



**Creative
Mentor
Network**



2024 Impact Report

When looking back over the last year, we saw some amazing creative moments in the UK. Taylor Swift's mammoth Eras Tour took over the UK, which was estimated to boost the economy by nearly £1 billion, Oasis sold 1.4 million tickets to fans in 158 countries for a world tour in 2025, 19.1 million of us tuned in to watch the Gavin & Stacey final on Christmas Day and we saw the release of the much-anticipated film Wicked which was primarily filmed in the UK. A report released by the House of Lords in 2024 stated that the UK creative industry contributed around £124 billion to the UK economy, seeing a 6% growth since 2019.

So why if the UK creative industry is growing, are we seeing socioeconomic representation decline, especially in certain sectors? Working-class representation has halved in the Film & TV industry in the last forty years, and according to recent figures released by the DCMS, working-class representation across the industry went from 26% in 2020 to 19% in 2023. Last year we also saw the cost of living crisis continue, unemployment rates rise, and civil unrest throughout the UK.

It's because of this that the work we do at Creative Mentor Network is so important. The growth we saw in the last year continues to illustrate the

positive impact mentoring can have. Not only did more of the young people we work with develop skills and networks to help them, they felt a career in the creative industry was accessible, thanks to the confidence instilled in them by their mentors. We also saw our mentors continue to advocate for socioeconomic diversity beyond the programme, taking their learnings back into the workplace and making changes in their daily lives.

We couldn't do any of this without the support of our partners, who share our belief that the creative industries should be open to everyone. I want to thank them for prioritising socioeconomic diversity in their businesses, especially when we are seeing others reject DEI initiatives globally.

Looking forward to 2025, we will continue our work to break the class ceiling and ask our partners and the wider industry to continue the conversation around socioeconomic diversity and the importance of improving the class imbalance. We look forward to supporting those who want to make real change in the industry and we hope that 2025 brings a fairer and more diverse creative industry.



KATIE THOMSON-GREENE
CEO AT CREATIVE MENTOR NETWORK

2024 in numbers



Mentee Impact

How sharing knowledge supports success

One of the biggest barriers to accessing the creative industry is simply not knowing enough about the industry or what jobs exist. With new roles being created constantly, careers education struggles to keep up, especially as pathways aren't as clear as more traditional careers like law or finance.

This year we saw a direct response to this through our programmes, as young people were given access to the industry through a mentor. This relationship allowed them to learn about the types of companies within the creative industry and enabled them to start building a professional network to add to their knowledge of the industry.

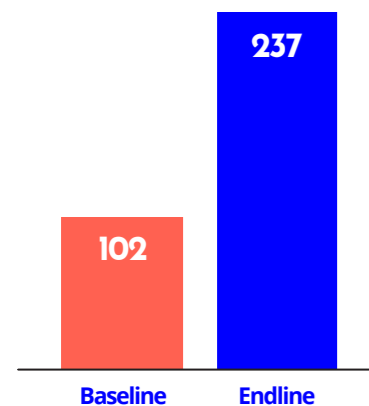
Mentors further supported their mentees by leveraging their own networks. By setting up meetings and introductions mentees were able to meet professionals from a wide range of roles. This year mentees made an average of five professional connections through their programme, which we know makes a huge difference to accessing and developing within the industry.

1676 PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS MADE

Getting in, getting on, and getting paid

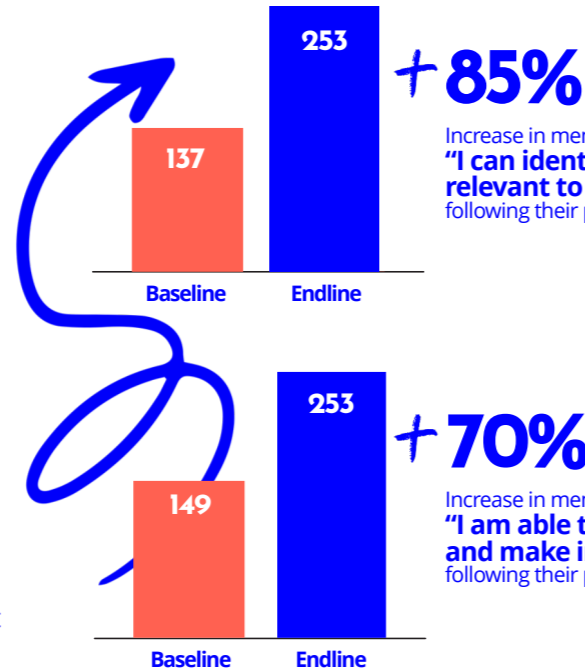
Work experience and internships are an essential part of accessing the creative industries. These experiences support young people to identify the roles that are right for them and help get them noticed when applying for such roles.

But these opportunities are not equal in access, many are unadvertised meaning it is still a case of "who you know". Mentors were able to help facilitate these opportunities through their networks, as well as providing tangible support with applications, including the CV and interview prep required to get into the industry.



+139%

Increase in mentees who said "I have a clear understanding of the different roles and career paths within the creative industries" following their programme.



+85%

Increase in mentees who said "I can identify employers and organisations relevant to their career interests" following their programme.

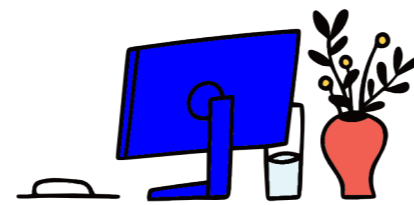
+70%

Increase in mentees who said "I am able to build positive relationships and make industry connections" following their programme.

"Industry knowledge isn't something you can get on YouTube. Having somebody who is ten years ahead to give that information to you is just priceless."



JURGEN FORSTER, SOHO MENTORSHIP BRIGHTON

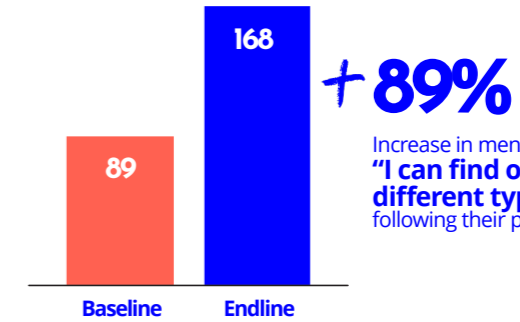


62 Mentees did work experience or an internship on their programme

67 Mentees gained employment on their programme



For mentees in work, mentors were able to support them with their confidence and understanding of their value which in turn allowed them to negotiate salaries, navigate day rates effectively and self-advocate for promotions.



+89%

Increase in mentees who said "I can find out how much people earn in different types of jobs" following their programme.

"My mentor pushed me to negotiate a higher salary, which I got in the end. The idea was nerve wracking because of that fear of rejection, and it's not the type of thing you are taught in school. I feel more confident now with this for the future which I'm really happy with."

SHANICE ST DENNIS, SOHO MENTORSHIP



"Before the programme, I was basing my freelance rates on what I'd earned in retail, not on what designers are actually paid. My mentor helped me reset my prices and present my offering to people in a clearer way, more in line with my skills and value, which was really helpful."

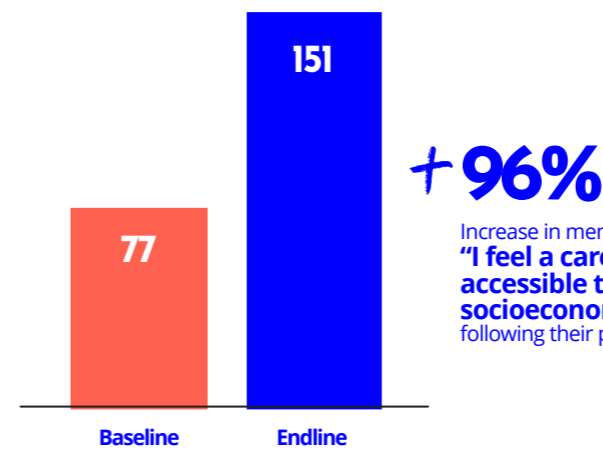
KIA COOKEY-WILLIAMS, AMAZON BRIGHT SPARKS



Helping people feel like they belong

Following mentoring, it is incredible to see the number of young people who feel that the industry is accessible to them has **nearly doubled** over their programmes. This improvement is a result of mentees learning more about the industry, being able to recognise and value their skills, and overall building their confidence with the help of their mentors.

Making the creative industry accessible to the young people we work with is crucial to our mission. The training our mentors undertake ensures they have the skills to create change beyond their mentoring relationship, and ultimately to become advocates within their workplaces. This way we can ensure we are not just supporting recruitment, but also retention.



+96%

Increase in mentees who said "I feel a career in the creative industries is accessible to a young person from a lower socioeconomic background" following their programme.

By building a community of young people, and creating advocates for socioeconomic diversity within creative workplaces, we want to build an industry where everyone feels that they belong. The benefits of this go beyond the individual, these changes can lead to happier employees, increased confidence, and a renewed culture at work that supports success for everyone.



"The mentoring programme has been a life changing first step into an industry I've always dreamt of being a part of. From starting off, being clueless and having no connections and no confidence to branch out and build a strong network, this opportunity has really given me a chance to dive my head in and meet so many people I don't think I would've met otherwise, mentee and mentor alike. I'm so forever grateful for this chance and it's been even more than I could've ever dreamt for."

JOSHUA BAPTISTA, POSITIVE INFLUENCE

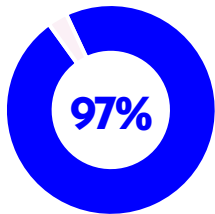


Mentor & Partner Impact

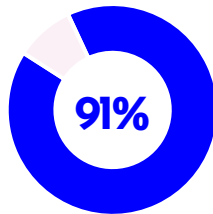
We saw an incredible impact on our mentors in 2024. They developed their understanding of the barriers to access for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and their training in mentoring and coaching gave them the necessary tools to support their mentees in overcoming these.



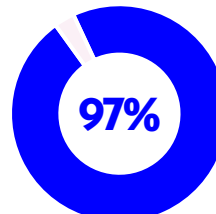
The power of skills building



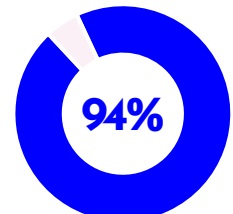
of mentors have a good understanding of the barriers to access for young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds



of mentors feel well equipped to support young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds into their industry



of mentors feel confident advocating for socioeconomic diversity within the workplace

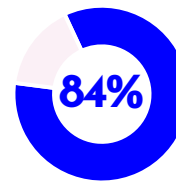


of mentors feel motivated to contribute to their company's diversity and inclusion strategy

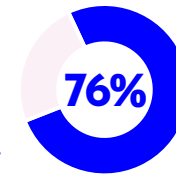


Mentors take the skills they learn throughout the programme and apply these to their day to day roles as managers and leaders at work.

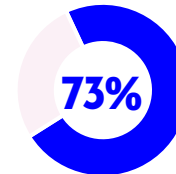
By becoming better listeners, and understanding how to coach and support junior talent, our mentors are able to bring inclusive practices to work, supporting their own development and their businesses.



Mentors who increased their listening skills



Mentors who increased their coaching skills



Mentors who increased ability to up-skill junior team members

Making impactful changes

Reverse mentoring plays a big role in our programmes, with mentors reporting on how much they also learnt from their mentees. From understanding more about new audiences and attitudes to getting feedback, and working collaboratively on live projects. Mentors gained not only skills in management and coaching but also expanded their cultural capital which benefited their own work.



“Learning about the importance and diversity of cultural capital made me think about the people we work with more. We made an active effort to use a director outside our usual roster for a social campaign. With the help of my mentee we found a director with a completely different viewpoint who had experience with TikTok and Snapchat we wouldn't have got elsewhere.

LIAM BENDELL,
AMAZON BRIGHT SPARKS

THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 PARTNERS

