

Update report from Lifespace Trust – Stratford Upon Avon

In December 2017, £3,000 was awarded from the Always a Chance Fund

Background

“ As you may have discovered from looking at our web-site we are a small charity, established in 2004 and since then have helped over 1600 young people suffering from some kind of distress on a 1 to 1 mentoring basis. Distress takes many forms and we regularly work with young people who are suffering due to family break downs, bereavement, bullying and stressful home lives because of poverty or unemployment. These situations often present in schools through anxiety, depression, anger management issues, eating disorders, self-harm, psychosis and some suicidal thoughts.

We expect to help approximately 350 young people aged between 9 -19 this academic year. We have a small core team of 6 who run the charity and all of whom are part time but in addition are mentors themselves. We are mainly staffed by volunteer mentors and we have a very high retention rate. There are almost 70 mentors on our books, 60 of whom are active currently. We have never had to advertise to recruit volunteers who find us through word of mouth although we do have a rigorous interview process with DBS checks etc. We take care of these mentors and supervision takes place every 6 weeks.

Our referrals generally happen through the local schools’ pastoral teams and we are currently mentoring in over 20 schools across Warwickshire. Although through our recently new venture – Youth Mental Health First Aid training we have worked with over 50 local schools (Warwickshire and neighbouring counties) in the last 18months.

One of the areas which I would like your generous donation to be applied to is the core running costs of mentoring within primary schools. This is also a relatively recent focus for us. Since 2004 until 2015 our focus had been the 11-19 cohort, however following an increasing number of requests from local primary schools to work with the 9-11 age group, in September 2015 we recruited a part time primary school coordinator who not only specialises in the mentoring of this age group but trains and supervises primary school mentors. As an organisation we are very encouraged with the mentoring we undertake within this age range as we are able to work in a multi-disciplinary way with senior leadership teams, pastoral care reps, the classroom teacher, TAs, parents and sometimes even specialist services to ensure a co-ordinated approach to helping the young person concerned. To help a child via this ‘early intervention’ and address their issues and build resilience before the big move to senior school makes so much sense to us. “

Please extend to the families behind the trust an open invitation to visit us anytime in the new year. We would be delighted to explain more about all our work and chat through some case studies which may bring our mentoring to life for them.

The impact of the grant – June 2018

The numbers I promised regarding our primary work this academic year and more specifically since December.

Mentoring Activities

We have 14 mentors of whom 4 have been recruited in this new summer cohort.

We are working in 19 primary schools; 3 new schools since Christmas - Salford Priors, Shipston Primary, Shottery St Andrews. 6 new schools this academic year – those above plus Arden Fields, Coughton Primary and Snitterfield Primary

Children and Young People

We are working with 56 mentees and 6 of these are from the 3 new schools since Christmas. To date we have completed 237 hours of primary school mentoring.

We recruited a new cohort of 9 new volunteer mentors in May, who last week completed their training. This was a first for us as we normally only recruit and train in the Autumn term but due to demands from the primary sector we ran a summer course. Four of these new mentors will focus on primary school mentoring.

In February we were asked to support a new primary school, which has been opened to support children at risk of exclusion who have severe behavioural difficulties.

This is an exciting venture for us and we are providing both a male and female mentor who each work a full morning at this school supporting pupils and staff members. The feedback from the Head teacher and staff room has been very positive.