

Ignition

Strategic Plan 2025–2028

Executive
Summary

Until
everyone
**has
someone.**





“Ever since I’ve got a mentor, I realise I can do much bigger things, like going to college and uni and I’ve got much bigger plans for myself. My path and goals have definitely changed because of mentoring.”

Phoebe

We’re a **movement for change that wants to see greater numbers of young people, like Phoebe, to find paths to brighter futures across the United Kingdom.**



Hey, we’re Susanne and Frankie. We’ve both been in the shoes of a young person feeling lost, unsure about the future, and needing someone to believe in us. That’s exactly what MCR Pathways gave us, someone who helped us see our potential, when we couldn’t see it ourselves. Having a mentor changed everything. It wasn’t just about advice or guidance; it was about having someone who really listened, who stuck with us through the tough times, and good, and who helped open doors we didn’t even know existed. Now, as co-chairs of the Young National Advisory Board (YNAB) and trustees of the MCR Pathways Board, we’re proud to stand alongside the charity to make sure every young person gets that same experience. Let’s keep pushing for change, because every young person deserves to feel seen, heard, and supported.

**Susanne and Frankie, Co-Chairs,
MCR Pathways YNAB**

**If we simply have two minutes to share
our strategic priorities with you...**

**Let’s get straight to
our strategic priorities.**



To be there for every young person who needs us, wherever they are. We are committed to expanding our reach so that no young person is left without support. Whether they’re in school, at college, in the community, we will ensure we’re there to offer the trusted adult they deserve.



Ensure mentors, supporters and partners feel valued and appreciated at every step of the journey. We are passionate in ensuring mentors, supporters, and partners feel valued and empowered in supporting us to achieve our vision. Strengthening these connections is vital, achieved by celebrating success, sharing learning, listening and embedding their voice in all that we do.



Strengthen our foundations that support everything we do. Behind every connection are strong systems, motivated teams and mentors, and wise use of resources and channels to drive efforts forward in realising our vision. That way, we remove obstacles to igniting the vital spark brighter than ever before.



Amplifying the voice of young people in shaping the national policy landscape. We are passionate in amplifying the voice of young people louder than ever before. Advocating for greater participation of young people in decision making affecting their lives is very important to achieving positive change, both now and in the future. We are committed to achieving change at local, regional and national levels.

**Insert CTA to download the main publication to find out more.
Insert CTA to get in touch to find out more.**

If you have a little more time to find out more...

Let's continue setting the scene.



“When people believe in you, not only does it make you believe in yourself more but to push yourself even more to work hard, with my mentor there’s no judgement, no trying to fix things but she just listens and motivates me to work hard” **Zein**

At some point in our lives, we all need someone to help us find our way. The power of mentoring can spark something incredibly important for young people, like Zein.

To witness the positive change in a young person as your connection grows is such a wonderful experience and one that belongs to you both. I decided to become a volunteer mentor because I wanted ‘to help someone’ but it was only through time and the mentoring experience that I really discovered what that actually meant and that one of the people that I would help would be me! Being there as a mentor for young people can also really help them to achieve positive outcomes as they have the confidence of knowing they have a trusted ally who can help to guide them going forward. This also gives them the power to choose their own path knowing that they are fully supported by their mentor. Mentoring has made me a better person and I see its benefits every day, whether that’s engaging with my own family or making me see what’s actually important in life. I’m so excited to see the positive impact that mentoring with MCR Pathways will continue to make for our young people and how the strategic plan will achieve this over the next three years.

Aimee Canavan

Could you give just an hour a week, like Aimee, to help a young person to see their potential? Find out more about becoming a volunteer mentor.



“At the start, before I met my mentor, I wasn’t up for trying hard. I never had any confidence in myself whatsoever and then, ever since I met my mentor, she made me believe in myself more and made me feel as if I actually do mean something and make me go do it and actually try.” **Kirsty.**

What started out as an ambitious pilot project in Glasgow twenty years ago continues to change lives for young people, like Kirsty.

MCR Pathways emerged from frustration with a care system that left too much potential unrealised, flickering amidst the backdrop of uncertainty, challenges and disadvantage. What started as determined action has grown into a national movement built on the idea that there must be a better way. Starting with a single school and five-year pilot shaped entirely by their input. That foundation proved powerful: thousands have since benefited, showing that mentoring transforms lives. Glasgow, with its challenges and deep community spirit, was the perfect place to begin. Our success in the city gave us the confidence to expand across Scotland and the UK, adapting to each new setting. Today, we support 7,172 young people with the help of X mentors across X schools and communities. But we are more than a programme. We’re a movement. Our vision is simple: every young person who needs support should have it. The spark of potential is in everyone. We’re here to ignite it and we’re just getting started.

Maureen McKenna
Chair, MCR Pathways

Iain MacRitchie
Founder, Trustee,
MCR Pathways



Igniting that spark of potential and helping young people to find paths to brighter futures is what we’re very passionate about, driving us forward in achieving our new strategy with purpose and vision.

Our purpose is changing lives through the power of mentoring. An unfair start in life can mean young people can lose their way. We refuse to let circumstances dampen a young person’s spark of potential. We’re a bold, empathetic, and tenacious community, driven by one vision: to put young people at the heart of everything we do. Their voices lead us. Their futures fuel us. We’re not just here to support change. We’re here to make it happen.



A trusted adult comes into a young person's life providing personalised, consistent support.



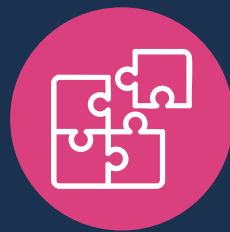
Support provided leads to improved motivation, confidence and resilience.



Igniting the vital spark of potential where the young person is ready to learn, participate and attend.



The pace of progress accelerates and the spark of potential glows through improved attainment.



Leading to sustained positive post-school destinations, and wider contributions to society.



At the heart of MCR Pathways lies a simple yet powerful belief: every young person, just like Aaron, has a vital spark within them - a unique potential waiting to be seen, nurtured, and set alight.

That spark is talent. It's ambition. It's individuality, often buried beneath uncertainty, self-doubt, or tough circumstances. It doesn't come from others. It's already there, waiting to be awakened. Mentors don't give young people their spark, they help light it. Through empathy, belief, and consistent encouragement, mentors become the catalyst for change. When that spark is nurtured, young people find the confidence to dream bigger, push through barriers, and step into who they're truly meant to be. And what makes it even more powerful? Transformation can flow both ways. Mentors often rediscover something in themselves — a renewed sense of purpose, compassion, and connection. In giving their time, they reignite their own spark.

Watch Aaron's video:



“Me and Phil connected through football and a love for sports and stuff like that. Having a mentor can help you study and do stuff during your time together and it just kind of makes school a little bit less stressful.” **Aaron.**



“For me, the best thing about having a mentor is that you have someone who’s 100% on your side, and just wants to help and support you to do as well as you can. Having that support is really valuable and has helped me feel way less nervous about the process of leaving school and applying to college.” **Olive.**

We all have a role to play in helping more young people, just like Olive, to feel supported, understood and encouraged to pursue brighter futures.

Our strategic plan is more than simply a document.

It's a road map for achieving positive change developed with young people, and wider supporters. Every roadmap leads somewhere, and ours leads to where every young person can spark potential into a brighter future. But we know we won't get there alone. Reaching that future demands deep collaboration with those who share our passion and purpose. Whether you're a decision-maker, local authority, school, business, corporate parent, or donor — your role is vital. Together, we can build the future every young person deserves.

Until everyone has someone. Join our movement in igniting the vital spark.





Until everyone **has someone.**

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