

The Impact of  
**Young  
MumsAid**



# Breaking the cycle

YoungMums Aid, set up in 2014, is a specialist service for young mums ages 14-21. In 2023 the service was identified as a best practice model for holistic, trauma-informed support. It provides integrated support focussing on working together to build confidence, trust and long-term resilience.

Two-thirds of pregnant women in London aged 16-24 experience mental health challenges. Becoming a parent is a huge transition at any age, but for many young mothers, living with instability and lacking support, it becomes overwhelming.

When a mother is struggling with her mental health, it can be harder to provide the consistent, responsive care that babies need in their earliest months. These early interactions are crucial - not only for bonding, but for a child's brain development and long-term emotional wellbeing. Without that support in place, the effects can last well beyond infancy.



**Dr. Miriam Donaghy,**  
**Founder & CEO**

# Our Young Mums

The young mothers we work with come from diverse backgrounds, but many share experiences of deep adversity. We prioritise work in areas of high deprivation. Our groups operate in communities ranked among the most deprived in the UK ([Local Deprivation Explorer 2025](#)) including SE9 5SD which is within the 20% most deprived areas overall and among the 10% most deprived for income and SE2 9JP, which falls within the 20% most deprived areas for housing, income, and crime.

A significant majority of mothers we work with have lived through multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), often at very high levels. Many have experienced loss, trauma, and instability from an early age. Some have also faced exploitation, including trafficking or involvement in gangs, and many have developed coping strategies—such as substance use—that reflect the scale of what they've endured.

**82%** have experienced domestic violence

**69%** have experienced childhood abuse

**63%** have had involvement with social care

**95%** have a history of mental health issues

**40%** have a baby currently on a child protection plan

**30%** have or have had a relationship with the social care system

Alongside this, many young mothers are deeply isolated. For some, this is the first time they are being asked to care for another human being without ever having experienced consistent, attuned care themselves. Without intervention, there is a real risk that cycles of trauma, poverty and disadvantage continue from one generation to the next.

But with the right support—support that is compassionate, consistent and trauma-informed—these cycles can be interrupted. Young mothers can build confidence, strengthen their relationships with their babies, and begin to create different futures for themselves and their children.

# What Does Young MumsAid Offer?

- Weekly one-to-one therapy delivered by trauma-trained therapists for young mums experiencing mental health difficulties
- A dedicated 24-hour text service, offering crisis support for both mums and dads
- Regular home visits, providing practical, emotional, and parenting support to young mums in their own homes
- A moderated online peer support group to reduce isolation, build confidence, and encourage connection between young parents
- Weekly drop-in groups for young mums, facilitated by highly trained, trauma-informed practitioners

## **Our group programme includes:**

- Parenting support, including about infant development, bonding and attachment, infant feeding, and managing toddler behaviour
- Life skills and learning support, including healthy relationships, budgeting, benefits advice, and housing support
- Practical assistance, such as sourcing essential baby items, foodbank and Early Start vouchers, and access to hardship funds
- Enrichment and wellbeing activities, including creative sessions (e.g. photography and crafts), family day trips (farms, parks, zoos), and celebratory events such as Christmas and Halloween parties
- Cultural and musical experiences, including access to music sessions at local Children's Centres and at the Royal Albert Hall

CIN FILM [https://youtu.be/\\_BTqiL6zePU](https://youtu.be/_BTqiL6zePU)

“Ultimately the charity wants to break cycles of generational trauma and improve the life-chances of these children. It offers consistent support through the children’s early years.”

*BBC report*

[Watch BBC News report](#)

# Measuring Impact

We track and measure the impact of all our work – making sure that what we do makes a real difference for mums, babies and their families. We use a variety of methods to do this, including:

- Social connections questionnaire
- Nationally-recognised clinical measures for mental health outcomes e.g. the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
- Client and referrer testimonials
- Mother-baby observations during group sessions
- Case studies
- Focus groups facilitated by lived-experience researchers

In 2025 our Young Mums Aid service supported 92 young mums and their families

## Outcomes

**95%**

reported improved mental health and wellbeing

**94%**

reported feeling better able to cope and less isolated.

**97%**

reported improved parent-baby bonding.

**83%**

reported improved parental confidence.

**100%**

felt they have benefitted from the support received.

# Building Strong Futures

## Lauren's Story

*Lauren is a pseudonym used to protect identity.*

Young MumsAid first met Lauren when she was 17 years old and pregnant with her oldest son. Lauren was in an extremely difficult and vulnerable position – her mother is dependent on drugs and alcohol and she lost the one supportive presence in her life, her grandmother, when she was 34 weeks pregnant.

Since the birth of her first child Lauren has faced situations that are unthinkable to many. She tragically lost her brother to knife crime two years ago and gave birth to a stillborn baby. Her older son, now 5, was diagnosed with ASD and global developmental delay. After her youngest child was born, she was the victim of domestic abuse.

Young MumsAid was able to be at Lauren's side throughout these challenges, providing practical and emotional support. Today Lauren has been able to build a family home with her two sons and is in secure housing and is debt free. Lauren's oldest son has an ASD diagnosis and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), he is in a school that meets his needs and her youngest son has just started nursery.

Lauren has been able to leave an unhealthy relationship and put steps in place to keep herself and her children safe. Lauren's mental health is good, and she knows how to manage her anxiety.

Lauren now has become a volunteer for Young MumsAid, supporting in our peer-to-peer support group, using her lived experience and new-found confidence to support other young mums.

"I would not be in the position I am now if it was not for Young MumsAid supporting me in the toughest and hardest times of my life. I want to try and put the trauma I have suffered into a positive by helping other young mums and being a true saviour."

Lauren's story shows how crucial consistent ongoing support is. Having a specialist service meant that we could stand with her for the long-term, enabling positive outcomes for her and her children.



# With thanks to our funders and donors

**Awards for All**  
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**Colfe's School PTA**  
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**Greenwich Peninsula Fund**  
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**More2 Nurseries**  
**National Lottery Community Fund**  
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**The Mayor of London's New Deal for Young People**  
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