

2025 Impact Report

Empowering London's Next Generation through Partnership and Purpose

A partnership of Youth Organisations in Uniform (YOU) working together to maximise opportunities for young people in London. YOU London **transforms** the experience of young people in London's uniformed youth organisations by **uniting** groups to **collaborate, share ideas** and **spread effective practice**. Through inspiring events and access to high-profile opportunities, it brings leaders and young people together in ways that **build confidence, connection and ambition**. By raising the profile of these organisations across the wider community, YOU London also helps secure the recognition and support they need to thrive.

- Army Cadet Force
- Boys' Brigade
- Combined Cadet Force
- Fire Cadets
- Girls' Brigade
- Girlguiding
- Greater London Scouts
- Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade
- RAF Air Cadets
- Sea Cadets (includes Royal Marines Cadets)
- St. John Ambulance Cadets
- Volunteer Police Cadets

76,132 young people
19,637 adult volunteers



The role is simple but powerful: YOU London connects, coordinates and amplifies; delivering London-wide impact with minimal overheads – the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.



Strengthening London's Uniformed Youth Sector

The 12 partner organisations deliver affordable, transformative experiences and educational opportunities to more than **76,000 young people**, supported by c. **20,000 adult volunteers**, throughout London. These organisations are inclusive, accessible and welcoming to all young Londoners. YOU London's co-ordination ensured these organisations were **more connected, more visible and more supported** than ever before.

YOU London **facilitated volunteer connections** and **strengthened relationships** through:

- London-wide collaboration via quarterly meetings that fostered shared learning, dissemination of good practice, consolidated relationships and deepened trust.
- Maintenance of a borough-level contacts database to enhance cross-borough collaboration and provide accurate, up-to-date stakeholder information.
- Engagement of civic leaders, volunteers and youth groups at community networking events to showcase member organisations and support volunteer recruitment efforts.
- Formation of WhatsApp groups connecting adult volunteers in five London boroughs to improve partnership working.
- Delivery of a City of London Volunteering Conference focused on information sharing and exploring opportunities to support employee volunteering.

In 2025, YOU London directly engaged with 1,107 young people, 359 volunteers and 246 stakeholders through nine regional events.



"You do a wonderful job of connecting all of the organisations, where opportunities and resources can be shared and we can remind ourselves of exactly why we all go through the hardships we do with volunteering, because of the positive impact on the young people but also on us as adults. Seeing others in the same boat in other organisations really unites us to continue providing these opportunities and to expand them."

**Millie Celeste, London Fire Cadets Manager,
Central Teams Prevention & Protection, London Fire Brigade**

Broadening Access to New Experiences

YOU London gave young people from diverse backgrounds **access to major civic and ceremonial events** in the UK - experiences that made a lasting impact.

- Nearly 1,000 young people watched Trooping the Colour and the Colonel's Review from a dedicated youth enclosure.
- Over 80 young people participated in the YOU London float at the Lady Mayor's Show, including an Air Cadet featured in a live BBC interview.
- Young people played a visible role in national VE/VJ Day 80 commemorations in Westminster and at the Tower of London, strengthening intergenerational understanding and civic pride.
- Over 120 young people participated in the YOU London Leadership Development Weekend.

Access to these once-in-a-lifetime experiences **boosts pride, confidence, aspiration and a sense of belonging** - especially for young people who may not otherwise get the opportunity to access such events.



"The cadets said last night it was the best day ever and can they go again next year! They really did have a fantastic time and even their parents have said how excited they were on their return."

South East London Army Cadet Force

"I loved going to see the Birthday Parade! It was surreal having the whole Royal family wave at us and I really enjoyed the air show! I'm so grateful to have had this amazing opportunity and it was an experience I'll never forget." **Matilda, Girlguiding**



"Our young people have used their participation on CVs and in their personal statements."

Girls' Brigade

"Thank you for the opportunity to parade with you and the brilliant young people of YOU London. Our Sea Cadets had a brilliant and memorable time. I really enjoyed hearing about the activities of the other groups from the young people and having the opportunity to chat with the other adult volunteers."

Debbie Smith, Training Officer, Greenwich Sea Cadets

Developing Leadership Skills and Resilience

YOU London's Leadership Development Weekend at Trinity School, Croydon, brought together **over 120 participants from 11 organisations** for two days of **intensive leadership, teamwork and resilience training**. Delegates took part in a programme of inspiring speakers and challenging activities facilitated by London's Emergency Services and the Armed Forces, designed to strengthen leadership, communication and teamwork skills.

- Young people gained practical skills in first aid, communication, problem-solving, teamwork and resilience.
- Cross-organisation relationships were strengthened, building a more cohesive youth sector.
- MPs, Mayors and other civic leaders left "impressed by the energy and enthusiasm" of participants.



"I gained teamwork skills and learnt how to interact and make friends better." **Scout**

"The Leadership Development Weekend gave me the opportunity to meet other young people from uniformed organisations, some of which may be coming to teach their skills to our cadets in the future! It's such an empowering experience and allows us to see what the other cadets get up to in their units while having lots of fun." **St John Ambulance Cadet**

"I gained valuable leadership and team-working skills, and it was an incredible opportunity to learn about other organisations." **St John Ambulance Cadet**

"It was a great experience which everyone can benefit from. I had so much fun and got to meet so many new people. I would love to do it again." **Volunteer Police Cadet**

"This was a wonderful opportunity for our members to work together in mixed teams developing skills for life and leadership. Great to have something concrete to add to their CV / personal statements from their out of school activities." **Girls' Brigade Adult Leader**



Raising Visibility of Uniformed Youth Groups

YOU London ensured young people in uniform were **visible at major national and civic moments**, reinforcing their contribution to London's cultural and civic life. Thousands of Londoners saw uniformed youth groups represented on the capital's streets, **raising the profile** of these proven, universal organisations.

- VE/VJ Day 80 commemorations - YOU London worked behind the scenes to secure youth participation in both national and local commemorative events.
- Trooping the Colour Youth Enclosures - almost 1,000 young people watched this ceremonial spectacle on two dates, with safe access to a dedicated youth enclosure managed by the Volunteer Police Cadets. The walk up The Mall, cheered by the watching crowds, provided an experience many will never forget.
- London New Year's Day Parade - two adult volunteers in uniform accompanied the Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London in her carriage, showcasing youth leadership on a global stage.
- Lady Mayor's Show - more than 80 young people and adult volunteers from 11 organisations formed the YOU London float, waving branded flags to represent their groups to crowds on the streets and the millions watching on BBC1.



A short promotional video, two newsletters, an annual report and generic literature on 'How to Join a Uniformed Youth Group' and 'The Benefits of Volunteering,' helped stakeholders understand what YOU London delivers for young Londoners. These materials delivered a clear narrative of our 2025 achievements, bolstering stakeholder confidence, expanding our reach and reinforcing our core messages of the wide range of fantastic opportunities available to young Londoners and the ongoing need for more adult volunteers.



WHY VOLUNTEER? THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING WITH A UNIFORMED YOUTH GROUP
NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE OR KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

Through volunteering, you can make a positive impact on your local community and gain social, career and personal benefits too.

A sense of purpose. Find a sense of purpose and meaning in your life by contributing to your local community.	Meet new people. Make new friends with people who share a common interest.	Gain new skills. Learn new skills or build on your existing ones through training and hands-on experience.	Stay physically and mentally healthy. Volunteering can help you stay active and improve your mental health.	Challenge yourself. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and do things you wouldn't normally do. Could you do this through a voluntary role?
A sense of community. Find a sense of community and belonging by being part of a group that cares about your local area.	Self-esteem and self-confidence. Gain self-esteem and self-confidence through the support and encouragement of your fellow volunteers.	Gain nationally recognised qualifications. Gain nationally recognised qualifications in leadership and management through our award-winning training.	Gain work experience. Volunteering can help you gain work experience and develop your skills and experience.	It's fun! Volunteering can be a fun and rewarding experience that you can enjoy for years to come.

HOW TO JOIN A UNIFORMED YOUTH GROUP AS A VOLUNTEER
NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE OR KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS Visit www.youlondon.org.uk to decide which organisation is for you, then click through to that organisation's website to see where your nearest units are. <small>There are all sorts of roles available from non-uniformed support members. There's really something for everyone.</small>	APPLY ONLINE You should submit your application online directly to your chosen organisation to join an online volunteer network. <small>Adult volunteers must have a minimum age of 18. You don't need any previous experience as full training will be given.</small>	VISIT THE UNIT Visit your chosen unit for an informal chat or join an online volunteer network. <small>This is your opportunity to find out more about what is involved and ask any questions you might have.</small>	COMPLETE PAPERWORK Complete any additional paperwork required and apply for an enhanced DBS check. <small>The organisations will only get the DBS back once you have completed the DBS check.</small>	ONGOING TRAINING For all organisations, you will undergo some sort of introductory training, including mandatory safeguarding training. <small>Once complete, there are numerous further training and development opportunities available to you.</small>
--	---	--	--	--

All potential volunteers will work through this process at their own pace. Sometimes it can take a while for paperwork and DBS checks to be returned, and training courses may only take place on set dates, so please be patient with the process.

Strengthening Local Partnerships and Community Impact

Local partnerships can **reduce duplication of effort, increase reach** and ensure more young people have **access to high-quality youth provision**. YOU London **facilitates borough-level engagement**, bringing adult leaders together to plan, collaborate and share information, resources and facilities.

- The YOU Croydon Challenge brought together more than 60 young people from six organisations for a day of problem-solving, teamwork, communication, leadership development and friendship.
- WhatsApp groups established in five London boroughs connected adult volunteers to facilitate local partnership working.



- Community networking events at Southwark Cathedral (serving Southwark and Lambeth) and Kingsford Community School (serving Newham, Barking and Dagenham, and Redbridge) brought together civic leaders, adult volunteers and local youth groups. Young people shared moving accounts of how their organisations have profoundly influenced their lives. As a result of these receptions:
 - Borough leaders gained a clearer understanding of the sector's role in enabling life skills, inclusion, social mobility and better mental health and wellbeing.
 - New relationships were formed between organisations, schools, MPs, councillors and community partners.
 - Attendees left with a greater understanding of the continual need for more adult volunteers.
 - Improved local collaboration has included offers to share resources and host joint events.



Celebrating Achievement - Inspiring Progression

Recognition boosts confidence, aspiration and retention.

- In 2025, **258 Deputy Lieutenant Certificates were awarded** - an **increase of 45%** from 2024 - meaning more young people received formal recognition for their service and accomplishments.
- Borough-level presentations raised local awareness and visibility of youth achievement.
- Through YOU London, 55 adult volunteers were invited to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party in appreciation of their service.



Influencing Policy and the Volunteering Landscape

The YOU London Co-ordinator sits on the London Volunteering Strategy Group, Young Londoner's Coalition, the Lord-Lieutenant's Occupation Council, and Council on Culture and Heritage and attended meetings hosted by DCMS, UK Youth and the National Youth Alliance, ensuring uniformed youth organisations had a voice in policy discussions at national level and London-wide.

In 2025, YOU London **contributed to two major volunteering reports**, the 'London Vision for Volunteering' and 'What if Everyone Stopped Volunteering?' Through these efforts, YOU London:

- Raised the visibility of the sector in conversations about volunteering, resilience and community impact.
- Gathered insights from Girlguiding, Girls' Brigade, Scouts, Sea Cadets, Met Police, and Ulysses Trust to contribute to both reports, amplifying the sector's collective influence and helping shape future policy.
- Strengthened the sector's collective voice to enable long-term sustainability and strategic alignment.



The London Vision for Volunteering "contains so much that I have advocated for many years. The recommendations are really positive and are sensibly directed to encourage, promote and support volunteering."

Margaret Casely-Hayford CBE, Patron of Girls' Brigade Ministries

Building a Sustainable Future

Despite facing financial challenges during transition to charity status, which remain ongoing, YOU London continued to operate effectively, and successfully delivered a full programme of events and activities.

- All activities remained **free for both young people and adult volunteers**.
- The CIO structure was strengthened, new Trustees recruited, Gift Aid approval obtained and a partnership with JustGiving established.

“At Girls’ Brigade, we really do value every opportunity given to us by YOU London. Our young people sometimes feel that they are in the minority at school, that maybe uniformed youth organisations aren’t cool these days, so for them to see just how many young people are thriving in similar organisations is really encouraging and empowering for them. Any occasion where relationships between people from different organisations can be built is of great benefit. The impression of competition between uniformed youth organisations evaporates when real relationships are formed.”

Judith Davey-Cole, Chief Executive Officer, Girls' Brigade Ministries



In 2025, YOU London:

- Built stronger collaboration across 12 organisations in Greater London
- Raised the profile of uniformed youth groups at major events
- Improved leadership and life skills for hundreds of young people
- Set new records for achievement recognition
- Shaped policy on volunteering and youth support
- Strengthened borough partnerships and community ties
- Gave the uniformed youth sector a louder voice

YOU London accomplished these goals with minimal costs, through a part-time coordinator, who delivered meaningful, measurable benefits to young people, volunteers and Greater London's civic community.

“Attending events organised by YOU London has been a really valuable experience for me. I’ve had the opportunity to meet and collaborate with young people from different organisations, try new activities, and build my confidence and leadership skills. The events have helped me develop new friendships, gain new perspectives, and feel more connected to the wider youth community through St John Ambulance and other Youth Organisations in Uniform. I’m very grateful for the opportunities provided and the positive impact they’ve had on my personal development.”

Harry, St John Ambulance Cadet