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## Introduction

Peer mentoring in an education context can be seen as a way of enabling a school to 'tap in' to a previously under-used resource: the student body itself.

Traditionally schools have made use of this resource by conventional means, such as prefect or monitor systems, and, more recently, by the

development of school councils. There have, of course, always been older pupils in schools who use their experience to help and guide younger pupils. Peer mentoring seeks to combine elements of both the formal role and the informal guidance, into a network of mutual support for students.

*"She is funny and kind. She gets along with everyone. When you have a problem you can talk to her and she never laughs at you."*

Year 7 mentee, Merseyside

The peer mentoring pilot programme described in this report has been developed by the National Mentoring Network (NMN) and funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It is incumbent on the National Mentoring Network, as the manager of the programme, to attempt to assess the effectiveness of the projects introduced into schools.

The aims of the report can be summarised as follows:

*"Being a peer mentor I feel that I have great responsibility and trust. I love helping and guiding other students, reassuring them and helping them build up their confidence."*

Year 10 peer mentor, Manchester

- To assess the overall impact, on individuals and schools, of their participation in the peer mentoring project
- To provide a source of general information and guidance for those organisations considering the introduction of peer mentoring projects
- To assess the value generally of peer mentoring in schools
- To make recommendations for future action

*"Peer mentoring helps our pupils to feel that they can make a difference for others in our community."*

Headteacher, quoted in Ofsted report 'Bullying: effective action in secondary schools.'

## Context

In 2001 the National Mentoring Network developed a peer mentoring guidance and support pack to promote peer mentoring in secondary schools. The resource materials were developed in partnership with the Department for Education and Skills, together with Julia Baker, Lead Learning Mentor for Peer Mentoring and Study Skills, EiC Sheffield; Joyce James, Mentoring Schemes Co-ordinator, Sandwell EBP, and Linda Davidson, Programme Manager, St Helens EBP / Greater Merseyside Connexions. The materials provide information on planning and setting up a scheme, together with six training units designed to prepare students in Years 10 and 11 to support younger students in one-to-one mentoring relationships.

*“Overall I think that peer mentoring has been a success. I am really pleased that we had the opportunity and support to get it off the ground. Hopefully it will become an established part of school life.”*

Co-ordinator, Nottingham

<b><u>Region</u></b>	<b><u>No of Schools</u></b>
Eastern	15
Yorkshire and Humberside	31
South West	33
North West	56
Midlands	45
North East	23
South East	97

An initial pilot of the pack took place with six schools during 2001–2002. Feedback from the schools was very positive, which prompted an expansion of the programme during 2002–2003. The NMN managed this expansion with additional funding from the DfES, enabling schools to be awarded a £500 bursary to help in establishing their schemes. Phase one of the programme involved the selection and training of 150 schools during the summer term 2002. A further 150 schools were brought into the project in October–November 2002.

The peer mentoring programme was publicised in Spectrum, a DfES publication distributed to all schools. Interested schools were asked to submit a formal application to the NMN. Criteria for selection were based on schools having little or no experience of peer mentoring; commitment to work with the 11–16 age group, and geographical location. We were also concerned to strike a balance between those schools in Excellence in Cities (EiC) regions, and those with more rural or suburban catchment areas. The geographical breakdown, based on Government Office regions, is as follows:

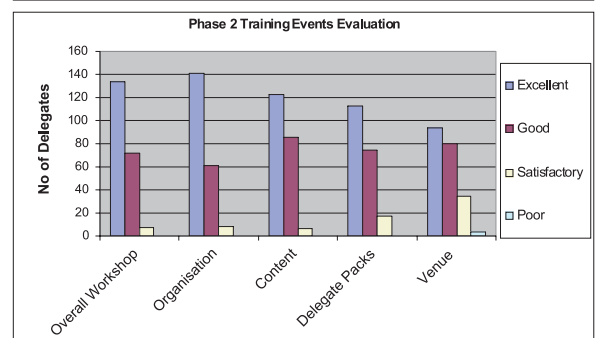
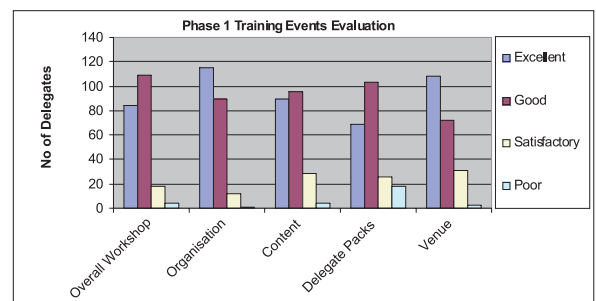
## National Training Programme

Practitioners involved in the early development of the NMN project felt it was important that programmes were introduced into schools in a planned and consistent way, with adequate resources made available and a national support structure in place. With this in mind ten regional training events were held for phase one schools during the period May–June 2002. Each school was invited to send two representatives, the intention being to reduce the possibility of subsequent staff absence or role change having an adverse effect on the programme. Julia Baker, Joyce James and Linda Davidson were asked to deliver the training sessions. All three had been involved with the project from the outset and it was felt that their commitment and expertise would prove to be invaluable in establishing early momentum.

The training covered the planning required prior to the introduction of a peer mentoring programme: 'selling' the idea to senior management and colleagues; the recruitment of mentors; selection of mentees; assessment and evaluation; child protection and confidentiality issues; logistical 'where and when' considerations; funding matters and sustainability. All these topics are covered in Part A of the training pack. This then leads to practical sessions involving use of the training activities found in Part B of the pack. 15 schools were invited to each event, 30 representatives in total. Two trainers were used on each occasion, thus allowing the option of smaller group work where appropriate. Positive evaluation of the phase one training events led to a similar pattern

being adopted for phase two. A further 10 events were held during the period November 2002–February 2003.

Evaluation of the training events revealed significant numbers reporting a high level of satisfaction with both the content and organisation of the days. The improved 'excellent' ratings in phase two are a reflection of adjustments made to the structure of the training days following the review of phase one evaluations. A balance was achieved between the delivery of factual content and the 'hands on' interactive elements of the training. A decision was made to incorporate into the training day a session that gave colleagues the opportunity to plan and deliver a Unit from the training resources: this proved to be extremely popular with those attending, helping to give them the confidence that familiarity with the training materials brings.



## Resource Pack

A draft version of the peer mentoring training and resource pack was piloted originally in six schools and evaluated extensively. Amendments were introduced before the pack was made available to the 150 phase one schools. The pack has been very well received and evaluation forms indicated that co-ordinators found the training activities clearly presented and practical. Feedback at the training events and during subsequent evaluation exercises identified several areas in Part C of the resource pack where additional materials would be useful. There was felt to be a specific need to include information designed to help the co-ordinator 'sell' the concept of peer mentoring to senior management. This would comprise case studies and lists of potential benefits accruing to schools and individuals if a correctly run peer mentoring programme were to be introduced. A PowerPoint presentation was

suggested as a useful tool. Exemplar materials, such as letters of application for prospective mentors, monitoring sheets and other related documentation were also recommended. Schools were invited to submit examples of documentation already being used successfully in peer mentoring programmes.

As part of the continuous evaluation of the project a national focus group was formed with a brief to look at all aspects of peer mentoring in secondary schools. Proposed amendments and additions to the resource pack were put to the focus group for consideration. The focus group agreed that a range of exemplar materials would enhance the pack and that this material be included in an expanded Part C.

## Recruitment and Training of Mentors

Over 80% of schools in the programme chose to recruit their peer mentors from Years 10 or 11, with a smaller number choosing sixth formers, generally from Year 12. Increasingly, schools are now promoting involvement with Year 9 pupils after SATs in May, with recruitment and initial training taking place during the remainder of the summer term. Successful peer mentors are then involved in Primary / Secondary liaison activities before returning to school in September as Year 10 pupils. These activities may take the form of accompanying the Year 6-Year 7 liaison teacher on visits to feeder primary schools; taking part in sessions where Year 6 pupils are brought into the secondary school for 'taster' visits; assisting at open evenings for the parents of prospective Year 7 pupils; helping at literacy or numeracy summer schools.

In the recruitment of mentors, schools have generally favoured a system that involves a period of initial publicity, including a presentation during a Year assembly, followed by a written application and a formal selection interview. This process leads to the identification of those pupils who are serious about making a commitment, as the less

*"I feel that peer mentoring in itself has been of great benefit to me because the training helped me become more confident and made me feel that I could give something to others such as advice or help if needed."*

Peer mentor, Manchester

committed will tend to drop out along the way. A recurring comment during the evaluation meetings has been that students often treat this procedure very seriously and present themselves surprisingly well during interview.

If the formal nature of this method is felt to be likely to deter some candidates then those candidates can be approached in other ways. Co-ordinators were urged during the training to try to select a group of peer mentors representative of the student body as a whole, not just highly motivated, academically able, pupils. The more successful schools tried to achieve this by using a combination of formal application, direct invitation and subtle persuasion!

For example, co-educational schools, representing over 90% of the pilot, reported a gender issue in the sense that girls were far more likely to put themselves forward than boys. A typical gender breakdown would show 80% girls and 20% boys. The latter can be brought into peer mentoring schemes by personal invitation and, once engaged, can go through the selection and training process in the same way as the other students. Schools are reporting that once the precedent has been set for boys to be involved then others will follow, particularly if those boys have status within the school amongst their peers. There can be a misconception amongst students that the skills required to be a peer mentor, such as listening, empathising, vocalising and communicating generally, are somehow inherently feminine, therefore positive action can be necessary to counter this assumption.

The fact that very few schools reported any problems in recruiting mentors would suggest that the methods outlined above are effective.

It is difficult to be prescriptive about numbers but if projects are to be monitored effectively it makes good sense to start with a relatively small group of mentors. There should be a clear match between the number of peer mentors and the number of tasks there are for them to perform. Recruiting too many mentors can lead to lack of focus and frustration. Numbers can be built up when everyone concerned becomes aware of the

demands of the programme, but a workable ratio should be maintained between staff co-

*“This programme has had a profound impact in our school. Our students’ self-esteem has been enhanced by their active involvement in a scheme that promotes independent learning and citizenship skills.”*

Head teacher, Hertfordshire

ordinating the scheme and pupils participating. Once selected the peer mentors undergo a period of training built around the NMN training resource pack. Over 70% of school based co-ordinators undertook to deliver the training themselves, with assistance from colleagues, whilst the remainder chose to involve external trainers in the delivery.

An important decision has to be made about the most suitable way of delivering the training. A strong recommendation emerged from the six pilot schools involved in the initial stages of the programme. They felt that where possible training should take place off-site. For a variety of logistical reasons not all schools in phase one felt in a position to offer off-site training, with only 30% opting to do so. However, positive feedback from this group of schools was passed on to schools attending training during phase two, with the result that over 50% of phase two schools elected to deliver training off-site.

Schools reported that training off-site generates cohesion within the group, allows a proper focus on the training activities and enhances the feeling of being ‘special’ to which students respond so well. Local universities, football or rugby clubs, church halls, City Learning Centres, sixth form centres, hotels and community centres have all been used as cost effective training venues.

Another outcome, which became apparent as a result of the evaluation process and was particularly noticeable during school-based interviews with peer mentors, was the high value placed on the training activities by the students. The activities seem to possess an intrinsic value quite apart from their primary

function in preparing students to be mentors. The training brings together a disparate group of students and forms them into a cohesive whole: into a new peer group in fact.

Communication skills and awareness of whole school issues, such as bullying,

lunchtime provision and rewards and punishments, are given a significant boost before any real involvement with mentees begins. This positive feature was commented on by co-ordinators and peer mentors, both in questionnaire returns and during school visits and evaluation meetings.

## Selection and Preparation of Mentees

*"This was our first year of training peer mentors and it went very well, although there will be a few things we will do differently next time around. We will shortly be looking at recruiting and training a number of our Year 10 pupils over the next months, as our Year 11 pupils leave. Our current peer mentors have thoroughly enjoyed the training and continue to enjoy their role in school. They are doing a fantastic job and are highly respected by both pupils and staff."*

Co-ordinator, Merseyside

Over 90% of the schools formed their mentee group from Year 7 pupils, with a smaller number extending provision into Year 8. Another small group is located in local education authorities where middle schools operate and the first year of high school intake is Year 9. Over 70% of schools identified Year 6-Year 7 transition issues as their principal focus. Two approaches have been used in the identification of mentees: self-referral and recommendation by teaching staff. Most schools have used the latter.

A typical process would involve staff identifying a pupil during Year 6-Year 7 transition activities, or once he or she has arrived in Year 7. The pupil may appear to be isolated, lonely, disorganised and/or generally vulnerable. It will be anticipated that successful transition into secondary school could prove to be difficult. The pupil will be approached by the peer mentoring co-ordinator and offered support. The scope and limits of the peer mentoring scheme will be explained to the prospective mentee, and these may be reinforced at a meeting of all mentors and mentees.

A small number of schools reported significant problems in attracting mentees, and this led to a consequent feeling of frustration amongst the peer mentors. In

every case this was because an open invitation had been issued to all Year 7 pupils to attend mentoring sessions. Most pupils perceive that they do not need mentors and where an approach such as this is used it can be difficult for those pupils who really would benefit from the scheme to have the confidence to put themselves forward. A careful selection of mentees, as outlined above, will eliminate such problems.

A variety of peer support techniques is being used in the schools, including buddying, which involves older pupils befriending younger students at break time and lunch time; drop-in clubs, generally games based and run during lunch times; and tutor group attachment, where mentors are attached to Year 7 tutor groups and attend registration and tutor sessions. The drop-in clubs, in particular, serve a useful purpose in encouraging reluctant mentees to come forward in a way that is easier for them.

The different types of support are suggested during training as ways of leading into direct one-to-one mentoring. Mentors are matched with mentees by common interest and personality similarity; some schools opt for same sex matching as a matter of course but gender has not emerged as an issue in matching arrangements.



Whilst buddying, drop-in sessions and tutor group attachments can operate on a daily basis, one-to-one mentoring generally takes place once a week. A location that allows some privacy, but not total seclusion, is ideal. Co-ordinators need to be aware of such meetings and should be in a position to offer support. The peer mentor will keep a short written record of the meeting and this will be discussed with the co-ordinator as part of the review process.

*“Our son is a hard working and considerate pupil who we feel has shown dedication, maturity and commitment to this programme. This has been a positive and valuable experience for him and we thank you.”*

Parent of peer mentor, Derbyshire

## Accreditation

Several different approaches towards the issue of accreditation emerged during the pilot. A number of school co-ordinators were of the view that accreditation ‘takes over’ the schemes and, despite the best intentions of those involved, comes to be seen as the primary purpose of the whole enterprise. This is perceived as being contrary to the voluntary nature of peer mentoring. Another group was keen to explore accreditation routes but was inhibited by the prospect of additional administration and associated costs. A third group did not anticipate problems and introduced accreditation from the outset.

Further evaluation was carried out with a small group of schools, all of which were following accreditation routes. The favoured course is that offered by the Open College Network (OCN). Only one of the schools responding found the administration of the course onerous, the others describing it as ‘manageable’ or ‘straightforward.’ It was felt that accreditation raised the profile of peer mentoring amongst school staff and parents. Schools report the young people involved as mentors responding well to this extra recognition, and that the formal qualification that accompanies it acts as a useful incentive.

A number of schools have found that peer mentoring activities can be slotted into specific units of GNVQ Health and Social Care courses, and into the requirements of the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The National Mentoring Network issued certificates for schools to award to their peer mentors, in response to requests to provide something tangible for students to put in their RoAs (Records of Achievement). Many schools had produced their own certificates but were keen to offer a reward with an external, national dimension.

The NMN, on behalf of the Home Office and the DfES, manages the administration of two quality standard awards: the national standard for volunteer mentoring programmes (Approved Provider Standard) and Excellence in Mentoring for Schools quality award. APS is a generic award aimed at a wide range of programmes involving volunteers, including peer mentoring, which of course relies largely on young people giving up their own time to help others. The Excellence in Mentoring for Schools award seeks to recognise the achievements of mentoring schemes operating exclusively in schools. Fourteen of the schools involved in the peer mentoring pilot are working towards, or have achieved, APS and twenty four are involved in Excellence in Mentoring.

## Curriculum Links

Co-ordinators are keen to stress the links between peer mentoring and other areas of the curriculum. There is felt to be a particular relevance in the introduction of citizenship to the secondary school curriculum. Peer mentoring would fit into two of the three identified citizenship strands: social and moral responsibility, and community involvement. There is some evidence of Ofsted and HMI interest in this link, particularly in the context of 14–19 curriculum developments. The Healthy Schools initiative

provides another natural link, including, amongst its aims, the promotion of social inclusion and the raising of educational standards. Peer mentoring is also being used in response to the introduction of the Learning Challenge at Key Stage 3. This is designed to help under-achieving pupils improve their personal organisation and the organisation of their learning. It includes reading, writing and mathematics elements. Peer mentors are well placed to assist in these areas.

## Ofsted / HMI

Ofsted inspectors and HMI take a direct interest in the development of good relationships within a school and how well a school cares for its pupils. It follows that those schools operating an effective peer mentoring programme are adding an extra dimension to this element of care. Inspectors

*common was a clear understanding of their role and the techniques to use and a capacity to listen, understand and empathise.”*

The report summarises the section on peer mentoring by remarking that:

*“I feel the greatest benefit to my daughter has been a raised awareness and a readier acceptance of responsibilities.”*  
Parent of peer mentor, Derbyshire

*“Peer mentors can often understand better than adults the pressures on and the fears of their peers.”*

reporting on one of the 300 pilot schools in March 2003, commented that:

*“Pupils in Year 11 act as mentors to new pupils and have had training to increase their skills for this role...this very good practice by the school contributes considerably to a smooth transition for these pupils...”*

The Ofsted report on bullying (*Bullying: effective action in secondary schools*), published in autumn 2003, notes that:

*“The use of peer mentoring to give support to pupils on a range of matters, including bullying, is increasingly used in secondary schools...the strength of character of peer mentors met in the schools visited was impressive. They came from all age groups and backgrounds. What they generally had in*

Quoted in an interview for Press Association News on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2003, Ivan Lewis MP, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Skills and Vocational Education, addressing the issue of bullying in schools, observed that:

*“Some schools are using very innovative approaches – for example, peer mentoring, where they’ve got young people training to be available to other young people because sometimes you feel more able to share things with peers.”*

Helping to enhance a school’s anti-bullying strategy is just one of the areas where peer mentoring can have a positive impact. The official recognition of its worth outlined above can only provide great encouragement to those working with projects in schools.

## Funding

Each of the 300 schools involved in the programme was awarded a bursary of £500 to be used in setting up a peer mentoring project. At each stage of the evaluation process co-ordinators were asked how the money had been spent and if funding generally was a problem. Schools were advised at the training events not to spend the bursary funding on cost intensive areas such as supply cover or external training providers, but to concentrate on smaller, although no less important, items such as off-site training venues, refreshments, stationery and rewards for young people taking part in the projects. Many schools also used some of the funding to furnish and equip an area suitable for mentoring activities to take place. Chairs, cushions, posters, curtains, blinds and colour scheme generally can all be important in creating the right atmosphere.

It was interesting to note that when asked to identify areas that had hindered progress very few schools cited lack of funds. This is not to say, of course, that they would not all welcome extra funding if it were to be

provided, and many of the schools have been proactive in seeking and obtaining additional funding for their projects. Barclays New Futures, The Prince's Trust and the Red Cross have all been approached successfully. Schools have also been keen to 'tap in' to local funding routes and resources provided by Excellence in Cities, Education Action Zones, Education Business Partnerships and other local and regional bodies.

*"I really enjoyed every minute of it and would love to carry on next year."*

Peer mentor, Salford

Within EiC schools co-ordinators have been able to acquire extra funding from Gifted and Talented provision. The most obvious source of additional funding remains the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Peer mentoring is a whole-school, non-departmental initiative, requiring relatively small amounts of money, and as such is a perfect example of the type of initiative to which PTAs could contribute.

## Child Protection

One of the reasons for introducing a peer mentoring project is to add an extra element to the commitment that a school makes to ensure that all its pupils can work and learn in a safe and secure environment. Child protection is at the heart of this thinking, and it is therefore somewhat ironic that so many co-ordinators attending the training events, and pupils preparing to be peer mentors, are concerned that child protection issues will place them in difficult positions.

Feedback from schools on the issue of child protection has, however, been very reassuring, and a model of good practice has emerged. Providing certain procedures are followed, child protection issues should not cause difficulties. The names of potential peer mentors and mentees should be

approved by the member of staff designated by the school to deal with child protection issues. He or she will have the information needed to make judgements about problems likely to arise, and decisions can be made accordingly. Mentors and mentees must be told at the outset of the programme that confidentiality is important but that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed: if any issues emerge that make the mentor feel that the mentee is in physical or moral danger then the mentor is duty bound to pass this information on to the co-ordinator. One to one mentoring meetings should take place in areas that can be supervised properly, and records should be kept of such meetings. Parental consent should be built into the initial recruitment and selection process.

None of the schools involved has reported any problem with issues of child protection or confidentiality. Perhaps because of sensibilities surrounding this area schools have been rigorous in their approach. Awareness of the issue has been built into the training programme, and mentors and mentees should understand the parameters within which they must work. Peer mentors operate primarily in an area where the

majority of issues are concerned with low level incidents of bullying, classroom procedures and personal organisation. If not dealt with these can escalate into time consuming problems, frustrating for pastoral staff and pupils alike. Peer mentors offer a vital extra level of pastoral support at this stage. Any more serious concerns should be passed on immediately to the co-ordinator. This system is working effectively in the schools.

## Evaluation / Impact Measurement

Evaluation of the pilot had four elements:

- questionnaires
- school visits
- regional evaluation meetings
- national focus group

Each school received an initial evaluation questionnaire asking a range of questions in relation to the early stages of the project. This sought to focus on the principal aims of the

*"I like my mentor. She helps me and listens to what I have to say. She sees me nearly every week."*  
Mentee, Salford

scheme, recruitment of mentors, selection of mentees and the delivery of the training (see Appendix 1), the response rate was 70%. A second questionnaire asked co-ordinators to report on progress made once the project had been operating for over six months (Appendix 2), 80% of schools responded.

In addition to the questionnaires four regional evaluation meetings were held, in Manchester, Darlington, Milton Keynes and Loughborough, with 22 schools being represented in total (Appendix 3).

A national focus group with seven members was formed as a result of the evaluation meetings. Its brief was to explore and make recommendations on issues raised as the pilot progressed (Appendix 4).

A sample of 21 schools was also visited as part of the evaluation process, 18 from phase

one and three from phase two. Feedback was gathered from co-ordinators, and from students involved in the programmes, over one hundred in total, both mentors and mentees (Appendix 5).

Questionnaire feedback shows that just under 4,000 students are involved in the projects as either peer mentors or mentees. When asked to describe the principal aims of their schemes over 70% of the schools highlighted the easing of difficulties associated with the transition from Year 6 to Year 7. These included the problems of bullying and low self-esteem. Over 30% of the schools also placed the acquisition

of new skills high on their list of priorities for mentors and mentees, communication skills being referred to most frequently. A desire to achieve changes in patterns of behaviour, attendance and punctuality were referred to directly by 15% of schools, although it should be borne in mind that there is considerable overlap across these areas. For example raising self-esteem may well have an impact on the behaviour or attendance of certain pupils.

Schools were advised during training that systems of assessment and evaluation should be built into their programmes and examples were provided (Appendix 6). Over 70% of schools declared their intention to use a combination of school staff testimony, student self-assessment and parental feedback as their principal tools of evaluation; 26% mentioned attendance, behavioural referrals or academic grades as main indicators.

Phase one schools responding to the second questionnaire were asked to identify ways in which both peer mentors and mentees had benefited, if at all, from involvement in the project. More than 73% reported that amongst the mentee group the reassurance provided by being involved in a peer mentoring relationship was the most highly rated benefit. Mentees were pleased to be acknowledged by a group of older, established students, and to be able to seek advice from students with 'street cred' status within the school. They also appreciated the haven offered by provision of drop-in clubs run during lunchtimes.

One of the unexpected outcomes of the programme was the degree to which the peer mentors benefited, in many cases as much, if not more so, than the mentees. It was noticeable that 53% of schools highlighted an increase in self-confidence amongst peer mentors, with 27% commenting on an improvement in organisational and

*"I understand what my peers are going through, not being so confident in first years of schooling myself. Therefore I know how helpful and nice it must be to have a peer mentor. I have built up trusting relationships and have been taught through numerous courses how to deal with certain situations."*

Peer mentor, Manchester

communication skills, and a similar proportion pointing to a growing sense of maturity and responsibility. If the advantages to be gained from involvement in a peer mentoring programme are indeed shared between mentors and mentees this presents schools with the attractive proposition of making a positive impact on two distinct groups of pupils by the introduction of a single project.

By using the regional evaluation meetings, school visits and the national focus group we were able to ask schools to specify how an increase in self-confidence, or a growing sense of maturity, in peer mentors would be

*"My mentor's been very helpful to me at times. He helps me when I'm in trouble. When I'm sad he cheers me up."*

Mentee, Manchester

manifested. A list of impact measurement criteria was produced, which highlighted the indicators that school staff would look for. This comprised:

- being entered for external examinations
- staying on task during lessons
- completing homework
- completing coursework
- being able to talk informally to school staff and other adults
- better social relationships with peers
- clearer focus on college or work ambitions
- participation in extra-curricular activities, including revision classes
- smarter appearance
- improved attendance / punctuality
- reduction in behavioural referrals

A positive response in a combination of these areas would substantiate a claim such as 'her attitude has improved.'

A portfolio of case studies was built up during the pilot (Appendix 7) with the aim of providing an illustration of good practice. In addition, some schools were able to point to conventional impact

measurement data as an indicator of progress. The case study material being gathered serves to remind us that the purpose of the whole exercise is to determine whether or not peer mentoring can make a positive difference to the school experience of certain young people. Although other factors may well play a part in the changes that happen in the lives of young people there

nonetheless seems to be significant anecdotal evidence pointing to the positive impact of peer mentoring.

The commitment and enthusiasm of co-ordinators, peer mentors and mentees is a striking feature of many of the projects. Those individuals most closely connected to the programmes are enthused by the experience. Only one of the participating schools has indicated a reluctance to continue next year, all the others declaring their intention to build

upon the foundations laid during the pilot project. At the 'cutting edge' there is a belief in the value of peer mentoring. The case studies illustrate this belief, providing an insight into the impact that peer mentoring can have on the school experiences of young people.

## Conclusions

Developments in the 14-19 curriculum, particularly the introduction of citizenship courses, and proposals to reform the examination system at GCSE and A-level, make it more likely that voluntary activities will assume a greater importance. Peer mentoring falls naturally into the category of active community involvement that might form an element of any new curriculum under these proposals. In addition, government education ministers, Ofsted and HMI have all recognised the part peer mentoring can play in combating bullying in schools. Taken as a whole, these developments would suggest that the profile of peer mentoring is likely to rise.

Overall, the NMN peer mentoring programme has been very successful. Over 300 schools are involved nationally, with 4,000 pupils participating. Scrutiny of evaluation feedback leads to the following conclusions being drawn.

- A peer mentor group representative of the school population as a whole, in terms of gender, ethnicity and academic ability, increases the likelihood of high levels of commitment amongst participants. There is no 'typical' peer mentor, but reliability and a willingness to help others are important attributes.
- Recruitment and training of peer mentors after SATs in Year 9, in preparation for the mentoring role in Year 10, provides a realistic, workable timescale. Year 10 students have the maturity and the time to take on the peer mentoring role seriously.
- Schemes work well where mentees are chosen from Years 7 or 8. Mentees are often selected because they are disorganised, isolated and generally vulnerable. However, it would be unrealistic to expect peer mentors to deal with more complex issues. Schools should follow appropriate strategies of pastoral intervention in these circumstances.

*"Our scheme is definitely continuing next year: it is here to stay. Peer mentoring complements our school motto: 'we prove our worth.' Training is near completion and team is ready to start in September. Ex peer mentors have been involved in the training."*

Co-ordinator, Tyne and Wear

- The resource pack and the training day should be considered as two integral elements of a training package: one without the other is far less effective.
- In terms of 'distance travelled' peer mentors may well make the most striking progress, the case studies providing evidence of this.
- Effective monitoring and support of mentors and mentees is essential. Schemes should be kept to manageable proportions if this is to be achieved. A sensible ratio should be maintained between co-ordinating staff and participating pupils, thus enabling effective supervision to take place.

- Accreditation is an option that schools might wish to consider. Administrative procedures are relatively straightforward, and it can act as an incentive for students.
- Peer mentoring is low maintenance in terms of funding but does make demands on the time of co-ordinators (see effective monitoring and support above). It is important that sufficient funding is found to cover the cost of a venue for training, furnishings for a designated mentoring area, and ongoing consumables such as refreshments, rewards, badges, certificates and stationery.
- Schools considering introducing peer mentoring programmes should not be deterred by the prospect of difficult child protection issues occurring frequently. Standard school procedures and effective monitoring of projects provide perfectly adequate safeguards.
- It can be helpful to look at the voluntary hours worked by peer mentors as an additional resource in schools. Peer mentors might contribute an average of 20 hours

*“Peer mentoring has helped me. I have learned things after doing the training and it has given me an insight into what some people struggle with as well as how they feel about things. I have met new people in our year through doing it as well as meeting people in the lower years.”*

Peer mentor, Salford

each over the course of an academic year, supporting mentees with a range of pastoral issues that would otherwise have to be dealt with by professional staff. In supporting

mentees as they resolve these issues, peer mentors therefore provide an important additional resource in contributing to improvements in attendance, behaviour and achievement.

- Feedback from projects indicates a high degree of satisfaction with peer mentoring programmes and the beneficial effect that they can have on those pupils involved directly and on the whole school environment. Peer mentoring adds an extra level to the pastoral support offered by a school; it helps to convey the message that this is a school that cares about its pupils. Whilst schools recognise the improvements in their own pupils, in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of peer mentoring schemes to a wider audience it would be useful to develop a generic index of impact measurement.

## Recommendations

During the course of the pilot programme it has become apparent that considerable interest in peer mentoring exists in all regions and across the age group range, from primary to further and higher education. The National Mentoring Network has peer mentoring contacts with over 400 of the 3,500 secondary schools in England. If we add to this figure the various projects, such as that run by Kent Safe Schools, and the numerous individual school schemes currently

operating, a pattern of increasing participation emerges. Recognition by Ofsted and HMI of the positive impact peer mentoring can have as one of a range of anti bullying strategies, is also likely to boost interest.

The NMN is keen to be involved in the channelling of that interest. We make the following recommendations, based on the three-year pilot programme, for maintaining momentum.

- The NMN peer mentoring resource pack is offered to secondary schools as part of a package that would include a day's training at a regional venue. An element of quality control would then be exercised over the delivery of training in the schools.
- A national accreditation award for peer mentors is developed, based on the Open College Network model.

*“Colleagues now accept peer mentoring as part of mainstream school activity and understand its role in the wider spectrum of pupil support. An example has been the Head of Year 7 seeking the involvement of mentors in the induction process. The NMN ‘Excellence in Mentoring Award’ assessor sought the views of a variety of people and confirmed that the peer mentoring programme is valued and respected.”*

Co-ordinator, Leicestershire

Approved Provider Standard or Excellence in Mentoring for Schools is offered as a national standard award for peer mentoring projects. The accreditation routes would all serve to add an extra layer of quality control.

- Regional networks of peer mentoring practitioners are set up. These will provide opportunities for the exchange

of ideas and the sharing of resources, thus reducing the feeling of working in isolation that schools in certain areas sometimes feel.

- The NMN continues to work with schools, via the national focus group, on the development of meaningful impact measurement criteria. This would include the setting up of a research project looking at the impact of peer mentoring over a longer period of time than the three years of the pilot programme. This would trace the progress of mentees as they moved up the school, and of mentors after they had left school.

- The NMN to look into the possibilities of extending a form of peer mentoring into primary schools and sixth form colleges.

The adoption of these proposals would represent a continuing commitment to the development of peer mentoring provision nationally, with an important element of quality control built into the system.



# Appendix 1 – Evaluation Questionnaire

## Peer Mentoring Evaluation

Name of school:

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Programme Co-ordinator:

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1. What are the principal aims and objectives of your programme?

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2. How are you planning to measure its effectiveness?

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3. Are there any obstacles hindering development of your programme?

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4. From which Year group are your mentors drawn?

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5. How were your mentors chosen and how many have been selected?

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6. On what dates did the training take place?

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7. How was the training pack delivered?

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8. From which Year group(s) are your mentees drawn?

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9. How were the mentees identified?

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10. How many one to one pairs are you working with?

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11. How are mentors matched with mentees?

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12. On average how often are they meeting?

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**Please return this questionnaire to me at the network office, or fax on 0161 787 8100, by Friday 19th December.** Thank you for your co-operation.



Mark Newman  
Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator

## Appendix 2 – Evaluation Questionnaire

### Peer Mentoring Evaluation

Name of school:

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Programme Co-ordinator:

..... Position .....

1. Have the principal aims and objectives of your programme been met:

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2. How have you measured the effectiveness of your programme:

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3. Have any factors hindered the effectiveness of your programme? If so, please give details:

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4. How have your peer mentors benefited from involvement in the programme:

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5. How have your mentees benefited:

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6. What feedback have you had from colleagues or other pupils:

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7. Please give a breakdown of how the £500 bursary was spent: .....

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8. Will the scheme continue next academic year:

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Should you wish to include an example of a one to one peer mentoring relationship from your programme please attach it as appropriate.

**Please return this questionnaire to me at the network office, or fax on: 0161 787 8100, by Friday 26th September.** Thank you for your co-operation.



Mark Newman  
Peer Mentoring Co-ordinator

## Appendix 3 - Regional Evaluation Meetings

Four regional evaluation meetings were held, in Manchester on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2003; in Milton Keynes on 3<sup>rd</sup> April; in Loughborough on 9<sup>th</sup> April, and in Darlington on 25<sup>th</sup> June. The first three were attended by phase one schools, whilst the Darlington event catered for phase two schools in the North East. The agenda was substantially the same on each occasion and covered initial 'selling' of the programme to senior management, staff colleagues and pupils; recruitment and training of mentors; selection and preparation of mentees; child protection and confidentiality issues; curriculum links; accreditation; monitoring and evaluation, and sustaining interest. Schools were invited on the basis of a positive response to evaluation questionnaires, the primary aim being to identify examples of good practice and to highlight potential pitfalls.

A feature of all four events was the degree of commitment shown to the idea of peer mentoring by those attending; even on those occasions when unsuccessful elements of

the projects were being described, this was done in the spirit of sharing an experience and by so doing helping others to avoid making the same mistakes.

In many respects the responses and contributions of those taking part were similar, suggesting a shared experience regardless of type of school or location. However, there were also some interesting variations. At Milton Keynes and at Darlington several innovative ideas were put forward for acquiring extra funding. At Loughborough a detailed account was given of the potential problems caused by selecting a mentee group using strict academic criteria, and then setting related targets for the programme. At the Manchester meeting the idea of forming local networks of school-based peer mentoring practitioners was advocated.

The overwhelming impression given at all four events was one of growing enthusiasm for the development of peer mentoring and for the positive impact that it can have in schools.

Schools represented at evaluation meetings

St Edmund Campion RC School  
St Mary's RC Comprehensive School  
West Gate Community College  
Ferryhill School  
Dinnington Comprehensive School  
Eckington School  
Broadgreen High School  
The Oldershaw School  
Plessington RC High School  
Highfield High School  
Swinton High School  
Wentworth High School  
Monks' Dyke Technology College  
Castle Rock High School  
St Paul's Catholic School  
Saltley School  
Lea Manor High School  
The Marriotts School  
Stantonbury Campus  
Edgebarrow School  
Brentford School for Girls  
King Richard School

Gateshead  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
Durham  
Rotherham  
Derbyshire  
Liverpool  
Wirral  
Wirral  
Blackpool  
Salford  
Salford  
Lincolnshire  
Leicestershire  
Leicester  
Birmingham  
Luton  
Stevenage  
Milton Keynes  
Berkshire  
West London  
Portsmouth

## Appendix 4 - National Focus Group

From the regional evaluation meetings the idea emerged of having a national focus group. This was formed by inviting two or three colleagues from each of the phase one regional evaluation meetings to come together as a national group. Its brief is to take issues arising from the ongoing evaluation of the peer mentoring projects in schools and to make appropriate recommendations. The group is innovative in its thinking and is charged with the task of trying to respond to the challenge of helping schools sustain interest and momentum in their peer mentoring programmes.

Communication between members of the group is conducted mainly by telephone and e-mail. The first formal meeting took place in Manchester on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2003, where amendments and additions to the resource pack were discussed fully, together with issues relating to the training of mentors, and the area of impact measurement.

The second meeting of the focus group took place in March 2004, with the main focus of the agenda being the forming of local networks.

### Peer Mentoring National Focus Group

Linda Prestidge	Lea Manor High School, Luton
Farmuja Begum	Lea Manor High School, Luton
Sheena Burke	Brentford School for Girls, West London
Sandra Grinling	Dinnington Comprehensive School, South Yorkshire
Andy Pyke	Saltley School, Birmingham
Simon Valentine	Broadgreen High School, Liverpool
Tony Lloyd	Plessington RC High School, Wirral

## Appendix 5 - School Visits

To further highlight good practice in the peer mentoring projects a series of 21 school visits was arranged, taking place in the period May 2003 – January 2004. Schools were selected on the basis of a positive response to evaluation questionnaires and to preliminary telephone calls. A cross-section of schools was chosen: EiC and non-EiC, denominational and non-denominational, co-educational, single sex boys and single sex girls. It was also possible to visit one of the three special schools involved in the programme.

At each visit an interview was held with the co-ordinator(s), this followed generally by a look at the facilities available in terms of space for mentoring activities. Discussions with peer mentors then took place, either individually, in small groups, or in larger groups. They were asked how they became interested in the project, what their friends, parents and teachers thought about it, what they remembered of the training, how they had found the experience of working with younger students, whether they felt it had benefited them in any way, and whether or

not they were keen to continue. At three of the schools mentees were involved in these discussions and on several visits lunchtime drop-in clubs were seen in action.

Bearing in mind the criteria by which the schools were chosen, one would expect a positive response during the visits and this was indeed the case. The 'acid test' however came in the response of the students themselves. Young people in schools do not always say the things that we want them to say! Most of the interviews with the peer mentors were held without the co-ordinator or any other school staff being present. The students could therefore say exactly what they wanted to say, with no prompting from adults. Almost without exception the peer mentors presented themselves as young people working on an exciting project to which they were committed fully. The degree of engagement was impressive and it was difficult to take away from the experience any impression other than that these young people were deriving great benefit from being involved in peer mentoring.

### Schools visited as part of evaluation process

Plessington RC High School	Wirral
Henbury School	Bristol
Sheldon School	Chippenham
Westborough High School	Dewsbury
Brentford School for Girls	West London
Bow Boys' School	East London
Highams Park School	North East London
Belvue Special School	West London
Kirk Balk School	Barnsley
Blythe Bridge High School	Staffordshire
St Wilfrid's RC High School	Liverpool
Park High School	Colne, Lancashire
Saltley School	Birmingham
Belfairs School	Southend
Haydock High School	St Helens
Frankley Community High School	Birmingham
Dinnington Comprehensive School	Rotherham
Moorside High School	Salford
Stockland Green School	Birmingham
Broadgreen High School	Liverpool
Leeds United Study Centre	Leeds

## Appendix 6

### Evaluation Guidance – objectives and key performance indicators

The following are suggested ways of measuring the effectiveness of your programme depending on the aims and objectives agreed at the outset.

Objectives	Different Approaches To Measurement	Examples of Key Performance Indicators
1. To increase self-esteem and self-confidence	Mentee self rating Mentor rating Parental rating Significant other rating (e.g. form tutor)	No./% of mentees reporting improved self-confidence No./% of mentees reported by mentors or significant others as demonstrating improved self-confidence No./% attending extra curricular activities
2. To improve personal and social skills	Mentee self-rating Mentor rating Parental rating Significant other rating (e.g. form teacher)	No./% of mentees reporting improved personal and social skills No./% reported by mentors and/or significant others as demonstrating improved personal and social skills
3. To improve behaviour, including punctuality and attendance	School termly attendance record School lateness record Record of detentions or other punishments Record of misbehaviour Temporary exclusions Teacher ratings	Examples: % improvement/change in attendance record compared to previous term % improvement/change in lateness record compared to previous term
4. To improve motivation to learn	Pupil self-rating Subject teacher ratings e.g. effort grades on termly reports Parental ratings	No./% of pupils reporting more time spent on homework/coursework No./% completing homework/coursework tasks No./% of pupils reporting paying more attention in class or having greater interest/enthusiasm in lessons No./% of subject teachers reporting improvement in effort
5. To improve coursework and examination performance in general	Pupil self-rating Subject teacher ratings e.g. changes in homework and coursework grades Differential between predicted and actual performance	No./% of pupils improving on predicted scores in examinations

Amended from the NMN's 'Guide to Effective Evaluation', Andrew Miller (1999)



## Appendix 7 – Case Studies

### Case Study 1, Birmingham

**Stephanie** was recommended as a potential peer mentor by the Head of Year. She had previously been mentored herself within the school because of her disruptive behaviour. It was felt that she was a capable individual who was often influenced negatively by her peer group within lessons. Mentoring sessions were offered to her and she received support over a period of six months. Strategies were introduced by the mentor that addressed Stephanie's disaffection within class and she was taught coping strategies.

Stephanie attended peer mentor training, six hours in total, leading to a qualification from the Open College Network. An interview prior to training was carried out by the co-ordinator. Stephanie possessed skills relevant to the programme and seemed to have a natural flair with the younger pupils, often using an approach similar to that which had been used with her earlier.

During sessions with the mentee, a Year 7 girl, the mentor established a rapport by

attendance and punctuality by escorting her to classrooms after break and lunch times.

The pair also worked on improving the Year 7 girl's reading and numeracy skills, the former showing a marked improvement.

A trip to a multi-activity centre was arranged for all mentees and mentors as a reward for participation in the peer mentoring programme. The mentor was able to demonstrate to her mentee an appropriate way of behaving and interacting with her peers and staff. In her evaluation of the trip the mentee commented on how she had felt about the kindness shown to her and the way in which she had been encouraged to take part in all activities.

Helped by this experience Stephanie remained motivated within school, relishing the additional responsibility of being a role model to a Year 7 pupil. Her own attendance and punctuality improved, and instances of challenging behaviour reduced. Staff commented on an improved, more positive, attitude towards her studies. She has been

Dionne is a pupil at a school in the west Midlands, now preparing for her GCSEs in Year 11. During Year 9 Dionne's behaviour was so poor that on more than 20 occasions a letter was sent home to her parents. Incidents of poor behaviour included using a mobile telephone in class, going off site without permission and consistently disrupting lessons. After SATs she was assessed as working at Level 5 in her principal subjects, well below her level of ability. Dionne was brought into the peer mentoring programme half way through Year 10, representing a calculated risk on the part of the co-ordinator. She had already received another 10 letters home by this stage. Since being trained as a peer mentor Dionne's behaviour has improved to the extent that she has only transgressed twice in a year. Her level of academic work has now been reassessed and she is expected to achieve 9 GCSEs at grades A-C. She is in the top 20 group of pupils in her Year, and is determined to go to college and eventually train as a social worker.

case study

playing games and talking about when she herself was mentored. She set the mentee targets linked to her attendance at lessons, punctuality and her attitude towards teaching staff. She would often reward the mentee by giving her attention at lunch times, allowing her to associate with an older group of friends. Stephanie improved the girl's

entered for eight GCSEs and has ambitions to study Child Care at college. She also acts as a link for the whole peer mentoring programme by encouraging other younger pupils to ask for mentors.

Peer mentoring has made a real difference to this young person's life.

## Case Studies 2 and 3, Hertfordshire

**James** had been identified in Year 6 as a pupil with very low literacy levels and behavioural problems. On transfer to secondary school he was brought into the peer mentoring programme. James was matched with a peer mentor, a boy from Year 10.

James did not take to the mentoring idea. He resented being selected and displayed a range of challenging behaviours. He rejected the mentor he was matched with and refused to co-operate.

The co-ordinator persevered with James and matched him with another peer mentor, **Julie**, a sixth former, with a history of behavioural difficulties herself, earlier in her school life. Julie is an assertive character, but because of her own problems in the past she has developed into a very good listener.

Whilst not an obvious pairing, James and Julie have become a very successful partnership. Teaching staff have commented on the change in James' attitude. He is much more on task in class and is finding it easier to relate to his peers. His form tutor has commented that he seems like a 'different person.'

## Case Studies 4 and 5, Buckinghamshire

**Sean** is a Year 10 pupil. Staff were surprised when he showed an interest in the peer mentoring programme. He had never previously volunteered for anything and was inclined to be awkward and hostile towards school. There was some objection from staff to Sean's participation in the programme but as the co-ordinator was also a deputy head his inclusion was pushed through.

To the amazement of everyone, Sean not only turned up for all the training sessions but also excelled in the activities. He took part in the discussions and kept momentum going throughout the two days. Sean has not yet entered a one to one mentoring relationship but has been used in other activities involving younger pupils, as a build up to one to one

mentoring. Already staff are commenting on the change in his behaviour and attitude, including a new willingness to take part in extra-curricular activities.

**Caroline** is a very bright Year 9 pupil at a very large school. She was moved from one site to another as the result of her strange behaviour. This takes the form of wearing outlandish clothes, both in and out of school, and adopting unusual hair and jewellery fashion styles. This has led to her becoming a victim of bullying, both physical and psychological.

Caroline was matched with an older peer mentor, a girl who had experienced problems herself in integrating into school life. Caroline has now been introduced to a group of slightly older pupils, all of whom have managed to strike a balance between being 'different' and leading a happy school life. Caroline's parents have reported a radical change in her outlook. She now has friends, both inside and outside school, and is also focused on achieving good academic grades at GCSE, thus helping her to move on to A – level courses in the sixth form.

## Case Study 6, Berkshire

**Lisa** is a quiet, shy Year 8 girl. Her form tutor, who felt that Lisa was becoming something of a loner, recommended her to the peer mentoring co-ordinator. Her parents were becoming worried. During Year 7 she had not stood out in any way; she was one of the 'silent majority.' She was matched with a girl in Year 10, an excellent listener.

To the astonishment of the co-ordinator Lisa began to reveal that she was profoundly unhappy at school. She felt isolated, had no friends and had been bullied. She felt that she had no one to turn to at school. She is an only child and felt too embarrassed to speak to her parents. As a last resort she had started to cut herself and had scars on both arms.

As a result of intervention by the co-ordinator Lisa is now talking to her parents about her problems. The mentoring relationship is

continuing. Her parents have reported a considerable change for the better. Supported by her mentor Lisa is now confident enough to attend extra-curricular activities. Lisa says that she just could not have talked to anyone else about her problem in the way that she could talk to her peer mentor.

### **Case Study 7, Luton**

**Anna** is a Year 7 girl, recommended to the peer mentoring programme by her form tutor. Anna was unhappy in school and giving cause for concern by her anxious manner. She was matched with a Year 10 girl.

During the one to one sessions it became apparent that Anna was being bullied by another girl in her class. The co-ordinator took the view that the bully must have problems as well, and as a result she was also given a peer mentor. The two peer mentors worked together and engineered a meeting with Anna and her tormentor. As a result, the two Year 7 girls have now become friends. Staff report that Anna's whole demeanour has changed.

### **Case Study 8, Manchester**

**Chloe**, a Year 7 pupil, had experienced problems settling into school and establishing relationships. She was very demanding and attention seeking. She was introduced to her Year 10 mentor, a girl chosen specifically for her strong, no nonsense, yet caring, personality.

Initially Chloe, who was very pleased to have a mentor, was rather demanding and had to be reminded to make proper appointments. She now does this and can discuss any problems with her mentor. The mentor has offered weekly one to one support time. The mentee has been accompanied to the lunchtime Link Club, where Year 7 pupils have the opportunity to establish social and support networks in school, by the use of citizenship based activities. The mentee is now much less demanding and staff have

An academic tracking exercise was conducted by a co-ordinator at a school in Manchester, focusing on the mentors who had taken their GCSEs. The school had set a target of 51% A-Cs; the whole school result was 41% but the peer mentor score was 80%. The huge increase was only partly attributable to the academic ability of the mentor group relative to the rest of the Year 11 examination cohort.

case study

commented on her improving ability to form relationships with her peers. This has had a 'knock-on' effect in class where she is now much more focused on her work.

### **Case Study 9, Lancashire**

**Robbie** received his training towards the end of Year 9 with the intention of starting to mentor a new Year 7 pupil during transition from primary school. The mentor is a friendly boy, popular with both staff and pupils. His mentee, Reece, found mixing with others and moving to a large building intimidating. He became anxious and started to have time off school.

The two met twice a week, for a thirty minute period, using a small room with comfortable chairs, near the library. Quickly Reece gained confidence from these sessions. As a result, his experience of school became less daunting. His personal organisation improved, with fewer homework related difficulties. His friendship with an older pupil gave him a certain amount of kudos with his peers. The encouragement given to him helped and supported him during that crucial first term. Robbie also benefited, as staff recognised in him a strength of character not always evident in earlier years.

## Case Studies 10, 11 and 12, Portsmouth

**John** came into the school six weeks into the new term as a Year 7 pupil. He had experienced difficulties settling into his first secondary school and had been transferred. The school worked with John's parents for over a year to help with his integration.

John was brought into the peer mentoring programme as a mentor towards the end of Year 9. At the Year 7 induction day John worked with a boy whose mother feared would never go into the school building. John persuaded him to stay and then maintained contact with the boy by attaching himself to his form group and meeting him once a week for one to one mentoring sessions. John's parents report a vast improvement in his behaviour at home, and staff testify to an increase in self-confidence, demonstrated by a new ability to form friendships with his peers and to relate to adults.

**Rachel** is a Year 10 girl with a hearing impairment. She should wear hearing aids but since being teased in Year 7 she prefers to rely on lip reading. For much of her time in Year 7 she was tearful and unhappy. Since becoming a mentor she has blossomed. She is confident, caring, reliable and happy. Having the responsibility for younger students has given Rachel the opportunity to reflect on her own experiences and to use these in a positive way to help others.

**Simon** was known by most staff at school to be loud and disruptive. Throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 there were numerous instances of poor behaviour, although Simon was never formally excluded. Mentoring staff took a gamble in bringing him into the peer mentoring scheme as a mentor. Simon was a lively participant during the training sessions and was then asked to take part in induction day activities by escorting the parents of prospective Year 7 pupils around school. He was talkative, honest, funny and respectful: the parents loved him.

Simon does not yet do one to one mentoring but he supports a tutor group and is always picked by staff to help at parents' evenings. The mentoring experience has given Simon the confidence to build more positive relationships with members of staff who now accept him for who and what he is.

## Case Study 13, Merseyside

**Kate** is a Year 10 girl with little self-confidence and a very low profile within the school. She is the kind of girl who 'causes no ripples' and it would be easy not to notice. Since being recruited into the scheme she feels that she has had to mature in order to help Year 7 pupils with their problems. She enjoyed the training and gained a lot of confidence from it, particularly in relation to her communication skills. Staff have commented on a greater willingness to 'get involved' and an increasing self-assurance with her peers.

Jonathan, a Year 10 peer mentor at a school on Merseyside managed to turn around a Year 9 pattern of behaviour, which included daily behavioural referrals and four fixed-term exclusions. A five-day exclusion followed an incident when a knife was brought into school. One more transgression would have led to a permanent exclusion. Jonathan was one of two 'at risk' pupils that the peer mentoring co-ordinator wanted to include in her programme. He was trained during the summer term 2003 and took up his role as peer mentor when he returned to school in September 2003, as a Year 10 pupil. His behavioural referrals have been reduced by 75%; there have been no further exclusions; for the first time in his secondary school career Jonathan has gained some positive recognition, winning an academic award, for science.

case study

Kate's own words.....

*"I started peer mentoring in Year 10. I liked the training and thought it would be a good idea to join the peer programme. I liked meeting the mentees and talking to them. Some mentees don't really have many issues to speak about and sometimes it is hard to make conversation. They can be shy and not speak much so it is difficult to find out what they need help with. This is a real challenge for me. Mentoring has helped me socially because the training helped me to be more confident. We learned about communication and listening skills, which will help me in the future. I would like to be a nurse and good body language is essential. I believe that I am doing something valuable in school because I am developing my social skills, and I am also having a good time."*

#### **Case Study 14, Lincolnshire**

**Tony** is a Year 7 pupil. Both parents leave for work early in the morning, leaving Tony and an older sister to get themselves up and off to school. The sister is in Year 11 but has stopped attending altogether and has been placed on home tuition. Tony's attendance began to suffer. His mother made arrangements so that it could be guaranteed that he would leave the house and head for school, but he was only going as far as local fields where he would wait until it was safe to return home.

Tony was matched with a peer mentor in Year 10, who had to pass his house every morning on the way to school. He now calls for Tony and they go to school together. They do not have a formal one to one mentoring relationship but have become friends. Tony's attendance has improved dramatically. This apparently simple step has made a huge difference to Tony's life but it is difficult to see how it could have been accomplished without the intervention of a peer mentor – it is not something an adult would have been able to do.

#### **Case Study 15, South Yorkshire**

**Alan** is a Year 7 pupil. He is physically tall, and has an unusual appearance. He has not been bullied but has been rejected by other children. He has no friends and spends break times and lunch times alone. He was recommended to the peer mentoring programme by his form tutor.

Alan was paired with Sally, a quiet, but persistent, girl in Year 10. He found the one to one meetings difficult and would not respond. She tried asking him specific questions but he would give one-word answers and make no eye contact. She persisted. She asked him if he would feel more comfortable with a friend sitting in on the sessions; he said that he had no friends. She brought along one of her friends, a Year 10 boy. They met several times as a trio. The two boys began to communicate; they played chess and computer games. Alan started making social contact with Sally and her friend outside designated mentoring time. Staff began to notice a difference in his behaviour; there was more eye contact, more smiling. The relationship is continuing.

Apart from the obvious benefit to Alan, the skills that Sally is developing are considerable. She has proved herself to be persistent, resourceful and flexible.

Jodie, a Year 10 pupil at the same south Yorkshire school, had accumulated 85 absences during Year 9, giving her an attendance rate of 78%. She was recruited into the peer mentoring programme during the summer term 2003 and trained as a mentor. Since returning to school as a Year 10 pupil in September Jodie has been matched with a Year 7 pupil and attends the drop-in club twice a week. By the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2004, Jodie's Year 10 record of attendance stood at 100%.

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## Case Study 16, Birmingham

**Rashid** is a Year 7 pupil. He already shows all the signs of disaffection normally associated with certain older pupils. He has poor attendance and is not co-operative when present at school. He was matched with a boy in Year 10 who had had a similar record of non-co-operation prior to joining the peer mentoring programme. In this particular school, both mentors and mentees had been recruited from an 'at risk' inclusion group.

Rashid's mentor, described by the co-ordinator as a 'Jack-the-lad,' started collecting Rashid on the way to school. Attendance began to improve. He then started bringing Rashid into school early, to attend a basic skills / breakfast club. The benefits have been two fold: staff report a far more positive attitude from Rashid. Now that he is attending school on a regular basis staff can work with him on improving his basic skills. The change in the mentor has been no less noticeable; the responsibility has brought a positive response. He has to set an example. The 'Jack-the-lad' uniform of

At a school in the Midlands the co-ordinator monitored the academic levels of a group of Year 7 mentees. Levels improved in an average of 5.3 subjects per pupil.

case study

baseball cap and designer clothes has been toned down. He is now talking about college or employment.

## Case Studies 17 – 21, Leicester

The following case studies are taken from a school in Leicester where the co-ordinator uses an informal mentoring club to make the initial contact between mentor and mentee.

**Joe** is a quiet Year 7 pupil who attends mentoring club regularly. His peer mentor noticed that he appeared to be becoming withdrawn and pre-occupied. His form tutor reported that he had been getting into trouble for not doing his homework; the homework diary was never signed and Joe made different excuses every Monday morning.

Joe eventually confided in his peer mentor, telling him that his parents were separating and most weekends he was spending at his Gran's or other relatives' houses. His school equipment was in a variety of places. There was no one to sign his homework diary, and when he did see his parents he did not like to bother them with it. The peer mentor suggested that he check Joe's homework and sign the diary; this was agreed with Joe's tutor. Joe did not get into trouble again and felt that someone was taking an interest in his schoolwork. He is adjusting to his new family circumstances.

**Diane** is a Year 8 pupil, and part of an extended and rather notorious local family. She is, in fact, a quiet girl who resents people assuming that she is 'the same as the rest of them.' She does have a group of friends but these girls are frequently in trouble and Diane wants to break away. She approached the mentoring team saying she felt upset because 'people were always talking about her.'

Diane was invited to attend the Mentoring Club where she teamed up with a Year 10 and a Year 7 girl. She now attends all mentoring club sessions and several other extra-curricular activities. She has a wider group of social contacts within the school. She has also established a friendship with one of the sixth form mentors who travels to school on the same bus. Although she is not part of a one to one mentoring relationship, Diane is now a much more relaxed student, getting a lot from her school experience.

**Maria** is a peer mentor in Year 11. She was recruited into the programme as a Year 9 student, despite opposition from staff, including her Head of Year, who regarded her behaviour and general attitude as being completely at odds with the qualities required of a peer mentor. She was taken on as a gamble but has succeeded to such an extent that she now supervises younger pupils at Mentoring Club, and is frequently used to show visitors around school. As a Year 11 pupil she is taking her GCSE studies seriously, in a way that no one would have predicted two years ago.

**Louise** was identified as a potential problem during Year 6. Whilst quite sociable she had missed some schooling because of illness and found herself outside all the friendship groups. On transfer to high school she was invited to Mentoring Club and matched initially with another Year 7 girl. They were then teamed with a peer mentor in Year 10. The two girls became friends and attend all the mentoring club sessions. They have become confident in talking to the older pupils and have settled into the school well.

**Alex** is a highly intelligent Year 7 pupil. He loves attending Mentoring Club because as a mature Year 7 he enjoys talking to Year 10 pupils who are in many ways his intellectual peers. He is not part of a one to one mentoring relationship but joins in the general banter in a way that would be impossible with his own age group peers. The aim will be to develop Alex's social skills to the point where he can form relationships across the age range, not just with older pupils.

### Case Study 22, Merseyside

**Chris** is a Year 9 student. He is an intelligent and articulate pupil who has been bullied continuously since arriving at secondary school. Chris was first assigned to a peer mentor in September 2001. He has been supported by three mentors over an eighteen-month period, his current mentor being Steve.

Chris's maturity and intelligence are such that he experiences difficulty in making friends

with boys in his own year group. School has been quite a lonely and difficult environment for him, and his particular needs could not always be met by teaching staff. The opportunity to work with a peer mentor has enabled Chris to build on his relationship skills and learn to be more assertive. More importantly, it has encouraged Chris to remain committed to school and to achieving his academic potential. He does not feel so alone, and the school emphasis on peer education has added a positive emotional component to his learning.

At a school on Merseyside Deborah, a peer mentor now in Year 11, experienced a troubled Year 9, during which she received 14 referrals for poor behaviour. After involvement in the peer mentoring programme this figure reduced to 3 in Year 10 and none by the end of January 2004.

case study

Chris's comments:

*"I think that it's a good idea to have peer mentors because if you are worried about something you can trust them and talk to them about your problems. They can help you with homework. They are kind with you and you can have fun with them. Steve, my mentor, has lunch with me and we go to the library to work on the computers. Steve has also helped me when I have been bullied by other pupils."*

### Case Study 23, Merseyside

**Kathryn** was introduced to the peer mentoring programme as a mentor during Year 11. She was seriously underachieving and very anxious about the GCSE examinations she was due to take in June 2002. Kathryn lacked self-confidence and experienced a lot of anxiety resulting in low attendance and poor test results.

Kathryn's comments:

*"I have attended training in school and on a three-day residential course with a local organisation that collaborates with our school in training peer mentors. The training was really enjoyable and I made a lot of new friends with people I have been in school with for years but never got to know before. The training has done a lot for my self-confidence. Since the training, I have been able to talk with other pupils a lot more. I am able to discuss a variety of situations in a non-judgemental way.*

*My work as a peer mentor involves helping to co-ordinate our school Buddy scheme. We have fifty Year 8 and Year 9 pupils who support Year 7 pupils when they first come to high school from Juniors. I also work one to one with two Year 7 pupils. I asked them to write something about the way I help: this is what they said:"*

*'Kathryn is thoughtful, helpful and caring. She is a kind and positive person and always seems to say the right thing. She is able to calm younger pupils down. She has a good sense of humour.'*

*'Kathryn is brilliant at Buddy meetings. She is funny and kind. She gets along with everyone. When you have a problem you can talk to her and she never laughs at you.'*

Now in Year 12, Kathryn is described as a model member of the school community. She passed her examinations with flying colours and she exudes confidence and cheerfulness. Kathryn is an excellent role model and a good example of how training in peer support can benefit the mentor, the mentee and the whole school community.

## Case Study 24, South West

**Richard** is a very quiet boy who finds it difficult to mix with others. At times he has felt very lonely and isolated as one of a Year 7 intake of 270. His ability level is average for the school but he finds it difficult to organise himself and often receives detentions for not having equipment, planner or getting planner signed. Richard is upset about his lack of organisational skills, and getting into trouble has made him feel even more isolated.

Richard was matched with Lucy, a Year 10 peer mentor. Lucy listened to Richard and devised ways in which she could help and support him. They made up games to help him remember kit, books, homework etc. She encouraged Richard to suggest the ways forward and then gave him support. A strong mentor / mentee relationship has developed.

Richard has really improved in many areas and has not had a detention for a long time. He is far more confident, as illustrated by a growing circle of friends. He is more active in tutor time and lessons. He is prepared to ask for help when he doesn't understand something. These factors are all helping his overall progress.

Lucy's last report stated that Richard is now attending after school clubs, particularly enjoying DT (Design Technology)

The mentoring arrangement will continue until the end of Year 7. His progress will then be monitored during Year 8.

It is worth recording that Lucy herself, as a Year 9 pupil, was extremely quiet and not terribly self-assured. Being part of the peer mentoring programme has enabled her to acquire and develop new skills, and given her status within the school



## Case Study 25, Yorkshire

**Toni** had a very troubled transition from primary to secondary school. A variety of social issues led to name-calling and fully fledged bullying. Toni lives near to the school and found it convenient to run home when life at school became unbearable. She had a miserable Year 7 experience and as a result of this was recommended for the peer mentoring project at the start of year 8.

Sarah is quite sporty and has encouraged Toni in this area. The school has a 'girls into sport' policy and runs girls' football and basketball teams, as well as aerobic dance sessions and the usual range of school sports. Toni accompanies Sarah to netball club, to football and to aerobics. Kit is supplied in a sensitive way.

Toni has had a much better Year 8. She has stopped running out of school and is more

Sally is a Year 8 pupil at a school in south Yorkshire. When she arrived at the school in September 2002 her rate of attendance based on her last year at primary school stood at 67%. She was recommended as someone who might benefit from the peer mentoring programme, as a mentee, because of her shyness and isolation. She was matched with a peer mentor from Year 10 and was also encouraged to attend a lunchtime drop-in club. By June 2003, Sally's rate of attendance had risen to 87%. As a Year 8 pupil, by the end of January 2004 the figure stood at 96%. In the middle range academically, Sally's test scores improved steadily during this period from an average of 20% in the early part of Year 7, to just over 50% in the first term of Year 8. She also received three academic commendations during the autumn term, compared to none during the previous year.

case study

Toni was more than willing to attend the opening introductory sessions and eventually paired up with Sarah, a Year 10 girl. Sarah is quiet and studious, but has an established place amongst her peers and in the school generally. The two girls meet once a week at the mentoring sessions but this has led to much more.

prepared to seek help if problems arise. Sarah has suggested strategies to help defuse confrontations with other pupils. As well as attending extra-curricular activities Toni has also managed to acquire one or two friends of her own age. These factors point to a considerable achievement.

Sufia, a Year 10 pupil at a school in west London, had an attendance record of 45% during Year 9. She was brought into the peer mentoring programme as a mentor during the summer term 2002, the co-ordinator recognising in her the 'people skills' that can be so useful to a peer mentor. Sufia was recruited on the strict understanding that her attendance record had to improve: during Year 10 the figure rose to 92%. As well as one to one mentoring Sufia has also been part of a project that involves going into PHSE classes in Year 7 and 8 and talking about safe use of the Internet.

case study

Shenez, a peer mentor from the same west London school, was described as timid and lacking in self-confidence as a Year 9 pupil. After training she began working with younger pupils. She contributed over 140 voluntary hours during the year and was chosen to work on a project called 'The Living Brain', which involved giving presentations to groups of teachers and other adults at training days. Shenez was recognised by the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, winning an award given to 'pupils who inspire.'

case study

Shareen, another west London pupil, was brought into the programme having been placed on a school 'under-achieving' register. Despite being academically able, by the end of Year 9 her estimated GCSE grades were all in the range D/C. After becoming a peer mentor and involving herself fully in the project, Shareen's estimated grades were reassessed and placed in the A/B range.

case study

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