



celebrating
30
years

Stories of Impact

Celebrating 30 years of
changing lives

eikon helping young people in Surrey



“YOU'RE NOT
alone”

Reflections from Chris Hickford MBE Founder and CEO of Eikon

Eikon is an organisation where relationships are at its core.

Our relationships with children and young people are, and always will be, the most important to us.

Our relentless dedication to this has driven the levels of impact and the number of changed lives over three decades that we're so proud of. When young people express their desperation because of the sometimes unimaginable circumstances they are facing, it's not our words that matter in that moment, it's the fact we are there – listening, comforting, caring. The rebuilding work begins once the relational foundations are established.

My greatest privilege as Founder and CEO of Eikon is hearing about the lives impacted through the work of the team and I thank all those who have shared their stories here. The emails, letters and even people stopping me in the street bring much joy. They also remind me how important our work is and will be over the next decade.

Yet we couldn't do what we love doing the most – helping young people to become safe and thrive – without our supporters and funders. You have made it possible. Your support, encouragement and advice have enabled us to become who we are, and even when faced with something difficult, you have helped us find a way. We are indebted to you, and we thank you for our first 30 years.

To our commissioners and partners, we thank you for your trust. We are humbled and motivated to deliver on our responsibilities and not let you down. In the next decade we are stepping up our commitment to work side by side with you to ensure support systems for children, young people and families provide what they need and when they need it.

Thank you for partnering with us on our mission and vision for the future.



Ellie

Supported by Eikon 2003 to 2010

Ellie first connected with Eikon as a young teenager struggling to cope at school and at home. Facing trauma, isolation and a lack of support, she found comfort in the small hub at Fullbrook School, where consistent, caring adults provided a safe space and a sense of belonging. Over time, those relationships became life-changing.

Eikon supported Ellie through some of her most difficult experiences, including court proceedings and personal crisis, always going beyond what was expected. As she grew older and became a young mum, their support didn't stop. They continued to encourage her, helping her rediscover her identity and build confidence during a challenging time.

For Ellie, Eikon became more than a service; it became family. Their care, consistency and belief in her helped her navigate trauma, parenthood and adulthood, shaping the person she is today and leaving a lasting impact she still carries with her.

“I wouldn't be the person I am now if it wasn't for them.”

“You may not have your family, but that was like an extended family for me”



Katie

Supported by Eikon 1997 to 2000
Volunteer Mentor 2022 to present

When Katie Newton first connected with Eikon in the late 1990s, it was “just Chris” in “a tiny little office in Fulbrook”, but the impact was life-changing. Feeling “pretty lost” and alone amid challenges at home, Katie found in Eikon a safe space to be heard, supported and understood.

Chris created an environment where Katie could “just shout and vent” without judgement, helping her return to lessons calmer and more able to cope. He also helped Katie communicate difficult emotions with her mum when she struggled to express herself alone.

Now volunteering with Eikon since 2022, Katie says her experience motivated her to give

back to young people facing similar challenges. Although Eikon has grown hugely since those early days, her first thought is still “Chris and his support and his enormous smile”.

For Katie, Eikon’s impact was simple but profound:

“He created a space where I felt like I could just get out everything that was going on.”



Lola

Supported by Eikon in 2021



Lola began struggling during lockdown, overwhelmed by anxiety and depression that left her feeling uncomfortable in herself and afraid of where her thoughts might lead.

Reaching out was a turning point, and through Eikon, she found a safe space to be heard. With patient, non-judgmental support, she was able to open up about emotions that once felt too heavy to carry alone.

Over time, that support helped her rediscover hope and begin to understand herself. Today, Lola is in a much happier place, with a renewed sense of strength.

**“I didn’t feel judged.
Instead I felt relieved.”**



Dear Future Me

Dear younger self

Here's to you.

I'm sorry you have to put up with what I'm putting you through.

Dear Future Me

Please say you're happy

No I can't go on knowing I'm still who I used to be.

Cos I can't spend another day, wiping the tears off my face

Finishing another dinner plate, wishing I was somebody else.

But if that's how it cracks up to be, I'm praying for the future me

Please go ahead and live your life and be yourself

And promise you won't change for anybody else.

Dear Present me

I know things are rough here

But we will stay strong

We will carry on cos there's no giving up now.

Cos I can't spend another day, wiping the tears off my face

Finishing another dinner plate, wishing I was somebody else.

But if that's how it cracks up to be, I'm praying for the future me

Please go ahead and live your life and be yourself

I promise that one day you'll realise your wealth.

BY LOLA ROSE

Sam

Supported by Eikon in 2022

CONFIDENT*

Sam came to Eikon at a crisis point, sharing: “I wanted to die because I didn’t feel like I was understood. I hated my body, and no one could help me.” After coming out as trans+, Sam was struggling deeply with identity, isolation and mental health.

Through one-to-one wellbeing sessions with Tracy, Sam found a safe, understanding space to explore difficult feelings and begin a journey towards self-acceptance: “We looked at loving myself and accepting my body.”

Practical coping strategies and consistent, compassionate support helped Sam feel safer and more able to reach out.

Over time, this support built confidence and hope: “The support has helped me in ways I cannot tell you... it’s given me the confidence to be open with those around me.” Reflecting on the experience, Sam says simply: “You really have saved me along my journey.”



Tom

Supported through the Eikon Safer Streets Project 2024



Through Eikon's Safe Streets project, Tom received targeted group support and one-to-one guidance from a wellbeing practitioner, helping him build on his natural leadership potential. Initially displaying disruptive behaviour and struggling to use his influence positively, Tom took part in structured group sessions and an outdoor residential experience.

These activities enabled him to develop teamwork skills, reflect on his impact on others, and shift from disruptive behaviours to encouraging and supporting peers.

As a result, Tom demonstrated more positive leadership and improved self-awareness. Eikon's support created pathways for continued development, with Tom progressing into a volunteering role helping to lead a younger sports group, reinforcing his confidence, responsibility, and contribution to his community.



Sadie

Supported through Eikon High Hopes! programme in 2023

When Sadie arrived at Eikon's High Hopes! residential, she had been living with overwhelming anxiety for years. Yet over one weekend, something shifted. By courageously stepping into challenges like the high ropes, her confidence began to grow and others began to look up to her.

The experience helped Sadie feel seen and understood, while strengthening her relationships at home.



She connected more deeply with her mum and brother, building empathy and learning how to support one another.

Reflecting on her journey, Sadie shared:

“It helped me realise that I am not alone... I feel like a different person.”

Today, Sadie is doing things she once thought impossible, taking part in dance competitions and planning for her future.

With Eikon's support, Sadie has found confidence, connection, and hope, transforming how she sees herself and what she believes is possible.

Sadie's Mum – Rebecca

Supported by Eikon in 2023

Through Eikon's High Hopes! residential and parenting programme, Rebecca was supported to build her confidence and feel less alone. Initially unsure about attending, she found reassurance in connecting with other parents facing similar challenges.

Eikon provided a safe space for Rebecca to share experiences, reflect on her parenting, and learn practical strategies to support her children. She gained simple, actionable tools and an

understanding that small changes at home can lead to meaningful progress.

Crucially, Rebecca also developed a supportive peer network of parents and had valuable quality time with her children, helping to strengthen family relationships.

With Eikon's support, Rebecca moved from uncertainty and isolation to confidence, connection, and practical tools to support her family.



Jamie

Supported by Eikon in 2023

Eikon's one-to-one support provided a vital safe space for Jamie to explore identity, relationships and wellbeing, building confidence and self-understanding over time. Through regular sessions, Jamie developed practical strategies to manage overthinking and communicate more openly, leading to meaningful change at home.

As Jamie shared, "I've found myself opening up to my dad... he really has begun to understand my journey," resulting in feeling "safer and more accepted."

The support also strengthened Jamie's voice and resilience:

"I had a safe space where I could be real... and gained a big understanding of myself."

By enabling honest conversations and equipping Jamie with tools to cope and connect, Eikon not only improved emotional wellbeing but helped rebuild a key family relationship, creating lasting, positive impact beyond the sessions.

listen



Jamie's Dad

Supported by Eikon 2023

Eikon's support enabled Jamie's parent to move from uncertainty to understanding, creating space for open, positive conversations at home. Initially "pretty sceptical," Jamie's parent shared, "I am so thankful... I am much further along in my understanding," highlighting a significant shift in awareness around gender identity.

With Eikon's guidance, communication improved, leading to everyday changes

that mattered: "I am now using Jamie's chosen name and pronouns," and "we now have many conversations about their journey."

This growing understanding has had a profound emotional impact, with Jamie's parents reflecting that the support has been

"so valuable" and that they are "thankful to have my happy young person back."

Eikon's work has not only supported Jamie, but strengthened family relationships, fostering acceptance, trust and lasting connection.



Maddy

Supported by Eikon in 2021

When Maddy was 16, severe anxiety was taking over her life. She was struggling deeply, facing self-harm and suicidal thoughts, and waiting years for NHS support. That's when she was referred to Eikon.

With the right mix of counselling and medical support, everything began to change. Eikon didn't just treat her anxiety, they helped her feel seen, understood, and supported without judgement.

Recently, Maddy attended an event at the House of Lords, where she shared her story and thanked Sarah, her Eikon practitioner and the wider Eikon team for the support that changed her life. She is now studying law and has received national recognition for her contribution to free legal advice.

Eikon didn't just help Maddy cope, they helped her build a future she once thought wasn't possible.



Emma

Chair of Surrey Heath Youth Council, 2018 to 2022

With support from Eikon, Emma gained confidence and developed her voice through her involvement in Surrey Heath Youth Council. Motivated by a desire to “help make positive changes... on things that matter to young people,” Emma took on new challenges and built resilience, even during the pandemic. A key highlight was helping to deliver a live TEDxYouth event, showing what could be achieved despite difficult circumstances.

Emma pushed beyond her comfort zone, including speaking

to more than 1,000 people, while building confidence, teamwork skills and lasting friendships. Emma described Surrey Heath Youth Council as

“a brilliant thing to be involved in,”

highlighting the sense of belonging it brought.

With Eikon’s support, this experience helped Emma grow into a more confident and socially aware individual, with a stronger voice and a clear commitment to making a positive difference in her community.



Julie, Trustee 1995 to 2001

Julie Gines, an early trustee of the New Haw Youth Project, remembers Eikon's beginnings as a small but deeply purposeful community initiative centred around Fullbrook School. Working initially from "a little cupboard office," the project relied on volunteers, church support, fundraising events and a handful of committed trustees to sustain Chris's role supporting young people in school.



Julie believed the project stood out because Chris worked directly within the school community at a time when youth clubs were closing and young people needed greater support. She described the early ethos as one to "lead by example," offering care and guidance through relationships and presence rather than preaching.

During her time as trustee, the New Haw Youth Project expanded into surrounding areas and eventually became Eikon, with young people helping choose the new name. Looking back, Julie said she felt,

"very proud to have been involved in the beginning," adding: "from an acorn it's grown into an oak."

Mike

Volunteer since 2010



Mike has been volunteering with young people for over a decade and now supports Eikon as a mentor. Through his role, he helps young people facing low confidence and limited aspirations to believe in themselves and take positive steps forward.

With Eikon's training and support, Mike empowers young people to overcome challenges like supporting one student to build the confidence to make an important phone call about their future. That moment of success didn't just solve a problem;

it gave the young person pride, independence, and belief they could handle future challenges.

For Mike, volunteering is deeply rewarding. He sees first-hand how quickly young people can grow when given the right support. As Mike says,

“You’ll be surprised at what a difference you can make.”

Through Eikon, volunteers like Mike transform lives while gaining purpose, connection, and a powerful sense of impact.



Deborah Oates

Volunteer since 2016

Children and young people are at the heart of Deborah's volunteering with Eikon. Since 2016, she has helped create spaces where they feel safe, relaxed, valued and free to be themselves.

Through the Garden Clubs community, and time in the Hopes and Dreams Garden, (which was created by young people, for young people) she sees them grow in confidence, build friendships and discover a sense of purpose. The impact is both visible and deeply personal. Young people have many opportunities to gain practical skills, over and above

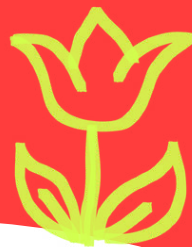
gardening, take ownership in projects, and work towards nature-based awards, while benefiting from time outdoors that supports their wellbeing. Some come for restoration, calm and connection; others find a pathway into wider support. Each chooses how they engage, giving them agency and a voice in their own development.

For Deborah, the change is clear in the small moments, conversations, laughter, growing independence and in the garden itself as it continues to be shaped by their ideas and effort. As she reflects,



“My life is enhanced by my experiences at Eikon, volunteer and find your ‘win/win’; it’s not work, it’s more.”

George Garden Club Volunteer 2017 to 2020



George's journey with Eikon began as a student attending lunchtime clubs before volunteering with the young carers group in Year 11.

After noticing an unused patch of land behind the Eikon site, George and his friends came up with the idea of creating a garden where young people could learn, build and grow together. With support from Eikon staff and volunteers, and by securing £10,000 from the People's Postcode Lottery, the garden club soon became a thriving project.



The garden gave young people the chance to plant vegetables, cook with the produce they grew, create artwork and enjoy a calming outdoor space. George described it as "like therapy" for many of the young people involved. Reflecting on the project, he shared the quote:

"As I work on the garden, the garden works on me."

For George personally, Eikon transformed his confidence. Once shy and quiet, he says organising the project, fundraising and working with others helped him grow into someone confident enough to "talk to anyone." He credits Eikon's caring and supportive team with helping shape both his confidence and outlook on life.

Mike

Trustee - 2023 to present



When Mike was 12, everything started to unravel, his parents had divorced, his behaviour slipped, and panic attacks took hold. That's when he found Eikon.

With their support, things slowly changed. Mike got back on track at school, rebuilt friendships, and learned how to cope. But life kept testing him, losing a close friend, then his mum during his GCSEs.

Eikon stayed by his side through it all, offering not just support, but stability, care, and a sense of family. Despite everything, Mike achieved strong GCSE results and is now on the path to becoming a Royal Marines Commando.

Eikon didn't just help Mike through tough moments, they helped shape his future.



"If Eikon hadn't been there... I could easily have ended up in serious trouble. But they were there."

Marion

Volunteer Mentor

Supported Elsie in 2025

When Marion first met Elsie, she was almost invisible, her hair covering her face, avoiding eye contact, and barely speaking. At home, life had been unsettled: her parents had recently divorced, relationships were strained, and after an autism diagnosis during COVID, she'd been left without the support or strategies she needed. School felt overwhelming, and she had no outlet.

Through gentle, patient mentoring, trust slowly grew.



A shared interest in sewing became a breakthrough, giving Elsie a calming focus and a sense of achievement. Week by week, she began to emerge, looking up, making eye contact, even smiling.

By the end, Elsie had found confidence, connection, and a safe space in school. For Marion, the journey was profound:

“I can’t tell you how rewarding it is to see that transformation... it’s about making a difference in someone’s life.”

Teacher at Sunbury Manor School

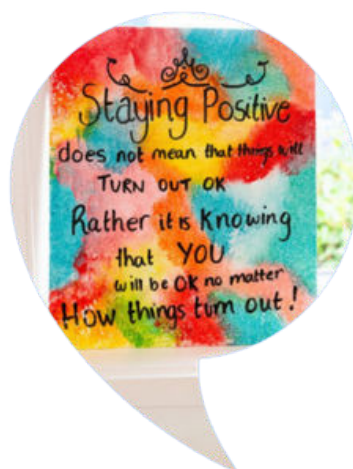
Heads Up! programme in 2021

At Sunbury Manor School, the Heads Up! programme (an 8 session programme delivered to Year 7 and 8) delivered by Eikon has been changing the stories young people tell about themselves. Teachers have watched pupils who were once silent or shut down begin to “open up... and ask for one-to-one sessions,” while others who “never speak... laugh and be carefree.” Through Eikon’s interactive, confidence-building sessions, trust has grown, between students and within themselves, sparking “new friendships” and a sense of belonging.

One moment has captured this shift: a student who often withdrew shared, “Believe the positive things that people tell

you, they see things in you that you don’t see in yourself. Trust them.” For staff, this has been “huge.”

Eikon’s work has gone beyond activities; it has given young people “the internal strength and confidence to make these changes.” The result is lasting: students are more connected, more resilient, and ready to thrive, an impact described simply as “tremendous.”



The Priory School

Wellbeing Ambassador Programme 2023

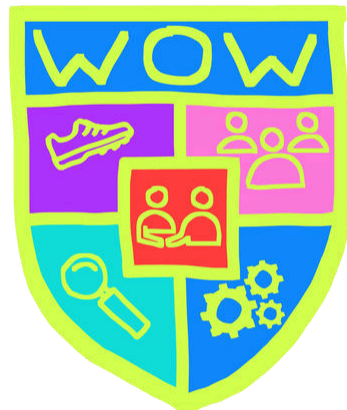
Eikon's Wellbeing Ambassador Programme empowered The Priory School in Dorking to place wellbeing at the heart of its community, training 21 students in the Five Ways to wellbeing and equipping them to lead change.

Described by the school as “a fabulous resource... the training is very thorough, and the resources are invaluable,” Eikon's support has driven a shift towards stronger student voice, with Wellbeing Champions and Peer Mentors creating inclusive, peer-led support.

Daily drop-ins and student-led initiatives have fostered connection, resilience and confidence, helping students feel calmer and more supported,

with improved focus and productivity.

By sparking both cultural and practical change, Eikon has helped embed a compassionate, sustainable approach to wellbeing that continues to positively shape the whole school community.





THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We would be incredibly grateful for any donation that helps us continue supporting children and young people for the next 30 years.

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The Eikon Charity, Selsdon Road,
New Haw, Surrey KT15 3HP
Telephone: 01932 347 434

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