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NETWORKS

Wiseup Networks Social Impact

The social value generated by Wiseup
Networks 2023 - 2026

September 2026



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Prepared using HACT's social value assessment and methodology.

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1. Executive summary

HACT was commissioned by Wiseup Networks to undertake an indicative social value assessment of mentoring and work experience programmes delivered between the 2022/23 and 2025/26 academic years. The assessment covers programmes delivered with multiple anonymised employer and education partners.

Based on available data, HACT has calculated a conservative estimate of indicative social value using assumptions and alternative data where direct outcome evidence was not available. HACT calculates that Wiseup Networks' programmes generated £939,692 of indicative social value across the period covered by the HACT summary sheet. This includes £731,012 linked to increased confidence, £74,006 linked to gaining advice, and £134,674 linked to mentoring. These figures are indicative rather than actual social value because the available data does not fully meet the evidence requirements of the HACT UK Social Value Bank methodology. They should therefore be read as a conservative estimate based on the data supplied, alternative evidence sources and stated assumptions, rather than as a verified measure of realised social value.

The assessment demonstrates the value created through structured mentoring, advice and workplace exposure for young people, and the importance of support that helps participants build confidence, access guidance and develop professional connections.

2. Introduction

Wiseup Networks is an award-winning social enterprise that connects employers and education providers through mentoring and work experience programmes for young people. By working with businesses to train employees as mentors and by creating structured links between students and employers, Wiseup Networks seeks to improve social mobility, strengthen employability and give young people clearer insight into the world of work. Wiseup Networks works with HACT to measure the social impact of their programmes.

Wiseup Networks combines mentor training, matching, one-to-one mentoring and work experience placements to help students build confidence, understand career options and access professional networks. This report assesses the social value generated by Wiseup Networks during each academic year since 2023. The assessment focuses on the outcomes created for participating students through mentoring, workplace exposure and employer-led work experience. It considers the extent to which the programme supports young people to build confidence, strengthen communication and employability skills, understand post-school career pathways and develop professional connections that can support their future choices.

The report uses available evidence to provide a measured view of the value created during the reporting period and to identify how Wiseup Networks can continue to strengthen impact measurement, outcome evidence and future reporting.

3. Assessment

To gain a comprehensive view of the impact generated by Wiseup Networks' programmes, we have used the HACT impact measurement methodology to measure the social value of the services delivered. The methodology measures social value using a recognised wellbeing approach, in line with HM Treasury's Green Book. By assigning evidenced financial proxy values to outcomes such as improved financial stability and access to advice locally, HACT's methodology captures both the improvement to individual wellbeing and the potential savings to the state. See the appendix for more detail about HACT's methodology.

The report indicates the social value generated by the programmes and years included in the HACT summary sheet. We have used data provided by Wiseup Networks on the number of young people supported through mentoring, advice and work experience activity. In each instance, the calculations are based on a conservative estimate to provide a baseline for the social value expected. Throughout the report, recommendations are outlined as opportunities to generate more social value or to measure it more comprehensively.

3.1 Social value assessment

Based on available data, HACT has calculated that Wiseup Networks' programmes generated £939,692.00 of indicative social value across the programmes and years included in the HACT Summary sheet.

The partner-level table has been replaced by aggregate outcome totals to prevent identification through programme-specific cohort sizes, years and financial values. The original overall assessment values have not been changed.

Outcome	Indicative social value	Share of total
Increased confidence	£731,012	77.8%
Able to obtain advice	£74,006	7.9%
Mentoring	£134,674	14.3%
Grand total	£939,692	100%

Increased confidence is the largest contributor to social value. When responses were mapped to the HACT UK Social Value Bank, Wiseup Networks' feedback indicated that around 25% of participants reported an improvement in confidence that met the threshold used to evidence social impact.

Programme-by-programme comparisons and per-participant values have been omitted because their combinations of figures and cohort characteristics could reveal individual partner organisations.

Key considerations regarding the calculations

- Calculations are based on assumptions using the data and materials supplied to us.
- Where evidence as set out in the social value banks are not available, we have used available data to make assumptions about the percentage of young people that are likely to achieve a social value outcome.
- Each social value outcome requires a certain threshold of change to occur before the social value can be claimed. This means that it is unlikely that everyone who receives a service will achieve the positive progression required to claim social value and so we do not apply the total number of young people to the calculation. An evidence informed adjustment is applied which depends on how closely the data aligns with the outcome chosen.
- HACT anticipates that the social value that could be captured would increase following the implementation of new data trails and further data collection with customers.
- HACT recommends that all forecast and indicative social value calculations are caveated in reporting to highlight that these are based on alternative data sources and assumptions.

3.2 Assessment commentary

The following section provides further detail on the outcomes applied across Wiseup Networks' programmes and explains how mentoring, advice and workplace exposure contribute to improved wellbeing for young people.

3.2.1 Mentoring

Mentoring is a core part of Wiseup Networks' programme model. Young people are connected with trained employee mentors who provide structured conversations, workplace insight and access to professional networks. For this assessment, mentoring has been included where Wiseup Networks' data showed that young people took part in mentoring activity and the outcome has been applied to everyone who was reported for each cohort. The mentoring value is based on the HACT Social Value Bank outcome that best reflects structured mentoring and training support. This outcome recognises the value created when people build skills, confidence, career awareness and employability through guided support. It has therefore been used as a suitable proxy for the mentoring delivered through Wiseup Networks' programmes.

The qualitative feedback reinforces this choice of outcome. Participants described mentors as trusted sources of practical advice, reassurance and encouragement, with support extending to CVs, presentations, career choices and professional communication. These comments corroborate the mentoring activity recorded by Wiseup Networks; the financial proxy itself remains grounded in programme participation records, as required by the outcome evidence specification.

"It was very helpful to have someone from the company to confide in", "She has been the best mentor I could have ever asked for" and "The consistent support and feedback from my mentor played a crucial role"

3.2.2 Confidence

Confidence is an important outcome for Wiseup Networks because the programmes support young people to feel more able to engage with employers, take part in professional conversations and make decisions about their future. For this assessment, confidence has been measured using survey responses collected by Wiseup Networks.

Participants rated their confidence on a 1–10 scale before and after taking part in the programme. These responses were mapped to the relevant HACT Social Value Bank evidence questions. The mapping can be viewed in the appendix. This allowed the survey data to be used in a way that is consistent with the HACT evidence requirements. Only participants whose survey responses showed the required uplift in confidence have been included in the confidence calculation. This means the value does not assume that every participant became more confident. The confidence figure should therefore be understood as a measure of the evidenced change created by the programme. This is also the strongest theme in the open-ended feedback. Participants linked increased self-belief to public speaking, presentations, interviews, professional communication, meeting new people, independent travel and feeling comfortable in a workplace. Statements provide clear qualitative support for the outcome. The quotations strengthen the interpretation of the measured uplift, but they are not treated as a substitute for the pre- and post-programme threshold used in the social value calculation.

"My confidence grew exponentially", "It definitely set me up for interviews"

"The whole experience not only built my confidence but also enhanced my public speaking skills"

3.2.3 Able to obtain advice locally

"Able to obtain advice locally" is the name of the outcome used in the HACT UK Social Value Bank. For this assessment, it has been applied to a small proportion of young people who were mentored through Wiseup Networks' programmes. This is because the open-ended feedback and sentiment in the data provided by Wiseup Networks showed a clear theme around advice and guidance. Young people described mentors helping them understand future options, plan next steps, make informed choices and feel more comfortable asking a professional for help. The value has therefore been applied cautiously, only where the available evidence suggests that mentoring helped participants access advice and support that could influence their future decisions.

The feedback gives further context for this proxy. Young people reported greater clarity about sectors, university and apprenticeship routes, and less pressure to have every future decision resolved immediately.

“I don’t need to have all the answers at this age”

“I’m more certain of what sector I would like to go into”

“My mentor had helped me navigate different career paths”

3.2.4 Wider outcomes evidenced in participant feedback

The feedback also identifies benefits that are not separately monetised in this assessment.

Participants described a better understanding of professional environments, stronger CV, presentation, interview, networking and communication skills, exposure to unfamiliar roles and sectors, wider professional connections, and increased motivation and aspiration. The contrast between expecting to be “just sitting at a desk” and finding that the experience “exceeded my expectations” illustrates the value of meaningful workplace exposure.

Other comments, including “I have a lot more to put on my CV”, “Introducing me to many people in many fields” and “This experience has made us more open-minded to future plans” show development in workplace readiness, social capital and future outlook. Potential proxy alignment: these themes may align with Social Value Bank outcomes relating to employability or job-related skills, access to professional networks and improved future outlook.

No additional value has been added to the £939,692 total because the current evidence does not yet demonstrate the specific threshold, attribution and non- duplication requirements for those proxies.

Future surveys should include matched pre- and post-programme questions for these areas so that any additional outcomes can be tested and valued robustly without double counting benefits already captured under confidence, advice or mentoring.

4. Recommendations

This assessment provides a baseline view of the social value generated through Wiseup Networks’ mentoring and work experience programmes.

The calculations are indicative where direct evidence was not available and should therefore be understood as a cautious estimate based on the data provided.

As Wiseup Networks continues to develop its approach to impact measurement, HACT recommends focusing on a small number of practical improvements that will strengthen the evidence base and support more robust future reporting.

Strengthen outcome measurement and evidence collection

Wiseup Networks should continue to collect participation data while placing greater emphasis on evidencing outcomes through direct feedback from young people. Using a small number of consistent pre- and post-programme questions aligned with the UK Social Value Bank evidence requirements would help demonstrate meaningful changes in outcomes such as confidence and access to advice.

This would strengthen the evidence base, keep data collection manageable, and enable Wiseup Networks to move from indicative social value estimates towards actual social value calculations.

Build on the existing baseline

This report should be used as a foundation for future impact measurement rather than introducing significant new reporting requirements at once. Over time, stronger outcome evidence will enable Wiseup Networks to demonstrate impact with greater confidence and accuracy.

The existing findings also provide a useful starting point for Phase 2 of this work, including the development of an updated impact framework and a clearer approach to measuring social value across different programmes and partners.

5. Appendix A: Social Value overview

Defining social value

There is no single universal definition of social impact, but most descriptions focus on the changes (positive or negative) that an organisation creates in people's lives, communities and society. Social impact is concerned with what changes, for whom, and to what extent, often relating to improvements in wellbeing, health, education, environment, community cohesion and equity. It is typically long term, representing the end goal in a Theory of Change and the difference achieved through an organisation's activities, outputs and outcomes.

All organisations generate impact through what they do, the choices they make and how they reinvest their resources. While impact can occur unintentionally, understanding it requires intentional planning, measurement and reflection, particularly when aiming to maximise positive change.

Social value is closely connected but distinct. In simple terms, social value is the value attributed to the social impacts delivered and is a way of understanding the relative importance of different outcomes. An independent social value organisation describes it as: "Understanding the relative importance people place on changes to their wellbeing and using that insight to make better decisions."

Similarly, the social value research organisation defines social value as the process of quantifying the importance people place on changes in their lives, with wellbeing at its core. In practice, social value is most powerful when used to inform decisions it helps organisations choose interventions that deliver the greatest benefit for people and communities. While the concept of additionality (value beyond the core service) is widely used in procurement, all organisations create social value, whether through their primary activity or additional commitments.

Together, social impact and social value provide a framework for understanding what difference is being made, how meaningful that change is, and how organisations can prioritise actions that maximise positive outcomes for the people and places they serve. Why Social Impact and valuation Matters Understanding impact is essential for organisations that want to make a meaningful difference. It clarifies what matters to communities, ensures resources are targeted where they have the greatest effect, and supports the design of services that address real needs. At HACT, we believe social value is only achieved when impact happens and when outcomes genuinely improve people's lives. This requires engaging with communities, understanding their priorities, and embedding that insight into decision-making, investment and service design. It also helps organisations recognise forms of value that traditional financial measures may overlook.

Valuing social impact strengthens this understanding. Robust valuation supports better decisions in procurement, regeneration and service delivery, helping organisations track progress, improve effectiveness and maximise positive impact while minimising harm. HM Treasury's Green Book endorses wellbeing valuation as a recommended method, and HACT's wellbeing-based approach aligns with this guidance, offering a consistent, sector-wide standard for measuring and valuing social impact.

HACT's Wellbeing Approach

HACT's methodology uses the UK Social Value Bank (UKSVB), UK Built Environment Bank and Mental Health Bank. The outcomes applied in this assessment relate to increased confidence, gaining advice and mentoring. The banks are based on wellbeing valuation and include monetised outcomes that reflect the real changes experienced by people. Each outcome includes:

Wellbeing value – direct impact on an individual's wellbeing

Exchequer value – fiscal impact on public services

Business value (built environment only) – local economic impact

Total social value – combined value after applying deadweight

The banks are co-created with an independent research partner in partnership with the sector. Informed by national datasets, the HACT's social value banks provide monetised outcomes that reflect the uplift in wellbeing experienced by people to understand impact in a transparent and comparable way. Used by hundreds of housing associations, local authorities and charities across the UK, the methodology continues to evolve in response to new evidence, policy shifts and community insight, ensuring it remains a reliable, relevant and future-ready standard for capturing and valuing social impact.

6. Appendix B: HACT Social Value Evidence

To evidence the social value generated, a lot of outcomes in the UK Social Value Bank are based on survey feedback from respondents. The below survey questions could be used, following these methodological considerations:

- Ask the question prior to, and after, an intervention takes place
- Only claim the social value of this outcome if their answer moves from a non- asterisk to an asterisk answer (indicated for each question separately)
- The movement from a non-asterisk to an asterisk is where the methodology identifies this transition as representing the level of uplift required to evidence a meaningful improvement in wellbeing.

Theme	Outcome	Evidence required
Local environment	Able to obtain advice locally	If I needed advice about something I could go to someone in my neighbourhood. Strongly agree*; Agree*; Neither agree/disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree
Health	Confidence (adult)	Have you recently been losing confidence in yourself? Not at all*; No more than usual; Rather more than usual; Much more than usual
Employment	Mentoring	No survey required – evidenced by organisation records

7. Appendix C: Wiseup Networks Responses mapped

The below sets out how the survey responses for improvement in confidence has been mapped against HACT's social value bank evidence requirements.

Wiseup Networks HACT

Wiseup Networks survey score	HACT equivalent
1-3	4. Much more than usual
4-6	3. More than usual
7-8	2. No more than usual
9-10	1. Not at all

To achieve the confidence outcome, the response moved from 1-8 to 9-10.