



The Switch

The Switch is a TimeBank mentoring project that matches volunteer mentors with young people who are living with mental health issues like depression, anxiety or self-harm.

- Mentors use their skills and experience to support these young people as they transfer from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to those designed for adults, or begin an adult life independent of mental health services.
- At TimeBank we build on our extensive volunteer mentoring experience by working with experts in their fields. In this case the project was funded by the Maudsley Charity and worked closely with CAMHS across London.
- The Switch was launched in April 2012. 145 young people were referred to the project and 294 volunteers came forward. This resulted in 81 matches in mentoring relationships that lasted from one month to over a year.
- The interim evaluation of The Switch, conducted by Charities Evaluation Services, noted the project's unique role in providing these young people with assistance when they would otherwise be unsupported. It found it was particularly effective in helping young people improve their confidence in meeting new people and negotiating busy environments like using public transport. This growth in confidence appears to be a precursor for many other positive changes in their lives, such as accessing education, employment or volunteering.



“When I saw her last she was just an entirely different person. She was so painfully shy to start off with and now she's so much more confident. If I've achieved anything for her it's really helping her with her confidence. I mean, I took her out for dinner, and last time I saw her she said she'd been back to the same restaurant with her boyfriend because she liked it. She managed to find it and she was comfortable with the menu. She would never have done that before.”

How do we measure these changes? We use an outcome star which gives a good indication of a mentee's mental well-being and what aspects can be worked on. Mentors can also use it to show the progression the mentee has made to achieve their goals.

The results?

- 11 mentees reported a positive difference in making friends
- 11 reported a positive difference in facing challenges

- 11 reported a positive difference in trying something new
- 10 reported a positive difference in feeling independent
- 11 reported a positive difference in 'feeling good about myself'

Moving on

- A quarter of all mentees moved into education, employment or training
- 15 said their mentor helped them stay in college
- 7 entered further education due to support from a mentor
- 4 received assistance from their mentor to obtain apprenticeships or internships
- 2 mentees obtained a full time job with the help of a mentor
- 35 reported an improvement in socialising, confidence and travelling due to support from their mentor

The future



The Switch was a pilot project so an important opportunity for us to learn and develop our mentoring model. We recognise the current uncertainty in the political environment and the impact this may have on NHS services. But we believe that by working collaboratively and by applying our learning, we can offer innovative, cost-effective and sustainable support to large numbers of vulnerable young people through volunteer mentoring projects like this.

We are now taking our extensive learning from The Switch – and our other mental health projects – to develop the project and take it to the next level, for example expanding the age range to 14-25 based on consultation with CAMHS and clinical commissioners.

Within this new phase, we also want to explore whether our mentoring model can work as a preventative intervention, by supporting the young people to mitigate some of the social/environmental issues that have been shown to impact on their mental wellbeing, such as social isolation, unemployment or lack of educational achievements.

TimeBank is a national volunteering charity. We recruit and train volunteers to deliver mentoring projects to tackle complex social problems. We also work with businesses to engage their staff in volunteering. We believe that great volunteering can transform the lives of both volunteers and beneficiaries by building stronger, happier and more inclusive communities.



TimeBank, One KX, 120 Cromer Street, London WC1H 8BS www.timebank.org.uk

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