and that it is important both to mentees and mentors to understand what successful completion of the programme looks like, and how young people leaving care might transition from being mentees to holding a different form of relationship (or no relationship) with their mentors.

**Recommendation 6:** Mentor training and support. In the previous review, changes were recommended to the process by which mentors’ training and development needs and progress were identified and assessed. It is clear from our research for this evaluation that much progress has been made in this area. However, one of the findings (3.4.1) around goal-setting would suggest that some further work is needed in this area, particularly in terms of the role that goal-setting plays in mentoring programmes, how to engage young people in goal-setting, and to use different techniques to achieve goal-setting. We see goal-setting as core to mentoring schemes, an important means by which young people increase their agency and choice, and important in demonstrating the success of Grandmentors in terms of supporting young people leaving care as they transition to independent adulthood.



## 4.2 DISTANCE TRAVELLED BY GRANDMENTOR MENTEES

Distance travelled is a form of analysis of the change in the behaviour of individuals who participate in a programme or who receive an intervention. It is a simple way of understanding the contribution that a programme or intervention may make to the observed outcomes of participants. Distance travelled analysis is often used to understand changes in 'soft' outcomes – outcomes which are broad, big picture, and often intangible and difficult to measure or quantify. Soft outcomes are often contrasted with hard outcomes, which typically have a high level of specificity, are tangible and easily measurable. Soft and hard outcomes are not mutually exclusive, and the difference between them is often the result of subjective decision making.

Distance travelled analysis is focused on changes in observed or self-reported behaviours / experiences / outcomes at the level of the individual programme participant or individual receiving an intervention.

### 4.2.1 OVERALL FINDINGS

We found that the proportion of mentees in education, employment or training (EET) increased over time. Young people who participated in the programme were more likely than the general population of care leavers to be in EET; around three quarters of Grandmentors programme participants were in EET when outcome data were first collected about them, compared to around 60 percent of all care leavers (NAO, 2015)..

Most mentees experienced increased autonomy during their participation in the programme, with over two thirds of participants reporting an increase in one of the two scales used to measure this outcome.

We found a more mixed picture in terms of wellbeing: over half experienced some progress, and around a third experienced some decline over time.

Contextual information provided by Grandmentors Coordinators about the cases that featured a high decline in at least one wellbeing measure revealed that those mentees were facing specific challenges, such as risk of deportation or depression, or had particular needs (e.g. autistic spectrum disorder).

See section 3.1.1.1 for information about the tendency for young people's subjective wellbeing to decline from later adolescence to early adulthood, and for the extant but limited data on care leaver wellbeing.

A more detailed description of the distance travelled analysis is set out below.

#### 4.2.2 WELLBEING

One of the key outcomes expected from participation in the Grandmentors programme is increased wellbeing. Wellbeing here is understood as subjective wellbeing, which reflects young people's self-reported views and experiences of their own wellbeing. The programme measures the wellbeing of participants using two existing and validated scales in relation to relationships and networks, and happiness. Each scale consists of a number of questions, to which respondents are given a Likert scale of possible responses. To measure distance travelled in each of these two domains, we have quantitised (scored) the response options.

The relationship and networks scale consists of four questions, each with five possible responses. The maximum score for this scale is 20. For happiness, there is an eleven-point scale from 'not at all' to 'completely', which has been scored from 0 to 11. The maximum score for this scale is 44.

Each mentee's responses to these individual questions have been scored in this way, and then the responses within each domain have been summed. By comparing the summed scores at two different points of a individual mentee's participation in the programme, we can assess whether or not progress towards meeting each outcome is being made. Distance travelled is therefore measured at the individual level; and it is important to note that we have not controlled for factors that might affect progress towards these outcomes.

Of the thirty young people participating in the programme for whom we have data, eighteen (n=18) experienced positive progress in either their relationships and networks, or happiness. Twelve (n=12) saw progress in terms of relationships and networks (n=4 saw no change, and n=14 experienced some decline). Fifteen (n=15) experienced positive progress in happiness, with three (n=3) seeing no change (and n=12 experiencing some decline). Overall, there were eight (n=8) mentees who experienced positive progress in their wellbeing in both relationships and networks, and happiness.

Table 4 illustrates the overall responses to the relationship and networks questions at the two data points (ME1 and ME2). In the first round of data, scores for responses to the relationship and network questions ranged from seven out of a total possible score of twenty (7/20) to seventeen (17/20), with a mean score of 12.67 (standard deviation 2.33).

**Table 4 Descriptive statistics for relationships and network scale scores (n=30 responses)**

	ME1	ME2	Diff
<b>Mean</b>	12.67	12.67	0.00
<b>STD</b>	2.33	3.01	3.72
<b>Min</b>	7.00	6.00	-8.00
<b>Max</b>	17.00	20.00	8.00

In the second round of data collection, the spread of scores widen slightly, with the lowest score being six (6/20) and the highest score being twenty (20/20). The average score is unchanged.

The change in scores over the two points ranges from -8 to 8 (standard deviation 3.72). In percentage terms, the average change in score across the two data points ranges from -57 percent to 114 percent, with a mean change of 4.03 percent.

Table 5 illustrates the overall responses to the happiness questions are the two data points (ME1 and ME2).

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics for happiness scale scores (n=30 responses)**

	ME1	ME2	Diff
<b>Mean</b>	20.73	21.40	0.67
<b>ST</b>	7.55	6.80	9.07
<b>Min</b>	4.00	5.00	-16.00
<b>Max</b>	40.00	34.00	24.00

In the first round of data collection (ME1), individual scores ranged from four out of forty (4/40) to forty (40/40). The mean score was 20.73, with a standard deviation of 7.55. In the second round (ME2), the range of scores narrowed slightly, with the lowest score being five (5/40) and the highest score being thirty four (34/40) (standard deviation 6.80). There was a slight increase in the mean score over the two data points, with individual changes ranging from a decrease of sixteen points to an increase of 24 points. In percentage terms, changes in scores ranged from a fall in score of 57 percent to an increase in score of four hundred percent.

Figure 4 illustrates the change in absolute scores for both scales over the two data points. The data have been ordered by the relationship and network scores, so that the largest decrease in score over the two data points is to the left of the diagram, and the largest increase is to the right. Figure 5 illustrates the change in score as a percentage change from the first data point. Again, the data have been ordered by the relationship and network scale, so that the largest percentage drop in score is to the left of the diagram and the largest percentage increase is to the right of the diagram.

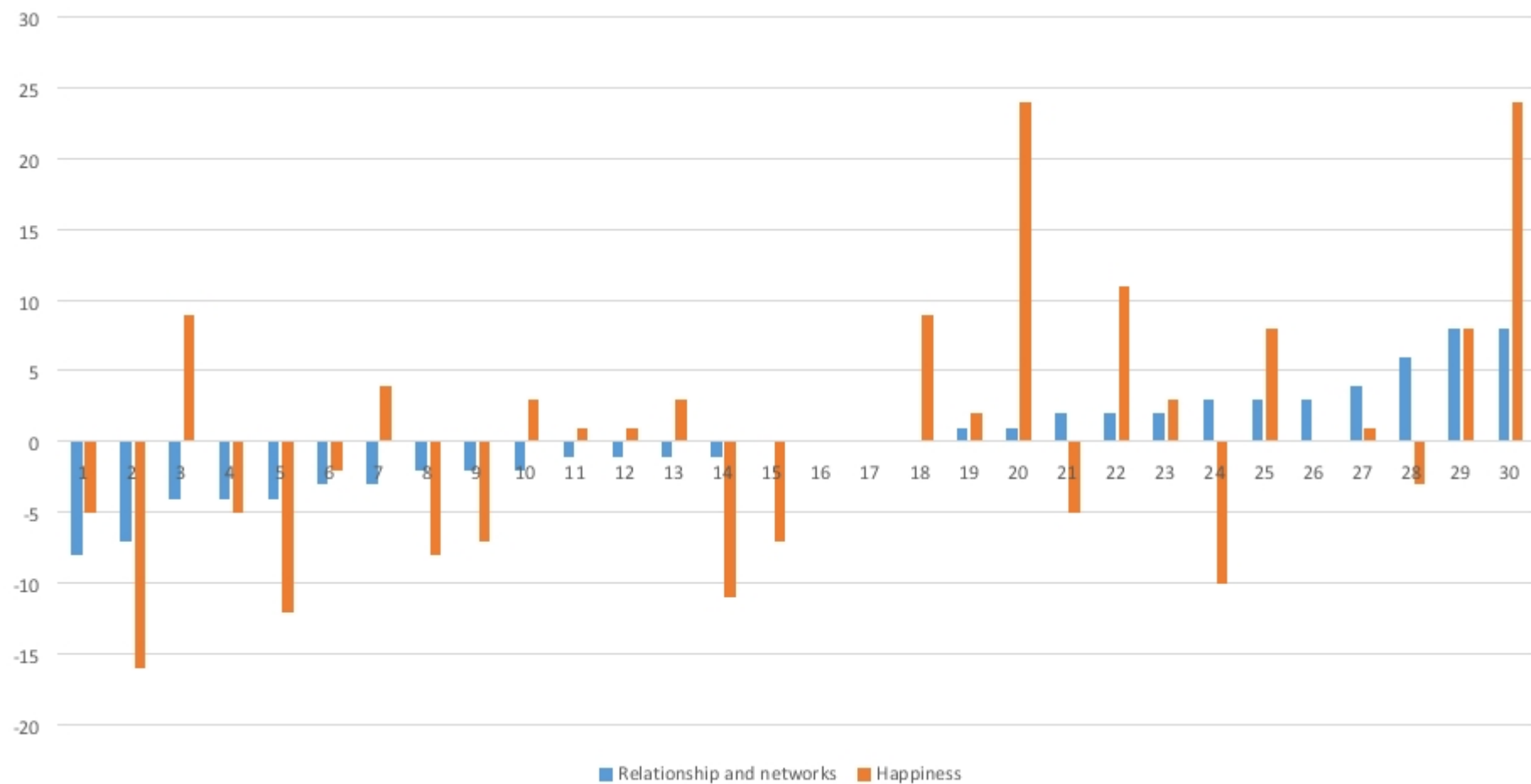


Figure 4: Distance travelled by mentees in their subjective wellbeing (n=30) (absolute change in scores)

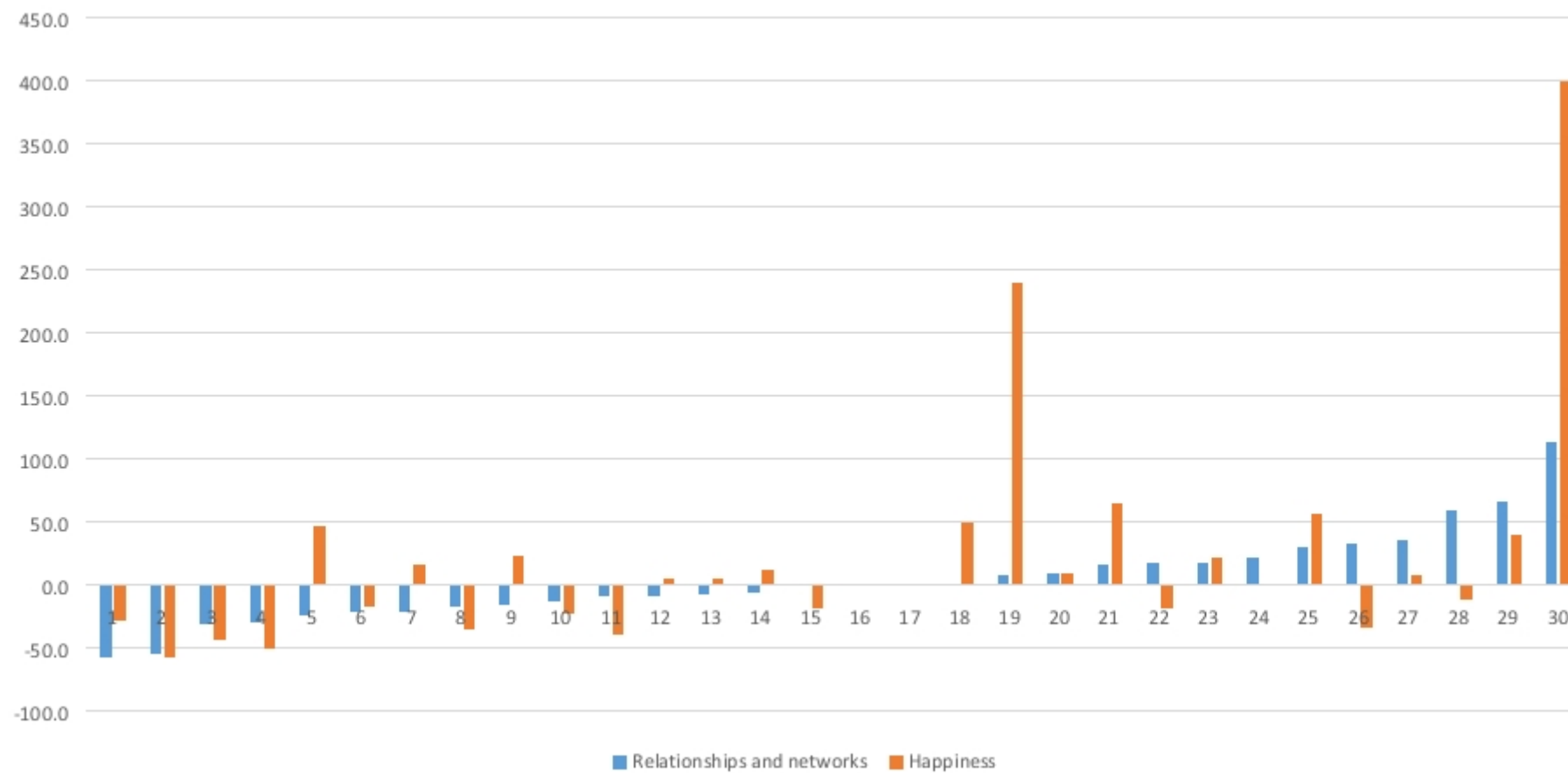


Figure 5: Distance travelled by mentees in their subjective wellbeing (n=30) (percentage change in scores)

### 4.2.3 AUTONOMY

The second key outcome expected from participation in the Grandmentors programme is increased autonomy. It is measured by the programme using two scales; self-esteem, and confidence. As with the two scales used to measure progress towards increased wellbeing, the two scales used here are published and validated measures. The self-esteem measure consists of ten questions, with a four-point Likert scale for responses. The confidence measure consists of nine questions, with a five-point Likert scale for responses. As with the two wellbeing measures, these Likert scales have been scored, and the scores for each mentee for each question have been summed to provide an overall score for self-esteem and an overall score for confidence. The self-esteem scale has a maximum score of 40 and the confidence scale has a maximum score of 45.

By comparing the summed scores at two different points of an individual mentee's participation in the programme, we can assess whether progress towards meeting each outcome is being made. Distance travelled is therefore measured at the individual level, and it is important to note that we have not controlled for factors that might affect progress towards these outcomes.

Of the thirty young people for whom we have data, twenty-three (n=23) experienced positive progress in either self-esteem or confidence. Nineteen (n=19) saw some positive progress in relation to self-esteem, with five (n=5) seeing no change, and six (n=6) seeing some decline. Twenty-two young people saw some positive progress in confidence during their participation in the Grandmentors programme, with eight (n=8) experiencing some decline.

Figure on page 42 illustrates the distance traveled by young people participating in the programme in relation to their autonomy. Each line on the graph is an individual mentee. As with the previous diagram, the blue boxes represent the relationship and networks score; the brown represents the happiness score. Where both the brown and blue boxes are to the right of the zero point on the graph, the individual mentee has made positive progress in both measures. Likewise, where both the brown and blue boxes are to the left of the zero point, the individual mentee has made negative progress in both measures. Where there are boxes on both sides of the zero point, the mentee made positive progress in one measure and negative in the other.

The scores for the two scales that have been used to measure the increased autonomy outcome are described below. Table 6 relates to the self-esteem scores. In the first data collection round, individual scores ranged from nineteen out of forty (19/40) to forty (40/40), with a mean score of 28.17 (standard deviation 4.54).

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for self-esteem scale scores (n=30 responses)

	ME1	ME2	Diff
<b>Mean</b>	28.17	30.33	2.17
<b>ST</b>	4.54	5.04	4.92
<b>Min</b>	19.00	20.00	-8.00
<b>Max</b>	40.00	40.00	13.00

In the second data collection round (ME2), the mean score increased slightly to 30.33 (standard deviation 5.04). The range of scores narrowed slightly, with the lowest score increasing from nineteen in the previous round to twenty in the second round. The highest individual score remained unchanged at forty (40/40). In percentage terms, the change in score as a percentage of the score in the first round ranged from a drop of nearly thirty percent (-28.57 percent) to an increase of over fifty percent (54.17 percent).

Table 7 relates to the responses to the confidence scale questions. This scale consists of nine questions, each with five possible responses, and a maximum possible score of 45.

**Table 7: Descriptive statistics for confidence scale scores (n=30 responses)**

	ME1	ME2	Diff
<b>Mean</b>	31.50	33.70	2.20
<b>ST</b>	4.98	5.45	7.07
<b>Min</b>	23.00	18.00	-18.00
<b>Max</b>	44.00	44.00	12.00

In the first data round (ME1), individual scores ranged from twenty-three to forty-four (23/45 to 44/45), with a mean score of 31.50 (standard deviation 4.98). The range of individual scores widened slightly across the two data points, with the lowest score being eighteen (18/45) in the second compared to twenty-three in the first. The highest score remained forty-four across the two data points (44/45).

The mean score increased by 2.20 points across the two rounds, with a second round mean score of 33.70 (standard deviation 5.45). As a percentage, the change in individual scores range from a decrease of fifty percent (50 percent) to an increase of just over fifty percent (52.17 percent).

The distance travelled by individual mentees in their sense of autonomy is illustrated in the figures below. Figure 6 illustrates the change in absolute scores for both scales over the two data points. The data have been ordered by the self-esteem scores, so that the largest decrease in score over the two data points is to the left of the diagram, and the largest increase is to the right. Figure 7 illustrates the change in score as a percentage change from the first data point. Again, the data have been ordered by the self-esteem scale, so that the largest percentage drop in score is to the left of the diagram and the largest percentage increase is to the right of the diagram.

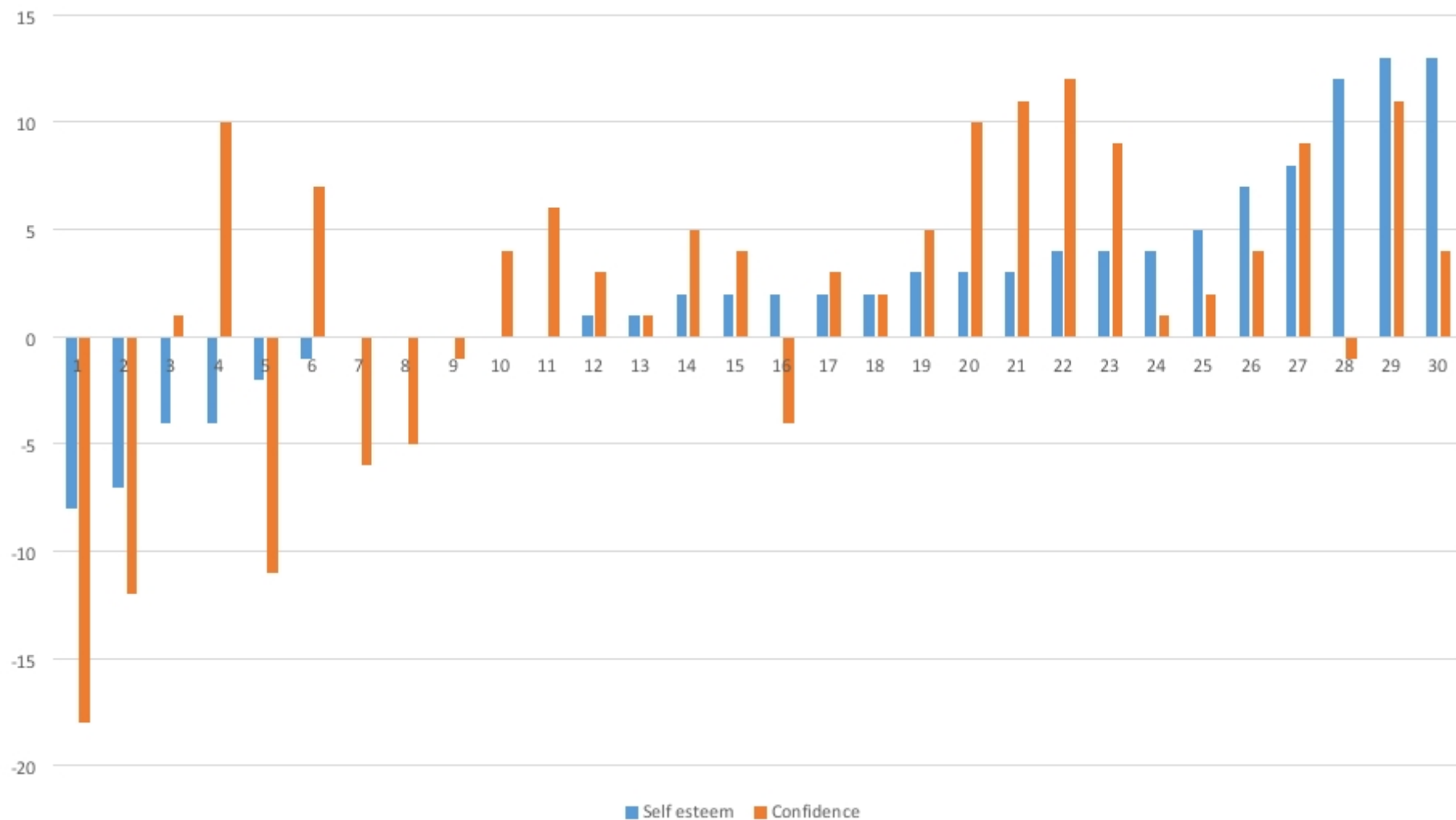


Figure 6: Distance travelled by mentees in sense of autonomy (n=30) (absolute change in scores)



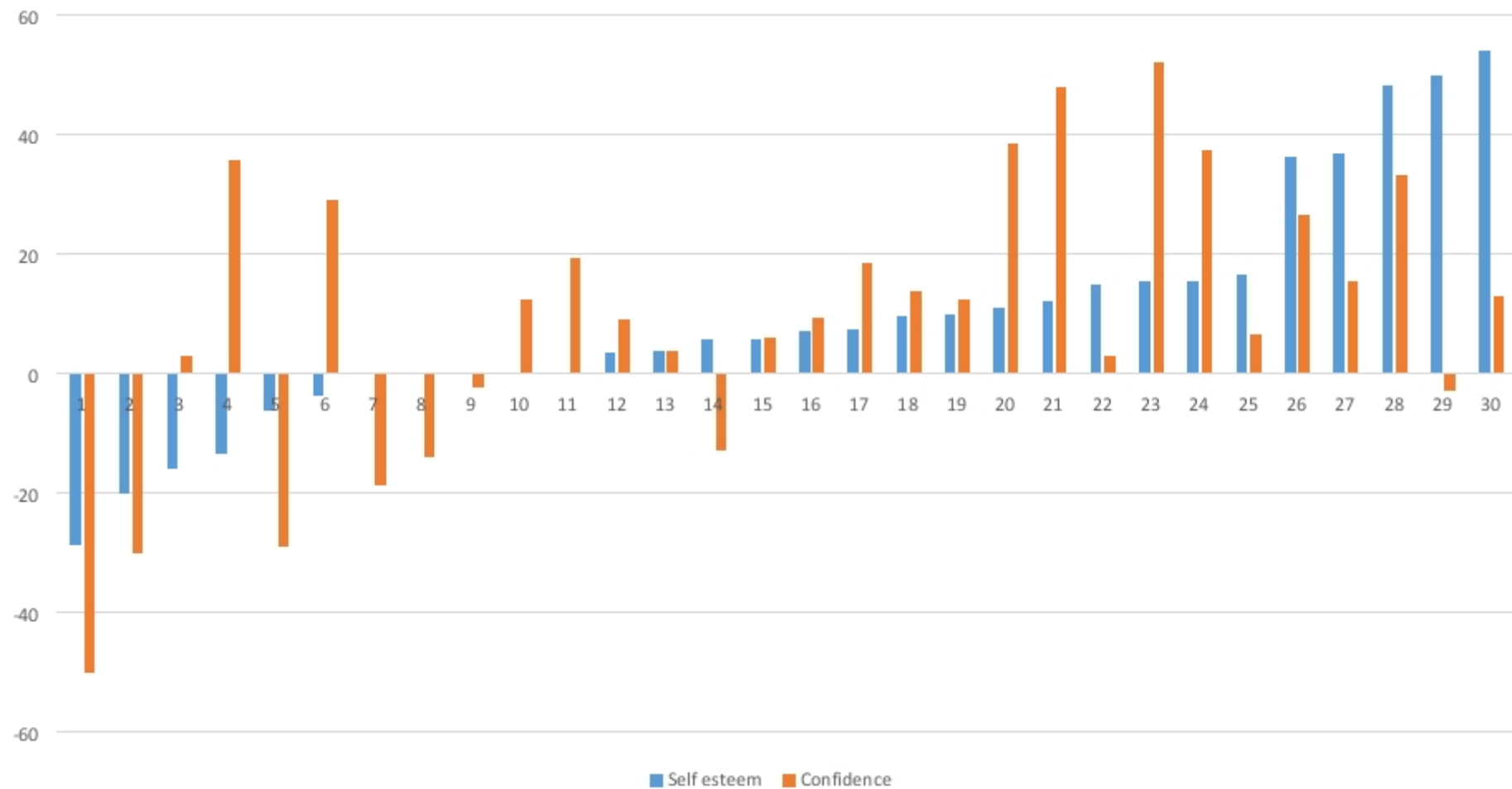


Figure 7: Distance travelled by mentees in their sense of autonomy (n=30) (percentage change in scores)

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#### 4.2.4 EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The final outcome expected for young people participating in the Grandmentors programme is improvement in their education, employment and training (EET). In comparison to the wellbeing and autonomy outcome measures, which both use existing and validated scaled measures, the EET outcome measure is a self-report of current EET status by mentees. At two points, mentees are asked to describe their current EET status, and are given seven options, namely: in full-time employment (working 30 hours per week or more); in part-time employment (working between 8 and 29 hours per week); not working but seeking work; not working and not seeking work; student; volunteering or doing unpaid work; and entrepreneur. Respondents can select more than one of these choices.

As such, measuring progress in relation to EET is less straightforward than for either the autonomy and wellbeing outcome domains. We have defined progress as being when a mentee stays in, or moves into, education, employment or training over two points at which outcome data have been collected.

Of the thirty young people for whom we have data, twenty-two (n=22/30) were in some form of education, employment or training at the beginning of their participation in the Grandmentors programme. These include 19 individuals who identified as students (two of whom are also working part time, and one who stated that they are not working but seeking work); five identified as being in work (four part time and one full time). Ten individuals identified as being out of work; 1 listed 'nothing' as their status, eight stated that they were not working but seeking work, and one identified as not working and not seeking work. (There are more responses than respondents because more than one response was allowed, and four individuals gave more than one response.)

In the second data round, twenty-five (n=25/30) were in some form of education, employment or training. Sixteen (n=16) respondents identified as students, four as working part time, five as working full time, seven as not working but seeking work, one as not working and not seeking work, and one respondent preferred not to give a response.

Figure 8 sets out mentees' self-identified EET status at the two data points of the evaluation.

The following significant changes are highlighted by Figure 8:

- Work: there was an increase in the number of mentees who are working full time, which includes one mentee who moved from not working to a full time apprenticeship;
- there was a slight increase in part time working; and
- there has been a slight decrease in the number of mentees who are not working.
- Education: there was a net fall over the period in the number of mentee's who identified as a student. This net fall include two individuals became students during their participation in the programme, and four who stopped being students during their participation. Of the two who moved to being students, one was working part time at both data points and the other moved from not working to being a student and also volunteering. Of the four mentees who left education, three moved into full time employment and one moved to part time employment.

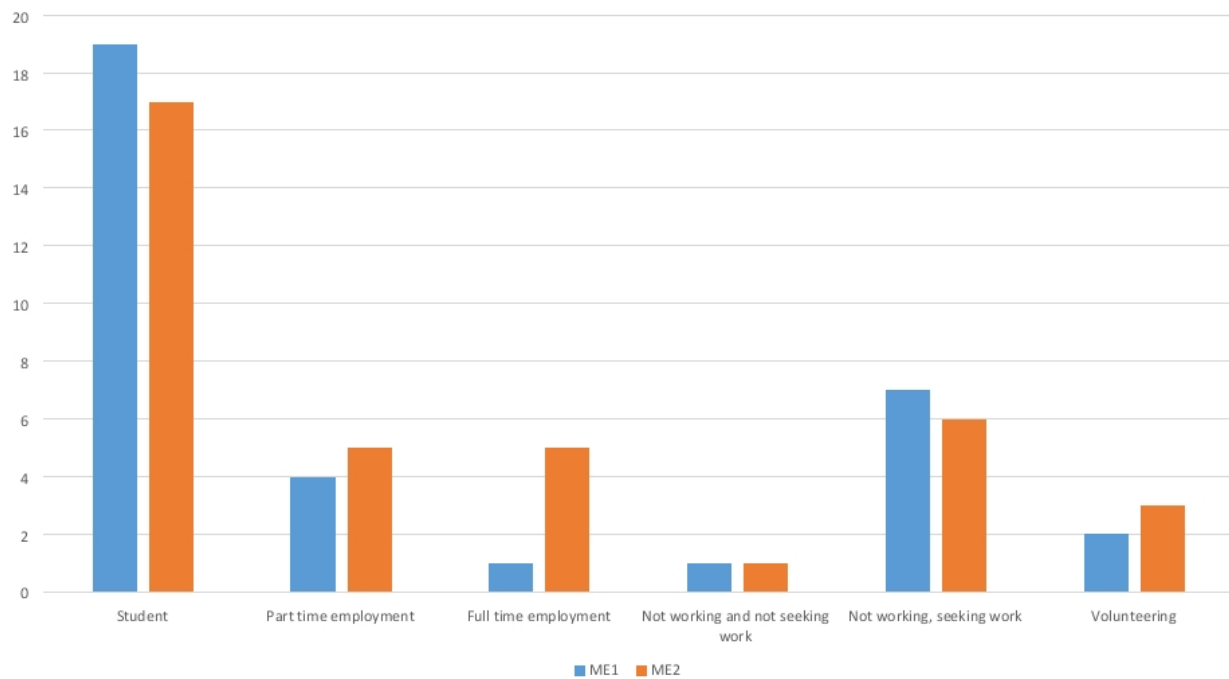


Figure 8: EET status of mentees, first and second round (n=30 mentees, more than one response allowed)

Overall, the distance travelled analysis indicates that the proportion of mentees in EET increased over time. Whilst the young people engaged in the programme were more likely than the general population of care leavers to be in EET, the subtle changes within the category show that the young people who dropped out of education, moved into employment. Furthermore, most mentees increased their autonomy scores, with over two thirds of participants reporting an increase in one of the two measures. Results regarding well-being are less clear, with over half experiencing some progress and around a third experiencing some decline over time.

## 4.3 THE IMPACT OF GRANDMENTORS

The distance travelled analysis presented in section 4.2 suggests that during their participation in the Grandmentors programme, mentees experienced positive improvements in their education, employment and training status, some positive progress in their sense of autonomy, and mixed progress in their sense of wellbeing.

To understand whether and how Grandmentors might have contributed to these positive changes in mentees' outcomes, the evaluation team used Qualitative Comparative Analysis, or QCA.

### 4.3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE CASES

Table 8 provides a description of the full data set following calibration. There are a couple of points to note from data set out in this table. First, it is apparent that almost all of the twenty-three cases are gender matched; the male mentees are matched with male mentors, and female mentees are matched with female mentors. There is therefore limited variation seen in this condition, which would likely affect the results. As outlined previously, the evaluation team explored the underlying data and, based on this and the limited variation in this condition, added a condition that represented a female gender match (female mentee matched with female mentor).

Secondly, eight of the cohort entered the care system as unaccompanied asylum seeking children, of whom three appear to be have a similar ethnic background to their mentor. Mentees without this background are more likely to be matched with a mentor of a similar ethnic background than mentees with this background. In one case - I32 – a female mentee with a UASC care history is matched with a female mentor from a similar ethnic background.

Thirdly, all of the cases except one (H18) are matched in some way with their mentor - either gender matched or ethnicity matched. Fourteen are male mentees matched with male mentors; six are female mentors matched with female mentees. Nine cases are male mentees who are matched with mentors who are also male and with whom they share an ethnic background (cases H7, I1, I15, I33, I4, MK1, ST1, ST3, SU6). In comparison, four cases are female mentees who are matched with mentors who are female and with whom they share an ethnic background (cases I19, I25, I32, MK5).

Fourthly, in relation to outcomes, twenty of the cohort ( $n=20/23$ ) saw a positive outcome in their education, employment or training. Three cases (I32, MK1, ST1) did not have a positive outcome. Again, this limited variation is likely to effect the results of the qualitative comparative analysis. Therefore, the evaluation team explored different ways of calibrating the outcome and also examined education and employment separately.

Finally, seven mentees ( $n=7/23$ , around 30 percent of cases) have been successful across all three outcomes. It is worth noting that fifteen ( $n=15/23$ , nearly two thirds of cases) have been successful in two of the three outcomes, and all but one (case MK1) have been successful in one of the three outcomes.

Table 8: Cases and data calibration for qualitative comparative analysis

<i>Mentee ID</i>	Gender match	F to F	Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	Length of mentorship	O1 Wellbeing	O2 Autonomy	O3 EET	Overall outcome
H18	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
H7	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
I1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
I12	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
I15	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
I18	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
I19	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
I2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
I20	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
I24	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
I25	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
I29	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
I30	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
I32	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
I33	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
I4	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
I6	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
MK1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
MK5	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
ST1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
ST3	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
ST4	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
SU6	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Presence/positive	20	6	15	8	6	10	14	20	7
Absence/negative	3	17	8	15	17	13	9	3	16

### 4.3.2 EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Twenty of the cohort of twenty-three mentees saw positive outcomes in relation to education, employment and training. This limited variation in the data is a significant problem, as it does not provide a basis from which cases can be compared to explore which conditions or combinations of conditions are associated with the successful outcomes. The evaluation team therefore considered employment and education separately.

#### Employment

The twenty-three cases were then recalibrated in terms of the EET outcome, so that mentees who (a) stayed in or (b) moved into some form of employment over the two data points were assigned as '1', and those who moved out or were not in employment were assigned as '0'. Table 10 provides a case level description of the calibration of the conditions and employment outcome. The table provides data on twenty-two of the cohort (n=22/23), as one mentee declined to answer the EET questions and was removed from this analysis. Again, there is limited variation in relation to the gender match condition, as almost all mentees are matched with a mentor of the same gender. The evaluation team therefore focused on gender matches between a female mentee and female mentor.

There are some interesting issues to note from this case table.

First, there are five female mentees, all of whom are matched with a female mentor. Only one of the female mentees saw a successful employment outcome during their participation in the programme. This represents one of the eight cases overall that saw a successful outcome. In contrast, seven of the seventeen male mentees experienced a successful employment outcome, of whom five were matched with a male mentor.

Secondly, of the eight mentees with a successful employment outcome, two were matched with a mentor with a similar ethnic background (none of whom had a care history that included being a UASC), four were UASC, and two were male mentees matched with a male mentor, who were not ethnicity matched and did not have a history of being an unaccompanied asylum seeking child.

Table 9 summarises the data, giving counts of the presence of each condition with a successful employment outcome and also unsuccessful employment outcome.

Table 9: Count of presence of each condition with successful and unsuccessful employment outcome

	Gender match	F to F	Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	Length of mentorship	Outcome
Presence of condition with successful outcome	6	1	2	4	2	8
Presence of condition with unsuccessful outcome	13	4	12	3	3	14

Table 10: Cases and data calibration, EET outcome for employment only

ID	Gender match (all)	Gender match (female to female)	Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	Length of mentorship	O3(a): employment
H18	0	0	0	1	1	1
H7	1	0	1	0	0	0
I1	1	0	1	0	0	0
I12	1	0	0	1	0	1
I15	1	0	1	0	1	0
I18	1	0	0	1	0	0
I19	1	1	1	0	0	0
I2	0	0	1	0	0	1
I20	1	1	0	1	0	1
I24	1	0	0	0	0	1
I25	1	1	1	0	0	0
I29	1	0	0	0	1	1
I30	1	1	0	0	0	0
I33	1	0	1	0	1	0
I4	1	0	1	1	0	0
I6	0	0	1	1	0	0
MK1	1	0	1	0	0	0
MK5	1	1	1	0	0	0
ST1	1	0	1	0	0	0
ST3	1	0	1	0	0	1
ST4	1	0	0	1	0	1
SU6	1	0	1	0	1	0
Presence/positive	19	5	14	7	5	8
Absence/negative	3	17	8	15	17	14

Again, there is limited variation in relation to the gender match condition, as almost all mentees are matched with a mentor of the same gender. However, dividing the education and employment outcomes brought further granularity to the data (i.e., bigger proportion of cases that are not gender matched). Consequently, in this particular case, the analysis will consider gender match and mentee gender separately.

The first level of analysis resulted in the following truth table:

Table 11: Truth table, EET outcome for employment only

Gender Match	Mentee Gender	Ethnicity Match	UASC	O3(a) Employment	Coverage
0	0	0	1	1	H18
0	0	1	0	1	I2
0	0	1	1	0	I6
1	0	0	0	1	I24, I29
1	0	0	1	C	I12(1), I18(0), ST4(1)
1	0	1	0	C	H7(0), I1(0), I15(0), I33(0), MK1(0), ST1(0), ST3(1), SU6(0)
1	0	1	1	0	I4
1	1	0	0	0	I30
1	1	0	1	1	I20
1	1	1	0	0	I19, I25, MK5

This first level of analysis identified four combinations of conditions of interest for further exploration, of which two were contradictions (where the combination is associated with both successful and unsuccessful outcomes). It also suggested further within-case exploration of a number of cases, as they appear to be 'implicants' (that is, cases which do not fit with the rest of the data in some way) which should be removed from the dataset before further analysis is undertaken. From this first level of analysis, there do not appear to be any significant patterns that describe successful or unsuccessful outcomes.

Through several rounds of within-case exploration and further cross case comparison, the evaluation team identified that ethnicity match and having a care history of being an unaccompanied asylum seeking child appeared to be sufficient conditions in relation to employment. This final analysis resulted in the following truth table:

Table 12: Final truth table, EET outcome for employment only

Ethnicity match	UASC	O3(a)	Cases
0	0	0	I30
0	1	C	I12(1), I18(0), ST4(1)
1	0	C	H7(0), I1(0), I15(0), I19(0), I25(0), MK1(0), MK5(0), ST1(0), ST3(1), SU6(0)
1	1	0	I4, I6

From this analysis, we draw the tentative conclusion that being matched with a mentor with a similar ethnic background is a sufficient condition for **not** being successful in terms of staying or moving into employment.



## Education

The twenty-three cases were recalibrated in terms of the EET outcome, so that mentees who gave their status as 'student' at the second datapoint were assigned as '1', and those were not in education were assigned as '0'. Table 13 shows the recalibration based on education only. There are sixteen cases included, with four cases not in education by the collection of the second dataset and twelve that had maintained or began education between the first and second datasets.

Table 13: Cases and data calibration, EET outcome for education only

ID	Gender Match	Mentee Gender	Ethnicity Match	UASC	Length of Mentorship	Education Outcome
H18	0	0	0	1	1	1
I1	1	0	1	0	0	1
I15	1	0	1	0	1	1
I18	1	0	0	1	0	1
I19	1	1	1	0	0	1
I20	1	1	0	1	0	1
I25	1	1	1	0	0	1
I29	1	0	0	0	1	1
I30	1	1	0	0	0	1
I33	1	0	1	0	1	1
I4	1	0	1	1	0	1
I6	0	0	1	1	0	1
MK1	1	0	1	0	0	0
MK5	1	1	1	0	0	0
ST1	1	0	1	0	0	0
SU6	1	0	1	0	1	0

The evaluation team examined those individual cases who move into education during their participation in the programme (as opposed to staying in or moving into education). Three cases made this transition, as set out in Table 14. Given this limited variation here and it is not possible to use this calibration in the analysis.

Table 14: Mentees who moved into education during their time with a mentor

Case	ME1	ME2
I20	In part time employment (working between 8 and 29 hours per week)	In part time employment (working between 8 and 29 hours per week), Student
I29	Not working, but seeking work	Full time apprenticeship
I33	Nothing	Not working and not seeking work, Student, Volunteering or doing unpaid work

The following truth table shows that there are no clear conditions that could be combined to make a simplified pathway.

Table 15: Truth table, EET outcome education only

Gender Match	Mentee Gender	Ethnicity Match	UASC	Length of Mentorship	O3(b) Education	
0	0	0	1	1	1	H18
0	0	1	1	0	1	I6
1	0	0	0	1	1	I29
1	0	0	1	0	1	I18
1	0	1	0	0	C	I1(1), MK1(0), ST1(0)
1	0	1	0	1	C	I15(1), I33(1), SU6(0)
1	0	1	1	0	1	I4
1	1	0	0	0	1	I30
1	1	0	1	0	1	I20
1	1	1	0	0	C	I19(1), I25(1), MK5(0)

However, after several iterations of the combinations of conditions were run through QCA, it was found that gender match, and ethnicity match could be important conditions in the positive outcome of being in education. Following this line of enquiry, the team found that of those cases who had a female gender match and an ethnicity match 70% had remained in or started a programme of education by the collection of the second dataset.

It is important to note that there is no symmetry between these two sub-outcomes of employment and education, as positive outcomes in one sub-outcome do not indicate a negative outcome in the other. Three cases saw a positive outcome in both education and employment, four cases saw a negative outcome in both outcomes, and fifteen saw a positive outcome in either employment or education. What could be of interest is outcomes of those that were not in education, training or employment, 75% were male.

Table 16: Not in education, employment or training.

ID	gender match	mentee gender	Ethnicity match	asylum seeker	Length of mentorship	O3b Education
MK1	1	0	1	0	0	0
MK5	1	1	1	0	0	0
ST1	1	0	1	0	0	0
SU6	1	0	1	0	1	0

### 4.3.3 AUTONOMY

Fourteen mentees in our cohort increased their sense of autonomy over their participation in the Grandmentors programme (n=14/23). Increased autonomy is measured here using two externally validated scales of self-esteem and confidence. Increased autonomy is a 'soft' outcome; each of the scales consists of a series of questions to which respondents are provided a Likert scale of potential responses. Calibration of mentees' responses to these questions to a crisp set where mentees have either progressed or not requires three levels of quantitisation and calibration decisions; values to give to each response within the Likert scale for each set of questions, decisions on what constitutes progress for each set of questions, and decisions of what constitutes increased autonomy. Table 17 sets out the cases and calibrated data in relation to the increased autonomy outcome.

Having completed calibration of the data, the evaluation team examined the extent to which the presence or absence of each condition coincided with successful and unsuccessful increased autonomy outcomes. Below sets out this analysis.

**Table 17: Count of cases with presence of each condition for increased autonomy outcomes**

	F to F	Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	Length of mentorship
Count of cases with presence of condition and successful outcome	3	8	4	4
Count of cases with presence of condition and unsuccessful outcome	3	7	4	2

**Table 18: Count of cases with absence of each condition for increased autonomy outcomes**

	F to F	Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	Length of mentorship
Count of cases with absence of condition and successful outcome	11	6	10	10
Count of cases with absence of condition and unsuccessful outcome	6	2	5	7

This simple first level of analysis does not identify any clear patterns in the data at the level of individual conditions; there is almost equal spread of presence and absence of each condition – of female mentees being matched with female mentors, of mentees being matched with a mentor of a similar ethnic background, of whether the mentee had a care history that included being an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, and whether the menteeship had been going for less or more than six months – with successful and unsuccessful increased autonomy outcomes.

Table 19: Cases and calibration, increased autonomy outcome

ID	F to F	Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	Length of mentorship	O2 Autonomy
H18	0	0	1	1	1
H7	0	1	0	0	0
I1	0	1	0	0	1
I12	0	0	1	0	0
I15	0	1	0	1	0
I18	0	0	1	0	1
I19	1	1	0	0	0
I2	0	1	0	0	1
I20	1	0	1	0	0
I24	0	0	0	0	1
I25	1	1	0	0	1
I29	0	0	0	1	1
I30	1	0	0	0	1
I32	1	1	1	1	0
I33	0	1	0	1	1
I4	0	1	1	0	0
I6	0	1	1	0	1
MK1	0	1	0	0	0
MK5	1	1	0	0	1
ST1	0	1	0	0	1
ST3	0	1	0	0	0
ST4	0	0	1	0	1
SU6	0	1	0	1	1
Presence/positive	6	15	8	6	14
Absence/negative	17	8	15	17	9

The key objective of qualitative comparative analysis is to identify patterns in **combinations** of conditions and their association with the outcome of interest. As such, the counts outlined in Table 17 and Table 18 are interesting, but it is the truth table that is of real interest. The calibrated data were uploaded to Tosmana for analysis, which resulted in the truth table outlined in Table 20.

Table 20: Autonomy truth table, first level analysis

F to F	Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	Length of mentorship	O2 Autonomy	Cases
0	0	0	0	1	I24
0	0	0	1	1	I29
0	0	1	0	C	I12(0), I18(1), ST4(1)
0	0	1	1	1	H18
0	1	0	0	C	H7(0), I1(1), I2(1), MK1(0), ST1(1), ST3(0)
0	1	0	1	C	I15(0), I33(1), SU6(1)
0	1	1	0	C	I4(0), I6(1)
1	0	0	0	1	I30
1	0	1	0	0	I20
1	1	0	0	C	I19(0), I25(1), MK5(1)
1	1	1	1	0	I32

This first level of analysis identified six combinations that were each associated with a single case. These ranged from one mentee with a successful outcome, without any of the conditions present (case I24), through to one mentee with an unsuccessful outcome for whom each condition was present.

There are then five combinations that cover more than one individual case, each of which are contradictory; the combination is associated with both a positive and negative outcome. The evaluation team therefore conducted further within case analysis for each of the mentees covered by a contradictory combination of conditions, as well as examined whether changing the definition of successful outcome used in the data calibration might affect the results.

The five contradictory combinations cover seventeen cases in total; seven of these have an unsuccessful outcome and ten a successful outcome. Examining the seven cases with an unsuccessful outcome, two saw a decline in the overall scores for both measures over their participation in the programme. Five mentees saw a decline in one of the two measures, but no change or increase in the other. Figure 9 illustrates the change in score for the self-esteem and confidence measures.

The two cases that saw a decrease in both their self-esteem and confidence during their participation in the programme might be considered outlier cases. Both saw the largest declines in both scores across the whole cohort, both in absolute and percentage changes. This suggests both mentees might be considered extreme cases and should be excluded from this analysis.

For the other five mentees, two did not answer one of the confidence questions, for which a dummy value had been assumed. In one case – I12 – changing this assumption could have resulted in this mentee being considered to have increased their autonomy overall. In two further cases (I19 and ST3), a change in the calibration of what constituted success in terms of increase autonomy would have seen them change from unsuccessful to successful.



Figure 9: Contradictory combinations analysis - increased autonomy

Through some recalibration of the outcome of interest, and with further within case analysis, some tentative findings emerged. This further analysis included examination of self-esteem and confidence as two separate outcomes as opposed to components of a single wellbeing outcome. These various iterations resulted in further contradictions and limited explanation of successful versus unsuccessful outcomes. The analysis suggested an interplay between two conditions, namely ethnicity match and UASC care history. However, further examination of this resulted in truth table presented in Table 21. This again highlights a number of contradictory configurations.

Table 21: Autonomy truth table, second stage analysis

Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	O2 Autonomy	Cases
0	0	1	I24, I29, I30
0	1	C	H18(1), I12(1), I18(1), I20(0), ST4(1)
1	0	C	H7(0), I1(1), I15(0), I19(1), I2(1), I25(1), I33(1), MK5(1), ST1(1), ST3(1), SU6(1)
1	1	C	I32(0), I6(1)

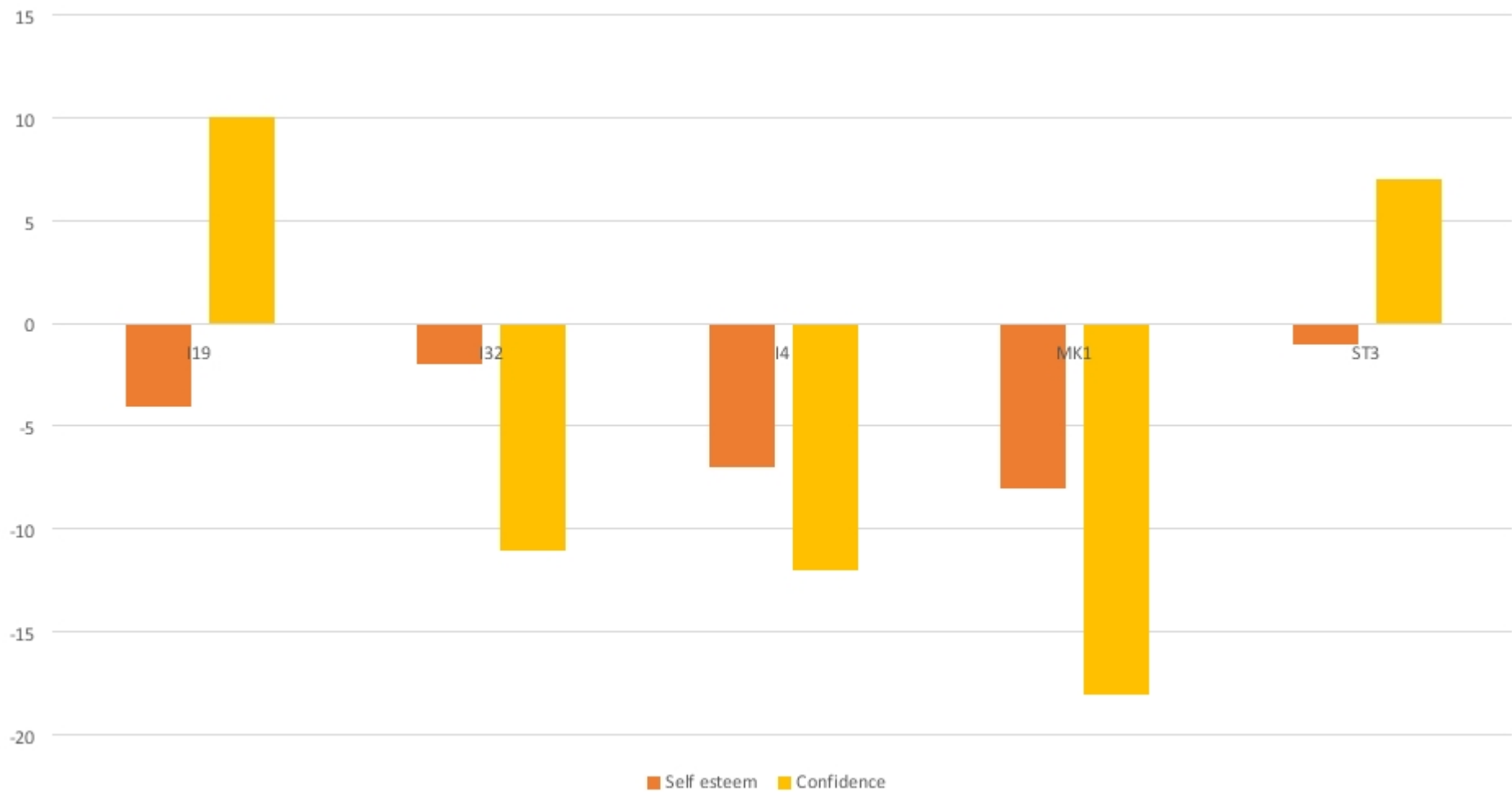


Figure 10: Distance travelled scores for each case, increased autonomy outcome

In table 21 (p.48) there appeared to be many outcomes where ethnicity was a condition. By focusing on the conditions that seemed most relevant in the truth table: gender matching (v1); ethnicity matching (v2); mentee gender (v3); asylum seeker status (v4); and length of mentorship (v5), the following Venn diagram (Figure 11) is created.

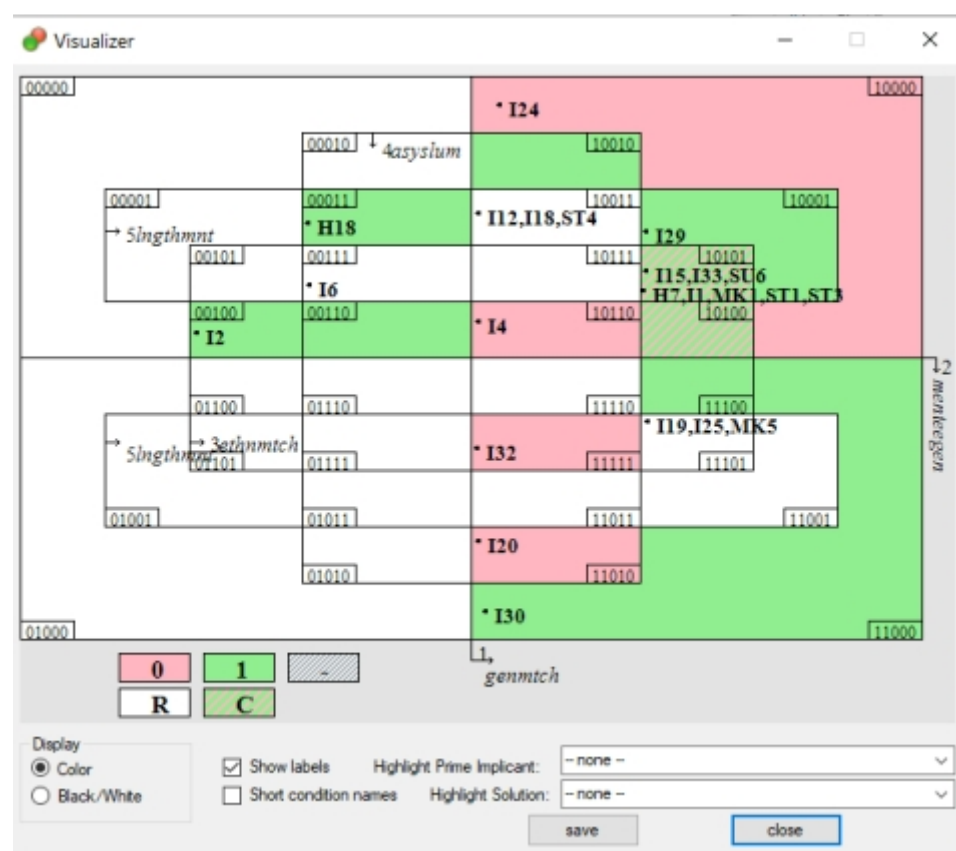


Figure 11: Venn diagram showing the interplay between gender, UASC and length of match.

The Venn diagram shows that ethnicity matching is an important factor in those cases in the bottom right-hand quadrant, either positively or negatively. Focusing on the cases in this section and in the section where ethnicity did not seem to have an impact (upper right), there were some identified areas that could be of relevance.

Four cases (I30, I19, I25, MK5) show that where non-asylum seekers have placements of under 8 months, they have successfully increased in autonomy. For males who are not ethnically matched, there is success, but with the exception of three cases. One of these cases (MK1) had been highlighted as an exception, and in another case (I24) the scores stay the same on both measures. One other case that was shown to be unsuccessful (H7) was not found to have exceptional circumstances and has a normal (negative) movement in all measures.

However, for cases where the young people are asylum seekers and matched ethnicity, the outcome is mostly negative despite length of placement. Where there is an ethnic match, then the mentorship was not as successful (2 out of 5 successes). Therefore, regardless of placement length or gender, asylum seekers who are not ethnically matched are successful, whilst those who are ethnically matched are less successful.



#### 4.3.4 WELLBEING

As with the increased autonomy outcome, wellbeing is a ‘soft’ outcome that is measured subjectively, drawing on two separate validated scales. The programme measures the wellbeing of participants using two existing and validated scales in relation to relationships and networks, and happiness. Each of these scales consists of a number of questions, to which respondents are given a Likert scale of possible responses. Calibration of mentees’ responses to these questions to a crisp set where mentees have either progressed or not requires three levels of quantisation and calibration decisions; values to give to each response within the Likert scale for each set of questions, decisions on what constitutes progress for each set of questions, and decisions of what constitutes increased autonomy. Table 22 sets out the cases and calibrated data in relation to the increased wellbeing outcome.

Table 22: Cases and calibration, increased wellbeing outcome

	F to F	Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	Length of mentorship	O1 Wellbeing
Mentee ID					
H18	0	0	1	1	0
H7	0	1	0	0	0
I1	0	1	0	0	0
I12	0	0	1	0	1
I15	0	1	0	1	0
I18	0	0	1	0	1
I19	1	1	0	0	0
I2	0	1	0	0	0
I20	1	0	1	0	0
I24	0	0	0	0	0
I25	1	1	0	0	0
I29	0	0	0	1	0
I30	1	0	0	0	1
I32	1	1	1	1	1
I33	0	1	0	1	1
I4	0	1	1	0	0
I6	0	1	1	0	1
MK1	0	1	0	0	0
MK5	1	1	0	0	1
ST1	0	1	0	0	0
ST3	0	1	0	0	1
ST4	0	0	1	0	1
SU6	0	1	0	1	1
Presence/positive	6	15	8	6	10
Absence/negative	17	8	15	17	13

The first stage of analysis involved examining whether there are any patterns in the data in terms of the presence or absence of each individual condition and the outcome of interest. Table 23 sets out this first stage of analysis. It does not suggest any patterns in the relationships between individual conditions and the wellbeing outcome.

**Table 23: Count of presence and absence of individual conditions and wellbeing outcomes**

	<b>F to F</b>	<b>Ethnicity match</b>	<b>Asylum seeker</b>	<b>Length of mentorship</b>
Count of cases with presence of condition and successful outcome	3	6	5	3
Count of cases with presence of condition and unsuccessful outcome	3	9	3	3
Count of cases with absence of condition and successful outcome	7	4	5	7
Count of cases with absence of condition and unsuccessful outcome	10	4	10	10

The first stage of the qualitative comparative analysis resulted in the following truth table. As with the other two outcomes, this resulted in a number of contradictory findings.

Six of the possible combinations of conditions were associated with a single case; four of these with a successful outcome and two with an unsuccessful outcome. There were five combinations that covered more than one case, of which four were contradictions in that the combination was associated with both successful and unsuccessful outcomes.

One combination – where mentees had a care history that included being an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, but an absence of the other three conditions – is associated with three mentees (cases I12, I18 and ST4). It is the only combination that includes on this condition (it is not associated with any unsuccessful wellbeing outcomes), but given that it only covers three of the cohort, it appears to be of little empirical significance.

Table 24: Wellbeing truth table, first level analysis

F to F	Ethnicity match	Asylum seeker	Length of mentorship	O1 Wellbeing	Cases
0	0	0	0	0	I24
0	0	0	1	0	I29
0	0	1	0	1	I12, I18, ST4
0	0	1	1	0	H18
0	1	0	0	C	H7(0), I1(0), I2(0), MK1(0), ST1(0), ST3(1)
0	1	0	1	C	I15(0), I33(1), SU6(1)
0	1	1	0	C	I4(0), I6(1)
1	0	0	0	1	I30
1	0	1	0	0	I20
1	1	0	0	C	I19(0), I25(0), MK5(1)
1	1	1	1	1	I32

The four contradictory combinations cover a total of fourteen cases, of which five experienced positive outcomes. Taking a closer look at the nine cases with a negative outcome, two (H7 and I2) have a positive score in relation to relationships and networks and a negative score in relation to happiness, and one (I15) saw no change in their relationship and network score and a decrease in their happiness score. Figure 12 below illustrates the changes over time in both measures for each of the relevant mentees.

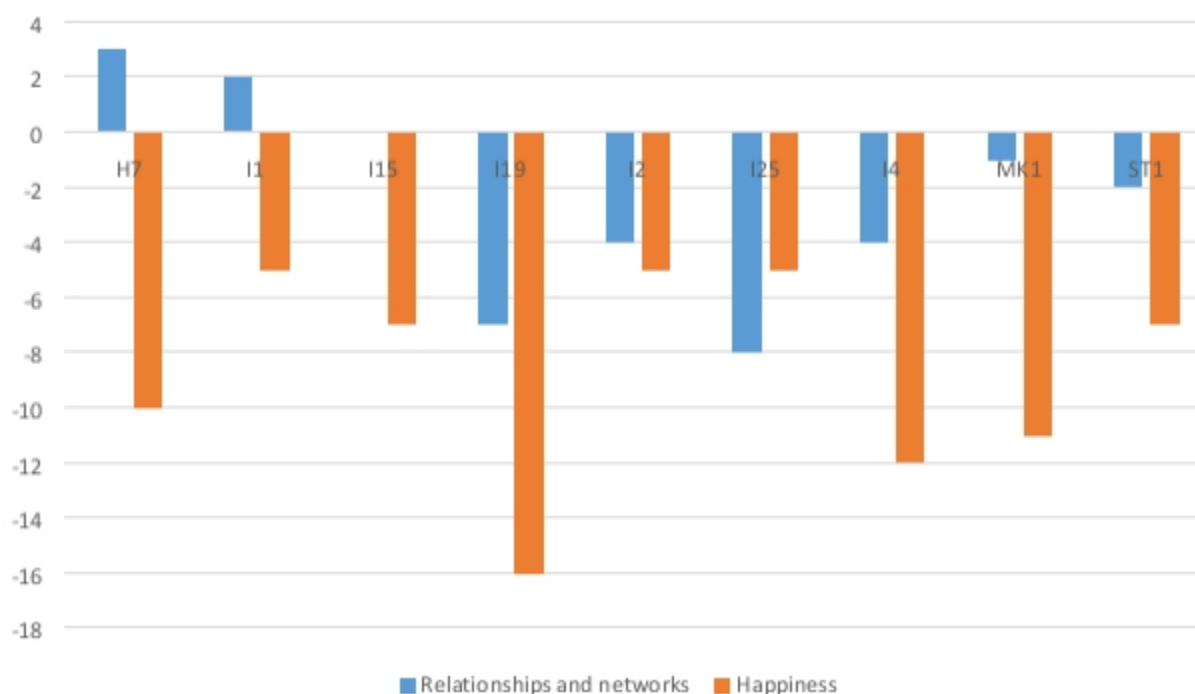


Figure 12: Distance travelled on each wellbeing scale - cases with negative outcome in contradictory combinations

The evaluation recalibrated the wellbeing outcome crisp set from being a positive score increase in both measures, to either no change or increase in both scores. This recalibration and further within case analysis did not result in any significant findings.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 IMPLICATIONS

The evaluation team has enjoyed working with Volunteering Matters and with the Grandmentors programme. It is clear from our discussions with stakeholders, staff and especially with mentees that it is a well-regarded programme, and is seen to make a positive contribution to young people's transitions to independent living. It is particularly important that young people leaving care face a 'double whammy', because they experience significant challenge both before and during care, and because their transition to independent adulthood is shorter and less supported than their non-care experienced peers. Schemes like Grandmentors can play a part in helping young people through this transition.

This evaluation, and our previous work on the Grandmentors programme for Volunteering Matters, identified a number of areas of positive practice, and of work with young people as they leave care and transition to independent adulthood. There are three broad conclusions we draw from this evaluation.

Firstly, the programme is well thought out, with clear outcomes expected from participation in the programme and a plausible logic to how the programme would contribute to achieving these outcomes. The theory of change work undertaken at the early stages of this evaluation demonstrates that the programme should be able to deliver, and the wider evidence around intergeneration mentoring programmes and what makes them work is reflected in the programme design.

Secondly, the programme is delivered by a team of staff and volunteers who are committed to making it work. The programme has taken on board feedback from mentees, mentors, and from our research team to make changes and improve the delivery of the programme. As the programme expands to new sites, there is a clear sense that the positives are being taken forward and changes are being made to improve the programme, such as the introduction of soft matching that provides care leavers with a greater sense of agency. There is a clear sense that evidence of what works in similar programmes is an important part of the culture in the implementation of Grandmentors.

Thirdly, young people who participate in the programme see positive changes in their lives in terms of improved education, employment and training outcomes, their sense of autonomy, and (to a lesser extent) in their sense of wellbeing. It appears that mentees are more likely to be in education, employment and training than other care leavers and that during their participation in the programme, they see further improvements in this area. Mentees are still less likely than their non-care experienced peers to be in education, employment or training and the programme contributes to improving this outcome. The distance travelled analysis also found that a majority of mentees experienced an improvement in their autonomy, with over two thirds of participants reporting an increase in one of the two scales used to measure this outcome. The picture was less clear regarding well-being, with over half experiencing some progress and around a third experiencing some decline over time. Contextual information about the cases that have shown a significant drop in scores indicates that those individuals were facing particularly challenging situations (e.g., risk of deportation) or with mental health conditions (e.g., depression), or where individuals have an autistic spectrum disorders. Furthermore, recent evidence shows that care leavers' wellbeing scores are significantly lower than the general population of young people (Baker et al., 2019).

Unaccompanied asylum-seekers are particularly vulnerable in terms of mental health as they can have uncertain immigration status (Parhar, 2018). Considering the vulnerability and poorer outcomes of the care leaving population, progress in measures of education, employment, wellbeing and autonomy can expectedly be marginal or fluctuate. To some extent, staying in education or employment is already a positive outcome. Similarly, it is unsurprising that mentees' wellbeing scores have not drastically improved given that they tend to decrease with age in the general population of young people (ONS, 2017) and leaving the care system is also associated with a decrease in wellbeing scores (Baker et al., 2019) and increased of mental health issues (Dixon et al., 2015) .

These three broad conclusions are drawn from the theory of change, process evaluation, and distance travelled analysis undertaken during this evaluation. The evaluation team also used Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to understand the impact of the programme, and particularly to identify the way or ways of organising the programme most associated with successful outcomes. This analysis produced some interesting findings, but the findings were not empirically significant (in that they did not meet the requirements of this method to be reported as significant), and are not economically significant (in that we do not make recommendations about committing resources or making changes to the delivery of the programme based on these findings). Rather, they support a clearer understanding of what may work for whom and under which circumstances and are consistent with the current design of the programme.

The QCA analysis did not reveal any pattern for the wellbeing outcome. This mirrors the distance travelled analysis to some extent. As mentioned in the methodology section, none of the configurations observed through the analysis were of sufficient consistency and coverage to support robust conclusions. This evaluation report presents findings that are of interest, but not empirically significant.

Whilst the results of the QCA did not unravel any findings of substance, some interesting configurations in the data point towards the role of ethnicity matching in the Grandmentors programme. This particular condition appeared to be relevant as mentees that were matched with a mentor of similar ethnic background are less likely to be successful in terms of employment. However, the condition appeared to play a positive role when considering education, as female mentees that were ethnically matched were more likely to remain or start education. Furthermore, the QCA analysis revealed an interplay between ethnicity match and unaccompanied asylum-seekers. Indeed, where mentees are asylum-seekers and have an ethnicity match, there is a decrease in levels of autonomy. When they are not asylum seekers, the ethnicity match does not appear to have an impact on the outcome. The evidence presented here is not substantial enough for us to draw any conclusions or make recommendations on changes. Ethnicity match appears to have nevertheless a role in generating outcomes. Further monitoring data could support the refinement of this analysis.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

From these conclusions, and the wider work undertaken during this research, the evaluation team makes the following recommendations:

**“Recommendation 1:** Volunteer Matters should recognise the demands of, and commit sufficient resources to schemes as they establish and develop networks and relationships with agencies that engage with young people leaving care. This might mean having dedicated time for networking, establishing and managing new relationships, and promoting the scheme in the local area. Once schemes are established, it is still important to manage these relationships (recognizing that key individuals may move on) but during the implementation period, extra time and resources committed to this work could increase the likelihood of implementation success.

**Recommendation 2:** Schemes should consider whether their established networks should be widened and refreshed, to include other agencies that work with young people leaving care, including those outside of the care system.

Data provided to the evaluation team suggests that established sites are achieving higher than targeted number of matches, and that the new sites are achieving lower than targeted number of matches. Staff in the new schemes suggested that this was because the target was high compared to the relevant eligible population, and that eligibility criteria could be widened to include young people who have not had recent or direct experience of the care system.

At this stage, given that the new sites started their implementation less than a year before field research for the evaluation was conducted, the matched data do not indicate significant implementation failure issues. We would expect a number of matches to pick up as the schemes bed in and becomes more established, and as the resources invested in building networks begin to pay off. At this stage, there does not appear to be sufficient reason to widen the eligibility criteria to include young people who have not experienced the local care system, which risks diluting the primary objective of the programme, which is to support young people leaving care as they transition to independent adulthood.

**Recommendation 3:** Volunteering Matters should not widen the eligibility criteria for the programme to include young people who have not experienced the care system. It should continue to monitor actual versus target matches for new and existing sites, and examine the effectiveness of relationships with referral agencies if targets are not met on a consistent basis.

Both existing and new schemes use hard and soft matching processes, the choice of which appears to depend on local circumstances. Overall, soft matching appears to have many advantages, although it may not always be appropriate or feasible.

**Recommendation 4:** While overall it appears that soft matching has a number of benefits and should be the favoured approach, it should be recognised that there may be circumstances under which hard matching is more appropriate or feasible. Volunteering Matters should enable local Grandmentors schemes to make decisions about the form of matching they use. Local schemes should continue to monitor the effectiveness of the preferred approach to matching, by engaging with stakeholders (including mentors and mentees, as well as commissioners and referral agencies) to capture their views of the matching process.

**Recommendation 5:** Entering, exiting and ending the mentor/mentee relationship. In the review we completed in 2017, we recommended that a more formalised and articulated process was needed around the referral and assessment process, recognising the role it played both in the process of matching mentors and mentees and to the outcomes achieved through mentoring. Evidence generated through this evaluation would suggest significant progress has been made in this area. We also previously recommended that clarity was needed around the process of ending a mentoring relationship, particularly when the relationship developed into something more akin to befriending or a familiar/friendship relationship. We would recommend that work on exit strategies is still needed, and that it is important both to mentees and mentors to understand what successful completion of the programme looks like, and how young people leaving care might transition from mentees to a different form or relationship (or no relationship) with their mentors.

**Recommendation 6:** Mentor training and support. In the previous review, changes were recommended to the process by which mentors' training and development needs and progress were identified and assessed. It is clear from our research for this evaluation that much progress has been made in this area. However, one of the findings (3.4.1) around goal setting would suggest that some further work is needed in this area, particularly in terms of the role that goal setting plays in mentoring programmes, how to engage young people in goal setting, and to use different techniques to achieve goal setting. We see goal setting as core to mentoring schemes, an important means by which young people increase their agency and choice, and important to demonstrating the success of Grandmentors in terms of supporting young people leaving care as they transition to independent adulthood.

**Recommendation 7:** The outcome and performance data collected by Volunteering Matters for this evaluation provides a wealth of information about, and significant insight into, the distance travelled by individuals who participate in the programme. Not all of these data were as useful as other information collected, and there were some areas where the relevance of the data collected to the outcomes of interest was not explicitly clear. We recommend a period of reflection on the outcome and performance data, perhaps cutting these variables which are not directly useful. Findings point towards ethnicity matching being of some importance. Whilst the evidence is not strong enough to generate a recommendation for the programme design, it certainly indicates that ethnicity matching should be monitored and a new subjective measure capturing the mentees' opinion on whether they share a similar cultural background with their mentor could be introduced. We also recommend regularly reporting on progress both at the aggregate level – for funders, other stakeholders, volunteers and staff – but also for individual mentees. This is particularly important as it will ensure that significant drops in wellbeing or autonomy are identified as those mentees may need further or complementary support.



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## APPENDIX 1: QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This appendix presents an overview of the various steps taken during the Qualitative Comparison Analysis (QCA). The analysis was reiterative and involved a process of going back and forth between different steps.

### 1. Preparing the data for QCA use

The first step undertaken by the evaluation team was to prepare the performance and outcome data collected by Grandmentors for analysis. This involved two steps. First, the team quantitised the data – turning what is often qualitative data into numbers for the analysis. So, for example, where data used Likert scales, responses such as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ were replaced with numbers. The second, and more substantial piece of work, was data calibration.

QCA draws on set theory, a form of mathematical logic which underpins many analytical methods in the social sciences. Put simply, such approaches explore the characteristics of cases being examined, and seeks to group cases, in sets, by these characteristics. Calibration is the process of deciding how these sets are defined, and therefore how decisions are made about whether individual cases are in or not in a given set. For this evaluation, these sets relate to the outcomes of interest (have achieved or have not achieved, for example). Once the data benchmarks and calibrations have been defined, the data made available needs to be converted into conditions that, in the case of a crisp set, indicate the presence (1) or absence (0) of a condition, and whether an outcome is positive (1) or negative (0). The data are then presented in a table, called a dichotomous data table.

### 2. Simple counts (necessary and sufficient analysis)

Once the data are ready, the first step of analysis involves looking for the association of conditions (presence of absence) with an outcome (positive or negative). This is called a necessary and sufficient analysis and indicates whether some of the conditions are necessary (there is no positive outcome without their presence) or sufficient (their presence triggers a positive outcome). The analysis starts with considering positive outcomes. Is any condition always present or absent when the outcome is positive? The next steps is to consider the same question for a negative outcome. In theory, this analysis establishes very strong causal links between conditions and outcomes. In practice, it is rare to find such patterns in the first round of analysis.

### 3. Visualising configurations (truth tables and Venn diagrams)

The next step of the analysis involves generating a truth table, which is a representation of the different existing configurations in the data. The first four columns present the conditions and whether they are present (1) or absent (0). The fifth column represents the outcome, in this example the outcome is autonomy. The outcome can be positive (1), negative (0), or contradictory (C) meaning that the configuration generated both positive and negative outcomes. The right hand side of the table shows the ID of cases that follow this configuration.

Another useful way to visualise the data is through generating a Venn diagram. A Venn diagram synthesises all the information in the dataset, providing a visual representation of it. On the diagram, lines divide the bi-dimensional space into areas representing one condition. The intersection of these areas creates boxes that represent combinations of conditions. Venn diagrams generated by Tosmana

provided a visual representation of the truth table presented earlier. Here, positive outcomes are in green, negative outcomes are in pink, and contradicting cases are in green and pink stripes. The Venn diagram also provides a better understanding of the configurations that are theoretically possible but do not have any cases (called logical remainders). They are represented through the white space.

#### 4. Resolving contradictions

Contradictory configurations (i.e. when the same configuration of conditions generates both positive and negative outcomes) are perfectly normal in early stages of QCA analysis. They “tell us something about the cases we are studying” (Rihoux and De Meur, 2009: 48). A core part of the QCA process is to understand, explore and explain why individual cases with these conditional configurations might have positive or negative outcomes. There are several approaches to solving contradictory configurations. Some of the most common ones involve adding or removing a condition, and re-examining the operationalisation of conditions and outcomes.

In the case of this evaluation, the evaluation team did not have further conditions to add and the removal of certain conditions did generate a clear pattern. Consequently, contradictions were mostly resolved through gaining a better understanding of the cases featured in the contradiction. For instance, considering the cases associated with a negative outcome, it became clear that they were all (n=3) very close to the threshold for a positive outcome (e.g., scores with a decrease of -1). Consequently, recalibrating the entire set to account for very small decreases in scores resolved the contradiction and made for coherent patterns in the data.

#### 5. Refining the conditions and outcomes (calibration)

QCA analysis is a reiterative process, which involves calibrating the data based on previous results and running the analysis several times.

When the first steps of analysis does not generate any pattern within the data, it is possible to refine the outcome (recalibrate). For instance, using a crisp set the outcome autonomy was initially calibrated as follows:

Positive outcome (1) =

- when there is at least one point progress in both measures,
- or at least one point progress in one measure and status quo in the other measure,
- or progress in one measure bigger than one point and prompting a change of category<sup>5</sup> and a very small decrease (max of -1) in the other measure.

Negative outcome (0) =

- when progress is only in one measure,
- or when it is negative in both measures (i.e. scores have decreased),
- or when there is status quo and the category was ‘very low’ or ‘low’.

As there was no pattern emerging in the data, the outcome was recalibrated to become more discriminant. It excluded those cases where the outcome is not an absolute positive or negative, but rather there has been a degree of progress. Therefore, the QCA analysis is looking for patterns in the cases where there was significant progress or failure. The new calibration was as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> Outcome measures were categorised as ‘very low’, ‘low’, ‘high’, and ‘very high’. See section 2.4.2 for more detail about outcomes and their categories.

Positive outcome (1) =

- progress in both measures and change of category in at least one of the measures.

Negative outcome (0) =

- decrease in both measures,
- or a decrease in one and status quo in the other.

Cases to be excluded =

- progress in both measures but no change of category,
- or progress in one measure and status quo on the other,
- or status quo in both measures

Of the n=23 cases for whom there are a full set of data, n=11 cases were excluded. As a result, the analysis was ran on n=8/12 cases with a positive outcomes and n=4/12 cases with negative outcome.

#### 6. Reducing the pathway to the simplest form possible (Boolean minimisation)

In this last step, the configurations are simplified to the point where they only contain conditions that make a difference. In QCA, this is called a Boolean minimisation. When the number of cases are quite small, such as the case of this evaluation, the minimisation can be handled manually. For instance, in a configuration where a positive outcome is obtained in the presence AND in the absence of a condition, this condition can be taken out, as it is obsolete. Here, we have generated 'descriptive' formula as it does not go beyond the empirical cases (Rihoux and De Meur, 2009) and conducted parsimonious minimisation. This final steps generates clearer configurations.