



Leah's story*

Find out how Creative Mentoring helped 15-year-old Leah* to explore her identity, the world around her and her interests through performing arts and visual arts!

*Names have been changed to protect the young person's identity.

"I loved seeing how much Leah and Alice understood and respected each other, they were a perfect match in that respect."

Supporting Adult

"There was an understanding that the sessions were her 'free space' and that I wasn't going to impose my agenda on her. She was respectful and appreciative of me, with quite a lot of gentle, affectionate, (sometimes mocking) banter."

Alice*, Creative Mentor

"My favourite things are that I don't have to do anything I don't want to do. I just do what comes to mind. It's not like school, there's no rules. You can just be yourself."

Leah*, Young Mentee

social justice for young people

through arts, culture and creativity

the **mighty** creatives



background

Leah was 15 years old when she first met her Creative Mentor, Alice. The professionals around Leah felt that she was struggling with the school environment and its demands. She was, on occasion, absconding from lessons and not maintaining positive relationships with some school staff. She had unfortunately been suspended from school a couple of times. It was also shared, however, that Leah had big dreams! She was interested in music and drama and had shown a lot of interest in drawing when she was younger.

who was Leah matched with?

Leah would be best matched with a Mentor who was going to hear her voice and create a safe space. Leah also required a Mentor with a variety of creative talents, so she could explore her own. Leah was matched with Alice, a Creative Mentor who could do exactly that. Alice not only had bags of experience of working with young people in similar situations to Leah, but she had skills in visual arts, written arts and performing arts.

what happened next?

Once Leah and Alice had started to build a relationship and some trust, Leah began to take the lead during their sessions. Alice would arrive prepared for anything and follow Leah's direction of the day! Alice would play music during their sessions and even created a personal playlist for Leah – this prompted conversation and connection between them. Leah and Alice also often found themselves deep in conversation about the world, politics and social justice.

They found they had a very similar way of looking at things. Leah would often choose to paint whilst they spoke, taking inspiration from other artists. Leah would often not want to keep or treasure her artwork, but Alice would encourage this gently. Alice also supported Leah with planning for her future, looking at auditions for a drama-based opportunity that was available.

what was a key moment?

Leah and Alice always valued their sessions in school as they were always safe, reflective and creative, but a particularly special moment came when they spent time together outside of school, with a trip to a local jazz concert. They bonded over their mutual love of one of the performers. They both enjoyed this trip thoroughly and were so grateful for the opportunity.

what progress has been made?

Leah's progress shows:

“**Making great progress**” in **Self-Belief** (improving from 5/10 to 9/10), **Creativity** (improving from a 7/10 to 9/10), and **Resilience** (improving from a 8/10 to 10/10).

“**Started to make progress**” in **Teamwork** (improving from a 7/10 to 8/10) and **Motivation** (improving from a 8/10 to a 9/10).

“**Nearly making progress**” in **Communication** (8/10 throughout the Creative Mentoring journey) and **Relationship Building** (8/10 throughout the Creative Mentoring journey) and **Engagement and Participation** (8/10 throughout the Creative Mentoring journey).

Leah and Alice enjoyed 72 hours in total over 3 contracts and almost a whole year. Their time together came to a natural end, as Leah sat her GCSE's and prepared for her future. It's been an absolute pleasure to see how Leah became more positive and calmer throughout her time with Alice. She explored herself, the world around her and her interests, supported by Alice. We wish Leah all the best for the future and can't wait to hear what she gets up to next. Alice believes she'll see Leah on the stage or the silver screen one day, and we think so too!