# DEVELOPING A NATIONAL MENTORING SCHEME FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**Dr Susan Elsley**

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**INTRODUCTION**

1.   In the autumn of 2012 the Scottish Government invited Dr Susan Elsley to consider the viability of a national mentoring scheme for looked after children and young people. This report presents the conclusions of that assessment, and summarises the accompanying discussions of the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group's (LACSIG) Mentoring Hub, which ran between November 2012 and June 2013.

2.   The original concept was for a national scheme that would provide long term mentoring relationships to looked after children and young people, with volunteers taking on the mentoring role. The Terms of Reference for the Mentoring Hub identified that a mentor would be an independent person who would be expected to:

- be an active, constant and long term person in a child's life
- provide encouragement and support
- support a child's voice to be heard
- act in a child's best interests
- challenge systems and services to meet an individual child's needs.

3.   In assessing this idea, Dr Elsley and the Mentoring Hub considered the following issues:

- The principles and parameters for a national scheme
- Target groups (which groups of looked after children and young people any scheme should apply to)
- The role and the recruitment, training and support of volunteers or other staff involving in mentoring
- How mentoring would work alongside other existing professional and support roles and areas of policy and services
- How mentoring could support family relationships
- Information sharing with volunteers
- Issues around transitions for children and young people

- Challenges and barriers to be overcome
- What a pilot scheme would look like, including where, when, how and by whom it could be run, and how this could be translated into a national scheme
- Resourcing a national scheme in the long term.

4. Through assessing the evidence, inputs from mentoring experts and in-depth discussion, Dr Elsley and the Mentoring Hub have concluded that there are specific positive advantages to focusing the national mentoring scheme on children and young people looked after at home. It is their contention – detailed in this report – that a mentoring scheme for this population will help facilitate and promote a shared ambition to improve outcomes. By harnessing the commitment and motivation of skilled volunteer mentors, Scotland has the potential to create a valuable network of champions for this group of looked after children and young people, both locally and nationally.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NATIONAL MENTORING SCHEME**

5.      After assessing the options for a national mentoring scheme for looked after children, Dr Elsley and the LACSIG Mentoring Hub have reached the following conclusions. These constitute final recommendations to the Scottish Government.

*Principles*

6.      Mentoring (for the purpose of a national scheme for looked after children and young people) should be defined as a relationship-based approach to supporting an individual or group of individuals by another or others. It should include both goal orientated and social aspects of mentoring, based on the intrinsic value of relationships and the consent of the child or young person.

7.      The national scheme should provide mentors for as a long as a child or young person needs one. In some cases this may extend across many years, and the scheme must be able to support this.

8.      Partnership and collaboration should underpin a national mentoring scheme. There should be close links built into other initiatives which support looked after children and young people (such as advocacy services and those being developed by the Life Changes Trust). The mentor should be seen as part of the wider GIRFEC team which provides support to a child or young person.

*Parameters*

9.      The national mentoring scheme should be aimed at children and young people who are 'looked after at home' (at the point of referral to a mentoring service).

10.   The age range of children and young people covered by the scheme should be from 8 through to 14 years old, although mentors should be able to work with younger children or older young people as appropriate.

11.   The national mentoring scheme should be available to relevant children and young people in every local authority. However, the service may take different forms, depending on current provision and local circumstances. It should take account of the needs of rural and urban areas. Mentoring should be provided locally, with links to the community.

12.   Mentors should predominantly be volunteers, in line with the majority of current provision, recognising that some services use paid staff as mentors.

13.   Mentors should be regarded as valuable contributors to the realisation of the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators for a child or young person. They should contribute to care planning and other processes as appropriate (and should the child or young person so wish). The mentor's role should be taken into account by the GIRFEC team and, specifically, by the Named Person and Lead Professional.

***Structure of the national mentoring scheme***

14.   The national mentoring scheme should involve multiple providers across Scotland, each providing the scheme in a local area (or region). Services should opt in to be members of the scheme, which should operate as a national network of separate but connected services, with opportunities for knowledge exchange, joint promotion and collaboration.

15.   Benefits for participation should include the invitation to apply for resources from the Scottish Government. There may also be benefits in being part of a national mentoring scheme in accessing resources through other funders.

16.   Resources should be held centrally (by Scottish Government) and released to providers on multi-year contracts. Each provider would have to detail (in their bid for resources) how their proposed service meets the principles and parameters of the national mentoring scheme. (This report contains initial work on principles and guidelines.)

17.    All services which become part of the national mentoring scheme should have to sign up to a common set of principles and standards, including specific quality assurance measures (such as the tools developed by the Scottish Mentoring Network). There should be a commitment to ensuring high quality recruitment processes, training, supervision and support for all volunteers and paid staff.

18.    All organisations participating in the national mentoring scheme should sign up to a monitoring and evaluation framework, in order to share experiences, identify ongoing needs and gaps, and to monitor outcomes.  This framework should be built on GIRFEC's SHANARRI indicators. The intention should be to monitor outcomes at a national level in order to evaluate the benefits of a national mentoring scheme.

19.    All organisations participating in the national mentoring scheme should retain flexibility over service delivery, to provide for local circumstances and ensure continuity with their service history.

20.    A national and local identity should be developed for the national mentoring scheme, in order to: (1) raise awareness about the existence of the scheme; (2) highlight the potential benefits of mentoring; (3) promote opportunities for volunteering; (4) develop a network of mentor 'champions' for looked after children and young people; (5) and to give the national mentoring scheme prestige and profile. This takes into account the example of the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programme based in the US[1], whose high profile results in benefits for its service development, volunteer recruitment and funding drives.

### *Development of the national mentoring scheme*

21.    Phase 1 should be used to consolidate and confirm the parameters, principles and standards associated with the national mentoring scheme. Consideration should be given, as part of the initial development of the programme, to ways of giving a common identity to volunteers involved in separate mentoring services, each of

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[1]Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

which is part of the national scheme.  There should be further exploration of how mentoring can practically contribute to GIRFEC and other processes.

22.   In Phase 2 organisations that already provide mentoring services to looked after children and young people should be invited to be members of the national mentoring scheme. This would provide the basis for a national network of organisations providing mentoring.

23.   Organisations should be invited to submit proposals to Scottish Government detailing how they would deliver the scheme in a particular local area (or number thereof). Priorities for funding in Phase 2 should be targeted at services that can contribute actively to the initial development of the national scheme.

24.   In Phase 3 the Scottish Government should push to extend the availability of the scheme more widely. This would require a sustainable funding programme, so the Scottish Government – in partnership with potential funders, partners and collaborators – should consider establishing a National Mentoring Scheme Fund. The aim would be to grow the national mentoring scheme so that it is available consistently to children and young people who are looked after at home across Scotland (currently estimated at 2,217 children and young people aged between 8 to 14 years who were looked after at home on the 31st July 2012, according to disaggregated Scottish Government statistics). The scheme should take into account that all children and young people would not require the same service at the same time. Services should be invited to bid for resources in line with the initial phase of development.

25.   As part of the ongoing development of a national mentoring scheme, evidence on the impact of the scheme should be gathered through evaluation, research and knowledge exchange. This should inform further service development and provide details on the implications for other services and programmes.

**BACKGROUND**

26.    The Scottish Government's work on looked after children and young people is focused on improving the stability and consistency of care. It aims for each looked after child to be provided with a safe, stable, nurturing and permanent home at the earliest opportunity.  However, the Scottish Government has identified that for some children and young people, this journey to a stable and permanent home takes considerably longer than is acceptable.

27.    Evidence shows that stability and permanence in the lives of children and young people aids the creation of secure attachments and can lead to improved life chances. Conversely, it is known that frequent placement moves have a significant detrimental effect on a number of outcomes for looked after children. For example, children and young people with frequent placement moves tend to do less well at school.[2]

28.    It has also been identified that having a constant person in a child's life, who takes an active interest, provides encouragement and support and can challenge services and systems so that they meet the child's needs, can make a positive difference to the outcomes for looked after children and young people.

29.    The role of a constant person in a child or young person's life is usually fulfilled by family members and other trusted adults. But children and young people who are looked after do not necessarily have access to the same range of constant adults. They will have contact with a range of committed professionals (including teachers, social workers, care workers and health professionals). However these roles do not generally provide continuity of relationships for a looked after child or young person. The people undertaking these roles may change, and they may not be able to independently challenge decisions affecting a child or young person because they undertake specific duties or are linked to a service provider. Relationships will be based on the role they have and this will not meet all the needs of children and young people.

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[2] Scottish Government (2013) Education Outcomes for Scotland's looked after children 2011/12

30.   There are other adults who support children and young people who are looked after.  Professional advocates are generally independent from service providers but this provision is patchy, and some groups of looked after children (those looked after at home, for example) have a limited access to an advocacy service.[3] In addition, the role of an advocate is generally restricted to giving a child a voice.

31.   The Scottish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee's inquiry into looked after children's educational outcomes[4] urged the Scottish Government to consider utilising volunteers more in response to the needs of looked after children and young people, particularly those looked after at home. Responding to the recommendations of the inquiry, and the imperative to improve outcomes for this vulnerable population, the Scottish Government determined to explore options for a national mentoring scheme

32.   This report was commissioned by the Scottish Government in the autumn of 2012 and presents the conclusions of an assessment into the viability of a national mentoring scheme for looked after children and young people. It complements an earlier Scottish Government report on peer mentoring, written by Susan Middleton.[5]

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[3] Elsley S (2010) Advocacy makes you feel brave: Advocacy support for children and young people in Scotland Scottish Government
[4] Scottish Parliament (2012) Sixth Report, (Session 4) Report on educational achievement of looked after children
[5] Middleton, S (2012) Peer Mentoring Opportunities for Looked after Children and Care Leavers, Scottish Government

**DEFINING MENTORING**

33. The LACSIG Mentoring Hub considered definitions of mentoring and its associated activities in order to inform its discussions. The following definition is the one which most accurately reflected the Hub's discussions:

*'Mentoring' is a relationship-based approach to supporting one person or a group of people by another or others to achieve a mutually agreed goal.[6]*

34. The Evaluation Resource Pack for Befriending and Mentoring [7] identifies a spectrum of supportive mentoring and befriending relationships which involve working towards stated objectives as well as developing social relationships.

35. Peer mentors may be young people close to those being mentored in age and/or who have a shared experience of care.[8] According to the recent study on peer mentoring undertaken for the Scottish Government by Susan Middleton (2012), it can include activities which are related to mentoring but are also akin to peer education, befriending, group support, coaching, tutoring or participation activities. This description is supported by Who Cares? Scotland's work on peer mentoring, which focuses on the shared experience of young people who are, or have been, in care.

36. Mentoring can also be based around informal supportive relationships outside the boundaries of a formal mentoring service. The Hub agreed that these informal relationships, where they existed, were important to children and young people and their contribution should be acknowledged. Formal mentoring services should not undermine these positive relationships. However, it was recognised that children and young people who are looked after may not have access to a range of trusted relationships with adults.

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[6] Sandford, S; Copps J and Yeowart, C (2007) Lean on Me: Mentoring for young people at risk: A Guide for Donors and Funders, New Philanthropy Capital
[7] Kennedy, J, MacKenzie, I and Wilson, H Evaluation Resource Pack for Befriending and Mentoring , Befriending Network Scotland, Scottish Mentoring Network and Evaluation Support Scotland
[8] Middleton, S (2012) Peer Mentoring Opportunities for Looked after Children and Care Leavers, Scottish Government

37. Mentoring also needs to take into account children and young people's existing relationships with parents and other family members, even where these relationships are not as stable, consistent or positive as they could be. Mentoring should work with, and alongside, these other relationships rather than be seen as an alternative to family and other close relationships in a child or young person's life.

38. Building on the definition laid out above, the Hub agreed that mentoring for looked after children and young people should include the following tasks:

*(i) Providing goal-orientated mentoring*

Working towards goals and objectives (as appropriate for the individual child or young person) and providing encouragement and support.

Areas for mentoring support could include supporting a child or young person: on educational issues such as school attendance, educational achievement and home school links; in transitions between services or other areas which impact on their lives i.e. between primary and secondary school; through changes in placement or family circumstances; as they experience developmental changes.

*(ii) Building social relationships*

Developing a social relationship based on the needs of a child or young person with a specific focus on listening to the child or young person.

Areas for mentoring support could include: supporting a child or young person in their hobby or interests; attending activities in which they participate (i.e. school shows; sports etc.); doing fun activities together; supporting a child or young person in relationships with others, including family members and peers; sharing the success of a child or young person's achievements.

### *(iii)  Working with services and systems*

Where children and young people want support, mentoring should work with, and challenge, services and systems so that they meet a child or young person's individual needs.

Areas for mentoring support could include: communicating with schools or children's services about the support they are providing; challenging services (with the direction of the child or young person) where services are not meeting a child or young person's needs; contributing to the wider GIRFEC team as appropriate around care planning etc.; sharing positive achievements and interests with services.

39.  Taking the previous points into account, the Hub concluded that the mentoring provided to looked after children and young people through a national mentoring scheme should be defined as:

*A relationship-based approach to supporting an individual (or group) by another or others. It should include both goal orientated and social aspects of mentoring, based on the intrinsic value of relationships and the consent of the child or young person. It should be undertaken formally by trained mentors, taking into account existing relationships with family members and other informal mentor-type relationships with trusted adults.*

**MENTORING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND**

40. Mentoring projects in Scotland are run predominantly by the voluntary sector with local authorities also providing services. Mentors can be volunteers, project staff or part-time paid sessional mentors with the majority of mentors being volunteers. There are peer mentoring projects where young people with shared experience or from a similar age group support other young people individually or in groups. There is a wide range of befriending services which may also work with children and young people using a goal orientated approach but do not identify themselves as mentoring projects.

41. According to figures from the Scottish Mentoring Network, there are approximately 86 local services in its membership which support children and young people through mentoring as all or part of their activities. This includes mentoring services in further and higher education and in employment. It includes services available to young people of 16 years and above.

42. It is difficult to identify accurately how many projects or services provide mentoring support to looked after children and young people, and specifically those looked after at home, because this group of children and young people may fall within other categories e.g. socially isolated children and young people or children and young people at risk of offending. It may be provided in mentoring-type support through befriending services. However, it appears that there are a range of services that have experience in working with vulnerable children and young people.

43. Mentoring services and projects work across the age range. The youngest children identified as having access to a mentoring scheme were 6 years of age, although this was unusual. Other mentoring and peer mentor schemes, in particular those focused on leaving care, mentoring around employment and further and higher education, engaged with young people up to the age of 18 and into their twenties.

44. Examples of mentoring services for children and young people were considered by the Hub and in further contact with organisations. (Please refer to Appendix B for details about examples of services). These mentoring services all had

common elements: extensive training programmes for volunteer and paid mentors; open referral systems which were balanced by high demand for services; other activities and forms of support available to children and young people through the service or other agencies; general alignment with GIRFEC principles; and support and liaison with families. Services had different approaches to the length of the mentoring relationship which varied from three months up to two years.

**EVIDENCE ON MENTORING**

45. There is not a substantial body of evidence which focuses specifically on mentoring and looked after children and young people in the UK or solely on Scotland. However, the available evidence explores issues and outcomes that are relevant to children and young people who are looked after or are care leavers.

46. The evidence considered was from research and evaluations undertaken in Scotland and the UK, as well as evidence from the US where there is a substantial body of research. The evidence is briefly explored here and has been taken into account in the development of the proposals for a national scheme.

47. Lawner, Beltz and Moore (2013)[9] in an analysis of 19 evaluations of mentoring programmes in the US, found that programmes which supported children and young people in areas such as education, social skills and relationships were more effective than those which focused on behaviour problems; for example, reducing teenage pregnancy or conduct/disruptive disorders, aggression and bullying. Those programmes that lasted one year or more were identified as being more effective than those that lasted less than one year. The study found that programmes based in schools or communities could be effective but community programmes were more consistent in achieving outcomes. This applied specifically to educational outcomes where community programmes appeared to work better than programmes based in schools or other services.

48. DuBois et al (2011)[10] analysed 73 US mentoring programmes for children and young people that were conducted between 1999 and 2010. The review found that mentoring was effective in impacting on outcomes in different domains of wellbeing including behavioural, social, emotional and educational development. It identified that mentoring can impact on children and young people from early childhood until adolescence and its effectiveness was not confined to one particular age group.

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[9] Lawner, E Beltz, M and Moore K.A (2013) What works for Mentor Programs: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions, Child Trends

[10] DuBois, D.L, Portillo. N, Rhodes, J.E, Silverthorn, N, Valentine, J.C (2011) How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence, Psychological Sciences in the Public Interest, August 2011 vol. 12 no.2 57-91

Mentoring programmes generally used volunteers as mentors in one to one relationships. Programmes, which involved older young people as peers in both group and individual settings, were also found to be effective. Overall, the study found that mentoring was able to support positive development for children and young people.

49.    Benard and Marshall (2001)[11], discussing 'resilience based' mentoring in the US, point out that effective mentoring relationships were not prescriptive and were supported by strong programme management. They identified that mentoring and mentee matches needed to be 'safe', focused on the needs of the child and 'built to last'. More broadly, the authors highlighted the need for 'mentor-rich environments' in prevention, education and youth services so that the focus was not on one adult providing all the child or young person's relationship needs with a range of supportive adults available.

50.    Clayden and Stein (2005)[12], in a study on mentoring schemes for young people leaving care in the UK, found that mentoring was mostly volunteer led and based on one to one mentoring. They identified two main mentoring approaches: mentoring which aimed to give support to young people where they had no adult to guide them: and peer mentoring. The authors found that mentoring relationships generally had 'instrumental' task-focused and 'expressive' befriending roles. The study found that mentoring was valued by young people, supporting them with relationships, confidence building and impacting on their wellbeing. However, it was difficult to evaluate long-term benefits because of the multitude of factors impacting on young people's lives although some young people were able to identify that mentoring had been helpful to them. The study found that mentors identified that their skills and confidence had improved and that they as a result wanted to work with young people.

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[11] Benard, B and Marshall, K (2001), Resilience Research for Prevention Programs: Big Brothers/Big Sisters Mentoring: The Power of Developmental Relationships, National Resilience Resource Center, University of Minnesota

[12] Clayden, J and Stein, M (2005) 'Someone for me': Mentoring young people leaving care, York: University of York

51. The lack of a substantial body of evidence on mentoring in Scotland also applies to the specific approach of peer mentoring.[13] The study undertaken by Middleton identified that peer mentoring shares many of the elements of other mentoring approaches and that having consistent approaches to reviewing and evaluation would be helpful in ensuring that comparisons can be made between different programmes.

52. An evaluation of the YMCA's Plusone mentoring programme in Scotland, undertaken by the University of Dundee[14], identified that young people who took part in the programme valued mentoring highly. Mentors were regarded by young people as having important roles in: providing support; engaging in positive activities giving advice; and in mediating with other services. After six months, there were improvements for the majority of young people across the risk factor areas being addressed.  Volunteer mentors were recruited from across the age range and from a variety of different backgrounds. The findings of the evaluation suggest that the following are important: mentor relationships which are effective are long term, frequent and regular; the need to match young people and volunteer mentors carefully; supporting young people's voluntary participation which is based around their needs; ensuring appropriate supervision of mentors; and that mentoring does not replace other more relevant services for a young person.

53. In summary, research indicates that mentoring is effective as an approach to supporting children and young people who require this level of support. It appears to have a positive impact on outcomes across different areas of children and young people's lives. Longer term mentoring relationships appear to be more beneficial and mentoring can work with younger as well as older children and young people.  The use of volunteer mentors is identified as being positive with community based approaches being particularly successful. Peer mentoring shares many of the elements of other mentoring approaches. Having a goal orientated approach and also supporting social relationships is important for effective mentoring.

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[13] Middleton, S (2012) Peer Mentoring Opportunities for Looked after Children and Care Leavers, Scottish Government
[14] Blazek, M, Brown, D.M, Smith, F.M, van Blerk, L (2011), Plusone Mentoring Evaluation, Dundee: University of Dundee and The Scottish Institute for Policing Research

**EVIDENCE FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

54.   The Hub was committed to including the views and experiences of children and young people throughout its work. It undertook two activities, an online survey and a consultation event, between January and March 2013.

*Online survey*

55.   An online survey was distributed through Hub members and publicised through CELCIS and the Scottish Mentoring Network. It included questions about children and young people's experience of mentoring, the qualities that they expected a mentor to have and the roles that a mentor should undertake. The survey was completed by 116 children and young people up to the age of 25 with 13.8% aged 7 years or under and the majority between the age of 11 and 17 years.

56.   Ninety one per cent (105) thought that it was a good idea to have someone to help a child or young person who was not a member of a family or a professional. The majority of children and young people who completed the questionnaire had not had a mentor but those who had (18%), had a mentor for longer than a year. Children and young people were in agreement that a mentor should: provide encouragement and support; help a young person achieve the things he/she wants to; help a young person's voice be heard by other people; and support a young person to get the services they need.

57.   Children and young people were positive about having a mentor and the ways in which a mentor could help them. It was pointed out that family members were not always the best people to share problems with. A small number of young people were concerned about having more people in their lives. Young people highlighted a range of things that a mentor could do including:

> 'Listen and tell so I don't have to keep repeating myself. Being there is always good feeling to know she is there for me.'

'Take you out, be friends with you, have a laugh, stick up for you, speak on the phone.'

'If you are struggling with school.'

'Be part of a young person's life. Not just when times are hard. You need to build trust and the mentor would need to support you even when you are in difficulty'.

'Help families as well'.

58.    Participants thought that a mentor should be easy to talk to and respect young people. The following qualities were highlighted as being important for a mentor: listens to and respects young people; kind, friendly and easy to approach; trustworthy, reliable and confident. Children and young people also described their ideas of a 'good' mentor:

'Likes a good laugh. Is not easily put off like sticks with you through everything that is going on.'

'Reliable, understand, not to judge and not to lie about things, not to pretend they are not listening. Not to tell someone what to do but to guide them.'

'Know about how to best help a young person. A caring nature and willing to help you at times.'

59.    Conversely, children and young people had views on what would not work in a mentoring scheme. These included: having a mentor they did not like or did not choose; a mentor 'taking over' a child or young person's life; another person turning up to meet a young person instead of their usual mentor; someone who had no experience with children and young people.

*Consultation event*

60.   A consultation event was held in March 2013 and attended by 15 young people aged from 14 years to young people in their twenties. Young people participated from four organisations that had experience of mentoring, were peer mentors and were, or had been, looked after. The Minister for Children and Young People attended the event along with representatives of the Mentoring Hub as well as staff from Who Cares? Scotland, the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum and Debate Project, Maben House Residential School and Action for Children's Moving on Project.

61.   The event's discussions identified the following key issues:

- A scheme should be targeted at the most vulnerable – the young people who need it most. It should also be about preventative interventions before children and young people become looked after.
- Young people want to be involved in recruiting mentors and should have choice in the mentor available to them.
- Mentors need to come from a range of backgrounds – a care background can be helpful as well as experience of a range of transitions.
- A mentor should be there at crisis points and for as long as it takes. It is also important to help young people before the crisis arises.
- There should be no restriction on the age a young person can access a mentor.
- It is important to get young people involved in the mentoring system generally and as peer mentors as well. Young people should also be involved in the training of mentors.
- Developing a mentoring scheme is a unique opportunity to make a change by getting young people involved in every aspect and make the service as good as it can be.
- It is very important to match relationships well and allow young people to opt out.
- Overall, mentoring needed to be available for young people at the right time, in the right place and to be the right intervention. It should be needs led.

62. In summary, the majority of children and young people were supportive of mentors being available to those who were looked after. They identified some of the key tasks that mentors could undertake, the qualities that mentors should have and emphasised that children and young people should be involved in all aspects of mentoring services and projects.

**ESTABLISHING THE PRINCIPLES FOR A NATIONAL MENTORING SCHEME**

63.  The Terms of Reference for the Mentoring Hub identified that a mentor would be an independent person who would be expected to:

- be an active, constant and long term person in a child's life
- provide encouragement and support
- support a child's voice to be heard
- act in a child's best interests
- challenge systems and services to meet an individual child's needs.

64.  These areas have guided discussion on both the principles and the parameters for a national mentoring scheme.

65.  Hub discussions identified the importance of a sustainable national scheme that supported collaboration between those supporting children, young people and families across a range of services.

66.  During the course of Hub discussions, potential benefits were identified for a national mentoring scheme. These included:

- Mentoring being regarded and evidenced as a positive approach to supporting children and young people who are looked after.
- Mentoring can support the development of a 'community' of adults and peer mentors who have experience of supporting children and young people who are looked after and can act as champions in their communities and more widely.
- Mentoring can support stronger links with the community through collaboration and partnerships with local organisations and projects which can, in turn, provide other forms of support to children and young people.
- Mentoring can help to counter the stigmatisation of looked after children and young people, supporting, for example, the aims of the Who Cares? Scotland

'Give me a chance' campaign and providing positive messages about children and young people.

- Mentoring can contribute to better outcomes for looked after children and young people, supporting children and young people in their relationships, educational outcomes and through reductions in risky behaviour.

- Mentors' gain skills, experience and understanding which they can take into their professional, personal and civic lives.

- Having a mentor provides access to a trusted relationship which can be fun and social as well as provide support in dealing with challenges. It is an alternative to other relationships in a child's life whether that it is family or professionals involved in statutory duties.

- Referrals to mentoring services can be made by different professionals across sectors and services.

- Mentoring provides an opportunity for children and young people to take control and responsibility over different areas of their lives.

- Mentoring can contribute to positive outcomes such as building confidence, supporting aspiration and building resilience.

67.   At the same time Hub members acknowledged that there were challenges in establishing a national mentoring scheme that should be taken into account. These included:

- The potential for claims for mentoring being unrealistic in terms of what it can achieve.

- The need for mentoring to complement, rather than replace, other forms of support to children, young people and their families.

- The impact of care planning on the mentoring relationships, particularly in relation to placement changes and other key transitions.

- The necessity for support to parents and carers being available so that families are supported at the same time as the individual child or young person.

- The importance of identifying and utilising guidance and best practice around information sharing.

- The challenges of sustaining mentoring services long term without the provision of adequate financial resources.
- The need to ensure that there is ongoing mentor support for a child or young person when a previous mentor moves on.
- The importance of accessibility of mentoring to children and young people so that they can access a mentoring service when they need it.
- The need for information to be widely available on mentoring services so that referrals can be made from across services and by children and young people and their families.

68. The following draft principles emerged from the Hub's activities and are suggested as the underpinning for a national mentoring scheme. They are: based on the Hub's discussions; drawn from children and young people's contributions to the work of the Hub; informed by mentoring services experiences; and identified from wider evidence.

*Draft Principles*

i. ***Mentoring is available to children and young people who are looked after at home***
Mentoring should be available to a child or young person who is looked after at home and wants to access this form of support. Mentoring support should follow the child or young person if they are then placed away from home.

ii. ***Mentoring supports children and young people's rights and well-being***
Mentoring should be based on the best interests of a child or young person and should support his or her right to have their views taken into account.

iii. ***Mentoring provides a positive, supportive relationship***
Mentoring should be based on a positive, trusted one to one relationship between a mentor and a child or young person.

### iv. Peer mentoring is supported

Peer mentoring should be supported as one approach to individual and group mentoring, based on children and young people's shared experience of being looked after. Where peer mentoring is identified as appropriate it may involve a range of activities.

### v. Children and young people can choose mentoring and mentors

A child or young person should freely enter into the mentoring relationship. The process of matching a mentor should allow for a child or young person to choose his or her mentor. A child or young person should be able to opt out from a mentoring relationship if they wish or access mentoring at a later point when they feel more ready.

### vi. Mentoring is independent from other services

Mentoring should be independent from other services that support children and young people. This is because other professionals' roles can make it difficult to undertake a formal mentoring role, potentially creating a conflict of interest or misunderstanding about their principal role.

### vii. Mentoring complements other support for children and young people

Mentoring should not replace other forms of support or other relationships with trusted adults. It should complement other mentoring, befriending or similar services including strategic programmes such as those being developed by the Life Changes Trust.

### viii. Mentoring supports long term and sustainable mentoring relationships

The mentor and the mentoring service should aim to have a long term commitment to mentoring a child or young person, based on his or her individual needs. Moving on strategies from mentoring should be well planned with the child or young person and should facilitate access to other forms of support. Where a mentor moves on, services should ensure continuity of mentoring support for a child or young person as appropriate.

ix. ***Mentoring links with communities***

Mentoring services should be provided locally with links to the community where a child or young person lives so that he or she can also access local provision and other forms of support such as youth, play and leisure services.

x. ***Accessing mentoring is needs led***

Access to mentoring should be needs led and easy to access by referral from any service working with children and young people such as social work or education, or by self or family referral where this is possible. Mentors should be available to support children and young people through transitions in services and life experiences.

xi. ***Mentoring is inclusive of the needs of all children and young people***

Mentoring should be inclusive and take into account the needs of all children and young people, including disabled children and young people and those with a range of communication needs.

xii. ***Mentoring provision is informed by the views and experiences of children and young people***

Children and young people should contribute to and inform the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a national mentoring scheme and local mentoring services.

xiii. ***Mentoring includes different roles and responsibilities***

The mentoring relationship should include a spectrum of different roles and activities including: supporting a child or young person to achieve his or her goals; providing a social relationship; and working with other services to ensure that they meet a child or young person's needs.

xiv. ***Mentoring provides a high quality service***

Mentoring should be based on common standards with quality assurance built in, using existing tools such as those developed by the Scottish Mentoring Network and through sharing of effective practice. High quality recruitment

processes, training, supervision and support should be available to all volunteers and paid staff.

### xv. *Mentoring supports policy and practice implementation*

Mentoring should contribute to current policy and practice implementation, specifically: GIRFEC; the policy implications of the Children and Young People Bill; developments relating to looked after children and young people; the role of the corporate parent; and the reform of the Children's Hearings system. It should also take into account other policy areas relating to children, young people and their families such as the National Parenting Strategy.

### xvi. *Mentoring takes account of family relationships*

Mentoring services should liaise closely with parents and carers before and during the mentoring relationship. There should be ongoing contact throughout the mentoring relationship, including opportunities to share a child or young person's successes and achievements.

### xvii. *Outcomes are monitored and measured*

A commitment to monitoring, evaluation and measuring outcomes should be built in from the outset of any mentoring relationship. Outcomes should be measured in line with the GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators. It should be informed by the views and experiences of children and young people and by their families. Ways of monitoring outcomes after the mentoring relationship has ended should be identified in order to ensure that longer term outcomes could be identified.

### xviii. *Sharing learning and developing knowledge*

More generally, learning should be disseminated so that knowledge of what works in mentoring can be shared and inform future policy and service developments.

**SETTING THE PARAMETERS OF A NATIONAL MENTORING SCHEME**

69.   The Hub explored the possible parameters for a national mentoring scheme. These included: which groups of looked after children and young people should a mentoring scheme apply to; the appropriate age group for a scheme; the length of mentoring relationships; the importance of working with other professionals and services; using volunteers as mentors; and the need to support families more widely.

*Target group for a national mentoring scheme*

70.   The Hub considered whether a national mentoring scheme should be for all looked after children and young people or if it should be limited, at point of referral, to a specific group of children and young people who are looked after.

71.   It was acknowledged that all children and young people who are looked after would benefit from access to a mentor. However, the Hub recognised that children and young people looked after at home have particular needs and challenges. Children and young people looked after at home do not necessarily have the same access to professional support as children and young people looked after away from home. They have substantially poorer outcomes in education compared with other children and young people who are looked after, with limited changes in levels of achievement over the last few years according to 2011/2012 figures. [15] They experience instability in their placements and in people who provide support to them.[16] Overall, there is not a substantial body of research on children and young people who are looked after at home.

72.   Children and young people who contributed to the Hub work were not asked if one specific group of looked after children and young people should have access to mentors. However, children and young people highlighted the importance of responding to a child or young person's needs and providing support at the right

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[15] Scottish Government (2013) Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children 2011/12, Edinburgh: Scottish Government
[16] Gadda, A and Fitzpatrick, JP (2012) Home Supervision Requirements: Messages from Research, Glasgow: CELCIS

time. This included providing access to mentoring as a preventative measure before a child or young person is looked after.

73.   A national mentoring scheme should primarily be for children and young people looked after at home (at the point of referral to a mentoring service). There is a wider issue of whether there should be an aspiration that all looked after children and young people should have access to mentors.

### *Proposed age range for a national mentoring scheme*

74.   The Hub considered the optimum age range of children and young people to participate in a mentoring scheme.

75.   Several mentoring schemes that contributed to the work of the Hub support children and young people aged from eight years upwards. The experience of Barnardo's pilot service, STRIVE, suggests that intervention at the lower end of its age range (i.e. S1 at secondary school) is likely to be effective. In addition, an analysis of evaluations of mentoring programmes in the US found that mentoring could work for children of all ages.[17] Evidence also suggests that there are benefits from early intervention, before situations for children and young people become more complex or move into crisis.[18]

76.   The Life Changes Trust, which is currently developing its programme, has the objective of supporting young people who have left care and those who are near to the age when they may be leaving care. This is likely to be available to young people aged 14 years and above.

77.   The Hub decided that a focus on the children and young people in the school year groups between P4 and S2 would be appropriate, taking account of the challenges children and young people can experience in the transitions from primary

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[17] Lawner, E Beltz, M and Moore K.A (2013) What works for Mentor Programs: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions, Child Trends
[18] DuBois, D.L, Portillo. N, Rhodes, J.E, Silverthorn, N, Valentine, J.C (2011) How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence, Psychological Sciences in the Public Interest, August 2011 vol. 12 no.2 57-91

school to secondary school. This would also provide an opportunity to work with designated managers in primary and secondary school in order to support children and young people.

78. In terms of the specific population of those looked after at home, there were 2,217 children and young people aged between 8 to 14 years who were looked after at home on the 31st July 2012, according to disaggregated Scottish Government statistics.

79. An optimum age range for accessing mentoring through a national scheme should be from the age of 8 years (although some schemes may be able to work with children who are younger) up to the age of 14 years, recognising that some young people may be older when they either access or move on from a mentoring service.

*Length of mentoring relationships*

80. The original concept for the mentoring scheme was that mentors would be involved with children and young people for a longer period of time in order to provide consistent, stable relationships.

81. Mentoring services that contributed to the work of the Hub had different practices relating to the length of mentoring relationships. These varied from three months to two years. Some mentor relationships could extend beyond two years but this was less common. The length of the mentoring relationship was dependent on a number of reasons: whether mentoring programmes were intensive; the reason for referrals; the need to avoid 'drift' where children and young people were mentored without clear moving on strategies; access to other forms of support; and whether there were heavy demands on mentoring services.

82. All the mentoring services indicated that mentoring was provided for as long as a child or young person needed it, with options for extensions to the length of period where required. In addition, there was a need to work closely in partnership with communities and other agencies so that children and young people could access support when they moved on.

83.   Children and young people who took part in the online survey were asked if they had a mentor and for how long. Many of those with experience of having a mentor stated that this relationship had been supported for longer than a year. For some young people the contact with mentors was maintained over several years.

84.   Discussions in the Hub identified that the length of time that a child or young person had a mentor should be needs led and should support children and young people through key transitions. It was not defined as a particular time period. Longer term relationships were identified, however, as more appropriate in providing stability and to support children and young people through transitions.

85.   There are, however, challenges in 'guaranteeing' mentoring relationships to children and young people on a long term basis. These included: the retention of volunteer or paid mentors; the need for mentoring services to access funding which is sustainable; and the importance of children and young people, their families and mentors reviewing progress so that decisions about moving on could be agreed.

86.   Maintaining mentoring relationships through placement moves was important, taking into account the practical difficulties in doing this if a child or young person was placed away from their immediate community or was placed in an out of authority residential or foster placement. Being able to sustain mentoring relationships links to the importance of a whole systems approach which reduces the number of placement moves.

87.   Changes in mentors had to be managed well, especially where a service had a long term engagement with a child or young person. Many services had group activities in order to foster wider organisational as well as individual mentor relationships. Cultivating this wider engagement could provide additional support and continuity for a child or young person.

88.   The scheme should provide mentors for as a long as a child or young person needs it. In some cases this may extend across several years, and the scheme must be able to support this involvement.

*Supporting mentors*

89.   The original concept for a national mentoring scheme was that mentors should be volunteers. This is in line with the majority of current mentoring provision in Scotland.

90.   Some services use paid staff (both part-time sessional and full-time) as mentors. Most services, using volunteers or paid mentors, have professional co-ordinators and other staff to support mentors. Mentoring can also be provided by peer mentors (those with a shared experience of being looked after and/or close in age to those being mentored) who are also generally volunteers and are supported by paid staff.

91.   Discussions in the Hub explored the challenges that might be associated with using volunteers as mentors. This included: recruitment, training and support for mentors; volunteer mentors having the skills and experience to deal with complex situations; availability and retention of mentors.

92.   Organisations that used paid or part-time sessional staff as mentors highlighted that they did so to ensure continuity of mentoring relationships and because of the challenges associated with working with vulnerable children and young people. However, mentoring services which used volunteers highlighted that they had procedures for dealing with challenging situations affecting children and young people and provided in-service support and supervision. There were examples of volunteers who had been with their organisations for a considerable time. It was noted that more volunteer mentors were trained than ended up being matched with children and young people. Volunteer recruitment took this attrition into account in recruitment.

93.   The Hub also identified different benefits for using volunteers. This was supported by the experience of mentoring services. Benefits included: being able to follow personal interests in supporting children and young people; previous experience of care and/or of mentoring; interest in personal professional development and utilising experience for CV, professional training and career

development; working with children and young people in a different way to their usual professional roles. These were also applicable to those in part-time sessional mentoring roles.

94.   Hub discussions emphasised the importance of the potential role of volunteer mentors' to be a network of champions for children and young people who were looked after.   There was general support for the role of volunteers in a national mentoring scheme.

95.   Mentors in the national mentoring scheme should predominantly be volunteers in line with the majority of current provision, recognising that some services use paid staff as mentors.

### Linking with policy and services

96.   Hub discussions emphasised the importance of ensuring that a national mentoring scheme linked to existing and developing policy relating to looked after children and young people in order to maximise the effectiveness of the mentoring role and to ensure that there was not duplication of other roles.

97.   This was particularly relevant in terms of the roles of the Named Person and the Lead Professional as outlined in GIRFEC, the role of the corporate parent and the proposals in the Children and Young People Bill.

98.   Mentors should be regarded as valuable contributors to the realisation of the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators for a child or young person. They should contribute to care planning and other processes as appropriate (and should the child or young person so wish). The mentor's role should be recognised and taken into account by the GIRFEC team and specifically by the Named Person and Lead Professional.

99.   There is a range of current developments that have implications for a national mentoring scheme. These include: advocacy for children and young people in the Children's Hearing System; how to support a child and young person in ensuring their views are taken into account around the Child's Plan; and discussions about

home supervision and how to better support children and young people who are looked after at home.

100. The independent, voluntary and relationship-based nature of the mentoring role is complementary to that of other roles which relate to children and young people who are looked after. The Hub discussions emphasised that mentoring is not a bureaucratic role and is outside of statutory responsibilities. Mentoring, however, needed to be compatible with GIRFEC, a role that that was supported by mentoring services that inputted to the Hub's discussions.

101. A national mentoring scheme should take into account the rapidly developing policy context and the roles of other professionals who provide support to looked after children and young people.

*Supporting families*

102. The Hub identified that the needs of families should be taken into account when establishing mentoring support for children and young people. Although the benefits of mentoring for a child or young person could have positive impacts for the whole family, it was regarded as essential that parents and carers had access to appropriate support, where they require it, in order to improve the child or young person's home situation in a holistic way. Mentoring should not be seen as a substitute for support to meet the wider needs of a child or young person and their families.

103. In addition, the Hub emphasised the benefits of mentoring where it supported positive interactions between a child or young person and their families. At the same time, it is important that there are clear boundaries for mentors' relationships with parents and carers in order to ensure that the mentoring relationship focuses on the child or young person.

104. Many of the mentoring services that contributed to the Hub's work had either in-house services which could also support parents (e.g. Barnardo's Youth Involvement

project in Easterhouse) or contacts with other agencies which could provide services and support to parents.

105. Hub discussions emphasised that support to parents and carers should be available through other services and provision in order to maximise the benefits of mentoring relationships for children and young people and their families.

**SUPPORTING AND EVALUATING THE MENTORING SCHEME**

**Recruitment and support of mentors**

106. Mentoring services had extensive procedures for recruitment, training, support and supervision of volunteers and paid mentors. In addition, matching mentors with children and young people was regarded as an important part of the mentoring process and individualised to meet the needs of each child or young person.

107. Mentors were recruited widely from across age groups, with one service identifying that it attracted volunteers from 16 to 65 years of age. In addition, volunteers were drawn from a wide range of employment or caring backgrounds. Some mentoring services found it more difficult to recruit younger male volunteers while others, such as the YMCA's Plusone programme recruited younger male mentors from the local community. Mentoring services generally had a paid manager or coordinator and a range of other paid staff (such as volunteer support workers), depending on the size and the scope of the service.

108. Paid coordinating or support staff often undertook initial liaison with children, young people and families and were the contact point with children's services, particularly around the assessment of children and young people's needs and in terms of formal links to care plans. Professional staff often provided specialised support to a child, young person or their families when it was needed or dealt with complex issues.

109. The following were suggested as groups from which to attract potential volunteer mentors:

- open recruitment to attract potential mentors from diverse backgrounds and professionals, personal interests and across a wide age range
- volunteers from the local community where the service is based
- students undertaking training in social work, teaching, social care, counselling etc.

- those already working in professions working with children and young people such as social workers and teachers
- those who want to move to work in professions working with children and young people
- Panel members who wish to develop their interests supporting children and young people
- ex-army personnel (as high number have experience of care and may have an interest in mentoring)
- ex-foster carers who wish to continue to support children and young people
- peer mentors with shared experiences of care and potentially from a wide age range.

## *Quality assurance*

110. The Hub identified that having an appropriate quality framework in place was essential to ensuring consistency of services for a national mentoring scheme for looked after children and young people.

111. The Scottish Mentoring Network supports projects to apply for the Scottish Mentoring Network Project Quality Award. It is accredited by SQA to provide a customised award in Peer Mentoring and Support for mentors working with vulnerable client groups and will also be providing a new award for Mentoring Co-ordinators at SCQF Level 7 starting in autumn 2013.

112. Many mentoring services use the Scottish Mentoring Network's approved provider accreditation. National organisations such as Barnardo's have their own internal quality assurance mechanisms while the YMCA has developed a detailed providers' handbook that all its services, including franchised organisations, have to agree to. Befriending organisations are quality assessed through the Befriending Network's Quality in Befriending award.[19]

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[19] Befriending Network's Quality in Befriending award

113. It would be critical to assess whether any additional knowledge or criteria were needed for a scheme targeted at looked after children and young people, particularly in terms of the context of GIRFEC and other significant policy implementation areas.

### *Evaluation and monitoring*

114. Similarly, the Hub identified the importance of a consistent evaluation framework that all services providing mentoring for looked after children and young people would sign up to. Although there is a growing body of evaluation of mentoring services in Scotland, many of these evaluations are not easily comparable, publicly available to enable these comparisons or use the same evaluation approaches.

115. Services use a range of different approaches to evaluation, including self-evaluation models including logic modeling, evaluation by external researchers and the evaluation framework resource developed by the Scottish Mentoring Network.

116. Having a comparable monitoring and evaluation approach enables outcomes to be effectively tracked and compared. Evaluations should take into account outcomes for individual children and young people, identifying stories of change as well as efficacy in achieving organisational or service objectives.

117. Identifying common indicators for improved outcomes for children and young people looked after at home, such as increased attendance at school, educational achievement and reductions in placement moves, would provide mentoring services with common outcome measures. Ensuring that these matched GIRFEC's SHANARRI indicators would enable comparisons to be made with other evaluations of services supporting children and young people. 'Soft outcomes' such as increased confidence and empowerment should be measured along with harder outcomes relating to, for example, education.

118. Overall, evaluation needs to be built in from the start of the individual mentoring relationship and explore long term the impact of mentoring on the child or young person, taking into account the challenges in identifying the specific factors related to mentoring which impact on outcomes.

**CONCLUSION**

119. The Scottish Government invited Dr Susan Elsley to consider the viability of a national mentoring scheme for looked after children and young people. The original concept was for a national scheme that would provide longer term mentoring relationships to looked after children and young people, with volunteers taking on the mentoring role. This report presents the conclusions of that assessment, and summarises the accompanying discussions of the Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group's (LACSIG) Mentoring Hub.

120. Evidence shows that stability and permanence in the lives of children and young people can aid the creation of secure attachments and can lead to improved life chances. However, there are still poor outcomes for many children and young people who are looked after, particularly those looked after at home. This report is a response to the imperative for improving outcomes for looked after children and young people, taking into account the Scottish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee's inquiry into looked after children's educational outcomes[20] which urged the Scottish Government to consider utilising volunteers more in response to the needs of looked after children and young people, particularly those looked after at home.

121. Research indicates that mentoring is effective as an approach to supporting children and young people who require this level of support. It appears to have a positive impact on outcomes across different areas of children and young people's lives. Longer term mentoring relationships appear to be more beneficial and mentoring can work with younger as well as older children and young people. The use of volunteer mentors is identified as being positive with community based approaches being particularly successful. Peer mentoring shares many of the elements of other mentoring approaches. Having a goal orientated approach and also supporting social relationships is key to mentoring.

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[20] Scottish Parliament (2012) Sixth Report, (Session 4) Report on educational achievement of looked after children

122. The Hub included the views and experiences of children and young people in its work. It undertook two activities, an online survey and a consultation event, between January and March 2013 with children and young people. The majority of children and young people were supportive of mentors being available to those who were looked after. They identified some of the key tasks that mentors could undertake, the qualities that mentors should have and emphasised that children and young people should be involved in all aspects of mentoring services and projects.

123. The mentoring services that inputted to the work of the Mentoring Hub all had common elements: extensive training programmes for volunteer and paid mentors; open referral systems which were balanced by high demand for services; other activities and forms of support available to children and young people through the service or other agencies; general alignment with GIRFEC principles; and support and liaison with families. Services had different approaches to the length of the mentoring relationship which varied from three months up to two years.

124. The Hub identified that mentoring for looked after children and young people through a national mentoring scheme should be defined as a relationship-based approach to supporting an individual or group of individuals by another or others. It should include both goal orientated and social aspects of mentoring, based on the intrinsic value of relationships. It should be undertaken formally by trained mentors, taking into account existing relationships with family members and other informal mentor-type relationships with trusted adults.

125. This report recommends that a national mentoring scheme should be established by the Scottish Government for children and young people looked after at home. Mentors should predominantly be volunteers in line with the majority of current provision, recognising that some services use paid staff as mentors. An optimum age range for accessing mentoring through a national mentoring scheme should be from the age of 8 years (although some schemes may be able to work with children who are younger) up to the age of 14 years. The scheme should provide mentors for as a long as a child or young person needs it. In some cases this may extend across many years, and the scheme must be able to support this objective.

**LACSIG MENTORING HUB WORK PROGRAMME**

126. The Mentoring Hub was established by the LACSIG Board[21] in October 2012 as a short life group. The Hub included representatives from Barnardo's, the Centre of Excellence for looked after children in Scotland (CELCIS), Children 1st, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), the Scottish Mentoring Network and Who Cares? Scotland. It was supported by the Scottish Government and CELCIS, and chaired by Dr Susan Elsley, an independent consultant.

127. The work programme of the Hub focused around the following activities:

- Examining evidence of mentoring, including peer mentoring, and other approaches which provide support to children and young people, particularly looked after children/young people and young people who are care leavers
- Engaging with stakeholders who have expertise and an interest in mentoring including professionals, service providers and children and young people
- Exploring the positive attributes and challenges associated with a national mentoring scheme and identifying ways of addressing any issues
- Developing a proposal for establishing and implementing initial work on mentoring and developing a proposal for extending the pilot scheme into a national scheme.

128. The Hub met four times between December 2012 and June 2013 with structured discussion to explore different issues and evidence relating to mentoring, including:

- *Exploring evidence on mentoring:* The Hub has examined research, evaluations and other evidence on mentoring in order to consider its role, effectiveness and approach to measuring outcomes.

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[21] For further details of the LACSIG Board, please visit the CELCIS website.

- *Input from mentoring organisations and projects:* The Hub has had direct expert input from five organisations with experience in providing or supporting mentoring: Barnardo's; Renfrewshire Council; the Scottish Mentoring Network; West Dunbartonshire Council; and the YMCA. In addition, there has been contact with a range of other mentoring projects and services.

- *Children and young people's views*: The Hub undertook an online survey with children and young people on their views of mentoring with 116 children and young people responding. A consultation event was held and attended by 15 young people from four organisations that had experience of mentoring, were peer mentors and were or had been looked after. The Minister for Children and Young People attended the event.

**APPENDIX B**

**EXAMPLES OF SCOTTISH MENTORING SERVICES**

**Barnardo's Youth Involvement Project:** Based in the Easterhouse area of Glasgow this service works with children and young people affected by parental substance misuse and works closely in partnership with other agencies. Most children and young people are on home supervision and already have social work involvement. The service uses volunteer mentors and works with children and young people aged 6 to15 years. It works to GIRFEC SHANARRI outcomes, using the six domains of the resilience model.

The mentoring programme focuses on early intervention. It can include access to family therapy, individual work and social activities. In addition, support to parents is provided through access to other support provided by Barnardo's such as the Triple P parenting programme.

The mentoring relationship is reviewed with children and young people every 13 weeks. Evaluation is undertaken internally with highly positive feedback from children, young people and families. Volunteer mentors have extensive mandatory training and monthly supervision. There is a strong emphasis on matching mentors and children and young people, with support from project workers where young people's needs are complex.

**Plusone Mentoring, YMCA:** The YMCA has developed a mentoring programme called Plusone for children and young people aged 8 to 14 at risk of offending. It runs Plusone services in seven local authority areas with six more planned. Mentors are volunteers who are supported by project co-ordinators. The projects are based in communities, ensuring that there are strong local links for children and young people during and after the mentoring relationship.

The programme is based on the premise that intervening earlier is more effective, especially through difficult transitions such as from primary to secondary school. The Plusone scheme works to youth work principles; that the mentor works in the best

interests of the child, building trust and positive relationships; and that the young person voluntarily engages in the programme.

There are mechanisms in place to ensure quality assurance across the Plusone projects with franchise arrangements where partner organisations run local services. The Plusone programme has been externally evaluated with highly positive outcomes with 86% of young people significantly changing behaviour after six months. The YMCA has received Big Lottery funding from the Realising Ambition programme that will enable the model to be replicated in 10 new local authority areas across Scotland.

**South Ayrshire Befriending Project:** South Ayrshire Befriending Project has been running for 17 years and provides one-to-one befriending relationships for children and young people who are socially isolated between 8 and 18 years of age. Although this project focuses on befriending, it also provides goal orientated support in line with the objectives of mentoring services. A number of the children and young people referred to the service are looked after at home and/or cared for by kinship carers. The project works to achieve outcomes in line with the GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators and links closely with local services and agencies. At any time, the project can be working with 33 to 35 children and young people.

Funding is provided by the local authority, Children in Need and additional trust and grant funding. The one-to-one befriending to children and young people is provided by trained volunteers who are supported by project staff. The project also offers and facilitates monthly activities for matched young people. The befriending relationship can last for up to two years (with the potential for extension) with planning for children and young people who are moving on often starting a year before the end of the befriending relationship. The project maintains close links with parents and carers, meeting every six to eight weeks. The project has recently achieved the Quality in Befriending award through Befriending Networks.

**West Dunbartonshire Council Youth Mentoring Service:** This mentoring service is run by West Dunbartonshire Council and has been in place for nine years, funded by the social work department. The service provides mentoring support to an

average of 50 young people per year aged between 7 and 22 years. Its activities range from befriending support to longer term goal orientated mentoring. The focus is on looked after children and support to children and young people around youth justice. The majority of support to looked after children is provided to children and young people on home supervision.

Referrals come from across services. The mentoring support is provided by paid sessional staff and is supported by a fulltime programme co-ordinator. The scheme is viewed as being highly effective with a focus on early intervention which has positive repercussions in the community. The project is currently working on its third approved provider accreditation through the Scottish Mentoring Network.

**Xplore, Dundee:** Xplore works with peer mentors who support other young people who may be socially isolated, have behaviour issues, are experiencing family difficulties or are bullied. Peer mentors are aged 14 to 22 years and are generally in the same age group as those they are mentoring. Peer mentors undergo a 26 week training course and are provided with regular support and supervision by project staff. Dundee City Council funds the service.

The focus of the service is on mentoring, rather than befriending, with goals and targets for each young person who is being mentored. Mentoring is provided in groups or one-to-one. Support to young people can include help with homework, providing advice and supporting social activities. The mentoring support provided by peer mentors is time-limited, usually lasting up to 3 months although this can be extended. The service uses the GIRFEC well-being indicators to review mentoring relationships with positive feedback from young people who are mentored and peer mentors developing increased confidence and new skills.