

VOLUNTEERING WITH THE MIX

Online Volunteer Counsellor



Essential support for young people





About The Mix

Life is tough. It throws a lot your way and it can be hard to know what to do with it all.

The Mix is here to sift through the embarrassing problems, weird questions, and “please-don’t-make-me-say-it-out-loud thoughts” that you have. We don’t have all the answers, and we can’t (and won’t) tell you what to do, but we will support in any way we can.

The Mix believes in young people so we’ll do everything in our power to inform, encourage, and motivate you so you can make the best choices for yourselves.

We’re a multi-channel digital service. Whether it’s by digesting our articles and videos, talking with others going through similar situations on forums and group chats, or seeking support with trained volunteers and counsellors, you can seek information and support in the way you want it.

The Mix doesn’t just want to reach out to you, we want to work with you too. We strongly believe in peer-to-peer support and offer a variety of volunteering opportunities to strengthen your skills and get you involved, as well as making sure that we’re as well-informed and understanding as we can be of your feelings and issues.

We want to be the first place you turn to get support. Sometimes what you’re told at school or at home just doesn’t cut it. We’re here whenever you need us, wherever you are. Life is tough, but support doesn’t have to be.

Organisation Details:

Charity Registration Number: 1048995

Company Registration Number: 3031098 (England and Wales)

Registered Office: 209-211 City Road, London, EC1V 1JN

VAT Registration Number: 766 1469 03

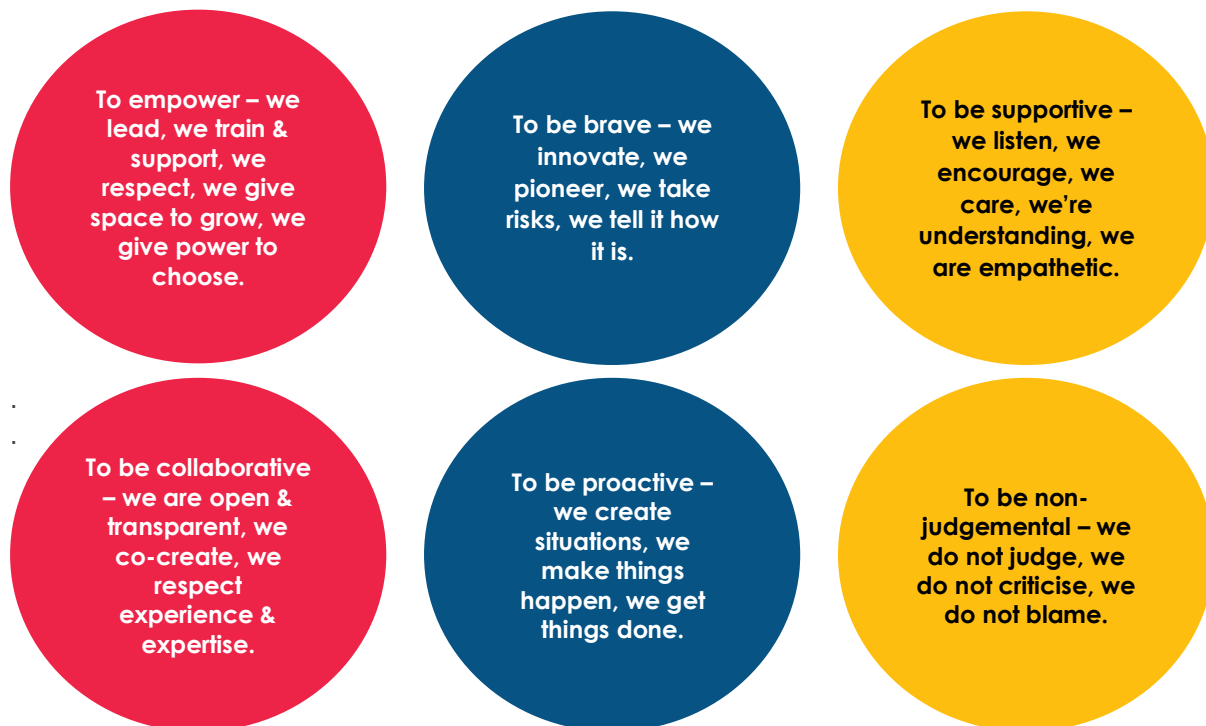
Inland Revenue Number (Gift Aid): XR10652



Volunteering with The Mix

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of The Mix because without them, we simply wouldn't be able to provide the support we do.

Here you can make a direct difference to the lives of young people in a variety of different way through volunteering on our Counselling service, Helpline and Online Community. Each role holds different kinds of tasks and responsibilities, but at the core of them all is our organisation's core values:



For those who are 13 to 25 and looking for one off or short-term opportunities, you can take part in our Youth Voice program, where we use your ideas to help us develop news tools and services to ensure they are accessible.

For more information, please email youthvoice@themix.org.uk and someone from the team will be in touch.

Contact Details:

If you want to get in contact about any of our roles, there are different ways to get in touch.

Email:	Phone:
<p>volunteering@themix.org.uk (For general volunteering enquiries and helpline opportunities)</p> <p>counsellingvolunteersupport@themix.org.uk (For counselling related placements and volunteering opportunities)</p> <p>community@themix.org.uk (For community related placements and volunteering opportunities)</p>	<p>Our mainline is open from 9am to 5pm every weekday. You can call us on 0207 009 2500.</p>



What are the benefits of volunteering at The Mix?

As well as that warm fuzzy feeling you get from providing lifesaving support to a person in need, we also aim to provide all volunteers with training and upskilling opportunities to aid with your own personal and professional development. So, if you're trying to collect clinical hours for your counselling degree, or want to gain transferrable skills for your CV, we've pretty much got you covered!

As a volunteer at The Mix, you also get:

- Full training and an induction period to ensure you are well equipped for, and feel confident in, your role.
- Additional emotional support from staff and feeling part of a community of likeminded individuals.
- Access to upskilling trainings. Previous trainings have included Substance Abuse training from The Amy Winehouse Foundation and Hearing Voices training from Voice Collective.
- Opportunities to take part and shape our campaigns – with an active and engaging social media presence, we've been able to meet millions of people and provide expert support.

How do I become a volunteer?

Every volunteer role has its own application process and throughout the year, we open applications to onboard more volunteers to join our service to provide support for young people across the UK. For certain roles, such as Online Volunteer Counsellor, applications open every two months as we aim to provide training every two months. Other roles, such as the Helpline Call Taker, open when we are low on volunteers or can accommodate more volunteers per shift.

If you wanted to know keep up to date with volunteering opportunities, you can do so on [our website](#) and across our social media platforms.



Online Volunteer Counsellor



To be considered for the online volunteer counsellor role, applicants must:

- Be a member of a professional body in counselling or psychotherapy (or equivalent), such as the BACP or NCS.
- Be on at least a level 4 counselling, psychotherapy, or equivalent course, or have graduated. **Ideally, you should be a second-year student, however, if you have your fit to practice and feel ready for clinical placements, we welcome your application!**
- Be able to work with clients aged 11 to 25. **Please note that we do not assign certain ages to counsellors, so if you need specific ages, we may not be able to guarantee this.**
- Live in the UK or residing in the UK during your placement.
- Provide an in date enhanced DBS or complete a full DBS check with us as part of our safer recruitment policy. We can provide this free of charge.
- Be able to commit to 12 months of clinical sessions.

What are the benefits of volunteering as an online counsellor at The Mix?

- **Free group supervision** with a member of the counselling team with up to 5 years' experience and **over 85% of supervisees believe their needs are met and exceeded**, whilst **100% are happy with the quality of their supervision**.
- Opportunity to **network** with peers and professionals in your field.
- **Full training and induction period**, as well as access to **resources and a buddy** to provide additional support as you settle into the role.
- **Clinical debriefs from our counselling and/or safeguarding team at request**, who can provide emotional support and practical support with complex cases.
- Counsellors are invited to share their expert knowledge and skills in articles and videos too.
- **Direct feedback from young people you've supported** – it's always positive and you're able to see the impact you've had on someone's life!
- We'll provide you with a **reference after 6 months of volunteering**.

Counselling at The Mix can be a really great opportunity, so if you meet the above requirements, you can apply directly on our [website](#).



What does the application process look like?



You'll be asked to complete an application via the website.



The team will review your application. This may take up to 6 weeks.



If successful, you'll be invited to select a time and date for your interview on Microsoft Teams.



You'll attend an online interview for up to 30 minutes.



If successful, you'll be invited to our two Saturday training sessions.

Below are some common questions about what counselling at The Mix looks like that might be beneficial for you as you consider joining our team:

What are the age ranges of the clients?

The Mix offers free online counselling sessions for young people aged 11 to 25 in the UK.

Can I work with just over 18s or under 16s?

As we are a service for anyone who is 11 to 25, we can't guarantee specific client ages to anyone. We may be able to suggest times and days more popular with certain ages, but it's not a guarantee. If you can work with these ages, but they won't count towards your hours, you may need to speak with your course coordinator to ensure you reach your mandatory hours.

What type of counselling is provided?

Our counselling services are delivered through telephone and webchat. Each session is 50 minutes long and each client is entitled to 8 sessions - although some may choose 4 at the time of their referral. We are currently piloting video counselling, which counsellors can offer from their third month of volunteering.

How can I sign up to offer video counselling?

As video counselling is still in its early stages, only those who have been delivering sessions with us for 3 months are eligible for video counselling. Video counselling is also only offered to those who are aged 18 to 25 years old.

When is counselling offered?

Our counselling service is open every day between 9am to 11pm. Counsellors are expected to volunteer during these times. You may choose to do a block shift or spread the hours across the week.

How many clients will I support?

We encourage each counsellor to have 4 clients a week, which is 4 hours a week. You will see the same client for up to 8 weeks at the same time and day, which is selected during the referral stage.

During the induction, however, you will have a reduced caseload to give you time to settle in and familiarise yourself with the systems and policies before you are given a full caseload. This period usually lasts for 4 weeks, and you will have up to 2 clients.

I can only count telephone counselling hours, is that okay?

That is absolutely fine! We know that some courses and professional bodies are strict when it comes to what counts towards your total hours, so you will only be expected to offer the service you can. You will be trained in both telephone and webchat, so should you fancy offering both, even in the future, you'd be able to do so.

What training is provided?

We provide two online Saturday training sessions that last between 11:00 and 14:00. These occur every two months. The training focuses on policies and procedures, safeguarding, and how to facilitate sessions online at The Mix.

As we onboard counsellors from at least level 4, we do expect you to come with your own skills and knowledge – even if this is your first placement, you should be ready to see clients. Therefore, we do not



teach any specific therapeutic skills, but instead demonstrate how you use what you already have in line with The Mix's policies and procedures.

What happens after the training?

Following the training, you'll be placed into an induction period, that typically lasts 4 weeks. During this time, you'll receive regular feedback on what you're doing well and where you could develop further.

How soon can I start my placement?

Assuming you have completed both trainings, completed DBS checks, we've received your references, and you've returned all paperwork, you can start whenever. We encourage counsellors to start soon after the training to make sure the information is still fresh in your memory.

You must also have your fit to practice, which you can supply before or after the training.

Am I able to change my availability?

We ask that you pick availability that you can commit to because you will need to see that same client at the same time and day for 8 weeks. To make brief intervention therapy effective and to provide a consistent service, we try to discourage counsellors from changing their availability once booked.

However, we understand that things can change unexpectedly, and we try to be accommodating as possible. If you need to change your availability and it won't affect any caseloads, you should inform the team immediately to allow us to make the changes on the system before you are booked. If you have a caseload at the time, you may ask if they are happy to change to your new availability, although if they cannot, you will need to agree upon a time together or continue at the original booking time.

Sometimes, clients ask to change times, either as a one off or for the remainder of their sessions. If you have the flexibility to offer an alternative time, this can be arranged, although this is not mandatory. In circumstances like this, speak to the team and we will advise on what will happen next.

How are clients assigned to counsellors?

The days and times when you have sessions is entirely your choice and you will only receive bookings on those agreed days and times. When you have decided when you want to hold your sessions, we will upload it onto our system for up to 6 months to ensure you have a continuous flow of caseloads come in when one ends. We update this twice a year (April and September) to guarantee that you receive clients. At any point you need to change your availability, you should inform the team immediately.

We are a self-referral service, which means that any young person can refer themselves to counselling and do not require parental consent or a GP referral. We do expect, however, that there will be instances where someone will complete the referral on the person's behalf, but we do encourage the young person to be present at the time of the referral to ensure that the information accurately represents how they are at the time of the booking.

If you are available at a time and day that suits them, they will select that slot for 4 to 8 weeks, alongside an initial assessment. Counsellors can receive bookings from 2 days to 4 weeks' notice. You will receive a series of confirmation emails to your Mix email account once the booking has been made.



What does the initial assessment involve?

During the referral process, an initial assessment is completed to allow us to understand who the person is, what they hope to receive from counselling, and any immediate risk factors. This is completed by the person filling out the referral.

In an instance where a young person presents any level of risk in their referral, they are automatically sent a list of signposts to crisis services to ensure that they are provided with support between the time of the booking and the first session. This is monitored by our safeguarding and counselling team who can intervene before the session if we are concerned about the young person's safety or do not feel that the assigned counsellor is suitable to work with the client.

As it is a self-referral process, it isn't always possible to predict the type of client a counsellor will receive until the sessions start. The initial assessment gives us an idea of what to expect, but it's not clear until that first session.

Are clients screened before they assigned to me?

Yes, so whilst it's all automated, we are alerted when bookings are made, and we can decide whether a client is suitable or not. We also expect you to be proactive and alert us if you feel that you may not be suitable for a client because we explore whether there is an opportunity for growth or whether we have a more suitable counsellor to take them instead.

Do we use any measurement tools?

We use a variety of measurement tools to assess the needs of the young person, to establish any risk factors, and to evaluate the overall effectiveness of brief intervention therapy. Therefore, in the first and final session, we use a CORE measurement scale. Additionally, in every session, we ask four check-in questions to understand more about key aspects of a young person's life and where they may require additional support.

Do I need to make clinical notes?

Yes! After every session, you must complete session notes and they will be stored on our secured platform that only you and the team have access to. You will be given a template to follow to assist you in making these.

Can clients have more than 8 sessions?

Unfortunately, this is something that we cannot accommodate. To provide as counselling to as many young people as possible, we must limit the total number of sessions provided. From our research and consultation with similar organisations, we felt that 4 to 8 sessions were a suitable number to deal with issues that have the most immediate impact on an individual.

A young person can self-refer for counselling again, however, it must be 6 months after their final session at The Mix and there is no guarantee that they will have the same counsellor.

Does The Mix open on bank holidays and over Christmas?

We are open every day across the charity, so do we offer counselling support on bank holidays and Christmas. However, volunteers can take time off during these times, as well as any other time of the year. You would be required to complete a holiday request form to allow us to know when you'd be away and if you have clients booked on those days, you must inform them too.



Do you provide supervision?

We do and it's completely free! It is group supervision, and we abide by the BACP regulations. You have the choice of using this supervision fortnightly or monthly.

Do you provide insurance?

We do! All volunteers are covered by it, although, for counsellors, we do encourage you to get your own insurance as part of best practice – plus if you're hoping to open your own private practice one day, this is a great way to explore what insurance providers are out there!

How does safeguarding and confidentiality work at The Mix?

This is covered in more detail in the training, although you can read about it on our [website](#). It's important to highlight that in circumstances where we believe that we cannot keep someone safe, you would not be the one to contact the emergency services as we do this on your behalf.

Do I need experience?

We understand that as students, you'll be seeking placements to start getting that experience. Therefore, we don't expect you to have any clinical experience, other than your triage and peer work. We do, however, assess your suitability to ensure that you are ready for the type of clients The Mix provides.

Do I need to be a certain age?

We ask that you're 21 or over as these ages are what we expect someone to be at the start of their counselling career. Most level 4 courses and postgraduate courses are started by those who are 21 and above. We have no other age restrictions.

Can I stay longer than a year?

Yes! We ask for the initial year because it's beneficial for all parties (you, us, and the young people.)

Will you be able to complete any paperwork?

Certainly – we expect that you'll have a few things for us to sign and complete for you. As long as you give us suitable notice, we'll be happy to fill out anything you need us to.

What times are most popular?

It's all dependent on the individual, so it's hard to give an exact time that is most popular with young people. We tend to see that under 16s are most available from 4pm to 8pm on weekdays and 18s to 25s are more likely to attend sessions from 10am to 3pm. Although, each young person is different, so we recommend choosing times that are suitable for you.

Do you provide references?

We do – anyone who has provided 6 months of clinical volunteering will receive a reference. We will personalise it too. If you haven't provided 6 months, we may not be able to provide a reference or may only be able to confirm your volunteering dates.

How many volunteer counsellors do you have currently?

It changes quite often, but we've always got over 50 and we hope to keep growing. More counsellors mean more young people who receive potentially lifesaving counselling.



THE MIX

What do current volunteers think about the experience?

“Incredibly attentive supervision which leaves me feeling valued as a part of this wonderful team. Invaluable supervision that allows me to support young people in turn. Thank you so much!”

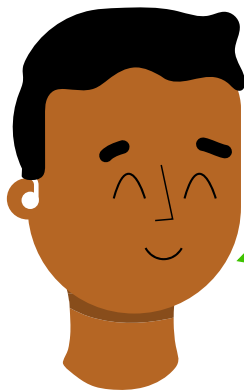
“My experience at The Mix has been incredibly enriching, and I am grateful for the opportunities and knowledge I have gained. The organisation's commitment to providing vital support to young people in need is truly commendable, and it has been an honour to contribute to this important cause.”

“I felt very well supported during the induction phase. I found the team at The Mix to be responsive, kind and understanding. Amongst all the volunteers that you need to look after you do a really great job of making us feel supported and understood.”

“I want to express my deepest gratitude to [the team] and anyone who has been a part of this journey for your unwavering support, guidance, and mentorship throughout my time at The Mix. Your expertise and commitment to my growth as a counsellor have been invaluable, and I am incredibly grateful for the trust you placed in me.”

“I found the team to be incredibly supportive. If ever I was unsure of anything or made a mistake, I was never made to feel silly or an inconvenience.”

What do young people think about our counselling service?



The counsellor was extremely helpful and kind, I believed I developed a wonderful relationship with her, and it was almost heartbreaking to say goodbye. Her words and insights helped change the way I see the world and myself, which helped me a lot with the problems I face on a day-to-day basis.

My counsellor was very nice and easy to talk to. I found actually talking about it helped so I wanted to keep going.

