Relationships, Assets and Social Capital: A Case Study Review of Youth Mentoring

Thesis

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Relationships, assets and social capital: a case study review of youth mentoring

Catherine Jean Comfort

Doctorate in Education

The Open University

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Abstract

Youth mentoring, where young people (mentees) work with adult mentors to achieve change, is a popular government and third sector intervention. Past research, concentrating on quantitative analysis of US programmes, concludes that mentoring achieves significant but modest change. Such research assumes that changes from mentoring can be externally identified and measured, often without hearing the views of those involved.

This study investigates the experiences and expectations of mentoring from the perspective of mentees, mentors, referring agencies and programme coordinators. Using social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000), the study explores how mentoring relationships are built and their role in bringing about change.

A local authority youth mentoring programme in the UK formed the case study for investigating experiences of mentoring and perceptions of change. To allow nuanced exploration of views, an interpretive, qualitative approach was taken. Data were collected from mentors, mentees, referring agencies and coordinators via semi-structured interviews, survey, diaries, focus groups and programme feedback. Data collection and thematic analysis were informed by social capital theory.

Findings indicated that mentees actively participating in the mentoring process benefitted most. Mentees experienced unusual levels of equality in the purposeful
and trusting mentoring relationship. Drawing on the relationship’s social capital, mentees enhanced their assets and enjoyed emotional support, learning and challenge. Collaborating with mentors, mentees achieved previously inaccessible outcomes. Assets developed could be used in other relationships.

The study also concludes that social capital and asset acquisition provide a theoretical basis for understanding the mentoring process. By encouraging asset and social capital exchange, mentoring develops mentees’ self-awareness, agency, and confidence, increasing the likelihood of resilience. This knowledge may be transferable to other programmes and relationships. Supporting young people’s knowledge of their needs and strengths through mentoring may contribute to their wellbeing post 2019 Covid pandemic.
Acknowledgements

To my inspiring mentees Julia, Jaimie, Eunice and Lara whose remarkable fortitude and resilience set me on this journey. To the MyTime mentors, mentees and coordinators for their hard work and support of my research. To my supervisors, Dr Tony Morgan and Dr Naomi Holford for shaping and challenging my thoughts. To my family who have weathered my challenging EdD journey with patience and encouragement, particularly remembering Angela. And to the 2018 EdD WhatsApp group, a beacon of support and positivity through the highs and lows.
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Acronyms

APPG  All Party Parliamentary Group
BERA  British Education Research Association
BPS   British Psychological Society
CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CBM   Community based mentoring
CERD  Consequential, Ecological, Relational and Deontological framework
DBS:  Disclosure and Barring Scheme
DYP   Dalston Youth Programme
EdD   Doctorate of Education
FoTC  Friends of the Children
MoTY  Mentor of the Year
OU    The Open University
P/PV  Public/Private Ventures
PYD   Positive Youth Development
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<td>RCT</td>
<td>Randomised Control Trial</td>
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Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter explores how this researcher’s experience of being a volunteer mentor for young people shaped her interest in finding out more about the mentoring process and the relationship built between adult and young person. This chapter gives an overview of the development of youth mentoring in the UK, including its role in UK policy. The rest of the chapter outlines the thesis structure.

1.1 The origins of this research

I had been drawn to supporting young people for several years, based on my experience of sharing the triumphs and difficulties faced by my children and those of my friends. I was concerned that the nature of challenges faced and the response to them seemed to be leading increasingly to depression, anxiety and self-harm in the young people I knew. I wondered if my experience and knowledge gained from navigating my own life and supporting my children might be of some use to others. To further this ambition, in 2016 I trained as a volunteer mentor with a local authority youth mentoring programme, referred to by the pseudonym of ‘MyTime’ in this thesis. Working with my first mentee, I was humbled by the challenging home life she faced and the fortitude she displayed. I wondered how in these circumstances, an hour a week spent with an adult could make any difference. What was the best way to spend this time?
Hearing from other mentors, I was struck by the resilience of the young people and the ingenuity of mentors for their mentees. Because an hour a week seemed a relatively small amount of time, yet seemed to achieve positive results, I wondered whether mentoring was strengthening and activating attributes or assets already in the young people. What did these young people bring with them to the mentoring process and what happened as a result of spending time with their mentor, someone who started off as a stranger?

Most of what I read was data-driven, relating to large US mentoring programmes or meta-analyses of research findings from the US or UK. Academic literature, such as the DuBois et al. (2002) comparison of 55 US mentoring programmes found, on average, evidence of only a modest or small benefit of program participation with certain groups of young people benefitting under certain circumstances but others not at all. This contrasted with the positive impacts reported by young people and their supporters on the MyTime programme.

I wondered to what extent the US programmes and research related to UK experience. It also seemed that the voice of mentees and those who referred them (referrers) was missing from most of this literature. The assumption was that the benefits of mentoring could be measured by the end of the mentoring process. I conjectured that programme objectives might differ from those of mentees and proposed examining the evaluation criteria to help unpick the conundrum.

However, as my reading and thinking around mentoring and evaluation developed, the individual nature of youth mentoring became increasingly apparent.
and, it seemed to me, the need to listen to individual experiences as well as collective views. Mentoring appeared to employ no specific technique or approach, and the main mechanism for achieving change seemed to be the mentoring relationship. My interest turned to investigating this relationship. What could it achieve and how? How did mentors and mentees form close, trusting relationships in a relatively short time? These and other questions inspired my decision to embark upon a Doctorate of Education (EdD) into youth mentoring. These aims, along with discovering the gaps in the literature, resulted in the following research questions, introduced here for convenience:

RQ1: What are the expectations of those involved in a youth mentoring process?

RQ2: How do those involved experience youth mentoring?

RQ 3: What is the role of the relationship in the mentoring process?

RQ4: How do any outcomes of youth mentoring relate to the development of assets and social capital in young people?
1.2 Youth mentoring and its history

The concept of youth mentoring is broadly understood as an adult supporting a young person to make changes or achieve a goal by transferring adult knowledge to the younger person. Such support occurring naturally or by design dates from the ancient Greek literature of Homer’s Odyssey with Mentor undertaking to guide and support Ulysses’ son, Telemachus, whilst Ulysses fought in the Trojan wars. In one-to-one (dyadic) youth mentoring, a trained and vetted adult and young person are introduced to form a relationship to bring about change in the young person’s life. The adult is usually a volunteer and the young person referred for support is often vulnerable through being in difficult circumstances. Mentor and mentee meet regularly, with expectation of the relationship’s duration usually set by the programme. Mentoring programmes examined lasted between three months and 12 years. Mentoring in the form of a relationship between two individuals is the focus of this study.

1.2.1 Mentoring in the US

The seeds of youth mentoring were sown in US at the turn of the twentieth century by charities and the Church responding to the number of children being seen by the newly introduced Children’s Court. To keep them out of the criminal justice system and stem ‘juvenile delinquency’, girls in the criminal justice system were befriended by members of The Ladies of Charity (later Catholic Big Sisters) and boys by Big Brothers. Support for boys and girls was combined as Big
Brother, Big Sister (BBBS) in 1977. In 2019, the most recent figures available, BBBS in the US supported around 136,000 children aged six to 18 through school and community-based programmes (Mitchell, 2020). Youth mentoring from its earliest days was thus associated with charitable or religiously inspired assistance to those experiencing disadvantage. It was linked with crime prevention and outcomes deemed undesirable, such as teen pregnancy and delinquency.

1.2.2 Mentoring in the UK

The perception of a need for services specifically to support and guide young people outside the family is not new. In the UK, open access youth work dates back to the early nineteenth century as part of the work of churches and the voluntary sector and focused on character formation (Cooper, 2012). The introduction of formalised youth mentoring in UK is more recent, originating in the 1990s. Youth mentoring is associated with the 1997-2010 Labour Government’s policy focus on encouraging participation in education, employment or training. The Labour Party made mentoring part of its youth justice reform, the centrepiece of its Home Affairs policy (Newburn, 1998). It established Connexions in 2000, offering young people a key worker to form a trusting relationship, see their problems in the round and signpost to other sources of support (Department for Education and Employment, 1999). Significantly, Connexions represented a shift in government funding away from universal services for all young people to targeted services for individuals deemed at risk of exclusion from employment, education or training, or social exclusion.
Concurrently, school policy has been increasingly concerned with raising educational attainment as judged by measurable milestones, exams and qualifications. The focus on achievement has left less time for forming relationships, supporting individual children and free-of-charge after-school activities, precisely those factors that have greatest impact on educational performance (Jeffs and Smith, 2019). Brendtro (2019 p. 15) tells us that ‘Children thrive when their needs are met in the ecology of family, school, peers, and community’, the opposite of current depersonalization of relationships which has created ‘alienation’ among young people. He proposes that relationships with those around them are the best means of counteracting young people’s sense of alienation and can help young people become resilient. This study examines whether and how mentors fit into a young person’s ecology.

The trend from generalised to targeted support has moved in tandem with reduced funding to local councils in general under the Conservative austerity programme. This has particularly impacted the funding of youth services because they do not have a ring-fenced budget. Expenditure on services for young people fell by 59.5% in real terms between 2011/12 and 2017/18 (O'Donnell et al., 2019) or by £103.1m from 2013-14, resulting in a reduction in youth workers and youth centres, with 77 local authorities reporting some youth services would disappear altogether (Cabinet Office, 2014). This report also drew attention to the replacement of universal services with targeted interventions. The impact of policy decisions to target and reduce funding is not clear as the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs (2019) (APPG) noted, calling for such
impact to be evaluated. Additionally, the APPG on Youth Affairs also highlighted the lack of accountability or strategy for youth services. Thus, services for young people have become less strategically important, more targeted on particular cohorts of young people, more focused on achieving measurable outcomes and less well funded so inevitably fewer. It might reasonably be assumed that the overall impact on young people of fewer, harder to access services is unlikely to be positive.

Mentoring therefore developed as an intervention in the UK in the 1990s at a time when the prevailing belief was that resources deemed scarce should be targeted at those considered vulnerable rather than to fund universal youth services. This individualised approach has been criticised for ascribing difficulties as personal to the individual rather than public issues to be addressed by communities (Smith, 2000, 2007). However, it does suggest a supported individual can help themselves, an area for exploration in this current study.

1.2.3 Current policy context

Politicians’ belief in the ability of mentoring to address the challenges faced by young people is demonstrated in the recommendation of the Select Committee on Education and Employment (1998) that mentors should be included in all programmes related to disaffected children. The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), an independent charity and part of the government’s What Works Network, found ‘good evidence’ that ‘high-quality’ mentoring approaches were effective
and that consistent high-quality mentoring for vulnerable young people should be supported (Lewing et al., 2018 p. 31). The current Conservative government associates mentoring with the following specific interventions:

- youth crime and violent crime prevention programmes (Houses of Parliament, 2019)
- specialist job coaches facilitating participation in the workplace (Department for Work and Pensions, 2021), education or training (Department for Education, 2022)
- community engagement (through association with the Diana Award, see Appendix C)
- social mobility, the aim of the All-party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in Mentoring (see below), “where the circumstances of birth do not determine outcomes in life” (Social Mobility Commission, 2020).

Mentoring has thus been seen as a policy tool to variously reduce youth crime, increase social mobility, enhance community involvement and/or lead to well-paid employment. The aims behind such initiatives have been to help young people reach their potential or solve the problem of young people by keeping them out of trouble and thereby reducing youth crime.

The connection with policy goals has associated mentoring with a need to be measurable or deliver quantifiable results. Efforts made to quantify mentoring’s impact and effectiveness as an intervention for young people in the UK often bemoan the lack of data upon which to make such evaluations. Given the
popularity of mentoring for young people, with estimates of hundreds (Shaw and Bernardes, 2018; Gannon and Washington, 2019) of programmes currently running in the UK, there is a perhaps surprising lack of information about its impact on young people.

English mentoring has no representative body, unlike MENTOR in the US. However, there are signs that the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in Mentoring, founded in 2017 and closely connected with the Diana Award (see Appendix C) may be seeking to promote good practice in English mentoring. Scotland maintains greater support of mentoring, with the Scottish Mentoring Network, founded in 1997 and funded by the Scottish Government, still in operation. Research into youth mentoring is therefore highly relevant in the current policy context.

1.3 The proposed theoretical lens

Given that the focus of mentoring is on the relationship between two people, theories around social capital, or the benefits available from relationships and membership of groups (Portes, 1998) seemed relevant. Could social capital, as expounded in the theories of Bourdieu (1984, 1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000), help understand what happens during mentoring and how it happens?

Another debate around mentoring is how outcomes should be judged and by whom. The assumption seemed to be that outcomes for interventions for young people can and need to be measured. This view was challenged by the All-Party
Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs (2019) which commented that the desire to prove the value of services by measuring impact could lead to overly narrow services that do not reflect what is important to young people.

Peer-reviewed academic research into mentoring, as opposed to internal or even anecdotal evaluation of any UK youth services, is comparatively rare as noted by the Education Select Committee (2011). Calls for evidence to support mentoring coupled with a persistent lack of funding for empirical academic research typifies UK mentoring. The aim of this current study was, therefore, to add to the knowledge base about mentoring.

To investigate the practice and process of mentoring, exploring an example of a long-running UK mentoring programme seemed appropriate. Brief details of the research site chosen, the MyTime programme, are given below.

1.4 The case study setting: MyTime Programme

MyTime Programme background and aims

The MyTime mentoring programme is delivered by a local authority in the South of England as part of its services for young people. The local authority is affluent although there are areas of severe deprivation. Several of the areas in which MyTime operates feature in the top 15 in terms of social mobility in England, meaning those originally on Free School Meals have high median earnings, and difference in earnings between the most advantaged and most disadvantaged are
some of the smallest (Social Mobility Commission, 2020). Young people helped by the scheme back into education therefore have a good chance of achieving a secure future. The MyTime programme’s aims are:

‘To provide additional one to one support to young people in [County] to assist them to reach their potential, by improving their skills and providing new opportunities.’ (A. County Council, 2016)

These are further broken down into five areas:

- To raise young people’s confidence and self-esteem.
- To improve young people’s motivation to learn and achieve.
- To help young people improve their relationships with family and peers.
- To help young people access and engage in positive activities.
- To develop independent living skills in young people e.g., budgeting.

(A. County Council, 2016)

These aims reveal the aspects of a young person’s life which MyTime believes are key to achieving their potential. The aims of ‘improving’ motivation to learn and ‘improving’ relationships suggest that to reach their potential, young people need to change something about themselves. Programme expectations set out in the Mentor Handbook are for mentors to help young person achieve their aims, to ensure they are heard and to discuss options with them (A. County Council, 2016). At a MyTime Networking meeting, the Head of Young People’s Service framed
mentoring as preventative, to reduce the need for more intensive intervention, such as counselling. This current study compares the programme expectations of mentees and mentors with those desired by MyTime.

**Mentee motivations for having a MyTime mentor**

From many years’ programme experience, one coordinator said that the main issues young people wanted help with was managing anxiety, increasing their confidence and self-esteem and anger management. Before mentoring began, mentees identified three areas of desired change to focus with their mentor via a referral form, which they completed with the referrer. Examples seen included, to ‘improve confidence’ or ‘get out more’. Thus, goals were set by the mentee rather than the programme. The impact of allowing young people the opportunity to specify and work on their goals, unfamiliar processes to many, is examined in this current study.

In line with good practice for mentor support, volunteer mentors were expected to attend at least one group review meeting annually, to report on cases, to learn from and support each other’s practice and to benefit from programme knowledge and resources. An annual conference provided additional training and mentors nominated for Mentor of the Year (MoTY) by their mentees were recognised.

**The mentoring process**

Mentors and mentees were introduced, or ‘matched’, based on mentee preference for mentor gender, time, location and mentor availability. The process and
implications of matching are examined further in Chapter 4. Once matched, mentor and mentee agreed where and when to meet. The first mentoring session could be attended by the mentee’s parents/carers, referrers or by the mentoring coordinator, to make it less daunting for the young person and help establish trust, but after this, meetings were between mentor and mentee only. MyTime expectations were for weekly sessions of an hour, with some flexibility, depending on mentee needs.

Mentor and mentee met in a public place, for security and safeguarding reasons. Mentors and mentees never entered each other’s homes nor socialised together outside mentoring sessions. At a session, they purchased and shared a drink and possibly a snack. They spent an hour together talking about whatever the mentee chose, working towards the mentee’s aspirations. In some cases, sessions included activities, such as a walk or meeting mentor contacts, although not required by the programme.

**Duration of MyTime mentoring**

Although not open-ended, MyTime was unusual for a local authority service in having no quota of sessions. However, it was conceived as a temporary support to achieve aspirations, designed to finish around six to twelve months after starting with flexibility to increase the duration if required. The longest relationship mentioned by a mentor was around two years, in a very complex case. The assumption was that change desired by the mentee could be achieved within the allotted timescale. The mentoring handbook calls the relationship between mentor
and mentee a ‘professional’ one, with the aim being for a young person to reach ‘independence’ (A. County Council, 2016 p. 16). During the course of this current study, relationships remained consistent throughout the mentoring period, with no examples of mentors changing.

Expected duration seemed a pragmatic compromise based on trialling various formats. When relationships were expected to last over a year, a backlog of young people developed. Reducing relationship length to a maximum of six months was felt too short in some cases. The programme deemed three or more sessions to constitute a relationship, acknowledging that two to three sessions might be needed to see whether a relationship could be established.

Relationship endings were treated as significant by the programme, with additional funding to allow mentors and mentees to choose a special event to mark the occasion. In many cases, this was a significant amount of time together, such as a day at the zoo or a visit to the cinema. The nature of endings is examined in Section 4.2.4 in this study.

**Evaluation of MyTime**

The outcomes from mentoring were assessed by MyTime during and at the end of the mentoring process using qualitative and quantitative measures. As well as providing information about their requirements on initial referral forms, at the end of a mentoring relationship mentees were asked about their experience, whether they had achieved their goals, whether the ending came at the right time and
whether they had suggestions for improvement. In these mentee feedback forms, mentees expressed their opinions in their own words. The information provided was used by coordinators to understand the mentoring experience, any benefits from it and to reflect on suggestions for change. Examples of these documents were used in this current study to compare initial aspirations and any changes identified at the end of mentoring.

Further qualitative data was provided by mentee nominations for MoTY. These documents give mentees’ views of what they value about mentoring and their mentor. Nominations by mentees were entirely voluntary and written in their own words. At the time of this current research, MyTime contact with mentees ended once mentoring finished, indicating that the programme was expected to monitor short rather than long term change.

1.5 Structure of this thesis

Chapter 2, literature review, considers literature relating to mentoring, relationship formation and the support of young people. It explores the concepts of youth mentoring and who it is aimed at. The proposed theoretic lens through which the research is viewed, that of asset acquisition and social capital, is investigated in relation to young people. Debate around the role of the mentoring relationship and how it is developed is covered. The difference that mentoring makes and the research questions raised by the literature are outlined.
Chapter 3, methodology, covers the reasoning behind the interpretive, qualitative methodological approach taken. Since mentoring is fundamentally the meeting of two individuals, the methodology was designed to uncover their experience of what happens during their interactions and what this achieves. Chapter 3 explains the need for the research to listen directly to the voices of mentees and their supporters, to explore how they interpret their experience of mentoring.

By gathering and analysing data according to the methodology and methods identified in Chapter 3, this current study hears directly from participants about their experience of mentoring, what they valued about the mentoring relationship and how, if at all, mentees benefited.

Findings resulting from the thematic analysis of the research are presented, analysed and discussed in Chapter 4, viewed through the lens of social capital theory. This chapter provides answers to the research questions.

Finally, the implications of the analysis and discussion of these findings for practice and mentoring policy are discussed in the concluding chapter. Chapter 5 also covers how the research could be extended, its limitations and importantly, its contribution to knowledge about mentoring to supplement gaps identified in the review of literature.
1.6 Summary

Part of the purpose of the EdD is to impact policy and practice. This chapter has considered the historical origins and current policy context in which youth mentoring operates, including influences from the US. It showed how mentoring fits into budgetary constraints around services for young people and an increasing focus of support on the individual. Chapter 1 noted that the overarching link between youth mentoring programmes is the relationship between a young person and an adult and the underlying belief that undergoing the mentoring process helps young people negotiate difficulties in their lives.

The structure of this study allows exploration of how mentoring is experienced and what results from it, applying the lens of social capital and asset acquisition to an example of a UK mentoring programme. The findings from this research are designed to contribute to discussions about how to help young people thrive. These discussions are particularly relevant as society addresses the longer-term impacts of the pandemic which coincided with the timeframe of this research project.
Chapter 2. Literature Review

The previous chapter considered the history of UK youth mentoring and its policy context, the genesis of the research and thesis structure. This chapter sets out the literature around youth mentoring. Initially the review focused on literature relating to measurable outcomes using search terms, such as ‘mentoring and evaluation methodologies’ using the ERIC database. As the complexity of mentoring became clearer, the search terms focused instead on mentoring, relationship building, youth assets, resources and social capital and on identifying relevant literature through bibliographies. The literature is set out and critiqued below as a backdrop for future analysis and discussion about whether and how mentoring increases asset and resource development in young people.

2.1 What is youth mentoring?

This current study focuses on youth mentoring where a volunteer, non-kin adult (mentor) supports a young person (mentee). The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, formerly the accreditation body for mentoring programmes and now part of National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), defines mentoring as follows:

A voluntary, mutually beneficial and purposeful relationship in which an individual gives time to support another to enable them to make changes in their life (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2011).
This definition highlights some key aspects of mentoring. Mentoring is a connection between two people. This connection has an aim, it is ‘purposeful’. Tellingly, whose purpose is served is not defined. It could be a third party’s (such as a government), a programme’s or could be the mentee’s. Different purposes give rise to programmes with different conceptions of their role, a feature of mentoring that becomes more evident during this current study. Mentoring occurs when different outcomes, or ‘changes’, are sought and requires ‘time’. There is no coercion, with mentor and mentee choosing to meet, the relationship ‘supporting’ and ‘enabling’ and both sides willingly entering the ‘voluntary’ relationship. Both mentor and mentee gain (‘mutually beneficial’), implying a level of parity.

The dimensions of youth mentoring can be described as:

- Instrumental support: practical assistance including teaching new skills or material resources, often to achieve targets such as employment or education.
- Emotional support: listening during stressful times, conveying acceptance of individual worth.
- Companionship: spending enjoyable time together.

(Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2008; Shaw and Bernardes, 2018)

Conceptualising mentoring and differentiating it from coaching can cause difficulties, potentially leading to very loose or very tight definitions with results that are too vague or too specific (Butts, Durley and Eby, 2007). Defining mentoring tightly may cause some aspects of it to be overlooked. Another option
is to allow participants to use their own definition, an approach taken by this
current research. Salter (2017) draws a distinction between mentoring, which she
defines as goal driven and concerned with reaching potential, and coaching which
assumes mentees can solve their own issues. Interestingly, she equates coaching
with an asset, rather than deficit-based, approach from its premise that young
people have assets and can learn to change. Salter supports trialling a mentor-
coach approach to youth mentoring (Salter and Gannon, 2015; Salter 2017). This
current study examines the extent to which MyTime mentoring combines goal-
driven mentoring and asset-based coaching characteristics as distinguished above.

Youth mentoring’s purpose is seen variously as compensatory, supplementary or
complementary. Mentoring programmes can compensate for limited family and
school support and negative influences from peers (Coleman, 1961) or replace
parenting perceived as inadequate (Meier, 2008). Young people need external
adults (such as mentors) because traditional sources of support cannot meet the
risks young people face in society (Beck, 1992). More positively, mentoring
supplements natural relationships, where these have not sprung up spontaneously
(Bennetts, 2003; Russell, 2007). Others see mentoring as a positive tool to help
young people develop assets (Phelps et al., 2007).

2.1.1 What is a mentor?

The positive influence on young people and their sense of self that relationships
with unrelated but significant adults, such as school staff or youth workers, have is
acknowledged (Rhodes, 2002; Spencer, 2007; Worsley, 2015), and knowing individuals from outside the family can be protective for vulnerable young people (Rutter, 1987; Ainsworth, 1989). Not all young people have experience of adults who take an interest in them. Providing access to such an adult and the presumed benefits of such a relationship is fundamental to mentoring.

Mentors fulfil many and varied roles. Mentors function as ‘tutor, coach, counsellor’ (Keller 2007 p. 23). The Lakind, Eddy and Zell (2014) phenomenological research amongst paid mentors finds they see themselves as being consistent in lives without much consistency or stability. They conceive their role variously as part of their mentees’ families, as substituting for parents, particularly for fathers, or as complementing the work of parents and teachers. The role encompasses teacher, therapist and friend as well as having unique aspects. For some mentors, the relationship counterbalances more negative or problematic relationships whereas for others, it complements existing support in the environment (Lakind, Atkins and Eddy, 2015).

Blinn-Pike (2007) finds that mentoring is more complex than may at first be thought, a view supported by the literature examined in this chapter. Perceptions of the purpose and role of mentors in mentees’ lives and the extent to which it complements or replaces existing relationships are explored in Section 4.1.

Differing views of the role of mentoring are also reflected in the ways programmes position mentors and mentees. For the Big Brother Big Sister programme (BBBS, see Appendix A), supporting adults are family members. For
Friends of The Children programme (FoTC, see Appendix B) mentors are friends, part of the extended social network. BBBS refers to mentees as ‘children’, in line with the United Nations (1989) which defines those under the age of 18 as ‘children’. In the FoTC programme, mentees are often referred to collectively as ‘youth,’ rather than recognising individual difference. The MyTime and Diana Award (Appendix C) programmes refer to ‘young people.’ The terminology used reflects different perspectives and greater or lesser expectation of support and agency. A child needs protection and support within a family/carer unit. The term ‘young person’ suggests a greater expectation of responsibility, autonomy and agency. This expectation of mentee responsibility seems to suffuse the ideology of UK mentoring programmes. Adult supporters are usually referred to as mentors, denoting a role incorporating an expectation of duty and guardianship. Thus, different programmes consider young people as more or less active in bringing about change. This current study explores how MyTime’s conception of young people’s ability to make changes for themselves, and the role of the mentor is operationalised.

2.2 Youth mentoring and youth work

For Batsleer and Davies (2010), youth mentoring is an ideal model of youth work, meaning it exhibits essential and typical characteristics of youth work. The National Youth Agency (NYA), the national body for youth work, describes youth work as a ‘distinct educational process’ (NYA, no date) or, as defined in the House of Commons report into youth work:
...a deliberative educational approach with its own pedagogy and professional base (House of Commons Education Committee, 2011).

It is thus helpful to consider the values of youth work as reflected in mentoring, which according to the NYA (no date), are:

- Young people choosing to take part
- Utilising young people’s view of the world
- Treating young people with respect
- Seeking to develop young people’s skills and attitudes rather than remedy ‘problem behaviours’
- Helping young people develop stronger relationships and collective identities
- Respecting and valuing differences
- Promoting the voice of young people

Youth work is therefore an approach to developing young people, not a solution to fix problems. The NYA definition positions mentors as educators who respond to young people’s lead about what they want to learn, helping them develop their skills (or ‘assets’ for the purposes of this study, see Section 2.5). Youth work as an educational practice focuses on the needs and interests of young people, with its curriculum responding flexibly to young people’s needs rather than following a fixed timetable. Youth workers are professionally trained, informal educators creating opportunities for young people to discuss and learn about issues relevant to them (Batsleer and Davies, 2010). As a branch of youth work, mentoring is thus
designed to support young people’s personal and social development outside the curriculum of formal education. Giving ‘Trusted relationships and voluntary engagement of young people,’ as a principle, the NYA links education, trusting relationships and active participation with youth work and thus mentoring.

Despite being a branch of youth work, mentoring has less of a professional basis than youth work. MENTOR, the US national not-for-profit resource for mentoring, recommends mentors be trained for at least a day (Clawson, Endelman and Heubach, 2015), obviously a far cry from a professional qualification. This study considers whether mentors perceive their role as ‘professional’ and whether a lack of training has a negative impact on mentees.

The topic of voluntary attendance is another area for consideration. Young people are referred by third parties rather than initiating attendance of mentoring themselves. This might suggest that mentoring may occur against a mentee’s wishes or without their active agreement, contrary to the requirements of youth work. The extent to which this is the case is explored in Section 4.1.2. Before presenting the review of literature, however, it is worth noting some of its general characteristics.

### 2.3 Characteristics of the literature

The longer history of mentoring in the US, championed and funded by US government, has given rise to most of the mentoring literature, and academic expertise in mentoring is seen to reside in US. The Blackwell Handbook of
Mentoring (Allen and Eby, 2007) for example, cites 39 academics, of which 38 are US-based. Of the over 5000 US mentoring programmes (MENTOR, no date) most are, as in the UK, small and local. However, there are several national, franchised schemes, some of the best-known of which are Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS), franchised in 15 countries, and Friends of the Children (FoTC).

US research tends towards analysis of large data sets. It is worth noting that much mentoring research in the US sees mentoring as a psychological intervention. Researchers in this tradition include Professor Jean Rhodes, with a background in Psychology, Sipe (1996, 1998) and Tierney et al., (1995). Psychology is associated with predominantly positivist, quantitative or numbers-based, methodologies. Between 1988 and 1995, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), a US non-profit organisation, funded ten empirical and evaluative mentoring reports generating large data sets from BBBS. Rhodes et al. (2017) for example, use data sets on 5,000 US mentoring relationships. Although P/PV was disbanded in 2013, the link between research and a large mentoring organisation has made the BBBS programme significant in understanding mentoring and what it achieves. It is used as an example of good practice mentoring in MENTOR’s handbook (Clawson, Endelman and Heubach, 2015) which was used to advise on good practice in mentoring for the UK (Miller, 2007).

This wealth of US data and the researchers who have analysed it have been instrumental in shaping the view of mentoring, including identifying how and what should be considered its outcomes. Believing that outcomes of human
relationships and processes should and can be measured suggests it is possible to distil a ‘right’ way to deliver mentoring and achieve desired outcomes. There is a focus on establishing correlations in data such as longevity of mentoring relationships and measurable outcomes. UK mentoring and its associated research come from a youth work tradition, as discussed below, which is arguably more process and less outcome focused.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given their cultural differences, US programmes do not always translate well to a UK context (Whybra et al., 2018). For example, BBBS in UK closed in 2004. An evaluation of BBBS in Ireland finds that the programme needed adaptation for local culture and policy practices, particularly where there was no tradition of formal mentoring (Brady and Curtin, 2012). A quantitative evaluation of BBBS Ireland, using data relating 76 rather than the thousands sampled in US, finds that in Ireland, as in England, funding and implementation are issues in ways not experienced in the US (Silke, Brady and Dolan, 2019).

These experiences suggest that learning from US research may not be directly applicable to UK mentoring programmes.

However, UK-focused, empirical research has been found to be limited. Recent UK research into the effectiveness of mentoring compiles existing studies (meta-analysis) for charities such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation or the Children’s Commissioner. Philips (2008) who undertook empirical research using qualitative methodologies is now retired. The evaluation of Chance UK, a mentoring programme for five-11-year-olds with behavioural difficulties, using a
quantitative methodology and a randomised control trial (RCT) finds ‘no statistically significant effect on any outcome’ (Axford et al., 2020 p. 110). The programme was set up in line with good practice as advocated by DuBois et al., (2011). It focuses on developing self-esteem and self-efficacy which were hypothesised to be mediators of positive change rather than aiming to reduce delinquency and improve grades (Whybra et al., 2018). The authors hypothesise that additional mentor training in delivering the intervention might improve outcomes. There are questions therefore about the direct applicability of US literature to the UK mentoring context.

The Shaw and Bernardes (2018) meta-analysis of UK mentoring schemes found greater need for an English evidence base for mentoring. This current research is intended to contribute to addressing such a need. The next section looks at what the mentoring literature says about outcomes and benefits that accrue to young people from the mentoring relationship.

### 2.4 Adversity and mentoring

Youth work, including youth mentoring, is associated with an educational approach appropriate for all young people but usually associated with those in difficult circumstances. Mentoring programmes focus on ‘reaching’ potential, implying that there are currently hindrances to achieving this. Young people subject to ‘above average risk’ may be described as ‘vulnerable’ with the enhanced likelihood of ‘negative outcomes’ (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005 p.
For Williams and Le Menestrel (2013 p. 98) young people become vulnerable through a combination of having ‘disadvantaged social status’ and being unable to access social networks or support. Shaw and Bernardes (2018) find that these are the same circumstantial risks that mentees face - lack of connections (for example, insecure family support), limited social networks, school-access difficulties or lack of economic resources and the consequences of poverty (such as inadequate housing, or impoverished neighbourhoods). Mentees or their families may face mental or physical health challenges. Such difficulties make it harder for a young person to reach their potential than better supported peers (Lindon, 2007).

However, academic debate has identified factors internal and external to a young person that support their ability to develop and thrive, despite vulnerability. The understanding and impact of ‘assets,’ qualities that help protect a young person from harm and risk and are protective (Rutter, 1987) and ‘resources,’ or opportunities in the external environment, are explored next.

2.5 What is meant by young people’s assets?

Assets are broadly conceived as positive factors, internal to an individual. Other terms used in the literature include strengths, skills, soft skills or competencies. This current study refers to ‘assets’ for consistency. As the term suggests, assets are beneficial and possession of assets avoids or protects against risk. Grotberg, (1995 pp. 9-10) talks of the benefit a young person gains from a positive view of
themselves – the assets of self-concept and self-esteem or what she calls ‘I am’. ‘I can’ - self-efficacy or confidence in one’s ability to cope (Bandura, 1977) and social and interpersonal competencies are further assets.

For Fergus and Zimmerman (2005), protective assets are broad ranging, with no definitive list of protective assets since different assets protect against different risks. Assets identified include coping skills, agency (having control over one’s life), self-reliance, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-control, positive affect (feeling happy, interested and relaxed), positivity towards school and academic achievement, skills in withstanding temptations, social competence and psychological wellbeing. Involvement in community/extracurricular activities, decision making skills, competence and problem-solving abilities are further assets which help young people avoid risk. Similarly, Scales et al. (2016 p. 154) refer to ‘40 assets’ including ‘

Thus, assets are beneficial and help vulnerable young people overcome risks. This raises the question that if those with assets can overcome vulnerability, are assets innate in young people and therefore not available to all or can they be acquired? More recently, the influential positive youth development (PYD) or positive psychology perspective, is premised on the idea that all young people have assets which they can use to make choices in their lives and that help them develop in a positive way, not just avoiding risk (Farruggia et al., 2011; Zimmerman, Phelps and Lerner, 2008; Phelps et al., 2007). The goal of PYD is for young people to motivate themselves and activate their assets, supported by adults (Larson, 2006).
Assets promoting PYD are ‘the 5 Cs’ of competence, confidence, character, connection and caring (i.e., having physical needs taken care of) (Eccles and Gootman, 2002 p. 71). This asset-based approach believes that young people have or can develop the assets they need to pursue and achieve their interests.

According to current literature, assets can be developed through interventions, such as mentoring. Mentoring and activities in the community and outside school can help young people exposed to adversity and risk develop the assets of social skills for peer-relations, self-efficacy and academic skills (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005; Phelps et al., 2007). Young people participating in effective community interventions and programmes show increased ‘personal and social assets’ and reductions in problem behaviours (Eccles and Gootman, 2002 p. 301), and in turn develop assets which both protect from harm and encourage development and growth. The fact that such programmes revolve around young people experiencing supportive adult relationships and learning how to form lasting peer relationships is seen as significant (Eccles and Gootman, 2002). Community interventions, such as mentoring, can provide regular positive experiences, contact with new people and opportunities to develop assets by participating in decision making and leadership. For Worsley (2015), a young person must not only have assets, but also be aware of these assets to reach their potential. Given the significance of asset development, this current study examines the ability or otherwise of mentoring to develop assets and increase mentee’s awareness of those assets through practice.
As well as assets, young people may have access to resources in the external environment. The nature and impact of such resources are examined next.

2.6 Networks and relationships

2.6.1 Social capital

Much has been written about the ‘social and economic resources embodied in social networks’ (Putnam, 2000 p. 19), known collectively as social capital. For Campbell (1997 p. 15), an individual’s stock of social capital relates to the degree to which they are ‘embedded within family relationships, social networks and communities and sense of belonging and civic identity’. Philip and Spratt (2007) and Philip (2008) speculate that social capital frameworks and strengthened social networks including bonding and bridging capital could explain mentoring’s impact despite, as Philip (2008) points out, its isolated nature. Examining the role of social capital in mentoring is the concern of this study.

The three main theorists who have shaped the conception of social capital are Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. They see resources in social connections as having a positive impact on wellbeing and life chances but differ in their view of who gains these benefits. Rather than viewing any one conception as definitive, this study considers the broadest view of social capital as it pertains to mentoring.
Bourdieu

For Bourdieu (1986 p. 21), social capital is the ‘actual or potential resources’ in relationships, giving members access to ‘credit’ in the form of ‘material or symbolic profits’. The volume of social capital in relationships depends on the capital of its members, including economic (financial) or cultural (the knowledge, behaviours and skills linked to social status). For him, the dominant class is richest in social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and possession of social, cultural and economic capital maintains the status quo and reproduces inequality by amplifying privilege. Building relationships that are ‘directly usable’ because they embody a sense of obligation requires time, ‘endless effort’ and ‘unceasing sociability’ (Bourdieu, 1986 p. 22), an aspect of social capital acquisition of relevance to this study. Work on concepts of social capital by Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000) has expanded its benefits beyond dominant classes and broadened its applicability to mentoring.

Coleman and Putnam

Despite taking different methodological approaches to their research, unlike Bourdieu (1986), Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1988) both position the benefits of social capital as potentially available to all. They emphasise the importance of trust, reciprocity (or obligation) and shared norms within relationships to enable accumulation of social capital. Trust and norms of reciprocity in family, school, peer and community relationships give members opportunities and greater ability to pursue goals (Putnam, 2000). Social capital, which is inherent in all
relationships (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000), allows resources to be combined. Of particular relevance to this study is the idea that a combination of resources permits achievement of outcomes that would not otherwise be possible (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000).

Putnam differentiates between social capital from close relationships with people similar to each other e.g., family and friends and local community, which he refers to as ‘bonding capital.’ These bonds tend to exclude those who are different. Looser connections with acquaintances who move in different social circles are referred to as ‘bridging capital.’ Although it allows individuals to ‘get ahead’ by changing life-chances, bridging capital is usually ‘tough’ to create (Putnam, 2000 p. 363) because both parties are inevitably dissimilar. Distinguishing between forms of social capital and the different roles they can play in mentee’s lives is helpful when considering the role of mentors and the nature of social support available to young people.

The ideas of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam relating to resources in networks have been further developed and critiqued, resulting in more detailed conceptions around its deployment and benefits.

**What are the benefits of social capital?**

Putnam and Bourdieu find that presence or absence of economic capital (financial resources) has the greatest impact on an individual’s opportunities (Bourdieu, 1984; Putnam, 2000). However, social capital within family and community
relationships can be beneficial, particularly for vulnerable children. Strong community ties benefit young people whose families lack resources (Putnam, 2000). Indeed, social capital can be a ‘weapon’ that enables individuals and communities without much economic (financial) and human (educational) capital to bring about change (Putnam, 2000). Social capital is thus linked with the ability to change. Worsley (2015) cautions that although strengthened social capital and asset development can increase a mentee’s likelihood of being on a resilient trajectory, they do not necessarily deliver instrumental goals because a mentee’s environment is also significant. If a mentee’s environment lacks resources, this suggests that being able to bring resources from different experiences and environments could be valuable.

Resources in social capital include new information, contacts, companionship and practical and emotional support (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). Connection with others encourages tolerance and participation by increasing awareness of other views and perspectives which can help with decision making and judgement (Field, 2005). Social connections are linked with the development of assets, which Field (2005 p. 29) calls skills. These include cooperation, which is facilitated by shared values. Other assets include ‘capacity to trust’, ‘communications, organisational skills, tolerance towards others, confidence’, ‘self-worth’ and ‘willingness to take the initiative’ (Field, 2005 p. 29).

Social capital is linked to an individual’s ‘sense of self-worth and self-efficacy’ (Field, 2003 p. 59). The trust inherent in social capital constantly enhances assets
(called ‘capabilities’ by Field), fostering the exchange of ideas and information to create applicable knowledge (Field, 2005 p. 140). Social networks are a learning resource, enabled by discourse, with the knowledge created helping network members to make sense of the world and meet goals (Field, 2005). Bonding social capital is particularly associated with learning, which, for Field (2005 p. 3), lets us attain ‘goals’ and gain agency by interacting with a ‘changing environment’. This learning, often called informal learning, accompanies formal education but can be applied practically and is more likely to be acquired from the life experience of those we know and trust (Field, 2005). Field associates informal learning with assets such as confidence and self-efficacy which he calls ‘social meta-competences’ and which, he asserts, increase the possibility of positive outcomes (Field, 2005 p.109).

Learning also produces new social capital (Nixon et al., 1996). Field (2005) agrees with Putnam (2000) that social capital, applicable knowledge in this case, can compensate for socio-economic disadvantage. Social capital is associated with asset development in ways that enhance network members’ sense of agency in navigating their changing environment, a finding relevant to this current study.

Putnam quantifies benefits that individuals in connected communities enjoy more broadly in terms of health, education, employment and lack of crime. He finds social connection is the greatest predictor of life satisfaction, and that those with close ties with family, friends and community can be ‘healthy, wealthy and wise’ (Putnam, 2000 p. 287).
Additionally, bonding and bridging capital bring different but complementary advantages. Bonding capital, the ‘superglue’ that connects individuals with material and strong emotional support from family and immediate networks, helps individuals ‘get by,’ particularly at times of difficulty (Putnam, 2000 p. 22) and promotes coping assets (Field, 2003). Bonding capital can have a less positive side in discouraging or excluding access to resources outside family and peer groups, as Putnam (2000) and Field (2008) warn. Strongly identifying with one set of individuals and their norms can discourage change or movement into a new identity (Putnam, 2000) and reinforce prevailing values, such as the worth of academic achievement, with potentially long lasting negative or positive impact on the individual (Field, 2005). Young people may find it difficult to explore new options through lack of contacts or even hostility to new ideas and identities. Rodríguez-Planas (2012) and Colley (2003) take a different view and raise concerns about mentoring ignoring, damaging or weakening bonds to any existing networks around the young person, particularly with parents. Rodríguez-Planas (2012) refers also to the unexpected consequence of parents giving a child being mentored less attention because they feel someone else is doing this. This implies the need for mentors to balance opening new opportunities, which may accord more or less with family expectations, with respect for existing networks and their resources. This current research explores the extent to which mentors can do this.

Bridging capital offers contacts, different views, external resources and different information sources. Putnam (2000 p. 362) considers it a ‘magic wand’ that can lead to new opportunities and contacts, making it particularly valuable to those
without economic or human capital. Bridging capital relies less strongly on shared values and is useful for achieving goals because it can lead to new resources. Distant acquaintances link to ‘unexpected opportunities’ and cross social divides (Field, 2003), resulting in creativity and ways of dealing with change and disruption (Field, 2005 p. 33). However, Field (2003) agrees with Putnam (2000) that it is difficult to accumulate since contacts have little in common.

In his critique of the work of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam, Field concludes that networks are powerful and ‘valuable’ (Field, 2003, p. 12), and the ability to access social capital can make significant difference to life chances (Field, 2003). More connections have more potential benefits. Thus, broadly, networks are beneficial, can build assets and help individuals change.

### 2.6.2 Young people and social capital

For Coleman (1988), young people’s social capital is determined by the adults in their family: the amount of time and resource adults dedicate to the child, the adults’ level of education (human capital) and adult connectedness with their community. Rhodes (2004 p. 46) takes a wider view, stating that ‘sources of support, encouragement, and trust make up the social capital of a community’ and the more networks and connections a young person has, the better for them.

Increased social capital is likely to improve wellbeing because of the increased support and ability to achieve goals that it offers a young person. The strength of young people’s relationships with their care givers indicates the social capital
available to them, with social capital being reduced where both parents are not present for the young person and as family size increases (Coleman, 1988). The more a family’s relations involve trust and reciprocity, the more social capital is accumulated and the more its young people can benefit from their parents’ human capital (Coleman, 1988). Other structures and artificial relationships, such as schools, cannot compensate for the loss of family connectedness and social capital is reduced when young people’s closest connections are with peers (Coleman, 1988). Coleman thus challenges the view that introduced relationships, such as mentors, can bring about change, by emphasising the importance of the family bond. Evidence that the mentoring relationship has social capital and that it can impact family relations is therefore of interest to this current study.

Putnam (2000 p. 298) correlates social capital with stopping ‘bad things’ happening to ‘good kids.’ However, neither Bourdieu, Coleman nor Putnam conceive young people as able to generate social capital of their own. Field’s (2005) discussion of the benefits of social capital for children relate to their carers’ social networks and the way in which they educate their children, rather than young people’s direct access to social capital. Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam do not discuss young people activating assets or social capital for themselves, an area of interest to this study.

Worsley (2015) and Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) find links between external resources and benefits to young people. External resources include peers, ‘parental support and school connection, family-member connectedness, continuing study
intention, adult mentoring, community organisations and extracurricular activities’ (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005 p.399). Such resources are protective and promote positive youth development (Zimmerman, Phelps and Lerner, 2008). Resources can aid the development of young people’s assets (Worsley, 2015) and an awareness of having resources in their network gives a young person security, with greater access to resources affording more options for action (Grotberg, 1995; Zimmerman, Phelps and Lerner, 2008). The resources described are not tangible, and, of interest to this study, not entirely controlled by adults in a young person’s life but derived predominantly from networks of contacts. Such resources can be considered social capital. Developing a young person’s social capital is linked to positive outcomes (Calvert, Emery and Kinsey, 2013) which may be achieved through mentoring (Philip and Spratt, 2007; Philip, 2008).

For young people, attending formal education in school or college to gain qualifications forms a major part of their lives. Attending these institutions provides opportunities to meet others, encouraging social connectedness. Education is a direct investment in social capital, building social skills and shared norms (Field, 2003), meaning that young people attending school can access a major source of social capital (Field, 2005). Learning and achievement enhance young people’s social capital by giving access to knowledge and resources (Fukuyama, 2002), increasing their likelihood of educational qualifications, often necessary to reach potential. Children in school learn to socialise and make friends, gaining emotional support. Coleman’s (1988) research finds social capital can have a positive impact on educational achievement, which is particularly
valuable for disadvantaged young people. Thus, education builds social capital and social capital enables educational achievement, making lack of involvement in education, a situation faced by many mentees, potentially detrimental. This current study investigates, therefore, whether mentoring can link young people back into education or to alternative networks.

Young people may not be powerless in acquiring and using social capital. Morrow (1999), in her review of social capital literature, finds unclear the extent to which social capital increases for young people embedded in their communities and with self-efficacy. She does however conclude that regarding young people as unable to generate or use their own social capital is incorrect and calls for investigation of how community involvement and self-efficacy impact the social capital of children and young people. Indeed, Morrow (1999) finds that research, especially US research, overemphasises the influence of parents on children and underemphasises young people’s agency, particularly in the middle and older age ranges at whom mentoring is often targeted.

If Coleman and Putnam are pessimistic about the decline in individual and community connectedness and therefore in social capital, Harpham (2002) highlights that young people have networks from wider social settings, including community activities, friends, social networks, paid and volunteer work, and other community connections, and not just from family and school. This positions mentoring, a community connection, as a potential source of social capital for young people.
Access to social capital is thus beneficial, particularly for those with limited access to economic or human capital (formal training and qualifications). As well as providing emotional and practical support, social capital is linked with learning and asset development, such as confidence and agency. Social capital, residing in all relationships, develops assets which are beneficial and protective with more networks offering more possibilities to get by and even ahead. The greater the trust and obligations, the greater the social capital. Use of resources and assets makes possible change that could not happen otherwise.

The social capital of mentees, as young people, is located predominantly in the emotional support and guidance of their families and immediate community (bonding capital). Young people who do not have a trusting, reciprocal relationship with those closest to them, who are cut off from their school or community, whose networks have limited resources or who are unaware of how to mobilise the resources in their networks are likely to have reduced access to social capital. Portes (1998) finds social capital may be dormant which implies an individual may be unaware of possessing it or how to access it. Field (2003) points out that networks can only marshal resources available to them.

For mentees without connections or where their networks have few resources, a question that arises is how to identify and strengthen latent or existing ties and identify new connections, either on their own or with help. This current study explores whether mentors can help mentees establish connections and activate resources within their networks by, for example, asking for help or taking advice.
2.6.3 The role of mentoring

This section discusses how all relationships, but particularly those with trust, shared values and reciprocity, contain social capital which is associated with developing assets. Employing assets, including social skills or the ability to form rapport and relationships with others, helps build, activate and maintain social capital (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). However, employing assets requires ‘endless effort’ (Bourdieu, 1986 p. 22). A high level of commitment is also required to make a relationship work (Spencer, 2007). Social capital can build assets which, with effort, can build further social capital. Learning facilitated by social capital and its ability to develop assets helps network members adapt to changing circumstances.

As described earlier in this chapter, mentoring relationships can help mentees develop and become aware of their assets, including those previously hidden. Mentees can also potentially benefit from social capital inherent in the mentoring relationship, provided there is a sense of reciprocity and trust between them and their mentor. This would allow them to achieve outcomes not possible previously. Indeed, mentors might be a particularly rich source of social capital if Putnam’s findings (2000) that those who volunteer are well-off, highly educated and have extensive social networks, are to be believed. Social capital in the mentoring relationship develops assets and resources which for Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) increase the likelihood of positive outcomes and reduce the chance of negative outcomes, such as involvement with drugs, violence and risky sexual
behaviour. Thus, the access to relationships and networks that mentors can bring is likely to be beneficial to mentees, particularly where they are disconnected from relationships at home, school or with peers.

Field (2003) suggests that social capital acquisition relies on individuals freely participating in relationships. Given that mentoring relationships are requested by third parties, not mentees, the degree to which mentees are willing participants and the impact this has on the mentoring relationship is explored in the case study.

Indications that the mentoring relationship may be able to help mentees access the ‘magic wand’ of bridging capital (Putnam, 2000 p. 362) include the findings by Darling, Hamilton and Niego (1994) that forming quality relationships with mentors requires fewer skills of mentees than is usually the case because a mentor feels a sense of duty towards their mentee. Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1988) describe reciprocity as one of the norms upon which social capital is built, suggesting mentors and mentees have obligations towards each other, one of which could be helping mentees benefit from bridging capital in the mentoring relationship. A question for this study, therefore, is whether mentee effort and application of assets, and mentors’ sense of obligation towards mentees can overcome the usual difficulties in accumulating bridging capital.

Field (2003) believes that artificial attempts to introduce bridging capital ignore the fact that people may or may not like each other which can impact their ability to work together. This would seem to imply that for social capital to develop in a mentoring relationship, mentor and mentee must like each other. The MyTime
case study offers an opportunity to examine whether mentors in some way facilitate formation of a relationship with bridging capital, despite the acknowledged difficulty of forming such connections.

Evidence that mentoring facilitates access to social capital outside as well as inside the mentoring relationship is provided by Keller (2007 p. 37) who finds mentors can develop a mentee’s social capital through ‘socialisation and expansion of social networks.’ Spencer and Rhodes (2014) believe that activities supporting young people should help them form and maintain connections, to identify supportive adults in their networks and develop their ability to seek help.

The ability of mentoring to facilitate access to such connections with their inherent social capital could compensate for the eventual withdrawal of the mentor and is therefore of interest to this current study.

Summary

The attributes of social capital discussed above suggest a framework within which to explore mentoring in this current study. Table 1 below summarises the key terms from this section, showing the connection between them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>Social capital is the beneficial result of membership of networks and relationship. Social capital develops and is activated through use of assets. Social capital is inherent in all relationships but particularly where there is trust and mutual obligation. Where norms and values are shared, the relationship can become close.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The nature of social capital available may vary by the nature of the relationship in which it resides. This was discussed in terms of **bonding capital** and **bridging capital**:

**Bonding capital**: Located predominantly in emotional support and guidance of those we know and trust - families and community.

**Bridging capital**: In looser connections, relies less strongly on shared values, but gives access to contacts, different views, external resources and different information sources, new information, contacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>These comprise the individuals with whom a young person has some form of connection. Networks encompass relationships as well as looser connections. Young people’s networks are from family, school and social settings including community activities, friends, paid and volunteer work, and other community connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Form where there is shared trust, values and sense of reciprocity and obligation. Such relationships where individuals freely participate accumulate social capital. Social capital within relationships is linked to developing assets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section considered the role of assets and social capital in helping young people achieve change and the potential role of mentoring in developing these.

The next section considers the nature of mentoring relationships which are the main mechanism for asset and resource development.

### 2.7 The mentoring relationship

For most academics, the mentoring relationship is the essence of mentoring.

Identifying what a mentoring relationship can and should achieve is therefore, unsurprisingly, an area of much academic debate. There are at least two schools of thought about the role of the relationship in achieving change. One view holds that change occurs through a positive, warm relationship that offers deep emotional attachment, that is, a developmental mentoring relationship. Another view is that change is achieved through working towards goals or ambitions, that is, an
in instrumental mentoring relationship. The next sub-sections cover these differing views.

2.7.1 Mentoring delivered through developmental relationships

In ‘developmental relationships’ the mentor is guided by their mentee’s ‘needs and wishes’ (Keller, 2007 p.32), is non-judgmental and offers suggestions rather than solutions (Styles and Morrow, 1992; Morrow and Styles, 1995). The close rapport and relationship between mentor and mentee fostered by spending time together in enjoyable structured and social activities can bring about change. The mentoring relationship helps mentees value other close relationships and encourages them to ‘open themselves up more to people around them’ (Rhodes, 2004 p. 38), reinforcing the socialising influence of the mentor.

Clayden and Stein (2005) suggest that a mentoring relationship offers mentees support not otherwise available, such as a caring, listening ear. Through a developmental relationship, mentors can provide new opportunities and activities which help mentees to understand the perspective of others inside and outside the family, promoting bonds to new individuals and institutions (Rhodes et al., 2006). Mentoring relationships should mimic naturally occurring relationships between adult and young person and be ‘more akin to friendships,’ with mentors attending family or school events with their mentee (Spencer, 2007 p.334). Shiner et al., (2004 p. 35) describe the mentoring relationship as ‘relatively mundane.’ It offers
mostly emotional attachment (Philip, 2008), which empowers but does not overwhelm a mentee (Spencer, 2004).

A developmental view holds that relationship building is central to successful mentoring and necessary before mentor and mentee can work on ‘transformation goals’ (Rhodes et al., 2006 p. 701), suggesting a linear process whereby relationship formation is paramount. Structure, challenge and support encourage mentees to be open to an adult’s guidance and influence, allowing a mentor to maximise learning and new skill (asset) development through ‘mentoring moments’ (Spencer and Rhodes, 2014 p. 66), suggesting the adult is in the driving seat.

**Theory behind developmental relationships**

With a background in psychology, for Rhodes et al. (2006), the mentoring relationship can counteract relationship issues caused by insecure early childhood bonding with care-givers (Bowlby, 1973). A supportive mentoring relationship with an emotionally available and predictable adult helps a young person to feel valued and form a more positive model of relationships with adults.

A relationship which offers mentees security and emotional support, responding to their views with positive regard, encourages asset development, such as feelings of self-worth, efficacy and ability to plan for future. The personal nature of the relationship influences the social, cognitive and identity development of the mentee (Rhodes, 2002; Spencer, 2007). Such a relationship counteracts ‘negative
views’ mentees have of themselves (Rhodes et al., 2006; Keller, 2007; Rhodes et al., 2017 p. 418). Mentees benefit academically and socially by replicating this relationship to become closer to others (Rhodes et al., 2017).

Li and Julian (2012) agree, suggesting the emotional attachment of the mentoring relationship compensates for a lack of attachment in primary relationships and that asset-based approaches may hinder relationship formation. A developmental mentoring relationship is more than a well-meaning friendship, however. Lasting ‘emotional attachment; reciprocity; progressively more complex patterns of joint activity’ and a shift in balance of power from the more experienced to less experienced individual brings about change in ways that incentives, accountability or curricula cannot (Li and Julian, 2012 p. 156). Raposa, Rhodes and Herrera, (2016) agree that developmental relationships encourage personal and social development through close relationship formation and promote ‘positive developmental trajectories’ (Raposa et al., 2019 p. 424).

For Eccles and Gootman (2002 p. 3) mentoring is likely to promote ‘positive outcomes’ because it lets young people spend time with caring adults within and outside their family, learning skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. This emphasises the relationship as a means of learning.

Mentoring programmes valuing a developmental relationship are concerned with the duration of mentoring relationships, finding that longer lasting relationships produce more measurable outcomes. Mentoring programmes conceived as a
developmental or relationship-led intervention include Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) (Appendix A) and Friends of The Children (FoTC) (Appendix B).

The developmental relationship would thus seem to be based on close relationships and their inherent bonding capital, including learning. To accumulate social capital, such a relationship should share norms with the mentee and be long-lasting. Literature on social capital suggests bonding capital provides strong emotional support and facilitates learning. However, it may be less likely to bring about significant change. Having examined the characteristics of mentoring programmes based on a developmental relationship, the next section considers mentoring that is structured around attaining programme goals.

2.7.2 An instrumental approach to the relationship

A mentoring relationship where the mentor helps a young person to identify and work towards challenging goals is instrumental (Keller, 2007). Assets can be developed through structured activities alongside mentoring, such as leadership training (Varga and Deutsch, 2016) and teaching and role modelling (Keller, 2007). The relationship strengthens a mentee’s internal capabilities (assets), increasing self-awareness and improving social skills. Thus, an instrumental relationship is premised on a mentee having agency, or ‘being able to exert control over key parts of one’s life’ (Field, 2005 p. 144). Agency, self-efficacy or competence is a key to promoting successful transition into adulthood (Scales et al., 2016).
Mentoring that is goal-focused sees the relationship as a means of helping mentees achieve change and become more self-sufficient. Christensen et al., (2020) in their systematic review of 48 adult to child RCT mentoring programme evaluations (46 of which were US based) find that targeted programmes with activities structured to meet mentee needs are more than twice as effective as non-targeted programmes in increasing academic performance and school engagement, psychological impacts (self-regulation, depression and anxiety) and social functioning. The interpersonal bond in such relationships is less important than the extent to which the adult challenges, points out opportunities and undertakes goal-directed activities, such as building the young person’s character or competence (Darling, Hamilton and Niego, 1994; Darling et al., 2003). Non-kin adults should provide instrumental teaching because relationships are built where relationship building is not the only aim and relationships based on emotional support alone end prematurely.

Newburn and Shiner (2006) find that many of those referred to the Dalston Youth Programme (DYP) who gained the most benefit had identified changes they wished to make. They speculate that having aims might help those mentees achieve change. This finding adds to evidence that seeing mentoring as a means to achieve desired aims can help mentees change, particularly where these goals are theirs. Darling, Hamilton and Niego (1994) therefore challenge the view that the relationship is pre-eminent, finding having goals more important. They also suggest that relationships are formed by working on goals rather than relationships needing to be formed before goals can be achieved.
Raposa, Rhodes and Herrera (2016) suggest that warm, empathetic relationships, with young people as willing participants, are necessary to help mentees change but are not sufficient on their own. Interestingly, Rhodes’ view has evolved during her career researching mentoring, with a shift towards a more goal-focused approach achieving greater change.

It is comparatively rare to hear directly from mentees in the mentoring research. Where their wishes and expectations are explored, findings suggest that mentees have ambitions for the relationship beyond friendship. The most commonly included aspirations are for ‘help’, ‘general support,’ a ‘listener’ or ‘role model,’ but also a desire for help with ‘independent living skills’ and to explore their ‘options and plans’ (Clayden and Stein, 2005 p. 31). Examples of instrumental mentoring programmes include the Diana Award, and DYP (see Appendix C).

The debate between a developmental, mentee-centred approach and an instrumental approach may be somewhat artificial. Keller hypothesises that a hybrid approach may work best, with the mentor building the relationship and helping the young person to develop assets through enjoyable activities. Raposa, Rhodes and Herrera (2016) find no difference to relationship quality, emotional engagement or dissatisfaction between developmental and instrumental relationships, suggesting that goal focus and relationship formation are not mutually exclusive. Like Keller, they conclude that successful relationships tend to balance developmental and instrumental aspects. Findings from the literature
therefore emphasise the power of relationships as agents of change (Li and Julian, 2012).

To make significant changes and achieve goals, mentees benefit from new contacts, ideas and opportunities, suggesting that an instrumental relationship needs to encompass bridging capital. The looser ties associated with bridging capital do not require such a close relationship as for bonding capital. This current study examines whether the mentoring relationship offers bonding capital and/or links to new opportunities through bridging capital.

Instrumental relationships are shorter than developmental ones overall (Raposa, Rhodes and Herrera, 2016). This could suggest that instrumental relationships are less satisfactory than developmental ones. Alternatively, and potentially significantly, it could suggest that once goals are reached, it is appropriate for the relationship to end. This could imply that mentoring relationships are loose ties providing bridging capital. If the relationship provides bonding capital, identifying other relationships that can replace it once mentoring ends is likely to be important. Management of relationship endings, particularly in relationships lasting less than a year, is examined in this current study.

Interestingly, DuBois et al. (2002) find that different mentoring practices are less important than a well-structured approach. Blinn-Pike (2007) reinforces the importance of the quality of delivery of programmes, finding this has the greatest impact on outcomes. This could suggest that underlying attitudes to the role of the relationship are less, or certainly no more important than programme structure, or
that there is insufficient understanding of how best to support mentees. Given the lack of empirical evidence about the mentoring relationship, this current study contributes to the debate about the relative importance of mentoring relationships and processes, particularly from the mentee’s viewpoint.

2.7.3 Who sets the agenda and goals in the mentoring relationship?

Just as developmental relationships are more than friendship, goal setting in instrumental relationships should be sensitive to the views of the mentee rather than prescriptive or imposed. A goal-focused, or prescriptive, relationship driven by the mentor with little regard for the young person is less likely to be successful than one where time is taken to establish trust (Sipe, 2002) and usually leads to mentee frustration and relationship breakdown (Colley, 2003; Raposa, Rhodes and Herrera, 2016). Sipe does not consider whether goals set by the mentee are more likely to succeed. Focusing on ‘hard’ outcomes can negate other potential benefits and rigid adherence to instrumental goals may undermine emotional development (Colley, 2003). Letting a mentee determine agenda, meeting times and locations, with a mentor responsive to their changing needs is more likely to lead to durable relationships (Rhodes and DuBois, 2008).

Speaking to mentees, Philip (2008), a UK researcher, finds that authoritarian approaches, lack of respect, taking control away from the young person, intrusiveness and ‘forcing the pace’ inhibit mentoring relationships. Mentees appreciate being valued by their mentor and having some control over the
relationship and agenda. Mentees report less favourably on relationships with a power imbalance and emphasise the importance of having a say in what is discussed (DeWit et al., 2016). However, unmet expectations for mentees to initiate contact and plan activities can lead to mentors giving up on the relationship (Keller, 2007), suggesting responsibility needs to be balanced between mentors and mentees. Relationships respecting the interests of both parties suggest the reciprocity, shared norms and trust necessary to share the benefits of social capital.

Raposa, Rhodes and Herrera (2016 p. 327) speculate that, although goal setting might be important, being overly prescriptive might not match the ‘unpredictable nature’ of mentee lives and that initial mentor goals might be less important than a mentor’s ability to collaborate with young people. The assumption here seems to be that although negotiation is valuable, goals for the relationship are set by the mentor and either agreed or resisted by the mentee.

Thus, goal-driven mentoring can help mentees change aspects of their lives. However, the role of mentees in setting those goals has not been researched. This current research examines how goals are set in the case study and the implications of that approach. After considering the nature of the mentoring relationship, the next subsection considers what the literature says about the quality and impact of that relationship.
2.7.4 Relationship duration and quality

Most programmes, and particularly those conceiving the mentoring relationship as developmental, consider relationship duration as significant, because desired outcomes such as increased academic success are associated with longer lasting relationships. Benefits from close (high quality) relationships include improved academic outcomes, (Bayer, Grossman and DuBois, 2015). Duration is found to be closely linked to the nature, or quality, of the mentoring relationship.

Relationship duration

Significant research indicates that contact frequency and duration are crucial to mentoring, with an increased likelihood of positive effects where relationships last over a year (DuBois et al., 2002; Rhodes and DuBois, 2006; Herrera et al., 2007; Rhodes, 2008; DuBois et al., 2011; DeWit et al., 2016). This is in part because time is needed to establish the mentoring relationship. Relationship formation can be difficult (Spencer, 2007) and mentees are sometimes mistrustful, taciturn and unreliable in keeping appointments for six to 12 months (Rhodes, 2008).

Relationships that end prematurely or break down within three months can have no benefit or even cause harm, particularly in terms of mentee self-worth and perception of academic competence (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002; Spencer, 2007; Philip and Spratt, 2007). These findings indicate the longer the mentoring relationship, the better with the converse also holding true. This is concerning, given that less than half of mentoring relationships last a year (Grossman and
Rhodes, 2002), with 30-50\% of US mentoring relationships lasting only a few months (DeWit et al., 2016). Over a third of UK mentoring relationships end prematurely, usually because the young person’s life becomes too chaotic to maintain mentoring (Clayden and Stein, 2005).

However, Miller (2007) in his review of US and UK research to identify good practice for UK usage, finds mentoring relationships that last at least six months can be beneficial. The Herrera et al. (2011) survey of mentees, mentors and teachers, shows impact on academic performance after only around 15 meetings, over a five-month period that is comparable to 12 months of BBBS community-based mentoring (CBM). In a five-year RCT study on 278 children in the FoTC programme, caregivers reported greater rates of growth, slower rates of problems and more positive perceptions of children over the five-year timespan. However, outcomes were on a par with those achieved by volunteer mentors over a year long programme (Lakind, Eddy and Zell, 2014).

These findings suggest change can be achieved in less than a year, albeit over fewer domains, challenging findings that relationships of less than a year achieve little benefit and that programme length is the most important factor in determining outcomes. The Raposa et al. (2019) meta-analysis of 70 mentoring studies finds that programme length and expectations around meeting frequency have no impact on outcomes and that, surprisingly, the programmes that expect mentoring to last the longest achieve smaller effect sizes. They acknowledge that this varies from the prevailing view about relationship length but find that positive
youth outcomes can derive from shorter duration programmes if there is time to form a relationship. The literature on social capital adds that a relationship also encompassing trust, reciprocity and shared norms can bring about change by deployment of social capital.

The debate around the importance of relationship duration continues, with some studies pointing to longer relationships achieving greater change and others indicating benefits even from shorter relationships. No matter the length of relationships, Spencer (2007) suggests that endings need careful management. Raposa et al. (2019b) call for more research into relationship duration. Given the fact that most mentoring relationships last for less than a year and there is potential risk to mentees from unmanaged endings, the length of MyTime relationships is of interest to this current study. It considers the extent to which mentors and mentees become close and experience benefits from relationships lasting less than a year.

Given that the length of relationships is often equated to greater change, research, particularly for programmes with a developmental approach, seeks to define the features of a ‘high quality’ relationship, or one that lasts, and how such ‘quality’ might be measured.

**Mentoring relationship quality**

As in so many areas of mentoring, definitions of ‘high quality’ differ. It may be defined by subjective and objective measures: ‘emotional closeness, frequency of
contact and longevity’ (Spencer 2007 p. 332) or subjective only: closeness (emotional support provided, satisfaction, and engagement in the relationships) and instrumental support (helping mentees work on assets and try new activities) (Herrera et al., 2007). A high-quality relationship exhibits the five ‘global attributes’ of ‘trust, warmth/affection, closeness, happiness and respect’ (DeWit et al., 2016 p. 63). Spencer and Rhodes (2014) find mentors who exhibit warmth, support and actively develop young people’s learning and asset development foster close relationships. A relationship where both partners are satisfied, but particularly the mentee, and feel close, defined as a ‘high quality’ relationship, is more likely to achieve change. The mutual satisfaction experienced in such relationships suggests reciprocity and inherent social capital which could explain the achievement of change.

Raposa, Rhodes and Herrera (2016) note that stressful home environments and personal difficulties such as misconduct can make it difficult for mentor and mentee to form high quality, lasting relationships and suggest that mentoring is therefore less appropriate in such situations. Given that such stressors exist for most mentees, these findings are concerning. This study considers whether social capital within mentoring relationships, particularly bridging capital, may have a role in overcoming mentees’ vulnerability to circumstantial and personal difficulties.
The impact of mentoring relationships on other relationships

Correlations between mentee satisfaction with the mentoring relationship and other relationships are noted in the literature. The higher a mentee’s assessment of mentoring relationship quality, the greater the improvement to other relationships (Rhodes et al., 2017). Using the Mentor-Youth Alliance Scale (MYAS), Zand et al. (2009) find that the higher a mentee rates their mentor relationship, the higher they scored in youth competency which is measured in terms of relationships and assets: family bonding, relationships with adults, school bonding and life skills. Chan et al. (2013) in their survey of 526 mentees in a BBBS school-based mentoring (SBM) programme about their mentoring relationship, correlate higher quality relationships with improved mentee relationships with teachers and parents. Higher quality relationships are also associated with the assets of increased self-esteem and enthusiasm for academic study. Research relating to 76 BBBS Ireland participants finds strong links between mentee relationship satisfaction and outcomes, and that the happier mentees are with their relationship, the more likely they are to think that their parents trust them (Silke, Brady and Dolan, 2019). A young person’s rating of relationship closeness is more indicative of a long-lasting relationship than that of the mentor (Rhodes et al., 2017).

Indications of links between mentoring relationships and other relationships suggest mentoring has an impact outside the mentoring relationship with implications for increased social capital. This current study explores whether participants experience links between mentoring and other relationships. It also
examines whether the mentor’s or mentee’s view of the relationship is more important.

2.7.5 The foundations of the mentoring relationship

Literature highlights the role of trust in forming a mentoring relationship. Sipe (2002) in her meta-analysis of mentoring research, finds that building trust is central to a successful relationship. Mentor behaviours most likely to build trust are: ‘consistency and dependability, willingness to maintain the relationship, a sense of caring for the young person, respect for the mentee, involving them in decision making based on their interests, having fun, and becoming acquainted with the mentee’s family whilst avoiding overinvolvement’ (Sipe, 2002 p. 253). Conversely, relationships may fail if mentor or mentee are unreliable and do not maintain their commitment to meet (Spencer, 2007). The importance of mentor consistency and reliability is captured in the titles of significant mentoring research studies: ‘Someone for me’ (Clayden and Stein, 2005), ‘Sharing a laugh’ (Philip, Shucksmith and King, 2004) and ‘Somebody who was on my side’ (Spencer et al., 2016).

Other studies emphasise the importance of empathy towards young people, with mentors who are highly ‘attuned’ to mentee needs reducing the likelihood of harm to the young person, which is one way of representing positive outcomes (Keller and Pryce, 2012). Effective mentoring relationships include support and challenge for mentees (Philip and Hendry, 1996; DuBois et al., 2002). This current study
examines the role of trust, empathy and challenge in building mentoring relationships and how this is achieved.

Mentees value their mentors as role models. The fact that a mentor is unconnected to the mentee makes gaining their positive opinion particularly valuable to a young person’s self-esteem (Darling, Hamilton and Niego, 1994). Relationships where mentees identify positively with their mentor, respect them and consider them a significant adult in their life through shared interests are more likely to be effective and to promote self-esteem, particularly for younger mentees (Philip and Hendry, 1996; DuBois et al., 2002; Spencer et al., 2016). Mentors who share ways they overcame past difficulties are particularly appreciated by mentees in late adolescence (Spencer et al., 2016). Such learning is indicative of a relationship with social capital. This current study examines the extent to which mentors as role models help develop mentee assets, such as problem-solving and self-reliance.

Mentees need to be willing participants in mentoring. Where the desire for a mentor comes from someone other than the mentee, a relationship is more likely to fail (Spencer, 2007). DeWit et al., (2016) agree, finding that mentees who feel extrinsic pressures to take part in a mentoring programme are more likely to end their mentoring relationship early. This finding about the importance of mentee willingness to participate in mentoring is explored in this current study, particularly since voluntary participation in relationships is necessary for social capital acquisition (Field, 2003).
Although a relationship depends upon two people, the literature reviewed focuses less on assets or behaviours contributed by the mentee to establishing the mentoring relationship. A question to be addressed by this current study, therefore, is how mentor and mentee conceive their relationship and whether they use assets to develop it, which is necessary if they are to benefit from inherent social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). An asset raised as significant in developing the mentoring relationship formation is communication, as discussed further below.

The importance of conversation to the mentoring process

A relationship between two people enables conversation. The art and practice of conversation are central to informal learning (Harte, 2001), a resource embedded in social networks (Field, 2005). Conversation between two people, such as mentor and mentee, is often delivered through dialogue which is purposeful, aids understanding and is characterised by ‘concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affection and hope’ (Bennetts 2003, p. 73). Significantly for mentoring, it gives relative equality to both sides (Jeffs and Smith, 1999). Gallagher and Morgan (2013) link conversation with developing the relationship necessary for experiential learning. Conversation also enables the learning embedded within social networks to be accessed (Field, 2005). Through discussion and reflection on personal experiences, young people can develop self-awareness and responsibility for themselves (Gallagher and Morgan, 2016). Talking to a supportive adult helps young people reflect, problem-solve, explore feelings and attitudes and plan (Clayden and Stein, 2005). Worsley (2015) finds young people who talk to others
about matters of concern demonstrate self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual’s belief in their own abilities or competence, a concept developed by Bandura (1977).

Dialogue requires talking and being listened to and is a form of collaboration. Listening and collaboration support change and growth with the increased self-awareness that being listened to brings, potentially leading to improved personal, family and social relationships (Gallagher and Friel, 2010). Goal orientated, or active listening is essential to successful relationships (Bennetts, 2003). Active listening encompasses eye contact, open body language, resistance to distractions, paraphrasing and clarifying or mirroring questions and positive comments are the foundation of a strong mentoring relationship (Converse and Lignugaris-Kraft, 2009). The benefits of active listening as a therapeutic technique have been noted by Higley et al., (2016) and by Donlan, Mcdermott and Zaff (2017) for whom it provides emotional support. Listening is also noted as important to mentees (Clayden and Stein, 2005).

Conversation and listening are thus key to relationships, learning, change and asset development. However, to benefit from the learning and potential for change in the mentoring relationship, mentees need to be able to communicate. Literature highlights the benefits of dialogue but assumes that those involved are proficient at talking and listening. Young people who could benefit from communication may be those in whom these assets are undeveloped. This study examines the role which mentors play in developing and facilitating use of such assets.
The significance of similarity and difference between mentor and mentee

The extent to which mentor and mentee need to be similar is an area of debate. Spencer (2007) highlights the importance of meeting location on the mentoring relationship, finding that meeting in each other’s houses can reinforce income disparity and cause discomfort. This current study examines the impact of the choice of meeting venue on the mentoring relationship and whether such discomfort can be avoided.

For Sipe (2002), mentees who perceive similarities of personality or interest with their mentors report greater liking and satisfaction. However, her review of mentoring studies suggests that mentor behaviour is more significant than matching mentor and mentee on interests (Sipe, 2002). Christensen et al. (2020) in their systematic review of mentoring literature find that shared interests lead to better quality relationships. These findings imply that either shared interests are needed for close relationships or that mentor interaction with their mentee is more significant. Neither approach considers potential benefits from differences between mentor and mentee, nor whether taking an interest in a mentee is as significant as sharing interests.

Having considered what the literature says about the mentoring relationship, the next area to consider is any change the mentoring process might bring about for a young person.
2.8 The difference mentoring makes to a young person

2.8.1 What is an outcome in the context of mentoring?

There is broad agreement that a ‘successful’ mentoring programme is one where young person experiences change for the better, in some, preferably measurable, way. This change may be called an outcome, impact, benefit, or effect, depending on the study. A successful mentoring experience therefore results in positive outcomes, impacts, benefits, or effects. The outcomes measured equate avoiding harm, increasing social capital and/or developing assets with enabling a mentee to ‘reach their potential,’ the aim of many mentoring programmes. Studies invariably focus on achievement or otherwise of pre-determined markers of change which, for programmes or researchers, indicate a young person is on a pathway to achieving their potential. The desire to evidence benefits comes from the laudable aim to identify the ‘right’ way to run mentoring programmes to ensure young people gain from the experience. Programmes and their sponsors may be keen to see measurable evidence of positive mentee outcomes to be confident their resources are being put to good use. This impetus is particularly noticeable for large scale programmes or those, such as DYP, set up to deliver policy outcomes including, for example, improved academic results.

To ‘prove’ what mentoring achieves, many research studies are structured to measure difference in achievement of specific outcomes between programme participants and a similar, non-participating cohort (RCT). To test hypotheses,
studies may also be set up as an experiment. Where the difference between measured outcomes for mentees is greater than for a control group of young people who are not mentored, the programme is said to be ‘effective.’ As stated earlier, the aim of many mentoring programmes is to help mentees reach their potential. ‘Reaching potential’ implies change which persists after the mentoring relationship has ended. Paradoxically, however, research studies and programmes tend measure outcomes by comparing mentee behaviour at the beginning and end of the research period, with little follow up. For example, Tierney, Grossman and Resch (2000) is unusual in re-evaluating results after 18 months. In the absence of longitudinal information, measurable outcomes, benefits and impacts can be considered proxies or staging posts, indicating that a mentee is on a pathway to reaching potential when longer term impacts are unknown.

Outcomes measured in US research tend to focus on educational performance improvement, with harm reduction measurement, such as drug-taking, or lack of involvement in the criminal justice system more prevalent than emotional well-being (Shiner et al., 2004; Newburn and Shiner, 2006; Eddy et al., 2017). Sound academic performance may indeed be a significant marker of future success but focusing on this measure may overlook the connection between emotional wellbeing and academic performance.

Although less widely measured than academic achievement, increases in assets and connections may also be measured, including increased confidence, self-esteem (Schwartz, Lowe and Rhodes, 2012) and the ability or improved ability to
sustain relationships (LoSciuto et al., 1996; Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2008), important for benefitting from social capital. Outcomes measured may combine harm avoidance and asset increase (Tierney, Grossman and Resch, 2000). Herrera et al., (2011), in their research into BBBS SBM programs, compare outcomes with a control group of non-mentored youth both objectively, in terms of changes to academic performance, school misconduct, and attendance, and subjectively, in terms of mentees’ perceptions of their academic potential and teachers’ evaluation of mentee ‘social acceptance.’ Measuring mentees’ perceptions of their potential suggests being aware of their own ability is significant and separate from academic achievement. The importance and significance of self-awareness is explored in this current study.

2.8.2 What outcomes are identified in the literature?

Correlations between positive effects in many domains of mentee’s lives and mentoring are identified in the literature. Rhodes, Grossman and Resch (2000) find young people with close, lasting mentoring relationships see increased self-concept and strengthened interpersonal relationships, decreases in substance use and improved school attendance. Similarly, Tolan et al. (2008) suggest that involvement in youth mentoring programmes is associated with more positive attitudes toward school, greater well-being, a greater ability to resist peer pressure to take drugs and alcohol, improved interpersonal relations, less aggressive behaviour and decreases in truancy. High-quality mentoring is associated with positive behavioural, social, emotional and academic outcomes (Higley et al.,
Shaw and Bernardes (2018 p. 25) find ‘statistically significant positive effects’ in ‘academic, social and emotional, behavioural and attitudinal domains’, particularly for ‘males and those who are vulnerable or high risk’.

Newburn and Shiner (2006) surveyed young people on the DYP programme before starting, 12 months later, and at a follow up six months later. To judge the efficacy of the results, a cohort of young people who had chosen not to participate in the scheme despite expressing an interest was used as a control. Where the programme was delivered without modification, participants were significantly more likely to be in education, training or employment than the control group. By the end of the programme, their qualifications were on a par with those who had been deemed not to need the support of the programme.

Drawing attention to the significance of programme delivery to achieving desired outcomes supports earlier findings that high-quality programme structure is important. DYP did not achieve all its desired outcomes. The decline in offending behaviour, for example, was consistent with the general decline in that age group, with control group members indeed reporting greater reductions. However, a universal approach does not meet the needs of all mentees (Newburn and Shiner, 2006). This current study considers the extent to which MyTime takes a standard approach or is individualized to each mentee and the impact that this has.

Thus, the impact of mentoring on mentees is found to be mostly positive. A feature of all this research is that it is based on indicators of success selected by programmes or researchers rather than by those involved in the programme.
What mentees value

Significantly for this study, the outcomes mentees value from mentoring overlap with rather than directly replicating those valued by programmes and researchers. Mentees’ opinions about what they gain are less often identified in the literature but where these exist, mentoring’s impact on mentees’ self-concept seems more important than hard outcomes, such as gaining a job, academic prowess or response to ‘risky’ situations. Mentees identify having a mentor with building self-confidence, communication skills and assertiveness (Clayden and Stein, 2005), which can be considered as assets. Mentees report improved communication and assertiveness, emotional well-being, social and practical skills (Philip, 2008).

Gallagher and Morgan (2013) theorise that the process of youth work (which includes youth mentoring, as discussed in Section 2.2) facilitates young people’s development of universal and useful core skills of increased self-awareness, resilience and coping mechanisms (or assets for the purposes of this current study). These assets increase young people’s awareness of their potential. Indeed, Salter (2018) finds that the process and experience of arts-based youth work is as important to young people as achieving an outcome. This current study explores young people’s views about the important aspects of mentoring and whether this includes the process, outcomes or both.
Impact of mentoring on relationships

Mentees also comment positively on mentoring’s impacts on social support and relationship quality with peers, teachers and parents (Raposa, Rhodes, et al., 2019b). The literature finds that mentoring can improve young people’s perceptions of other adult relationships, particularly the parent–child relationship (Rhodes, Grossman and Resch, 2000). Such improved parental relations are associated with positive change in other domains including improved academic performance (Rhodes, Grossman and Resch, 2000), higher social self-concepts and lower levels of problem behaviour (Lau and Leung, 1992). Positive mentee perceptions of mentor support correlate with perceiving other adults as helpful (Silke, Brady and Dolan, 2019). BBBS’s own research indicates that whilst strong parental relationships are important, good relationships with peers, or having ‘social competence,’ are more significant indicators, particularly of academic achievement. However, a note of caution is sounded by Philip (2008), who finds that asset building in dealing with relationships may be patchy and cannot be guaranteed. The importance of connections and mentoring’s potentially beneficial role in supporting formation of these is thus highlighted. This current study considers mentoring’s role in developing relationships, and thereby access to social capital, through the MyTime case study.

In line with the generally contradictory nature of mentoring literature, there is conflicting evidence about who benefits from mentoring and the domains in which mentoring makes the most difference. The Farruggia et al. (2011) meta-analysis of
28 studies finds effective programmes focus on psychological and interpersonal goals rather than educational, behavioural, vocational or cultural ones. However, the Shaw and Bernardes (2018) meta-analysis finds clearer impact on academic attainment than on social or emotional development.

The suggestion by Spencer (2007) that mentoring has greater impact on mentees’ interaction with their environment, helping them overcome environment risk such as low socio-economic status, rather than individual challenge such as learning difficulties, suggests mentoring may increase access to social capital in community connections. However, Blinn-Pike (2007 p. 172) finds mentoring programmes have more impact on a mentee’s academic performance than ‘delinquent behaviour, improved psychological functioning and mental health’.

DuBois et al. (2011) and Schwartz et al. (2011), using BBBs programme data, find that mentoring is more effective for those with some or moderate environmental risk than for those with high or no risks. Raposa et al., (2019 p. 423) describe mentoring for young people ‘at risk’ of developing ‘psychological, social and behavioural problems, potentially avoiding more intensive intervention, rather than those facing issues currently.

These differences are significant because they suggest different circumstances in which mentoring should be used and, in some cases, suggest no benefit for precisely the young people often referred for mentoring. Considering a case study allows exploration of circumstances in which mentoring is used and whether these circumstances lead to beneficial outcomes.
2.8.3 Mentoring and resilience

Literature suggests mentoring has a role to play in developing the resilience of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Clayden and Stein, 2005; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2016). A resilient person can adapt to adversity by making positive changes (Zimmerman, Phelps and Lerner, 2008). Resilience was considered a fixed trait in the individual, with ‘characteristics’ protective of a resilient trajectory existing at a personal (e.g., intelligence and appealing manner), family (e.g., socioeconomic advantage and close relationships) and/or community level (positive, non-related role models, community organisations and good schools) (Rhodes, 2002). Needing to have these characteristics, whilst explaining why some young people have resilient profiles, offers little comfort to those without characteristics such as socio-economic advantage over which they have little control, which would seemingly preclude them from resilience.

Resilience is now conceived more dynamically as a positive outcome from the interaction of social environment and the individual (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005) or as positive adaptation when faced with adversity (Zimmerman, Phelps and Lerner, 2008). Strengthening young people’s assets and resources can increase resilience (Grotherg, 1995; Worsley, 2015), allowing them to develop healthily (Eccles and Gootman, 2002). Such assets include self-confidence and social skills (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005), goal-directed behaviour and self-regulation (Zimmerman, Phelps and Lerner, 2008), self-esteem, self-efficacy and awareness of resources (Worsley 2015), all classified as assets for the purposes of
this study. So, although a young person cannot reduce adversity, developing assets and resources can help them have a more resilient response.

Worsley (2015) links possession of social capital with resilience. She finds that a willingness to ask for help and having connections and relationships gives access to support, self-esteem and efficacy and increase the likelihood of a resilient response to adversity. New experiences and persisting through setback, by for example, developing a skill increase young people’s sense of their own competence (Worsley, 2015) which enhances resilience (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005).

Helping young people develop a resilient response to adversity gives them a better chance of reaching their potential, the aim of most programmes studied. The case study used in the current research explores the extent to which connections fostered through the mentoring process help mentees develop and harness assets and resources, indicated by literature to develop resilience.

2.8.4 The significance of change brought about by mentoring

Despite their variation, findings in literature point consistently to positive benefits. Mentoring is ‘modestly effective’ for young people who are coping relatively well in difficult circumstances (Rhodes, 2004 p. 128). DuBois et al.’s (2011) systematic literature review finds that mentoring benefits young people’s development in multiple domains including social and academic, in ‘soft’ areas, such as attitudes, as well as objective areas, including behaviour and academic
performance. That is, mentoring can accommodate a wide variety of mentee needs because it gives consistent benefits in different settings.

However, although ‘statistically significant,’ changes are small and suggest that mentoring is not a panacea for young people and the difficulties they face. The influential DuBois et al. (2002) meta-analysis of mentoring programmes reports modest but consistent effects on young people in reducing problem/high-risk behaviour, improving social competence, academic/educational indicators, and career/employment preparation. DuBois et al. (2011) subsequent meta-analysis of 73 evaluations of youth mentoring programs found mostly only small benefits to participants’ emotional wellbeing, behaviour and engagement in education.

Blinn-Pike (2007 p.173) bemoans the lack of peer-reviewed or theoretically based research, with much of it being ‘more anecdotal than empirical’ and concludes mentoring has a low to moderate impact, mainly in attitudes to school and violence, in some academic outcomes and parental relationships.

Analysis of ‘what works’ for the Education Endowment Foundation toolkit (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017) finds disadvantaged pupils who are mentored gain one month’s academic attainment progress relative to their more affluent peers. Shaw and Bernardes (2018) identify that mentoring’s general impacts are positive but modest. In their systematic review of literature between 1975 and 2017, Raposa et al. (2019 p. 437) note considerable variation in programme effectiveness, with average impact statistically significant in all outcomes, in line with the average impact of youth prevention programmes and a
‘modestly effective strategy for promoting a wide-range of positive outcomes’.

They speculate that low impact from mentoring could be due to differences in the ‘strength and length’ of mentoring relationships (Raposa et al., 2019 p. 437).

Christensen et al. (2020) disagree, claiming that mentoring delivers relatively weaker effects than other interventions that serve a similar population.


Worse than achieving no change, studies such as the Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study identify negative effects, where those in a mentoring programme designed to prevent delinquency were more likely to commit crime than the control group (Rodríguez-Planas, 2012). A study on a Student Mentoring Programme revealed that young women who took part experienced improved academic and behavioural outcomes but not young men, resulting in no overall benefit from the programme (Rodríguez-Planas, 2012).

Thus, change is deemed as significant but small. However, Rhodes (2004) observes that relationships can transform lives. Raposa et al. (2019b) make the
important observation, highly relevant to this current study, that even small improvements can have a significant impact on youth development longer term. Taking a mentee’s perspective of whether small improvements should indeed be considered insignificant and whether there are examples of lives transformed is part of the work of this current study.

2.8.5 Why do reports of mentoring’s outcomes differ?

For Rhodes (2008), inconsistent findings about mentoring’s effectiveness and the modest impact of the intervention arise from the differing quality of evaluation methods used and outcomes measured. Rhodes (2008) critiques the use of meta-analyses, finding they mask the benefits of well-run programmes such as BBBS where greater change has been noted. Variation and lack of consistency in outcomes identified could result from the lack of comparability between mentoring models which differ by aims, methods, outcomes and audiences (Busse, Campbell and Kipping, 2018a). Busse, Campbell and Kipping, (2018a) suggest that twelve mentoring categories exist, differing by type of mentor, setting and purpose and that findings between categories cannot be directly compared. The Philip and Hendry (1996) typology categorises interventions by their value to young people. Rhodes et al. (2006) conclude from meta-analyses that mentoring effects are likely to vary depending on mentee, mentor and programme characteristics as well as quality of evaluation method and outcomes measured. Accepting that mentoring models are not directly comparable challenges validity
of mentoring meta-studies, which aggregate models and may explain why limited benefits have been found.

Rhodes et al. (2006 p. 692) hypothesise that mentors help their mentee’s development by ‘a) enhancing social skills and emotional well-being b) improving cognitive skills through instruction and dialogue and c) fostering identity development by serving as role model and advocate’. However, this remains a theoretical model. Newburn and Shiner (2006 p. 39) and others have called for identification of the factors behind individual change and testing hypotheses to lead to a ‘more fully theorized’ approach. Colley (2003), Shiner et al (2004) and Blinn-Pike (2007) find a lack of theoretical basis for mentoring interventions. Miller (2007) comments that good practice recommendations for mentoring tend to be theory- rather than practice-based. He calls for empirical research into the formation and development of youth mentoring relationships to explore the validity of theoretical models, particularly from the mentee’s viewpoint. The current study provides such empirical research by exploring what happens during the mentoring process and what those involved experience.
2.9 Summary

This chapter has reviewed and analysed youth mentoring. Mentoring programmes examined in the literature start with the laudable aim to help young people in difficult circumstances to thrive. The assumption underlying the mentoring process is that young people need to change in some way to reach their potential and this change can be achieved through working with a mentor, a non-kin, caring, vetted adult. Mentoring programmes often assume that the difference made by mentoring can be measured. Recent research suggests participation in mentoring can help mentees avoid harm by, for example, staying out of the youth justice system or avoiding early pregnancy. Additionally, or alternatively, mentees can improve life chances through enhanced academic engagement and performance, increased emotional wellbeing, increased confidence and strengthened relationships such as better relations with parents. This more positive approach recognises the benefits to young people of developing assets and connections in making change.

This chapter also discussed the nature and importance of assets, internal qualities which include confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem. The literature indicates that these are protective for young people vulnerable to risk, increasing their likelihood of resilience and helping them attain their potential. Mentoring and mentors may help mentees become aware of and develop their assets,
Young people can benefit from resources in the connections around them which include applicable learning, information, emotional support, access to material goods, new ideas and opportunities. These resources are known as social capital. Employment of resources can help achieve change that would not have been possible otherwise. Those with social capital are also likely to develop assets.

Literature examined in this chapter broadly agrees that access to more assets and connections gives young people more social support, new opportunities and sources of learning. These in turn provide more options and opportunities to overcome obstacles and reach their potential, particularly where young people are aware of their assets and resources. Activating assets and social capital can also help keep young people on a resilient trajectory. The literature establishes a correlation between a mentee’s relationship with their mentor, the development of their assets and access to social capital.

Despite the similarity in aims, the underlying beliefs about how change can be delivered and should be operationalised differ. Some programmes, such as BBBS and FoTC, conceive mentoring as relationship led. Regular contact between mentor and mentee with no set curriculum to follow is envisaged to create close and long-term connection which brings about change. Such programmes therefore focus on strengthening bonding capital, based on a close and supportive familial relationship. Based on social capital theories, this is likely to give emotional support and applicable learning, but less likely to bring about transformational change.
Instrumental programmes, such as the Diana Award and DYP, have specific aims such as employability or experience of community leadership and are to a greater or lesser extent structured to achieve those aims. Relationship formation, rather than being the main aim of such programmes is a means of delivering the programme’s purpose. Such programmes may offer less emotional support but bring about greater change if relationships contain bridging capital. Although shared norms and values may be less significant to access social capital in these relationships, trust and reciprocity are still required.

The literature is divided on which of these models works best or indeed whether relationships benefit from both close relationship and purpose. How mentoring programmes are structured and how mentor and mentee relate to each other are also highlighted as important, with some programme approaches (such as programme flexibility towards individual needs and goals) and some mentee attitudes (such as being a willing participant and having personal aims that align with those of the programme) potentially achieving greater change than those without these approaches. Other literature claims that well-structured and well-supported programmes are as important for mentees to benefit as the underlying relationship model chosen.

Research consistently finds that mentoring can achieve its stated aims and help mentees avoid harm and/achieve positive change in their lives in the many domains and formats in which it is applied. This points to its flexibility and value as an approach. Research is divided in whether mentoring achieves similar or less
benefit to other youth development interventions. However, any changes measured, although significant, are small and may in some cases be negative.

The lack of involvement of young people in deciding what makes mentoring a useful intervention is indicative of a general lack of mentees’ voices in mentoring literature. Where their views are heard, mentees ascribe strengthening their assets such as confidence and relationships to mentoring and value these changes. They appreciate mentoring’s impact on how they feel about themselves and how they relate to situations and others (Philip, 2004, 2008), rather than measurable outcomes such as increased literacy or reduced truancy.

The review of mentoring literature suggests a theoretical framework for this current research that young people exposed to a mentoring process through a high-quality relationship benefit from increased assets and the resources of social capital to achieve their goals. However, it also indicates gaps in knowledge. Indications of significant but small changes as a result of mentoring could suggest it can only ever be a modest intervention. Alternatively, it could be that mentoring achieves outcomes that do not lend themselves to measurement or that are not measured because they do not match those considered significant by those judging the success or otherwise of mentoring. An outcome or indicator driven approach that pre-determines what is significant and should be measured may not capture all mentoring’s benefits and may overlook the significance of the process and experience of mentoring to those participating. Change perceived as small by researchers might have a greater significance to participants.
Other areas for investigation highlighted by the literature include the role of the relationship in achieving outcomes and how a relationship of the necessary ‘quality’ is developed. Without talking to those involved, it is difficult to understand what they value about the mentoring process. Discussion with individuals can complement findings from data-based studies, allowing focus on ‘how’ mentoring is experienced and ‘what’ its impact is on those involved.

Several researchers call for a more qualitative approach to better understand how the relationship between mentor and mentee is formed. To respond to this, this current study focuses on mentors’ and mentees’ experiences of the mentoring relationship, addressing gaps between mentoring theory and practice. This current study seeks to understand what happens during the mentoring process that might bring about change. It explores mentor and mentee activity in establishing, maintaining and benefitting from a mentoring relationship, to deepen the understanding of mentoring gained from the literature. This current study also explores the roles that the mentoring process and relationship play in asset and social capital development. Using a UK case study, this study sets out to answer research questions that emanate from the literature and resonate with the aims of the thesis, specifically:

RQ1: What are the expectations of those involved in a youth mentoring process?

RQ2: How do those involved experience youth mentoring?
RQ 3: What is the role of the relationship in the mentoring process?

RQ4: How do any outcomes of youth mentoring relate to the development of assets and social capital in young people?

Chapter 3 sets out the methodological considerations and choices around operationalising these research questions. It discusses how the research strategy was selected to address the limited academic investigation of participant experience of a UK mentoring programme.
Chapter 3. Methodology

Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 discussed perceptions of mentoring, its expected outcomes and the lack of understanding of what young people value in the mentoring process. It also revealed the potential for social capital inherent in the mentoring relationship to develop assets and further networks. This chapter argues that the most appropriate way to answer these questions and the assumptions underlying the research is to take an interpretivist, qualitative stance towards what can be known about the phenomenon of mentoring and how it can be known.

3.1 The appropriateness of an interpretivist viewpoint

For this researcher, mentors and mentees are the experts in their own lives, and this learning and knowledge has value. Mentors and mentees are not passive receivers of knowledge but active in self-directed and experiential learning from those they trust. Additionally, given the unique nature of individual experience of mentoring, the reality of mentoring is discoverable only through discussion with those experiencing that reality. Mentors, mentees, referrers and coordinators construct their own meaning in the social context of each mentoring experience and relationship. The reality of mentoring thus comprises the views and interpretations of those participating.

Considering the phenomenon of ‘what we may know’ (Grix, 2002 p. 178), and that the ways of discovering the meaning of mentoring are constantly recreated by
social interaction, is an interpretivist viewpoint (Richardson, 2018). Although a similar term ‘constructivist’ is also used (Grix, 2002), this study refers to ‘interpretivist’ for consistency. Interpretivism matches this researcher’s viewpoint that there is no single or definitive truth and that reality can be interpreted in many ways, influenced by one’s beliefs and perceptions (Twining, 2018). The interpretivist paradigm seeks to understand from the participant’s perspective that human behaviour and ways of knowing are context dependent or situated, rejecting the notion of stability. Individuals interpret according to their culture, different ways of life and beliefs about the world. Their actions and the operation of institutions cannot be understood without understanding how they interpret and make sense of their world (The Open University, 2014). Individuals construct their own social reality rather than external reality determining their perception.

Interpretivism considers that ‘how we come to know what we know’ (Grix, 2002 p.178) is gathered by understanding a person’s unique worldview (Richardson, 2018). The constant dialogue between people and their context constructs many realities (Shaw, 2010).

Interpretivism is concerned with the individual (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), the interest of this current study. If the reality of mentoring is constructed subjectively by those experiencing it, it follows that the most appropriate way to understand the phenomenon of mentoring and what it can achieve, is to seek the views and interpretations of those experiencing it. Specifically for this study, this means speaking to mentors, mentees, referrers and coordinators to understand
their views and expectations of mentoring, of the relationship, of what they value and of what changes because of mentoring.

The research strategy chosen, therefore, must allow participants to describe their lived experiences of mentoring and be underpinned by an interpretivist position. Exploring the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem requires a qualitative research strategy (Creswell, 2014). This permits the researcher to focus on understanding the subjective meaning those involved in youth mentoring ascribe to their experiences and to identify the ‘essence’ of their experiences (Greene and Hogan, 2016 p. 16).

Elements of the interpretivist approach are shared with phenomenology, a view of gathering knowledge derived from philosophy and psychology that, like this study, is concerned with the individual’s experiences of reality (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). Phenomenology and its attendant data analysis methodology, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), relate specifically to the practice of psychology and people’s mental and emotional states, a different emphasis from this current study. However, its commitment to exploring ‘meaning and sense making’, ‘personal experience’ and individuals’ perceptions, trying to understand their world and take their side through ‘interpretive activity’ (Smith and Osborn, 2008 p. 53) have informed development of this methodology.
3.2 Choice of qualitative research strategy

An assumption that the benefits of mentoring can and need to be measured has resulted in the predominantly data-driven approach evidenced in the literature review. Evidence of change brought about by mentoring is often collected through positivistic, quantitative research strategies, employing large data sets (DuBois et al., 2002). Such research can identify trends and hypotheses as well as indicating statistical correlation between variables such as mentoring relationship and outcomes e.g., employment. It can test hypotheses about which factors lead to which results, using or developing tools to measure these impacts and establishing statistical relationships between variables, such as mentoring ‘quality’ and relationship duration (Chan et al., 2013). However, it cannot explore how the relationship was established nor why such correlations might occur. Additionally, a quantitative approach that sets out to prove or disprove a hypothesis is less likely to uncover results which are unexpected (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

The success or otherwise of mentoring is usually determined by movement in indicators associated with outcomes believed to be of most benefit to young people e.g., academic engagement and success, social skills and avoiding behaviours deemed ‘risky,’ such as drug taking. Positive change in indicator measurements before and after mentoring is deemed to show success. The assumption is that the greater the extent to which researchers can demonstrate positive outcomes, the greater the benefit to mentees and therefore the more successful the programme.
The measurement of outcomes pre-set by policy makers and programmes has been the main basis of understanding mentoring outcomes to date. Although responses to survey questions about mentoring’s impact, for example in the BBBS mentoring studies referenced in the review of literature, are answered subjectively by participants, the indicators and outcomes measured are specified by researchers. Additionally, datasets may not be collected specifically for a particular research study and thus require some ‘fitting’ of findings to research questions. There is no possibility of going back to participants to understand why they answered questions in a certain way or to explore nuance in their answers.

Such quantitative research has demonstrated mentoring’s worth in a way understood by sponsors and policy makers and established statistical correlations between cause and effect e.g., between quality and duration of relationships. However, a quantitative approach that summarises large quantities of data into headline findings and correlations is less able to explain why this is. A qualitative approach as undertaken in this current study can explore how mentor and mentee form that relationship, based on individual experience. A qualitative research strategy is interested in ‘causal processes’ and can complement, supplement and explain findings from quantitative research, suggesting how evidence might be turned into practice (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011 p. 227), with the latter an important consideration for a professional doctorate. Such a strategy can uncover complexity and contradiction (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), complementing the existing, mainly data-driven knowledge base which identifies correlations and connections through statistical significance.
3.2.1 The need to consider the views of young people

The sensitive nature of mentee and mentor experience also indicates that an approach focused on the individual is appropriate, suggesting a qualitative approach. Additionally, the literature gives little indication that the outcomes measured reflect what a young person, and those supporting them, would choose or value, which are important considerations in understanding mentoring. The literature evidences statistically significant, positive but small change from mentoring, with negative outcomes from premature ending (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002; Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2017). However, a change measured as small or insignificant by an external evaluator may be very significant to the person experiencing it.

The literature review indicates that externally judged perceptions of benefits and the significance of these benefits might differ from mentees’ views. This suggests that aspects of mentoring that could be amplified to benefit mentees may be being missed. Conversely, the evaluation of FoTC noted caregivers found a difference in outcomes but not the young people. Understanding whether young people notice a difference and the nature of that difference are the subjects of this study.

3.2.2 Qualitative research or quantitative research

Interpretivist research should adopt an ‘exploratory orientation’ to understand ‘what is going on’ (The Open University, 2014 p. 28) and data should be structured as little as possible by researchers’ assumptions. As well as matching
the research aims of this study, taking a qualitative approach supplements gaps identified by quantitative researchers in the field of mentoring. Rhodes (2002, p.110) identifies a need for better understanding of mentoring relationships, ‘that covers the reciprocal nature of the mentoring process as it unfolds i.e., research that demonstrates how to develop and sustain effective mentoring relationships. Spencer (2007) calls for research into the expectations of mentors and mentees and the impacts that these have on the mentoring relationship. Keller (2007) finds greater understanding of whether mentees report instrumental support, of their experiences of developing assets (called ‘competence’) and access to social capital is needed. Qualitative research into the nature of relationships that have been identified as protective resources (e.g., non-kin adults) would be beneficial since most resilience research has focused on individual assets and family level resources (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). Relationships with non-kin adults or mentors is a focus of this current research.

Although Chan et al. (2013) identify links between the quality of the mentoring relationship and relationships with other adults, their study cannot investigate the causes of these improvements. Chan et al. (2013) suggest undertaking studies, including those with a qualitative strategy, to explore connections between match quality and the outcomes for young people. They also recommend research to establish whether pre-existing mentee assets, such as social skills, result in higher quality mentoring relationships, making mentoring more suitable for some young people than others. This study explores whether mentees need to have existing assets or whether these can be developed through the mentoring process.
Researchers of BBBS and FoTC programmes often use RCTs to compare outcomes and effectiveness of mentoring for young people who have been mentored with a similar control group who have not. RCTs can highlight outcomes that may be ascribed to mentoring and those which would occur in the population without the intervention. However, criticisms of the use of RCTs include the ethical consideration of selecting some young people to potentially benefit from the intervention whilst excluding others. Other criticisms draw attention to financial and time costs. Eccles and Gootman (2002) also point out that findings are meaningless unless accompanied by an evaluation of implementation and methods to identify why experimental effects are achieved. Non-experimental approaches, such as case studies, interviews and observational techniques, can help understand programmes without a clear theory of change by providing ‘patterns of effective practice and programme strengths and weakness. Non-experimental approaches are appropriate where the research is interested in the nature of participants’ experience and are also useful to generate hypotheses such as why programmes fail (Eccles and Gootman, 2002).

Interestingly, Raposa et al. (2019) report that survey-based assessment of mentoring programmes is known to reveal significantly larger impact sizes than interviews or school records. This suggests either that change may be even less than currently indicated or that the change being measured is not the change being experienced.
Importantly for this study, Eccles and Gootman (2002), in their evaluation of evidence around programmes for young people, comment that the transformative effect of a programme on a young person can be lost in large surveys, which identify the average rather than individual effect size.

Quantitative research tests hypotheses and decides which variables indicate a young person’s likelihood of reaching their potential. However, quantitative research cannot explore the experience of mentoring. To allow mentors and mentees to identify which aspects of the mentoring experience and its outcomes are important to them and to build on the findings from the literature review, a qualitative research strategy is needed to explore individual experience and nuance.

Because this study seeks to understand similarities and differences between individual mentor and mentee experiences, a quantitative, positivistic approach that there is one objective ‘truth’ to uncover to the phenomenon of mentoring is inappropriate (Twining et al., 2017). A qualitative research strategy allows ‘for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem’ (Creswell, 2009 p. 4). Multiple perspectives and factors can be considered, uncovering the complexities of differing knowledge, expectations and contexts (Twining et al., 2017), in this case of mentoring relationships. A qualitative approach recognises that the meaning of mentoring is created anew during social interaction rather than there being one truth to discover. Such an approach accommodates different experiences and possibly differing views of
participants. To focus on processes that lead to mentoring outcomes as well as the outcomes themselves requires a qualitative approach (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Given that behaviour and data are socially situated i.e., dependent on context, the most effective way to achieve the research aims is hearing individual experiences and interpretations of the reality of mentoring. A qualitative research strategy allows this study to draw ‘strongly’ on direct experience, to examine meaning beyond what is immediately presented and give ‘voices to participants’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011 p. 219), all important considerations when participants include vulnerable young people.

3.2.3 Counteracting criticism of qualitative research

A criticism levelled against qualitative research is that it lacks scientific rigour because it deals in descriptions and feelings rather than facts, suggesting that findings apply only to the case where data were collected i.e., are not generalisable. Findings are also difficult to reproduce because the data collected depends upon the interactions between interviewer and interviewee, leading some to question data reliability. These criticisms need addressing if findings from this current research are to be applied or related to practice and policy.

Counter arguments include the possibility of generalisability even from individual such as in ethnography (Woods, 1979). Qualitative research that considers explicitly how ‘findings tie in with or contradict existing relevant theories and generalisations about human social behaviour’, can be more generalisable
(Denscombe, 2003 p. 88). This current research makes such links to theories regarding social capital frameworks.

Braun and Clarke (2021, p.143) discuss the need to understand an issue and ‘connect that to something broader’, particularly for those working in policy or applied areas, both of which apply to professional doctorates. This study, for example, wishes to see findings about mentoring in one programme which might apply or relate to other cases or youth mentoring in general. Ensuring research is embedded in historical, policy and wider discourse debate shows the fit between data interpretation and wider contexts (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

Findings from qualitative research are generalisable to ‘identifiable specific settings and subjects’ rather than to all situations and ‘trustworthiness and its components’ can fulfil the same role as reliability and validity in qualitative research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, p.220). Such trustworthiness is provided in this current research through its coherent research strategy, including sampling and data collection methods, with findings thus relatable to other mentoring cases. An interpretivist epistemology supported by a qualitative research strategy therefore allows development of a broad understanding of the mentoring experience, based on detail from individual cases within the overall study. Focusing on the individual can increase understanding of the mentoring experience and may uncover findings or nuances not revealed by a quantitative approach.
Having discussed how the choice of qualitative methodology both fits with this study’s ontology and epistemology and complements existing mentoring research, the next section outlines ethical considerations in undertaking this study.

3.3 Ethics

This study and its methodology follow British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines (2018), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and British Psychological Society’s (BPS) guidance for working with young people under 16. (See Appendix D for ethics approval documentation.) The Consequential, Ecological, Relational and Deontological (CERD) ethical framework (Fox and Mitchell, 2019) was used as an approach for identifying and responding to ethical considerations in this current study. Ethical concerns were of particular significance in a study researching the views of vulnerable young people and responses to ethical dimensions of this study are discussed below.

3.3.1 Consequential Considerations

This aspect of the CERD framework covers ethical considerations around the impact and consequences of the research on participants (Fox and Mitchell, 2019). This current study is in the interests of children and young people because it researches an area of government and community practice which is under-evidenced, in line with Article 3 of the UN Convention, ‘in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration.’
The way in which data was collected as part of the qualitative research strategy of this current study gave participants a voice and is described later in this chapter. Participation in the research was entirely voluntary with interviewees having to opt into the process. The researchers explained to mentees there would be no negative outcome from non-participation or withdrawal and that the outcome of interviews would not be shared with mentors or third parties involved in mentoring. Additionally, mentees were exposed to a new experience, the research process, and were valued for their expertise in their own lives, both of which were found to be beneficial in this current research.

The initial briefing outlined the topics for discussion to help aid decisions to participate. Interviewing participants using semi-structured questionnaires to collect data meant that they could choose how they presented their views. The two-stage interviewing process included discussion with participants to ensure their views had been understood. Although the researcher decided the topics to be covered, interviewees’ responses were the only topic of interest.

The impact of the researcher and research process on those interviewed, reactivity, was also considered. In the case of data collection tools, participants were notified that a recorder could be used and were asked again for consent before the interview. One young person did not wish to be recorded so handwritten notes were taken instead. The recorder was a mobile phone, a familiar item, to minimise intrusion. The question-and-answer format of interviewing did not suit all young people which resulted in the use of elicitation interviews to stimulate discussion.
Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) talk of the ethical need for researchers to ensure participants gain from the research in return for their contributions. Potential benefits from participation included the opportunity to reflect on their situation, to learn more about themselves and support their development. Reflection allowed the construction of knowledge from interviewee mentoring experience, increasing self-awareness of what was important to them and what they wished to achieve from mentoring or being mentored. Increased self-awareness is associated with resilience and positive outcomes for young people (Zimmerman, Phelps and Lerner, 2008). Mentors, mentees and coordinators all commented spontaneously and voluntarily on the benefits they had found from such discussion and reflection.

Only two mentees were able to participate in both interviews (see Appendix G for an example). Given the difficulties mentees faced in getting their voices heard, it was important for this study to include the contributions that they were able to make. Interviews with mentees were designed to be standalone, reviewing mentee comments with them during interviews and using elicitation to gain deeper insight into their views (Grant, 2018).

Study questions were designed to be non-intrusive, focusing on uncovering generic experiences and processes of the phenomenon of mentoring, not specific situations or advice. However, most mentees are deemed ‘vulnerable,’ and mentors may have issues of their own so there was a risk of participants’ reflections negatively affect their mental wellbeing. Participants were reminded
that they could withdraw from interviews at any time. This researcher also had a list of community counselling services for participants if required but this offer was not taken up.

In the case of mentor and mentee interactions during a mentoring session, observation was considered as a research method because observing can give insight into the meaning participants ascribe to an activity (Denscombe, 2003). However, it was only used in one case and at a distance. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) find observation can still be subject to bias in interpreting what is seen, but more importantly this researcher was concerned it might distract mentor and mentee in their interactions. Taking an interpretive stance based on interviewees’ descriptions of their experience of mentoring seemed more ethical and better suited to enable greater understanding of the meaning they ascribed to mentoring than external perceptions or observations.

A concern for this researcher was the potential impact on the MyTime team that was so supportive of her work if her research findings suggested MyTime mentoring was not a worthwhile use of local authority time or resource. She suspected this might encourage her to focus only on positive aspects and ignore evidence of non-benefit, harm or which supported the findings of the literature review that outcomes from mentoring are small (DuBois et al., 2002; 2011). The EdD supervisory process, use of different data sources and reflexivity, described later, challenged her thinking and assumptions. Additionally, this current study is not an evaluation of the MyTime programme upon which funding might rest, but
rather, an exploration of areas of practice where the findings of mentoring literature are unclear, such as the importance of shared interests or whether relationships should be developmental or instrumental.

### 3.3.2 Ecological Considerations

This aspect relates to the cultural appropriateness of the research, researcher positionality, responsibility and any role conflicts. This researcher has DBS clearance to research young people and is familiar with the OU Safeguarding policy. She gained parental permission for interviewing young people under the age of 13, through their mentors, in line with the local authority’s policy. Young people over the age of 13 do not need parental permission to be mentored making it inappropriate to reveal they had a mentor by asking parental permission. The OU Ethics Committee approved this approach in line with BPS.

**Role of the researcher**

An interpretive qualitative approach recognises that this researcher is part of the data collection process, capturing data and interpreting the meanings that participants construct about their world (Creswell 2014). Not only is she the ‘instrument of data collection’ (The Open University, 2018 p. 57) but her subjectivity is ‘key’, ‘valuable not problematic’ (Braun and Clarke, 2021 p 12). The nature of her viewpoint towards those being researched is not fixed, however. She has not been a mentee, referrer nor coordinator, does not know their circumstances, how they might interpret and understand their experiences and
does not share many characteristics with them, indicating ‘outsider’ status (Braun and Clarke 2021; Greene, 2014). She can only establish mentee and mentor views by asking questions and being guided by what participants choose to say. Additionally, as a researcher looking in at the process of mentoring, she could be considered detached from the mentoring programme and its participants.

However, as a MyTime mentor herself, she was researching a social group with which she shares similarities, so is an ‘insider’ (Braun and Clarke 2021; Greene 2014). Her six years’ experience of being an insider to MyTime led to the questions explored in this current study about relationships, social capital and assets. Being known trained and DBS-checked by coordinators increased trust and reduced their perceptions of risk, an important consideration when interviewing vulnerable young people. Trust encouraged mentor and coordinator participation. They liaised with parents and mentees, making interviewing mentees possible by explaining the purposes and benefits of participation and facilitating interviews after mentoring sessions. The researcher experienced the ‘kindness’ at the heart of mentoring for herself (Walker 2007, p. 15). Denscombe (2003 p.39) remarks that access to case studies can be ‘demanding’. This was the experience of this researcher but was facilitated by her insider status.

This researcher’s knowledge and experience of mentoring as an insider gives the research benefits outlined above but inevitably also encompasses assumptions and preconceptions, or ‘who you are and what you bring through research shapes and informs your research’ (Braun and Clarke, 2014 p. 14). Being an insider to
MyTime could lead this researcher to assume her mentoring experience matched that of other mentors, potentially limiting her ability to be open to what she was told. The temptation to interview those already known, with a disinclination to ask challenging questions is a further consideration in insider research (Greene, 2014). In her role as researcher, this detachment as an outsider could be equated with objectivity. However, outsider research has the potential drawback of overlooking the significance of what occurs (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

Thus, this researcher moved along a continuum of insider to outsider status, a feature of qualitative research. She could not escape her subjectivity but by being aware of her feelings and expectations, she could better understand those from whom she sought data and come to a new sense of a phenomenon (Shaw, 2010). She used several approaches to increase her awareness of her different roles in the research, from mentor to ‘participant as observer’ (Greene, 2014; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). An approach drawn from phenomenology, to support researcher objectivity is that of ‘bracketing off’ a researcher’s assumptions, beliefs and theories about the world (mentoring in this case) or approaching the phenomenon of mentoring as a stranger (Schutz, 1962). The data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions and focus groups challenged researcher assumptions such as about the mentoring experience or the importance of mentor and mentee ‘liking’ each other.
The importance of reflexivity

Another approach was to increase this researcher’s awareness of her situatedness within the research, a process known as reflexivity or ‘turning the gaze’ on oneself (Shaw, 2010 p. 234). For Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011 p. 540), reflexivity can counteract lack of objectivity with a reflexive researcher aware of the impact of their ‘assumptions, preconceptions and biases’ on the research process, how these may ‘distort’ the research and the effects research has on those being researched. Braun and Clarke (2021 p. 8) see the researcher’s reflexivity about their beliefs and feelings as integral to reflexive thematic analysis (see Section 3.7.1). For them, a qualitative researcher is necessarily reflexive with bias elimination making little sense, being more aligned to a positivist approach to objectivity. Practices recommended by Braun and Clarke (2021) to increase reflexivity, including reflection, reflective diaries and full engagement with a qualitative methodology and its methods, have been adopted by this researcher.

3.3.3 Relational Considerations

These are ethical considerations around relations between participants and researcher (Fox and Mitchell, 2019). Adults either have power to affect outcomes for mentees, or are perceived as having such, resulting in a power imbalance which could affect what younger participants say. The OU Ethics committee commended the assent form for young people for being particularly appropriate (Appendix E). However, it expressed concern about the potential power imbalance
in this current study. This researcher was mindful that her manner, age difference and the fact that she was asking questions and noting down answers could all add to an impression of the power imbalance typical of relationships between young people and adults, particularly non-kin. Methods to counteract this used included keeping her research and mentoring role separate, including not interviewing her own mentees to avoid any feelings of pressure or confusion.

One mentee indicated he thought the researcher was a MyTime employee, ascribing her a level of authority that she did not have. The researcher subsequently compared her role to that of a pupil doing a school project and asked mentees about any projects they had been involved in. She explained the research process, emphasising the interest in their opinions, with no right or wrong answer.

Data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews, including elicitation, were selected to allow interviewer and interviewee to co-construct meaning (Flewitt, 2014). The researcher let mentors and mentees to choose the time and place to meet to suit them. Participants were asked to capture their thoughts prior to a mentoring session in a diary in whichever format they chose, with a paper diary provided for convenience. Participant comments about the concept map from the pilot study (See Appendix I) helped question refinement in the main study. This interpretive engagement, allowing participants to guide findings, respected their experience. Any quotations selected from interviewees were anonymised and were chosen to maintain confidentiality. The researcher thus
endeavoured to minimise her impact on interviewees’ behaviour (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), whilst recognising reactivity was likely.

The original research proposal included co-production by involving a young carers’ organisation directly in the design and execution of the study, so that although adult-initiated, there would be ‘shared decision-making with young people’ - step six on Hart’s Eight-Step Ladder of participation (Hart, 1992), rather than step five where young people are less engaged, being only consulted and informed. Despite introductions by MyTime coordinators and initial enthusiasm, the young carers’ organisation consulted did not pursue the opportunity to participate and so this level of engagement was not possible. Shaw and Bernardes (2018) call for smaller mentoring programmes to link with academics for example for evaluation, but this experience demonstrates the difficulty of working with public-sector bodies that are subject to resource constraints and frequent restructuring.

3.3.4 Deontological Considerations

These are ethical considerations around duty towards participants such as protecting them and being guided by them, being honest and open (Fox and Mitchell, 2019). Coordinators from the case study mentoring programme advised that a small amount of money (£15-£20) was likely to increase the participation rate of young people. The OU Ethics Committee expressed concern that such incentivisation might make mentees feel obliged to participate, even when they
wished to stop, to gain the payment. The National Institute for Health and Care Research (2021) states that young people and children participating in research should receive appropriate reward and recognition for their contributions and to demonstrate the value placed on their time, commitment and expertise. It suggests discussing this with the young person’s organisation. The Association for Research Ethics (FAQ 12) advised ‘Payments to children can be considered to be an unethical inducement especially if in cash. However, parents should have expenses (travel or meals) associated with their child’s participation in the research study reimbursed’.

To balance the wish to recognise the value of young people’s time with addressing the potential for payment to be seen as inducement, a £15 Amazon voucher (not cash) was given independent of whether interviewing was completed or not. Young people were told that they could stop at any time. BERA ethical guidelines say that compensation must be commensurate with good sense. The amount chosen, £15, was not excessive but allowed mentees to put this towards something they are saving up for such as an electronic game and was suggested by MyTime. Talking about what they might spend the money on was also an opening conversation for the interview. Interviewees were offered out of pocket travel expenses and refreshments, with a tin of biscuits for the coordinator, rather than financial compensation. The kindness and flexibility of mentors, mentees, referrers and coordinators in taking part in this study was much appreciated. Findings as they developed were and continue to be shared at MyTime Annual conferences, so participants can benefit from their time.
Before turning to the question of where the study took place, the next section considers the context in which it was carried out and impact on the research process.

3.3.5 The impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic

It would not be possible to talk about a research project running 2020-22 without reference to the Covid 19 pandemic. By mid-March 2020, the date of the first lockdown in England, all focus groups, first and most of the second interviews with mentors, referrers and coordinators had been completed. Most mentee second interviews were still to be completed. The research plan was to finish the remaining second interviews and analyse them. After the March 2020 lockdown, OU Ethics specified that where possible interviewing was to be carried out online, and if this was not possible, it should stop. Because interviewing seemed almost complete by March 2020 and Government guidance suggested that Covid restrictions were temporary, the research design was not changed to explicitly include the experience of online mentoring, although the impact of the pandemic was touched upon in some mentor interviews. The remaining second mentor interviews were held online via Microsoft Teams. Although everyone was adjusting to being online at the time, this worked well. Rapport had already been established during the first, face-to-face interview which allowed the second interview to clarify and explore what interviewees had already said. Interestingly, the experience counteracted prevailing assumptions that older people would find online communication difficult, and that younger people would take to it easily.
This researcher’s experience was that the four mentors interviewed were comfortable with online communications, whereas it did not prove possible to interview the mentees. This could have been further evidence of mentor flexibility, which is referred to elsewhere in this research.

Only two mentees had a second interview, both of which were face-to-face before lockdown. Of the five others, one stopped attending mentoring sessions before the second interview and the mentor lost contact. The lack of regular face-to-face meetings with their mentor meant this researcher needed to negotiate access through parents or directly with mentees. No other second interviews with mentees occurred, despite this researcher’s contact with mentees and their mothers over three or four months. The impact of Covid-19 on families already under stress can only be imagined. Difficulties related to contact reinforced for this researcher the trust that mentees and mentors had built up and the value of previously regular mentoring sessions to facilitate access to mentees.

As time elapsed, it became clear that even if further interviews became possible, too much time might have elapsed for mentees to remember why they had said what they said during the first interview. All mentee first interviews were rich in data, particularly from elicitation. Although not collected for this study, documents prepared for and by MyTime were also used to gain insight into mentee priorities and values.

As lockdowns continued with significant impact on the format of the MyTime programme, this researcher reflected on the validity of the research. If face-to-face
mentoring never returned, would this make evidence of the importance of location and observation of mentee behaviour to the development of trust irrelevant? Her reflection indicated there was still value in this current research. This was for a number of reasons. Knowing what aspects of face-to-face mentoring helped to build a purposeful relationship and how and what assets and resources were transferred between mentor and mentee could help mentors identify what needed replicating in online interactions. Findings could increase awareness that the relationship might be different without these characteristics. These findings could be combined with learning from online mentoring to add to knowledge about mentoring, as discussed in Chapter 5.

At the time of writing (June 2022), a hybrid approach to mentoring is being offered with meetings in person or online. The findings from this current research are therefore still relevant to mentoring practice and of interest to developing good practice in online mentoring.

3.4 Case study

The previous section has explained how a qualitative strategy matches the research viewpoint taken by this current study. This section sets out how using a case study provided the most appropriate approach for identifying a site for data collection to support this strategy.
3.4.1 Selection of case study approach

A case in the context of research is a single instance of the event or occurrence being studied (Denscombe, 2003). The case for this study is the MyTime mentoring programme. For Stake (1995), case study researchers are interpreters reporting on their construction of the reality or knowledge gathered through investigation. Identified as one of three methods of conducting qualitative enquiry (Cohen, Manon and Morrison, 2011), a case study approach allows research and in-depth analysis of a programme (Creswell, 2014) in naturally occurring settings (Denscombe, 2003). A case study can be key to investigating complex social phenomena (mentoring in this case) (Yin, 2009). In line with the aims of this current study, using a case of a mentoring programme permitted exploration of participants’ perspectives of the complexity and contradictions of multiple interpretations of reality, or interpretivism, without concluding any one meaning (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Examining a case is a way of learning through experience (Flyvbjerg, 2006), appropriate for the experiential and phenomenological approach of this current research.

Focus on relationships and processes

Because relationships and processes in social settings affect each other, understanding a phenomenon such as mentoring requires consideration of the interconnection of the whole (Denscombe, 2003). A case study approach allows detailed exploration of relationships and social processes along with the ways
outcomes are associated with these rather than focusing only on outcomes: for example, what mentors and mentees do to build ‘quality’ relationships, rather than looking for indicators that such a relationship has been achieved. Additionally, case studies can effectively challenge biases, with researchers conducting intensive, in-depth case studies typically reporting that their preconceived views and initial assumptions were wrong and that the case material compelled them to change their thinking about essential points (Campbell, 1975; Burton, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Using MyTime allowed a clear boundary to be drawn around the research site in terms of individuals involved, locations and processes, as required for an effective case study (Denscombe, 2003). The detailed, in-depth examination of MyTime allowed context, setting, approach, type of young person referred, community and social aspect of mentoring to be considered. Aims, operationalisation, participant experience including perceptions of outcomes could all be examined. Studying the MyTime case therefore added depth to mentoring knowledge gained from experiment-based studies, large scale survey analysis and statistical correlations.

Some research reported in the literature was based on experimental mentoring programmes to test hypotheses and assess the impact of different approaches to mentoring e.g., for BBBS, FoTC. However, as well as suggesting that direct comparison can be drawn between results for different mentees, which is contrary to the individual nature of mentoring, such trials cannot capture how programmes operate outside control conditions. This is an important consideration because
mentees experience mentoring as part of a programme. Using the delivery of an established programme as a case study allowed examination of mentoring in natural settings. As mentioned previously, findings from the literature highlight both the lack of UK-based mentoring research and the potential lack of direct transferability of US-originated programmes to UK, indicating examining a UK case study could supplement learning from US programmes.

**Generalisability**

Different views have been expressed about the extent to which case studies are generalisable or relatable to other cases. A case study allows development of context-specific knowledge and experience (Flyvbjerg, 2006). For Yin (2009), findings from a single case study can be generalised to some broader theory when qualitative researchers study additional cases and generalise findings to the new cases. Although this suggests findings only relate to the case study, established practices in most mentoring studies consider and hypothesise from single cases, such as BBBS, albeit in different locations, rather than between cases.

Denscombe (2003 p. 36), however, is more of the opinion that qualitative research is generalisable, finding the extent to which knowledge gained from case studies is generalisable depends on ‘how far the case study example is similar to others of its type’. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) believe comparability and translatability are more appropriate to qualitative research than generalisability. Comparability requires describing the characteristics of the group researched to allow comparison and contrast with other groups. Thus, findings that can be
connected to those from comparable experiences including policy context and encompass application of theory can have wider applicability than just the case in which they originated. Therefore, the case study, its context, comparison to other cases and the nature of the programme itself are described below.

3.4.2 Identifying a suitable case study

The programme that forms the case study for this research was given the pseudonym, MyTime, to protect participant identities. MyTime is the mentoring programme for which the researcher currently volunteers and there are several reasons for its suitability as a research site. MyTime is managed in line with elements of good practice identified by MENTOR (Clawson, Endelman and Heubach, 2015). These elements include volunteer mentors recruited through a formalised recruitment process, induction and ongoing training, active mentor and mentee matching with both having a say in the matching process, mentors and mentees being supported by professional coordinators and the programme being evaluated and having secure funding. MyTime aims to help young people reach their potential, strengthening mentee assets and accumulation of social capital through enhanced relationships, new opportunities and connection to school. This makes the programme an appropriate site to explore this study’s theoretical framework that mentoring relationships develop young people’s assets and access to social capital within their networks.
Based on 366 English community youth mentoring schemes that are not run by schools, the Children’s Commissioner summarised the characteristics of mentoring programmes (Shaw and Bernardes, 2018). Their report indicates that MyTime typifies English mentoring programmes in many respects. This includes the dyadic format, with a more experienced mentor supporting a less experienced mentee and mentoring sessions that last around an hour. MyTime is an open-access service, rather than targeted at strict eligibility criteria, like 42% of English mentoring programmes, the largest category (Shaw and Bernardes, 2018).

Although MyTime’s stated aim is to help young people achieve their potential, this is measured through change to perceptions of wellbeing, and 72% of all youth mentoring programmes target social/emotional development outcomes (Shaw and Bernardes, 2018). MyTime engages volunteer mentors, in line with 68% of formal schemes, and it is community based rather than initiated by a school or college. Like 70% of English mentoring schemes, MyTime involves secondary school aged young people.

In line with most youth mentoring programmes, MyTime supports young people encountering difficulties, which are holding them back from reaching their potential. These difficulties often relate to personal circumstances, such as illness or disability, or to those of family members and may be compounded by personal challenges around learning or language. Family and personal issues may in turn impact ability to engage in education. MyTime’s average length of six to 12 months for individual mentoring relationships matches the English average of less than a year (Shaw and Bernardes, 2018). Where MyTime may be unusual is in its
longevity, having celebrated its 20th year in 2021. This longevity means that the programme has well-established mentoring practices for the researcher to examine.

MyTime’s similarity to other English mentoring programmes indicates research findings are potentially relevant beyond this case. The MyTime programme can allow exploration of different experiences to draw out patterns and themes relating to the essence of mentoring within that case. Comparison can then be made with cases studied in mentoring literature to judge broader relevance and similarity.

3.5 Data collection methods

For Grix (2002), methods should be seen as free from ontological and epistemological assumptions, and the choice of which to use should be guided by research questions. However, the research questions in this study emanate from a qualitative view of what can be known and how it can be known, suggesting instead that research methods drawn to, questions asked and participants interviewed are all influenced by one’s beliefs and values (Braun and Clarke, 2021). A case study approach allows detailed data to be collected using various methods over a sustained period (Creswell, 2014). The data collection methods selected for this current study responded to the fact that, for this researcher, those involved in mentoring were best placed to describe their experience and any change that occurred as a result. Thus, the methods needed to allow mentors, mentees, referrers and coordinators to explain how they interpreted and
constructed their reality of mentoring by negotiating meanings and interpretations with them (Merriam, 1988). Using the multiple data collection methods implicit in qualitative research, in this case interviews, focus groups, a survey based on open-ended questions, diaries and MyTime related grey literature, meant individual experience of mentoring could be captured and helped participants to feel valued and expert. This chapter now turns to why semi-structured interviews, an online survey, focus groups, mentor and mentee diary-keeping and document review were selected for data collection.

3.5.1 Using semi-structured interviews

Interviewing, particularly semi-structured interviewing, allows establishment of rapport (Smith and Osborn, 2008), an important consideration when trying to understand the viewpoint of vulnerable young people. Building rapport with mentees, showing them that what they said was important and taken seriously was very important to this researcher. Semi-structured interviewing involves co-creation of knowledge, placing the interviewee as experiential expert (Smith and Osborn, 2008). For vulnerable young people, having their expertise acknowledged, being found interesting and constructing meaning with the interviewer were assumed to be a benefit of participating in the research process. The idea of mentees as experts is further explored in Chapter 4 of this current study. Ensuring that involvement in the research process was enjoyable was another consideration which led to the use of elicitation techniques discussed later.
Oakley (1981) suggests that to empower interviewees, researchers should show emotion and feelings, sharing knowledge and experiences but warns that this approach needs to be understood by the interviewee, who may be expecting a more objective approach. This more engaged interviewing style was used during the research project because many interviewees, particularly mentees, were unused to being interviewed. Interviewees were encouraged to speak as much as possible, but the researcher on occasions reacted with warmth or discomfort to some responses rather than being totally objective.

The research design involved holding field interviews in the community where mentoring happened with mentees and most mentors, in line with the suggestion that qualitative research take place in ‘uncontrived’ and ‘natural’ settings with the minimum of ‘intrusion’ by the researcher (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011 p. 220). Interview timing and venues were agreed with participants, reinforcing the idea that research was being carried out on their terms. Interviews with mentees were arranged by mentors, usually after a mentoring session. These venues were often noisy, crowded environments which demonstrated the importance of both familiarity and privacy to the mentoring process. The coordinator was interviewed in her office. Referrers were interviewed at work by telephone to meet their time constraints. Mentors chose to be interviewed at home or in community settings.

Conversation is the main way of constructing, maintaining, modifying and reconstructing subjective social reality (Twining et al., 2017). Interviews and verbal research methods let participants construct their understanding of
mentoring during interviews, using language to enable thoughts and mental concepts (Hammersley, 2007; Creswell and Poth, 2017).

Semi-structured interviewing was topic based to address research questions, but these were asked to a schedule rather than timetable and were adapted as the interview progressed to allow the interviewer to explore areas of interest as they arose, as recommended by Smith (2008). Questionnaires developed for this current study (See Appendix F) were broad and general with participants co-constructing meaning though discussion or interaction (Creswell, 2014; Twining et al., 2017). Topics covered included ‘tell me what it is like to be mentored’ and ‘have you learned anything from your mentor?’ Open-ended, exploratory interviews allowed participants to provide their own interpretation of the mentoring experience, letting the researcher uncover current mentoring practice and experience. Participants controlled what they interpreted as significant, because they highlighted and chose how to present it which led to discussion of topics the interviewer had not thought of (Smith and Osborn, 2008), such as the significance of their mentor’s reliability to a young person. Descriptions of mentoring led by the interviewee’s experience matched this current study’s interest in exploring participants’ perceptions expressed in their own words, to complement the existing focus on external observation and definition of impact.

Interviews were recorded, with permission of the interviewee, and transcribed. In depth, semi-structured informal tape-recorded interviews allow insights into the thinking of a group (i.e., of mentors and mentees), who can describe and explain
their experiences and reasoning so the researcher can see their viewpoint (Denscombe, 2003). Recording and transcription avoided using the subjective selection of interviewer notes as a basis for further analysis. Recording proved particularly valuable where only one mentee interview was possible. Recording allowed tone and nuance of interviews to be appreciated. It also meant that interviewee’s words could be replicated through quotations, which was important to allow young people’s voices to be ‘heard’.

From some rather stilted initial interviews, this researcher focused on making mentees’ involvement in the research process engaging and interactive, reducing mentee diffidence or boredom. Elicitation was used i.e., ‘participants were shown items to shape the direction of the conversation’ (Grant, 2018). One, pre-prepared document showed eight photographs of adults on their own or with young people. Mentees were invited to choose who they felt would make a good mentor and why. The second document, entitled ‘Wanted - a mentor,’ allowed the mentee to specify what they would look for in a mentor and initiated a brief discussion about job advertisements. The third document was created by mentees arranging card prompts that let them show how ‘close’ (defined however they wished) they felt to other relationships in their lives. These documents stimulated discussion about the meaning they ascribed to their choices and provided participants with agency (Lomax, 2015; Mannay, 2015), one of the objectives for the research. Asking participants to create documents helped them to define their own reality (Grant, 2018), albeit shaped by the researcher’s brief. Because the young person was present, unlike with other mentee-provided documents, such as the MoTY
feedback, meaning could be established before analysis, to ‘create a shared understanding’, and reduce this researcher’s dominant position as interviewer (Grant, 2018). These ‘documents’ were recorded via mobile phone, allowing them to exist after the meeting, creating data with meaning (Grant, 2018).

**Interviewing as a two-stage process**

Mentors and mentees were interviewed twice: firstly, to establish rapport, and to explore mentoring experiences; secondly, to review and expand understanding of the first interview once the researcher had summarised the themes arising as recommended by Hycner (1985). Revisiting interviews with interviewees challenged researcher preconceptions, erroneous conclusions or patterns in data where there were none (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Two interviewees challenged the initial conclusions drawn, for example, so these differences of view could be investigated. As well as being reflexive about the interviews, additional scrutiny was provided by supervisors. The second interview also allowed examination of the reflective diary, where this had been completed. Examples of interviews are given in Appendices G (Mentee 2), H (Mentor 7), I (Coordinator 1) and J (Referrer 2).

To allow participation of mentors who had expressed an interest in participating by providing contact details but who had not responded to requests for interview, an online questionnaire was devised using the Jisc online interviewing tool.
3.5.2 Online survey

Although a structured survey is more associated with a quantitative approach where standardisation is required (Smith and Osborn, 2008), the questionnaire was small-scale, being circulated to twelve mentors with a focus on individual experience. It built on what had been learned through semi-structured interviewing, supplementing information collected in face-to-face interviews. Most questions were open-ended and questionnaire format allowed for unstructured text answers chosen by the respondent in their own words, including where options given did not match a mentor’s views. This online questionnaire was sent to 12 mentors, of whom five responded (42%). The 20 questions covered the respondent’s mentoring context, the experience of a mentoring session, purpose of mentoring, role of the relationship, the role of the mentor, matching, views about changes observed and how these were achieved. Questions about assets and social capital were not asked about directly, being unfamiliar terms outside research. Instead, respondents were asked about changes to skills, experiences, relationships and contacts which they had observed. It was not possible to survey mentees because this researcher had no direct contact details for them, all communication being facilitated through their mentors.

Salient ideas about mentoring revealed through interviewing during the pilot study (see Appendix M) and subsequent interviews were explored through focus groups.
3.5.3 Focus groups

Focus groups are a form of group interview where data are collected from interaction between members of the group on a topic chosen by researcher (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), in this case ideas for further exploration raised by the pilot and subsequent interviews. This approach was chosen to stimulate debate and learn about participant experiences and perceptions of mentoring (Hennessy and Heary, 2005; Morgan and Krueger, 2013). Hearing others talk can help people articulate opinions on topics they have not thought about before. Comparing and discussing views with others helps them articulate their own views (Morgan and Krueger, 2013) and construct meaning, in this case of mentoring (Creswell, 2014). Using focus groups allowed gathering of a range of options on ‘attitudes, values and opinions’ and empowered participants to express their opinions ‘in their own words’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011 p. 436), an approach matching the study’s ethos. Comparing different viewpoints allowed collection of more data and examination of complexity, such as the degree of detachment that mentors had from the mentoring process, than with other methods (Morgan and Krueger, 2013).

Additionally, focus groups are ‘friendly,’ forging connections between participants and researcher (Morgan and Krueger, 2013 p.13). Three separate focus groups were run at an annual MyTime conference in November 2019. Holding them when mentors were meeting, often for the first time, helped enhance one of the purposes of the conference i.e., to forge links between mentors.
For the focus groups, convenience sampling was used as ‘the sampling strategy selected for a case study or a series of case studies’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011 p. 181). Participants were the 30 mentors who attended the annual mentoring conference and prize giving, about half the population of current mentors in the MyTime programme. Mentors were a homologous group but not well-known to each other, and therefore useful in a focus group (Morgan and Krueger, 2013). Attendance at the focus groups was optional, but none withdrew. Attendees of the event were selected by availability and willingness to attend and self-allocated to one of the three groups which were facilitated by the researcher and the two mentoring coordinators who had been previously briefed. All facilitators had experience working with groups and the research process benefitted from their knowledge of participants’ points of view and from this researcher’s knowledge of project goals (Morgan and Krueger, 2013). The topics covered in three focus groups of ten mentors each were:

- Focus Group 1: What is mentoring?
- Focus Group 2: Is there such a thing as a ‘good mentee’?
- Focus Group 3: How important is it to like your mentee?

The focus groups ran concurrently for 40 minutes with the discussion subsequently summarised by each facilitator in a brief feedback session.
3.5.4 Use of mentor and mentee diaries

Prior to the first interview, participants were asked to keep a diary, reflecting feelings before and after mentoring (as suggested by Mendelson, Turner and Tandon, 2010) to triangulate mentoring relationship data. The value of diaries as research tools is established (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Greene, 2014). Although innovative methods such as these can ‘unlock the thoughts and perceptions’ of interviewees and are particularly appropriate for young people (Fraser, Flewitt and Hammersley, 2014 p. 47), the only diary usage this researcher identified in mentoring literature relates to researcher practitioner notes from ethnographic research into use of mentors for high achieving girls (Russell, 2007).

For this current study, participants were asked to keep a written, recorded or visual diary of feelings before and after four mentoring sessions (typically for up to two months). Three mentors and one mentee provided such a diary, and an analysis of these is included in the findings in Chapter 4.

3.5.5 Other data sources

Documents produced to monitor and evaluate mentee experiences have been used in this current study. Triangulation, or use of multiple sources of data, is good practice (Mason, 2002) as the researcher needs to be receptive to data that goes against any previously identified trends. As well as researcher reflexivity being a form of triangulation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), documents can also be used. Triangulation of data within its social context increases understanding
through new insights, allowing multiple truths to be considered during analysis (Grant, 2018). Samples of MyTime documents consulted for this current study included those collected for programme monitoring, mentee nominations for mentor of the year (MoTY) and evaluations of the MyTime programme produced for local authority management. Analysing everyday documents alongside other forms of qualitative inquiry can result in accounts of social life which are more rounded than if documents are not considered, especially documents from organisations (Grant, 2018).

The positionality of these documents for review was critically assessed using an evaluation framework devised by Scott (1990) (See Appendix K). This analysis revealed that the documentation contained useful information, such as what mentees highlighted about mentoring, but that all documents produced were likely to cast mentoring and mentors in a favourable light and did not include the views of all mentees. The externally produced evaluation of the MyTime programme is cited in this current study to compare findings with those of this research. Points of note from the analysis are discussed in Chapter 4.

Having described why the methods of data collection selected were appropriate to a qualitative approach, the next section explains how participants in the research were selected.
3.6 Sampling approach used for interviews

The selection of research participants, or sample, for interviewing was drawn from the categories of individuals most closely involved in the experience and outcomes of youth mentoring: referrers, coordinators, mentors and mentees. Using homogenous sampling of these four categories allowed deeper investigation of the phenomenon of mentoring (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Information about each category in the sample is given below. Summary details about the individuals interviewed from each category are given in Table 2.

3.6.1 Referrers

Those who referred young people to mentoring were trained and paid professionals working with the young person and their families, such as social workers, school pastoral care staff, mental and physical health professionals or family support services. Referrals could complement or supplement the work of other services. The fact that referrals came from such services indicated the young person was dealing with challenges within their home and community.

One referrer interviewed felt that high achieving, but very anxious young people, could benefit but had not referred such young people to the service. This suggested referrers had a particular profile of low achievement and difficulty in mind when considering young people to refer.
3.6.2 Mentees

At the time of the study, The MyTime programme supported around 100 young people aged between 11 and 19 i.e., of secondary school age (though up to the age of 25 for care leavers or those with learning difficulties). Young people over 13 could have a mentor without carer or parental permission, suggesting MyTime expected them to have a certain amount of autonomy. However, neither young people nor their families could make referrals direct to MyTime. Given the importance of mentee willingness to participate in mentoring indicated by the literature review, the implications of third-party referral are examined in this current study.

In the coordinator’s experience, young people wanted support to deal with anxiety, bullying, exam stress, friendship issues, family situations and someone to talk to (especially for young carers and home-schooled young people). The MyTime handbook (A. County Council, 2016 p. 5) states that mentees experience difficulties and may be ‘quite challenging, unmotivated and lacking in the confidence, self-esteem or experience they need to move on.’ These difficulties could be with relationships or with attending school and/or education such as school refusal, withdrawal from school by family, partial or full school exclusion.

As discussed in the literature review, lack of access to relationships and to education is likely to reduce social capital available to mentees (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000).
Although a universal rather than targeted service, MyTime criteria for mentee admission recognised that mentors did not have sufficient training to support young people with certain profiles. These included violent behaviour or aggression although there was some flexibility around this, and mentors talked of young people being aggressive in other contexts but not displaying this behaviour with them. MyTime also could not support young people with severe mental health challenges which needed to be professionally addressed before mentoring could begin. Being a Child in Need (an official recognition of a child requiring local authority support to develop healthily or avoid harm) or where there were child protection concerns were other circumstances under which mentoring was deemed unsuitable.

3.6.3 Mentors

There were approximately 70 mentors at time of writing, with a slight preponderance of women over men. Most mentors were from a professional background, working or retired, including teaching, academia, business and the police force. Mentors, who needed to be over 21, undertook a formal application process. They were interviewed, vetted and trained by MyTime coordinators. Training included safeguarding, understanding the context of the young people’s lives and techniques to get a relationship started, such as ‘ice breakers.’ All mentors were volunteers but were reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, such as petrol, and had a £10 budget per session for food and drink. Thus, mentors, young people and their families did not need to pay, and a session could be seen as a
treat. MyTime asked mentors to commit at least a year to the programme, to see a young person through a complete cycle of mentoring. Many mentors had been with the programme for considerably longer, as shown in Table 2.

### 3.6.4 Programme coordinators

The programme was managed by two job-sharing coordinators who worked slightly more than a full-time role, with one of the coordinators until recently having been involved with the scheme since its inception. Coordinators used processes established by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation to recruit and train mentors, to identify young people able to benefit from mentoring, match mentors and mentees, support mentoring relationships, run networking events to share good practice and monitor and report on the programme’s effectiveness. According to these programme coordinators, the current number of mentees and mentors was the maximum number they could support without compromising mentor and mentee experience. The focus of MyTime on programme quality matches findings in the literature of the importance of good practice processes and procedures.

Coordinators allocated, or ‘matched’, mentees and mentors according to mentee preferences of gender and time of meeting expressed on the referral form, along with using their ‘instincts.’ They oversaw mentoring relationships and gave advice if issues arose. They signposted mentors and mentees to other Council or non-Council support such as youth clubs or food banks. They collected and evaluated
feedback at the beginning, during and after mentoring relationships. They were therefore pivotal to the success or otherwise of the MyTime programme and invaluable resources to this study. This current study is grateful for the contributions made by the coordinators whose work and views are often not captured in research (Gannon and Washington, 2019).

3.6.5 Recruiting participants

The research population from which the sample was drawn comprised all individuals in these categories i.e., around 70 mentors, 100 mentees and two coordinators. The population of mentees additionally included those who had been mentored and were still in contact with their mentors. The research population of referrers was unknown, comprising members of organisations able to refer young people to the MyTime programme. Braun and Clarke (2021) find sampling problematic for qualitative research because, for them, it suggests that a small number can in some way represent the whole which is contrary to the qualitative views of reality and how we can understand it. The current research study sought to recruit a variety of voices and experiences whilst respecting the requirements of General Data Protection Rules (GDPR) that MyTime did not provide mentor or mentee details because they had not given permission to be contacted for research. Both MyTime coordinators were interviewed, separately and together as well as via a questionnaire. The sample of referrers was recruited from those known to the coordinators and researcher, that is, snowball sampling.
Convenience sampling was used to recruit mentors. This is a form of non-probability sampling, or where the sample ‘simply represents itself.’ Convenience sampling involves using those closest to hand and is appropriate in small scale studies such as case studies or series of case studies (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011 p.155). Although convenience sampling is critiqued for lack of rigour (Braun and Clarke 2021), participants were drawn from the population of interest, mentors, and a wide range of experience was represented (see Table 2.). Interview participants were recruited by asking for interested mentors to provide details, having been provided with information about the purpose of this current research at events they were attending, such as networking events. It took many iterations of meetings to gain access and acceptance from potential interviewees (mentors) as described in Walford (2001). From two consecutive quarterly mentoring networking events and the 2019 Annual Mentoring conference, around half of all mentors (30+) indicated their interest in participating. The researcher contacted this sub-set of the category of mentors and invited them to interview, giving each an equal opportunity to participate. The recommendations of Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) that subgroups in a sample should contain no fewer than three cases, was satisfied when seven mentors agreed to be interviewed (see Table 2). As explained in Section 3.5.2, an online survey was used to explore the views of mentors who expressed interest in participating in the research but did not agree to interview.

Although there was initially no quota for the type of mentor to interview, the sample included highly- and moderately experienced and novice mentors.
Initially, the sample included an overrepresentation of male mentors and thus male mentees in my sample compared with the whole category of mentors which is more female, because male mentors are usually matched to male mentees whereas female mentors may be matched to male or female. Two further female mentors were actively contacted from the list which involved opportunistic sampling that developed from the convenience sampling as the research progressed (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). By chance, the sample included one mentor, one mentee and one referrer from minority ethnicities. Although this research does not consider difference of experience by gender or ethnicity, it was valuable to hear a range of realities and views in line with a qualitative approach.

Mentee recruitment was conducted via mentors because this researcher had no contact details. Mentors used their contacts and knowledge to actively recruit their mentees to this research, sharing information provided about the study and in some cases pointing out how it matched a mentee’s desire to be useful. Mentee recruitment thus relied on interpersonal relationships and trust between mentors and mentees. This was respondent-driven snowball sampling which is, as Noy (2008 p. 332) says, ‘essentially social’.

There were several practical and ethical advantages to this sampling method. As well as facilitating contact between researcher and mentee including obtaining parental consent, mentors provided an additional level of safeguarding. Mentees were a sensitive sample. Even though the discussion of mentoring was designed to be unintrusive, e.g., with no need to reveal the content of mentoring sessions,
mentors were more aware than the researcher about the appropriateness of interviewing. A couple of mentors who took on new mentees during the research project felt interviewing would not be beneficial for these mentees.

Talking to both halves of a relationship allowed triangulation of findings, which for Grant (2018) lets data from two or more sources to be combined, giving increased understanding of the phenomenon being examined. However, to maintain confidentiality, mentor and mentee were not linked in the findings. Mentor 6 for example did not mentor Mentee 6. The sample of seven mentors (four male and three female) and seven mentees (five boys and two girls) is described in more detail in Table 2 below:
Table 2: Interviewee sample and data collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant role</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Experience with MyTime</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30+ years’ total mentoring experience, retired business coach, volunteer with other youth charities</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>2 x 1 hour interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor 2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2+ years</td>
<td>2 x 1.5 hour interviews; diary kept for 4 sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor 3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>first mentee, supply teacher (former teacher) and carer of mentee, supply teacher (former teacher) and carer</td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>2 x 1.5 hour interview; mentoring diary for 4 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor 4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>former teacher, mentor, supply teacher (former teacher) and carer</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>2 x 1.5 hour interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor 5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>2 x 1 hour interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor 6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>University lecturer</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>2 x 1 hour interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor 7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>University lecturer</td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>2 x 1 hour interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Age 13, home-schooled</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>1 x 40 minute interview; 2nd interview not completed, mentee stopped mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Age 13, home schooled</td>
<td>Over 1 year</td>
<td>2 x 40 minute interview; mentoring diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee 3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Age 13</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>2 x 40 minute interview; no diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee 4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Age 13</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>1 x 1 hour interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee 5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Age 15</td>
<td>Former mentee</td>
<td>1 x 45 min interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee 6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Age 15, home schooled</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>1 x 45 min interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentee 7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Age 17</td>
<td>Over 6 months</td>
<td>1 x 45 min interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator 1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>County Council employee</td>
<td>15+ years</td>
<td>2 x 1.5 hour interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>County Council employee</td>
<td>3+ years</td>
<td>1 x 1.5 hour interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrer 1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>local authority youth advisor</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrer 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Teacher, pastoral care responsibility</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1 x 1 hour interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant role</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Experience with MyTime</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrer 3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>local authority family support worker</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Questionnaire and 30 minute interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrer 4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>local authority youth advisor</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2 x 1 hour interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7 Data analysis

A qualitative approach seeks to identify shared understanding of the multiple realities about a social phenomenon between members of a group, focusing on how ‘the processes of interpretation are shared, and socially constructed’ despite each individual experience being unique (Denscombe, 2003 p. 105). The purpose of analysing the data collected is to achieve such a shared understanding by interpreting and discovering patterns and communalities in the complexity of meaning ascribed by individuals. Analysis allows generation of themes and an understanding of the norms and ‘laws’ of groups as well as explaining and seeking causes (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Thus, analysis in this current study needed to establish patterns of meaning, or themes, to reveal a shared understanding by mentees, mentors, coordinators and referrers of the realities of mentoring across the multiple versions they experience. Establishing such themes reconciles tension between the situatedness of each mentoring relationship, which is experienced differently, and the desire to find mentoring’s ‘essence’ (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, the process of discovering underlying principles, patterns and themes from interpreting the experiences of participants can extend the relatability of findings despite human behaviour not being amenable to ‘predictive theories and universals’ (Flyvbjerg, 2006 p. 224).

A foundational method for qualitative analysis, notable for its flexibility of application, is reflexive thematic analysis (TA) as found in Braun and Clarke (2006). Their six-phase method of data analysis systematically and critically
allows interpretation of patterns to identify themes by the application of codes developed by the researcher. TA helps the researcher interpret data from participants who have already interpreted their world. Given the importance of reflexivity in the qualitative research process, and in this study in particular (see ethics, Section 3.3), the use of reflexive TA was highly appropriate. Reflexive TA aims for analysis that is ‘thoughtful, rich, complex’ (Braun and Clarke, 2021 p. 8), matching the complexity of the mentoring process itself.

The researcher’s role in analysis is to interpret and identify patterns in the experiences to discover the ‘essence’ of a phenomenon and to make sense of meanings that participants construct (Briod et al., 2014 p. 6). These patterns, or themes, in data are not summaries but ‘anchored by a shared, idea or concept’ (Braun and Clarke, 2021 p. 8). Most importantly, these themes are actively constructed by the researcher rather than being uncovered or ‘passively’ emerging. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) warn that selecting and ordering data can result in bias and that reflexivity can mitigate against this. For Braun and Clarke (2021), a situated, subjective viewpoint is not biased but central to the analysis process. Outcomes of qualitative research are negotiated and idiographic (i.e., personal to an individual) and the researcher’s interpretation allows deeper understanding of a phenomenon, in this case mentoring, how it is experienced and its impact.

The aspects central to TA are interpretation and theory. Whilst rooted in the qualitative paradigm that meaning is socially situated, the world is only partially
knowable and there is no single truth to be discovered, TA is ‘theoretically flexible’ (Braun and Clarke, 2021 p. 14). For this current study, the importance of theory was critical because it allowed for an analysis of the mentoring process and relationship through the lens of social capital and the ‘positive consequence of sociability’ (Portes, 1998) of the mentoring relationship.

Bringing this researcher’s own experience and a rigorous analytical process to the data collected allowed the establishment of themes around the actions and interactions of mentors, mentees, referrers and coordinators. Understanding how certain actions and interactions, such as building trust, are linked to certain changes, such as trying new ideas, allows transfer of learning from this current study to strengthen mentoring policy and practice.

### 3.7.1 Analytical procedures

Both computer-based and manual tools were used to categorise and organise data collected from the research site through interviews, focus groups, survey, diaries and MyTime feedback, material. This allowed the data to be explained (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011) through development of themes based on the six-phase reflexive TA process advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021).

NVivo, qualitative data analysis software, was used as a storage tool, with the researcher fully aware as Denscombe (2003) points out, that such tools cannot analyse data, they can only help classify it. Data from each interview was filed by interviewee category (mentor, mentee, referrer and coordinator), with each
interviewee given a reference name (Mentor 1, 2, 3 or Mentee 1, 2, 3) in order of the interview being carried out. This also allowed rapid identification of which category an interviewer belonged to. After becoming familiar with the data through listening to recordings, transcribing and regular reading of transcripts and other data sources (TA Phase 1 – dataset familiarisation), this researcher analysed each interview by interpreting their meaning and ascribing codes which identified similar or linked information (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), the basis for theme development which help the researcher understand meaning in relation to the data in a new way (Braun and Clarke, 2021) (TA Phase 2 – data coding).

Coding was both deductive and inductive. Codes were assigned deductively, or in connection to theoretical constructs (Braun and Clarke, 2021) i.e., around relationships, assets and social capital which were derived from the literature review. They were also organised deductively, in response to the research questions e.g., the purpose and experience of mentoring, the role of the mentoring relationship. Using coding and analysis based on the research questions is ‘a very useful way of organising data’ because it connects the concerns of the research with the findings in a coherent manner (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011 p. 552). Within the research questions and theoretical constructs, coding was inductive, or driven by the data. Inductive coding allowed ideas around mentee effort and mentees as experts to arise for example. For Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), methodical coding of multiple sources of data and the variety of voices of interviewees helps to distance the researcher from judgement, in this case of how participants describe mentoring, an important part of the analytical process. For
this researcher, inductive coding supported analytic reflexivity by encouraging openness to statements that contradicted or extended her thinking and theoretical frameworks.

Clustering connected codes with similar meaning allowed exploration of meaning and development of themes with a central organising concept (Braun and Clarke, 2021) (TA Phase 3 initial theme generation). Codes were initially allocated deductively under pre-determined themes. Inductive coding allowed the exploration of patterns that illuminated the themes, creating sub-themes. Research questions were modified in response to the evidence collected during the process of analysis (TA Phase 4 –theme development and review). An example of early development of the theme ‘nature of relationship’ is shown in Appendix L.

Braun and Clarke (2021) suggest that qualitative data analysis software is, despite its name, based on the positivist premise that there is a truth to be discovered, and that it is insufficiently flexible to accommodate true qualitative analysis. This researcher found it helpful to also use manual, pictorial methods to develop themes further after initial work with NVivo. The activity of writing up findings contributed further to the analytic process, being integral to TA (Braun and Clarke, 2021), a process which was neither linear nor rapid.

This researcher analysed patterns she identified using her informed intuition in the way that seemed most logical to her (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The analytic process of coding deductively from the research questions and inductively from the data permitted identification of patterns of similarity and difference in
participant interpretations of mentoring throughout the data rather than just by
category. This complex process was necessary to capture the reality of mentoring
in the round rather than from any one perspective, a richness made possible by
using a qualitative methodology which took advantage of the flexibility of
thematic analysis (TA Phase 5 – theme refining, defining and naming). Writing up
findings began as patterns were identified and recognising that writing up is not a
neutral process (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), this researcher kept a
reflective account of her thoughts, to shape her response to the data (TA Phase 6 –
writing up). Findings under each of the themes identified are discussed in Chapter
4.

3.8 Summary

The underlying desire of this current research was to hear the experiences of those
involved in mentoring and their interpretations of those experiences in their own
words, which the qualitative research methodology selected permitted. The
methodology devised allowed analysis of the data collected through the lens of the
social capital theoretical framework. Investigating the experiences of a small
number of mentors and mentee in detail using a qualitative research strategy gave
the researcher insight into interaction between mentor and mentee. Having
covered the rationale for the methodological strategy, the next chapter presents the
findings that emanated from this methodological approach. The themes and sub-
themes encompassing difference and similarity of individual and category
findings resulting from the thematic analysis are presented in Chapter 4. Findings
are presented by responses to themes by category, with an indication of where views differ between and within categories such as between mentors and mentees and between mentors. Findings include those from a pilot study (See Appendix M) that shaped aspects of the choice and implementation of the methodology.
Chapter 4. Findings: Analysis and Discussion

The previous chapter set out methodology used in this study, the associated data collection methods and the analysis method used, explaining how a qualitative methodology matched research aims. It explained why the use of a case study was appropriate. The selection and composition of the participants of the research sample were described. This chapter presents, analyses and discusses the main findings from the data collected, reflecting this researcher’s interpretation of participants’ views, in line with the interpretative approach. Many mentees gave insightful feedback about mentoring and the difference it had made to them. However, interviews revealed that some mentees found it difficult to recognise or articulate change, even though their interviews revealed change had happened.

Adult participants commented on their experience as referrers, mentors or coordinators and on their perceptions of mentees’ experience. Outcomes for this current study are a combination of coordinator, mentee and mentor feedback and data collected for the MyTime programme. This chapter analyses the findings thematically in response to the research questions:

**RQ1:** What are the expectations of those involved in a youth mentoring process?

**RQ2:** How do those involved experience youth mentoring?

**RQ3:** What is the role of the relationship in the mentoring process?

**RQ4:** How do any outcomes of youth mentoring relate to the development of assets and social capital in young people?
The process of thematic analysis to answer the research questions above identified the interconnected nature of the findings and that the most appropriate way to present them was through the themes given below:

- What is mentoring?
- Developing the relationship and mentee assets
- Accumulating and accessing social capital

Further discussion of this approach is given in Chapter 5. Findings amalgamate the diverse sample groupings into one composite set of responses, exploring how findings relate to relationship building, asset development and social capital strengthening. To represent the voices of participants, this chapter includes selected verbatim comments, written in italics.

**4.1 What is mentoring?**

This section outlines and discusses participant views of the MyTime mentoring purpose, process and the role of the mentor. MyTime objectives (Section 1.4) referred to mentees experiencing increases in confidence, motivation to do well at school, close relationships, access to community resources and life skills, implicitly referring to improving access to social capital and developing assets. The extent to which participants agreed with this view of mentoring is discussed and analysed below.
4.1.1 Mentoring is purposeful

When deciding who to recommend to MyTime mentoring, referrers considered individual need using their professional judgment rather than specific deprivation criteria. They identified young people who seemed to lack support at home or school, who needed someone to talk to who was neutral and removed from their everyday lives. Referrers strongly hoped that working with a mentor would help a young person to change and achieve ambitions that were not currently possible. Part of mentoring’s purpose, referrers explained, was to develop the assets to help mentees achieve their aspirations:

‘That the young person has developed trust with an adult. That they have helped them build their confidence and esteem and can now move forward with their plans.’ Referrer 1

‘I’m hoping what might happen is that they become more self-confident, more motivated and committed to doing things and achieving goals.’ Referrer 4

Mentors talked of helping young people overcome barriers, reinforcing the idea that mentoring could help a young person to achieve the change that they wanted. Like referrers, many mentors talked of expecting mentoring to have an impact on mentees. This could involve developing mentee assets, referred to often as ‘competencies’ and ‘life skills’ or ‘tools,’ rather than achieving specific outcomes at school, at home or in the community. For mentors, the timing of the
intervention was significant. They saw their role as helping mentees to make changes to improve their circumstances at a challenging time or ‘crunch point,’ as expressed by a mentor:

‘I look at it as a transition, that where they are now is not the place where they want to be, to stay, and they're wanting to move themselves to a better place.’ Mentor 6

**Mentoring is expected to increase mentee self-sufficiency**

Another outcome of the mentoring process desired by coordinators and mentors was that mentees should become ‘independent,’ or more self-sufficient. They saw mentoring as the beginning of a process whose outcomes they would not know, but which would, as Mentor 7 observed, ‘help them to help themselves by the time the process is finished.’ Independence encompassed being better prepared for challenge in their lives. Dependency, or reliance on the mentor, was perceived to be a negative, or even harmful outcome and the programme was not designed to provide companionship alone (befriending) which, according to coordinators should be avoided. The desired outcome for young people of the Jekielek, Hair and Moore (2002 p.12) model of youth development is ‘self-sufficiency’, similar to the ‘independence’ wished by MyTime mentors for their mentees. This desire for independence was not expressed directly by mentees who, being mostly still dependent on carers, probably did not see dependence on an adult as problematic. However, they attended sessions on their own, suggesting they were prepared to act without relying on friends or family.
One school-based referrer felt that mentoring was too prescriptive. She gave the example of a young person who had done well with a mentor but had not been able to maintain the benefits once the support was withdrawn. She found a whole school coaching approach more effective. Whilst not denying that a whole-school coaching approach is likely to be effective, evidence suggested that MyTime mentors focused on helping mentees develop assets that would persist after the support of mentoring finishes, a combination of mentoring and coaching, indicating its flexibility of application. This would seem to put into practice the mentoring and coaching approach advocated by Salter (2017).

**Mentees expected mentoring to help them change**

As part of the referral process, mentees specified up to three areas where they wanted mentor help. This introduced the idea that mentoring had a purpose and that the decision about what help they wanted was theirs rather than predetermined in line with specified programme aims. Mentee 7 reflected that mentoring would offer no benefit without this purpose:

‘...it can be for anything like relationship problems, with friends and family, stuff like school problems, outside school problems, someone to just talk to, if you need them then just ask for a mentor. Don't just go “I need a mentor” because then they will be no use to you. If you don't need one, then there’s no point.’ Mentee 7
Help requested by mentees often focused on asset enhancement such as improving communication skills. Referrers spoke of young people wanting to have ‘someone to talk to, to talk about problems with,’ a view corroborated by mentees. Mentor 4 thought one mentee saw her initially as ‘someone nice who would buy her an ice cream and have a bit of a chat.’ Mentees 1 and 2 had thought it would be ‘just nice to have someone else to talk to outside of school and home.’

When asked what the attributes of a good mentor were, mentees identified someone who was good at listening, someone to ‘support you in what you do,’ who ‘understands from your point of view,’ who ‘chats’, ‘someone you can relate to,’ and who was ‘happy’ and did not ‘moan’. These responses emphasise the immediate appeal of a mentor, therefore, was someone who would listen and support rather than lead and give instruction. Other areas mentees identified were goal setting, gaining confidence and self-esteem. Some mentees expressed the desire to leave their home environments and have new experiences. Their aims related to changing something about themselves rather than policy goals of, for example, truancy and school dropout reduction. They seemed to hope that mentoring could help them change how they felt about themselves and feel ‘more positive’ as this mentee perspicaciously stated:

‘Get along with self and be happy.’ Mentee Referral form

MyTime actively encouraged mentees to think about what they wanted to change, even if they were not sure how this might be achieved. Shiner et al. (2004) speculate that mentees who knew which areas they wanted to work towards
benefitted more from the Mentoring Plus programme than those who did not. The MyTime programme seemed based on an instrumental, or goal-focused relationship (Keller, 2007) but interestingly, the purpose was defined by mentees within a framework set by the programme or mentors.

**Mentees wanted a relationship that was purposeful and close**

When shown images of adults with and without young people and asked who they thought would make a good mentor, one mentee explained he chose images of adults and young people working together, not being told what to do. Another mentee selected all the images of adults and young people together, saying they ‘seem to, like, talk and to do stuff with the mentee’ whereas he could not judge adults on their own because they ‘don’t really have anybody next to them showing what they can do.’ This suggested that connection and interaction were important to him. Mentee 7 was similarly drawn to the rapport he perceived in one image:

‘I did that one [woman and girl] because they look like a really nice mentor. They look really close together and that’s what you want. You don’t want someone that you sort of sit there and have awkward conversations with. You want to have that connection… You can see that they are both smiling at each other.’ Mentee 7

Mentee 5 valued the life experience of older mentors:
These two are a bit older, they sort of know everything, how to get through it and they've probably been through the same situation themselves.’ Mentee 5

For mentees, mentoring offered emotional support and companionship but also purpose and access to mentors’ knowledge and experience. When asked to describe how they thought of their mentor, some mentees cited family roles such as a ‘big brother.’ Mentee 2 saw her mentor as a ‘role model’ to look up to and ‘like my mum but not my mum,’ similar to, but not a replacement for existing relationships. Most mentees compared the relationship to ‘a friend’ or ‘another friend’, such as the one who said he thought of his mentor as ‘a really close friend’ because he was one of very few people who ‘knows what’s really gone on.’ Mentee 6 remarked he had, unusually for him, given his mentor a nickname and thought of him as a person rather than ‘the mentor’.

Mentors also thought that their mentees saw them as friends. This could reflect mentees’ limited experience of relationships for comparison but did suggest an enjoyable, unstrained relationship, impressive testament to mentors and mentees, who were introduced as strangers.

When asked to show how close they were to others in their lives, most mentees indicated their closest relationships were with their family, although one selected her friends. Most mentees placed their mentor close to but separate from family, friends and professionals, such as social workers, mental health staff and teachers. Only Mentee 4 compared his mentor with ‘other’ adults, whom he defined as
psychiatrists and doctors. He spoke highly of his mentor, suggesting he saw him as part of a professional support process. No other mentees compared their mentor with a professional. Rhodes (2002) finds mentees who benefit from mentoring consider their mentors significant adults i.e., they give support, influence their actions, believe, care and inspire them. Comparing mentors to friends and family suggests that mentees experience mentors as such adults.

For Rhodes et al. (2006), emotional closeness brings better outcomes. Spencer (2007) and Herrera et al. (2007) find mentee perception of closeness to their mentor is indicative of a high-quality relationship that is more likely to last. The findings from this study are that mentees value closeness and that the mentor was someone they felt connected to. However, they also understood mentoring as more focused than friendship, seeking someone whose views they respected and who offered a supportive ear to discuss their concerns with.

4.1.2 Voluntary attendance is key to mentoring

Mentees were referred to MyTime rather than requesting mentoring and sometimes came to initial mentoring sessions to please someone else. However, interviews with mentors, coordinators and mentor focus groups agreed unanimously that to benefit, a mentee must want to be mentored and to attend for their own benefit rather than to please someone else. Young people who agreed to mentoring did not always understand what it could offer. However, mentees reported responding positively to the suggestion. Mentee 1 talked of thinking ‘that
sounds a good idea’ even though he had ‘not heard of it before.’ Others were willing to try mentoring, even if they initially attended to satisfy someone else’s wish. Mentors and coordinators stated that mentoring could not be imposed. For mentors and coordinators, this voluntary attendance of sessions by mentees was an important part of the mentoring process:

‘The fact that they've actually volunteered to be mentored, there is something that they want to actually do and that’s the decision that they've made.’ Mentor 3

Without a young person’s willingness to participate, mentoring would not be beneficial no matter how ‘desperate to try anything’ others, including parents, were. Mentors persevered despite initial mentee reluctance but realised they needed the young person’s agreement to mentor them.

In their empirical study of BBBS Canada, DeWit et al. (2016) associate intrinsic motivation to be mentored with greater commitment of mentor and mentee to programme completion than extrinsic motivation, such as institutional referral or a parent’s insistence. From this they establish that mentees must be willing to change if the relationship is to endure. For MyTime coordinators, willingness to participate was the major criterion for identifying potential mentees and they actively checked where this was not clear. Voluntary attendance by young people is a principle of youth work, and its importance was noted also in mentoring.
The findings from this current research suggest that the fact mentors are volunteers is also important, freeing them from the statutory obligations of many professionals and thereby complementing other services working with young people.

The fact that mentors had chosen to help young people rather than being paid for it seemed to give a particular flavour to mentoring. Both mentors and mentees referred to mentors as a ‘normal’ part of ‘normal’ life. This seemed to mean that, as volunteers, they were not trained professionals, carrying out a paid role and was felt to be positive, rather than a drawback. Mentors said that mentees behaved differently with them because they were volunteers who ‘want to be there, we’re not professionals.’ Mentors felt their life experience and everyday practices were sufficient for the role, rather than requiring ‘all of the extra training’ implied in professional roles. Indeed, one mentor explained that the unique context and needs of each of her mentees precluded any standard approach.

As volunteers, mentors were not tied to statutory requirements (beyond safeguarding), which was seen to be beneficial. However, the relationship had attributes of professionalism:

‘...it's not a formal professional thing which has to be recorded in a particular way... it's a professional role in an unprofessional setting.’

*Mentor 5*
Referrers talked of a mentor as a ‘resource’, implicitly acknowledging the social capital mentors brought. Despite the support many mentees were receiving from other agencies, referrers recommended mentoring, suggesting that for them, it offered something different from existing support from professional services and could help get the young person ‘back on track’. Another purpose of mentoring seemed to be stepping in where other services such as a school’s pastoral care did not or could not provide support. Mentor 4 explained that a school tried mentoring when ‘the teachers were absolutely desperate and didn’t know what to do’ for a young person in crisis.

For Ehrlich et al. (2016), adults who step outside the traditional roles towards young people by taking an interest in them and their home lives support strong relationship formation. The findings from this current study suggests MyTime mentees experienced relationships with mentors that crossed boundaries between professional and personal relationships, complementing other relationships in those areas.

4.1.3 Mentees need to understand their level of control in the mentoring process

Despite specifying their goals, mentees often had little understanding about mentoring and what it could achieve. Mentors in a focus group thought only 10-20% of mentees were well informed. This was reflected in mentee interviews and feedback:
‘I didn’t really expect anything.’ Mentee in programme feedback form

‘It was surprisingly nice.’ Mentee in programme feedback form

Referrer 4 believed that not understanding what mentoring offered and/or feeling overwhelmed by other professional support could discourage some young people from taking up mentoring, including those leaving care. She also believed that some young people saw mentoring as stigmatizing and, as a result, only about half of those she referred took it up. In the US, mentee’s families make a third of referrals to the BBBS mentoring programme. Although MyTime does not accept such referrals, this does suggest a wider understanding of mentoring’s potential benefits. Increased explanation of mentoring for both referrers and mentees could reduce stigma as well as increase the likelihood of a lasting match (Spencer, 2007), and therefore change.

Given this lack of understanding, mentors talked of helping young people to understand the unusual level of control the mentoring process could give them:

‘I do keep repeating about this is their session, they choose to be here. So, this is about them. That’s very powerful language for young person who’s normally told what to do, where to go to and how to behave.’ Mentor 6

Mentor 6’s view that mentees drove the process of change reflected coordinators’ and mentors’ universal belief that the mentoring process should be mentee led in response to their needs, not the expectations of parents/carers or referrers. The idea of being companions rather than mentor as leader and mentee as follower
seemed to typify the relationship. Mentors talked of offering mentees guidance and support, ‘a hand on the shoulder,’ ‘walking along beside the young person.’

Spencer (2007) finds that young people’s lack of understanding about mentoring and what it offers can cause relationships to fail. She suggests that mentees and mentors would benefit from more information about what to expect and typical challenges of the programme prior to the start of the relationship, noting that such information has had positive results with psychotherapy services.

Mentors remarked that the programme design let mentees drive the ‘agenda’, or what was discussed. This was likely to contribute to mentees’ feelings of control and sense of agency, as further discussed in Section 4.3.4. Although empowering, being given control implied an expectation of effort from the young person and an assumption that they were able to make such an effort.

**Mentors balanced leading and guiding mentees**

Mentee feedback and interviews referred frequently and favourably to being ‘helped’ by mentors which implied collaboration to overcome challenges, as opposed to solution imposition. Mentee 2 said that a mentor should ‘suggest ideas, don't tell them to do it’. This view was supported by a coordinator who said that mentors should not try to ‘solve’ a mentee’s ‘underlying difficulties’ but ‘explore’ and ‘offer support’. Mentors agreed their role was ‘empowering’ mentees, giving them time and space to ‘come up with [their] own solutions,’ try these out and then see the consequences, an experience which might be new to them.
Mentees emphasised how much they valued the fact that their mentor listened to them and suggested options rather than telling them what to do. Mentee 2 talked of the benefit of ‘telling it, having reassurance and then having advice to solve my issues’. This contrasted with being told what to do by ‘expert’ adults with the ‘right answers,’ a more typical adult to child relationship. The MyTime process encouraged mentees and mentors to see each other as partners in achieving mentee aspirations. Mentor 1 explained how he chose words to emphasise collaboration:

‘...how can we achieve this?’ rather than ‘how can you achieve this?’ so you don’t alienate them.’ Mentor 1

Mentors spoke of providing ‘targeted support’ and ‘guiding.’ Mentees also talked frequently of being ‘helped’ by their mentor. However, for all the relative control mentees had in the mentoring process, the mentor was still the adult and the mentee a child. Mentors talked of feeling responsible for their mentees who they perceived as vulnerable, wanting to ‘do right by them,’ and aiming for a good outcome from the trust that had been placed in them. Mentor 4 talked of mentoring’s ‘hidden agenda’ as a ‘tool in the toolbox to look after vulnerable children.’ Although guided by what their mentee was saying, the adult still had responsibility, ‘the thinking brain in the room’ as one mentor explained. This might involve identifying or responding to issues which the young person had not seen, so overlaying the young person’s aspirations with adult judgement of what a young person needed. Mentors were aware this involved accommodating their mentee’s needs and not, albeit unwittingly, conflating the mentor’s desire to
‘move them forward’ with what the mentee wanted. The tension inherent in this balance was captured in reflections by one mentor on a previous relationship where he thought he might have focused on what he thought was needed rather than on what his mentee wanted.

Findings showed mentors felt a level of responsibility towards their mentees that could result in apprehension, not usually found in friendship. One mentor’s diary captured his anxiety about how a session would go and whether the mentee would benefit. Another mentor expressed trepidation before her first sessions, being ‘a little bit, maybe nervous because you don’t know that person’ although once the relationship got established, ‘you settle into a routine, you kind of look forward to it.’ This sense of duty and obligation towards the mentee suggests foundations for a relationship with inherent social capital (Putnam 2000).

Larson (2006 p. 682) talks of the ‘intentionality paradox’ or tension for adults who support young people. They wish to protect and guide and help young people overcome barriers and avoid mistakes that adults with their greater experience can foresee so they do not need to learn by trial and error alone. However, using a positive development approach requires young people to experience ownership and agency for themselves to activate their assets and motivation. An overcontrolling adult undermines this activation. Findings from this current research suggests MyTime mentors experienced this tension. MyTime mentors tried to balance mentee aims with adult guidance, a need recognised by Spencer:
‘...mentors should strive to build collaborative working relationships with youth, neither becoming too directive nor allowing youth to become too passive in their exchanges’ Spencer (2004 p. 37).

This current study corroborates speculation by Raposa, Rhodes and Herrera (2016), amongst others, that mentors with successful relationships collaborate with their mentees rather than setting a rigid agenda.

4.1.4 The process of mentoring is important

A theme arising strongly from participants was the benefit of the flexible MyTime mentoring format which encompassed location, timing and content. These features, unusual in many other local authority services, are discussed here.

Location as an enabler to asset development

Mentoring sessions were always held in public and never in a mentor’s or mentee’s house, giving mentees physical and emotional distance from their home environment. Neutral territory also avoided highlighting disparity between mentor’s and mentee’s homes, a potential cause of difficulty highlighted by Spencer (2007). Mentors worked with mentees to find places where they could create an enjoyable atmosphere for mentoring and help mentees to benefit from community resources. Mentors and coordinators said that finding somewhere suitable for a session, although not always easy, was integral to a successful mentoring process. They felt that a welcoming and safe location encouraged
mentees to talk about sensitive topics, explaining Rhodes and DuBois (2008) finding that flexibility in session format leads to relationships that last.

Community venues such as cafés, McDonalds, or ‘normal’ school settings were appreciated by all. Some mentors and mentees contrasted these places with unpleasant previous experiences of professional help: ‘awful buildings’ which ‘smell’ or depressing locations, ‘a secluded room, which is usually cold and has low energy’. There was less power imbalance than from an ‘official’ in ‘their’ office with authority over the young person. One mentor thought for her mentee, meeting in their preferred café on ‘that dark sofa in the corner’ was ‘like her sofa at home. It's safe,’ and she changed it at her peril.

‘If I suggest a different coffee shop or a different something to it, she doesn't want that. I've tried every now and again and she says, “No, I really like going there.”’ Mentor 4

The £10 provided by MyTime meant that mentoring was usually associated with a treat, such as a drink and possibly snack (‘very good cake’), distinguishing it from many other services for young people. This regular, nurturing routine became significant to many mentees, meeting basic requirements, such as hunger, before tackling more complex issues (Maslow, 1954). Routines of daily life are good for lives that do not have much routine and provide ‘opportunities for learning and growth’ (Brendtro, 2019 p.10). These rituals allowed mentees to decompress from their day through a physical and emotional transition:
‘All of mine have never wanted to do anything except sit and have a hot chocolate. They love that.’ Mentor Focus Group

Without the routine, mentoring did not always work so smoothly. Mentor 2 recounted a session when a venue without opportunity for refreshment resulted in a mentee being ‘really disgruntled’, possibly because ‘he hadn’t eaten all day’. The mentoring format also allowed insight into need for additional help. Walking to and from venues together, as well as encouraging spontaneous chat, helped Mentor 4 to identify physical needs, such as not ‘walking properly because [mentee] didn’t have any suitable shoes to wear.’ Mentors used locations unobtrusively as resources to help mentees work on their aspirations in everyday settings. This included, for example, getting them to order the drinks, or to borrow a pen from a receptionist to work on confidence. The confidence they had demonstrated could then be pointed out to them, revealing assets they may have been unaware of.

The calm space in which mentoring was held, away from a stressful situation emotionally and physically, with someone external to the event helped to create an environment conducive to discussing sensitive topics privately and for mentees to express themselves and to reflect. One mentor described how this gave her mentee respite:

‘...with my difficult girl, she swears at everyone. She's angry, she swears. It's really tricky. And yet, when she’s sat with me, she doesn’t do any of those things.’ Mentor 4
Community venues also maintained confidentiality, an important consideration for mentees. Mentees told their mentors they could be ‘an auntie or a friend of the family, nobody knows’ if their friends saw them together.

For Philip and Hendry (2000), control of venue and meeting timing rather than having these imposed gives mentees a sense of agency in mentoring. In this current study, it also creates a respectful atmosphere where close connections can be formed. Meeting somewhere pleasant at a time driven by mentee preferences rather than a pre-defined schedule set the scene for an enjoyable experience and a relationship sensitive to mentee needs. The mentoring process was thus jointly negotiated and informal, demonstrating to mentees that their comfort and opinion mattered, and they had some control in the mentoring process.

**Locations with potentially negative impact on mentoring**

Some mentors found mentoring in schools more problematic. Coordinators wondered whether mentees who specified which lessons they wished to miss were fully committed to mentoring, an important part of benefitting as discussed earlier. Where young people were positive about school, mentoring could work well and removed timing and transport issues. However, mentees were often ambivalent or even hostile towards their school. When one stopped attending school, mentoring broke down because the contact process and session venue were lost, and the mentor suspected he was negatively associated with the school by his mentee. The resource of mentoring and social capital from school were thus lost simultaneously. Another mentee with negative experiences of school asked not to
meet there, a request that became easier to accommodate once she ‘basically got expelled’.

Mentors reported sometimes feeling overtly or covertly driven by school rules, timetable and ethos with less privacy or control over venue suitability. Herrera et al. (2011) report mentoring activities in school increase a young person’s sense of belonging, positivity of feelings towards school and improved academic outcomes, at least in the short term. This could suggest that mentors felt more discomfort in school settings than mentees, or school settings for mentoring should be used only after careful consideration of the mentee’s personal circumstances. Additionally, schools might be more appropriate for academic mentoring than experiential learning and asset development.

**Sessions allowed time for mentor and mentee to get to know each other**

As well as the freedom about where and when to meet, mentors appreciated being able to get to know a young person and their situation ‘at their own pace’.

Although time limited, MyTime offered mentees support for six to twelve months, or longer, seen as almost a luxury. Referrers and mentors understood that mentees might need time to trust their mentor, particularly if they had little experience of a trusting relationship with an adult. For Mentor 5, not having the pressure of being a statutory service meant he had time to develop a relationship and explore issues in depth. He compared this time to being a grandparent rather than parent. He felt that having time let a mentee gauge whether they could trust their mentor, making them more likely to talk about their situation.
For Mentor 6, one of the benefits of time was that mentees could take stock, reflect and have ‘…space to dream, to talk about what you are worried about.’ Mentors facilitated reflection on personal experience, listening and reframing words. This was likely to help mentees feel understood, understand themselves better and think about themselves differently (Gallagher and Morgan 2013). MyTime mentors had time to respond to individual mentees, some of whom were ‘desperate to talk’ and some of whom a coordinator felt took longer ‘to get comfortable,’ despite the skills of the mentor. For Coleman (1988) time spent together builds social capital in the relationship, an aspect that is discussed in Section 4.3.

Sessions followed the mentee’s needs and agenda

MyTime mentoring sessions had no prescribed format or curriculum. Mentors felt that this flexibility allowed mentees to focus on their concerns:

‘It's like what she wants to work on that she's not allowed to do elsewhere...It's empowering for the young person.’ Mentor, Focus Group

Mentors commented that mentees often presented them with the unexpected such as issues at home or school during a mentoring session and that they needed to adjust constantly between working on a mentee’s long-term aspirations and dealing with issues at hand. Mentor diaries highlighted mentoring’s reactive nature, with one planning possible topics to give ‘a bit of direction’ while being responsive to whatever their mentee wanted to bring up. Mentors spoke of
needing ‘flexibility, adaptability,’ having to ‘adapt to the person, and to the situation’ because every relationship was different, requiring a different response. The lack of a fixed agenda was likely to be beneficial in these circumstances.

Mentor inflexibility is likely to lead to relationship breakdown, whereas flexibility is helpful for forming strong relations (Rhodes, 2002). In the MyTime programme, the flexibility of format was matched by the flexibility of mentors in their actions and understanding of their role.

Session location, regularly agreed and flexible contact created conditions that were integral to building a working relationship. Mentoring locations connected mentees to their assets and resources in ways unavailable to many other professional services. Mentors reacted to day-to-day challenges as well as providing a calm reflective and enjoyable space for their mentees.

4.1.5 The mentor role is complex

Mentors had no shared concept of the mentor role, which they described variously as a friend, a member of the extended family (‘auntie,’ ‘granddad and grandson’) or someone neutral but concerned for the young person. As with mentees, mentors were clear that they complemented rather than substituted for existing relationships. Many mentors defined their role by what it was not, on occasions showing mentoring more positively than other relationships in mentees’ lives:

‘Not a moaning parent or a barking teacher’ Mentor 1
If mentees frequently saw their mentor as a friend, mentors and coordinators mostly did not. A coordinator defined the mentor role as ‘friendly but not friends.’ For Mentor 3, establishing the nature of the role took time, with the age disparity precluding true friendship. She commented that the role did not have the same ‘two-way conversation’ as friendship, and although there was no ‘power dynamic’ of being ‘a teacher or social worker,’ it was ‘not an equal relationship.’ She felt mentoring’s regularity and structure were more significant that the relationship.

The discussion in Section 2.6.5 identified the importance of consistency in building a trusting relationship. However, the mentor was perhaps understating the importance of the relationship to her mentee, who made great efforts to attend sessions even when her mother could not take her. Mentor 3 felt mentors should consider what to reveal about themselves and ‘hold themselves back.’ She had not mentioned that she had been a teacher, for example, in case that impacted the relationship with her mentee who had a negative view of school. A mentor in a focus group tried to encapsulate the role:

‘…it’s not a friendship. There is something professional about it but at the same time we’re also not teachers, counsellors or social workers.’ Focus Group Mentor

For another mentor, mentors were role models: not perfect and setting impossible standards to live up to but contributing the assets and knowledge from their life experience. All adults perceived having a relationship with their mentee as important, with views varying from ‘critical’ to being helpful but not essential.
For one, regularity of contact, being available and listening were equally valuable. Referrer 4 felt that closeness was not essential. Allowing a mentee to ‘let off steam’ could be beneficial although a close bond could be ‘really good.’ For her, mentoring was ‘a nurturing relationship,’ suggesting the relationship permitted development and growth, including emotional support.

However, mentors were mindful mentoring had a purpose and felt they should not veer into befriending alone. Although displaying empathy, some mentors believed that emotional distance from their mentees made them more effective, allowing them to be ‘far more objective’ than, for example, a parent and that over-involvement in the relationship could be unhelpful.

‘The reason for being there is to try and to help and develop these kids but if you're emotionally involved, because you like that person in front of you, are you the best person for it?’ Mentor, Focus group

By having this distance, mentors believed they were less likely to reinforce issues that could be holding mentees back. For one, being ‘not linked in any way’ let mentees express their opinions freely. For another, the value of a mentor was this lack of connection:

‘So that makes it very special. Because if in theory, you're not related in any other way, you're not related as the uncle, godfather, the trusted family friend. Being neutral, being someone separate.’ Mentor 5
One saw her role as the voice of reason, like the Walt Disney character acting as Pinocchio’s conscience:

‘...I like to say when I’m talking to mine, I'm like your Jiminy Cricket on your shoulder, that's who I am. I'm not your mum, I'm not your teacher, I'm not your anybody else. As opposed to ‘just do as you’re bloody told’ (laughter).’ Mentor Focus group

However, in practice, several mentors did not achieve the level of detachment to which they aspired, as discussed in a focus group:

‘I must admit, I get quite emotionally invested. I mean, I keep it to myself, but you can't help it.’ Mentor, Focus Group

Many mentors remarked on the unusual nature of the role that they played. They pointed out that this role was not fixed but differed by mentee needs. It was ‘infinitely adaptable’ and evolved over time to be the relationship that the mentee needed or defined for them.

‘If there was somebody they could have that relationship with, they wouldn't [want a mentor].’ Mentor 7

Mentor 4 remarked that although she had worked with young people all her life, the mentoring role was different from all of them. Interviewees indicated that their role moved along a continuum from emotional support to instrumental goal achievement, with different aspects important at different times.
Lakind, Eddy and Zell (2014) describe an inherent flexibility of mentoring and the influence of the mentor’s conception of their role on their work. MyTime mentors took advantage of this flexibility to fulfil the role they felt was needed by their mentee. Darling, Hamilton and Niego (1994) find that it is the goal focused nature of the mentoring relationship rather than the relationship itself that achieves change. In the case of MyTime, the idea of purpose suffused the whole mentoring process. However, the way in which this sense of purpose was balanced with closeness and emotional connection is discussed in Section 4.2.

4.1.6 Summary

Participants from MyTime believed the purpose of the programme was to help young people change and progress. For coordinators and mentors, this related to helping young people overcome barriers to reach their potential. For mentees, it was about changing something about themselves. The process of mentoring demonstrated to mentees from the outset that they had considerable control or agency. It also created the expectation of effort on the part of young people. Mentors expected to provide support and guidance to navigate a time of transition or challenge, rather than instruction. They thought that mentoring should be led by the mentee, although with adult interpretation of their needs, working together on mentees’ aspirations.

Mentees, although initially unclear about what mentoring was and with low expectations, aspired to connection with someone who would listen and help them
change, often by developing assets and relationships. Mentees understood that the mentoring had a purpose and played a role in relationship establishment by actively choosing to participate. All participants expected that mentees would benefit from the process of mentoring.

Mentees conceptualised the role of mentor alongside, but outside, that of family members and friends, encompassing aspects of each. Mentors found it difficult to equate their role with any existing ones, although often compared and contrasted it with professional services (i.e., a paid and trained role), including where mentors had worked in those professions. Mentors and mentees believed that being outside the ‘professional’ system, unconstrained by statutory requirements other than safeguarding, gave them more time and flexibility to respond to mentee aspirations.

This flexibility of mentoring, which was one of its strengths, also added complexity. The role of the mentor could thus be summarised as unusual, encompassing aspects of professional relationships and friendship, but where there were still boundaries. Mentoring offered purpose and support. Mentoring’s flexibility as a resource to complement (or supplement) support from home and other professional services was acknowledged, including its use when all else had failed. Referrers expected that those they referred would benefit from the emotional support and asset building (often confidence) of an external, caring adult. The basis of MyTime mentoring was thus a relationship. Given its
importance in the mentoring process, relationship building is considered in the next section.

4.2 Developing the relationship and mentee assets

All participants believed that mentoring could only progress with a connection or relationship between mentor and mentee. This section presents and discusses the multitude of interactions that helped build this all-important relationship.

Mentees have assets and behaviours which facilitate the mentoring process

All those interviewed believed that, to benefit fully from the mentoring process, mentees needed to be open to change and to trying different ways of addressing issues as well as being active participants. For one referrer, young people who accepted mentoring had realised they needed help and were prepared to accept it. For Mentor 2, willingness to share their concerns and countenance change was the mark of ‘a good mentee’. Mentee 2 agreed:

‘You’ve got to want to change… If they give you advice, at least try it. Try it. If they give you something to do, try it out at least because you never know, it could work and make the whole situation ten times better.’

Mentee 2

When asked who mentoring would not suit, she added:
‘Someone who doesn’t like opening up…If you're not ready to open up, then there's no point in doing it.’ Mentee 2

Mentors recognised that opening up during mentoring and revealing their feelings to an unknown adult, sometimes for the first time required courage as noted by Philip (2004). Youth mentoring literature stresses the need for mentors to be open to their mentees (Miller 2007; Darling, Hamilton and Shaver, 2006). This current study finds such openness is necessary also for mentees to gain benefit from the mentoring process.

Colley (2003) questions whether mentees are predisposed to succeed or whether mentoring helps them succeed, an important consideration. Bourdieu (1986 p. 22) talks of needing the ‘disposition’ to acquire the ‘competence’ to accumulate and maintain social capital. Mentees, it can be argued, in their openness and willingness to change, displayed the disposition for competence. This competence in the form of assets they developed predisposed them to benefit from the mentoring relationship and to accumulate social capital.

### 4.2.1 Building trust is central to the mentoring relationship

Mentors and coordinators agreed that establishing mentee trust was the foundation for working successfully together. For one mentor, it was more important for a mentoring relationship to be based on trust than on emotional connection:
‘Trust is more important. You don't have to like someone to trust them.’

*Mentor Focus Group*

Another mentor felt that mentoring was unlikely to help until a mentee trusted their mentor enough to tell them what was truly happening. A third mentor stated that trust led to a more relaxed relationship. Mentee 2 observed that mentoring could only work for those able to trust and accept support:

‘Because what's the point of opening up to someone if you can't trust them? So, you have to be able to trust them... Because it's meant to help you come out of your shell or whatever. But if you can't trust them, then you can't do that.’ Mentee 2

Referrer 2 explained that once a mentor had ‘built trust’, the mentee felt they had ‘permission’ to talk honestly. The use of the term ‘build trust’ suggesting joint effort from mentor and mentee and the many ways in which trust was built are described below.

**Confidentiality was essential for mentees to trust their mentor**

For mentees, the advantage of having a non-kin mentor who did not know anyone in the mentee’s social network was that confidentiality was almost guaranteed. Mentees made it clear that confidentiality was central to trust. Mentee 2 stated her mentor was one of only two adults she trusted and said of her ‘I can trust her a lot.’ This was because she knew what she discussed with her mentor would not be shared with teachers, family or friends. Mentee 7 expressed the same view:
'It’s someone completely random. Like they don't know anything that's happened, or why it's happened and it's all completely confidential which was really nice.’ Mentee 7

Focus group mentors agreed that ‘confidentiality goes a long way’ in building trust, creating a ‘contract with them’. Mentees decided whether to share their discussions with their families and, unlike with BBBS, progress updates were not shared with families or referrers. Contact with a mentee’s parents or carers was usually discussed with the young person first, respecting their privacy. One mentor felt he might have undermined trust in his relationship with his mentee by corresponding with the mentee’s mother.

Rhodes and Lowe (2008) suggest mentors were correct to pay attention to these boundaries, with inappropriate sharing of information causing relationship breakdown. In her review of good mentoring practice, Bennett (2003) warns against breaching confidentiality and of negative impact on trust if mentoring becomes monitoring. Mentoring where mentors have decision-making power over their mentees can lead to sensitivities around negotiating confidentiality (Philip et al., 2004). MyTime mentors came from outside a mentee’s family, friends and school and had no authority over mentees’ futures, which helped ensure confidentiality and build trust in a way possibly unavailable to professional services with statutory responsibilities.
Mentors being non-judgmental helped build trust

Mentors felt that accepting a mentee for who they were, being on their side and non-judgemental were part of the mentoring ‘contract’ and helped to trust. For Referrer 3, the very definition of a mentor was ‘a good listener who is non-judgemental.’ This was echoed by many mentors and in focus groups:

‘That starts to build rapport because, as I said, again as they begin to realise, you're not here to judge them but to empower them.’ Mentor 6

‘It’s making them feel safe, not judging them. They're not judged, they can just say anything.’ Mentor focus Group

Part of being non-judgmental for mentors meant not using information they were given about their mentee to form preconceptions about them. Although supposedly written by the mentee, a referral form might reflect someone else’s view of what was needed rather than the mentee’s view. Mentors felt they should help young people present their own story, as discussed by mentors in a focus group:

‘...they've been told they can't do that; that they've been very naughty, this, that and the other. And I say, “Yeah but what do you think? You tell me what you think the problem is. That’s what everyone else thinks the problem is, but what you think it is?” It is often two very, very different things.’ Mentor, Focus Group
As with confidentiality, by coming from outside a situation, mentors were less likely to have pre-conceived ideas. The only way they could learn about a situation was by listening to a mentee’s words, something that might not have happened before. Mentees seemed to feel they could be more ‘themselves’ in the mentoring relationship that in some other relationships. Knowing that their mentor would not judge them seemed to put mentees under less pressure to ‘put on a brave face’ or pretend to be something they were not. Mentees appreciated being allowed to talk about how they felt rather than being exhorted to be positive. Other professional interactions seemed to require a persona, having to ‘try to mitigate it or try to over exaggerate just to make it more entertaining, more serious’, as Mentee 6 explained.

Mentors also perceived their mentees differently from those around them which seemed to help mentees see themselves in a new light. With different expectations, mentors gave mentees fresh opportunities to use their assets, such as by placing orders at a cafe. A mentor spoke of a mentee with autism, who realised he could manage day-to-day activities such as buying drinks for himself and his mentor, previously done by his mother. By the end of mentoring, he could walk to school unaccompanied, an outcome that delighted him. His mentor speculated that small steps had helped him see he could tackle other challenges and may have shifted the view of those around him about his capabilities.

Mentors reported mentees behaving differently with them than with school staff or their parents. One mentor noted that his mentee’s bad stammer disappeared as
soon as his parents and teachers left the room, suggesting that being with a mentor lacked the stress of other relationships with adults.

By being non-judgmental, mentors helped mentees feel accepted, which might have been an unusual experience. Taking a non-judgmental stance meant a mentor could frame an issue so it was not presented in a ‘critical parent-type role’. For example, one mentor gave his mentee the confidence to ‘come out’ as gay. The mentor’s warmth towards his mentee was evident in the way he talked about the event, a demonstration of being non-judgemental in action.

Knowing they would not be judged could also help a mentee take responsibility for their actions. A mentee spoke of the benefit he gained from being able to talk about difficult situations:

‘Say if someone has done something, you don’t want to be moaned at about it. You just want them to ask you, ‘What went, what actually caused it?’ Why it was caused. And maybe even who caused it? ... if everything’s gone a bit cr*p, it’s something to look forward to. And it’s someone where you tell them what’s going on. Like why it's happened. It's someone that you can sort of share everything to; that's why I think it’s like one of the best things to have.’ Mentee 7

However, despite being keen not to pre-judge mentees, mentors still wanted to have enough background information to help. Mentor 1 worried that his lack of knowledge about mentees’ circumstances meant he might ‘put his foot in it,’
alienating them by making them talk about something they found difficult. Mentor 2 wished he knew what was going on ‘behind the scenes’ when he saw that his mentee’s good progress ‘all of a sudden went downhill.’ In the case of a mentee whose family had recently undergone religious conversion, the mentor was concerned he was suggesting activities or options that could cause conflict at home.

Being non-judgmental helps mentoring relationship formation (Lewing et al., 2018; Whybra et al., 2018; Tierney, Grossman and Resch, 2000). Knowing they would not be judged helped MyTime mentees reveal topics they had previously kept hidden. MyTime mentors seemed to try to balance being open-minded, having enough context of the young person’s life and interpreting from this knowledge what would be in their mentee’s best interests, further evidence of the flexibility of the role and process.

**Challenge increased trust**

Mentors saw it as their role to build trust rather than taking it for granted:

> ‘It’s not just them coming straightaway to be a good mentee. It’s like we help them to become this positive person.’ Mentor Focus Group

Mentors believed that mentees expected to be challenged so they could ‘move on and so that will require some gentle challenges’ which was part of gaining their trust. Being non-judgmental was not passive acceptance of a mentee’s thoughts or decisions:
'You can just sit there and nod and go: “Oh, yeah. So, you did that.” I think they both expect a bit more of me than that. ... I mean, I'm not going to say something’s marvellous when it's not.’ Mentor 4

Having been accepted as non-judgmental, the mentor could discuss decisions or thoughts without the mentee feeling criticised. Mentees could consider other options that might lead to a better outcome next time. The level of challenge could increase as the relationship developed. Mentee 6 explained how he was ‘glad’ his mentor had been ‘able to help’ by challenging his way of thinking. Showing him different options, the mentee said, had stopped him going ‘in places where I could have regressed.’

A mentee needed to trust their mentor to be receptive to challenge, but challenge also increased a mentee’s trust in their mentor. Such interconnection between cause and effect typified many of the findings about this case study. Larson (2006) finds that effectively engaging adults balance structure and challenge with enjoyment and support and that challenge is necessary for young people to develop their potential. Along with enjoyment, mentor challenge was part of the purposeful MyTime programme.

**Mentors modelled trustworthiness**

MyTime mentors said that they demonstrated their trustworthiness and respect for their mentees by being reliable and consistent, potentially counteracting inconsistent and unreliable behaviour mentees might have previously experienced.
from adults. Mentors became a regular and reliable fixture in the lives of mentees, with mentoring sessions becoming a routine in week which might otherwise lack structure, flexing to accommodate the mentee’s needs. Mentor 7 worked from home to ensure she was on time for mentoring sessions (pre-Covid). For Mentor 6, mentor consistency and perseverance against setbacks could disrupt mentee assumptions about adult behaviour for the better, ‘Because the dynamic’s changed.’

Mentees commented that their mentors were ‘punctual’ and ‘always on time,’ suggesting this differed from their expectation of adult behaviour. Mentor 2 saw from his mentee’s MoTY feedback that he had underestimated the profound difference his always being on time had made to his mentee. The mentor’s norm was to be respectful and trustworthy, unlike his mentee’s previous experience.

By being reliable, mentors helped mentees experience how beneficial this was. One mentor suggested that consistency did more to build mentee trust than what a mentor said or did. The evaluation report stated that continuity of support set mentoring apart from other local authority services, with the mentor providing consistent support that mentees otherwise lacked (Matthews, 2015). The need for consistency was a view shared by mentors:

‘A lot of these kids have so many professionals in their lives. And they quite often disappear off the scene, so they give up information about themselves to a social worker and then six months later the social worker’s
moved on or, and they’ve got to do it all over again. It's very demanding for them.’ Mentor 5

Inherent in the comment above is a questioning of the value of a mentoring relationship that often lasted no longer than six months. The implications of the length of the mentoring relationship and the views of participants about endings are explored in Section 4.2.4.

**Authenticity in the relationship**

Mentors were not always experts and were prepared to research topics to help their mentees. This could be seen as part of their ‘normality,’ even where possibly uncomfortable for them. Mentors showed mentees that they were not all knowing and modelled that learning and reflection were part of finding solutions. Mentees said that hearing about their mentor’s lives deepened the relationship. For Rogers *et al.* (2016), authenticity as perceived by the client is one of the bases of successful helping relationships. Mentors’ willingness to show that they were not experts and to reveal past mistakes demonstrated such authenticity.

The importance of commitment and continuity of key adults in programmes in helping young people feel secure and to support strong mentoring relationships is well recognised (Williams and Le Menestrel, 2013; Smith *et al.* 2015; Donlan *et al.* 2017). Relationships demonstrating consistency, intentionality, predictability, authenticity, empathy and positive regard are therapeutic or healing, and for Spencer and Rhodes (2014), encourage a young person to be open to adult
guidance and influence. Findings from this current study indicate how mentor behaviour demonstrated such characteristics, paving the way for mentees to benefit from their mentor’s resources and experience. The benefits experienced are discussed in Section 4.3.

The mentoring process is respectful

Everything about the mentoring process was respectful, possibly in contrast to some young people’s experiences of adults and systems around them. Mentee preferences of mentor gender, session timing and location were accommodated where possible. One mentor talked of affording his mentee the same respect as an adult. Respect was seen as more ‘highly significant’ than ‘having to like each other’. Mentors’ respectful approach towards mentees was shown in their descriptions of mentoring as ‘incredibly rewarding’ and as a ‘privilege.’

For Mentor 7, the ability to be respectful was fundamental to every aspect of life, which suggests it is an asset. Another mentor reflected how being respected in the relationship could help mentees be respectful in other relationships and was ‘a really powerful model.’ Although mentees did not talk directly about being respected, several described their mentor as a role model, as discussed in Section 4.1.5, which implies they respected and wished to emulate them. This current research finds, like Donlan, McDermott and Zaff (2017), that respect was a foundation for a successful mentoring relationship.
MyTime mentors tried to show mentees that adults could be trusted and that trusting brought benefits. They demonstrated ways of establishing trust such as being non-judgmental and listening. The realisation that trust could be established with those you did not know but that it took time came as a useful insight to Mentee 2:

‘If I talked to someone, and they’ll be like,” Oh, don’t you trust me?” I’ll be like,” I’ve only just met you.” It takes time to build up trust. You have to talk to them and open up but not straight away.’ Mentee 2

For Coleman (1988), the amount of time individuals spend together builds trust. Gaddis (2012) finds that most mentoring outcomes are impacted by the amount of time mentor and mentee spend together and level of trust between them, with time insufficient on its own. He is uncertain whether the ability to trust precedes or comes from the mentoring relationship. MyTime findings evidenced that trust both strengthened and was strengthened by the relationship. For MyTime mentors and mentees, trust resulted from session confidentiality, regularity, reliability, time spent together, effort put into engendering trust and willingness to trust.

Trustworthy adults give young people confidence in adults and their ability to mediate or control difficult situations Rhodes 2002). By being trustworthy, mentors are therefore likely to help mentees develop their ability to trust others, which for Field (2005) is an asset. Additionally, trust enables formation of close relationships that accumulate social capital (Coleman, 1988). Whether the effort expended in developing trust was rewarded in terms of mentee asset development
and a relationship in which social capital could accumulate is examined in Section 4.3.

4.2.2 Communication helps build the relationship

Another way of building the relationship discussed by interviewees was through all forms of communication: conversation, talking, listening, questioning and observing.

Mentees wanted to be listened to

A mentor observed that to learn how to express themselves, mentees needed to be listened to. Mentees emphasised the value they placed on being listened to by their mentor, something of which they might have had little experience. Indeed, referrals to MyTime were often because it was felt a young person’s needs and concerns were being overlooked and they could benefit from having someone to listen to them, finding as Rhodes (2004 p. 14), that mentoring can help ‘youth who lack attention from caring adults’. Many mentees had no one else who would listen actively rather than to take professional notes or who were not distracted by other worries:

‘I got to talk to someone who would actually listen. And all those sorts of things, something I didn't get, you know, a lot in my house...It's quite nice because you know that they’re understanding and they don't just go, ‘yeah, yeah, yeah’, that sort of thing.’ Mentee 5
All participants saw listening as a major part of the support offered:

‘It is more or less the fact to listen to you. If they ask you to do something, like you forget about some things to tell them. Whereas if they just listen. It's really good, because then you can tell them everything.’ Mentee 5

‘He’s very good at listening; he helps me.’ Mentee 1

‘... someone who wants to listen to me, wants to help me ....’ Mentee 4

Mentee 4 noted the benefit of voicing his concerns to his mentor, saying that after a session he felt:

...better because I've got stuff out I wanted to talk about, and it puts me in a good mood.’ Mentee 4

For mentees, feeling listened to when they talked about concerns, ‘no matter how small,’ made them ‘feel better’ and that this was at the heart of mentoring:

‘If you don't listen, then what's the point of being a mentor? You're basically there to listen to that person's problems and to help them.’ Mentee 2

Mentor 6 explained how a mentor could help a mentee express themselves:

‘...really trying to understand what's at the root cause of a certain situation and give them a voice because often they're not listened to, they're not really listened to.’ Mentor 6
Mentors agreed that their role was of a ‘friendly listener,’ ‘really listening.’ Findings from interviews and focus groups evidenced mentors listening attentively and interpreting what their mentees were trying to tell them:

‘...her observations of animal behaviour are nearly always linked to something that she's trying to tell me... She can't always say what's worrying her, I feel. She doesn't have the words; she doesn't quite know how to express it.’ Mentor 4

Mentors observed non-verbal communication to help judge their mentee’s needs. One consciously stopped talking to encourage conversation, trying to ensure his own body language was appropriate. Mentees’ body language, such as playing with a hair band to indicate anxiety, and language changes as well as words were all noted as this mentor explained:

‘...the way [mentee] holds her coat tells me quite a lot. Whether she puts it on or not, tells me something. I can tell whether she's had a row with her mum just by her body language. Then, you know, I can sort of go, ”How are things at home?” which I wouldn't always ask but I can ask if I’ve picked up that clue.’ Mentor 3

A referrer said that mentors ‘heard’ their mentees. Findings from this current study indicated mentors demonstrated active listening such as: open body language, resistance to distractions, paraphrasing, clarifying or mirroring questions and positive comments (Converse and Lignugaris-Kraft, 2009). Some
mentees found direct eye contact difficult, but the flexibility of the mentoring format allowed mentor and mentee to engage in less challenging interactions such as walking side by side. Higley et al. (2016) and Donlan et al. (2017) find active listening provides emotional support. Being listened to encouraged mentees to develop their ability to communicate, as discussed next.

**Developing the art of conversation**

Interviews, focus groups and diaries showed that research participants identified the importance of communication skills. Mentors felt mentees needed to be able to express themselves to activate resources in their networks:

‘*You know, just talking about something is often just the way to unlock something else.*’ Mentor 5

A referrer directly linked the ability to converse with developing other assets:

‘…to build up self-esteem by speaking to someone, someone to talk to, to build up language skills.’ Referrer 3

Mentees agreed that discussion and conversations were key to the changes they were seeking on mentee referral forms:

‘…be able to communicate better with people.’ Mentee Feedback form

‘I want to talk about how I feel a lot more.’ Mentee Feedback form
Verbal and non-verbal communication was the main medium through which mentoring was conducted. Mentor 7 mentioned using open questioning techniques to ‘probe and explore things further,’ to encourage mentees to talk and reflect. Mentors spoke of modelling different communication styles from those a mentee was used to. One mentor said using respectful language showed their mentee they had valid views. For Mentors 4 and 6, this difference of approach and a chance to practise other ways of communicating could disrupt existing behaviour patterns:

‘I don’t think she can’t because she doesn’t want to talk, she just can’t. She cannot put it into words. Whether she’s been told to shut up in her life I don’t know. It doesn’t feel that she’s listened to, so therefore you don’t want to talk if no one listens… she just has an angry outburst. And that’s the way that she releases that, because she can’t actually release it by necessarily generally talking about how she feels.’ Mentor 3

Mentors suggested topics of conversation when mentees had few experiences to talk about:

‘...If the rest of the time he's just at home and he hasn’t done anything to talk about unless you talk about films he's watched. He hasn’t got that dynamic of school or school friends or anything like that. So, keeping that conversation going when all he has done is things he doesn’t want to talk about, I feel like I've got questions written on my arm sometimes: ” Oh, have I done number 9 yet? (laughs).”’ Mentor 2
Talking to someone who listened helped mentees clarify their thoughts and understand themselves and their options better. Mentees said that working together to achieve their aspirations helped to build the relationship, which differs from Rhodes et al. (2006), who sees a more linear progression from relationship building to addressing goals. Using appropriate questioning helped mentees make sense of situations which could otherwise seem confusing and ‘disjointed.’ Discussing her situation helped one mentee realise for the first time that her low mood was part of a long-term pattern, rather than a recent change. The observation by Rhodes et al. (2006) that practising communication skills and conversation with their mentors can develop mentee cognitive skills was born out by at least one mentee who described the value of being helped to make sense of her thoughts:

‘And get it out. Even if it's like a jumble of words. Then you can like piece it together... she just listens. And then I explain it. And if I'm struggling, then she'll help me.’ Mentee 2

Modelling and encouraging active listening and dialogue help develop self-awareness and responsibility (Gallagher and Morgan, 2013), suggesting the benefits of communication for mentees. The mentor could give mentees ‘a voice’, as a number of mentors stated, and hear their view of events, something both mentors and mentees said could be rare. Being helped to use language to express emotion, being listened to and telling their version of an event increased mentees’ understanding of themselves:
‘By reflecting, I think it's helping them hear their own words. It helps them hear that they've been listened to, by reflecting, by reframing it quite often that helps them get a different insight into what they're saying... a new understanding, or to listen to their words in a different way. Maybe it's a partly formed thought that gets clearer, when you reframe it and present it back to them... reflecting, reframing very often. Empathising.’ Mentor 6

The close relationship and the fact that mentors might be the only adult that mentees were communicating with, meant that mentors also needed to listen for and report safeguarding implications to what was being said. Mentor 6 had been the only person to learn what had been behind a violent clash between a mentee and his father, rather than accepting the version told by the boy’s father to the police. Being listened to for the first time allowed the mentee to get the support he and his family needed.

The importance that mentors, mentees and referrers placed upon listening, being listened to and talking matches literature review findings, which are unanimous in identifying benefits for learning and relationship formation (Harte, 2001; Bennetts, 2003; Converse and Lignugaris-Kraft, 2009; Gallagher and Morgan, 2013; Worsley, 2015). Social connections are linked with the development of assets, of which the capacity to trust and communication are two (Field, 2005). MyTime findings suggest that encouraging the art of conversation built the relationship and developed the mentee’s communication assets.
4.2.3 Mentoring sessions are managed occasions

Findings suggested mentors saw providing an atmosphere conducive to discussion and reflection as important for relationship building. Mentors talked of the effort they put into making sessions enjoyable such as using games and activities to encourage mentee participation. Diaries and interviews mentioned activities, such as walking, tinkering with a car or playing pool to stimulate conversation naturally. Mentor 5 talked of using the response from a newspaper ‘agony aunt’ to help a young person address his own situation by thinking of the advice he would give someone else. Another mentor invited her mentee to join her in creating stories about people in the café they met in. One mentee was able to express himself through communication mainly with his mentor’s dog.

Mentors explained that they ‘sort of lightened the conversation,’ with humour or affectionate teasing, a feature of close relationships that young people might not be used to. All mentors mentioned the importance of humour and fun to help establish rapport between mentor and mentee:

‘Having a laugh will encourage them to come back.’ Mentor 1

Spencer and Rhodes (2014) comment on the importance of creating fun and enjoyable environments for mentoring, aspects which differentiate mentoring from other therapeutic interventions (Philip, Shucksmith and King, 2004). Mentees appreciated this aspect of mentoring, with Mentee 7 highlighting that his
experience of humour helped him know he had a ‘nice connection’ with his mentor:

‘If the conversations aren’t taken so seriously; if you could sort of have a joke about it. And sort of just while you're having your meeting, still have a little bit of a laugh and not have everything taken extremely seriously.’

*Mentee 7*

Mentors often talked of giving shape to a session, trying to end on a positive note no matter what the content of a session:

‘If you've outpoured out about something that you've not been happy about, let's just play a little game. So that you can go home slightly, you know, differently.’ *Mentor 3*

**Mentors emphasise positive factors in mentees’ lives**

Mentors helped mentees to view themselves and their circumstances more positively. They talked of their pleasure at being able to point out to mentees when they had done well, such as handling a difficult situation at school or sharing sensitive information. Referrer 4 said that such positive reinforcement was important, helping mentees to feel valued when they might lack encouragement and support from parents or teachers. Mentor 3 commented that people were not ‘praised enough,’ something she tried to counteract:
‘...it was probably because they are never told they've done a good job. In life, you're told everything you're not doing right, not necessarily everything that you are doing right.’ Mentor 3

Mentees benefitted from their mentors’ empathy

All mentors demonstrated empathy towards young people in difficult circumstances. They reported emotional highs, such as being ‘proud’ when a mentee overcame a challenge, and lows, such as feeling ‘deflated’ when a mentee faced daunting issues. Diaries showed mentors remained concerned about their mentee after a session, implying emotional connection. Interviews and mentee feedback evidenced empathy (desire to help their mentee navigate difficult circumstances), authenticity (valuing time spent in with their mentee) and positive feedback (pride in mentee achievements). This empathy was seen as important by referrers. For one, an empathetic attitude and ‘willingness to put self in another person's shoes’ were more important than experience. Mentors talked of seeing their former selves in their mentees, empathising with their fear of change or dislike of crowds for example. Noting and reacting sensitively to their mentee’s direct and indirect cues suggests mentors were attuned to their mentees. Attunement to mentee needs is present in satisfied mentoring relationships, promotes relational development and is characterized by flexibility, understanding and empathy (Varga and Deutsch, 2016). Attuned adults can provide an environment allowing young people to talk about sensitive topics and attunement should be taught to all mentors (Allen and Eby, 2003). The attunement
demonstrated by MyTime mentors motivated young people to express themselves, knowing they would be listened to.

Mentors explained that the topics discussed made them feel close to their mentee, particularly if circumstances were difficult. This care was evidenced during Covid when mentors maintained the relationship through writing letters or online contact to counteract restrictions on face-to-face contact. Some mentors talked of their mentee as a ‘child’, implying emotional involvement and a protective attitude.

DuBois et al. (2011) find that significant personal connection is essential between mentor and mentee. For Rhodes (2002), internalising their mentor’s positive view of them improves mentee self-image and can explain the impact of mentoring. Findings in this current study suggest that the empathy, warmth and care shown by mentors towards their mentees resulted in such connections.

Although mentees did not directly refer to the impact of the positive regard, empathy and attunement of their mentors, they did express it indirectly through their obvious sense of enjoyment of mentoring sessions.

**The importance of taking rather than sharing an interest**

As described in Section 3.6, mentors and mentees had few points of similarity initially. Their differing age, career and life experience were reflected in different attitudes and perspectives. Mentors’ career experience and knowledge included academia, volunteering, teaching, business, retired and police force. These differences potentially endowed the mentoring relationship with bridging capital,
which can transform lives. Yet mentees made it clear that it was important for
them to be able to relate to their mentors and bridging capital is hard to activate
precisely because of these differences.

MyTime mentoring coordinators ‘matched’ young people with a mentor who was
previously unknown to them. Mentee 6, despite having a good relationship with
his mentor, said he would have preferred to choose his own mentor. However, the
issue for most mentees was having no adult who could fulfil this role. A major
activity for the coordinators was thus trying to ensure mentor and mentee
compatibility. From initial discussion with coordinators, matching interests
seemed critical to a successful match, which one coordinator explained as an
intuitive process and required some mentors to wait for a suitable match which
had on occasion caused them to withdraw. The MyTime evaluation report
commended the matching process as ‘clear and consistent and takes into account
circumstances, interests and preferences of the young person’ (Matthews, 2015 p.
13). Several mentors talked of shared interests getting the relationship off to a
good start, particularly where conversation was stilted. One said that coordinators
needed to match mentoring styles and common interests to mentees, whilst
conceding coordinators would know little about mentees.

Although this suggested that compatibility of styles and interests was needed to
avoid relationship failure, evidence from subsequent interviews revealed matching
was based more on practicalities such as proximity. Mentors felt that they should
be able to make a relationship work, irrespective of shared interests or
characteristics. Some expressly said that matching was ‘not so important’. For Mentor 5, a mentor’s attitude to young people was more important than matching on shared interests which he implied was the easiest rather than best way to match. When the interviewer asked this mentee whether shared interests were important, he emphasised the need for broader rapport:

‘I guess you sort of want the same sort of interest...Stuff like, depending on the person, someone you can relate to.’ Mentee 7

For a referrer, kindness, willingness to build rapport, support and a mentor’s lack of authority over the mentee were more important than having ‘anything in common’. One mentor pointed out that everyone shares universal experiences such relationship and academic/work issues. Another mentor highlighted that although shared interests could help, they were difficult to achieve and did not guarantee that mentor and mentee would ‘gel’ and be compatible.

Coordinators confirmed that ‘random’ matching could work if mentors had ‘the skills, just to connect and engage with the young person’.

Mentors felt that taking an interest in, learning about and from their mentee was more important than sharing interests for relationship formation. As mentees practised talking, mentors could learn about their lives, reducing the difference between them. Mentees noted and valued this interest:
‘I told him I like reading and writing stories and he got a bunch of challenges for me, competitions around the country that help me. He’s a very nice person.’ Mentee 1

Coordinators remarked that MyTime mentors might be the only adults showing an interest in a young person and commended mentors on their ability to do so. Examples included a mentee’s MoTY nomination where he mentioned his appreciation of his mentor who, on discovering the mentee’s passion for reptiles, found a club for reptile fanciers and went to the first meeting with him, despite not liking reptiles. Several mentors thought showing an interest so important that they made notes after sessions so they could follow up on what had happened in subsequent meetings. Mentor 4 thought taking an interest in her mentee was more significant than her words. She went on to explain:

‘...just by remembering things that they said and talking about them again is that you give them a bit of confidence. And I think the confidence is the thing that then allows them to open up and actually verbalise things that they don't verbalise to other people.’ Mentor 4

Mentee 6 agreed strongly with the need to take an interest:

‘a genuine interest in your life... if you were to be a mentor, that's a big one. Because if I'm supposed to be expecting to talk to you about my life, how can you not? How can I form a relationship if you don't really care about how I’m doing?’ Mentee 6
Mentors explained that they asked mentees about their passions and researched topics, learning as much as their mentees did. Mentor 7 believed mentors needed to be open to learning if they expected mentees to learn. Learning from their mentees also let them model how taking an interest in someone helps develop a friendship, something many mentees were keen to do:

‘Talking to people and taking an interest is how you make friends.’ Mentor 3

Teaching their mentors about their passions positioned mentees as experts in their own lives. Mentors talked of using their own lack of experience in areas where mentees were experts to build the relationship. This included asking about how gaming worked, being helped with make-up or using new technology. Having an adult they respected value learning acquired outside the classroom encouraged mentees to share thoughts and achievements:

‘I think it helps them... just the act of being able to share something with somebody, must be quite empowering for them, if they've never shared anything with somebody before.’ Mentor 7

Mentor 7’s mentee taught her about gaming in response to her queries and shared his sketchbook of characters subsequently, something he had not done with anyone else. Showing a genuine interest in learning from her mentee deepened the relationship. Mentors recognised how empowering it was for a young person to be
seen as an expert in their own domain, valued for their expertise, not only academic learning:

‘...they've been told they can't do this, and they can't do that. And we're suddenly giving them the ability to tell us something. And that builds up that interest.’ Mentor, Focus Group

Becoming aware of their expertise is likely to increase a mentee’s sense of competence, a protective asset which has been linked to resilience (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005).

DuBois et al. (2011) link shared interests and hobbies to relationship longevity and for Rhodes et al. (2017), shared interests make the biggest difference in the effect of mentoring. For Raposa et al., (2019), relationships where a mentor does not share a mentee’s interests are more likely to end prematurely. Findings from this current study added nuance to such assertions. By learning about mentees, MyTime mentors created shared interests. Shared interests helped overcome difference between mentor and mentee and helped build the mentoring relationship, supporting Spencer (2004) that a relationship driven by the interests of the young person, including being exposed to completely new experiences, contributes to their wellbeing.

MyTime mentoring relationships were founded more on rapport and positivity towards young people than on directly shared interests, reducing the dangers of incompatibility. Interestingly, Raposa et al. (2019) find a disinterest in the same
areas such as outdoor activity is more significant to relationship duration than shared interests. The flexible format of MyTime mentoring sessions meant likes and dislikes, particularly those of mentees, could be accommodated.

**Mentees felt liked and likeable**

Mentors’ sense of responsibility towards their mentee seemed to help relationship establishment, even if mentors did not find the young person easy to get on with. Mentors believed that it was more important for their mentee to feel liked by and likeable to their mentor than their feelings about their mentee.

> ‘But ultimately, you’re there to support the person regardless of whether you like them or not.’ Mentor Focus group

> ‘The role allows you to be objective – irrelevant if you like them.’ Mentor Focus group

One mentor realised her mentee had issues with feeling negatively judged and therefore deliberately emphasised her ‘positives,’ rather than because she liked or disliked the mentee. In a focus group, mentors mentioned techniques that helped them establish a rapport with mentees who they were not initially drawn to. One said the fact a session lasted a limited time helped. Another said that she went ‘into a role’ and appreciated that her mentee was ‘fascinating and intelligent’ although not anyone she would choose as a friend. Another mentioned focusing on finding interesting aspects of their mentee’s life. One mentor talked of overcoming initial thoughts that he would not be able to form a rapport with his
mentee. His success in relationship building was shown by his mentee nominating him for MoTY.

Mentors seemed willing to overlook norms of behaviour that might otherwise make relationship formation difficult. Mentor 1, for example, was tolerant of a mentee who did not turn up because he had been playing with his cousin on a sunny day. He was not alienated by another mentee’s anger, understanding this was likely linked to breakdown of his family life.

This seeming disconnection between mentors being ‘authentic’ yet also ‘managing’ their role did not seem to negatively impact mentee perceptions of the relationship. All mentees said or indicated that they felt liked by their mentor. One mentee took it for granted that his mentor would like him because it was ‘their job’. Mentee 2 felt that mentor and mentee needed at least to be ‘civil’ to each other. When talking of their current relationship, all mentees talked of a rapport or even ‘instant connection’ with their mentor, suggesting they felt liked. Mentee 6 felt more at ease with his mentor than his friends.

‘I know that [mentor] does like [me]. Like, I guess, I can tell someone is okay with me, and that doesn’t really happen that much. To this day, I'm still somewhat insecure about how my friends truly feel about me. But I don't know, with [mentor], I’m more sure.’ Mentee 6

Mentee 5 said that he needed to take an interest in his mentor for his mentor to like him, which could have suggested anxiety about the relationship. However,
when asked to explain this, the need ‘to sort of get them to like you’ just required ‘being yourself’, suggesting he felt accepted and likeable to his mentor. His awareness that a relationship was not normally ‘just a one-way thing’ demonstrated his awareness of the complexities of relationship formation. Mentor focus on mentee views is consistent with findings that a mentee’s rating of relationship closeness is a more accurate indication of a long-lasting relationship than the mentor’s (Rhodes et al., 2017). Darling, Hamilton and Niego (1994) speak of the sense of responsibility mentors have about their role and Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam of the role of a sense of obligation in relationships with social capital. These factors seemed to result in a mentoring relationship where, for mentees, the work that they would typically need to put into a friendship and its potential insecurity of being liked or not were reduced.

4.2.4 Relationship endings are integral to the mentoring process

Rhodes (2004) emphasises the importance of endings to a mentee’s overall impression of their mentoring experience. Mentors and coordinators agreed that the way in which mentoring ended was important. For some, it gave significance and purpose to the whole relationship. A mentoring relationship that ended positively signified that mentees had achieved their aspirations.

‘The best part of the relationship is when it comes to an end and they’re ready to move on.’ Mentor 6
Mentor 6 saw a satisfying ending as ‘a model for other endings,’ thus suggesting the whole cycle of the mentoring process was an opportunity for mentees to learn. Mentors and coordinators believed the relationship should last until mentees had achieved their aspirations but also that a relationship could last too long and create ‘dependency.’ Most relationships considered in the case study continued until concluded by mutual agreement, although one mentor lost contact when his mentee’s parents no longer responded to requests for meetings.

Although the timing of the relationship ending was agreed by mentor and mentee, mentors initiated its discussion. A coordinator thought that mentors were good at judging when a relationship should end, a point she felt was usually obvious, often when sessions became ‘chats’ rather than having a purpose. Mentors talked of ending the relationship when mentees had reached ‘independence,’ ‘a point where they don’t need me’ and were ready to ‘fly’. This suggests that mentors believed they should help mentees reach a point where they were more aware of their assets and resources and ability use these. Endings were also triggered by improvements in the external environment when a difficult situation had ‘settled.’

Mentor perceptions of when this point would be reached varied. Mentor 2 thought three months should be the standard relationship length, with longer only if necessary. Mentor 5 thought having any limit might constrain relationship building but also could see the benefit to mentees of a short-term relationship that differed from permanent family ones. For Mentor 6, it was imperative to help mentees achieve their aspirations as quickly as possible, making shorter
relationships preferable. To help mentees adjust to the removal of emotional and practical support, meeting frequency was often reduced over a couple of months to allow a ‘gradual weaning off’ from the mentor (and from the mentee for some mentors). The need for this was recognised by several mentors:

‘And then suddenly you’re not going to be there and no one replacing it. Yes, I can introduce him to Scouts if that’s what he wants to do. He’s not going to talk about helping his mum to get dressed there is he? So, it’s still a different sort of relationship. So, I think sort of signposting that, so they get used to it is really important.’ Mentor 2

The term ‘weaning’ recognised the closeness of the relationship but also suggested that it might not be entirely the mentee’s choice as did the fact that mentors, not mentees, suggested ending the relationship. Identifying the end point depended to some extent on mentor attitudes as well as programme expectations.

The supposedly clear-cut nature of endings seemed more blurred in practice and sometimes were suggested by coordinators. Mentors were not immune to wanting to carry on, even if they believed ending was appropriate:

‘I've got two more meetings and that's it. And that's the end of it and I'm really, really sad.’ Mentor, Focus group

Mentees views of relationship duration

Mentor 2 reported that, despite explanations, one of his mentees had been shocked to realise mentoring was not a permanent friendship. However, mentees
interviewed understood that the relationship would end. When asked how they would know when they were ready to stop mentoring, mentees early in the relationship could not say and, in the case of Mentee 6, were clear that the time was not yet right:

\[ ‘It would suck, honestly, if it ended. I know it will end. It’s not exactly a thought I’m happy of.’ Mentee 6 \]

Mentees further on in their relationships could see the progress they had made and felt ready to stop or that the relationship stopped at the right time:

\[ ‘If there’s nothing else really, I need to talk about...There will maybe be only one slip up a week or even none every week, but I’ll know then that it’s coming to an end.’ Mentee 4 \]

\[ ‘I feel like the mentoring was no longer useful and the timing was right for me.’ Mentee feedback form \]

Even recognising that mentoring’s purpose had been served, some mentees were in no hurry to move on, suggesting that, like mentors, they valued the relationship. One mentor mentioned a mentee continuing to contact him occasionally after the ‘official’ ending. In other cases, both mentor and mentee seemed to consider the relationships as closed with no further contact.

DuBois et al. (2002) and Jekielek et al. (2002) find that longer relationships, particularly where these last over a year, deliver stronger benefits. Conversely,
Herrera et al. (2007) find no link between shorter relationships and decreased benefit. MyTime mentoring relationships ended when the mentor or coordinator judged that a mentee could manage without additional support and/or their circumstances had improved, usually in less than a year. This was not always as easy to judge as mentors and coordinators stated. Although relatively short-lived, MyTime mentors and mentees seemed able to build a close and trusting relationship within this time, between two very different individuals. Whether or not this brought any benefit to mentees is discussed in Section 4.3.

### 4.2.5 Summary of relationship building

The mentoring relationship was built through the interaction of many elements. Mentees played a role by being open to new ideas and experiences. However, findings clearly showed that trust was central to relationship formation. Mentors modelled behaviours demonstrating trustworthiness including confidentiality, being non-judgmental, respectful and reliable. Mentees allowed themselves to trust their mentors, an unusual situation for some. Being able to trust was an asset that allowed close relationship formation.

Through the relationship, mentees also developed their communication assets - listening, talking, discussion and conversation. Talking and responding to questions helped mentees understand their needs and explain these to their mentor. Developing communication skills also helped strengthen the relationship in the mutually reinforcing way of many aspects of mentoring. Enhancing assets is a
feature of relationships with social capital (Field, 2005), suggesting the mentoring relationship enjoyed these resources.

Mentees’ interests were explored and valued, not just academic success, which created a connection between mentor and mentee even when hobbies and passions were not necessarily shared. Although mentors differed from their mentees in age, hobbies and background, taking an interest allowed mentor and mentee to overcome these differences and form close bonds. Liking a young person and sharing interests (which would be necessary for most close relationships) were not considered vital to relationship formation. In MyTime, difference was an area of strength rather than difficulty, allowing mentors to build the relationship by valuing a mentee’s expertise.

The respectful and flexible format of the MyTime mentoring process made it empathetic and enjoyable for mentees who felt liked and cared about. They found it easier to be themselves than in some other professional or even everyday settings. By the end of the mentoring relationship, mentees and their supporters indicated that they had achieved change that they were satisfied with.

The mentoring relationship was probably unlike any other relationship with an adult that mentees had experienced, drawing on aspects of friendship, family, and professional support including guidance, challenge, and celebration. Herrera et al. (2007) and Rhodes (2008 p. 36) find the need for high quality rather than ‘weaker’ relationships for change to happen. Evidence in this current study points to a
complex relationship with emotional closeness yet sense of responsibility, distance yet connection.

Relationships with trust accumulate social capital (Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 1988). The extent to which mentees were able to activate the social capital inherent in the trusting mentoring relationship by employing their assets is explored next.

4.3 Accumulating and accessing social capital

The previous section considered how establishing the mentoring relationship enhanced mentees’ assets including ability to trust and to communicate. This section considers how mentees further developed and used assets, particularly those that Field (2005) describes as social skills - the ability to communicate, be tolerant, cooperate and take advantage of opportunities - to activate the resources inherent in the mentoring relationship and on occasions, in other relationships.

4.3.1 Accumulating social capital

Effort and sociability are necessary to accumulate and deploy social capital within a relationship (Bourdieu, 1986), particularly bridging capital where both parties inevitably have little in common (Field, 2003). Findings from this current study have revealed the effort expended by mentors and mentees in the mentoring process (Section 4.1) and establishing the relationship (Section 4.2). As described in 4.2.3, mentoring sessions were often carefully managed encounters. Shiner et
al. (2004 p.35) describe many mentoring activities as being ‘relatively mundane’. This may be how it looks to an outsider, but this was not the experience of either mentors or mentees.

Mentors wanted mentees to benefit from their knowledge, hard gained from experience:

‘...that's why I kind of want to do this as well because I've got that knowledge, and if I can help somebody, then that's great because I had to kind of muddle my way through.' Mentor 7

As a result, mentors and programme coordinators shared their resources (contacts), assets and experience (social capital) whether they felt drawn to mentees, or shared interests, lowering the barrier to accessing bridging capital. Through the relationship, mentees actively shared their knowledge, assets and interests. Mentors spoke of the benefit to mentees from putting this effort into the mentoring relationship:

‘It's a win win if they give as much as they get’. Mentor, Focus Group

‘...you need to say, look, I'm coming along to see you, I want to help you. But you've got to put something in. It cannot be a passive relationship.’

*Mentor Focus Group*

Some mentees said they identified what they wanted to talk about before a session. Some did not (or were not able to) but hinted, perhaps subconsciously, at
concerns for mentors to pick up. Mentor 4, for example, noticed that whatever was currently concerning her mentee was the topic she brought up after she had eaten. Being expected to take responsibility for themselves, rather than being organised by adults, might be unusual for mentees and was a challenge some were better able to respond to than others:

‘I usually forget. My mum tells me. Mum knows when it’s happening and says, ”You’ve got mentoring.” I go into the study and get ready quickly.’

Mentee 1

However, mentees’ main area of effort was employing their assets to benefit from the resources or social capital within the mentoring relationship, for instance by trying new ways of thinking and behaving. The ways in which mentees benefitted from the social capital in the relationship are covered next.

**4.3.2 Accessing the resources in the mentoring relationship**

**The mentoring relationship offers emotional support**

How the mentoring relationship was built was discussed in Section 4.2, including the warm and caring atmosphere that mentors tried to create (Section 4.2.3). Mentees talked of the benefits they received from the relationship by employing their assets such as communicating with their mentor:

‘Just by talking about it helps a lot.’ Mentee 6
One explained how talking to his mentor made his issues seem less insurmountable and overwhelming:

‘...but I do feel somewhat better. I feel there's more things to do. It's not like I feel after therapy where I'm just I'm tired. [Mentoring] It somewhat uplifts me...it does give me energy.’ Mentee 6

Mentees reported looking forward to and enjoying mentoring sessions. For Mentee 3, her mentoring day was her ‘favourite’ day of the week. For another, his weekly session was a ‘shining light.’ When asked how he felt when he knew a mentoring session was coming up, Mentee 1 referred to the companionship and support he enjoyed from his mentor:

‘...fun, feels like you have another friend...I feel happy, it's nice.’ Mentee 1

Mentees referred to the lift their mentor gave them, frequently commenting on the welcome cheerfulness and positivity of their mentors, particularly appreciated when they were facing difficult circumstances. Many mentees implied this emotional support was an unusual experience. When asked what made a good mentor, Mentee 4 said:

‘...generally, a happy person’ Mentee 4
Mentee 2 said how reassuring she found her mentor who helped her see ‘the positive side of things’ when she could only see ‘all the negatives.’ Mentees reported that they felt cared about and understood by their mentor. One said of his mentor ‘he really cares’. Others talked of their mentor’s kindness, understanding and empathy, ‘when I have had a hard day,’ which for Rogers (1959) help develop a resilient trajectory. The findings from this study support Liang et al. (2013), who suggest that ‘kindness to strangers’ (Walker, 2007 p. 15) is at the heart of mentoring. Mentors offered companionship and emotional support at a difficult time.

The mentoring process allowed time and space for mentees to discuss emotionally charged issues and receive support. The fact that a mentor was an ‘anonymous’ adult from outside their social circle meant that mentees could talk about subjects that might be hurtful or distressing to those around them. Mentors were also ‘neutral,’ as described earlier, without the emotional investment of closer friends and family. The mentoring relationship seemed to offer support but be less ‘high stakes’ than those in mentees’ immediate social networks such as at home or school. Mentors were less likely to react in ways mentees thought unhelpful. One mentee reflected that she was not tempted to ‘wind up’ her mentor as she did with her parents because:

‘...you don’t really know each other well enough.’ Mentee 2

This let mentees use mentors as ‘as a bit of a sounding board’ to discuss issues, including ‘shocking things’ they were concerned about, ‘because we have no
power, no influence really.' Mentors said that mentees mentioned contentious topics to test what they thought, suggesting their views and experience were respected. One mentee for example told his mentor about taking part in ‘challenges’, extreme dares, which his mentor needed to take advice from the coordinators about.

Emotional support extended to mentors accompanying their mentee on significant occasions, such as looking round a new school when no one in their family was able to do this. Support of this nature was facilitated by the flexibility of venue and timing of mentoring. Mentees benefitted from the bonding capital in the mentoring relationship which provided emotional support.

Rhodes (2004 p. 33) find that mentors provide ‘a haven for teens to air sensitive issues, while still transmitting adult values, advice, and perspectives.’ MyTime mentees seemed to value the support their mentors could give them, including in dealing with issues they might not wish to discuss with those they knew better.

**Mentoring provides new experiences and perspectives**

Using their knowledge meant that mentors could ‘open up [a mentee’s] world’. New experiences included ‘going out’ rather than being ‘stuck at home’ and ‘very bored during the week’, so were not necessarily elaborate but, combined with adult attention, often unusual for the mentee. One mentee was looking forward to borrowing his mentor’s camera so they could investigate his interest in photography together. Another talked of exploring ‘new cafes’ and ‘different
things.’ Mentor support facilitated access to experiences and community resources that would not otherwise have been possible:

‘I’ve sort of tried a lot more things that I wouldn’t even have thought about... There are loads of them I wouldn’t have bothered trying.’ Mentee 7

Mentors’ different expectations of mentees’ options and potential gave rise to new opportunities. One talked of ‘taking a bit of a chance,’ to give mentees a ‘bit of a taste of freedom,’ for example, choosing and buying drinks and handling money. A referrer explained that mentors gave mentees ‘an awareness of what there is in the community’. Examples in the study included visiting new places together such as a library or youth clubs, which mentees had been unaware of previously and from which they could benefit to develop their interests. New experiences taught mentors and mentees more about each other. A mentor explained how a long bike ride together helped his mentee to think more positively about what he was capable of. Mentors commented that unfamiliar environments revealed new or hitherto unknown interests and behaviours:

‘He seemed to enjoy being outside – he ran around, very interested in the sailing school activities and the conversation was much less stilted... He’s definitely chattier if we’re out and about.’ Mentor 2 Diary

Another mentor took his mentee to a local site, thinking its history of gunpowder manufacture would appeal. Instead, the mentee was fascinated by the wildlife. For
Spencer (2004), a relationship which exposes a young person to completely new experiences contributes to their wellbeing. MyTime mentoring gave mentees access to such new experiences and their increased wellbeing was indicated by their enjoyment and positivity towards mentoring. Additionally, new experiences resulting from the mentoring process seemed to help mentees learn to think differently about themselves, expand their horizons and reveal new interests.

With their different backgrounds and different and greater life experience, mentors presented a different model and possibly expectation of adult life. They also brought different or broader perspectives to help mentees to see their lives and options in new ways. A mentor referred to this benefit of social capital:

‘it's just the perspective. The sort of way you see the world and the experiences.’ Mentor, Focus Group

A coordinator felt that a mentor’s different viewpoint helped mentees ‘see the potential of their situation.’ Mentors agreed they could give mentees ‘a different lens to look at stuff through,’ helping consider options, such as A’ levels or college for the first time. Another mentor talked of trying to ‘make the picture a bit wider’ and increase the range of options her mentee considered because her focus was always ‘so narrow.’

Coming from outside their mentee’s network of contacts and being less directly involved in situations meant mentors could help a young person consider the
views of other people involved in situations. When asked what she had gained from mentoring, Mentee 2 highlighted being able to take a broader perspective:

‘I'm not like self-centred but like not to look at things just from my point of view, look at it from other people’s point of view. So, like see the bigger picture.’ Mentee 2

An awareness of other views and perspectives helps decision making and judgement (Field, 2005) and should therefore be considered an asset.

As well as providing emotional support, new experiences and perspectives, social capital is a learning resource that can increase agency and ability to achieve goals, particularly when close i.e., with bonding capital. Learning is enabled by discourse, developing knowledge with practical application (Field 2005). The way in which the mentoring relationship facilitated learning and solution formulation through combining mentors’ life experience with mentees’ assets and expertise in their own lives is discussed next.

### 4.3.3 Mentors and mentees learn from each other and collaborate

For Mentor 3, ‘learning something’ defined mentoring and was fundamental to acquiring assets:

‘Learning something, I suppose that's what mentoring is as well. It’s just learning something different, doing something new... Learning life skills, it's really important.’ Mentor 3
Developing their ability to communicate their views and to trust their mentor seemed to make it easier for mentees to collaborate with their mentor on solution finding. Mentors and coordinators believed that discussing issues together, developing and trying out solutions, all forms of learning, helped ‘show [mentees] the way.’ Mentors talked of sharing personal experiences of success and failure, including overcoming barriers, such as difficulties at home based on their own experience, to show mentees how they might reach their aspirations. Mentors hoped that through these discussions, which were more about learning than purely social conversation, they might encourage mentees to try approaches and take chances they might not otherwise have attempted:

‘It’s trying to say it doesn’t matter if you make mistakes. We all do, that’s how you learn. Well, you didn't learn to walk in a day.’ Mentor 3

‘...just kind of letting them know that it's okay to make mistakes. We're all human beings, we all learn, and, you know, if we don't try things, we won't learn... You can make mistakes but still things have, you know, work out well.’ Mentor 7

**Putting learning, assets and resources into practice**

The benefit of mentoring was that mentees had access to their mentor’s knowledge and could put their learning into practice. One mentee learned from her mentor to walk away from stressful situations at home and use a breathing technique to calm down. She found this de-escalated anger. Through discussion
with his mentor, a young man came to realise how intimidating he must seem to his teacher when he was angry and modified his behaviour as a result, improving relations with his teacher and remaining in school.

Mentor 7 explained how she and her mentee together ‘came up with the little tasks and techniques’ to help improve his ‘small talk,’ or social skills and achieve what he wanted. The mentor described how this joint problem solving encouraged her mentee to practise social skills in everyday life by talking to people in the café where he worked and culminated in his being able to speak to delegates at a conference, something he previously had only been able to aspire to.

By pointing out the resources that they had in their networks and helping them practise using their assets, mentors helped mentees to solve problems for themselves. Mentees brought their expertise about their own situations and identified how to put a solution into practice in a way that suited them. A mentor talked of her mentee finally going to her teacher about bullying, having discussed this strategy frequently with her mentor. Realising there was support in her network of contacts and that she could benefit from this, she resolved the issue of being bullied by a boy in her class by herself, something not previously possible.

As a result of talking with their mentor, several mentees talked of tackling issues or aspirations that had seemed unattainable. Exploring with her mentor how she could work in childcare, a mentee realised that she needed to acquire qualifications which made her aspirations achievable. Another mentee successfully tackled being bullied by girls in her school. Drawing from the
experience of being a teacher, her mentor had explained the importance of collecting evidence. The mentee’s solution of giving a recording of her tormentors to her teacher had not been what her mentor had expected. However, it stopped the bullying. Youth work (which includes mentoring) engages young people in experiential learning on topics of interest to them at their pace. This increases ‘self-awareness’, and ‘coping mechanisms,’ and helps develop the relationship (Gallagher and Morgan, 2013 p. 5). MyTime mentees acquired learning that helped them cope with their situations and make changes with the help of a trusted adult (Field, 2005).

Mentees talked of being able to analyse their situation, after practising this with their mentor. Mentor 3 agreed, feeling that time mentees spent reflecting in sessions helped them understand their options and thus make better decisions. Having acquired analysis and problem-solving assets, she hoped her mentee would continue to benefit from them. With a better understanding of what was happening, one mentee no longer reacted to the deliberate provocation of classmates, enabling him to remain at school. The mentee who realised through talking to her mentor that she was depressed decided to talk to her mental health advisor about this.

Mentees seemed to benefit from bridging capital in the relationship, such as access to their mentor’s specialist knowledge. Mentee 5 explored home-schooling with his mentor, a former teacher, as a solution to his anxiety. The mentee said this was ‘something I hadn't really thought about before ’ and was a result of his
mentor listening to the issues he raised. Combining mentee and mentor assets and knowledge resources resulted in home-schooling, an outcome not previously possible.

‘...he sort of made me understand something, sort of more about myself. And like how I could help myself a bit more... He sort of would listen and give me ideas of what could happen.’ Mentee 5

Another mentee was considering university application. His mentor had, coincidentally, been a university admission’s tutor, and so was able to help him with his application, something his family had no experience of.

Being able to share mentors’ resources, such as contacts for work experience or career opportunities, let mentees activate bridging capital in the relationship. Mentor 4 organised for her mentee, who was very interested in animals, to shadow a friend who was a vet. Other resources in the relationship included the knowledge of other mentors and the coordinators. Through the mentoring relationship, mentees gained access to advice, grants and computers as well as local authority support for wider problems such as homelessness (within the constraints of such services) or safeguarding.

Findings from this study suggest that becoming aware of their assets and resources helped mentees solve problems (Newburn and Shiner, 2006). Solving problems or achieving goals is likely to increase a mentee’s sense of competence and mastery, which are further protective assets for young people and increase their resilience.
(Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). The findings from this current study show that through the mentoring relationship, MyTime mentors and mentees not only combined resources, a feature of social capital identified by Coleman (1988), but also assets to achieve solutions applicable to mentees’ situations. Matching individuals who were different from each other did indeed seem to expand their ‘knowledge, networks and experience’ (Gaddis, 2012 p. 1264). Clayden and Stein (2005) find that by talking and listening, mentees can reflect, problem solve and plan for the future. In this case study, the mentoring relationship seemed to facilitate this by connecting mentor and mentee knowledge with mentee assets and resources.

4.3.4 Mentees use assets to access social capital in other networks

Mentees often reported problematic relationships with family relationships, saying ‘I don’t get on with my mum at all’ and/or that they had few trusting relationships with adults outside their family. One mentor reflected this lack of support could cause them to be ‘all at sea without anywhere to go.’ Mentees often seemed to have become detached from supportive networks, so had limited access to emotional support and resources from close relationships. Many also faced difficulties in accessing education (school refusal, young carer or exclusion), missing out in its connection with positive outcomes (Brendtro, 2019).

Mentor 6 linked the assets that mentees gained from mentoring to changes to ‘relationships that are around them’ and mentees provided evidence of this. When
interviewed, Mentee 2 said mentoring had not increased her likelihood of approaching others for help. However, she subsequently explained that mentoring made her realise she did not have to ‘solve things all by yourself,’ which suggested she saw benefit in seeking support. Being able to collaborate potentially increased mentee ability to access bonding capital from their families and friends and bridging capital from teachers and other professionals in their lives, something they would not have been able to do before. Indications of improvements to relationships are provided below.

Mentees can experience closer family relationships

Mentor 7 discussed a mentee who had no contact with her brother. With her mentor, she considered why he might be behaving as he was, which encouraged her to make friendly overtures towards him and eventually repair her relationship, something she expressed gratitude to her mentor for. Mentee 7 spoke of feeling closer to his mother, who was impressed by the progress he had made in achieving his aspirations and commented on improvements to their relationship:

‘It’s someone that you can sort of share everything to; that's why I think it’s like one of the best things to have...And now that I've been meeting with [mentor], I also have like a nicer connection with my mum which is really nice.’ Mentee 7
Mentees, at their mentor’s suggestion, asked family members for support sometimes for the first time. Mentee 2 had noticed a better relationship with her mother since mentoring started, even if she could not explain why:

‘…having [mentor] like, just makes me like, it’s hard to explain it but like just having someone so I don’t have to tell my mum how I feel because I don’t really like doing that. And like just build a relationship with my mum.’ Mentee 2

Mentoring could not necessarily overcome all relationship problems: its isolated nature (Philip, 2008) involved only the young person and their behaviour. Change could help other relationships around them as described above. However, in families where significant relationship problems remained, mentors were instrumental in involving support from social services or counselling services.

Speculation that mentoring can help family relationships (Philip, 2008) does seem to be substantiated. Blinn-Pike (2007), in her metadata review of 17 studies, found relationships with parents improved after mentoring in all the cases where this was evaluated. This current study finds that assets acquired during mentoring can help strengthen family relationships, even if on occasion this is through reference to support from other services.
Mentees experience more harmonious friendships

Mentee 5 believed that working with his mentor had developed his communication assets, specifically listening, making it easier to increase his social network:

‘...Mostly, that I can listen. I never really used to be good at that. But now I'm better at it, I'm better at making friends, that sort of thing... I just ended listening to people a bit more and started to understand people a bit more because he had been listening to me, and it's really beneficial.’

Mentee 5

Another mentee said mentoring had altered his outlook on life, which had ‘helped my friendships a lot’. Mentee 2 learned to consider her friend’s viewpoint which she found led to fewer arguments. An increased ability to consider the impact their behaviour had on others helped mentees return to or remain in school, something to which they aspired. One mentee talked of his pleasure at being back at school almost full time because he had learned to modify his behaviour and be less confrontational.

Mentors can connect mentees to other networks

A coordinator said mentors could help isolated mentees, such as those being home-schooled, find ways to ‘link in with other people,’ suggesting they could increase their networks and thus access to resources. Other mentee comments related to
expanding social capital through improved connections, by ‘boosting [my] abilities to talk to people,’ to existing or new networks:

‘She has given me the courage to come out of my comfort zone and talk to students at school and make more friends.’ Mentee MoTY feedback

MyTime mentors talked of working with their mentees to identify who else could help them, such as form tutors in the case of bullying or other family members when they needed support, making them aware of the social capital available to them in their networks. Reflecting about the future when her mentoring relationship had ended, Mentee 2 was not sure she would manage on her own as well as when she had a mentor but said she would look for support from other people and realised that to build relationships ‘just takes time.’

Mentor 7 worked with a mentee with several cultural identities who felt torn about which one to adopt. Exploring her concerns with the help of her mentor, she realised she could embrace them all, potentially giving her access to resources in social networks associated with each.

Having experienced the value of trusting an adult mentor and having gained the assets to form relationships, some mentees indicated a greater inclination to trust adults outside their close circle, such as counsellors.

‘I think she's learned that people do listen. And I think certainly from what she said yesterday that when she goes to CAMHS, she might be a bit more open...’ Mentor 4
A willingness to ask for support helps access the expertise, emotional and tangible resources (social capital) in those relationships. Mentor 4 saw how increased confidence had helped her mentee activate social capital in her networks, and she hoped this would encourage her to ‘look out for those people’ in the future.

Rhodes (2004 p. 3) highlights the significance of developing a close relationship with their mentor, finding it improves mentee’s connections with other adults, particularly parents/carers and therefore with their ‘future prospects and potential’. Many mentees experienced the benefit of helping themselves, including asking for help. As a result of working together, several mentors said their mentees would be ‘more willing to help themselves’ and find what they needed for themselves such as university social societies.

4.3.5 Harnessing assets and resources brings about mentee change

For Rhodes (2002 p. 50), change brought about by mentoring can be ‘complex and subtle’ and may take time to emerge, the opposite of measuring outcomes at the end of a programme lasting a year or less. Although mentors, and/or coordinators, used judgement of change to end the relationship as discussed in Section 4.2.4, views about the extent to which change could be observed by the end of the process differed.

Most mentees talked of the changes which they ascribed to mentoring, as described below. However, some mentees were either unaware they had changed even when it was obvious from interviews or found it difficult to articulate the nature of the
change. A young woman wrote to her mentor some months after mentoring finished to thank her for the difference her guidance had made to her decisions, something she seemed to become aware of only with the passage of time.

Some mentors ascribed positive change, such as increased confidence, to mentoring. Others felt any views they expressed about whether change had occurred would reflect their assumptions rather than their mentee’s experience. This could include underestimating its impact as in the example of a mentor who was surprised to learn from his mentee during a training session of the hugely positive impact spending an hour a week with him had had. Another talked of fearing his mentee would lose the benefits of mentoring when he returned to the same difficult situation as before when mentoring ended. However, a chance encounter a year later revealed the mentee was back in school and thriving, indicating that change had occurred, and that mentoring might have had a part to play in this. Mentor 5, after many years of working with young people, had no expectations that mentoring would lead to change. He focused on providing emotional support in difficult situations and, like many mentors, expected any change to take time to become evident.

Based on many years’ experience of mentoring, coordinators, cautioned against high expectations:

‘...sometimes you’ve just got to slow down a little bit and be patient and go at the young person’s pace and that might mean not seeing a huge
However, she pointed out that change that seemed insignificant or a ‘small step’ to the mentor ‘might be a life saver’ to a mentee. She explained that a mentee might greatly value their mentor’s stability and emotional support, even if a situation was not resolved, which suggested some issues were beyond the timescales or capacity of MyTime.

This current study suggests that mentoring changes which are significant to mentees may be perceived by others as small. Conversely, changes that are perceived by others might go unnoticed by mentees. Understanding the nuanced nature of improvements to mentee’s wellbeing and social capital do not lend themselves as easily to measurement as truancy reduction or job acquisition. Notwithstanding the complexities of identifying any changes because of mentoring, findings indicate several areas of note.

**The mentoring process increases a mentee’s sense of agency**

Findings from this current research showed that the mentoring process gave mentees considerable control over what was discussed, where and how. Mentors explained that their mentees became aware of the agency they had in their lives to achieve their aims, a ‘powerful insight’:
They realise they have choices and if things are happening to them, they realise they can play their part in changing that dialogue ... Rather than being sort of buffeted by the winds and currents.’ Mentor 6

Mentees talked of realising they were not passive but could change situations for themselves:

‘...there's always a way to come back from something. You can always do something that could help your situation out. You don't always just need to sit in the background with it.’ Mentee 7

Mentee 2 talked of realising she could change a situation she was unhappy about. Mentor 4 felt that from discussion, her mentee came to realise that decisions she took, such as choosing whether or not to do her homework, had implications.

Mentors raised their mentees’ awareness of the assets they had at their disposal by pointing them out, for example the courage they had shown in agreeing to mentoring. By doing this, mentors could ‘make that skill [asset] accessible to them,’ including, as a coordinator pointed out, those ‘they didn’t realise they had.’ ‘Checking in’ at the end of mentoring and encouraging mentees to reflect on and celebrate their progress at a special event, helped reinforce their mentee’s awareness that they could and had achieved change for themselves:

‘...an opportunity to look back and say how far the young person has come, a chance to sing their praises, to say how much I have enjoyed our time together.’ Mentor 1
Mentee 2’s diary reflected her satisfaction at becoming aware she could explain her emotions effectively to her mentor and ‘own my feelings,’ something she had thought she was incapable of doing. Increasing awareness of assets increases likelihood of using them in the future (Grotberg, 1995). Addressing their issues and devising solutions enhances mentees’ sense of agency and self-belief, increasing confidence and independence (Spencer, 2007). Through MyTime mentoring, mentees experienced the benefits of harnessing assets and resources to bring about the changes they desired for themselves.

**Mentees report increased confidence**

On referral forms, confidence was the asset mentees most frequently wanted to develop. Mentors, coordinators and mentees reported evidence of increased mentee confidence as a result of the mentoring process. The main change noted by a referrer who saw young people after mentoring was ‘confidence boosted.’ A coordinator remarked increased confidence frequently featured in mentee feedback.

As a result of jointly developing and putting into action plans by applying assets and resources, mentees achieved aspirations that they had not thought possible. The progress they made and the changes they achieved seemed to increase their confidence. Mentee 2 explained that mentoring had improved how she thought about herself. She now had confidence in her ability to make good decisions rather than needing external validation:
‘Before I started my self-confidence was so bad. Honestly it was so low … I just know that since seeing her, my self-confidence has gone up … just how I think about myself. I don’t really care what people say any more.’

Mentee 2

She said this increased confidence had even been noticed by a friend who, having not seen her for three years, remarked she seemed ‘so much happier…more confident in yourself.’ The confidence that mentees gained seemed to encourage them to respond positively to opportunity rather than rejecting it as they might have done previously.

Having talked over an opportunity with his mentor, one mentee overcame his initial reticence and took it up. Willingness to take advantage of opportunities is an asset (Field, 2005), an assertion corroborated by the satisfaction this mentee expressed to his mentor from participation. Mentoring was cited as helping another mentee gain enough confidence to overcome anxiety which stopped him leaving his bedroom. Working with his mentor, he had gradually managed to leave his home, then walk into town firstly with his mentor and then on his own until he was able to go to college, which the coordinator said, ‘was massive in the young person’s life.’

Other mentors saw from their mentee’s demeanour that confidence in themselves and their ability to fulfil their aspirations had increased. One said she saw her mentees ‘blossom’ from being able to interact with others and feel more positive about their futures. Mentor 4 thought she had ‘definitely given her [mentee] a bit
more confidence... She expresses her opinion. ’Being listened to, respected, supported and shown their assets and resources through the mentoring relationship seemed to result in increased mentee confidence, echoing Schwartz et al. (2012), who find mentees and mentors cited increased mentee self-confidence and self-esteem from mentoring.

**Mentees feel more positive about themselves and their options**

By the end of the mentoring process, most mentees appeared to achieve outcomes they perceived as positive and seemed ready to move on with their lives. The changes often related to gaining assets which could in turn strengthen social capital. Moreover, undertaking the mentoring process seemed to lead to a change in mentees’ perceptions of themselves and what they could achieve. When asked about the difference mentoring had made to them, many mentees talked of feeling happier and more positive about themselves, their opportunities and resources. One mentee, for example, had realised she was able to cope in difficult situations:

’If something goes wrong, it’s not the end of the world. Like there’s always a solution to the problem.’ Mentee 2

Mentee 6 talked of being less pessimistic about his future, with a ‘glass half full’ or more optimistic attitude, a change that he had not thought possible. Another reflected positively about his future from the sense of perspective and self-esteem he had gained from mentoring:
‘It’s sort of changed my attitude towards most things like school and homelife... it’s just gradually happened like. And I’ve felt happier in everything that I do and in the choices I make... I’m back in school. I’m a lot more positive. I can sort of see things with the big picture.’ Mentee 7

When asked what difference mentoring had made, Mentee 2 commented on her improved sense of wellbeing:

‘I don’t really know, just that I’m a lot happier... before I was really down and really moody all the time and now look at me.... They [mentors] make you really happy ... like you’re a better person at the end of it.’ Mentee 2.

Another mentee had learned ‘there’s always a bright outcome to most things in the end.’ Some ascribed the results of the mentoring process as having a transformative effect. Having described how he could listen and understand people ‘a bit more,’ as well as doing ‘different things’ and having ‘chats’ as a result of mentoring, one mentee described the major impact this had had:

‘...just like who I am. Just like me, you know, so yeah... Mostly, that I can listen. I never really used to be good at that. But now I’m better at it, I’m better at making friends, that sort of thing.’ Mentee 5

Rhodes et al. (2006) speculate that changes experienced by mentees are related to self-concept, with mentees having a more positive view of themselves. Some MyTime mentees mentioned strengthened assets, such as confidence, ability to listen and express themselves. Others talked more about the overall change they
had experienced as a result of the interaction of the many facets of mentoring including asset and resource development.

Mentee responses indicated they could see a more resilient future trajectory than when they started mentoring. Changing mentees’ feelings about themselves and their options was more fundamental to reaching potential than proxy measures, such as school attendance or performance, for at least one mentor:

‘We’re helping them improve their self-concept. Is this really about equipping them to get the job, or the exam grade? For me it’s about, having a better sense of self and improved resilience. That may translate into opportunities, performing better at school, etc. It likely will.’ Mentor 6

Optimism and positivity are protective of a resilient trajectory and young people who are aware of and use assets and resources to overcome adversity show or achieve resilience as an outcome (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005; Grotberg, 1995). MyTime mentoring was designed as a short-term intervention to help young people reach their potential.

Mentees expressed satisfaction at dealing with difficult situations during mentoring in ways which had not been possible before, suggesting new resources had been introduced. They and their mentors took pleasure in the changes that occurred, including increased assets, such as communication and confidence. MyTime mentees expressed increased positivity and optimism during or by the
end of mentoring. Indications were therefore that they had increased likelihood of
being on a resilient trajectory.

**Summary**

For Field (2005), social capital is more likely to be imparted through social
close ends than through formal learning. MyTime mentoring seemed to provide
and foster such social connections despite artificial introductions. Mentor and
mentee worked to activate the social capital inherent in the mentoring relationship
through emotional support, sharing knowledge and experience, learning and
development of assets.

Coleman (1988) tells us that access to the social capital embedded in a
relationship between an adult and child depends on the amount of time spent
together, and for Gaddis (2012), access to social capital relies on the quality of the
relationship. For MyTime mentors and mentees, time and relationship quality
were important to the extent that they allow development of assets and access to
the benefits of the social capital inherent in the relationship. This current research
finds that MyTime mentors facilitated relationship formation and worked with
their mentees to develop assets and unlock the relationship’s resources through
learning, agreeing with Gaddis (2012) that an individual needs to have access to
relationships and assets to benefit from the resources in that relationship.
4.4. Summary

Relationship formation

The mentoring relationship was built upon a mentee’s willingness to actively engage in the mentoring process and their openness to change. Non-kin mentors and mentees were introduced to help the mentee achieve desired change, giving the relationship purpose. The role of the mentor drew on aspects of friendship, coaching and mentoring, with mentees most likely to equate it to friendship or family relationship. For mentors, the level of responsibility and effort that a mentoring relationship entailed precluded it from being a friendship and made it unusual.

The mentoring relationship included confidentiality, lack of authority over the young person, a focus on mentee’s aspirations and was enhanced by enjoyable, empathetic and flexible mentoring sessions. These aspects helped to build a trusting relationship. Mentees reported feeling listened to and their needs respected, an unusual experience for many young people. The attention paid to mentees and their concerns seemed to help them feel liked and likeable. Mentors’ limited knowledge of mentees’ contexts meant they were more inclined to explore options together than tell mentees what to do, a more typical adult and child interaction. The mentoring approach, less directive and adult-led than ‘teaching,’ was appreciated by young people.
Asset development

MyTime’s collaborative style encouraged mentees to develop and use their assets including listening, perspective taking and working collaboratively through reflection, trial and error. By talking and being heard, mentees understood themselves and their assets better and helped mentors understand their needs. Collaborating on achieving the mentee’s aspirations strengthened the relationship and developed the assets needed to achieve that aspiration.

Resources

Both mentors and mentees put effort into establishing the mentoring relationship, necessary to accumulate and activate social capital. Mentees often compared their mentor to a friend or family member, suggesting they provided the support and learning, or bonding capital typically found in these close relationships. The sense of obligation mentors felt towards their mentees helped overcome the usual difficulty of activating and strengthening bridging capital, despite their differences in outlook and experience.

Employing assets such as being able to communicate and the ability to trust and be trustworthy, mentees gained access to resources inherent in these relationships. Benefitting from this social capital, mentees were able to combine their knowledge and that of their mentors to develop ways of addressing issues and achieve the changes that they aspired to. Figure 1 below is drawn from the current research study and summarises diagrammatically how the mentoring relationship
that formed as a result of the mentoring process developed assets and activated resources in a mutually reinforcing way.

Figure 1 The mentoring relationship, asset and resource development

Combining their assets and expertise in their lives with the mentor’s knowledge helped mentees devise solutions to their challenges and achieve change not previously possible. Mentors and mentees described mentees’ increased confidence and appreciation of their assets. Mentees themselves spoke of realising that they could help themselves, including turning to others for help. Mentee feedback at the end of mentoring demonstrated increased positivity about the future and their coping abilities, suggesting they were on a resilient pathway. In the absence of longitudinal data, resilience and independence could arguably be taken as proxy indicators for reaching potential.
MyTime programme findings suggested that the assets developed by mentees, such as the ability to appreciate the views of others, promoted connections outside the relationship. Working with their mentor increased mentees’ awareness of the benefit of collaborating with others to achieve change. In some cases, talking to their mentor, who did not know the family, outside the home environment seemed, perhaps counterintuitively, to strengthen mentee’s family or other relationships, thereby potentially accumulating further social capital, such as emotional support. Some mentors believed their mentees were more likely to approach others, using the assets developed through mentoring. Figure 2 below shows how using assets and resources developed in the mentoring relationship can strengthen access to other relationships with their social capital and potential to develop assets.

*Figure 2 Benefits can be felt in other relationships*
The mentoring relationship was therefore a catalyst to asset development and accumulation of social capital. This often led to increasing mentee’s confidence in their ability to cope with challenge, indicating increased resilience.

This chapter analysed and discussed the findings from MyTime. The final chapter considers implications of these findings for this study, for mentoring practice, theory and wider policy. It considers the limitations of the research and sets out areas for future research.
Chapter 5. Conclusions

This study set out to understand why mentees took part in mentoring, what mentoring meant to participants, how the relationship developed and what was achieved through that relationship. Chapter 1 outlined the history and context of youth mentoring as a means of supporting young people. It also introduced the case of the MyTime mentoring programme, a small local authority-run programme which formed the basis for this study.

Chapter 2 reviewed literature around the purpose and practice of youth mentoring, drawing attention to the fact that much of the experience is drawn from large US studies, with a focus on measurable outcomes. The outcomes noted such as increased academic performance or wellbeing were significant but small. The potential of assets such as self-esteem to protect young people from harm and to increase their likelihood of resilience was identified. Opportunities and support provided by resources in networks, or social capital, were also examined. The literature linked mentoring with development of assets and social capital, offering a theoretical framework within which to conduct this research.

The inconclusive debate about whether the mentoring relationship should include goals was identified together with a call from the literature for a greater understanding of relationship formation. The importance of well-structured programmes was established. The absence of young people’s voices in the
literature was also noted. The examination of the literature gave rise to this study’s research questions as outlined in Section 2.9.

Chapter 3 explained how the rationale behind a qualitative, interpretive methodology was arrived at to answer the research questions identified in Chapter 2. The methods for data collection were chosen to allow investigation of the experience of mentoring from those involved in it, rather than how it was judged by others. The views of mentors, mentees, referrers and coordinators were collected through interviews, including elicitation techniques, focus groups and a survey. Programme-related literature was also consulted. The data collected was analysed thematically.

Chapter 4 presented the analysis and discussion of the findings from the research study in answer to the research questions. From this analysis, one insight stood out. The process of mentoring, the mentoring relationship, the development of assets and the sharing of resources were inextricably intertwined, with each aspect supporting and developing the others. Attempting to focus on one in a linear way could not reflect this interconnection. Taking as an example the way in which the relationship with their mentor helped mentees develop communication assets, findings revealed that talking increased mentees self-awareness as well as further developing the relationship by helping mentors understand more about their mentees. Talking also helped mentees activate resources in the relationship such as emotional support and new perspectives, as mentor and mentee understood each other better. Thus the relationship helped develop assets which developed the
relationship and permitted access to the resources within it. Answering the research questions through the three overarching themes of ‘What is mentoring’, ‘Developing the relationship and mentee assets’ and ‘Accumulating and accessing social capital’ proved the most effective way to encapsulate this interlinkage.

### 5.1 Contribution of this study to theory and knowledge

Coleman (1988) asserts that the resource of a mentor can strengthen social capital. This study, based on findings from MyTime, agrees and details how a high quality mentoring relationship can embed mentees in a network of supportive contacts offering emotional support and gateways to new sources of knowledge, support and companionship. Such a mentoring relationship becomes the mechanism through which mentees develop protective assets such as self-esteem (Zimmerman, Phelps and Lerner, 2008), and can access resources such as emotional support. As a result of the mentoring process, mentees become more aware of their assets and resources in networks around them. By employing these assets and resources, for example in collaborating with their mentor, mentees can make changes such as addressing problems that were previously unachievable (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). They can use these assets and resources in other situations and with other relationships. Increased awareness and use of assets and resources can result in increased mentee optimism and confidence in their ability to cope. This was seen to increase mentees’ likelihood of resilience and of achieving their potential (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005).
Based on a UK mentoring programme, the findings from this study supplement those from often US-based meta-analyses and large-scale quantitative studies that form the bulk of mentoring literature. Using a qualitative methodology gave the opportunity to investigate questions raised but unanswered by quantitative research. Data collection via interviews and diaries let mentees, who were young people often not listened to, describe their experiences their own terms. The research process was enhanced by learning from the many years’ experience of the mentoring coordinators.

On the face of it, using the life experience of caring adults to support young people seems an uncomplicated response to the complexities of many young people’s lives. However, findings from this study demonstrate that the mentoring relationship is, in fact, complex and multi-faceted, agreeing with Blinn-Pike (2007) that mentoring is more complex than it seems.

Introducing two strangers to each other, where one may be adrift from support and networks, could seem to be an act of last resort. However, this study shows that having a mentor from outside a mentee’s current situation brings benefits that they might not experience from those they know better. The difference in mentors’ and mentees’ backgrounds and experience and their willingness to share these both help mentees develop their assets. The relationship between an unknown adult who is predisposed to form a close relationship with a young person accumulates elements of both bonding capital (emotional support and learning) and bridging capital (new experiences and resources that could change their lives) (Putnam,
The ways in which young people can benefit from high quality mentoring relationships as exemplified by MyTime to develop assets and activate social capital are described in detail in Chapter 4.

Although described as ‘mentors,’ a flexible programme such as MyTime allows adults to fulfil a wide range of roles that respond to mentee needs: role model, friend or supplementary family member, mentor and coach, help young people find solutions for themselves. With lives that may be isolated or perhaps with few opportunities to make friends, young people can benefit from enjoyable and undemanding companionship, and from spending time with an adult that does not have to be shared with siblings, classmates or friends.

Mentoring literature tends to focus on identifying measurable outcomes from mentoring and to what extent different aspects of the mentoring relationship help or hinder this, an instrumental approach to success. The small improvements identified come in areas such as school results and attendance, asset development and increased wellbeing. The findings from this current study identify that mentees are seeking something different: companionship and fun, emotional support, someone to discuss options and careers with, to explore areas of difficulty or to develop specific assets such as confidence. The variety and nature of change experienced by mentees identified through the qualitative methodology of this study indicate why mentoring’s measurable change might be considered modest (DuBois et al., 2002 and 2011).
Evidence from mentees suggest that the changes they found most important such as being able to express themselves better were not easily measured or might be considered small by positivistic research. Mentees talked benefitting from the process of mentoring, and this might not be captured by measuring change at the end of mentoring or at a moment in time.

The findings from MyTime agree that a strength of mentoring is its flexibility and applicability (DuBois et al., 2011). However, highlighting small changes in many settings may do youth mentoring as demonstrated through MyTime a disservice. Hearing the words of referrers, mentees, mentors and coordinators has shown how the mentoring process can bring about transformation.

Youth mentoring offers something rare and valuable: a service for young people that responds to their needs within a relatively long timeframe. Without fixed format or externally set targets, mentors and mentees can exchange assets and resources in the way that suits them best. Having a mentor may help a young person get better grades or learn how to apply for a job, and there were examples of mentees and mentors working together on these areas. However, mentoring can also show young people the power of relationships combined with their internal assets to help them achieve change, even when this might not seem possible. Mentoring can reveal options and new opportunities and help develop the assets and resources so young people can pursue those options for themselves.

This study adds to the debate about mentoring in several areas. Based on evidence from a UK case study, it finds that assuming all young people will benefit from
mentoring is not correct. Mentees must want to be mentored, to change. Without willing participation and effort, they are unlikely to benefit.

Considering whether mentoring should be goal-focused (Darling, Hamilton and Niego, 1994) or relationship-based (Raposa et al., 2019), this study finds that working on goals together builds a strong relationship rather than being a linear process as suggested by Rhodes et al. (2006). Goals set and agreed by mentees gives them a sense of achievement and progress and helps them make the changes that they want, often to improve communication skills, confidence and feeling more positive. However, emotional support is also important, and a high-quality relationship can offer emotional and instrumental support, varying by mentee needs.

The relationship and its activities are not ‘mundane’ (Shiner et al., 2004). Rather they are complex and adaptable. However, the fact that mentors are perceived as normal with life skills is seen as positive by mentees for whom it complements or even supplements support from trained professionals. The Chance UK mentoring scheme which requires mentors to use Solution Focused techniques was found to make no difference to young people’s confidence or self-efficacy (Axford et al., 2020). MyTime mentoring did not employ particular techniques but focused on achieving mentee aspirations. Requiring specific technique usage by volunteers might not be making the best use of mentors’ expertise.

The difference between mentors and mentees is a strength of mentoring. Mentees do not need to be similar in background and interests to their mentors. For
mentees to benefit from bridging capital in the relationship, mentors able to share
knowledge, experiences and access to resources that are different from those with
which a mentee is familiar are particularly valuable.

Mentors feel a sense of duty towards their mentees that facilitates mentoring
relationship formation (Darling, Hamilton and Niego, 1994). They lower barriers
to strengthening mentee social capital by taking an interest in and learning from
their mentees. Both mentor and mentee can be experts in their own areas.

Finally, in response to the suggestion that mentoring makes small differences to
mentees, this was not the experience of those interviewed. At the least, mentoring
offered invaluable emotional support at a difficult time in a young person’s life
and at the most, it helped them change in ways they had not thought possible. By
viewing mentoring through the lens of asset and social capital acquisition and
considering the views of those involved in it, this study has increased
understanding of the processes and practices of mentoring. For young people who
are willing participants, prepared to work for change, by developing their assets
and resources, mentoring can change the way young people think about
themselves.
5.2 Implications for Policy

From a policy perspective, the benefits of high quality mentoring as observed within MyTime could be rolled out more widely. The impact of Covid on the wellbeing of young people, particularly those who are vulnerable, has been strikingly negative, a fact which was noted by more than one mentor. School-aged children have missed out on schooling and its stabilising routine, on socialising and on supportive relationships. Offering a mentor to work with young people on their aspirations and concerns could be a first step towards improving their wellbeing. Evidence from this study suggests that a chance to decompress, be listened to and have their concerns taken seriously could help as they adapt to life back at school. This intermediate step could put young people in the frame of mind to benefit from any ‘catch-up’ academic tutoring, rather than focusing on ways in which they have ‘fallen behind’ which is likely to add to rather than reduce their stress.

Given the benefits that mentoring can have on young people’s self-esteem and optimism about their futures, the value of well-designed and supported mentoring programmes to help such young people could be significant. If such an approach is not possible, incorporating aspects of listening and supporting as well as telling and teaching into extra tuition is likely to be beneficial. Based on the experience of MyTime, mentoring can help a young person feel better about themselves or achieve the change they want within a relatively short period of time as well as
leaving them with tools for the future. Mentoring could be a way for local communities to support their young people in a practical way.

Young people could also benefit from the application of these findings to other, professional relationships in their lives. The mentoring relationship seemed to provide additional and different benefit from the support which many young people already received. However, given the numerous interventions by professionals in some mentees’ lives (one counted 26), rather than introduce yet another adult, perhaps introducing aspects of a high quality mentoring relationship into professional interactions could be helpful.

Much time is given to developing professionals with regular contact with young people through mentoring, such as teachers. Within this framework of being mentored for professional development, is there an opportunity for teachers to be encouraged to use a mentoring approach towards their pupils? Discussions this researcher has held with teachers reveal the demands of the curriculum and timetable can result in a lack of time for pastoral care and getting to know young people. However, teachers could consider whether there are any opportunities to listen, value a young person’s expertise in their own lives and interests, to work with them and offer new experiences and ways of thinking to develop solutions as well as delivering instruction.
Understand what mentoring can and cannot do

However, policies around mentoring need to recognise that although mentoring can benefit young people, it should not be assumed that it always and automatically does so. Although mentoring can work very well for some young people, it does not appeal to all and is therefore unlikely to work as a unilaterally imposed or mandated solution despite its flexibility and ability to adapt to the individual. For young people uncertain about what mentoring can offer them, clear explanations and an opportunity to try for themselves could help. Mentoring is likely to most benefit young people who are either ready for change or are willing to try and are prepared to put effort into the process.

Mentoring programmes need to properly resourced and supported to achieve the positive outcomes identified for MyTime. Whilst mentoring can offer a highly flexible means of supporting young people, this research has identified the importance of good practice in mentoring programmes. Voluntary, non-professional mentors can support young people as long as this is part of a programme that is well structured and offers training, monitoring and support. From its many years of trial and error, MyTime has established advertising, recruitment, vetting, training and monitoring processes as well as employing paid, professional coordinators. Despite the seeming simplicity of the mentoring concept, the processes and posts are time consuming to establish.

Mentors who become significant adults in the lives of vulnerable young people can help them achieve positive change. Although no cases of harm were identified
in the current study, the potential for adults to make suggestions against the interests of the young person or worse, to have malign intentions towards them remain. Any schemes set up need to allow sufficient time for vetting, training and monitoring of mentor candidates to protect mentor and mentee.

One coordinator highlighted a potential conflict between the requirement of external funders of mentoring services to achieve targets and specific outcomes with taking a more mentee-driven approach, such as is typical for many UK mentoring programmes, where outcomes are difficult to identify. A clear finding from this research is that programme flexibility permits the meeting of diverse needs, aspirations and circumstances. Funding which has externally imposed targets attached would have a major, and possibly negative, impact on the nature of a programme and the benefits it is likely to deliver.

**Young people need more support**

Mentoring may open the door to other support for mentees, providing such support exists, but is not designed to address or ‘solve’ external factors in a mentee’s life. Findings from this research reinforce calls for additional services to support young people. The MyTime programme continued to experience an increase in referrals of young people with needs greater than could be met by unqualified volunteers such as mental health needs or significant safeguarding concerns. Coordinators attributed these referrals to a lack of resource in referring services. This leaves a cohort of young people whose needs are too great for
MyTime but who do not meet the threshold for referral to professional support. The needs of such young people need addressing.

5.3 Contribution to mentoring practice

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) tell us that a qualitative methodology can suggest how to turn evidence into practice. The research from this current study uncovered many areas of practice, intentional or unintentional, that benefitted relationship and mentee development. These findings have been collected below to identify practices and procedures likely to replicate some of the positive benefits from the MyTime programme. This knowledge can be used as an evidence base to inform youth mentoring practice and training. It can supplement decision making such as about matching which currently may be based on ‘instinct.’ The findings summarised by areas of practice are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Recommendations for youth mentoring practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme Practice</td>
<td>Consider meeting venues carefully. Avoid home environments. Community locations offer flexibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing funding for food and drink can help create a social and nurturing environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venues that permit confidentiality are preferable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentor recruitment</td>
<td>Aspects to recruit for:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interest in people and particularly young people and their development.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A positive view of young people and their capabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative approach to working with young people rather than telling them what to do.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resourcefulness and willingness to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recommendations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Provide clear guidance to referrers about who can be supported and what support is available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Explain need for mentees to attend voluntarily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of humour</td>
<td>Explain mentoring gives time and space to develop mentee life skills (assets) and problem solving abilities, talk about their concerns and aspirations in enjoyable environment with supportive adult.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to share life experience to benefit young person</td>
<td>Consider providing information such as interviews with mentors and mentees and examples of cases to help young people understand what mentoring can offer them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td><strong>Training mentors</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefing referrers</td>
<td>Emphasise need to be non-judgmental, reliable and empathetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mentoring is a learning experience for mentor and mentee.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not be worried about difference between you and mentee in age and outlook. Use this difference to find out more and strengthen the relationship.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain how and when to work with coordinators.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefing and preparing mentees</td>
<td><strong>Matching</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matching on interests is not essential: taking an interest in the young person is.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match as far as possible on mentee preference of timing, gender of mentor and school/community location.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suggestions for mentors during Mentoring sessions</td>
<td>Actively listen to mentees.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help mentee work on goals to develop sense of agency and mastery.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Be a role model e.g., ensure punctuality and reliability as these can have a very positive impact on mentees.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Be prepared to tolerate different behaviour expectations e.g. about time keeping.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gently challenge unhelpful thoughts and behaviours.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Work together to solve issues rather than imposing solutions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Help mentees to develop assets, such as social skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Value mentee expertise and learning, including hobbies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share perspectives and life experience insofar as they can help mentees identify</td>
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<td></td>
<td>their own solutions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use locations for learning opportunities and experiences, such as ordering food</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and drink.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Boost mentee self-esteem with positive feedback.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Help mentees see their resources and assets and build on these e.g., pointing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>out new opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance and activate social</td>
<td>Work with mentees to establish/re-establish networks of contacts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>capital</td>
<td>Introduce mentees to new experiences, places and people.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure mentees are aware of the networks and adults they can turn to for help</td>
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<td></td>
<td>once mentoring stops.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endings</td>
<td>Plan for the end from the outset – endings are positive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify indications of a relationship approaching its end such as increased</td>
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<td></td>
<td>mentee confidence and ability to support their aspirations themselves.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mentor and mentee should decide together when they are ready to finish.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consider tapering off support as relationship ends.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have a celebratory event to reflect on progress and make the ending positive and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>constructive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 highlights several implications for good practice in mentoring that emerged from the research. **Recruitment** should target adults wishing to share knowledge, experience and resources with young people and to help them reach their potential. Mentors **selected** should be empathetic towards young people, particularly those in difficult circumstances, whilst seeing them as capable and able to achieve goals using their assets and the resources in the mentoring relationship. Mentors should see their role as listening, collaborating and guiding rather than directing. They should be prepared to learn from and on behalf of their mentees to support them. Actively sharing mentor experiences and contacts and facilitating new experiences can help mentees change in ways that would not
otherwise be possible. Mentor induction should be realistic about the mentoring process. It should indicate the need to be open-minded, non-judgemental yet to challenge dangerous behaviours or negative mindsets. Mentor flexibility of outlook should be encouraged to address the variety of experiences encountered, not all of which may be positive. Using humour makes mentoring more enjoyable for mentor and mentee. Where mentees’ behaviour differs from their own, mentors should be encouraged to persist and to model more positive behaviour. Mentors can be confident that mentees gain from mentoring even if they themselves cannot perceive change. Mentees who disengage may not be ready to expend the effort required to benefit from mentoring.

Where **matching** practice meets mentee preferences of gender, time, location and objectives, mentors can establish a relationship by exploring mentees’ situations and interests and using the difference between them and their mentee to form a relationship. Mentors taking an interest in their mentee’s life help mentees feel liked and likeable. Working on goals together helps mentors and mentees activate assets and resources in the mentoring relationship. As part of **ongoing training**, mentors who have opportunities to learn from each other and share resources, strengthen their mentoring practice. Learning, including formal courses, about unfamiliar issues e.g., neurodiversity or drug usage helps mentors navigate mentee’s contexts. Where mentors require guidance about their course of action, **ongoing, responsive support** from professional coordinators is invaluable, especially where they can share their experience and signpost to further resources.
5.4 Limitations of the study

The convenience sampling methods chosen to recruit mentors as outlined in Chapter 3 meant the interviewer spoke only to those who actively volunteered to take part. Convenience sampling can only represent itself, although a range of mentor experience was captured. These interviewees might have been more positively biased towards the programme than those who did not put themselves forward, potentially skewing the results towards positive perspectives. Additionally, using snowball sampling to identify mentees meant that only those mentees who had persevered with mentoring, so were benefitting from it, were interviewed. Lack of contact details meant it was not possible to talk to mentees who had declined the offer of mentoring or stopped after a few weeks. The positive impacts of mentoring may therefore be overstated because those who did not benefit could not be contacted. Furthermore, mentees who agreed to interviews were likely to be confident about speaking to a strange adult. Mentors did select who to nominate, with some mentees deemed inappropriate to interview. This again may have caused an unwitting bias in results.

The extent to which qualitative research and a case study in particular are generalisable to other instances of the case was discussed in Chapter 3. Although the ability of a case study to develop context-specific knowledge is recognised (Flyvbjerg, 2006), for Yin (2009), generalisability relies on using evidence from other cases. However, given that the case study had many of the characteristics of UK mentoring programmes, as discussed in Chapter 3, findings may be
generalisable to other cases (Denscombe, 2003) or at least comparable (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The research was embedded in historical, policy and wider discourse which can increase applicability to wider contexts (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

5.5 Future research directions

MyTime’s purpose was to develop young people’s assets and social capital so that they could become ‘independent’ and more confident in dealing with issues that they faced. It emphasised the importance of not creating dependency rather than creating enduring relationships, the interest of much of the mentoring literature. This current study indicated that assets and attitudes developed could persist after mentoring ended. A longitudinal study of former mentees eighteen months, five and even ten years after mentoring could be helpful to hear mentees’ reflections on the difference that mentoring made and whether any particular approaches were helpful. It would also allow examination of whether the young person maintained a resilient trajectory or indeed, had become a self-sufficient adult.

As a result of this study, the MyTime referral form now asks potential mentees whether they would be prepared to be contacted for research, making future data collection possible. The lack of MyTime resource to carry out regular, systematic reviews of feedback and survey results has made it difficult for them to gauge longer term impact. Mentors regularly discussed cases at individual and group review meetings with coordinators to receive support and share practice. The
MyTime programme could benefit from working with researchers to set up a process for capturing experiences, learning and views of mentors, who were revealed to be extremely reflective and insightful about the mentoring process.

Interviewing or surveying those to whom mentoring had been suggested but who did not take it up beyond a few sessions could help understand if mentoring’s appeal could be extended. Such interviews could also explore how well they had navigated the issues they were facing in their lives at the time of referral.

Speaking to young people who withdrew from mentoring after a few sessions would help understand whether it was indeed because they could not see any value in it or whether lack of compatibility with mentors or other factors were at play.

Another area for research arises from the experiment with online mentoring that resulted from Covid-19. As explained in Section 3.3, this research did not cover the impact of the pandemic and online mentoring on the MyTime programme. However, observations and reflections from mentors about their experiences captured during the research period (see Appendix N) suggest that interviewing mentors and mentees about their experience could reveal useful insights for programme development.

The potential of mentoring delivered over compressed timescales e.g., six sessions or twelve weeks is also of research interest. Given the volume of young people who could benefit from support, it would be valuable to see what, if any, aspects
of relationship building from the MyTime programme could be transferred to shorter ones.
References

A. County Council (2013) Services for Young People Mentor Scheme evaluation report June 2013


Big Brother Big Sister (2022a) About Us. Available at About Us - Big Brothers Big Sisters of America - Youth Mentoring (bbbs.org) (Accessed 19 May 2022)

Big Brother Big Sister (2022b) Youth Protection. Available at Youth Protection & Child Safety - Big Brothers Big Sisters of America - Youth Mentoring (bbbs.org) (Accessed 19 May 2022)


MENTOR (no date) *Become or Find a mentor*. Available at MENTOR | Become or Find a Mentor (mentoring.org) (Accessed 23 May 2020).

Mentoring Plus (no date) Mentoring Provider to young people. Available at Mentoring provider to young people | Mentoring plus (Accessed 19 July 2021)


The Diana Award (no date) *The Diana Award Mentoring Programme.* Available at [The Diana Award Mentoring Programme - The Diana Award (diana-award.org.uk)](https://diana-award.org.uk) (Accessed September 2019).


Appendix A: Big Brother Big Sister

Mentoring Programme Case study 1: Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS)

BBBS’s origins were in helping young people avoid harm by staying out of the criminal justice system, away from drugs and alcohol, by avoiding teen pregnancy and finishing school. Originally conceived as ‘befriending’ and providing ‘caring role models’ to children, BBBS now describes itself as ‘mentoring,’ to help ‘all youth achieve their full potential’ by ‘building protective factors’ to reduce the ‘violence and victimization children and youth face… and to address the impact of trauma,’ suggesting more active guidance as well as role modelling (Big Brother Big Sister (2022a)).

BBBS matches young people with non-kin mentors who become an adult friend, rather than seeking to improve or eradicate specific educational or socio-economic problems (Grossman and Tierney, 1998). Mentors are High School or college students and employees from businesses local to the community, average age 28. Children are referred by their parents or professionals. The average mentee age at relationship start is 12.6 years, although they can be enrolled from age five. Mentors are recruited from the community, screened, trained and supported by the programme. The website states that matching is ‘carefully carried out’, with mentee family approval required. Mentors are unknown to the young people and their families before programme start. The programme works closely with parents who also approve activities and report on progress to Big Brother Big Sister.
Young people are referred by their families or social workers. Mentors are encouraged to teach by example, an ‘additional positive role model in their [mentee’s] life,’ modelling the ‘right way to behave.’ They are told their role is to ‘open them [mentee] up and be open, dependable, patient, loyal, fun’ and they are a friendly adult, not a peer. Mentors and mentees are referred to as Big/Little Brother and Big/Little Sister, suggesting the relationship is based on a model of an extended family (Big Brother Big Sister 2022a). Mentors are positioned as a complement, not substitute, for a mentee’s parents and should ‘edify’ and build up, not detract from the parent/child relationship (carers are not referred to). Mentor and mentee meet no more than once a week, at least twice a month and spend at least an hour together each time. BBBS mentors work both in schools (SBM) and the community (CBM). SBM includes talking, games and some structured academic activities such as homework. In CBM, mentors are encouraged to include mentees in their lives, spending time with them. Mentor and mentee undertake everyday activities rather than specifically goal-orientated time together.

BBBS is based on ‘relationship-building and non-specific recreational activity’, having fun together, and role modelling rather than problem-solving (Christensen et al., 2020 p. 968). This is a developmental model of the relationship, whereby mentors focus on broad development goals (helping child feel good about themselves). BBBS introductions are made ‘in the hope that’ (Spencer 2007 p. 332) a relationship will spring up. Other than spending time together doing
enjoyable activities, there is no goal focus, the assumption seemingly being that change happens by osmosis, with assets transferred from adult to young person.

BBBS tracks the number of Littles (a term used for mentees) from single-parent families, seen in some policy circles as the cause of difficulties rather than a group to be supported. Children of incarcerated parents being offered support through ‘local religious organisations’ who help children develop into ‘responsible young men and women.’

BBBS programme success is believed to rely on collaboration between mentor (known as a ‘Big’), mentee (or a ‘Little’) and the Little’s family, with parents and families receiving regular progress updates programme and families approving the mentor selected. Mentors are drawn from local employers and increasingly, undergraduates (Colley 2003, p. 522). Funding is provided by Government and also sponsors who, Colley believes, are driving an increased focus on instrumental goals: academic achievement, crime and substance abuse reduction and employment (Colley, 2003). However, the mentoring relationship remains based on that of extended family with mentors encouraged to include mentees as part of the family and relationships continuing beyond completion of the programme if desired. Mentors pay for mentees to participate in activities. Consistent with a view that relationship length is a driver of benefits from the mentoring, the website records that community-based relationships last on average 31 months, with 70% lasting over a year and school-based ones 16 months on average, with 50% lasting over a year.
Appendix B: Friends of the Children

Mentoring Programme Case study 2: Friends of the Children (FoTC)

Friends of the Children (FoTC) is a non-profit organisation founded in 1993. It now operates in 540 schools in 22 US regions (called chapters) as well as internationally (Friends of the Children, no date a), with expansion plans. Funders include the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Program (OJJDP), high-profile figures such as Michael Jordan and charitable foundations. Although each FoTC chapter operates independently, all share a mission and programmatic approach to youth work. The FoTC programme employs paid mentors and guarantees a mentor for 12+ years from pre-school/kindergarten until High School (secondary school) graduation. FoTC is one of the most intensive mentoring models available and is based on relationship development rather than developing skills (assets) via structured programme approaches or curricula (Lakind, et al., 2014). Children deemed to be ‘at risk for the development of serious problem behaviours’ (Eddy et al., 2017 p 900) with a high number of risk factors and low numbers of protective factors, are identified through school and kindergarten screening and are referred to the programme aged around four. Individual risk factors include social withdrawal, aggression or low school attainment and environmental risk factors, such as substance abuse, incarceration, unemployment. Eligibility is thus through screening rather than individual nomination.
Mentors are called ‘Friends,’ suggesting a slightly more separate role than the family relationship envisaged by BBBS. They work full-time and are assigned a number of mentees who they meet for an average of four hours a week to build up a ‘long-term, nurturing relationship with a consistent and caring adult,’ which the programme believes is a child’s strongest protective factor (Friends of the Children, no date b). Mentors are encouraged to build on mentee interests. Relationship building is the key priority, along with unconditional love, encouragement and support and being a role model. These relationships in turn are believed to improve relationships with peers, parents, teachers and natural mentors. FoTC is thus predominantly a developmental relationship programme and youth reaches its potential by developing healthy relationships for later life.

There are one-to-one as well as structured group activities. The relationship is seen as protective of developing serious problem behaviours in later life by supporting a child’s social-emotional development, asset development such as emotional regulation and by providing new experiences (Eddy et al., 2017 p 900). FoTC aims to promote child resilience and competence (assets) through a ‘close, healthy’ relationship with a caring adult. FoTC is strengths-based (i.e. asset development) although referral is based on risk (deficit-based). Mentoring during adolescence is more group based although the 1:1 relationship continues. In 2008, FoTC was funded for a 12-year, longitudinal RCT into the effectiveness of its paid-volunteer model, with interim results in 2017. The results of these studies are referred to in this chapter.

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Appendix C: Diana Award and Dalston Youth Programme

Mentoring Programme Case study 3 and 4: Diana Award and Dalston Youth Programme

Diana Award

The Diana Award was established by the Government in 1999 in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales and became a charity in 2006. It enjoys Government, former Minister and royal patronage and receives a budget of £1.5m from sponsorship. It describes itself also as one of the UK’s largest youth mentoring programmes with a mission to ‘empower young people to change the world.’ It operates through hubs in London, Birmingham, Jersey and Leeds and reports having mentored over 4,000 young people since 2012. It is focused on helping 16- to 17-year-olds coming to the end of their secondary school career ‘to achieve their potential’ and to facilitate social mobility. Pupils from selected schools in areas of deprivation are offered three-month group mentoring from businesspeople to work on social action projects and to think about a future post-school (The Diana Award, no date).

Mentors are positioned as role models who inspire and impart life skills to mentees from the community-based campaigning, project planning, critical thinking and public speaking activities they undertake. The programme talks of
mentees building relationships with adults and peers who they would not normally meet (The Diana Award, no date). Building contacts within and outside mentee’s communities builds social networks and access to resources. The Award has a 2021-26 strategy, but no evaluation of its achievements is listed on its website. For the Diana Award, achieving potential involves connecting with the community in a worthwhile activity and improving ‘work-place readiness’ although not necessarily achieving employment (Diana Award, no date).

**Dalston Youth Programme (DYP) and Mentoring Plus**

One of the best-known UK mentoring programmes, DYP, later replicated across England as Mentoring Plus, was set up in London in the 1990s by Crime Concern (a national crime reduction organisation and registered charity), guided by the experience of a US mentoring practitioner. The programme aims to build education employment skills and confidence in young people deemed at risk of committing crime, 11-18 for DYP, and 15-19 for Mentoring Plus, to reduce youth crime (Mentoring Plus, no date). The programme started with a residential course, followed by dyadic mentoring to help mentees achieve their goals and to provide positive relations with an adult. The programme included literacy, numeracy, education and personal development sessions.
Appendix D: Ethics Approval and Correspondence

From: Research-REC-Review

Sent: 18 July 2018 10:08

To: Catherine Comfort; Research-REC-Review

Cc: Castle Owen; Naomi Holford

Subject: HREC/2938/Comfort: HREC Favourable Opinion

Project title: Comparative analysis of frameworks within which youth mentoring programmes operate to identify policy and practice implications

Date application submitted: 04/07/2018 HREC response date: 17/07/2018

This message confirms that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, has been given a favourable opinion on behalf of The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee.

As part of your favourable opinion, it is essential that you are aware of and comply with the following:

1. You are responsible for notifying the HREC immediately of any information received by you, or of which you become aware which would cast
doubt on, or alter, information in your original application, in order to ensure your continued safety and the good conduct of the research.

2. It is essential that you contact the HREC with any proposed amendments to your research, for example - a change in location or participants. HREC agreement needs to be in place before any changes are implemented, except only in cases of emergency when the welfare of the participant or researcher is or may be affected.

3. Your HREC reference number has to be included in any publicity or correspondence related to your research, e.g. when seeking participants or advertising your research, so it is clear that it has been agreed by the HREC and adheres to OU ethics review processes.

4. Researchers should have discussed any project-related risks with their Line Manager and/or Supervisor, to ensure that all the relevant checks have been made and permissions are in place, prior to a project commencing, for example compliance with IT security and Data protection regulations.

5. Researchers need to have read and adhere to relevant OU policies and guidance, in particular the Ethics Principles for Research involving Human Participants and the Code of Practice for Research - http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/

6. The Open University's research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of research council, professional organisations and
grant awarding bodies research ethics guidelines. Where required, this message is evidence of OU HREC support and can be included in an external research ethics review application. The HREC should be sent a copy of any external applications, and their outcome, so we have a full ethics review record.

7. At the end of your project you are required to assess your research for ethics related issues and/or any major changes. Where these have occurred you will need to provide the Committee with a HREC final report to reflect how these were dealt with using the template on the research ethics website - http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/human-research/full-review-process (HREC Final Report form)

Sent on behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee

Professor Louise Westmarland, Dr Duncan Banks, Dr Claire Hewson

Chair Deputy Chair Deputy Chair

Approval for minor amendments to initial application

RE: Amendment to HREC/2938/Comfort

18 November 2019

Dear Catherine,
Thank you for providing me with the extra documents. I am giving your changes a favourable opinion by Chair’s action. You will not need further paperwork as this email will be sufficient.

Best wishes,

Dr Duncan Banks

Deputy Chair, HREC

---

From: Catherine.Comfort <catherine.comfort@open.ac.uk>
Sent: 15 November 2019 14:55
To: Research-REC-Review <research-rec-review@open.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: Amendment to HREC/2938/Comfort

Dear Duncan,

Thank you for this. I attach the briefing material and document to capture names of participants in the focus group for the A. County Annual Mentoring Network Conference. Please note that this will only be attended by mentors, mentees will not be involved.

Kind regards

Catherine
Dear Catherine,

I have read through the changes to your ethics application. You have provided the questionnaire which you will use either online or provide a hard copy for participants. We will however need consent forms and participant information leaflets for the participants at the A. County Annual Mentoring Network Conference even though you are using the rules that apply in loco parentis. Once you have supplied these please reply to this email.

Best wishes,

Dr Duncan Banks

Deputy Chair, HREC

From: Catherine.Comfort <catherine.comfort@open.ac.uk>
Sent: 09 November 2019 14:52
To: Research-REC-Review <research-rec-review@open.ac.uk>
Subject: Revised version of Ethics Application reference number: HREC/2938/Comfort
Hi,

I attach my ethics application which was approved in 2018 for my research project. I have made some minor amendments which are shown in track changes attached.

Kind regards

Catherine
Appendix E: Assent Form for Young People

FACULTY OF WELLBEING EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES

THE ROLE OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP IN HARNESING THE ASSETS OF ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPATING IN A (COUNTY) YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAMME

ASSENT FORM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE BEING MENTORED

(to be completed by the young person (and their parent/guardian if under 13)

Please circle the answers you agree with below. (Parent/guardian to complete if the child is unable)

Have you read (or had read to you) information about this project? Yes/No

Has somebody else explained this project to you? Yes/No

Do you understand what this project is about? Yes/No

Have you asked all the questions you want? Yes/No

Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand? Yes/No

Do you understand it’s OK to stop taking part at any time until Jan 2021? Yes/No

Are you happy to take part? Yes/No
If any answers are ‘no’ you can ask more questions. But if you don’t want to take part, don’t sign your name! If you do want to take part, please write your name and today’s date

Your name ___________________________

Date of birth ----------------------------------

Email address (if you want a summary of the findings) ----------------------------------

Date __________________________________

If you are under 13, your parent or guardian must write their name here too if they are happy for you to take part

Print Name ___________________________

Sign ___________________________

Date ___________________________

The researcher who explained this project to you needs to sign too:

Print Name ___________________________

Sign ___________________________

Date ___________________________

Thank you for your help.
Appendix F: Semi-Structured Interview Schedules

Semi-structured questionnaires for mentees, mentors, referrers and coordinators

Mentees

Introduction/icebreaker

- Instagram or Facebook?
- Ice lolly or ice cream tub?
- Run or walk?
- Swim or sunbathe?
- Cat or dog?
- Gym or club?
- One thing you are proud of at the moment?
- One thing you’d like to change?

Questions for Mentees

- Tell me about yourself (mentor profile; motivation for mentoring).
- Why do/did you want to have a mentor? (Prompts if needed: knew someone else who had had one, recommended by someone, sounded interesting)
- Tell me what it is like to be mentored? What happens during a session?
• How do you feel before, while you are with your mentor and afterwards (prompts: do you look forward to it? Always forget? need reminding, enjoy it dread it) How does this compare with what you were expecting? (length/frequency/topics covered)

• Tell me about the sort of young person who can benefit from having a mentor? What are they like? What made you able to benefit from having a mentor? Is there any type of person who might not benefit from having a mentor?

• What do your carers think about your mentoring?

• What sort of person makes a good mentor?

• Can you tell me how you think of your mentor – friend? Family member? Like a teacher? Why is this? (do activity)

• How do you think mentoring helps you?

• Have you learned anything from your mentor?

• Have you done anything new because you have been mentored?

• Have you met any new people or had any new contacts from having a mentor?

• Which aspects of mentoring have been the best/worst?

• Has anything changed because of mentoring – has this surprised you?

• When do you think you will be ready to stop working with your mentor?

• What advice would you give someone who was wondering whether they should have a mentor?

• May I come back to you to ask you for more information about your answers? Yes/No. If yes, please give your preferred contact details
2 Mentors

- Tell me about how you became a youth mentor (mentor profile; motivation for mentoring; previous experience of working with young people)
- What preparation and support have you had? mentor training; matching the mentoring relationship; the intensity of the relationship.
- What do you think the purpose of mentoring is?
- How do you think it works?
- What attributes do mentors need?
- What attributes do mentees need?
- Reflections on the mentoring relationship: the nature of the relationship; the importance of it, building it up, planning and goal setting
- The role of the mentoring relationship (in helping the young person)
- How has the nature of the relationship changed over time and how have you managed this?
- your perception of the impact of mentoring and to what extent it makes a difference to the young person/to the mentor/to the family of the young person
- What you think the most important outcomes are – for you and for your mentee(s)?
- Tell me about ending relationships - how do you know when to end the relationship?
- The most rewarding aspects/The most problematic aspects of youth mentoring
- Advice to someone who was thinking of becoming a mentor?
3 Referrers

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your role?
- How many young people do you refer annually to the MyTime mentoring scheme?
- Under what circumstances would you refer a young person to Safe Space?
- What makes a young person likely to accept having a mentor?
- What do you understand by mentoring?
- What do you think the mentoring process is?
- What is the role of the mentee in the mentoring process?
- What is the role of the mentor?
- How important is the mentoring relationship in the mentoring process?
- What do you think happens during the mentoring relationship?
- What are the outcomes of formal youth mentoring?
- What about the context in which these young people are growing up – are there the opportunities for secure schooling, employment and housing if they are able to access them? Or are they being set up for failure.
4 Coordinators

- What motivated the local authority to begin mentoring?
- What have been the successes of the mentoring programme over the 15 years?
- What are things that have been tried that have not worked?
- What is the hardest part of organising the mentoring?
- What are the most satisfying parts?
- What have you based the training on?
- What makes a successful mentor?
- What are the main categories of issues that young people being mentored by MyTime face?
- What issues would you not consider?
- In what areas does mentoring help the most/least?
- What makes relationships work/not work? Literature says relationships of less than a year do not work – how would you respond to this?
- How would you describe the relationship between mentor and mentee?
- How important is the relationship between the programme and parents?
- What support is available to young people other than mentoring – statutory and non-statutory? Are mentees also supported by other statutory services?
- Where do you see mentoring fitting in with youth work? With statutory services? With school pastoral care including counsellors?
- Policy landscape for mentoring in the future – challenges and opportunities?

Funding?
Appendix G: Example Interview – Mentee 2

**Name:** Mentee 2 Interview 1  
**Classification:** mentee

1. Interview with Mentee 2; 15 March 2019

2. 14 years old; female.

3. Q: So I thought the first thing you could do is we could each think of 4 words to describe ourselves. So for me, when I think of myself. I'm a mum. I'm a researcher, I swim. I like swimming outside I like reading books those are four things about me. Can you think of all things about you to describe yourself as?

4. A: I don’t like most people, I'm a daughter and I have a brother and I like swimming.

5. Q: So the thing I want to talk about is what it feels like to have a mentor and then what you think you’re getting out of your mentor but I’ll ask you separately; there’s loads of questions. I’ll try not to make it feel like an interrogation. Can you tell me how you ended up having a mentor? You know, what happened?

6. A: Basically I had social services or something involved with my family at home and then basically D. was saying, that is my social worker, she recommended that I did this like someone like another role model right? And then I just filled out my papers to say like I'd be happy to do it and then yeah,

7. Q: And when she suggested it to you, what did you think?

8. A: Nothing really, just an experience

9. Q: Did you think it was going to be a good thing or bad thing?

10. A: A good thing

11. Q: Had you done anything like that?

12. A: No

13. Q: So what made you think that you would have a go?

14. A: just nice to have someone else to talk to outside of school and home?

15. Q: When she suggested it to you, did you have an idea of what it would be like?


17. Q: And you just went ahead and did it. That’s quite brave. And what do you like about having a mentor?
118: A just someone to talk to that I know that definitely won’t tell anyone else and it’s nice to have someone who’s not inside school

119: Q: When you have a like a session like this, what do you like about it?

120: A: Just when I’ve had a really bad day, I can unload all of what happened or

121: Q: Is there anything else you like to talk about?

122: A: No, we just like have conversations about what happened and then how to resolve it if something bad happens

123: Q: And then when you know you've got a mentoring session coming up, do you feel like it’s something that you have to do or something you want to do?

124: A: I want to do

125: Q: who chooses what you talk about?

126: A: it’s Just really what else comes up, I’ll just say something and we’ll just talk about that

127: Q: So whatever you want to talk about?

128: A: if there is something that is bothering me then we’ll just talk about that.

129: Q: Before you come to a session do you think this is what I'd like to talk about? Do you prepare a bit?

130: A: Yeah

131: Q: Is it what happens on the day or during the week?

132: A: Yeah

133: Q: So mostly during the day?

134: A: Yeah

135: Q: So you talk about what ever happened to you? And then how did you agree how often you’re going to meet?

136: A: we just agreed it would be every Tuesday that we would meet here.

137: Q: Do you walk here from school?

138: A: No my mum brings me

139: Q: And then what have you done to help you get to know each other? Obviously you didn’t know each other at all before you met so have you done anything to try and get to know each other better?

140: A: No we just meet up here every Tuesday and talk about things and gradually get to know each other.
Q: so you said by talking to each other that’s how you get to know each other?
A: Yeah
Q: okay that’s interesting. And do you do the same thing every time or is it different each time? Do you have kind of like a set way of having a session or visit?
A: No we just come in and get a drink and sit down and talk about whatever
Q: So what sort of things do you talk to your mentor about?
A: Family issues, if I’ve got like any issues with friendships or whatever. That’s mostly it.
Q: School?
A: yeah
Q: i think that's mostly what people want to talk about isn’t it. Do you talk about feelings at all?
A: yes feelings as well
Q: So you say family issues. So you obviously don’t have to talk about specific things but do you feel it’s made a difference having mentoring? Like how you felt about your family before and how you feel about it now?
A: No its just like because I don’t really like telling people how I feel because I don’t really trust anyone so having just someone who I can like load all my stress onto or just someone to talk to.
Q: So what makes you feel that you can trust your mentor when you can’t trust other people?
A: (laughs) I don’t really know, I guess in my head she just looked like someone who wouldn’t tell anyone else
Q: is it because like at the beginning she said I won’t tell anybody. Like you agreed that between you didn’t you? Do think that helped you?
A: A little bit.
Q: So, sorry you were talking about how you got on with your family before and after. Has it helped at all?
A: So before she came I was like really down and like in a really bad mood and flipping out all the time now like having someone to talk to I’m a lot calmer
Q: So did you have anyone else you could talk to?
A: Yeah but I didn’t talk to them. I just don’t like talking to people because I don’t know how to say how I feel. I find it really hard to put my emotions into words.
Q: it’s hard to say when you when they’re really strong yeah. So how does [Mentor] help?
A: If I say to her this, she’ll be like that’s this emotion and I’ll be like I agree.
Q: right okay. So she’s kind of like helping you to understand yourself a bit more?
A: yeah
Q: and then when you talk about school, has it has it made a difference between how you feel about school before and how you feel about it now?
A: when I was getting bullied it’s just like I haven’t had anyone to talk to and then have like to have her advice given to me and what to do
Q: and what did you do with that advice?
A: we just talked about ways I could just walk away or whatever and then I decided to film what they were saying and it got resolved. Now me and the girls are fine.
Q: So did you try the advice out and did it work?
A: Yeah.
Q: Had you thought of doing that kind of thing before?
A No.
Q: That's brilliant
Q: and do you get on with your teachers at school?
A: Yeah
Q: So it’s mostly actually about other people at school. And then your friends. How has it helped you?
A: Just someone to muck about with, someone to be silly with that really helps. Like if I had a really bad day I could just go to X, my best mate I could just go to X and literally be so stupid with her and laugh about the smallest little thing, it really cheers me up.
Q: and do you have worries about your friends sometimes? Do you have fallings out? Would you talk to [Mentor] about that?
A: Yeah
Q: what would she do?
A: Just give me advice about how to solve it. It makes you look at both sides of the argument it makes you see the bigger picture, because sometimes I just like look at something from my point of view and how I would see it instead of looking at it from someone else’s point of view.
Q: So how does she help you do that?
A: She just explains like well if I was in that situation and then we just look at it from both sides.

Q: How does that help you?

A: It just helps me understand how Kacey would feel like someone else would feel. If we were having an argument.

Q: And had you thought of looking at it like that before?

A: No,

Q: no. Okay. Who do you live with at home?

A: My mum and my brother

Q: And do you talk about them to [Mentor] at all?

A: Sometimes

Q: Did you get on okay with them before?

A: I never really had a good relationship with my brother. I never really had a good relationship with my mum either. But having [Mentor] like, just makes me like, it’s hard to explain it but like just having someone so I don’t have to tell my mum how I feel because I don’t really like doing that. And like just build a relationship with my mum. So that helps. The fact that you can talk about how you feel is a (indistinct) I have.

Q: So the fact that you can talk to her, does that make it easier for you to talk to your mum?

A: yeah because I don’t like telling my mum how I feel. So then instead of keeping it in, I just then like tell her how I feel and I don’t have to tell my mum how I feel.

Q: So do you feel calmer? sorry I feel like I’m putting words in your mouth. So how do you feel after you have had a session?

A: A lot better. So like before I feel really low, really down and in general it’s like a weight lifted off my chest and then at the end I just feel a lot better and I can finally get through the week.

Q: right okay so what is it what is it that makes you feel better?

A: Just talking about all my worries, so how to deal with some stuff and then I make a big thing out of nothing.

Q: So they can otherwise kind of build up inside you?

A: and then I make a big thing out of nothing. Like I can have the little smallest little thing in my head out of nothing but having her like just having someone to sort of bring back to reality like that’s probably not going to happen so..
Q: So when you know that you've got session coming up how do you feel about that?
A: I don’t really know (laughs).
Q: Do you look forward to it?
A: Yeah
Q: Anything about it that you don’t look forward to?
A: No
Q: So that's all good. So have you learned anything new do you think from your mentor?
A: I don’t really know. Probably not to be so like, I don’t know how to say it. I'm not like self-centred but like not to look at things just from my point of view, look at it from other people’s point of view. Um, so like see the bigger picture. Yeah, that's really it to be honest.
Q: Yeah, I think that's what you said isn't it? Yeah. So trying to understand things from other people’s point of view. Okay. And have you done anything that you haven't done before do you think?
A: No
Q: Been anywhere that you haven’t been to before, talked to anyone you haven’t talked to before?
A: No,
Q: okay that’s fine
Q: So has she given you any suggestions, you know, whenever there's something you’re worried about, has she told you?
A: Breathing techniques. I do the breathing technique
Q: Oh yes, so what is that?
A: So like just take a step, just walk away from the situation and then just like breathe. No one needs to know about it but just breathe really slowly and then take a deep breath in and then a deep breath out and then carry on or come back to the situation later.
Q: How does that help?
A: because I'd make a big thing out it in my head as I said and then like I could just make the situation 10 times worse so then just walking away and coming back to it I have a clear head then I can just...
Q: Yeah, Yeah, sounds good advice for everybody. And so did you have any problems or things that you were worried about before that she's helped you with?
Q: No, no not really that I can think of.
A: Have you learned anything about yourself that you think you didn’t know before?

A: That my emotions aren’t that hard to put into words. I just built it up in my head that it is. Sometimes I do struggle to put it into words but not as much as I thought. Like I can put it into words, I just don’t. I just think that I can’t.

Q: so is that from talking to her

A: yeah

Q: That’s really interesting. So things that you thought you had a problem with, you don’t actually. So when you’ve finished mentoring, do you think there’s anything that you’ve learned that you will use in the future?

A: just like if there is a bad situation just walk away from it and come back to it later on. If something goes wrong, it’s not the end of the world. Like there’s always a solution to the problem.

Q: And do you think you always have to find the solution yourself or will you go to other people?

A: (indistinct) You don’t just have to solve things all by yourself, you can do it in teams or groups or whatever.

Q: Do you talk about your future at all or what your plans are?

A: We talked about how I want to do something to do with childcare and have beautician on the sidelines and that’s about it.

Q: And how did you feel about that before you started mentoring? Did you feel it was going to be possible? Were you looking forward to it?

A: I was feeling quite scared but now I’m not so scared.

Q: So what has happened there? What has changed?

A: just like have what I definitely want to do

Q: and is that through talking or is that?

A: Yes, just talking about the things and then being like well I’m going to do that so maybe I should go for that.

Q: So she’s helped you see what things you’re good at now that you could use in childcare and as a beautician.

A: yeah

Q: right okay so she’s made you feel better about yourself?
A: Yeah. Boosted my self-confidence. Before I started my self-confidence was so bad. Honestly it was so low and then like just having her because I’d said I wanted someone to boost my confidence and then yeah...

Q: what does she do that boost in confidence?

A: I don’t even know I just know that since seeing her, my self-confidence has gone up.

Q: And is that because she’s made you feel yes you can do the things that you want to do?

A: yeah probably

Q: So you can tell you feel more confident about yourself?

A: Yeah

Q: So what difference does that make to you, feeling more self-confident? Is it like you feel different with your friends or your family or just different about how you think about yourself?

A: Yeah just how I think about myself. I don’t really care what people say any more like before it really knocked my self-confidence. I didn’t tell anyone anything, I really hated how I looked and everything and then I was really self-conscious but now I don’t really care what anyone says to be honest. I’m like that’s nice, I don’t really care.

Q: Do you know why that is

A: No

Q: because it is a big change isn’t it?

A: yeah

Q: So you feel positive about your future?

A: yeah

Q: and did you did you feel like that before you started mentoring?

A: No

Q: And having kind of worked with a mentor do you think that's made you feel differently about other adults, whether they can help you or not?

A: No, not really.

Q: So you don’t think you’d go to people for help more easily?

A: No

Q: You’d still prefer not to talk about your feelings with other people?

A: No
Q: What about problem solving? Do you think you’ve learned anything about that from having a mentor?
A: What do you mean?
Q: If you have a problem, do you think you’ve got different ways of looking at solving it than you had before? Or do you think you haven’t changed much, you kind of go about solving things in the same way as you did before you had a mentor?
A: It depends on the situation. Like sometimes I’ll be like, oh that’s actually not going to happen and I’m like whatever and just come back to it. Most of the time I just leave situations now because it’s pointless,
A: right. So you pick your battles? Save your energy.
A: Yeah,
Q: Yeah. And we might have covered this one already. Have there been any particular things that you’ve been worried about that you’ve talked about in mentoring?
A: Not that I can remember.
Q: A mentor is quite an interesting person. How do you think of her? As a friend, like a member of your family. How do you think of her?
A: As a role model, just someone to talk to.
Q: interesting. So role model in that she’s someone you’d like to be like in the future or the way she makes suggestions?
A: Yeah. Just the advice that she gives me
Q: So you meet every Tuesday. Do you think that’s right? Is that as often as you need to meet? Do you think you should more or less often?
A: No that’s fine every Tuesday.
Q: And then is it an hour?
A: yeah
Q: so how does that feel - too long, too short?
A: Yeah that’s fine.
Q: And then do you think you’ll know when you don’t need a mentor anymore?
A: Yeah it’s for six months and then I was like after 6 months I might be okay. So that before the start I was like 6 months is definitely not long enough but now I like maybe it is.
Q: So you feel a lot more confident that you can cope with things yourself?
A: Yeah

Q: So if you think about mentoring and how much you liked it where 10 was you really liked it and 1 was you really didn't like it at all, where would having a mentor fit on that do you think?

A: like nine

Q: Why have you chosen nine?

A: It's just like having someone to talk to and it's not in school your life because sometimes, like, me and lots of other people I talk to, they find it really hard to tell people at school because they could go and tell this person or that member of staff, whatever, but like she doesn't really know anyone else I talk to

Q: So she couldn't tell them even if she wanted to?

A: Yeah, yeah. It's just, like, having someone else to talk to that I definitely, like, and that they don't know anyone. So yeah, it doesn't really matter. And that no one else knows about. But as far as anyone else knows, she could just be like a relative coming to see me or something.

Q: Yeah, that's true. How would it be if it was worse? What kind of things would you not like about it? I know that's quite hard to imagine. So some people don’t like being told what to do or to be given too much advice

A: Well, if you think about it, from [D’s] point of view, which is my boyfriend, and he would not like it at all because he doesn’t like talking to people like at all right, unless it's like his own age or they're like ?? or whatever. And he doesn't like having people to turn to, he wants make his own decisions. He doesn’t like being told what to do. He has to be in control. And he only looks at things from his point of view

Q: so did you tell him about looking in a different way?

A: Yeah! He doesn’t listen. There’s no point.

Q: That’s interesting. So you think that people who don’t like talking, they’re not going to enjoy mentoring you think?

A: Yeah

Q: So you need to be prepared to listen to someone else's point of view and actually take their advice. So you need to be that kind of a person.

A: Yeah

Q: So if a friend of yours came to you, I’ve forgotten your friend’s name

A: X

Q: If she came to you and said I’m thinking of having a mentor, what would you say to her?

A: Go for it. Because I’d say to her, like, you know how, like, before I was really down and really moody all the time and now look at me. I’m like I don’t care what anyone says like my self-
confidence is like really high. I can like, they make you really happy whereas before I would not have been able to do that, it would have been the other way round. They make you, like you’re a better person at the end of it.

Q: Do you think your friend has noticed a difference in you?
A: Yeah.

Q: What’s she said to you?
A: I met a friend the other day who I haven’t see for like three years and she was like you seem so much happier, just like more confident in yourself and I was like yep

Q: and were you surprised that she said that to you? Were you surprised that she noticed it that much?
A: yeah

Q: and so you hadn’t kind of realised?
A: No.

Q: and so when you think of anyone who wouldn't be suitable for mentoring so you're saying someone who doesn't like to talk?
A: Someone who doesn’t like opening up.

Q: and then so in a year's time, if you were to look back, what difference do you think mentoring might have made to you or is that too hard?
A: I don’t really know, just that I’m a lot happier.

Q: So happier and more confident in yourself and what you think you can do and your plans, you think you can achieve them? Anything that has surprised you about mentoring?
A: No.

Q: So you didn't know what to expect but it’s been a good experience which you would recommend to other people? And then so your mum, do you talk to her about what you’ve done in mentoring at all?
A: No

Q: How does she feel about you having a mentor do you think?
A: I don’t know. She just picks me up and then we go home for about five minutes and then she brings me here and then we just go home and then we have dinner together and then I just do whatever.

Q: So she’s happy to bring you. Do you think she’s noticed a difference in you, has she said anything?
A: no

Q: I was just kind of wondering where your mentor fits in amongst all your other kind of people that you know. So this is you in the middle (demonstrates card with names on it). And then all around you, you've got all these other people, you've got your friends, your relations, your best friend, teachers, mentor, and family. How close would you put them to you?

A: What you mean? What do you mean by relation?

Q: So your family would be like your close family and relations would be like aunties or uncles or grandparents

A: Okay

Q: Are there any other people that you're close to that I haven't thought of? Yeah that's interesting. So is that your best friend? Okay yeah and then after that it's your friends and family?

A: Friends.

Q: And then your family is a bit further away? OK, and then your relations. And then so where is your mentor in relationship to your family: a bit closer or a bit further away?

A: I don't know how to say it. It's like she's a second mum but she's not. So it's kind of a similar
Q: Yeah. Yeah. So you’ve put them the same distance apart

A: Yeah.

Q: But not together. Okay. And then your relations and then are there any other people you can think of that you might be close to?

A: My counsellor. Outside school.

Q: is there anything else you’d like to tell me about having a mentor that I haven’t asked or anything you’d like to know?

A: No

Q: Did you manage to keep a diary?

A: Yeah, I kinda forgot

Q: What would be really helpful is if I can look through everything that you’ve said and if I’ve got any other questions would you be ok to meet me again?

A: That’s fine

Q: You’re sure? Yeah and then maybe we can bring your diary as well and we can look at that together. That’d be great because it’s really nice to kind of have a look and think about what you said and see if there’s any other questions I’ve got. When I analyze it, I have to make it anonymous. Do you want to choose a name?

A: I mean you can use my name if you want.

Q: Do you have a nickname or something?

A: I don’t mind.

Q: I’ll call you Mentee 2

A: Fine okay

Q: um yeah so what I'll do is I'll listen to what you said and the interesting ideas and then if anything is unclear I’ll come back but also come back and tell you kind of summarize what it is you seem to have said that and that’s really really helpful so thank you very much indeed for time and so do you have to go and do homework now?

A: No, I’ll just go home and eat dinner and get in the shower and facetime all my mates and stay up till whenever and then go to sleep. I’m going to see my dad in the morning which I’m really excited about.
The things that you said to me that were really helpful were having someone to talk to and get things off your chest. So you felt that your mentor helped you to identify what the problem was? And then she gave you some strategies and ideas to help you address those problems.

MENTEE 2

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

Before you didn’t have anyone to talk to, because you didn’t like talking to anyone in your family? Was there any particular reason for that?

MENTEE 2
They would always tell each other stuff. And I didn't like it. That's why I wouldn't tell them anything.

So you felt like they were talking about you behind your back? Something like that. Yeah. And did you feel that they could give you good advice?

No. not really.

A lot of it seemed to do with trusting. But for some reason, you felt you could trust [MENTOR] Jana as soon as you met her? Do you know why you felt like that?

She just reassured me that she wasn't going to tell anyone. And who is she going to tell? anyway? She doesn't know my family.

You described her as a role model or second mum?

Yeah.
You see her as someone who can give you good advice? And you talked about that the mentoring is about six months. And first of all, you thought that wasn't going to be nearly long enough?

MENTEE 2

No

INTERVIEWER

And then you felt ok maybe it is. How are you feeling about it now?

MENTEE 2

Silence

INTERVIEWER

Do you know how long it is going to carry on for?

MENTEE 2

No

INTERVIEWER

And you said that you liked that it was completely independent from your home and school life. And you felt your mentor was someone who could give you good advice about things that had been worrying you. It helps you put your emotions into words.
36. Yeah.

37. And you had thought that was going to be really hard. But in fact, you found out it wasn’t that hard. How has that been helpful?

38. MENTEE 2

39. It was hard to express my feelings. And in the end, I would say Oh, forget it, it doesn't matter. And now I can just explain how I feel.

40. INTERVIEWER

41. And how does that help?

42. MENTEE 2

43. I feel a lot more confident.

44. INTERVIEWER

45. Oh, that's interesting. So being able to understand yourself makes you feel more confident

46. MENTEE 2

47. Yeah, and to own my feelings.

48. INTERVIEWER

49. Tell me about that.
MENTEE 2

So instead of being I don't know how to explain it, I can say this is how I feel. I can change it. But I can't always change it and don't get upset about it. You can't always change it.

INTERVIEWER

You can't change the situation, or you can't change your emotions?

MENTEE 2

You can’t change the situation. No. You can get used to it. Or try and do something different to make it better.

INTERVIEWER

Oh, that's really interesting. In order to be able to do something about a problem, we need to understand

MENTEE 2

how you’re feeling.

INTERVIEWER

you need to understand how you feel about it. Before that you couldn't really understand it.
No.

INTERVIEWER

And then your mentors given you some new techniques. Things like walking away. If there's an argument. And I think you talked quite a lot about being able to see something from someone else's point of view. That was helpful. And the breathing technique. You also said she gives you the big picture. And she challenges your views about what is likely to happen. How does that help you?

MENTEE 2

It helps me see like the other person's perspective. I do that anyway. But not all the time. Basically, it puts me in someone else's shoes. So, I know how they feel.

INTERVIEWER

And how does that help?

MENTEE 2

I don’t really know. (indistinct)

INTERVIEWER

And there’s always a solution to a problem. You’ve decided, so if something goes wrong, it’s not the end of the world. Is that different? How did you feel before that?
Yeah. If it was something really bad, then that was it. Everything was going wrong, but now it’s not everything. You can just change what you did do.

INTERVIEWER

Okay. Just because one thing goes wrong doesn’t mean everything has gone wrong. And also you said you didn’t feel you needed to solve problems on your own. Is that different from what you thought before?

MENTEE 2

Yeah, I don’t really know.

INTERVIEWER

Okay, but you definitely feel that you’re not on your own now.

MENTEE 2

Yeah

INTERVIEWER

Who else would you go to?

MENTEE 2

My CAMHS person.

INTERVIEWER
So they are quite good at helping you solving problems.

MENTEE 2

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

And you said that talking about the future and how to achieve it has made you feel more positive. Tell me a bit more about that.

MENTEE 2

If I get scared about something, I can just talk to her about it. And then she'll give me reassurance. That it's not the end of the world. Sometimes it's a good thing. Sometimes you just see all the negatives. And she makes me see the positive side of things. And makes me feel more comfortable.

INTERVIEWER

So she helps you see other people's points of view, helps you to see positive things? She's a balance to what you're saying.

MENTEE 2

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER
So you've mentioned it again, you're saying that it's really helped your self-confidence. You said it really helped you but you weren't quite sure how. Can you say anything else about this and what it's done?

MENTEE 2

No.

INTERVIEWER

So, you don't care what people think about you so much. You used to worry. And then we talked about who it wouldn't suit. mentoring. And you said someone who only likes to take their own advice and who only sees problems from their point of view. They wouldn't like mentoring.

MENTEE 2

No.

INTERVIEWER

So if someone like that actually had a mentor, What do you think would happen?

MENTEE 2

They could open up. But some people are very stubborn. I don't think they would. But they could change.

INTERVIEWER
And were you at all like that before you started?

No.

And you said you are as close to your mentor as you are to your family. But you don’t think of her as being part of your family? Is that right?

Yeah.

So any other ideas about how you think about her?

No?

OK Yes. Anything else about your mentor? You think I should have asked?

No.
INTERVIEWER

Which do you think is more important to you? Is it that you get on with your mentor? Or that she gives you good advice.

MENTEE 2

You have to get on with them. Maybe pick, someone with the same gender.

INTERVIEWER

So why do you think that?

MENTEE 2

So they can relate to you more and be able to trust them and get on with them. Because if you don't get on with them, there's no point because you're not going to be able to talk about it.

INTERVIEWER

When you say get on, you can get on with teachers, even if you don't have a particularly close relationship. Is it that kind of getting on?

MENTEE 2

Yeah, it must be civil.

INTERVIEWER
So you don't have to really, really like them you think but you have to be able to see them without thinking, oh, I've got to see them again.

That's a really good way of looking at it. So, you have to look forward to it, do you think?

Yeah.

So it could be like a relationship with a teacher.

Yeah

And if you really, really got on with them and had a lot in common, do you think that would make a difference? Would that help or not?
I think that would make you trust them more. You have more in common. And then you can talk about more stuff.

INTERVIEWER

So you mentioned trust, that's a big thing.

MENTEE 2

Because what's the point of opening up to someone if you can't trust them? You don't know who they could tell? And then it might get back to you as a completely different thing from what you said. So, you have to be able to trust them.

INTERVIEWER

So you say it is really important to get on with them. You must have at least, is it a respect thing?

MENTEE 2

Yes,

INTERVIEWER

respect each other.

MENTEE2

Yes.
INTERVIEWER

And what about the kind of advice they give you? How important is that? Is it the listening to you? or giving you advice?

MENTEE 2

If they give you advice, at least try it. Try it. If they give you something to do try it out at least because you never know it could work and make the whole situation ten times better. Because sometimes I find that people say oh yeah, I've tried it. But they haven't. And they wonder why the situation isn't any better? And then they go back to it and think maybe I should have done that. And it's like, why didn't you try that in the first place?

INTERVIEWER

So has she ever suggested something where you felt? I'm not sure about that?

MENTEE 2

No?

INTERVIEWER

Have you been able to try them?

MENTEE 2

Yes.
If you didn't trust your mentor, it would never work?

No. Because then you'd be like you wouldn't open up properly. And then you could still be in the same position as when you started. Because it's meant to help you come out of your shell or whatever. But if you can't trust them, then you can't do that.

I'm trying to get an idea of what makes a good mentor. Someone who makes mentoring works. You're saying you've got to be able to trust them. Anything else about them that you think makes someone a particularly good mentor?

suggest ideas, don't tell them to do it. Just suggest ideas. And don't put words in their mouths.

Would You want them to have experienced the same things as you had or is that not so?

similar things,
INTERVIEWER

similar things?

MENTEE 2

Certainly, if you can relate it would be easier to explain.

INTERVIEWER

Trust and suggesting ideas, anything else? and the kind of listening side of things?

MENTEE 2

Has to be a good listener. Because otherwise, what's the point? You could just switch off?

INTERVIEWER

Who else do you talk to? If you want advice?

MENTEE 2

No one really? I have CAHMS I talk to her. Or my dad. I think it's important to have at least one parent you can trust to speak to about stuff.

INTERVIEWER

Do you talk to them about the same things you talk to your mentor about?
MENTEE 2

No. I don't tell my mentor everything. But I tell them most of the stuff that goes on. And I tell my dad like everything.

INTERVIEWER

What sorts of things wouldn't you talk to your mentor about? What would you talk about?

MENTEE 2

my love life?

INTERVIEWER

Because you don't think she can help you or it's private?

MENTEE 2

It doesn't concern her. So she doesn't need to know. It's just private, I guess.

INTERVIEWER

Yeah, okay. Would you talk to your dad about that?

MENTEE 2

Yeah. Or just tell her family things? Or if you're stuck on a problem. And you don't know who else to talk to? You can talk to your mentor.
INTERVIEWER

And are there things you'd talk to caHms about that you wouldn't tell your mentor?

MENTEE 2

No.

INTERVIEWER

So you talk to them about the same things

MENTEE 2

roughly yeah?

INTERVIEWEE

Do they give you the same advice or different advice?

MENTEE 2

Similar?

INTERVIEWER

So how does it help having a mentor if you've got those other people to talk to as well?

MENTEE 2
Just like that extra reassurance. You definitely know that someone's there, if all else fails?

So the fact that she's always there?

INTERVIEWER

Yes.

MENTEE

INTERVIEWER

Do you think that is to do with trust as well? You trust her to always be there? You can rely on her. So, if you didn't have [Mentor] Jana to talk to what difference would that make?

I don't really know. I guess my dad could tell everyone that he wanted. And that would affect it. But I know for 100% she wouldn't tell. So I can trust her a lot. Yes, I feel like that feels like safe ground, because otherwise, you'd just be on edge all the time?

And is there anything that makes it easy to talk to [Mentor]?

You can just know she understands. You can relate to some things.
INTERVIEWER

MENTEE 2

INTERVIEWER

MENTEE 2

MENTEE 2

INTERVIEWER

MENTEE 2

INTERVIEWER

MENTEE 2
and open up but not straight away. Obviously, you’re not going to jump straight in. But gradually tell them stuff.

INTERVIEWER

Is that something you’ve learned from having a mentor? Or did you know it already?

MENTEE 2

from having a mentor.

INTERVIEWER

So in future, you might be prepared to spend that time getting to know someone? Yes. I think from your diary, and what we've said, talking is a really important part of mentoring

MENTEE 2

If you’re not ready to open up, then there's no point in doing it.

INTERVIEWER

And how does talking help you?

MENTEE 2

I don’t really know, instead of writing it down because people can read that thing, they can What’s the word, misinterpret it or whatever. If you're like saying it, and then
that person can relate. And then they can like Forget about it. And then they won't judge you or whatever.

INTERVIEWER

So when you talk about it, does it make it clearer to you? Does it help you understand what's gone on?

MENTEE 2

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

When it's in your head it can be quite confusing.

MENTEE2

And get it out. Even if it's like a jumble of words. Then you can like piece it together.

INTERVIEWER

Is it just the talking and she's listening to you? Or does she do something while you're talking? That helps?

MENTEE 2

No, she just listens. And then I explain it. And if I'm struggling? Then she'll help me.
INTERVIEWER

How important is the listening side. Obviously, it's important to talk but how important is it that she listens?

MENTEE 2

Very important. If you don't listen, then what's the point of being a mentor? You're basically there to listen to that person's problems and to help them. You're meant to help people through stuff. So if you can't listen, then what's the point?

INTERVIEWER

That's kind of what you'd expect a mentor to do? Someone who listens to you telling problems.

MENTEE 2

Yes. INTERVIEWER

And she does she ask questions, or just listens?

MENTEE 2

Sometimes it depends what it's about.

INTERVIEWER
Sometimes that can help. If people ask you questions. How do you think she feels towards you?

MENTEE 2

I don't really know. She always tells me Oh, you're really nice or whatever. That's it. I don't really know.

INTERVIEWER

Do you feel she cares about you?

MENTEE 2

Yes. (emphatic)

INTERVIEWER

Do you feel like it matters to her? What happens?

MENTEE 2

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

How do you feel towards her?
I like her she's really nice. I don’t know what to say. She's very nice. And you can look up to her. And you can actually trust her.

INTERVIEWER

So you look up to her, you say. We can look a quick look at your diary. How did you find writing a diary?

MENTEE 2

I found it very difficult because I didn’t really know what to say. I did know what to say for this one.

INTERVIEWER

But this one and this one, I didn’t really know what to say.

INTERVIEWER

Before or after or during?

MENTEE 2

Mainly during.

INTERVIEWER

So a couple of times you said you were feeling calm. And it's nice to see you say you were looking forward to it. And it's all to do with just having someone to talk to, to
explain what had happened. So this was something that was on your mind. Had you
talked to anyone before?

MENTEE 2

No. No, because I hadn't been going to school. This really helped. Because if I have
a problem I can verbalise about it instead of writing it down and then forgetting about it
and then somebody else reading it. Because my mum goes through my stuff and having
a mentor like, because [Mentor] has a diary for me.

And then I come here and write down what happened over the week? And then
she keeps in her house and my mum can't read it.

INTERVIEWER

So writing it down does help you?

MENTEE 2

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

But you have to feel that no one else is going to see it.

MENTEE 2

Yes.

INTERVIEWER
So how have you found writing that diary?

MENTEE 2

Good.

INTERVIEWER

Because you say before this session, you say you were anxious? Were you anxious because you were thinking about something that was making you anxious?

MENTEE 2

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And then it’s better when you’ve discussed your thoughts. So were these ideas that [Mentor] suggested, or was it something that you

MENTEE 2

She just said what if you do it in little sections. And then it doesn't seem as much, you can cope with it better. And I was like yeah.

INTERVIEWER

How did that sound when she said that to you? And did you try it? And did you go to bed a bit earlier?
MENTEE2

Yeah. It took a lot of effort but I did it.

If your mom or dad had said to you to go to bed a bit earlier, would you have done it?

MENTEE 2

No. I don't know. It's because like with your parents, you can wind them up, you know what buttons to press and then you can just annoy them. But you can't exactly do that with your mentor because they don't live with you so.

INTERVIEWER

So why don't you want to wind them up?

MENTEE 2

Because you don't really know each other well enough.

INTERVIEWER

So then you were looking forward to explaining what happened because it was bothering you. You thought mentoring was really going to help?

MENTEE 2

Yes.
You felt like a weight was lifted off your shoulders. You felt happier and less down?

Was that just the telling it or the advice that she gave?

MENTEE 2

telling it, having reassurance and then having advice to solve my issues. ?

INTERVIEWER

And then you thought you'd try the relaxation exercises such as breathing and think of something to do. So did you do that? Did you get a chance to think about it?

MENTEE 2

Nods head

INTERVIEWER

That's really great. Good for you. She gives you advice and you go away and take it. And what difference Do you think it made doing these things?

MENTEE 2

Because I'd never have thought of doing that. And having someone outside the family with a bird's eye view of my family, and just explaining things to them and (indistinct) and resolving things.

INTERVIEWER

355
So again, it's the same you were feeling calm. You were looking forward to saying what had happened? Well, and this is nice. You say you explained yourself well. So you were pleased with how it had gone in the meeting? What made you feel you'd explained yourself well?

MENTEE 2

(Indistinct). Whatever, a right mess. Just piecing it together slowly. And being able to understand how what I thought I was doing but I actually wasn't. And the situation wasn't exactly that big. I just made it into a huge thing in my head.

INTERVIEWER

How did talking about that help you see that?

MENTEE 2

Yeah

INTERVIEWER

You were talking about changing schools and planning to make your future better? And that made you feel better? One thing that struck me was that after sessions you seem to have like a plan. Is that your idea? Is that her idea?

MENTEE 2

Kind of both of our ideas? Mainly hers.
INTERVIEWER

How does having a plan to make you feel?

MENTEE 2

Something to work on? I don’t just have to do what I think. I can try different things. To see if it works. And then maybe it works better than what I thought.

INTERVIEWER

does having something to aim towards make you feel you have more control?

MENTEE 2

Yes. Emphatic.

INTERVIEWER

So you read two chapters. Was that a particular book you were looking at?

MENTEE 2

I think it was called playing with anxiety. And I just had to read it.

INTERVIEWER

Did you? Did you manage to do that?

MENTEE 2
Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

And was that helpful?

MENTEE 2

Not really.

INTERVIEWER

And then the idea was to contact the school to get some work. Did you do that?

MENTEE 2

Well, they contacted me.

INTERVIEWER

So you felt low? Because you had an argument but you still you still wanted to go and meet her even though you weren’t feeling great.

MENTEE 2

Yes.

INTERVIEWER
And you wanted to say what had happened? Um, was that because you felt confused about what had happened?

MENTEE 2

No, I just wanted to sort out that I wasn't in the wrong and she was like, No, you did all the right things. The balls in her court, basically. And then we managed to resolve it.

INTERVIEWER

(reading) explaining it out loud made me realize I did the right thing. And I can't do much more. Again, just talking about it so it's not in your head helps. Yeah, so it's kind of shared with someone. So you got in touch with the school yourself?.

MENTEE 2

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

Wow.

What made you feel more confident? Do you think?

MENTEE 2

I can't really remember. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER
The plan again? Was it to do with having a plan? And you're doing some decorating?

MENTEE 2

Yeah, really positive. Yeah. Basically, I don’t know what happened but me and my best mate, Jack,

We got in this huge thing and I was so like angry and I got this sudden urge to paint my room so I did. As you do

INTERVIEWER

do you think before you had a mentor you would have done that?

MENTEE 2

No.

INTERVIEWER

How do you think you will manage without one?

MENTEE 2

Not as well maybe. But I'll always remember to always look from the other person's perspective.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think you will find someone else to talk to in the same way as her?
MENTEE 2: Probably yeah. It just takes time

INTERVIEWER: Are you going back to school?

MENTEE 2: I don't want to but I have to
Appendix H: Example Interview – Mentor 7

Name: Mentor 7 Interview 1

Created On: 09/09/2020 09:14:52

Created By: CJC

1: Interview with Mentor 20 March 2020, F2F in home

2: INTERVIEWER CC:

3: Did you have any other questions about the study or somebody's looking at the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. And that's the main kind of thrust of it and also what kind of skills and attributes people are bringing with them, if any?

4: So my first question is just about kind of experience you've had so far. So how many young people have you mentored?

5: MENTOR7INT1:

6: I think yes, fully. Yeah, it is only two. And then I started about three but they didn't really they kind of ended.

7: INTERVIEWER CC:

8: So you started two that went fully and three that ended. So five in total.

9: MENTOR7INT1:
Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER CC:

Right, so they ended up sort of earlier, and how when did you start as a mentor.

MENTOR7INT1:

Oh, I can’t remember, um,

INTERVIEWER CC: yes, people find it hard to remember.

MENTOR7INT1:

It’s been two years, I think, at least. Yeah. 2017

INTERVIEWER CC:

coming up to three years. And what sort of ages has that been?

MENTOR7INT1:

The ones that were, the two full ones yes 17 and 18. older ones in comparison to others.

INTERVIEWER CC:

and what were they a boy or a girl?

MENTOR7INT1:
INTERVIEWER CC

Okay so the 17-year-old was a boy, and he was your first mentee. Well, first full mentee and then the 18-year-old was a girl?

MENTOR7INT1:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER CC

And then the three that didn’t continue.

MENTOR7INT1:

So, one of them was 13. Yeah. The other one was 14 I think, the last one was 16. first two girls. And the last one was a boy.

INTERVIEWER CC

Okay, brilliant and about how long did those different relationships last?

MENTOR7INT1:

The full six months, for both of them
And with the others. How many sessions, do you think you managed?

MENTOR7INT1:

with the first one, the 13 year old girl, probably about, we did about three session
With the second 14 year old girl only like one session. And the boy, boy, probably about four, four sessions.

INTERVIEWER CC

I’m really interested in ones that don’t last as well so is it ok for me to ask you about those too?

MENTOR7INT1:

yeah

INTERVIEWER CC

that's brilliant. So, are you able to talk about a kind of typical mentoring session, do you have a particular approach that you take you do this, beginning this is the middle and this at the end, are they all really different?

MENTOR7INT1:

I think I do have a rough thing in the two that I’ve seen. I’ve met them in a coffee shop. Yeah. So, obviously, I ask them if they want to drink. that's the first thing I do, and then, then I kind of try and start by saying, what would you like to talk about today, just to try and get the conversation started and allow them to drive the conversation. And
then we'll talk. And then I usually end by saying, okay, so is there any specific anything specific you'd like to do, or discuss next week. So, because I help them with. For instance, UCAS application or cv and things like that so they might say, oh yeah next week I'm going to do my CV next week I'd like you to look at it, that sort of thing. And then also I end with I always arrange the next meeting or confirm it at least.

INTERVIEWER CC: And when you say you meet in a coffee shop does it tend to always be the same one, do you have one that you go to the same place?

MENTOR7INT1:

The two, the two that I've saw fully they are from [x] area so I would meet them in the corner in a coffee shop at the retail park, there's a retail park there so there's a costa there and so I just used to meet them there which was fine.

INTERVIEWER CC: And that was your suggestion their suggestion.

MENTOR7INT1:

I can't remember I think it was my suggestion, because that was convenient for them. Yeah, because the girl used to go to the college just there.

INTERVIEWER CC

Right. So, yeah, did they see you sort of, so after college then or

MENTOR7INT1:
not necessarily because the guy was in sixth form, yes, sometimes his lessons used to finish early, so I might see him after school. But it might be like 2.30 or something like that do you see what I mean, because I tend to when I see them. I tend to work from home. On those days so I can kind of see them. And the 18-year-old girl she was on a gap year. So I'd just see her in the afternoon right yeah morning or whatever it wasn't fixed.

INTERVIEWER CC: like it sounds interesting so you kind of say you have this sort of routine that you they get to drink. Sit down anything they want to do and discuss, and then, and then you can let them take it from there and then you sort of say next time Do you want anything okay yeah sounds good. Sounds good. I want to ask was quite big question but what do you think the purpose of mentoring is?

MENTOR7INT1:

For me, I think it's to be there for a young person when they need it. So, it might be, to listen to them. It might be to offer practical advice, like, Yeah, because of my background. You know I used to be an admissions tutor at uni. I helped one of them with doing his UCAS application - he's at [N.] University now.

INTERVIEWER CC: So did they match you because they knew you had that experience or it just was complete serendipity that?

MENTOR7INT1:

I'm not entirely sure maybe partially, right, and this yeah the. Well I don't know because the initially that didn't come about, I think he, the boy just was having sort of anger management issue. So, but that the application just came out as part of the
mentoring. So yeah, I think, I think that for me it’s, it’s to is to have for them to have someone to listen to know that I’m not going to judge them. And I’m going to support them. I’m not going to be their parent or be on the side of their parents, necessarily, and to provide any advice and support I can.

INTERVIEWER CC: Brilliant. Thank you. And then if I said to you, a mentoring relationship, what would you understand by that.

MENTOR7INT1:

I would see, for me, that means, and I don’t know this will have an influence but previously. This is how I’ve got into mentoring, because previously I trained as a mediator, and conflict coach at the university, and I was really interested in there you learn all the questioning techniques. Yeah. And I was really interested in that, especially the conflict coaching, because it’s about helping someone to help themselves. And not telling them, oh this is how you solve your problem. So, that’s what that for me that’s what mentoring means is helping, a mentoring relationship is helping someone to help themselves.

INTERVIEWER CC: Do you think there are any comparable relationships that a young person would have in their life to the one they have with their mentor might not be one, it might be a number of different ones

MENTOR7INT1:

in the cases that I’ve been involved with no there wasn’t anyone in their life that they could talk to, like this. From what I understand. If they did, then they might be why,
why would they do mentoring. If there was somebody they could have that relationship with, they wouldn’t, because I have that with my niece and nephew. So, and we have a very open relationship and they know they can come and talk to me. So, perhaps, it didn’t come up in my conversations with them.

INTERVIEWER CC: Yes, so there was nobody, that’s really interesting.

MENTOR7INT1:

They have friends but yes, obviously that’s different relationship isn’t it?

INTERVIEWER CC: And in what way Would you say that’s different,

MENTOR7INT1:

because sometimes you worry, especially with the, with the girl she worried that what her friends might think. or if they might judge her. So it was very it was silly things like she actually ended up getting a job as a runner for Les Mis but she was afraid to tell her friends that, because it might upset them. So we had a conversation of well, if your friends told you that. How would you feel. She said I’d really happy for them. Exactly. So, those sort of, I guess, young, the sort of concerns that young people have may have.

INTERVIEWER CC: how, do you think your mentee thinks of you? How would they describe the relationship can you imagine they think of you as a friend or.

MENTOR7INT1:
Yeah, I think, though, they were different, because with the guy. He was quite shy. And you, you felt he had issues with small talk and things like that so I helped him with that. But I think he would. I don’t know how he would see me actually not as a friend. But not as a mother or father figure. I don’t know how to label it. I think an adult not child but young adult relationship.

Whereas with the girl she was. She. I think she saw me more as maybe an even an older sister potentially, and you know sometimes she would just come in and hug me, like, she's taller than me and she'd be like that so it was like, Yeah, no, it's, yeah. So, and she was very much like she'll, message me sometimes and say oh this is what, like I said to her, I won't. Both of them I said, I won't contact you. But if you wish to, you can contact me.

INTERVIEWER CC: So, this is after the relationship had finished or during it?

MENTOR7INT1:

I think towards the end, you know when you kind of Yes, sort of, prepare to end the mentoring process.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, you said to them that is coming to an end. But if you need
Yeah, so she sort of messaged me and said, Oh, just to let you know I've decided to take another gap year and continue working at Les Mis that was it. But nothing, nothing more.

INTERVIEWER CC: promising really nice that she wants to tell you though.

MENTOR7INT1:

Exactly. It's nice and I want to know as well it's important to me. And I know it shouldn't be because. So, but it's natural I guess. and actually the boy, the boy. I saw there was a free webinar or something for genome, I don't really understand it all but genome whatever he's doing he's doing chemical engineering, I'm not sure. And I saw it and I did, I sent that to him to say that he might be interested in this and he said Oh thank you. that was, that was it.

INTERVIEWER CC: And then how important you think that this relationship is in the sort of success or otherwise of mentoring?

MENTOR7INT1:

From the experiences I've had so far I think it's really, really important, because with the guy he. We did things like small talk, like little techniques for initiating conversation and things like that. And so he took himself off to a conference and spoke to somebody, and he came back and he goes, I spoke to somebody I spoke to somebody I spoke to somebody.

INTERVIEWER CC: So did he actually come to you and say I find it really hard to talk to people or did that kind of come out in. was he able to say this is my issue or did you
MENTOR7INT1:

not initially, but, you know, in the beginning we kind of said okay so what are the types of things that you’d like to work on. And those were the things that he’d sort of, identified. So, we might talk about little tasks and things like that so he might try something, and then come back next week and then say oh this is how it went, sort of reflection. Yeah, I think I helped him with. Because when I was mentoring him he was going to visit universities. So it was good that we would talk about that. What did you like, What didn't you like, you know, does the course offer a placement and and so that practical.

INTERVIEWER CC

He must find that so helpful I imagine.

MENTOR7INT1:

I hope so. Yes, I hope so because I don't have any of that. And that's why I kind of want to do this as well because I've got that knowledge, and if I can help somebody, then that's great because I had to kind of muddle my way through, and it's so so confusing. I didn't have anyone to talk to, I was the first one in my family, go to university. So it was, it was really tough. So, yeah, I think, I think so with him it was more practical, because he also was having issues with revision, and that sort of thing, but I could have helped him with that but his family or his father got him a study tutor or something like that, so they were doing that with him so I didn't really focus on that.
And then with the girl. So with her I think that. So the way that she came to me was that she, her brother had had a mental breakdown, whilst at university, which really affected her and was putting her off going to university herself. And then the other thing was that her. She. She was questioning her identity, because the background was that her mother is Jewish. Father is Catholic. However, they, they have, they both come, well they kind of met they’re both converted to Hare Krishna. And yet that’s how they got together. So she was questioning her identity was she Jewish, because that Jewish community is quite strong. But then she’s in the Hare Krishna community which is also very strong. So she, she was she was questioning her identity. So we spoke about that and I’d get her to tell me, tell me stuff that hadn’t. It was good actually that I had a little bit of knowledge of Hare Krishna so that was good, that was helpful.

So I think she found that useful and then the other thing was that because she wasn’t getting on with her brother so her brother didn’t live at home he lived with his grandparents in L. he’s at L. University now. And she just completely hated him she hated the sight of him. She thought that he was taking advantage of her parents. And so we just looked at that, in that, you know, just because he didn’t behave the way that she thought he should or the way, she would she thought that was a bad thing so we just looked at, we talked about. I said my yoga teachers always used to say you can’t control the behaviour of others. You can only control what you how you react to it and whether you react to it. And so she took that on board and slowly slowly her relationship with her brother improved. And then she was like using little techniques to get him to help her with like technology and he’s doing cybersecurity now. So to help to help with
technology and things like that so that's what she's. she sent me a message to say thank you for everything and you know, you've, you know, you helped me with my brother.

INTERVIEWER CC: Well, and you feel that if you hadn't had the relationship that you had, that couldn't have happened.

MENTOR7INT1: I don't know but hopefully I speeded up the process of improving that relationship. And also with her gap year. I think she thought okay I'm taking a gap year but what am I going to do so. So I got her to. Oh, I helped her with planning, time management. You know how best to use her time she enrolled on different courses like, on, on meetups, so she was looking for all these free classes, and she went to Japanese sword fighting and art, and all of it life drawing or something I can't remember, but all of these sort of things so she was really happy. Oh, the other thing was because her plan originally was to either go to drama school, because that's her background Performing Arts. Or if that didn't work she her plan was to do some sort of university degree in animation or something like that. And she wanted to create a portfolio. So I helped her with portfolio things that she might do. I didn't actually do anything, but just sort of because I don't know about an art portfolio but just kind of said okay so what can you include. When are you going to do this, you know, like managing her time.

INTERVIEWER CC: And you said, so she used to kind of hug you and she saw you and things,
not all of the time but some of the time

INTERVIEWER CC:

so she obviously did feel very close to you.

MENTOR7INT1: Yeah, well,

INTERVIEWER CC

what do you think you did to encourage that closeness,

MENTOR7INT1:

I'm not conscious of doing anything specific but, um, I think I just listened to her, I think, I think the key is listening, and not telling her what to do. It's the okay so exploring those issues and helping her to come up with her own solutions or things that she can do. I think that's really important not telling them. I think that's maybe, Well I don't know about other mentors, but I think that's a difference is we're not saying, We're not being a parent saying you need to do this and you need to do that we're kind of allowing them to find their own way. And we're just there to support them.

INTERVIEWER CC: Yeah, because that's, I think, when I talk to people about mentoring they quite often say oh I wouldn't know what I wouldn't know what to say I wouldn't know what advice to give what to tell people, and it's, it's not that is it.

MENTOR7INT1:

No,
INTERVIEWER CC

it is to. And that's what all the young people have said it's being listened to not being told what to do.

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah. And that's what I learned when I did the coach conflict coaching, it was about the listening because human nature is just about giving people advice and saying when I was in this situation. So I really like that. Yeah, I really like that.

INTERVIEWER CC: It's really interesting. And then, um, so what do you think helps build up the relationship with your mentee to these sorts of things.

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah, I actually as part of what I'm when I actually when I see them. I might just say to them. Oh, how was your week what did you do? So then, that usually they talk about what they've done and who they've seen, and, kind of, then the following week. I might say, oh, and then I'll say what your plans for the week so if they say oh I'm going here, then the following week, I'll say, Okay, how was that. So, I think it's not just in the moment, it's about asking them about the whole week. And what they've been doing

INTERVIEWER CC

And remembering it.
Yeah, well I don't remember it. I write it down, I jot it down because otherwise. I can't remember it. So, yeah, I think. Yeah, I think, I think that's important. And I think just being yourself and not not trying to be anyone else or trying to play a role. And sometimes I tell them about, especially when I was doing the small talk with the boy. I'd get him to ask me question. So, then I'd say, Oh, this is what I did this week and so obviously you don't give too much away but you they could kind of get an idea of you as well. I think that's important.

Yes, you're not so professional that you're not a person.

Yeah, because I think I found initially that the guidance was not to give away personal information but I found that quite difficult because it feels like it's one sided. So, I'm careful what I say, but I do like, for instance, I'll say oh I like Formula One or, you know, that sort of thing. And so, those sort of high level things and they know that I teach at B.. I teach computing so they know those sort of things. And I think that's important.

that you are a real person.
139: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

140: INTERVIEWER CC

141: I read somewhere something I thought was quite interesting it's a power thing if they tell you stuff about them but you don't tell them, You keep the power I haven't thought of that. Yeah, so you're kind of sharing it by telling a bit more about you

142: MENTOR7INT1:

143: exactly. Yeah, and you don't have to go into personal details but it's little things like oh I went on. I went to a museum this weekend, you know. Yeah, sharing experiences, I guess.

144: INTERVIEWER CC

145: And what hinders building relationship what sort of things.

146: MENTOR7INT1:

147: So this last, the last boy that I saw which didn't, it only. I only saw him for four sessions. He just, I could not get him to engage at all, because he didn't want to be there. He just did not want to be there and no matter how hard I tried. I'm quite good at engaging people but I just could not engage him he didn't want to. His parents. His parents made him. do the mentoring. So I think obviously they have to be willing to be part of the process. engage.

148: INTERVIEWER CC
Yeah, so it's not something that can be done to them, is it?

MENTOR7INT1:

No, not exactly. Exactly. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER CC

Okay, and anything else you think gets in the way of building relationship or is that the other main thing?

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah, I think that's the main thing.

INTERVIEWER CC: So to be a mentor, do you think you need to bring any particular skills or characteristics to the role? Sounds like it's really useful. it's been really useful to your mentees that you've got all that experience in universities,

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah, yeah. But that's a maybe side-line, if you like, like coincidental. But I think qualities for mentor the listening always, always, being non judgmental. I think learning, learning from your mentees, because with the boy he he used to play Pokemon. And he used to play all these games and I didn't understand so I'd say to him. Oh, like Explain it to me Show me. So you'd come and show me. And then the next time he brought his sketchbook where he drawn the characters from things so it was like he was, he was teaching me something, which was quite nice and even with girl she was telling me
about art and how things work in drama school and things like that. So, it’s a two way exchange.

159: INTERVIEWER CC

160: That you’re not the only expert.

161: MENTOR7INT1:

162: Yeah, Exactly. Yeah, I think that’s important is, is finding what, what makes them tick, what they’re interested in, and ask them about that.

163: INTERVIEWER CC: **Do you think you have to have any particular knowledge of the world or contacts or anything like that?**

164: MENTOR7INT1:

165: Not necessarily because I think you can find all of these things out. There’s plenty of resources out there so if there was anything, then you can go and search. and find that information out. So I think it’s just that, again, from a mentor’s perspective, a willingness to engage in the process.

166: INTERVIEWER CC

167: All right. Okay, from mentors viewpoint as well.

168: MENTOR7INT1:
169: yeah. Not, not just to say right, not just to be narrow minded, this is mentoring, and this is how it's going to be, you have to adapt to the person, and to the situation, I guess. So flexibility adaptability.

170: INTERVIEWER CC

171: Yeah, and I think that's not going in with preconceptions isn't it.

172: MENTOR7INT1:

173: absolutely.

174: INTERVIEWER CC

175: Yeah. I think that's a good point about not thinking this is what mentoring is because whatever you think it is, it isn't.

176: MENTOR7INT1:

177: It's not. Because the first time, the first one, the guy. I got freaked out because he didn't have any specific agenda. And then I panicked, and I phoned [coordinator] and I'm like, oh my god this is not you know you know they do the training. and you just think, Okay, he's not following that training process.

178: And then in the end I was like, Okay, I don't need to dictate this, I need to let him lead the way, and take the lead, take the lead. And I'll follow him. And so that's kind of what I do now is let them
it's really interesting. It's quite, it's quite scary as an adult, you feel like you should be in control, don't you,

MENTOR7INT1:

But I'm not scared now because the first one. And he used to quite often feel tired. And, and so you could see it on his face he used to go to a Jewish school like two hours away. So I used to see in his face so he used to see me on his way home. And you could see, and I'll be like you’re tired, aren't you, yeah. Should we call it a day. So I think that's the thing. It's, it's just being flexible and not going ok we're going to sit here for an hour (laughs). Going with the flow that's it that's what you have to do just go with the flow.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, no, I agree. And do you think the young people that you've been working with Have you introduced them to new skills or new experiences from being their mentor.

MENTOR7INT1:

the boy it was just the little techniques for making small talk and being feeling a bit braver to approach people, which he couldn't do. So whilst I was mentoring him he actually, there was, I don't know some sort of family feud or whatever. But he actually got in touch with one of his cousins via Facebook, and they agreed to meet up, and that sort of thing, whereas he wouldn't have done it wouldn't have had the confidence to do that before.
INTERVIEWER CC

So is it a confidence thing, or was it that it wouldn't have occurred to him to do that.

MENTOR7INT1:

I don't know.

INTERVIEWER CC

Did you get the impression that he knew what to do, it was just to in most situations he wasn't confident enough or he didn't even know how to?,

MENTOR7INT1:

I think, it was just equipping him with those little techniques. encouraged him to do that. I don't think he would have thought about doing it before to be honest,

INTERVIEWER CC

I suppose the fact that he tried to out in other circumstance made him confident to try it out in a different circumstance.

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah, because he got a part time job in a. And so, we, I used to tell him. Oh try and talk to customers coming in, you know, they're older people, they like having conversation. So, he was doing things like that. So, and the fact that he took himself off
to that conference was amazing and talked to people, was really good. So, and then with the girl. it was time management. So sort of coming up with a timetable.

Before, so she. She has, she has dyslexia. So, she couldn't she would write. She would write the, our next meeting on her hand. And then, at home, she would have a calendar and she needed to see everything if she wrote it in a book, the book would be closed. So she had to have it there, she had to be able to see it.

So, anyway, so that's what she did. And I said, Oh, I showed her my calendar, the Outlook calendar that I use and I said look I can sync it all up and that. So in the end, she started using an online calendar. And then she was all the colours and things like that.

The other thing I taught her was mind mapping, because I did a mind mapping course at work and I said that you can use it for planning your time. So she used, she used that as well. For because you can then have visual representation everything if that's what she needed to see that whole picture. she could have a so we did a mind map of because she had the one year for a gap year, a mind map of the whole year. Because you could have that in one page

sounds really interesting. So you introduced kind of appropriate techniques, depending on what they needed.

Yeah.
INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah. And then it was. Do you think, and perhaps you've answered this already you know do you think the young person needs to bring any particular skills or attributes, with them so you've said they definitely need to want to be there, so anything else they need to bring in order to benefit from mentoring?

MENTOR7INT1:

They have to have an open mind.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah. What do you understand by open mind,

MENTOR7INT1:

willing to explore things, try things. And, and have positive and negative experiences try things out and see what works, and that's absolutely fine. You know it might just you know one thing might not work for everyone, it's, it's what works for you.

INTERVIEWER CC

So not be afraid of having a negative experience.

MENTOR7INT1:

Absolutely.
especially as you know it is it is that isn't it, you know, learning that you try new things and it doesn't necessarily always work out but you learn something from it.

MENTOR7INT1:

Absolutely

INTERVIEWER CC

And that's, that's it basically.

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah, I think, I think it's important for them to respect. More well, not for them but it's a two way, respect to one another in terms of timings and communication and things like that.

INTERVIEWER CC

So, you respect, someone else's time and turning up you say you're going to.

MENTOR7INT1:

Or if you can't, you call them. Let them, let someone know. I think those really important skill for the future as well.

INTERVIEWER CC

So is that, that's kind of putting yourself in someone else's shoes isn't it. Looking at it from. If I didn't turn up that's actually rude.
MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, yeah. And that's kind of making them think that which they haven't necessarily

MENTOR7INT1:

thought of thought before. And I think that I use, I always message them the day before, to say so because I think one of the. A good quality of a role model is to lead by example. So if I behave the way, if I show them this is how I behave. Then they might it might help them to see, you know, okay like professionalism, because that's really, really important. So, again, I think, what not very eloquently, but I think like, we work with lots of employers, and they say that our students don't know how to communicate within a working environment they don't understand about professionalism sometimes. So I think that's important. So, these little things like I messaged them the day before and say, Oh, I’m scheduled to meet you tomorrow at this time. Are you still okay with this. And they’re like, Yes, I am fine. See you tomorrow.

INTERVIEWER CC

So when you say professionalism that's interesting what do you mean by professionalism – is that about reliability.

MENTOR7INT1:
I'm relating it to for their future in that sometimes like students don't realise that if then they're going to be late to work, then you should contact your manager and say I'm going to be late to work, so it's those sort of technique.. In this context is not professionalism, it's. I don't know what it is I think this is, I'm trying to equip them with skills that will benefit them in the future. so even like for students at university, it be like, Hey, what's up. It's like, dear X, I do not understand your email, please write to me formally. so then we start this just that kind of training for the future.

INTERVIEWER CC

Is it to do with taking responsibility for yourself as well,

MENTOR7INT1:

I guess so yeah,

INTERVIEWER CC

I'm not going to be at work I need to

MENTOR7INT1:

It's respect isn't it.

INTERVIEWER CC

It's just realising that you have a job to do,
Yes, absolutely.

I suppose because mine was like older mentees. Maybe that's why that was relevant maybe when they're younger, you know.

So there's lots of time spent matching mentors to mentees. How important do you think that is to find the right match, or do you think it's not that important, something will happen, whatever.

I didn't realise that a lot of time was spent doing the matching.

So that's why I asked you about the kind of the fact that you work in a university but sounds like that wasn't deliberate,

I don't know maybe perhaps it was I don't know. I thought the matching was done based on like location primarily.
I think, is but also they do try and match on sort of interests and types of problem and obviously, if the young person asked for a particular gender or time of day, there is that. Do you think it's important to kind of spending a lot of time matching or do you think, you know, mentors can be matched with anybody. It doesn't really matter.

My experience has been that sometimes you start somewhere else and end up somewhere else. So, what they initially identify as things that they would like to work on, other things come out in the process. Yeah. So, I would then say, although I'm a bit conflicted here because my mentees seem to have been matched up quite well with me, but other things came out, I think. I think if you're a good mentor. Yeah, as a mentor, we should be able to support anyone really, I think that, yeah, I think, because you’re, trying to tease out the issues. so yeah I think Yeah. I think it's not so important you know the matching. because as a mentor, we should be able to tease those things out. And if for instance, there was something that I didn't know about, then I would either find out or I'll be like, Oh, I know somebody who does that let me ask them. So, what this last one he was interested in games design. And I was going to, if everything worked out, we’ve got a games design course at university, and they do like project work over the summer so I was going to take him. And so that he could visit them. So, I didn't know a lot about games design, but you find people who do know about that. Yes exactly, exactly. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, yeah. So you're like the gateway

MENTOR7INT1:
INTERVIEWER CC

It’s really interesting. And then what you think happens during the mentoring process what happens to the young person. If anything. Do you think they change from the beginning to the end?

MENTOR7INT1:

From what I've seen Yes they do. Because I think that they've had someone there to be there for them and someone that they can that they can talk to. Maybe they would have got there anyway, but I think, it's difficult to say, I mean, I've seen with both my mentees them blossom over the process. But I don't really know. what has what's happened.

INTERVIEWER CC and when you say you see them blossom, can you tell me more about what you mean

MENTOR7INT1:

so with the with the guy obviously he used to talk to me like this to begin with, it was really really difficult. And it was very stilted, and short answers to questions and very limited. Yeah, and then slowly slowly, you could. I suppose it’s them getting comfortable with you as well, isn’t it. You don’t just meet someone and then reveal all do you, so yes slowly slowly he began to, Yeah, so it was with him, especially, it was me doing a lot of talking at the beginning and then slowly slowly, he was doing more and
more of the talking and bringing stuff and showing me things So that was really evident with him.

278 With the girl she was quite open. From the beginning, I think she just wanted some sort of outlet. So, I think in the beginning she was. She felt. I think unsure, and uncertain and then you know at the end she was like, she felt much more secure with her identity, who she was or is And having, okay with not having a plan for the future.

279 INTERVIEWER CC

280 Yes, she kind of realised that's not the end of the world. It was just really interesting so lots of young people are very shy. Do you think there's a difference between the young people who accept to be mentored and those who don't, then?

281 MENTOR7INT1:

282 No I don't think so because the guy was really really shy. But slowly slowly, but he wanted to. Yes, he wanted to do this

283 INTERVIEWER CC

284 so he kind of realised that it was holding him back.

285 MENTOR7INT1:

286 Yeah, definitely. So he wanted to do something about it so he was open to it.

287 INTERVIEWER CC
Yeah, so is that self awareness Do you think, he was aware that it was an issue

MENTOR7INT1:

Yes

INTERVIEWER CC

Whereas other young people may be, you know, they, They're shy, they don't realise it. Yeah. So, do you think you know as a result of mentoring, that mentees have experience any difference in their relations with their families at all, or with their friends.

MENTOR7INT1:

I think with boy yeah he, he was able to make friends, he was able to approach people, and therefore initiate that conversation and he wasn't afraid to do that, whereas he was before. And I think the problem was that his father wanted him to be something he wasn't because he was, he was, he described himself as a, as a nerd, or a geek. So he liked his computer games he liked his science, but I think his dad wanted him to be outgoing and very social. But he was more, had his small group of friends and he was comfortable in that, he was black belt in karate Taekwondo I think. So he had that. So, I think he was comfortable, but I think that his dad wanted him to be somebody else. So I don't think I don't know whether the, the mentoring had an impact on his family life.

I know with the girl obviously things improved with her brother. So yeah, that was that, yes, definitely an improvement and things were fine with her parents, anyway.. And friends as well. She was fine with friends mainly the brother her brother.
INTERVIEWER CC

And that was the boy, it was making more friends

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah, yeah,

INTERVIEWER CC

And then, and, you know, do you think the mentoring had any impact on how they did at school – but only one was in school.

MENTOR7INT1:

Well she had finished she was taking gap year because she didn't want to go to university. And then with, with the guy. Did it have an impact on how? I'm not sure, because he had the tutoring as well, right so I'm not sure. And he didn't get into his first choice of university, but he was happy with where he ended up at Nottingham (laughs).

INTERVIEWER CC

So maybe his issues at school were with friendships and that did help him approach people at school do you think?

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah I think Yeah.
And then did it improve their connections with the local community at all. Did you introduce them to things or

MENTOR7INT1:

the, the boy he. So, he said he had I don’t know, Judo or some sort of martial art. And he, he then was offered not a job, but he was asked if he would like to teach the younger boys or children. And then, he, he said he wasn't sure at first, and it was a judging of competition as well, so he wasn't sure about it at first and I said why not. What have you got to lose? So, we just talked about it, and then because initially he wasn’t he wasn’t going to do it, but then he did do it.

INTERVIEWER CC

Was he glad he did it?

MENTOR7INT1:

he loved it.

INTERVIEWER CC

And then did they increase their skills or abilities in any area so you talked about more confidence, and the timekeeping. Anything else.

MENTOR7INT1:

And, yeah, he was yeah timekeeping, and focus focus. Yeah, one of the things he couldn’t do was focus on his studies for long enough. So we looked. We talked about his
setup at home, what's going on, what are you getting distracted by. So we talked about
techniques of, you know, taking distractions away. and having that time where you focus
on your studies, but then having time to either play games or go outside and do some
martial arts or whatever, you know, sort of work life balance but you know what I mean.

320: INTERVIEWER CC

321: Do you think it increased the kind of number of people they would turn to for
support, did it improve their kind of network of relationships at all?

322: MENTOR7INT1:

323: I think with the guy, I think he had his network and I don’t think immediately it
would have, but I think going to university, he would have been equipped with the skills,
and I would love to know how he's getting on there, to more easily make friends, and
socialise. So I didn't see evidence of that but i think i i’m hoping that that would have
helped him.

324: INTERVIEWER CC

325: And then what do you think, did the mentoring make him more likely to try and
find someone to help I think young people quite often feel like I've got a problem. No
one can help me. Do you think it kind of opened his eyes, or opened either of their eyes
to know that there is help out there.

326: MENTOR7INT1:
I think so but I think more importantly, I think they would be more willing to help themselves. So with the guy, he would now. I think he would go and join social groups at university, and things like that, with the, with the girl. She I think she would be willing to seek support. And if. Yeah. I think she would be very open to that. But she would again find it herself. I think Yep, yep.

INTERVIEWER CC

And so do you, do you think that made them feel different did mentoring alter the way they thought about themselves at all. And if so, in what way,

MENTOR7INT1:

Yes. I think with a boy, I think he. I don't know, like, I think he felt that it was okay to be him. He didn't have to be someone somebody else wanted him to be. And I think that's important that it's okay to be yourself

INTERVIEWER CC

and you're fine as yourself.

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah, absolutely. So I think that's important. Yeah, so especially, especially with the girl, she had that identity issue. So, I think she went on. She went on various with her Hare Krishna Group. What do you call it like retreat? Something like that. Okay, yeah, that was that was good. She was organising. She was supposed to go to Israel to do. They have a thing for young people where they can go out and learn about their culture, I
obviously that was after the mentoring process. But I think that she. She. I think the
process helped her to be more content with who she is. And that she didn't have to be
labelled this way or that. Just, you know, I think she's, she's lucky that she's got Jewish
heritage Irish heritage, and then she's got the Hare Krishna, which is a great community.
So she's got friends from all different areas and communities.

INTERVIEWER CC

can benefit from Yeah, yeah, all of those Yeah, that was really amazing. So, the final
ting thing is the evidence of change that you've seen. You might feel we've kind of covered
that, the blossoming, any, any other evidence of change as a result of mentoring?

MENTOR7INT1:

I think that they would they would show me things, you know, so the guy he would
show me his artwork, and he would be keen to show me and it's like, I don't think he
perhaps had never shown anyone his artwork before.

INTERVIEWER CC

Not his parents?

MENTOR7INT1:

he didn't need to talk to them at, he. Yeah, he talked to me but he didn't talk to
them. Yeah, because one of the things was that that he would always just be wearing his
headphones. So even if he went down to the kitchen. He would just be wearing his
headphones and he wouldn't talk to them. So they, I probably saw a completely different side to him that what his parents saw.

344 INTERVIEWER CC

345 Right okay so they brought and they shared it yet with you. They knew they knew that you'd be interested.

346 MENTOR7INT1:

347 Yeah.

348 INTERVIEWER CC

349 And they were expecting some feedback from you or validation or?

350 MENTOR7INT1:

351 I don't even think it was that I think it was sharing and sharing and knowing I would be happy for them. I think they were proud with what they had done and what they had achieved. So, you know, with the girl. I did mock interviews with her. So, we did that process, and then she went for an interview. And so the first mock question is, tell me about yourself. And she struggled with that, but because we had practised it. She was like, first question he asked was, tell me about yourself, and she goes, I had the answer prepared! it's just like such a simple little thing. but just sort of being proud and just sharing that I think. And knowing that I'd be happy for them. I think that that Yeah,

352 INTERVIEWER CC

399
which is. Yeah, something you would normally expect to do your parents isn't it but not in this circumstance, yeah for whatever reason. Yeah, or with anybody.

MENTOR7INT1:

The girl's parents were quite good. But, I don't know. Perhaps I mean, they run a charity and that sort of thing so they were busy so maybe she didn't get that time with them.

INTERVIEWER CC

And she must have really respected, your opinion as well she wanted your good view of if she was something she wants to share it with you.

MENTOR7INT1:

That was yeah really really nice.

INTERVIEWER CC

And then just finally for the ones that didn't work out, do you have a view on why. One was because he just definitely didn't want to be there

MENTOR7INT1:

His parents, he said, because I tried and tried. Emma said to me, I think we need to call it a day. I said Let me just try once more. And, and so I met with him, and I just said, Are you gaining anything from this. And he said, No, not really. I said, , why are you doing this? because, if I don't do this to my parents will make me do something else. So,
but I think that with him, he had obviously I'm not medical but there was some other underlying issue I don't know whether depression, because he just had a very negative outlook on life and it was kind of like, what's the point of doing that because it's not gonna work out anyway so yeah that kind of. I don't know if he needed like cognitive behavioural therapy or, I don't know.

1364. With The first, with the young girl 13, she, um, I think that she liked the idea of it., but she wasn't engaged in the process because she would get her mom to call me, and yeah she just didn't

1365. INTERVIEWER CC

1366. Put herself out.

1367. MENTOR7INT1:

1368. Yes. And the second one I only saw once. And, again, she was very chatty, seemed to want to do it but then when push came to shove. She always asked but actually I went to meet her. She didn't show up and I put in a phone to her and she didn’t answer her phone. And then I think [coordinator 1], or [coordinator 2] phoned her. She never responded.

1369. INTERVIEWER CC

1370. no, brilliant. Okay, well thank you very much indeed. That's really, really interesting, and so what I tend to do is I kind of look through what you said and I analyse
it, and then I'd come back to you and say this is what I think you're saying is that, do you agree and if you want to add or take away. Would that be okay.

MENTOR7INT1:

Yeah, do you do that in writing.

INTERVIEWER CC

Um, no, usually just another chat so I'll say you know these are the things.

MENTOR7INT1:

Oh, is it a second interview?

INTERVIEWER CC yeah yeah

MENTOR7INT1:

Fine, fine, yeah, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER CC

That would be great. And the other thing is I don't know how you feel about this. So, what would be really nice. Have you got a mentee at the moment?

MENTOR7INT1:

no no
right you're between mentees,

what happened was I finished with that one and then I've got, our director of teaching and learning left. So, I've been, I've been doing that role. That's why it's been so crazy normally I'm on it. But it's been so I've basically been thrown in at the deep end and I've still got a full teaching load. So that's why I said to [coordinator] If it's possible, can I not have anyone assigned until end of March.

Well now yeah I was gonna say was, what is quite interesting is that people keep a diary before and after a mentoring session so how they kind of feel beforehand and, yeah, how they feel afterwards. And that's been really interesting but if you've not got a mentee at the moment then. But if you were to get one in it's before sessions just come just jotting down beforehand you know with you're feeling nervous or excited or whatever and then how you feel afterwards.

That's like a technique we use for mediation. So the people and the debrief afterwards.

And people record it do they?
MENTOR7INT1:

It's just a personal thing where you just write down okay how am I feeling. Yeah. And then at the end you say okay, how did that go What would I change, what would I change next time. it's just for yourself.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, because as I've said not not many people have been able to do on but it is really, you forget how you feel beforehand. Once you've. Once you've done it. But yeah,

MENTOR7INT1:

I guess it depends on what stage is because I think at the beginning you feel a little bit, maybe nervous because you don’t know that person so well but then I find actually once you get to know them and you settle into a routine, you kind of look forward. I look forward to seeing my mentees and seeing what they've been up to in the week, so I gain as much. I think from it, it is not a one-sided thing.

I don't know if you want to see a text message. I don't know, are you allowed to? from my mentee, because it just maybe helps. She said when I left school, I really didn’t know what to do as I felt so overwhelmed with the future. However, you helped me to construct a first step to honour what I was feeling and to find other ways around my problems. I left school knowing a little about CVs and interviews in theory, but you helped me put it into practice. That was the main reason I even got my first job. Thank
you for helping me with my relationship with my brother and helping me to see that I
can't change people, but I can change how they affect me. And then, yeah.

\[400\]: INTERVIEWER CC

\[401\]: Wow that, yes,

\[402\]: MENTOR7INT1:

\[403\]: She said her employer’s extended her work, I’m going on with life drawing lessons
after work, I meet nice people at the Comic Book meet up, and my friends are coming
together so she’s getting on with her friends. She said, I’ve learned so much from you
and I’ll keep on growing. That’s nice isn’t it

\[404\]: INTERVIEWER CC

\[405\]: yeah and to have done all that in six months is extraordinary.

\[406\]: MENTOR7INT1:

\[407\]: Well, I think it was her, it was her. She was so enthusiastic, it was her.

\[408\]: INTERVIEWER CC

So it kind of just unleashed something

\[409\]: MENTOR7INT1:

\[410\]: Yeah, exactly
so it was kind of there,

I think so. she just needed someone to, I don't know what it was but kind of put her in touch with it or

Yeah or just show her the way maybe or just, I don't know, give her confidence.

Yeah. Yes, that she could do those things maybe Yeah, yeah, that it was possible, or you showed her the steps to make it possible.

I don't know what it was but Yeah, so that was really nice

Brilliant. Oh, thank you very much that's really, that's really inspiring.
just because I have that flexibility in my role in that. I work from home. I tend to work from home to one to two days a week. So I think it’s just convenient for me to do that is, I suppose in the past my, my visit most I’ve met my mentees in [B]. Yeah, it’s easy for me to go from here. I mean, I been straight for work, to meet them. However, I get, I get afraid if I’m going to be caught up in something yeah delay, and so on and I don’t want to do that. I don’t want to be late or. Yeah. No, I think that’s important to me that that I’m there for them and that I’m really not. Yeah, I see that they can rely on the fact that I’m going to be there.

So you kind of arrange your week to make sure you can accommodate being at home for when the when you're? that's really interesting. so this this is the idea that, you know, what they write down initially on the form isn't necessarily what you end up talking to them about or working on. So, what, what is it that helps that happen. Do you think in mentoring?
That kind of other areas can be uncovered I don't think they come out straight away. Yeah, yeah. I think it's a good place to start the conversation. Yeah. Okay, so on your form you wrote this, but I want to know what what are your thoughts Now tell me, I suppose, we'll start the conversation like that but normally it's a few weeks down the line where you kind of, you know, one another, a bit better. Well I think issues and true goals. Yeah.

These issues and goals were always there they just didn't want to see them, or do you think the process of mentoring helps to uncover them or both or something else.

That's a really good question. I think. I think it's the mentoring process. That helps them to tease out, I figure, you know, the way that we're taught to question. You know, and probe and explore things further. Yeah. Perhaps this is just like a not a higher objective but, like, an issue but actually there's something not very behind that. Yeah, so I think it's the mentoring process and the questioning process that uses that. Yeah, that's really interesting.

So, and then another interesting thing that you said what I talked about, you know, Is it like any other relationship, and you said. Obviously, there isn't this relationship in their life. Otherwise why would they be doing mentoring and thinking so if that
relationship doesn't currently exist and mentioned fulfils it what happens when that relationship goes away, is it does it cause problems.

MENTOR7INT2

I don't, I don't think so, yeah, I think the way that I see is that we're mentoring them. Yeah, to help them to help themselves. Yeah. By the time the process is finished. Hopefully we will equip them with the tools and techniques or the knowledge. Yeah, for them, then take that forward, and it might not be forever but it might just be for that instance or that next chapter in their life. Yep.

INTERVIEWER CC

Brilliant they don't think once it's there's no harm in it being withdrawn because that withdrawal comes at a time when they're ready for it.

MENTOR7INT2

Yes, I think so and I think it could potentially do more harm, not harm. But yes, they think that come to rely on you I think they know from the beginning okay the maximum period that this relationship is going to be six months. So I think that's good. And I think it's good that they don't, they don't rely on you. Yep, yep.

INTERVIEWER CC

They come in. And then you were talking about the chap that you mentored. The one whose small talk wasn't very good and you gave him. You said little techniques for initiating conversations and things like that. Do you, do you think you were kind of
enhancing skills that he had already, or were you introducing skills that he hadn't got already or something else.

23: MENTOR7INT2

24: And I think a little bit of both. Fair, the skills were already there. Yeah, it's giving them the confidence to act, man. I think I think that, in his case he knew what he had to do. but he just wasn't able to do it. Yeah, and just give him giving him that confidence to do it and also I didn't we came up with the little tasks and techniques together. Okay. What would you like to achieve for next week. Yeah. So he might say, Oh, I'd like to have started a conversation or said hello to this person or whatever it is, email, so rather than me saying to him. Do this, it was kind of coming up with it together.

25: INTERVIEWER CC

26: That's really interesting. It was almost like setting him goals was it then for each week.

27: MENTOR7INT2

28: Yeah, or he or he do you agree to go. Yes. Yeah, yeah, it was what yeah what would you like to achieve for next week. Yeah. Oh no, whatever it is.

29: INTERVIEWER CC

30: So he he kind of, yeah he said he went at the pace he wanted to, then

31: MENTOR7INT2
I think so. I think I would never, I would never put, I don’t think it’s helpful to push, make them do anything they have to do in their own time and if not with him so much but this the last one only saw him a few times. You know I try to get. You know he would set a goal, and then he wouldn’t achieve it and then we’ll talk about okay why he so so I think it’s quite good to explore that.

INTERVIEWER CC

then talking about the young woman that you mentored. And you know what’s the difference that made to her relationship with her brother. And you said. Hopefully I speeded up the process of improving that relationship. And did you get any sense of whether that would have happened anyway or do you think, you know, the mentoring process or you as a mentor. Did something that wouldn’t have happened otherwise, it might be very hard to tell?

MENTOR7INT2

Yeah, I think No, she absolutely despised him at first. And so she was just closed off to any, any, any route for trying to recover the relationship or trying to mend it. So I just, I think, I think. I think we discussed about not being able to control the behaviour and I think that conversation helped, because it made her look at things in a different light.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah. But she brought it to you as an issue, though, yes yeah yeah yeah she although she despised him and she you know she couldn’t see any way forward. It was something that she was worried about what she wanted to change. And
I don't know if it was explicitly mentioned, but I knew that his actions his behaviour was making her angry. Yeah. And that's weeks, so I think that's how we approached it is from the fact that, you know, why was she angry. Yeah. You know she was angry because it was, she was, she was upset with the impact on her parents. kind of taking responsibility for that. And we just looked at responsibility, you know whose responsibility is it, you know. Is it her responsibility or is it her parents responsibility. And so we were just having a general discussion about that. And, yeah, there was no no explicit mention of mending the relationship but I think that just came about things differently. Pretty quickly

she, so she came at it from a like an anger point of view, yeah how it presented itself. And then I thought, well, I just thought it was really helpful what you've done. So you talked about she wants to build up a portfolio, and although you hadn't ever done that kind of thing you helped her do it by thinking through what she might need. Yeah. So, and I see well there's a basic kind of transferable skills on a that you've that you've used. It's both skills that you have that you've transferred to her but also skills that she's sorry it's just it's just like a comment but it seems interesting but it's also skills that you've given her she'll be able to use in other contexts
and also just by asking her okay so what do you need. Yeah. What does what makes up our portfolio, what do you need, what do you need to show. Yeah, I suppose, helped me to look to understand what she needed to do but helped her to kind of consolidate her sort of knowledge about it and what your understanding of what she had to do. And then, and then it would be things like, I don't know she would say. So I was like okay so what do you want to have done for your portfolio for next week so it might be going out and take some photographs of flowers, so she can she can start the process of because you think you'd have to do like a pencil drawing and then a painting and that sort of thing so that evolution of that piece of art, where I yeah. So, we were talking with, you know, so I think what I think what helped was that I broke down process for her. That's really easy it's a small and manageable parts yeah that I think that's helpful. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER CC

For something that seemed overwhelming and achievable. She suddenly thought. In fact, I could do this.

MENTOR7INT2

Yeah, we just broke it down into steps. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER CC

Oh yeah, that was another interesting idea that you mentioned. So this idea, as I know that you know mentees, it comes over clear loud and clear and they have to want
to be there, they have to be engaged and, needing to be willing to learn and to engage in the process. Yeah, as anything else you wanted to say on that idea.

53: MENTOR7INT2

54: I know just that I think I suppose we emphasise that it's a really, really important. I think it's really important because you've. If you can't show that you're willing to learn. Yeah. Then how can you expect them to to display that quality.

55: INTERVIEWER CC

56: Yeah. So this role modelling, right there.

57: MENTOR7INT2

58: Again, is it. Yeah, I guess

59: INTERVIEWER CC

60: so that you, you're kind of modelling, you're learning from them and benefiting from it in the way that they can learn from you and benefit from maybe.

61: MENTOR7INT2

62: Yeah, yeah, no, absolutely, absolutely.

63: INTERVIEWER CC

64: Oh yeah and then this in, I think, and then we discussed this idea of, you know, when one goes into mentoring you think it’s going to be like this and this is going to
happen and you know you're going to get the answers and it's nothing like that. It's about thinking out of control, and how that can actually be quite scary and how. Yeah. That is really unusual for an adult child relationship isn't it.

**MENTOR7INT2**

**INTERVIEWER CC**

Absolutely. But I've learned that it's important because if you don't, if you don't let go. If you don't allow. If you don't follow their lead, then you're not doing them any good. You're, you're doing things for you and not for them.

**MENTOR7INT2**

Because you're following your agenda.

**MENTOR7INT2**

Yeah, what your model of mentoring is all right. Not that I have a model.

**INTERVIEWER CC**

No you think it's I think it's that thing you think you're going to be the expert, and they're going to be Yeah, yeah. Kind of lap up your words of wisdom.

**MENTOR7INT2**

Exactly. And that's the thing is you want to do right by them, because it's so important, you're so important in their life in that moment in time. You might be the only person that they're talking to. So you, you want to do your best for them. You don't have them to any negative. You don't have a negative impact on them. Yeah. Yeah.
And then yeah and then, so that was the issue of time management with one of your mentees. And you said she had dyslexia so she needed to what helped her with being able to visualise everything in one. So did that. Again, did she present that to you as an issue, did you tease it out, did, how, how did you learn that she had seen, things like that.

Um, because one of her concerns was that she had this gap year. And she was worried that she would just waste that time just sleeping, and not doing very much. So, so we took that's how the issue of time management came up. And, and then we just talked about different methods for managing your time, and that's when she said, I need to be able to see everything so she puts things up on her board. And then I think recently I've done a mind mind mapping course.

Yeah, and I said all you could use mind mapping to, to manage your time, which she, she really enjoyed, you know, getting, she's, she obviously it's just she has that art arts background right yeah your tip pens out and, you know, it appeals to the creative side of her. Yeah.

Yeah. So, so, you know, she says teasing out as you say that you know that prism is one of the prime reason she has problems timetabling because of how she needs to visualise things, it was only by you really delving into it that you found out.
But you didn’t know, and in the end she stopped because I said to her well I use my calendar on my phone which I can sync up with my email, everything. And she said, Oh no, I can’t do that because I need to see it all there and then in the end, she did use her calendar. So reaches so heard before seeing everything at being able to see everything at the same time, I kind of disappeared.

Oh, interesting. Yeah, so that was so she was just like uh trying something new.

Yeah. Yeah, new solution. Okay. Oh, yeah. And then again, this is another interesting thought, and so we’re talking about. So mentees need to bring an open mind, benefit from mentoring. And he said, he went to explore, to try things and to have positive and negative experiences and see what works. And then something might work. Nothing works for everyone, you have to try different things. And then there’s this idea about not being afraid of having a negative experience so I wondered what what kind of thing you’ve thought of by a negative experience, what might happen.

And I don’t think it’s negative as such. I think it would be more about, it’s, I think, I come from that trial and error. Yeah, it’s about being confident to try things out and and
acknowledging that not everything will always work out. Yeah, where you perhaps want it will be the best thing for you. And that's okay. If there was any negative kind of experience as such.

Then what kind of getting good job engineers or have they tried out anything that hasn't quite kind of gone according to plan, but it's been okay.

Not that I can think of the to the last one, he, he tried. Well, he, he said that he tried to initiate conversation with his classmates but just couldn't he lost, he lost the portal and can do it. And then, but then after that the mentoring process ended so I wasn’t able to explore that any further.

right okay so thinking you know what, what then are you able to do because you know when you when you've tried something it doesn't quite go right, and you've been quite brave to do it that's that's quite tough. I wonder what how you'd kind of pick them up from that or how you can help them learn that actually it doesn't matter.

I think I would just sort of explore, you know what, what they think. Yeah, suppose. Went, went wrong, shall we say, yeah, and what they would have done differently. Yeah, they could do it over again. And then I would try and get them to quickly move on and say okay so that's happened now let's park it. Yo, what can we do next. Because I think you know those. That was the tough thing about being young especially now is somehow
you're not allowed to ever make a mistake or get it wrong. And it does take quite a lot of bravery to try something new.

96: INTERVIEWER CC

97: That’s what mentoring is find to make you do so it's I wondered how you kind of lifted them, you know, lifted them up after they've had that experience to make sure they will try again. but that sounds like. Yes, and then we got on to respect, and the importance of respect. Being a two way thing that you have to respect each other, and other bits you talked about respect in terms of timing and communication. Does respect cover things other than your behaviour, do you think or is it mostly about behaviour.

98: MENTOR7INT2

99: I think he's just applies to everything really doesn't it respect in in everything that you do. Being aware of others. Yeah, and putting trying to empathise with others as well.

100: INTERVIEWER CC

101: Do you, I mean do you say it's a two way thing so do you think that's something that they would have anyway or something they develop.

102: MENTOR7INT2

103: I think I think he's more of a young person thing where, for example, one of my mentees, she got the internship, but she didn't want to tell her friends because she thought it would make them feel bad. And I just said, Well, how would, if, if it was if the
tables were turned How do you feel if your friend told you that? She would be really happy for them. So just being able to. I mean they're doing it for the right reasons. But, yeah, but it's just sort of getting them to try and see the other person's point of view. Yeah.

\[104: INTERVIEWER CC\]

\[105: Yes, and I suppose, seeing that is it is it seeing that other people are liking it rather than being something totally different. Other people are actually like you and however you react they, they're likely to react the same way.\]

\[106: MENTOR7INT2\]

\[107: Exactly, yeah,\]

\[108: INTERVIEWER CC\]

\[109: Right. And then, so then you've, you talked about. So we were talking about respect and you said you always messaged them the day before. Because you said a good quality role model is to lead by example. And if we could you could you tell me a bit more about how you think you know what what your role modelling as a mentor.\]

\[110: MENTOR7INT2\]

\[111: just kind of letting them know that it's okay to make mistakes, we're all human beings, we all learn, and, you know, if we don't try things, we won't learn. Um, yeah.\]

\[113: And I don't know I don't really difficult to kind of verbalise Yeah. Um,\]
I think, also, I think that when I talk about, um, I suppose. My background as well. I didn’t, I didn’t grow up or I didn’t go to a great school and so sometimes I think that that helps that they can perhaps relate to me in that. And perhaps, you know, I didn't have a great start, but I did okay actually. Yeah, so that I sort of aspiration, in that you don’t, you don’t have to pigeonhole yourself. Yeah, you can have aspirations and if you, if you work hard and you want it you can get there.

Yeah and I suppose he talks about it you know not having to be.

You can make mistakes that yes, you know you make mistakes you like but you still things have worked, you know, worked out well and you’ve done. Well, yeah, it’s like the right being there being who you are.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah. You are a role model. Just having kind of survived life. Yes. Is this really an interesting idea but yes as you say it’s hard to kind of conceptualise what

MENTOR7INT2

is really hard really hard.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yes. And then, we’re talking about matching. And you said you hadn’t been aware that you would equal try to match on personality as well as other things. And then you said, I’m a bit conflicted here because I meant to seem to have been matched quite well with me. And then I thought, quite a few mentors say that. And is it the matching
process or is it the type of personality that the mentor, is that you find things in common or a piece of things. I'm.

MENTOR7INT2

To be honest, I thought they match people just based on location so that's what I was down to, but I think for me, I don't know about the other mentors. But for me, I'm, I'm really interested in people. Yeah. I'm really interested in their stories in their lives. And so, I'm I, I'm happy to hear about different things. Also I'm myself as I'm a massive learner. So, if I can learn about something that's great, you know, I'll take a great interest in that. And yeah, so, I think I don't know if that's just part of the way that I am personality wise. I like people they're not interested in them. And so, I will always even if I haven't got a clue about anything, I'll always be able to ask questions and this sort of, they told me about that and tell me. So even with my other mentor he used what was it called. Oh, Pokemon Go, do you remember right I remember

INTERVIEWER CC

So he used to do all this pokemon gaming and I had no interest in it whatsoever. And then I was just like so what do you find fascinating about it What do you like and then he explained it. And I was like, I can see where you're coming from. So I think if you, if people tell you what they're why they're interested in it.

INTERVIEWER CC

I think that's interesting.
But I think it can be, you know, I think generally speaking mentors are interested in other people because I don’t, you know, I don’t think you’d do it unless you were.

Yeah, absolutely. I totally agree with you. But anyway, all you can speak about is from your own point of view. What you’re saying is, you are well matched but you would have found something to match on, come what may,

I think, so maybe also because I work with students all the time, and dare I say awkward computer science, boys. I’m so we’re trying to teach them communication skills and networking skills, so I have to as part of my role, be able to kind of tease that out of them so maybe it’s, it’s developed over time, maybe, I don’t know.

And then, yeah, you talked about, you know, even if you don’t know anything about what they’re telling you you know you can find out about her, you can look online you can go and talk to people. Again, do you do you find. Do you think that’s an attribute of mentors that they’re particularly able or interested in in doing that and finding out stuff for their mentees or maybe again you can just talk about yourself.

423
Yeah, no, I think, I think, um, You know when you look at the things that the other mentors have done like they've been really brave and I can't remember was it the skateboarding or something like that I can't remember what it was but

I'm always amazed he managed. His mentee was really into reptiles, even though he didn't like them. He took him to a reptile fanciers club.

Exactly, exactly. And I and I do think I think that's a mentor characteristic. Yeah, just being good at finding things to meet the needs of their. Yeah, doing research. that fat learning thing then isn't it.

Oh yes and then you said a lovely thing, you talked about, as I said, you know, had you had you seen any changes in person and you said you've seen both of them. Blossom over the process which I thought was a really lovely term. Can you can you explain a bit more about kind of what that looked like or what it was that made you feel they were blossoming.

I think it was just that in general. I don't know and that might be because obviously when you start out you're strangers. But just that sort of tense, perhaps, in some cases, angry, not necessarily at you but every circumstances. I'm sure. Yeah. And
you can physically see them relax you know their body language, um, and just smiling, more. Yeah. And I think the obvious thing is the talking more, you know when you start out I always find that I end up doing most of the talking at the beginning and then slowly over time, that changes, and then they end up doing most of the talking, which I think is great. and just being confident, I think the confidence thing, I don't know how you measure that. But, um, observe being more confident. Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER CC

Oh yeah and then I suppose that was, he, he touched on it with your other men to the one who was not good at small talk he, but it. So the mentee needs to want to do they need to want to change they need to be open. change, do you think.

MENTOR7INT2

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, because he was just there because his parents wanted him to do it. That was him.

You do kind of feel for the parents because it was kind of, you know, they would benefit so much but if they don't, if they can't see that in the home theatre.

And to be honest, there was nothing I tried everything ever needed. Maybe you should end it maybe you should try. And I, but then eventually I just thought, you know what, no matter why do this until he's, he's willing to engage it's not going to happen there's nothing I can do for him.

INTERVIEWER CC
Yeah, that's right.

MENTOR7INT2

And so again, I think with your with the chap, you, you mentor, you said one of the things was he couldn't focus on your studies for long enough and then he talked about how he did that, again, did he did he say to you, oh I find it really hard to concentrate or did that kind of come out of general discussion.

MENTOR7INT2

Yeah, no he said that to me right. Yeah, and he was quite open about it so I just said well so what what is. You know what is distracting you Hmm. And what can you do about it. So actually we tackled that within the first two weeks, because he knew exactly what was distracting him, and he knew exactly what he had to do to overcome that and he did it. So that's what I'm saying is that the things that they initially say aren't necessarily the things that are the issue.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yes, but how, but he knew what the problem was, what he needed to do and yet it took you to for it to happen.

MENTOR7INT2

Oh, and then and then you realise that this is this interesting thing about that, having been mentored mentees are more willing to help themselves. And I thought that
was really interesting. So are you saying that they get more of a sense of agency and control having had mentoring, and if so, why.

MENTOR7INT2

I don't know if it's control a search but I think it's the. Maybe the confidence to seek things out. Ask for help. Turn your knowledge. I think it's more that than right control, or maybe it's controlling I suppose it is controlling it because they're taking control of their.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, but they feel they can make a difference. Yes, to their to their outcomes. But presuming they didn't feel that before until. Yeah. How do you think, you know, if you've got any ideas why or how mentoring might, might do that.

MENTOR7INT2

I think sometimes it's just kind of showing them the way. Yeah, whatever that might mean, I think that's different for everyone here, but just sometimes you don't know where to go for help, or who to speak to. So I think it's just making them aware of that just providing, I see as a step up.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah. You know they they look to you for guidance, and then, and then, then you equip them with the skills and the confidence to then seek that guidance from elsewhere, as and when they need it.
And you kind of help them practice what it's like getting that help.

Yeah, yeah,

And it's nice. You said you know, I think she's lucky that she's got all that. Whereas, obviously to the young person before, that was a problem. And is it is it this idea of helping them to accept they're fine, who they are, being different is not, not necessarily a bad thing is, are any of those ideas explored?

I think it was more why she needed to feel. Um, she had to have an identity as such. Why did she feel she needed to belong to a particular group. So I think, I think it was more to do with that
MENTOR7INT2

Yeah, why is that important to you so just exploring that you know. Yeah, like, what, what, how would that make you feel, if you understood that, what would that mean to you?

INTERVIEWER CC

And then you talked about, so the chap who showed you his artwork, and he'd never shown it to anyone before and then we kind of had a bit of a discussion that he had never shown it to his parents. And so as I suppose I think this is something you've talked about already so if you are almost standing in for his parents at that point and, and that's withdrawn is, is that going to be a problem?

MENTOR7INT2

I would never think that we're standing in for parents. I think that would, might be a bit dangerous. And I even, I'll always ask, I think, how your parents or how are things going with your parents? I think his mom broke her ankle or something in between. So, you know, how's your mom. So, I would always keep them. If that's what they wanted if they said I really don't talk about my parents, then fine, and then, because with him he was going to university open days with his dad. so we would talk about that. So,

INTERVIEWER CC

okay, you see the role of kind of complementing every other relationship so that
200: Absolutely, absolutely.

201: INTERVIEWER CC

202: There's a school of thought that you know the mentor is the kind of quasi parent for a bit. But that's not how you see the role?

203: MENTOR7INT2

204: No, not at all.

205: INTERVIEWER CC

206: and then you talked about, the idea of sharing came up and sharing things with them. And I wondered and that was a concept I kind of hadn't come across before and what do you think sharing things with them, what does that do? So he's sharing his art with you. They bring you things to have a look at. And you're sharing and you're happy in their achievements, what, do you think that does?

207: MENTOR7INT2

208: I think it helps them. I think obviously it's different for each mentee but just the act of being able to share something with somebody, must be quite empowering for them, if they've never shared anything with somebody before. Then it must be empowering. And, they must feel vulnerable as well at the same time so I think it's important to show that interest and really engage with what they're. What they're showing you, and what they're telling you.
INTERVIEWER CC

So would that be an indication of a deep relationship do you think. Does it say something about your relationship?

MENTOR7INT2

I think for the guy. Yes, I think that was quite a big thing for him. I think with the girl she, I think she saw me. I think obviously they see us differently but I think she saw me as having quite a lot of knowledge in terms of the, like, CVS, interviewing so, I did that sort of stuff with her because I've got that experience. I could talk to her about it. because I work at uni I could talk to her about the university experience. So, I think she was that she saw that I had the knowledge and that's what she was kind of taking from that. But then again, she would show me her art portfolio and I think that was more of her character anyway.

INTERVIEWER CC

But she must have known that you would be very positive about it. Neither of them felt they were taking a massive risk in showing you.

MENTOR7INT2

No I don't think so because I am quite, I think, open and, I think it's about being non judgmental and embracing everything and that's very much my character, is it helpful to be judgmental?

INTERVIEWER CC
So I think it does say something about the relationship that you've had. So you talked about, you just felt like the mentoring just kind of unleashed something in them. And so the person who said you know he had it all there and he knew what he had to do he just couldn't do it what is it that's holding young people back from being able to do that?

I think for him in his case, he admitted that he was a little bit lazy sometimes. So he admitted that, but sometimes it's, and also I think it was that a lot of the case was that his parents, especially his dad, was telling him what to do. and I think he was rebelling against that. But I was never gonna, I never told him. This is what you need to do. I said okay so what are your distractions? What are you going to do about it? Not for one minute, am I saying okay so get rid of your music or don't turn music on while you're trying to study. I got him to make that decision. So, again, maybe it's what you said about the taking control of decisions and actions and allowing them to do it rather than telling them what to do.

So, yes, I was wondering if mentoring is just showing them that they can make those changes. Is it, is it kind of giving them permission or is it? I suppose it's that as you say it's that breaking it down into little steps.
Yeah. I think maybe it's empowering them. To take that control maybe I don't know, um, maybe they've been told, you know, do this, do that and they never had that opportunity to make decisions for themselves. I don't know.

INTERVIEWER CC

It's a kind of, you're giving them a space to kind of practice that skill. And then they can go away and try and see what the consequences are. And then you can come back and talk about it.

MENTOR7INT2

Exactly, exactly.

INTERVIEWER CC

And even if it isn't gone fantastically well, you're not going to judge them you're just going to talk about it calmly.

MENTOR7INT2

Yeah, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah. No, that's really great. Thank you.
Appendix I: Example Interview – Coordinator 1

Name: Interview 1  Coordinator 1

Description: First interview with mentoring coordinator

Created On: 02/01/2020 12:19:07

Created By: CJC

Classification: mentoring coordinators

1. Interview November 2018

2. Coordinator: The mentoring service at the local authority was set up 16 years ago. It started with Youth Connexions with the Personal advisers (PAs) who did 1:1 work with young people, mentors were additional support alongside the work of the PAs. It was lower level than now – where PAs had a young person that could do with a bit more support but not necessarily from a professional. Not sure where the idea came from.

3. Expanded from there. Restructure and moved to MyTime team alongside counselling and art therapy. Before was more focused on practical schoolwork and clubs but now focus on emotional wellbeing and referrals have changed over time as other services are under more pressure so mentoring is for a broader range of things. In youth Connexions, referrals from youth Connexions but when moved, referrals from anyone e.g. CAMHS who had finished working with young people but thought they had ongoing needs. They
would obviously have greater needs because they had been working with CAMHS issues
going to be different from the more universal services.

¶4: Interviewer: What has service achieved over 16 years?

Coordinator: Benefits to young people, alternative support that works really well for
some young people bonus is flexibility that lots of services can’t do – they are more rigid
in terms of time and support can offer. MyTime remained flexible can extend time to go
at their pace, remained young person focused hour a week completely for young people,
just there for young person no other agenda unlike school. They can talk about whatever
they turn up with. Mentors volunteers helps. Young people don’t see them as people in
authority or might come with an agenda, someone there for them, they’re the main
benefits of mentoring.

¶5: Do mentors address issues? What happens – do mentees bring problems that get
fixed?

Coordinator: If only that simple! Don’t come with clear idea, something suggested to
them. Might not feel comfortable to talk about what they really want to until further
into the relationship. Occasionally they come with a problem, and this can be addressed
someone to talk to. You can’t really quantify the value that they get from that.
Sometimes on feedback form they can identify areas that have improved because of a
mentor – help to feel more confident and positive influence someone there to
encourage them and point out the positives just help them along the way, they might
want to start something new, and mentor can give them the encouragement they need
to do that. A mentor can talk through with them what something will be like – they
might be starting a new school or college which can be very daunting. A mentor can talk through with them what it might be like be there alongside them through the transition which might just help them. Sometimes it is helping a situation not get any worse. We don’t always see an improvement and sometimes young people have very chaotic lives and sometimes we help prevent situations escalating.

Life cycle beginning and end but not a problem – feel they have moved on: in some cases it is easier to identify when a relationship should end. Usually mentors are good at telling us when they feel it is befriending and then question how useful it is. If meeting for chat, time to end. We don’t want to create dependencies with young people and it is a time bound service, we can’t be there for young people for years on end so I think we work with mentors to talk through ending. This is easier in some cases than others. If they spent lots of time of together and have really enjoyed it, mentor and mentee can feel sad about it ending so we try to manage that carefully.

Interviewer: What hasn’t worked so well – any things that tried and it didn’t work that well?

Coordinator: Obviously had to amend way do things. Biggest factor is young people’s willingness to engage. Challenge is size of county. Ideally coordinator would go to meet every young person who is referred but couldn’t do that – half a day for one young person so they rely on professional making referral and inputting to form. If not sure how much input young person has had to form, call young person directly and speak to them so hopefully a bit of filtering before we get to the first meeting because we don’t want to waste the mentor’s time if the young person doesn’t want to engage and are
being forced to be there. The way we are relying on professional to prepare young person. Sometimes more pressure put on young person to take part when they don’t really want to do it. That’s one of the challenges.

The other is the suitability of referrals – where we have got broad referral criteria make sure referrals are suitable eg explain to refers that low to mid-level support but that that means different things to different people. It is a lone working role out of hours so try to be mindful that is daunting for a mentor if a young person has a very chaotic life or turn up in a crisis and a mentor has to deal with it. We ask about risk factors eg serious self-harm or suicidal thoughts or a really unsettled home situation. We want to make sure they access the right support and then mentoring could come later. Doesn’t always happen – there have been cases that have not worked out because MyTime not the right service – which means don’t always get it right.

Interviewer: Referrals that didn’t work – is it around 30%?

Coordinator: MyTime filter out so success rate probably higher than that. Not properly analysed but because have filtering once you get to first meeting most go ahead to 3 meetings or more. It will usually progress. MyTime judge success anything over 3 meetings – even within 3 meetings they can decide they have made progress and don’t want to do it anymore.

Couple ideas that didn’t work out – lowered age range, initially from 13 and then asked to take younger and lowered it to 11 and then transition to secondary school and then feedback from mentors was that that was too young for the training they had had and the support they had. We encourage mentors to set goals even if vague goals but
trying to set goals with younger ones – befriending plus getting them to and from
meetings. At secondary school they can be a bit more independent. That was consistent
feedback so changed it so was from 11 and they needed to be at secondary school.

¶11: Targeted projects if get funding – funding through to work with Herts probation to
mentor young offenders – had to be recently released or on a referral order hardly had
any successes due to lack of contact difficult to keep in touch with young people and
having a lot of statutory professional support – if on referral order had to be seeing
youth offending worker or probation worker. I don’t think they saw the value of coming
to see a mentor as well.

¶12: A lot of people in their lives: in terms of other professional input if a young person
has been referred to lots of places at once, we suggest we hold off – if seeing counsellor
and mentor at same time is confusing. Have professional support first. MyTime tend to
be longer term intervention so make sense for this to follow on. This hasn’t really
worked for us starting at the same time.

¶13: Interviewer: how do you select and train mentors – any particular things you look
for or warning signs that you look for?

Coordinator: Obviously we interview them DBS checks and training the kind of things we
might turn people down for – sometimes application with barely any info if no taken
time to demonstrate how met person criteria – show they meet this in some way. Look
at availability if v limited eg to attend group review meetings if only an hour a week and
can’t be flexible commit to programme. At interview, passion, enthusiasm to work with
young people motivate and inspire them if got experience good but not essential an
awareness of boundaries. If people don’t work in sector we provide training but need to understand it is a professional relationship if they don’t show awareness of keeping boundaries in place – is it something they could work on at training or is it going to be too difficult for them? Same around self-disclosure – if wanting to use their negative life experiences to help young person – obviously people have had own experiences and might be reason for wanting to give back but if they are using that to help young person be therapy for them e.g someone been in prison or and wants to use that own experience to help young people not sure how helpful that is for young people on this programme to be drawing on your own experiences.

14: Interviewer: Does it happen that Mentees don’t turn up or mentors drop out?

Coordinator: We ask for minimum commitment of a year because each relationship 6-12 months. Retention rates pretty good - in past always kept it fairly steady at about 50 mentors each year about 10 new to replace people who have dropped out e.g when people take a break or leave it is usually through life circumstances or if reach particularly v busy time of your life volunteering has to be first to go, having babies, getting married, having jobs tends to be those reasons. We have had occasional ones where mentors have dropped off face of earth and not got in touch which is a shame that they don’t feel able to let us know because if they did we could put in place other support for young person. It is a bit embarrassing for us if a young person’s parent has to tell us that mentor isn’t turning up. At the last training we made it very clear to mentors and we have put in the agreement if you can’t follow through on your commitments, let MyTime know. MyTime know that life happens, and they are a team there to support. In
past coordinator has stepped in if the mentor has to take a break for a few sessions just so the young person has some kind of continuity.

Ch15: How do mentors and mentees know what to expect?

Coordinator: Hopefully the training. We consistently get feedback that the most helpful bit is hearing from existing mentors so we got at end of first day we got a mentor to talk and at the end of the second day we got a mentor and a mentee in to talk so that hopefully brings training to life and one thing that really helps with success is getting mentors up and running quickly after the training. It isn’t always possible, but coordinator thinks it does help to keep mentors motivation and enthusiasm up. It is frustrating when we don’t get a match and were promoting that we have mentors available, but the right referrals aren’t coming in the right areas. We are really keen to get the matching right and it sometimes means mentors have to wait a while and can lose a bit of interest that way which is a shame. 50 mentors and 100 mentees a year. This is going to increase to 75 mentors and 150 young people. Some relationships go on for longer, but some mentors work with 2 mentees at a time.

Ch16: Interviewer: How is training structured? Is it based on anything in particular?

Coordinator: Went on training course with Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (NCVO Mentoring and now). When she started she went on course about training mentors and she took quite a lot from that and also worked with external trainer for the first mentor training session.

Ch17: Interviewer: Is there any preparation for mentees?
Coordinator: MyTime has got a flyer and relies on professional to have conversation with young people and if we feel from the referral form there is a sense that maybe they have not inputted to referral form or perhaps they want help with something not within remit, would ring and talk to them over the phone. MyTime go along with mentor when they are new and have their first one that is quite daunting for the mentor.

118: Interviewer: What makes a successful mentor?

Coordinator: such a mix of people, matching is important because all the mentors have different approaches there is not one fixed approach we use our instinct for who is going to work best with each young person so wouldn’t say there was a set approach. Mentors need to be flexible to needs of young people. She thinks its just going with the flow of what the young people need, being there for the young people, not feeling they have to come with their agenda or put any pressure on, cos lot of mentors want to see progress which is great and they come with their ideas and everything but sometimes you’ve just got to slow down a little bit and be patient and go at the young person’s pace and that might mean not seeing a huge amount of progress but that is often what the young person needs - somebody to be there for them being patient.

119: Mentors need to share young person’s interest, show an interest in them as a person and take the time to get to know them cos each young person is so unique and fascinating having someone to share in their world is really important. Some mentors do more practical stuff, some are happy to sit chatting. Some like to go and play pool or kick a football round a park – there is no better way to do it just what works for that young person.
Do mentors need to have experience of working with young people?

– Coordinator: no not at all, such an interesting range of people they all bring something unique. If sit in group review meetings, such different day jobs. She wouldn’t say at all you need to have worked with young people.

Interviewer: What tend to be main issues?

Coordinator: Lot more about anxiety, seems to be the most common thing boys and girls. Confidence and self-esteem; anger most common ones. Bullying exam stress friendships family situations and just someone to talk to – do a lot of work with young carers might be parent or sibling that commands a lot of the parent’s time so the young carer might feel they don’t want to trouble their parent with their day to day worries that they don’t want to. How often do get 1 hour to talk about yourself for an hour – most people don’t get that time. Very valuable. The fact that young people turn up means they are getting something out of it but it does make it harder to quantify. We do get some lovely comments on feedback forms but it’s hard to demonstrate when every situation is so different. And success looks so different for each young person it has made evaluating the service a challenge.

Issues that wouldn’t consider where statutory services involved, self-harm if there is child protection issues currently being investigated there will probably be a social worker involved there is probably too much going on we wouldn’t blanket rule about what is or isn’t suitable with self-harm if they are receiving professional support or there has been no evidence of it recently we would not want the mentor to be the only person supporting that young person then it might be appropriate. We would have to really
consider if there has been aggressive behaviour especially if towards a professional we would have to put the safety of a mentor a priority if a young person had previous aggressive behaviour to a professional it probably wouldn’t be suitable. Obviously if it has been aggression in certain situations in the home directed towards family and certain situations have triggered it we would look at that and see what the risk to the mentor is. That would raise alarm bells.

¶25: Interviewer: Which areas mentoring helps the most?

Coordinator: All young people are different. Older young people will engage better. The younger ones harder to engage with. Get 11 year olds who are really grown up and engage well it depends on the young person. It is difficult to say. Confidence comes up a lot and something on evaluation forms that young people say they have gained from mentoring. There’s also things like the practical stuff getting organised.

¶26: Mentoring helps them see things from a different perspective: If they are arguing with their parents, a mentor can help them see from a teacher’s or parent’s perspective.

¶27: Case study: there was a young person with anxiety who was struggling to leave home and could only come with mum. They got on really well with mentoring. They used to meet at the end of the drive and at the end of a year they met further and further away. They managed to go to college by the end of the mentoring sessions – this was massive in the young person’s life.
There has been a recent increase in young people being home educated. They can feel very isolated, a mentor can help them find other ways of linking in with other people.

Relationships: mentors need to take time to get to know the young person, don’t rush in and try to solve problems, being there and listening, being patient, showing an interest and being flexible in how you work together, adapting and finding what works. They may be different 1:1 and having an adult who is positive with them. Relationships – the best ones work within 6 months and don’t go on for longer than they need. Otherwise it becomes befriending and dependency, the longer it goes on the harder it is to end. Endings then become really difficult. Even within 3 months you can achieve an amazing transformation and mentees can off-load.

Offer alternative and try to match with other support and other services. Not that common. Most people are really committed. They can tap into other services.

Interviewer: What is the extent of parental involvement?

Coordinator: If parent wants to come to first meeting to find out who their young person is going to meet, they explain confidentiality unless there are concerns. Ideally mentor and mentee organise meetings themselves but sometimes they need to involve parents. Parent has minimal involvement – it is time for the young person not someone else to nag them. It is usually a positive relationship parents supportive and explain what could.
Parents are usually welcoming of extra support – the fact that the reference comes from a professional is usually seen as a good thing. The young person might have a social worker – it varies – referral may come via school or family worker or counselling – not too much overlap as counselling comes to an end, young person could have mentoring.

Local authority can be invited to Team around the family meetings – where services meet together – the young person has a choice of whether they want their mentor there or not – mentors can get a set of copies of the notes; database if get contacted by social worker, the mentor can see this on an individual basis.

Interviewer: How does MyTime relate to Youth work –

Coordinator: MyTime is part of counselling. Youth work is now Youth Connexions YC – they can make referrals to mentoring but are separate. If a young person starts at a new youth club, the youth worker might go with them. Mentoring used to sit within Youth Connexions. MyTime has worked with Youth Connexions to set up an employer mentoring scheme in schools.

Mentoring is well valued within local authority. There is a commitment to fund it. MyTime is grateful for the funding. Local authority has the best interests of young people at heart – there is commitment from local authority and it is a good value intervention – it is low cost and can be used in so many different ways and by so many different services. It has the support of service managers.

Interviewer: How is MyTime evaluated?
**Coordinator:** They commissioned and used the Wen web tool which has been validated. There were a range of evaluation options but some needed training. The wenweb tool was all positive statements and was validated for the age range. It needs a big enough sample – a 100+ - to be validated – sets – middle and end. Coordinator will carry out another evaluation in the next 6 months.

¶37: Youth Connexions has funding for its programme and outcomes will be evaluated through STAR.

**Name:** Interview 2 Mentoring Coordinator 2

**Created On:** 02/01/2020 12:18:39

**Created By:** CJC

**Classification:** mentoring coordinators

1. Interview 2 mentoring coordinator

2. 8 June 2019

3. [Discussing tools for measuring the effectiveness of mentoring]

4. INT2COORDINATOR1

5. We’ve been through various tools and various ideas. And when I first started, we had like a networking event where mentors came together and talked about what they felt would be useful. And we discussed the idea of some sort of goal setting tool. And I think the general consensus was just that it is so broad what young people want to get out of
our mentoring, it's not got one specific goal. And a lot of young people don't know what
their goal is, it's often not very clear. Or perhaps what they set out wanting to achieve
doesn't end up being what they want to achieve. And you know, things change for them
and they end up getting something very different out of the mentoring. So what we did
as a result of that was we put together a sort of a package of different tools that the
mentors could use. And the idea was they could pick and choose some sort of
monitoring form. And then as you know, a few years ago, we decided to standardize it a
bit more and then go for that Wen webs form that we use. So yeah, we've been through
various ideas.

6. CC

7. That works for you and us. Yeah, yeah.

8. INT2COORDINATOR1

9. And we are now looking at the Outcomes Star, just because for the young carer’s
projects, they have to use that. There’s one called the Shooting Star, which they’ve
asked us to use. So we'll probably have to use that with young carers that get referred..
And it looks, you know, looks good. It’s quite a good tool, quite visual. It was the cost
that put us off but you know, the licenses have been included in there, in the funding. So
we'll see how it goes with the young carers. And that that might be something if it works
well, we might look to use that instead of the Wen webs. And yeah, I think it’s nice. It's
quite a visual tool. The shooting star one, the results are a bit more visual. But the Wen
webs one, a lot of mentors say that it generates some good discussion. And certainly, if
they feel they're a bit stuck, or they need a bit of help to kind of steer the direction of mentoring, it can be really good conversation starter.

10: INTERVIEWER CC

11: I think, I think anything that you can both look at together does seem to generate discussion. Just having something to discuss together really just helps generate conversations and opinions.

12: INT2COORDINATOR1

13: So it would be interesting to know what tools [online mentoring] are using?

14: INTERVIEWER CC

15: It's, so it's literally an online, it's like a forum? And you have online mentoring sessions, but it's done, you type it in?

16: INT2COORDINATOR1

17: Yeah, I mean, in terms of their goal based evaluation.

18: INTERVIEWER CC

19: Oh, I see. And so it was just the chap that I was talking to, he said, this is what they were because he was talking about evaluation as well, and how you evaluate whether it's successful? And he said, you know, the thinking at the moment was this goal based outcome measures is the way to go. He didn't kind of specify what tool it was. It sounds like it's an approach. It's quite simple. And you...
I did talk exactly like you did about what I said, you know, young people don’t seem to know what they want. And he was talking about goal setting for very young people. But also, and I said, you know, goals change. He said that it can be accommodated. So it just sounded like, yes, it was some kind of a tool where you, you thought about the kinds of goal and then you classified it just very broadly. And then some kind of measuring how close they were to achieving that. And that was one way you could evaluate, evaluate the successfulness of your project. So I haven’t looked into it at all. I mean, you talked to on Thursday, but if I do any research into it, and there's anything in there that comes out that is interesting, I'll certainly let you know. Yeah, obviously every sort of service like this has, you know, it is effective, but how do you how do you show it is effective? So if he's trying to address the same issue, and they found a solution to it, it’s interesting to learn from other people, isn’t it?

So it would be useful to know if they have found something that works for them. It's not dissimilar to what we do.

We certainly recommend it to young people

Yes, I think it’s nice that they really like that complete anonymity.
And then it’s anytime, it’s there when they need it.

Yeah, when they need. And it can be in if you have to wait a little while to have a face-to-face mentoring, it is something that you can do in the meantime if there’s an immediate crisis, then you can help young person with that. And then longer term, they can be referred to other things. Yes, that was that was very interesting. Yeah. So I just thought I’d mention that. But the thing, there's kind of two very interrelated aspects that you talked about last time, I’d be interested in finding out more about, and one is this whole idea of matching and how important that is. And kind of what the impact of matching is on relationships. Because I was sort of thinking, well, the relationship is everything. But then seeing that you can do online mentoring as well, where it must be much harder to build up relationship by words. And that seems to work too. So that was kind of what’s made me think about the relationship.

Interesting. Yeah.

So you said you know, you spent a long time thinking about matching young people and mentors? Are you able to tell me a bit more about what kind of aspects you look at? When you’re matching, what are you matching for?
Largely it's location for us because it covers such a big area, location is the biggest factor. The first thing we look at is what area? It’ll be interesting, we're just doing this project in B. County where most well, all of the mentors are from B. County and all the referrals are from B. County, so that won't be such a constraint, we can look at personality a lot more. Whereas it might be we only have one or two mentors in an area. And so it's Yeah, it's who've we got in the right area is the biggest factor. And we've asked, obviously, availability as well. But most young people are fairly flexible and most of them want to meet in the evenings. And that’s what most mentors’ availability is. So that's not a huge issue. We ask the young person if they prefer male or female mentor, and then I usually talk to the referrer and get a feel for personality, right is there anything they feel that's particularly important, and I'd say instincts then is, is you just get a feel for who you think would be a good match. And that's when I might ask if there's somebody who I think they would be really good. I might ask a mentor to travel a bit further. For example, in that group review meeting, [Mentor X’s] one is not local to him, right, but we just thought he would be really good. And he said he travel, he agreed to travel a bit further than we’d normally ask. So I just think sometimes it's worth asking, because you just think somebody be a good match.

INTERVIEWER:CC

So that's a personality type?

INT2COORDINATOR1

Yeah. And I’d just I would say [Coordinator’s] really good at instinct, right? If I’m, if I’m not sure, then I’ll always run it by her and she says, You know, I think give so and so a
go, that's good where there's been three of us in the team, we've been able to have a
discussion about it and see who each think would be a good match. And, yeah,
sometimes it's something as you know, it's something as simple as if they support the
same football team. Well, if that's what gets a young person chatting, then that's great.

43: INTERVIEWER CC

44: And so having yet having things in common, I think you said with me today,
swimming, so just little triggers?

45: INT2COORDINATOR1

46: Or, I mean, this is really broadly speaking, but you sometimes have sort of a kind of
categories of mentees, where you might have more challenging ones, or you're more
sort of shy and withdrawn ones. And there's sometimes different mentors,
personalities, who got some mentors that like the more challenging cases and, and
others that you just know, work better with sort of, you know, ones that they can maybe
take a more sort of gentle approach with, so the mentor’s personality as well as who you
think they would enjoy working with. Sometimes mentors have told us if they would
prefer working with boys or girls or, you know, one mentor told us he’d particularly like
to work with young black males. And that’s helpful to know. So you might take into
account ethnicity.

47: INTERVIEWER CC

48: Does it tend to be male to male, female to female? Or is that?
Normally, but not always. We’ve just matched a male mentor with a girl who said she didn’t mind and he happens to be available. I said, would you mind a male mentor? And she said, that’s fine. And they’ve got on really well. We’ve had a mentor in the past did query how it would be perceived if friends of the parents or something spotted them in a cafe and saw a teenage girl with an older male.

But, the parents know, do they know? Well? Yes. Yes. Okay. So do you think, in order for mentoring to work, do people have a very strong relationship? How important do you think the matching is to making it successful? Is that the critical thing, or

I think relationship is really important. And I wouldn’t want to take all the credit for that with the matching because sometimes you’ve just match on who’s available or on a whim or another way. And it works really well. And so I wouldn’t necessarily say that, then, because, you know, all of our mentors are really good at showing an interest in the young person. That’s the, that’s the mainly forming that connection, you don’t necessarily have to have had anything in common. You could have been that the first person who’s taken the time to show an interest in that young person and give them that time. I wouldn’t necessarily say the match is essential, Just Just getting the connection.

I wouldn't necessarily say the match is essential, Just Just getting the connection.
Yeah. Okay. So would you say the type of person who either wants to be mentor or who you choose as a mentor tends to have those attributes that they need?

Yeah,

Right. So that's the, the match is kind of like another nice extra thing on top of that.,

I would say Yeah,

Right. And then what, you know, what role do you think the mentor has in actually making the relationship work?

Um, well, obviously, part of our filtering processes, we try and establish if the young person wants to be there, that's really important. So I think if the young person has come of their own free will, and they want to be there, then that is a head start with a mentor. But yeah, I'd say the mentor. Yeah, that that role is really important in that first session, just to try and make them feel comfortable, really it does depend on the young person kind of wanting to be there, coming in the right frame of mind. Obviously, if they're in a difficult situation, if we've got a crisis going on somewhere else, that's going to be really challenging. So yes, circumstances are important. I do think if we can make
the young person feel comfortable in that first session, it's something they want to come back and do, then that's really important.

67. INTERVIEWER CC

68. And so have you had any cases where the mentor and mentee really didn't get on and and it didn't work because of that?

69. INT2COORDINATOR1

70. Yeah, I can think of, yeah, there’s a handful. I wonder whether young people are always honest with us, if they haven’t got on with the mentor. They might just say, I don’t want to do it anymore. But I, you know, have had cases where you can just tell it hasn’t worked. And we might try and rematch. I can think of one where the young man just didn’t click with the mentor, and he had some additional needs. And I don’t think the mentor just didn’t get that his behavior was the result of his condition. And I matched him with somebody else, and he had a completely different experience.

71. INTERVIEWER CC

72. So that’s quite rare, you’re saying tends to be they seem to manage to establish a relationship. Because something I wrote down, my supervisor said, you know, does this mean that mentoring doesn’t, you know, it only works in certain circumstances? But I think from what you’re saying, you’re saying it usually does work? That usually the mentor and the mentee are able to form some kind of relationship?

73. INT2COORDINATOR1

74. Yeah, yeah.
INTERVIEWER CC

No matter what. Yeah, no, that's, that's interesting.

INT2COORDINATOR1

I think as long as we establish, it's just so important, that young person wants to do it. There are quite a lot of scenarios where we get a referral, and you can just tell, the professional really wants it or the parent really wants. And if we are at all unsure, and so we don't always speak to the young person. But if we are unsure, we do try and have a conversation with the young person if we can, and because sometimes, they will then say no, I really don't want to do it. We've saved wasting everybody's time. Because volunteers' time is precious. And, you know, we don't want to go to the lengths of setting up that meeting, if they point blank don't want to be there. Yeah,

INTERVIEWER CC

I'm really not sure if that seems really obvious to you. Yes. But to me now that came is quite a revelation. I think, someone I interviewed was talking about there being such thing as a “good mentee”. So like about someone who actually wants to be there and wants to listen and wants to open up the, if you don't have, if you’re not going into mentoring with that kind of attitude, it is less likely to, to work.

INT2COORDINATOR1

Yeah. And sometimes we are taking a bit of a gamble, because it's out of most young people's comfort zone, to come and meet a mentor. And so I get that they're not always going to be fully on board. But actually, if we can get them kind of in case of your last
one, if you know, I just had a niggling feeling that if we can get her out you know, you
break down that first hurdle we might just be the service that helps her move forward.
So sometimes you do give it a go, even though you’re not 100% sure So yeah. I spoke to
a referrer the other day and it hadn’t been suggested to the young person yet, but he’s
not really leaving the house at the moment. So I’ve explained what we can offer. I said
we won’t come into the home, but the mentor could meet at the doorstep, go for a walk
or something, whatever, whatever the young person feels comfortable with really.
You’re welcome to give it go and there’s no pressure. So sometimes you can tell there’s
more buy in than others. You’ve just got to give some young people a go, because it’s
not that they don’t want to do it. It’s just that they don’t know whether they can, you
know, feel able to leave the house to do that.

183: INTERVIEWER CC

184: Yes, yes, that is a big deal. Just thinking I should have made more of it. But it was
such a huge step for her to come out and meet someone in a cafe. And, indeed, if she
hadn’t kind of left the house and she’d been in bed. That was it. That was a huge step.

185: INT2COORDINATOR1

186: So yeah, but great that you were willing to give it another go. There’s some people
who would have been quite annoyed that the week before and cancelled on at the very
last minute and say you’ve been at it and she might still you know, it might just be the
mom was having a bad day.

187: INTERVIEWER CC
Yes. Yes. It might be or who knows. Anyway, there are so many unknown, aren’t there. But yeah, I did say you know, that the services if she changed the mind service is always there in the future. But yeah, and she can still change her mind. There’s still time. So we’ll see what [referrer] has to say.

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I guess if a young person was being made to turn up every week, there would be a mentoring relationship. I just wonder how effective it would be. I just think if the young person comes, they enjoy that time, and they want to come, they’re going to get more out of it. And that’s my main concern with mentoring sometimes being in school, that most of our mentoring is out of school. And I think if the young person’s giving up their time to be there, and they’re turning up each week, then they want to be, you know, they want to be there. If they’re missing a lesson. Especially some young people are a bit specific about which ones they want to miss. And I sometimes question the commitment.

That’s not always the case. You know, sometimes they’ve taken it in school for perfectly valid reasons. But I think it’s a lot more convenient in school. And they might be told to be going and they’re there anyway. So yes, most of the time, we know if it’s out of school, they’re turning up because they want to be there.
Yes, I think so.

INTERVIEWER CC

I think, you know, you definitely get that sense that although the mentor puts a huge amount into it, the mentee needs to, it's not something that's just done to you is it. It's something that if you're a mentee, you need to act on the advice that you're being given, you need to try and change things.

INT2COORDINATOR1

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER CC

Okay, so you said, so you've had very few examples of where it didn't work. And that that was a personality thing. Do you think or just a circumstantial thing? Or?

INT2COORDINATOR1

I'm just trying to think about the cases. I mean, there might be logistics when it won't work. So I did set one up the other day. A bit of the referral form was missing when she said where she wanted to see a mentor. So I rang and I only have mom's phone number, I asked mom, does she want it in school or at school? Oh either. And I matched her with a mentor who can only do school hours, and then emailed the referrer to say, just let you know, this is all set up? And she replied, she said Oh, she really wanted to get out in community. And so we changed it at that point for logistics to a mentor who could do it out of school. And I think that one I mentioned before probably was a personality thing. I think it was the mentor's skill set as well. I think the mentor
who I think, he was autistic and the mentor I matched him with had a bit more experience. And the first mentor just didn’t, didn’t really get him. And they just didn’t really click.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, yeah, no, no, fair. Fair enough. And also it might sound negative, but have you ever felt the mentor was in a way, they were giving bad advice? Or that you were concerned about what was happening? Or does it? Is that very rare?

INT2COORDINATOR1

It’s rare, but we have had a few concerns over the years about the mentoring.

INTERVIEWER CC

And has that been to do with personality again, or just

INT2COORDINATOR1

It’s often if we would end our mentor’s involvement, it would be something like boundaries, if the mentor’s not operating within the boundaries, you know, we’ve got to be a safe service at the end of the day, and if we are concerned and don’t feel we can support a mentor’s practice, then they can’t really be volunteering for us.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, you can see how that can happen. Yes, you get involved in the young person’s life you could get too involved, I suppose.
Yeah. Yeah, I can think of a few cases where we’ve matched mentors, with a number of young people and they’ve never really taken off. They’ve never really clicked and they probably made their own decision.

And we’ve stopped contacting them and they’ve stopped contacting us, that kind of thing. Well, probably maybe something we should have picked up at the interview. But we’ve gone ahead and recruited and, you know, if it’s not worked out a number of times for no, real clear reason, it probably is a personality thing. But I think most mentors sort of comes to their own conclusions if it’s not for them.

Yes. So young person wouldn’t carry on coming would they if they weren’t happy with what was what was going on.

But you don’t feel there’s been kind of... one person I was talking to about mentoring said he never he never tells a young person what to do, he’s just trying to trying to look at options

At the training we always say to look at the options rather than giving advice. I think we would steer clear of saying, if I were you I would do this. If it not what the parent wants or turns out to be not in the best interests of that young person. That would be a tricky situation. So we have always said give guidance.
I was just to look at, you know, if for whatever reason the match wasn’t right, could it lead to bad advice, but it doesn’t sound, it sounds like the matching is not that important. It's the general characteristics of the mentor that are the most important thing.

Yeah, the skills, yes, just to connect and engage with the young person, And probably needing to adapt your approach for each young person, some young people are very clear what they want out of it. That might be easier for some mentors, and a lot of mentors really want to be making a difference. And if there's a clear objective, where they can go and get University prospectuses to help go to uni or something that's probably quite straightforward. The harder ones are where you just need to be there for that young person.

And, and sort of be there to support them. And I think some mentors find that easier than others, you know, we always say just being there for an hour a week, just giving them that time is really important. And a lot of mentors question whether they're doing enough by by just being there and not feeling like they're kind of making any major progress. Often the progress is small, but it does happen over time.

And I think, I also felt like that at the beginning, how can this possibly make a difference? But I suppose, as mentors have more experience, you realize, in fact, it does. Whereas at the beginning you think or, are they going to achieve this, and they go to achieve that. And that's not necessarily what they want to get out of it. And what, what
kinds of things do you think mentors can do to make it work? You talked about taking an interest in the young person? Is there anything else that mentors can do to make that a working relationship?

INT2COORDINATOR1

I think at the beginning, we've got to sort of be led by what they feel comfortable with. So we would ask things like, I think the venues quite important, yes, somewhere where they feel comfortable, and they're not going to be bumping into their friends.

Yeah. And it might be. We just had a discussion then about conversations being overheard. I know I don’t like to really quiet places. Because you are going to be conscious.

If you don’t really know what mentoring is and you go to a really quiet café, you’d be really conscious you might be overheard. I’d rather be somewhere noisy.

So I think somewhere where they're going to feel comfortable. And you know, we are restricted sometimes if it's an evening. Not that many places are open. It can be tricky finding somewhere suitable at the right time that they can get to. And we might ask if parents want to be there. But equally, we don’t want parents to dominate that first session with telling us the life history and all the problems, because that's not going to make young person feel very comfortable. So yeah, it's just working out with them. What would make that first meeting?

INTERVIEWER CC

So you’ve come back to that – that the first meeting is really critical?
INT2COORDINATOR1

Yeah. But it then still be awkward. I often say it is a bit odd coming to meet a stranger in a coffee shop. And a mentor will often say I was really nervous about coming. And yeah,

INTERVIEWER CC

so then it's just establishing some kind of connection at that meeting?

INT2COORDINATOR1

I think so, Yeah. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER CC

And I think you've you said previously that if the first meeting, if you managed to achieve that first meeting, chances are the other meetings will follow

INT2COORDINATOR1

Yeah. I think having that discussion about confidentiality early on is really important because some young people might be worried about opening up because they don't know, are you talking to mum, are you talking to school. So I think that's something mentors can do.

Yeah, and then that's a showing an interest, encouraging them. And just taking the time to build a rapport. You know, some mentors get to a stage where they might be, they might be able to challenge them on things and have difficult conversations that no
one else has been able to have, because they've built their trust, and then they're able to make, you know, really positive changes.

146: INTERVIEWER CC

147: I talked to one mentee, I think it came is what she learned is that it takes time to build up a relationship of trust. And I don't think she kind of realized that before. So that's, that was really interesting, because there's other relationships, that with your parents, you have to build up relationship, and they're just there for them. Okay, but you're not used to the time it takes to Just to build that kind of relationship.

148:

149: INT2COORDINATOR1

150: Yeah. And a lot of services now won't have that luxury of time, they'll be limited on the number of sessions. So that's, that's, to me, is the value of mentoring.

151: INTERVIEWER CC

152: That was another big. That's another big theme.

153: INT2COORDINATOR1

154: I'm aware there are mentoring programs that do shorter, you know, shorter time than ours, and is still effective. But I've just really seen the value of mentors, especially if, you know, young people have got quite challenging needs, it might take longer than six sessions or something. You know, they can slow down a bit, go at their pace, take the time to get to know them. And if that involves six weeks of walking around the park, and you know, making chitchat and that's fine. We're not in any great rush.
Yeah, yeah, that's really interesting. Yeah, we might talk about other other ways might be going and doing something like having a walk or even taking along like something like Play Doh, coloring books or something like that. Games, some mentors do games with their mentees.

And I’ve been trying to get both mentors and mentees to think about what other relationships they have, which are equivalent to having a mentor. And some of them talked about it being like a second mum or a big brother or a role model. But it is a professional relationship. Do you see it on more on a par with like, a teacher or a doctor or nurse, somebody to have that kind of professional relationship with? Or do you think it’s more like a family relationship? How do you see it?

In between really, I think somebody used the term “professional friend”, Like, you know, with boundaries? I know we always go about these. But they are so important. You know, you’re not, you know, a friend, not part of the family. And I think those boundaries have got to be in place to protect the mentor as much as mentee to prevent dependence.
INTERVIEWER CC

Do you think you think mentees understand that what the relationship is?

INT2COORDINATOR1

Some more than others, I think. You know, a lot of mentors say mentees never asked them anything about themselves. So yeah, yeah if it was a friend you think you would be? Yes. So I think probably some of them get, you know, yeah, they just get it.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, so that's interesting, isn't it? They just they understand that there is that kind of slight distance?

INT2COORDINATOR1

Yeah. Yeah. Some of them the boundaries, you know, they might try and get their mentors on Facebook but that's uncommon. I

INTERVIEWER CC

Yes, I think one of them I got her to kind of plot where she put her mentor. So they were kind of close, like her family, but not that close, she didn't put them with her family. So so she could see that was that kind of distance.

INT2COORDINATOR1
And when we do like an initial feedback form, after usually about sort of six sessions, just to check they are happy with everything. And one of the questions we ask is, has mentoring been what you expected? And quite often they say, no, it's been better than I've expected. And when I say what way they might say it's more fun or I thought it would be, you know, like CAMHS where we sit in a room, and it's just more flexible than that. And yeah, it's surprising how a lot of them say it's been better than they expected.

INTERVIEWER CC

Yeah, I suppose statutory services haven’t got much option to be fun, really.

INT2COORDINATOR1

Because that seemed to be a big thing to mentors and mentees, that's a big thing about this is so flexible, where you meet and how you meet. And it can be can be outside, it could be inside, be playing football, it can be going with the dog, and that really adds to being able to build a good relationship. Which other services as you say don’t really have that option at all, it’s much more flexible.

INTERVIEWER CC

Do you think it matters, do you think mentors need to like their mentees? Does that make a difference? Or do you think they just automatically do?

INT2COORDINATOR1
That’s a good question. No, I wouldn’t say, you know, a skilled mentor would, but they would still enjoy it more I’d say, but I think you could still mentor somebody even if you don’t like them.

INTERVIEWER CC

So is mentoring an intervention that only works if the relationship is at a particular level? So is there like a threshold above which it will work and below which it won’t? I think you seem to be saying that. It in most cases it will work at thresholds. So in terms of how close that relationship is, do they have to have a certain type of relationship in order for it to work? Or is it is it going to work whatever.

INT2COORDINATOR1

Well, you have to have trust to have any meaningful conversations, I think you could turn up and sort of chit chats and maybe even set some goals and work towards them. But I think if you are going to get to the root of issues, you are probably going to be having better conversations if you have built that trust.

INTERVIEWER CC

And respect. Do you think there's anything around that? That you need to respect each other, look up to each other? Or is it more about the trust?

INT2COORDINATOR1

I’ve not really thought about that. I definitely think it helps if you respect each other.
Right. Okay. But that's not, it's mostly the trust? That's a bigger thing.

Yeah. Yeah, I think so, to be open and honest with somebody.

Because that seemed to come from the mentors, that they really respected the young person where they were and what they were trying to do. And a couple of the mentees just kind of said, Oh, yeah, they look, they looked up to them. So that is the kind of being a role model.

That probably comes in time doesn’t it?

Yes. It could be that yes. Yeah. Because you have to, that's it, you have to build that relationship of trust before someone can look up to you. Yeah. Okay, that's really good.

Two more kind of themes about it seemed quite a lot coming out from mentors about being really careful about the language that they use and not being, kind of putting yourself on a level with a young person and asking open questions and not kind of being too directive. Have you got any kind of thoughts about the language?
INT2COORDINATOR1

Well, I mean, language in terms of not using jargon, I think as volunteers you probably obviously, depending on their work backgrounds, a lot of mentors might not know all the jargon that professionals use, which is anyway, I actually think that's helpful because some young people, you know, it's quite baffling all of the different jargon that professionals use and, you know, can be really confusing and if a mentor's sort of only got a basic knowledge that is really quite helpful, because they're sort of muddling through and learning it with the mentee.

INTERVIEWER CC

Right. Okay. And when you say like jargon, what do you mean?

INT2COORDINATOR1

Well the council love, you know, abbreviating everything and all different services. And sometimes, young people have so many services involved, it's confusing to know who does what. And yeah, sometimes you sit in meetings and you're talking even like, you know, CAMHS and TYS for Targeted Youth Support. And so that kind of language in terms of not using jargon. Yes. Language. As a professional, it's easy to get swept up in, you know, in the office, we are talking about, you know, we are using abbreviations, and then you forget, when you're talking to families that they won't know what that is.

And in terms of the open questioning, I think that is important. But there are times when you need direct conversations. It's Yeah. Once you build that trust, you might need to be a bit more direct with them in order to make any progress.
INTERVIEWER CC

That's interesting. Yeah. I think that the last kind of thought was, it's very much a partnership. And then the more you get to know each other, and the more you trust each other, the more you can actually achieve together. Do you think that's the case?

INT2COORDINATOR1

Yeah, I agree with that. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER CC

And another thought that I had, and I don't know whether you agree with this or not, is what mentoring is doing is, it's kind of helping young people kind of get in touch with those kind of skills and knowledge that they have, and, and kind of harness it in some way in a way that they hadn't sort of thought to doing before. So it's, it's giving them access to stuff they have inside themselves anyway, and helping them to use that.

Do you think that's what's happening? Or do you think something different is happening?

INT2COORDINATOR1

And yeah, I definitely agree with that.

INTERVIEWER CC
Yes, it's something that they have already, because it seems to be it doesn't take much to help them help themselves. So it must be there already.

I think what the mentor is doing is, helping them build on what they've got, and take it perhaps a bit further or use it in a slightly different way.

Q: Yeah. Yeah,

That's brilliant. Thank you very much.

I was just going back to thinking about what makes it work as well. And I would say the mentees’ personalities are a big factor. But I have to say, you know, some will be really open at the first meeting to tell you everything. And others, it just takes a long time. And even like the most experienced mentors, you know, it might just take them a long time to get that young person to open up. So yeah, it's not the mentors doing anything wrong. It's just that some young people need longer to get comfortable.

And to build that trust?
Yeah. And to feel comfortable, confident enough to say what they want out of the mentoring. It depends how much the young person feels they need mentoring. So I've got one mentee at the moment who's, you know, a really confident, capable young person. And she said, she's not been seeing her mentor long, she doesn't need it. But she says whenever I'm talking to a mentor, a counsellor, everything's okay. And then when I stop, things start to go wrong. So we sort of said, we'll cut down the frequency of sessions. So she's got her there in the background. And if they don't make any great progress, that's fine. If the young person feels she needs somebody there just in case things go wrong again, that's what she needs at the moment. So, again, you can't really quantify that can you? You can't really measure that for the young person. She's got quite difficult home situation, but she's coping really well. And academically, she's doing really well. Some weeks, she turns up, and she doesn't have a lot to talk about. She just wants someone there if she needs. So that's where we have recommended Kooth so that she's got somebody in the moment if she needs and she doesn't feel quite ready to let go of having the mentor which is fine. We'll sort of stick around.

INTERVIEWER CC

So yeah, it's that thing about knowing they're there. It makes you need to less than not having anything there in the first place. Yeah. I can see that.

INT2COORDINATOR1

Yeah, so the mentor might feel that it's not a great use of their time. She's not doing a lot. But for that young person, it's a bit of a safety net. And she knows that once
a fortnight, she can go and have a rant, if she needs to about what's going on or it might just be to share good news.

236: INTERVIEWER CC

237: Yeah. Yeah, Yes, and then it's kind of learning also how you can use it, isn't it? I mean, maybe to start with, she didn't think that's what she'd be using mentoring for, but now she can see that that's really helping her. What do you think mentoring is doing, you know, other than helping young people kind of reach these skills that they have? Is it is there anything else that you think's going on in mentoring?

238: INT2COORDINATOR1

239: It's just giving people the time. I probably said last time, one mentor once said to me, how often you get one hour to yourself to talk about whatever you want, completely uninterrupted. She said everybody should have it and, you know, it is really valuable. We probably could all benefit from an hour just to talk about whatever we want, completely uninterrupted, to someone who's got no agenda and I think that's just a set time. We're all so busy. And you know, parents are rushing around trying to juggle so much, they might not be able to give their child that time that they need.

240: INTERVIEWER CC

241: I know I thought when did I last sit down with any of my children for a whole hour? Never, never ever. We just don't do it do we.

242: INT2COORDINATOR1
Yeah. And I always remember a young person telling me her favourite time was going shopping with their mum, because they had the best chats in the car on the way to Tesco because mum wasn't on her phone. And you know, she was trying to run a business and juggle everything. And the young person just loved that time sitting in the car with mum. And I think that's what we're doing. We're giving people time in a busy world.

INTERVIEWER CC

And is it is it the talking? Is that really important? Or is it just the time or combination of the two?

INT2COORDINATOR1

A combination. But you know, some will play games if talking is hard. And they wouldn’t be turning up if they weren’t finding that useful.


Annotations

1 Actually quite a low level threshold

2 Interesting - categorise by how complex the case is likely to be - though this can be deceptive often

3 being able to make a connection and show an interest is the most important thing

4 this is my interpretation - that mentees and mentors together learn what can be achieved with mentoring.
Appendix J: Example Interview – Referrer 2

Name: Referrer 2

Created On: 02/01/2020 16:55:35

Classification: referrers

11: Referrer Interview

13: INTERVIEWER CC

14. Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your role?

15: Referrer 2

16. My role is learning manager, mental health, learning coaching and mentoring. The Secondary School has been a coaching school for six years. We're putting effort into wellbeing and mental health. Agencies have pulled away, and there's higher stress in pupils and in families, so we knew that we had to do something.

17. There was a watershed moment for me when a Year 11 student that I worked with, who had a difficult family life was mentored in year, 11 and was doing really well and did so well that she managed to get into the sixth form, and then lasted only three weeks. Mentoring had given nothing given her, no ability to carry on. So we went to a B. County School which was a coaching school and I sat in with a young man, and within five minutes, he’d filled the form out about how he was feeling and the coach got as much
information out of him as I had managed in four sessions. So I trained with them. And the senior leadership team took this on board and coaching is there for everyone, it's not attached to any kind of performance appraisal or anything. Anyone can self-refer.

8. INTERVIEWER CC

9. Under what circumstances would you refer a young person to MyTime?

10. Referrer 2

11. Traditionally, it's been the Head of Class or staff who recommended pupils but they can now access and recommend themselves. The references do tend to come from the teacher. But it's built into the ethos of the school, part of the conversation. And students now feel more comfortable in referring themselves. There have been no referrals from Laura recently to MyTime.

12. They were interested in ‘Inside, Outside’ coaching which started in the States: thinking creates your reality and they've done this for the past three years. Laura has also done traditional goal orientated coaching previously, but inside outside has been very effective. Her son travelled to the States, where he was a teacher at the school. And he said this was something that had to be tried so they tried it with about 15 pupils. There was no curriculum or strategy. It was just about how life is. And this caused transformational changes, anxiety levels went down. So she's done her role for 14 years. And once they introduced this it was a first year that no one crashed out of exams. Students exceeded their target grades and everyone commented on how much calmer year 11 was even if they didn't know that they were being coached. Her son had left
teaching, and he goes to other schools to get staff to see the potential of this. He’s a mental health and wellbeing specialist and he does mental health and wellbeing for staff.

The reasons the school refer to MyTime is some students don't want to be in school to do mentoring. So the causes of being referred there's usually a build-up: there are behavioural problems, disengagement or pupils not fulfilling their potential or something, their home was very difficult. Then there are always those who prefer to do something outside school. Sometimes the pupils, ask for help, or sometimes the school identifies them as potentially needing help. Mentoring offers T(ender) L(oving) C(are). If the Head of Year or Form notices pupils disengaging or needing something extra, they offer them all the different options and see what appeals.

INTERVIEWER | CC

What is the difference between mentoring and coaching?

Referrer 2

So the difference between mentoring and coaching is mentors, you’re using your own expertise to offer solutions. Coaching is facilitating: you to find your own answers and to think outside the box. They're both very different. Mentoring let's try this and that. But what they found was once you withdrew the support the people's couldn’t do this on their own. They need to be independent and able to deal well with life on their own.
18: So of those that I’ve referred for mentoring I’ve never had a follow up session with young person afterwards. The value of outside mentoring is that mentors taken authentic interest in the young person, someone who wants to hear their story and cares about them. This is really powerful. Students who go to mentoring don’t want anything in school. They are growing through the experience of the other person who offers a mentoring. So they’re using their experience, not building tools. Inside Outside thinking creates the reality of our world.

19: Year 11 build so many stories about themselves that they don’t realise. This is a very high achieving school. So if pupils struggle, they think that they’re stupid, but it’s pointed out to them that it’s not a real concept it’s just an idea. Can you hold “stupid”, no it’s not a thing. It’s not real. And then when they realised that they, it doesn’t hold them down, they can look at their own lives and build on their own ability. Their creativity has been closed down by these stories they have about themselves. So [referrer] did her MA, with action research, on a group. So the young people have resilience and wellbeing, but they lose their ability to be in contact with them.

20: ‘Inside Outside’ allows them to slow down to hear what their bodies are saying. They can re-evaluate and see what they’ve made up about themselves, reconnect and get their self-belief back. Mentoring tends to happen when their home lives are difficult or their parents have difficulties. It could be a bereavement and they can’t talk to their mum. In one case, it was an older lady who mentored this young person, and she was almost like a grandmother, she was happy to listen.

21: INTERVIEWER CC
What does the mentee need? What characteristics do they need to have? Do they need any type of engagement?

Referrer 2

By the time they start thinking of working with someone outside, they have realised they need help. So I have an introductory meeting with them if it doesn't feel right they don't have to do it. But they've always wanted to carry on with the mentoring, it's been successful because they've disappeared off her radar. So she's known the change over 14 years and the nature of need. Before it was students in pain or with health issues. And now it's students completely knocked sideways by life.

Five years ago, in transition, there were six students who were recommended. They needed something and now it's 20 to 25. So, this is both because life is more stressful and because they maybe don't have the coping skills they used to have.

Social media is a big problem, particularly the bullying. They never get to break. Quite often when she meets the parents she realises what the issue is, it's never just a student in isolation. Anxious students have anxious parents. So she works with the parents too. Inside Outside, you can have conversations with people in the family.

Another characteristic is the young person is likely to accept help in life, and thinks that their lives can be better. I want something to change. Inside Outside changes thinking.

There was someone in year 10, who was engaging in very risky behaviours. With Inside Outside she began to understand that the situation in her family was created by
how she was seeing other people. She could rethink this. This meant the dynamics in the family were different, by understanding other people’s points of view. And being non-judgmental. You can get back online.

129: INTERVIEWER

130: How important is the mentoring relationship in the mentoring process?

131: Referrer 2

132: The relationship is very important if you don't get a connection, it won't work. This comes from a feeling, if the feeling is right you don't need anything in common. It’s an engagement that heals. The fact that they’re volunteers, is very important, as is the feeling of kindness and building rapport. It’s a nurturing relationship. It’s an attribute in the mentor.

133: Kids respond to the feeling, to non-judgement. Students and teachers can reach a point of understanding. I’m non-judgmental about you but what you’re doing is wrong. You’re giving permission to the other person to get back to themselves. If you go in fighting, you get a fighting response.

134: If the feeling is different, if you’re not feeling threatened and fear and aggression, which leads to bad behaviour, you can have a connection. It’s non-judgmental, it comes from a place of love. Connection on a human level. It becomes a way that things are done, and you end up in everyone feel safe and secure. So what happens during the relationship, trust builds during the relationship, lots of students are not in a position where they can trust. A great deal at home, home has been an issue. And that would be
a reason why they want to take outside mentoring. Mentors, also often have empathy. Someone hearing you. It offers time. And that's a massive benefit. If you have no time to deal with issues. There's listening, and this is just for you.

INTERVIEWER CC

Reflection - does that benefit the students?

Referrer 2

I think it probably does to hear back what the mentor has heard, the assessment of the situation. Coaches reflect. This is what I am hearing powerfully represents to the person accurately what they're saying.

INTERVIEWER CC CC

Does this suggest validation?

Referrer 2

Yes, it shows that you are important. We want to see if this can be beneficial to you. So it can be useful to you. Trust. The students who put forward, they don't readily have trust they might come from a dysfunctional or difficult home. Only when you build trust you give permission to be honest and truthful. They can give a voice to stuff that they've not said before to someone who's on their side. Again, this may be unusual for them.

Students may see school as the enemy. Mentoring can offer an alternative view to that.
What attributes does a mentor need to have?

It's a great privilege to have that time with these young people. You see what great individuals they are. Parents can't see this, if they could see their kid, we wouldn't be where we are. This gets lost in translation. All of them, even those who push the boundaries have such great potential. With the right opportunities, they can reach this potential, the sorts of outcomes. You see individuals are given the opportunity to grow. They don't come back on my radar. The mentoring has fulfilled the need at the time it is given. Something that has got them back on track. On average, they meet for six weeks which fits into a half term. So, it usually works within that time, or one or two did eight to nine sessions. Quite often it's about anxiety and stress for exams.

I went to a conference, talking about anxiety and stress for exams. And the school is going against what psychiatry believes. So in her MA with 15 students. One student said they'd been to CAMHS, and on CBT. CBT said if they felt a panic attack coming on what they needed to do but if it didn't work, they felt like they weren't managing. Using the Inside Outside approach, they know they'll come out of the panic attack. It's the body saying I don't like the chemicals. So giving me bad feelings it's a warning to stop doing what you're doing. There were lots of papers that have come out of the United States about it. But it's getting it onto the ground so that people can see the potential of it.
I've worked with primary school, some don't get it and some do. You need two people to have the impetus to do it in their own school. This coaching approach is preventative. It can, they can step in with coaching at every stage, so they can get in early. There will always be people who need a range of offerings. They do it early. Then they ready for the summer when they get stressed about exam they know they can cope with it. A reference site is www.mental-wellbeing in schools.org. Her son could send me interviewer some stuff, and could get in touch. She said that she could talk to MyTime about it.

Using the Inside Outside approach, you are able to engage with the family as well. And then if parents can instigate better ways of doing things, then that helps. It grew out of PTSD and human trafficking. And the idea, you might have the idea that life does stuff to us. Young people suffering PTSD and human trafficking, they're still living in it. It's like a DVD that makes them relive that experience all the time. So Inside Outside means you don't go back to traumatic experience that your thoughts have created, you’re safe now. So you can create the thought and break the barriers, It is a trick being played on us. And it has no power.

Annotations

1 interesting, [referrer K.] talked about being neutral but this is definitely being on the side of the Young Person
# Appendix K: Documents used for Triangulation of Study Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Reference No.</th>
<th>Authenticity</th>
<th>Credibility</th>
<th>Representiveness</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme evaluation report produced for internal management 2013</td>
<td>E-1-2013</td>
<td>Original text; written by coordinator for internal evaluation but can be cited in public domain. Author can be questioned.</td>
<td>Evaluation by those running service may wish to give positive impression of programme to ensure service continues. Survey data used.</td>
<td>Only one produced that year: who is it produced for and why</td>
<td>Factual report back about the programme, what it has achieved and areas for future enhancement; no criticism of programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme evaluation report produced for internal management 2015</td>
<td>E-2-2015</td>
<td>Original text; author Steve Matthews Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF); possibly other editors</td>
<td>External reviewer so more objectivity about findings. May want to cast MyTime in a good light to promote mentoring as a service?</td>
<td>Only one produced that year</td>
<td>External impact assessment of programme plus value for money and recommendations for future development:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Reference No.</td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Representiveness</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of nomination forms for mentor of the year award for 2017</td>
<td>N-1-2017</td>
<td>Each mentee writes on own, in own words and handwriting and submits</td>
<td>Wanting their mentor to be selected for award – emphasizing most positive points; mentees choose to complete and submit this themselves, unknown to mentor</td>
<td>Random selection by coordinator –</td>
<td>What mentees valued and thought merited special attention and was worthy of award; likely only submitted by satisfied mentees and not all of those</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of nomination forms for mentor of the year award for 2018</td>
<td>N-2-2018</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five mentee referral forms and follow up once mentoring completed</td>
<td>R-1-2018</td>
<td>Supposedly mentee on own but may have been influenced by referrer, follow up is probably written by mentee</td>
<td>Only those who finished and wanted to reply to the feedback request – all young people have to fill out a referral form</td>
<td>Random selection by mentoring coordinator – Around 30% mentees provide follow up form</td>
<td>What mentees’ goals were at the beginning of mentoring and how these were met/not met/changed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table taken from Scott (1990 and 2006).
The E-1-2013 review of MyTime by the coordinator in June 2013 assesses programme status, areas of good practice and where improvement might be required. From their statistics, coordinators identified a not insignificant 22% dropout rate, a topic explored in this current study. The statistic that 86% of young people said mentoring was what they expected differs from the findings of this current study and perhaps suggests referrers have less knowledge about MyTime than previously. Mentors and mentees were surveyed about ‘achievements’ for the report.

Mentees identified improvements in all aspects of their lives measured: confidence, communicating, progress in school, with school life, organising their time and relationships at home. When allowed to select their own comments these included satisfaction in academic achievement which they had not thought possible (finishing school and gaining qualifications), making friends, coping with difficult family relationships, dealing with bullying, and being able to make their views heard. Although this is similar to outcomes measured in the literature, quantitative studies do not capture the evident delight mentees experience in exceeding their expectations of themselves. The qualitative approach of this current study allows exploration of this change of self-perception.

Mentors identified similar changes to mentees, suggesting they were attuned to each other. Changes included increased mentee confidence, better communication, improved attitudes towards school and improved academic performance. Referrers commented on the benefit to mentees of having ‘grounded’ adults as role models
and of having an adult listen to them without a ‘professional agenda’ (A. County 2013 p. 8). Referrers views raise a question about young people’s views of the mentor’s role which is examined in this research.

The E-2-2015 review was carried out by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NVCO), the accrediting body for mentoring programmes, in 2015. The NVCO report noted that the changes most frequently reported by mentees were ‘enjoying and doing well at school,’ including being more motivated to learn, and ‘getting on better with friends.’ It found mentees reported increased coping skills. The evaluation report also found evidence of longer-term mentee benefits, including educational progress or building better relationships with their family.

‘A key benefit of many mentoring relationships is in helping young people to come to terms with difficult family relationships and most young people find the experience a positive one, contributing to their confidence, skills [assets] and development in a number of ways’. Matthews (2015 p. 6)

Such a statement indicates changes to assets and relationships, which are further explored in this current study. Like much of the mentoring literature, evaluation reports focus, inevitably, on outcomes rather than the mentoring experience and explanation of how changes occur.
Appendix L: Thematic Coding

Example of coding

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<th>Category</th>
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<td>02/01/2020</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>02/01/2020</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>02/01/2020</td>
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<td>02/01/2020</td>
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<td>02/01/2020</td>
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<td>Trust and respect</td>
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Appendix M: The pilot study

The 2018 Doctorate of Education required completion of a pilot study at the end of the first year to review appropriate literature, draft research questions, a methodology and generate initial findings. This pilot allowed the use of semi-structured questionnaires to be tested, as well as initial analysis of findings emanating from these questionnaires. The pilot study, carried out between June and September 2019, involved face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with 3 mentors and 2 mentees. It revealed that such interviews were an appropriate data collection method, permitting interviewees to talk about their experience of mentoring and allowed probing of their understanding more explicitly. Interview findings from the pilot were included and analysed with main study findings as they provided a backcloth for major considerations that emerged in the early stage(s) of the research.

A number of modifications were made to improve the methodology as a result of the pilot. The extent to which interviews were a co-creation came as a surprise to this researcher who realised interviewees were not drawing on ready formed ideas about reality but did indeed create them through reflection:

‘You asked interesting questions which I had not thought about before’

Mentoring coordinator

Interviewing was not ‘mining’ existing views and opinions but a social event whereby meaning and knowledge were a ‘co-constructions between interviewee
and interviewer’. (Flewitt, 2014 p.150). As a result of this realisation, the researcher allowed more time during interviews for interviewees to explore what indeed their thoughts were. Having two interviews allowed further development of thoughts such as around what the role of the mentoring relationship was. Re-engaging with these thoughts in a second interview helped this researcher interpret how they constructed their reality.

The initial methodology proposed using concept maps. Concept mapping, developed by Novak in 1972 (Novak and Canas, 2007), allows interviewees to identify and agree the main themes of importance to them. For the pilot study, completed interviews with mentors were analysed and summarised thematically by key themes arising in connection with the research questions. These key themes were then represented, or mapped, visually using bubbl.us, a mind-mapping programme.

This visual representation of sub-theme and theme hierarchy allowed relationship tracing, organising and representing knowledge (Novak and Canas, 2007). The interviewee saw the map before or at the second interview to allow progressive focusing, or concept-mapping. Concept-mapping invites interviewees to co-create their own map from themes identified by the researcher. However, mindful of the time required of participants for the interview and diary-keeping, this researcher produced the initial analysis for the second meeting so participants could reflect on whether the researcher’s initial interpretation matched their construction of the mentoring experience.
Figure 3 Concept Map
From the map, Figure 3, Mentor 2 felt that any potential negativity of the mentoring experience for mentees should have been included in interviewing. Mentor 1 identified an area that he believed had been captured incorrectly. These aspects were clarified in the questionnaire. On reflection, this researcher considered that the laborious procedure of analysing the interviews to produce a concept map lost nuances of the interview and rather than allowing researcher enquiry to clarify meaning became about how information was displayed. This did not seem to add anything to the results that could not be gained from a second, clarifying interview. The use of concept mapping was therefore discontinued.

This researcher did not use mind maps with mentees. Based on experience during the pilot where one mentor lost contact with his mentee, it became clear that the first mentee interview needed to stand alone if necessary. A single interview still valued the views of the young person, allowing them to be incorporated into the research.
Appendix N: Online mentoring and MyTime

during the Covid pandemic

Although never part of MyTime’s design, during the pandemic, mentoring was immediately offered online where mentor and mentee wished it and stopped where it was not possible or desired. Initially, no further mentees were taken on.

Coordinators reported surprise at how well online mentoring had worked and are considering offering this to mentees alongside the face-to-face approach. Understanding what worked well, what did not and mitigations for issues could benefit formerly face-to-face only mentoring programmes.

As explained previously, Covid restrictions meant no further contact with mentees was possible so their views cannot be represented at all. However, the topic was discussed at a mentoring network meeting and views of mentors are captured here. Mentors had mixed views. Some talked of online contact being ‘not so intimidating’ as meeting face-to-face. Some could see advantages:

‘I don’t know. maybe it'd be nice that they might like it because it's perhaps maybe not so intimidating for them. It might work’ Mentor

Others the disadvantages:

‘…To have that first meeting and it'd be an online meeting. That'd be pretty tough’ Mentor 7
Mentors used different methods of communicating, demonstrating the same resourcefulness and flexibility identified previously: more but shorter online meetings, private conversations during the daily exercise time and using text and email to keep in contact between meetings. For mentees with no online access, mentors wrote letters and sent little gifts to show they were still thinking about them. When meeting outside was allowed, the constant work of mentors and mentees identified in this research continued. They located and shared community resources such as local parks and tennis courts, places to spend time together. Researching the impact of these different interactions would help understand which to continue, modify or discontinue.

Difficulties with online mentoring included ‘digital poverty’ - mentees with limited or no online access – and those with no private space. If mentoring could no longer provide a neutral, welcoming physical space away from everyday pressures, which this research has revealed as valuable to mentees, did mentors find a way to recreate this virtually? For one mentor, ‘physically standing in front of them, interacting’ was important for helping mentees express themselves and feel valued. Was there a way in which a mentor’s online presence could create this same reassurance?

Consistency of meeting time, devoted to the mentee was in theory possible but subject to the needs of the family, phone credit and bandwidth. Shorter more frequent meetings were one way round this. Did any mentors find other ways?
With online mentoring, mentor and mentee had access to the home environment that was not physically allowed under MyTime policy. This increased understanding of the mentee’s context and could explain, without the mentee needing to say anything, why for instance it was hard for a mentee to find space to use a computer. However, the very aspects of mentoring that could be considered strengths could no longer be offered – its confidentiality, negotiated without involvement of parents, being a ‘neutral’ location away from environments that might be stressful such as home, school or professionals’ offices, offering activities and the reassurance of a physical presence. Are there circumstances under which online mentoring can offer these, or mitigations for them?

Online mentoring worked well for some mentors and mentees, even those who were new to mentoring. For others it proved difficult or even impossible. It would be interesting to explore what could be learned from the experience of building trusting relationships online that could be used by MyTime and other programmes. What did not translate, what was better?