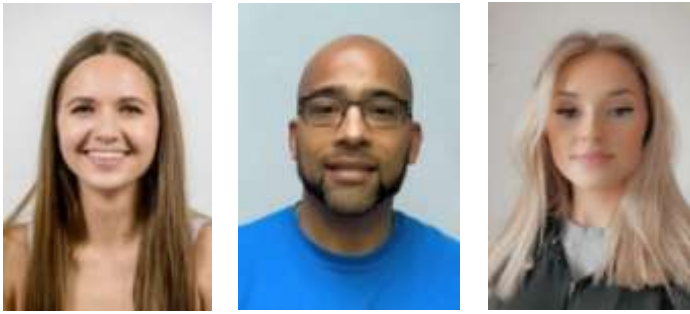


Youth Development Team Annual Report 2025/2026

South Cambridge

South Cambridge



Stories of hope

Lee* is a 14-year-old young person who has been involved with Romsey Mill since Year 6 at primary school. Over the years, he has remained a consistent and valued participant in our open-access youth clubs, building positive relationships with both peers and staff.

A few years ago, Lee expressed an interest in taking on more responsibility within the youth club. In response, he was offered the opportunity to become a young leader. Since stepping into this role, Lee has thrived. He has become an integral part of the sessions, demonstrating commitment and maturity. His contributions include welcoming and engaging new participants, supporting staff with session setup and food service plus promoting and reinforcing positive behaviour among peers. This progression highlights Lee's growing confidence, sense of responsibility, and ability to act as a positive role model within the group.

Despite his successes within the youth setting, Lee has faced ongoing challenges in his personal and educational life. Over the past few years, his school attendance has been inconsistent, largely due to circumstances at home. Lee lives in overcrowded housing, where he shares a bedroom with multiple family members. This environment impacts his sleep quality, often leading to oversleeping and missed school days.

Additionally, Lee can find it difficult to express his emotions. He tends to be reserved and often avoids discussing negative or distressing experiences, which can make it harder for him to seek support when needed. We have supported him by delivering one-to-one sessions in school to encourage attendance and monitor his wellbeing.

Recently, Lee's place at school has been at risk and a move to another school has been proposed. This situation has understandably caused anxiety and stress for both Lee and his family. Romsey Mill continues to work closely with Lee and his family during this transition period. Staff are providing emotional support, advocacy, and practical guidance to help him navigate the next steps in his education. While this change presents challenges, it also offers the potential for a positive fresh start. With the right support in place, Lee has the capacity to re-engage with education and continue building on the confidence and leadership skills he has already demonstrated.

*The name of this young person has been changed

Henry* is an 11-year-old boy who has been attending our open-access youth club for just under a

year. He initially began attending alongside his sister and a group of friends. During his first few sessions, Henry presented as extremely shy and hesitant. While his sister and peers entered the youth club confidently, Henry chose to remain outside, waiting by the door. Romsey Mill staff made consistent efforts to engage him, introducing themselves and offering reassurance in a calm and supportive manner. At this stage, Henry gave very little verbal response and appeared uncomfortable entering the space.

In the following sessions, Henry began to take small but significant steps forward. He briefly entered the building to take snacks before returning outside. Staff continued to greet him warmly, offering drinks and creating low-pressure opportunities for interaction. Over several weeks, Henry gradually increased the amount of time he spent inside. Each visit showed a small progression, demonstrating growing trust in both the environment and the staff team.

Henry is now a regular and active participant in the youth club. He arrives each week with a smile, confidently entering the space and greeting staff. He now engages fully in activities, including games such as table tennis, socialises comfortably with peers, independently accesses food and drinks, participates in conversations with both staff and other young people.

Henry's journey reflects a significant increase in confidence, trust, and social engagement. Through consistent encouragement, patience, and relationship-building, he has transitioned from a young person who felt unable to enter the space to one who actively participates and enjoys the sessions.

*The name of this young person has been changed

Kieran* is a nine-year-old boy from a family that Romsey Mill has supported for several years, particularly through ongoing work with his older siblings.

Over the past year, the family experienced significant trauma and disruption, resulting in a period of separation. During this time, Kieran moved into foster care, living apart from his siblings for the first time. This transition was emotionally difficult for Kieran and his family. The separation limited his opportunities to maintain regular contact with his siblings, who have been an important source of support and stability in his life.

Prior to these changes, Kieran would occasionally "drop by" the youth club and had been looking forward to attending regularly once he reached the appropriate age. However, due to his change in living circumstances, he was initially not permitted to attend sessions, further reducing opportunities for connection and continuity. Recognising the importance of these relationships, Romsey Mill staff actively advocated for Kieran to be able to attend the youth club. Following this, permission was granted.

Staff then worked closely with his foster carer, building a positive relationship, sharing key information, and ensuring that Kieran's attendance would be safe, supportive, and beneficial. His foster carer responded positively and was supportive of his involvement.

Since being able to attend, Kieran has become a regular and enthusiastic participant in the youth club. He engages fully with his peers, enjoying games and activities, and displays a high level of energy and enjoyment during sessions. Importantly, the youth club has provided Kieran with a safe and supportive environment where he can, spend meaningful time with his siblings, rebuild and maintain important family connections, experience stability and routine during a period of change, enjoy being a child, free from external pressures.

Kieran's story highlights the vital role that safe community spaces can play in supporting children

through periods of instability. Access to the youth club has not only supported his wellbeing and social development but has also enabled him to reconnect with his siblings in a meaningful way. For Kieran, this space offers more than just activities—it provides consistency, connection, and a sense of belonging during an otherwise challenging time.

*The name of this young person has been changed

Photos



Statistics | Engagement and Activities

Total number of young people regularly involved in Romsey Mill activities	143
Gender of the young people	Female: 66 Male: 77
Number of young people we supported through	130

open access activities	Trumpington Youth Club Yr 5&6 Trumpington Youth Club Yr 7&8 Trumpington Youth Club Yr 9+ Springstead Younger Youth Club Springstead Older Youth Club
Number of young people we supported through targeted group work	4 Trumpington Girls Group Untold Stories Project part 2
Number of young people we supported through school-based group work	8 St Bede's Inter-Church School
Number of young people we gave community based 1:1 support	5
Number of young people we gave school based 1:1 support	10 Trumpington Meadows, St Bede's Inter-church School, Trumpington Community College
Number of young people involved in community projects	8 4 Young leaders involved in Youth club Cambridge United/ Fitzwilliam Museum Project
Number of trips	14 trips Shepreth Wildlife park Cambridge United Football Match Arsenal Stadium Tour South Lake Aqua Park Wyboston Lake Aqua Park Canoeing Dance Class Trampoline Park Night-time Paintballing Ice Skating Obstacle course Clip and Climb Boom Battle Bar Cinema
Number of young people we supported in more than one context	25
Number of young people we supported in a time of crisis	10
Number of hours of face-to-face delivery	620

Year Overview

Work across the South of Cambridge has been led by Lead Youth Development Worker Laura Kahlbaum, alongside Youth Development Workers Justin Lewis and Paige Barden.

We expanded our open access provision in June 2025 to include the year 5 age group. This decision was informed by high levels of interest from Year 5 pupils, more referrals from the local primary school for one-to-one support for year 5 students and strategic aim to build relationships with young people outside of the school environment. We therefore run three weekly youth club sessions on a Thursday. This restructure proved highly effective, significantly increasing engagement and enabling us to reach a broader group of young people.

Throughout the year, we have continued to provide a wide range of trips and enrichment opportunities, ensuring young people can access experiences they may not otherwise have. Highlights included a return to obstacle course trips and our first-ever nighttime paintball trip during the October half-term.

Alongside open-access provision and detached work, we have continued to deliver intensive support to young people and families experiencing crisis. This has included, attending and contributing to multi-agency meetings, advocating on behalf of young people, supporting attendance at key appointments (GPs, dentists, opticians), assisting with housing moves, benefit applications, and bank account setup, supporting employability through CV writing and job search guidance; this support has been vital in helping families navigate complex challenges.

Last year we partnered with the Fitzwilliam Museum and Cambridge United on a project with young people designing a kit to be worn at a Cambridge Utd match as part of Black History Month. This project took place in one of our Trumpington youth clubs where young people produced art work based on the story of Olaudah Equiano, an 18th century African man who was sold into slavery as a child but managed to earn enough to buy his freedom. He ended up living in Cambridgeshire and campaigned against the slave trade. In October this project culminated in the young people receiving complementary tickets to attend the football match where players wore the one-of-a-kind kit celebrating black history month that the young people designed. The experience was particularly memorable, enhanced by a Cambridge United victory on the day. Lucy Cavendish college at Cambridge University invited us to speak at their Formal about this project as part of their Black History Month celebration.

Additionally, the Year 5 & 6 youth club in Trumpington welcomed a visit from Cambridge United players during the Christmas period. Players actively engaged with young people and distributed gifts, creating a meaningful and memorable experience.

We are also currently developing a youth-led video project, working with two long-term participants to share their personal journeys and challenges. The project includes original music created by the young people and aims to amplify their voices and experiences.

We have strengthened relationships with local schools and have been commissioned to deliver both group work and one-to-one interventions. This has enabled us to extend our reach and provide targeted support to new young people, while reinforcing existing partnerships.

Statistics | Mechanisms of Change

"The youth workers make me feel welcome"	97.6%
"The youth workers care about me"	100%
"The youth workers give me the support I need"	97.6%
"The youth workers listen to me"	97.6%
"The youth workers trust me"	90.5%
"The youth workers respect me and my background"	97.6%
"I enjoy my time with Romsey Mill"	97.6%
"I feel I can talk to one of the Youth workers if I have a problem"	90.5%
"I feel part of a community at Romsey Mill"	95.2%
"I have a say in what activities take place at Romsey Mill"	83.4%

Focus Groups

(Excerpt from a focus group we ran with some of the young people we support)

L: From having us (Romsey Mill) involved in your life do you feel that has helped you in anyway?

F: Since I joined, I know that I can talk to you guys about being worried, I can be more confident and social.

R: I'm not scared of meeting new people, now that I'm here, I have been able to speak to more people that I didn't know. I now feel welcome and safe and able to do it.

L: Is there any final comments on what you would like to say about your experiences

R: I think it's a really good fun and welcoming place and I feel comfortable

K: I really enjoy it, even though I haven't been coming for long I am really enjoying it

F: I started when I was in an odd stage in my life, and after talking to you I realised that what I was doing was not good and stuff and I got out of it

R: Yeah, I feel like we can talk to you about anything.

Community Connections, Partners and Enablers

Partner Organisations	Trumpington Community College St Bede's Inter-church School Trumpington Meadows Primary School South Trumpington Parish Meeting Cambridge City Council Cambridge United Foundation Cambridge Acorn Project Oblique Arts Fitzwilliam Museum Anglia Ruskin University
Number of Volunteers	4

Photos





Third Party Quote

Facilitating the weekly art group for Romsey Mill on behalf of Oblique Arts charity has been a fulfilling experience- seeing the young people take part in various fun activities and even be provided with a meal, by a very nurturing staff. There's a great sense of community here, and it's lovely to see the young people flourish in the therapeutic art sessions we provide.

Janey Norman, Art facilitator, Oblique Arts

Statistics | Outcomes

Young people expressing an improvement in confidence	83.4%
Young people expressing an improvement in their ability to overcome challenges	85.8%
Young people expressing an improvement in their ability to get on with others	85.7%
Young people expressing an improvement in their wellbeing	92.8%
Young people expressing an improvement in their skills	92.9%
Young people expressing an improvement in making positive choices and decisions	88.1%
Young people expressing an improvement in feeling safe in their community	97.6%
Young people expressing an improvement in their ability to have a positive impact on others in their community	85.7%
Young people expressing an improvement in hope for the future	88.1%
Young people expressing an improvement in their ability to manage their emotions	80.9%
Rating of Romsey Mill sessions out of 10	9.07

Quotes From Young People

How has Romsey Mill helped you?

- "It has helped me get along with other people"
- "I have fun and it lets me be more social with my friends"
- "It helped me to take a break from life and chill out."
- "I feel really happy and excited when I come to youth club to hang out with friends"
- "Because I feel myself"
- "It helps me communicate and get more confident"
- "I have made more friends and feel very safe and welcome"

Young Leader

Maryam, 13, has been involved with Romsey Mill for a number of years and after attending our open-access youth clubs she became a young leader and has been given more responsibility:

"I really enjoy being a young leader, seeing as I have been coming to youth club since year 5 and I get to experience new things like Celebration night etc, and all the staff are nice and caring".