

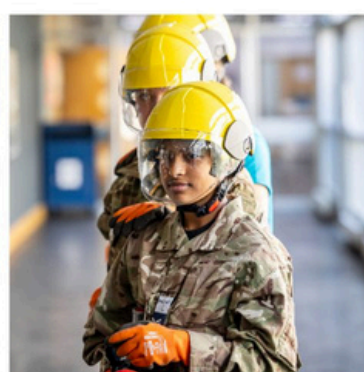
YOU

L N D O N

NEWS

DECEMBER 2025

YOU LONDON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WEEKEND



LEADERSHIP WEEKEND CONT...

The annual YOU London Leadership Development Weekend saw over 100 participants each day from 11 different organisations (Army Cadet Force, Boys' Brigade, Fire Cadets, Girlguiding, Girls' Brigade, RAF Air Cadets, Scouts, Sea Cadets, St John Ambulance Cadets, Trinity School CCF and Volunteer Police Cadets) take part in an inspiring weekend of speakers and practical activities designed to strengthen the delegates' leadership, communication and teamwork skills.

This year, the event was hosted by Trinity School in Croydon over the weekend of 1-2 November. The challenges over 2 days ranged from a trek cart slalom race, creatively bridging across platforms, blindfold and memory tests, building a vertical structure, CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) including how to use a defibrillator, conducting a mock forensic search, and searching for an indeterminate number of casualties in a smoke filled room with zero visibility. The stand activities were delivered by the Metropolitan Police Service Volunteer Police Cadets, London Fire Brigade Fire Cadets, Army Engagement Team, Royal Navy Attract Team, St John Ambulance, Scouts and Trinity School CCF.



Conference speakers shared valuable lessons on personal growth and resilience. Hubert Mensah, Firefighter, First Aid Trainer and former Police Cadet, spoke about the importance of resilience and building strong support networks. Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, offered an uplifting message about positivity and maintaining perspective. Mark Dean, Guinness World Record holder and former Nigerian Rugby Manager, reminded the delegates not to define themselves solely by their careers, but to keep an open mind to future possibilities.

"I definitely improved my leadership and communication skills."

"I've gained knowledge on other organisations and how they work and leadership skills in communication and logical thinking."

A number of visitors, including Natasha Irons MP, and the civic and elected Mayors of Croydon, visited the event to witness the activities and chat to the young people between tasks. All those who visited said they were hugely impressed by the event and by the energy and enthusiasm of the participants.

A big thank you to the dozens of adult volunteers who supported the weekend – either by delivering activities or speeches or simply being on site to accompany the young people.

Images from the weekend can be viewed here: [YOU London Leadership Development Weekend photographs](#).

"I learnt a lot about how the other organisations help in their local communities as well as important life skills such as first aid."

"It was very enjoyable, informative and well-structured. The staff in charge were kind and helpful."

LAMBETH AND SOUTHWARK COMMUNITY NETWORKING RECEPTION

Southwark Cathedral was filled with energy, purpose and community spirit on Monday 8 September, as His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE, hosted a reception in his capacity as President of YOU London to raise awareness of the life-changing opportunities community-based uniformed youth groups in the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark provide and to celebrate the invaluable contributions of adult volunteers.

Held by kind permission of the Dean, the reception brought together civic leaders, youth representatives and volunteers to highlight the transformative impact these proven organisations can have on young people's skill development, social inclusion, social mobility, employability and mental health.



Guests heard powerful testimonies from young people and adult volunteers who spoke movingly about their experiences with these organisations, and the skills and benefits they have gained whilst making a positive difference to their local community.

Attendees were encouraged to leave the reception inspired to spread the word – to raise the profile of uniformed youth groups in their local communities and to encourage volunteer recruitment to ensure every young person has access to these opportunities.



The evening finished with a spectacular glow-in-the-dark drumming display by South East London Army Cadet Force Corps of Drums.

More images from the event [can be viewed here](#).

THE LADY MAYOR'S SHOW

YOU London was proud to participate in the City of London's first ever 'Lady Mayor's Show' on Saturday 8 November. Although Dame Susan Langley DBE is the 697th Lord Mayor of London and the third women to hold the position, she is the first to be titled 'Lady Mayor'.

Over 80 young people and adult volunteers from 11 different uniformed organisations proudly waved flags of their organisations, showcasing co-operation, strength in numbers, organisational pride and community spirit. We were delighted to have a live BBC interview en route.

Images of uniformed youth groups participating in the show can be viewed at [Lady Mayor's Show images](#).



"Thank you for the once in a lifetime /amazing opportunity to be part of the show on Saturday. It was truly incredible, and thank you for all the hard work you and your team put into this event, as well as all the other wonderful events your run!" Volunteer Police Cadet

EAST LONDON COMMUNITY NETWORKING RECEPTION

YOU London hosted a community networking reception at Kingsford Community School in Beckton on Monday 1 December to raise awareness of the fantastic opportunities provided by uniformed youth groups in the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Newham and Redbridge, and their ability to change lives. The evening brought together youth organisations, community leaders, policy makers and local supporters to promote and celebrate the beneficial impact of uniformed youth groups, to celebrate the invaluable contributions of adult volunteers and to raise awareness of the continual need for more.



The evening began with a warm welcome from Joan Deslandes OBE, Head Teacher of Kingsford Community School, whose staff and pupils showcased so effectively both the school and its values. Professor Richard Hazenberg, co-author of [The Impact and Value of School-based Cadet Forces in the UK](#), presented the findings of his report which concluded that pupils who are members of CCFs do better at school, have improved attendance and behaviour and are more likely to go to university.

Debbie Wilkinson DL, YOU London Co-ordinator, hosted a short Q&A discussion with young people and adult volunteers from uniformed youth groups in Barking and Dagenham, Newham and Redbridge to hear why they volunteer and what they get from it. Colonel Jane Davis OBE QVRM TD DL, Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, drew the speeches to a close by thanking the school for hosting the reception and encouraging attendees to take the messages they had heard into their communities.

The evening concluded with a fantastic performance by the band of 282 (East Ham) Squadron RAF Air Cadets who played a medley they had created themselves of Christmas, traditional and modern tunes.

Images from the event can be viewed [here](#).



FUNDRAISING THANK YOU

Major Norman Fontaine-Thompson, Officer Commanding 15 Company, South West London Army Cadet Force, undertook the London T100 Triathlon on Sunday 10 August, raising £475 in sponsorship for YOU London. This Olympic-distance triathlon was a massive challenge: a 1.5km swim in Royal Victoria Dock, a 40km cycle past iconic landmarks like Big Ben and Tower Bridge, and a 10km run through the Docklands.

Maj Fontaine-Thompson completed his first triathlon just one year ago, to lose weight and challenge himself. The London T100 was his first Olympic-distance event – double the distance of anything he had done before.

He said: "It was an amazing experience and great to raise money for YOU London to help support youth organisations in London. I'm signing up to the T100 full 100 distance next year and hope to be able to fundraise for YOU again."

We'd like to thank Major Norman Fontaine-Thompson for his incredible effort. If any other groups or individuals would like to fundraise for YOU London, to help the charity continue to promote and support uniformed youth groups across the capital, please visit www.justgiving.com/charity/youlondon.

JustGiving™



LONDON **T100** TRIATHLON
10 AUGUST 2025

T100 100 TRIATHLON
TRIATHLON WORLD TOUR



NORMAN FONTAINE-THOMPSON

Finish Time

2:58:31

PRELIMINARY: Times and places may change



60th Place
out of 98
N40-44

733rd Place
out of 1,174
by Gender

883rd Place
out of 1,651
Overall

Event	Time	Time of Day	Pace
Swim Finish	37:13	10:33:57 am	2:29
Bike Finish	1:04:04 1:46:47	11:43:31 am	34.69
Finish	1:05:28 2:58:31	12:55:15 pm	6:26

London T100 Age Group Triathlon - 2025-08-09

LIVE RESULTS BY & TIMING BY



LONDON **T100** TRIATHLON
10 AUGUST 2025

T100
TRIATHLON WORLD TOUR

LONDON **T100** TRIATHLON
10 AUGUST 2025

T100
TRIATHLON WORLD TOUR

DEPUTY LIEUTENANT CERTIFICATES

The nomination process for 2026 Deputy Lieutenant Certificate submissions is open until Friday 6 February 2026.

The Deputy Lieutenant Certificate scheme is open to all YOU London organisations. Certificates are awarded to young people (aged 15 or over on 31 January 2026) to give recognition to their achievements within their organisation and to create an awareness of their contribution within the community. Nominations should be completed initially by unit/group leaders, then sent to the next level up to put forward ideally one or two candidates from each organisation per borough.

The question to be asked of a unit/group is 'Who are the best young people you have in your unit/group and what have they achieved?' Differences between organisations make it impracticable to stipulate the qualifications required for an award, but candidates are expected to be worthy representatives of their organisation, assessed on professional performance, personal qualities, social responsibility and other achievements in fields such as education, sport and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

To be eligible for a certificate, a young person must belong to a unit situated within a London borough. Deputy Lieutenant Certificates will be presented by the Representative Deputy Lieutenant for that borough during the course of 2026. Presentation events vary widely from visits to units, to a joint presentation with the Mayor.

Nomination forms are available from Debbie at youlondon1@gmail.com or Donna at gl-offcadets@fca.mod.uk.



258 Deputy Lieutenant Certificates were awarded in 2025 to young people from 10 organisations across all 32 London boroughs.



Young people from Croydon spelt out the letters VJ earlier this year to mark 80 years since VJ Day and the official end to the Second World War.

CAMPING ON THE UNDERGROUND

Looking for places to stay around London?

A big thank you to Scout leaders from Southwark, West London and North London districts who have produced this fun guide to [Scout Camping on the Underground](#). This mini website contains a [map](#) and [list](#) of Scout-owned and Scout-friendly campsites that can be reached using public transport to help volunteer leaders run a low-cost overnight camp for small groups carrying their own equipment without the need for a minibus, ambitious programme or expensive catering. Whilst this project was undertaken for the Scouts, many campsites will accept bookings from other uniformed youth organisations.

The [Girlguiding website](#) also features a [map](#) and [list](#) of approved national residential venues, which includes 23 options in Greater London.

Or for a very different overnight experience, the Imperial War Museum offer young people the chance to '[Kip on a Ship](#)' aboard HMS Belfast. A variety of packages, starting from £58 per person, are available. Popular with groups visiting London, 'Kip on a Ship' provides a unique opportunity to stay on the Thames in the heart of the city.



TROOPING THE COLOUR YOUTH ENCLOSURES

YOU London will again be organising two dedicated uniformed youth enclosures at Trooping the Colour and the full scale dress rehearsal the week before, on Saturdays 6 and 13 June 2026. If your group would like to watch this impressive display of British pomp and ceremony for HM The King's Birthday Parade, please contact the YOU London representative for your organisation. Details are on the last page of this newsletter.



WHAT IF EVERYONE STOPPED VOLUNTEERING?

YOU London is quoted in a new national report that was published in September. This ground-breaking report asks the question: [What if everyone stopped volunteering?](#) It looks at the impact on our health system, the environment, education and young people, law and justice, democracy, heritage, community resilience, emergency response and our communities, and concludes with the statement: 'It's not a question of whether the country can afford to support volunteering more, but can the country afford not to?'



YOU London is quoted on pages 46 and 49. Other contributors to the report include Girlguiding, Scouts, Sea Cadets, Met Police, Ulysses Trust, Youth United Foundation, Youth United Derbyshire and Youth United Hertfordshire.

WHERE WOULD THEY BE ?

It all starts in September.
When the evenings first turn cold,
And the days grow shorter—
But something warm begins in our stations.
New boots on drill yard ground.
Nervous smiles. Fidgeting hands.
Young people....some wide-eyed, some closed-off.
All waiting for someone to believe in them.
And then—you arrive.
Not for pay. Not for praise.
But with a quiet purpose that speaks louder than words.
You give your evenings,
Not because you have to—
But because you know what it does.
You show up,
So they can grow up.
Through October winds and November rains,
You're there.
Teaching more than YH1 drills and hose laying, again
and again and again because of course they forgot what
they learnt last week.
You're teaching self-respect.
Teamwork.
Belonging.
You see the quiet ones start to speak.
You see the jokers learn when to listen.
You see the cognitive wheels turn as they start to grasp
the safe space they are in
you see them realise that they can obtain a positive
purpose.
By December, they've started to believe
That maybe... just maybe...
They can be something more.

And I often wonder—
Where would they be, if not here?
If not in this fire station,
With volunteers who see beyond young people's
disguises and straight to the heart
Where would they be
If you hadn't turned up that cold Tuesday night,
Or stayed late on a Thursday
To help someone who was struggling just a little bit
more?

The year rolls on.
January to March—you're still there.
When life gets busy.
When your own world pulls at you.
Still, you give time—
So they can keep growing.

Then April to June—and something incredible
happens
That cadet who couldn't meet your eyes in
September
Now leads a crew across the yard from you,
Voice steady. Posture proud.
The one who didn't speak at all?
Now mentoring someone new.
The energy changes.
They don't just follow instructions, they start to take
ownership (with a few gentle reminders)
Because you didn't give up.
Because you kept showing up.

And when July comes round,
With sunlight and final passout's,
You watch them stand in formation—
Not just taller in height,
But in confidence. In pride. In who they've become.
And you think—
This is more than drills and uniforms.
This is transformation.
And again, I ask myself—
Where would they be if they weren't here?
Because the truth is,
Some would be lost.
Some would be hiding.
Some would still think they aren't good enough.
But here, because you show up —
They are seen.
They are valued.
They are championed.

So here's to you—
Our volunteer cadet instructors.
You are the steady hands
Behind their growth.
The voices behind their courage.
The quiet heroes behind their futures.
You may not wear capes.
But every week, from September to July,
You walk into that station
And light a path that might have never existed.
Thank you for giving your time,
and in doing so,
Changing lives.
Because of you,
They're not just learning to 'fight fire'
They're learning to find their fire.
And carry it forward.

This thoughtful poem was composed by
Tiernan Routledge, Youth Services
Volunteer Manager at London Fire
Brigade and read out at LFB's annual
celebration of its Volunteer Cadet
Instructors.



**The King's Award
for Voluntary Service**

Congratulations to:

- Greenwich, Deptford and Rotherhithe Sea Cadets
- Twickenham Sea Cadets

for being awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service on 14 November 2025.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) recognises outstanding work by local volunteer groups to support their communities. It is the highest award a volunteer group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

Well done to those units!

YOU LONDON

It's all about YOU...

The aim of YOU London is to work together to support young people by maximising the benefits of the existing youth organisations.

Working together takes many forms including inter-group competitions, sharing premises, sharing information, exhibiting together at recruitment events or simply being aware of who's who within each borough.

Working together often produces for the groups much more than the sum of the individual parts.

Organisation	Contact Name	Email Address
Army Cadet Force	Debbie Goodall	gl-se-ao2@rfca.org.uk
Boys' Brigade	Bethany Goddard	Bethany.Goddard@thebbinlondon.org.uk
LFB Fire Cadets	Johnny McDonald Millie Celeste	Jonathan.McDonald@london-fire.gov.uk Millie.Celeste@london-fire.gov.uk
Combined Cadet Force	Alistair Grant	Alistair.Grant317@mod.gov.uk
Girls' Brigade	GB Support Centre	Gbco@gb-ministries.org
Girlguiding LaSER	Rachael Dixon	RachaelD@girlguidinglaser.org.uk
Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade	Anthony Moran	Anthony.Moran@jlgb.org
RAF Air Cadets	Squadron Leader Taz Bhachoo	Tarandeep.bhachoo100@rafac.mod.gov.uk
Scouts	Steve French	you@scoutslondon.org.uk
Sea Cadet Corps	Lt Cdr Cliff Lewis RNR	clewis@ms-sc.org
St John Ambulance Cadets	Rosemary Herbage (West London) Hazel Shirley (South London)	Rosemary.herbage1@sja.org.uk Hazel.shirley@sja.org.uk
Volunteer Police Cadets	Carol Young PC Paula Cooper PC Liam Masterson	Carol.Young@met.police.uk paula.cooper@met.police.uk Liam.Masterson@cityoflondon.police.uk
YOU London Co-ordinator	Debbie Wilkinson	youlondon1@gmail.com
YOU London Admin	Donna O'Halloran	gl-offcadets@rfca.mod.uk

Z-CARDS

Fold out business-card sized 'Z-cards' which advertise all of the YOU London groups are available from Donna at gl-offcadets@rfca.mod.uk.



YOU London would like to wish all young people, adult volunteers and permanent staff in London's uniformed youth organisations

*Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year*

Here's to lots more collaborative working in 2026!

If you would like to contribute to the next edition of YOU London News, please send articles and images to youlondon1@gmail.com by 30 April 2026. We're particularly after stories of collaboration between 2 or 3 organisations of no more than 200 words with a good digital image of at least 500KB in size.