



August 2024

Relational Mentoring (West & Southern Scotland): Interim Impact Report



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ABOUT THE WISE GROUP

The Wise Group is a leading social enterprise working to transform lives. Since 1983 we have delivered customer-led solutions to lift thousands of households out of poverty. Today, we continue to build bridges to opportunity for the most vulnerable in our society through Relational Mentoring.

We build better lives, better communities and stronger businesses, and we don't do it alone. We work with a range of partners to make a real and lasting difference to the lives of thousands of people and families every year, from large businesses to national/local government and third sector organisations.

Every day we support customers into jobs, out of fuel poverty, and help people coming out of prison to build a better future. Our work is wide ranging but underlying everything we do is a passion and commitment for sustainable change.

Our Values guide all our work

- We go the distance, so our colleagues and customers reach a positive and sustainable future.
- We are ambitious to make a real difference every day with colleagues across the enterprise following our values: socially; financially and culturally.
- We hurdle boundaries and innovate.
- We thrive through collaboration, kindness and learning together.
- We celebrate and respect individual difference.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONAL MENTORING (WEST AND SOUTHERN SCOTLAND) SERVICE?

The Wise Group's Relational Mentoring service (West and Southern Scotland) is funded by the Scottish Government's Fuel Insecurity Fund. As part of our joint longer-term approach to tackling poverty and its root causes, holistic support is provided to help vulnerable households navigate life's various challenges, and overcome barriers involving home energy, finance, employment, skills, and access to services.

Taking a holistic approach, the service is delivered across six Local Authority areas (Glasgow, Scottish Borders, South & North Lanarkshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire) with the aim of supporting 3,000 households to meet their immediate needs and to connect with services which could help lift them out of poverty for good.

Having supported over 2,800 households to date, the service has generated £49 million of social value, reflecting significant improvements in wellbeing, mental health, financial stability, energy efficiency and social inclusion. This gives a significant Social Return on Investment (SROI) of almost 1:11. For every £1 invested, £10.79 indicative social value has already been delivered.

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Since its launch in July 2023, we have focused on alleviating fuel poverty and addressing overall poverty. By implementing a holistic Relational Mentoring approach, the service has successfully contributed to sustained positive changes in the circumstances of vulnerable families across Scotland. Additionally, it has addressed poverty at the household level, acknowledging the circumstances of parents/guardians directly alleviate child poverty.

Addressing the immediate fuel insecurity needs of households has therefore been a key priority. The households we see have been trapped in persistent levels of poverty prior to the cost-of-living challenges and have relied repeatedly on energy crisis funding to survive throughout. To tackle this, we ensured households received a comprehensive range of energy support services including:

- Energy Crisis Support – so no one is self-disconnecting and has access to fuel/energy
- Energy Advocacy – issues with suppliers, billing, fuel debt are resolved
- Energy Advice & Information – equipping households with essential knowledge
- Energy Saving and Efficiency – optimising energy use and improving comfort levels
- Income Maximisation – all available funds and resources are tapped into

We have seen emerging challenges developing over recent months within the social housing sector. Many social tenants coming through the service do not top up their prepayment meter during the summer, meaning they have no access to fuel. Subsequently when a gas safety check

is required to be completed by their social landlord, the check fails as there is no gas supply and results in the household being unable to use their boiler. During this time, households are not realising they are building-up a debt of standing charges, further exacerbating the situation. This then requires their supplier to reset the meter (on site) to place the debt at the back of the meter so any top up will go towards access to fuel and allow the safety check to be carried out.

Instances of capped meters have also been prevalent, where the social landlord has capped the household's meter but requires the supplier to then uncap. The tenant cannot get their meter uncapped until they clear their debt with the supplier. In these situations, Relational Mentoring is essential so that households do not bury their heads in the sand and understand the potential consequences of their actions, such as not topping up their meter. It also highlights the need for crisis support and advocacy so vulnerable households have the necessary assistance to guide them through the multiple complexities.

Relational Mentoring

The service begins with a referral from a partner organisation, followed by an initial meeting between the customer and a professional mentor. This meeting can be conducted online or in person and starts with a compassionate introduction. During the initial assessment, the mentor works with the customer to evaluate their immediate needs across 15 key areas to inform their bespoke action plan. Based on the customer's identified needs, their action plan will detail how they will work with their mentor to meet their needs. This may include participating in volunteering groups, skills training programs, and accessing practical financial and energy support. Over time, through consistent engagement and communication between the customer and their mentor, a trustful relationship develops. This trust often leads to the customer revealing deeper issues, which are often unreported due to stigma and rejection.

Success is measured by short and medium-term outcomes achieved and the customer's positive progression against their identified areas of need. The number of engagements and activities completed demonstrates the volume and effort required to secure meaningful, sustainable change. While the mentoring can extend up to a year, most individuals become self-sustaining within a few months. This holistic and relational approach ensures each household receives tailored support to help them overcome their obstacles and achieve self-sustainability.

Key Outcomes

The outcomes achieved to date are a powerful testament to the impact of our Relational Mentoring Service across Glasgow, Lanarkshire, the Scottish Borders, Inverclyde, and Renfrewshire. The initiative has not only addressed immediate needs like fuel poverty but has also provided comprehensive support that drives long-term change. We are incredibly proud of the progress our customers have made and are committed to continuing this vital work in these regions.

- **Significant Improvements in Access to Services and Energy Assistance:** The most notable progress across all regions was seen in how people were enabled to access other services and energy assistance with nearly half of all customers reporting improvements in these areas. This

reflects our commitment to connecting individuals with vital services and helping them achieve greater energy efficiency and financial savings in their local communities.

- **Multiple Positive Outcomes Per Household:** Each household supported by our mentoring service achieved an average of 9 distinct outcomes, engaged with our services 22 times, and participated in at least 6 activities. This comprehensive support highlights the impact of our efforts across these key regions, where participants have benefited from meaningful engagement and positive change.
- **Progress Among Economically Inactive Individuals:** Individuals who were economically inactive made the most significant strides towards lasting change. This progress underscores the effectiveness of our mentoring, particularly in areas like Glasgow and Lanarkshire, in helping participants move closer to economic stability and independence.
- **Support for Households with Children:** We supported 1,473 households with children. Families across Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, and other regions gained significantly from increased awareness and understanding of available services and benefits, leading to improved financial stability, with many reporting increased incomes.
- **Impact on Low-Income Households:** Households with annual earnings under £20,000 saw remarkable progress driven by enhanced awareness of funding support, improved energy efficiency, and increased income, providing crucial support to those most in need, particularly in the Scottish Borders and other economically vulnerable areas.

RELATIONAL MENTORING EXPLAINED

Relational Mentoring is the evidenced and sustainable approach to helping people identify and overcome multiple challenges through the relationship built with a professional mentor. Mentors motivate and inspire customers to commit to change, to persevere and achieve goals by working together – reaching their full potential.

Relational Mentoring is based upon the insight that working with a person across a wide variety of different needs in a professional, evidence-led manner has a compounding impact and delivers more sustainable results. It is necessary as, across traditional services, support is often limited to one specific area of need, such as securing a job, which often leaves underlying issues unresolved.

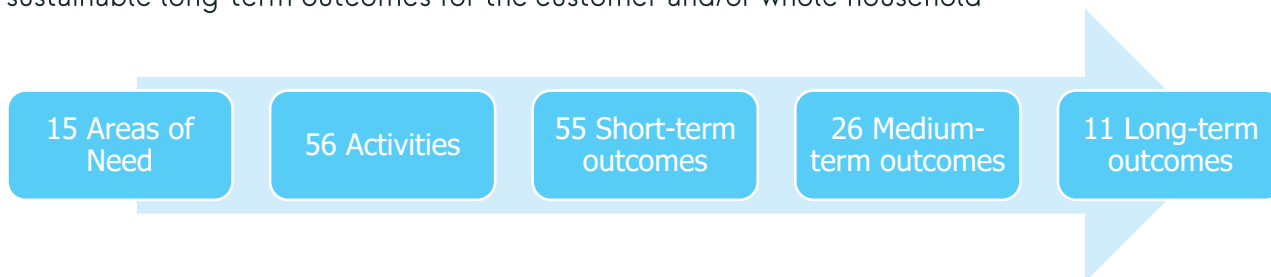
Our Relational Mentoring approach was developed by customers and mentors building upon 40 years of experience in supporting as many as a million people towards a happier, healthier, and sustainable future.

This approach is tailored to each situation and recorded using our Relational Mentoring Framework, which consists of 15 key areas of need with crisis management, coaching, advocating, listening and mentoring as key methods of delivery.

The development of Relational Mentoring has helped to maximise the breadth of support offered to an individual, breaking down traditional boundaries between health, employability, energy, and housing which has often left individuals unable to access the full suite of support required to make a sustainable change.



Our framework directly links the 15 Areas of Need to 56 activities. Through repeated engagements and completion of activities, this results in the achievement of short-term outcomes. Over time leading to the achievement of medium-term outcomes and ultimately sustainable long-term outcomes for the customer and/or whole household



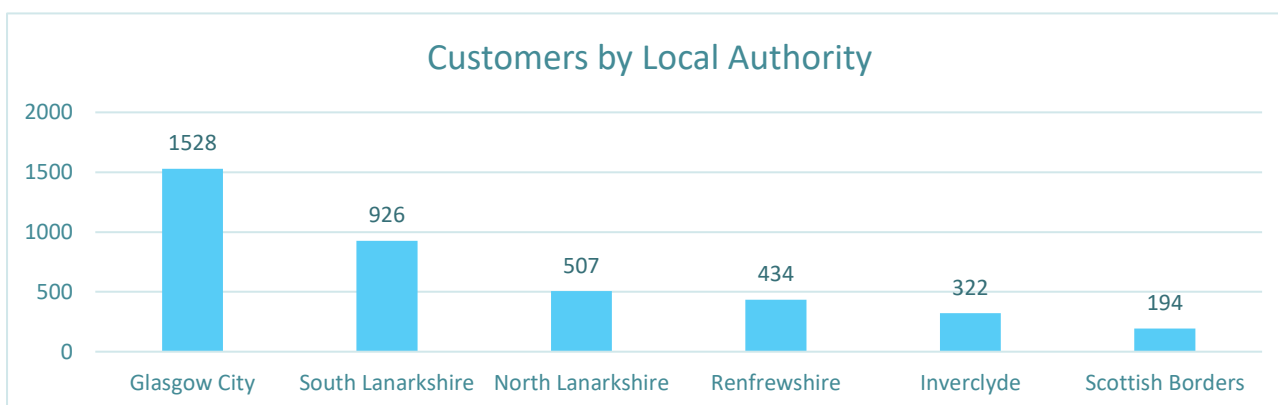
DEMOGRAPHICS: WHO ARE OUR CUSTOMERS?

Relational Mentoring (West and Southern Scotland) supports a cross-section of those in need and offers a lifeline to those who often fall through the gaps of existing provision. This places Relational Mentoring at the heart of Scotland's anti-poverty ecosystem in the six local authorities in which it currently operates.

Since July 2023, we have received 3,911 referrals and supported 2,798 customers. Analysis of this data tells us who our customers have been and indicates the groups that have benefited the most from the service.

Local Authority

Of the 3,911 referrals made so far, just under two thirds (63%) have come from Glasgow City and South Lanarkshire. This is likely due to the high populations and deprivation in both areas.



Our primary sources of referrals are third-sector organisations, local government, housing associations, the NHS, and educational institutions within the above local authorities. Over the past year, we have established partnerships with 364 organisations, including 2 nurseries and 37 schools.

Gender

The service has worked with 1,660 (59%) female customers and 1,148 (41%) male customers. Representing roughly a 60/40 split between female and male customers, this has proven to be a closer gender split than in most support services, which often see a greater weighting towards females.

Gender	Number of Customers
Female	1,660
Male	1,148
Non-binary	7
Other	5

Ethnicity

Our variety of customer ethnic backgrounds helps to demonstrate that the service has been able to effectively reach a wide range of communities, however there is always more work to do to ensure that people are included and recognised. Some ethnicities include:

Ethnicity	Number of Customers
White British	2,067
'Other' White background	132
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	86
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	51
Pakistani	40
Asian/Asian British	30
Arab	25
Indian	18
Ukrainian	17

With extensive diversity among our mentors, it has been beneficial for customers to see people with similar characteristics represented within the service.

Households with Children

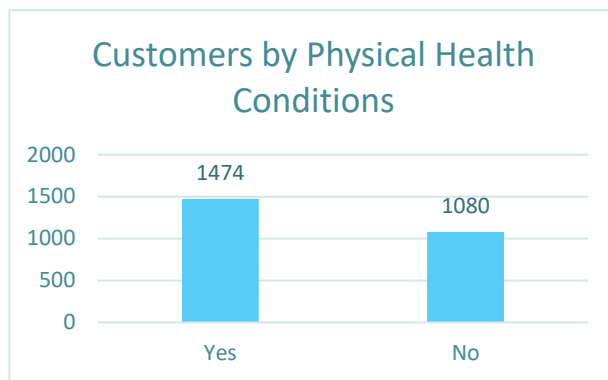
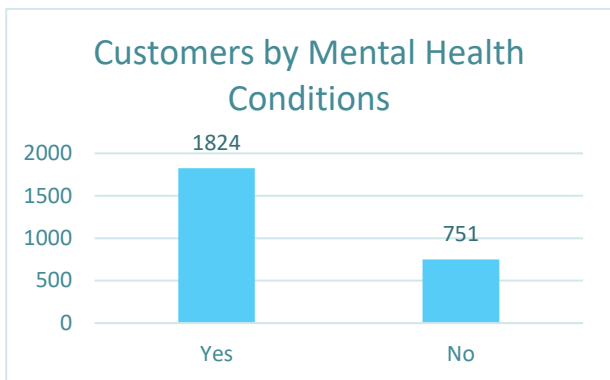
Among the vulnerable households supported, many children were affected by poverty. Overall, 1,473 (47%) customers reported having children in their households. Notably, over half (51%) of these households with children are single-parent households. The children's age ranges include:

Age Group	Number of Households
0-4 years	393
5-10 years	490
11-15 years	363
16-18 years	227

There is no greater service you can offer a child than preventing a lifetime of poverty. That's why we work with the whole household, schools, and specialist partners to alleviate and eradicate child poverty. The service also works directly with 2 nurseries and 37 schools. With an evidence-led approach we can identify the greatest issues facing households with children, and the greatest opportunities for change.

Households with Disabilities

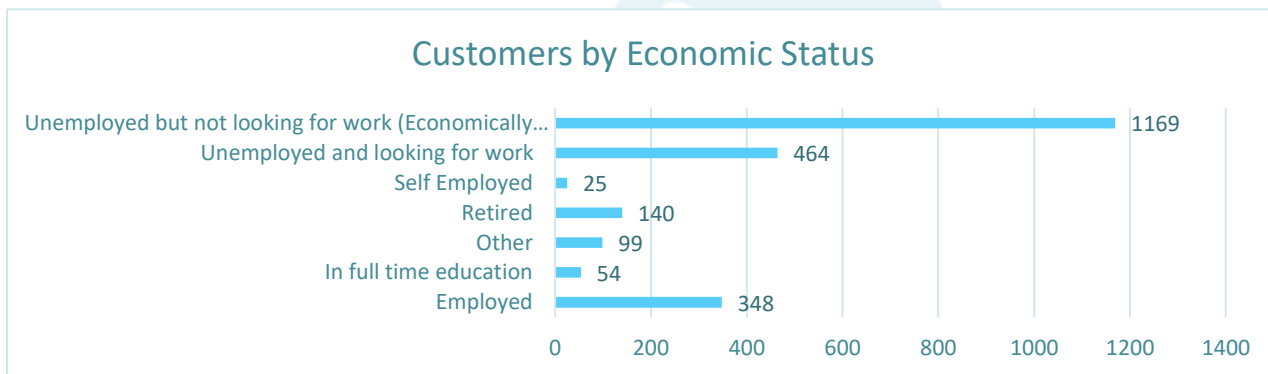
Customers who shared their health status, 1,824 customers (71%) reported having a mental health condition. For physical health, 1,474 (58%) reported to have a physical health condition. Moreover, 320 customers reported having a learning difficulty.



We provide tailored support to accommodate diverse conditions, transforming challenges into opportunities for growth and self-sufficiency. Our mentors offer opportunities such as disability-sensitive job-seeking support, flexible training, confidence building, and stress management. Many mentors have lived and relatable experience, allowing them to understand and meet individual needs effectively.

Economic Status

Most customers (51%) engaged in the service are economically inactive, often due to health conditions or caregiving responsibilities. Among those employed, we support a diverse range, including accountants, cleaners, HGV drivers, civil servants, retail workers, NHS employees, and factory workers.



The range of economic statuses shows our service reaches a broad spectrum, from economically inactive individuals to those employed in various sectors. This highlights our ability to provide tailored support, whether helping people enter the workforce, supporting those employed, or assisting those facing multiple barriers to work. Our goal is to promote financial independence and stability for all through personalised support and skill development.

ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

For each customer, we record how many engagements they have with their mentor, the number of action plan goals created and how many activities have been completed to help progress towards outcomes.

So far, we have carried out over **62,000 engagements**, created **23,600 action plan goals** and supported **2,798 onboarded customers** to complete **17,000 activities** since the service was launched in July 2023.

We measure customer (and their household's) progress based upon widely recognised goals which are integrated into our framework. Looking across the whole service, **16,808 short term outcomes and 8,313 medium term outcomes** have been achieved.

Overall, every onboarded customer, including those still using the service or who have only just begun, have **averaged 8.97 outcomes, 22.15 engagements and 6.07 activities**.

Here is a breakdown of medium-term outcomes our onboarded customers have achieved:

Medium Term Outcome	Outcomes Achieved
Improved motivation to address addiction	1,259
Improved engagement with services	1,248
Improved confidence to manage energy use	709
Improved household energy efficiency/carbon footprint	709
Improved housing situation	552
Improved capability to manage housing & basic needs	552
Improved household income	480
Improved attitude/outlook on life & emotional wellbeing	414
Improved participation in day-to-day life	414
Improved motivation to engage in activities of interests	283
Improved attitude/outlook on life & emotional wellbeing	283
Improved confidence to find work	192
Improved motivation to work	172
Improved financial decision making	168
Improved confidence in life skills	122
Improved personal routine/lifestyle	122
Improved financial situation	121
Improved personal relationships and connections	79
Improved self-esteem & wellbeing	79

Improved application of social skills in work	75
Improved confidence in digital skills	74
Improved use of digital in day-to-day life	74
Improved positive attitudes and behaviours at work	66
Improved positive lifestyle choices	50
Improved confidence in basic skills	16

Overall, the outcomes data shows that the service has been particularly successful in improving motivation related to addiction and engagement with services. With a significant number of improvements reported by customers involving household energy efficiency, reduced energy debt and other general energy assistance support.

Households with Children

Among the 1,473 households with children, 6,408 short-term and 3,166 medium-term outcomes were achieved, with an average of 4.4 short-term and 2.1 medium-term outcomes per household.

Here is a snapshot of some outcomes achieved by households with children:

Short Term Outcomes	Medium Term Outcomes
Improved awareness and understanding of services available	Improved engagement with services
Improved understanding of benefit entitlements	Improved motivation to address addiction
Improved awareness and understanding of how to meet housing and basic needs	Improved attitude/outlook on life and emotional wellbeing
Increased income	Improved participation in day-to-day life

The data shows that households with children benefit significantly from improved awareness and understanding of available services and benefit entitlements. This critical knowledge is often out of reach for many families before they engage with our services, largely due to the challenges faced by single-parent households, unpaid caring responsibilities and other barriers to information access.

Economic Status

Among the 1,169 unemployed (economically inactive) households, 7,760 short-term outcomes and 3,765 medium-term outcomes were achieved, averaging 6.6 short-term and 3.2 medium-term outcomes per household. Our data also reveals that the 464 unemployed (but looking for work) households achieved 3,068 (6.6 avg.) short-term outcomes and 1,521 (3.3 avg.) medium-term outcomes.

Of those who are unemployed, here are some common outcomes they achieved:

Short Term Outcomes	Medium Term Outcomes
Reduced energy debt	Improved household energy efficiency/carbon footprint
Improved money management skills	Improved motivation to address addiction
Improved understanding of options for the future	Improved engagement with services
Improved awareness of funding support available	Improved household income

This evidence shows that frequent short-term outcomes for unemployed households generally cover financial relief and skill development, like reduced energy debt and better money management. Common medium-term outcomes include improved household energy efficiency and increased income. In most cases, mentoring for unemployed households not only addresses immediate financial concerns but also allows for sustainable, lasting change and improvements in their overall economic status.

Similarly, households earning under £20,000 annually (1,182 households) achieved 8,679 short-term outcomes, averaging 7.3 per household, and 4,264 medium-term outcomes, averaging 3.6 per household. Common outcomes for these households include “improved awareness of funding support”, “better household energy efficiency/carbon footprint”, and “increased household income”.

Health and Wellbeing

1,474 customers with a reported physical health condition achieved 8,693 short-term and 4,256 medium-term outcomes, averaging of 5.9 short-term and 2.9 medium-term outcomes per household.

Here is a breakdown of some outcomes achieved by customers with physical health conditions:

Short Term Outcomes	Medium Term Outcomes
Improved day-to-day life skills	Improved participation in day-to-day life
Improved awareness and understanding of activities to support physical health	Improved positive attitudes and behaviours at work

Improved awareness and understanding of mental wellbeing	Improved confidence in life skills
Increased income	Improved confidence in digital skills

1,824 customers with a reported mental health condition achieved 10,997 short-term and 5,350 medium term outcomes, averaging 6 short-term and 2.9 medium-term outcomes per household. See table below:

Short Term Outcomes	Medium Term Outcomes
Improved understanding of personal role in relationships	Improved confidence in life skills
Improved ability to manage mental wellbeing	Improved confidence to manage energy use
Improved access to mental health recovery	Improved personal routine/lifestyle
Improved money management skills	Improved capability to manage housing & basic needs

For customers with physical health conditions, improvements are seen in day-to-day life skills and health awareness. Meanwhile, those with mental health conditions show significant progress in personal relationships, confidence, and lifestyle management.

Additionally, 275 (15%) customers with reported mental health conditions achieved a "prevented crisis/worsening of situation" outcome. This highlights the often life-changing impact of the personalised, one-to-one support provided by our mentors with lived experience.

SOCIAL IMPACT AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT

When new customers are welcomed to the service, every individual ranks where they stand on a scale of 1-5 against each of the 15 needs, with 5 being that they require no support. Each time they move along in their journey, a new step is only counted when the customer recognises that progress has been made. In other words, steps are about how customers perceive the change they have made in themselves.

Overall, 2,798 households made an average of 3.4 steps towards long-term positive change.

The table below shows the percentage of onboarded customers who made progress in the areas they identified as having a need:

Area of Need	Proportion of Customers who Progressed
Access to Other Services	52%
Addiction	13%
Aspiration & Motivation	39%
Basic Skills	17%
Building & Maintaining Relationships	22%
Developing Life Skills	20%
Digital Skills	15%
Energy Assistance	47%
Financial Support	43%
Housing Stability	45%
Mental Wellbeing	39%
Physical Health	27%
Social Skills for Work	17%
Wellbeing, Self Esteem & Confidence	35%
Work Skills & Experience	27%

The highest progression was observed in "Access to Other Services" (52%) and "Energy Assistance" (47%), with about one in two customers making improvements in these areas. Other significant areas of progress include "Housing Stability" at 45% and "Financial Support" at 43%. Overall, the most progress is being made in reinforcing the foundational layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, with energy assistance, financial support, stability, and access to other services ranking highly.

In contrast, helping individuals overcome addictions and move towards meaningful work remains a complex, long-term challenge. These areas saw comparatively lower engagement, with "Addiction" at 13% and "Digital Skills" at 15%.

It's important to note that progression is based on a self-assessment scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating a crisis point and 5 indicating no support is required. Therefore, those starting at 1 face greater difficulties in moving up the scale, requiring more time and resources.

The severity and complexity of addiction recovery, which often requires long-term rehabilitation and support, and the foundational gaps in digital skills, which stem from limited access to technology and education, contribute to slower progress in these areas. Additionally, individuals facing these challenges often deal with other significant barriers, such as mental health issues and a lack of support networks.

The progress of those who have exited the service

533 households have so far planned exits from the service under the guidance of their mentor. The table below shows the percentage of customers with a planned exit who made progress in each area of identified need. Their progress made was as follows:

Area of Need	Proportion of Customers who Progressed (Planned Exit)
Access to Other Services	57%
Addiction	13%
Aspiration & Motivation	39%
Basic Skills	16%
Building & Maintaining Relationships	19%
Developing Life Skills	18%
Digital Skills	11%
Energy Assistance	59%
Financial Support	48%
Housing Stability	43%
Mental Wellbeing	44%
Physical Health	31%
Social Skills for Work	17%
Wellbeing, Self Esteem & Confidence	36%
Work Skills & Experience	25%

Economic Status

Economically inactive individuals made the most steps towards lasting change (3.9), followed by the self-employed (3.8). Unemployed and full-time students average 3.7 steps, while retirees and employed individuals take fewer, at 3.3 and 3 steps respectively.

Economic Status	Average Steps Towards Lasting Change
Economically inactive	3.9
Unemployed but looking for work	3.7
Employed	3
Retired	3.3
Full time education	3.7
Self-employed	3.8

This initial finding helps dispel the dangerous myth that economically inactive individuals are not interested in improving their lives. Instead, it argues for better engagement with this group through meaningful mentoring support. In fact, those who reported being economically inactive made positive progress in areas of need related to employment.

The following table illustrates the progress made by individuals in different economic categories who identified employment-related needs.

Economic Status	Work Skills and Experience	Social Skills for Work	Aspiration and Motivation
Economically inactive	20%	14%	41%
Unemployed	49%	33%	42%
Employed	36%	17%	43%
Retired	N/A	N/A	42%
Full time education	47%	17%	23%
Self-employed	54%	8%	23%

While economically inactive individuals show lower improvement in work skills (20%) compared to other groups, their progress in social skills (14%) is comparable to employed individuals and students (17%). Notably, their aspiration and motivation improvement (41%) nearly match unemployed (42%) and employed (43%) categories. This indicates a strong desire for growth among the economically inactive, suggesting potential for future employment opportunities despite their current status.

Social Return on Investment

The 15 key areas of need identified and updated as part of a customer's journey, are linked to activities and short, medium, and long-term outcomes which can then be used to calculate the social impact of Relational Mentoring. The Wise Group is committed to delivering £1.5 billion of Social Impact over the next 5 years.

To understand how much social value is created through the delivery of this service, we worked with HACT (The Housing Associations Charitable Trust) to assess the impact achieved to date. The social value calculation has been conducted using well established tools within the HACT UK Social Value Bank. HACT's approach to measuring social impact is underpinned by Wellbeing Valuation which is endorsed within HM Treasury's Green Book. The UKSVB is a comprehensive set of metrics designed to measure the social impact of programs and services that provides a standardised approach to valuing the benefits of social interventions, allowing the quantification of positive outcomes in monetary terms.

The measure of impact is based upon data collected by mentors to evidence the achievement of outcomes by customers. The Wise Group's Relational Mentoring framework outcomes were mapped to the UKSVB. As some outcomes did not directly map to HACT's social value wellbeing measures, this indicates the social value generated to date has not been fully accounted for. The calculation also includes a deadweight deduction, which accounts for what would have happened anyway in the absence of an intervention by the service. By incorporating deadweight, this ensures that only the additional social value is calculated, providing a more robust and accurate valuation.

Additionally, to ensure no overclaiming and double counting of outcomes, only those that are material are included in the overall calculation. *E.g. where two or more outcomes draw on the same UKSVB metric, only one is counted per customer to prevent double counting.*

Based on the period from July 2023 to August 2024, the total expenditure in the Relational Mentoring service was £4,531,250 of the total £5,155,723 investment (£5,000,000 from Scottish Government, £155,723 from the Wise Group). The total indicative value derived from the mapped outcomes (allowing for both deadweight and in accordance with double counting principles), is £48,879,835 of social value.

Outcomes Achieved (Short-term & Medium-term)	Social Value
25,572	£48,879,835

As noted above, we expect the total social value generated to be higher due to some outcomes not being mapped to the UKSVB. Based on the current social value figure, this gives a significant indicative Social Return on Investment (SROI) of 1:11. For every £1 invested, almost £11 of social value has already been created. The figure is made up of both primary and secondary social value, the primary value being the wellbeing increase of the 2,851 individuals, with secondary social value accounting for the value to wider society made through preventative spending/savings created when the primary wellbeing improvements are achieved.

CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

The Challenges of a Refugee: A Story of Resilience

A mother of two sought refuge in Scotland from Nigeria in 2022. She paints a grim picture of her early experience in Scotland:

"I feel that I just came to suffer. The system is structured as if it is deliberately designed for you to have a mental health issue, to frustrate you and to trip people off their feet. If I had my way, I'd have stayed in my country. I didn't want to move and resettle. But because I didn't want to die, I had to leave... This organisation came to my aid."

She faced numerous difficulties, leading to anxiety and depression. Her children also felt the effects of this hardship, as they were constantly moving between hotels, with limited access to food and other essentials. One of her sons even had to prepare for his exams under these challenging conditions. The referral to the Wise Group marked a significant positive shift in her life.

"The Wise Group, and especially my mentor, have been really helpful. They are an amazing organisation. In times of low mental health, they have helped me in such a way they would not even know. The reception was so overwhelming."

Her mentor worked to uplift her, reminding her of her worth and contributions. It was a collaborative journey that saw her slowly regain hope and confidence. Her mentor was with her every step of the way, interpreting confusing emails and helping her navigate her new financial and social environment.

Through The Wise Group, the mother received much-needed support like foodbank access, free energy vouchers, and a starter pack with essential household items. Their support extended to helping her purchase a freezer to store food, a crucial need given her living situation.

The customer has now been signed up for employment pathways, digital skills training, and a three-day mental health course. As a mother of two, she's eager to find employment, using her skills to make a positive societal contribution and provide for her children.

Battlefield Primary School: The Value of Partnership Engagement

Battlefield Primary School experiences a significant amount of hidden child poverty. Whilst it is not located in a low-income area, the pupil/parent body is diverse. Parents grappling with financial difficulties often remain silent and do not seek necessary aid, such as for school uniforms, due to the societal stigma and resultant feelings of embarrassment associated with accepting financial help, particularly when they are perceived as middle-class families. The school staff mentioned:

"We have a lot of hidden poverty here and people don't often ask us for help".

The Wise Group bridges the gap for families that need support but do not meet the threshold for social work. The school appreciates this collaboration:

"Collaboration with The Wise Group allows us to help the parents from further away".

The identification of families in need usually happens indirectly, through their children or via trust-building meetings with parents. However, the school lacks the capacity to handle this issue on its own. The staff acknowledged:

"We don't have the capacity to support families experiencing hidden poverty. We rely on the reciprocal collaboration of the Wise Group to support these families through partnership and collaboration".

A story of one of the parents illustrates this: *"She kept saying she didn't need help... but she absolutely needed help".*

With The Wise Group's intervention, this parent is now receiving disability job seeking support, stress management assistance, and has been encouraged to participate in positive wellbeing activities such as Zumba classes and walking.

Before her experience with the Wise Group, she felt let down by previously imposed and unhelpful services. The school staff concluded:

"The turnaround is amazing. It's great to see parents are engaging. We feel so emotional towards this case as this parent would have never done those things prior to engaging with your services".

Visit us here:
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