



NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration  
Kent, Surrey and Sussex

# In Our Own Words

doing research *with* young people, instead of about them

## What is the programme about?

**In Our Own Words** is a project to train and support young people to become researchers and lead their own social research projects to understand other young people's experiences of mental health and wellbeing as well as mental health support.

The programme will run from **March – October 2024** and you will be supported with 1-2-1 mentoring throughout.

The project focuses on recruiting **young carers** and/or **neurodivergent** young people as **Youth Researchers**, but supporting roles are available for other young people too!

Using your research, you will present findings and make suggestions to leaders in Surrey on young people's experiences and what services can do to improve as well as what works well – feeding back on what other young people think and need!

In Our Own Words is a collaboration between **Surrey County Council**, **MindWorks**, **Surrey University**, **Surrey Youth Focus** and **Healthwatch**. We all want to learn more about mental health for young people in Surrey, from young people themselves.

## What will the youth researchers do?

- Get social research training from **Surrey University** – learning how to create research questions, collect and analyse data, understand results, and present findings.
- Network with wider groups of young people to understand experiences and share knowledge.
- Take part in workshops to grow skills and confidence e.g. digital media creation, public speaking.
- Present your findings and suggestions to key decision-makers in Surrey to bring about change.





## Who can apply to become a youth researcher?

We are looking for young carers and neurodivergent (no diagnosis needed) young people and aged **14-18 or up to 25** for those who have an additional need or disability.

No experience is required. Just enthusiasm and commitment to the project. As well as the desire to share the experiences of young people in Surrey!

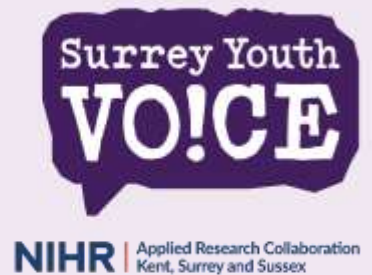
## What are the roles, responsibilities, and commitments?

### Youth Researchers:

- Coming along to the training each month and taking part to the best of your ability
- We would expect you to spend time outside of the monthly sessions on your research projects (8-10 hours over the 6 months), using what you learn in the training to design your study and collect your data.
- Producing a final piece of work of your choice to present your findings.
- Respecting and accepting all members of the research group.
- Working as a group to present your suggestions to key decision makers across Surrey, convincing them of the changes you think we should see!

### Project Advisors:

- If you would like to be involved in the project but you aren't neurodivergent or a young carer, or don't have as much time, this could be the role for you!
- Meet with youth researchers in the summer to look at data and understand what young people may be thinking and feeling about mental health and the services available.
- Work with young researchers to extend research, coming up with suggestions on how we may be able to improve.
- Working as a group to present your suggestions to key decision makers across Surrey, convincing them of the changes you think we should see!



## What's in it for me?

### A new opportunity...

- Professional training in social research methods from Surrey University
- Great work experience and loads of new skills to add to your CV.
- Meet likeminded people who share the same passions.
- The opportunity to make a difference and have a say in how mental health services can better meet the needs of children and young people.

### Get paid...

- Just like a professional researcher or advisor you will be paid for your time in vouchers!

## Interested?

Applicants will need to apply via a short form which can be found [here](#). You can write your response or submit a video or audio file to us by email – whatever works best for you.

Please note that not everyone who applies will be selected to be a Youth Researcher. Those not selected can still take part, but in a supporting role as a Project Advisor.

Instructions on how to apply and more information on the project is available on the Surrey Youth Voice website at <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/youthresearchers>.

If you'd like to find out more or need any further accessibility adjustments, please contact Lucy from the User Voice and Participation team: [user.voice@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:user.voice@surreycc.gov.uk).

The deadline to apply is **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March @ 6 pm**. We're looking forward to hearing from you!