



THE
CATALYST
COLLECTIVE



ANNUAL REPORT
2023-24

WELCOME

Chloe Lewis

Founder & Programme Director



At a time when opportunities for young people can feel uncertain and education and career inequities for young Black women remain, our mission has never felt more vital. It's been a year of deepening impact and continued growth, and I'm delighted to share our Annual Report for the 2023–24 programme year.

This year, we went from strength to strength, growing our offer to include our first-ever residential and a series of Insight Days, both made possible by our supportive partners and funders. These are quickly becoming a permanent feature of the Catalyst programme, and it was exciting to have the opportunity to enrich our work with young people in new and meaningful ways.

We launched 80 cohorts this year. Our growth from just six pairs in 2020–21 to where we are now is hard to believe! I'm especially grateful to the staff team, and our Advisory Board, who have invested time and energy into maintaining the quality of the programme as we've expanded.

Most of all, I want to thank our partner schools, who have worked closely with us to recruit and support cohorts of young people and who remain deeply committed to our mission and values. My final thanks go to our inspiring mentors, without whom none of this would be possible, and the mentees, whose excitement, aspiration, and humour make this such meaningful work.

As we look ahead, I'm excited for the opportunities to reach even more young people, deepen our impact, and continue building a community that believes in the power of mentoring.

YEAR OVERVIEW

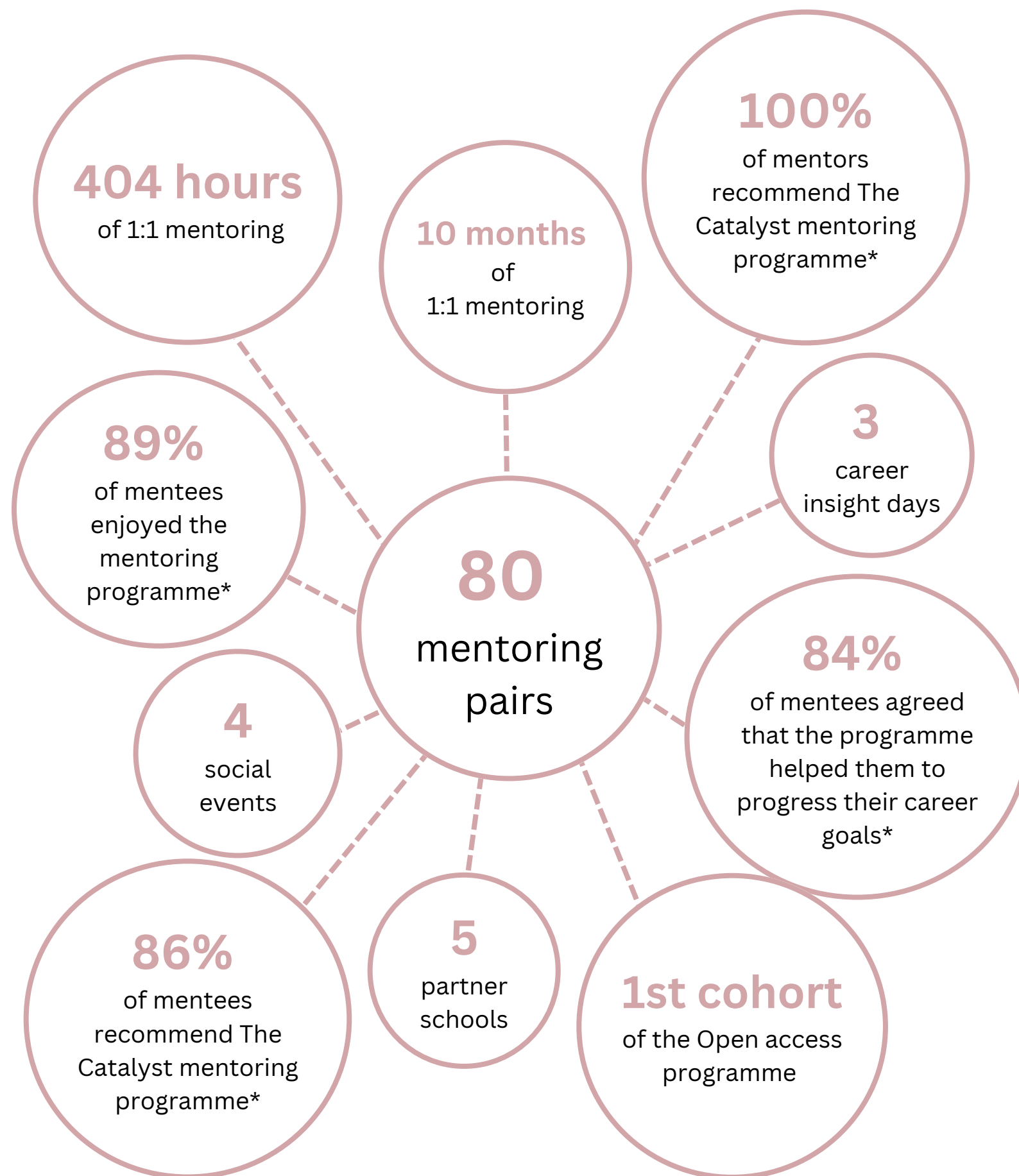


For 2023-24, The Catalyst Collective made significant strides in expanding opportunities for Black girls. This year, we build new partnerships, piloted new strands of our mentoring programme, and developed our enrichment programme delivery. Through all this, we continued to support Black girls to achieve their aspirations.

Highlights from the year included:

- **Expanded Reach:** This year, we continued to partner with more and new schools across London, increasing our impact on young people.
- **Pilot Open Access Mentoring Programme:** For the first time, we made our mentoring offer available to young people who were not at a Catalyst partner school, by launching the Open Access Mentoring Programme (OAM). OAM matched Year 12 teenage girls from across the country with professional Black women mentors. It was an accelerated version of our same high quality mentoring offer, running from January to July.
- **Enrichment & Insight Days:** This year, we built on our programme offer and provide opportunities to visit professional workspaces in industries like law, the creative sector, CJC and the London Metal Exchange.
- **First-Ever Residential:** In April 2024, we were thrilled to run our first ever residential. This gave mentees a chance to experience a new area outside London, build connections and grow out of their comfort zone.

OUR 23-24 IN NUMBERS



*: Of mentors and mentees participating in the end of year survey (response rate 36%)

CASE STUDY

Jemimah is a mentee in year 12 on the 2023-24 programme and worked with her mentor Belema. We spoke with Jemimah to hear about her experience on The Catalyst mentoring programme.

What was the benefit of having a mentor?

“The biggest benefit was being able to have someone to talk to who isn't family or school. I related to my mentor [Belema] through my interest in engineering, science and maths. She [Belema] is very knowledgeable about various topics and went in depth when explaining things.”

What did you enjoy the most about the programme?

“Meeting my mentor and the other catalyst network in person.”

What 3 skills did you develop while on the programme?

“Time management, networking and communication.”

What advice would you give to someone thinking about mentoring?

“Just DO IT. Mentoring will change your life so use it to get help and support.”

Mentee
Jemimah

Mentor
Belema



Are you a Black female student in Years 11–13? Join our Open Access Mentoring programme from January to July and be matched with an inspiring mentor.

[Apply here!](#)

SCHOOL TESTIMONIAL

We began our partnership with Waterside Academy in Hackney, London, in 2021. Since then, we've partnered annually to support Black girls in years 9 and 10.

What were your expectations of the programme?

“Initial expectation was of a programme that would possibly run for the year and that had the potential for partial success given other mentoring programmes that had been tried in the past. But this was different.”

What impact has the Catalyst Collective had on your students?

“It has been beyond measure in some cases. It has given some students a clear path into what their future could look like which they would never have had without the mentoring. The school relationship with the Catalyst Collective is one of real partnership and it is one that has become truly embedded into the fabric of our school. [...] We now have girls who want to continue with their mentoring relationship beyond the full year [...].

How do you view the communication from the Catalyst Collective?

“We are given feedback, including details on each individual girl to a very accurate and detailed level. This means that we always know about the safeguarding down to just general feedback and observations on mentoring relationships, I would say the management and oversight is truly excellent [...].

Would you recommend this programme to other schools?

“There is nothing else that quite matches what the Catalyst Collective does for our students. I cannot speak highly enough of the programme which I would recommend without any hesitation to any other school. My hope is that this programme is invested in so that it flourishes to help many more girls with raising their aspirations and making their dreams come true.”

– **Samira Ahmed, Career and Aspirations Manager at Waterside Academy**

OUR MENTORS

The range of roles held by our mentors in 2023–24 reflects the depth and diversity of experience they brought—offering guidance that empowered mentees to explore the possibilities ahead. Each mentor embodied our mission to support, inspire, and equip Black girls to achieve their goals, helping make representation across every walk of professional life a reality.

Healthcare

Sexual Health Nurse Consultant
Doctor
Dentist
Midwife
Clinical Scientist
Senior Clinical Trial Coordinator

Psychology & Mental Health

Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Mental Health Therapist

Animal Healthcare

Senior Veterinary Surgeon
Veterinary Nurse

Education & Academia

Deputy Headteacher
University Lecturer
PhD Researcher

Law & Justice

Barrister
Lawyer
Paralegal
Head of Prosecutions

Creative & Media

Interior Designer
Graphic Designer
Fashion Designer
Film Director
Producer
Actress
Freelance Journalist

Business & Management

Founder & CEO
HR Business Partner
E-commerce Development Manager
Project Manager

Science, Technology & Engineering

Scientist
Product Development Engineer
Data Analyst

Social & Community Work

Social Worker
Chef
Air Cabin Crew
Construction & Surveying
Quantity Surveyor

We're always looking for passionate and committed Black women to inspire and support the next generation. [Apply here!](#)

MENTORING MOMENTS



OUR SUPPORTERS

We would like to thank our 2023-24 funders:



UK YOUTH



London Borough of
Hackney

We'd also like to thank the following partners who delivered Insight Day programmes for our young people:



These organisations have been instrumental in helping us to deliver this year of impactful programming for our mentees.





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