

YMM MENTORING PROGRAMME

EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES

Registered Charity Number: 1187987



"On a mission to help young people turn their struggles into strengths"

Introduction

At YMM we believe every child deserves the chance to flourish, feel valued, and develop the resilience needed to face life's challenges. Our vision is a world where every young person receives the support they need to build self-esteem, confidence, and focus, enabling them to live a purposeful and happy life. We have built a committed and passionate team of trained mentors who we provide free of charge to schools to work on a 1:1 basis with students and we are proud of the strong reputation we have gained in our partnerships with pastoral staff in the schools we support.

Our Founder, Sue Roberts is a true advocate for young people's mental health. Struck by the huge taboo surrounding young people's mental health and the difficulty in accessing support services, her first act was to organise a concert featuring talented young musicians and some inspirational speakers and the event raised just short of £40k for young people's mental health charities. Spurred on by another successful concert in 2019, Sue then founded her own registered charity Young Minds Matter (now YMM), offering mental health and wellbeing support for young people.

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Partnering with Schools

YMM works with schools free at the point of need, to deliver mental health support to their pupils. We do this primarily by providing highly trained mentors to work alongside and supplement in-house student support services. We understand that when partnering with external providers students safety and well-being is of paramount importance, hence our mentors:

- **Are fully trained**
- **Enhanced DBS checked**
- **Receive ongoing monthly training and support from a BACP practitioner**

Providing schools and pupils with:

- **Free one-to-one mentoring within school**
- **Referral options (School, Parent/Carer or Self-referral)**
- **Sessions lasting approximately 45 minutes each**
- **A safe and confidential space for students to talk about their feelings**
- **Support once per week**
- **Opportunities to take part in YMM events**

Our service is designed to be easily accessible to all students, especially those who are most vulnerable.
We know that waiting for traditional services, like CAMHS, can leave children without the support they desperately need. We're seeing increasing demand for our mentoring, with more schools and students reaching out for support, and we are committed to expanding our impact to meet these growing needs.



Jo Ashton & Danka Chitryn

To ensure the highest quality of care, our mentors undergo compulsory monthly supervision with their supervisors Jo & Danka, both who are fully qualified and accredited British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) practitioners and Clinical Supervisors. This supervision supports their own mental health as they navigate this demanding role as well as helping them to constantly expand their mentoring skills and learning.

Sarah Ashworth



Sarah provides training to our mentors on understanding of biological, psychological and sociological factors which influence mental health in young people. Sarah holds professional qualifications in psychotherapy, nutritional therapy and coaching, is a Registered and Accredited Member of the BACP, and a Member of the British Association for Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine.

YMM Mentor Training

Our mentors undergo extensive training to ensure they are fully equipped to support young people facing mental health challenges. Each mentor is prepared with the knowledge, skills, and strategies needed to provide compassionate, non-judgemental practical assistance. Below is a list of the key areas our mentors are trained in, enabling them to take on this vital role with confidence and care:

The evolutionary brain in the internet age
Different forms of neurodiversity
Common adolescent mental health challenges
Response to childhood trauma

- ***Abuse, neglect and exploitation***
- ***Hormones and social development***
- ***Social anxiety***
- ***Eating disorders***
- ***Sleep problems***
- ***Self-harm and suicidal thoughts***

The role of mentor

- ***Benefits and boundaries***
- ***Working with schools***

The legal framework - Keeping Children Safe (KCSIE)
Practical mentoring skills

- ***Contracting – limits to confidentiality***
- ***Building rapport with children and adolescents***
- ***Questions and empathetic listening***
- ***Recognising and responding to a safeguarding concern***
- ***Signposting***
- ***GDPR and Note-taking***



*2026 Mentor cohort with their certificates.

Success Stories

One of our mentees, a Year 8 student, experienced frequent panic attacks, sometimes up to three times a week. Initially, she struggled to even enter the room for her mentoring sessions. Her anxiety was overwhelming, and it was clear that she needed support to manage her panic attacks.

During the first few sessions, she began to identify the triggers for her panic attacks. Our Mentor, equipped with Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, introduced her to the grounding technique, a method that helps anchor her in the present moment and reduces anxiety. With consistent practice, she has started to use this technique effectively.

After eight sessions, she made a remarkable transformation. She confidently reported that she was now able to manage her anxiety and had experienced very few panic attacks. Even when she did feel anxious, she was aware of the signs and knew how to control them. Her journey is a testament to the impact of our mentoring programme and the essential skills we provide to help young people manage their mental health.

As a YMM mentor, I supported a mentee, who came to me with issues they were facing at school, including bullying and difficulty fitting in with their peers.

I guided them to recognise their own value independently of others' opinions, particularly those who treated them poorly. They then underwent a significant transformation, becoming more self-assured and independent rather than feeling the need to be accepted by a particular group.

This newfound confidence helped them forge better relationships at school. They are now part of a band and have established their own social circle. They have also recommended mentoring to many friends, having found it profoundly beneficial themselves.



The Need

Young people in the UK have a higher mental health need now more than ever:

1 in 5 have experienced a mental health problem in 2023*

50% of mental health problems are established by age 14**

70% of those who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age***

Those in the lowest income bracket are **4.5 times** more likely to experience severe mental health problems than those in the highest income bracket†

Our Approach

YMM takes a holistic, child-centred approach to mental health and well-being, we:

- **Provide Early Intervention**
- **Engage the Community**
- **Are Accessible to All**
- **Empower Young People**
- **Fit Students Needs**

*Mental Health of Children & Young People in England, 2023- NHS England.
**Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health (2020) State of Child Health. London: RCPCH.
***Children's Society (2008) The Good Childhood Inquiry: health research evidence. London: Children's Society.
†Gutman, L., Joshi, H., Parsonage, M., & Schoon, I. (2015). Children of the new century: Mental health findings from the Millennium Cohort Study. London: Centre for Mental Health

Our Events

At YMM, we also focus on organising engaging, youth-led activities that not only raise essential funds to enable us to offer our service free of charge but also highlight the mental health challenges young people face today. These activities help young people develop skills, resilience and build their confidence.

Channel Swim Challenges

Our Channel swim teams take on the demanding physical and mental challenge of swimming the English Channel. These efforts showcase both endurance and teamwork while supporting YMM's mental health services, with young people competing to raise funds to help their peers mental health. These events also showcase resilience and community spirit, engaging participants and supporters alike. In the past two events, our swimmers were shortlisted for the BBC CWR Make a Difference Awards, with Brian receiving a highly commended recognition this year, they also got to meet Olympic gold and silver Medal winner, Adam Peaty, and were interviewed on BBC CWR radio.

Click here to watch the swim

Click here to watch Adam Peaty OBE message



Community Engagement

We actively engage with the community in many ways. Over the past year, we've visited schools to give talks on mental health, raising awareness and tackling stigma. We've hosted a pub quiz, spoken to students at Caludon Castle School and Notting Hill & Ealing High School in London, met with local MPs for a Q&A alongside our young ambassadors, given a pre-run talk at Park Run Stratford, and attended '100 Talks for Change' with Oly Newton and Daniel Wilsher at Stratford High School. We also supported a girls' football tournament in Warwick. Looking ahead to the end of 2024, we are looking to source businesses to sponsor a mental health talk by Oly Newton in 10 Warwickshire schools.







Concerts

Our fundraising concerts celebrate the talents and contributions of young people. These events bring together inspiring performances by young musicians, along with powerful speeches that shine a light on mental health. So far, our concerts have raised £57,300, with young people from schools we work with given the opportunity to lead as performers, speakers, and even providing technical and organisational support. These events help build confidence and self-esteem in young participants while highlighting the importance of mental wellbeing.

Click here to see one of our concerts

The team at YMM created this video during lockdown to provide a reminder to all that 'you are not alone' and If you are suffering with any issue, there are places and people that can help. We truly believe that music has the power to transform mental health and lift people's spirits.

Click here to see our lockdown video

Sports Events

Each year, we enter a team into the London Landmarks Half Marathon, and as members of 'Run for Charity', we provide young people with opportunities to join various events. From marathons and 5Ks to fun runs, these activities offer a great way for them to get involved, stay active, and be part of a supportive community.

Our aim is to help young people push themselves out of their comfort zones and experience a true sense of achievement and purpose by involving them in inspirational events, to help raise awareness and funds to support their peers. We also, via our Young Ambassadors scheme (YMax), empower young people to take an active role in the welfare of their peers in schools, as well as providing them with opportunities to enhance their life and business skills.

Click here to see our current events









YMax is a pioneering initiative by YMM, aimed at integrating mental health and well-being into the educational experience of young people. This programme recruits and trains older students, typically in Years 12 and 13, to support the mental health of their peers within their schools.

The group at Stratford High School collaboratively chose the name 'YMax', symbolising the goal of helping young people live life to the fullest. The branding, led by an A-level Photography student and supported by Parallel Creative through the Make Good Grow initiative, resulted in a logo featuring the letter 'Y' and a tree motif, representing youth and growth.

YMM bUddy Scheme:

A core component of YMax is the buddy scheme, where older students are paired with younger ones to offer support. The scheme is guided by values of approachability, consistency, confidentiality, and clear boundaries. The buddies play a crucial role in reassuring and supporting younger students, contributing significantly to the mental well-being of their peers.

YMax Enterprise:

YMax will also involve schemes allowing integration with local businesses to learn new skills, as well as YMM helping the Young Ambassadors to learn presentation skills and organise entrepreneurial initiatives

Progress and Future Plans:

The YMax pilot group has already seen active engagement, with initial buddy pairings and preliminary briefings conducted. The group has also participated in discussions with key figures such as Lisa Webb from Persimmon Homes and local MP Manuela Perteghella, advocating for youth mental health.

We plan to roll this new scheme out to other schools we work with, ensuring that more young people benefit from the support and connections offered by YMax. Early feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive.

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Impact and Outcomes

Young people with mentors are less likely to experience depressive symptoms. Studies show that mentoring relationships can reduce the risk of depression by 50% for those involved.**

From September 2025 to August 2026 we :



Provided over 2007 mentor sessions



Helped over 334 Young people

Our work has had a profound impact on the young people we support, The feedback we have received from both schools and young people show:



Improved Mental Health



Enhanced Academic Performance



Improved Social Skills



Increased Resilience, Confidence & Self-Esteem



Improved Focus



Better School Attendance

**Source: Rhodes, J., Spencer, R., Keller, T., Liang, B., & Noam, G. (2006). "A model for the influence of mentoring relationships on youth development."

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Comments from Schools

"I have been working in education for 25 years and what YMM mentors bring to us is by far the best direct support I've seen for young people"

"The fact that they can self-refer is a game changer and means they can often be seen straight away, without having to spend months on a waiting list for CAMHS or counselling"

"The work that the mentors do with our young people is invaluable, and the students talk very highly of their mentors, and we cannot thank them enough"

"The mentors from Young Minds Matter provide an essential part of our wellbeing offer for pupils. They have enabled our children to open up and seek support; a crucial step towards taking care of their mental health and regaining emotional balance"

"The overall impact of (YMM) sessions includes higher attendance, (and not only on the day YMM are with us), increased independence working in the classroom, improved confidence and self-esteem with adults and peers, overall increasing the young persons social and emotional mental health"

"I have to say, we rely heavily on Charities, like YMM, being able to offer support free of charge. We are a school who simply does not have a budget for employing external agencies for mentoring or counselling"

"We are regularly seeing students who are on very long waiting lists for CAMHS and whose parents are desperate for support for their child, many of whom would simply be unable to afford to pay for private mentoring or counselling. From this perspective, YMM are providing an invaluable service to our local community and improving the lives of so many young people and their families"



*Sue Roberts at Caludon Castle School

Schools we currently support

- Alcester Academy
- Kings High
- Bridgetown Primary
- Studley High
- Shipston High
- Stratford Girl's Grammar
- Alcester Grammar
- Alveston Primary
- Our Lady's Catholic Primary
- St Mary's CofE Studley
- Thomas Jolyffe
- King Edwards IV
- St. Benedict's
- St. Gregory's
- Stratford High
- Caludon Castle
- Myton
- Kingsway Primary
- Ridgeway
- Bishopton Primary
- Earlsdon Primary
- St Augustine's
- Holy Trinity

Join us in our mission empowering young voices.



For more information, please visit our website www.ymm.org.uk or contact us directly at info@ymm.org.uk

Sign up to our bi-monthly newsletter here

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Supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing
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Uniform
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YMM


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Studio 2

CALUDON CASTLE
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ELIZA

young minds matter
Giving Young People A Voice