



Scottish
Mentoring
Network

Mentoring in Scotland:

Strengthening our Future Through Relationships

2026

Call to Scottish Government

2026

As Scotland moves forward in 2026—building resilience, tackling ongoing social and economic challenges, and shaping a fairer future—mentoring remains a vital force for positive change. Today, mentoring plays an even more powerful role in supporting people through transition, strengthening wellbeing, developing skills, and widening opportunities.

Mentoring boosts confidence, supports personal and professional growth, and improves life chances across communities. It is a key part of Scotland's commitment to inclusion, empowerment, and long-term renewal.

In 2026, mentoring can make a significant impact on many of the issues facing Scotland's people, including:

- Working alongside individuals to navigate changes, challenges and opportunities in their personal and professional lives
- Supporting people to realise their full potential
- Rebuilding social connections

Mentoring can play a strategic role in advancing Scotland's contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals by strengthening equality, enhancing wellbeing, supporting quality education, and building resilient, inclusive communities.

Through targeted support and capacity-building, mentoring can help accelerate progress across multiple SDGs and ensure that Scotland's approach to sustainable development remains people-centred and future-focused.

Children, Young People and Families:



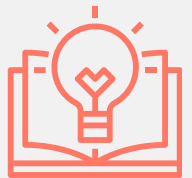
Mentoring services are proven to have a positive impact on the life chances of our children and young people. The continuity and consistency of a mentor can provide the stable and nurturing environment that a young person needs to identify their goals and thrive. Many of our members currently provide crucial support in this way across Scotland, however access to mentoring for young people who need it should not be left to chance. It is time to ensure that these opportunities are available across Scotland.

Mentoring is a proven measure to enhance and the support for care experienced adults and families to ensure that they have the opportunities and resources they need to thrive.

“Honestly, a mentor can make you feel so much better about yourself. There will be one moment that you’ll never forget, and you’ll always be thankful for that.”

Mentee, Age 15, Intandem Mentoring Service

Education:



Across the spectrum of educational opportunities in Scotland, from primary to further and higher education, mentoring is used effectively to widen access to opportunities, support engagement and increase attainment of students. Mentoring can play a key part in the reinvigoration of people in the educational systems and increase the support available to students to reach their potential.

This boost in self-belief has helped students feel happier, more settled, and more willing to take part in school life. Even small steps forward in confidence like speaking up in class represent huge personal achievements for these young people.

Teacher, Light Up Learning Mentoring Service

Scottish Businesses and Workforce:



Businesses in Scotland are crucial to the success and vibrancy of our communities. Many have faced severe challenges and had to adapt to new ways of working. Mentoring programmes that operate in Scotland have a proven record in aiding business development and supporting organisational change within businesses. Promoting the importance of well-managed mentoring services and supporting business to implement mentoring in an efficient and effective manner will play an important part in their continued development.

“My mentor provided a safe space to talk openly and honestly about my fears and having my horizons widened to consider what I can achieve. They have enabled me to do what I do today”
Mentee, Growbiz Mentoring Service

Community Justice:



Previous investment from the Scottish Government to encourage the use of a mentoring approach in the reintegration and rehabilitation of offenders means that mentoring methods and techniques are now used widely in the community justice sector in Scotland. Continued recognition and support of adequately resourced quality mentoring activities will allow the positive impact already being demonstrated to be maximised within the sector.

“When people come out [of prison] and that first day doesn’t go to plan and they’re still left with needs unmet, they’re so much more likely to return to either an abusive relationship or drugs or alcohol or negative coping behaviours. We will have someone there at the gate waiting to take them home, take them to a safe place and get them sorted.”
Mentor, SACRO Upside

Supporting Households:



With the rising cost of living households are struggling to survive. Issues with mounting debts, poor mental & physical health, lack of transport in rural areas, fuel poverty, and lack of income maximisation support for those in work all present major barriers to employment. Relationship based mentoring is used to successfully provide 1:1 tailored ,holistic support to help vulnerable households navigate life's various challenges, and overcome barriers involving home energy, finance, employment, skills, and access to services. Mentoring used effectively can help these households more from surviving to thriving. Further development of existing initiatives to ensure mentoring is available to all households that would benefit can play a key role in the future success of the people of Scotland.

“I felt listened to, appreciated for who I was, and empathised with. Whatever I needed, it was okay. I was given a large degree of freedom. I knew myself and my circumstances best and didn't want to be 'told' or 'instructed'. I was expertly mentored through so many issues that I faced – always compassionate and always understanding.”

Mentee, Wise Group Relational Mentoring Service

Creative Arts:



As a result of rising costs and reduced funding opportunities the creative arts sector in Scotland is struggling to survive. The arts are critical to our economy, our wellbeing. We cannot afford to neglect them. Mentoring is already being used in various creative arts settings to improve access to education in the arts and to help artists to develop a sustainable income from sharing their skills and talents. Further investment to allow these successful initiatives to support the sector would be welcomed.

“It has helped me feel less isolated as a self-employed person working in the arts. It has been the perfect amount of challenging and uplifting.”

Mentee, TRACS Mentoring Service

Our Call to Scottish Government

The current and historical investment the Scottish Government has made to the development of Scottish Mentoring Network has allowed us to progressively enhance mentoring practice in Scotland.

We have achieved this by learning from our members experience, sharing good practice and responding to the needs identified by mentoring services. This means that Scotland is now at the forefront of effective mentoring delivery. We currently support and develop mentoring programmes that work across all sectors of Scottish society and to this end Scottish Mentoring Network has one **BIG** ask of the Scottish Government –

Currently, funding for the mentoring infrastructure comes from the Children and Families Directorate. We would ask that this support is replicated across other Government departments to allow us to grow the reach of our support services and maximise the positive impact mentoring can have in the aiding of the recovery of Scotland's communities, enabling the people of Scotland to thrive in 2026 and beyond.

Scottish Mentoring Network can provide strategic oversight to help to enable understanding about the benefits to be shared across government departments.

We can assist in the broadening of cross-departmental working, consistency of application, joined-up thinking and collective action, across departments.

Mentoring has a great track record in Scotland. From our most recent member survey, we estimate that there are over 12,000 mentors, and 32,000 mentees across Scotland. As the majority of mentors are volunteers, this represents around 1,948,684 voluntary hours of mentoring giving a value of around £27m in unpaid time.

Increased investment in mentoring projects represents excellent value for money for the public purse. It is preventative spending that reduces more expensive crisis interventions in, e.g. health and social care, education.

Scottish Mentoring Network has the expertise to support the development and delivery of new and expanded mentoring projects. We have high quality accessible services, including a unique Quality Standard, that increases the impact of high-quality mentoring.

Our vision is of a Scotland where :

**“Effective, high quality mentoring, is recognised,
valued and available to all.”**

Mentoring has the power to strengthen life chances for people across Scotland, helping individuals and communities build confidence, skills, and resilience. As Scotland continues to navigate ongoing social and economic challenges in 2026, investing in mentoring has never been more vital. It should be a core element of the nation’s efforts to drive inclusive growth, support wellbeing, and build a fair and sustainable future for all.

#MentoringWorks

About Scottish Mentoring Network

Scottish Mentoring Network is the intermediary and membership organisation for mentoring projects across Scotland. We support mentoring services across Scotland and can evidence the growing use of mentoring as an effective support to a wide range of people. Many of our members support children and young people, a great number of whom are disadvantaged and vulnerable. Others work within communities and with families and with individual adults in a range of contexts, e.g. employability, health and disability, the justice system and business/professional fields.

Mentoring has the power to transform lives, strengthen communities, and unlock potential. At Scottish Mentoring Network, we help organisations create high-quality mentoring that makes a real impact. Through training, expert guidance, and our Quality Award, we raise the standard of mentoring across the UK.

We connect you to a vibrant community where social connections drive growth and opportunity. Together, we can shape a culture where mentoring changes lives.

