

Become a Time to Change Young Champion

Are you aged between 16-25 with personal experience of mental health problems?

Do you want to volunteer as part of England's largest social movement to ensure that this generation can be more open about mental health problems than any before?

Do you want to use your experiences to speak out to make sure no young person is made to feel isolated and ashamed because of their mental health problem?

Do you want to attend training, be part of local campaign groups and meet passionate, like-minded young people?

If so, you should apply to be a **Time to Change Young Champion!**

We especially encourage applicants from groups which are less represented in mental health campaigns, such as people who identify as LGBTQ+, people from BAME communities, people who are severely affected by mental health problems, young men, people from faith groups, disabled people, and young people from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. We want everybody with a mental health problem to be able to live a life free of fear.

Please note there are only a limited number of spaces so we may not be able to accept all applications.

Read more about Time to Change, the Young Champion role and commitment below and apply to be a Young Champion today:

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/young-champions-apply>

Who are Time to Change?

We are Time to Change, the growing social movement changing how we all think and act about mental health. Too many people are made to feel ashamed or isolated because they have a mental health problem but we're here to change that.

Our voice is made stronger and louder thanks to funding from the Department of Health and Social Care, Comic Relief and the Big Lottery Fund with funding from the National Lottery. Our campaign is run by charities **Mind** and **Rethink Mental Illness**, and thousands more organisations have joined us to make change happen.

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Since Time to Change began in 2007, around 4.1 million people in England have improved attitudes towards mental health problems. And more people than ever are able to be open about their mental health problems. Find out more about the impact we're having.

We've still got a long way to go – too many people with mental health problems are still made to feel isolated, ashamed and worthless.

We know it can be difficult to talk about mental health problems. That's why we support **communities**, **schools** and **workplaces** to open up to mental health problems, to talk and to listen.

The Children and Young People's programme began in 2011, working to change the way young people, teachers and parents think and act about mental health. We aim to inspire and equip schools, colleges and youth groups to deliver anti-stigma activities and offer training, resources and support for teachers, youth professionals and young people. Young Champions are at the heart of this programme and input into all aspects of the work. We train and support Young Champions to take part in social contact conversations. These are conversations that take place between people who have personal experience of mental health problems and those who may not. When people talk to each other, prejudices and assumptions are often replaced with mutual understanding and respect. Young Champions take part in social contact in schools, youth settings, online and in their communities.

Who are #TeamYoungChampions?

- Aged 16-25 (at the point of applying)
- Young people with personal experience of mental health problems
*Please note this does not need to have been formally diagnosed
*We encourage applicants with diagnoses that are less represented in mental health campaigns e.g. Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia and Personality Disorders.
- Young people who have faced stigma and discrimination due to their mental health problem. For example from schools, friends and family or self-stigma.
- Passionate individuals who want to volunteer to be a part of a growing social movement using their voice to change the way the country thinks and acts about mental health.
- Young people who want to learn more about campaigning, leadership and how to use their voice to make change.
- Young people who can take initiative and enjoy being part of a team of like-minded individuals with different experiences and skills.

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What does being a Young Champion involve?

- Attending the initial Young Champion induction training weekend for your region* ([you can check your region here](#)).
 - If you live in the Midlands or the North of England: Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th July in Manchester
 - If you live in the South, East of England or London: September 8th and Sunday 9th September in London
- Using the training and support provided to speak out about your experiences at least 10 times per year. This can happen in a variety of ways from events, to blogs, to informal conversations with friends and family. You will be trained on how to share your experiences safely and we will help you with ideas about ways to speak out.
- Logging this with us at Time to Change so we can celebrate your brilliant campaigning! We call this 'social contact' and you can find more information and a short video [here](#).
- Inspire young people all over the country to talk openly about mental health.
- Attending campaign group meetings with other local Young Champions.
- Getting involved on World Mental Health Day in October and Time to Talk Day in February.
- Working with the Children and Young People's Team to share your story in schools and at events around the country

*Please note that attending the induction training for your region is compulsory. If you are unable to attend, there are many other ways to campaign with Time to Change, e.g. you can sign up to be part of our Children and Young People's virtual panel [here](#).

To learn more and be inspired by the last cohort of Young Champions please check out the #TeamYoungChampions hashtag on [twitter](#)! To read more Young Champions talking about their experiences, check out Jodie's blog [here](#).

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What the Young Champion programme can offer you

- The chance to become an integral part of England's largest social movement to change attitudes and behaviours towards mental health, an ambitious programme to ensure that nobody is made to feel isolated or ashamed due to having a mental health problem.
- Exciting opportunities to share your experiences in your area; from attending events with staff, to sharing your story in schools to blogging and vlogging.
- Meeting like-minded, passionate young people.
- A tailored training programme to enhance your leadership and campaigning skills including:
 - Testimony Training - public speaking in schools and youth settings
 - Media Training - speaking out in the media
 - Blogging and Vlogging Training
 - Evaluation Training
 - Campaigning Training
 - Further training sessions as decided by #TeamYoungChampions
- Invitations to events and conferences about mental health in your local area
- Travel across the country, seeing new places and meeting new people in the education and mental health sector
- Support from the Time to Change team to meet your own campaigning goals.

Your Commitment

Being a Young Champion requires a level of commitment from you over the next 18 months. We will offer guidance and training to support you on your campaigning journey. Your wellbeing will always be top priority, we understand that this may vary and you may need to take time out from campaigning. Professional mental health support is not available through this programme and young champions are encouraged to practice self-care and identify sources of support. Think about who can be [#InYourCorner](#).

As a young champion, you are expected to:

1. Travel independently or with a carer to Time to Change training events or sessions
2. Participate in and engage with the Young Champions programme where possible over the next 18 months

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Being a Young Champion, written by 2016-18 #TeamYoungChampions

"I have most enjoyed the confidence and self-esteem that being a Young Champion has given me, by connecting me with a group of like-minded and inspirational mental health champions and allowing me to share my story with them and with others about my mental illness struggles. I am hugely grateful for these opportunities and cannot thank Time to Change enough for improving my confidence and self-esteem around doing new things, speaking to strangers, meeting new people and travelling to new places. Being a Young Champion has allowed me the opportunity to no longer be ashamed of my mental illness and to use it as a way to help others. I'm hoping to continue to do this by challenging the stigma around mental illness in society even if it's just by sharing my story online or reaching out to a friend who's struggling." – Peter

"Being a Young Champion has been an amazing experience, and I have made friends for life. The Young Champion programme has given me the confidence and the tools to challenge mental health stigma, and the opportunity to share my story in schools and at events has been incredible. The best thing about being a Young Champion is being part of a community of people who all have the same mission and who inspire you every day." – Mary

"This programme has not given me a voice, it has allowed me to find my own, because it was always there, just hidden and hidden pretty well at times. But without it, I would never have realised that actually my voice did matter, I did have something to say, my story was worth sharing and I too could use my experiences to better those of others." – Jodie

"Being a Time to Change Young Champion has been an exhilarating experience. From walking through the door on the first day of training through to the various events I have had the opportunity to take part in, including the ten-year anniversary at the department of health, the support from the staff and fellow Young Champions has been outstanding. My favourite aspect of being a Young Champion is undoubtedly the opportunity you get to hear the stories people have because everyone has an experience of mental health difficulties be it personal or that of a friend, colleague, family member or a complete stranger." - James

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