

# upside

## Youth Mentoring

Referrers Information Pack



# Who we are

We're Upside Youth Mentoring (formerly Brothers In Arms) and we exist to support change in Aotearoa New Zealand's young people with adverse childhood experiences. We want to help them feel a little brighter and more loved than they did yesterday. Our dream is to change the future of our nation.

We've been matching young people with mentors since 2006 and with over 700 matches and 6000 hours of mentoring a year, we've seen time and time again the life-changing effects of this connection.

Right now we work in Auckland, Rodney and Tauranga.

# Volunteering

All our mentors are volunteers. They are committed to meeting with a young person every week for at least 12 months. The focus of those times is building a quality relationship of unconditional love, care and support with the young person.

Volunteers are vetted through New Zealand Police vetting, personal character referees and interviews with our team. The volunteer provides monthly feedback to Upside on the progress of the relationship and is supervised and supported regularly throughout the year.

# Care and Protection

Volunteers advise Upside of any concerns for the young person they are mentoring and we follow-up and report to Oranga Tamariki as necessary. This is in line with our Care and Protection Policy.

# Referrals to Upside

There are a number of young people that would benefit from a relationship with an Upside volunteer.

However, as volunteer numbers are limited and matching is based on geographic location, we do not guarantee that all referred young people will be matched with a volunteer. We strive to maintain communication regarding the matching status of all referrals.

# Disclosure of Information

Where legally able, we ask the referring party to disclose to Upside information pertaining to the young person that may aid in the young person's relationship with their volunteer mentor.

We will seek to share the information obtained throughout the relationship between the young person and the volunteer if they feel it is pertinent for the referring party to know. This includes Care and Protection issues, or at the referrer's request.

Maintained communication is desirable throughout the matching process so that if issues arise, they can be discussed with the referrer.

Upside's intention is always to build positive working relationships with referrers.



# Case Management

The role of Upside is to initiate, facilitate and supervise its volunteer relationships. Upside intends to encourage the volunteer and young person in their relationship in any way possible.

Its intention is to equip volunteers to walk alongside a young person in their community for one year, with the hope that they are a source of consistent encouragement, support and friendship.

The referring party must understand that the volunteer from Upside is trained in relationship-building and not in social work or counselling. Therefore, the volunteer's role is not to replace one of a counsellor, social worker or caregiver for that young person.

As such, Upside will not be held accountable for cases in which the volunteer has not been able to identify and address risk factors within the young person's life that has caused harm to the young person's wellbeing.

## FGCS and Alternative Action Plans

Upside understands that some young people will be involved in the youth justice system during the course of the time that they are involved with Upside.

Upside is a voluntary programme for the young person and therefore the referring party must understand that Upside is not a programme in which the young person's participation is required, in order to complete an Alternative Action or FCG plan.

The referring party must also understand that it is not the role of the Upside volunteer to ensure that the young person

completes tasks of their Alternative Action Plan or FGC plan – and therefore Upside wishes to not be allocated any tasks in an Alternative Action Plan or FGC Plan.

In situations in which the young person is involved in the youth justice system, the role of the Upside volunteer is one of support and encouragement.

## Young Person Referral Criteria

All young people referred to Upside must fit within the following criteria –

- Aged 9–13 years
- Be referred by an approved referring party
- Live within the following regions – Auckland Central, Auckland South, Auckland Central West, Panmure or Glen Innes (individual exceptions may apply), Rodney, or Tauranga. (Please note that as our mentors are volunteers, we are limited to where we can match by the volunteers that are available).
- And/or be 'on the radar of police, health or education social workers' as someone who displays some of the following –
  - Issues at home with separated parents/families
  - Irregular school attendance/non-attendance
  - Gang-affiliated role models (older siblings, family members, peers)
  - Anxiety, depression or concerning mental health
  - Suicide risk
  - Anti-social behaviours that prevent relationship-forming
  - Lack of positive role models in their life
  - Family with mental health issues

The young person must also –

- Agree to Upside guidelines (see Match Agreement – Young Person’s Agreement)
- Have parents/caregivers who will support the relationship and also agree to Upside guidelines (see Match Agreement – Parent/Caregiver Agreement)

- Have at least one line of communication available within the family (a cell phone or landline)
- Have a positive attitude towards the volunteer mentor, Upside and towards change

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## Referral Process

### 1. Before referring

Before making a referral, we encourage referrers to speak with an Upside staff member.

### 2. Referrer’s agreement

This will be sent to a referrer by an Upside staff member to be signed. Returning referrers do not need to repeat this step.

### 3. Make referral

The referrer must ensure both the young person and their family have verbally volunteered to take part in the Upside programme.

### 4. Vetting

Upside will only contact the young person and/or family once they are satisfied the young person is likely to be appropriate for a volunteer mentor.

### 5. Young person interview

The young person is interviewed to –

- Ensure the young person fits Young Person Acceptance Criteria
- Gauge their commitment/enthusiasm level

### 6. Approval and matching

If the young person is suitable, Upside will proceed with matching the young person with a volunteer mentor once there is a suitable mentor available. In either case, the referrer will be informed of the process.

**At every stage, involvement in Upside is voluntary to all parties.**