Changing the Lives of Children and Older People: Intergenerational Mentoring in Secondary Schools

Intergenerational Mentoring Project: Phase 3 Evaluation Report

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Beth Johnson

FOUNDATION

looking at ageing in new ways

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CHAPTER 1
The Context of the Study: Empowerment, Well-Being and Quality of Life

Introduction

The Beth Johnson Foundation (BJF) in Stoke-on-Trent has a long tradition of innovative development work in the community: influencing and challenging the roles and status of older people in society. Much of this work has been the subject of thorough professional evaluation, research and dissemination at local, national and international levels. This research report is the culmination of an action research project conducted since 1997 (see Ellis, 1998, 1999) into the experiences of older and younger people who engage in school-based intergenerational mentoring. The two early 'pilot demonstration programmes' (BJF, 1999) led, for the first time in the UK, to the expansion of the project into a sustainable intergenerational mentoring scheme across the majority of secondary schools in the Stoke-on-Trent Local Education Authority (LEA).

The wider intergenerational scheme began in October 1999, funded by a National Health Action Zone (HAZ) innovation award, and concluded in the summer of 2002. This research report focuses on secondary evidence drawn from 1999-2002 and primary research conducted during the summer of 2002.

The main aims of the project were:

- To develop a sustainable intergenerational mentoring scheme across one LEA that could be promoted to, and taken up by, other LEAs;

- To engage a minimum of 10 secondary 11-16 schools and to target Y7 pupils who were most at risk of failure and had been marginalized within the system, in order to promote pupil self-confidence and self-esteem, improve school attendance and academic attainment, and facilitate a successful transition from primary to high school;

- To encourage older volunteers to become purposefully involved in meaningful activity promoting a sense of personal identify, self worth, well being and empowerment;

- To promote educational, social and health benefits for both younger and older participants and, through a process of engaging the two generations, to benefit the community and provide models of positive ageing for young people and the local school community;

- To develop a sustainable community based initiative that brings young and old people together, and to play a part in addressing issues of 'social fragmentation' across the generations.

Background to the Study

The above aims encapsulate a number of themes and issues that underpin research and developments that have taken place at the BJF during the past five years. First, considerable time has been spent searching for a definition of intergenerational practice that best suits our purposes and the UK environment in which we work. Much past research and writing has emerged from North America and in particular from the USA (Kuehne VS, 1999). However, in 1999, the International Consortium of Intergenerational Programmes (ICIP) met in Dortmund and developed the following definition:

'Intergenerational programmes are vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations for individual and social benefits'.
(Hatton-Yeo & Ohsako, 2000:3)

This definition has its European origins in the development of social policy around ideas of 'social exclusion' with an emphasis on communities and community development. The social exclusion concept recognises how social structures can exclude sections of society, in this case younger and older people. Some argue that it is a relative concept that is manifest in social relations and not individual circumstances (Atkinson & Hills, 1998). However, one of the key dimensions of this approach to social policy is the emphasis on communities and community development as a way in which issues of social deprivation and social exclusion may be addressed. Chronological age is a crucial factor in social exclusion and intergenerational activities which are carefully constructed can bring the old, young and middle generations together, including them in the 'social fabric' of society for the benefit of themselves and the communities in which they live (BJF, 2000:2).

In this research, we wanted to move away from the widespread quantitative frameworks and research tools previously adopted (Ellis, 1998, 1999; Kuehne, 1999) and to reflect some of the more recent policy and intellectual developments at the BJF in terms of their intergenerational activity and work. To this end, community development approaches and concepts of empowerment, well-being and quality of life, are crucial underpinnings to the research.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a much used and abused term and it is therefore important to consider how we use and understand the concept. Bernard (2000:28), writing about empowerment and health promotion with older people, argues that empowerment can be *'variously understood as an ideal, or ethos, as a goal, as a skill, as a process or a set of processes, and as an outcome or a set of outcomes'*. It is therefore a rather difficult term to unpack given that she also acknowledges that empowerment has close associations with education, citizen participation and community development work. Given this proviso, Bernard (2000:29) provides sound advice on how this 'unpacking' might be achieved. First, we need to think and recognise that empowerment can operate at a number of different levels: individual, organisational and community. In terms of the mentoring scheme and this research, we were most interested in empowerment at an individual level (for the children and mentors); at group level (for the school teams of mentors and coordinators); and at a community level for the secondary schools and their surrounding communities.

'At an individual level, empowerment is essentially about the acquisition of individual skills and/or a change to ways one thinks about oneself, and how it is linked with taking control over one's life and one's destiny' (Bernard, 2000:29). Individual empowerment can also be linked with recognising that it needs to build on existing skills and competences and that raising people's consciousness, awareness and confidence will, in turn, lead to increased participation together with the enhanced ability to make informed positive choices. Empowerment in this sense is a very positive and dynamic notion, concerned with growth and personal development.

In the realms of organisational empowerment we move on to a different set of understandings and issues that lead us to begin to question the relationships between individuals and structures. In this case, our concern is with the schools and with the management and coordination both within schools, and between schools and the BJF. Organisational cultures are important either as facilitators or impediments to empowerment. Thus, we are dealing here with attitudes and orientations of professionals, be they teachers, mentoring coordinators in schools, or BJF project developers all working within organisational frameworks.

It is also important to acknowledge that empowerment is an evolving process and has no clear end point. As users and volunteers experience more power so what was once acceptable can become the subject of criticism (Stevenson and Parsloe, 1993). In this sense, empowerment can become regarded negatively or as dangerous or difficult. However, this is not the case when we look at community level empowerment. Indeed empowerment through community mobilisation and support has been a cornerstone of community led approaches, built around a recognition that community empowerment will come about through active participation of people (in this case older mentor volunteers) in the implementation, planning and providing resources for change in the community.

At whichever level one considers empowerment there are two further fundamental issues that should be considered. First, there is the issue of power itself which is a very evocative term and, second, the nature of relationships between individuals. Bernard (2000:30) indicates that we tend to think of power in terms of a finite resource: that there is only a certain amount of it to go around and that it can be given to, or taken away from, some other group or individual. Conventionally therefore empowerment is often thought of in individualistic terms. For the purposes of this research, we prefer to see empowerment as the *'cultivation of a person's self esteem to such a degree that they assume power over some aspect of their lives without reference to higher authority'* (MacDonald, 1998:10).

Well-Being

The World Health Organisation (1958) has defined health as a state of complete physical, psychological and social well-being. In recent years a number of instruments have been developed that are intended to broaden the spectrum of health research from more traditional medical measures to include the more subjective and functional status of patients (Jenkinson et al, 1996). These measures are aimed at what is referred to as subjective health status and health related quality of life. Subjective measures such as the degree of social and community interaction, psychological well-being, pain, tiredness and satisfaction with life, can be calculated for particular groups within the total population. For the purposes of this research we felt it important to gain measures of the mentor volunteers' well-being as well as their overall quality of life. This, we felt, would provide some indication of what was 'special' about this group of older people compared with community norms.

Quality of Life

Quality of life is currently the subject of much and varied research (see Walker et al., 2002). However, there are some problems in terms of defining quality of life, especially so with older populations where health status has been often been used as a proxy measure for quality of life. There is also a growing body of evidence to suggest that large proportions of those who have retired are enjoying active and relatively healthy life styles (Bernard, 2000). The notion of human beings as 'needs satisfiers' is well established in psychology and Maslow (1968) argues that all human beings, by virtue of our humanity, share a common set of needs. This implies that not only can one measure the extent to which an individual's needs are satisfied, but that these measures can be compared for different individuals. Furthermore, Maslow (1968) is critical of the 'deficiency model' that behavioural psychologists adopt, arguing that it is too narrowly focused on the basic requirements of human life and that once fundamental needs are satisfied people pursue higher needs such as self actualisation, happiness and esteem.

Notions of empowerment, well-being and quality of life therefore underpin the mentoring scheme and, in turn, form the focus for the research study which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Summary Points

- This research report focuses on both primary and secondary data drawn from a variety of sources during 1999-2002. The main aims of the scheme were to develop a sustainable intergenerational mentoring scheme across one LEA; and to develop a community based initiative that brings young and old people together.

- The background for the study included developing and promoting workable definitions of intergenerational practice, and a concern with the development of social policy around ideas of 'social exclusion' and an emphasis on school communities and school community development.

- This study deliberately moves away from the quantitative techniques used in previous studies to reflect more recent intellectual developments in the field of intergenerational work and research. To this end, it uses measures and approaches that give some indication of the ways in which volunteers and children become empowered through intergenerational exchange.

CHAPTER 2
Research in Action: Evaluating the Intergenerational Mentoring Scheme

Introduction

The main aim of this study was to investigate the use, relevance and effectiveness of an intergenerational mentoring project targeting Y7 secondary school children in need of support and guidance from older mentor volunteers. We specifically sought the perspectives, opinions and experiences of both older and younger people involved in the scheme. The study was therefore designed to:

- Identify what impedes and what facilitates intergenerational mentoring relationships;

- Elicit children's and older mentor volunteers' views on the ways in which the scheme has enhanced their self-esteem and well-being;

- Articulate the perspectives of older people and children and identify areas where they feel empowered to move on with their lives;

- Assess the contribution which participation in intergenerational mentoring makes to the quality of life of older volunteers.

Ethical Guidelines

The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 1992) believes that all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for persons, respect for knowledge, respect for demographic values and respect for the quality of educational research. This research raises a variety of ethical issues that impact both on the actual research, the participants (older people, schools and children) and on those conducting the research. We are especially mindful of our responsibilities to the participants in particular the older people (all of whom were subject to a 'police clearance check') and the children, who work within a close professional educational mentoring relationship. In a similar way, the bringing together of the mentors and the children in focus groups for close and sometimes emotional discussion around their experiences of the mentoring scheme, had significant legal and professional implications for the research team.

Section 7 of the BERA (1992: 2) guidelines focuses specifically on participants. It is reproduced here in full for the purposes of this research:

Responsibility to the participants:

- *Participants in a research study have the right to be informed about the aims, purposes and likely publication of findings involved in the research and of the potential consequences for participants, and to give their informed consent before participating in the research.*

- *Care should be taken when interviewing children and students up to school leaving age; permission should be obtained from the school, and if they so suggest, the parents.*

- *Honesty and openness should characterise the relationship between researcher, participants and institutional representatives.*

- *Participants have the right to withdraw from a study at any time.*

- *Researchers have a responsibility to be mindful of cultural, religious, gendered, and other significant differences within the research population in the planning, conducting and reporting of their research.*

How the Study was Carried Out

The research was conducted over a year from March 2002 to February 2003 and a multi method approach was adopted. The study had three phases: initial secondary data collection; quantitative and qualitative data collection; analysis, write-up and dissemination. Details of the collection of research data are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Data

Methods	Timing	Sample
Internal monitoring data (BJF), including occasional papers, review of various newspaper articles (Sentinel), taped interviews (Radio Stoke), volunteer support group meetings, school mentor feedback sheets, minutes of school liaison meetings, annual project reports (1999-2002), development plan and budget plan, project advisory group meetings.	March-June, 2002	BJF Staff/Mentors/ Minutes steering and liaison
Mentors' reflective diaries (1999-2001)	March-Aug, 2002	Mentors
National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Questionnaire: evaluation of the mentor bursary programme, sample questions for mentees (1999).	May, 2002	Children Secondary Schools
Short Form (SF12) Health Survey	May, 2002	Mentors
Quality of Life Measure (CASP-19)	May, 2002	Mentors
Qualitative Focus Groups	May, 2002	Secondary Schools, Children, Mentors and Coordinators
Participant Observation	March-July, 2002	Borough Arms, Newcastle-u-Lyme Intergenerational Mentoring Event Celebration Event Steering Committee
BJF Steering Group	March, 2002-3	MMU/Keele Researchers/ BJF Management
Dissemination	Oct, 2002-Mar, 2003	Interested Groups/ Schools

Why do the research in this way?

One of the key features of this research was to build on previous evaluations (Ellis, 1998, 1999) and, in particular, to bring the mentors and children together in a collaborative research setting rather than treat them as separate entities. Children are designated by the UN Convention as being everyone under the age of 18. Children, however, are not a homogenous group but comprise a wide variety of characteristics, dispositions, variable family circumstances, communities and schools (Taylor, 2000:22). There is also recent research and writing which suggests that since the UK ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991), thus supporting the right for children to express their views freely and for those views to be respected (Article 12), that researchers are also becoming more aware of the absence of young people's voices and perceptions (Oakley, 2000:75). Participation, in this case through the medium of 'focus groups', sought to mutually reinforce the importance of this group of children and older mentors and to encourage the children especially to speak their minds and express their opinions.

Focus Groups

The focus group has gained considerable popularity as a means of gathering qualitative data in social research. The focus group technique is commonly acknowledged to have its origins in sociology (Merton et al., 1956). Focus groups have been described as group discussions exploring a specific set of issues or topics and facilitated and coordinated by a moderator or facilitator. The topic for discussion is decided in advance and the concern is with both the content and the process of discussion (Nettleton et al., 2002:2). The aim is to capitalise on the interaction that occurs and to help people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily available in a one-to-one interview (Sim, 1998:346). When setting up focus groups it is generally felt that 8-12 is a suitable number. A facilitator, who can be assisted by a co-researcher, coordinates the group. The broad advantages of focus groups include: they are economical in terms of tapping the views of a number of people; they provide information on the 'dynamics of attitudes' (Morgan, 1988); they encourage spontaneity and expression of views, and participants often feel supported and empowered by a sense of group membership and cohesiveness (Sim, 1998:246).

Whilst it is generally agreed that the focus group has considerable potential for the collection of qualitative data there are methodological constraints that should be acknowledged and discussed in the context of this and other research utilising this technique. These include the skills and attributes of the moderator which will have a powerful influence over the quality of data collected; the fact that focus groups explore a collective 'social reality' which may be different from that of one-to-one interviews; and that focus groups can reveal the nature and range of views but is less secure as a measure of strength of opinion held by individuals within the group (Sim, 1998:351). This raises the issue of what to use alongside the focus group. Indeed, Morgan (1995) argues that whilst it is conceivable to use other qualitative techniques, the focus group is most effectively and commonly used alongside questionnaires. For the purposes of this research we therefore used three validated questionnaires to explore quality of life and well-being outcomes: one for the children (from the National Foundation for Educational Research) and two for the older mentor volunteers (SF12, CASP19) (see Appendix 1).

Focus Group Interviews

The interviews were conducted during a two-week period in May 2002 in the 9 secondary schools (11-16) involved in the scheme. The interviews took place at a variety of times throughout the day usually facilitated by one researcher. In some cases it was possible to use two

researchers: one conducting the interview and the other acting as a non-participant observer providing feedback on the interview process and reactions and comments from participants. The first sample school was treated as a pilot study and the lessons learnt in terms of timing, questioning, organising and managing the research was fed-forward into the rest of the study. In fact, the basic format of the meetings changed very little from school to school once we had established a rhythm and a sense of direction of the best way to conduct the focus group interviews. The number of participants in each group was dependant on the numbers of past and present children and mentors available at any given time (see Table 2).

All the sample schools had been involved with the scheme for a minimum of three years and some had up to five years' experience. In one school, for example, we invited the children into the room in year groups beginning with Y9s and then Y8s through to Y7s. In other schools it was possible to have just the one group that included all. The meetings took place in a variety of settings from the head teacher's study, to school libraries, classrooms, learning support units and small meeting rooms. Each meeting varied in duration from around an hour to over two hours in some cases, dependant on the numbers involved. Each interview was tape-recorded using a powerful microphone and quality machine. The tapes were later transcribed and analysed providing a rich source (66,000 words) of comment, testimony, and lively interaction between mentors, children and school coordinators.

Table 2: Participants in the Research

Schools	Children	Mentors	Coordinators
A	19	5	2
B	8	4	1
C	7	4	1
D	4	3	0
E	5	4	0
F	2	3	2
G	0	9	1
H	5	6	1
I	4	4	0
Total	**54**	**42**	**8**

The Children

The child participants included the Y7 children (11-12 years of age) currently involved with the scheme, together with children who had been involved with the scheme in the past from Ys 8 to 11 (note: only Y7 children currently in the scheme completed questionnaires). Some children were invited who had been involved since 1997 and were now about to leave the secondary sector to engage in post-16 education. The older children provided a very useful long-term perspective and were able to look back and reflect on the contributions the scheme had made to their educational and social development.

The Mentors

42 mentors out of a total of 64 in the scheme participated in the focus group discussions. They were generally aged between 60 and 75 with some in the age-range 50-60 and a few in the 75-85 age group. The majority of mentors were married with children and grandchildren; some

were single or divorced, and about 10% were widowed. Not all volunteers were in regular physical contact with their grandchildren and, in two cases, volunteers were the main carers for grandchildren.

All volunteers involved in the project had worked outside the home throughout their adult lives and were from a wide range of careers ranging from company director to skilled labourers and artisans (in the local ceramics industry). Volunteers therefore came from diverse educational backgrounds. Similarly, many had been involved with some form of volunteering during their lives. Their reasons for joining the scheme are best described by the following quotation from the second annual report:

> 'Whatever their experiences they all shared a common interest in helping young people make the best of their educational opportunities. The most frequently cited motivation for getting involved with the project was to 'give something back and to make a difference'.
>
> (Purcell, 2001ii:6)

Some of the mentors also had a wealth of experience of engaging in this type of mentoring (since 1997) and were able to provide an invaluable long-term perspective on the ways such activity had affected their personal well-being.

Structure of the Focus Group Interviews

Research with human participants is an intrusive process and we cannot assume that research subjects simply cooperate with the researcher for a short period of their lives and then move on unchanged (Lindsay, 2000:3). The impact of these meetings between young children and older adults needed to be carefully managed and conducted with an awareness of ethical issues. Consequently, building on the experiences of the first pilot interview and comments and feedback from the development officer for the scheme, it was decided to organise the interviews into the three phases described below (see Appendix 2).

Initial Setting-Up, Questionnaire Form-Filling and Establishing Ground Rules

Each of the venues within the sample schools were different and therefore presented slightly differing challenges in terms of setting up the interviews. We were aware that group size, group members, seating of group members and the physical arrangements might influence the nature of the data collected. Bearing this in mind, in all cases we tried to work around a large table, and each participant was asked to write their preferred first name on a sticky label and display it (for ease of identification) in a prominent position. It was decided to use first names only, for simplicity and to engender a less formal approach. Some of the children found this a little difficult to adopt being more used to a formal form of address within the school system. Children were also asked to sit alongside their mentors and the mentors were requested to support the children and reassure them this was 'not a test or a trial' and that they were to try to relax and enjoy the discussion. For the children and mentors this situation was entirely new and, despite the initial introduction of the research to the mentors at a training event prior to Easter 2002 (held at the Borough Arms Hotel, Newcastle-u-Lyme), the children had not had the benefit of meeting and having the research explained to them. Furthermore, and quite significantly, neither had they met as a group of mentors and children before. Contact between the two groups had been mainly one-to-one in the classroom. So, this was a first for all of them and it was very important to stress the confidential nature of the research; to emphasise that the aim was to facilitate naturalistic, interactive and open discussion between the two groups (Lindsay, 2000:3); to explore the ways

in which their mentoring relationships had developed, progressed and improved; and to discuss their sense of well-being and their collective/individual empowerment.

In order to further settle people, mentors began by completing the CASP questionnaire and the SF12 health survey. I also asked the mentors to assist the Y7 children with completing the NFER questionnaire. Many of the schools provided refreshments at this point that we served to the participants. This exercise took around 10 minutes and we were then ready to begin the interview once basic ground rules had been established. In terms of ground rules, it was agreed that the adults listen to the children initially and then adults were invited to interject questions of their own keeping, as much as possible, the conversation flowing.

Children's Interviews (with adults present)

Each child was first asked to introduce their mentor and to give some indication of the ways in which their mentor help them and why they thought they had been given a mentor. This acted as an 'icebreaker'. Some of the younger children (Y7s) were initially quite shy but, through careful prompting, support from their mentors, and specific direct questioning, the children gained in confidence and were really quite forthcoming and insightful in their comments. There was however a slight tendency for the mentors to answer for the children at times and, in one case, a mentor who used the occasion to chastise the child for some poor behaviour during class in the week prior to the meeting. This was not a serious problem with the interviews but we needed to be mindful of the ways in which some participants could become dominant by either restricting the topics for discussion or dominating the discussions themselves. Others may be hesitant to offer a different or alternative perspective. We also tried to make sure that when the interviewer attempted to 'tidy-up' and summarise the inputs that this was not reinterpreted erroneously thus altering the group order effects (Dockrell et al., 2000:52). This all had to be managed in much the same way as you might manage a class-teaching situation or a large meeting. The following comment about the children's response to the interviews is taken from a taped field-note at one of the meetings:

> *'It has been quite difficult to warm some of these children's groups up because they are not used to being in a situation where they are alongside adults having an adult/child type conversation. They are clearly quite intimidated by some of it, one of them was mentioning about the tape, oh you are taping it so it is a big official thing. It has been quite difficult to get a response with some of the groups. Some of the groups have been quite relaxed so I think it is probably a question of interview time, relaxed relationships with the older adults and the ways in which the school coordinators present the interview situation. Most groups have eventually warmed to the task'.*
>
> *(Field note, 14th May, 2002:11)*

It should be acknowledged that there are many layers of influence on children's experience of school life, from the macro to the political to the community and individual school and classroom contexts. These layers fuse and interact to result in the individual conditions that comprise everyday classroom learning' (Taylor, 2000:27). Given this context it was important to listen to the children's comments carefully and encourage them to be honest and open. In this sense, the main focus of the research was *with* rather than *about* children (Oakley, 2000:75). Once settled, most of the children were able to articulate their thoughts clearly and interact with the group. Some were very confident and used the occasion to 'play to the audience' (usually a close friend) while others used the opportunity to 'show-off' and give me outlandish responses which fitted with their notions of what was required in research terms. However, the vast majority were very mature in terms of their responses and often quite emotional about the impact the scheme had

had on them. At the appropriate time (usually after the question 'would anyone like to add anything?'), I thanked the children and asked them to remove their 'sticky labels' and return to their classrooms.

Mentors' Interview (without the children)

At the conclusion of the joint interview with the children, mentors were asked to stay for a short time to raise any issues relating to the children, their role and the management and future of the scheme. It was at this point that I was able to bring in the school's scheme coordinator (usually a member of the senior management team) who had observed the interview between the mentors and the children. The discussion in all cases was open, frank and professional, working best where the mentors felt relaxed and confident with the coordinator.

Summary Points

- The main aims of this research study were to investigate the use, relevance and effectiveness of an intergenerational mentoring project targeting Y7 secondary school children in need of support and guidance from older mentor volunteers.

- The ethical guidelines provided by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) were adopted and we were mindful of our responsibilities to all stakeholders.

- The study was carried out over a year from March 2002 to February 2003. A multi-method approach was adopted. This involved drawing on a wide variety of secondary monitoring, reporting and evaluation data provided by the BJF, as well as the primary data collected through focus group interviews.

- One of the key features of this research was to build on and draw from previous evaluations, in particular to bring both the children and volunteers together in a more collaborative research setting rather than, as in the past, treating them as separate entities.

- To this end, focus groups were used in order to explore the collective 'social reality' of the groups of volunteers and children in each secondary school. This data was supplemented by the additional use of three validated questionnaire instruments assessing well-being and quality of life.

- Focus group interviews were conducted during a two-week period in May 2002. Interviews took place in 9 secondary schools involving over 100 mentors, school staff and children. A key point here is that the interviews provided us with both a short-term perspective as well as retrospective views which, for some, amounted to 5 years' involvement in the scheme.

- Focus group interviews were subdivided into three sections: firstly, a warm-up which involved questionnaire completion; secondly, interviews with the children and the mentor volunteers; and, finally, a short debrief with the mentors and, in some cases, the school-based coordinator.

CHAPTER 3
Research in Action: Quantitative Findings

Introduction

In this chapter we report on the data obtained from the three research instruments used at the start of the focus group sessions. We especially discuss the research background and the relevance of both SF12 and CASP 19 as measures of the mentors' well-being and quality of life.

Short Form 12 Health Survey (SF12): A Measure of Well-Being

SF12 is a measure that has been developed for the explicit purpose of monitoring, comparing groups and forward planning for health provision for adults. SF12 is a measure that can be completed quickly and yet is comprehensive enough to give a 'generic health status measure' using validated psychometric multi-item scales (Jenkinson et al., 1996). It is especially useful for comparison, in this case, our sample of older mentors with the general population for that age group. However, the limitations here are that this is a small scale, base-line cross-sectional study that does not attempt to indicate the long-term differences that might accrue from involvement with the scheme. We present here the outcomes for the volunteers at the formal conclusion of the scheme, in the summer of 2002.

Here we report the outcomes in two ways: first, the analysis of the raw data for physical and mental health and, second, the physical and mental component summary algorithms for the SF12 sample.
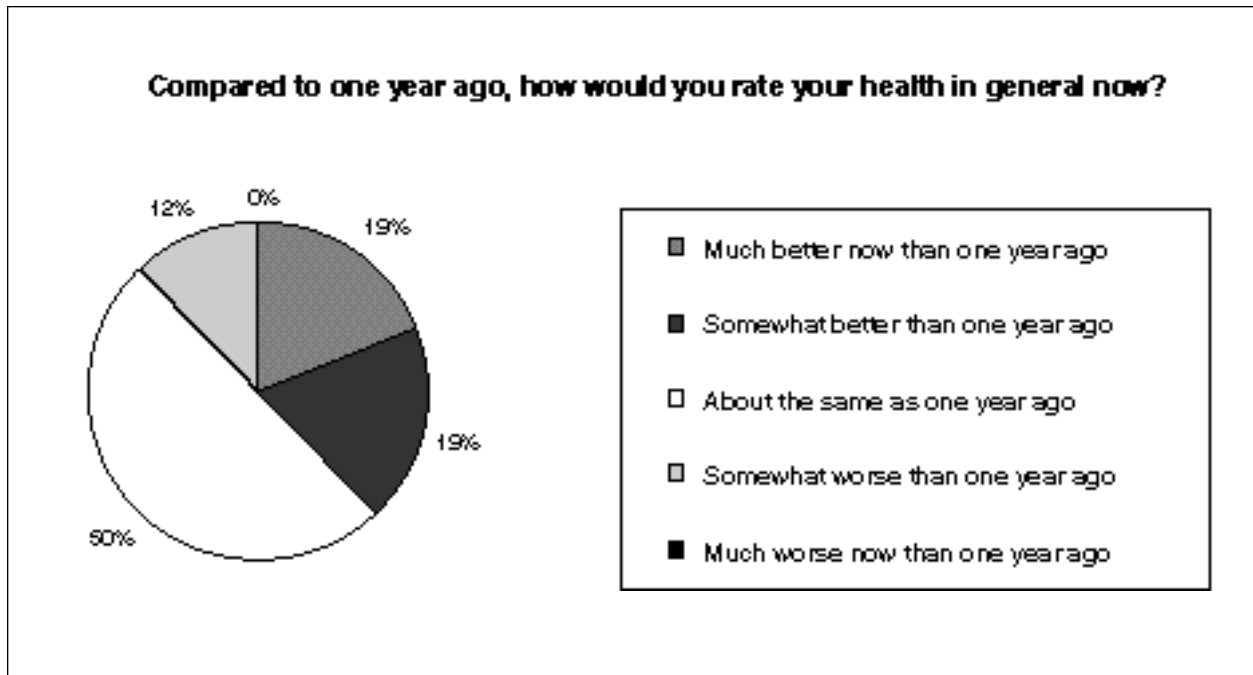
As Figure 1 shows, three quarters (74%) of the mentors rate their health as excellent, very good or good.

Figure 1: General Health Perception
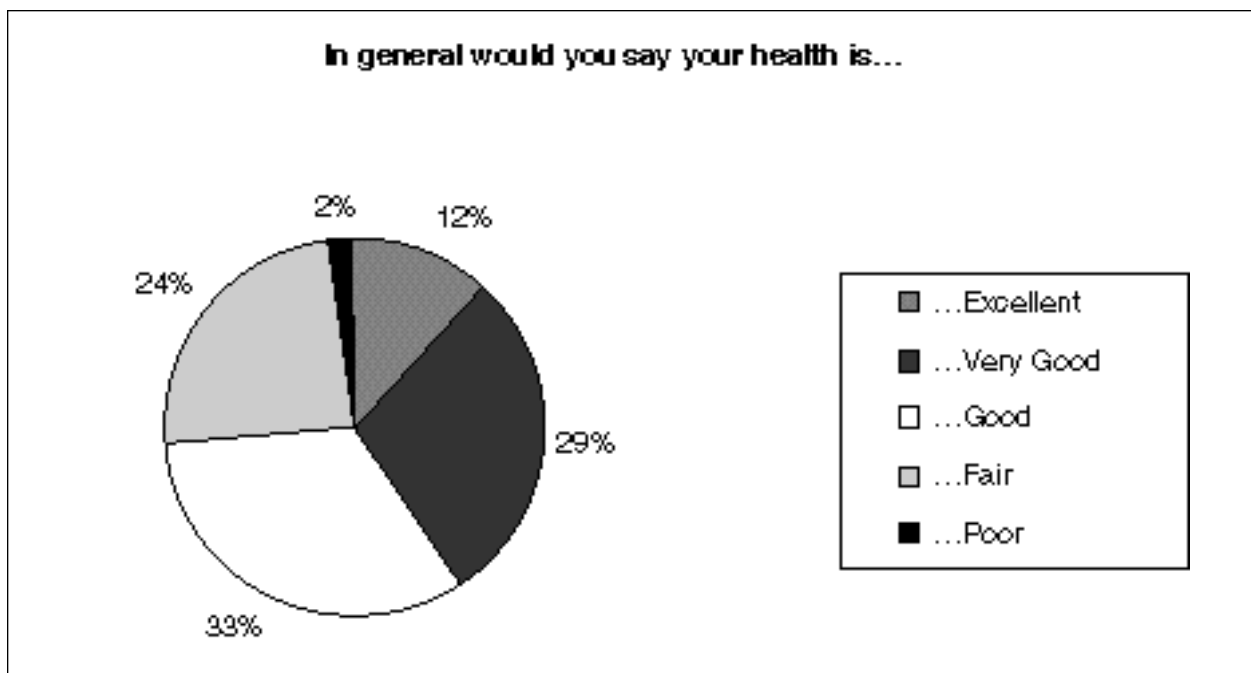
Similarly, most respondents (88%) report their health as either better or about the same compared with a year previously (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Change in Health

Figure 2: Change in Health

Not surprisingly then, the majority of the mentors say that their health does not limit their activities. However, a small proportion (between 10 and 20%) report that they are limited a lot (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Limitations to Activities

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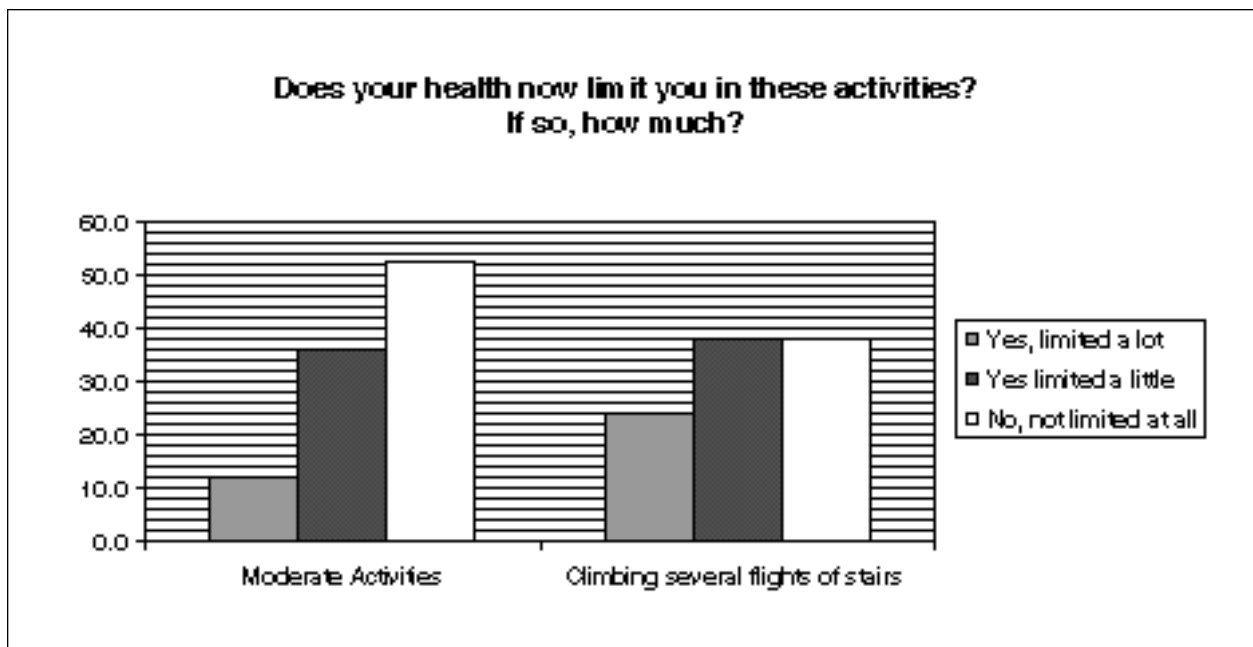
In terms of their physical health, over 70% of the mentors report that they have few problems with accomplishing tasks or are limited in their work (see Figure 4).

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Figure 4: Role Limitation due to Physical Problems

During the past 4 weeks, have you had any of the following problems with your work or other daily activities as a result of your physical health?
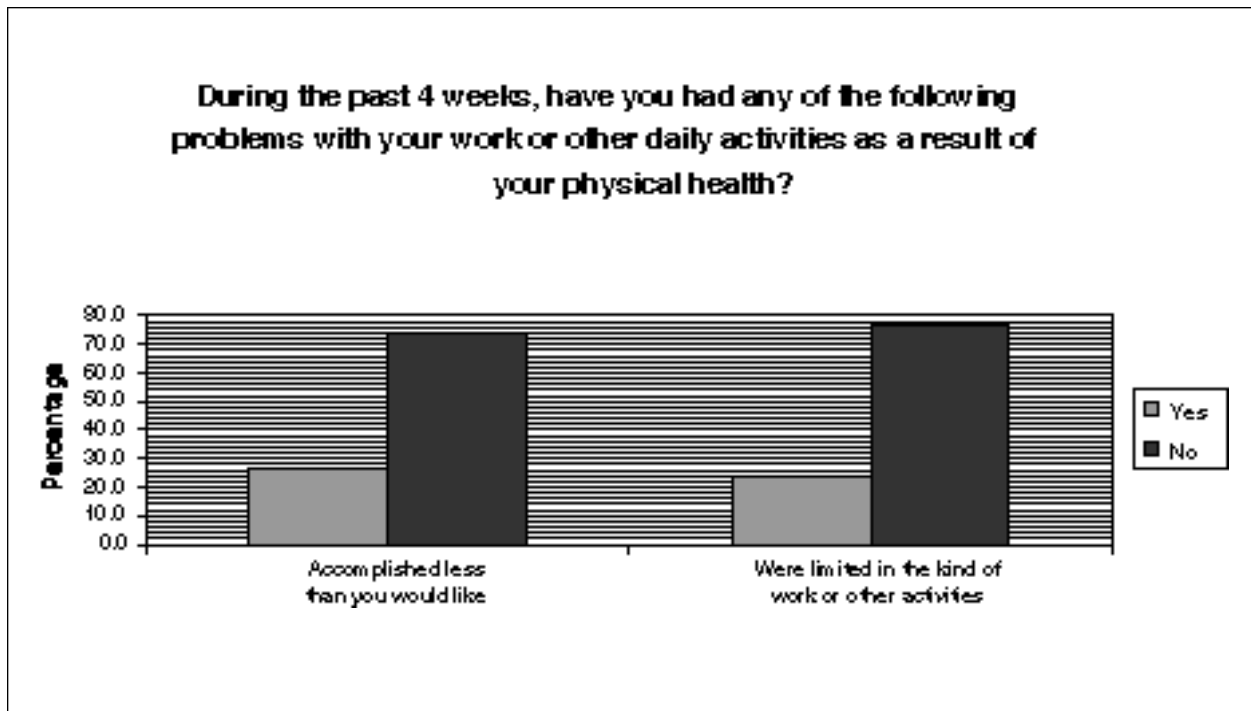
Figure 5 shows that although over one third of mentors are not affected by pain at all, nearly two thirds of them experience some pain that interferes with their work.

Figure 5: Pain

During the past 4 weeks, how much did pain interfere with your normal work?
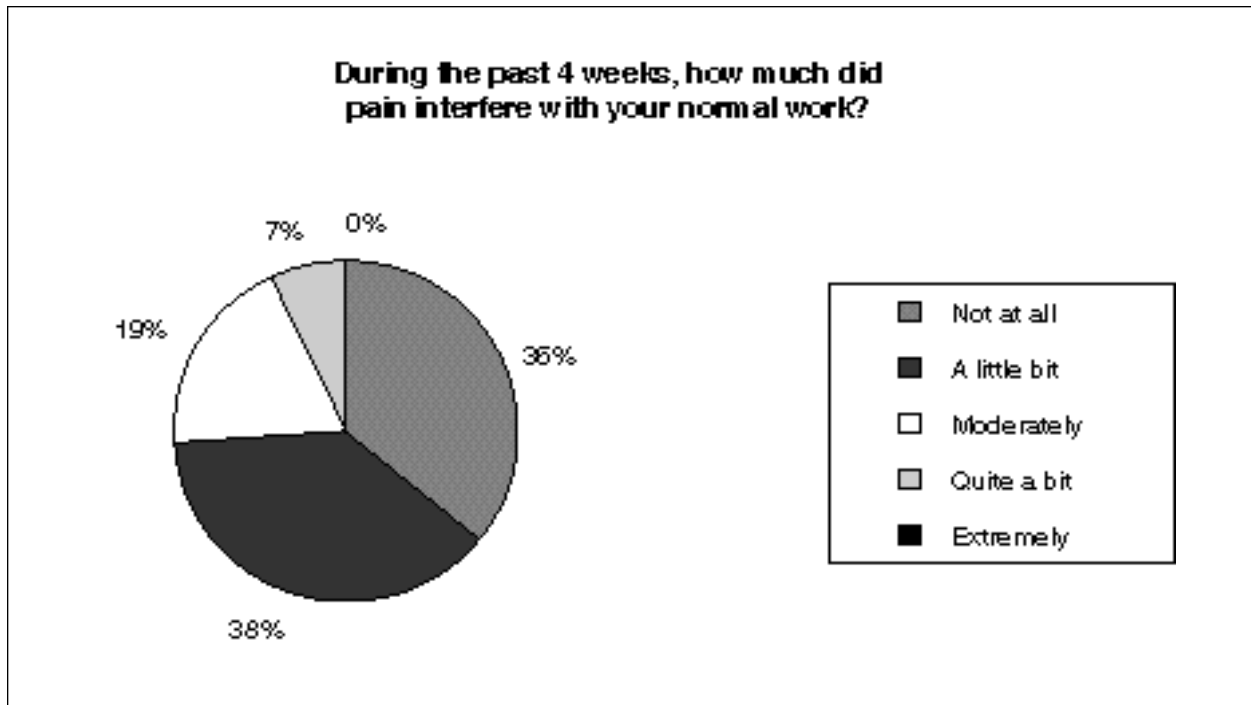
Turning to mental health, the majority of volunteers (about 80%) report few emotional problems although a minority (between 10 and 20%) have been affected by such problems during the four weeks prior to the interviews.

Figure 6: Role Limitation due to Emotional Problems
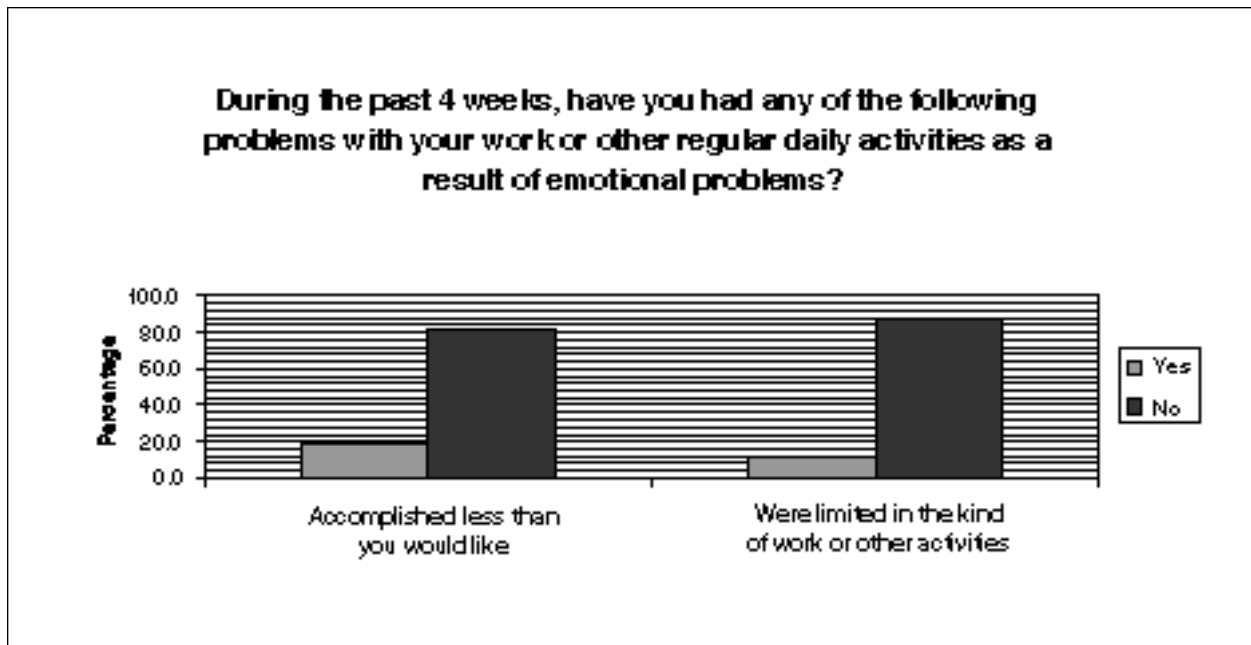
Again not surprisingly then, Figure 7 shows that the majority of the mentors feel calm and peaceful for most of the time and have reasonable levels of energy. Conversely, just over half say that they feel downhearted and depressed some of the time, with one volunteer indicating that they felt depressed all of the time.

Figure 7: Energy and Vitality
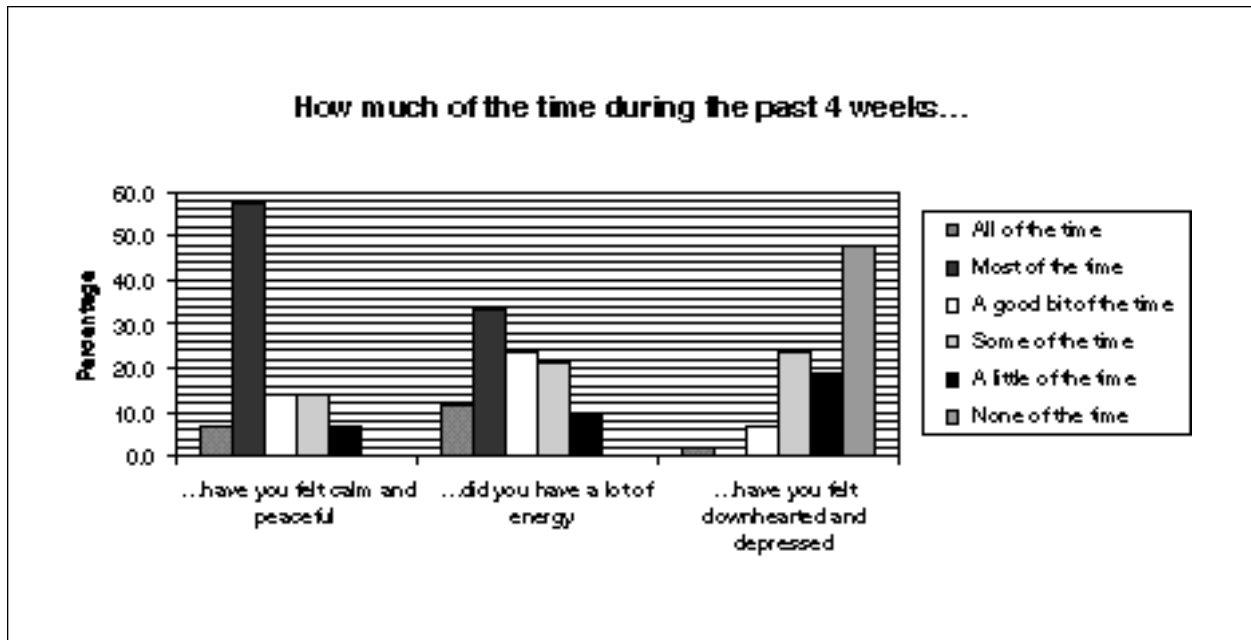
In sum though, despite certain difficulties for some people with pain and with feeling downhearted or depressed at times, Figure 8 shows that over three quarters (78%) of the mentors say that neither their physical limitations nor their mental health interferes with their social activities. In other words, the majority of the sample is socially active and engaged with their volunteering and with the community.

18

Figure 8: Social Functioning
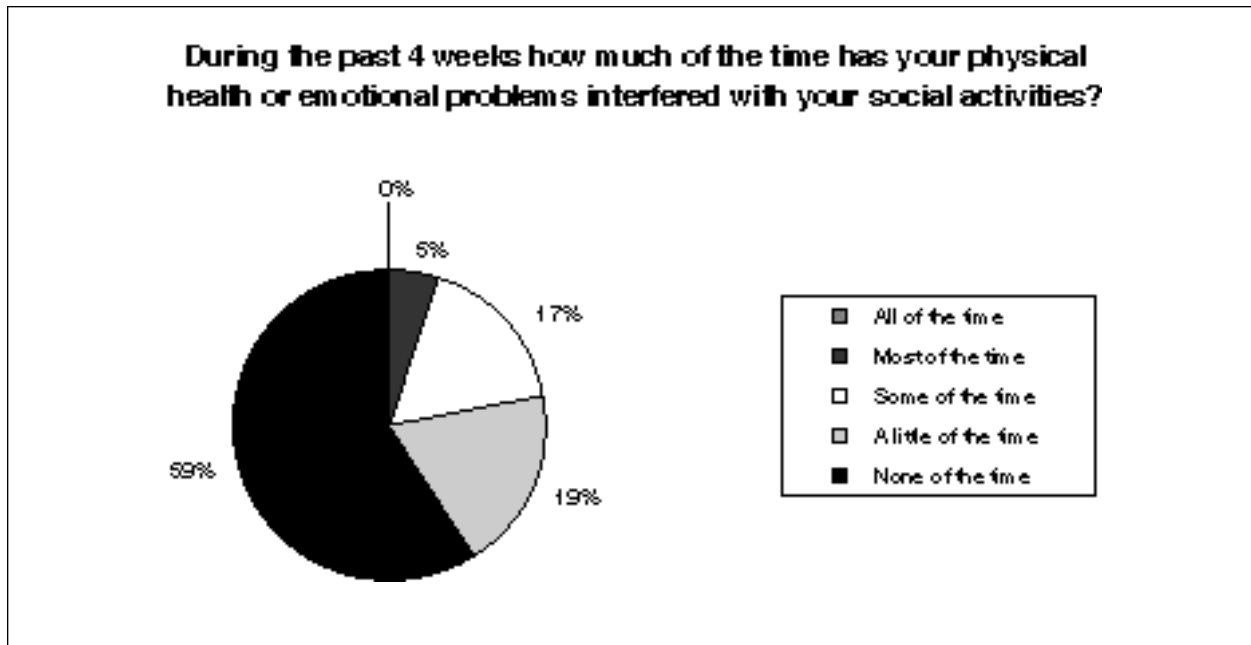
How then do these mentors compare with other older people in the general population? Table 3 shows the mean scores on the SF12 for both the physical and mental health status of our sample in comparison with figures for older people living in the community. In terms of physical health, the scores are very similar. Interestingly, for mental health, this sample scores below the mean although these findings for older people living in the Stoke-on-Trent are not dissimilar to other research findings from studies conducted in the same geographical area (see Bernard et al, 2002).

Table 3: SF12 - Physical and Mental Health Status

	n	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Dev	**Mean**	**Norms**
Physical health	42	22.406	54.998	7.435	**43.408**	**43.65**
Mental health	42	31.846	61.452	5.859	**46.410**	**52.10**

Turning to a consideration of gender differences, Table 4 shows that the scores for men and women are not significantly different at the $p < .05$ level for either physical or mental health status. However, the male mentors appear to have slightly better physical health scores while the women have slightly better mental health.

Table 4: SF12 - Health Status by Gender

Gender		n	Minimum	Maximum	**Mean**	Std. Dev
F	Physical health	29	22.406	54.998	**42.782**	7.747
	Mental health	29	36.925	55.709	**46.780**	5.010
M	Physical health	13	25.760	51.144	**44.804**	6.766
	Mental health	13	31.846	61.452	**45.584**	7.592

CASP 19: A Measure of Quality of Life

CASP 19 (Hyde et al., 2001) is now being included as a measure of quality of life in the new English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (www.ifs.org.uk/elsa) that began in November 2002. The aim of the measure is to identify contextual and life course influences on quality of life and to conceptualise quality of life as distinct from the factors that influence it. CASP 19 is based on a needs satisfaction model and consists of 19 statements that are coded: often=3, not often=2, sometimes=1 and never=0. The 19 statements refer to four domains, namely: control (5 items), autonomy (5 items), pleasure (5 items) and self-realisation (4 items). In this way a raw percentage score can be calculated for each of the domains and an overall score for quality of life can be calculated by adding the scores for each domain together. The domains that make up the quality of life model reflect the need for a more holistic approach to investigation of older age that includes both positive and negative experiences.

Of the four domains, autonomy is defined as the right of an individual to be free from the unwanted interference of others. Item wording includes both negative and positive statements, for example, 'I feel I can please myself what I want to do' and 'my health stops me from doing the things I want'. Self-realisation and pleasure capture the active and reflective processes of being human and, for example, include such statements as: 'I enjoy the things I do' (pleasure) and 'I feel full of energy these days' (self-realisation). Similarly, control is understood as the ability to actively intervene in one's environment and again, includes both negative and positive items such as 'I feel free to plan for the future' and 'I feel left out of things'.

Figure 9: Domains for the Mentors
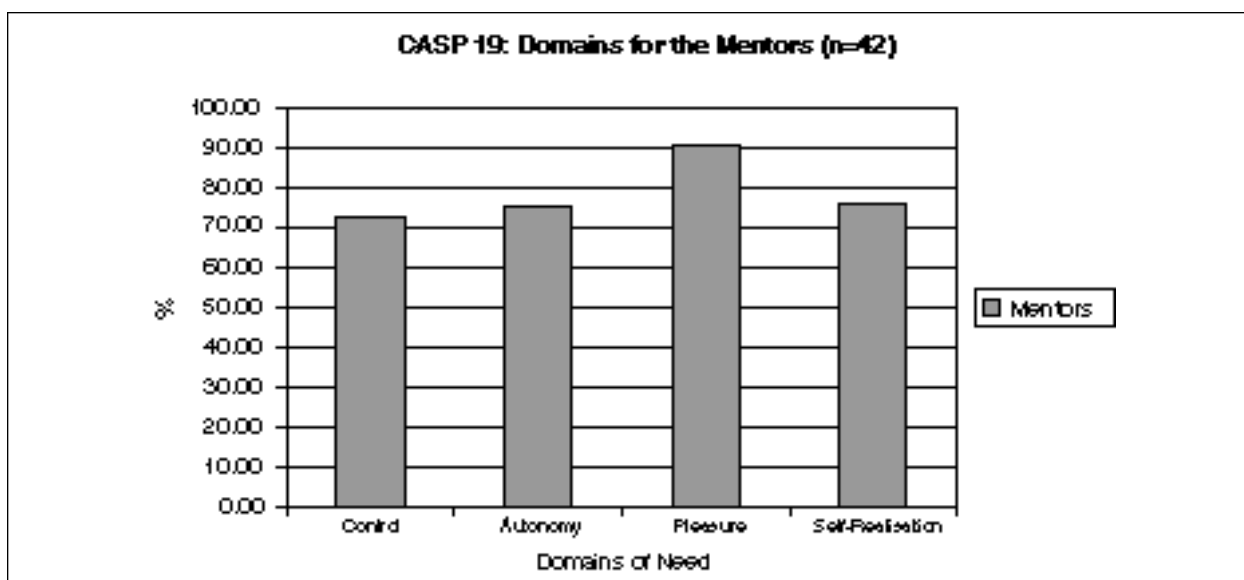
CASP 19: Mentor Outcomes

Figures 9 and 10 clearly show that the mentors involved in the scheme scored very highly in terms of all four domains. The mentors displayed high degrees of control (73%) in terms of planning for the future; they were optimistic in terms of their personal autonomy (76%) and felt they could do the things they wanted to do. Similarly, in terms of pleasure (91%) they clearly looked forward to each day and for most, this especially included their half-day mentoring in school. In addition, the majority of the groups had developed very cohesive, supportive and close professional relationships working well individually but also coming together for training etc. They

clearly enjoyed being in the company of others in the mentoring team and felt fulfilled. Another characteristic of the groups was the amount of energy they brought to the task. There was also, for many of the mentors, an awareness of self-realisation (77%) in terms of re-entering secondary schools for the first time in years and feeling satisfied with the ways in which opportunities, mentoring and school relationships had turned out.

Female mentors score more highly than male mentors across all domains although the differences are not statistically significant.

Figure 10: Domains by gender
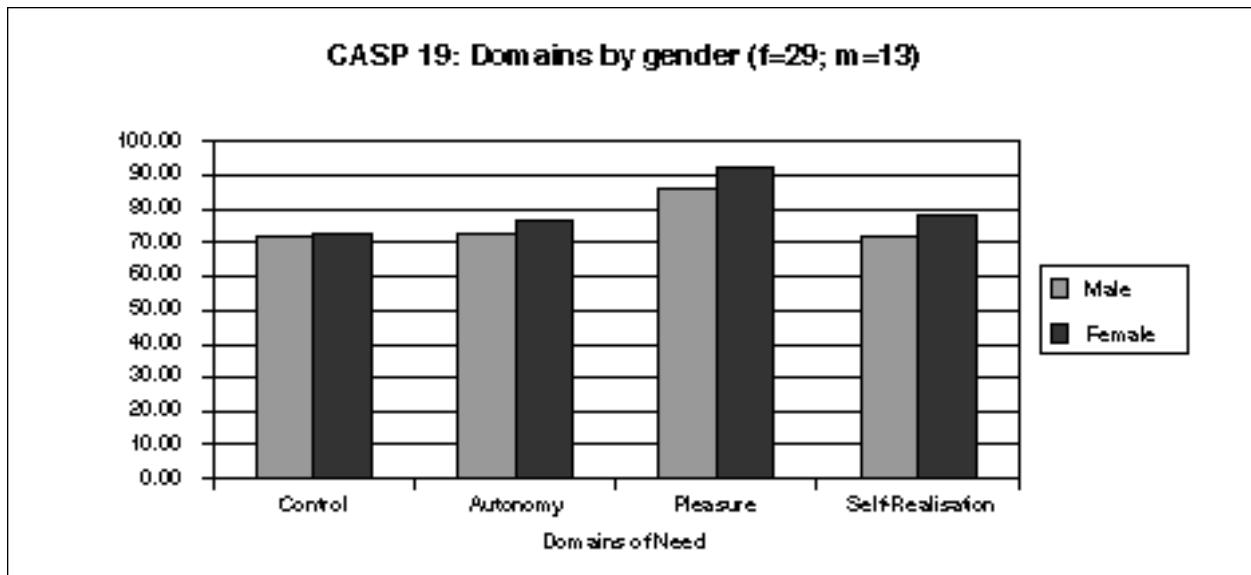
CASP 19 also permits us to calculate an overall quality of life score as shown in Figure 11. The outcome is overwhelming positive for the mentors as a whole with the women scoring higher than the men. These results indicate that most of our older mentor volunteers enjoy a good quality of life although some pointed out that they had recently had negative life experiences that might affect their responses.

Figure 11: CASP 19 - Quality of Life
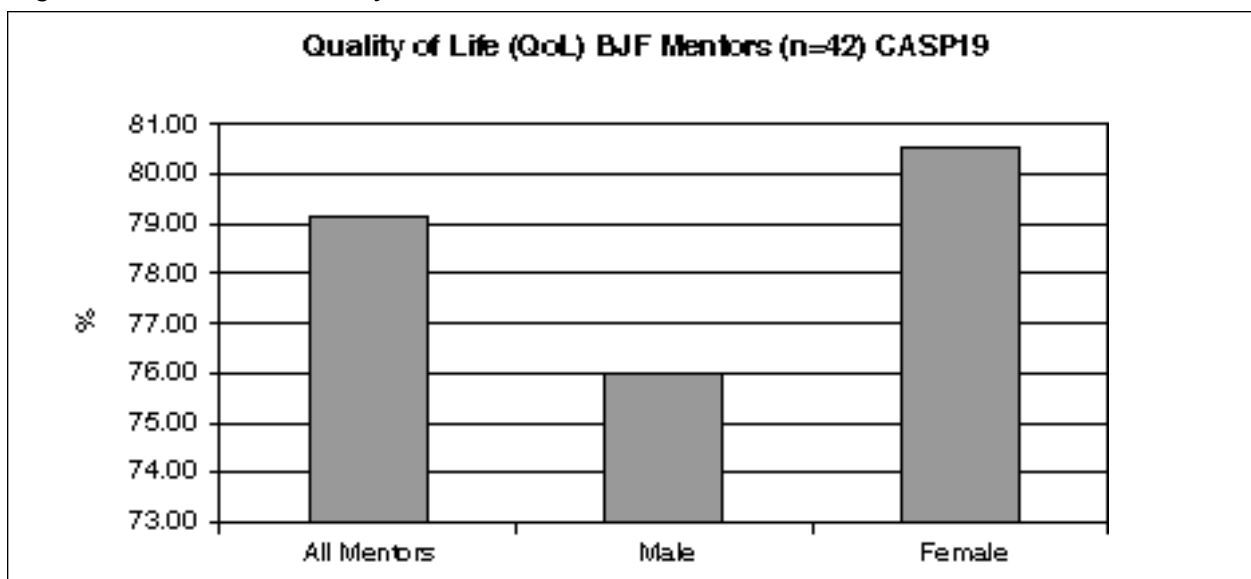
NFER: Children's Outcomes

The NFER questionnaire was used with the Y7 children at each of the focus group sessions in the 9 sample schools. This questionnaire provided information on the children's personal development (confidence, self-esteem and motivation), key skills, their view of the future, attendance and their personal views on mentoring. Here we report on the 'raw scores' obtained for the sample of children currently involved in the mentoring scheme in their first year of secondary education (n=41). The questionnaires were completed individually and, in some cases, with the help of their mentors. This questionnaire was devised by NFER and has been used throughout the UK to evaluate the National Mentoring Bursary Programme (Simms & Golden, 1999).

As Figure 12 shows, most of the children are confident when talking to their peers and telling someone about their ideas. They were less confident about talking to adults they didn't know and making plans for the future. They felt they could cope with a course or job interview, and were very confident about their abilities to work as a team.

Figure 12: NFER - Confidence
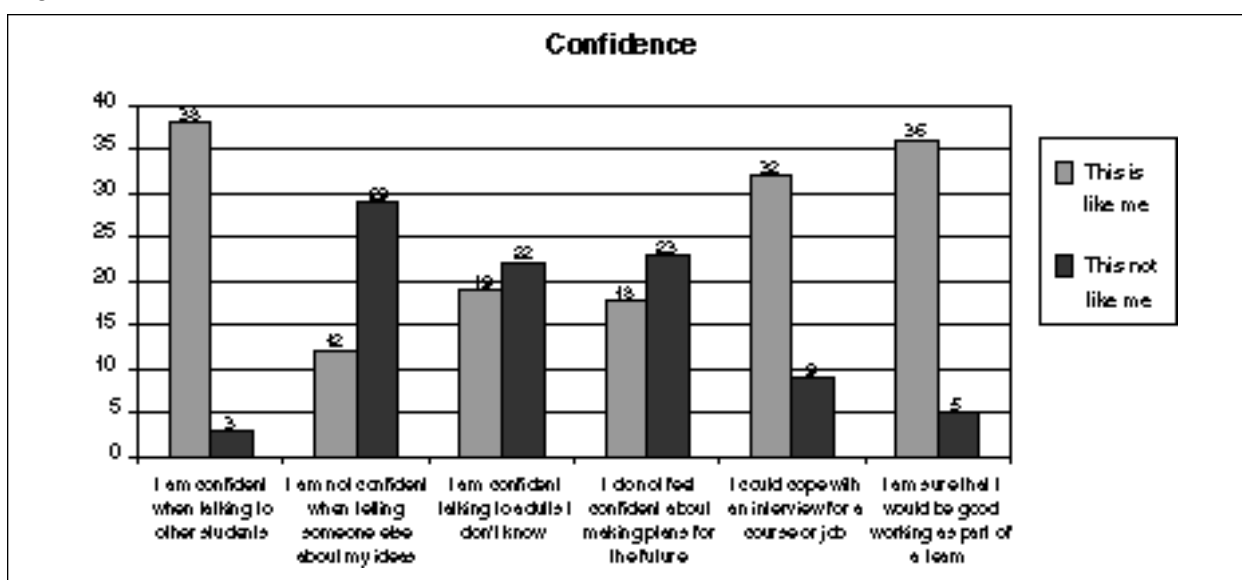
In terms of their self-esteem, Figure 13 shows that the children felt that they had good ideas and that they were worth listening to. They also felt people valued what they had to say but were less sure about getting rewards. They were more ambivalent about the statement 'people think highly of me' with nearly half of them feeling that they were not well thought of. Similarly, over 50% of the sample often felt they were useless. However, most children liked being the way they were and felt they had particular strengths and qualities and a lot to offer other people; and most were optimistic when it came to getting something out of life.

Figure 14 shows that most children (approximately 75%) felt they were well organised in terms of schoolwork, were able to set themselves targets, wanted to do well in examinations, always did their homework, paid attention in lessons and were punctual. However, around 30% of the sample did not hand their school work in on time, found target setting difficult and did not always do their homework. There appears to be an element here of the children answering the questions as they think we would expect them to answer, especially given that the mentors were present and in many cases actually helping the children to complete the questionnaire. Furthermore, it also begs the question that if they are all so positive and doing so well, why do they need mentors?

Figure 13: NFER - Self-esteem
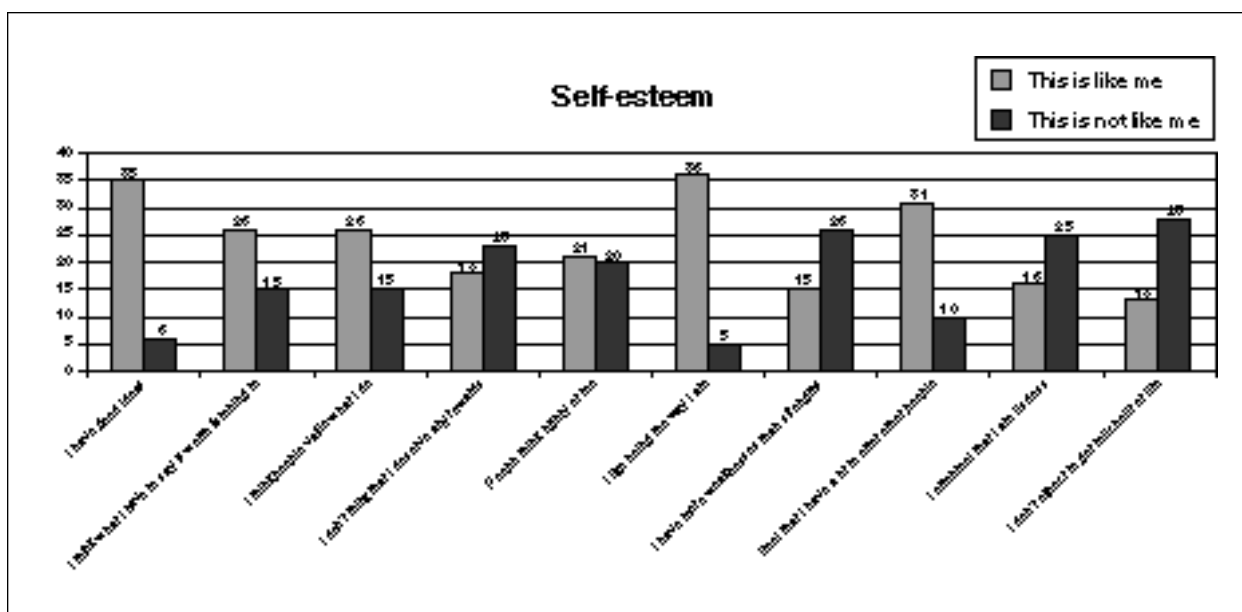
Figure 14: NFER - Motivation
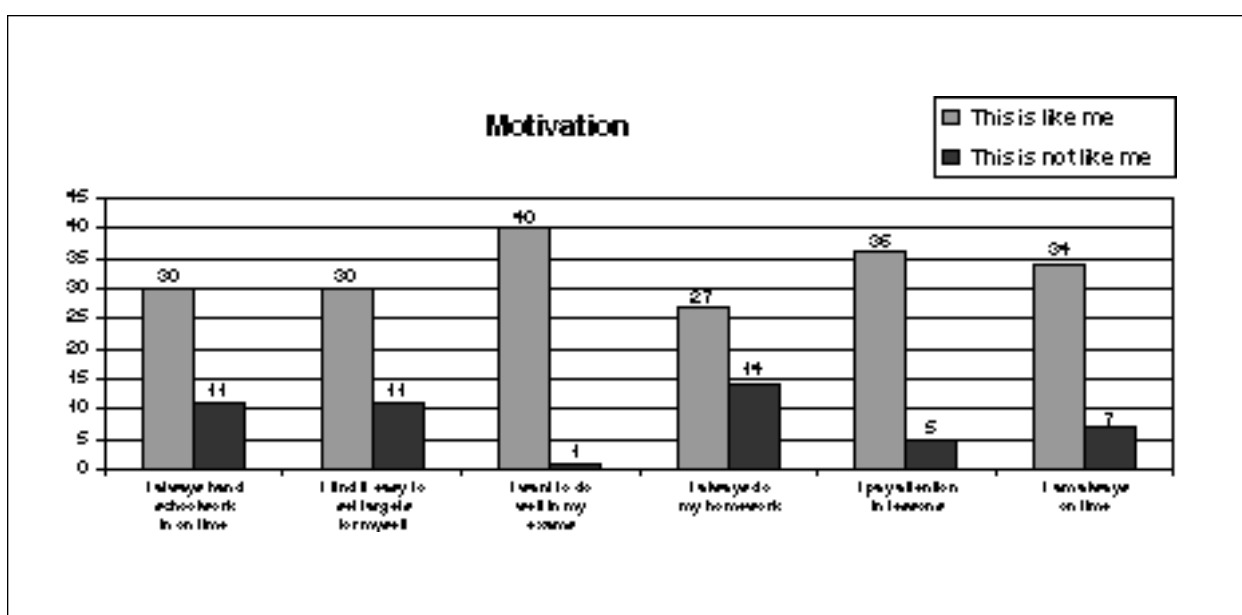
In terms of key skills, most of the children felt that they were either very good or fairly good at solving problems, reading, working with number, using computers, working with others, organising their own work and thinking and acting for themselves (see Figure 15). A more mixed response can be seen for writing and the ability to explain their ideas.

When asked to think about the future and, particularly, the world of work, the children's responses are much more mixed (see Figure 16). This is not unexpected given that these are Y7 pupils and it is debatable just how relevant the world of work might be to them at this stage in their academic careers. While they are clear about projected careers, getting jobs/courses etc. they are less confident about job opportunities, the nature of working life, what employers are looking for, higher education courses and qualifications for chosen careers.

Figure 15: NFER - Key Skills

Key Skills: How good do you think you are at...

Figure 16: NFER - The Future

The Future

Finally, this group of children describe their attendance at school as very good or good (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: NFER - Attendance

Attendance

Summary points

- This is a small-scale, baseline cross-sectional study which does not attempt to indicate the long-term differences that might accrue from involvement with the scheme. We only have quantitative data for the research conducted in May 2002.

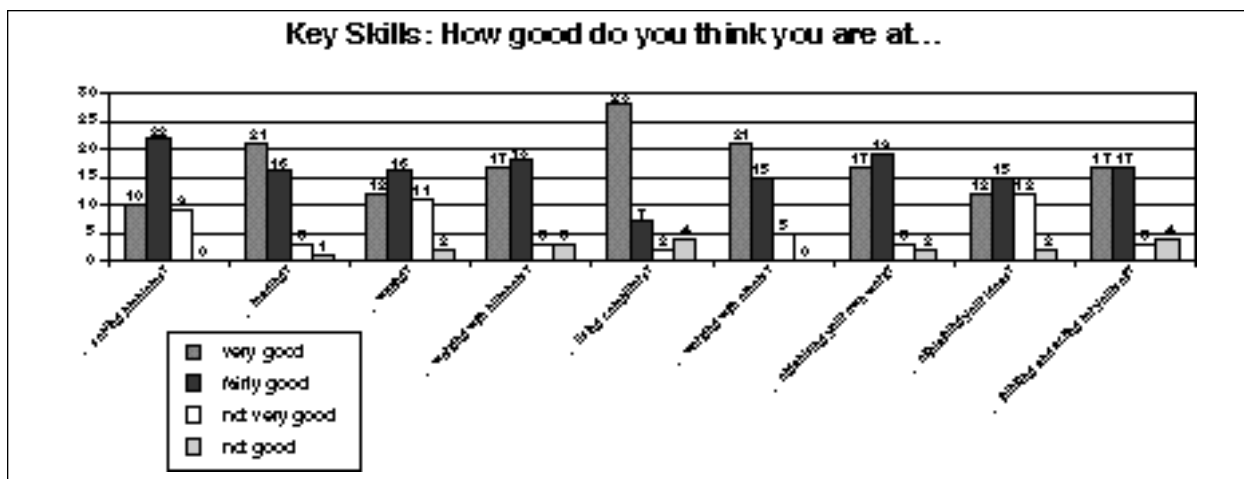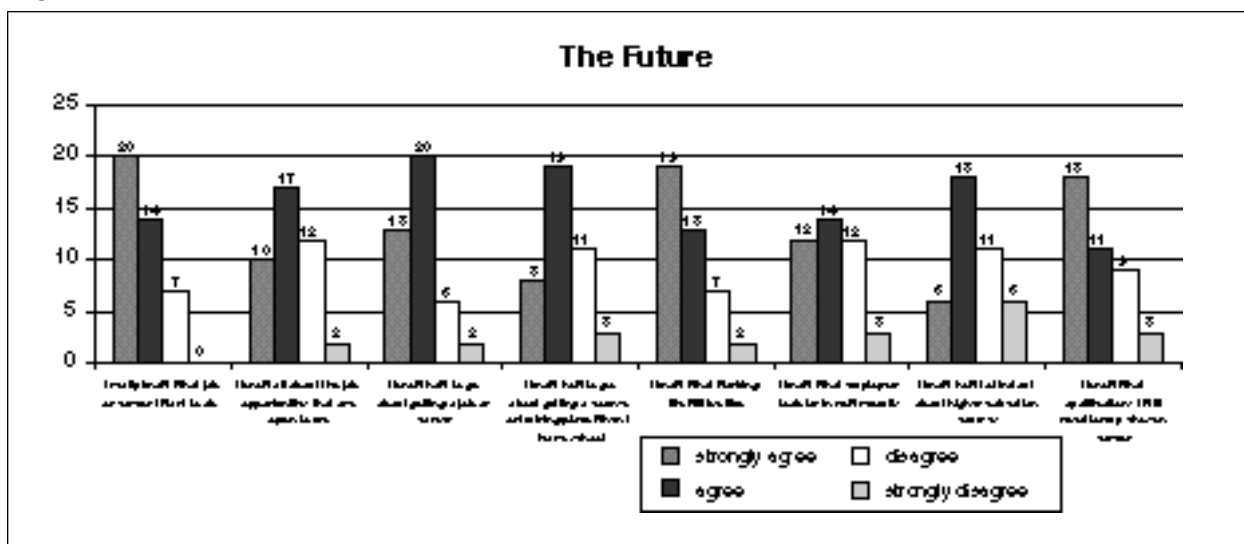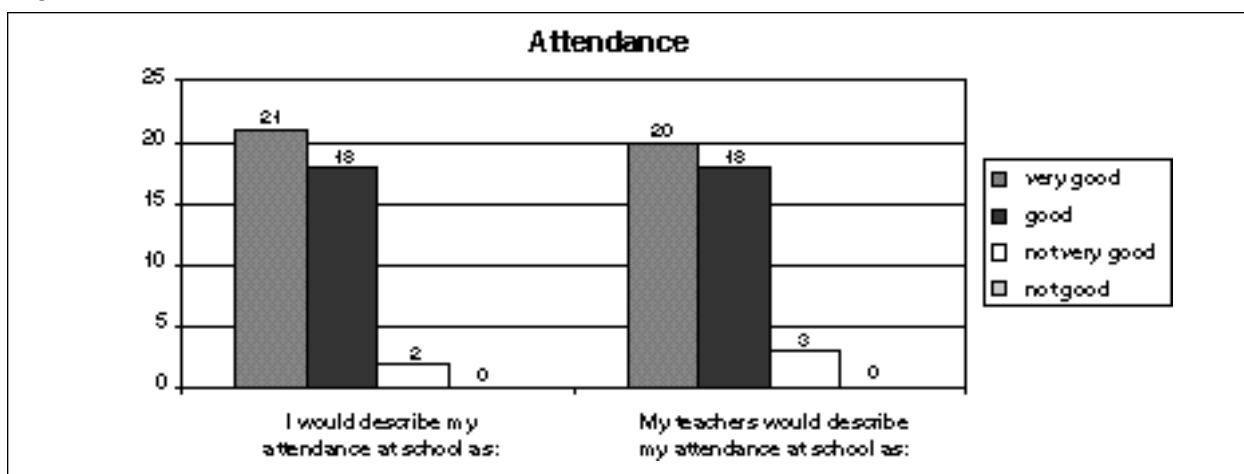- **SF12** is a measure that has been developed for the explicit purpose of monitoring, comparing and forward planning for health provision. It is especially useful for comparative purposes. It is also a holistic measure providing a balance of positive and negative attributes of both physical and mental well-being.

- Older mentor volunteers report that their **general health** is excellent or good and most felt healthier compared with a year ago.

- Up to 20% of the sample report some **emotional** problems during the previous 4 weeks. However, most have felt calm (60%) with modest amounts of energy (50%) while nearly 50% have felt downhearted and depressed for at least some of the time.

- Overall, the SF12 summary data shows that our mentors are around the community norm for physical health while slightly below the community norm for mental health. There was no significant difference between men and women.

- **CASP19** identifies contextual and life-course influences on quality of life. Our sample scored higher on this measure than the SF12. This suggests that although there are some people in our sample who suffer from emotional difficulties, certain other needs are being meet through the scheme and the mentors enjoy a very good quality of life.

- The children's personal **NFER** development scores are variable in terms of their confidence, self-esteem and motivation. Roughly a third of the sample at any one time responded negatively to the items although this does mean, of course, that the majority of our sample responded positively.

- Similarly, a mixed response was recorded for areas such as key skills, the future and school attendance. Overall, the data seems to suggest this is a mixed group of children. Some have clear emotional and educational needs while others seem to have been targeted because they were already 'doing well'. In the latter case, the mentoring for these children appeared to enable them to 'do even better' and progress at an accelerated rate.

- Finally, it should be noted that this cohort of children were interviewed towards the end of their mentoring input so, in terms of impact, one would expect them to be 'up-beat' about their personal development and progress and settled in their attitudes to attendance, key skills and their future.

Changing the Lives of Children and Older People: Intergenerational Mentoring in Secondary Schools

Intergenerational Mentoring Project: Phase 3 Evaluation Report

Stephen W Ellis

Mentors and Children (School A, May 2002)

Mentors and Children (School A, May 2002)

Mentor Training Event (Borough Arms, March 2002)

Mentor Training Event (Borough Arms, March 2002)

CHAPTER 4
Research in Action: Qualitative Outcomes

Introduction

Having explored some of the background theory, methods and outcomes from the quantitative data analysis, we now turn to the qualitative analysis. Like the previous chapters, this focuses on the children's and mentors'views of the ways in which the scheme has enhanced their self-esteem, well-being and sense of empowerment. For both groups, the two main sources of qualitative data are the nine focus groups in each secondary school held with the children and older mentors, and the 35 mentor diaries kept between October 2000 and July 2001 (see Appendix 3).

From the analysis of the qualitative data, it is apparent that the ways in which the scheme is operating is a complex interplay of practical, managerial, attitudinal and experiential influences. For the sake of clarity, what the mentors and children say about these issues is presented as distinctive themes. However, it is important to remember that these themes overlap and impinge on one another. The analysis therefore is organised into three sections: first, 'The Mentor's Journey' where we give a brief snapshot of what the mentoring experience/relationship is like. Second, it is evident from the mentor's journey that there are things which facilitate or impede the development of intergenerational relationships between the mentors and the children. We have called these 'barriers and facilitators' and these are discussed in section two of this chapter. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the outcomes of the intergenerational mentoring experience for both the mentors and children.

The Mentor's Journey

The reflective diaries provide examples of the ways in which mentoring relationships develop over a long period of time. The key here is the appreciation that mentoring is not a 'quick fix' solution, neither is it static or simple. The diaries exemplify the 'ups and downs' of relationships experienced in school and taken together they provide an account of a 'typical' journey.

Typically, the journey is one of initial recognition of a need to become actively involved in the life of the community. Like George (aged 80), this may follow bereavement. He says: *'I lost my wife last year and I was getting absolutely bored and I could feel myself going down bank and I thought you've got to stir yourself here'.* For others, mentoring is an extension of other volunteer work done over many years. Once accepted into the scheme and having gone through a period of training, the mentors are then introduced into the schools and to their mentees. The ways in which this is done varies from school to school and, often, matching criteria are implicit rather than explicit. For most mentors it is also some considerable time since they were in these environments, and learning to cope and adjust takes a while. There were stories of poor discipline and shouting in classrooms, and of having to engage with poor supply teachers. Conversely, other lessons are well run and the mentor and child settle together quickly. Many of the diaries therefore record the need for perseverance and dedication in order to overcome the unfamiliarity of the setting and the early frustrations that might attend the developing relationship.

Despite the ups and downs, successes and achievements for both mentors and children are recorded in the diaries although this takes some while and is often achieved in small, incremental steps. Sheila, writing about her mentee, says: *'Initially I was a little anxious, I was uncertain how to go on separated from my mentee with no explanation. Less anxious today. As well as helping I'm also learning. My mentee is happier today - he did not once look at the clock'.* And here is

Clare, some way into the scheme, saying that: *'Everything is still going well. All the pupils in the class have accepted me and greet me when they see me'.* Sufficient time then is of the essence in developing these relationships. In addition, the mentors greatly value the ongoing support and training provided by the BJF, which helps to allay their fears and doubts, and builds their self-confidence. The skills and experience developed by the mentors is then utilised again when they help train new recruits. Positive feedback from the teachers and the schools, together with publicity for the scheme, for example articles in *The Sentinel* or presentations on local radio, reinforce the special nature of the project and provide external recognition of the value added by the mentors to the schools and the wider community. As George says, joining the scheme *'was the best thing that I've done'.*

Barriers and Facilitators

Even from the brief overview of a mentor's journey given above, it is evident that there is a whole range of things that may impede or facilitate the development of a constructive intergenerational mentoring relationship. These include both structural and attitudinal aspects. Figure 18 summarises what mentors and children say about these things and we then go on to discuss each in detail. It is notable that the children were wholly positive about the presence of mentors and were unable to identify any barriers.

Figure 18: Mentors' and Children's Views of the Barriers and Facilitators

Mentors' Views		Children's Views	
Barriers –	matching mentors & children; learning to cope; structural problems in school.	**Barriers –**	none identified.
Facilitators –	support, monitoring and training.	**Facilitators –**	having a mentor and unconditional support; support of parents.

Barriers: matching mentors and children

As noted in the mentor's journey, the ways in which mentors are initially introduced to the children seems to vary from school to school and this can prove difficult for mentors who are unfamiliar with these environments. Related to this is the ways in which mentors are matched to specific children. In some instances, informal criteria for the selection had been applied and, in most cases, criteria were implicit rather than explicit. Other mentors were simply asked to choose an appropriate child from the class as Iris describes:

> *In all honesty he is brilliant but what happened is, I was new at the school and they said at this point they didn't pick me one. They said, 'Go in and see which little one takes to you.' Well, Thomas was very polite and kept on more or less looking after me so, in the end, when they asked for a name I gave Thomas. But I must admit he is brilliant.*

This lack of clarity about the terms and conditions under which relationships operate can become problematic, especially when mentoring relationships break down or mentors have to change their mentee. Here is Doris writing about her experience:

My new mentee David was really interested in the lesson and was a joy to work with. My old mentee (Christopher) made a threatening gesture towards David.

Similarly, Joan describes how she has had to operate in a very flexible way to accommodate the needs of two young people, one of whom had moved into the area:

The second one that I had was going through real problems. He'd moved from one place to Stoke-on-Trent. He hated it. He lived in a pub which was a nice pub. He used to tell me lots; I can't go into it because it is all in confidence. In the end they decided that I would have to move to another mentee. That's why I've only been with John a few weeks and, since being with him, they've now realised that he needed such a lot of help in writing and spelling, anything to do with English and things like that, because he can't read properly, he can't write properly. So, we had a word. Now I've changed the day I'm coming in so that I'm working with him between lessons where I can help.

Barriers: learning to cope

Not unusually, some of the mentors were experiencing difficult times in their lives and were having to cope with recent bereavements or family who were suffering serious illness. These additional stresses could be problematic especially when the mentor first enters the school, and at the very beginning of their work with the children. For most, it is some time since they have had any experience of secondary schools, and the evidence suggests that the mentors are at their most vulnerable at this time especially when dealing with difficult children. George articulates his feelings about this in one of the focus groups:

Perhaps I could do with someone to tell me how to cope when your mentee is very vacant about her responses to both her work and her teachers. I did ask her teacher to help and she responded very well indeed. I must say how kind they are they certainly have a very hard job.

If feelings of not being able to cope with particularly difficult children are left unaddressed, some mentors can experience failure. Here, Fred is writing about his new mentee Vicky:

Vicky suspended from school today for a week – feel all my efforts were in vain. Maybe I do better with boys. Common knowledge throughout the school this was a difficult mentee. I thought Vicky was making progress with me. She works well when I'm with her but apparently it doesn't last. I'm disappointed. After a successful three years with Michael I feel I have lost my touch.

Barriers: structural problems in school

For the mentors, one of the key structural issues of concern was inconsistency in the ways in which some school systems operated. There were examples of poor management and teaching of some lessons; issues over supply teachers; suspension of children; how fire drills were handled; whether or not children are permitted to walk outside in the rain etc. For the mentors, these structural problems often manifested themselves in terms of unexpected behaviours towards them by the children in terms of attendance, negative attitudes to learning, poor attitudes and mood swings. Jane, a mentor of long standing, describes how continued disruption in science and maths lessons over a few weeks led to frustration and dissatisfaction:

Today I feel really disillusioned. Okay, when I was at school we had the cane as a deterrent but at least we were taught to have respect for teachers. This is my fifth year as a mentor and so far it's been my worst, not because of the child but because of the school system.

Similarly, other mentors like John recorded events they found 'not so good about today': *'The English lesson was taken by a supply teacher who lost control, never acknowledged me and made me feel very uncomfortable'.* Many of the mentors also commented especially on the nature of secondary schools and in particular the noise levels. Here is Ethel writing about this and the effect it had on her relationship with her mentee:

English was disruptive again which affected my mentee. He lost concentration and said that the noise was a nuisance. Having said this he worked hard in history because there was plenty to do. Warren is only here for some of the time. Mostly he won't cooperate with the English teacher and refuses to work. When I said that I tried to assist you, his reply was, 'Well don't come then'.

These structural barriers affect the amount of quality time the scheme allows for actual mentoring and supporting the children. Albert suggests that there should be inbuilt *'timeout'* for *'quality talk and support in the scheme'.* This sensible suggestion is encapsulated in the following observation he made in one of the focus groups:

We have just no time really at all with these children. It is all very well saying 'have conversations' but, as you are walking from one classroom to another with all the hurly burly and the pushing and the shoving and the so on, and the fact that I'd got Joshua at this height speaking to me with a voice about as quiet as this, and I'm leaning over and I can hear everybody else's voice except his, I find it very difficult to have a conversation in that situation because he is not… he was more dominant today (during the interview) than I've seen him. He spoke fairly fluently. So, having conversations is almost impossible and, in a classroom, you can't have a conversation. So, I really feel that it would be very, very useful to have ten minutes or a quarter of an hour in a quiet place.

Facilitators: support, monitoring and training

Many of the mentors experience considerable self-doubt about their own abilities to do the job in school and, when questioned about this, they stress the importance of the support mechanisms available both via the school coordinator and, especially, the monitoring and support carried out by the BJF workers in the field. There are many instances, in both the diaries and the focus groups, of the mentors talking about the ways in which they are able to 'work things out' within, and with, the support of their particular group or team. As June describes:

I don't know if I'm doing what is expected of me but, my mentee seems to be enjoying the experience. I look forward to the support meeting to compare notes and experiences with other mentors.

An important spin off is the support and sense of teamwork that most mentors felt in each of the nine secondary schools. Doris indicates how her presence in the classroom, and her work, was appreciated by the food technology teacher:

I was asked by the cookery teacher to programme the new cookers. I was pleased to be able to do this for her and felt appreciated. The following week I was a little concerned to be asked to take four pupils who had no ingredients. We worked well together and the teacher told me my presence in the room in general was helping her a lot.

The mentors also felt that they could access the school support system via the scheme coordinator as Margery records:

Spoke to the school coordinator today and discussed my problems and anxiety with my mentee. She reassured me and indicated that he seemed more organised and settled since I started working with him.

Training – both initial and ongoing – is closely linked with issues about support and monitoring. Some of the mentors have been with the scheme since its inception in 1997 and have developed excellent skills in working with, and supporting what were, in some cases, difficult and disaffected children. These 'special skills' have been nurtured and utilised for training new mentors. In addition, some mentors now represent their colleagues on steering groups, lead groups at events, and represent the BJF and the scheme at national conferences.

Facilitators: having a mentor and unconditional support

The children could clearly recognise and articulate what having a BJF mentor meant to them. Of particular importance was the unconditional support which mentors gave as described here by Jamie in one of the focus group discussions:

Like, I was shouting in class, I was fidgeting a lot and like being silly all the time. But, in the end, she always helps me. She helps me with all my work. She also works with other children, which I'm actually feeling good about. I am feeling that she's actually one of the best mentors I've had [laughs].

The children were keen to articulate what was special about 'their mentors'. Ted for example was seen as a *'father figure and a mate'* by one Y7 and Ted in turn says: *'I have tried to make him as he can tell me anything, whether it is right or wrong and I won't split on him. I've tried to give him a lot of confidence [laughter]'*. Other children talked about being *'close to their mentors'* and felt that they stood out above most other experiences in school because they were always at hand and would consistently, and without hesitation, provide the support that they needed and which was perhaps missing in other parts of the children's lives. One child described his mentor as being *'like an angel'* and many of the older children interviewed were still in contact with their previous mentors. A great deal of trust was placed in the mentors whom the children saw as a neutral third party, a listening friend, a grandparent who was non-judgmental, understanding and who would always try to help if they could.

Other children readily acknowledged that their behaviour was not always as it should be and that they needed the help of their mentor in settling and concentrating during lessons. Some reported lacking confidence in their abilities at oral work and the support of their mentor was especially valued in helping them to speak up. Lorraine recalls:

I never had any confidence answering questions. I knew the answer but I wouldn't put my hand up and when I was stuck I would just sit there. She (the mentor) kept saying, 'Put your hand up', and it would go up to about there, and then she would push my arm up. The teacher would spot it and I would answer a question in class - something new for me.

For others, problems associated with bullying were discussed with mentors and the children readily accepted that the older people's support had often been of help. The mentors were in a unique position to help, outside the normal pupil-pupil or teacher-pupil relationships that exist in our secondary schools. Kathy, for example acknowledged this support during one focus group discussion, saying; *'He (the mentor) made me feel more positive about things and the trouble has all been sorted now'.*

Since the start of the intergenerational project in 1997, the national situation in secondary schools has changed considerably with regard to mentoring. In fact, in recent years, secondary schools in this LEA have each acquired up to four full-time learning support mentors through the Government's 'Excellence in Cities' funding. These mentors operate in a number of ways, supporting and targeting individuals who require specific help with their learning. The introduction of such mentors has brought into focus the work of the BJF mentors and the children who experience both types of support make the inevitable comparisons. As Jamie points out:

> *The BJF mentor is actually a good mentor 'cos I've got two - I've got one from the normal school, and I've got one from Beth Johnson. But the one from the normal school doesn't come in much as what she does, 'cos the normal one almost ignores me. But the BJF mentor normally helps me a lot.*

There was a great deal of trust displayed in their relationships with the BJF mentors who were seen as being fundamentally different from anything else that was on offer in the school system.

Facilitators: support of parents

In most cases parental permission had been sought for their children's involvement with the scheme: letters were sent home and many of the mentors had met with parents at special events to celebrate the scheme's success. Generally, the children revealed that their parents fully supported the scheme, indicating that they thought their parents believed it would be *'good for them'*, and were hoping that their confidence, spellings and general work would improve as a consequence of this intervention and support.

Outcomes of Intergenerational Mentoring: Empowerment, Well-being and Quality of Life

Importantly and interestingly, the research was the first time the mentors and children had been brought together as a group. This raised many questions, not so much for the adults, but for the children speaking publicly about their relationships with their mentors and the possible difficulties they might be having in their lives. Some were initially rather shy, but most were able to contribute to the discussions. Between them, the mentors and children articulated a number of outcomes which revolved around the central issues of empowerment and improvements to quality of life and well-being. The main outcomes for both children and mentors were:

- Improvements in school work (children);

- The feeling of 'making a difference' (mentors);

- Enhanced physical and mental well-being (mentors);

- Improved confidence, self-esteem and happiness (both groups);

Improvements in school work

There was plenty of evidence, from both the diaries and the focus group discussions, of positive changes in the children's behaviours when the BJF mentors were present in the classroom. For their part, the children report increased effort and attainment and the mentors respond to this in a variety of ways. Here is Joe (mentor) commenting on his mentee Adam:

First of all I started just doing the Fridays with him and he was struggling. He felt himself he was struggling with history and he wanted me to come in with history. Well, apparently he'd got a lesson Thursday, first lesson Thursday afternoon and I said, 'Well, if you try, you knuckle down and do the work I will come in, I will put myself out and come in Thursday afternoon'.

Here too are George and Susan talking about the achievements of their mentees:

Another very good day. Paul has been moved in maths because he had a very good result in his end of term exam. He is so keen he deserves to get ahead. His writing is improving by the week. (George)

Kirsty's marks have improved. She now gets lots and lots of praise from her teachers. (Susan)

Further evidence of the children's improvement in behaviour in school was that, in practice, many of the children also took on responsibility for their mentors. Speaking about her mentee, Betty reported that: *'She always greets me and introduces me to all her teachers when I'm in school'.* Perhaps some of the most powerful testimonies to the success and longevity of the scheme were provided by the older pupils who had been invited back to reflect upon the impact (in some cases for up to 3 years) it had had on their lives. Michael, who was about to leave the school to go to 6th Form College, describes how important it was for him:

Well in year 7 she come in the afternoons and come round the classes with me and she helped me a lot, really helpful. She didn't only help me she helped quite a few pupils in the class.

In some instances, as the scheme developed, it also appeared that children were given a BJF mentor as a 'reward' for good behaviour or good work. Brian, for example, talks about how: *'I got Mr Smith for handing in all my homework and good attendance'.* The support provided in this case by the mentor was not really around classroom management issues, but more to do with supporting Brian's efforts and study skills, encouraging him, in his own words, to; *'slow down, to concentrate hard and to stop and think tasks through more'.*

In sum, the presence of mentors meant that the children generally felt more positive about school and what was happening in the classroom and their lives, findings supported by some of the results from the NFER questionnaire discussed in the previous chapter. Given that these children were coming to the end of their mentoring year when they were interviewed, their responses to the question 'Why do you think school is important? were now more reflective than they perhaps might have been previously. Matthew, for example, replied:

'Cos you've got to learn and then, if you don't like it in school and you're off, you miss lessons and then, when you are later on in your life you are going to, like, miss out on good jobs.

Making a difference

For the mentors, the sense that they were indeed making a difference in and to these children's lives was especially important. They record in their diaries and talk in the focus groups about the development of positive relationships and improved learning amongst their young charges. Joyce and June both write about this:

My mentee told me he wishes I could stay all day. It was so good to hear that it made a difference when he said, 'I learned something new today'. (Joyce)

I was called a saint today; we managed to get a sticker. Mentored two children today. Made working a real pleasure and reinforced the reasons why I originally volunteered for this project five years ago now. (June)

John and Doreen also describe how their skills and contributions are recognised not just by the children, but also by the teachers:

Two of the teachers remarked on the influence my presence made. Until now I haven't understood why Jordan needed a mentor but, today, I didn't sit by him and he was most disruptive. (John)

The friendliness of the teachers: it makes you feel we have achieved a goal in breaking down the age barriers as you told us at the training meeting. The other children in the class will ask for help, but also show great respect and a willingness to help you if needed. (Doreen)

Enhanced physical and mental well-being

As noted earlier, some of the mentors were going through difficult times in their lives. The focus group discussions seemed to provide an outlet and support for them to share their feelings with the group and to articulate some of the changes which they had experienced in both their physical and mental well-being. Their diaries too record some of these changes. Here is Gladys reflecting on her situation:

Over the past few months I have noticed a great improvement in my arthritis. I don't have the pains in my arms and I'm sleeping better. Could it be that by stimulating my brain, due to mentoring, that I'm also being physically stimulated?

Jean too talks about how the scheme has helped with her personal well-being and mental health:

These last few weeks have been quite traumatic in my personal life. But, until I got home I realised that during the morning I did not think about my problems. So far this morning the children have helped me more than I have helped them. This project is definitely a two-way thing.

Improved confidence, self-esteem and happiness

For both the mentors and the children, their discussions and writings are littered with comments about how involvement in the scheme has improved their confidence, self-esteem and general happiness. In many of the groups, the children reported feeling more positive about school life and about life in general which, in turn, led to discussions about how things had changed for the better since gaining the support of a mentor. Anne talked about how her mentee Samantha had changed:

That's right, I've found her changed quite a lot from when we first started, to up to where we are now. I mean she is a lot happier - she smiles a lot more which is good.

Jean too had noticed changes:

I think my mentee is much happier being in school. He is much more attentive in lessons and there is an improvement in his work. He seems more interested and talks more about his family.

Matthew, one of the older children, described it in the following way:

When you go into them lessons what mentors come into, you expect them initially to help, and you are relying on help of the mentor. But, as soon as you are settled into the lesson then you're alright. They provided more confidence and a kick-start really.

For their part, the mentors too have grown in confidence, and involvement in the scheme has improved their self-esteem. Vera talks about how, having worked full time, she coped with retirement through active involvement with the scheme which enabled her to overcome her personal confidence problems:

Well self confidence really because I had to finish work, cause I'd always worked full time and I did a lot of overtime cause I'd always worked. Then my back and my leg went so I sort of went into a recluse. I wouldn't go out or nothing. Before that I was very active and the doctor said he thought I should go to day centres. So they sent social services round for to take me out. It wasn't for me. So, they got me into the college and I did a self-confidence course and a computer course for beginners like. There was a piece of paper in there about the scheme it was like the end of September, it was about October, and them in the self confidence said, 'Go on, go for it, phone them up'.

Joan also recognises her growing self-confidence when she writes about resolving a particular dilemma, and Margaret describes how she had the confidence to take control of a classroom situation:

I am feeling more confident now and not too bothered if I can't answer a question. I find my best response is not to say, 'I don't know', but to suggest we think about this together and try for a solution. That way tells them I'm interested and will help if I can. I think my indecision about one-to-one has been resolved. I don't feel that Katie (mentee) would be very happy if she thought she was being 'set apart' and I myself really enjoy talking to the other pupils'. (Joan)

I felt so moved in the science lesson when she left for a short time and the children became noisy and unruly, that I stood up and shouted 'Quiet' to get some order in the room. It worked! I felt that maybe I had overstepped the mark, I don't know. (Margaret)

Further Reflections

Throughout the project, the children and the mentors have been encouraged to reflect on their experiences in an honest and open way. The children, for their part, were asked about how they might feel when they came to the end of the scheme. Most reported that they would miss their mentors and some indicated they would be upset by the prospect. For the mentors, the training received and the open, supportive nature of the scheme has enabled many of them to overcome the sometimes-difficult experiences both in their lives and at school. The evidence suggests that many of the mentors have become 'reflective practitioners'(Hargreaves, 1994): able to reflect on personal experience, cope with the demands of mentoring, seek appropriate help and set realistic targets for themselves and their mentee. This is well exemplified by the fact that few mentors have left the scheme to date. In fact, their numbers have grown quite considerably from the original handful in 1997 to over 60 in the summer of 2002. There was a general feeling that the mentors were now a 'critical mass' in the sense that there was a clear group identity both within each school, and recognition of the 'bigger picture' across the nine city schools and the wider community. The scheme had become a catalyst for change in these schools and was having a recognised impact from the Director of Education downwards.

Overall, the outcomes for both children and mentors are very similar. Clearly the scheme has enabled them to improve their confidence and self-esteem and the children in particular seem happier and have shown improvements in their schoolwork and their relationships. For the mentor volunteers, the benefit they gain from clearly making a difference in a young person's life have enhanced their well-being and empowered them as individuals and as a group of very special older people. This is enhanced by the fact that the staff in all nine secondary schools recognised, without exception, the contribution made by this group of volunteers to their school communities and Y7 children. Both staff and mentors have become comfortable with the idea of working together for the mutual benefit of the children. In fact, all schools were planning to continue working with their volunteer mentors in 2002/3 despite the official closure of the scheme in the summer of 2002. In this sense, the scheme has become self-reliant and self-functioning with all stakeholders confident enough to continue without the direct support of the initiating agency, in this case the BJF. One of the school's senior coordinators encapsulates this when she says:

Well, I say to these people (the mentors), I know they don't believe me, but they are part of us; you are a member of staff, you are part of the school, you are part of the furniture. I sometimes feel a bit guilty that I don't acknowledge that they are there, but I've got so used to them being there. I want all these people to come back next year. I don't want there to be any struggling, financial whatever. I will move heaven and earth for them to continue.

Summary Points

- From the analysis of the qualitative data, it is apparent that the ways in which the scheme is operating is a complex interplay of formal and informal support, and of practical, managerial, attitudinal and experiential influences.

- The mentor's journey shows how mentoring relationships develop over a long period of time and that mentoring is not a 'quick fix' solution, neither is it static or simple.

- A whole range of things may impede or facilitate the development of a constructive intergenerational mentoring relationship. The children were wholly positive about the presence of mentors and were unable to identify any barriers. For their part, the mentors identified barriers around how they were matched with children, how they learnt to cope in a new environment, and various structural problems within the schools.

- For the mentors, support, monitoring and training were the most important facilitators. For the children, having a mentor who gave them unconditional support, together with the support of parents, were important facilitators.

- The main outcomes for both children and mentors were improvements in school work (children); the feeling of 'making a difference' (mentors); enhanced physical and mental well-being (mentors); and improved confidence, self-esteem and happiness (both groups).

CHAPTER 5
Conclusions

The study on which this report is based aimed to evaluate the ways in which an intergenerational mentoring project could develop into a sustainable scheme across nine secondary schools in one LEA. It sought to explore workable definitions of intergenerational practice and the development of social policy around the ideas of 'social exclusion' and an emphasis on school communities, 'active citizenship' (QCA, 1998) and school community development by bringing younger and older people together in a classroom setting. To this end I drew upon a mixed method holistic approach using measures that give some indication of the ways in which the mentors and the children have become empowered through an intergenerational exchange; an indication of their general well-being and a measure of the mentors' quality of life resulting from such activity in the community. In this chapter we draw together the findings, by discussing three overarching themes that have permeated this study. These are:

- Intergenerational Mentoring Relationships;

- Enhancing Quality of Life for Children and Older People;

- Local Community Action.

Intergenerational Mentoring Relationships

Characteristically, the evaluation found that the benefits gained by the older mentors related to development of skills, personal development and an understanding of young people and the work of teachers. Mentors noted their communication and listening skills had been enhanced and their professional roles within the school context firmly established. They provided a continuity of experience for the children that was consistent, caring and child-centred. Their commitment to the children was unquestioned, providing positive role models through positive attitudes to learning and active engagement with life through volunteering. The children were keen to talk about the older people and to articulate what was special about *'their mentors'*. There was a great deal of trust displayed in their relationships and the older people were seen as being fundamentally different from anything else that was on offer in the school system. As we have shown, they seemed to stand out from most other experiences in school: they were always at hand and would consistently, without hesitation, provide the support that children needed.

For both groups, the research brought them together in a unique way allowing both the mentors and the children to speak openly about their relationships and the mutual respect and sense of well-being they felt for each other. There was also great humour in these groups, and recognition from both parties of the importance of their relationship in bridging the gaps between young and older people in the important context of educational settings. Similarly, both groups felt empowered by this work and perhaps one of the most significant testimonies to the success and longevity of the scheme was provided by the older students who had been invited back to the group to reflect upon the powerfully positive effect it had in their lives and future.

Enhancing Quality of Life for Children and Older People

The main effects on the children noted in the study were the ways in which mutually beneficial relationships between the younger and older people had developed during the course of the

year. The benefits gained for both parties included a 'sense of growing together', the benefits of an 'older wiser counsel', 'a growth in understanding each other' and a confirmation of 'making positive progress' both socially and educationally. Overall, the data seems to suggest that this is a mixed cohort of children: some with clear emotional and educational needs while others were given mentors because they were already 'doing well'.

There were also clear differences noted in the ways in which schools managed this additional help. Some schools clearly targeted those most in need, while others seemed to match the children with the scheme rather than those possibly most in need. Furthermore, it should be noted that this cohort of children were interviewed towards the end of their mentoring input (June, 2002) so, in terms of positive impact one would expect them to be 'up-beat' about their personal development and progress and settled in their attitudes to attendance, key skills and their future. From the evidence, the children showed improved self-confidence and they reported a greater willingness to ask questions in class with the mentor's help. They also reported increased self-esteem feeling that their mentors valued them, that their motivation was improved and that they cooperated and concentrated in class when the mentors were present.

For the older volunteers, we were able to gather base-line data on their quality of life and their general physical/mental health (SF12). Interestingly, our sample scored well for physical health but slightly below the norm for mental health. However CASP 19, which we used to identify the contextual and life-course influences on quality of life in early old age, suggests that the mentors enjoy a very good or excellent quality of life. High scores in the 'pleasure' and 'self-realisation' domains also suggest that the mentors are actively engaged in the intergenerational scheme.

Local Community Action

This evaluation suggests that the influence of the intergenerational scheme went far beyond the mentoring relationships in the classroom. The effects were felt by many people and networks within the community. Within the school, both this evaluation and previous work (Ellis, 1998, Granville, 2000) suggests that the effects are felt at whole-school level often challenging stereotypes of the old and developing active citizenship (QCA, 1998) and awareness through the community involvement of the volunteers. The volunteers, as Granville (2002:24) comments, become 'champions' for other groups in the community:

> *Many of the initiatives have been developed to resolve conflict and potential tension in neighbourhoods. The advantages of intergenerational activities that are part of a community development approach is that they can be sustainable and part of the community process, rather than isolated projects which come and go without enabling change.*

The volunteers in this mentoring scheme had become a force for change: an empowered group of older people with a common sense of their worth and the contribution their volunteering has brought not only to the young people in the schools, but to their local communities and the city as a whole. This contribution was recognised by the LEAthrough its director and officers, through the local media, and the overall management of the scheme since its inception in 1997. One of the early aims of the project was to make this scheme sustainable and transferable to other areas in the country. Clearly, one key to the success of the scheme was the overall sense and evidence of a project that was well monitored, managed and evaluated. The volunteers were very well supported both within the school (by coordinators) and by BJF development workers. In all schools, the scheme had established routines and procedures and there was evidence of teamwork and acknowledgement that the volunteers were part of a much larger group of older people working in this way. Systematic training of volunteers, regular whole-group events, a

newsletter, media publicity, the reflective diaries, systematic meetings between coordinators, the BJF and the intergenerational mentoring advisory group, reinforced this team identity and sense of community development through action.

Conclusion

This research has sought to contribute to our understanding of ways in which intergenerational activity can enhance the lives of both older and younger people. The research raises a number of issues for schools in terms of the development of meaningful mentoring relationships between the younger and older people and whether, indeed, schools are the best place for a successful outcome. One particular issue concerns whether more can be done to target individual children more accurately, especially perhaps those most in need of guidance and support. There is also a need to ensure that mentors are given sufficient quality time with their 'young people' outside the classroom environment: time to reflect together and to set targets for the coming week.

One of the over-riding themes of this research is the ways in which the mentors and the children are committed to each other and show great trust. In this sense, the evidence suggests that both groups have made enormous strides in terms of improving their sense of worth, sense of self-esteem and well-being. The benefits to health and overall quality of life, especially for the older people, were also evident.

Finally, and in a broader context, intergenerational approaches have been used to address a whole variety of social issues involving marginalised and disaffected groups (Kuehne, 1999). One of the professed aims of much of this work is to demonstrate how it can make significant and positive changes to the ways in which younger people in particular perceive older people and ageing. In this sense the research reported here demonstrates the benefits to the wider community of older people acting as 'champions'supporting generations of school children in their community schools. Furthermore, from a UK policy perspective, these intergenerational approaches fit with current social policy concerns about 'social exclusion'. This particular scheme has forged connections between the schools and the communities in which they are placed and, in this way, has done much to challenge the marginalisation of both older and younger people. Most significantly it has helped to create, in part at least, a more inclusive local society in which active citizenship through the mentor volunteers has helped young people develop positive intergenerational relationships and a more productive outlook for their collective futures.

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Appendix 1

CASP-19 Questionnaire (Self Completion)

The following are some statements that you may agree or disagree with. Please tick the answer that most closely fits with your feelings and experiences.

1. My age prevents me from doing the things I would like to

Often ❐ Not often ❐ Sometimes ❐ Never ❐

2. I feel that what happens to me is out of my control

Often ❐ Not often ❐ Sometimes ❐ Never ❐

3. I feel free to plan for the future

Often ❐ Not often ❐ Sometimes ❐ Never ❐

4. I feel left out of things

Often ❐ Not often ❐ Sometimes ❐ Never ❐

5. I can do the things I want to

Often ❐ Not often ❐ Sometimes ❐ Never ❐

6. Family responsibilities prevent me from doing what I want to

Often ❐ Not often ❐ Sometimes ❐ Never ❐

7. I feel that I can please my self what I want to do

Often ❐ Not often ❐ Sometimes ❐ Never ❐

8. My health stops me from doing the things I want to do

Often ❐ Not often ❐ Sometimes ❐ Never ❐

9. Shortage of money stops me from doing the things I want to do

Often ❐ Not often ❐ Sometimes ❐ Never ❐

10. I look forward to each day

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

11. I feel that my life has meaning

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

12. I enjoy the things that I do

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

13. I enjoy being in the company of others

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

14. On, balance, I look back on my life with a sense of happiness

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

15. I feel full of energy these days

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

16. I choose to do the things that I have never done before

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

17. I feel satisfied with the way my life has turned out

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

18. I feel that life is full of opportunities

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

19. I feel that the future looks good for me

Often ❏ Not often ❏ Sometimes ❏ Never ❏

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.
Dr Steve Ellis

Appendix 1

SF-12

1. **In general** would you say your health is?
    *(Please tick **one box** only)*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

    The following questions are about activities you might do during a typical day.
    Does **your health now limit you** in these activities? If so, how much?
    (Please tick one box on each line).

	Yes, limited a lot	Yes, limited a little	No, not limited at all
2. **Moderate activities**, *such as moving a table, pushing a vacuum cleaner, bowling or playing golf*	☐	☐	☐
3. Climbing **several** flights of stairs	☐	☐	☐

    During the **past 4 weeks,** have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities **as a result of your physical health**?

	Yes	No
4. **Accomplished less** *than you would like*	☐	☐
5. Were limited in the **kind** of work or other activities	☐	☐

    During the **past 4 weeks,** have you had any of the following problems with your work or other regular daily activities **as a result of emotional problems** (such as feeling depressed or anxious)?

	Yes	No
6. **Accomplished less** *than you would like*	☐	☐
7. Didn't do work or activities as **carefully** as usual	☐	☐

8. During the **past 4 weeks**, how much did **pain** interfere with your normal work (including both work outside the home and housework)?

(Please tick one box only)

Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

These questions are about how you feel and how things have been with you **during the past 4 weeks**. For each question, please give the one answer that comes closest to the way you have been feeling.

(Please tick one box on each line)

How much of the time during the **past 4 weeks:**

	All of the time	Most of the time	A good bit of the time	Some of the time	A little of the time	None of the time
9. *Have you felt calm and peaceful*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. *Did you have a lot of energy?*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. *Have you felt downhearted and low?*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. During the **past 4 weeks**, how much of the time has your **physical health or emotional problems** interfered with your social activities (like visiting friends, relatives, etc.)?

(Please tick one box only)

All of the time	Most of the time	A good bit of the time	Some of the time	A little of the time	None of the time
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix 2

Focus Group Guide

Children: Introductions: Have you met as a group before? ie children and mentors. Please relax and enjoy this, try to be as honest and open as you can, I'm interested in what you think and feel about the scheme? Please introduce your mentor to me and indicate why you think you were given a mentor this year.

Why do you think you were given the opportunity to have a mentor?

How did you feel when it came to the end of the year and you no longer had the support of your mentor?

In what ways do the mentors help?

What long-term impact has the scheme had for you? (addressed to the Y8-11).

Has the mentoring scheme given you a good start to secondary school?

Has the scheme helped with self-esteem, well being and confidence?

If I took your mentor away what difference would that make to you?

Did you realise that you would not have a mentor in Y8?

Did you want a mentor?

What are you experiences of your mentor?

Did you find them helpful in terms of your school study and in what ways were they helpful?

What is special about your mentor?

What type of role model is your mentor?

Do you make sure you are in school on the day your mentor is coming in?

What comments did you get when a mentor appeared tin the classroom?

What does it feel like when you come to the end of Y7 and you realise that you have not got a mentor in Y8?

Mentor Volunteers: Please feel free to comment at any time during the interview. Try to respect and help each other.

Do you think the children were comfortable with the interview?

Are you comfortable with this form of interview?

Did the introduction to the research at the Borough Arms training and social event help to prepare you for the interview?

How long have you been involved with the scheme (1-5years)?

Is there a difference between the years, in what ways are you more experienced from your first year of involvement?

Do you still see and communicate with the child that you had in your first year?

How were the children allocated to each of you?

Do you mentor in pairs?

How many times a week do you come into the school?

How long do you spend in the school on average per week?

Do you stay on in the school after your mentoring sessions has ended?

What ability bands are the children from?

Were you given a choice of children, was the allocation of child discussed with you?

How is the scheme managed in the school?

Is the senior management team involved, who is the coordinator is he/she a member of the scheme?

Has the management of the scheme changed since you became involved, if so, in what ways?

Is the scheme well managed in your school?

Do you need to be flexible?

What special skills do you bring to the classroom?

What benefits have you provided for the children?
Are there issues of race and gender that we might discuss?
Do you think of your relationships with the children as relatively long-term?
In what ways have the children changed during the course of the year?
What school-based experiences have you had this year?
Have you met as a group before now ie, children and older people?
Is half a day a week enough time to make a difference?
How many children do you work with in the classroom?
What are the differences in your opinion between school now and back then?
Do you think age makes a difference in terms of your role in the classroom?
How many generations do we have here today?
Is the scheme intergenerational (young and older) or multigenerational (several generations)?
What terms would you prefer to use when talking to/about your classroom mentees?
What are some of the management problems in the classroom? (supply verses regular teachers).
In what ways do the teachers use you in the classroom?
Do you get involved in whole-class teaching? What support do you give the children?
What impact are you having in the class?
What is your primary focus in the classroom?
Are you able to reflect on good and not so good practice in the classroom?
In what ways are you able to improve and develop your mentoring expertise in the classroom? (diaries).
Do we need to identify specific learning targets for your mentees, could you do this jointly with the children, is this a useful tool, could this be linked to the diaries in some way?
Are you aware of other mentors in the school eg. learning support mentors, industry mentors?
What are your reasons for joining the scheme?
How were you recruited, supported and retained?
Will you be re-joining the scheme next year?
How do you view your mentees abilities?
How can you best support the children's continued progress?
Why do you think the children were chosen for the scheme?
How does the child view her/himself in terms of the scheme?
How might you improve the quality of mentoring you provide?
How can you measure progress made with the child?
In what ways has the scheme empowered you?
Have you attended additional functions, events, recruitment, publicity and training since joining the scheme?
Are you aware of other mentors in the school?
In what ways do the 'learning mentors' differ from the BJF mentors?
As a group of mentors are you cohesive, do you have good relations and support each other?
Will you continue with the scheme next year?
Have you enjoyed the interview and in what ways has it been useful to you?

Appendix 3

Mentor Diaries

Why Keep a Diary?
The aim of the diary is to enable you to record the development of your relationship with the young people involved and the good things and the not so good things about being a mentor. Your diary is also a place to reflect on your experience of being a mentor and to comment on changes that have taken place in your self and the young people.

Tips for Filling in Your Diary
You are more likely to fill in your diary if you write brief comments soon after your visit to school. Don't leave it until later in the week, you will forget how you felt on the day. Try to put some thing down under each section but don't be overly worried if you don't. Each term the project coordinator will discuss your diary with you and sections of it may be used as part evaluating the progress of the project and the mentoring relationships. The confidential nature of the entries will be honoured and the diaries won't be judged for neatness, spelling or grammar! On the next page you will find some trigger words, which you might find helpful.

Trigger Words
Capable Confident Disorderly Great helped Negative Over-Loaded Questioning Sad Skilled Uncertain Vexed Certain Confused Dissatisfied Happy Interested Not enjoyable Positive Relevant Satisfied Stimulating Unfriendly Well-Ordered Challenged Demanding Enjoyable Hard work Keen OK Puzzled Responsible Secure Tired Upset

Useful Expressions
I made a difference; I learned something new; I handled that really well; I could have handled that better; Next time I'll do that differently; My mentee really responded to what I said/did; I feel better about my self/our mentoring relationship.

Date
Good things about today:
Not so good things about today:
I was happy/not so happy with the way things went because:
What could I have done differently to get a different result:
The best way to describe today is:

Mentoring Notes
Use this section to record from time to time any significant situations and events that you feel are important to the mentoring relationship and/or the exchange between generations. You could note any life changes for you or your mentee – such as feeling more confident, feeling happier or healthier or one of you learnt something new about another generation. You could also use this space to note down things you would like to discuss with the project co-ordinator or other mentors.