Move On Peer Mentoring Programme: Evaluation Report

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Final report

Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR)

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Acknowledgements

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Mentors say...

"It was magical: the people that were involved... people were very open about themselves, their experiences and their problems. Stereotypes were blown out of the water."

"The fact that he understands he's not alone in this world, do you know what I mean? There is people who are in the same boat as him who have changed their life about, who are daein all right now...he might be in this noo but it's not forever."

"People are accepted as soon as they come through the door. The staff are all friendly, supportive and not judgemental."

"Building confidence and achieving goals is important, but it is also about those 90 minutes where the mentee is the sole focus, the most important person in the room. That is unusual – I would have liked to have that."

Mentees say...

"They were open-minded. I had a choice and a say in things and I liked that."

"If I go and meet him when I'm down I always come out with a smile on my face."

"I've been in the care system since I was 8 and I've seen pals shipped off to Polmont and that and I'm determined not to do it. I'm determined to move on and make a new life for myself."

"I've learned how to grow up. At this time last year I was getting into a lot of trouble with the police and stuff, since Move On stepped in I've got none, no trouble. They stepped in when I needed it most."

"He tells me that he's been through what I'm going through the now and to stop being a fanny and to get a grip."

"Basically what she done was she helped me to develop my social skills, which is like the major part of it because I used to really struggle like speaking to new people, like even buying new things and stuff like that. I think she helped me a lot with that...I think I'm mostly ok now with communicating. There's still moments where I'm a bit hesitant or like I step back, but mostly I'm ok."

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Background

Established in 1997, Move On delivers services across Scotland to "unlock the potential of vulnerable young people and those affected by homelessness in order to improve their lives".

Over the last decade, Move On's mentoring and peer mentoring service has become an integral part of the organisation's programme of work. The mentoring service matches vulnerable young people (including those who are care-experienced) with a volunteer mentor. Some mentors, known as 'peer mentors', have experienced the care system or other forms of disadvantage themselves and bring this life experience to matches with care-experienced young people.

The evaluation

In 2015, Move On commissioned The Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, based at the University of Edinburgh, to conduct an outcome-based evaluation of its pilot peer mentoring programme (which was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation), and its relationship to its wider mentoring services.

The evaluation took place from August 2015 – December 2015. Early in the evaluation process it became apparent that the division between peer and core mentoring services is not always distinct. As a consequence, the evaluation report does not focus solely on peer mentoring, but rather seeks to draw out findings related to shared experience across the mentoring matches and to explore specific benefits and challenges of peer mentoring where this emerged from the data.

The evaluation team has taken an approach that acknowledges that projects and programmes do not occur in a vacuum but are part of many interacting factors which impact upon individual's lives. The approach taken in order to address this complexity combines contribution analysis and pluralistic evaluation.

Two evaluation workshops brought together a range of stakeholders to develop a "theory of change" for Move On's mentoring service. This theory of change informed questions asked in interviews with 12 mentees, 14 mentors, 10 members of Move On staff and 9 external stakeholders, including funders and referrers. In addition, three focus groups were conducted with groups of mentors.

Key achievements

The mentoring service is accredited by the Scottish Mentoring Network and was awarded a Quality Award by the Network as well as being named their Project of the Year, during the evaluation period. Referrers and funders hold Move On's mentoring service in high regard and see the organisation as a source of mentoring expertise.

Both mentees and mentors expressed broadly very positive experiences of their involvement with mentoring with Move On. All mentors and all staff spoke very positively about the mentor training and found it to be extremely valuable and, overall, enjoyable. That the young person chooses their mentor and that mentees set, and work towards achieving, goals are central to Move On's approach.

The activities undertaken by matched pairs depend upon the goals that they have set. The programme was especially valued by mentees, mentors, staff and partners for its flexibility and diversity. The programme has attracted mentors and mentees with diverse experiences and the style of mentoring, pace and goals was highly flexible.

Central to Move On's mentoring model is the "triangle of support", a triangular relationship between the individual mentee, individual mentor and Move On. Move On's mentoring service is flexible to the individual needs of the mentee; the triangle of support provides a structure within which this high degree of flexibility can safely exist. It is important that this structure is consistently strong in order to maintain the boundaries of the mentor relationship and protect all three actors in the triangular relationship.

All mentees and mentors were able to identify positive outcomes that they attributed to their mentoring relationship. These varied depending upon the needs of the individuals involved in the match, but included both 'hard' and 'soft' outcomes for both mentees and mentors. Some outcomes related directly to the goals set, but others were unexpected.

Recommendations

We recommend continuing to develop a coherent service across the two cities that recognises the value of all of the experiences and interests that mentors bring to the service to share with young people.

The evaluation found that the majority of mentors and mentees felt well supported by Move On most of the time but the levels of support described were not always consistent. The evaluation identified that challenging incidents may have been resolved more quickly if staff had been meeting more regularly with mentors and mentees. Whilst recognising the usually strong and effective support provided by Move On to mentors and mentees, we recommend that the minimum level and structure of support is clarified with mentees/mentors and adhered to across the staff team.

We recognise the challenge that Move On faces in balancing the need to provide a consistent service and responding flexibly to the needs of different individuals and matched pairs. We recommend that this challenge is honestly discussed with mentors as part of the mentor training in order to avoid unrealistic expectations of the service.

Move On has rightly focused upon the needs of mentees, but there is some evidence that this has at times focused attention away from the support needs of mentors and from the benefits that mentoring can bring for mentors. We recommend starting a conversation about the importance of meeting mentors' needs in order to best support mentees.

One particular point of concern is the potential gap between mentors finishing training and being matched with a mentee. This is a period of potential vulnerability for mentors who are waiting to be 'chosen' by a young person. Therefore, we recommend that each mentor should be assigned a key worker after the training and that individual support be consistently provided as part of the support structure outlined above.

We are aware that Move On is currently undertaking a review of its monitoring systems and developing a new database for recording information. We recommend that the findings from this evaluation process feed into this review.

The Move On "theory of change" set out in this evaluation report provides a framework through which Move On can tell a narrative about the Mentoring Service. We recommend that Move On builds this framework into ongoing self-evaluation.

1 Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

1.1 Established in 1997, Move On delivers services across Scotland to "unlock the potential of vulnerable young people and those affected by homelessness in order to improve their lives"[1]. The critical objectives of the organisation are to:

- Support vulnerable young people and those affected by homelessness to raise their aspirations and build confidence.

- Empower vulnerable young people and those affected by homelessness to take control over their own futures and achieve their goals.

- Deliver flexible, responsive services across Scotland to meet the needs of our service users.

1.2 Through bases in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the service has expanded to include a range of services for people affected by homelessness and vulnerable young people. These include:

- One to one community-based support, including volunteer befriending, mentoring and peer mentoring.

- Peer education, providing vital information and advice on a range of issues.

- Schools-based group work, workshops and advice and information delivery.

- Employability activities, e.g. early engagement, CV preparation, job search, personal development, building basic skills, group work and aftercare.

- Literacy and numeracy tutoring.

- Money and debt advice.

- FareShare Glasgow and the West of Scotland' a food recycling initiative, tackling food poverty, health inequalities and offering significant employability opportunities.

- Volunteering opportunities.

1.3 Throughout the organisation value is placed on ensuring service users have control over setting, and achieving, their own goals. Move On also aims to maximise the impact of what they do, rather than seeing the delivery of a service as an end in itself. Through this flexible, outcome-focused approach,

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[1] Source: www.moveon.org.uk

Move On aims to empower people to help themselves, grow in confidence, access suitable accommodation, build positive social networks, develop employability skills and access jobs, training and education.

Evaluation aims and objectives

1.4 Over the last decade, Move On's mentoring and peer mentoring service has become an integral part of the organisation's programme of work. The mentoring service matches vulnerable young people (including those who are care-experienced) with a volunteer mentor. Some mentors, known as 'peer mentors', have experienced the care system or other forms of disadvantage themselves and bring this life experience to matches with care-experienced young people.

1.5 In 2015, Move On commissioned The Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, based at the University of Edinburgh, to conduct an outcome-based evaluation of its pilot peer mentoring programme (which was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation), and its relationship to its wider mentoring services. It was expected that the evaluation would help develop Move On's ability to self-evaluate its services for young people at all stages (from setting outcomes, collecting and analysing data, through to learning from the findings).

1.6 The evaluation took place from August 2015 – December 2015, and focused on three specific questions:

- What difference is mentoring making to the lives of the young people who are being mentored?

- What evidence, if any, is there of benefits of peer mentoring for the hardest-to-reach young people, over other forms of mentoring?

- What are the benefits of the service for those volunteering as peer mentors and mentors and how could the service be improved to meet their needs more effectively?

1.7 Early in the evaluation process it became apparent that the division between peer and core mentoring services is not always distinct. This relates to the changing and debated definition of 'a peer', and also to staff, mentor and mentees' awareness of the peer aspect of the relationship and the differing role that shared experiences play in different matches. As a consequence, the evaluation report does not focus solely on peer mentoring, but rather seeks to draw out findings related to shared experience across the mentoring matches and to explore specific benefits and challenges of peer mentoring where this emerged from the data.

Evaluation methodology

1.8 The evaluation approach acknowledges that projects and programmes do not occur in a vacuum but are part of many interacting factors which impact upon

individual's lives. The approach taken to address this complexity combines contribution analysis and pluralistic evaluation.

1.9   The aim of contribution analysis[2] is to develop a 'theory of change' underpinning a service/policy – in other words how people think a project will lead to successful outcomes - by discussing what the project sets out to achieve, and the steps that will lead to these outcomes. In particular, a theory of change is used to examine and interrogate the risks and assumptions implicit in the service design. Importantly for Move On, contribution analysis allows the possibility of multiple outcomes, such as benefits for both mentees and mentors. Contribution analysis involves all partners in discussion about the theory of change and so encourages investment and ownership in the project aims and processes, together with the evaluation.

1.10   A contribution analysis workshop was held at the beginning of the evaluation process with Move On staff, mentors and other key stakeholders. In this workshop we developed a 'theory of change' which identifies different success criteria for the service at different stages and the risks and assumptions inherent in this model.

1.11   The theory of change produced during the contribution analysis workshop is illustrated in Figure 1.1. This theory of change tells the story of Move On's mentoring service as perceived by stakeholders who participated in the contribution analysis workshop.

1.12   The theory of change was used to inform all aspects of the data collection, including developing interview schedules for interviews and focus groups. It ensures that key stakeholders are involved in the process of prioritising key topics for investigation. Overall the theory of change, combined with data from the interviews, enables the evaluators to provide a strong narrative about the contribution and impact of Move On's Peer Mentoring Service in this evaluation report.

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[2] •Mayne, J. (2008) Contribution Analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect, ILAC methodological brief, available at http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/files/ILAC_Brief16_Contribution_Analysis_0.pdf

Figure 1.1: Theory of change produced from contribution workshop

7. Contribution (final outcomes)
Positive and sustainable outcomes for mentors and mentees; wider external recognition of the success of the project as an innovative model of best practice; ongoing funding.
Examples of positive outcomes might include increased confidence & resilience; more integration into society; independence and sustained positive destinations.

Assumptions: Young people can sustain change in the longer term; they have enough support to deal with deep-seated issues (e.g. counselling, drug and alcohol rehab).

Risks: The social, economic and community situations young people live in don't support their positive changes. Old issues might re-emerge (or new issues emerge), especially for young people with attachment issues and / or experience of trauma. Funders think change is simpler than it is. Too much focus on hard outcomes.

6. Behaviours / Practice (intermediate outcomes)
Mentees make healthy choices and achieve goals; move into new jobs and access new opportunities.
Mentees and mentors communicate their emotions and their needs; try new challenges; demonstrate new skills and gain confidence.

Assumptions: that progress is linear; the process of goal setting and reviewing transfers to other areas of young people's lives. Different services that young people access support each other in their approaches.

Risks: External factors get in the way of progress (e.g. family, negative peer group, poor physical/mental health, drugs and alcohol, living conditions, environment, financial problems); over-dependency on support networks; young people unaware of progress made and new skills gained.

5. Capacity / knowledge / skills (immediate outcomes)
Mentees have the ability to build positive relationships based on mutual trust, honesty and support; gain new hobbies and interests; new abilities to identify goals and review progress; the development of life and employability skills.
Both mentors & mentees experience an increase in interpersonal and communication skills.

Assumptions: that there is a triangle of support relevant to mentor and mentee; that mentee, mentor & staff understand and respect child protection/ confidentiality/ boundaries. Measurable & appropriate goals are being set, SMART goals are useful. Staff have time, no stress or burnout.

Risks: Incompatible pairings; goals too expensive or unrealistic; matches not sustained long enough for positive outcome; match does not move in a forward trajectory; mentor and/or mentee do not take responsibility for match; service 'inappropriate'; breakdown of trust, for example as a result of child protection concerns; external factors cause relapse/regression; peer mentor relationships might be more likely to break down because of shared life experiences.

4. Awareness / reaction (immediate outcomes)
Mentees think "this is for me", engage with / trust their mentor and Move On, feel safe and respected.
Mentors think "I can make a difference", feel empowered, safe and supported. Think this would made a difference for themselves.

Assumptions: that training from Move On gives mentors skills and experience they need; expectations are made clear from the beginning of the match; mentors will provide peer support; matches will happen quickly. Mentees & mentors are in control of the process.

Risks: work commitments/social life of mentors; high drop-out rate for mentors and mentees; mentors personal life may have a negative or a positive impact; it is emotionally challenging for staff to maintain a strong relationships with mentors & mentees. Matches don't always happen quickly & mentors lose motivation.

3. Engagement / involvement
For mentees: Young people want to get involved, matches are sustained and successful relationships are built between mentee/mentor/Move On.
For the mentor: There is a sustained pool of volunteer mentors, mentors are engaged and motivated and the match is well-supported by Move On.
For referrers: The service is clearly promoted to potential referrers, good communication with referrers ensures appropriate referrals and referrers are well-informed about

Assumptions: that the project will get enough appropriate referrals; volunteer mentors will be recruited and sustained; that training and support maintains/retains volunteers. Peer mentoring makes it easier to engage with harder to reach young people than other mentoring.

Risks: Inappropriate referrals and / or unrealistic expectations from referrers, mentees and mentors; that volunteers leave or are disheartened by delays in being matched; that staff turnover results in problems in communication and relationships with mentors.

1 & 2. Inputs / activities / outputs
To run a peer mentoring service; recruit train and support mentors; manage referrals and ensure young people's needs lead the service; support successful matches and

1.13   The primary data was collected from a range of project partners. These included: mentees, mentors, staff, referral agencies and funders. A total of 44 interviews were conducted for the research, with the 'theory of change' being used to shape the interview questions (a breakdown is shown in Table 1.1 below). The primary data collection was supplemented by a review of background information provided by Move On staff. Research instruments can be found in the appendices to this report.

Table 1.1: Summary of primary data collection

Source of evaluation data	Glasgow	Edinburgh	Other / no area	Total
Individual interviews with mentee	4	4	-	8
individual interviews with mentors	5	5	-	10
paired interviews with mentees and mentors	3	1	-	4
focus groups with mentors	1	2	-	3
Interviews with 10 project staff (includes 1 paired interview)	3	4	3	10
Telephone interviews with external stakeholders (4 referrers and 5 funders)	-	-	9	9
Total	**16**	**16**	**12**	**44**

1.14   The evaluation approach acknowledged that not all mentees would be comfortable participating in an individual interview with an adult they did not know. In order to ensure that all mentees were able to take part we adopted a flexible approach where mentees could either take part in an individual interview or a paired interview with their mentor. These paired interviews also allowed researchers to observe the relationship between mentee and mentor. This was adjusted after piloting the interview schedule with Edinburgh mentors by adding an optional follow-up phone call to both mentee and mentor who took part in a paired interviews so that they could share any information that they had not been comfortable discussing in the pair. Only one of the three pairs requested this follow-up telephone call.

1.15   Unfortunately, given the limitations of time and scope of the research, and despite the best efforts of Move On staff, we were unable to include any interviews with young people who were no longer engaged with the service. It is therefore acknowledged that the mentee views represented in this evaluation report tend to be from young people whose match is ongoing and successful. In order to mitigate for this bias we took care to talk to mentors and staff about matches that had not been successful.

1.16 It is also important to note that the interviewees were identified and contacted by Move On staff. This means that there is a potential for bias in the sampling of participants. However, the evaluation team found that Move On were keen for us to not only talk to mentees and mentors with positive opinions of the service and, within the limitations of the evaluation, we believe that the participants – both mentees and mentors – reflected a wide range of experiences.

1.17 The University of Edinburgh's School of Social and Political Science gave ethical approval for the evaluation. An information sheet about the evaluation was provided and an informed consent form was signed by all participants before they took part in focus groups (see appendix 1). The consent form included details about confidentiality, child protection and recording.

Report structure

1.18 In the contribution analysis workshop a metaphor emerged of a 'mentoring journey' which progresses across all of the different stages of the theory of change. Together with the key theme of relationships, this metaphor is used to organise the data presented in this evaluation report.

1.19 Chapter two provides an overview of Move On's journey into mentoring, while chapters three and four look at mentors and mentees journeys through, and relationships within, the service. In chapter five we look explicitly at the outcomes of the service for mentees, mentors and the organisation and in the final chapter we present our concluding comments, recommendations and questions for further reflection.

2   Move On's mentoring service

> **Key Points**
>
> Move On's mentoring service developed from the belief that young people benefit from a sustained one-to-one relationship with a volunteer who is neither family nor a support worker.
>
> The first mentors were not required to have any specific life experiences and these mentors are known as 'core mentors'. Over time Move On has also developed its 'peer mentor' service which aims to target the most hard to reach young people.
>
> Move On's definition of 'peer' has evolved to focus primarily on the benefit that shared life experiences brings to the mentoring relationship rather than upon shared age and experience.
>
> Move On has separate staff teams in Edinburgh and Glasgow with a senior management structure that straddles both teams. Operational staff do not specialise within the organisation but rather split their time between the various services that Move On offers to clients.

The development of Move On's mentoring service

2.1   Move On's mentoring service began in Edinburgh in 2002. It grew from the organisation's peer education programme for young people, which provides workshops in schools focusing on housing and independent living skills. Feedback from professional partners and young people suggested that there were young people who would benefit from peer education, but who struggled to engage in a group setting. This was coupled with a belief that, in addition to one-off educational inputs, young people would benefit from a sustained one-to-one relationship. It was felt that a mentoring relationship, with a volunteer who is neither family nor a support worker, could remove many of the barriers young people have experienced within past relationships.

2.2   An initial attempt to develop three-way meetings between a young person, a trained young peer mentor and a member of staff proved challenging. While this model strengthened Move On's belief in the potential benefit of the mentoring model, the three-way dynamic proved problematic, with a perception that young people found it difficult to speak freely to two new people. Therefore, Move On moved initially towards a more traditional mentoring service.

2.3   Initially, Move On's mentoring service recruited volunteer mentors specifically for care-experienced young people (CEYP) and young people attending SEBD (social, emotional & behavioural difficulties) schools. In line with Move On's broader organisational objectives, the focus was explicitly upon improving employability outcomes for mentees. The mentoring approach developed emphasised the importance of supporting young people to set and achieve goals

and to raise their self-esteem as a result of achieving these goals. Secondly, it prioritised building a consistent, supportive and trusting relationship, particularly for young people who may not already have such relationships in their life. The service aims to give control and choice to young people, with mentees choosing their mentor, their goals, the activities that they undertake with their mentor and the pace of their journey.

2.4   Mentors recruited to this original service were not required to have any specific life experiences. Such mentors are now sometimes referred to within the organisation as "core mentors" in order to differentiate them from the more recent addition of "peer mentors". This new programme of work commenced in 2012, with funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Through matching care-experienced or recently care-experienced young people with "peer" mentors who have left care, the aim was to provide both mentee and mentor the benefits of a positive mentoring relationship, helping to build confidence, enhance skills, develop improved social networks and improve employability outcomes. Paul Hamlyn Foundation has since extended the funding for a further two years to part-fund expanding the peer mentoring programme to Edinburgh and integrating the training and support of peer mentors with mentors from other backgrounds. More recently, Move On gained funding from the Life Changes Trust to further develop this model and approach. Over this time Move On have worked closely with the Scottish Mentoring Network, were one of the first recipients of their new Quality Award and won their Project of the Year award, 2015.

Defining peer mentoring

2.5   Move On investment in peer mentoring is driven by a belief that it offers a range of specific benefits, particularly for care-experienced children and young people:

- Peer mentors have a deep awareness of the emotional impact of being care-experienced.

- They provide a sensitive role model to young people in transition from being care-experienced to independent living.

- They can build on their own awareness and experience of meeting the challenges of managing that transition to offer additional tools and strategies to their mentees.

- They have a shared formative experience, which can accelerate the building of trust and the establishment of a positive relationship.

2.6   There is also a belief that peer mentoring can best engage with the hardest-to-reach young people. This may link back to the origins of the service in seeking to engage with young people who were not able to engage with peer education group-work or who needed more sustained support.

2.7 While initially there was an expectation that peer mentors would be only slightly older than their mentees, the project highlighted the challenges that care-experienced young people face well into adulthood. Move On experienced difficulties recruiting individuals who were both interested, and able, to sustain the role of mentor. Potential peer mentors were often still working through practical and emotional challenges related to their own past experiences and did not have enough stability in their lives to enable them to mentor a young person. Move On has since redefined the phrase "peer mentor" to focus solely upon shared life experiences, rather than similar age and experience.

2.8 This evolution in how peer mentoring has been defined has also shaped the way potential mentors have been trained. Initially, the peer mentor and core mentor training was run separately as there was a belief that peer mentors would need different information and support as a result of their different age-range and life experience. However, when the definition of peer mentor was reconsidered, the two training programmes were brought together. The belief is that this benefits both groups of mentors; with core mentors and peer mentors all learning from sharing their life experiences and skills.

Resources and staffing

2.9 At the time of the evaluation, funding sources (see table 1.1) demonstrate a range of criteria both for mentees and mentors across the organisation's two locations of Edinburgh and Glasgow.
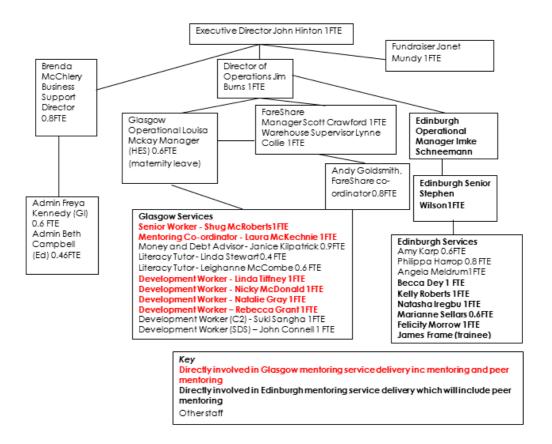
Table 2.1: Summary of funding sources

Funder	Mentee criteria	Mentor criteria	Location	Start Date	End Date
Henry Smith Charity	CEYP/SEBD pupils	Core	Edinburgh & Glasgow	Dec 2014	Dec 2017
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	CEYP	Peer	Glasgow	April 2015	March 2017
BBC Children in Need/Hunter Foundation	Homeless YP/CEYP	Peer and core	Edinburgh & Glasgow	April 2015	March 2018
City of Edinburgh Council	CEYP/SEBD pupils	Core	Edinburgh	April 2015	March 2019
Life Changes Trust	CEYP	Peer	Edinburgh	Oct 2015	Sep 2017
City of Edinburgh Council (EPSIP)	Homeless YP	Core	Edinburgh	Oct 2015	March 2018

2.10 Move On has separate staff teams in Edinburgh and Glasgow with a senior management structure that straddles both teams (as can be seen in figure 2.1). Staff do not specialise within the organisation but rather split their time between the various services that Move On offers to clients, thus supporting the

mentoring service is only one part of their role. Staff who work across Move On services, including directly with the mentoring service, have the job title of 'Development Worker'. However in this report they are referred to as 'key workers' reflecting the specific part of their role relating to supporting mentoring matches. At the time of the evaluation Move On was in the process of recruiting a Mentoring Co-ordinator who will work with the mentoring service in both Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Figure 2.1: Organisational chart

Summary of 2015 service activity

2.11 In 2015 Move on trained a total of 50 mentors (27 In Glasgow and 23 in Edinburgh). Of these, 14 mentors (8 in Glasgow and 6 in Edinburgh) are identified by Move On as peer mentors.

2.12 In total Move On's mentoring project engaged with 79 young people in 2015, 43 of whom were care-experienced and 21 of whom had experience of homelessness.

2.13 A total of 33 young people began matches with a mentor in 2015. In the same year, 10 matches came to a planned end (2 with peer mentors) and 5 came to an end in an unplanned manner (1 with a peer mentor).

2.14 Of the young people who were in active matches in 2015, 34 were recorded as reaching positive destinations, 40 reported soft positive outcomes from the mentoring relationship and 18 achieved SMART goals set with their mentor.

2.15 At the time of the evaluation, Move On was undertaking a review of its monitoring systems and developing a new database to ensure that all of the necessary information about its services is captured.

3   Move On mentoring journeys

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Key Points

Both mentees and mentors expressed broadly very positive experiences of their involvement with mentoring with Move On.

Mentees and mentors express varied personal motivations for getting involved in the service which, in turn, influence their understanding of the aims and outcomes of Move On's mentoring service.

There are commonalities and differences in each mentor/mentee's journey through the mentoring process. The beginning and ending of each mentoring journey can be particularly challenging for mentees, mentors and staff. Both positive and challenging unexpected events can and do, however, occur at any point on the mentoring journey.

The programme was especially valued by mentees, mentors, staff and partners for its flexibility and diversity. The programme attracted mentors and mentees with diverse experiences and the style of mentoring, pace and goals was highly flexible.

Staff emphasise the needs of the mentee over the needs of the mentor. While this is understandable, there are times when increased sensitivity to mentors' anxieties and needs may benefit the service. This is particularly true in the period between the end of mentor training and being matched with a mentee.
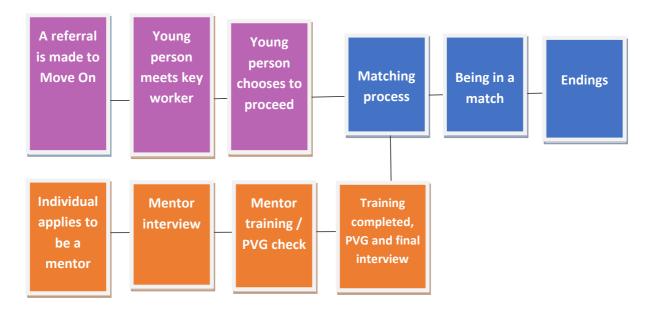
The issue of deciding when to end the mentoring relationship raised the consistent tension for staff and mentors between having a naturalistic and authentic relationship and placing strong boundaries around that relationship.

Aspects of the mentoring service could be made more explicit as part of a good practice model, including the role of experienced staff and their expertise in framing the matching process, and in deciding when matches should end.

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The mentee-mentor journey

3.1   A 'Move On mentoring journey' can be traced for each individual mentee, mentor and each mentee/mentor match. These journeys are unique but all have stages in common. These stages, and the interview participants' experiences of these stages, are outlined in the following sections.

Figure 3.1: The mentee-mentor journey

| A referral is made to Move On | Young person meets key worker | Young person chooses to proceed | Matching process | Being in a match | Endings |

| Individual applies to be a mentor | Mentor interview | Mentor training / PVG check | Training completed, PVG and final interview |

How young people found out about Move On

3.2 The majority of mentees interviewed were told about Move On by a professional who was providing them with support, including teachers, social workers and workers from third sector organisations. Three mentees came to the Mentoring Service through a friend who had been involved in another Move On project and one could not remember how he found out about the service but thought that it might have been through his mum.

3.3 Professionals from other organisations who referred young people to Move On found out about the organisation through networking with individual Move On staff or joint working with Move On. They emphasised Move On's reputation and their past experience of working with Move On as reasons for referring young people.

> *"There is a trust between the different organisations that people know what they are doing." (referrer)*

> *"I really like the staff and their approach. It's obvious they are always thinking about the young person and that is what pushes things forward." (referrer)*

Mentee referrals

3.4 There was agreement across the interviews with staff and referrers that the service targets a very wide group of young people. The service is perceived to be of benefit to young people who, among other factors, 'are vulnerable', 'lacking in direction', 'not engaging with learning', 'experiencing problems at home' and 'lacking confidence'. Staff described how funding criteria also impact upon the young people that the service targets, with current funding streams focusing upon young people who are care-experienced, young people at risk of

homelessness and young people who lack a positive destination. However, several members of staff stated that they can find ways to accommodate particular young people if the organisation thinks that the service will be of benefit to them.

3.5 Although it is possible for a young person to self-refer to the mentoring service, this rarely happens and in the majority of cases the referrer completes a referral form which is then sent to Move On. Over time more questions have been added to the referral form in an attempt to get all necessary information about the young person. However, Move On staff in both Edinburgh and Glasgow working directly with referrals stated that the way referrers complete forms is extremely variable. As soon as possible the referral will be allocated to a development worker or senior development worker who has capacity to support a new match. Staff suggested that the longest period to allocate a referral would be 2 or 3 weeks. This can sometimes be a result of having to wait for referrers to respond to Move On staff who are asking for more information or trying to arrange a meeting. Once the referral has been allocated to a member of staff they will contact the referrer and arrange to meet with the young person, either with or without the referrer present, to tell them about the service and see whether they would like to be matched with a mentor. Staff and referrers valued the flexibility of these meetings and emphasised the need to arrange the meeting around the needs of the young person.

"I would judge if I could stay or leave [the initial meeting]." (referrer)

"What I try and dae, and it's really important, is promote choice. So you've got a pastoral care teacher there, a mum sitting there and maybe a social worker sitting there and they're all saying, 'this will be good for you'. So I meet with the young person and I go like that, you've been referred by these people, or it could just be one of them, and I'll say, 'I'm gonna go through the booklet, I'm gonna tell you what it's about, it's a cracking opportunity, and I don't want you to make a decision for anyone else apart from yourself." (staff)

3.6 Staff emphasise that for a referral to be successful it is important that the referrer has talked to the young person and that the young person wants to be referred to the service. The service, in other words, must be voluntary. There was some concern amongst staff that referrals are sometimes resource-led rather than needs-led. One member of staff gave the example of a young person who agreed to meet with Move On but after an initial meeting decided that the service was not for him. However, in the meantime the referrer had withdrawn the support that they offered the young person and so he was left with no support. Other staff suggested that certain referrers refer all young people on to Move On with little consideration of whether mentoring will be beneficial for the individual young person, or whether the young person wants the service.

"They were just referring every young person that came on their books to us." (staff)

3.7 Staff also spoke about the need to take into account the young person's support needs and other sources of support when considering a referral. All staff were

clear that any mentoring service has limitations and that the mentor is not a therapist or support professional. However staff also said that in practice they would try to be flexible to the needs of any young person who wanted a mentor. As a result of this flexibility, there have been challenging cases where the mentor is not able to meet all of the unmet needs of the mentee. One example provided related to a mentee who was housebound as a result of mental health issues but not engaging with mental health services. The mentor was therefore their only source of support. In another case a young person with autism had a very successful mentoring journey but found the inevitable ending of the relationship with their mentor extremely difficult, possibly as a result of their condition. In both these cases staff reflected that mentors were put under undue pressure and that, with hindsight, the referrals may not have been appropriate given the limitations of the service. Whilst acknowledging the importance of connecting with other support services that may be appropriate for mentees, staff noted that such support was not always available and that knowing this can make it difficult to say no to an unsuitable referral.

3.8 Many of the mentees interviewed suggested that they did not really understand what the service was when it was first suggested to them. One had been doing a course with Move On and so already knew the staff and agreed to give it a try. Some agreed to meet a worker from Move On because the person who referred them had suggested that the service might help with a particular issue in their life ("keep me off the streets", "get me back into going to school", "get me out of the house", "help my confidence"). Several mentees suggested that their relationship with the person who referred them was important. One mentee said that he trusted the teacher who referred him to know what was best for him because "every time he tries to help me it works so I thought it was worth a go".

> "I wasn't too sure but…yeah…I thought I'd give it a try, something new, maybe it'd help…and it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I thought it would be someone telling you what to do, cos that's really what I've had all my life." (mentee)

3.9 Mentees emphasised how difficult it can be to meet new people and how nervous they were before the first meeting.

> "To be honest when I started off here I didn't really want to come in and do it. Because obviously I've got mental health disorders, anxiety and depression and stuff so I hated coming out and meeting new people so that's what made it difficult." (mentee)

3.10 Many mentees appreciated that Move On staff had been willing to come to a place of the young person's choosing for the first meeting and one young woman said that she only went through with the meeting because her teacher was able to be there too. Some referrers suggested that having Move On staff come to their place of work can be disruptive but understood that it is a good way to build a relationship with the young person and check that the referral is appropriate.

3.11 All of the mentees expressed positive first impressions of Move On staff; repeatedly used words and phrases were 'friendly', 'funny', 'kind', 'they listened to me', 'they asked me what I wanted'. One mentee was impressed by his key worker at their first meeting, describing how she had given him easy to understand information about the service and saying "she was obviously an expert at what she was doing".

How mentors found out about Move On

3.12 Mentors who participated in the evaluation came to the mentoring service primarily through word of mouth (either a friend who was already a mentor or a friend who was a member of staff), seeing an advert in the press or as a result of a web search for volunteering opportunities.

3.13 Staff described how the most fruitful recruitment routes were either word of mouth or adverts in The Metro newspaper and on the Gumtree website. Recruitment can take up a large amount of staff time and several staff wondered whether there were different, more creative ways that Move On could approach recruitment, and whether they could look to other organisations for inspiration.

3.14 All mentors expressed multiple initial motivations for contacting Move On to inquire about becoming a mentor. The most common came from the mentor making a connection with their own past experience. For instance, many mentors used a variation of the phrase, 'I wish there had been something like this when I was a teenager'. Others, particularly those who identified themselves as peer mentors, talked about wanting to make something positive out of their own challenging life experiences by using them to help someone else.

"It's probably the one thing that I've got to bring to the table – my experience" (mentor)

3.15 Other mentors were motivated by the benefits that they perceived they would receive. Two mentors interviewed were motivated by a desire to do something that was different to their professional role, one mentioning how she tended to work with privileged people and another stating that his job was not very social and he wanted to meet different people. In both of these cases the mentor was motivated by a belief that mentoring would enrich their lives. Others were primarily motivated by a desire to get experience in order to move into employment or to build their own confidence.

Mentor recruitment

3.16 The mentor role is voluntary. Potential mentors fill in an application form and attend an interview to be accepted onto the mentor training. All staff with a direct role in the mentoring service take turns to interview potential mentors and there are always two members of staff at each interview.

3.17   The same questions are asked at every interview, covering the following topics:

- Values

- Personal characteristics

- Maturity

- Motivation

- Self-awareness

- Ability to accept/access support

- Stable environment

- Social networks

- Ability to commit to an 18-month match

3.18   Staff describe the interview as informal, and view it as an opportunity to assess the applicant's potential, motivations and values. Mentors commonly talked about being nervous before and during the interview; several mentors said that it was more formal than they expected. However, all mentors said they felt very welcomed by Move On and all first impressions on meeting staff were positive.

"people are accepted as soon as they come through the door – they are all friendly, supportive and not judgmental" (mentor)

3.19   Staff state that the majority of applicants interviewed are accepted onto the training but are clear that the interview is only one part of the assessment process and that they monitor participants throughout training. Occasionally a decision is made at interview, during the training or after the training that an individual will not make an appropriate mentor with the service. Such a decision is made in discussion with different members of staff including a senior development worker or manager and is discussed with the individual concerned. Staff described this as a difficult but vital process that requires good support and communication among the staff team.

3.20   The most common reasons given by staff about why potential mentors did not go on to become mentors were: current life circumstances that made them unable to make the necessary commitment, unresolved past issues that interfered with their ability to take up the role of mentor at that time, and attitudes /values/using language that do not fit with Move On's values (as judged by staff) and that persisted throughout the training.

3.21   It can, at times, be a challenge to ensure that mentors are recruited who meet the needs of the young people who are referred to the service. At the time of the evaluation there was a shortage of male mentors and mentors available to meet mentees after school. However these groups were being targeted in the most recent round of mentor recruitment.

Training

3.22 Mentor training currently takes place on Saturdays. Mentors are also required to do homework in between the sessions. Staff recognise that this is a significant commitment from mentors but believe that it demonstrates the commitment required throughout the match.

"We ask a lot in terms of resilience and commitment" (staff)

3.23 If a mentor cannot make a session they have to meet with a member of staff to catch up on what they have missed. The 10 session training period is a time of particular pressure upon staff time. Several staff mentioned that it can be difficult to plan workloads because the number of training programmes a year is not set and rather determined by demand for mentors.

3.24 The training programme is constantly evolving in response to participant feedback and covers the following topics:

- Introduction to mentoring
- PVG registration, boundaries and personal safety
- Communication and listening skills
- Completing paperwork and evaluation process
- Confidentiality, protection of children and vulnerable adults
- Understanding young people
- Prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination
- Mentoring skills and processes
- Dealing with challenging mentoring situations
- Beginnings and endings

3.25 When asked to describe the training both mentors and staff mentioned both specific topics covered and the approach used. Topics commonly mentioned included boundaries, child protection and knowledge of statutory systems. Some of these topics were challenging for individual mentors, particularly where the mentor either had personal experience that correlated with the topics under discussion or where the mentor was completely unfamiliar with the topic and shocked by the content. The training approach was most commonly described by staff and mentors as 'interactive', with frequent comments from mentors about it being useful to discuss and act out different scenarios that could occur during a mentoring relationship. Several mentors found this approach challenging at first as they had expected a more didactic style of training.

3.26 However, several mentors also pointed out that it is impossible to prepare for every possible scenario. With only a few exceptions, they said that the most useful aspects of the training were:

- Thinking about/sharing/challenging their own experiences and attitudes,

- Learning from the experiences of other people in the group, particularly where group members may not otherwise have been likely to come into contact with people with these life experiences

- Understanding the values/principles related to being a mentor with Move On.

3.27 All mentors and all staff spoke very positively about the mentor training and found it extremely valuable and, overall, enjoyable. Simultaneously almost all of the mentors emphasised that the training is difficult and used words to describe it such as 'intense', 'heavy', 'draining' and 'sometimes uncomfortably intimate'. The value of the training lies in this ability to provide a safe and trusting space where mentors can challenge themselves deeply and share personal experiences, with a common goal of becoming positive mentors.

"for me it just opened my eyes right up to other people, other places, other situations – there is no longer a tunnel vision" (mentor)

"It was magical: the people that were involved…people were very open about themselves, their experiences and their problems. Stereotypes were blown out of the water" (mentor)

"they [workers] bring us on, they are making us realise that we already have it in us" (mentor)

3.28 Many mentors mentioned the important role that skilled staff play in the process of creating and structuring this space. Mentors appreciated staff's skills in bringing together a group of very different people and making everyone feel welcome, included and valued. Several mentors described minor conflicts in the training that they perceived staff had managed well. Mentors perceived that staff "know their stuff" and appreciated a willingness to share both their own experience and example scenarios from previous mentor/mentee matches.

"Initially just like anyone when you're in an atmosphere where you're not sure what's going on, you're a little bit daunted, a little bit kind of you're not really sure, but again I've got to praise the facilitators of the training because they did a really good job of sort of breaking down, kind of like, I've more or less an English accent, I've lived in Glasgow, not so much, so they did a really good job of kind of breaking those barriers down by sort of introducing activities that sort of tell you what you already know on an intellectual level but you might not feel on an emotional level which is a connection with everyone else, and by the end I think you bond quite well with the other people on the training group…. You got to interact with a lot of different people on a level that you would never normally interact with them on." (mentor)

3.29 The important role that Move On staff play in the training for mentors was also recognised by a referrer who had also commissioned Move On to do mentor training for their organisation.

"The staff are key. What's key – a non-judgmental approach, down to earth, have empathy and understanding. [In the mentor training] they therefore help people make that transition from self-doubt to self-belief." (referrer)

3.30 Several mentors said they had been very nervous at the beginning of the training course. One was nervous because she was older than other people in the group, another because he didn't think he had life experiences that would be useful for the role and others because they had never done anything like this and were not used to working in groups of people. However, all stated that their worries disappeared after a couple of weeks of the training.

Post-training

3.31 The training was an intense experience and several mentors mentioned how the end of this period was difficult because the group had become very close.

"we have been giving each other support, we have become like a wee family" (mentor)

3.32 Others talked about the mix of nerves and excitement at getting on with the role of being a mentor. Two mentors who have just finished the training explained this feeling saying:

"I feel worthy. I just want to share it" (mentor)

"I'd be lying if I said I wasn't worried – but I'm stronger than I was at the beginning" (mentor)

3.33 Move On recognises that life experiences that can be valuable for working with vulnerable mentees may co-exist alongside previous criminal convictions, but this needs to be balanced with appropriate safe-guarding procedures as outlined in the Child Protection policy. Before being considered for a match mentors must receive their PVG certificate for which they will have applied in the early weeks of the training. Waiting for the PVG certificate can cause a frustrating delay for mentors that is outwith Move On's control. If a PVG certificate comes back with convictions, a senior development worker will, with input from other staff, complete a risk assessment for that potential mentor and discuss this with the Executive Director who makes the final decision over recruitment. Consideration is given in particular to the type of conviction, the length of time since the conviction, the individual's life circumstances at the time of the conviction and the individual's honesty in disclosing their convictions at interview. Several mentors who had been through this process felt that Move On had been understanding and respectful of their circumstances and progress. One mentor emphasised that, although he had felt supported by Move On and had ultimately been accepted as a mentor, it had been challenging to see all of his convictions "in black and white".

3.34 After being accepted as a mentor there is still a potential wait before any individual is matched. Both staff and mentors are clear that this is emphasised in the training and yet it is still a time of potential stress and misunderstanding.

Mentors describe waiting to be matched as stressful because they are waiting to be 'chosen' by a mentee and it is difficult not to take it personally if they are not matched quickly. Some mentors remain unmatched for over a year and yet one mentor said that only 6 weeks after the training he felt that "there were times when I was like 'am I ever going to get matched?'". Although matching times were identified as a key issue, they are not currently monitored by Move On (this may change with the introduction of the new monitoring system).

3.35 Mentors repeatedly talked about the matching form that they complete during the training which mentees use to make their decision about which mentor to choose. Two mentors described how they had asked staff for their matching form back so that they could adapt and develop it, trying to make the form more attractive and more accurately reflect their personality and interests. Both told how staff had told them that this was not necessary but they had done it anyway. This was reflected in interviews where staff talked about how they felt mentors placed too great an importance on matching forms when in reality there were multiple reasons why there could be a delay in mentors getting matched. Staff acknowledged that improvement could be made to the process of keeping unmatched mentors informed and aware of current issues relating to their application, for example seasonal differences in numbers of matches or if they currently needed more mentors of a particular gender or with particular availability.

3.36 Communication with unmatched mentors was one area where both staff and some mentors felt there could be some improvement. After the training mentors are currently not assigned to a specific key worker until they are matched. Although mentors can still attend mentor support group meetings, this can result in mentors feeling out of contact with the organisation. This was not the experience of all mentors, many of whom felt comfortable to pop into the organisation and were comfortable with less formal contact. However, as one member of staff stated, it is everyone's role to stay in touch with unmatched mentors "but when it's everyone it's no-one".

"I actually thought (my matching form) had gone under the table during that period" (mentor)

3.37 Several staff also reflected on whether mentors who have been unmatched for some time should receive a refresher training session. This was reflected by mentors who had been matched after a long period of time and felt that they had forgotten a lot of the content of the training.

Matching

3.38 The matching process is stressful for mentors, memorable for mentees and time-consuming for staff. One funder noted that, although both the training and matching process are long, the hope is that the rigour of these processes results in more successful matches.

3.39   Staff meet with young people two or three times individually after a referral and it is in these meetings that the matching process begins in earnest. However, for mentors, the matching process actually begins during the training when mentors complete a matching form, as mentioned in the previous section, which provides information about them to a potential mentee. Young people fill in a similar form with the key worker in one of their first meetings to help them think through what sort of mentor they would like.

3.40   That the young person chooses their mentor is central to Move On's approach. However, how this happens varies depending upon the member of staff. Some staff let young people look through matching forms for all available mentors while other staff select a small number of forms, using their knowledge of individual mentors and young people, and their intuition about who will work well together, for the young person to choose from. Some staff described the match more like a negotiation where they had an idea of which mentor would work well with a young person and made suggestions. This is somewhat different to the impression of mentors, who repeatedly talked about a table with all the forms laid out and the young person gets to look at them all. While all staff were clear that the final decision belonged to the young person, two mentees stated that they had not had a choice in who their mentor would be, saying that their key worker had chosen a mentor who would be good for them. It may be useful for Move On to seek to make explicit and elaborate the hidden hand of experienced staff and their instincts in guiding the matching process, as part of a good practice model.

3.41   Young people's thought processes in making this decision can be quite a mystery to the staff who described how the young person might pick up on one seemingly very small or insignificant piece of information on the form. This was often borne out by mentees who remembered very specific things about the mentor's form that they had chosen. Usually these were a shared interest ("we both like films" "she likes curry") or something that they thought was a positive characteristic ("she said she was open-minded") or something about how the form looked ("it was nice handwriting"). Mentees were all positive about the process of choosing a match and everyone could remember why they had made their decision.

3.42   Staff talked about how some matches are more complex than others to establish, in some cases because the young person has particularly complex life circumstances and requires additional support structures and communication around meetings. In other cases the young person takes longer to engage with the service, and the key worker and mentor need to be patient and persistent, a situation that both found frustrating. In yet other cases the mentee chose two or more mentors that they wanted to meet and this required both more practical arrangements and time to manage mentors' expectations. Staff suggested that in most cases young people might say that they want to meet two mentors but actually after they meet the first person they are happy to have them as their mentor. However, one mentee interviewed told how he was just about to meet

a second potential mentor because he did not want to make a final decision without seeing more than one option.

3.43 After the mentee has chosen a mentor there are a series of three-way meetings between mentee, mentor and key worker. These meetings might happen during an activity such as pool or bowling or they might happen in a café. In these meetings the key worker introduces the mentee and mentor and supports them to begin the process of getting to know each other, often gradually withdrawing as the meetings progress. Despite broadly feeling supported by their key worker, both mentees and mentors talked about these meetings being "nerve-wracking" and "scary". Mentors repeatedly described anxiety that they would not be liked by the mentee and a simultaneous sense of responsibility to make a success of the match.

"Would they like me? Would they get on with me? Would they take to my personality? Would I be able to do it?" (mentor)

"I was excited and nervous about meeting the young person" (mentor)

3.44 Several mentors suggested that they would like a one-to-one meeting with the key worker before the first three-way meeting in order to learn a bit more about the mentee and think about strategies to prepare for the meeting. Most said that they just had a phone call to say that they had been chosen and then moved straight into the match.

3.45 Referrers and funders were all positive about the matching process. Several acknowledged that it can be a lengthy process, which might be frustrating for individuals involved, but believed that this level of care was positive in terms of the likely success of matches. Referrers were all positive about communication with Move On through this period, saying that they were kept up-to-date about progress. In particular, several referrers stated the perceived benefit they saw of young people being matched to peer mentors as opposed to core mentors.

"A young person I referred was matched with a peer mentor – it meant a lot to him. He got a lot out of it and still does." (referrer)

"It's great for young people to see there is value in what they know and have been through." (referrer)

3.46 Staff in Glasgow said that they try to match as many care-experienced young people as possible with peer mentors, but this can depend upon the rate of referrals and mentors available. Staff based in Edinburgh were less clear about the distinction between peer and core mentors, which reflects the distinct funding context in each city. However, funding now exists in Edinburgh specifically for peer mentors and this distinction may need to be clarified. In addition, it was unclear how the identification of the need for a peer mentor fits with the mentee's ability to choose their own mentor. For some mentees shared experience was very important but for others shared interests was just as valuable.

3.47 Mentees begin to talk about their goals in the initial meetings with their key worker and this process continues in the three-way meetings. Setting and working to achieve goals is central to the Move On mentoring approach. However the goals that each pair set are extremely varied ranging from activity-focused goals such as "to go to the gym" or "to learn guitar", to personal development goals "to get more confident", to employability-focused goals "to get volunteering experience in my chosen career". The process for setting goals varied, with some pairs setting long-term goals while others set a goal each week for the next week. In some interviews it seemed like there might be different 'levels' of goal, some of which were explicit and some implicit. One mentee described how she had got a mentor because she wanted to get back to attending school but her explicit goal was cooking classes. Another mentor described how, although his mentee had explicit activity-based goals, the mentor and staff member had discussed other personal development goals that they would like the mentee to achieve but which had never been discussed with the mentee.

3.48 A contract is signed by the mentee and mentor, usually at the last three-way meeting before the pair begin to meet without the key worker present. Different staff have different approaches to signing the contract; some sit down at a table with the pair, others leave the pair to discuss the contract and others have the conversation over an activity such as a game of pool. All of the mentors could remember signing the contract but approximately half of the mentees had no memory of it. However, when reminded about the sorts of things that were in the contract, most mentees could recall some specific things that were included ("we are not allowed to bring anyone else to the meeting", "he's not my pal, I can't just call him", "she'll tell Move On the things I tell her"). At this stage pairs decide whether they want to share their phone numbers or have all communication go through the key worker. Most mentees and mentors interviewed had decided to share phone numbers but there were pairs who had chosen not to do so.

Being matched

3.49 After the three-way meetings most pairs spend some time meeting up and getting to know each other without starting a specific activity. One member of staff explained that it is important that they "get familiar with being with each other – that's where the magic happens".

3.50 What pairs do together after they have been matched depends very much upon the goals that the mentee has set. From mentees and mentors participating in this evaluation it seems that matches in Glasgow tend to have a specific activity that extends over time as a goal, where matches in Edinburgh tend to have goals that are more personal development-focused and therefore the activities are not necessarily so consistent. For example one pair might have a goal of attending guitar lessons or a cookery class while another pair might have a goal of improving social skills and so might look for different opportunities to explore different social situations. Similarly, some pairs talked about having a clear idea

of what they would be doing for the next few months while others decided each meeting what they would do the following week.

3.51 Referrers appreciated that mentees and mentors with Move On are able to undertake such activities. It was considered quite unusual for an organisation to have a budget for ongoing activities chosen by young people.

3.52 Mentees, mentors and staff all discussed the benefits of mentees and mentors learning together and learning from each other. One member of staff described how, if a mentee wanted to learn guitar as his goal, he would not be matched with a mentor who could already play guitar. This reasoning was reflected in one mentee/mentor pair's reflection that the one activity they had undertaken that didn't go well was a sport at which the mentor was already accomplished because the mentor got overly competitive and the mentee could not keep up. Several mentors talked about how they had gone outside of their own comfort zone to take classes in something that their mentee wanted to learn. Mentees talked about how they wouldn't have done the activities without someone to go with and appreciated the mutual learning and support that took place.

"if I was there myself I wouldn't be able to focus. If I can't get it and he's got it he can help me and if I've got it I can help him" (mentee)

3.53 This reciprocity was a recurrent theme in the mentee interviews. Mentees liked the idea that they not only learned something but helped their mentor in some way. One mentee explained excitely how he had taught his mentor about the graffiti that they saw when they were meeting. Another described helping her mentor:

"I remember going to Winter Wonderland, that really stood out cos I enjoyed that. You know the big wheel right, we went on that and what happened was that I'm usually the anxious one, I'm usually the one who freaks out, but she was freaking out and I was the one who stayed calm. She was like 'if you stay calm, I'll stay calm'. It was like a role swap." (mentee)

3.54 The focus of this stage of the mentoring journey varied from pair to pair. For some mentors and mentees the focus was on their specific goal but for others the most important thing was developing the mentoring relationship. This relationship will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter but one theme worth mentioning here is the importance of both the mentee and mentor 'turning up'. Staff repeatedly suggested that the best sign of a successful match is that the mentee turns up. Two mentees suggested that this ability to keep turning up and to commit to a relationship had been one of the most valuable things that they had learned from having a mentor. Mentors also must continue to turn up and be a consistent and reliable presence in the mentee's life during this period of being matched.

"Building confidence and achieving goals is important, but it is also about those 90 minutes where the mentee is the sole focus, the most important person in the room. That is unusual – I would have liked to have that." (mentor)

3.55   The above comment is reflected by a different mentee who valued his mentor's time and focus:

> "He concentrates on me. He puts everything aside and focuses on me to make sure I'm going away happy." (mentee)

Endings

3.56   Move On's mentoring is a time-limited service and the usual maximum length of a match is 18 months although senior staff are clear that this maximum is somewhat flexible depending on the circumstances of the mentee's life. One member of staff gave the example of a mentee who became homeless just as they had started to plan for the end of the match and so the support had been continued for a few more months. One funder suggested that there might be young people with particularly complex circumstances who would benefit from longer-term mentoring. Ideally staff would prefer for matches to come to a natural end when a goal had been reached and the mentee's life circumstances are more positive. Most mentors and some members of staff suggest that the service has to be time-limited because of funding limitations and staff capacity. Some spoke of wishing to avoid a reliance on the mentor which could not be sustained. Senior staff, however, emphasise the importance for mentees of learning about positive endings and understanding that this is not a friendship but a specific type of supportive relationship that will not last forever.

> "I would hope that it wouldn't actually be 18 months because my feeling is I don't think it should necessarily be something that has an arbitrary finish date, I think it should finish when something changes or the goals have shifted or the goals have been met." (mentor)

3.57   One mentor suggested that thinking about the ending can affect the match long before the end is imminent. Other, currently matched, mentors and mentees were unsure about how long the match could continue.

> "More emphasis on planning the end is required. We've been matched for 4 months but I think it's already a worry for me as a mentor. I think my mentee is starting to worry too – it needs more thought and planning." (mentor)

3.58   At the planned end of a match the key worker, mentor and mentee plan a celebration to mark the match's completion. This is typically a special activity or a meal out. One staff member emphasised that mentee and mentor reactions to endings are very different, for some the ending is "like water off a duck's back" whereas others will be very upset and some mentees may not turn up to the end of match celebration because they cannot face it. Staff suggested that in many cases it may be the mentor that is more upset by the ending than the mentee. Several mentees and mentors who participated in the evaluation had experienced planned endings of mentoring relationships with Move On and their experiences were broadly positive although some would have liked a little more

clarity earlier in the match about when it would come to an end in order to prepare themselves.

"I did really enjoy the mentoring but at the same time I was like, I don't really need this anymore, and anyway she's working in London now." (mentee)

"We were looking at each other (when the key worker told us that the match was going to come to an end) and she said 'I wasn't expecting that' and I said 'I wasn't expecting it either' (mentor)

"She just needs someone to give her a start, to say 'on you go, you can do it', but that's not what she's got and I find that really difficult now that we're not seeing each other …She could set the world alight, she just doesn't know how to." (mentor)

3.59 Several mentees and mentors who had been in matches that had come to an end said that they had been surprised when they were told that the match was going to end. Although the majority of mentees were aware that the service is time-limited, several thought that they would have a mentor as long as they needed them and one mentee said that he would always be friends with his mentor. Similarly, most mentors stated that the time-limited nature of the relationship had been very clear from the beginning of the training, but few were clear about how a decision would be made that it was time for the match to come to an end. One mentor who had experienced the end of mentoring relationships had some concerns about the ongoing support that was provided to the mentee who had been taking music classes as her goal and had made good progress but had stopped taking the classes when the relationship ended. There was some lack of clarity among mentees, mentors and staff about whether they were allowed to stay in contact after the relationship finished and, indeed, if Move On could prevent this.

3.60 In addition, some matches come to an end without planning, usually because the mentee stops engaging with the service. Often the reason for this is not known and so it is impossible to know whether it is related to the service or to the mentee's wider circumstances. One mentee described how he had wanted a mentor but had not been reliable about attending meetings because he lived at a residential school outside of Glasgow and found it difficult to get in for the meetings. The match was suspended but on this occasion the mentee really did want to engage with the service and when he subsequently moved back to Glasgow he was able to make a commitment to the service and continued seeing the same mentor.

3.61 The unplanned end of matches can take people involved completely by surprise; towards the end of the evaluation period a member of staff was surprised to report that one of the mentee/mentor pairs who gave a very positive joint interview had stopped meeting unexpectedly after the mentee had stopped communication with Move On and with his mentor. Generally, though, this situation tended to happen towards the beginning of a match and was extremely frustrating for mentors who had experienced it. When asked about his feelings on the end of a previous match, one mentor repeated several times "we just

don't really know why". One mentor who participated in the evaluation described a match that had come to an end as a result of a conflict between the mentor and mentee. Interviewees also described other cases where either the mentee's or mentor's lives had changed, for example a personal crisis or moving to a new area, bringing the match to a close. Move On may wish to consider practice in professional reflection and recording in cases where matches break down unexpectedly, to observe possible patterns, and to draw together the learning in the longer-term. Staff often cited young people's complex life circumstances as the cause of breakdown, and this is undoubtedly the main challenge in this area of work. However, the matches succeed in bridging crises in other young people's lives and it would be important to learn more about which matches break down and why, especially as young people themselves may simply disengage without offering explanation.

4   The triangle of support

Key Points

Central to Move On's mentoring model is the "triangle of support", a triangular relationship between the individual mentee, individual mentor and Move On. The triangle of support acknowledges the relational core of the service and makes it explicit that this relationship is three-way.

Many staff and mentors referred explicitly to the triangle of support in interviews. Mentees did not use the term 'triangle of support' but did refer to distinct relationships with both their mentor and a particular member of Move On staff.
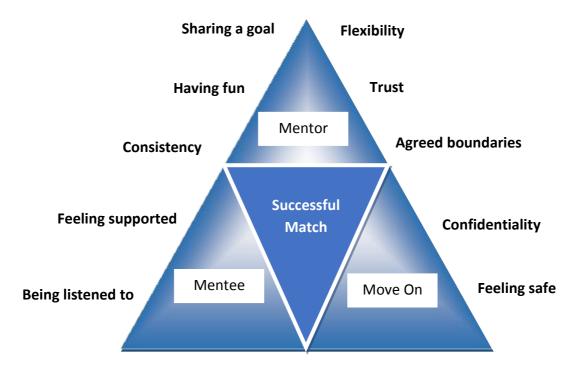
Move On's mentoring service is flexible to the individual needs of the mentee; the triangle of support provides a structure within which this high degree of flexibility can safely exist. It is important that this structure is consistently strong in order to maintain the boundaries of the mentor relationship and protect all three participants in the triangular relationship.

The relationships between mentee and mentor are different for every matched pair. In some matches the activity shared by the mentee and mentor was the focus of the relationship; in other matches the conversations between the pair assumed more importance. The evaluation team made a distinction between shared interests and shared experiences as a way of thinking about the differences between matches, although we recognise that this distinction was not always clear.

All three points of the triangle are vital. A strength of Move On's mentoring service is its focus upon the needs of the mentee and flexibility in meeting these needs. However, care must be taken to balance this flexibility with the needs of the volunteer mentors and the capacity of staff. While both mentors and staff were positive about support that they receive from Move On, many identified times when they had experienced significant stress as a result of their role.

4.1   The previous chapter outlined the journey that a mentee/mentor match makes through the Move On mentoring service. Throughout this journey mentees and mentors are building a relationship with each other and also a relationship with Move On.

4.2   Move On staff frequently talked about the triangle of support (see Figure 4.1) being at the centre of Move On's model of mentoring. Several mentors talked about how the model of the 'triangle of support' had been central to the training programme and others used the model to describe the support that they get from Move On to be a mentor. While mentees did not use the phrase 'triangle of support', they were all able to discuss two distinct relationships that exist, one with their mentor and one with their key worker at Move On.

Figure 4.1: The triangle of support

Sharing a goal **Flexibility**

Having fun **Trust**

Mentor

Consistency **Agreed boundaries**

Successful Match

Feeling supported **Confidentiality**

Mentee Move On

Being listened to **Feeling safe**

4.3 Members of staff talked about the triangle of support as setting the boundaries for the mentoring relationship and ensuring the safety of the mentee and mentor. Mentors primarily referred to the triangle of support as a means to provide reassurance if they were unsure of anything whilst mentoring and as means to monitor that the mentoring relationship is 'on track'.

"It's (the triangle) sort of secure, probably like a house idea, I mean it doesn't work if there's one not there, if Move On's not then there there's no point in me being a mentor and there's no point in the mentee being there." (mentor)

4.4 It is worth noting that while most Move On staff discussed the triangle of support as between the organisation, the mentee and the mentor, all of the mentees and some of the mentors discussed the relationship as being between mentee, mentor and a specific member of staff at Move On. The three separate relationships that make up the triangle of support are discussed below.

Relationship between mentee and mentor

4.5 There is some inevitable crossover between what the mentee and mentor do together (as discussed in chapter three), and their relationship. The relationships between mentee and mentor are different for every matched pair. In some matches the activity shared by the mentee and mentor was the focus of the relationship; in other matches the conversations between the pair assumed more importance. The evaluation team made a distinction between shared interests and shared experiences as a way of thinking about the differences between matches, although we recognise that this distinction was not always

clear. Some matches combined elements of both shared interests and shared experience, or the focus was found to shift at different points in the mentoring journey.

4.6 Where the distinction was strongest was in a comparison between the experiences of core mentors and peer mentors. Not surprisingly, matches with peer mentors were often discussed in the context of a shared experience. However, this shared experience did not necessarily involve 'emotions talk' or 'therapeutic disclosure'. Rather, young people with peer mentors appreciated having a supportive relationship that did not require them to talk about the things that were going on in their life, or require them to re-tell stories already told.

> *"a lot of his relationships are about people wanting him to do certain things, this is about him doing activities and having fun" (mentor)*

4.7 In this sense, the shared experience was often an implicit, unspoken and unsaid element of the match. Some went as far to suggest that the shared experience provoked an intuitive understanding of each other. It would seem that shared experience is important, initially at least, since it can provide the basis of mutual trust and a common understanding. However, it is what passes between mentor and mentee that cements a successful match. Time spent together can relate to the activity itself (and associated achievement of goals), but more significant is the multifarious shared experiences that evolve from the match – this can be as mundane as shared jokes, or as enlightening as new ways of thinking.

4.8 A fascinating aspect of the interviews with mentors and mentees was the variation between how much and how little some mentors know about what is going on in their mentee's life. In one paired interview, with a pair who had been meeting together for some time and seemed very comfortable in each other's presence, the mentor was fascinated by the mentee's answers because they revealed a lot about the mentee's life that he had not previously known. When the interviewer asked whether they felt comfortable with this, they explained that their relationship was focused on the shared activity. It was agreed that for this mentee the main value of the relationship was the mutual commitment to a consistent relationship. Other mentees shared personal details of their life freely with their mentors and some mentors viewed their role as encouraging their mentee to speak about their life. Yet other pairs talked only about very specific aspects of the mentee's life that were related to the goal.

> *"For her I was quite emotional because quite a lot of the things she told me were shocking. On more than a couple of occasions, I'd be sitting opposite her and I'd just be crying, the tears would be spontaneous, you're trying to show no reaction …but for her, me being able to show some emotion about her situation bonded us much more closely because she couldn't express it and I was, without being mumsy about it." (mentor)*

4.9 The amount that mentors shared about their life tended to depend on whether the mentor viewed their own life experience as something valuable that they

were bringing to the mentoring relationship. Those who identified themselves as peer mentors tended to share more about their own previous life experiences, although several emphasised that the focus of the relationship is the mentee and that they only share their own experiences if they judged that it would be useful for the mentee. One peer mentor suggested that it is beneficial that his mentee knows they've had similar experiences but he didn't need to tell his mentee details of these experiences.

"Without telling him, he knows. He knows but I dinnae say specifics." (mentor)

4.10 A different mentee made a similar point saying that he thought that his mentor had been through the care system but he was not sure and it had never been made explicit. However, although the mentee was not sure about his mentor's experiences he recognised that they had something in common saying "there is something similar there", and he respected that. Mentors who did not identify as peer mentors were less likely to share information about their own lives with their mentee.

4.11 Mentees who did know that they shared similar life experiences to their mentors saw this as an important part of the relationship. They repeatedly mentioned that their mentor understood what they were going through and that they found it easy to relate to each other.

"he tells me that he's been through what I'm going through the now and to stop being a fanny and to get a grip" (mentee)

4.12 Peer mentors and staff also felt that the peer element of the relationship was important, citing both a connection that comes from sharing experiences and the possibility for the mentee to see that it is possible to come out the other side of those difficult experiences and use them to help other people. Several young people talked about how this was preferable to having a mentor who had "learned it all from books" or was "just being nosey". However, some core mentors worried that if a mentor had had a negative experience of being in care they might influence the mentee negatively.

"The fact is that he understands he's not alone in this world do you know what I mean? There is people who are in the same boat as him who have changed their life about, who are daein all right now …he might be in this noo but it's no forever." (mentor)

"That (care experience) comes with a lot of stuff, you know that can have a massive impact on young people, so having the chance to have a peer mentor who has experienced similar issues and has that awareness, I think that's a beautiful connection." (staff)

4.13 Many mentees talked about having fun with their mentors. The activities the mentee/mentor matches take part in are discussed in chapter three. These activities are important to mentees not only because they are working towards achieving their goals but because they are having fun together on the way. One mentee/mentor pair described an activity that had not worked out at all but they had laughed and teased each other until they had finally decided to give up.

Several mentees and mentors described pushing each other to do better at their particular activity, getting competitive and having a laugh together. Another mentee described how he used to have fun getting into trouble with his friends but now he prefers to have fun meeting up with his mentor and trying new activities.

"If I go and meet him when I'm down I always come out with a smile on my face" (mentee)

4.14 Mentors described themselves variably as "a role model", "a wee guiding hand" and "a consistent person to be there". Mentees said their mentor's role was "to help me" or "to help me work out who I am". However many mentees, in particular, found it difficult to explain their mentor's role or their relationship with their mentor. One mentee summed this up by saying: "not sure, but I know it's is a good thing".

"She helped me, she pushed me to do (the volunteering). She was like 'just send them an email' and I was 'I don't think I'd get it' and she was totally 'just send it'." (mentee)

"he reminds me of an older version of me" (mentee)

"someone there for me to talk to if I need it. Someone to get me away from all my troubles at home and help me out if I need it" (mentee)

4.15 All mentees said that the relationship that they have with their mentor is different to other relationships in their lives. They described the relationship as different to that with other professionals because they went out and did things that the mentee had chosen and that were fun. Several also mentioned that it was important that the mentor was not paid to be there, they *wanted* to be there. Conversely mentees described their relationship as different to the relationship that they had with family and friends because there were limits on the relationship – "I don't just call him for a chat" – and many said that there were some things that they wouldn't share with their mentor – "I wouldn't have a carry-on with him like I have with my friends at college".

"Everyone else is like 'oh you've got to follow the rules' but he is more laidback. Like you go to all these things and they're telling you you've to wait until you have a fag but he'll just turn his back for a bit." (mentee)

4.16 Mentors similarly suggested that the relationship was different to other relationships in their life. On occasion this could be awkward – one mentor described bumping into friends whilst out with his mentee and briefly introducing the mentee as his friend as previously agreed, but being painfully aware that he was obviously not a friend. Others offered explanations as to what it is about the relationship that is different.

"it is in a mutual place and it is away from everything" (mentor)

"it's a formal informal relationship, it's not a friendship and there are particular ways of doing things" (mentor)

4.17 In a relationship that seeks to find a balance between formal and informal, boundaries can be tricky. Despite the fact that boundaries and confidentiality are discussed in the training and the contract that is signed by both mentor and mentee, mentors sometimes worried that sharing things that their mentee told them with Move On would damage the relationship.

"if he's talking about drugs and stuff like that I tell them [Move On] obviously, but the last thing you want is telling them and then they put their bit in, it's at a different level if you like and it's hard to explain to them what level you're meaning. They'll [Move On] say, 'I'll have a word with his mum about that' […] I don't know how it goes after that because you'll never hear." (mentor)

4.18 Wherever mentors discussed a specific incidence of sharing a concern, however, this had rarely affected the relationship. Different people draw boundaries in different places. While most mentors were clear about the boundaries that Move On requires and appreciated the three-way relationship, one mentor in particular expressed strong opinions that the ongoing involvement of Move On in the relationship got in the way of his relationship with the mentee and suggested that he would only tell Move On if there were big issues where he judged a requirement to pass it on. Mentees all knew that mentors do share information with Move On but weren't always clear exactly what information is shared.

"I don't know what he talks to Move On about but they know everything anyway cos I tell them." (mentee)

"I stopped all the fighting because I had somebody to talk to, I can get it out and it stays between you two unless it's proper serious." (mentee)

Relationship between mentor and Move On

4.19 The relationship between mentors and Move On is the most prescribed of the three relationships. Across all of the interviews with mentors and staff the following requirements for contact between mentors and Move On were mentioned:

- Inform Move On of their plans for meeting with the mentee
- Text the safety phone to say that they have met the mentee
- Text the safety phone to say that the meeting has ended with no problems
- Complete a recording sheet of the meeting and send it to their key worker at Move On
- Speak to their key worker either on the phone or face to face in the few days after each meeting
- Have support and supervision with their key worker every four to six weeks
- Have a three-way meeting with their mentee and key worker at regular intervals (ranged from every 3 weeks to every 3 months) to monitor the match

- Manage their float and meet up with their key worker to get more money as and when necessary

4.20 However, not all mentors mentioned all of these methods of keeping in contact. All mentors knew that they were supposed to text at the beginning and end of each meeting with their mentee although several admitted that they did not always remember to do this. Requirements to make contact after each meeting varied; all mentors talked about either providing a written record or speaking with their key worker after each meeting, while a minority of mentors did both. For most mentors the time they most regularly met with their key worker was when they went in to the office to top up their floats. Many did not make a distinction between these meetings and support and supervision meetings and the purpose was primarily seen as checking in and making sure that they had enough money. One member of staff acknowledged that the meetings with mentors tended to be "more like a chat than full support and supervision" and reflected that it is important to ensure that full support and supervision sessions take place. Most mentors said that three-way meetings happened "every few months" although there were two mentors who said that they had not have any three-way meetings after the matching process.

4.21 Mentors were broadly satisfied with the level of support that they receive from Move On. They were generally less concerned about the ongoing formal support structures than the safety net that they perceived that the organisation provides for them in their mentoring role. Mentors repeatedly stressed the importance of feeling able to pick up the phone or pop into the office if there was anything that they were not sure about. While some felt a specific connection with their key worker, the majority of mentors indicated that they felt able to talk to multiple members of Move On staff and several also mentioned informal peer support from other mentors, stressing the preservation of confidentiality in such conversations.

4.22 However, two mentors in particular, both of whom had experienced significant challenges in their mentoring relationship, felt that if the formal support had been stronger the challenge could have been better managed. In one case the mentor perceived that it might have been possible to resolve difficulties in the relationship between the mentor and mentee if supervision meetings between mentor and key worker had taken place regularly. In the second case the mentor had similarly not been meeting regularly with the key worker and felt that this contributed to the escalation of an incident which could have been managed differently within a stronger supervisory relationship. Other mentors had not had serious challenges in the mentoring relationship but still felt that meeting up regularly to catch up and to check that everyone is happy with how the match was progressing was important and did not feel that they always got this opportunity consistently.

"Feedback is important. It's reassuring." (mentor)

4.23 Being a mentor is a responsible role that takes place in a largely unsupervised environment. Move On has to find a way to manage the inevitable tension between the organic process of building a relationship and the structures needed to ensure that both mentor and mentee are safe and making progress. Mentors' attitudes to this tension varied. Several of mentors expressed the opinion that the requirement for them to discuss their mentee with Move On might jeopardise the trust that they have built up in their relationship with the mentee. Other mentors offered multiple examples of issues, incidents and concerns that they had discussed with their key worker and expressed gratitude for this possibility. One mentor had experience of working with two different key workers in two different matches and reflected upon the different levels of control that they felt. In the first match the mentor felt that they had more freedom in a mentoring relationship which developed naturally until there was a problem which caused the match to end, whilst the second match was more closely controlled, there were more meetings and stricter boundaries. The mentor had mixed feelings about each of these approaches since they had enjoyed the more natural approach but appreciated the need for safety. However, they experienced these differences as a lack of consistency across the organisation and were unclear about the basis for these inconsistencies, whether based in different key workers' ways of working or a comment upon their ability as a mentor.

4.24 There is also possibly some difference based upon the distinction between peer and core mentors. Managers seem to assume that peer mentors require more support and that this is in place. Key workers say that the amount of support mentors require depend upon the individual not upon whether they are a 'peer mentor'. Indeed key workers do not draw a clear distinction between the two groups of mentors.

4.25 A further source of difference was the amount of information that key workers gave mentors about their mentee's life. One mentor talked about how their key worker kept them updated about what was happening in their mentee's life while one other expressed frustration that their key worker did not give them sufficient information about, specifically, their mentee's medical diagnoses. Another mentor felt they did not need to know anything about their mentor's personal life and that such personal issues should only be discussed between the key worker and mentee. Several mentors expressed uncertainty about what information they could expect to receive about their mentee from Move On.

> *"I'm happy to know what I need to know, I don't think there's any point in knowing more than I should know …in my head one of the things I think, this is why I'm not necessarily sure if it's a good thing or a bad thing that (name of mentee) talks to me about these things. I suspect that he doesn't because it's a consistent thing and so it could be quite bad if I went into a session knowing that something had gone on. It would probably change how I acted, right, and I know he would pick up on that and I don't know whether that would be a good thing or a bad thing." (mentor)*

4.26 Staff mentioned specific frustrations in their relationships with specific mentors, including mentors not returning their paperwork on time and mentors

expectations being too high, expecting dramatic changes in mentees' lives and ignoring smaller, but significant achievements. Staff also find it particularly frustrating when mentors' life circumstances change and they can no longer continue with a match – although staff recognise that this is not the fault of individual mentors. Several members of staff suggested that their role can be as a "sounding board" for mentors and that this is important but can take up a lot of time if the mentor wants to be in contact frequently.

4.27 The amount of time that relationships with mentors take up for staff was mentioned repeatedly by staff. There was a recognition that this relationship is vital for the success of the service but also a sense of pressure that it puts upon staff time. In particular the safety phone was mentioned by almost all staff directly working with mentors as a specific pressure. The safety phone is rotated around staff who each hold it for a week at a time and are responsible for ensuring that all mentors text in and out of each meeting.

"I can be out meeting a young person, a mentee, and I'm on the safety phone and I can be doing support and supervision with a match…we just do it but that's a frustration if I'm out doing support and supervision with a match and I've got two or three matches out, I need to be answering 'cos you've got texts saying 'that's me met up' and you need to reply to them. And if there's an issue, well that can be quite frustrating and difficult to manage." (staff)

"[the mentoring service] is very time consuming, it's a lot of legwork, it takes a lot of time…you're managing mentors, you're managing young people, you have three or four matches in amongst your caseload, booking things, you know, and then the safety phone as well…" (staff)

Relationship between mentee and Move On

4.28 As stated above, mentees who participated in this evaluation unanimously perceived themselves to have a relationship with their specific key worker rather than with Move On as an organisation.

4.29 All except the mentees at the very beginning of their match considered that they had a closer relationship with their mentor than with their key worker, but all mentees could identify their specific key worker and described them very positively. Common words used by mentors to describe their key worker included 'friendly', 'non-judgmental' and 'funny'.

"he knew how to speak to me and he knew how to have a laugh" (mentee's first impression of key worker)

"They were open-minded. I had a choice and a say in things and I liked that" (mentee speaking about their first meeting with their key worker)

4.30 All mentees could identify times when they had met individually with their key worker but most were vague about how often this happened and several suggested that this happened only rarely. All saw the reason for this meeting as to check that the match was going well. One mentee said that although he knew

that he could ask his key worker to meet up individually he preferred to meet with his mentor and his key worker together "as a team". All of the mentees said that they could contact their key worker if they needed to for any reason but only two could remember a time when they had done so other than to arrange or cancel meetings. One of these two contact their key worker regularly if they were having problems at school and another had contacted their key worker about a specific issue, not related to their mentor.

4.31 Staff talked about getting frustrated when mentees disengage with the service. Although they rationalise that the mentoring service is not right for everyone and that the time might not be right for a particular young person they find it frustrating that young people sometimes disengage without ever letting Move On know what has happened. Several staff also talked about the challenge of knowing when to end a match that is not working and suggested that there is a need to balance offering patience and flexibility to the young person with understanding that mentors find it challenging when mentees fail to commit over an extended period of time. Communication with mentees can also be difficult since they regularly change their phone numbers and often do not have credit to return calls and texts.

4.32 The interviews revealed some lack of clarity about who (key worker or mentor) holds most information about the mentee. Several mentors expressed the opinion that they didn't need to know what was happening in their mentee's life because the key worker held all of that information whereas several members of staff talked about relying on mentors to get information about changes in the mentee's life. This is an important point of clarity for Move On since a lack of information may impact upon the organisation's ability both to support the mentor and to effectively monitor outcomes of the match.

> *"If we don't know about it and it's not written down, then there's nothing that we can do about it …so I would say that's one of the most important parts of being a mentor, it's making sure that what you've talked about, and it could be that all you've done is you've been to the cinema and watched a film, and you've had a conversation about school, but I know the young person's still at school." (staff)*

Peer support among mentors

4.33 In theory, mentor support groups take place in Edinburgh and Glasgow every 4-6 weeks and are open to all mentors (matched and unmatched) who have completed their training with Move On. However, staff from both cities acknowledged that the groups do not always take priority in busy workloads and, therefore, do not always take place regularly.

4.34 Mentors in Edinburgh and Glasgow expressed the aim of the group quite differently; mentors in Edinburgh saw the focus of the group to be training on specific issues whereas in Glasgow the focus was seen to be sharing experiences and providing peer support.

"When you said the mentor support group I didn't know what you mean. I think of this as training, not support" (mentor)

"[The aim of the group is to] compare how things are going with other mentors – problem solve with other mentors if there are any problems" (mentor)

4.35 Mentors seemed to have mixed experiences about communication relating to the mentor support groups, with some mentors saying they were told about the group by email and some by text. The means of communication seemed to be important, mentors are often juggling busy lives and need to be reminded that the group is happening. While not all mentors attend the groups, those who did found them useful. Several mentors suggested that it would be useful to have more social events for mentors to get to know staff and more opportunities for in-depth training after the initial training has ended.

"When you are in a mentoring relationship it can be quite intense. You only see one person – the mentee – it is nice to have the opportunity to catch up with other mentors" (mentor)

5   Mentoring programme outcomes

> **Key Points**
>
> Most funders need hard outcomes and there is evidence of these, but the most important outcomes, as expressed by mentees/mentors, are more likely to be soft. Outcomes and learning identified by individual mentees/mentors tend to refer back to their initial expectations, goals and anxieties.
>
> Move On has an organisational focus upon employability – and moving towards employability – with a clear understanding that this will mean different things for different people. Therefore it is particularly important for the organisation to consider how to define and record employability-related outcomes for mentees and mentors.
>
> Organisational focus so far has been on recording outcomes for mentees and, to some extent, peer mentors, but there is increasing awareness of the need to record outcomes for all mentors, especially given a looser definition of 'peer mentoring'. The benefits of mentoring for mentors could also be used more effectively to market the volunteering opportunity, and may give an additional layer of data in support of employability outcomes.
>
> The relationships in matches vary and either the mentor or the key worker may hold more information about the mentee's life. This can result in a lack of clarity about what information needs to be recorded about mentees' life circumstances and who is responsible for such recording. Clarity is, however, important both during the match in order to ensure appropriate support and at the end of the match in order to ensure that outcomes are fully monitored.

The contribution analysis approach to evaluation identifies expected outcomes at each stage of the 'theory of change' for the programme, then evidence is collected to support this narrative. In parallel with this evaluation, Move On is reviewing its monitoring procedures and this evaluation has fed into that process by identifying gaps in, and limitations to, the information currently recorded. This chapter presents qualitative evidence from the interviews about staff's, mentors' and mentees' perceptions of outcomes from the service.

Outcomes for Move On

5.1   Staff were clear that Move On's mentoring service was good for the organisation. They stated that it is a unique, well-respected service and that Move On has gained expertise and a positive reputation as a result of the mentoring service. This perception is borne out by funders and referrers who view Move On as a professional, experienced and effective organisation.

> *"I have confidence in the organisation….and that they will deliver." (funder)*

> *"The Senior Management Team are very professional. Their reporting is very high standard. They are efficient….Staff (co-ordinators) are responsive if we want additional information. If I audit the information it is accurate." (funder)*

"They balance being a flexible supportive face for young people at the same time convert that to a professional business-like approach. Which is clear...they know what they do, they know they do it well. They learn and incorporate their learning from a strong base." (funder)

5.2 The demand for the service was viewed by staff in terms of "getting numbers through the door". While other services within Move On may go through quieter and busier periods, staff reports that with the exception of regular seasonal differences (e.g. fewer referrals are made during school holidays) there is a regular stream of referrals. Several staff stated that the mentoring service is the most rewarding part of their job because they can see that the positive impacts that it has upon young people.

"They've been lovely. They are determined to do the best for the young person they work with." (funder)

5.3 There is a desire amongst senior staff that, based upon this experience and expertise, Move On will establish itself as a "centre of excellence" for mentoring practice in Scotland and will share their experience with other organisations. That Venture Trust has recently commissioned Move On to complete two training programmes for their own peer mentors and that the service has been awarded Scottish Mentoring Network's "Quality Award" provide evidence that the organisation is on track to achieve this goal.

"Move On continued to be regarded as an exemplar of support for young people. Its reputation continues to grow as does its professionalism."

"No one else was doing mentoring support with that cohort of young people with chaotic lives and could have an employability strand directly with it." (funder)

"They came across as a really solid provider of mentoring. They trained others in doing mentoring. I don't think they found [peer mentoring] straightforward but they were really thoughtful about it and flexible in their approach" (funder)

5.4 Move On staff were positive about the support that they received from their peers and seniors within the organisation. Several mentioned the idea of a 'Move On family' and described a sense of community, where people are motivated to go beyond the call of duty to ensure that the work is successful. However, there is some question about who is included in the Move On family and whether it is one coherent family. While senior staff mentioned that communications between the Edinburgh and Glasgow teams had improved over recent years, key workers perceived little connection with the team in the city in which they did not work. This communication may be a focus for the Mentoring Co-ordinator who was being recruited at the time of the evaluation. In addition, while some mentors described feeling very comfortable popping into the Move On office, others felt that more could be done to improve informal links between staff and mentors in order to bring mentors into the Move On family. Suggestions included focusing on communication with mentors, a stronger social media presence and more social events with staff and mentors together.

5.5   Move On's mentoring service does make demands upon staff who find it difficult to maintain a positive work/life balance because of the flexible working hours required to fulfil the role. Staff talked about how it was difficult to make plans in advance and difficult to take TOIL that they had accrued because of the busy and unpredictable workload. While staff accepted that this is the nature of the service, several members reflected upon whether it would be possible for the organisation to approach the service in a more planned way having, for example an annual plan for training dates and peer support groups.

> *"It's hard to put this the right way because I enjoy mentoring, don't get me wrong, I enjoy my job…but sometimes it can be difficult to have a work/life balance, because we do invest and we want it to work and it's hard to, if the mentor and mentee are both free that week at 6pm and that's the only time they can do for another two weeks, well you've got to seize that moment." (staff)*

Outcomes for mentors

5.6   Since Move On mentors are such a varied group of people the outcomes are also extremely varied. All mentors interviewed were able to identify both hard outcomes (for example, gaining new skills or specific learning experiences) and soft outcomes (for example, a change in attitude or shift in belief system) resulting from their mentoring experience. However both staff and funders suggested that Move On could do more to record and promote the outcomes for mentors from volunteering with the service.

5.7   When mentees were asked whether they thought that their mentors had learned anything from being a mentor they either didn't have an answer or they cited a skill that the pair had been learning together as their mentoring goal (e.g. music, art, cooking). All mentors, however, believed that mentoring had developed a range of personal development skills including reliability, communicating with different people and the ability to identify goals. Different mentors had different starting points with these skills and for some the improvement was dramatic.

> *"I have more confidence in everyday things, I am doing things by myself, like getting on a bus" (mentor)*

5.8   The most commonly mentioned outcome for mentors was confidence. Many said that at the beginning of the training they had not been nervous about their ability to be a good mentor. Learning that they were able to fulfil this role and to be a positive support to a mentee was a source of pride in many of the mentors' lives. This was particularly true for peer mentors who learned that their own, often difficult, life experiences could provide useful learning and support for another person.

5.9   The knowledge that they were able to support another person 'simply' by being themselves was important to many of the mentors. Many talked about gaining a sense of self-acceptance and sense of self-worth from the role. For almost all mentors in established matches the initial anxieties had disappeared as they

learned to trust in the value of being yourself in the mentoring relationship. For example, one mentor talked about how before being matched she had been nervous that she wasn't 'hip enough' and wasn't good at small talk and would find it difficult to connect with a young person, but had learned through mentoring that it was enough for her to be herself. She thought that thinking of things to talk about would be difficult and stressful but she has not found that to be the case. This increased self-confidence was discussed alongside increased self-esteem. One mentor said that she had kept an exercise from the training when everyone wrote something positive about you because it had made her feel good about herself.

5.10   Realising the importance of reliability and consistency was a key theme in the interviews. Mentors might have initially thought that they needed complex skills to be a mentor but actually turning up every week was considered by many experienced mentors the most important part of the job. As one mentor said:

> *"It's not about sitting and talking, it's about showing up…I learned not to expect too much. Just let the fact that we still want to be here, that's enough." (mentor)*

5.11   Other mentors talked about mentoring as a part of their own personal development journey. One peer mentor talked about how mentoring fitted with other support that he was receiving to create a 'package for personal growth'. He said that mentoring had provided him with a structure and with a reason to be reliable and responsible. Other mentors talked about how they had reconsidered their own lives through the mentor training and through their relationship with their mentee. This was considered to be a positive outcome but several mentors stated that it had also been challenging at times.

> *"(in the training) I talked about things that were buried. I allowed myself to feel it" (mentor)*

5.12   Employability outcomes also applied to mentors. Several mentors had gained employment since becoming a mentor and staff were able to tell stories of other examples of this. Other mentors talked about moving towards employment by building their skills and developing structures in their lives. While it tended to be peer mentors who were gaining employment as a direct outcome of their involvement, several core mentors had changed employment whilst volunteering. One mentor was keen to point out that this wasn't the reason why he volunteered but acknowledged that the volunteering had contributed to his change in career. Another mentor was currently looking for a new job and was telling prospective employers that he needed to be free by a certain time on a certain day so that he could ensure that the mentoring arrangement remained consistent.

5.13   Several mentors mentioned that, as a result of the mentor training and of mentoring, they had learned about other people's experiences and developed new ways of looking at the world. For some this had also impacted upon on how they act towards other people in their communities, with one mentor saying that she made more effort in her relationships with neighbours and another

saying that he would act differently (more sympathetically and empathetically) if he saw young people "smashing something up in a park" in the streets. Others mentioned how other people in their lives had noticed a difference in them since they had been mentoring. One mentor described how she had asked her daughter's help in completing her last training homework assignment where she had to describe how she had changed as a result of the training. The daughter had said that her mother had changed completely over the course of the training. Another mentor described how his partner told him that he was "more easy-going" after each mentoring session.

Outcomes for mentees

5.14 When thinking about the outcomes of the service, staff first mentioned the outcomes for mentees and were able to list a range of different benefits that mentees received. Both mentees and their mentors were able to identify ways that the mentee had changed and/or had benefitted from the project. Some mentors struggled a little with the question of what they had learned but all mentees interviewed believed that the service had been a good thing in their lives.

5.15 As for mentors, the soft outcome of confidence was the most common benefit cited for mentees. While mentees tended to say that they felt more confident, mentors and staff listed ways in which they could tell that mentees were more confident including more open body language, increased eye contact, willingness to eat in public and ability to use public transport independently. Mentors often said that their mentee was more positive than they had been at the beginning of the match and several said that over time the mentee had taken more control of the mentoring process including making decisions about what activities they would do together. One mentor said that a significant moment in the relationship had been the first time that his mentee had suggested a particular activity because up until that point he had been very shy and wanted the mentor to make all of the decisions. Other staff and mentors also mentioned mentee behaviours such as answering back and making demands as things that could potentially be seen as negatives but in this context were seen as signs of increased confidence and comfort in the mentoring relationship.

> *"I think over time that young person starts to engage with the mentor and it could be small things like answering back because a lot of young people are really painfully shy and the mentor's job is just to continue to support. By the end of the match what I see is increased confidence, self-esteem, trying new things, learning new things, bringing out their skills." (staff)*

5.16 Mentees often mentioned hard outcomes in relation to learning new skills. Sometimes these were skills related to specific activities that they had undertaken with their mentor (cooking, music, sports). However, activities brought with them a range of softer outcomes connected to broader social skills such as improved communication, motivation and feelings of self-worth. One mentee, whose goal was to improve her communication skills, said:

"Basically what she done was she helped me to develop my social skills, which is like the major part of it, because I used to really struggle like speaking to new people, like even buying things and stuff like that. I think she helped me a lot with that…I think I'm mostly ok now with communicating, there's still moments where I'm a bit hesitant or like I step back but mostly I'm ok" (mentee)

5.17 Several mentees said that having a mentor had introduced them to people that they might not otherwise have met and that this made it easier for them now to meet new people. One mentor said that she would not have been able to speak to a researcher and take part in an interview before she had started getting support from her mentor. Another mentee referred to both his mentor and his Move On key worker when he said:

"I learned not to judge somebody by the way they look. I can associate with more people and I know how to get along with them." (mentee)

5.18 Some mentees had thought that they would learn skills related to the goal but had been surprised to find that they actually learned more about themselves as a result of having a mentor.

"I have learned stuff to help me deal with me." (mentee)

5.19 One mentee said that his mentor relationship is the first thing in his life that he had stuck with for so long and he was proud of himself that he was able to do that. Mentors also said that they felt their mentees had learned from the experience of a sustained relationship. In particular they suggested mentees had learned that some people can be trusted and to value themselves because there are people who are willing to work alongside them voluntarily.

5.20 Move On has a particular focus upon employability and many of the mentees interviewed had started new educational courses or employment while receiving support from a mentor. While mentoring may only be one part of a broader network of factors influencing these decisions and achievements, young people perceived that the support that they received from their mentor was an important factor. Several mentees said that their mentors had helped them prepare CVs and practice interview skills. Another told how his mentor had helped him get voluntary work experience in order to move towards his chosen future career. Members of staff were able to identify more mentees who had made progress towards employability including one young person whose goal was to go to college. When she became pregnant during the match she still achieved this goal with support from her mentor. One of the mentees had become a peer educator with Move On after her match had come to a planned end and said that she could not have done this before she had a mentor.

5.21 Mentees also described other significant life changes which they attributed to having a mentor with Move On. These life changes were unique to individual mentees, but two common themes were getting out of the house and staying out of trouble. One mentee described how it had been very difficult to break away from his old street fighting habits because he had very close bonds with

the people he fought with and when he told them that he wanted to change his life they had turned on him. He had told his mentor about this interaction and his mentor had supported him. However, he saw having a mentor as valuable not only because of the support that he received but because they had fun together and his mentor provided a positive relationship to take the place of the peer relationships that he was walking away from. Another talked about how she had rarely left the house before she started meeting with her mentor. One of her goals had been going to the gym and after a while she felt confident enough to suggest going to the gym with one of her friends which has become a regular occurrence; she was clear that she could never have made that suggestion without first having the support from her mentor.

"I've learned how to grow up. At this time last year I was getting into a lot of trouble with the police and stuff, since Move On stepped in I've got none, no trouble. They stepped in when I needed it most."

"at first it was to keep me off the streets, I was falling in with the wrong crowd…now I'm not associating with them."

6   Conclusions and recommendations

6.1   This evaluation tells the story of a service about which mentees, mentors, staff and external stakeholders were enthusiastic and supportive. There are, however, inevitable challenges in providing a consistent yet flexible mentoring service. This chapter highlights the achievements made by Move On and offers recommendations to strengthen and improve the service.

> *"I've been in the care system since I was 8 and I've seen pals shipped off to Polmont and that and I'm determined not to do it. I'm determined to move on and make a new life for myself." (mentee)*

> *"There will be a need for this service for some years to come. It is therefore critical to emphasise the need for longer-term funding to enable the most effective planning of the use of resources. This will help achieve better outcomes." (evaluation workshop)*

Contribution summary

6.2   In order to draw together the conclusions of this report it is useful to return to the theory of change developed at the first contribution analysis workshop as shown in Figure 1.1 (page 4). Key findings under the different contribution analysis stages are outlined below. The key risks that emerged throughout the evaluation are addressed in the recommendations below.

Activities and outputs

6.3   The evaluation provides evidence of a well-managed, enthusiastic and motivated team who feel positively about the mentoring service.

6.4   Move On's mentor training programme was highly praised by participants and staff. The programme was perceived to prepare mentors well for their role within the organisation. The training was also valued because it was thought-provoking, interesting and well facilitated by experienced and warm staff.

6.5   The experience of being a mentor and having a mentor is very different for different matches. This ability to be flexible around different mentees' needs is seen by staff and mentors as an immense strength of the service. Mentees rarely raised this issue specifically since the majority have only had one mentor and only see the service through the lens of their own circumstances. However mentees do view the aim of the service as related to their own particular needs, indicating a level of responsiveness to those needs. This balance between flexibility to different needs and consistent support structures is vital to the success of the project but challenging to achieve.

6.6   There is evidence of some differences in practice across the service in Glasgow and Edinburgh and within the staff teams in each city. In some cases this may relate to specific funding requirements and/or the impact of staff turnover. In other cases the value of flexibility needs to be balanced with the need for consistency.

6.7 Move On is currently developing its monitoring systems. One current gap is the recording of the time taken for mentors to be matched after the training and the duration of matches (both successful and unsuccessful).

6.8 Staff raised examples of referrals that were either inappropriate or that provided insufficient information to assess appropriateness. Although it may be impossible to fully eliminate such referrals, Move On may wish to consider whether there are measures that can be taken to ensure that they are minimised.

Engagement and involvement with the mentoring programme

6.9 The service is perceived to have high levels of engagement with young people referred to the mentoring service, but it may be useful to monitor the proportion of referrals that are successfully matched and the reasons why unsuccessful matches break down.

6.10 Some mentors suggested that Move On could do more to engage with mentors on an ongoing basis, including more in-depth training opportunities, more regular support and supervision and more social opportunities.

6.11 The evaluation notes that the role of mentor is a highly responsible one, since the relationship between mentor and mentee takes place largely unsupervised. The support and supervision procedures around the matches are necessary in order to provide a clear and safe structure within which this flexibility can take place.

6.12 There was evidence of the negative impact that unsuccessful matches can have upon mentors. Mentors may experience such a breakdown as a personal failure and may need additional support to understand the reasons why this may have happened. This is particularly important where mentors may be vulnerable themselves, although it may not be immediately apparent which mentors will need support in which circumstances.

6.13 Referrers reported that communication with Move On is good, that they feel engaged to an appropriate level in the service and that they are informed about young people's progress where appropriate.

Awareness and reaction by mentors and mentees

6.14 Mentees, mentors, staff and partners were all positive about their experience of Move On's peer mentoring service and the outcomes of being involved. Even where aspects of an individual's experience with the service had been challenging they were keen to point out their positive perception of the service overall.

6.15 Both mentees and mentors who participated in the evaluation talked positively about their first impressions of Move On and about their relationships with key workers within the organisation. Common reactions to the service included

feeling that they could trust the organisation, that the service is valuable and that being in a mentor/mentee match would be fun and offer opportunities to try new activities.

6.16 Less is known about the reasons for failed matches including whether more could be done to improve the initial interactions between mentees and their key workers/mentors.

Capacity, knowledge, attitude and skills

6.17 Mentors clearly state that the mentor training increases their capacity to successfully fulfil the role of mentor, including their knowledge of Move On's procedures and of issues affecting young people. Many mentors also suggested that their wider social attitudes had changed as a result of exposure to a wider group of people including mentees and other mentors.

6.18 The evaluation provides evidence that mentees have developed specific skills related to their goals and also achieved softer outcomes such as confidence and self-esteem. Mentees commonly suggest that they become more willing and confident to meet new people as a result of building mentoring relationships.

Changes in behaviour and practices (intermediate outcomes)

6.19 Mentees exhibit a wide range of changes in behaviour as a result of receiving mentoring. Changes are different depending on individual young people and range from the ability to use public transport independently to undertaking new college courses.

6.20 The skills and experience that mentors gain from their involvement in the project often contribute to changes that they make in their lives including new employment opportunities. These changes are also individual and are related to mentors initial motivations for getting involved in the service. Currently Move On tends to focus upon monitoring outcomes for mentees and such outcomes for mentors can be missed.

Contribution (final outcomes)

6.21 The mentoring service is accredited by the Scottish Mentoring Network and was awarded a Quality Award by the Network as well as being named their Project of the Year, during the evaluation period. Referrers and funders hold Move On's mentoring service in high regard and see the organisation as a source of mentoring expertise.

6.22 Final outcomes for mentees and mentors relate to sustainability of benefit and are, therefore, somewhat outwith the scope of this evaluation. There is, however, a positive perception amongst all stakeholders who participated in the evaluation that the service's focus upon building strong positive relationships and achieving self-identified goals engenders lasting benefits for young people. The service is also making positive changes which will enable better future

recording and monitoring of the service. Such changes include a new bespoke database and new member of staff whose post will focus on developing the mentoring service across both Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Recommendations

6.23 Move On's mentoring service operates across Edinburgh and Glasgow and across different funding streams some of which prioritise peer mentoring and some of which do not. However the evaluation finds that the distinction between 'peer mentoring' and 'core mentoring' is not clear and that different mentees value different types of relationships. We recommend continuing to develop a coherent service across the two cities that recognises the value of all of the experiences and interests that mentors bring to the service to share with young people.

6.24 We recognise the challenge that Move On faces in balancing the need to provide a consistent service and responding flexibly to the needs of different individuals and matched pairs. We recommend that this challenge is honestly discussed with mentors as part of the mentor training in order to avoid unrealistic expectations of the service.

6.25 Several mentors expressed the opinion that the Move On website was difficult to navigate and does not reflect their positive experience with the organisation. One said that he almost didn't apply because of his negative impression from the website. Other mentors suggested that Move On make better use of social media to publicise events and stay in touch with mentors. We acknowledge that Move On has recently updated its website and is currently reviewing its use of social media. We recommend that this review should include the website and include input from mentors and mentees.

6.26 Mentors value the mentor support group but there is a lack of clarity as to the aim of the group, which many mentors see as ongoing training on specific topics rather than peer support. However, these sessions do not go to the same depth as the mentor training and there is a perception that some topics require more than an hour to discuss. We, therefore, recommend the development of an occasional ongoing training session with opportunities for in-depth discussion and real life scenarios for experienced mentors to discuss.

6.27 The evaluation found that the majority of mentors and mentees felt well supported by Move On most of the time but when they described the support that they received from Move On the levels of support were not always consistent. The evaluation identified that challenging incidents occurred in both Glasgow and Edinburgh that may have been resolved more quickly if staff had been meeting more regularly with mentors and mentees. Whilst recognising the usually strong and effective support provided by Move On to mentors and mentees, we recommend that the minimum level and structure of support is clarified with mentees/mentors and adhered to across the staff team. This

includes ensuring that cover is in place for these meetings if staff change or are sick.

6.28   Move On has rightly focused upon the needs of mentees, but there is some evidence that this has at times focused attention away from the support needs of mentors and from the benefits that mentoring can bring for mentors. We recommend starting a conversation about the importance of meeting mentors' needs in order to best support mentees. This includes ensuring that outcomes for mentors are recorded. It may also be important to check that relevant life experiences of mentors are being recorded, so that the organisation is cognisant of the peer mentoring that may be taking place. Focusing on the benefits of mentoring will also give the organisation new opportunities for publicity and recruitment.

6.29   In particular it is important not to make assumptions about which matches are working and which are not, or about which stages of the mentor journey need less support. The Move On triangle of support creates a structure within which a safe space for the mentoring journey to take place exists. The components and relationships within each triangle will be different depending upon the individuals involved and therefore the challenges will be different in each mentoring journey. While the evaluation identifies particular points where challenges and anxieties might be more likely, it also identifies examples where challenges have arisen unexpectedly. Therefore we recommend that consistency of support should be prioritised throughout the mentoring journey and regardless of the level of experience of mentors.

6.30   Where there is flexibility, we recommend that key workers should take care to, wherever possible, involve mentors and mentees in decisions about their mentoring journey. Where this is not possible key workers should ensure that they are open about the reasons for making particular decisions. We recognize that this often happens and that staff express their commitment to sharing information about major decisions with mentors and mentees. However, it is important to remember that decisions that to staff seem minor may be the source of worry, anxiety or frustration for mentors or mentees.

6.31   One particular point of concern is the potential gap between mentors finishing training and being matched with a mentee. This is a period of potential vulnerability for mentors who are waiting to be 'chosen' by a young person and yet there is currently no formal structure to support these unmatched mentors who are not assigned a key worker until they are matched. Several mentors expressed a lack of clarity about the matching process and why they had not been matched after a significant period of time. Unmatched mentors are invited to mentor support meetings but both mentors and staff suggested that individual support and input would be useful during this period which can last more than a year. Therefore, we recommend that each mentor should be assigned a key worker after the training and that individual support be consistently provided as part of the support structure outlined above.

6.32 We also recommend that key workers provide particular support for mentors as they move into a new match. Such support could include an individual meeting with the key worker and mentor to discuss the potential match and any information or strategies that the mentor requires for working with the particular mentee. A refresher training session should be provided for mentors where there has been a significant gap between the training finishing and a match being made.

6.33 We are aware that Move On is currently undertaking a review of its monitoring systems and developing a new database for recording information. We recommend that the findings from this evaluation process feed into this review including; recording outcomes for mentors, characteristics of successful and unsuccessful matches, thinking about ways to meaningfully record progress towards goals and ways to record unexpected outcomes. This should include a conversation about who (staff, mentor or mentee) records what information, how this varies by location and by funding package, and how to ensure a shared understanding about what needs to be recorded is achieved (whilst still satisfying the needs of individual funders). It should also look to ensure that the new monitoring system has tools for measuring hard and soft outcomes, and that these measure the 'distance travelled' for individual mentors and mentees.

6.34 The Move On "theory of change" developed in the evaluation workshop using a contribution analysis approach (see page 4) provides a framework through which Move On can tell a narrative about the Mentoring Service. The interview and focus group data presented in this evaluation provides evidence to support this story. We recommend that Move On builds this framework into ongoing self-evaluation. This may include regularly reviewing the theory of change with all appropriate stakeholders and ensuring that organisational monitoring systems collect data that supports this narrative and therefore is led by the needs of the organisation rather than by the needs of specific funders.

Questions for consideration

6.35 Any evaluation raises interesting questions that are outwith the evaluators' role to answer. We therefore end this evaluation report by offering these questions as prompts for future organisational reflection.

The value of shared experiences

- The evaluation found that both peer and core mentors have experiences and interests in common with mentees. This raises the question: what is it that makes peer mentoring unique? Would it be possible/useful to emphasise peer aspects of all matches and therefore eliminate the tendency to make assumptions about the support needs of specific mentors?

The matching process

- To what extent can matches be planned and to what extent do they evolve? Are there questions that could be discussed prior to matching that mentees might

find useful to help identify the sort of mentor they would find useful? For example: Do you want a mentor who you can talk to about things going on at home or would you rather not? Is it important for you to have a mentor who has similar life experience to you?

- What role should experienced staff's 'instincts' play in the matching process? How can these subjective instincts be made more explicit and transparent?

- How can Move On staff identify and share examples of good, creative practice related to matching, recruiting and recording progress, either within Move On or in other organisations? Is there scope for piloting such approaches within the mentoring programme?

Setting goals

- What are the characteristics of a Move On mentoring goal? Is it satisfactory that the goals are very different in nature? Is it acceptable, for example, for some matches to have explicit activity-based goals, and other more implicit 'personal development' goals? Do goals need to be SMART and how are they monitored?

Managing matches

- What level of consistency (of activities and of language) and communication are useful/necessary between Glasgow and Edinburgh services?

- How should the service balance the need for flexibility with the need for consistent systems that minimise risk for mentees, mentors and staff? Are there ways of planning that could limit the impact of flexibility on staff without weakening the service?

- What level of information should Move On staff share about the young person's life with their mentor? Is this fixed or flexible according to professional judgment? What factors inform the judgment of experienced staff? What factors should guide these decisions?

Ending and exits

- To what extent should endings be organic and to what extent pre-determined? What informs the judgment of experienced staff in deciding the timing and nature of the ending? To what extent are the young person and mentor listened to? Are there ways that Move On can support the sustainability of outcomes achieved in the course of a mentoring journey? Is there ever a need for post-end support for either mentees or mentors?

Future monitoring

- How does this evaluation fit with the ongoing review of monitoring systems and development of a new database? Is there information that it would be useful to capture that is not currently captured? Are the monitoring system measuring hard and soft outcomes, and capturing distance travelled for individuals?

Appendix A: Research Tools

6.36 The following research tools were used to facilitate the data collection:

- Move on information leaflet
- Topic guide for mentees
- Topic guide for mentors
- Topic guide for outside stakeholders

6.37 Copies are provided below.

EVALUATION OF MOVE ON'S PEER MENTORING SERVICE
INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

The evaluation

This sheet gives you some information about an evaluation that is currently taking place of Move On's Peer Mentoring Service. Move On has asked University of Edinburgh's Centre for Research on Families and Relationships to conduct this evaluation because they want to learn about what works well and not so well in the service. They also want to be able to share this information with other organisations that are interested in peer mentoring.

We really need a good range of views to ensure that we don't miss any part of the picture of how Move On works. Therefore, we will be conducting interviews and focus groups with mentees, mentors, service staff and other people who are connected with the service.

Who are we?

We are Christina McMellon, Emma Davidson and Fiona Morrison and we work at the University of Edinburgh.

Why take part in the research?

In order for the project to develop and help more young people it is really important that we know what you thought about your experience with Move On's Peer Mentoring Service. We will ask about the bits of the service you liked and why, and the bits you didn't like and what you think can be done to improve them. Remember that we are evaluating the service not you; we won't ask personal questions about your life and what you say in the interview or focus group will not affect your relationship with the service.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

We want to hear your views and to write about your experiences and what you say, but we respect your privacy and will not be using any real names or information that could identify anyone.

Changing your mind:

Even if you agree to take part in the research, you can change your mind at any time or choose not to answer some questions in the interview

What next?

Either a member of Move On staff or one of the researchers may be in touch with you to see if you would be willing to take part in an interview or focus group. We will be flexible to arrange interviews and focus groups at times and in places that are comfortable for you. If you would have any questions, please either talk to a member of staff at Move On or contact:

Christina McMellon
The Centre for Research on Families and Relationships
The University of Edinburgh
23 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh, EH8 9LN

TOPIC GUIDE FOR MENTEES

Referral
How did you find out about the project?
What did you think when the idea was suggested?
What happened next? (Who phoned who?)

First impressions of Move On
When/where did you first meet someone from Move On?
Who did you meet first?
What were your first impressions of the project?
What did you talk about?
How did you feel?
Why did you decide to go ahead to get a mentor?
What did you hope would happen?

Matching process
How did you get matched to your mentor? (selection process, information provided, support from Move On)
How many times did you meet?
What was your first impression of your mentor?
How did you decide to go ahead with the match?
What influenced your decision?

First meeting (after match)
(If matched or has been matched) Tell me about your first meetings with your mentor.
Where did you go?
What did you do?
How did it go?
How did you feel?
What did you think would happen next?
Working with your mentor
Did you set goals with your mentor?
Can you tell me what these goals are and when they were set?
How did you go about setting them?
How do these goals fit in with other support that you receive?
What do you do when you are with your mentor? How was this agreed?

Relationship with mentor
Describe your relationship with your mentor.
How long have you been working with mentor?
How often do you meet?
What do you tend to do when you meet up?
What do you talk about?
Have there been any significant moments or changes in your relationship to date?
How are you progressing in terms of the goals set?

Tell me about a time when your mentor has helped you? Given you some useful advice?

(for those with peer mentors) Has it made a difference having a mentor with a care experience? Why?

Impact of working with Move On

Have you learned anything as a result of being involved with Move On?

Have you changed as a result of being a mentee?

Has anything in your life changed?

How has your relationship with the mentor changed?

Do you think that the mentor has learned anything?

Do you think that they have changed since they have been mentoring you?

Has anything about the project or about your mentor surprised you?

Has anything been difficult? What?

Other things going on in your life that affect the success of the match.

Final reflections

What would the ideal mentor look / be like? (Does it make a difference whether you have similar backgrounds or shared life experiences?)

Would you prefer a peer mentor or a mentor from a different background? Why?

What is the role of a mentor?

What do you think the project is trying to achieve?

How do you feel about the match coming to an end?

Anything that Move On could do to improve the service?

Anything else that you'd like to add?

TOPIC GUIDE FOR MENTORS

Recruitment
How did you find out about the project?
What attracted you to this project? (first impressions from the advert)
What did you think that you could bring to it? (skills, background, life experience)
Was there anything that you were worried about at that stage?
Have you volunteered before / did you consider any volunteering opportunities with other organisations?
How did you first contact Move On? What happened when you made contact?
Tell me about the interview that you had with Move On.
What were your first impressions when you first met someone from the project? Was it what you expected?
At this point what did you think the role of mentor was?

Training
Describe the training that you received from the project (duration, location, number of people, range of activities and learning – mentoring techniques)
What did you find most useful? Examples?
What wasn't useful? Examples?
Was there anything that surprised you?
Was there anything that you think should have been covered but wasn't?
Did your understanding of what it means to be a mentor change over the course of the training?

Matching process
(If you are/ have been matched) How long did it take you to get matched with a mentee?
 (If not yet matched) Has there been any progress towards making a match?
How did that process work?
Communication with Move On
Meeting potential matches
How involved were you in the process?
Was anything difficult? (timescales, maintaining skills, feeling supported, staying in touch)

Timescale
Was there anything you would have liked to be done differently?
What happens when people aren't matched?
Were staff at Move On pro-active in communicating with you? Was there one person who kept in touch? Who?
Did you feel informed about the process?
How did you feel? (Did you maintain motivation?)
Is there anything that could have helped that didn't happen?

Initial meetings

(If matched or has been matched) Tell me about your first meetings with your mentee. (how did it work, who said what, what did you talk about, what decisions were made)

What were your first impressions of your mentee?

What expectations did you have about the relationships?

How did you decide how the relationship would work? (where, how often, what you do, how you communicate with each other) Was the contract useful?

Did you set goals with your mentee?

Can you tell me what these goals are and when they were set?

How did you go about setting them?

Relationship with mentee

Tell me about the first time you met with your mentee without a member of staff.

What did you do? What did you talk about?

How did you feel?

Was there anything you were worried about?

Did you feel prepared?

Did you feel supported?

Working with the mentee (questions need to be adapted if match has ended)

Describe your relationship with your mentee.

How long have you been working with mentee?

How often do you meet?

What do you tend to do when you meet up?

What do you talk about?

Have there been any significant moments or changes in your relationship to date?

How are you progressing in terms of the goals set?

Impact on mentee

When you were first matched what difference did you hope this would make for the mentee?

Has this happened?

Has something else happened? (something unexpected or unanticipated)

If so, is that ok?

How well-suited do you think you and your mentee are?

Has your mentee achieved their goals?

How has your relationship with the mentee changed since you were first matched? If so, how?

Do you think that the mentee has learned anything from the relationship?

Are there any other positive outcomes of the match? (e.g. soft outcomes)

Do you think that they have changed since you have been mentoring them?

Are there any external factors in the mentee's life that have affected the success of the match? If so, what are they and what impact have they had?

Could anything have been done differently to make a greater impact? (by you? By Move On?)

Relationship with Move On

Who is your main contact at Move On?
How do you communicate with them?
How often do you meet with them (with and without mentee)?
What do you talk about when you speak and/or meet?
Do you find this contact useful? Why/Why not?
Overall, have you felt supported by Move On?
How much contact do you have with other mentors?
(if contact) Is this useful?
(if no contact) Would it be useful?
Could it be improved?

Impact of being a mentor (Experience of being a mentor?)
How would you describe the role of the mentor now?
Have you learned anything from being a mentor?
Have you changed as a result of being a mentor? (views, values, attitudes)
Do you do anything differently as a result of being a mentor?
Have your life circumstances changed since you have been a mentor? (Prompt specifically for employment)
If so, do you think that this change is related to being a mentor?
Do you think that you being a mentor has had any impact on other people in your life? (family? Friends? Wider community?)
Has being a mentor made you reflect upon your own life experiences?
What have been the biggest challenges of being a mentor?
Are there external factors in your life that have affected the success of the match?
How do you feel about the match coming to an end?

Final comments
Anything that Move On could do to improve the service?
Anything else that you'd like to add?

TOPIC GUIDE FOR OUTSIDE STAKEHOLDERS:
(questions are flexible depending upon role and relationship)

- What organisation do you work for?
- What is your role within your organisation?
- When did you first have contact with Move On?
- How did you find out about the service?
- What has been your involvement with Move On's mentoring service? (if funder: What part of the service do you fund? How much? What is the funding period?)
- What do you understand to be the aims of the service?
- Who do you think the service targets? (Mentees? Mentors?)
- (for referrers) Are you clear about who you can refer to the service?
- (for referrers) Have you ever referred a young person to the service?
- If so, can you describe the referral process?
- How did communication work between you and Move On during the referral process? Was it effective? Can you think of any ways it could have been improved?
- How did Move On keep you informed about the match?
- (for funders) What was it about the service that successfully attracted funding from your organisation?
- (for funders) How does the service fit within your organisation's priorities?
- (for funders) How does your communication work with Move On? (Contact person? Monitoring? Reporting?) Has this been effective?
- Are there any differences between Move On's mentoring service and other mentoring services? What makes Move On distinctive?
- What do you perceive to be the benefits of being involved in the service? (For mentees? For mentors? For organisations?) Do you have any examples that you can share?
- What do you perceive as the challenges of being involved in the service? (For mentees? For mentors? For organisations?) How does Move On manage these challenges?
- What do you see as the difference between the peer mentoring service and the core mentoring service? Do you see any particular value of peer mentoring? Any added challenges? Do you have any examples you can share?
- What aspects of Move On's Mentoring Service could be improved? What changes are required to make this happen and who needs to be involved?