



creative mentoring

Addressing personal and emotional challenges
from a creative distance

Information Pack

the mighty creatives

the challenge

The educational attainment gap is increasing.

Education offers protection. Where education is disrupted by school exclusions or simply missing education, children and young people, particularly those who are care experienced or children in need, are **at greater risk** of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), experiencing ongoing social disadvantage, and possibly experiencing a cyclical impact into the next generation.

Children and young people that we work with are often referred having experienced some degrees of trauma, either by virtue of their home circumstances (for example neglect and abuse), or through secondary factors (for example separation, loss or bereavement). This loss and/or trauma **affects children and young people's engagement in education and wider society**, depending on their personal resources and degree of resilience to manage this.

These experiences can lead to a combination of multiple vulnerabilities, from **low self-esteem** and difficulty in regulating emotions to **becoming disengaged** in education, seeking attention often through **risky/illegal behaviour and low levels of resilience**.

This is where Creative Mentoring can help.





angelica's story

Angelica is 5 years old. She was referred to the Creative Mentoring programme to help support her with her changes in home placement and imminent move across the country. Angelica's language was extremely limited when she started her Creative Mentoring journey. She struggled to read and she struggled massively with new people and surroundings, a concern for her teachers.

Angelica worked with her Creative Mentor for 1-2 hours a week, where they explored the "make believe" through arts processes. There was a clear structure to each session and the Creative Mentor ensured they were being fluid, flexible and adaptive in their approach. Over time, Angelica developed more trust with her Creative Mentor and the creative activities they would do together.

In a time where everything was uncertain for Angelica, her Creative Mentor has been her constant. Her confidence with her language has come on leaps and bounds, especially when developing key social skills and understanding politeness and social cues correctly. Teachers have shared that Angelica runs back to her classroom and excitedly shares what she has done with her Creative Mentor with her teachers and friends.

The school valued this intervention so much that Angelica continued to work with her Creative Mentor across the transition period of the academic year.

what is creative mentoring?



Creative Mentoring is a model and approach to working with children and young people who have or are experiencing vulnerabilities or disadvantaged, age 5-25. These children and young people may be care experienced, children in need, on child protection plans or otherwise, and as a result may experience challenges in education, are at risk of exclusion, social isolation or disaffection.

A Creative Mentor is commissioned to work with the child or young person and is briefed jointly by supporting adults, professionals and education providers. They get to know the individual and introduce creative activities such as film, drama, music, poetry, photography and stories to help them safely explore the world around them, learn new skills, communicate and **address personal and emotional issues from a creative distance**.

the story so far



In the Autumn of 2020, The Mighty Creatives launched its Creative Mentoring service for children and young people 'in and leaving care' and 'children in need' who are disengaged from education and struggling to find a solution or next step.

This tried and tested Creative Mentoring model has been **pioneered in partnership with Derbyshire Virtual School and The Amber Factory**, a partnership which has been transforming the lives of children and young people for over a decade through work with Creative Mentors. The model has since been supported by numerous funders including Children in Need, What Works for Children's Social Care, Charities Aid Foundation, Foyle Foundation, Arts Council England and the Swire Charitable Trust, and has now been launched across the East Midlands and wider. Local Authorities can also commission Creative Mentoring through our traded model.

In 2023, Creative Mentoring won a **Third Sector Award for Best Service Delivery Innovation** for its response to the cost of living crisis.



martin's story

Martin is 18 years old. When Martin joined the Creative Mentoring programme, he was living in semi-independent accommodation. He was serving community service and was often in trouble with the police and Youth Offending Services. He demonstrated very low self-confidence which impacted his communication with others and his self-belief.

Despite initially struggling to engage with new people, including his Creative Mentor, Martin slowly started to develop trust with them through joint moments of learning.

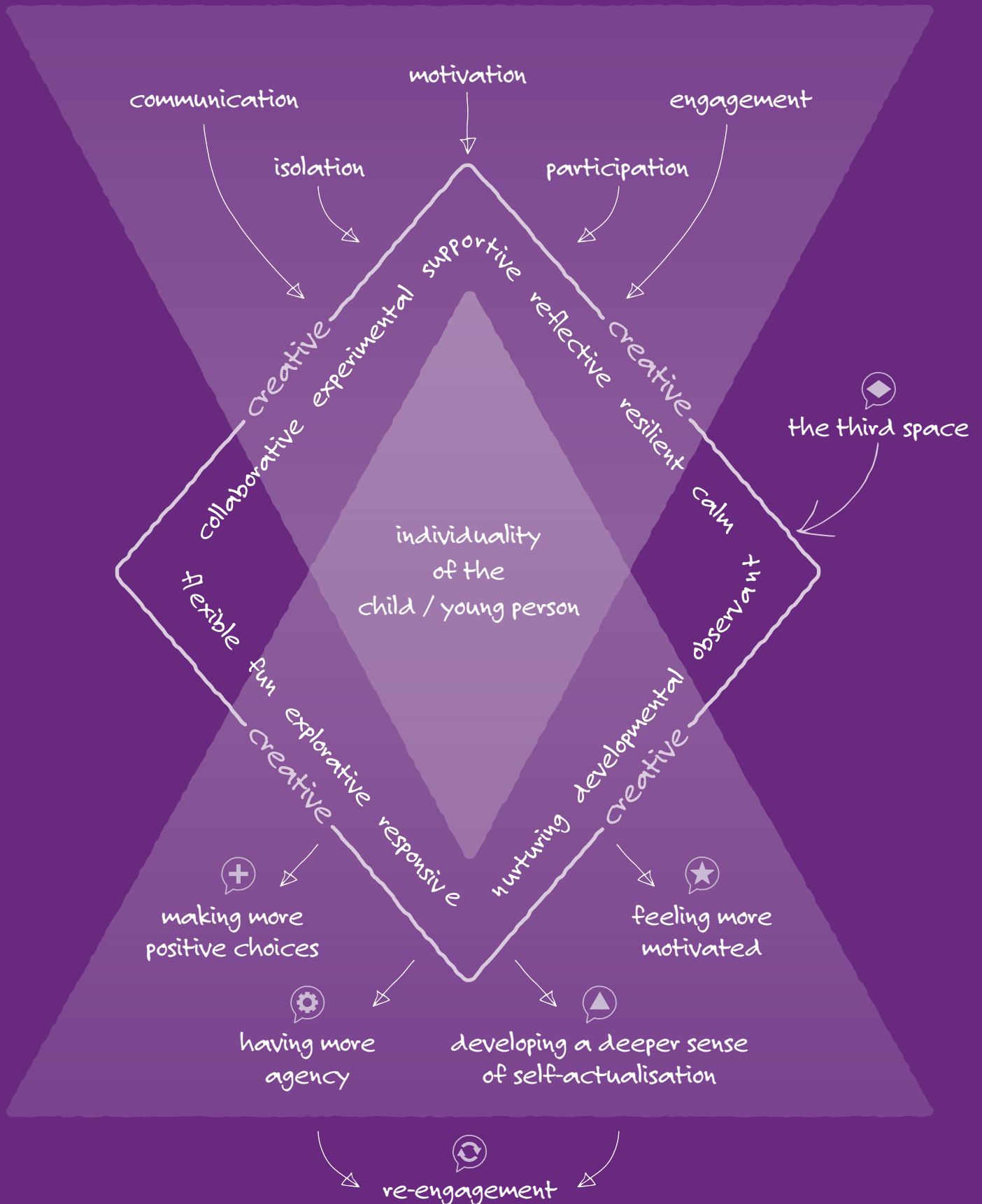
Coming towards the end of his community service Martin and his Creative Mentor decided to make masks for people working in his community service setting. Through this way of working, Martin felt a huge sense of purpose. He was very excited about making these masks, even going home early so he could make more masks to help out other people. This gave Martin a sense of purpose and deeper connections in the community.

This way of working helped Martin open up to his Creative Mentor, where he instigated a conversation about finding a job, showing a huge increase in decision-making skills and motivation. As a result, Martin found a job serving tables at a local café.

In their last session, Martin talked about how much happier he was and how he felt he was able to move on from his negative behaviours to make more positive decisions. Martin is no longer serving community service.

creative mentor model

children and young people may experience challenges in...





This is what we call the **Third Space**, where Creative Mentors find a shared creative activity that both the Creative Mentor and Mentee are genuinely invested in.



Making more positive choices

Knowing there is a breadth of choices to choose from, and that it is a person's right to make a choice suitable for them.



Feeling more motivated

Positive interests and goals.



Having more agency

Exercising your rights and making positive decisions.



Developing a deeper sense of self-actualisation

Developing those characteristics identified at referral, to explore their potential and a world of possibilities.



This then might lead onto **re-engagement** into education, training, employment, vocational pathways, inclusion in society and so on...

 [return to model](#)

how does it work?

The **collaborative model** of Creative Mentoring is an approach to working with children and young people who are struggling to engage in education, at risk of exclusion or social isolation. When a child is disengaged, resistant to support, and professionals are struggling to improve the situation, a Creative Mentor can be commissioned to work with the child or young person one-to-one.

A Creative Mentor works in what is called the '**Third Space**': a **person-centred**, **informal**, and **reflective** 'space' where Creative Mentors build trusted relationships using creative practice to refocus efforts away from negative preconceptions of education, to identify what it is the child or young person needs to help them become 'unstuck'.

Creative activity is introduced as a practical way to explore feelings about themselves and the world around them, learn new skills, communicate, address social and emotional issues, and **find a sense of purpose and agency**.

Creative Mentoring activity takes place at home, school, and in community settings in around 2-hour sessions, once a week over varying lengths of time, averaging 3-9 months. Virtual Schools and other referral partners can commission Creative Mentors for at least 24 hours per child or young person.

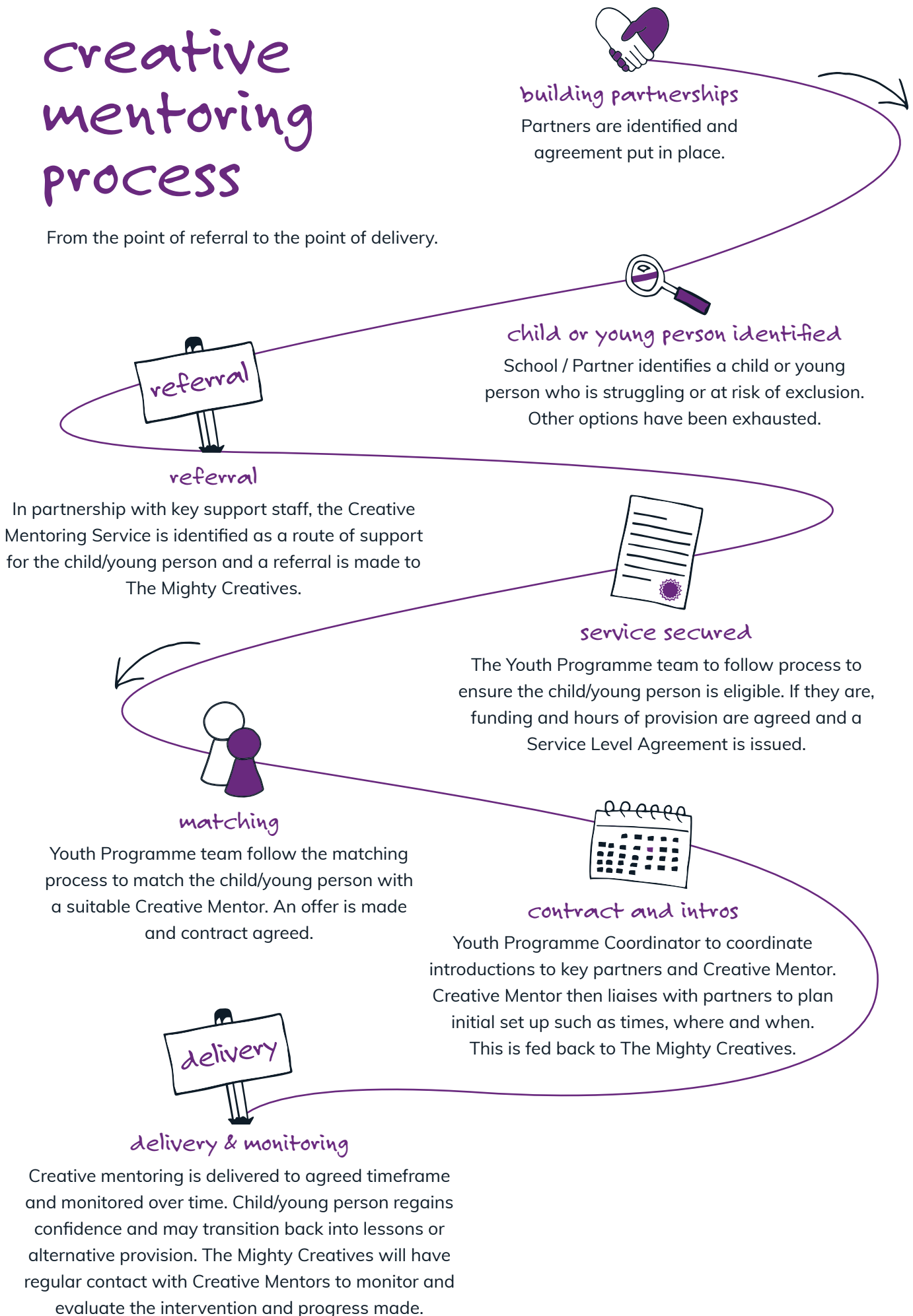
Creative Mentors start their sessions with one simple question:

"What shall we do together today?"



creative mentoring process

From the point of referral to the point of delivery.



criteria for accessing support

Creative Mentoring is available to Children and Young People with a Social Worker who are:

- in Care aged 5-11
- in Care aged 11-16
- leaving Care aged 16-25
- a registered Child in Need aged 5-25



The service is available to Children and Young People with a Social Worker who presents one or more of the following characteristics. The child or young person:

- Is at risk of school exclusion
- Has been excluded from school
- Is frequently truant
- Has a family member with criminal convictions
- Is at risk of gang membership and / or in a gang
- Has low levels of educational achievement
- Has diagnosed mental health issues
- Has suffered abuse / early childhood trauma
- Has been a victim of crime
- Displays antisocial behaviour
- Displays high impulsivity / hyperactivity
- Has a history of weapon possession (e.g. knife, gun)
- Has a criminal conviction
- Is receiving services from a Youth Offending Team or similar
- Has a history of alcohol and / or substance use
- Other (detail to be provided)

If the young person is "stuck" and presenting other characteristics, your referral form should share further detail, qualifying why you feel they should be considered for support.



claire's story

Claire is 14 years old. When she was referred to join the Creative Mentoring programme in 2020, she was going through a period of significant challenge at home, in education and within her social group. Claire had experienced severely traumatic events in her life that had impacted her confidence, self-belief, behaviours and attitudes. This presented itself in destructive behaviours that resulted in disengagement, violence, police intervention, exclusion and severe mental health needs. According to other professionals, Claire could “have derailed at any point”.

A Creative Mentor was commissioned to work with Claire to encourage her to positively re-engage in education and develop trust in adults and peers around her.

Claire was matched with a Creative Mentor and their weekly one and a half hour sessions initially focused on understanding how her trauma had impacted her life through visual arts.

Through working with their Creative Mentor, despite having experienced loss within the family and significant relationship challenges over the same timeframe, Claire has since returned to school and is regularly engaging, so much so that she used the time she would have spent with her Creative Mentor to do extra revision and preparation for her GCSEs. Claire said to her Creative Mentor before her last session that she now understands that staff and professionals are working for her best interests and has better relationships with them because of this.

traded services

Creative Mentoring is a great way to provide a service that we know works for children and young people. It is commissioned at an hourly rate of **£65.00 per hour**, at a **recommended 24 hours per child or young person**. The total cost of 24 hours is £1,560 inclusive of VAT and expenses per child or young person. For this fee we will provide:

- 21 hours of one-to-one Creative Mentoring for your referred child or young person.
- 3 hours of support time for the Creative Mentor, including time for planning, monitoring, evaluation and possible attendance to PEP meetings where appropriate.
- Professional supervision for the Creative Mentor provided by Educational Psychologists across the region, including:
 - One-to-one bespoke support.
 - Group supervision and networking sessions.
 - Access to CPD and development opportunities.
- Coordination of the matching process as well as monitoring, evaluation and ongoing communication with professionals.
- CPD and training opportunities for Creative Mentors themed around.
- Ongoing coordination of a Creative Mentoring monthly e-news, sharing insights into Creative Mentoring across the region and opportunities for children and young people.
- Travel expenses to cover Creative Mentor's mileage to and from sessions.
- Resources expenses to cover items purchased for the purpose of Creative Mentoring activities.

While we suggest 24 hours as the optimum time for one child or young person to receive Creative Mentoring, referral partners can ask for less/more hours where needed, subject to funding.

get involved

The Mighty Creatives have funding to provide a limited number of fully and part-funded Creative Mentoring opportunities, subject to funding and review. However, we offer the opportunity for referral partners to commission Creative Mentors through their own funding streams, such as **Pupil Premium**, or via our traded services above. This is a great way to embed Creative Mentoring within your existing provision for the children and young people you support.

become a referral partner

You can become a referral partner to the programme by getting in contact with creativementoring@themightycreatives.com. You will be asked to **complete a Partnership Agreement**, and from this point you can refer to the programme via our referral and reporting form, where the service will be assessed and secured.

want to know more?

Contact us at creativementoring@themightycreatives.com or call 0116 261 6834.

The Mighty Creatives

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or creativementoring@themightycreatives.com