

About Friendship Works

What we do

Friendship Works is a mentoring charity helping children and young people who are having problems growing up in their home and social environment to get more out of childhood and build brighter futures.

We currently reach over 150 children and young people aged 5–16 in Camden, Islington and Southwark. Our service is completely free of charge and is funded entirely through voluntary contributions.

88% of parents tell us that their child has **increased in confidence** with the support of a mentor and **71%** report that their child has **new interests**, hobbies and skills.

77% of volunteer mentors report that their mentee is **better at expressing themselves** and communicating their feelings.

72% say that their mentee is **more confident making decisions** about things which affect them.

Who we help

The young people we work with need stronger social support networks. They face problems such as social isolation, learning or behavioural difficulties, bullying or other challenges at school, or might be young carers for parents with health problems.

As a result, many have not had the opportunity to do things in life that other children and young people take for granted, such as a simple trip to the cinema or visit to the park. They haven't had the chance to develop important life-skills, and don't know how to cope with some of life's everyday challenges. They are less likely than their peers to be able to develop the skills, interests and attitudes that they need to lead a fulfilling life.

The difference a mentor makes

An extra adult acting as a mentor gives a young person time away from their problems, helps a child to access new experiences, have fun, explore new interests and develop life-skills. Our mentors meet the child they are matched with on a regular basis for two years to build a friendship which can make a lasting difference.

Through friendship, our mentors help children and young people explore their potential, build their confidence and help them realise their hopes and aspirations for a brighter future.



For a child who is **socially isolated**, a mentor connects them.

For a child **needing adult support**, a mentor is there for them.

For young carers, a mentor gives them the chance to **be a child again**.

Volunteer role profile

Role title Volunteer Mentor

Time commitment Approx 3-4 hours for a minimum of three out of every four weekends.

Volunteer mentors are asked to commit to a minimum of 2 years' friendship, after which there is the opportunity to conclude or continue with the friendship.

Location London (Camden, Islington or Southwark)

Reporting to Caseworker

Purpose of role Established in 1977, Friendship Works is a pioneering charity providing mentoring for children growing up in difficult circumstances. We believe that long-term friendship with an adult role-model is the most effective type of support for the children we work with.

Our mentors provide long-term support by meeting with a young person face to face regularly for at least two years. They offer a young person:

- a quality relationship through friendship, and positive social interaction
- access to opportunities and positive experiences
- the chance to learn new life-skills and to gain new perspectives on life
- the opportunity to explore potential and see what life has to offer
- a positive view of themselves, and an identity which is respected
- the confidence to make life-choices
- encouragement to develop, grow and have hopes and aspirations for the future.

We are committed to equal opportunities and welcome applications from all sections of the community.

Responsibilities

- To participate in a full assessment and training process, including attending an orientation evening, an interview at the Friendship Works office, and an assessment and training weekend (non-residential weekend at Friendship Works offices in Kentish Town), followed by a home visit from one of our caseworkers.
- To undergo an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and provide required references.
- To establish and develop a friendship with mentee through regular weekend meetings, arranging suitable activities to participate in together.
- Pick up and drop off mentee before and after outings.
- To provide non-judgemental support to mentee throughout duration of the friendship.
- To understand and abide by all relevant Friendship Works policies and procedures.
- To report to caseworker on a regular basis – participating in weekly phone calls for first six months of the friendship, and monthly calls thereafter.
- To participate in regular review sessions with caseworker (at six months, one year, two years and every following year for the duration of the friendship).

- To complete expense sheets and submit these in the allotted time frames.

Volunteer mentors may also be invited to act as ambassadors of the charity at various times, through activities such as speaking at volunteer recruitment or fundraising events and participating in case studies or interviews about their experiences.

Training and support

Volunteering as a Friendship Works mentor is not only personally rewarding, it is a great opportunity to develop new skills. In addition to the initial training, mentors are supported throughout their journey via regular supervision and reviews with a caseworker.

Mentors also have the opportunity to join our online community to share experiences, skills and ideas with other Friendship Works mentors.



Benefits

Volunteer mentors have the opportunity to build a friendship and connect with a young person in their community who needs more support. They are able to get more involved in their communities as a result.

Existing mentors find it rewarding to see the world through the eyes of a young person. Many have developed new interests as a result of their friendship.

Experienced mentors tell us that in addition to being lots of fun, volunteering with Friendship Works has helped them develop skills such as:

- communication
- active listening
- increased empathy
- planning
- change and expectation management.

The difference a mentor makes

An extra adult acting as a mentor helps a child to access new experiences, manage life's everyday challenges, have fun, explore new interests and develop life-skills.

Our mentors meet the child they are matched with on a regular basis for two years to build a friendship which can make a lasting difference.

Through friendship, our mentors help children and young people explore their potential, build their confidence and help them realise their hopes and aspirations for a brighter future.

Skills and attributes required

Whilst Friendship Works welcomes and encourages mentors from all walks of life, there are some minimum requirements. All volunteer mentors must:

- be in a settled period of life
- be 21 or over
- live in or around London, to make travelling to meet a young person a realistic commitment
- be able to make time most weekends to meet with the young person they support.



There are no formal qualifications needed to become a volunteer mentor, but we look for some key personal qualities.

| Heading | Attribute | Description |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Emotions | Empathy | Able to empathise with a child's emotions. Demonstrates an understanding of their emotional needs. |
| | Self-awareness | Demonstrates an understanding of own emotions and those of a child. Aware of the impact of own behaviour on others. |
| | Management of own and other's emotions | Able to express own emotions in an appropriate manner and help a child to do the same. |
| | Emotional maturity | Able to work through challenges or difficulties in own life. Non-judgemental and takes responsibility for actions. Able to set clear boundaries and not take unnecessary risks. |
| Commitment | Keeping your word | Demonstrates an understanding of the importance of the promise to be there for a child over two years, and is able to see it through. |
| | Reliability and consistency | Demonstrates behaviour that is dependable and trustworthy. Has good time-keeping ability. |
| | Resilience | Shows perseverance and isn't discouraged by setbacks. Displays patience and understands that mentoring won't be able to solve every problem. |
| | Keeping in touch | Will make regular contact with caseworker and seek advice and support when needed. |
| Relationships | Good relationship builder | Able to develop and sustain positive relationships with people of differing ages. |
| | Warmth | Demonstrates approachability and kindness when dealing with others. |
| | Good communicator | Open and friendly. Able to listen and allow a child to open up. Deals well with caseworker and a child's parents. |
| | Building trust | Will work on building trust within a friendship. Demonstrates patience and tolerance. |
| Approach to children | Imaginative planning | Good organisational skills and shows an interest in finding new things to do. |
| | Expectation management | Expresses realistic expectations about what mentoring can achieve. Understands that progress may be slow. Recognises small changes as much as big ones. Understands the objective of mentoring isn't target focused but should focus on building confidence, self-belief and trust. |
| | Understanding and experience of children | May have experience of working or volunteering with children, or demonstrates an understanding of how children think and a desire to develop this knowledge and gain experience. |
| | Sharing interests | Demonstrates a wide range of interests and enthusiasm for sharing these with a child or young person. Is open to being introduced to new experiences by a young person. |

Ajit and George

“When I got involved with Friendship Works, it was because I wanted to do something positive, and mentoring felt like an opportunity to have a meaningful impact. George was eight when we were matched. His home life was difficult and he had problems with his health. My caseworker said he could really do with a positive role model in his life.

“The first time I met George it went well. We had some good banter and made plans for things to do over the coming weeks – nothing special – kicking a football round, sometimes playing cards or a board game. It was just about doing simple things, and building a friendship.

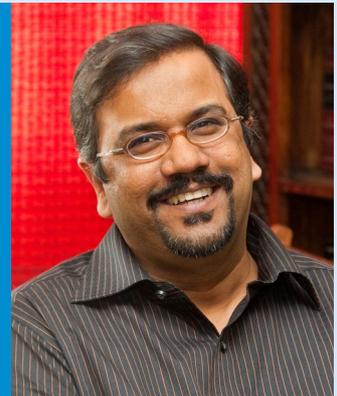
“It has been ten years now and what I have realised over that time is that my role was not to ‘turn his life around’ but to be there with him as he goes through his teenage years, supporting him when things haven’t gone well, helping him wherever I can to succeed in what he wants to do, and having some fun along the way.

“Mentoring is definitely more complicated than ‘achieving a goal’ – it’s not black and white like that, it can’t be measured by exam results, for example. I think the best measure of whether it has been successful or not is that we have kept up the friendship for ten

years during a period of immense change in his life, and I like to think that he has gone into every situation he has faced over those years knowing there is someone behind him. You can’t put a number on that, but I think it is worth a lot.

“For me, it has been both a life-changing experience and also a great deal of fun. I’m a better person for it. None of that would have been possible without the support of the team at Friendship Works, particularly my caseworkers. Ten years on, I still phone up for advice from time to time and always find it helpful and warm. As long as George wants my support, I’ll be around to provide it in some form or other, and I know that Friendship Works will keep doing the same for me.”

“George has gone through a lot of difficult times. I like to think I’ve been a reliable constant in his life through it all, someone who will listen to him, who he can trust and who he knows is on his side.”



Emma and Matthew

“When I moved to London, I missed looking after my nieces and nephews so I decided to start volunteering. I came across Friendship Works and applied to be a mentor. After an in-depth interview with the caseworkers I was invited along to a training weekend.

“During the mentor training weekend I worried that I wasn’t good enough. There was this other guy there who was a bee keeper and I thought ‘I don’t do anything interesting like that!’ But any nerves soon disappeared as the caseworkers reassured me that they would be there every step of the way to make sure that my match was a compatible one.

“Friendship Works puts an incredible amount of effort into finding the right match for each child they support, and I was matched with Matthew. When we first met, he was frightened to leave the house, very isolated at school, mute and had no friends at all. Over the next few weeks and months, our relationship developed slowly, but I started to see small changes in Matthew that showed he was growing in confidence. One of the high points was after six months, when he said ‘thank you’ to me for getting him a travelcard application form.

“My own self-belief has also developed as a result of our friendship. I feel like I’ve become so much more patient as a person and more confident at work too.”

“Now that I’ve met Matthew, I can’t imagine not knowing him. Becoming a mentor with Friendship Works has not only introduced me to new people, it has been one of the most fun and rewarding things I’ve ever done in my life.”

