

scottish
mentoring
network



#Keep
The
Promise

Mapping Mentoring for Care Experienced children and young people

Findings Report



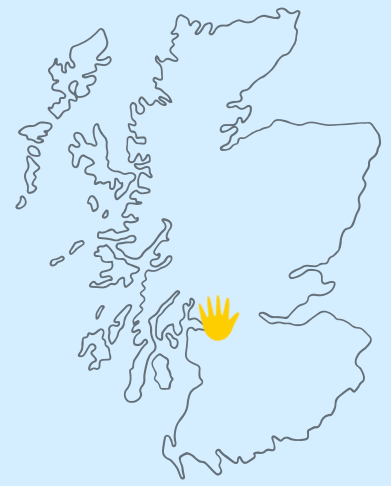
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About Scottish Mentoring Network



This report has been compiled by Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN), the membership body for mentoring projects in Scotland. SMN exists to support the growth, quality and recognition of mentoring practices

SMN supports mentoring organisations across Scotland, from the Borders to the Highlands and Islands. Our most recent data collected from member services illustrates the widespread and growing use of mentoring as an effective support to a wide range of people.

The majority of our member services support children and young people, many of whom are disadvantaged or vulnerable. Others work with adults in areas such as further and higher education, arts and culture, employability, health and disability, the justice system and business/professional fields.

Our strength lies in the experience and expertise of our members. We also promote the effectiveness of properly structured and resourced mentoring services and work strategically with a range of stakeholders including the Scottish Government, funders and policymakers.

We offer a range of services to our members to assist them to develop and deliver mentoring services in the most efficient and effective manner. We have a strong focus on measuring the impact of mentoring and on sharing proven good practice widely with all of our stakeholders.

www.scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk

Background and Context

Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN), Inspiring Scotland and YMCA Scotland formed a partnership group to undertake research to improve the information available about mentoring services available to care experienced young people in Scotland, which will be used to inform the understanding of the stakeholders and explore ways to best maximise the availability of mentoring to the young people who need it most.



The map can be accessed by following this link
<https://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/myp/> or scanning the QR code

The following report comprises the findings from this process. Including desk-based research, mapping of current provisions, information from stakeholder focus group discussions, and interviews with relevant individuals. For the purpose of this study, we have limited services mapped to those providing a service to people aged 7-26 focusing on setting and achieving goals.

The objectives of the mapping exercise were:

- To compile a comprehensive picture of mentoring service provision available to Care Experienced Young People across Scotland.
- To allow stakeholders to identify gaps in provision.
- To provide a narrative report identifying key findings and analysis of the provision.

The report provides a snapshot of mentoring provision available to Care Experienced Young People in Scotland in 2022.

As an intermediary organisation, we can see that over a number of years the quality and availability of mentoring options open to some children and young people in Scotland has increased. Presently there are a great number of excellent mentoring opportunities that will help children and young people to develop and find their voice to ensure that their wants and needs are at the centre of the decisions made about their lives. The issue is that these services all work on their own specific target group and in specific geographical areas. Consequently, access to this support is a postcode lottery and also carries the risk of stigmatising the children and young people who access the support as they need to meet defined criteria.

We need to be able to map the current provision of mentoring to care experienced children and young people to allow us to see where gaps in service access exist and plan how these can be filled to ensure all care experienced young people have the same access to a mentoring opportunity. We want to use our existing working relationships with two national mentoring programmes (YMCA Scotland, plusone and Youth works mentoring & Inspiring Scotland's intandem mentoring) to link up current service delivery and develop new delivery partnerships where needed. By carrying out this work we will be able to help our member mentoring projects to #Keep the Promise.



Significance of Mentoring for Care Experienced Young People

Scottish Mentoring Network sees the positive impact that an effective mentoring relationship can have on individuals at different points in their life. The work our members undertake supports and nurtures individuals to maximise their potential and supports them to identify and achieve their goals.

Professor Jean Rhodes has written extensively on youth mentoring, her research over the years has explored how youth mentoring can be effective (2011, 2008, 2006, 2005, 2002). She states that youth mentoring can impact young people in 3 ways:

- (1) enhancing their social relationships and emotional well-being;
- (2) improving their cognitive skills through instruction and conversation;
- and
- (3) promoting positive identity development through meaningful connection to role models and advocates.

Rhodes asserts that mentoring can contribute to the cognitive development of youth through several mechanisms, including exposure to new opportunities for learning, provision of intellectual challenge, guidance and confidence. (Rhodes et al, 2006, 694). It can also effect change in youths' perceptions of their future, including their aspirations.

Further support that evidence from existing literature and current research findings provide a convincing argument that youth mentoring has value for young people in care can be found in the book 'Mentoring for Young People in Care and Leaving Care' written by Brady, Dolan and McGregor in 2020.

Developing social relationships and improving resilience

One objective of youth mentoring programs can be that by reducing the risk of antisocial behaviour and increasing self-esteem mentoring will consequently improve social relationships. There are a number of research papers that conclude being mentored results in more positive social relationships, higher performance, and reduces the tendency to partake in risky behaviour. (Eby et al., 2008; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005)

Promoting resilience is another key outcome of a positive mentoring relationship. Scales and Gibbons (1996) determined that the significance of a relationship with at least one caring adult was the single most important element in protecting young people with multiple risk factors in their lives (Macallum & Beltman, 2002, p.24). At-risk young people can experience high levels of disappointment and rejection within their experience of relationships. Mentoring relationships addresses those negative experiences and rebuilds trust in the young person's expectations of a relationship.

Young people view their mentoring relationship as enhancing their social and emotional well-being by providing a social outlet, a listening ear, relieving stress, and improving sociability and self-confidence. Mentors also practical support and encouragement in relation to education, while also helping to scaffold young people's transition to adulthood. (Brady, Dolan & McGregor, 2020)

Through mentoring, young people can build relationships with caring adults, improve their social relationships, and feel better about themselves; improve their cognitive skills through conversations, and develop positive identities by connecting with role models and supporters.

Formal mentoring services

An effective mentoring relationship relies on the formation of a positive connection between mentor and mentee to help promote positive development outcomes. Mentor relationships are built on trust, empathy, authenticity, mutual respect, and sensitivity.

Compared to informal ways of mentoring, formal mentoring programmes explicitly recognise the mentoring relationship and usually involve matching a selected young person (mentee) to another individual (mentor). The establishment of a close relationship between mentor and mentee, characterised by mutuality, trust, and empathy, is hypothesised as key in leading to beneficial socio-emotional, cognitive, and identity development (Rhodes, 2005).

One of the factors that have been established to impact the effectiveness of a mentoring service is the overall length of the relationship between mentee and mentor. Research based upon the Big Brother's and Sister's of America evaluation revealed that the impact of mentoring on outcomes of young people with a mentor becomes increasingly stronger with a longer match length (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).

Other studies have agreed with this and concluded that young people who have had a short mentoring match or if the mentoring has ended premature, reported a decrease in their perception of self-worth and abilities. (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2006)

In addition to the importance of the duration of the mentoring relationship on positive outcomes is the quality of the relationship (Rhodes 2005; DuBois et al., 2002; MacCallum and Beltman 2002). The quality of the mentor relationship is central because the means through which mentoring relationships can promote positive developmental outcomes require the formation of a positive connection between mentor and mentee. Factors such as trust, empathy, authenticity, mutual respect, and sensitivity are all commonly cited as being critical to a quality mentor relationship.

Importance of effective mentoring programme co-ordination

It is clear that the coordination of a mentoring programme for care experienced children and young people is a crucial element that should be carried out with care to ensure that the mentoring service benefits the young people and doesn't have unintended negative consequences.

Sipe's (1996; 2002) research highlights the importance of appropriate support for mentors to build trust and that creating the correct structure and support to allow mentors to develop a positive relationship with their mentees is paramount to the success of mentoring relationships (2002, p.253). She concluded that the quality of mentoring relationships is dependant on good program structure and planning and that the positive outcomes from mentoring relationships are more likely to accrue when 'best practice' procedures are in place in a programme—including screening of volunteers, supervision, the provision of adequate orientation and training, ongoing support and supervision (Sipe 1996; Sipe 1998; Sipe 2002;).

Many have noted that when these elements are absent there is potential for programmes to have negative effects on mentees (Brady et al 2020; Rhodes 2008; DuBois et al., 2005).

The effective elements of good mentoring program design are:

- Aim, Objective, administration and management of the programme if focused on the mentee.
- Flexibility.
- Development of networks; connections to other services
- A mechanism for ongoing feedback from participants (mentors, mentees and other stakeholders) and evaluation for program improvement
- Sufficient resources for the program to achieve its aims.

The Mentoring Coordinators Role

Mentoring Coordinators can ensure that consistency and flexibility are applied to the mentoring relationships. Therefore the Mentoring Programme Coordinator role is key to the success of mentoring programmes, and it is important that coordinators have the appropriate knowledge and skills to effectively carry out key specific aspects of the role.

Hobson et.al (2021) outlines key considerations around the role of a mentoring coordinator.

1. Employ rigorous and effective processes for the appointment of Mentoring Coordinators who are likely to be effective in the role;
2. Ensure coordinators are appropriately trained to undertake the role and have subsequent opportunities for continuing professional development;
3. Ensure Mentoring Coordinators are effectively supported in carrying out the role, which would include, for example: Providing them with sufficient time and resources to enable them to undertake different aspects of the role effectively;
4. Ensuring the roles, responsibilities, and potentially valuable tasks of Mentoring Coordinators are clearly identified and communicated to mentors, mentees and senior leaders within the organization as well as to Mentoring Coordinators ;
5. Ensuring the Mentoring Coordinators role is recognized within the organisation, and how the valuable tasks they undertake support organisational aims and objectives;
6. Providing mentors and mentees with sufficient time and space to engage in productive mentoring relationships, and to access the support of the MPC, as appropriate;
7. Providing time, space and resources to enable mentors and mentees to be trained in undertaking and making the most of mentoring, respectively.

A study by Keller & DuBois(2019) on the influence mentoring service staff have on the quality of relationships developed found that more directive support given to mentors and mentees by mentoring service staff enabled more effective relationships to be developed when compared to a nondirective approach to supporting mentors. Thomas E. Keller, David L. DuBois (2019)

Research undertaken by Durkin et.al (2015) concluded that the following elements were crucial to effective service coordination.

- Participating in mentoring training before commencing a mentoring partnership is an invaluable strategy for determining the success of the mentor-mentee relationship;
- Mentees need to be equipped with the knowledge and understanding of mentoring and how they can get the most out of mentoring support;
- Clarifying the purpose and focus of the mentoring support is essential to value-for-time in the mentoring meetings;
- The mentor's interpersonal qualities and capabilities play a significant role in the mentoring relationship;
- The benefits of mentoring that can be gained by the mentee, the mentor, and the organisation described in the literature were evident in the findings from this project;
- The logistical considerations of establishing and sustaining the mentoring partnership need to be determined to fit the context

Another key aspect of mentoring service coordination is the training of mentors. Mentors should all be adequately prepared and confident in the role before undertaking a mentoring match and once matched the mentoring coordinator should then ensure the mentoring relationships are monitored and the mentor is supported to carry out their roles for the duration of the matches.

Methodology

A database was prepared using [Airtable](#), and used as a data collection tool for the mapping exercise. The fields for the database were agreed upon by project partners at the start of the mapping exercise and these formed the basis of every entry.

Planning consistent fields in this way ensured that the database was populated in a coherent manner using consistent fields from the outset, as well as making the fully populated database easier to search and analyse.

The fields in the database were:

Project Name	Main Contact Name	Project Address, Phone Number & Email
Aim of Mentoring service	Operating Area/s	Current number of Mentoring Matches
Capacity for matches	How many mentors does your service currently have?	Do you currently have a waiting list for a mentor? How many are on the list?
Is your mentoring service specifically for Care Experienced young people?	What proportion of your mentees have a Care Experienced background?	Where do your mentors & mentees meet?
What does your mentor training involve?	How many staff work on your mentoring project?	How long have you been operating a mentoring service?
Does your organisation have charitable status?	Is your organisation registered with Companies House?	How is your mentoring service funded?
Is your organisation a member of Scottish Mentoring Network?	Does your mentoring service hold the SMN Quality Award?	Does your service hold any other Quality Standards?

The database was set up with ease of use and sustainability in mind. Data could be entered, viewed and searched via a data entry form, as well as in an exportable table format.

The database was populated by SMN using a short web survey sent out to contacts and shared on social media platforms, with prompting or follow-up phone calls as required.

Database entries were made where it was clear that they had a youth mentoring service, and service operating areas were recorded to ensure accuracy in the geographic delivery of services where multiple areas are serviced from one central head office.

In total, 146 services were entered into the database. The database contains the results of a focused search for mentoring services available to all young people in Scotland, however, it may be that some venues or activities were missed or incomplete information was recorded if the information was not provided when asked.

The analysis of this database was conducted by SMN and the findings are provided in the following report. As part of the analysis of the database, population figures have been based on children's social work statistics produced by the Scottish Government 2020/21 (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-scotland-2020-21/documents/>)

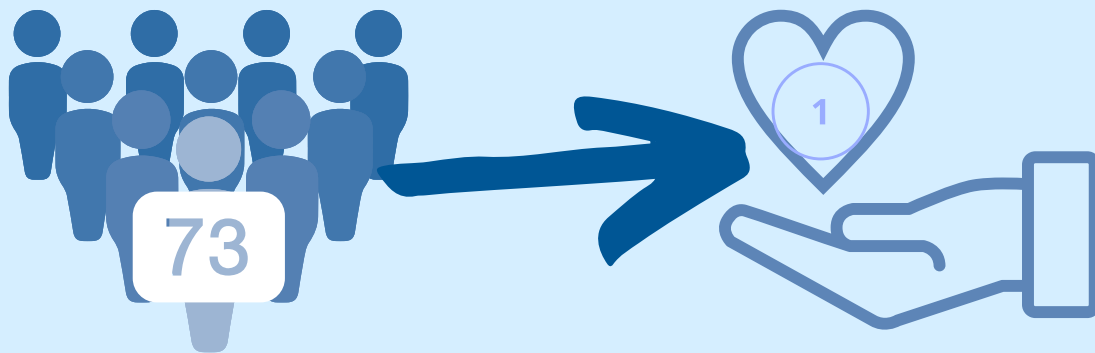
Following the data gathering phase, SMN reached out to the services that contributed to take part in focus groups or individual interviews to gain insights from their experience. Mentoring services also asked some of their mentees to contribute to the insights part of this report.

Key Findings

Mentoring Services Available

In total **146** mentoring service available to care experience young people in Scotland were identified, and various details about them (as described above) were entered into the mapping database.

With an estimated number of Care Experienced Young People in Scotland over the age of 5 at **10,918** and a database containing **146** services, the mapping process has identified one mentoring service for every **73** care experienced young person.



Mentoring service current capacity

In the survey, respondents were asked to tell us about the current capacity they had for mentoring matches. The following table provides information about this capacity.

Current number of mentoring services	147
Current capacity for matches	4310
No. of services with waiting lists (Range 2-26)	23

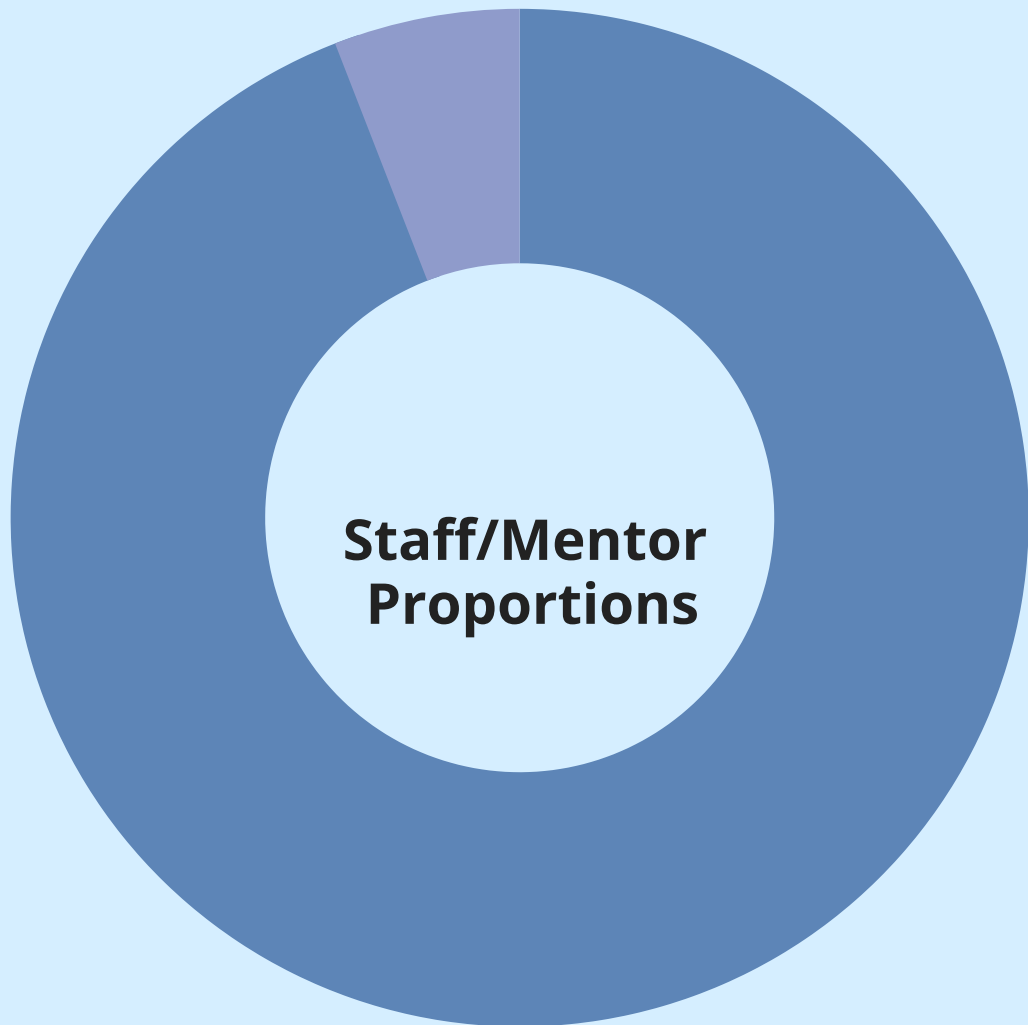
Therefore, if all the services on the database were delivering to their full capacity this would only allow for a service for **39% of care experienced young people aged 5 and above at any one time**. It should also be noted that some mentoring services on the database are open to a wider group of young people beyond those with a care experienced background.

Staff/Mentors

From the results of the mapping survey we can see that from the 146 mentoring services use a total of **3190** staff and volunteers this is made up of the proportions below

Mentoring Coordinators (added up to make to full time roles)

189



Mentors
3010

Delivery Setting

The services in the database are made up of **106** services delivered in a school setting, **41** delivered in a community setting and **3** have an online service provision.



106



41



3

Charitable status

144 of the services are delivered by registered charities

Funding

7 services receive at least some mainstream funding from a FE establishment

MCR pathways services (**97**) are coordinated by a LA employee with grant funding used for delivery costs.

The remaining **42** services rely on grant funding or charitable donations.



SMN involvement

14 services hold the SMN quality standard
31 are members of SMN

Geographical availability

This snapshot from the mapping shows that there is a predominance of services located around the central belt with large gaps in provision in the North and South of Scotland.

As the map graphic shows where the office of the mentoring service is located and not necessarily the area of delivery the spread of services can be understood more accurately using the table and chart below. However, the central belt dominance remains true.

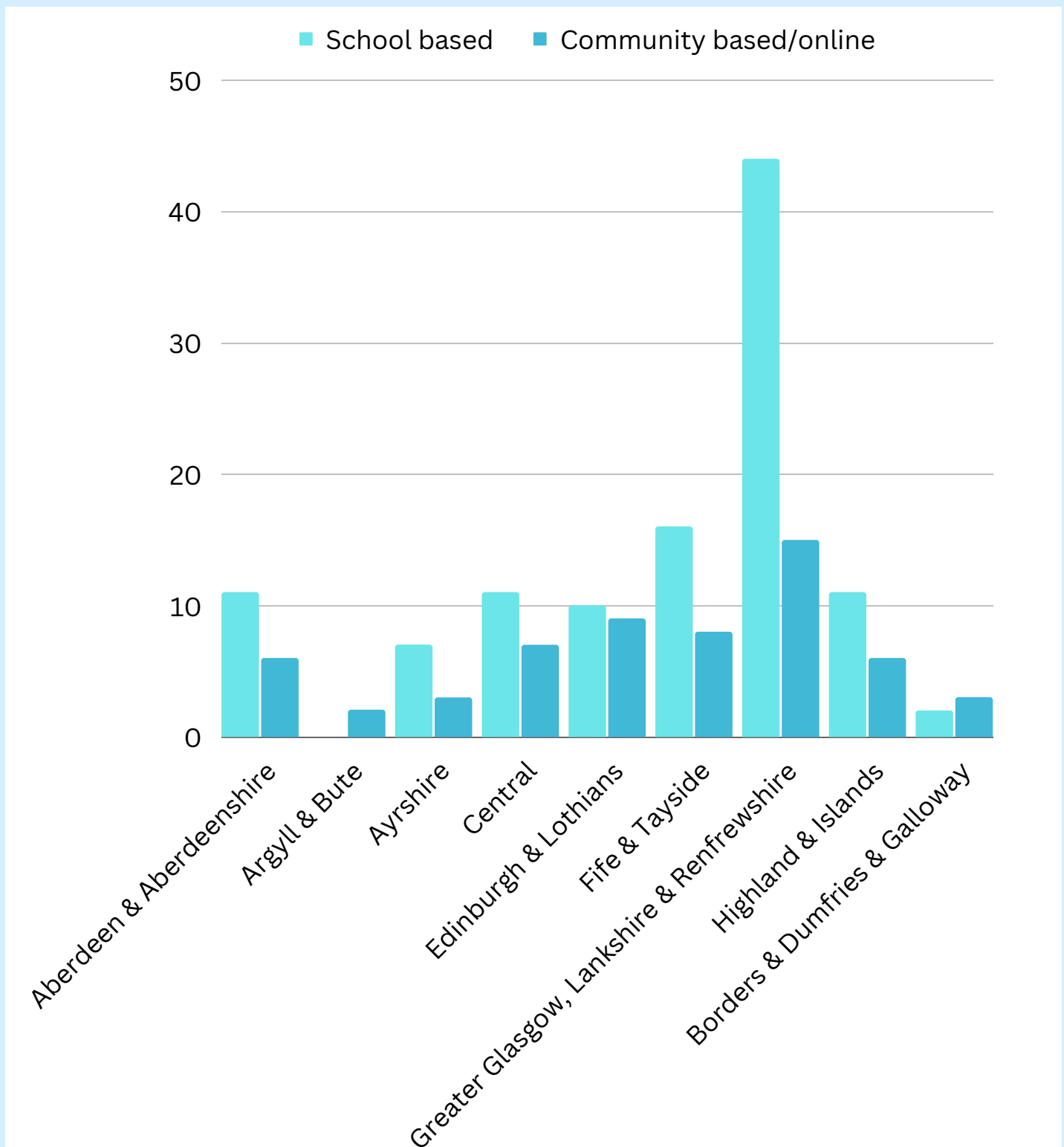
For more detailed information on the location of services refer to the map link.



<u>Region</u>	<u>School Based</u>	<u>Community Based/Online</u>	<u>Total</u>
Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire	11	6	17
Argyll & Bute	0	2	2
Ayrshire	7	3	10
Central	11	7	18
Edinburgh & Lothians	10	9	19
Fife & Tayside	16	8	24
Greater Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire	44	15	59
Highlands & Islands	11	6	17
Borders & Dumfries & Galloway	2	3	5

N.B. Total exceeds 148 as some services operate in more than one regional area

This chart illustrates the distinction between school-based and community-based mentoring provisions. The school-based services predominantly provide mentoring within the school setting and only during term time.



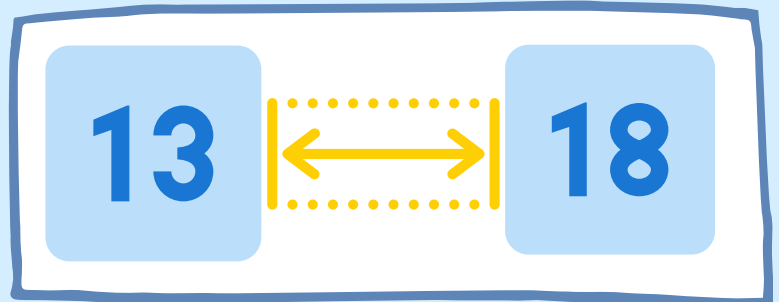
Mentee profiles

In the survey, respondents were asked to tell us more detail about the mentees who can access their service.

Age

School-based mentoring

The school-based mentoring services predominantly offer a mentoring service to young people ages 13-18 with only 6 offering a mentoring service to young people under 13 and 6 services offering mentoring beyond the age of 18.



Community-based mentoring

Within the community-based mentoring services, the ages range from 7 to 25 and most services said they had the flexibility to continue to work with the young person for as long as they needed it.

Care experience

Of the 146 services, 25 worked solely with care experienced young people.

21 services are specifically for care experienced young people.

The other 121 services take referrals from young people who have other risk factors identified in their lives.

Of the 146 services, only

5 have no referral criteria beyond the age range they work with

Mentor Training

All of the services that responded to the mapping exercise require their mentors to undertake some training. This ranges from 3.5 hours to 18 hours of core mentor training. Some services also offer optional further topic-based training opportunities to mentors.

The range of topics covered in the training provided to mentors varies, some common elements are:

- Mentoring Skills
- Communication
- The Mentoring Process
- Mentoring Models
- Goal Setting
- How to prepare for, hold and reflect on a mentoring conversation
- Boundaries
- Child protection & Safeguarding
- ACE's
- Promoting positive behaviours
- Resilience & Attachment
- Care Experience
- Children's Rights
- Diversity training

Mentoring Service Insights

Through a combination of focus group discussions and individual interviews, we asked the following questions to Mentoring Coordinators and Mentors from a range of projects that responded to the survey.

The questions we asked to generate discussions were:

- What works well when running your mentoring service/ mentoring?
- What challenges do you face when running your mentoring services/ mentoring?
- Do you feel all your mentees are ready to end their mentoring match when they leave your service?/ Do you feel all you will be able to continue to mentor your mentee until they no longer want/need a mentor?
- Do you allow encourage mentors and mentees to stay in touch after the end of the match within your service?/ Would you like to stay in touch with your mentee after your mentoring match has ended?
- What impact do you think having a mentor has on a young person?

We asked the mentoring services if they were able to ask some of their mentees what they felt about mentoring and how useful having a mentor is. The responses captured are also summarised below.

The following pages are a summary of the responses from the focus groups and interviews, where responses were similar one has been chosen to make the point. All comments are anonymised to allow honest open responses from volunteers and staff.

Mentor Insights : What works well when you're mentoring?

Letting the mentee decide what they want to share and do in the session and listening to what he/she has to say

...having a routine and plan. I usually stick to the same time and night with my young person. Changing time or day doesn't always work well. And it's good to have some sort of idea as to what we will do

.... to let my young person take the lead, I gauge how she's feeling that day and let her lead the conversation. It all rests on the person I'm mentoring, they're the boss and I feel that helps with making her feel comfortable with me and be more open in the conversations we have. I also have a very supportive employer which means I have the flexibility to take time out to mentor during the working week

I find that engaging and communicating on the Mentees level is paramount to a successful mentoring relationship. It is here that the rapport starts to build. I also find that getting those small wins in the early days further cements a new mentoring relationship..

..Just having space where the young person can feel relaxed is helpful in building a supporting relationship.

..approachability and accessibility are also key to a lasting relationship. I find that meeting with the Young Person outside of college is powerful, and is a visible sign that are to some extent there to support the young person and not just to represent the college

Coordinator Insights: What works well when running your mentoring service?

We get our young people involved in the running of our organisation, for example they can be on our youth interviewer panel when we do recruitment rounds and help with staff training

Mentee and mentor supervision to help with questions and an added layer of support worked well

Regular training sessions with additional training options for volunteers, for example ADHD or challenging behaviour. Volunteer Peer support evening every three months and volunteer celebrations, basically making the volunteers feel valued.

The dedicated full-time Coordinator in each supports the mentoring relationships and that works very well when establishing the relationships and maintaining through particularly challenging times. They also provide confidence for both the mentee and mentor.

All potential mentors are vetted by a youth panel before they are employed, which helps us find mentors who will relate well to young people in schools

We have a strong culture of sharing good practices and creative ideas between our mentors in order to make sure that our mentees benefit from the expertise and skills held across the team.

Communication with parents and schools allows the mentoring to flow better, and to help with family life

Coordinator Insights: What works well when running your mentoring service?

If you have procedures that work and you know why they work, then you can deviate from them when you need to for specific circumstances. You can describe mentoring in a way that shows it's a serious and professional role/service

Flexibility & type of support given to each match is very different, training works well (intandem gives a standard structure) but allows co-ordinator to customise

Clear procedure for mentor recruitment process gives consistency

Having additional services we can refer our young people to. Our service is part of a long standing mentoring programme so we have years of experience and knowledge to support the service to be the best it can be

A diverse pool of mentors across gender, background, experience, location. E.g. family circumstances giving some volunteers life experiences that are vital skills for the programme

Matching an adult who is choosing to spend time with young person very powerful for care experienced young people (their lives are full of adults who have to be there)

staff members to support mentor/staff member to support young person. Having a staff member with local knowledge to meet with the mentor/creates community

Mentor Insights : What challenges do you face when you're mentoring?

Often attendance at school is an issue and we cannot contact the mentee except through the Co-ordinator and they can be quite difficult to reach

Sometimes my mentee might not have enough clothes/layers with her but I tend to have spare layers with me. She is normally hungry so I take snacks with me so that she can have something to eat before we do an activity

My mentee is having a tough time with bullying at school and her guidance counsellor isn't meeting her needs. I wish there were more things I could do to support her but I don't know much about the services available and how they work.

Matching an adult who is choosing to spend time with young person very powerful for care experienced young people (their lives are full of adults who have to be there)

challenges I have when mentoring can be my young person's behaviour as he has ADHD

Challenges are in fixing a time with my mentees mum. It's often subject to last minute change but we can normally find a way around it. As the relationship has become more established this is improving.

It can be challenging to get the mentee to a place where they have enough confidence to have aspirations and set goals for themselves though I enjoy using the mentoring process to support this.

Coordinator Insights : What challenges do you face when running your mentoring service?

The programme operates in-school during normal school hours. That can be a challenge for mentors that are employed, however, that is very effectively managed and over 70% of mentors do so during work hours. Young persons timetables can also introduce challenges.

Parent causing barriers by not answering their phones or being supportive of the mentoring

A lot of our young people struggle with attendance in school because of complex situations they are struggling with. We find that the young people who benefit most from mentoring are the ones who are able to attend frequently so we have to work closely with schools to make sure that we can be as flexible with students as possible

Referrals from statutory services are not coming through, council staff will only refer to school based service.

Sustaining and attracting volunteers. Mentor retainment, mentors completing all the relevant paperwork in a timely fashion, some mentee's not attending sessions

Number of volunteers required and getting buy in from other businesses to allow their staff to volunteer within the working day

Coordinator Insights : What challenges do you face when running your mentoring service?

Referrals are inappropriate or lack information required.

...lack of initial interest from Care exp students - wariness from being identified as care experienced by other students, 'labelled' - possibly because their lives have been shaped by other people

The young people are increasingly requiring more intensive support and presenting complicated issues which is putting a strain on some of the volunteer mentors.

Length of funding - 2 year initially and then year on year presents significant challenge to maintain consistency with staff

Mentoring can do a lot but it's not a replacement for other services - ensuring that referrers know this.

There can sometimes be uncertainty about when young people will finish with us because their decisions about whether to stay on at school or not can be made fairly last minute. This can sometimes hinder our ability to manage transitions in the way we would like

Financial pressures mean that coordinators' roles are salami sliced into other areas - people perhaps don't understand the time required to do the role responsibly.

Coordinator & Mentor Insights – Ready for Endings?

When asked if the young people were ready to end their mentoring match when they leave their service most coordinators answered that the young person was ready but that they may be rematched after their initial mentoring match before they would be ready. They highlighted the importance of their role as coordinators to ensure that the young person is ready and to work with them further or find them other support if they are not. This can prove complicated when balancing referral criteria and limitations dictated by funding.



- "We feel that they are as this has to be of the mentee and mentors decision and awareness of the ending/goals being achieved are always at the forefront of the relationship."
- "In some instances, we have the ability to work with mentees after they leave school to support them transition to other services and to positive destinations. Often the extra support is only needed for a few months but prevents all the support they have had while in school from finishing at once."
- "Not all of them, some may re-apply for a second year of mentoring with a new mentor. "
- "Young person should be in control - not getting kicked out of the service - co-ordinator's role is very stretched whilst young people are waiting to be re-matched"



Coordinator & Mentor Insights - Ready for Endings?

The mentors, when reflecting on whether they felt that they will be able to continue to mentor their mentee until they no longer want/need a mentor were all very hopeful and committed to working with their mentees as long as they were needed. Though one mentor did have concerns about their ability to commit beyond the initial one year agreement.



- "I will continue to mentor for as long as he wants me to"
- "I am just entering a new relationship but in previous ones, generally have been able to except for one who wanted to continue seeing me but didn't want to attend school. So the relationship had to end as we can only mentor them through the school."
- "I really hope so as I've become rather fond of the lovely little girl I mentor"
- "Barring unforeseen circumstances, I would hope to be able to continue until they no longer want or need a mentor."



"My first year of mentoring has been amazing but work has been quite full on lately and I am finding it more difficult to have the time to meet up every week. I'm not sure if I will be able to keep going for a whole second year. I expect we'll have a conversation about it around summertime and probably phase things out gradually so that it suits my mentee and we finish our mentorship in a positive way."

Coordinator & Mentor Insights - Staying in Touch.

Consistency and longevity of positive relationships that Care Experienced young people develop can be really important in their emotional development and it would follow that some of these relationships may be developed with mentors. Therefore to start looking at the practicalities of this we asked the mentors if they would like to stay in touch with your mentee after their mentoring match has ended. The majority of mentors said that they would but some stated that this was not allowed under the policies of their mentoring service.



- "That is not viable as we are not allowed to share contact details but I would have liked to have done that"
- "yes I would like to keep in touch with my young person once the mentoring stops, just by occasional messages, as I would like to know how he's getting on"
- "I would be led by the young person as to whether or not they would want to stay in touch. Personally, I would be happy to stay in touch and would be comfortable knowing how to respond appropriately if I became aware of concerns. I appreciate not all mentors would feel the same about this. I do wonder if some sort of facilitated discussion led by a project worker would help young people think through what the mentoring relationship has meant to them and is this something to be left in the past or if they were to remain in contact, what would that be like"
- "I'd love to, I think the more we meet the stronger our relationship will get, so it would be only natural to want to carry that on once she's finished school."



The concept of mentors maintaining a relationship/contact with a young person after their match has ended and all the processes and policies put in place by the mentoring coordinator no longer apply is something that the mentoring coordinators have different views on.



- "This is a personal preference which we do not take a stance on. This is at the discretion of the mentee and their relationship with their mentor upon ending on if they would like to continue the relationship, although we do focus on boundaries within the relationship of mentor and mentee during the match "
- "We offer the opportunity for mentors and mentees to continue their relationship at the formal end of the mentoring programme and, where both consent, facilitate the sharing of details to allow for this to happen. Should either not wish to do so then we do not share personal details"
- "No, we wouldn't encourage this. We would make the parent/cares aware that the mentoring has ended and encourage the young person to come to our organisation if they needed extra support. "
- "if the mentee wanted to maintain a relationship, the mentor would have to understand that the project can no longer monitor relationship."
- We would say that there should be no contact after the end of the match and then they can contact the mentoring coordinator if they need anything else"
- "Not encouraged - if it's no longer a mentoring match, then we wouldn't be involved and would leave them unsupported which might be an issue"



Mentor & Coordinator Insights: What impact do you think having a mentor has on a young person?

Young people are building positive, meaningful and trusting relationships with an adult role model

Coordinator

I think having a mentor helps a young person's confidence and self-esteem. It gives them one to one adult attention that they might not always have at home. It lets them experience activities they might not have done before. And lets them talk about things outside of their homes to an adult who doesn't judge them

Mentor

In my experience, the biggest impact for young people is on their self-confidence and self-esteem. Very hard to measure but with my current matching I do think I have seen changes such as being more confident in expressing views, more positive interactions with peers, trying new interests

Mentor

It seems to help him cope with some of the adversity he is experiencing and develop positive social skills

Mentor

It builds their self confidence and self-esteem, helps them to see things from a different perspective and gives them time out of the classroom with just one person listening to them and them alone.

Coordinator

Having someone who is able to support YP who are not yet work-ready to develop their own confidence and help them realise their own ambitions and abilities to achieve something.

Coordinator

I think it has a wonderful impact. Often, you can be the only person who has guided that person on a 1:1 level. It's like watching a seed grow. The seed like the young person needs to be in the right environment with the right conditions and support to help it bloom and thrive. Mentoring is like watering that seed, feeding where needed and re-potted (perhaps in a change of direction).

Mentor

Mentee Insights



- "And then my Mentor (R)) came along around the same time and has been the best help out of everyone." Yp age 16
- "I asked if mentoring was good and A said "Aye cause it gets me out and gets me doing stuff that my mum can't do and can't take me out as she is disabled." She shared this and said that it gave her a bit of a break from life at home and she enjoys getting out and makes her days better. " YP age14
- "My mentor gives me their time and opportunities to try activities, I look forward to seeing them every week." YP age 15
- " They have been the best support to me. If I was to just call them right now and say ' Hi. I'm not feeling too good could you (inaudible) She would just come. She would come straight away, apart from if she was working ...she would say, wait for my lunch break and can come for a really quick half an hour or something. She even comes in her lunch break and she has an hour for lunch. And she came to me and we got a McDonalds" Yp age 16
- "The mentor stuck with me for 3 years. At the beginning I said to her, see if you are only going to stay for a few months then don't come. Just leave me completely. She said 'No, That's not the case and then she still comes and chooses to take me for a long time. (inaudible) ...she doesn't work for them but she still chooses to get me." Yp age 16
- "Well, the social workers know that they are there because they are getting paid, but a volunteer is not getting paid" Yp age 14

- "even after the mentoring finished, she still kept in touch so that shows how much they care, I know they really want to talk to me." Yp age 14
- "It's helped me be more confident and independent I've been going out and trying things instead of just talking about what I would like to do." Yp age 16
- "I like having my mentor to talk to because they don't have a go at me if I haven't been behaving, they ask me what is wrong and try to help me to fix things." Yp age 14
- We chat about where I want to be and what I can do to help me to get there. This helped me see how it was possible to go to college. My mentor always listens when I am worried about something and helps me figure out if it is something I need to worry about. Our meetings are always fun." Yp age 15



Perceived Challenges to Establishing a Mentoring Service for Young People

We spoke to a few youth organisations that don't currently offer mentoring services and asked them what they perceived the challenges would be to setting up a mentoring service. These are summarised below.



Securing adequate funding to make programs sustainable appears to have become more and more of an issue, especially for smaller programs and those in more remote, rural areas.

The high staff turnover for a number of reasons which could include:

- Too many demands on staff led to burnout.
- Services being understaffed, largely due to lack of funding.

Some services are restricted due to the lack of efficient public transport systems. This has led to the growth of more school-based programs in these areas. The one major drawback of school-based programs compared to community based services, where mentors tend to meet with mentees over weekends and outside school hours, is that the mentoring relationships do not continue during holiday periods. However, school-based services, well run, can be a transformational experience for many mentors and young people.

The insufficient training of mentors was a problem mentioned by a number of staff. There is a perception that potential mentors won't commit to a longer, more thorough training program, which has definitely not been my experience during the past twenty years during which time I have trained approximately 1000 volunteer adult mentors.

The way young people are labelled and treated was a cause for concern. Social Workers appear to be treated with disdain for a number of reasons, the two most common being high caseloads resulting in overworked staff, and, secondly, Social Workers, who lack the passion to encourage young people to reach their potential, being given young people on their caseloads.

An acknowledged shortage of parent involvement in many services. A number of services would like to see more parenting programs incorporated into the mentoring experience, as they felt family life would be considerably enhanced with such an intervention.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

In Scotland, we are lucky to have so many well-managed mentoring services in operation. The mentoring services that contributed to this study all have first-hand experience of the positive effect a mentor can have on the life of care experienced young person.

The goal must be that this opportunity is available to any Care Experienced Young Person in Scotland that needs & wants it.

The mapping exercise has highlighted that access to a mentoring service for care experienced young people depends on where they live, what kind of care they have experienced, and whether they would like to be mentored at school.

There are large areas of the country, predominantly to the North and South of the Central belt where there is very little in the way of mentoring services available to Care Experienced Young People.

Many of the services available have clearly defined referral criteria (i.e. intandem services are available to young people on compulsory supervision orders or in some areas kinship care) therefore, even where services exist, access to young people from other care settings is restricted.

The mapping also shows that the majority of the mentoring services currently available are school-based requiring young people to be engaged and comfortable with meeting a mentoring in the school environment, mentoring is also restricted to school hours, term time and the years a young person is at school.

This factor is particularly relevant when considering that, Care Experienced children and young people leave school earlier than their non-Care Experienced peers. In 2019-20, 43% of all school leavers who were looked after within the year left school in S4 or earlier, compared with just 11% of all school leavers. (Scottish Government, Education Outcomes for Looked After Children – 2019/20)

The services detailed in the study all use a mentoring coordinator to provide structure and support to the mentoring relationships. From the research cited and insights from the mentoring services, it is clear that this role is a crucial element in delivering services to Care Experienced Young People in a way that ensures the mentoring is effective and does not have unintended negative impacts.

These roles need to be carried out by professional, experienced staff who are supported by adequate financial and time resources to allow them to provide the structure and support that mentors and mentees require.

“Without proper supervision and support, the workforce is more likely to feel isolated, vulnerable and risk averse. Scotland must recognise the secondary effects of working with and caring for children who have and continue to experience trauma. Reflection, supervision and support must be recognised as an essential part of practice for anyone working with children.”

Reflective practice (coaching, mentoring, and supervision) must include things that matter to children, including how loved they feel, how their rights are upheld and how stigma is being reduced. This must emphasise support for the worker and their relationship with the child over evaluation of performance.” The Promise, pg100

Most services that are available rely on grant funding that is usually short term (3 years or less), it is therefore difficult for services to ensure that these staff members can be recruited and retained.

Much of the research and insights from coordinators & mentors indicate that mentoring services that are embedded within a network of other support provisions are more successful and responsive to the individual needs and preferences of Care Experienced Young People. Organisations such as TCA, Lochaber Hope, Y-Sort It, YMCA Edinburgh, YMCA Kirkcaldy, Volunteer Glasgow and Action for Children are examples of how organisations with a local footprint can enhance the ability of the mentoring service to support young people. These services can offer wrap-around support to work with young people before mentoring, support their families and allow for well-managed endings and access to other opportunities. This offers a more flexible and responsive approach.

“The workforce must be supported and encouraged to maintain relationships with people that matter to them, even if they ‘move on’. The relationship and the needs of the young person must be prioritised. This will require imaginative planning, supportive systems and adequate resource.”
The Promise, pg 103

Having a consistent approach to how mentoring services are delivered enables good practices to be established efficiently and offers a more standardised quality of service provision to young people. MCR Pathways, intandem and plusone mentoring are all examples of this approach resulting in positive results and efficient use of resources. The balance needs to be struck to allow coordinators the flexibility required to accommodate the individual needs and preferences of the young people accessing their services, but the structure and standards provide delivery to a consistently high standard.

Good Practice Standards should be consistent across these delivery elements:

- **Defining the Purpose and Process**
- **Managing resources and accountability**
- **Putting the mentee first**
- **Providing committed, prepared and supported mentors**
- **Employing skilled staff**
- **Active safeguarding**

It has been argued that the relationships with people who care for and about children are the golden thread in children's lives, and [...] the quality of a child's relationships is the lens through which we should view what we do and plan to do (Care Inquiry, 2013, p2). From the perspective of children and young people, stable, significant relationships are beneficial as they provide someone to turn to at points of crisis and change, they provide encouragement and guidance (Singer et al, 2013). Longstanding relationships can also provide a platform to make sense of the past, filling in gaps regarding one's own personal narrative. Such relationships, therefore, perform an important role in identity formation, particularly when children cannot return home (Neill and Howe, 2004; Schofield and Stevenson, 2009; Winter, 2012).

Mentoring services offer an opportunity for Care Experienced Young People to develop these relationships. Consideration however must be given to the fact that mentoring as a process should be time limited and the mentors are largely volunteers.

The voluntary aspect of the role helps to foster a genuine, trusting relationship where the young people can feel that the mentor is sincerely invested in their potential and well-being. The drawback is that the circumstances of the volunteers can change, and they may only be able to commit to the mentoring role for a limited time. It, therefore, falls to the mentoring coordinators to be the consistent, positive relationship in the young person's life and this responsibility needs to be factored into the allocation of resources to the mentoring coordinator role.

In Summary, there are 4 factors required for effective mentoring provisions to Care Experienced Young People in Scotland.

- 1. Professional, experienced Coordinators**
- 2. Committed volunteers**
- 3. A Structured Quality standard delivery model**
- 4. Services embedded in a wider community of support.**

Recommendations

From this study, there are a number of recommendations that stakeholders may wish to consider.

Develop an Agreed Set of Standards for the Service Delivery

By asking all service providers to evidence that the service they deliver Care of Experienced Children & Young People meets an agreed set of Quality Practice standards it will be easier for services to work in collaboration as they will all have similar service delivery standards.

This could be achieved by asking all services to hold the SMN Quality Award (which could be tailored specifically to this client group) which is already recognised as an assessment of mentoring practice and certifies that programmes are operating in a safe and effective manner.

The Quality Award is currently a requirement for all organisations delivering the plusone mentoring model and the intandem mentoring services.

<https://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/services/quality-award/>

Consideration should also be given to the knowledge and experience of mentoring coordinators and whether a course such as SMN's Professional Certificate in Coordinating Mentoring programmes (SCQF Level 9) would be useful for coordinators new to the role to undertake to enable them confidently fulfill the requirements of the role.

A standardised training programme for mentors which covers all the fundamentals and can be supplemented by specific service information would enable consistency and the flexibility of mentors to work across a number of services.

<https://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/services/training/>

Encourage an increase in collaborative working.

To enable existing mentoring services to expand their delivery to a wider group of Care Experienced Young People we should look at ways that the existing services can work collaboratively to offer a more responsive and flexible service.

Services working with specific referral criteria can partner with other local services to allow mentoring to be available to a wider group.

School-based and community-based services can work collaboratively to allow support for young people to cut across all aspects of their lives and be accessed where they feel most comfortable.

By working collaboratively the Mentoring coordinators will be able to support each other and coordinate their interventions to best benefit the young people that they work with.

Explore a place-based approach

When looking to develop services that can address the geographical gaps in provision we should consider a place-based approach.

Place-based working is a person-centered, bottom-up approach used to meet the unique needs of people in one given location by working together to use the best available resources and collaborate to gain local knowledge and insight. By working collaboratively with the people who live and work locally, it aims to build a picture of the system from a local perspective, taking an asset-based approach that seeks to highlight the strengths, capacity and knowledge of all those involved. (Munro, 2015)

This will allow these services to be developed using local connections that already exist and work with existing local service providers to expand their work and add in a mentoring service provision based on the service delivery standards.

Limitations

This study aimed to provide important new information about the context of mentoring provision for care-experienced young people in Scotland.

Despite its contribution, as an exploratory study, it has some limitations that should be noted. First, the study's findings represent the common insights from different organisations that work with care-experienced young people.

Although mentoring this group shares many similarities, future studies should examine whether there are differences in mentoring young people from various risk circumstances.

Secondly, the study included mentoring coordinators who are aware of Scottish Mentoring Network and have access to good practice information. It is possible that this specific sample emphasised certain aspects, and that other coordinators might add other challenges and needs according to their experience and knowledge.

Finally, this study focused predominantly on the perspectives of the mentoring coordinators and mentors. Examining more thoughtfully the perspective of care-experienced young people regarding both their challenges and needs and their positive and strengthening experience during the mentoring process could present a much wider and clearer picture with regards to mentoring relationships for this group.

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Contributors

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The organisations that have contributed are listed below:

Aberdeen YMCA plusone Mentoring
 Aberlour Youthpoint Moray
 Aberlour Attain Mentoring Project
 Aberlour intandem
 Befriend a Child
 Borders Young Talent
 COVEY
 Day1
 Dumfries YMCA
 Edinburgh Cares Staff Mentoring Programme
 Equip Mentoring Clackmannanshire
 Go! Youth Trust
 Hame
 HSCP Youth Services Team Mentoring Project
 Kirkcaldy YMCA intandem Mentoring
 Light Up Learning
 Lochaber Hope
 MCR Pathways
 Mentoring Young Talent
 Move On
 Musicares
 One Parent Families Scotland
 OPEN Project
 Peer Connections Dundee University
 Positive Futures Mentoring Project (National Deaf Children's Society)
 ProjectScotland Mentor Programme
 Quarriers intandem mentoring
 Renfrew YMCA
 Routes for All at Glasgow Caledonian University
 Salvesen Mindroom Centre
 Tain & District YMCA
 TCA Mentoring services
 The Sound Lab
 Time4Me
 Tollcross YMCA
 Volunteer Glasgow intandem mentoring
 Y Girls Mentoring
 YMCA Bellshill & Mossend plusone Mentoring
 YMCA Edinburgh Plusone Mentoring / intandem Mentoring / Group Mentoring
 YMCA Paisley
 Ypeople - intandem mentoring

How to contact Scottish Mentoring Network

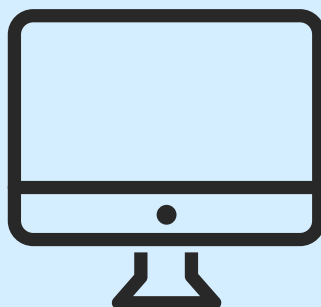
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