



**Y'S GIRLS MENTORING**

Enabling girls to belong contribute and thrive

**YMCA NORTH TYNESIDE**

## Y's Girls Mentoring: FAQs

Thank you for expressing an interest in being a volunteer mentor with the Y's Girls Programme in North Tyneside – we're super happy to have you on board 😊 It's through the time and dedication of our volunteers that we can make a tangible difference to the future wellbeing and success of vulnerable young people.

If you haven't already completed an Application Form and would like to, please follow the link to do so:  
<https://form.jotform.com/211033838407047>

Here we're going to answer some of the FAQs you might have before you decide to commit to volunteering as a Y's Girls Mentor. Anything else you might want to ask – please don't hesitate to get in touch.

**Kirsty Brettell: Y's Girls Project Coordinator**

kirsty.brettell@ymcanorthtyneside.org.uk

**07368917070**



### What kind of time commitment does mentoring entail?

Mentoring can have a truly transformational impact on a young person's life, and it takes time to build relationships, talk openly and share interests. Research indicates 12 months as the optimum time for the mentoring process to have the most impact. Commitment, reliability and care from a trusted adult can really help build a young girl's confidence and self-worth, so we ask you to consider the time commitment carefully when applying to be a mentor.

**Our volunteer mentors work with their mentees for a period of 12 months, meeting them once a week for 1.5-2 hours. Meetings will reduce gradually after the first 6 months.**

**We ask that mentors take the time after each session to send feedback to the Project Coordinator on the activities carried out with their mentee – and any problems that may come up. Mentors are also required to make themselves available for an in-person check-in with the Project Coordinator once a quarter, with additional knowledge sharing and networking opportunities monthly. Full training will be provided with optional additional training throughout the mentoring journey.**

We understand that everyone has busy lives and sometimes things get in the way – and we welcome flexible volunteering. You don't necessarily have to meet your mentee at the same time every week, and if you do have to cancel a session we ask that you let us know in plenty of time. The frequency of support will gradually reduce over the 12-month period as the mentee becomes more independent.



### What are the benefits of being a mentor?

Mentoring is an incredibly valuable and fulfilling experience for mentors as well as mentees. Not only will you get to help young people in your community, you'll also be able to share your experiences and skills and learn a lot about yourselves.

Seeing a young girl's confidence grow and helping her explore new interests is an immensely rewarding experience, and we hope that mentors will be able to learn from their mentees too – maybe even picking up new interests themselves.

## What training will I receive?

Each Mentor will be required to carry out mandatory training before being matched. This consists of:

- **YMCA Induction Training**- roughly half a day, in person, at the YMCA
- **Y's Girls Group Training**- This may be a full day, or spread over 2 dates, depending on what will work best for both volunteers and trainers.

**Volunteer mentors will also be required to participate in Diversity & Inclusion Training as part of the Y's Girls national programme.**

Training is a great opportunity to meet your fellow mentors, share ideas and bring your amazing experience to the table. We value our volunteers and welcome your feedback; if you want to learn more about an area relating to your role – just let us know!

**All mentors will receive rigorous training in child protection and safeguarding, so that you are well equipped and confident to safeguard the wellbeing of your mentee.**

## What young people will I be working with?

The young people who receive support from Y's Girls Mentoring are all **female-identifying young people aged between 9-14 years old**. Our girls have all been assessed as vulnerable to developing poor mental health/emotional wellbeing issues in the future, based on factors such as disengagement at school, conflict in the home, antisocial behaviour, a lack of positive adult role models and a lack of ties to their community. Y's Girls is an early intervention project which aims to prevent the need for statutory intervention and instead empower them to improve their resilience, confidence and experiences so they can lead happier and more fulfilling lives.

The young people we work with will have a wide range of interests and personalities, so we match mentors with mentees based on shared interests and perceived compatibility. The Project Coordinator will always try their best to match young people and mentors so that both gain the most from your experiences.

We want to reflect the society we live and work in and match young people with mentors who may share lived experience with their mentees, so we aim to recruit a diverse pool of mentors from across North Tyneside & its surrounding areas.

## What will a mentoring session look like?

Mentoring sessions will initially be aimed at getting to know the young person, building their trust and helping establish what they would like the mentoring relationship to look like. Over time, mentors will help

their mentees access activities they enjoy and try out new things. This can be anything from sport-based activities to music, singing, rollerblading, participating in our youth club...all sorts of stuff!



**Whilst the activities can be fun and recreational, mentoring sessions are aimed at fostering constructive conversations with the mentee, where they can seek advice and support and work with you to help them set and achieve goals (both big and small). As part of the journey, you will put together an Action Plan with your mentee, where you will help them identify tangible steps to work towards in order to achieve their goals.**

The mentoring is centred around the young person's goals and interests, and these may change over time, so the content of your sessions might also change over time. What started out as a weekly meet in a coffee shop may become a jog down the seafront, a walk around the park to take photos or a couple of hours learning about music!

You will initially meet your mentee at home or somewhere familiar, and the Y's Girls Project Coordinator will introduce you. You will meet your mentee in public places and use local facilities for activities. Whilst you and your mentee will get to know each other well, it is essential for you to remain a mentor helping your mentee achieve goals, rather than a friend.

**As a Mentor you will also come into contact with your mentee's family, so it's important to establish a friendly relationship with their parent/carer.**

### **What should I do if the young person asks for my personal number, or to add me on social media?**

It is not unusual for the young people we work with to ask such requests. We cannot become friends with the young people we work with on personal social media platforms such as facebook or Instagram. We suggest you explain that you are not allowed to. This lets the young person know it is not personal and not your decision. You will be provided with an alternative means of communication, primarily for the following purposes: to inform parents if you will be late or cannot make the session, to check in so your local YMCA knows you have finished your session, for parents to contact you in emergencies, should they need to, or to inform you the child is unwell/ can no longer make the session.

### **What if the child does not want to attend, am I doing something wrong?**

Almost certainly a young person deciding they do not want to attend a particular session, does not indicate you are doing something wrong. We will monitor the situation and make contact with the parents should this continue, to try to ascertain what the issues may be.

### **What if we don't get on?**

A main part of our focus with the Y's Girls project to be successful, is appropriately matching the mentor and mentee from the start. We may not always get this right, and it is not a reflection on the mentor. We try to match according to interests, personalities, wants and needs, and location. Rapport takes time to build, so we would ask you to allow time for the young person to get to know you, and visa-versa. If you feel you are not suitably matched, please do not hesitate to discuss with your Project Co-ordinator in the first instance, who will support you in the relationship process and try rectify any unsuitable matches.

### **Will I get to meet the other mentors?**

Yes! ☺ We really want to build a supportive community of our cherished volunteers and will encourage you to meet up for peer to peer sessions, where possible. We will also do group supervisions so we can all grow and learn from each other's experiences. We intend to hold group events and clubs for staff, volunteers and mentees, so we can further build relationships. Who knows, maybe some positive and encouraging friendships will blossom between our mentees too!

### **What happens at the end if the young person still wants to be involved with me or the YMCA?**

We know endings can be difficult, which is why we have devised a program that enables the gradual reduction of mentoring. The sessions will gradually reduce, in a structured way, and will become less frequent after 6 months, where they will reduce to fortnightly, and finally one session per month. By which point we hope to be able to sign post on to other groups within the organisation where possible. The project coordinator will stay in touch with the family for a period of time afterwards, and will give their work details should the family or young person need to make contact. We will have a big celebration event at the end of the program to shout about the success and the achievements made by our young people, and the difference you have made as a positive role model on the young person's life.

### **What kind of support will I receive from YMCA North Tyneside?**

As a Mentor you will be supported directly by the Project Coordinator for North Tyneside, who will be available for advice, supervision, resources and a listening ear 5 days a week. They will keep up to date on what you're working on with your mentee, and will be able to help you brainstorm ideas, signpost your mentee to additional resources and activities, solve problems and chat through anything you might need another perspective on. You're never alone in this process.

**You will also have the opportunity to link up with other local Y's Girls mentors for a range of activities, including peer-to-peer support, social events and ongoing learning.**

**YMCA North Tyneside also places great value on reflective practice and self-care and prioritises the wellbeing of its volunteers. We want you to feel fulfilled, happy and comfortable in your work, and we will provide opportunities for Mentors to focus on their wellbeing within their role.**

These optional ongoing training, development and wellbeing opportunities will be available to mentors both locally and as part of the Y's Girls national programme.

It's essential that we continually improve our service. We will regularly ask you for your feedback and ideas so that we can be our best; your participation in the evaluation forms is the best way to get your voice heard and help shape the project for continued success in the future!

### **What are the next steps from here?**

Once you have submitted your application form the Project Coordinator will be in touch with you to arrange a short interview (at your convenience). This is an opportunity for you to learn more about our organisation, and for us to hear more about your interests, experience, skills and why you'd like to mentor on the Y's Girl's programme.

We'll have some paperwork to fill out, we'll need to do a DBS check and take up the references you provide upon application. And then you're all ready to go!

If we agree that the role is a good fit then you'll be invited to **YMCA Induction Training** and our **Y's Girls Group Training**.

**Next step – finding you a great match and introducing you to your mentee 😊**

The Y's Girls programme has been made possible by generous funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) Tampon Tax Fund and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

The project aims to establish 250 mentoring relationships across 10 YMCAs based across the UK from February 2021 until July 2022. The current funding covers YMCA's in North Tyneside, Cardiff, East Surrey, Black Country Group, Bradford, Nottinghamshire, Lisburn, Southend, Tayside and Downslink Group with a view to expansion. Please contact us for more information.

To read more about the Y's Girls programme across the UK visit: [www.ymca.org/ysgirls](http://www.ymca.org/ysgirls)