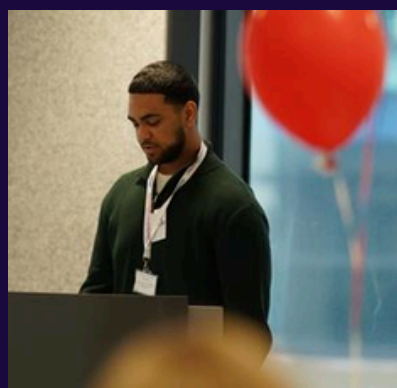


ANNUAL REPORT

One to one. **One hour a month.** One life changed.

April 2024 - April 2025

**20
25**



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

What's new for this generation is that they will be experiencing social media throughout their whole lives, with the confusion that can create around who they are, what they can achieve, what their aspirations should be and around, with a small 'i', their sense of identity.

When I look at that complexity, at the cultural barriers within society - with separate communities co-existing - and the difficulties for government in providing equitable support through the educational and social service systems, I know that there is an opportunity.

An opportunity that hasn't yet fully been capitalised on, based on the good nature of people to help their fellow citizens, and particularly for bringing together people who might enjoy being mentors with people who might benefit from being mentees.

We all need help to make the right decisions at critical stages in our development, decisions that will inform our prospects for the rest of our lives. Making it possible for more young people to receive that help is good for the individual, and it's good for society.

With the noise social media presents of idealised artificial lives, and the challenges of artificial intelligence and changes in the job market, it's going to get harder for young people to bridge the gap between their expectations and the reality of what it will take to get there.

Yes, it's going to be difficult for them to achieve but they can be helped by having intelligent conversations with people who have experience. Mentors who can help them think through for themselves objectively about how they make the right decisions at critical stages in their lives.

One Million Mentors are seeking to fill this gap, to meet this unmet need. We're a small organisation but we have terrific opportunities to scale. We engage with others, with government, with schools and other partners, with employers... and with young people themselves and the trusted adults who mentor them.



People crave purposefulness, and – not to be underestimated - we create purpose for mentors as well as benefits for mentees. Being purposeful is good for the individual, not just psychologically, but also economically.

When people have successful careers, they are happier and more fulfilled – important in itself – and they make an economic contribution to society. As a nation, we have a productivity problem. We need better employment. We need people to be creating value and contributing to the state. There's no doubt it helps society and increases social cohesion.

Mentoring is a powerful engagement with society in a "non-governmental" way, a positive given that many traditional bodies and institutions can no longer count on the respect that they used to have.

I've seen organisations grow. I've seen the value of mentoring in those organisations. I've seen mentoring in practise. I've seen it work. I've seen it have a powerful effect on people's lives.

Some of us are lucky to have mentors within our own network. Other people don't have the good fortune to have the kind of mentorship they need. We're organising ourselves to deliver it in a systematic way, across the country, rather than let it happen by chance - which has an unfairness attached to it.

My ambition for One Million Mentors in 2025 and beyond? Changing lives positively.

**Richard Sharp,
Chair of Trustees, One Million Mentors**



Year in Review

April 2024

We expand into the Merseyside region with our first programmes launching at Oldershaw School and Calderstones School in Liverpool, sponsored by Princes Ltd.

We sign an agreement with SERCO to work together to launch a pilot for young offenders with HMP Thameside.

May**June**

We 'dip our toe in the water' in Sheffield with an agreement with Sheffield Sharks, sponsored by Canon Medical.

Co-founder Rushanara Ali MP hosts a celebratory 1MM Drinks Reception at Central Hall Westminster, and Richard Sharp joins 1MM as our new Chair.

July**August**

The independent Evaluation of 1MM NCS Partnership Project (Pilot 1) by Cornish & Grey is published.

We expand from our London region into Buckinghamshire with support from Buckinghamshire Council (Opportunity Bucks initiative), running our first programme at St. Michael's School, Aylesbury.

September**October**

We celebrate 5 Years of 1MM in the Cardiff Capital Region at an event kindly hosted by Admiral and sponsored by Cardiff City Council.

The independent Evaluation of 1MM NCS Mentoring Pilot (2) by Rocket Science is completed.

November**December**

We expand our Greater Manchester region with our first programme in Bolton launching at Bolton University Collegiate School (Sixth Form) with key support from Warburtons & Howorth Airtech.

We expand Greater Manchester region's coverage further with our first Salford programme at Coop Academy Swinton, with mentors from Coop Bank, NHS University Foundation Trust and KPMG.

January 2025**February**

Three months in a row! Greater Manchester region extends into Stockport with the launch of our first programme with Aquinas College.

Powerful and inspiring speeches from mentee Aminah and Mentee Ambassador Farzana help us secure success at Hope for Cheetham's funding event.

March

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

In 2016, Rushanara Ali MP and I set up a bold and ambitious social innovation programme. We designed 1MM to be a disruptor, to move the dial – radically – to tackle inequalities and lack of social mobility, and to promote greater social cohesion. We were met with scepticism. Many questioned if the need was 'real' and rolled their eyes at our stated ambition to achieve 'one million'.

Eight years on and there are almost a million young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) and many more at risk of joining them. There is an alarming mental health crisis affecting young people.

High rates of youth unemployment and the advent of AI are heightening a sense of future job insecurity. A more disengaged and polarized society is leading to fear and disharmony in too many local communities.

I am proud that 1MM works at the local level, by establishing strong relationships with local communities, local councils, local employers and local youth partners... harnessing our combined social capital to back the talent of local young people. It has been very powerful to see us quickly establishing trusted relationships across stakeholders in Liverpool, Nottingham and Bolton this year – alongside further growth in our core regions.

We are now in a position to state confidently that our tried and tested model can be rapidly deployed in any new town or city in the UK, with the capacity to positively impact a wide range of young people immediately.

Every young person supported has their own story: there are thousands of examples of how 1MM mentoring has impacted young lives over the past 8 years. Three stand out for me in the last 12 months.

↑ The mentee from Moss Side, supported by the First Generation Scholarship Programme at Manchester Metropolitan University, who was mentored throughout his time at University. He applied to Oxford University and was awarded a full scholarship to study Masters in Public Policy. He says he would never have had the confidence to apply had it not been for his mentor.



↑ The mentee in a Cardiff school, whose mother passed away, who was mentored at a pivotal time in their life when they were lost and unsure of their future. They left school, secured employment and now go back to their school to mentor others... a real example of our belief that the mentees of today will be the powerful mentors of tomorrow.

↑ The mentee, who suffered severe anxiety post-Covid, who was supported by her mentor to complete her education, who had the courage to share her inspiring story to a room full of people in a pitch to secure funding to scale up mentoring in her local community. Now a 1MM Mentee Ambassador, she continues to advise us on how to ensure our programme remains relevant to the needs of diverse young people!

1MM is the fastest growing mentoring organisation in the UK, with a footprint in many towns and cities already. In the next 12 months, I am determined we will deepen our engagement in existing areas and support at least double the number of young people we did last year. It's an exciting year ahead for us at 1MM and we rely on, and are grateful to, our growing community of mentees, mentors, employers and youth partners for their continued support, encouragement and feedback as we continue to learn and grow.

I believe 1MM is needed now more than ever, to support - at the scale clearly needed - young people across the UK to navigate these unprecedented and challenging times.

Alveena Malik
Co-Founder & CEO, One Million Mentors



Our Year in Numbers

70

Programmes
launched

50

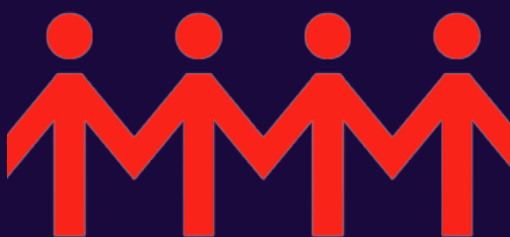
Youth partners
supporting and
running programmes

716

New mentors
trained

41%

of our mentees
identify as male



56%

of our mentees
identify as female



55%

of our mentees come
from disadvantaged
backgrounds

1,134

Number of young
people involved in
mentoring

62%

of young people on our
programmes were
from ethnic minority
backgrounds in the UK

Improving employability

Percentage of mentees who say that they:



Have people to call on for employment advice



Believe they have a wide range of opportunities open to them



Feel confident working with others



Know how to get the qualifications and experience they need for their chosen career



Are confident they can achieve what they want

80% after mentoring

Better understand what skills employers are looking for



Improving wellbeing

After mentoring:

**41% of mentees
feel proud of
themselves
more often**

**36% of mentees
feel more
positive about
their future**

**46% of mentees
are happier**

**42% of mentees
are less anxious**



London Region

50%

of our mentees
identify as female,
and 50% of them as
male

57%

of our mentees
come from
disadvantaged
backgrounds

77%

of young people on
our programmes were
from ethnic minority
backgrounds



Region overview : London

One to one.
One hour a month.
One life changed.



Our growing community

We're proud of the scaling in London that exemplifies what 1MM is capable of nationally: in 2024/25 the team passed a key milestone of connecting 1,000 young people to a mentor, and now connecting as many young people with a mentor in one quarter as was being achieved in the whole year four years ago! We've run 41 mentoring programmes, with 16 youth partners, including with new partners Langdon Park School, Isaac Newton Academy, various NCC campuses and HMP Thameside, and in several new boroughs: Havering, Epping, Greenwich, and Redbridge. We're also delighted that a new partnership with The Harris Federation not only opens up the opportunity to support their academies London-wide but to also engage their community of alumni as both potential mentees and mentors! We've supported 451 young Londoners this year: 421 through a Youth Partner programme, and 31 mentees, aged over 18, who signed up independently for mentoring.

Highlights

- Our valued partnership with New City College, that started with their Arbour Square campus in 2022, has this year not only grown to support both GCSE and A Level students but rolled out to 5 other campuses. We congratulate NCC on being judged "outstanding" in their [2025 Ofsted inspection](#).
- A strong relationship and generous funding from the GLA positioning 1MM to scale delivery, and serve young people across all of London, and facilitating partnerships with local councils: the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham and Newham, and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (who we're proud to be working with next year to deliver mentoring for young people close to the Grenfell Towers).
- Working with brilliant co-ordinators - for the first time, or again! - at Langdon Park School, Morpeth School, Royal Docks Academy, City Gateway, DigiLearning, Barking & Dagenham College, Stratford School Academy, The Photography Foundation, Newham College, HMP Thameside, ARK Isaac Newton Academy, Queen Mary University and all the New City College campuses!
- The continuing commitment of corporate sponsors Grant Thornton, Veld Capital and Mayer Brown (to provide vital funding and a pipeline of colleagues becoming mentors) and strengthening relationships with key volunteer providers: Metropolitan Police Services, Transport for London, Newham Council, Mott MacDonald, HSBC, KPMG.
- Joining the "Growth Mission" panel and connecting with like-minded organisations at the Annual Youth Work Conference, delivered by the Youth Endowment Fund and the National Youth Agency. The day was full of energy and optimism for the increasing attention and importance being afforded to the youth work sector.

Looking forward

Our pan-London expansion will continue – right now a number of new programmes are launching in all corners of the city. We will also work closely with existing partners where programmes have been largely focused on under 18s to engage their alumni community who could benefit from mentorship or, looking to give back, from becoming mentors.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

My name is Nahian, and when I first started mentoring, I was in Year Nine. At that time, I wasn't completely sure what I wanted to do with my future. I knew I loved acting and doing practical things, but beyond that, it all felt a bit blurry. Honestly, I think I'm still figuring some of it out even now!

Was there something you were facing that you asked your mentor to help you with?

Definitely. Careers were a huge thing on my mind. I had so many different interests – acting, practical work, different industries – but no real sense of direction. I felt a bit conflicted and overwhelmed. I wasn't sure which path to take, so I reached out for help. Through mentoring sessions, we explored different school options and career paths, both inside and outside of the traditional routes. Over time, I gained a much clearer sense of where I might want to go. Right now, I'm thinking about doing Public Services next year, which would help me work toward joining the Metropolitan Police. I'm also considering becoming an electrician or maybe even a train driver. Those are some of the options on my mind. At the start, when we first met, I actually said I wanted to be a millionaire! Which, you know, isn't a bad goal at all. But [my mentor] Ronan helped me realise that while it's great to have big dreams, you have to think about the steps you need to take to actually get there. You don't just wake up one day and find yourself a millionaire. It's about building your path, one step at a time.

How did your mentor help you on your journey?

Ronan really helped me explore different careers and gave me a better understanding of my options. We worked on timetables and planning my days better, especially when it came to managing stress. I used to find my days really overwhelming, but having a structured timetable made things feel a lot easier to handle. One session that stuck with me was toward the end of last year. It was actually our final session. We talked about how to balance different parts of my life — like school, career ambitions, and my religious commitments. That conversation helped me realise how important it is to keep balance in my life. Sometimes it's tough to prioritise everything, but that session gave me real tools to do it better.

What do you feel is the best thing that's changed for you because of mentoring?

Ronan taught me that it's not always best to run away from problems. Sometimes, you just have to walk right into them, confront them head-on. And while it's definitely scary at first, once you start dealing with your challenges, it actually feels a lot better. Now, I'm more confident, more focused in my studying, and overall just feel stronger in how I manage life.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

I grew up in Bangladesh. I did my Engineering degree and had my first work there. I came to the UK to do my Masters degrees and ended up falling love with working and living in London. For more than a decade now, I have been running a voluntary community organisation (Bank of Ideas). I am a social entrepreneur, author and TV/radio host as well as a coach/mentor.



Why are you involved in One Million Mentors?

I believe in youth! Young people can achieve whatever they want... with just a little inspiration and guidance to help them navigate in the direction that's right for them. Mentoring is an opportunity for me to influence a young person's life positively & meaningfully; to support and encourage them as they shape their future.

What has stood out most for you from your mentoring journey so far?

I had an incredible opportunity to see my mentee change... her thought process shifted and became more positive. Whenever I think of my mentee's transition, I feel very blessed to have been a witness and I felt a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment myself to have supported her.

Was there anything that surprised you as you supported your mentee along the way?

At the beginning, she didn't have any specific career aspirations, or solid goals, but she did have a sense that she wanted to earn 'lots of money'. We spoke about the different reasons why having a good income might be important and investigated what someone might expect to earn after GCSE qualifications. We talked about further/higher education options, and about work experience – including earning part time while you study.

What is the one takeaway from your own experience that you want most to share with others?

Be open to young people, listen to them, their aspirations and goals and then share your life skills and experience. By doing this, we can reveal so much 'treasure' in ourselves while mentoring and leave a positive impact on someone's life.



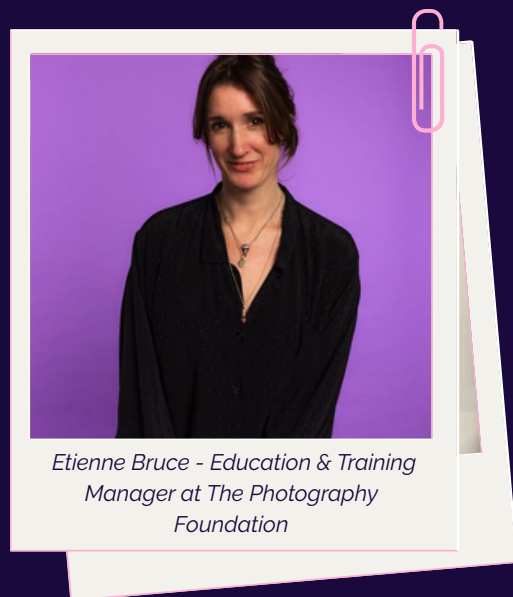
Youth Partner Youth Partner

One to one.
One hour a month.
One life changed.



Why did you want you want to get involved with 1MM?

Our six-month training programme is a professional photography programme. Everything we do has that ethos underpinning it. We're looking, in a variety of different ways, to convey lots of transferable skills. Mentoring is a fantastic strand of what we do because it helps trainees learn how to build the type of relationship that's going to help them further along in their career. Maybe they've interacted with teachers or lecturers in group sessions but this is different, this is an opportunity for one-to-one interactions where you really do need to think about how you use your time wisely, where you have to think about what you're coming to the conversation with, about how you're going to reach out to someone, knowing what it is that you're asking for... Understanding how to have more generative relationships will stand them in good stead in employment in any field, in any professional relationship.



*Etienne Bruce - Education & Training
Manager at The Photography
Foundation*

How have your trainees benefitted from mentoring?

One of our most recent cohort was struggling a little bit at the beginning. He was a bit nervous about reaching out to his mentor, who's a very busy person with quite a big following on social media. He really wanted his mentor to follow him back for his creative platform, but hadn't said so! After we'd had a bit of a chat, he asked his mentor to follow his work account on Instagram and he did. That had a lot of value, in itself, for our trainee, but it was also a starting point that helped him establish a better way of communicating and from that point on the relationship unfolded in a very positive way.

He now knew how to ask for things in a more professional manner and not to feel guilty about asking for "what I need". That will have a massive impact on his journey going forward. I do think the first step was the mentoring relationship. He went from being very nervous about how to 'put himself out there' to feeling quite confident. After his "commercial brief" project, he put together a test shoot and reached out to a paying client, a brand he really liked, and pitched to them... and ended up getting his first big job.

What would you say to others thinking of partnering with 1MM?

It's super helpful for us in so many ways. I definitely think it takes some of the pressure off, to have the additional resource that you offer adding value to what we do. I think it feels very collaborative in that we can structure it around our needs, and it doesn't feel like extra work. We've got our touch points throughout the year but otherwise we can just get on with it. If we need you, we can reach out to you - it really does add value in terms of alleviating some of our workload and giving us that security that we have experts that we can call on if we need to. Mentoring has definitely had a positive impact on trainees' engagement, confidence and career readiness. I think it gives trainees a certain level of insight into the industry that they just wouldn't have otherwise. Even though they meet different Facilitators throughout their time on the programme, and hear a lot of stories about people's journeys, mentoring is a consistent, one-to-one relationship throughout their time, and one that helps trainees to reach a wider network outside of the Foundation and our community. Mentoring helps on a very practical, as well as on a professional, level: the two things go hand in hand... it's not just the theory, it's the actual doing of it that's helpful.



Employer Employer Employer

One to one.
One hour a month.
One life changed.



Stephanie Tyler, Early Years Adviser at Transport for London.

What motivated TfL to partner with One Million Mentors?

We work very closely with the Mayor of London's New Deal for young people and support their goal to improve the lives of young Londoners. They made us aware of One Million Mentors and the brilliant work that you were doing, and we saw a parallel with how we wanted to help increase opportunities for young people.

Over the last year, we've really tried to highlight how mentoring fits with our organisational goals. We want to support the city that we serve, develop a future workforce with the kind of key skills that we need, and develop more meaningful engagement, linking into the Gatsby benchmarks. Going forward, with us looking at our strategic workforce plans, I think this is only going to increase: it's no longer just 'a nice to do'. We're targeting the areas our offices are based in, we've talked about our priority school list, I think it will just go from strength to strength.

How has the mentoring experience benefited your employees and the young people involved in the programme?

For mentors, there's the personal development, towards their career ambitions, and an opportunity to feel they are 'giving back a little bit' by working with young people who need additional support... But it's also an opportunity to get to understand the perspective of a young person! The value of that is something I talk a lot about: what you get from your mentee and how you can bring it back into the workplace.

We want to help young people reach their full potential, but also to see the diverse range of careers there are at Transport for London, dispelling the perception that it's all 'bus drivers and train drivers'. There's a huge variety of careers available here. Mentors help young people explore what routes they can come in to them by – showing them the breadth of opportunities and enabling them to really reach their full potential.

What are the key positives you would want to showcase about your involvement in a 1MM programme?

I think the key thing is it's enabled us to have a wider reach with schools. We have a new priority school list, and this is enabling us to work with schools that we previously wouldn't have been able to engage with. And I think the full training, and the skills, that by partnering up with you we are giving to our mentors. We do have a very basic introduction for mentoring, which I think is appropriate for those who are mentoring a colleague via a cyber relationship... but it's very different mentoring a young person outside your workplace with the kind of experiences that you may encounter with your mentees. I think that your training has really benefited us – the team of mentors that have gone through the programme has said this is one of the highlights.



Working together....



With Employers & Youth Partners



HSBC

M

MOTT
MACDONALD

M



LAING O'ROURKE



MAYER
BROWN



Gensler



serco

HMP Thameside



NEWHAM
COLLEGE
LONDON



New City
College



New City College
Ardleigh Green



New City College
Epping



New City College
Hackney



New City College
Havering



New City College
Redbridge



Greater Manchester Region

63%

of our mentees identify as female, and 31% of them as male

62%

of our mentees come from disadvantaged backgrounds

62%

of young people on our programmes were from ethnic minority backgrounds



Region overview : Greater Manchester

One to one.
One hour a month.
One life changed.



Our growing community

We're proud to be able to say that the number of people signing up to become mentors across the region has tripled in the last year. We've run 13 mentoring programmes, with 11 youth partners, including programmes in 3 new Greater Manchester boroughs: Bolton, Salford and Stockport. We've supported 271 young people this year: 240 through a Youth Partner programme, and 31 local young people, aged over 18, who signed up independently for mentoring.

Highlights

- Launching a fourth programme with Sale Sharks HITZ students who are 16-19 and not in education, employment or training (NEET). With 17 mentoring relationships, this programme has supported the largest number of young people yet.
- Partnering with Manchester City Council and Oldham Council to interest staff in becoming mentors and enabling them to support local schools: Whalley Range High School, Abraham Moss Community School and Oldham Sixth Form College.
- Working with some fantastic Mentoring Coordinators across the region, including at our new partners: Coop Academy Swinton, Aquinas College and Bolton University Collegiate School.
- Our programme at Bolton UCS is being enabled by our new Employer Partner, Warburtons, who provided half of the 40 mentors on this programme to support the entirety of the Sixth Form!
- Linking in with like-minded professionals through local networks, including taking part in events at the GM Chamber of Commerce, North Manchester Business Network, and the University of Manchester's Greater Manchester Digital Security Hub.

Looking forward

We were thrilled to take part in Hope For Cheetham's event where young people in the local area themselves voted for organisations they wanted to support them and honoured to have been awarded funding to deliver 70 mentoring relationships through current and new Youth Partners in the Cheetham Hill area.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

Before mentoring, I was in a very directionless place being very confused about my future goals, and career. Mentoring looks out for people such as me - from disadvantaged backgrounds. They may be the first person to go university, come from a minority or background that makes them believe they "can't do" something or be disadvantaged, or they do not have the same network others do to teach them skills or help them get into the industries they want.



Was there something you were facing that you asked your mentor to help you with?

I was deciding between many career paths within science and even tech industries and feeling confused as to what I should use my other skills - such as my creativity - for.

On top of this, having anxiety since secondary school, I overthought, making thinking about the future and tackling goals harder. I was very ambitious and knew I wanted to do well; however I lacked the confidence, clarity or organisation to apply.

How did your mentor help you on your journey?

A lot of the skills we covered I am able to apply to my everyday life today. I would say they were mainly focused on my life skills, building my confidence and strategies towards the future.

Ultimately, Joanna was there for me for the long and frustrating process of eliminating my career paths. She heard my concerns and encouraged me to research and envision myself in different experiences and pathways, finding what I truly enjoy and not what I think I should enjoy. This has developed to me even considering having a small business for my art which I had never even thought about before.

What do you feel is the best thing that's changed for you because of mentoring?

Joanna's positive motivation and techniques to build my confidence have helped. We talked about impostor syndrome and reaching opportunities that I may not have considered and switching my negative mindset to a more positive one. I love a specific technique where she helped me have more of a specific, optimistic approach to the start of the day or for a set period time. I have to assign myself 3 keywords (such as confident, helpful, productive) as small goals that I must live up to and give myself "checkpoints" to understand where I am at.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

In the past 10 years, I have achieved numerous goals, such as relocating to a new country, learning a new language to a proficient level, getting an undergrad degree in Psychology, building a career in talent acquisition, developing an avid interest in sports and nutrition and travelling the UK and parts of Europe. I recently got into horse-riding, tango, salsa and public speaking and I am a big believer that it's never too late to start and learn a new skill!



Why are you involved in One Million Mentors?

During the past year, there has been a lot of change in my life. I was looking for more direction and meaning, and I reached the conclusion that I needed to 'get involved in something' which I'd never done before. At a point in my life where I'd gained a bit more wisdom and experience, I felt I wanted to share this with others. I happened to come across an ad from 1MM and the motto just stuck... "one hour a month, one life changed". Realising I could - and hoping I can - have such an impact on someone's life, I knew I wanted to get involved.

What has stood out most for you from your mentoring journey so far?

I've learned how to ask better questions! The training provided by 1MM is comprehensive without being overwhelming. I also learnt how to empathise at a deeper level... and more specifically with younger individuals.

Was there anything that surprised you as you supported your mentee along the way?

Mentoring made me realise that we accumulate a lot of knowledge and experience throughout our lifespan and it can become easy to take it for granted.

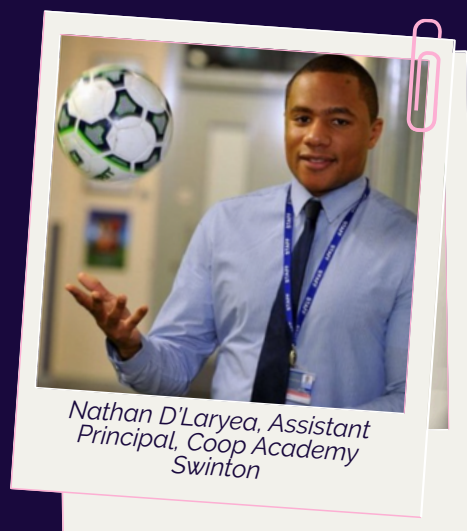
What is the one takeaway from your own experience that you want most to share with others?

Being a mentor has enabled me to be more grounded and appreciate all the wisdom I have collected, and to grow by trying to find ways to share it that would be interesting to a student.



Youth Partner Youth Partner

One to one.
One hour a month.
One life changed.



Why did you want you want to get involved with 1MM?

At Coop Swinton we have a number of students who have high aspirations and high potential who want nothing more than an opportunity to speak to individuals from professions and vocations that align with where they see themselves going in the future. Even if they don't align exactly, our students have told us that they would really value any opportunity to have adult conversations around their choices both when they leave school and when they step into the life of work. The 1MM programme provides this in abundance and allows students to have somebody not in school who they can talk to for real world advice.

How have your students benefitted from mentoring?

There is a real buzz in the rooms when the sessions are taking place. After the sessions, students speak glowingly about their conversations and feel more confident in school. They form good relationships with their mentors who are already providing our students with resources, guidance and knowledge that we would not have been able to do ourselves in school.

Students are asking me if I could arrange sessions more regularly than we already have them and are already seeing the benefit of their sessions. Our cohort of Y10 students are thriving and are already thinking about how their discussions can help to support them once they leave school. As well as bespoke guidance, the students are telling us that the mentors are providing them with general guidance which will help them as they navigate through their final years at school.

What would you say to others thinking of partnering with 1MM?

Please do it! The students absolutely LOVE the mentoring sessions. Schools are well supported by the programme leads and there are very few logistical arrangements that are not taken care of by 1MM. The support is excellent, and people are always on hand to answer any question and to provide on the spot support.



Employer Employer Employer

One to one.
One hour a month.
One life changed.



What motivated Casey to partner with One Million Mentors?

Our purpose is "Improving Lives", and we believe that begins with creating opportunities for the next generation. Partnering with One Million Mentors allows us to do just that – by offering time, guidance and encouragement to young people who are beginning to explore their future paths. The structured yet personal nature of the programme really resonated with us, and we felt it was an ideal way to contribute meaningfully to our local community, especially given our long-term presence in Oldham through our Sustainable Oldham Strategic Partnership Contracts.

How has the mentoring experience benefited your employees and the young people involved in the programme?

Mentoring has been just as rewarding for us as it has for the mentees. It's opened up new perspectives, reminded us of the importance of active listening, and reinforced the value of giving back through human connection. It's also been a great way to develop softer leadership skills within our team, all while supporting the aspirations of young people in our region.

What are the key positives you would want to showcase about your involvement in a 1MM programme?

Mentoring doesn't require huge resources – just a willingness to listen, support, and be present. The difference it can make is genuinely profound, both for the young people involved and for your own team. If you're looking for a meaningful, personal way to deliver social value and invest in the future of your community, I'd highly recommend getting involved with One Million Mentors



Working together....



With Employers & Youth Partners



Aquinas College



Bolton University Collegiate School



Co-op Academy Swinton



Hide Out Youth Zone



Abraham Moss Community School



Oldham Sixth Form College



Sale Sharks HITZ Programme



Whalley Range High School



William Hulme's Grammar School



MMU - First Generation Project



Xaverian College

Cardiff Capital Region

57%

of our mentees identify as female, and 40% of them as male

49%

of our mentees come from disadvantaged backgrounds

38%

of young people on our programmes were from ethnic minority backgrounds



Region overview : Cardiff Capital Region

One to one.
One hour a month.
One life changed.



Our growing community

We're proud to be able to say that this year we passed the milestones of 700 young people supported and 300 mentors recruited since we launched in the region in 2019. We've run 14 mentoring programmes, with 14 youth partners, including with new partners Whitchurch High School, Caerleon Comprehensive School, Lliswerry High School, Cathays High School, Ysgol Gwent Is Coed and the Welsh Millennium Centre. We've supported 206 young people this year and this year launched an exciting programme at the Welsh Millennium Centre to support a cohort of over 18 mentees in conjunction with their Creative Learning programme.

Highlights

- Willows High School starting their 5th mentoring programme. Willows were the first school to come on board in 2019 and have run a programme every year. Not only have there been over 70 students supported over this time, but the school creates such a positive environment that many of the mentors who started all those years ago are still mentoring there!
- Receiving ongoing financial support from both Newport and Cardiff City Councils to continue to support schools in both cities. In Cardiff, we have targeted schools based within the Southern Arc of the City - where the greatest need is - and in Newport programmes focus on supporting young people with challenges around attainment, attendance and attitude to learning.
- Newport and Cardiff having several Youth Partners 'going again' with repeat programmes this year. This is testament to the hard work and dedication of our youth partner mentoring coordinators. Special thanks go to Mrs Wheatley and Mr Clayton Jones (Bassaleg Comprehensive School), Mr Ward and Mr Seghiri (St Joseph's RC High School), Mrs Button (Llanwern High), and Mrs Lawrence (Mary Immaculate High School).
- Benefiting from some incredible support from employers this year including Admiral, Lloyd's Bank, Mott MacDonald, Willmot Dixon, and Princes Ltd who have extended their support into Wales.

Looking forward

In 2025 we will continue to support young people in the Southern Arc of Cardiff, look at expansion into the South Wales Valleys and be supporting an exciting tech programme 'All Hands on Tech' as we expand into the Vale of Glamorgan.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

My name is Layth Shamson and I am formerly a pupil at Willows High School. After passing my GCSEs, I successfully completed a Level 2 Science Diploma in Cardiff and the Vale College last year. This year, I am completing the Level 3 with the hope of going to University to study Science in the upcoming years. My dream is to be either a pharmacist or a teacher in the future.

Was there something you were facing that you asked your mentor to help you with?

In the Summer of 2022, my mother sadly passed away after a long battle with illness. Up until then, I had lived with and cared for my mother with my older brother, who continues to look after me and provide for me today.

The knowledge my school had about my home circumstances meant that I was chosen to be part of the 'One Million Mentors' scheme. This meant that I was introduced to Steve George from Willmott Dixon, my mentor, at a crucial point in my life.



How did your mentor help you on your journey?

Steve was extremely busy at work, and often travelling on business trips, but the fact that he always made time to meet with me and was dedicated to helping me made me feel honoured that someone cared to give up their time for me. It was great to speak to someone (who took) a different route into a successful career. Steve continually reassured me that, although important, GCSEs weren't the be all and end all for someone achieving their dreams. He constantly boosted my confidence and said that hard work would pay off in the end. From both Steve and my own brother, I have been instilled with this strong work ethic, and this has helped me persevere to this point today.

What do you feel is the best thing that's changed for you because of mentoring?

The key notion that I took away from Steve was how important it was to plan ahead. Steve taught me to plan ahead for revision for GCSE for example and I use many of these strategies now I am at college and will continue to do so. He showed me that this gets you where you want to be and it had been an effective strategy so far.

As part of my college Welsh Baccalaureate, I have recently returned to Willows High School but this time in the capacity as a mentor for younger pupils. Inspired by Steve, I chose to do my 15 hours compulsory work experience helping pupils. I have used my language skills in Arabic to help some of the asylum seekers and refugees improve their literacy. I also hope that some of the positivity and work ethic that Steve instilled in me will rub off on them.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm a professional astrophysicist. I've lived in Cardiff my entire life, but I've spent long periods working in the US. I have two six-year-old twins. As part of my life, I've been extremely keen on promoting self-empowerment and helping people, particularly young people, to realise that it's within their power to make changes to their life and become the best that they can be.

Why are you involved in One Million Mentors?

I believe it's really important for young people to understand that everyone learns differently. School might not always be the best environment for every individual to thrive, but that doesn't mean they can't learn or develop valuable skills. They can still grow, flourish, and become the best versions of themselves. Sometimes, it just takes a bit of bravery to step outside of traditional systems and realise that school qualifications, while important, don't define your future or what you're capable of achieving in life.

What has stood out most for you from your mentoring journey so far?

One of the most meaningful parts of this programme for me has been realising that I'm not there to "fix" anything. Unlike academic mentoring, where I might be focused on helping solve problems directly, my role here is to support my mentee—to listen, to guide, and to be someone she can trust. My mentee has been dealing with a lot of anxiety around her upcoming GCSEs, particularly about staying in her current school for sixth form. Our sessions have given her space to talk openly about those fears without the worry of being judged. I've made it very clear from the start that I'm not there to examine her or report back on anything she says. Just having that neutral, supportive presence has helped her open up about her challenges.

Was there anything that surprised you as you supported your mentee along the way?

Yes—one thing that became clear early on was how important stability was to her. She hadn't been at her current school for very long when we started, and she had moved around quite a bit due to family circumstances. She finally felt like she was settling in and was really eager to stay for sixth form. For me, her well-being became the most important goal. It's hard to perform at your best when you're constantly under stress. So, our focus became helping her feel like staying on for sixth form was both possible and within her control. That sense of continuity meant a lot to her.

What is the one takeaway from your own experience that you want most to share with others?

The most important thing has been giving my mentee space. It can be tempting, especially in the early sessions, to fill silences or overshare to build rapport. But learning to find that balance—between being open and staying professional—was key. So, for me, establishing that comfortable middle ground—where we could have honest conversations in a safe space - has been the most important aspect of this journey.



Edward - mentor
(Cardiff)



Youth Partner Youth Partner

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*Gemma Button, Coordinator
at Llanwern High School*

Why did you want you want to get involved with 1MM?

Llanwern High School is situated in the East of Newport and is catchment to some of the most deprived and challenging wards, not just in Newport, but in Wales. A large majority of our students access free school meals and face challenges both at home and in school. We were approached by One Million Mentors to run a mentoring programme in March last year and jumped at the chance of free additional support for our learners. We were careful with the students we chose as we wanted a balance between those who would engage with the programme versus those who would benefit the most. One of the aims of the programmes, which was directed by our headteacher, was to try to encourage as many of those on the programme to look at staying on at the school for 6th form.

How have your students benefitted from mentoring?

The students who joined the programme were given the opportunity at the start to test run the new 1MM training and were joined by a 1MM staff member from Manchester - this was a great opportunity for us as a school, and for our learners, to feedback on aspects of the One Million Mentors programme which would affect schools and pupils across the UK.

To say the programme was a success is an understatement. After 12 months of mentoring, a number of our pupils have gone on to achieve great things and in part, as well as the support from the school, is down to the 1MM programme. One of our students has managed to gain an exclusive spot at a prestigious drama school in London, another has managed to get a part time job at a local children's hospital and one of our quietest pupils has grown dramatically in confidence, so much so that he stayed on at the end of the celebration event to talk to the new cohort of year 10 pupils - something he would not have done 12 months ago.

What would you say to others thinking of partnering with 1MM?

The mentors have also been absolutely fantastic, 4 of them did not miss a single session and a lot of them have agreed to stay on to mentor the new cohorts of learners. We cannot wait to start this year's programmes and are excited about what success stories we can share in 12 months' time!



Employer Employer Employer

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"Admiral believes in giving back to the community and this is a great way to use the skills and knowledge of our amazing colleagues to really help make a difference. With every engagement we have the opportunity of building the community and getting one more young person on a successful career path. We are making an impact."

-Peter Olivier, Admiral Employee & Mentor

Admiral is Cardiff's largest employer and since 1MM launched in Wales' capital city they have been positive supporters of 1MM's mission and promoted mentoring as an opportunity for their employees.

In October 2024, Admiral hosted an event to celebrate 1MM's 5th anniversary in Wales. The event was sponsored by Cardiff City Council and saw a range of stakeholders come together, including mentors, youth partners, funders, local leaders as well as 2 inspirational young people: Layth and Lucas.

- Leader of Cardiff Council, Huw Thomas spoke about how the council was an early adopter of 1MM, and how our vision aligned with the Council's in terms of providing meaningful opportunities to every young person, regardless of their background, across the city.
- Assistant Head of Education of Newport City Council, Rebecca Sims highlighted the great benefits local schools and young people in Newport receive from 1MM, in terms of improved attendance, attainment and attitude.
- Admiral Group Plc Mentor, Peter Olivier highlighted the importance of business coming together to extend collective impact in our communities.
- 1MM Mentees, Lucas Hoare and Lyath Shamsam recounted their own personal challenges and how having a mentor transformed their lives, made them more confident and opened new doors for them.

Building on the success of the event, Admiral facilitated an online employer event with the aim of adding to their existing pool of volunteer mentors. We now have 36 mentors registered. In 2025 we are set to continue our partnership with Admiral as we look to engage with Admiral Law and recruit additional mentors for programmes in the Cardiff Capital Region.

"When a river seems impossible to cross, mentors point out the stepping stones and enable you to walk on water" Antoinette Mbanugo, Admiral Employee & Mentor



Working together....



With Employers & Youth Partners



Bassaleg Comprehensive School



Caerleon Comprehensive School



Cathays High School



Ely and Cearau Community Programme



Llanwern High School



Mary Immaculate High School



St Josephs High School



Welsh Millennium Centre



Willows High School



Our Funders

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