Blake Stevenson
research · insight · progress

intandem

External evaluation of Phase 1 (2017–2019)

For Inspiring Scotland

March 2019

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APPENDICES:

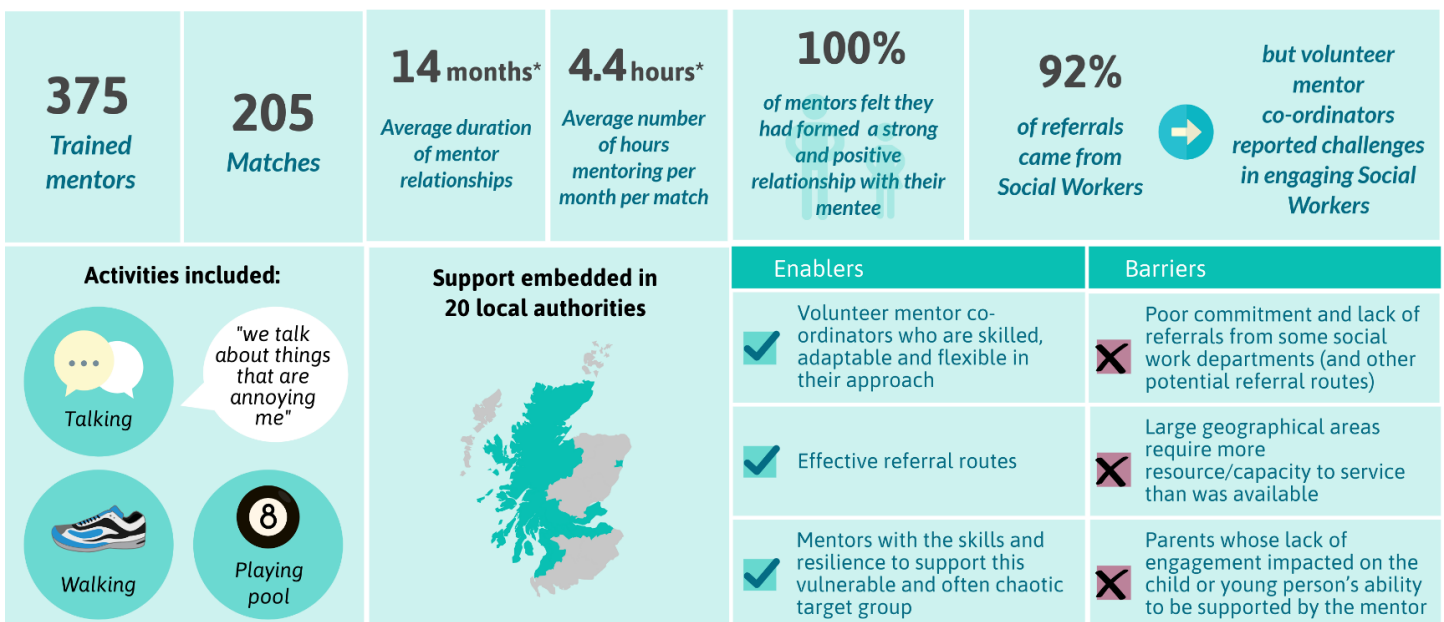# Executive Summary

Introduction

Inspiring Scotland commissioned Blake Stevenson to undertake an external evaluation of Phase 1 of the intandem programme, Scotland's first national mentoring programme for children and young people who are looked after at home, from August 2017 to March 2019.

intandem provides weekly mentoring for children and young people looked after at home and offers them opportunities to have fun, learn new skills, develop their confidence and access their local communities within a safe environment, along with support to set and achieve their goals. The programme matches children and young people looked after at home with volunteer mentors, in order to build a trusting and supportive relationship and provide them with a positive adult role model.

Developed by Inspiring Scotland and 13 partner charities, the Scottish Government funded Phase 1 of the programme between November 2016 (with the first mentors in place in early 2017) and March 2019.
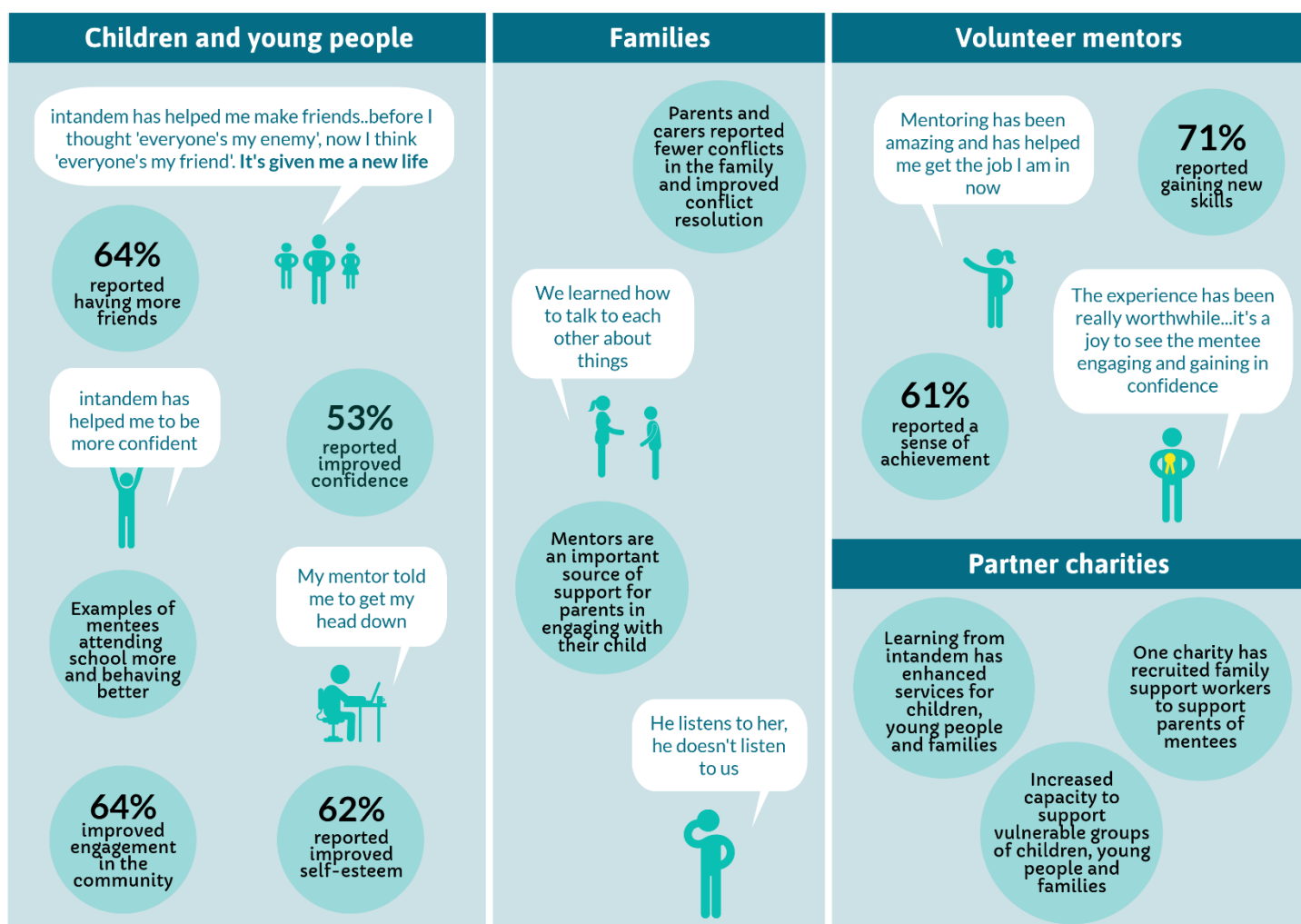
The infographics below set out our key findings related to the delivery and impact of the programme.

Delivery of Phase 1

| **375** Trained mentors | **205** Matches | **14** months* Average duration of mentor relationships | **4.4** hours* Average number of hours mentoring per month per match | **100%** of mentors felt they had formed a strong and positive relationship with their mentee | **92%** of referrals came from Social Workers | → | but volunteer mentor co-ordinators reported challenges in engaging Social Workers |

Activities included:

Talking — "we talk about things that are annoying me"

Walking

Playing pool (8)

Support embedded in 20 local authorities

Enablers	Barriers
✓ Volunteer mentor co-ordinators who are skilled, adaptable and flexible in their approach	✗ Poor commitment and lack of referrals from some social work departments (and other potential referral routes)
✓ Effective referral routes	✗ Large geographical areas require more resource/capacity to service than was available
✓ Mentors with the skills and resilience to support this vulnerable and often chaotic target group	✗ Parents whose lack of engagement impacted on the child or young person's ability to be supported by the mentor

* This data was not routinely reported by charities, but this is based on information provided by a sample of charities (six charities provided data about the number of hours and seven about the duration of relationships).

Impact

Children and young people

"intandem has helped me make friends..before I thought 'everyone's my enemy', now I think 'everyone's my friend'. **It's given me a new life**"

64% reported having more friends

"intandem has helped me to be more confident"

53% reported improved confidence

Examples of mentees attending school more and behaving better

"My mentor told me to get my head down"

64% improved engagement in the community

62% reported improved self-esteem

Families

Parents and carers reported fewer conflicts in the family and improved conflict resolution

"We learned how to talk to each other about things"

Mentors are an important source of support for parents in engaging with their child

"He listens to her, he doesn't listen to us"

Volunteer mentors

"Mentoring has been amazing and has helped me get the job I am in now"

71% reported gaining new skills

"The experience has been really worthwhile...it's a joy to see the mentee engaging and gaining in confidence"

61% reported a sense of achievement

Partner charities

Learning from intandem has enhanced services for children, young people and families

One charity has recruited family support workers to support parents of mentees

Increased capacity to support vulnerable groups of children, young people and families

Conclusions

The intandem programme is providing important mentoring support to a group of children and young people who are among the most disadvantaged in society and who to date have had limited access to services of this type. Phase 1 has demonstrated the impact that such a service can have and is considered by those involved in delivery to be a vital support mechanism that would leave a real gap if it did not continue.

It has taken significant time for Phase 1 to bed in and reach capacity. This is to be expected given the complex needs of the target group, but many of those involved were surprised at the extent to which referral routes in particular were so challenging to establish in many areas. This had a knock-on effect on how quickly children and young people could be matched with mentors.

The programme is just reaching capacity. Those involved have identified a clear ongoing need for support for this group of children and young people, and the evidence gathered has shown that the model has achieved significant positive outcomes for children, young people and families. Phase 1 is coming to an end and Scottish Government funding has been extended until March 2020, but the programme has significant potential to be rolled out further: "it still feels like the start of the overall journey – there is so much potential for it to grow."

Inspiring Scotland and the partner charities are exploring future funding and delivery models for intandem. There are various opportunities being considered in discussion with the Scottish Government, including:

- making intandem available to a larger number of children and young people who are looked after at home;

- providing similar services for other client groups, such as children and young people in kinship care; and

- extending intandem to new geographical areas; and

- partnering and signposting to support for intandem families, such as one-to-one and group support for parents.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of our evaluation, we make the following recommendations in relation to future development and expansion of the programme:

Recommendation 1: We recommend that Inspiring Scotland continues to work nationally to raise awareness of the programme and encourage greater strengthening of referral routes from social work, education and other appropriate sectors. This may include, for example, developing stronger links between the programme and organisations such as COSLA.

Recommendation 2: In order to address gaps identified in the management information data collected by partner charities, including systematic collection of data such as the duration of matches and the number of volunteers who progress from completing the training to being matched with a child or young person, we recommend that Inspiring Scotland and partner charities review the management information collected and reported so that all the relevant data required to fully understand the mechanisms of the programme and the resources required to deliver it is collected.

Recommendation 3: Continue to review the usefulness and usability of Viewpoint to ensure that it continues to support outcomes data collection in the best way possible.

Recommendation 4: Our findings show that intandem has had a positive impact on some mentees' engagement with school. However, there is currently no data being provided by schools to verify this. As the programme develops further, greater engagement and data sharing with schools in relation to the impact on children and young people and referral would be beneficial.

Recommendation 5: Consider reducing the review meetings between partner charities and Inspiring Scotland to quarterly.

Recommendation 6: Consider expansion of the programme to other geographical areas where there is a clear demand demonstrated. This could be done through the existing 13 partner charities involved in Phase 1 but experience from this phase indicates that this might not provide sufficient experience or capacity and other organisations may need to be involved.

Recommendation 7: Consider extending the target group to include children and young people in kinship care.

Recommendation 8: Consider offering mentoring support to parents of those children and young people being mentored, and/or signposting families to further support such as one-to-one and group support for parents.

1.   Introduction

1.1   Blake Stevenson was commissioned to undertake an external evaluation of the intandem mentoring programme, Scotland's first national mentoring programme for children and young people who are looked after at home, from August 2017 to March 2019. This final report outlines our findings from this research.

The context for looked after children and young people in home care in Scotland

1.2   Home supervision of looked after children and young people is a unique aspect of Scotland's child protection system. Although the number of looked after children and young people living at home with at least one biological parent has decreased since it peaked in 2008, there is still a significant number who receive care in this context. Overall, there are 3,766 children and young people who are looked after at home, representing 25% of the total number of looked after children and young people in Scotland (as of 2017).[1]

1.3   The Scottish Government's 2015 Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People strategy identified looked after children and young people in home care as a key priority.[2] Looked after children and young people who are in home care have the worst outcomes out of all groups of looked after children and young people. On average, children and young people looked after at home have the lowest school attendance (79%) compared to 89% for all looked after children and young people. Similarly, only 10% of children and young people looked after at home complete level 5 qualifications, compared with 25% of all looked after children and young people who reach this level of attainment.

1.4   The strategy emphasises that home-based care should not be a long-term outcome for children and young people. Instead, early, intensive support should be provided, and parents should be given timetables to address issues. The strategy also recommends that local authorities 'presume against' looked after at home provisions, except when it is part of a short-term plan to address specific issues in the household.

1.5   The strategy's approach to home supervision of looked after children and young people is heavily informed by the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach. GIRFEC has strengthened partnerships between services to help put the child/young person at the centre and work towards the eight SHANARRI wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included).

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[1] https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2016-17/pages/3/
[2] http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00489805.pdf

1.6   GIRFEC and SHANARRI are central components of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014),[3] which aims to strengthen and improve the rights of children and young people and puts in place a number of new actions, such as a Child's Plan and a named person, for children and young people who are most in need of support.

Overview of the intandem mentoring programme

1.7   intandem is a mentoring programme for children and young people aged 8–14 years who are looked after at home in Scotland. The programme was developed in response to the lack of support services for this group of children and young people and is funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by Inspiring Scotland.

1.8   intandem provides weekly mentoring for children and young people looked after at home and offers them opportunities to have fun, learn new skills, develop their confidence and access their local communities within a safe environment, along with support to set and achieve their goals. The programme matches children and young people looked after at home with volunteer mentors, in order to build a trusting and supportive relationship and provide them with a positive adult role model.

1.9   The common values which underpin the intandem mentoring programme are openness, aspiration, respect and commitment[4].

1.10   Phase 1 of the programme ran from November 2016 to March 2019, with the first mentors in place from early 2017. The evaluation was conducted between August 2017 and March 2019.

Evaluation aims

1.11   The aim of this evaluation, which was formative and summative, was to assess the progress and impact of the programme across the 13 partner organisations. It included an assessment of:

- the impact on the children and young people being mentored;

- key factors which influence the effectiveness of the intervention; and

- how this intervention compares with other support that the children and young people are receiving.

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[3] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted
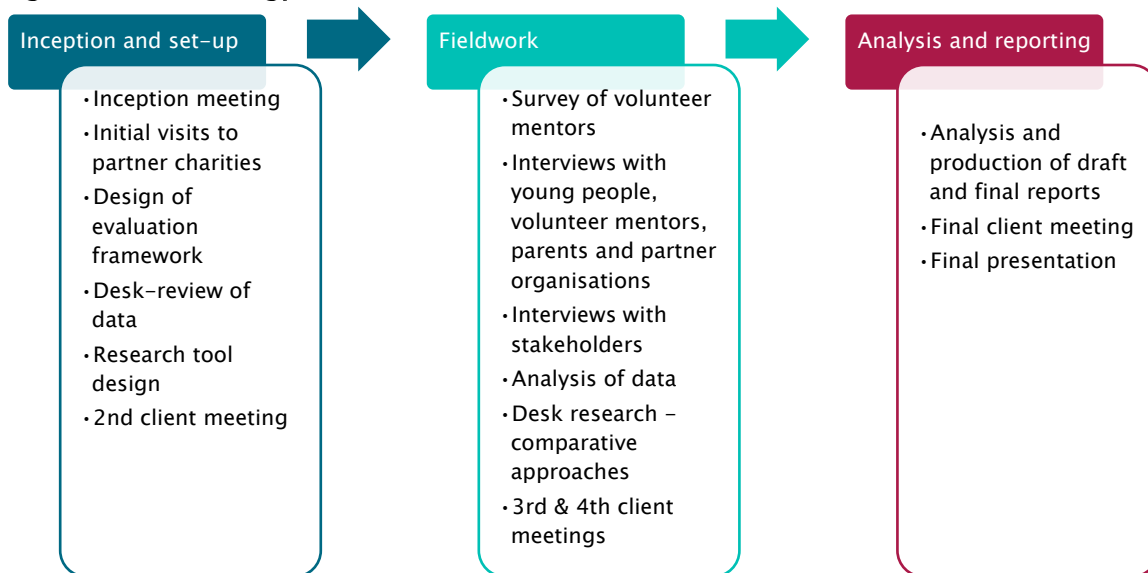
[4] https://www.intandem.scot/about/

Methodology

1.12   The evidence presented in this report was gathered using desk-based research as well as primary data collection. Our methodology is summarised in Figure 1.1 and described in more detail below.

Figure 1.1: Methodology

Inception and set-up	Fieldwork	Analysis and reporting
• Inception meeting • Initial visits to partner charities • Design of evaluation framework • Desk-review of data • Research tool design • 2nd client meeting	• Survey of volunteer mentors • Interviews with young people, volunteer mentors, parents and partner organisations • Interviews with stakeholders • Analysis of data • Desk research – comparative approaches • 3rd & 4th client meetings	• Analysis and production of draft and final reports • Final client meeting • Final presentation

Secondary data analysis and desk research

1.13   We undertook an analysis of data about the programme, its participants and impact on the children and young people involved, which was collected by the partner charities and collated by Inspiring Scotland. This provided quantitative information about the number of matches, and mentors involved and qualitative and quantitative data relating to the outcomes achieved by children and young people.

1.14   In addition, Inspiring Scotland asked for additional data from a sample of partner charities that was not previously recorded formally, such as the duration of matches, referral sources and the proportion of recruited volunteers who progress to live matches.

1.15   Our evaluation also included desk research to explore comparative approaches to mentoring looked after children and young people in Scotland and the wider UK (please see Appendix 1). Although the intandem programme is uniquely placed as Scotland's first national mentoring programme for children and young people who are looked after at home, the intention of this stage was to draw points of reference and comparison that could provide learning points for intandem.

Interviews

1.16   Our primary research involved interviews with project staff, mentors, mentees, parents, referrers and stakeholders. Mentees and parents were offered a £10 gift voucher as an incentive to take part, and Table 1.1 gives an overview of the number of interviews that were conducted during the research.

Table 1.1: Interviews completed

Stakeholder group	Number of interviews conducted
Mentor co-ordinators (initial scoping visits)	13
Mentees	24
Parents	12
Mentor co-ordinators (follow-up interviews August/September 2018)	13
Volunteer mentors	20
Service managers	13
Referrers/stakeholders	2

Survey of mentors

1.17   In addition, we issued an online survey to volunteer mentors via the partner charities and received 41 responses. Based on 182 available volunteers, this gives a response rate of 23%.

Analysis and reporting

1.18   We analysed the quantitative and qualitative data collected through the evaluation to identify recurring themes and evidence of impact, and our findings are presented in this report.

The report

1.19   The report is laid out as follows:

- Chapter 2 includes discussion about intandem's delivery model

- Chapter 3 presents our findings related to intandem's delivery of outcomes and its impact on children, young people, parents and families, mentors and partner charities

- Chapter 4 sets out our conclusions and recommendations.

## 2.	Delivery model

Introduction

2.1	In this chapter, we discuss various aspects of the intandem delivery model, including the selection of partner charities, the programme's geographical coverage, the target group, the role of volunteer mentor co-ordinators, the recruitment and retention of mentors, the referral of children and young people and the support provided to them.

Selection of partner charities

2.2	The partner charities were selected through a competitive process and assessed against a set of agreed criteria. 13 charities were selected for Phase 1 of intandem and these varied in size, and in type. Some were large national organisations, others were smaller and more locally-focused, and their experience of taking part in a national programme was also mixed, with some doing so for the first time. A full list of the selected partner charities is provided in Appendix 2.

Geographical coverage

2.3	The areas where the programme eventually embedded its support were Aberdeen, Argyll & Bute, Inverclyde, Edinburgh, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, West Lothian, Midlothian, Fife, Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, Highland, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and West Dunbartonshire. The local authorities with embedded support are displayed in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Geographical coverage

Local authority areas where intandem operates
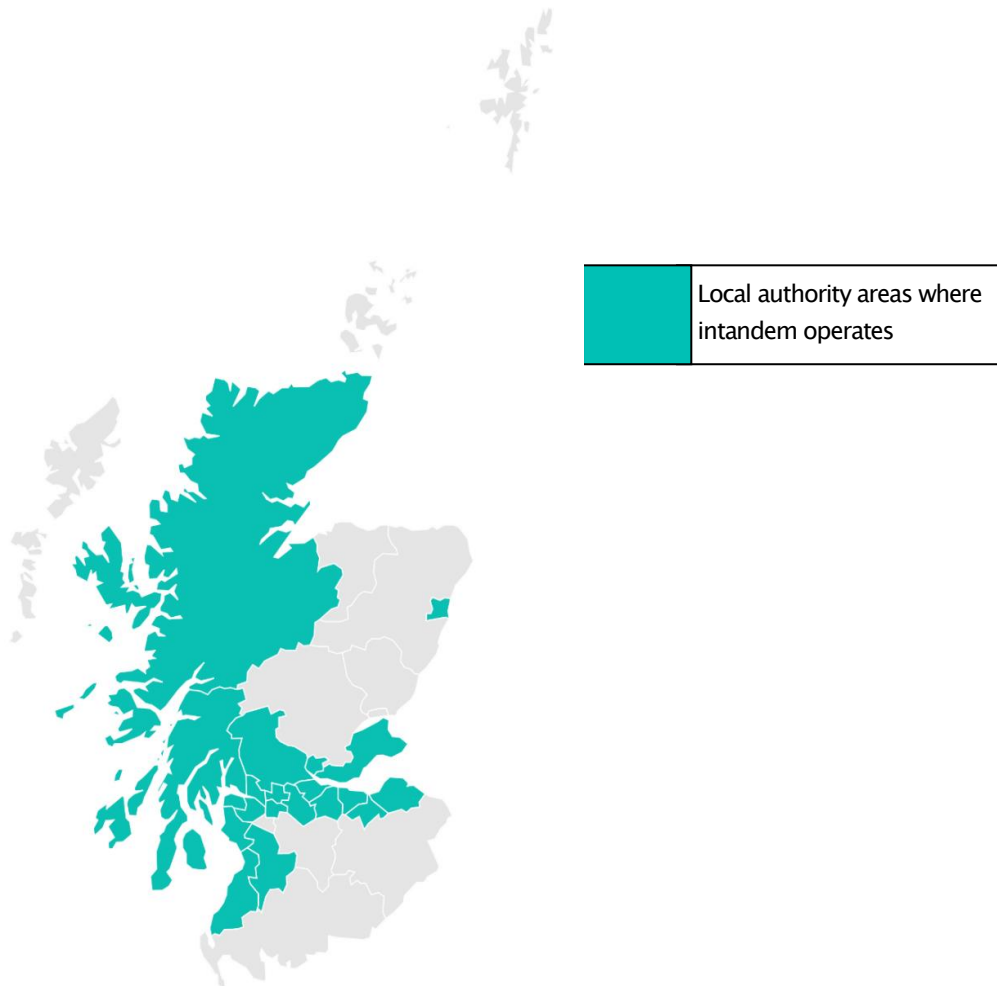
2.4 Of the 13 charities short-listed for funding, a number were seeking to deliver Phase 1 in the same geographical areas. In order to avoid duplication and to increase the range of areas benefiting from Phase 1, Inspiring Scotland entered into discussions with a number of these charities about scaling back or changing their geographical area of focus.

2.5 Whilst there were practical reasons for doing this, in practice this resulted in challenges for one organisation which had to set up the service in new areas from scratch, developing relationships with social work and other partners in the areas and developing referral routes. This proved time-consuming and did not yield results despite best efforts on the part of the charity involved. Subsequently, the charity then changed areas again.

2.6 The change of areas resulted in significant time lags between the original award and first matches between children and young people and mentors taking place. They also caused frustration for the charity who believed they could have provided a better service in areas in which they were more experienced (or where there was more buy-in from social work).

2.7   These challenges could not have been anticipated. However, if the programme is to be further expanded in future there are important lessons to be learned from this experience. Expansions to the programme might be best served by increasing the geographical coverage of the existing 13 charities (because they already have the knowledge, experience and systems in place from Phase 1). However, the evidence gathered during this evaluation suggests that in-depth knowledge and pre-existing relationships in an area are important facilitators.

Target group

2.8   The intandem programme was set up to support children and young people aged 8–14 years who are looked after by their local authority in their home (where a child is subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order and continues to live in their normal place of residence). This target group was recognised by Scottish Government to be one of the most vulnerable in society, and in greatest need of support. All partner charities involved confirmed the target group's need for the kind of support offered by intandem.

2.9   At full capacity, each of the delivery partners was expected to support a caseload of 20 children and young people who would be matched with a mentor, based on best practice recommendations from the Scottish Mentoring and Befriending Network. Different targets were set for Action for Children (14), COVEY (14) and Quarriers (16), each of whom have a part-time co-ordinator.

2.10   However, the level of need in the geographical areas being targeted varied. In some areas, such as Glasgow, there are significant numbers of eligible children and young people. In other areas, such as East Dunbartonshire, the population of children and young people looked after in the home was significantly lower, meaning that the pool to recruit from was also smaller and more challenging. We return to the issue of recruitment later in this chapter.

2.11   In addition to children and young people looked after at home, the majority of partner charities also identified a need for a similar programme for children and young people in kinship care, noting that their needs were very similar to those children and young people looked after at home and that there was significant demand for support for them from referral agencies.

2.12   A smaller number of partner charities also identified support for parents of those children and young people looked after in the home as an area of need.

Model

2.13   intandem is delivered in a similar way by each of the delivery partners with a Volunteer Mentor Co-ordinator leading on the day-to-day delivery of the programme. The mentor co-ordinators' responsibilities usually include awareness raising, recruitment, training and retention of mentors, recruitment of children and young people, monitoring performance against targets, and on-going support and supervision for mentors.

2.14   Each partner charity developed and delivered its own training for mentors, tailoring their approach to local needs. To support this, Inspiring Scotland set minimum standards for mentor training that partner charities had to meet including topics such as data protection and quality assurance. Inspiring Scotland also provided additional resources and training days for mentors and charities on subjects such as adverse childhood experiences, the circumstances of children and young people looked after at home, and trauma-informed approaches. Most charities have incorporated these events into their training for mentors.

2.15   For most partner organisations the model was broadly similar, involving mentors meeting up with the child or young person once a week at a time that suited them both to undertake an agreed activity, although in practice mentors provided support more flexibly and for some children and young people offered more support than this.

2.16   One charity (Befriend a Child in Aberdeen) implemented a slightly different model in which they initially had a community-based flat which operated as a hub for the mentoring service, and children and young people would meet their mentor there for activities and support. The benefits of the hub were that it gave the children and young people a familiar, safe space in which they could meet their mentor but also undertake other activities like homework. However, due to insufficiently high referral rates (to justify maintaining the flat) this later moved to a community-based model combined with space available in their main office building where mentors could undertake activities with the children and young people.

2.17   Data about the number of hours of mentoring support provided per month was not systematically collected across all partner charities, but six charities provided data that shows an average of 4.4 hours mentoring contact per month per match. Figure 2.2 shows the derived averages across six charities.

Figure 2.2: Average number of hours mentoring per month
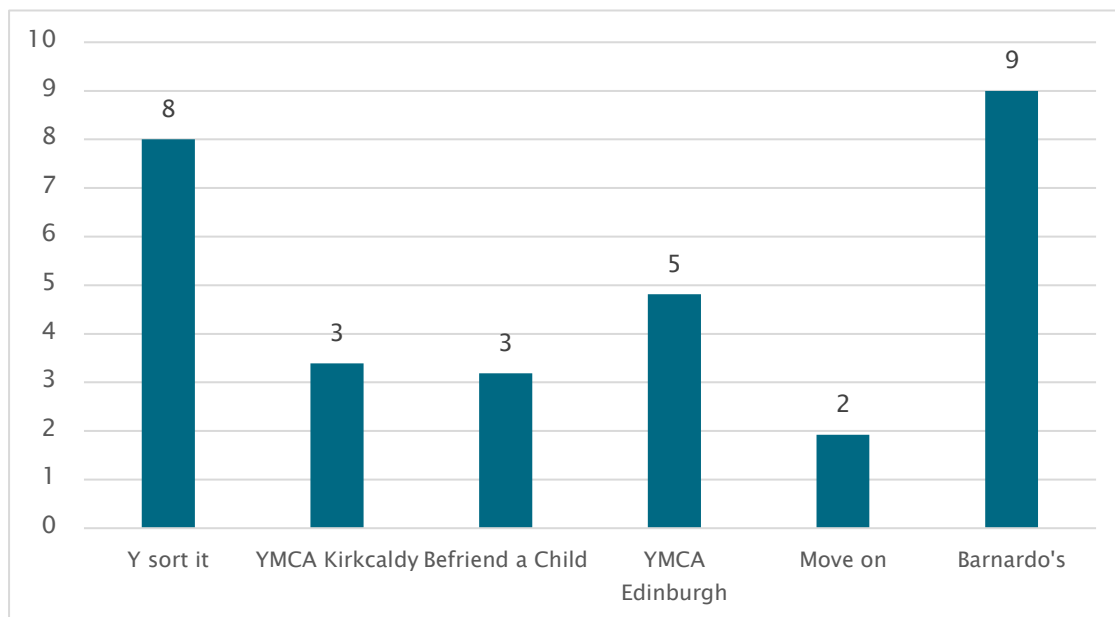
Volunteer mentor co-ordinators

2.18   Each charity appointed a volunteer mentor co-ordinator at the outset. In some partner charities this appointment was internal, but others had to recruit externally to the post. All charities except one, had one individual in this role. COVEY appointed two people to the role on a part-time basis, intentionally in order that there was more flexibility and back-up in the case of illness or annual leave.

2.19   The role of volunteer mentor co-ordinator was pivotal to the successful implementation of the programme. The co-ordinators played a key role in the recruitment of mentors and children and young people, liaised extensively with social work and other referral agencies in their areas, designed and delivered mentor training, supported mentors in their role, monitored progress and performance (including impact on the children and young people), and acted as the point of liaison between parents and mentors, and with Inspiring Scotland.

2.20   The role placed considerable responsibility on one individual, which meant that the impact of any changes of staff in this role (which occurred on a number of occasions for a variety of reasons), pressures of supporting a very vulnerable client group and a group of volunteers, and the administrative burden were magnified.

2.21   Many of the volunteer mentor co-ordinators also fed back to us that the role was considerably more administratively onerous than their organisation had anticipated. Many noted that they would welcome an administrator to support the data collection and paperwork involved.

2.22   Volunteer mentor co-ordinators covering a wide geographical area faced some additional challenges with long distances being travelled to support the volunteer mentors and the children and young people.

Recruitment of mentors[5]

2.23   Overall, partner charities have managed to recruit sufficient numbers of mentors to match with the children and young people being referred (Table 2.1). However, this has required significant effort by volunteer mentor co-ordinators (and others, such as communications staff) to advertise the opportunities for volunteering and in some areas this was more challenging than others. In larger geographical areas, for example, with greater travel distances involved in supporting children and young people, mentors were harder to recruit. Likewise, some challenges were faced in Glasgow where other large-scale mentoring programmes are currently operating and "competing" for volunteers.

Table 2.1: Volunteer numbers

Recruited volunteers	571
Trained volunteers	375

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[5] Appendix 3 includes a profile of the mentors recruited to the programme.

2.24   Most of the partner charities recruited and trained mentors specifically for the intandem programme. A number, however (for example COVEY and YMCA), took a different approach and recruited volunteer mentors across the range of programmes being run by their organisation. This had the benefit of ensuring that mentors did not have to wait long to be matched with a mentee. Both COVEY and YMCA noted that they selected their strongest volunteers for intandem due to the more complex needs of the children and young people involved.

2.25   One charity (Move On) found recruitment of mentors challenging, but they believe that was due to their induction process which requires volunteers to commit to five full Saturdays in a row. They recently adjusted their requirements in relation to initial training (reducing it to three weeks) and have seen a positive effect.

2.26   A number of projects highlighted the lack of male volunteers coming forward as a challenge – meaning that requests from referrers for male mentors to act as role models for young boys being referred were not always able to be met. However, partner charities finding themselves in this situation generally found a suitable female mentor who was able to establish a strong relationship with the young boy.

2.27   Based on the feedback we received from volunteer mentor co-ordinators, the conversion rates from trained volunteer to active mentor appear to have been reasonably good. While we do not have hard data on these rates across all partner charities (this was not routinely collected), we have a snapshot for a 17-month period between April 2017 and September 2018 across six of the partner charities. This shows that, on average, 79% of volunteers progressed from being trained to being in a match. The data from the six charities is shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Proportion of volunteers who progress to mentoring: Numbers trained and matched from April 2017 to September 2018
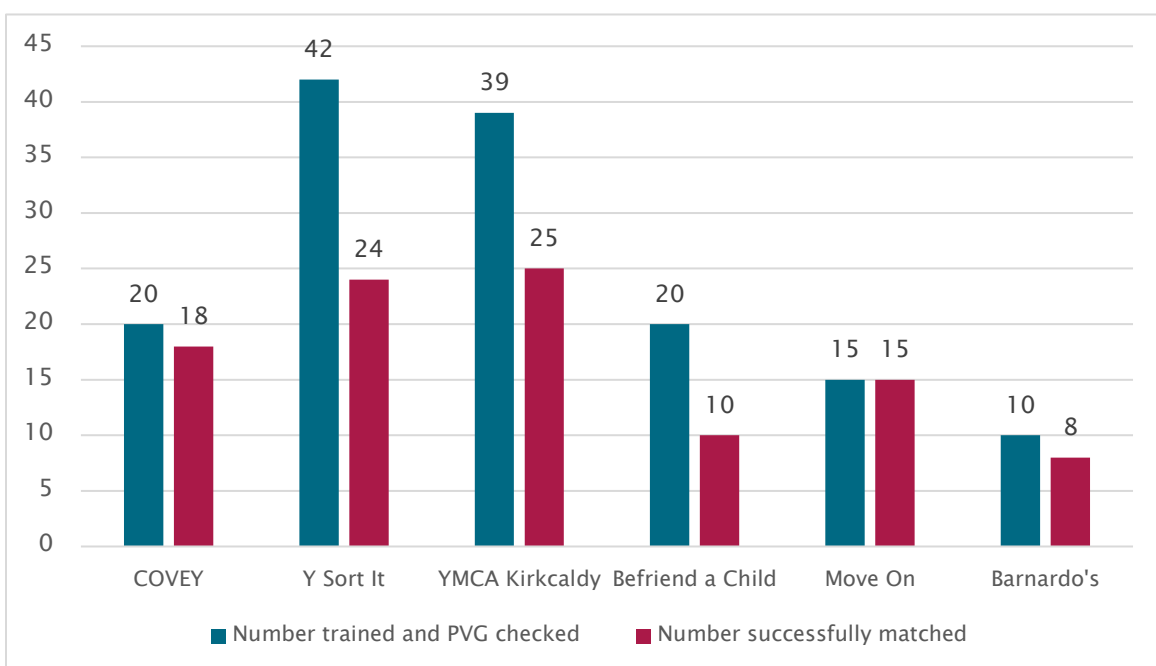
2.28   One challenge that projects encountered was in retaining volunteer mentors when the time lag between being trained and being matched was longer. This happened particularly in areas where referral routes were challenging. A number of projects addressed this challenge by maintaining regular contact with the mentors who had been trained and inviting them to take part in networking events. This proved successful in some cases, but in other cases there was some drop–off resulting from the delay.

Mentor retention

2.29   Mentor retention during matches has been good across the programme, with many mentors supporting the children and young people referred for extended periods of time. Again, this data was not systematically collected across all partner charities, but seven charities provided information that shows an average duration of 14 months. Figure 2.4 displays the data provided by the seven charities.

Figure 2.4: Average duration of mentoring relationships (in months)
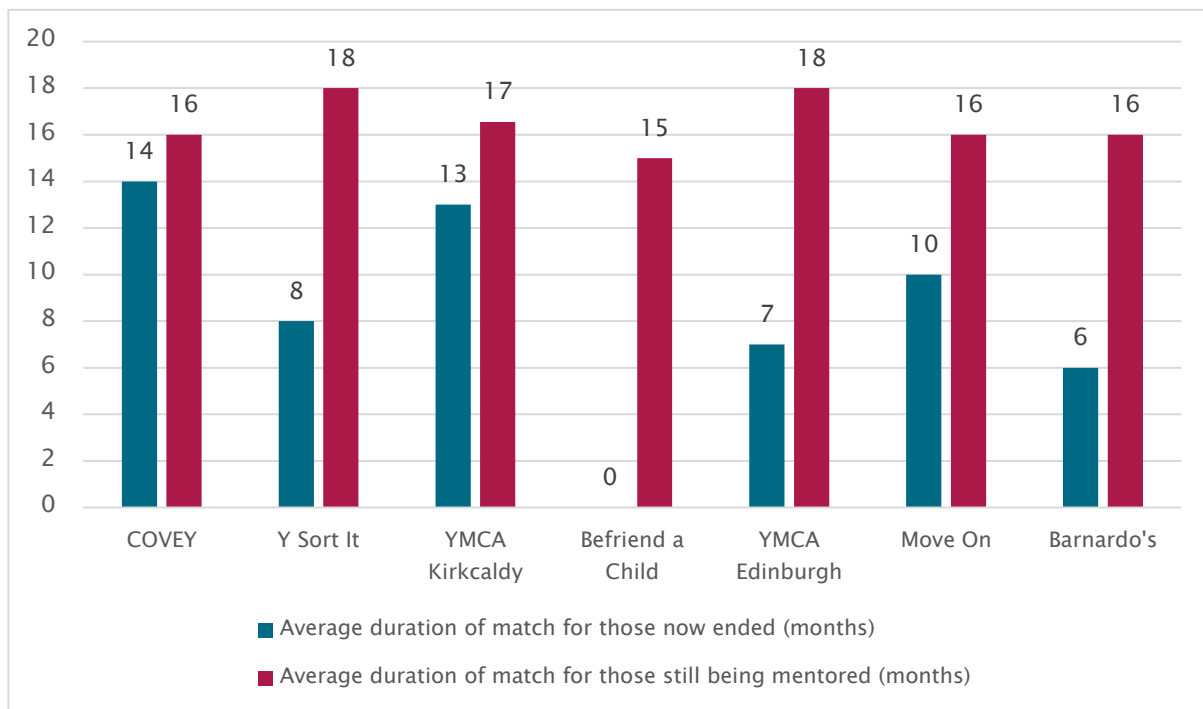
2.30   Figure 2.5 shows how the organisational average duration of a match compares with the overall derived average cross the seven organisations that provided this data.

Figure 2.5: Derived average duration of relationships (in months)
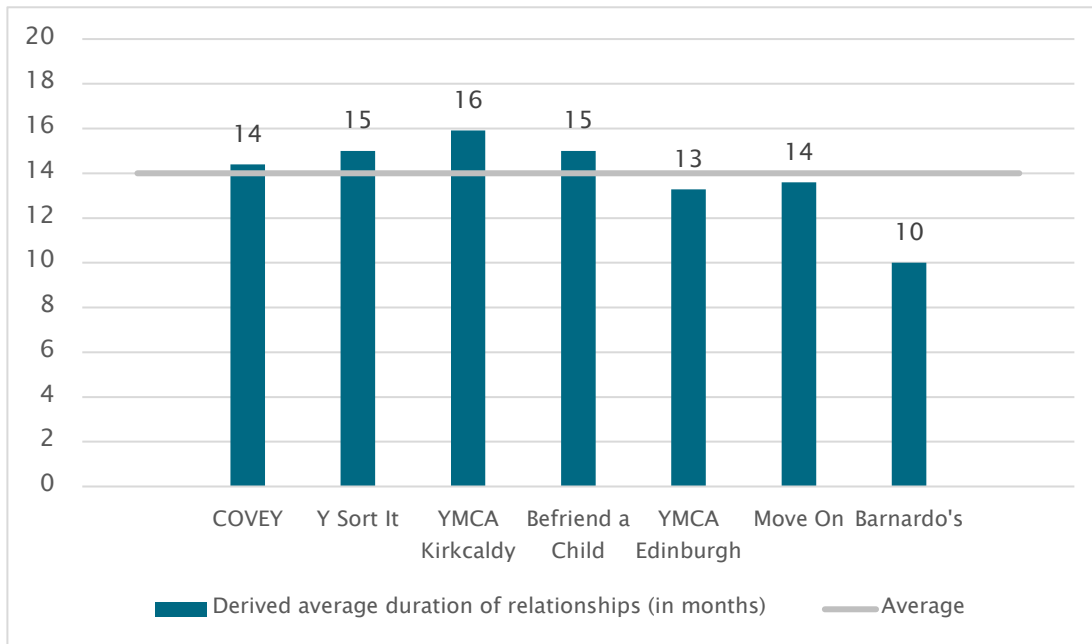
2.31　Length of match has been an important factor in the programme impacting positively on the children and young people involved. One service manager described the importance of the mentors in being "a consistent, reliable adult who was not paid by statutory services, and who didn't operate the relationship on the basis of consequences or sanctions."

2.32　The longevity of the relationships between the young people and their mentor was regularly described as key to the positive impact on the young people. Given the time it takes for these relationships to be properly established, it is unlikely that a short-term match would be likely to result in significant impact for the young person.

2.33　In most cases, the young people referred were matched with one mentor who supported them for the duration of the match. In a small number of cases, however, mentors had to step down from the role for a variety of reasons – including changes in their personal circumstances such as a house or job move, or in a small number of cases because they found the support role and the chaotic circumstances around the young person to be too challenging. Whenever a mentor had to step down, partner charities sought to replace them with another mentor as quickly as possible to ensure continuity for the young person (with the volunteer mentor co-ordinator sometimes stepping in to support the young person in the hiatus). In these instances, feedback indicates that the match usually continued successfully.

2.34　Some charities fed back that they found younger mentors to be less resilient (universities and colleges were a common route for recruitment of mentors) and this is an important point of learning for future recruitment, although mentor training, and subsequent mentor support, across the 13 charities was comprehensive and tried to prepare volunteers as much as they could for the challenges they may face.

Mentors' experience of volunteering

2.35   Mentors reported a very positive experience of volunteering with intandem from the initial training they received, to the matching process that paired them with their mentee, and the on-going support provided by their mentor co-ordinator as the match progressed. This section focuses on mentors' experience of volunteering, and we discuss the impact of it on volunteers in Chapter 3.

Mentors' experience of training

2.36   The partner charities had different approaches to the timing, number and intensity of training sessions and there were varying opinions among mentors about the different models used. For example, one mentor who had completed the training one night a week over a month felt this was a good approach because it was "easier to take it all in." Another, who had completed the training in a shorter timeframe, said that the training felt "a bit compressed at times", while others felt it was preferable to complete the training in a shorter space of time. Mentor preferences are clearly an important consideration in determining the timing and frequency of training sessions, and it is crucial that the partner charities continue to respond to feedback in order to tailor their approach to training as far as possible.

2.37   In terms of the impact of the training, mentors reported that it was effective in preparing them for their mentoring role. This view was unanimous among survey respondents and comments from mentors reflected the positive effect of the training:

> "The training was very detailed and covered a lot of relevant information."

> "The training was thorough and robust… stood me in good stead."

> "Very comprehensive."

> "I really enjoyed it. Every session I felt so inspired to continue with the process."

Figure 2.6: Effectiveness of training

100%
of mentors reported training was effective in preparing them for their role

2.38   A handful of mentors, however, had some negative comments about the training. A few reported that some elements of the training were "irrelevant", and one or two others felt

there was some repetition. This emphasises the importance for partner charities to regularly review the content of their training to ensure it continues to be relevant and focused.

Mentors' views of the matching process

2.39   Mentors were also, in general, very positive about the matching process. All but one respondent to our survey (40, 98%) agreed that they had been matched with a child or young person that they felt they could support, and all felt that they had formed a strong and positive relationship with their mentee. Comments from mentors include the following:

> "My co-ordinator took great care during the matching process to make sure that the match was correct."

> "The match is going well… we have lots in common."

> "The pairing process was amazing."

> "They look at your interests and the type of person you are and find someone suited to your personality."

Figure 2.7: Strong and positive relationships

100%
of mentor survey respondents felt they had formed a strong and positive relationship with their mentee

Support for mentors

2.40   Mentors receive various forms of support from their charity's mentor co-ordinator. Each partner offers support in accompanying the mentor on initial visit(s), regular support and supervision sessions, and email and phone contact as required.

2.41   Each partner charity also offers various additional forms of support for mentors. This includes regular peer support sessions (quarterly team meetings at one), often combined with on-going training opportunities on topics such as child protection, adverse childhood experiences and mental health, and at least two (YMCA Kirkcaldy and Volunteer Glasgow) have established social media groups for volunteers to share ideas and experiences.

2.42   Mentors were very positive about the support they had received. Many said that their co-ordinator is available for support whenever they need it: "I know they are there if I need them". Some praised their co-ordinator for achieving the right balance between offering support and allowing the mentors an appropriate level of autonomy to "get on with it".

2.43   The support provided has been successful in helping mentors to mentor more effectively. Forty survey respondents (98%) reported this, and comments from mentors reflected the positive nature of the support they had received:

> "My co-ordinator was always available to talk if I had any questions or worries."

> "The support I have received while mentoring has been outstanding."

> "Support is really really good."

Figure 2.8: Support from partner charities

98%
of mentors reported that support from partner charities helped them to mentor more effectively
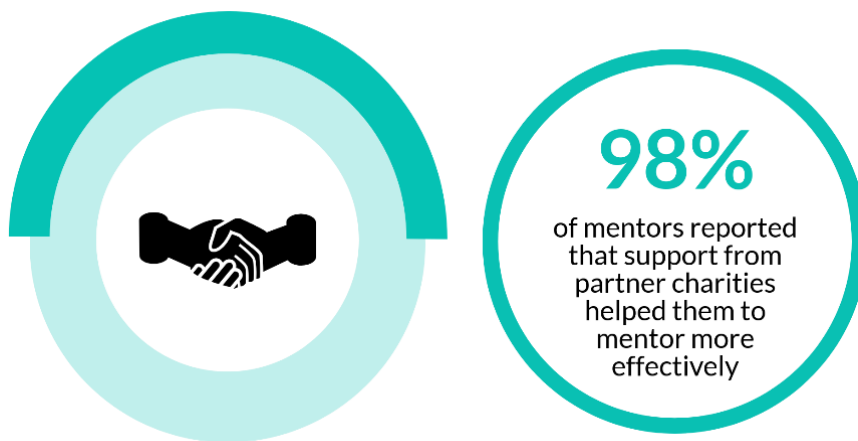
2.44   Very few mentors gave any negative feedback about the support they had received. One person did note that "mentors were given little support and too much was expected", but this was a minority view. Another, in a rural area, noted that there were not as many opportunities for supervision sessions as she would have liked, although she said the co-ordinator is always available by phone.

2.45   Some mentors offered suggestions for enhancing the support provided by partner charities. In particular, mentors emphasised the value of sharing ideas and experiences with other mentors and would like to have more opportunities to do this. Other ideas included:

- annual refresher training;

- more information on the background of mentees and their engagement with other agencies; and

- monthly updates from their mentor co-ordinator on the progress of the local project.

Challenges experienced by mentors

2.46 Some mentors said they had encountered challenges in their mentoring role. The most commonly reported difficulty was in identifying and respecting appropriate boundaries. One said that "the biggest challenge is not getting involved". For example, a mentor noticed that her mentee's trainers were worn and wanted to buy him a new pair but did not want to undermine the family and another wanted to buy the mentee something that he wanted for his birthday but felt this would be inappropriate. This mentor observed that it is "difficult to separate what we're trying to do from just looking after him".

2.47 Other challenges reported by mentors included:

- mental health issues experienced by mentees, such as anxiety, that sometimes prevent them from going out with their mentor;

- finding an appropriate balance between being the mentee's friend and in pushing them to achieve their goals;

- despondency at the lack of progress made by the mentee; and

- practical issues such as being unable to drive and having to combine mentoring with working full time.

2.48 It is important that partner charities continue to ensure that they provide support for mentors to address the challenges involved with mentoring.

Recruitment of children and young people[6]

2.49 Based on advice from the Scottish Mentoring Network, each charity was asked to commit to mentoring 20 children and young people at full capacity.

2.50 As we have already highlighted earlier in this chapter, there was a significant demand in most areas from children and young people. However, reaching capacity took significantly longer than any of the partner charities or Inspiring Scotland had anticipated. Most charities have only recently reached capacity or are on track to do so as Phase 1 draws to a close. This is due in large part to the many challenges that the partners faced in establishing reliable and regular referral routes.

2.51 "We didn't expect to struggle with referrals – that was a surprise. In other programmes that we run, the problem has been too few volunteers and too many children and young people being referred."

2.52 Data collected by the charities shows that the main reasons for referral were parental substance misuse and family mental health issues, as displayed in Figure 2.9.

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[6] Appendix 4 contains a profile of children and young people involved in the programme.

Figure 2.9: Reason for referral
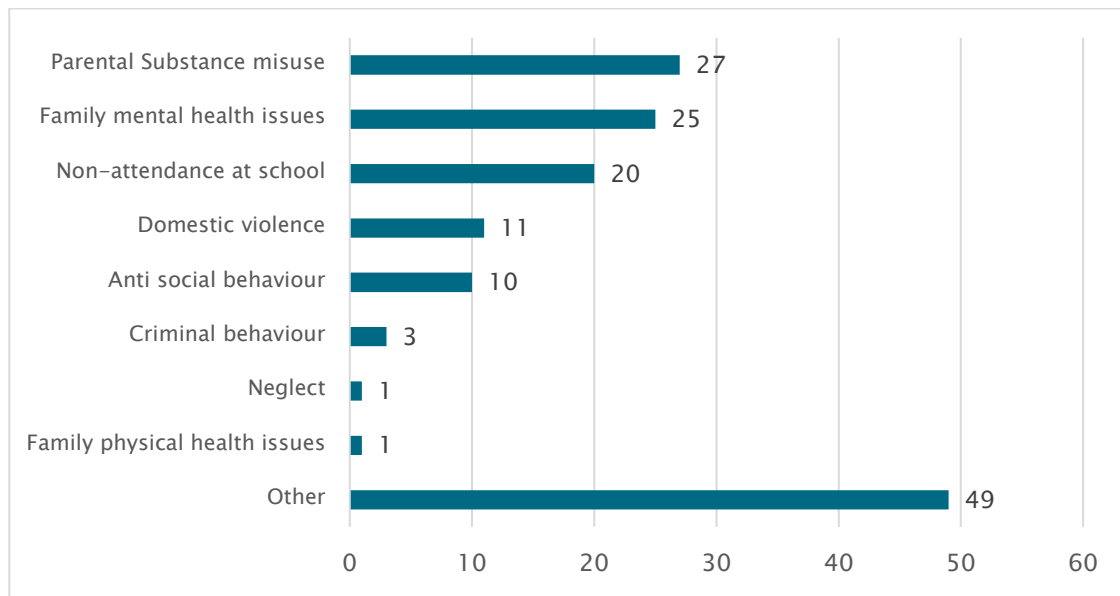
2.53 Data was not collected systematically on referral routes, but feedback indicates that the main source of referrals, across all the partner charities, was social work (92%). Figure 2.10, which gives a snapshot of referral routes from across six of the partner charities from the beginning of the programme, confirms social work as the key routes of referrals.

Figure 2.10: Referral sources
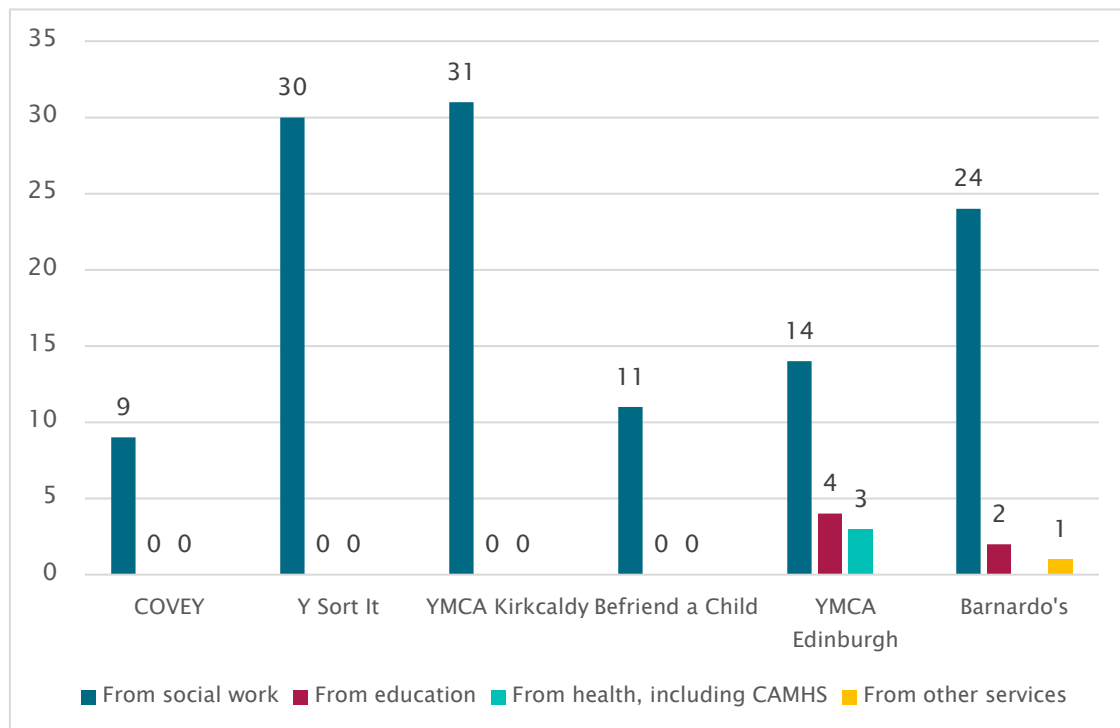
2.54 However, engagement with social work departments was frequently challenging. Volunteer Mentor Co-ordinators reported that it often took many meetings and points of contact on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that eligibility criteria were understood and social workers

referred. Even with this sort of committed input from volunteer mentor co-ordinators, referrals were not always forthcoming and many described a lack-of drive from more senior social work staff to make sure this happened.

2.55   Some organisations, such as YMCA Edinburgh, had well-established relationships with social work. Even in these situations, it took time for Volunteer Mentor Co-ordinators to work with members of the social work team to ensure that eligible children and young people were referred.

2.56   For example, in one area, the partner charity felt that social work staff were busy focusing on audits and other internal issues and there was a lack of focus on referring children and young people despite the need for the support. In another area, there appeared to be a lack of awareness among social workers of the outcomes that mentoring could achieve for children, young people and families, with some mistakenly perceiving the programme to be focused on befriending. The co-ordinator here suggested there could be scope for combined effort across intandem to raise awareness of the programme and its benefits among social workers: "there is a piece of work to be done across the programme on what outcomes mentoring offers – how that fits with SHANARRI and Children's Plans – we almost need to spoon-feed social work".

2.57   Other difficulties that charities reported in working with social work include difficulties in contacting social workers, challenges in establishing working relationships when social work staff change frequently, and, in one locality, social work policy is to keep children and young people on voluntary, rather than compulsory, supervision orders, thereby reducing the pool of children and young people eligible for referral.

2.58   However, pockets of good practice were identified – in Renfrewshire, for example, the corporate parenting approach being taken is very strong and there was a call to action from senior leadership in the council to staff to encourage them to refer to intandem and consider mentoring support more regularly as an option for vulnerable children and young people.

2.59   While a number of other routes, such as schools, were pursued, none of these resulted in significant numbers of (or any) referrals being made. For example, in Aberdeen, there is a virtual Head Teacher for looked after children and young people but despite approaches this has not developed as a referral route yet.

2.60   In areas where relationships were less well-established challenges in developing effective routes for referral were even more significant.

2.61   Social work clearly has a crucial role to play in the successful delivery of the intandem programme, but experiences of engaging social work in the programme on the ground were very mixed. Partner charities sometimes felt powerless to make progress and there is a strong sense that awareness of the programme needs to be raised nationally, and that senior managers in social work need to demonstrate more commitment to the programme and drive this commitment downwards to their social work staff who engage with children and young people looked after in the home. They felt that Inspiring Scotland had an important

advocacy role to play in helping this to improve – "Inspiring Scotland needs to be the vision and the voice."

Retention of children and young people on the programme

2.62   Some partners reported underestimating how difficult it would be to engage the children and young people due to their chaotic lifestyles. Others, however, with more experience of the target audience expected this to be a key challenge. Despite this, as Figures 2.3 and 2.4 presented earlier in this chapter shows, retention of children and young people once matched was in fact good, with the sample we received data for indicating that matches were lasting on average 15 months.

2.63   Some mentors found the chaotic nature of the children and young people's lifestyles, which resulted in changes to arrangements (often at short notice), challenging to deal with. A number of them also cited engagement with parents as a barrier to the success of their mentoring relationship with the child or young person.

2.64   As previously noted, volunteer mentor co-ordinators played a key role in supporting mentors to address these issues.

The matching process

2.65   Partners were largely positive about the matching process, with most noting that finding suitable matches once referrals were made was relatively easy.

2.66   A small number of the projects had requests from Social Work departments for male mentors for young boys that they referred, and this was sometimes not possible as many of the mentors coming forward were female. However, projects where this had occurred did not find that matching these boys with female mentors resulted in a more negative experience for them – they were positive about the relationships formed.

2.67   Partners emphasised that the key to successful matches was ensuring that time was taken to build rapport.

2.68   Occasionally, matches were not successful – for example – one young person asked for change because, although the mentor was nice, she "felt like I was with my mum's pal", and where this occurred volunteer mentor co-ordinators tried to find an alternative mentor for the young person, but the majority of matches were described as successful.

Nature of support

2.69   Across the projects, mentors engaged in a wide range of activities with the children and young people. These included spending time together chatting, going out to cafes and restaurants, parks, beaches and places of interest such as cinemas and museums, sporting pursuits including walking, cycling, rock climbing, pool, golf and horse riding, and other activities such as baking.

2.70   One service manager emphasised the importance of engaging the children and young people in activities which are sustainable in the longer term, for example trips to the park,

Scouts, or football, and avoiding activities like horse riding which would be prohibitively expensive for children and young people to continue themselves. This is an important consideration.

Goal setting

2.71   Goal setting is an important component of mentoring that distinguishes it from befriending. The definition of mentoring adopted by the Scottish Government's Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group is "a relationship-based approach to supporting an individual or group of individuals by another or others. It should include both goal-oriented and social aspects of mentoring, based on the intrinsic value of relationships and consent of the child or young person."[7]

2.72   Formal goal setting across the programme has been relatively limited to date, with most of the partner charities reporting that goal setting was not appropriate too early in the relationship with the child or young person and could result in them dropping out. Most, however, went on to confirm that as the relationship progressed, light-touch goals were often set with the child or young person, including goals related to things like undertaking more exercise, taking part in extra-curricular activities, attending school more, going to sleep earlier, using public transport independently, or using techniques to calm down when they are frustrated with their peers or teachers.

2.73   In addition, some of the partners emphasised that goal-setting does not work as well for the younger age group. "It's more activity-led than a mentoring service usually would be because of the type and age of young people."

Support from Inspiring Scotland

2.74   Feedback from partner charities was overwhelmingly positive in relation to the support that they have received from Inspiring Scotland during the programme. They distinguished the support from support they had previously had from other funders, noting that they particularly appreciated Inspiring Scotland staff's pragmatism and constructive support – "It has been an important relationship for us."

2.75   Some noted that Inspiring Scotland's experience of supporting a mentoring programme has grown as the programme developed (this was a new area for Inspiring Scotland), although a few partners remained concerned that Inspiring Scotland's focus on partner charities achieving targets suggested that they may not fully appreciate the extent of challenges facing the target group and therefore the amount of time it took to get projects to work at full capacity.

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[7]Elsley, S (2013), 'Developing a National Mentoring Scheme for Looked After Children and Young People', Scottish Government Looked After Children Strategic Implementation Group: https://www.celcis.org/files/2714/4050/9227/LACSIG_Mentoring_Report-2014-09-02.pdf

2.76   Most partners highly valued the portfolio days which were run for volunteer mentor co-ordinators and service managers. They welcomed the opportunity to meet with staff from other organisations and share lessons learned, in addition to benefiting from the information and advice provided by Inspiring Scotland at these events. One service manager noted that these days helped to give a real sense of being part of a national programme, something which she felt had been lacking in other national programmes her organisation had taken part in.

2.77   A few charities felt that the portfolio days were a little repetitive, and that some experienced staff probably found them too basic. One charity felt that they had limited value for experienced service managers.

2.78   Despite highly valuing the support they received from Inspiring Scotland, service managers and volunteer mentor co-ordinators across the funded projects fed back that they found Inspiring Scotland's monitoring too heavy-handed. Face-to-face monthly meetings were held between Inspiring Scotland and each partner charity to review progress and finances which many found onerous and too frequent. Most observed that not enough progress was made within a month to report on at these meetings. Almost all indicated that quarterly update meetings would suffice.

2.79   Inspiring Scotland has responded to this feedback throughout Phase 1, with a lighter touch approach taken with some charities. Portfolio days are now held every six months, with every second quarter including training for Volunteer Co-ordinators. In some cases, with the agreement of the partner charity, face-to-face meetings with Inspiring Scotland were held every six weeks instead of every month.

2.80   Inspiring Scotland reacted to situations to offer pro-bono support for partner charities across a range of different areas – including areas of their work which were not specific to the intandem project. For example, Inspiring Scotland offers support with governance, finance, leadership development and a range of other issues. Those organisations that had accessed this support were very positive about it and had highly valued it. They again noted that this was support which was not available from other funders.

Data gathering and self-evaluation (Viewpoint)

2.81   Data gathering requirements, and the programme database – Viewpoint – have been among the most contentious issues for the programme, and the area about which we received the most negative feedback during this evaluation.

2.82   Viewpoint was a bespoke database created for the programme, designed around a set of outcomes agreed between Inspiring Scotland and the partner charities. It was intended to be the main means of recording impact data, although many charities, as a result of their organisational policies, continued to use their own internal databases in parallel. There was a raft of teething problems with the software, which caused frustrations, and feedback indicated that even when fully operational Viewpoint was clunky to use, and did not enable partner charities to report for themselves on their progress towards the core outcomes,

although Inspiring Scotland programme managers were able to draw down reports for each charity based on the data provided. Most charities now report using Viewpoint regularly with few problems.

2.83 In addition, the data input sometimes did not always give a full or clear picture of the impact – for example, a reduced number of people appearing in the relationship circle can be an indication of negative peer groups being dropped, it is not necessarily a reflection of a negative reduction in social engagement.

2.84 While a few charities trialled using mentors to collect monitoring data from the children and young people, most quickly realised that this was too big a demand to place on volunteers and led to inconsistencies in the data that was collected. Volunteer Mentor Co-ordinators were usually responsible for the data collection which improved consistency and relieved the burden on the volunteers but transferred the burden of inputting and managing the data to the co-ordinator. This proved to be onerous.

2.85 However, the data being collected was vital to understanding the impact of Phase 1 on the children and young people involved and it is essential that this continues to be collected in some form in future.

2.86 All partner charities report management information relating to the implementation of the programme to Inspiring Scotland using a standard template. The data reported includes the number of mentors recruited and trained, the number of mentees referred and matched, information about ineligible referrals received, and a breakdown of the gender, age and employment profile of mentors. However, there is some data that has not been routinely collected and/or reported and the lack of this data has been a gap in assessing progress and fully understanding the model. Key gaps include data related to duration of matches, the number of hours volunteers spend mentoring, referral routes, and the proportion of volunteers who progress from training to active mentoring.

2.87 A sample of data was collected from seven partner charities which has given us some sense of implementation but in order to fully understand the programme mechanisms, it is important that this information is more systematically collected in future. This information would also provide service managers with a clearer understanding of the demands of overseeing the programme

Sustainability

2.88 The Scottish Government's funding for Inspiring Scotland to deliver intandem will continue until March 2020. Inspiring Scotland and the partner charities are in the process of developing plans for continuing the service beyond this point and Inspiring Scotland has been in discussion with several funders to gauge their interest in supporting the development of intandem. Some partner charities have also engaged directly with local authorities to secure funding to expand mentoring of this group of children and young people and to expand mentoring into a wider range of care-experienced children and young people.

2.89 Inspiring Scotland has also been in discussion with partner charities about potential routes for expanding intandem, including:

- increasing the mentoring they offer in their existing geographic area(s);

- expanding to a wider geographical area;

- providing similar services for other client groups, such as children and young people in kinship care; and/or

- partnering and signposting to support for intandem families, such as one-to-one and group support for parents.

Chapter summary

2.90 We have discussed various aspects of intandem's delivery model in this chapter. The programme is delivered by 13 partner charities across 20 local authority areas, and each partner has adapted some elements of the delivery model, such as the training offered to mentors, to suit local needs.

2.91 The programme has benefitted from each partner appointing a volunteer co-ordinator and, overall, charities have recruited sufficient numbers of mentors to match with the children and young people being referred. Mentors reported a positive experience of volunteering with intandem, with effective training and support provided by partner charities. Retention of mentors has been reasonably good, with many mentors supporting children and young people for extended periods of time.

2.92 Although there was significant demand in most areas for children and young people to take part in the programme, most charities have only recently reached capacity or are nearing it, due largely to challenges in establishing reliable and regular referral routes.

2.93 Partners were very positive about the support provided by Inspiring Scotland, but there have been some challenges related to self-evaluation processes, with a few gaps in the management information collected and concerns among some partners that the data collected does not fully capture the impact of the programme on the children and young people involved.

2.94 We explore the impact of intandem on children, young people, families, mentors and partner charities in the next chapter.

3.   Delivery against outcomes

Introduction

3.1   In this chapter, we explore the outcomes achieved by intandem for children, young people, parents and families, mentors and partner charities. This is based on data collected on behalf of intandem by the partner charities, and on the feedback we have collected from volunteer mentor co-ordinators, children, young people, parents, mentors and partner charities through our evaluation.

Impact on children and young people

3.2   While it is difficult to definitively attribute any outcomes to intandem in isolation from other support available to and influences on these children and young people, we show in this section that the programme has made significant progress towards its intended outcomes in relation to building confidence and self-esteem, improving social relationships, addressing social isolation, and improving engagement with the local community and with school. We also give an overview of the impact of the programme on children and young people's well-being and skills.

3.3   The children and young people being supported by intandem are among society's most vulnerable and were described by many we consulted, and are recognised in research, as the group of children and young people with the worst outcomes in society currently. It is important that the extent of progress made with them is considered in this context.

Increased confidence and self-esteem

3.4   intandem has supported many children and young people to improve their confidence and self-esteem. Data collected by the partner charities and presented in Figure 3.1 shows that 53 of the 100 children and young people who completed a baseline and follow up survey demonstrated improved confidence, and 62 said they felt better about themselves after being involved in intandem. Considering the profile of the target group and the challenges they face, these are positive findings. Indeed, given the nature of the client group, for some, simply remaining stable and avoiding any deterioration could be considered a positive impact: 10% reported their confidence stayed the same and the corresponding figure for self-esteem was 8%.

Figure 3.1: Impact on confidence and self-esteem

53% of mentees reported improved **confidence**

62% of mentees reported improved **self-esteem**

3.5   Confidence was a recurring theme in our interviews with children, young people, parents, mentors and project co-ordinators. For example, one mentee said that intandem has "helped me to be more confident" and another said it "boosts my confidence". Many parents observed that their child had gained confidence and a project co-ordinator said there had been improvements "more or less across the board". Mentors also noticed improvements in mentees' confidence, with 83% of survey respondents (34) reporting at least some positive change in their mentee's confidence.

3.6   This improvement in confidence and self-esteem is demonstrated in many ways, including increased willingness to socialise and try new things, leading to improved social relationships, reduced social isolation and improved engagement in the local community. We discuss these outcomes further below.

Reduced social isolation and improved social relationships

3.7   Many mentees told us that intandem has helped them to feel more confident in interacting with other people. This has been achieved through talking to their mentor, which has made mentees more confident in their ability to talk to people in general, and as a result of the encouragement that mentors provide to mentees. For example, a young person said that previously he felt anxious about social situations, but his confidence has increased to the extent that he is going on a school trip to Skye later this year, something he would not have considered before. Similarly, project co-ordinators gave several examples of children and young people who became more open and talkative as a result of mentoring, and a parent observed that her daughter had "found confidence… she opened up a lot more. Before she was quiet and within herself".

3.8   Feeling more confident in interacting with other people has in turn helped children and young people to make new friends. Data collected by the partner organisations shows that 64% of children and young people (57) have increased the number of people they would count as friends (Figure 3.2), and some mentees who we interviewed reported making new friends as a result of intandem's support. For example, one said the programme "has helped me make friends… before I thought 'everyone's my enemy', now I think 'everyone's my friend'. It's given me a new life". A mentor observed that their mentee has "more confidence to meet new friends at school" and another said the young person "seems to talk about having more friends".

Figure 3.2: Impact on social relationships


64%
of mentees reported having more friends
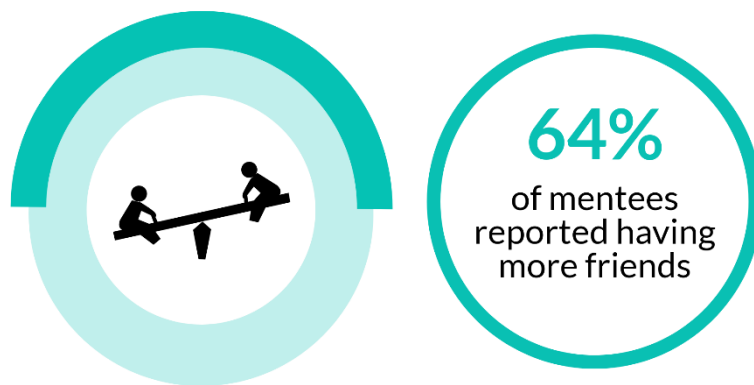
3.9   There are also examples of mentees who have improved existing relationships with their friends as a result of their mentor's advice and support. For example, a young person said her mentor has helped her to feel less angry, which means she gets on better with her friends now. One mentor reported that their mentee is now "more thoughtful about other people… less about being the biggest personality in the room" and this has helped him to improve his relationships with his peers. Similarly, a mentee reported that his mentor advised him to spend less time with 'online friends' and focus more on friends in the real world, and he is now more likely to go to a friend's house rather than playing on his x–box.

3.10   Developing new friendships and strengthening existing relationships means that many mentees now take part in more social activities with their friends, and consequently have become less socially isolated. For example, a parent said that her daughter goes out more with her friends thanks to her mentors' encouragement and is now "less reclusive". Mentors also gave examples of children and young people who go out more with their friends than before, and many children and young people told us they feel more confident and motivated to socialise with their peers.

Increased engagement with the local community

3.11   Children and young people's increased confidence to go out and socialise, as described above, has also helped them to become more involved in the local community. Data from partner charities shows that 64% of mentees (62) reported increased use of community facilities including sports and leisure facilities, cinemas, restaurants, shops, after school activities, community centres and youth clubs (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: Impact on community engagement

64%
of mentees reported improved engagement in the community
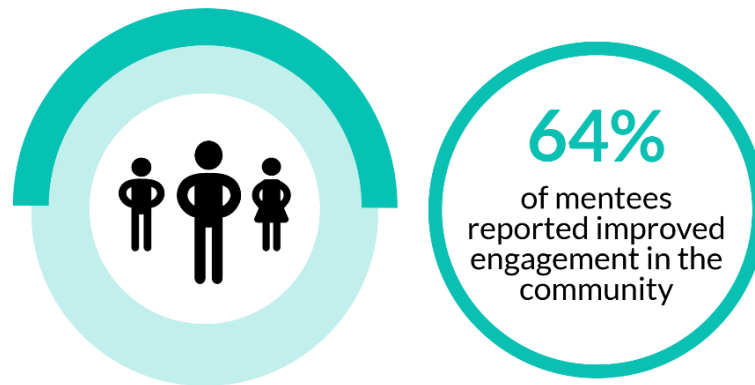
3.12   Similarly, several children and young people told us that, as a result of taking part in activities with their mentor, they are now more willing to try new things and they have started various community activities as a result. Most of these examples relate to children and young people joining clubs including rugby, football, cycling, horse riding and boxing, and one mentor observed that their mentee was initially reluctant to try new things but has now joined a local gym.

Improved engagement with school

3.13   Although there is no data available from schools, we identified anecdotal examples through our evaluation of children and young people improving their engagement with school as a result of their mentoring support.

3.14   Some children and young people reported that their mentor had helped them to improve their attendance at school, and 27% of mentors who responded to our survey (11) said their mentee went to school more often. For example, one young person acknowledged that her parents provided little encouragement to go to school but intandem persuaded her to go and her attendance has improved from 40% to 95% as a result. Another young person said her attendance was erratic because her response to frequent arguments with her peers at school was often to leave the building. Her mentor helped her to deal with those situations more positively and, consequently, her attendance at school is now better.

3.15   We were also told about some children and young people who had previously not been attending school but who have returned to school with their mentor's help. One mentee, for example, dropped out of school when he was 12 and now, aged 15 and as a result of his mentor's help in improving his confidence to interact with his peers, is attending school once a week. Another young person returned to school after her mentor had helped her to find the confidence to go back by talking to her about how she would explain her absence to her friends.

3.16   For other children and people, their mentor has helped them to improve their behaviour and performance at school. One young person, for example, said that intandem has "helped me to do better at school" and he now works harder, behaves better and gets on better with his teachers. A second young person said that he behaves better at school since his mentor "told me to get my head down". Parents also observed improvements. For example, one noted that they had had no contact from the school about their child's behaviour since mentoring started so it "must be doing some good". Another said that her son had experienced some difficulties in the transition from primary to secondary school but these "have smoothed down" and the mentor has been "a very very big part of that". Seventy–eight per cent of mentors who replied to our survey (32) agreed that there had been a positive change in their mentee's behaviour, and 34% (14) reported improvements in performance at school.

Wellbeing

3.17   Feedback from evaluation participants also indicates that the programme has had a positive impact on children and young people's wellbeing. Fifty–four per cent of mentor survey respondents (22) observed improved wellbeing. Some children and young people spoke about improvements in anxiety and anger management, and others noted the benefits of increased social interactions and community activity, for example: "I don't feel as lazy anymore… don't lie about bed in my jammies so much". A parent noted that her daughter "seems happier" and not so sulky because she is getting out the house more and has someone to talk to, and a mentor said "this wee girl seems a different girl who first got in the car. She just looks brighter. She's waiting at the front door rather than dragging her out of bed". A project co–ordinator gave an example of one boy who "went from playing on his games console in his room all day every day, to getting up at 9am on a Saturday and climbing Munroes".

New skills

3.18   Some children and young people reported developing new skills as a result of working with their mentor. For example, one young person has improved their reading, writing and ability to tell the time thanks to support from their mentor. Another said they developed new life skills, such as enhanced ability to order food in restaurants, through the mentoring, while others identified improvements in communication skills and in dealing with confrontation. Sixty–one per cent of respondents to the survey of mentors (25) reported that their mentee had improved skills.

A trusted adult

3.19 Interviewees commented that mentors provide a crucial source of trusted advice and support, independent of the mentee's family and statutory services.

3.20 Mentees described the importance of having an adult independent of their family and statutory services who they can talk to about issues, such as friendship or relationship problems, which they might feel reluctant to talk about with a social worker, teacher or parent. One young person said "it boosts my confidence by having someone to talk to". Another valued the opportunity to "talk about things that are annoying me". This is important because he feels he cannot talk to school staff as he thinks they would inform social work and "twist what I say".

Impact on parents and families

3.21 intandem also aims to support parents and families, and below we explore the programme's outcomes in relation to families reporting fewer conflicts, improved conflict resolution, improved safety for the child/young person, and increased access to services.

Fewer conflicts

3.22 Evidence from our evaluation demonstrates that support from mentors can help to reduce the frequency of conflicts between children and young people and their parents, siblings and the wider family. Thirty-seven per cent of mentors (15) who responded to our survey reported that their mentee's family relationships had improved. Many children, young people and parents told us that, by providing someone to talk to, by helping children and young people to engage with activities that help to "blow off steam", and by providing a trusted source of advice on how to talk to their parents about sensitive issues, there are fewer instances of conflict. In one case, for example, a mentee's dad had been convicted of assaulting him, but intandem helped their relationship to "dramatically improve", according to the mentor co-ordinator. The young person gained confidence and learned about how to communicate more effectively with his parents, so when he told his dad he wanted his mentor, not him, to teach him to ride a bike, this did not lead to a conflict.

3.23 This has led to improved relationships among family members, and many children, young people and parents told us that everyone gets on better thanks, at least in part, to the mentor's support.

Improved conflict resolution

3.24 intandem has also helped families to manage conflict more effectively when it arises. This includes mentors giving advice to mentees about how to deal with confrontation. For example, one young person reported that their mentor advised her on how to deal more positively with situations when her dad shouts at her. Another mentee said that his sister "winds him up" but his mentor gave him tips on keeping calm. There are also a few examples of where the mentor has worked with both the mentee and a parent on dealing with conflict. For instance, a parent reported that she and her daughter had "learned how to talk to each

other about things" with the mentor's help, and this had helped to both reduce the instances of conflict between them and to resolve any conflicts more quickly.

Support for parents

3.25   Feedback from some parents indicate that they value the support that mentoring provides them with as a parent and for their family more widely.

3.26   For example, some parents said that the mentor helps to support their child in ways that they are unable to, for various reasons. An example of this is one parent who said that "it's the one–to–one that makes a difference", and explained that they have four children, so find it difficult to spend time alone with the mentee. Another parent noted that they have a foot injury so cannot take part in energetic activities with their son, who has ADHD. She commented that when her son comes back from a session with his mentor, "he's burned off energy".

3.27   In some cases, the mentor and parent work together to support the child or young person. For instance, a parent told us that she asks for the mentor's support when her son misbehaves. In these cases, the mentor discusses the mentee's behaviour with him and encourages him to improve it. The parent noted that "he listens to her, he doesn't listen to us". Similarly, another parent said that the mentor will tell them if the mentee "is more pumped up or anxious" than normal so the parents can respond accordingly.

3.28   We also identified examples of intandem helping parents to liaise with other professionals. For example, some volunteer co–ordinators spoke about attending children's hearings, conferences and other multi–agency meetings with parents. In one case, the co–ordinator noted that "the mum says we were the only people speaking up for her" and she felt the child would have been removed from the family home without intandem's support. Another parent reported that the mentor gives them more advice on liaising with social workers, which the parent described as "very beneficial" and she knows that she can phone the mentor at any time.

3.29   Some parents spoke about the value of intandem in giving them a break from their parenting duties. One parent said that this gave him time to care for his elderly mother and allowed him some time for relaxation, as well as it being important for his daughters to spend time with another adult: "good for them and me". Another commented that intandem "gives me a wee break" and this helps her to rest, which is particularly important because she has health conditions.

Impact on volunteer mentors

3.30   Below we discuss the impact of taking part in the programme on mentors. This is organised under headings that reflect intandem's outcomes for mentors: recruitment from corporate parent organisations; increased engagement with the community; and improved social relationships. We also discuss two other outcomes for mentors that we have identified

through our evaluation – skills development; and the sense of achievement that it gives mentors.

Increased engagement with the community

3.31   Being a mentor has had a positive impact on some volunteers' involvement in the community. Forty–four per cent of mentors who responded to our survey (18) reported that being a mentor helped them to feel more involved in the community.

3.32   However, in most cases, mentors who took part in our evaluation were already engaged with their community, meaning that the programme has not had a particularly significant effect in this regard.

Improved social relationships

3.33   Mentors spoke positively about the relationship that they built with their mentee and the enjoyment they received from getting to know the child or young person. However, none reported a lack of social relationships being an area of concern for them. This suggests that this outcome is perhaps not best suited to the types of mentors who are attracted to mentoring this target group. While many of them derive pleasure and satisfaction from supporting the children and young people, increasing their social relationships does not seem to have been either a motivation for taking part or a particular need.

Skills development

3.34   Mentors reported that intandem has helped them to gain new skills (Figure 3.4). These include communication techniques, skills in working with children and young people, and the ability to deal with difficult situations. For example, one mentor said that "mentoring has really opened up my understanding of communicating with children and young people and supporting them through already difficult stages in their lives".

Figure 3.4: Impact on mentors' skills

71%
of mentors reported gaining new skills
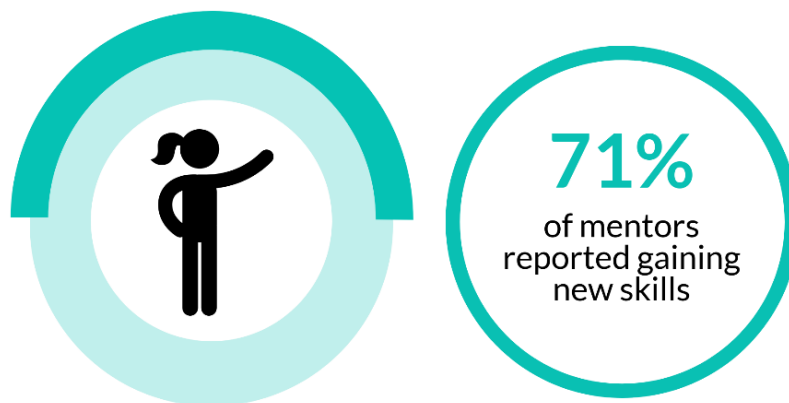
3.35 For some, the mentoring experience has had a significant effect on their career plans. An example of this is one mentor who said that she had been considering becoming a teacher, and volunteering with intandem helped to confirm that she wanted to take this path. She has recently started teacher training and described intandem as "one of the main reasons that pushed me to do it". Two other interviewees said that the experience had helped them to find new jobs working with children and young people: "mentoring has been amazing and has helped me get the job I am in now". Another two reported that they were now considering a career in the sector.

Sense of achievement

3.36 Mentors spoke positively about the sense of achievement that intandem provides through helping a child or young person (Figure 3.5). One said the experience had been "really worthwhile… it's a joy to see (the mentee) engaging and gaining in confidence" while another had similar feelings, commenting that it had been "very rewarding to see our relationship develop and the see (the mentee) develop".

Figure 3.5: Mentors' sense of achievement

61%
of mentors reported a sense of achievement

Impact on partner charities

3.37 The partner charities involved in delivering intandem are well-established organisations experienced in supporting children, young people and their families, but nevertheless charities reported some valuable learning from taking part in the programme.

3.38 Some partner charities have used the learning gained from intandem to enhance the services they offer to children, young people and families. One, for example, has recruited family support workers to support parents of mentees, and another has secured funding from a local authority to provide mentoring for children and young people in other forms of care.

3.39 The experience has also provided learning points in relation to project planning. For example, one charity commented that their experience of intandem has improved their organisation's ability to set attainable and sustainable targets, including the use of

incremental targets and acknowledgement that full capacity might not be achieved in the early stages of a project, and this is helping with applications for other sources of funding.

3.40   Charities also commented positively about the impact of intandem in increasing their capacity to support a vulnerable group of children, young people and families, who they may not otherwise have been able to.

Chapter summary

3.41   There is clear evidence that intandem has had a positive impact on mentees, families and mentors. Many mentees grew in confidence as a result of mentoring, and have made new friends, become involved in new activities and are less socially isolated as a result. There are also several examples where the programme has led to improvements in children and young people's attendance and/or behaviour at school.

3.42   For families, the programme helps to improve relationships between parents, mentees and siblings, with reduced conflicts and improved conflict management. The programme provides an important source of support for parents with their child.

3.43   Mentors reported that the main impact of the experience for them is enhanced skills and experience in working with children and young people, and for some this has made them reconsider their career plans. Mentors also spoke positively about the sense of achievement that mentoring a child or young person provides.

3.44   Partner charities have used the learning gained from intandem to introduce or refresh support services for families of children and young people looked after at home, and one or two have expanded to provide mentoring for other groups of children and young people.

3.45   The conclusions and recommendations from our evaluation are set out in the next chapter.

4.   Conclusions and recommendations

4.1   The intandem programme is providing important mentoring support to a group of children and young people who are among the most disadvantaged in society and who to date have had limited access to services of this type. Phase 1 has demonstrated the impact that such a service can have and is considered by those involved in delivery to be a vital support mechanism that would leave a real gap if it did not continue.

4.2   It has taken significant time for Phase 1 to bed in and reach capacity. This is unsurprising given the complex needs of the target group, but all of those involved were surprised that referral routes in particular were so challenging to establish in many areas, which had a knock-on effect on how quickly children and young people could be matched with mentors.

4.3   Referral routes worked most effectively where the partner charities had pre-existing strong relationships with social work and buy-in from senior social work managers is essential to the programme working on the ground.

4.4   The retention of mentors has been reasonably good, with significant numbers of volunteers initially recruited going on to complete intandem training and then progressing to a formal match with a child or young person. Where there has been significant drop out of volunteers, it is commonly where there has been a delay between being trained and being matched with a child or young person, and this was particularly true in the areas where establishing referral routes was a challenge.

4.5   The duration of matches has also been good, with many mentors supporting the children and young people referred for extended periods of time. This is an important factor in the programme achieving a positive impact on children and young people.

4.6   Managing the matches and providing support to the mentors and the children and young people has been time-intensive for the volunteer mentor co-ordinators and again the amount of time this would require was underestimated at the outset.

4.7   Monitoring and collection of monitoring data has also been more labour-intensive than a lot of the partner charities anticipated, compounded in the early stages by teething problems with the Viewpoint data that was used to record outcomes data. There are also concerns that Viewpoint is cumbersome and does not fully capture the impact of the programme on children and young people. Using the system has led to duplication of effort for some charities that have their own in-house self-evaluation systems, where data must be inputted in both databases.

4.8   Partner charities reported that the support from Inspiring Scotland has been excellent and is highly valued. However, some felt that meetings have been too frequent, and perhaps portfolio days for managers could be optional based on the content to be discussed.

4.9   While some charities felt that Inspiring Scotland's expectations were perhaps too demanding given the reality of supporting this very vulnerable target group, feedback from parents, the children and young people being mentored and mentors has been overwhelmingly positive and there has been a tangible impact on those involved. There is evidence that intandem has helped children and young people to become less socially isolated, with improved confidence, self-esteem, social relationships and community engagement. The programme has also had a positive impact on families, with improved relationships between participants, parents and siblings, and mentors reported improved skills and a sense of achievement. The programme has also resulted in valuable learning for partner charities and this has helped them to enhance the support they offer to families.

4.10   There are a number of key enablers which have been essential to the success of the projects funded. In particular, these are: volunteer mentor co-ordinators who are skilled, adaptable and flexible in their approach; effective referral routes from social work in particular; and mentors with the skills and resilience to support this vulnerable and often chaotic target group. The programme has also benefitted from the training and on-going support that partner charities provided to mentors, which has helped them to fulfil their role effectively.

4.11   However, there have also been a number of barriers which have impacted on effective implementation, including: poor commitment and lack of referral from social work departments (and other potential referral routes); large geographical areas requiring more resource/capacity to service than was available; and parents whose lack of engagement impacted on the child or young person's ability to be supported by the mentor.

4.12   The programme is just reaching capacity. Those involved have identified a clear ongoing need for support for this group of children and young people, and the evidence gathered has shown that the model has achieved significant positive outcomes for children, young people and families. Phase 1 is coming to an end and Scottish Government funding has been extended until March 2020, but the programme has significant potential to be rolled out: "it still feels like the start of the overall journey – there is so much potential for it to grow."

4.13   Inspiring Scotland and the partner charities are exploring future funding and delivery models for intandem. There are various opportunities being considered in discussion with the Scottish Government, including:

- making intandem available to a larger number of children and young people who are looked after at home;

- providing similar services for other client groups, such as children and young people in kinship care;

- extending intandem to new geographical areas; and

- partnering and signposting to support for intandem families, such as one-to-one and group support for parents.

4.14 However, any extension or expansion would need additional staff capacity, and further support at national level to address some of the key challenges outlined in this report.

Recommendations

4.15 Based on the findings of our evaluation, we make the following recommendations in relation to future development and expansion of the programme:

4.16 **Recommendation 1**: We recommend that Inspiring Scotland continues to work nationally to raise awareness of the programme and encourage greater strengthening of referral routes from social work, education and other appropriate sectors. This may include, for example, developing stronger links between the programme and organisations such as COSLA.

4.17 **Recommendation 2**: In order to address gaps identified in the management information data collected by partner charities, including systematic collection of data such as the duration of matches and the number of volunteers who progress from completing the training to being matched with a child or young person, we recommend that Inspiring Scotland and partner charities review the management information collected and reported so that all the relevant data required to fully understand the mechanisms of the programme and the resources required to deliver it is collected.

4.18 **Recommendation 3**: Continue to review the usefulness and usability of Viewpoint to ensure that it continues to support outcomes data collection in the best way possible.

4.19 **Recommendation 4**: Our findings show that intandem has had a positive impact on some mentees' engagement with school. However, there is currently no data being provided by schools to verify this. As the programme develops further, greater engagement and data sharing with schools in relation to the impact on children and young people and referral would be beneficial.

4.20 **Recommendation 5**: Consider reducing the review meetings between partner charities and Inspiring Scotland to quarterly.

4.21 **Recommendation 6**: Consider expansion of the programme to other geographical areas where there is a clear demand demonstrated. This could be done through the existing 13 partner charities involved in Phase 1 but experience from this phase indicates that this might not provide sufficient experience or capacity and other organisations may need to be involved.

4.22 **Recommendation 7**: Consider extending the target group to include children and young people in kinship care.

4.23 **Recommendation 8**: Consider offering mentoring support to parents of those children and young people being mentored, and/or signposting families to further support such as one-to-one and group support for parents.

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF COMPARATIVE APPROACHES

The intandem programme is uniquely placed as Scotland's first national mentoring programme for children and young people who are looked after at home.

In Spring 2018, as part of our evaluation of intandem, we conducted a short desk–based review exploring comparative approaches to mentoring looked after children and young people in Scotland and the wider UK. Although we identified a small number of broadly comparable programmes which provide valuable points of reference and comparison, in general, there is a lack of similar programmes that support this group of children and young people. It is also clear that there are challenges in attributing any positive outcomes achieved to these programmes in isolation from other services and interventions.

Mentoring looked after children and young people in Scotland

Within Scotland there are several different types of mentoring programmes currently being offered to looked after children and young people, which we describe below.

The MCR Pathways programme, which is delivered through a partnership between Glasgow City Council and the MCR Foundation, provides school–based mentoring to care experienced children and young people. The programme works with over 600 children and young people aged 12 to 18 in 15 Glasgow secondary schools.

Unlike intandem, MCR Pathways is specifically focussed on educational outcomes, including re-engagement with education and progression into positive destinations from school. The programme has been largely successful in meeting its outcomes with 81% of MCR participants moving into employment, university or college in 2014, compared to 49% of care experienced children and young people in Glasgow.[8]

The delivery model for the programme is similar to intandem in some ways, particularly in its use of MCR Pathways Co-ordinators who are embedded into staff teams at each secondary school to oversee the programme in that location.

MCR Pathways is delivered over an extended period with mentees meeting with their mentors in school on a weekly basis for a minimum of one academic year. During this time mentors focus on helping mentees to build relationships, confidence and self–esteem. There is also a strong emphasis on attainment in S5 and S6 to compensate for knowledge and skills gaps caused by the personal circumstances of mentees.

The MCR Pathways model has also been introduced in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Edinburgh, North Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire.

In Dundee, the MCR model has inspired the BREAKTHROUGH programme, which provides targeted one–to–one and group mentoring of care experienced and vulnerable children and young people in Dundee secondary schools. To date, the programme has launched in six schools

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[8] MCR Pathways, Impact Report 2017, 2017, p1.

and aims to be available in the other two secondary schools in Dundee by the end of 2019. As with the MCR Pathways programme, each school involved in the programme appoints a co-ordinator to provide support to mentors and mentees.

Mentees in S1 and S2 participate in group mentoring sessions to increase their confidence and to develop interest in art, science and sport. One-to-one mentoring begins in S3 and mentees are paired with adult mentors from the wider community for a minimum of one year. Mentees also participate in sessions on work, college and university.

Inspiring Scotland and MCR are in discussions to explore opportunities for referrals between the two services.

Forth Valley College offers a similar programme called Time 4 Me, which has received funding from Robertson Trust to provide mentoring support to care experienced children and young people who are struggling to transition from secondary school into college. The programme recruits college staff as volunteer mentors to work with S4–S6 pupils who are identified as least likely to enter a positive destination after finishing school. The programme was initially focused on ten secondary schools in Stirling and Clackmannanshire, with the aim to extend the programme to eight secondary schools in Falkirk.

There are also examples of peer mentoring projects being delivered by third sector organisations in Scotland. For example, Life Changes Trust provided £500,000 of funding to Barnardo's Scotland, Y Sort It, Rock Trust, Move on, Ypeople and Up-2-Us for peer mentoring programmes targeted at care experienced children and young people between 2015 and 2017.

Mentoring looked after children and young people in England

Unlike Scotland, England has set up a statutory role for 'Independent Visitors' through the Children's Act 1989, which allows children and young people in care access to a volunteer who visits and forms a relationship with them. However, research has found that there is very low awareness of this legislative provision and only 3.2% (2,200) of the looked after children and young people population in England is matched with an Independent Visitor.[9] Similarly, only 12 out of 56 local authorities reported offering mentoring services to looked after children and young people.[10]

A number of external providers deliver the independent visitors programme in England including National Youth Advocacy Service, Action for Children and the Children's Society, although internal local authority-provided services account for more than any single external provider.[11] Despite the low awareness of the provision, almost half of matches have been paired for more than two years.[12]

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[9] Alexandra Gordon and Kris Graham, *The National Independent Visitor Data Report*, Barnardo's, January 2016, p3.

[10] Children's Commissioner, Forging futures through mentoring, April 2018, p8.

[11] Gordon and Graham, *The National Independent Visitor Data Report*, p10.

[12] Ibid, p18.

Other mentoring programmes

Other mentoring programmes do not focus specifically on looked after children and young people but may still work closely with this group. For example, Plusone Mentoring which is delivered by YMCA Scotland, targets children and young people between the ages of 8 and 14 who are at risk of entering the youth justice system. YMCA Scotland has received £1,193,000 through the Big Lottery Fund to deliver the programme over five years.

Plusone Mentoring is being delivered in locations across Scotland including Aberdeen, Angus, Dundee, East Ayrshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Midlothian, South Lanarkshire and West Lothian. It applies a similar approach to the projects previously mentioned by using trained local volunteers to mentor children and young people.

The Big Brother Big Sister model is another commonly used form of mentoring for children and young people who face barriers such as being care experienced. In Ireland, youth organisation Foróige runs a number of Big Brother Big Sister programmes, which aligns with a set of standards set by Big Brothers Big Sisters International, including applying a professional case work approach to mentoring. Foróige's Big Brother Big Sister programmes include community–based matching between an adult volunteer and a child or young person who meet once a week; and school based programmes that match older students and mentees who are going through the transition from primary to secondary school. Although these programmes are not specifically targeted at looked after children and young people, they are likely to benefit from the support that is provided.

APPENDIX 2 – LIST OF PARTNER CHARITIES

- Aberlour
- Action for Children
- Barnardo's
- Befriend a Child
- Children 1st
- COVEY
- Move On
- Quarriers
- Volunteer Glasgow
- YMCA Edinburgh
- YMCA Kirkcaldy
- Y Sort It
- Y People