Centre for Public Impact
Founded by BCG

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
MAYOR OF LONDON

March 2026

# THE IMPACT OF YOUTH MENTORING IN LONDON
# FINAL REPORT

A transformative approach to evaluating the **New Deal for Young People**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Mayor of London's £34m investment in the **New Deal for Young People (NDYP)** provides disadvantaged young Londoners with access to high-quality mentoring.

Since 2020, over 150 organisations have been funded by City Hall to provide a diverse range of mentoring programmes with varying target audiences, formats, and activities. Through this investment, the programmed aim to:

- **Ensure 100,000** young people most in need of support have had access to high-quality mentoring.
- **Strengthen the quality and capacity** of the youth services sector.
- **Increase strategic investment** in youth services and mentoring.
- **Support system change** and long-term sustainability.

Between 2024 and 2025, the Centre for Public Impact (CPI) led a transformative evaluation to understand the impact of high-quality mentoring and how it contributes to the wider support infrastructure for young Londoners. Data collection methods included narrative storytelling, peer research, journey mapping activities and key stakeholder workshops.

This final report concludes a series of case studies developed during this evaluation. It provides a comprehensive summary of our approach, journey, and key insights, while offering an overview of the mentoring approaches delivering impact across three core areas: Mental Health, Skills and Employment, and Safe(r) Spaces.

Throughout our analysis, we have incorporated quotes to bring our findings to life and ensure the narrative remains firmly rooted in the voices of those at the heart of this journey. A further collection of these powerful insights can be found in the **Annex**.

## What's in this report?

This report brings together three case studies, youth-led peer research, mentorship journey mapping, and the Storytelling Toolkit for Impact Evaluation.

Each output captures a different perspective on mentoring, translating NDYP learning into practical approaches that organisations can use to strengthen mentoring quality and evaluation practice. Together, they form the evidence base for the conclusions and recommendations presented here.

Across each case study we broadly covered the following reoccurring themes:

**Mental Health**

How mentoring supported young people across a broad spectrum of mental health needs, including those with pre-existing mental health challenges and those on waiting lists for clinical support.

**Skills and Employment**

How mentoring helps young people develop specific, practical skills, ranging from soft skills like communication and resilience, to organisational and technical skills that improve employability and confidence.

**Safe(r) Spaces**

How the physical and emotional environments provided by youth clubs and community hubs offered the security and stability young people needed to engage fully.

## Quick Links

To gain a deeper understanding of the findings and the lived experiences captured during this evaluation, please refer to the following reports:

**Case Study 1**
Documenting Journeys of Mentorship and Stories of Success

**Case Study 2**
Through our Eyes: Peer Perspectives on Mentorship

**Case Study 3**
Understanding the Mentorship Journey

### Storytelling Toolkit for Impact Evaluation

Drawing on the transformative evaluation approach taken in this project, this toolkit is designed for practitioners and commissioners who want to bring storytelling approaches into their monitoring, learning, and evaluation practice.

It introduces three methods – Story Circles, Journey Mapping, and Most Significant Change – each with step-by-step guidance and practical templates. Whether you're new to participatory approaches or looking to deepen your practice, it gives you everything you need to get started with confidence.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre for Public Impact (CPI) partnered with the Greater London Authority to evaluate what high quality mentoring looks like in practice and what enables it to create lasting value for young Londoners within a complex system of support.

## What we learned

In this evaluation CPI's role was to examine the conditions that allow mentoring relationships to flourish, how different models adapt to unique needs, and what is required to sustain quality across London's diverse youth sector. This evaluation shows that mentoring creates impact through sustained relationships shaped by context and supported by the conditions around them. Across programmes, this impact is driven by five interconnected approaches: person-centred practice, trust-building by design, adapting to different needs, supporting young people to steer their own growth, and creating tangible pathways and opportunities. Together, these enable outcomes across mental health, skills and employment, and safe(r) spaces, with young people describing increased confidence, belonging, and ability to navigate transitions. These findings reinforce that change is relational and non-linear, shaped by wider systems, and best understood through lived experience and qualitative evidence.

Within NDYP, mentoring is defined as any high-quality youth activity that builds a trusted and positive relationship with a young person over time. The figures below ground our qualitative insights in the scale and reach of the New Deal for Young People programme, illustrating the representativeness of our evaluation and providing essential context that frame the findings in this report. **Across the wider NDYP Programme – including wider City Hall projects:**

**136,000+** young Londoners have been reached

**Projects directly funded by the NDYP**

**105**
projects funded since 2022 in 30 boroughs

**46,500**
young people reached through those projects

**42%**
projects engaged in this evaluation

**This evaluation has representation from three main audiences:**

**63%**[1]
project leads, many of whom were also mentors

**23%**
current or graduate mentees

**12%**
employed and volunteer mentors



[1] Percentages are rounded, and reflect a reporting period up to the end of September 2025.

# METHODOLOGY

The NDYP was designed to increase the quantity, quality, and sustainability of mentoring across London, and this evaluation examines how those aims have been realised in practice.

This report presents two connected types of evidence: it draws lessons on how high quality mentoring can be designed, funded, and evaluated at scale, and shows the outcomes created for young people across London.

The findings indicate that the NDYP has supported individual young people while strengthening the mentoring ecosystem by building skills, confidence, and capability across delivery organisations.


We approached mentoring not simply as a service, but as a network of relationships that can drive lasting shifts in how young people see themselves, the opportunities they pursue, and the support they receive. These wider systems can act as both enablers and barriers.

## Transformative evaluation helps us understand change, not just measure it

We adopted a transformative evaluation approach, recognising that traditional methods designed for linear interventions are less suited to capturing complex, relational impact. Given mentoring operates within systems shaped by structural inequalities across education, housing, employment, and mental health, we focused on how change unfolds through relationships and lived experience within these conditions.

Informed by Donna Mertens' transformative evaluation paradigm, which centres equity, participation, and context, the NDYP evaluation used an adaptive design responsive to organisational diversity, varied starting points, and differing conditions of trust, safety, and capacity. This enabled the evaluation to generate insight grounded in practice while supporting learning, policy development, and commissioning decisions.

## Centring participation and lived experience

Rather than asking whether mentoring worked overall, the evaluation focused on how mentoring was experienced by different young people, in different contexts, and over time. This shift enabled the evaluation to surface differences in access, trust, and perceived value that would have remained hidden within aggregate outcome measures.

As a result, we prioritised the real-life experiences and stories of the young people, mentors, and project leads who delivered this work every day.

Organisations also nominated young people to act as peer researchers on this programme, leading their own research, data collection and analysis to ensure the evaluation was built on an authentic foundation.

By doing so, we were able to build a comprehensive picture of what made a mentoring relationship truly successful.

The peer research strand demonstrates how involving young people as researchers shaped both the focus and depth of inquiry, revealing how trust, safety, and relationship dynamics influence what young people are willing to share and how they define meaningful change.

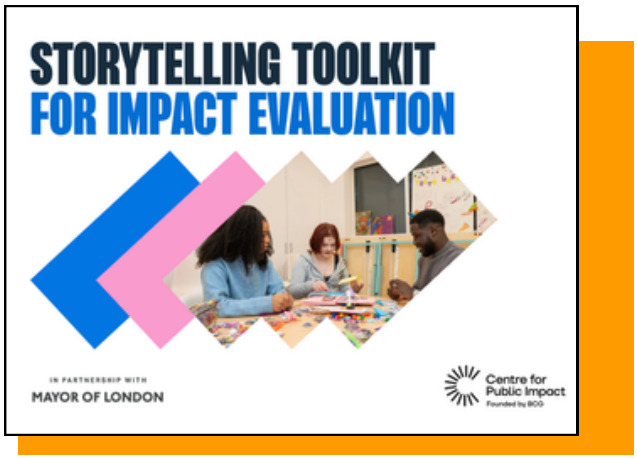
Peer researchers led conversations and contributed to analysis, surfacing perspectives that would not otherwise have been visible. The additional support and safeguarding required illustrate the practical investment involved and show how conditions of trust affected what evidence emerged.


## Participatory and qualitative methodologies

This evaluation combined qualitative and participatory methods, including journey mapping, storytelling, and peer-led research. These methods were selected to capture lived experience, relational dynamics, and the conditions shaping mentoring engagement and outcomes. Together, these methods enabled insights that would not have been visible through standardised tools alone, while maintaining clear ethical and analytic standards.

Alongside in depth qualitative case studies and peer research, routine reporting from over 100 funded projects was used to situate lived experience within a wider system picture and identify recurring patterns across programmes.

## Spotlight on storytelling




Based on the storytelling approaches we applied in this evaluation we developed a Storytelling Toolkit to help organisations embed storytelling into their monitoring, learning and evaluation (MLE) practice – strengthening the quality of mentoring and bringing the Mentoring Quality Framework (MQF) to life.

It does this by showing how quality standards are experienced in practice and how stories can help organisations learn, adapt, and communicate impact in ways grounded in lived experience.

The toolkit includes three adaptable approaches: Story Circles, Journey Mapping, and Most Significant Change. Step by step instructions and templates are provided for organisations to explore these approaches in their own contexts.

**Through our experience we have found storytelling as both a reflective and strategic tool that can help practitioners and funders understand change in context, identify barriers and enablers, demonstrate wider outcomes, and build trust across communities and organisations.**

While developed through mentoring practice, the toolkit's principles apply across youth, education, and community settings. Used alongside traditional evaluation practices, it can add depth, context, and legitimacy to data, making learning practical, participatory, and transformative.

## Shifting the role of the evaluator

Implementing these approaches also required a shift in the role of the evaluator. Rather than operating solely as an external assessor, CPI worked as a learning partner, supporting reflection, adaptation, and sensemaking alongside delivery organisations and young people. This required clarity about roles, transparency in decision-making, and reflexivity about how power and positionality shaped the evaluation process.

For peer researchers, this included facilitation, coaching, and safeguarding to support meaningful participation without undue risk.

Taken together, these shifts demonstrate that a transformative evaluation approach can be implemented in a structured and intentional way.

For the NDYP, they supported an evaluation that was responsive to complexity, attentive to equity, and capable of generating learning relevant to practice, policy, and commissioning.

# EVALUATION JOURNEY

The evaluation journey is presented here using journey mapping techniques developed during the evaluation, reflecting how learning evolved over time and mirroring the relational, non-linear pathways through which mentoring relationships develop.

DECEMBER 2024 & SEPTEMBER 2025

## Stage 1: Co-design Workshops

To kick off our collaboration with organisations, we conducted a co-design workshop with 19 project leads and mentors from NDYP-funded organisations to shape our evaluation approach. Towards the end of the evaluation, 13 project leads reconvened for a second workshop to discuss, challenge and validate the findings and recommendations presented in this report. This collaborative process ensured the evaluation remained grounded in delivery reality, empowering practitioners to challenge our language and assumptions rather than offer passive validation.

**What we learned:** A key challenge was **managing power dynamics** linked to CPI's role as a commissioner appointed evaluator, which required careful facilitation to ensure organisations felt safe to disagree and speak candidly. The workshops also surfaced tensions between participatory engagement and the slow, non linear nature of system change, reinforcing the need to be explicit about what influence participation could and could not have.

DECEMBER 2024

## Stage 2: Storytelling Interviews

We conducted in depth storytelling interviews with participants from 18 London based organisations between late 2024 and early 2025, focusing on how long term mentoring supports mental health, employability, and belonging. This approach worked well in generating practice grounded evidence that captured relational dynamics and invisible labour typically missed by outcome focused tools, forming the basis of the Stories of Success series and accompanying report.

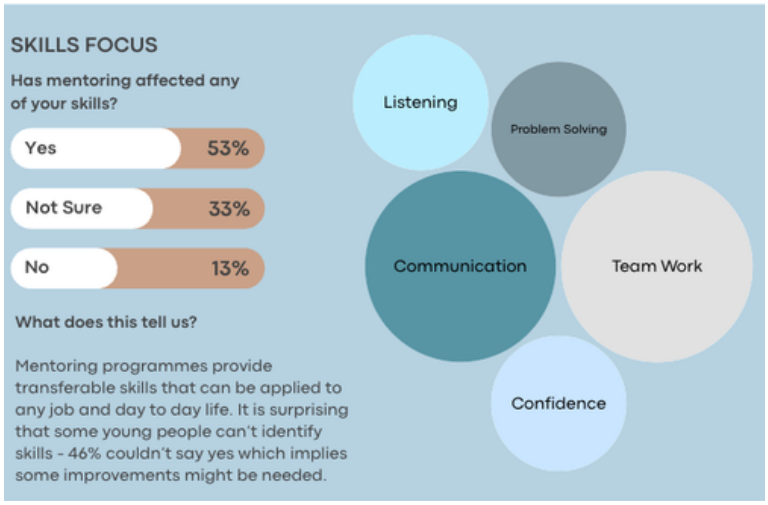
**What we learned:** The primary challenges were operational rather than methodological, particularly around consent management and follow up, which slowed finalisation of some outputs. While time intensive, the method proved effective in producing evidence that funders and policymakers could engage with intuitively and meaningfully.

**Click here to read the report**

FEBRUARY – JULY 2025

# Stage 3: Peer Research

Between February and July 2025, we supported 6 young people with lived experience of mentoring to act as peer researchers, leading research design, data collection, and analysis, and producing creative outputs including videos, infographics, and comic strips. This approach worked well in shifting both the focus and depth of evidence, surfacing insights around confidence, trust, and belonging that would not have emerged through adult led inquiry.


**What we learned:** Delivering this required phased training, coaching, and structured analysis support to maintain ethical integrity and analytic quality. The main challenge was accommodating young people's availability, wellbeing, and external pressures such as exams and health, which required flexibility and resulted in variable pace and outputs. As a result, peer research functioned as a high impact depth method rather than a scalable model.

Click here to read the report and explore peer-researchers creative assets.

OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2025

## Stage 4: Journey Mapping

Our third case study focused on the relational heart of mentoring by using journey mapping to trace how mentor mentee relationships evolve from entry through to transition and independence. Building on earlier NDYP evidence, this approach paired mentor and mentee perspectives to surface key turning points, moments of reciprocity, and periods of strain that are often flattened in outcome focused evaluation.

**What we learned:** Journey mapping was particularly effective when seeded with prior findings, enabling participants to validate and extend earlier insights and to visualise the ebb and flow of support over time. While the method carries a risk of abstraction if not grounded in concrete narratives, careful facilitation and synthesis allowed it to function as a bridge between lived experience and system-level learning, reinforcing mentoring as a dynamic rather than static intervention.

Click here to read the report

SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2025

## Stage 5: The Storytelling Toolkit

To help organisations adopt storytelling approaches within their own monitoring, learning, and evaluation (MLE) practice, we developed a Storytelling Toolkit for Impact Evaluation. The toolkit was tested through workshops with 25 youth organisations and feedback from these sessions informed successive refinements. Our experience highlighted strong appetite for storytelling alongside uneven familiarity with the methods, and reinforcing the need for simplicity, flexibility, and low-burden design.

**What we learned:** While developed through mentoring practice, the toolkit demonstrated broader applicability across youth, education, and community settings, functioning both as an evaluation output and a mechanism for building sector capability. Its effective use is strongest when paired with light touch learning spaces or peer exchange rather than as a standalone resource.

Click here to read the toolkit

**Reflections as an evaluator:** Across our activities, the evaluation demonstrated that participatory and qualitative methods can produce rigorous, policy relevant insight when supported by clear scaffolding, ethical care, and adaptive pacing. **The primary tradeoff was intensity rather than validity.** These approaches demand time, facilitation skill, and emotional labour, but they generate evidence that is credible to practitioners, meaningful to young people, and legible to decision makers.

# What transformative evaluation helped us understand

Across the evaluation, several core principles underpinning NDYP were consistently reinforced. The findings show that mentoring impact develops through sustained relationships over time, that mentoring programmes operate across diverse organisational and community contexts, and that delivering mentoring at scale supports learning and capability across the youth sector. The evaluation also surfaced learning that challenged simplified assumptions about how mentoring creates change and how impact can be evidenced. This included:

### Change as relationship and non-linear

To centre the voices of those directly involved in mentorship, we examined how change was described and experienced by young people, mentors, and project leads across the case studies and mentorship journey mapping.

These conversations showed that change unfolds over time, often progressing through stages such as building trust, navigating disruption, and preparing for transition, with progress frequently non-linear.

This challenged linear models of change that rely on before-and-after comparisons and highlighted **the importance of sustained engagement** in supporting confidence, agency, and belonging in practice.

It also shows that trust built over time is not simply an outcome of mentoring, but a key driver of how impact develops.

### Context as critical

To capture how mentoring operates in real-world settings, we examined how context shaped mentoring experiences across the evaluation, identifying the conditions that enabled or constrained progress.

The evaluation showed that mentoring outcomes were shaped by factors beyond individual programmes, including education settings, housing stability, mental health provision, and wider community context.

This highlights how NDYP mentoring operates across diverse environments and systems, reflecting the programme's emphasis on supporting young people through a range of delivery models and organisational settings. By adopting a systems-aware perspective, the evaluation revealed how mentoring contributes across organisations and services, shifting attention from isolated outcomes to patterns of change within a wider ecosystem.

## Qualitative evidence as rigorous and meaningful

To explore how lived experience can be used as credible evidence of mentoring impact, the evaluation strengthened the quality and use of qualitative evidence.

Through the development of the storytelling toolkit, we demonstrated how stories can function as evidence when collected and analysed systematically.

Methods such as journey mapping, peer-led inquiry, and most significant change approaches generated analytic insight into how mentoring worked and why particular experiences mattered.

This reflects **NDYP's emphasis on improving the quality and sustainability of mentoring provision** by strengthening how organisations understand, evidence, and communicate impact. Involving participants in interpretation helped connect individual accounts to system-level questions and supported their use in learning and recommendations.

## Learning linked to action

To support shared learning across youth organisations in London, we approached the evaluation not only as a process for measuring performance, but as an opportunity to strengthen organisational learning and connection across the sector.

Across our findings, learning was consistently linked to implications for practice and policy, generating insight into structural enablers and constraints, including funding stability, organisational capacity, and cross-system coordination.

This demonstrates NDYP's emphasis on sustainability and sector strengthening. Through workshops and capacity-building opportunities, organisations were supported to **embed transformative evaluation techniques within their own monitoring, learning, and evaluation practices**. This helps ensure that the benefits of NDYP extend beyond individual programmes, supporting youth organisations across London to measure and strengthen their impact beyond the lifetime of programme funding.

# WHAT WE LEARNED

## FIVE APPROACHES TO MENTORING

Through our evaluation of mentoring programmes across London, we sought to understand how mentorship moves from building quality relationships to creating lasting value and impact for young people.

Rather than seeking data against a rigid set of pre-defined KPIs, we asked young people and practitioners to tell us what they felt were the most significant drivers of success. By asking questions designed to reveal the turning points and essential ingredients of their work, we identified consistent and recurring themes that appeared across diverse delivery models.

We identified five interconnected approaches which youth organisations and mentors bridge the gap between relationship-building and tangible outcomes.

While these approaches emerged from mentoring practice, their logic is universal. We believe they can be adopted across the wider youth sector, from arts and sports clubs to employability schemes, offering any youth practitioner a pathway to deepen their impact on the lives of young people.

The findings in this evaluation can inform practice across different organisational contexts:

**Mentoring programmes** can reflect on the outcomes young people are achieving and work backwards to understand which approaches are driving that success. This helps identify strengths to celebrate and areas where adjusting your approach might unlock greater impact.

**Youth organisations** considering new programmes or refining existing work can use the impact findings to set clear aspirations for what young people should gain, then apply the approaches as a framework for designing delivery that achieves those outcomes.

**Policy officers and funders** can use both the impact findings and underlying approaches to assess programme quality. This dual lens –understanding both what programmes achieve and how they achieve it–supports more informed investment decisions and provides richer language for discussing effectiveness beyond simple metrics.


## Person-centred practice

A person-centred approach takes time to understand each young person's unique story, context, and history.

By connecting the dots across a young person's strengths, challenges and circumstances, **mentors provide personalised guidance** that helps young people make sense of different parts of their lives in actionable ways.This approach proves particularly effective when supporting young people facing complex and often systemic challenges, as it acknowledges and fills gaps within existing public services.

For instance, a mentor working with a young person experiencing housing instability might recognise how this affects their mental health, education, and employment prospects–and provide **support that addresses these interconnected challenges rather than treating them in isolation.**

The impact of this approach often extends beyond the individual to their wider circles, including friends and family. We heard that this deeply relational model proves more satisfying and rewarding for mentors, enabling them to support young people more sustainably.

> I think it's really important to sort of look at a young person as a whole. When I'm first assigned somebody to work with it's so difficult to know the areas that they find difficult. I think it's so important to see them as a whole, as a whole individual with different attributes and challenges.
>
> - Mentor, Cambridge House


## Trust building by design

Effective mentoring is founded on trusted, non-judgemental relationships. For young people who feel isolated or disappointed by previous experiences with statutory services, mentoring creates safer spaces to re-engage and build a network of trusted adults.

Trust develops across the entire relationship lifecycle, shaped by intentional programme design choices: how young people are referred, the infrastructure supporting the relationship, meeting frequency and format, communication approaches, and how relationships conclude. Each of these moments either builds or erodes trust.

> Being a mentee is like being accepted for who I am. I've been accepted for what I am and not been judged about it. Because having someone to talk to about it is a big thing. Opening up is not easy.
>
> – Mentee, 24

Critically, this trust must extend to mentors themselves. **Mentors require autonomy and agency to make decisions** aligned with their professional judgement of how best to support each young person. Overly prescriptive programme structures can sometimes undermine both the mentor's authority and the young person's trust in the relationship.

#3

## Different models for different needs

Mentoring programmes look inherently different because they must adapt to the diverse needs of the young people they serve. This structural flexibility–encompassing online, activity-based, place-based, and embedded models–is a core strength, maximising both accessibility and reach.

Our evaluation consistently showed that **no single delivery model is universally effective.** A young person dealing with anxiety might thrive in one-to-one online sessions, whilst another needs the energy of group activities to feel engaged.

The power lies not in the model itself, but in matching the right approach to each young person's preferences, circumstances, and needs.

> We have a drop in center on a Monday, where we have two clinical psychologists sitting in and everyone gets something to eat.
>
> They play PlayStation and can talk with a clinical psychologist if they want to, which they often do. Conversations just strike up and all sorts of things come out - and that's just how it is, that's our version of mentoring."
>
> - St. Matthew's Project

#4

## Support young people to steer their own growth

**Mentoring aims to help young people make better choices, exercise agency over their lives, and shape their futures sustainably.** The challenge is that many young people are required to make significant life decisions while lacking consistent support from a trusted adult.

Mentors provide a distinctive form of support by walking alongside young people as they make decisions rather than making decisions for them. This involves combining the development of core life skills such as confidence and emotional regulation, with practical support such as navigating services, applications, and networking.

Unlike statutory services focused on immediate risk reduction or outcomes, mentoring is about "sowing seeds of change"–supporting gradual development of autonomy and self-efficacy. This long-term, developmental nature requires different approaches to measuring success, focusing on growing agency rather than fixed endpoints.

> I feel like mentoring really helped with my self esteem, because it made me realise my own talents and traits, which, like eventually, after I like stopped being mentored as much, helped me realise that because they showed me a pathway of self-reflection, I learned how to self-reflect on myself and focus on my own traits. So then, mentoring helped me be more independent as well.
>
> - Graduate Mentee, 19

# #5

## Create tangible pathways and opportunities

Across our evaluation we heard that young people seek practical support working towards their ambitions, whether navigating career transitions, entering new industries, or accessing education. They want to **develop and practise transferable skills**–communication, confidence, critical thinking–that apply to real-world scenarios.

Effective mentoring balances the relational and developmental work (approaches 1-4) with concrete opportunities and connections.

This means linking young people to work experience, educational opportunities, professional networks, and resources that open doors. Without these tangible pathways, even the strongest mentoring relationships risk leaving young people feeling supported but stuck.

Young people particularly value connections between mentoring organisations and industry opportunities, career guidance, and professional networks that create **visible, achievable next steps.**

> My gap year has also been a great experience because my mentor has been able to support me. She was able to help me with interview preparations and my uni application, because after sixth form I was not able to receive any support from my school because I was not in education. I was completely on my own.
>
> – Mentee, 19

When working in combination, these five approaches led to profound impact across three key areas:

**Mental Health:** Mentoring serves as a vital alternative or bridge to statutory services, providing a trusted, consistent listener who helps destigmatise internal struggles, builds emotional regulation skills, and connects young people to clinical help when needed.

**Skills and Employment:** Mentors function as accountability partners and champions, helping young people understand their potential, learn through supported trial and error, and access professional networks that expand their social capital and career aspirations.

**Safe(r) Spaces:** Programmes actively cultivate safety, which is essential for emotional growth, particularly for marginalised identities. This security is established through flexible, person-centred delivery that ensures young people have a neutral, reliable space to grow.

**How these approaches show up in practice**

The following sections in this report examine the impact mentoring programmes have on young people across these critical areas, presenting key findings alongside direct quotes from young people, mentors, and programme leaders.

These outcomes reflect the five approaches working in combination, adapted to the specific needs young people face in each area.

# MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health emerged as a shared focus across all the youth organisations we engaged with, though each adapted its approach to meet the distinct emotional and psychological needs of the young people they serve. The impact of mentoring in this area proved both profound and multifaceted.

**This was reflected in NDYP reporting data from a subset of programmes, where 24% young people were identified as experiencing mental health concerns and 39% of young people were recorded as achieving improvements in mental health and wellbeing through programme participation.**

Mentoring supported young people experiencing a wide range of mental health challenges, including anxiety, trauma, isolation, crisis situations, and barriers to accessing statutory services. Young people consistently described mentoring as providing a trusted adult relationship that enabled them to speak openly, process experiences, and regain control during periods of instability.

Improved mental health outcomes were often realised through trust-building relationships, personalised and trauma-informed delivery, advocacy and service navigation, and support for emotional regulation and confidence development. Organisations demonstrated strong adaptability in responding to complex and evolving needs through flexible engagement models, careful mentor matching, and open-door support approaches that allowed young people to re-engage when challenges resurfaced.

Mentors frequently supported young people navigating fragmented support systems by clarifying referral pathways, accompanying them through services, and advocating for their needs within multi-agency settings. Mentoring also played a critical role during crisis periods, particularly where statutory support was delayed or inaccessible.

Across programmes, young people most frequently described improvements in mental health through increased **confidence, resilience, emotional regulation**, and the ability to navigate life transitions.

> In my opinion, [mentoring] is the best thing you will ever get. If you have too many thoughts in your head, it is really going to mess you up because you can actually get properly ill from not speaking your mind. Mentoring really did help me, because I felt like I was at a point there when I had too many things in my head. I started mentoring and then it just all cleared away.
>
> - Mentee, 17

# HOW MENTORING APPROACHES ENABLE IMPACT IN MENTAL HEALTH

#1

### Person-centred practice

This practice allowed mentors to respond to the individual circumstances that had been shaping young people's mental health, including identity-based stressors, family instability, and educational pressures.

Through personalised mentor matching and holistic understanding of young people's lives, mentors were able to identify unmet needs and tailor support beyond symptom-focused approaches, strengthening young people's confidence and sense of belonging.

> I see my role in just sort of bridging those gaps and sort of understanding that I'm here to support you in accessing all kinds of services that you would like to access. And even if something that's not available within our service, finding resources for them, like other services that are available outside.
>
> - Mentor, Cambridge House

#2

### Trust-building by design

Trust underpins young people's willingness to engage in conversations about mental health and sensitive experiences. By providing consistent, non-judgemental support and allowing young people to control the pace and depth of conversations, mentors created environments where young people felt safe to explore emotional challenges.

This relational stability reduced isolation and enabled mentoring relationships to support emotional resilience and sustained engagement with support.

#3

### Different Approaches for Different Needs

Personalised mentor matching, trauma-informed delivery, and flexible engagement models allowed organisations to respond to identity-based stressors, trauma exposure, social anxiety, and varying readiness for support.

Flexible mentoring approaches, including online engagement, community-based support, and open-door return pathways, allowed young people to maintain engagement during periods of instability. This diversity of delivery models reflects the complexity of mental health challenges experienced by young people and demonstrates that effective mentoring requires tailored, rather than standardised, support.

> We know that that healing journey is not always going to mean you can show up every day, especially if you suffer from anxiety or depression.
>
> That's why the way our programmes are designed in a way that allows for fluidity to kind of come in and out and pick up where they've left off you know
>
> - Sister System

#4

## Supporting young people to steer their own growth

Mentoring provided relational stability during crisis and transition periods, supporting young people experiencing acute anxiety, depression, trauma, and service delays. Mentors frequently provided emotional stabilisation while supporting young people to develop coping strategies and sustain engagement with support.

Through reflective conversations and modelling emotional regulation, mentors helped young people build resilience, self-efficacy, and confidence to navigate challenges and seek support independently. This support was particularly important during life transitions, including education, employment, and family change.

> I am able to control my emotions a lot more. Before, I wasn't able to control them as well. I used to just be angry all the time. I wouldn't speak about them. It just progressively went down. Now I don't. I'll be out with it. Or, I'll be on my own and I'll be able to just have my own space. I have been able to mature very quickly within that one year.
>
> - Mentee, 17

#5

## Create tangible pathways and opportunities

Young people frequently described mental health improvements through increased confidence, resilience, and self-esteem rather than clinical measures alone.

Mentors supported emotional regulation through practical tools such as creative expression, physical activity, and goal-setting exercises.

By helping young people explore opportunities, reframe setbacks, and recognise personal strengths, mentoring supported young people to translate improved wellbeing into participation in education, employment, and community life.

This pathway-focused support strengthened independence and sustained emotional development beyond programme participation.

# SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT

Mentoring supported young people to translate potential into practical readiness, confidence, and career direction. Across NDYP programmes, mentors adapted support to each young person's developmental stage. For younger mentees, mentoring often focused on strengthening foundational academic skills and self belief. For older participants, support increasingly centred on career readiness, professional networking, and navigating complex transitions between education, training, and employment.

**This emphasis is reflected in NDYP reporting data from a subset of directly funded programmes, where 46% of young people achieving at least one positive outcome reported improvements in socio emotional learning skills, and 38% reporting improved learning or work outcomes. This highlights the role of relational development alongside practical progression within mentoring .**

Across programmes, mentoring supported young people to develop employability skills, clarify aspirations, and navigate education and employment systems. Young people consistently described mentoring as providing a trusted adult relationship that enabled them to explore ambitions, build practical skills, and regain direction during periods of uncertainty or disruption.

Evidence shows mentoring supported skills and employment outcomes through personalised direction setting, practical skill development, supported access to professional networks, and structured encouragement to take ownership of career decisions. Organisations demonstrated adaptability through flexible engagement models, tailored mentor matching, and open door approaches that enabled young people to re engage when circumstances changed.

Mentors frequently supported young people to navigate fragmented education, training, and employment systems by clarifying pathways, accompanying them through applications, and advocating for their needs across services. Across programmes, young people most often described improvements through increased confidence, resilience, career direction, and independence in navigating life transitions.

> Right now, I'm a social worker for a youth charity. I love the experience. I've done an apprenticeship in youth work as well, my mentor helped me apply for that. He gave me tips on the interview, how to communicate in the interview. All the experience I've had is helping me reach my future goal.
>
> - Mentee

# HOW MENTORING APPROACHES ENABLE IMPACT IN SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT

#1

### Person-centred practice

Person centred practice enabled mentors to identify aspirations and potential that young people had not yet recognised in themselves. Because guidance was delivered through a trusted and non judgemental relationship, mentor validation carried significant credibility and strengthened confidence to pursue new aspirations. Once direction was identified, mentors worked collaboratively with young people to set realistic and achievable goals. Large ambitions were broken into smaller, time bound steps that reflected individual circumstances and available opportunities. Goals were most successful when shaped by young people's own aspirations rather than external expectations, strengthening ownership and long term motivation.

> My mentor opened my eyes, I could see me in a different light, if that makes sense. It's like having another opinion that tells you: I think you can do this and this is how I think you can tackle this.
>
> You know they're not just saying it, for saying its sake. But hearing that from a mentor, he has to say it in a different way for me to accept it.
>
> - Mentee

#2

### Trust-building by design

Trust building relationships created safe environments for learning through trial, error, and reflection. Rather than receiving prescriptive instruction, mentees were encouraged to practise professional tasks such as interviews and workplace communication, knowing mentors would support them if difficulties arose. Reflection on mistakes helped young people develop resilience, problem solving skills, and confidence relevant to workplace environments.

Mentoring also supported young people re-engaging with education or employment following disruption. Mentors helped young people manage anxiety about returning to learning environments, explore alternative training pathways, and navigate application processes. Consistent, non judgemental support reassured young people that setbacks did not invalidate their ambitions and helped them identify sustainable routes toward their goals.

#3

### Different Approaches for Different Needs

Mentoring programmes provided access to specialised tools and resources that translated abstract life skills into practical tasks. Vision boards, role play exercises, GCSE toolkits, and application support enabled young people to develop tangible assets such as CVs, structured career plans, and qualifications pathways. Tools were most effective when adapted to individual goals and learning styles.

#4

### Supporting young people to steer their own growth

Once trust was established, mentors introduced supported challenges that encouraged young people to move beyond their comfort zones. Opportunities such as public speaking, leadership activities, and workplace responsibilities allowed young people to test new skills within a secure relational environment. Mentors reinforced progress through consistent affirmation and constructive feedback, helping young people maintain motivation and confidence.

Mentor validation was particularly influential when mentors held roles or backgrounds young people aspired to. Shared experiences of structural barriers strengthened credibility and helped young people pursue opportunities that previously felt inaccessible.

> [My mentor] helped with my job interview nervousness, during the session he was really helpful and understanding, and he shared that he also struggled as well. He gave me a pep talk around believing in myself.
>
> - Mentee

#5

### Create tangible pathways and opportunities

Mentoring created entry points into professional networks and workplace cultures that many young Londoners found difficult to access independently. Mentors supported young people to build social capital, understand workplace expectations, and develop networking skills.

Mentors working within relevant industries often provided introductions and sector specific insight, while others researched career pathways and required qualifications. Programme success was reflected in young people taking ownership of career decisions and developing independence.

As confidence increased, young people strengthened professional communication skills, decision making, and help seeking behaviours, equipping them to navigate employment pathways beyond programme participation.

> At first, I didn't want to go to college, but I knew I wouldn't get a job in the long run. My mentor would help me, just by saying it was my choice, whatever I decided. He would support whatever I did, but college might be better because I could do a lot more things there.
>
> Now I am on electrical installation level two, and I am nearing the end of my course. Hopefully, I'll go on to level three.
>
> - Mentee, 17

# SAFE(R) SPACES

Mentoring programmes created safer physical and emotional environments that formed the foundation for young people's personal development and engagement.

**Across NDYP programmes, safety extended beyond physical location to include relationship consistency, identity affirmation, and trauma informed practice.**

Mentors prioritised sincerity and reliability, allowing young people to build trust often absent in other parts of their lives. This psychological safety enabled mentees to take risks, explore new ideas, and adjust their goals without fear of judgement. Mentoring relationships functioned as developmental environments where young people could experiment, reflect, and grow at their own pace.

Across the board organisations demonstrated strong adaptability in addressing both emotional and practical safety needs. Organisations provided multiple relational entry points including one to one mentoring, group based mentoring, and activity centred engagement. While some services provided in neutral third spaces were effective for young people experiencing overcrowded housing or restrictive home environments, others offered online alternatives where travel distance or personal safety concerns limited engagement.

Mentors also travelled to meet young people in their homes, schools, custody or other restricted environments.

Allowing young people to influence meeting location and structure strengthened agency and reinforced that safety was grounded in the consistency of the relationship rather than a single physical setting.

Many organisations supported continuity beyond formal mentoring through ongoing participation in youth clubs, creative programmes, and leadership pathways. Youth advisory boards and peer leadership opportunities enabled young people to apply skills and confidence developed through mentoring while contributing to programme development. This progression strengthened belonging, agency, and social capital.

> Your environment really optimises your impact as a mentor. I'm privileged to work at a football club. We go on the pitch and have had plenty of shootouts. Some of the best youth work meets their mentee in a space that they want to be in and engages them around those things. So for me, it's different spaces, different activities that facilitate the relationship.
>
> - Mentoring Manager, Queens Park Rangers Community Trust

# HOW MENTORING APPROACHES ENABLE IMPACT IN SAFE(R) SPACES

#1

### Person-centred practice

Mentors recognised that safety required an understanding of each young person's identity, living environment, and social pressures. Through personalised matching and holistic engagement, mentors created environments where young people felt valued as whole individuals.

Evaluation findings show that safety was particularly significant for marginalised young people, including LGBTQIA+ participants and young people navigating stigma, discrimination, or social isolation. Identity affirmation and being paired with someone who may share similar experiences strengthened trust, belonging, and engagement.

> I started mentoring when I was still working. Honestly, it did help me a huge amount. My last job was in healthcare and it wasn't working out for me. But at the same time, I still had my mentor call me. I'm messaging her and I was calling her.
>
> We had lots of conversations because I was having a lot of troubles in the workplace - it was the first time in the workplace where I didn't get along with someone and I didn't know how to react. I was so confused. But she gave me an opportunity. She just kept me calm and then she coached me, so I could get through it without getting myself into trouble.
>
> - Mentee, Streets of Growth

#2

### Trust-building by design

Consistency and sincerity within mentoring relationships created psychological safety that enabled young people to talk about sensitive experiences. Allowing young people to shape meeting pace, setting, and conversation focus strengthened autonomy and supported sustained engagement.

Psychological safety enabled mentees to take risks, explore new ideas, and adjust their goals without fear of judgement. Taken together, mentoring relationships functioned as developmental environments where young people could experiment, reflect, and grow at their own pace.

#3

### Different Approaches for Different Needs

Programmes demonstrated flexibility through varied relational models. One to one mentoring supported young people navigating complex transitions or mental health challenges by providing privacy and sustained individual attention. Group and community based mentoring created accessible and informal entry points to support. Activity based mentoring built relationships through shared interests such as sport, music, or creative practice, allowing trust to develop gradually through participation.

Exposure to aspirational environments including professional studios or sporting venues further expanded young people's sense of future possibility by connecting mentoring relationships to visible industries and opportunities. This flexibility allowed programmes to match relational intensity to young people's readiness and comfort levels, improving accessibility for those disengaged from formal support services.

I've worked with a young person who specifically asked me not to visit them at school because they didn't want to be taken out of class. So, I made sure the sessions were outside of school. Then, there were others who asked me to come to school because they didn't want to see me in their free time.

It really depends on their preferences. There are also parents who may have concerns about where the sessions are held, so I try to adapt the sessions around their requirements as well.

- Enfield Council

#4

### Supporting young people to steer their own growth

Safe mentoring relationships enabled young people to rebuild confidence navigating institutions, social settings, and life transitions. Stable relational support helped young people expand participation in education, employment, and community opportunities.

#5

### Create tangible pathways and opportunities

Safe and aspirational environments expand young people's sense of future possibility and belonging. Exposure to professional, creative, and community settings connected mentoring relationships to real world opportunities, while continued engagement through youth clubs, creative programmes, and leadership pathways strengthened social capital and sustained developmental progress beyond formal mentoring relationships.

Music happens to be something that many young people find very therapeutic when they get involved in writing about themselves, their lives, doing it to music and listening back. Sometimes they only keep it on their phone. I'm not trying to discover the next big thing. I'm really trying to help young people have a positive relationship with music for their mental health.

- Project Lead, Senior Mentor, HMDT Music (One Spirit)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The following reflections are offered by the evaluation team as considerations for future programme design and wider system partners. They are not intended as critiques of NDYP delivery but as observations about the conditions that would strengthen mentoring's impact at a system level. These are shared in a spirit of learning, and responsibility for many of the changes outlined below sits across multiple partners, funders, and statutory agencies rather than with any single organisation.

## A NOTE ON FUNDING

### 1. Longer-term funding agreements would strengthen relational continuity and organisational capacity across all outcome areas.

Across all three outcome areas – mental health, skills and employment, and safe spaces – the structure of funding cycles emerged as a consistent constraint. Multi-year or phased funding agreements would strengthen relational continuity, reduce workforce turnover, and allow organisations to support young people across key transition points rather than within artificially bounded programme periods. They would also free up capacity currently absorbed by repeat bidding and short-term reporting, enabling greater investment in supervision, safeguarding, and reflective practice. Future funders and commissioners across the sector may wish to explore how longer-term agreements could be structured, even within constrained funding environments.

## STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

### 2. Stronger referral pathways and handover protocols would reduce the burden on mentors and young people navigating fragmented mental health services.

Mentors frequently act as informal bridges between young people and fragmented statutory mental health provision – clarifying referral pathways, accompanying young people to appointments, and advocating in multi-agency settings. This role was valuable but stretched, particularly given long waiting times and weak communication between services.

Clearer referral expectations, structured handover protocols, and dedicated liaison roles between mentoring providers and statutory services would reduce the burden on both mentors and young people, and minimise the need for repeated disclosure of sensitive experiences. These are areas where local authorities, NHS partners, and voluntary sector could explore shared guidance and coordination mechanisms.

### 3. Investment in mentor support infrastructure is essential to sustaining safe and consistent practice with high-need cohorts.

Mentors working with high-need cohorts also took on significant emotional and safeguarding responsibility, often providing crisis stabilisation while young people waited for specialist support. Without adequate infrastructure – including trauma-informed training, structured supervision, and dedicated wellbeing support – this expanding role carries real risks of burnout and inconsistency. Investment in mentor support infrastructure is an area where programme leads and funders could each play a role.

### 4. Evaluation frameworks should reflect the developmental and non-linear nature of mental health progress within mentoring relationships.

The ways in which mental health progress shows up in mentoring – increased confidence, willingness to engage, growing resilience – are often developmental and non-linear, and may not be well captured by narrow metrics or short reporting windows. Future evaluation frameworks, developed in dialogue with delivery organisations, could usefully incorporate narrative and participatory approaches alongside quantitative measures, and where possible build in follow-up with young people after programme completion.

## STRENGTHENING SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT IMPACT

### 5. Sustained mentoring relationships are particularly valuable at transition points, reinforcing the case for support that extends beyond short programme timelines.

Skills development and employment progression rarely follow a straight line, and the evidence across NDYP programmes showed that sustained mentoring relationships were particularly valuable at moments of disruption – following dropout, during qualification milestones, or in the early stages of employment. The cross-cutting funding point above is especially relevant here, as short-term programme boundaries often cut across these critical transitions.

### 6. Funded collaboration between mentoring organisations would reduce duplication and widen access to employer networks and career pathways.

The evaluation also found that competitive funding environments can limit opportunities for mentoring organisations to share employer networks, career preparation tools, and sector knowledge. Where individual organisations have developed strong employer relationships or effective training models, these benefits are not always accessible to young people matched elsewhere.

Funded communities of practice and collaborative delivery partnerships – which some parts of the sector are already exploring – offer a way to pool resources and expand opportunity pathways without requiring large-scale structural reform.

### 7. Stronger cross-sector coordination would reduce the administrative barriers young people face when navigating education, training, and employment pathways.

Fragmented coordination between youth services, education providers, training programmes, and employers created additional barriers, with young people often encountering missed handovers, unclear eligibility thresholds, and repeated administrative burdens. Strengthening cross-sector referral pathways and transition support mechanisms is a shared responsibility and is an area where advocacy from mentoring organisations and their umbrella youth organisations could support wider system improvement.

### 8. Dedicated employer engagement capacity would help translate mentoring gains into real-world opportunities.

Many organisations also lacked dedicated capacity to maintain employer partnerships or translate employer relationships into consistent placements and work experience opportunities. Investment in employer engagement roles – whether within individual organisations or shared across consortia – would help ensure that confidence and employability skills gained through mentoring connect to real-world opportunities.

### 9. Broader outcome frameworks and longer-term follow-up would make developmental progress more visible to funders and commissioners.

As with mental health, skills progression is often visible in developmental indicators – goal ownership, persistence, growing confidence to apply and ask for help – before formal education or employment outcomes appear. Broader outcome frameworks and longer-term follow-up, where resources allow, would make this progress more legible to funders and commissioners.

## STRENGTHENING SAFE(R) SPACES IMPACT

### 10. Relational consistency and access to safe, dedicated spaces are both essential foundations for effective mentoring with young people navigating instability.

Safe and trusting mentoring relationships develop through sustained engagement, and the conditions that support them overlap significantly with those raised in the sections above. This is particularly true for young people navigating instability, safeguarding concerns, or marginalisation, where relational consistency matters most – and where disruption caused by short-term programme boundaries can be most damaging. Equally important is access to confidential, youth-friendly physical and digital environments that enable young people to engage openly and build trust over time.

Where organisations lack this infrastructure, the foundations for effective relationship-building are weakened regardless of the quality of the mentoring itself. Future funders and local partners could usefully consider how both funding continuity and safe space provision are factored into programme design and investment decisions.

### 11. Funded collaboration on safeguarding practice would reduce duplication and strengthen consistency across programmes.

Effective safer space provision also relied on partnerships between youth organisations, community providers, and safeguarding services – and competitive funding structures can limit opportunities to share safeguarding practice, outreach approaches, and relational models across organisations. Funded collaboration, including joint safeguarding training and shared learning forums, would reduce duplication and strengthen consistency in the quality and availability of safe environments.

### 12. Clearer multi-agency coordination improve safeguarding continuity for young people.

Mentors frequently supported young people navigating disconnected safeguarding systems across education, justice, housing, and social care, with limited communication between agencies increasing reliance on mentoring relationships to bridge gaps. Clearer multi-agency coordination expectations – including agreed referral contacts, response times, and information-sharing protocols – would reduce the need for repeated disclosure and improve continuity of safeguarding support.

# CONCLUSION

## FROM APPROACHES TO IMPACT

This final report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Greater London Authority's New Deal for Young People (NDYP) mentoring programmes, conducted by the Centre for Public Impact (CPI). Our systemic and transformative evaluation went beyond traditional output measures to understand the deep, relational impact of mentoring and the conditions that enable or hinder change for young Londoners.

The five approaches of mentoring– person-centred practice, trust-building by design, different approaches for different needs, supporting young people to steer their own growth, and creating tangible pathways– have demonstrated their effectiveness throughout this evaluation. We have seen how they enable **profound impact across mental health, skills and employment, and the creation of safer spaces.** What remains is to create the conditions for these approaches to reach every young person who could benefit. The barriers outlined in this section are not inevitable. They are the result of policy choices, funding structures, and systemic arrangements that can be changed. The recommendations presented here work in concert.

**MULTI–YEAR FUNDING**
provides the stability for all other improvements

**COLLABORATION**
spreads innovation and builds collective capacity

**BREAKING DOWN SILOS**
ensures young people can access holistic support

**INFRASTRUCTURE**
provides the spaces, training, and pathways that enable quality delivery

**TRANSFORMATIVE EVALUATION**
makes developmental impact visible and valued

Together, these changes could help youth mentoring in London to form a **coherent, well-supported system that enables the relational, person-centred approaches we know create lasting change.**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


## Partner Organisations

This work would not have been possible without the partnership and commitment of the Greater London Authority to taking a transformative approach to evaluation.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the youth organisations that participated in our activities throughout the year. Your insights, expertise, and willingness to share both successes and challenges have been invaluable.

We are consistently inspired by your dedication to London's young people and hope that your collective voice resonates clearly throughout these materials.

A special thank you is owed to the young people, mentors and project whose stories and perspectives are quoted in this final report:

- The Baytree Centre
- Cambridge House
- Enfield Council
- HMDT Music
- LifeLine Projects
- National Youth Theatre
- QPR in the Community Trust
- Reaching Higher
- Ricardela Savuvu-Tati
- SayYes Mentoring
- Sister System
- St Matthew's Project
- Streetz Ahead
- Streets of Growth
- XLP Mentoring

## Evaluation Team

This evaluation was conducted by Lidya Stamper, Mahreen Zaidi San Miguel, and Keisha Swaby, with support from Natalie Creary.

With a special thank you to our fantastic peer-researchers, Ana Valentina Barbosa De Saldanha E Silva, Chelsea Achiaa Gyamfi, Jaydon Burton-Jones, Ricardela Savuvu-Tati, Savanna and Unis Ali.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For comments, feedback or corrections please contact The Centre for Public Impact.

# APPENDIX: SELECTED QUOTES

Over the past year, CPI has had the privilege of having over 100 conversations with mentees, mentors, and project leads. Many have shared how mentorship has impacted their areas of their life such mental health, skills and opportunities, and access to safe spaces. Below are selected quotes.

## Mental Health

My mentoring motto is: to get someone to do something different, you need to think different, but before you think different, you need to feel different. If I can support the mentees to feel different about whatever it is that they need, that they're dealing with, that baseline feeling different enables them to then be different and then achieve differently.
- Mentoring Manager, Queens Park Rangers Community Trust

I think it's really important to sort of look at a young person as a whole. When I'm first assigned somebody to work with it's so difficult to know the areas that they find difficult. I think it's so important to see them as a whole, as a whole individual with different attributes and challenges
- Mentor, Cambridge House

Our relationship has been really good. It's a lot better than some of the other people that I've met in other organisations. Because with CAMHS, all you do is just sit down and talk with them and you don't really get to do that much. But with my mentor, I can chat with him about whatever, and I won't get judged. Meanwhile, if I go to CAHMS, I just get loads of questions and it's just not great. But with my mentor, I can talk, and it's just a lot of fun.
- Mentee 17, XLP

Many of the young people we work with are in crisis. We're not necessarily mentoring them to help them develop a career path, although that may come later. The immediate requirement for mentoring is to help a young person cope and deal with their current situation
- Project Lead, Senior Mentor, HDMT Music (One Spirit)

Having been mentored has boosted areas of my life. I feel like I'm way more confident. For example, like the other day, I gave a presentation in front of a group of people, and they were amongst the ages of 22 to 30. I feel like for someone who has struggled with anxiety, that was something out of my comfort zone.
- Mentee, 19

All in all, my confidence has improved. It was a big thing in my life at that time when I came to this programme. And if you compared me to when I started, all of my confidence, as we said, it's improved a lot... and it's making me smile because it's a good thing, you know what I'm saying? I'm proud of it a lot, even to this stage. It's thanks to my mentor.
- Mentee, Queens Park Rangers Community Trust

## Skills & Employment

Mentees create a vision board with goals, academic goals but also personal goals that we're reviewing with the mentors week by week.
- The Baytree Centre, Mentoring Coordinator

My mentor saw that I was really good at communication, and speaking so, she was like: Oh, do you want to speak at this event? And I did a public speaking event, and even though, like I wasn't really into public speaking, I realised that: Huh! I'm actually really good at it. So I kind of just started branding myself as a public speaker. A lot of the time I speak, at events, and it just kind of taught me more about myself in some ways
- Graduate Mentee, 19

He won't force jobs with me as well. He will ask me 'do you think you can do this'. And I'll say, 'I don't know', but he will try and go through it with me. He won't go, you need to go for it, you need this, you need the money, just do it, just take it. He'll find a way to like to give it to me, but not throw it in my face.That's how he helps me when it comes to jobs and knowing what I want in the future.
- Mentee

My mentor introduced me to some companies and advised me to start a career within construction. I started with a level 4 construction diploma, studying construction management, and then I ended up doing a level 7 as well. I honestly think I only passed it because I just felt how much I wanted it.
- Mentee, Streets of Growth

And when I got good news that I've been accepted, I emailed him, and he was really happy for me, which was good. I sent him an email just after we finished and he was very very kind, and he told me that I'm already on a good path.
- Mentee

My gap year has also been a great experience because my mentor has been able to support me. She was able to help me with interview preparations and my uni application, because after sixth form I was not able to receive any support from my school because I was not in education. I was completely on my own.
– Mentee, 19

One of the big pieces of advice that I learned is don't be afraid to make mistakes. Like even for me, when I started mentoring, I was already a graduate and I thought, okay, I'm too old. Little did I know there was actually so much to learn. So even if people have a stronger educational background like me, you're still going to make mistakes because at the end of the day, you're just a human being.

- Mentee, Streets of Growth

## Safe(r) Spaces

It is really important that mentors and mentees are paired suitably because not every mentor is going to be right for every mentee and not every mentee is going to be right for every mentor. It's really about drawing on your own experiences and then helping guide the young person that you're working with. I think it has been helpful having young people paired up with other young people who are kind of similar to them or have experienced the same kind of things because then you can really give them tailored advice.
- Youth Delivery Mentoring Officer, Reaching Higher

It helps me to have somebody to talk to about what's going on in my head. Especially as I'm a young guy from South East London, you're going to be judged a lot and it's hard to open up.
- Mentee

I've been working with young people who are gender questioning, but [they] are also finding out the sort of jobs they need, they can do like for the rest of their life or just need help with making job applications. Or even just finding it difficult to like having a routine and finding a schedule and like their daily being.
- Mentor, Cambridge House

We really do avoid delivering mentoring online, probably for the reason that young people don't have anywhere private they can talk if they're in their home. That's another reason why school-based mentoring is so effective. There are cost of living issues and there's housing issues which are becoming more extreme, with lots of young people in really overcrowded housing which means they don't want to be there and they're going out as much as they can.
- CEO, LifeLine Projects

Our programme delivery model has three stages which support their wellbeing journey. At the final programme stage, our girls become 'Big Sister' peers and as an organisation we are mindful to ensure that we continue to support them to extend on the impact for our community As an organisation we prioritise wellbeing ensuring that if we are not there for ourselves, you can't be there for others. We appreciate that the healing journey for girls in our community takes time.
- Sister System

I work with their whole care circle, resettlement team, and support them in their journey through the justice system, when their court hearings might be right through to when they are released to access resources and push towards their future ...we are supporting young people to deal with a system that is hard for them to break down. They are in a moment of life transition. The main pattern I see is that the organisation of their life has become too complicated for them to manage.
– Mentor and Music Educator, HMDT Music

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