Hope for the Young

Creating promising futures for young refugees

Annual Impact Report

2025-2026



Introduction to the 2025/26 Annual Impact Report

This year, we are proud to have stood alongside young refugees and people seeking sanctuary as they worked to rebuild their lives in the UK. Through our integrated model of one-to-one mentoring, financial support, and tailored advocacy, we continued working to remove the range of obstacles preventing young people from settling into their communities, accessing education, and building the skills and confidence they need to reach their potential.



Matt Blacker
Chief Executive Officer



Kami Saedi
Chair of Trustees

Throughout 2025-26, we supported 166 young people through mentoring, awarded 53 grants, and provided complex casework and advocacy support to 107 young people. Mentees enrolled in college, improved their English, made new friendships, and began to become part of their communities. Grantees graduated with first and second-class honours, secured competitive internships, and found employment in careers such as nursing, pharmacy, and engineering. These achievements show just what is possible when people are given the targeted, wrap-around support they need to overcome the barriers they face when arriving in the UK.

What makes these achievements all the more significant is the context in which they were achieved. Increased housing insecurity, escalating mental health needs, and a rising tide of anti-migrant rhetoric and far-right protests created fear and disruption for many of the young people we support. As a result, we saw the complexity of needs intensify, waiting lists grow, and demand for our services remain consistently high throughout the year.

At the same time, a tightening funding landscape, alongside several multi-year grants coming to an end, required us to make some careful decisions about our staffing and resources. We responded by restructuring our team and investing in diversifying our income across individual giving, corporate partnerships, and community fundraising – raising our highest-ever income to date. Through all of this, our staff team and volunteers responded with remarkable dedication, maintaining the quality and warmth of our programmes and ensuring that every young person who came to us received the same high standard of care.

We are deeply grateful to all the individuals, organisations, and grant-makers who made this year possible, and above all to the young people whose courage, ambition, and strength continue to inspire everything we do.

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A Year in Numbers

166
young people received mentoring

53
grants were awarded to young people

107
young people received additional casework and advocacy support

£64,188
was awarded in education grants

178
partners referred young people to our services

We supported young people from **43** countries

77
new volunteer mentors recruited

We also supported young people to receive:

26 laptops with the support of our partners at Screen Share

34 Foodbank Vouchers through the Trussell Trust

15 Mobile phones through Hubbub

Our Work

Why We Exist

3,627
unaccompanied children applied for asylum in the UK in 2025

114,000
people are stuck in the asylum appeals backlog, waiting over a year for a decision

People seeking asylum face fees up to
£38,000
per year to attend university

People seeking asylum receive
£49.18
per week to survive on (£9.95 for those living in hotels)

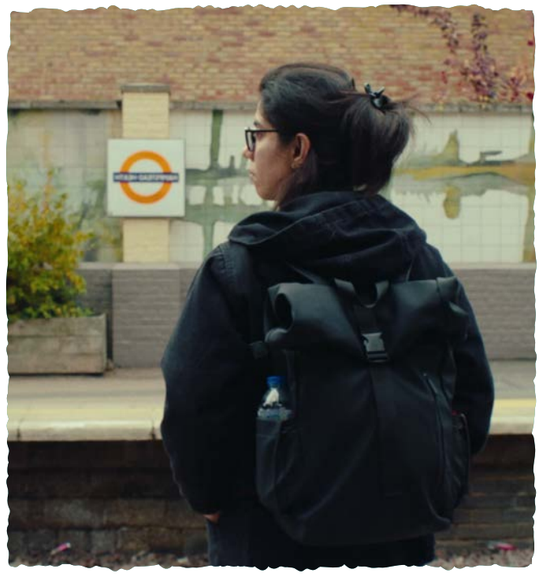
Refugees are
5 times
more likely to have mental health needs than the UK population

58%
identified loneliness as their biggest challenge when settling into a new country.

Our mission

Our mission is to remove the obstacles to young refugees and asylum-seekers' education and wellbeing through mentoring, advocacy, and financial support. Young people seeking sanctuary in the UK are determined to access education and make the most of their opportunities. At Hope for the Young, we're determined to support them in doing so.

We understand that everyone has different backgrounds, needs, and aspirations for the future. We therefore pride ourselves on providing holistic and tailored one-to-one support that ensures young people can move towards their goals, regardless of their starting point.



How we Support

Our programmes work closely together to remove the range of barriers preventing young refugees and asylum-seekers from accessing the education and support they need to reach their full potential.

Mentoring
We offer tailored one-to-one mentoring to enable young refugees to settle into their communities and pursue their goals.

Financial Support
We pay for tuition fees, exam fees, transport, and general study costs, so that young refugees can access and complete their education.

Advocacy
We provide advice, guidance and support throughout young people's education to maximise their chances of success.

"I really valued having a consistent, supportive person to talk to who was outside of my immediate circle. It made me feel less alone".

Mentee

How we measure impact



We measure impact across the duration of our work with each young person, to ensure that we remain informed and can continuously strengthen our offer of support.

Within the Mentoring Programme, outcomes are tracked using a visual tool based on the Outcomes Star model, enabling participants to reflect on their progress in key areas of their lives.

We also monitor and evaluate success through Personal Development Plans to set and track goals and weekly session feedback forms completed by Volunteer Mentors.

Additionally, structured reviews at three weeks, three months, and five months are conducted by a Mentoring Programme Manager with both mentors and mentees, culminating in a final six-month review.

Our Grantees receive ongoing advocacy support, including three check-ins per academic year, with opportunities to provide feedback during these sessions and a final review. Grantees also complete an evaluation form at the end of their year to track key outcomes, including their experience at Hope for the Young, their progress to date, and next steps.

Across both programmes, we collect data on demographics, waiting times, referral routes, as well as personal stories, quotes, and anecdotes.

This year, we commissioned Trauma Treatment International (TTI) to conduct an in-depth review of our organisation and services. TTI described our work as demonstrating 'many examples of excellent trauma-informed practice, and even trauma-transformative practices' with young people valuing our person-centred, compassionate and responsive support. We are proud of what this reflects and remain committed to deepening our trauma-informed practice and ensuring every young person we work with is supported towards the futures they deserve.

"We are struck by the breadth of remarkable work undertaken and the strong motivational drive of young people, volunteers, staff and trustees."

Trauma Treatment International

The Mentoring Programme

Our Mentoring Programme matches young people seeking sanctuary in London with a volunteer mentor. Mentors provide weekly one-to-one support in line with their mentee's goals and aspirations, working together to achieve incredible outcomes.

Due to the complex social, psychological, and practical challenges many young people face when trying to settle into their new communities, our holistic and youth-focused mentoring approach enables young people to develop the independence skills, support networks, and confidence they need to settle into the UK and achieve their full potential.

The Power of Mentoring

Across 2025-26 we supported 166 young people with a Volunteer Mentor, facilitating 98 new mentoring relationships across London. Over the past year, our mentors have supported young people to start college, improve their English, join youth and sports groups, and apply for university.



We assess the outcomes of our programme using a visual tool based on the Outcomes Star model, which is completed at the start and end of their mentoring journey. Of the 70 young people who completed mentoring this year:

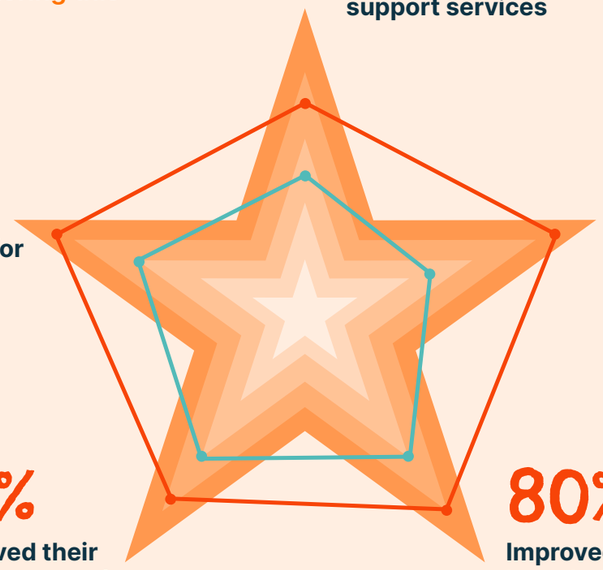
75% increased their knowledge and access to essential support services

85% furthered their pathways to education and/or employment

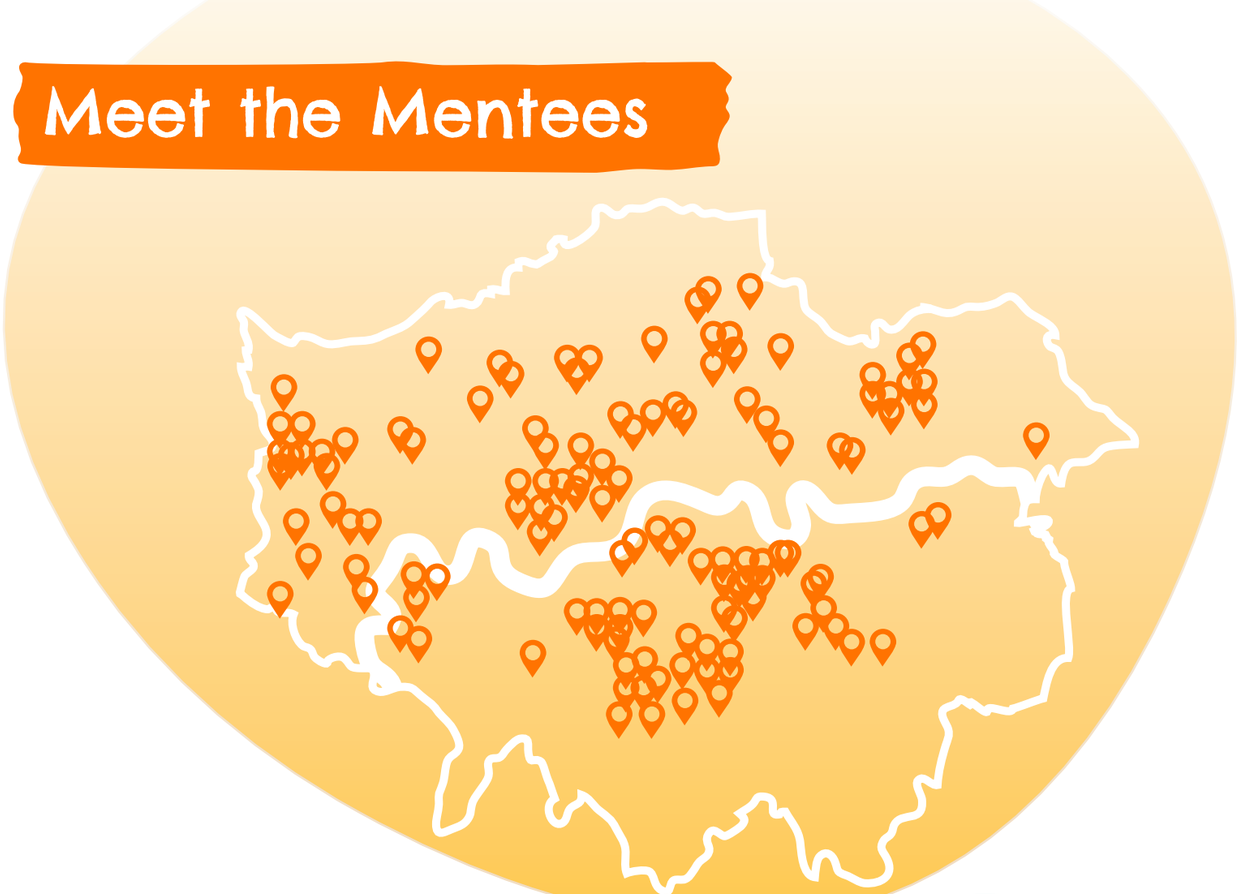
84% improved their English language and communication skills

79% improved their confidence and self-esteem

80% Improved their knowledge of local social activities and support networks



Meet the Mentees



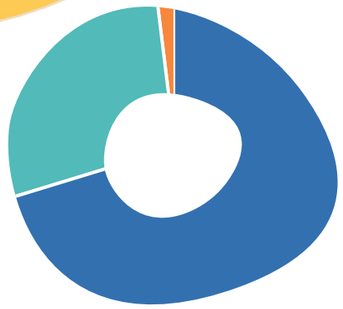
Age

- 16-17: **9%**
- 18-21: **63%**
- 22-25: **28%**



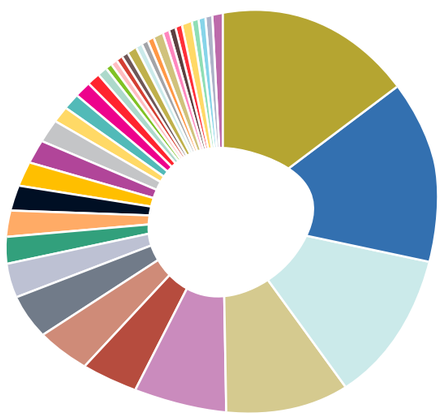
Gender

- Male: **70%**
- Female: **29%**
- Non-binary: **1%**



Nationalities

- **Sudanese 14.4%**
- **Afghan 13.1%**
- **Eritrean 11.3%**
- **Syrian 9.4%**
- **Iranian 7.5%**
- **Pakistani 4.4%**
- **Yemenite 3.8%**
- **Saudi 3.1%**
- **Sri Lankan 3.1%**
- **Ethiopian 2.5%**
- Bangladeshi 1.9%
- Egyptian 1.9%
- Guinean 1.9%
- Iraqi 1.9%
- Vietnamese 1.9%
- Ukrainian 1.9%
- Indian 1.3%
- Kuwaiti 1.3%
- Tajik 1.3%
- Trinidadian 1.2%
- Albanian 0.6%
- Angolan 0.6%
- Colombian 0.6%
- Congolese 0.6%
- Gambian 0.6%
- Indonesian 0.6%
- Jordanian 0.6%
- Kurdish-Syrian 0.6%
- Lebanese 0.6%
- Malaysian 0.6%
- Nigerian 0.6%
- Nigerien 0.6%
- Senegalese 0.6%
- South Sudanese 0.6%
- Stateless 0.6%
- St Vincentian 0.6%
- Tunisian 0.6%
- Uzbekistani 0.6%



Mouamal & Flo's Story

Mouamal arrived in the UK from Iraq when he was 16 years old. He wasn't able to study much back home, but he was very motivated and had dreams of going to university. He came across Hope for the Young, and decided to refer himself to the Mentoring Programme.

'I want someone who can understand me and help me with my studies'

When Mouamal was first introduced to his mentor, Flo, he was shy and lacking in confidence. Flo's warm, kind and committed nature helped him feel comfortable, and their meetings soon became a trusted space where he could talk openly, explore new ideas, and build his confidence.

Together, they worked on improving Mouamal's wellbeing and finding opportunities to connect with others. With Flo's encouragement, Mouamal joined a local youth group, and having Flo accompany him to his first session helped make the experience feel much less daunting.



Their sessions also created space for exploring his personal interests and having fun. Mouamal began learning to play the guitar, while discussions about time management helped him balance the demands of studying with making time for hobbies and looking after his wellbeing.

> "I really enjoyed the meetings I had fun learning new things visiting new places and speaking to my mentor it was the nicest thing I have ever had. Flo was wonderful and supportive she showed me things I never known about myself!"
>
> Mouamal, Mentee

A key focus throughout the mentoring was exploring future educational pathways, which led Mouamal to choose a new college for the following year. Together, they applied for a T Level course in IT, which will provide Mouamal with the qualifications he needs to apply to university.

The pair enjoyed exploring London together, visiting museums, art galleries, and parks. These outings helped broaden Mouamal's experiences and provided opportunities for informal learning and discussion. Their conversations were often so engaging that members of the public would occasionally stop to join in, drawn by the openness, curiosity, and warmth that both Mouamal and Flo brought to their interactions.

By the end of the programme, Mouamal had grown in confidence, developed new interests, strengthened his social connections, and felt more positive about his future. Their partnership is a great example of how consistent support, encouragement, and shared experiences can help a young person thrive.

Volunteer Mentor Impact

The relationships that are created through mentoring are rewarding for our volunteer mentors, too. Becoming a mentor provides the opportunity to transform a young person's life, whilst developing new skills and experiences.

In 2025, we recruited and inducted 77 new mentors, bringing our total pool of volunteer mentors to 205. Across the Mentoring Programme, 2687 hours of mentoring took place.

We worked with mentors based in boroughs across London, with a diverse range of occupations, skills and cultural backgrounds.

We held two mentor social events, providing a space for mentors to connect with each other, share common mentoring challenges, and learn from each other's experiences.

"I loved the whole experience...I saw Mo change from a troubled, frightened young teenager to a more confident young man who has ambitions and hope for his future"

Angela, Mentor



"It has been a personal growth and learning for both myself as well my mentee. I really enjoyed being able to connect with someone different but also not so different to myself and learning about them and helping them grow and flourish."

Mentor

98%

would recommend mentoring to others

100%

felt the induction they received was comprehensive

96%

felt they made a real difference to their mentee



"It genuinely feels like there are people who care about my education and want to see me succeed. That kind of backing means everything."

Grantee

The Grants and Advocacy Programme

The Grants and Advocacy Programme supports young people with insecure immigration status across the UK to access and complete further and higher education. We provide small grants of up to £4,500 and one-to-one advocacy support tailored to each grantee.



Across 2025-26, we awarded a total of £62,469 to 34 young people:

4 young people's university or college fees

14 young people's general living allowances

3 young people's study resources

13 young people's transport fees

We also awarded a further 19 small grants to young people on our programmes, totalling £1,719. These grants provided more flexible and targeted support throughout the year, including emergency support towards food, essential living costs, and travel, helping young people to maintain engagement with education and stay on track with their goals.

We involve current and previous Grantees at every opportunity throughout the year. In the summer, we held five successful grant panels. All five grant panels included HftY alumni, trustees, and staff – continuing our commitment to ensuring those with lived experience of our programmes are central to decision-making.

We also continued to offer peer-to-peer support by connecting current grantees with former grantees with similar experiences to provide advice and share learnings.

In the Autumn term, we held our Annual Welcome meeting for new Grantees, featuring presentations from alumni sharing their experiences and practical advice. We also facilitated peer-led workshops, such as how to gain employment after graduating. It featured a panel of four Grantee alumni who shared their different pathways into work.

100% felt receiving the grant made them more optimistic and hopeful about their future

96% felt HftY helped them to access new opportunities and services

92% felt their knowledge of their rights had increased because of the support received

92% felt HftY helped them feel connected to other young people who are facing similar challenges

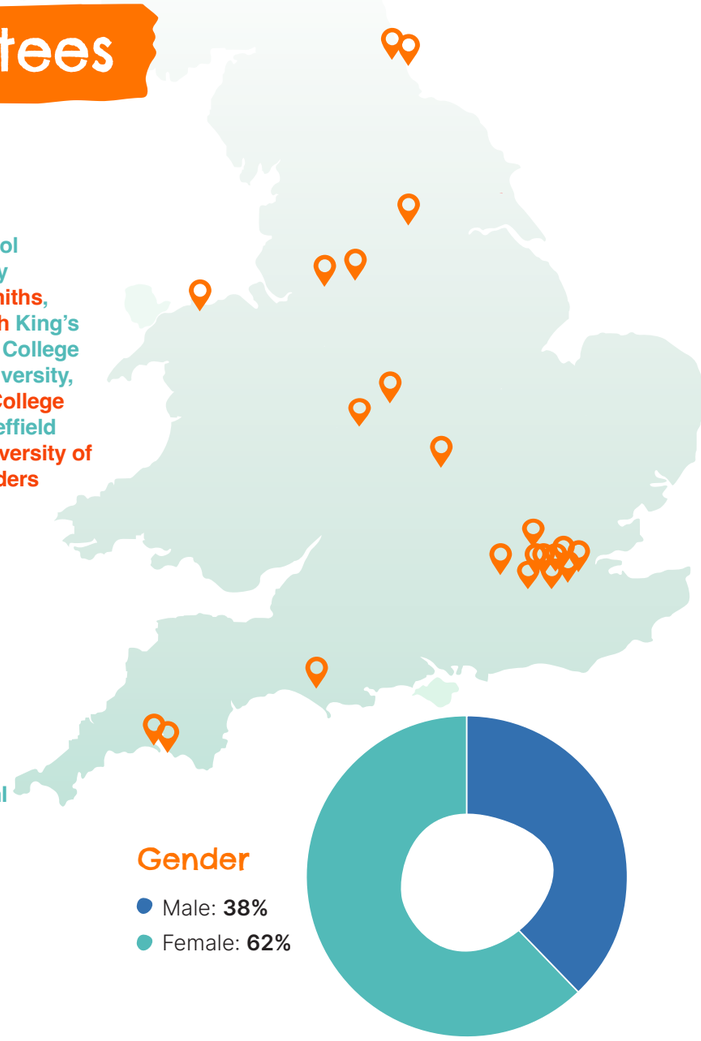
96% felt the support received from HftY had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being

23 grantees received additional casework and advocacy support from the Grants & Advocacy Manager

Meet the Grantees

Where our grantees study

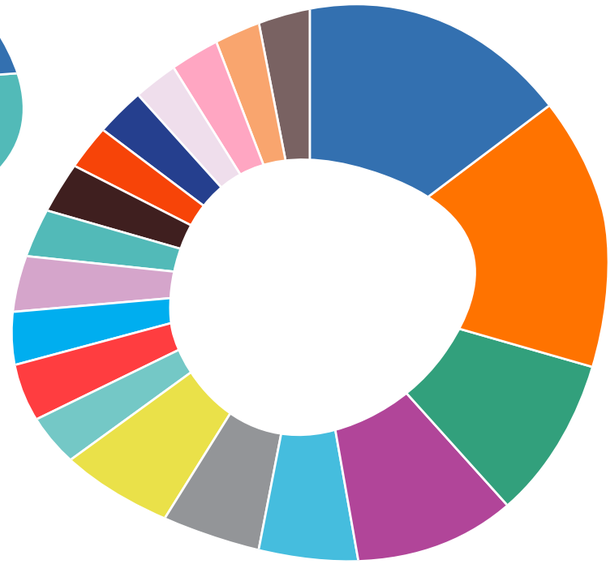
Aston University Bangor University City of Bristol College Brunel Medical School Brunel University Croydon College De Montfort University Goldsmiths, Gloucestershire College University of Greenwich King's College London Kingston University Leeds City College London Film Academy London Metropolitan University, Nescot College Newcastle University Newham College University of Plymouth University of Salford Sheffield Hallam University SOAS Southwark College University of Strathclyde University College London 01 Founders



What our grantees studied

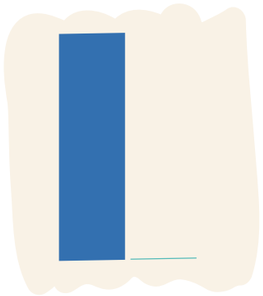
Acoustical and Audio Engineering Adult Nursing Applied Medical Sciences Art & Design Beauty Therapy Biomedical Science Business Construction Management Economics Electrical and Electronic Engineering Engineering Technology Filmmaking Graphic Design Information Technology JavaScript Software Development Law Law and Politics with Human Rights Mathematics Mechanical Engineering Medicine Music Nursing Psychology Sociology





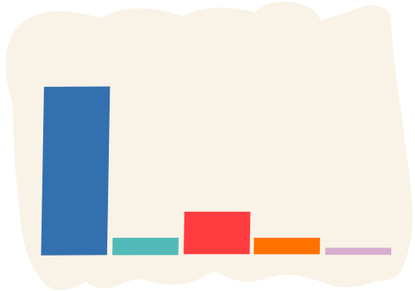
What's next for the Grantees

Educational Outcomes



- Completed the year and passed all assessments and exams: 100%
- Studies still in progress: 0%

What's next for our Grantees



- Continuing with my current college/university course: 66%
- Starting a new college/ university course: 7%
- Gained employment: 17%
- Graduated, work not yet permitted: 7%
- Other: 3%



"Not only did I get financial support. Hfty made it a priority to support my mental and academic well-being. Regularly checking in and always offering support. They showed me that they cared and that I could always reach out if I need any type of help whatsoever."

Liz, Grantee

"Receiving the grant made a huge difference in my life. It took away many of the financial pressures I was facing and allowed me to focus fully on my studies without constantly worrying about how I would afford travel, learning materials, or basic needs. Most importantly, it gave me the freedom to concentrate on my education and pursue my goals with confidence. Thanks to this support, I was able to perform at my best and achieve results I'm truly proud of."

Helen, Grantee

Taylor's Story

Taylor always knew she wanted a career where she could make a difference. It was through caring for her younger sister, who has Down syndrome, that she discovered her passion for nursing. Accompanying her to hospital appointments, Taylor witnessed the compassion and kindness of healthcare professionals and saw the impact they could have on someone's life.

After finishing college, however, she found herself unable to start a nursing degree. Due to her immigration status, she could neither work nor access student finance. With no guidance, Taylor was left to navigate the system alone, unsure what her next steps would be.

Unable to continue her education, Taylor experienced depression and found it difficult to leave the house. The support of her family, alongside her faith (and Taylor Swift!), helped her hold on to hope.

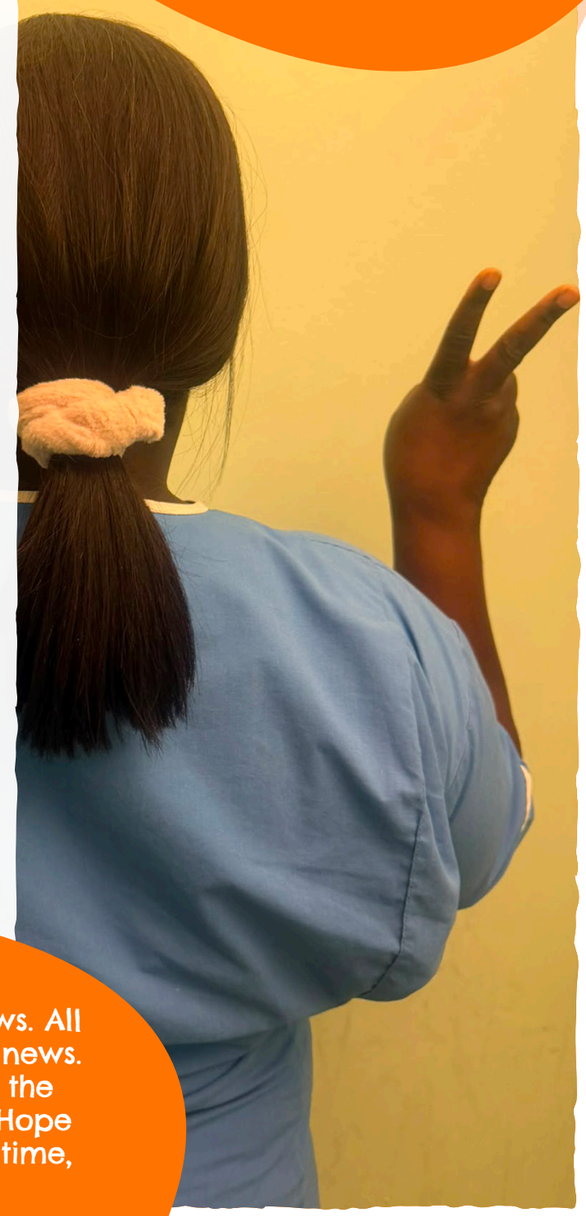
While searching online, Taylor came across Hope for the Young. She had secured a scholarship with a fee waiver, but still needed financial support to cover the remaining costs of studying. Learning her application to Hope for the Young had been successful marked a turning point after months of setbacks.

The grant allowed Taylor to focus on her studies instead of worrying about placements and everyday study costs. As the first person in her family to attend university, graduating was a milestone shared by everyone who had supported her.

Today, Taylor is proudly working as a qualified children's nurse in the NHS, fulfilling the dream that once felt impossible. Her journey reflects the transformative impact of education when young people seeking sanctuary are given the opportunity to thrive.

"Watching the way the nurses cared for my sister made me fall in love with healthcare. I knew I wanted to be able to care for people in the same way and be someone my family could be proud of."

Taylor, Grantee



"I cried when I got the news. All I'd been hearing was bad news. Suddenly I had a yes from the university and a yes from Hope for the Young. For the first time, it felt like not all was lost."

Taylor, Grantee

Youth Participation & Engagement





At Hope for the Young, we take a youth-centred approach that places young people with lived experience of forced migration at the heart of our decision-making. This year, we are proud to have officially launched our Ambassador Network, recruiting 20 committed and inspiring young people from our programmes, and working closely with them to design and deliver our work.

Ambassadors contributed to the review of our Theory of Change, co-designed a new Outcomes Star, advised on the development of a new Mentee Handbook, and helped plan and deliver our Annual Celebration.

They also told us that they wanted to share their experiences and inspire others, which led to *Hope Seekers*, our first podcast, which is designed and recorded for and by young people. One Ambassador also co-directed our new mentoring film, and others joined staff at external events and panels, including a Mayor of London event on quality mentoring.

Young people played key roles in co-facilitating training, and joining recruitment panels for staff and volunteer mentors. Former grantees also contributed to grant decision panels alongside our trustees and staff.

> "It was inspiring to see how our efforts are contributing to a bigger mission and making a meaningful impact."
>
> Noura, Ambassador



Community Highlights

Our Annual Party

We held our Annual Party in August, and welcomed over 80 attendees from our community, including trustees, young people, donors, supporters and the Hope for the Young team, to celebrate our work and the successes of the year. It was a joyous day involving games, delicious food, and musical and poetry performances from young people.



Refugee Week



As part of Refugee Week, we brought together more than 30 members of our community for a special film event, featuring three films curated by Refugee Week alongside our own youth-led film. We also launched our new limited-edition t-shirt designs, developed and launched in collaboration with young people.

Aatii & Shy's Story

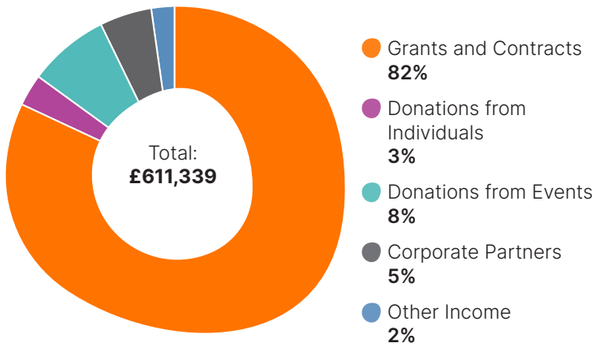
We were lucky enough for Aatii and Shy to share their story with us, for a film that we released in April. The film depicts Aatii's journey to Hope for the Young, and how Shy supported her to achieve some of her personal goals. Aatii has demonstrated remarkable strength, determination, and optimism while navigating so many challenges. As she moves into this next chapter, she is now in a position to embrace new opportunities, and we are excited to hear what's next for her. Watch the full video **here**



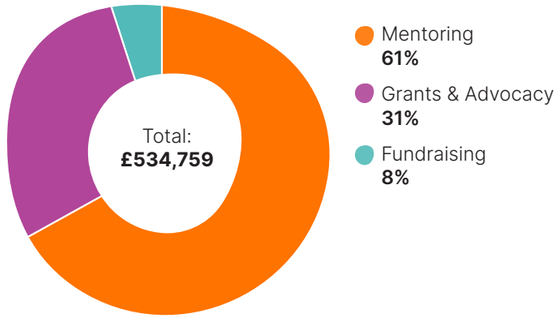
Finances

We are extremely grateful to all the individuals, trusts, foundations, and corporate partners for their support in 2025-2026:

Income



Expenditure



Our Funders

We are extremely grateful to all the individuals, trusts, foundations, and corporate partners for their support in 2025-2026:

novion
BigGive
CITY BRIDGE FOUNDATION
The Eve and Philip Morrison Trust
CAPITAL GROUP™
3SPACE Spaces for Public Good
Leigh Trust
Haringey LONDON
richersounds Experience Better
ISLINGTON For a more equal future
BNY
achieving for children
GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY
London Churches Refugee Fund Charity Number 1121108
The Reed Educational Trust
The Henry Smith Charity founded in 1628
The Hugh Symons Charitable Trust
COMMUNITY FUND
THE LINBURY TRUST
Propel
THE BELRON RONNIE LUBNER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
Southall Trust Est. 1937
HENRY SMITH FOUNDATION
Hackney
SWIRE CHARITABLE TRUST

Looking to the Future

The pressures facing young refugees and asylum-seekers show no signs of easing. Rising hostility, an overstretched asylum system, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis mean the need for our work has never been greater.

Our ambition for 2025–27 reflects a renewed focus on delivering impactful, sustainable, and responsive services for young people seeking sanctuary in the UK. Grounded in our mission and informed by the challenges and opportunities ahead, we will focus on three core areas:

Elevating Service Excellence

We will work to reduce waiting times, launch a new Mentee Handbook and Mentor Portal, and maintain the high satisfaction levels that young people, mentors, and grantees have consistently reported. The Grants and Advocacy Programme will direct all available resources towards supporting young people to access and complete their studies.

Embedding youth involvement and lived experience

Our Ambassador Programme enters its second year with a committed group of young people, and we remain focused on ensuring the voices of those we support are represented across the organisation. The Ambassadors are currently planning our annual event and will also build on the new outcomes framework we introduced, exploring the long-term impact of our programmes and how best to capture this data. Alongside this, they will contribute to discussions around the organisation's wider strategy and opportunities for programme improvement.

Building Organisational Sustainability

We will maintain our focus on staff wellbeing and development, carry out a governance review, recruit new trustees with relevant expertise, and continue to build and diversify our income base. As we approach the end of our current strategic period, we will also begin an end-of-strategy review, ensuring that the experiences of the young people we support help shape our direction for the years ahead.







Our Trustees

Dr Kami Saedi
Dr Cathy Street
Niki Kalyvides
Michael Atkinson
Jafar Omid

Our Team

Matt Blacker – CEO
Ellie Alvarez – Head of Programmes & Operations
Katie Ogilvie – Senior Mentoring Programme Manager
Pamela Verma – Grants and Advocacy Programme Manager
Lois Barton – Mentoring Programme Manager
Emily Hill – Mentoring Programme Manager
Alex Pang – Mentoring Programme Manager
Fakhria Joya – Finance and Administration Officer (from January 2026)
Sayed Sajjad – Operations and Finance Officer (- December 2025)
Hannah Greenwood – Fundraising & Communications Manager (- October 2025)

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Hope for the Young

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Registered Office: 85-87 Bayham Street, London, NW1 OAG

*We take the safeguarding of the young people we support very seriously. Some of the names and details of the young people whose stories have contributed to this report have therefore been changed to protect their identities.