

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT NETWORKS

Providing mentors with the skills to better support young people with sickle cell disorder

PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT

- **Client:** Sickle Cell Society
- **Years:** 2023–2024
- **Number of participants:** 24 mentors across 2 cohorts with sickle cell disorder working with young people living with sickle cell disorder
- **Participating country:** United Kingdom

THE OBJECTIVES

The Sickle Cell Society sought to strengthen its Children and Young Person's Peer Mentoring Programme, which offers one-to-one support for individuals aged 10–24 living with Sickle Cell disease. The programme focuses on:

- Providing personalised advice and guidance to help young people navigate their health, future plans, and independence.
- Supporting young people during the critical transition from paediatric to adult healthcare services.
- Helping mentees better understand and manage their condition and medication.

To enhance this support, the Sickle Cell Society trained 24 mentors to better equip them to:

- Offer emotional support and guidance as young people transition to adult healthcare.
- Foster confidence in mentees as they manage their health and make decisions about their futures.

THE CHALLENGE

Young people with Sickle Cell disorder encounter distinct challenges, particularly during the transition from paediatric to adult healthcare services. Many feel disconnected from their care and overwhelmed by the responsibility of managing their condition independently. This dynamic adds complexity to mentor training, as mentors need to understand and address these feelings while also navigating their own experiences with Sickle Cell disorder. Furthermore, since many mentors also have the condition, the training delivery must be adapted to accommodate their needs effectively.

OUR APPROACH

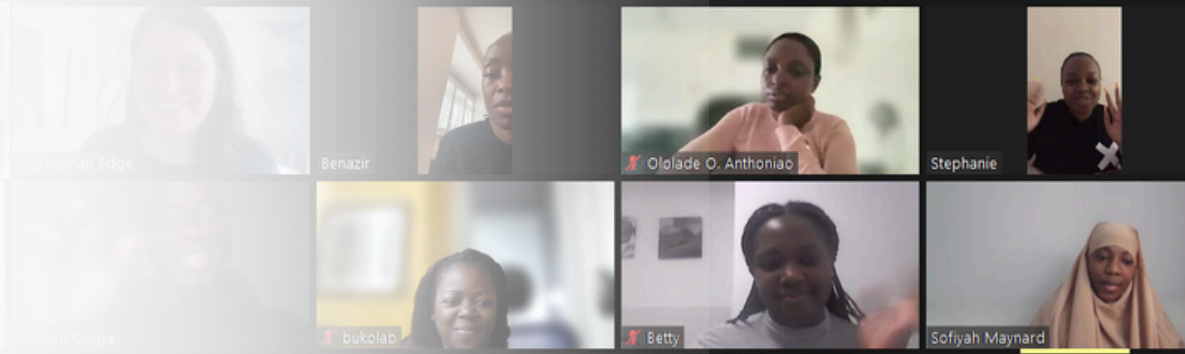
We have developed a **8+ week mentor training programme** designed to:

- Provide mentors with an on-demand course of 6 modules (1–2 hours each) focused on building the skills needed to offer personalised, supportive guidance.
- Support mentors in understanding the unique needs of young people living with Sickle Cell as they transition to adult healthcare.
- Foster a flexible learning environment that allows mentors to complete the course at their own pace or as part of a cohort, accommodating their health needs as they manage their own Sickle Cell disorder.
- Create opportunities for mentors to practice new skills, receive feedback, and build their confidence through peer sessions.

On behalf of the Sickle Cell Society and our Sickle Cell Children and Young People's Peer Mentoring Programme, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to The Human Edge for their exceptional training support for our mentors. Their expertise in mentoring, communication, and leadership has had a transformative impact on our team. The Human Edge's training sessions were not only informative but also specifically tailored to the unique needs of our programme. Our mentors left the sessions feeling more confident, better equipped, and ready to provide the highest level of support to the young people we work with. Their approach was practical, engaging, and focused on empowering our mentors to create meaningful connections with the children and young people in our programme. Thanks to The Human Edge, I have seen a noticeable improvement in the quality of mentorship within our programme, and I am incredibly grateful for their commitment to the growth of our team. I highly recommend their services to any organisation looking to invest in the development of their staff. Thank you, The Human Edge, for your invaluable contribution to the success of our programme.

Adassa Follett, Sickle Cell C&YP Mentoring Programme Manager, NEL Lead Mentor

KEY OUTCOMES



Greater personal impact



100%
of participants are confident about their role as mentors after the training



I feel like I have had value added to what I am doing and I have increased my confidence to practice, from the practice conversations to the resources and techniques offered. I am pleased with this training

Sofiyah Maynard

Stronger relationships



100%
of participants are confident in creating rapport and trust in their relationships after the training



The most important thing I've learned about mentoring is that the mentor doesn't need to have all the answers or jump in with solutions right away. It's also about using silence to let the mentee think and reflect, helping them find their own answers. Building trust from the start is key, and showing empathy, authenticity, openness, and vulnerability really strengthens the mentoring journey.

Oluwayemisi Akinlade

Next steps

In light of the success of the first two cohorts and the Sickle Cell Society's plans to expand its mentoring programme into additional regions of the UK, a third cohort is set to launch. This new cohort will continue to build on the positive outcomes achieved, equipping more mentors with the necessary skills to support young people living with Sickle Cell disorder in a wider range of locations.

Looking to support leadership development within your network?

Contact us now to discuss how we can help you deliver greater impact.