

CASE FOR SUPPORT

YMM

EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES

Registered Charity Number: 1187987



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

Introduction

Sue Roberts is a true advocate for young people’s mental health. In 2017, whilst balancing a full time job and raising two school-age daughters, she witnessed many young people suffering from quite severe mental health setbacks, often in silence and some so severe they required long periods of hospitalisation. Struck by the huge taboo surrounding young people’s mental health and the difficulty in accessing support services, Sue organised a concert featuring talented young musicians and some inspirational speakers and the event raised £37,100 for young people’s mental health charities. Spurred on by another successful concert in 2019, Sue then founded Young Minds Matter (now YMM), a registered charity offering mental health and wellbeing support for young people.

Every child deserves the chance to flourish, feel valued, and develop the resilience needed to face life's challenges. At YMM, 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 work in schools 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.

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 ✝

Young people today face unprecedented pressures, with lasting impacts from the pandemic, including increased cases of high social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. ✝✝

Statistics reveal a troubling increase in anxiety, depression, and related issues among young people. Without early intervention, these challenges can escalate, adversely affecting educational outcomes, social relationships, future prospects and ultimately their health and well-being.

The demand for young peoples mental health services has increased dramatically in recent years and in April 2022, there was an increase of 109% compared to the same month pre-pandemic of under 19s referred to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), this means that young people's mental health can deteriorate significantly whilst awaiting further support, emphasising the critical need for early intervention.

The stark reality of young people from low income families being most at risk of mental health issues highlights a critical gap in support for these young individuals. Our free mentoring programme addresses this gap directly. By offering our services at no cost, we ensure that children from low-income families can access the support they need without adding financial strain to their households. Both schools and pupils are on our waiting lists for support, highlighting the urgency.



*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

Researchers led by Professor Willem Kuyken Oxford Uni Dept of Psychiatry compared the mental health difficulties & well-being of thousands of UK secondary school pupils who experienced three lockdowns.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide experienced, committed, and highly-trained mentors in schools free of charge to support young people through one-on-one sessions. We aim to encourage students to view seeking support as a positive aspect of their education and development, working to remove the stigma surrounding mental health. We also aim to highlight and celebrate young people's development and talents by offering opportunities to participate in concerts, events, and initiatives.

To ensure the highest standards of support, our mentors undergo thorough training and are enhanced DBS checked. Our supervisors are accredited practitioners with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), guaranteeing professional and ethical guidance. Additionally, our trustees are deeply committed to our mission and values, reinforcing our dedication to empowering young people to take pride in and responsibility for their future well-being.

Currently we provide mentors free of charge in 13 primary and secondary schools in Warwickshire and Coventry. We have waiting lists of schools in this area and our aim is to fulfil this need as soon as further funding allows. Our aim is to expand our reach across the Midlands and ultimately throughout the UK.

Our aim is to empower young people, to build resilience, self-esteem and confidence. One of the ways we do this is by involving young people in inspirational events, to help raise awareness and funds to support their peers, to push themselves out of their comfort zones and to experience a true sense of achievement and purpose. 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 watch our Channel swim challenge

Click here to see one of our concerts

Click here to see Adam Peaty OBE message







Our Approach

YMM takes a holistic, child-centred approach to mental health and well-being. Our programmes are designed to:

Provide Early Intervention:
We identify and support young people at risk of developing mental health setbacks before they escalate.

Offer One-to-One Mentoring:
Our highly trained mentors provide personalised support and guidance, helping young people to build confidence, resilience and self-esteem, develop coping strategies, and enable them to be heard and listened to.

Integrate with Schools:
We work closely with teachers and school staff to ensure that the young person is supported holistically, with support from other mental health professionals and collaborations with like-minded organisations if necessary.

Engage the Community:
By involving families and local communities in our awareness and fundraising events, we foster strong community engagement, and we stay connected with the community through our newsletters and active social media presence.

Be Accessible to All:
We recognise that most schools lack the budget for much-needed mental health support. We believe no young person should miss out, especially those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. These are often the ones who need support the most but face barriers such as financial hardship or long NHS waiting lists. That's why we provide all our mentoring services to schools free of charge.

Empower Young People:
Via our Young Ambassadors Scheme (YMax) in schools, we recruit and train older students to play an active role in the mental wellbeing of the school, as well as providing them with opportunities to enhance their life-skills, learn business skills and take part in fund and awareness raising initiatives.

Fits Students Needs:
Our mentoring service is welcomed by students who often prefer to see a non-judgemental mentor who will listen and guide them when they may be feeling anxious. There will always be a requirement for the more statutory mental health support services, such as counsellors or psychotherapists, however, students are often reticent about being referred to these services, through fear of being labelled as 'having issues' or feeling that they don't have a diagnosed mental health condition and do not feel a need to see them.

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 2,007 mentoring hours



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 YMM 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"



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Words young people use to describe their YMM Mentoring sessions



YMM is working hard to address the increasing local demand for mental health support. **The South Warwickshire Place, Vision, and Priorities 2022-2027 report** points to a significant rise in mental health needs, especially among young people, many of whom are not currently accessing services. **Stratford on Avon District Council's Growing Opportunities plan** recognises young people with, or at risk of, poor mental health as one of its priority groups.

To support this growing need, YMM created a video during lockdown as a reminder that 'you are not alone'. It encourages anyone struggling with mental health issues to seek support, emphasising that help is available. The video highlights how music can play a vital role in improving mental health, offering comfort and lifting spirits during difficult times

Click here to see our lockdown video



How YOU can help !

Your support is crucial to continuing and expanding our work. There are several ways you can get involved:

Donate

Your financial contributions help us train more mentors, expand our programmes, and reach more young people in need.

Volunteer

Join our team of dedicated mentors and make a direct impact on a child's life. Or volunteer your professional skills to us or via our Young Ambassador scheme in schools.

Partner

Collaborate with us to bring awareness of our programmes to more schools and communities.

Click here to...

Donate with JustGiving

Costs

£20 - Can pay for 1 Hour session with a young person needing support

£120 - Can pay for a course of 6 sessions

£480 - Can pay for a Mentor for a month (24 hours)

£4,680 - Can pay for a year of mentoring (234 hours)

£9,360 - Can pay for a School for 1 year (2 Mentors/468 hours)

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Conclusion

At YMM we believe that every child has the right to a bright and healthy future. With your support, we can continue to provide the vital mentoring services that make a real difference in the lives of young people. Together, we can build a stronger, healthier, and more resilient future for the next generation.

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

Thank you for your support.

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dryrobe
YMM
Channel Swim Team 2026
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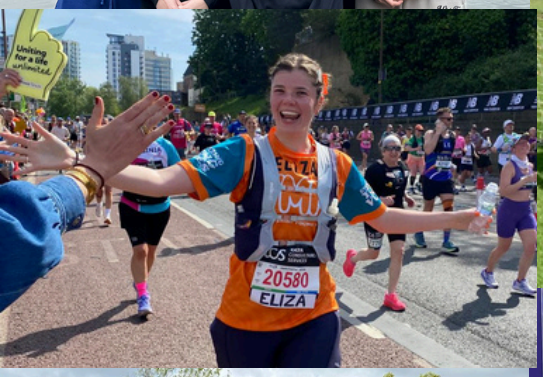
young minds matter
young people a voice




NIAMH
BRIDIE
MOLLY




minds matter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ELIZA




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BBC RADIO CWR
LILY
BEN


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