

The dilemma.

By the age of 13 many girls are likely to be on some kind of self-imposed diet, dreaming of being size zero and craving external validation brought on by early sexualisation. As well as starving themselves, many are self-harming and/or binge drinking. They might be gang members or the victims of physical or cyber bullying. Their academic achievements may be negligible and their role-models very limited. These are all symptoms of low self-esteem and the inability to see beyond a limited horizon of possibilities and they result in high levels of teenage pregnancy and of NEET categorisation.

How can we help?

We can introduce the girls to role models (Big Sisters) whose influence helps change their attitudes, self-belief and life-plans. The role models are trained to mentor the girls in structured, one-to-one programmes within their schools. They help them to acquire a more empowering mind-set which broadens their aspirations, encourages them to find their individual voice, re-connects them to education and helps them to make better life decisions.

Who are these Big Sisters?

The Big Sisters are volunteer mentors – women from all walks of life who have at least one thing in common; they were all teenagers themselves so they understand the challenges faced by the girls. They have a strong desire to help them to overcome the pitfalls of growing into adulthood and they can use their own experiences to empathise and offer guidance to those who feel alienated or isolated.

Who are we?

Girls Out Loud is a Social Enterprise created in April 2009 with the intention of helping teenage girls overcome the challenges of developing into adulthood. We have developed the Big Sister mentoring programme and we run all aspects of it; seeking and raising funding, approaching schools, finding and training volunteer mentors, instigating and running the programmes within the schools and monitoring the progress and results.

How can you help?

We have the systems, the people, the track record and the passion. We could improve the lives of girls all over the country if we had some help from you. Can you identify possible sources of funding? Can you put us in touch with women who would want to volunteer as Big Sisters? If you are willing to assist in either of these areas *please* contact us.

For further information

Our website www.girlsoutloud.org.uk has more information about us, our programmes, testimonials from girls and teachers as well as a short film on our work. And, anytime, contact: Rachel Ward Lilley – rachel@girlsoutloud.org.uk / 07931 551129

