MENTORING EVALUATION

LONDON PROBATION TRUST

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

London Probation Trust (LPT), in their aim to reduce reoffending and provide a more holistic service for offenders decided to work in partnership with third sector organisations to provide mentoring services for offenders in London to improve their rehabilitation prospects. The two strands of work that are evaluated in this project are:

- To develop a peer mentoring service for 100 young offenders aged 18-25 who were on the Intensive Alternative to Custody order. Mentoring was offered alongside offender management to encourage motivation and support compliance
- To develop a mentoring service for women based heavily around the 'personalisation' agenda to reduce the risk of re-offending. This would include an 'enabling fund' to allow women and their mentors to address the women's personal needs.

Service providers were commissioned to undertake the two mentoring services, working collaboratively to achieve two over-arching outcomes as defined by LPT:

- Reduced re-offending rates
- Improved attendance/compliance by offenders at supervision appointments/programmes

Additional outcomes were:

- Improved offender manager and sentencer understanding of the support that can be provided to offenders through mentoring
- Increased positive life outcomes through practical and motivational support.
- Reduced social exclusion of offenders.
- Increased access to community interventions for offenders.
- In the case of peer mentoring, peer mentors develop personally and socially through supporting others to develop,

keeping their own focus on rehabilitation and boosting their self-esteem and confidence.

- Develop integrated partnership working with the third sector.

Catch22 was appointed through a competitive bidding process to deliver the mentoring services with St Giles Trust as its subcontractor.

THE EVALUATION

In October 2012 Manchester Metropolitan University were commissioned by London Probation Trust to evaluate the 'Offender Mentoring' projects. The aim of the evaluation was to examine the extent to which the project had delivered against the agreed aims and deliverables, outlined in the above section. The evaluation budget was modest and guided by a framework of four overarching questions:

Should it work? To what extent is the project underpinned by an established 'theory of change', one which identifies the ways in which project design and inputs will produce the desired outputs and outcomes.

Can it work? An examination of whether the project has been implemented as intended. In relation to this project key themes will include: process of staff and volunteer recruitment, training and supervision; profile of staff as 'peers'; process of referral and assessment; process of engagement with service users; effective interagency working; application of the personalised budget in the context of the women's project.

Does it work? The evaluation aims to assess the impact of the mentoring service on the two groups of offenders: male offenders aged 18-25 and women offenders. The outcome measures LPT are judging success by are: whether the mentored group had a reduction (5%) in re-offending compared to their counterparts in the non-mentored group; whether the mentored group had higher compliance (5%) compared to the other group; and whether the mentored group had increased access to community interventions for

offenders compared to those in the non-mentored group. This work will be reported in the Final Evaluation Report. For this interim report we draw on the various sources of evidence collated as part of the evaluation so far in order to establish some tentative conclusions regarding whether the project is making progress against its intended outcomes.

Is it worth it? Our preferred option is a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA). Undertaking a CBA will be conditional on the impact evaluation providing estimates of the final and intermediate outcomes. If this is not possible our 'fall-back' position will be a Break-Even Analysis (BEA). In this report we set out the costs of the intervention including direct costs, free and discounted costs and the costs to other public services. The resource available for the economic evaluation is very limited so extensive data collection to support either the analysis of project costs or the potential benefits that might accrue is not possible.

THROUGHPUTS

> 152 referrals were made to the peer mentoring project (against a target of 150)
> 71 referrals were made to the women's project (against a target of 70)

The volume of referrals in the pilot period met the set targets for the project.

> 77 young men aged 18-25 were mentored by the peer project (against a target of 100)
> 44 women were mentored by the women's personal budget project (against a target of 50)

Neither project met the target volume of individuals to be mentored in the pilot period, of note here is the significant level of attrition between referral and engagement in mentoring.

IMPLEMENTATION

The characteristics of the service users mentored on the projects differed from that anticipated in a

number of ways. For example the analysis demonstrates that those mentored by both projects are in a substantial number of cases individuals convicted of relatively serious offences, assessed as presenting a range of 'risks' both in relation to harm and reoffending, and being released following fairly lengthy prison sentences. This does not align with the expectations provided within the initial theories of change workshop, where it was reported that the majority of individuals would be serving community sentences, and where a short period of mentoring (i.e. 3 months) would support increased access to community based services.

The small number of service users we spoke with had very positive regard for their mentors, as did the probation offender management staff. The key qualities and skills identified as being important included: someone who can motivate, listen and provide support in relation to key priorities - such as employment in the case of the young men accessing the peer service. The relevance of 'peer' status, and if or when such status should be revealed, was less clear with a range of expectations and understandings reflected across the mentors, stakeholders and service users. Similarly, the focus of business or corporate mentors for the women's project changed quite early into the implementation of the pilot.

Whilst the referral process was thought to work well in most cases, it does require a commitment from the referring offender manager to play an active role in sharing information and being part of initial meetings. The initial fieldwork revealed that there had been some issues with communication of key messages getting through to the LDUs from central LPT staff, this was particularly the case in the early months of the project.

Experience from the peer-mentoring project demonstrated that where mentors are visible and pro-active, with elements of co-location, they can play a successful role in referral and establish positive partnerships with probation practitioners. However, also of relevance is the 'outreach' nature of the mentoring relationship, their advocacy work, the potential to engage with family and

wider supporters of the individual and that meetings can take place in 'neutral' surroundings.

The voluntary nature of referral was viewed as being critical to both the engagement of service users and potential to support change. This was a key feature which distinguished the work of mentors from the wider process of probation supervision. One element of the mentoring service which emerges from this is the flexible and in some cases ongoing nature of support. This was indicated by the frequency of meetings and a wide range of duration lengths.

EARLY PROVISIONAL FINDINGS ON OUTCOMES

An assessment of the project's performance against the defined measure of compliance – a 5% increase in successful completions as measured by order terminations – is not possible for two main reasons. The measure as defined in the contract assumes that the majority of mentees will be on community orders and those orders need to be completed in order to measure the proportion of successful outcomes. However, the profile data demonstrates that a significant number on both projects are licence cases, or where on community orders these are for extended periods. However, there is tentative evidence that the project does engage individuals, both in relation to their ongoing voluntary contact with the mentors (as described above) and their success in meeting set action plan targets.

Both of the mentoring projects collated a range of objective and outcomes data in relation to employment, training and education outcomes. For many individuals on the peer project progress in relation to this area was prioritised by the service user and a variety of progress outcomes recorded, for example, individuals completing steps towards being ready for and accessing work both in practical terms (with a CV, completing applications), and in relation to their motivation or confidence. With almost half of those actively mentored securing work or a college place. This progress was further reflected in the small number of pre and post outcome star self-report questionnaires that were completed.

The availability of and access to settled and suitable housing was unsurprisingly identified as a key goal for some mentees, with mentors acknowledging the challenge in supporting progress in other areas without resolving this. Both projects record some very positive outcomes for service users in relation to housing, inevitably though the mentor plays a specific role of support and advocacy and is reliant on other providers prioritising their clients. It is likely that those individuals who were referred but did not engage with the project, and then in many cases were recalled to custody, represent those most in need of housing. As such the benefits of any mentoring service will often rest on other more pressing needs such as housing being resolved first.

The profiling information for the peer project indicated that just over one fifth of the young men referred were assessed and flagged as 'gang involved' by probation staff within their case management system. However, no reference was made to this being a factor relevant to the referral of mentees or delivery of the mentoring service. Further, there was no reference to this being captured within the action plans. Whilst this was identified in the initial 'theories of change' workshop as being a key outcome for the project this was not a theme captured through any of the evaluation methods.

There were a range of other activities captured within action plans which were recorded within the project data, and referred to within the qualitative research. These have been grouped into four themes: relationships and family; substance misuse and mental health; debt, finance and benefits; accessing community interventions. To varying degrees the mentoring service had a positive impact across all these areas. When reflecting on success across all targets set for both groups the project exceeded the set targets.

➢ The project data demonstrated that 70% of the young men involved in the peer mentoring project achieved at least 75% of the set targets from the action plan.
➢ The project data demonstrated that 97% of the women achieved more than 75% of the set targets from the action plan.

A number of recommendations for the future roll-out of the project are made in the main report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To review the nature of the mentoring projects, their underpinning principles and the relevant characteristics of the mentors in role now that the projects are well-established, and reflect this both in the contract and communication to all stakeholders including the service users.

To further reflect on what constitutes being mentored. In the context of the voluntary status of this relationship, this may include recognition of an intermittent relationship, with success regarded even within partially completed relationships.

To recognise that the profile of the service users is significantly different to that anticipated and this may require a review of both the skills, knowledge and support of mentors and of the targets and outcomes set of the project. For example the duration of relationships, outcomes in relation to 'gang activity', compliance contract measure etc.

To improve the process for recording project data, and regular review of information to support effective project delivery and contract management. Much of the data used for the evaluation was recorded from a range of paper based systems in retrospect.

To review and further understand how the mentoring resource is being deployed, this may be in relation to the profile of the individuals referred, those being mentored and the frequency of and duration of the relationships. A regular mini audit process could support this and enable both equity and quality of service delivery to be evaluated by the providers.

To recognise that employment is a key priority for service users and area of impact for the peer mentoring project and examine how this can be strengthened further.

To consider introducing a personal budget for the young men's peer mentoring service, in particular when there is evidence that college / qualification registration fees are a barrier to prospective employment opportunities.

To acknowledge the reported success of the mentoring project in relation to housing outcomes for a number of mentees, and examine the potential to expand this area of impact given the critical nature of settled and suitable accommodation.

To review the intermediate outcomes currently captured for the women's project and explore whether there are aspects of impact not captured, and / or why a number of the targets are used so rarely.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Probation Service[1] provide probation supervision, community service, offending behaviour programmes and specialist support services, to offenders aged 18 and over, which aim to stop them committing further offences and to make communities safer places.

The aim of the service as a whole is to reduce the level of crime in the community and increase public safety by:

- the effective management of offenders with and within communities;
- challenging offending behaviour; and
- facilitating the integration of ex-offenders.

1.2 AIM

London Probation Trust (LPT), in their aim to reduce reoffending and provide a more holistic service for offenders decided to work in partnership with third sector organisations to provide mentoring services for offenders in London to improve their rehabilitation prospects. Mentoring has been used for some time in other 'rehabilitation' contexts, most notably in substance misuse programmes such as the '12 step programme' where mentors, often peers, sponsor others.[2] There are also examples in mental health and increasingly mentoring and in particular peer mentoring is being used within the criminal justice system.[3] However, it was the speech made by the Secretary of State for Justice Chris Grayling MP in November 2012 which really signalled the likely increase in the use of mentoring of offenders in the context of the Coalition Government's 'Transforming Rehabilitation' agenda.

> *'Often it will be the former offender gone straight who is best placed to steer the young prisoner back onto the straight and narrow…There are some really good examples out there of organisations making good use of the old lags in stopping the new ones. We need more of that in the future.'* Chris Grayling MP[4]

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[1] On 1st June 2014 the work of the probation service nationally was split. As of that date a proportion (approx. 20%) of the caseload of local areas such as LPT has been retained within the National Probation Service and the remainder of caseload (approx. 80%) will be delivered by a Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The majority of this report will reflect the findings in the context of the Trust, however any conclusions will be reflected upon in the context of this new delivery landscape.

[2] Maruna, S. and LeBel, T. P. (2003) 'Welcome home? Exploring the 're-entry court' concept from a strengths based perspective. Western Criminology Review, 4 (2), 91 – 107.

[3] Mental Health Foundation (2012) Exploring peer support as an approach to supporting self-management. MHF: Edinburgh

Clinks and Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (2012) Supporting offenders through mentoring and befriending: Survey findings. Clinks: London.

[4] Rehabilitation Revolution: the next steps. www.gov.uk/government/speeches/rehabilitation-revolution-the-next-steps

There have been a number of evidence reviews undertaken recently, some focus solely on establishing evidence of impact[5] and others also examine on the challenges of implementing such approaches[6]. It is with reference to some of this literature that the findings of this interim evaluation report will be discussed.

1.3 LPT PROJECT DESIGN

The aim of the mentoring pilot was to provide a number of potential mentoring packages with the intention of contracting them out to third party voluntary organisations. Therefore, it was envisaged that through providing a mentoring scheme, offenders would receive practical support allowing them to reintegrate with their communities.

Linking with communities and providing an individualised service from peer mentors was intended to influence change. The strong need to recognise that the process of giving up crime is different for each individual was felt to be important in supporting an individual. LPT defined peer mentoring as individuals in 'similar positions providing knowledge, experience, or emotional, social or practical help to each other'. In employing peer mentors, LPT aim to use ex-offenders (who may still be on a community order or licence) who have evidenced that they have effectively rehabilitated.

The overall aim of LPT was to pilot three areas of mentoring, which would then be evaluated. The two options that are the focus of this evaluation are described below.

- To develop a peer mentoring service for 100 young offenders aged 18-25 who were on the Intensive Alternative to Custody order. Mentoring by ex-offenders in both paid and unpaid roles was offered alongside offender management to encourage motivation and support compliance
- To develop a mentoring service for women based heavily around the 'personalisation' agenda to reduce the risk of re-offending. Volunteer mentors would be drawn from both public and private organisations. This would also include an 'enabling fund' to allow women and their mentors to address the women's personal needs.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

Service providers were commissioned to undertake the two mentoring services, working collaboratively to achieve a number of outcomes as defined by LPT.

- Reduced re-offending rates

- Improved offender manager and sentencer understanding of the support that can be provided to offenders through mentoring

- Improved attendance/compliance by offenders at supervision appointments/programmes

- Increased positive life outcomes through practical and motivational support.

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[5] Taylor et al (2013) Intermediate outcomes of mentoring interventions: a rapid evidence assessment. NOMs Commissioning Strategies Group.

Skrine et al (2013) Intermediate outcomes of peer relationship interventions: a rapid evidence assessment. NOMs Commissioning Strategies Group.

[6] Morrison et al (2006) Ex-offenders as Peer Volunteers: promising practices for community programs. Knowledge Development Centre: Canada.

Fletcher, D-R and Batty, E. (2012) Offender Peer Interventions: What do we know? CRESR: Sheffield Hallam University.

- Reduced social exclusion of offenders.

- Increased access to community interventions for offenders.

- In the case of peer mentoring, peer mentors develop personally and socially through supporting others to develop, keeping their own focus on rehabilitation and boosting their self-esteem and confidence.

- Develop integrated partnership working with the third sector.

LPT defined their strategic priorities as quality, efficiency and growth, which were felt to specifically align with mentoring. In providing a mentoring service, LPT aimed to meet a number of key objectives:

- **Enhance Offender engagement** - develop engagement with 18-25 year olds. This will be done through mentoring of the IAC
- **Improve the quality of and deliver responsive sentence plans –** evaluate new approach to sentence planning
- **Deploy research and evidence based practice –** independent research to establish the effectiveness of peer mentoring, and personalisation
- **Commission effective services** – though contracting mentoring service to third party organisations
- **Develop partnerships to grow service provisions** – enable LPT to provide a better, more holistic service

1.5 CATCH22 AND ST GILES TRUST – DELIVERY PARTNERS

Two providers were appointed through a competitive bidding process to deliver the mentoring services: Catch22 (C22) and St Giles Trust (SGT). Both Catch22 and SGT have extensive experience of developing and delivering mentoring services for offenders. As a national organisation, Catch22 utilises over 750 volunteers, including 200 mentors, and St Giles Trust utilises 50 paid peer mentors in London, and over 100 volunteer mentors in prisons and the community.

Catch22 works with young people, families and adults nationally. It is a service which aims to assist individuals to steer away from crime and substance misuse. In doing so, family support, employability, education and housing are an integral part of service delivery. Their overall ethos is to *'help people in tough situations turn their life around'*.

St Giles Trust *'aims to help break the cycle of prison, crime and disadvantage and create safer communities by supporting people to change their lives'*. They provide offender services and has been training ex-offenders to become peer mentors since 2001.Depending on the needs of clients, SGT offer a flexible service assisting with areas such as accommodation, access to other services, improving life skills and employment prospects. Ultimately, they hope to 'equip them to live independent lives'.

Through the mentoring service, Catch22, will lead on the project to provide a mentoring provision for female offenders serving community sentences and have a wealth of experience of engaging volunteers in working with female service users. St Giles trust are currently providing ex-offender peer advisor services in 18 boroughs and have a strong record of engaging ex-offenders in peer mentoring. Both services will work collaboratively together to deliver the peer-mentoring element of the project. The aim is to provide holistic support that is personalised, responsive and intensive.

In meeting LPT objectives, Catch22 and SGT will utilise a structured and individualised approach to mentoring whether through paid staff or volunteer mentors. From this, it is envisaged that mentors will provide practical support and guidance to complement and enhance current service provision

2. THE EVALUATION

2.1 OVERVIEW

In October 2012 Manchester Metropolitan University were commissioned by London Probation Trust to evaluate the 'Offender Mentoring' projects. The aim of the evaluation was to examine the extent to which the project had delivered against the agreed aims and deliverables, outlined in the above section. The evaluation budget was modest[7] and is guided by a framework of four overarching questions[8]:

Should it work? To what extent is the project underpinned by an established 'theory of change', one which identifies the ways in which project design and inputs will produce the desired outputs and outcomes.

Can it work? An examination of whether the project has been implemented as intended. Furthermore, where there is evidence of adjustment in design what evidence has determined such decisions. In relation to this project key themes will include: process of staff and volunteer recruitment, training and supervision; profile of staff as 'peers'; process of referral and assessment; process of engagement with service users; effective interagency working; application of the personalised budget in the context of the women's project.

Does it work? The evaluation aims to assess the impact of the mentoring service on the two groups of offenders: male offenders aged 18-25 and women offenders. The outcome measures LPT are judging success by are: whether the mentored group had a reduction (5%) in re-offending compared to their counterparts in the non-mentored group; whether the mentored group had higher compliance (5%) compared to the other group; and whether the mentored group had increased access to community interventions for offenders compared to those in the non-mentored group. There will be 50 women mentored. A power analysis suggests it is very unlikely that any effect could be identified with statistical confidence. There will be 100 young men mentored. A power analysis suggests that an impact could be identified with statistical confidence if the effect on reconviction is substantial. Our preferred option is to implement a matched pairs design (Level 4 on the Scientific Methods Scale) and we will request the relevant analysis from the Ministry of Justice Data Lab[9]. This work will be reported in the Final Evaluation Report. For this interim report we draw on the various sources of evidence collated as part of the evaluation so far in order to establish some tentative conclusions regarding whether the project is making progress against its intended outcomes.

Is it worth it? Our preferred option is a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA). Undertaking a CBA will be conditional on the impact evaluation providing estimates of the final and intermediate outcomes. If this is not possible our 'fall-back' position will be a Break-Even Analysis (BEA). In this report we set out the costs of the intervention including direct costs, free and discounted costs and the costs to other public services. The resource available for the economic evaluation is very limited so extensive data collection to support either the analysis of project costs or the potential benefits that might accrue is not possible.

2.2 DATA

This interim report draws on a range of data sources, both quantitative and qualitative.

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[7] The evaluation contract was sufficient to fund approximately 50 days of work over a two year period

[8] Haynes (1999) 'Can it Work? Does it Work? Is it Worth it?' *British Medical Journal* 319 pp.652-653

[9] A more detailed paper on the options for impact analysis was prepared during the evaluation design phase.

2.2.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

- Individualised Mentoring Project data capturing details of those referred including: profiles information; action plan targets and outcomes against set targets; weekly activity regarding contact with mentors; and completion status on the project.

  - The data was gathered into one spreadsheet by the providers at the end of the pilot period, requiring a process of inputting information held disparately across a range of paper based documents. Unfortunately, this revealed a number of gaps in the available information. For example, in relation to the Greenwich peer mentor project there was no target or activity data collated for the 14 referrals making it impossible to make a judgement regarding whether they had been mentored, in what capacity or with what outcomes. Perhaps most challenging though was establishing a definition for 'being mentored' or 'completing' the mentoring process. This is discussed in detail in the section on 'engagement'

- Individualised LPT data capturing: further profiling information related to sentencing, risk assessment and case 'flags' applied by Probation staff; compliance; and order termination
  - The available data for each case held within the 'Delius' case management system was merged to the above individualised data at the end of the pilot period. However, the 'compliance' data gathered which was on 'breach' and 'successful order termination' is only relevant for those on a community sentence, which represent a minority of project referrals and individuals mentored.

- Self -report Pre and Post questionnaires:
  - The project collated paper based questionnaires completed by the service users at commencement (within a few weeks of starting on the project) and then as they were exiting the project. These were collated and sent to the evaluators for input into a spreadsheet at the end of the pilot period.
  - The pack consisted of two questionnaires: the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Health Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS); and the Outcome Star - Work readiness, housing and substance misuse.[10]
    - Positive mental health is measured using the short version of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS). The short version of WEMWBS is a 7-item scale of mental well-being covering subjective wellbeing and psychological functioning in which all items are positively worded and address aspects of mental health. Items include statements about thoughts and feelings such as "I've been feeling confident" and I've been feeling cheerful" with items rated on a 5–point Likert scale (1 = none of the time, 5 = All of the time). Minimum and maximum scale scores are 7 and 35 respectively. The scale has been validated in student samples, focus group samples and two national Scottish population surveys. High scale correlations with other measures such as the WHO-five Well-being Index, Short Depression Happiness Scale and the Positive and Negative Affect – positive subscale have been found together with high internal consistency for the scale. WEBWBS was designed to measure mental well-being in adult populations. It was not specifically designed for use with small groups or for measuring change in an evaluation. However, it is currently being used in both of these scenarios and its use has been validated.
    - The Outcome Star for 'work readiness' is a widely used tool for assessing the work readiness of service users. As a tool for defining needs a variety of professions have reported finding it valuable (see reports cited by its developers Triangle Consulting, 2013). The Youth Justice Board have described it as something for which there is

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[10] A number of minor amendments were made to these two sections of the outcome star assessment tool in order for it to be used for evaluation purposes.

'emerging' (rather than 'promising' or 'proven') evidence[11] – a programme having 'limited or no evaluation information available but…nevertheless regarded as (an) example of successful innovation or robust design by the sector or other stakeholders' (Archer, 2013: 12)[12]. Boswell & Skillicorn (2009)[13] found no evidence of a statistical linkage between the progress recorded by the Outcomes Star and tangible positive outcomes, though Triangle Consulting (2013), who are behind the Star, report from pilots of the alcohol version of the Star a convergence with measures of alcohol use. It is cited as a contributor to data considered by Government sources in the assessment of community initiatives with female offenders (MoJ, 2013)[14] and is being used in a payment by results context by a range of organisations (Triangle Consulting, 2011). We have made some minor modifications to the tool so that is more suited for evaluation purposes.

- o In total 20 paired assessments were gathered by the peer mentoring project, and no pairs of assessments were provided for the women's project. Due to this reduced number, and the potential that they reflect some form of selection bias they cannot be used as indicative of any changes in the self-report circumstances or attitudes of the wider 'intention to treat' group. However they do provide some indication of impact for those individuals who completed them.

- Aggregate information collected by the provider in relation to recruitment of mentors and volunteers; training and other outcomes for Peer Mentors.

2.2.2 QUALITATIVE DATA

A 'theories of change' workshop was held early in the project lifecycle and attended by representatives of London Probation Trust and both provider organisations. In addition, key project documentation was supplied to the evaluators to help them understand the relevant theories of change.

In addition to the Theories of Change workshop a total of 36 interviews have been conducted with a range of key stakeholders. The following table reflects the 24 individuals who have been interviewed as part of the evaluation, both in the initial period (undertaken during the initial months of implementation i.e. first 3 months) and whether these interviewees were also involved in a follow up interview towards the end of the pilot period (months 9 – 12).

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[11] On a 5-point scale which runs from 'Ineffective – treat with caution – emerging – promising – proven'.

[12] Archer (2013) *Effective Practice Identification and Dissemination* (v.2.1) London: YJB.
http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/about/yjb/effective-practice-identification.pdf

[13] Boswell and Skillicorn (2009) *Validating the Outcomes Star as a data collection tool*, Cardiff: University of Wales Institute.
http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/UWIC%20validation%20report.pdf

[14] Ministry of Justice (2013c) Ministry of Justice (2013), *Government response to the Justice Committee's Second Report of Session 2013-14: Female Offenders.* http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm87/8729/8729.pdf

Role	Initial	Follow-up
Commissioner LPT	4	3
Provider	4	3
Mentor Paid Peer	6	3
Mentor Volunteer Women	2	2
Referrer Offender Manager	3	0
Service User Male	3	0
Service User Female	2	1
	24	12

Figure 2-1: A breakdown of interviews

The aim at the outset was to conduct a total of 40 process interviews; 20 initial interviews and 20 follow ups. These were to be with 10 project staff and stakeholders, four mentors, and six service users (two mentors and three service users from each of the women's and 18-25 male strands). The number and profile of interviews achieved was affected by several factors. In part, more interviews than planned were conducted in the initial round due to the turnover of personnel (i.e. two of the mentors on the 18-25 male strand subsequently left their posts quite early on and it was felt important to speak with the new mentors who would be followed up later). It proved not possible to conduct follow ups with three of the stakeholders who took part in initial interviews; several attempts were made but we were unable to find mutually convenient times. With regard to service users, it was only possible to conduct two initial interviews one follow up with users from the women's strand; several unsuccessful attempts were made to identify a third user, and there was no response from the second user to requests for a follow up interview. On the 18-25 male project, two of those who took part in initial interviews subsequently went into custody (one was then released). The third subsequently found full time employment. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to locate and re-contact these service users, via the providers and then also via probation offender managers. The changes taking place in the probation service in the spring of 2014 were cited as making it difficult to ask probation staff to spend time trying to facilitate contact with service users.

2.2.3 ECONOMIC / COST ANALYSIS

This report includes data on the economic costs of the project. Set up costs have been identified. Running costs have been gathered for the first complete year of the project (February 2013 – March 2014).

Project managers from the three organisations (London Probation Trust, Catch22 and St Giles) were interviewed to identify direct project costs. In addition all three organisations provided budget breakdowns. The bulk of direct costs were staff costs and these include national insurance and pension costs.

The main source of free or discounted resources identified has been volunteers. They have been valued according to the market rate for sessional workers.

The main costs to other public services that have been identified at this stage are the costs to other service providers of additional referrals that would not have been made without the mentoring project being in place. Catch22 and St Giles took a sample of 45 clients and estimated the additional referrals made as a result of the

project. These are noted in this evaluation report, but at this stage have not been valued. Another potential cost to other public services might be a change in the number of additional breaches and recalls resulting from the closer scrutiny of offenders who participate in the mentoring project. At this stage in the evaluation this cost cannot be identified, but might be during the impact analysis.

3. SHOULD IT WORK?

3.1 WHAT ARE THEORIES OF CHANGE?

The theory of change (TOC) approach draws on US work by Connell and Kubisch (1998), Chen (1990), Weiss (1995), among others and is becoming widely used in UK policy evaluation studies (e.g. Mackenzie and Blamey 2005; Sullivan et al. 2002[15]. According to Weiss (1995), the concept of grounding evaluation in theories of change takes for granted that social programmes are based on explicit or implicit theories about how and why the programme will work.

A theory-based evaluation is one that starts by unpacking the theoretical or logical sequence by which an intervention is expected to bring about its desired effects. The key question to ask is:

> "What is the conceptual link from an intervention's inputs to the production of its outputs and, subsequently, to its impacts on society in terms of results and outcomes?"

The definition suggests that the first step towards evaluating the mentoring programmes is to determine intended outcomes, the activities it expects to implement to achieve those outcomes and the contextual factors that may have an effect on implementation of activities and their potential to bring about the desired outcomes.

The scoping activity undertaken as part of the evaluation has enabled the team to develop initial theories of change accompanied by a short narrative that provides additional detail. This model has been developed to reflect the full details of the programmes and their specifications. Given two programmes were operating, when considering the theories of change, the team was alert to the possibility that there might be a number of different theories of change operating across different sites.

3.2 THEORY OF CHANGE FOR THE MENTORING PROJECT

The theory of change that has been developed is summarised in the diagram below (Figure 3.1).

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[15] Mackenzie M. and A. Blamey (2005) 'The practice and the theory: Lessons from the application of a theories of change approach' Evaluation 11: 151-168
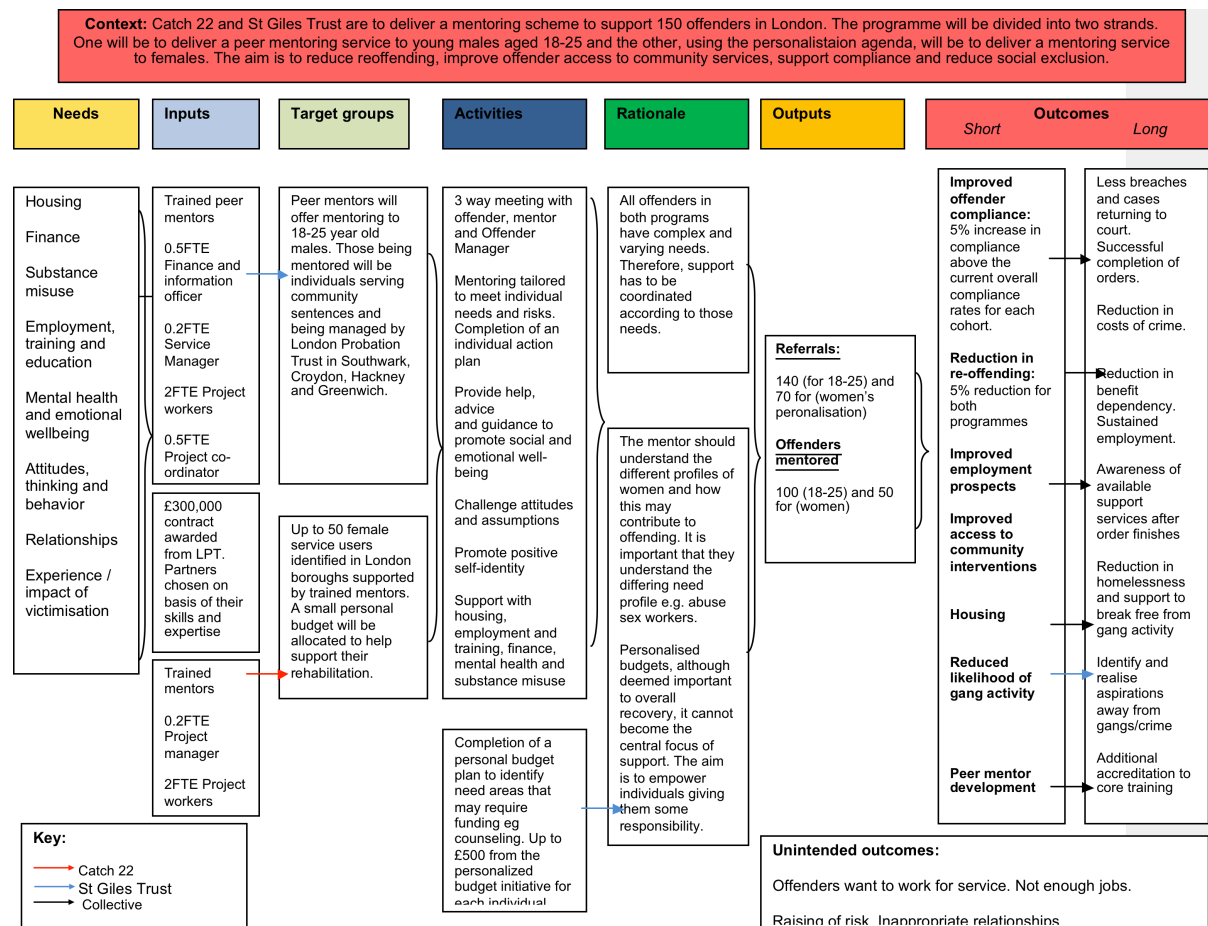
Context: Catch 22 and St Giles Trust are to deliver a mentoring scheme to support 150 offenders in London. The programme will be divided into two strands. One will be to deliver a peer mentoring service to young males aged 18-25 and the other, using the personalistaion agenda, will be to deliver a mentoring service to females. The aim is to reduce reoffending, improve offender access to community services, support compliance and reduce social exclusion.

Needs	Inputs	Target groups	Activities	Rationale	Outputs	Outcomes
						Short — Long

Needs: Housing / Finance / Substance misuse / Employment, training and education / Mental health and emotional wellbeing / Attitudes, thinking and behavior / Relationships / Experience / impact of victimisation

Inputs: Trained peer mentors / 0.5FTE Finance and information officer / 0.2FTE Service Manager / 2FTE Project workers / 0.5FTE Project co-ordinator

£300,000 contract awarded from LPT. Partners chosen on basis of their skills and expertise

Trained mentors / 0.2FTE Project manager / 2FTE Project workers

Key:
→ Catch 22
→ St Giles Trust
→ Collective

Target groups: Peer mentors will offer mentoring to 18-25 year old males. Those being mentored will be individuals serving community sentences and being managed by London Probation Trust in Southwark, Croydon, Hackney and Greenwich.

Up to 50 female service users identified in London boroughs supported by trained mentors. A small personal budget will be allocated to help support their rehabilitation.

Activities: 3 way meeting with offender, mentor and Offender Manager

Mentoring tailored to meet individual needs and risks. Completion of an individual action plan

Provide help, advice and guidance to promote social and emotional well-being

Challenge attitudes and assumptions

Promote positive self-identity

Support with housing, employment and training, finance, mental health and substance misuse

Completion of a personal budget plan to identify need areas that may require funding eg counseling. Up to £500 from the personalized budget initiative for each individual.

Rationale: All offenders in both programs have complex and varying needs. Therefore, support has to be coordinated according to those needs.

The mentor should understand the different profiles of women and how this may contribute to offending. It is important that they understand the differing need profile e.g. abuse sex workers.

Personalised budgets, although deemed important to overall recovery, it cannot become the central focus of support. The aim is to empower individuals giving them some responsibility.

Outputs:
Referrals:
140 (for 18-25) and 70 for (women's peronalisation)

Offenders mentored
100 (18-25) and 50 for (women)

Unintended outcomes:
Offenders want to work for service. Not enough jobs.
Raising of risk. Inappropriate relationships

Outcomes (Short): Improved offender compliance: 5% increase in compliance above the current overall compliance rates for each cohort.

Reduction in re-offending: 5% reduction for both programmes

Improved employment prospects

Improved access to community interventions

Housing

Reduced likelihood of gang activity

Peer mentor development

Outcomes (Long): Less breaches and cases returning to court. Successful completion of orders.

Reduction in costs of crime.

Reduction in benefit dependency. Sustained employment.

Awareness of available support services after order finishes

Reduction in homelessness and support to break free from gang activity

Identify and realise aspirations away from gangs/crime

Additional accreditation to core training

Figure 3-1: Theory of change

3.2.1 INPUTS

The funding for the mentoring provision was £300,000 split between two providers: SGT and Catch22. These organisations were selected due to their expertise on particular issues such as women, young offenders, gangs and a strong mentoring theme in their previous work.

Referrals were expected to come from local delivery units (LDU) within London Probation. For the women's project, these referrals were to be pan London, therefore including LDUs where there was no current women-only provision. For the male peer mentoring project, they were to be from the Southwark[16], Croydon, Hackney and Greenwich LDUs. The services also acknowledged that they may need to be pro-active in receiving referrals by promoting their services to Offender Mangers. Referrals would involve the review of assessment information (pre-sentence report) and/or Oasys to identify risk and needs of service users.

Both providers had similar operational structures. The Service Manager was to be drawn from Catch22's existing management structure and subject to Catch22's management pathway training, and performance and competency led appraisal process. SGT indicated it would employ 3 project managers. Each viewed as having differing roles but collectively to provide project management, partner liaison and fundraising. Catch22 awas also to employ a project co-ordinator to provide supervision to project workers and volunteers. They would also be responsible for ensuring the quality of the support provided. In addition, both services indicted they would employ four project workers, 2 for each strand of the projects. These would be responsible for providing

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[16] Southwark pulled out of the project at a very early stage and were replaced by Lewisham.

quality support to service users, overseeing the mentors and the creation, review and exit of mentoring matches. Further, a finance and information officer would be employed to manage administration, monitoring and finance procedures associated with the project.[17]

Given the importance of mentors to this programme, both providers would employ a number of people in this role. For the 18-25 year olds it was anticipated that these young men would be mentored by SGT, with up to 20 ex-offenders recruited to provide peer mentoring.[18] For the women at Catch22, up to 40 mentors would be recruited, who would be drawn from the world of business to deliver the service to women on probation.

3.2.3 ACTIVITIES

The delivery model for 18-25 year olds would involve an initial three-way meeting between the Offender Manager, mentee and project worker (peer mentor) following which the peer mentor and mentee would complete a mentoring assessment and action plan detailing their goals for the programme and details future activities to be undertaken. Initial contact was viewed as needing to be intense to address certain need areas, but would then taper off to weekly or fortnightly meetings dependent on the level of need identified.

For women, to facilitate access to a personal budget of approximately £500 per offender, a personal budget plan would be completed to identify need areas that may require funding, such as emotional wellbeing supported through counselling.

The relationship was viewed as being central to the delivery model of both strands of the project. Where possible, the relationship between mentor and mentee should remain a constant throughout engagement.

Mentees were to be provided with mentoring support and assistance with accessing mainstream services. For the women, mentors would address emotional wellbeing and help to build confidence and self-esteem.

3.2.4 RATIONALE

Offenders accessing both services were expected to have complex and varying needs. Meeting their needs can be problematic for service commissioners and providers. In particular, they often need personalised, co-ordinated and specialised services from a wide range of providers, which can be difficult and costly to deliver.

For women the mentor should understand the different profiles of women and how this may contribute to offending. Further, it is important mentors are aware of differing presenting needs or barriers to engagement, such as history of abuse. The role of the mentor was viewed as integral to the support provided, they must be able to gain the trust of the offender and have an ability to identify with them in order to find the most suitable mechanism of support.

In order to provide a personalised service, allowing individuals to have some control over their support, the introduction of a personal budget for the women was part of the support package offered. Through support planning and a personal budget plan, the mentee together with their mentor would identify areas of need such as employment, financial and emotional. From this, a decision would be made between the mentor and project worker as to whether the use of the personal budget may elevate some areas identified. The example given in the theories of change workshop was use the money to access paid for counselling services.

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[17] In reality the staffing appeared to be quite different to that planned – there was C22 project manager (recruited specifically for this and other projects) overseeing both projects; a C22 co-ordinator on the women's project; a St G project manager; and C22 and St G each employing 2 paid peer mentors. There was also a sense that some other staff in both organisations had some minimal involvement.

[18] In reality each organisation employed 2 paid peer mentors.

3.2.5 OUTPUTS

The outputs from this programme were considered to be the following:

- **Referrals:** A referral is sent to either Catch22 or St Giles Trust by an Offender Manager (OM) after which an initial 3 way meeting between the Offender Manger, mentor and mentee would be scheduled.[19] An individual action plan would then be developed detailing the service users' needs and goals. 140 referrals were expected for the 18-25 service and 70 for the women's personalisation element.
- **Offenders mentored:** Of those referrals received, it was anticipated that 100 offenders will be mentored from the 18-25 cohort and 50 from the women's personalisation approach. The mentoring relationship was expected to last on average 6 months. This would include a 3 month period for intensive support followed by a further 3 months for transition and exit work to be completed. However, in order to meet individual need, the project offered the flexibility of up to 10 months support.

3.2.6 SHORT AND LONG TERM OUTCOMES

There were a number of key outcomes identified by LPT that St Giles Trust and Catch22 were expected to achieve. Below the short term outcomes have been described followed by how they transcribe to longer term outcomes to benefit both the service and service user. It was envisaged that all outcomes would be monitored through the production of a monthly or quarterly report supplemented further by a quarterly contract review meeting between the commissioner (LPT) and the Provider (C22).

Improved offender compliance

Short term: One deliverable was for services to increase offender compliance by 5% above the current overall compliance rate for each cohort.

Long term: Through improved offender compliance it is expected that there will be less breaches and returning of cases to court. Not only would this mean offenders successfully completing their order, which ultimately reduces the costs of crime, but it could also assist with reducing reoffending.

Reduction in Re-offending

Short term: A target of 5% reduction across both programmes was set, to be measured against the baseline reoffending rates at the outset of the project which were 38.1% for peer mentoring and 27.8% for women's personalisation.

Long term: In the long term, it is envisaged that costs of crime will reduce. Further, as the opportunity for sustained employment increases, benefit dependency will decrease.

Improved employment prospects

Short term: The providers would work with agencies that offer employment and education support within their area, to link their service users with such agencies. Mentors would facilitate preliminary confidence building to assist in getting individuals 'work ready' and contact relevant agencies. Further, support would be offered through CV writing, filling out applications and sourcing volunteering opportunities.

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[19] In reality all referrals came to the C22 project manager who either directly allocated in the peer project, or passed to the women's co-ordinator to allocate within the women's project.

Long term: Individuals could gain employment or education. Further, service users would have the skills, knowledge and confidence to know where and how to apply for jobs once the mentoring support ceases. This would again impact on overall benefit dependency and potential reductions in reoffending.

Improved access to community interventions

Short term: The project would provide knowledge about local services and support the individual to access community support such as health, fitness and social events.

Long term: Increase in awareness of available support services. Empower the individual to know what services exist and have the confidence to access them.

Housing

Short term: Providers would be fully aware of services within their area and mentors would signpost individuals to relevant agencies and assist with filling in applications. Service users would gain knowledge and skills of where and how to apply for housing.

Long term: It is envisaged that through housing support, homelessness would reduce, in some cases ensuring that alternative suitable accommodation could be located and where necessary support individuals to break free from gang activity.

Reduced likelihood of gang activity

Short term: A reduction in gang activity.

Long term: Identify and realise aspirations away from gangs and crime.

Peer mentor development

Short term: Regular supervision, performance reviews and access to voluntary and mandatory training would be available for all paid and volunteer mentors.

Long term: This would enable the project to improve the employment prospects of those working as mentors.

4. CAN IT WORK?

The two distinct mentoring projects were implemented by London Probation Trust on 1st February 2013. The evaluation examines the period of implementation from this date until 30th March 2014, tracking those cases referred in the eight month period of 1st February 2013 until 30th September 2013. During this time the male 18-25 peer mentor (PM) project was available in four of LPT's local delivery units: Hackney; Croydon; Lewisham; and Greenwich. The women's personalised budget (PB) project was available to women across ten of LPTs local delivery units: Barnet and Enfield; Barking, Dagenham and Havering; Haringey; Redbridge and Waltham Forest; Croydon; Greenwich; Lambeth; Lewisham; Wandsworth; and Camden Women's attendance centre.

4.1 BACKGROUND TO COMMISSIONING

Those involved in commissioning the service indicated that a key impetus for developing the mentoring projects was the government's 'transforming rehabilitation' agenda, and the role envisioned for mentoring therein. In this context LPT were keen to understand the role mentoring could play in service delivery, and whether it could be associated to reductions in reoffending.

The initial project documentation, theories of change workshop and initial interviews all indicated the expectation that the peer mentoring project for the young men would be directed linked to the delivering of the EXIT Community Order. This was an intensive community order provided as an alternative to custody for 18 – 25 year old men, with the mentoring being offered as one of a range of interventions. However, the feedback and data confirm that this intended focus in terms of the cohort targeted for the mentoring did not play out. It is likely that the initial reason for this was the timing of 'go live' dates for the two separately commissioned initiatives - the mentoring being implemented approximately two months prior to the EXIT programme. The desire to ensure referrals were made to the mentoring project in order to use this resource was viewed as needing to be balanced with retaining some capacity for EXIT service users. In reality twenty-two individuals being considered for an EXIT order were referred to the mentoring service. Furthermore, only six were then subsequently mentored (see Section 4.5 for further information). Instead the mentoring was used in many cases as part of a resettlement package for those supervised by the probation service serving the remainder of their prison sentence on licence in the community. This has implications both in terms of the needs the service users present with, and for a number of the outcome measures which were designed with a community sentence cohort in mind. These issues will be discussed further in the relevant sections below.

4.2 COMMUNICATION

The initial fieldwork revealed that there had been some issues with communication of key messages getting through to the LDUs from central LPT staff, this was particularly the case in the early months of the project. This could be in part related to the shift in focus of the peer mentoring service, and it is likely that these issues had some part to play in the initial low referrals through a delay in establishing understanding and confidence in the project. However, these were worked through and resolved, by increasing face-to-face information giving sessions at local team meetings. However, there were no issues raised in relation to the communication between the two provider agencies delivering the project, nor with LPT or the wider community based agencies whom the mentors were engaged with when signposting service users. Given the level of inter-agency work involved in this project this should be regarded as a significant achievement.

4.3 REFERRAL PROCESS

As discussed above (see 4.2) there were some early difficulties with communication. However, these aside the referral process for both the projects was as envisaged, with offender managers completing a referral form, providing the details of the offender and an understanding of their assessed 'needs'. This form then went to both Catch22 and LPT with Catch22 allocating service users to mentors, in most cases on the basis of location. Mentor's indicated that the level of information provided by the offender manager varied, but generally speaking it was felt that the process worked well. Following this a three-way meeting would be arranged between the offender manager, mentor and service user. In the revisited interviews towards the end of the pilot year there were some frustrations regarding difficulties in communication between offender managers and mentors. For example setting up three way meetings and not attending, or missing key information on the referral form. However, it was acknowledged to be a very difficult time for probation staff, as by this time the service was being significantly affected by the preparation for changes under the governments 'transforming rehabilitation' policy.

In order to encourage referrals, particularly in the early stages of the project, two mentors engaged directly with service users who may be interested in the project. In one location where there was a probation 'hub' which provides access to a variety of services the mentor generated their own referrals through setting up a 'stall' in this hub. This was viewed as a very positive approach, especially initially as it enabled greater understanding of the project and a significant number of self-referrals of motivated individuals. In another area, the mentor increased referrals through attending the probation office and placing themselves in the reception area approaching service users and explaining the service on offer. Both approaches were viewed as supporting an increased volume of referrals. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether self or OM referral produces improved engagement or outcomes, as there wasn't a method of capturing those who may be initially self-referrals (endorsed by Oms) as opposed to OM identified referrals.

4.4 REFERRAL RATES

Figure 4.1 illustrates the pattern of referral for the two mentoring projects over the duration of the project pilot period.
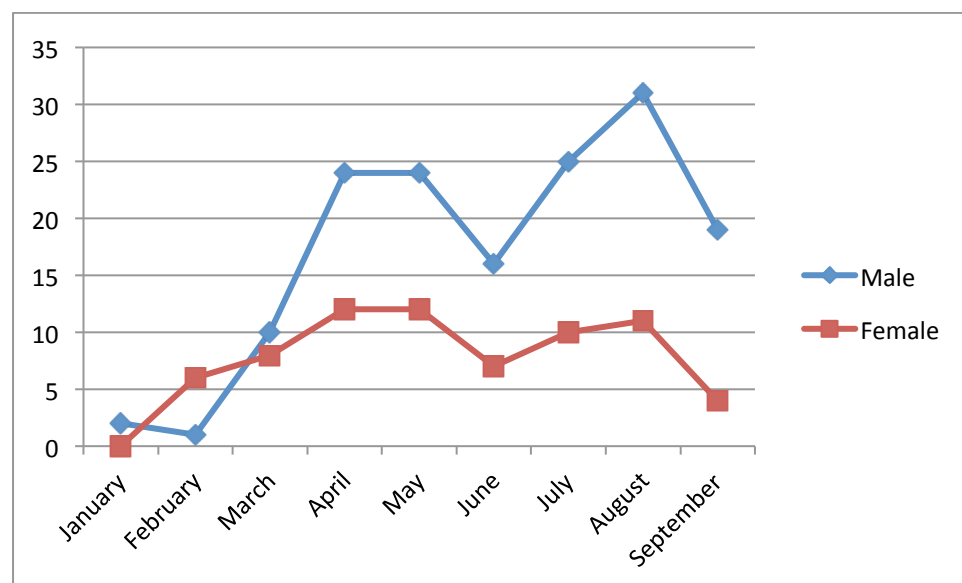

Figure 4-1: Mentoring Project Referrals up to 30th September 2013

This confirms that both projects took a number of months to establish referrals. However, whilst for the women's project once referrals were being made there was a relatively steady flow, for the peer project the referrals of young men fluctuated. Figure 4.2 also reflects that there were differential numbers of referrals from the four LDUs where the peer mentoring project was available. Furthermore, the majority of referrals appear to be driven by a small number of offender managers. It wasn't clear whether this was a reflection of the concentrated caseloads held by these OMs, or that they viewed the project as more valuable than their colleagues.
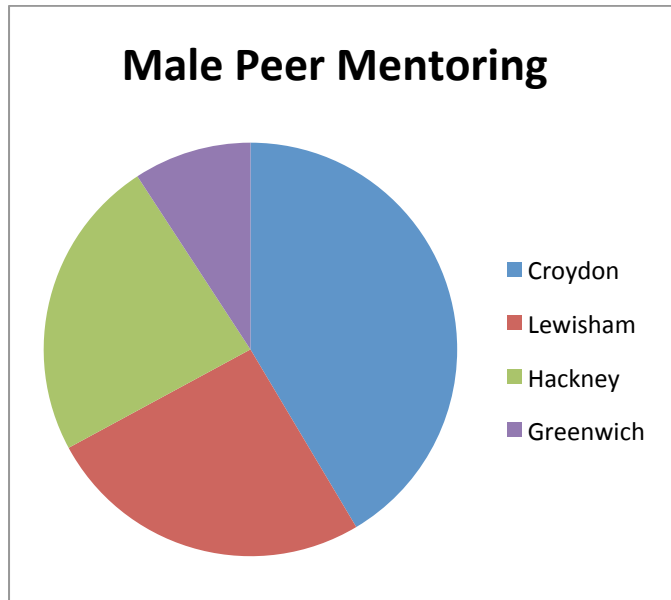
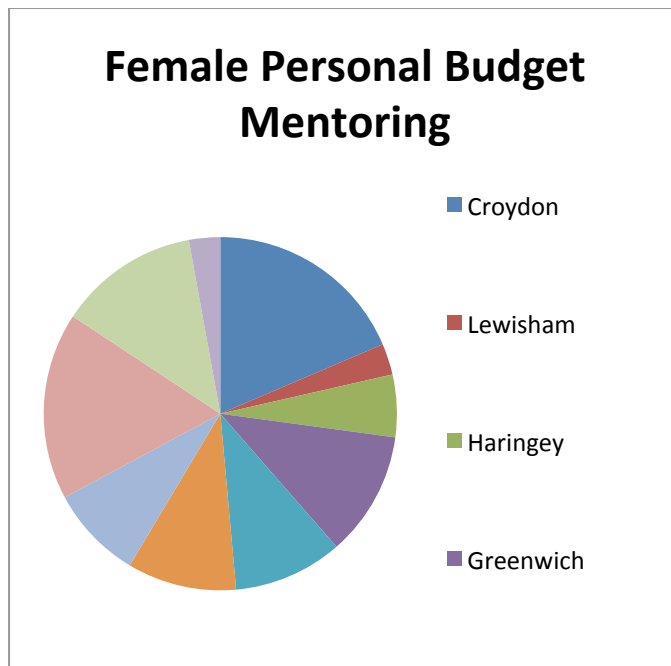Figure 4-2:Location profile of referrals to male peer mentoring project

Figure 4-3Location profile of referrals to female personal budgets mentoring project

The geographical coverage of the women's projects was very broad, as can be seen from Figure 4.3. In order to engage probation staff to generate what were a relatively small numbers of referrals from each location (i.e. 70 referrals across the 10 areas), and then recruit and co-ordinate mentors, required a significant level of resource. There was some reflection in the later fieldwork as to whether the current design of the women's project was viable for two reasons. Firstly, in terms of the project co-ordinator resource required to sustain all the elements – engaging offender managers, recruiting mentors to cover the area, matching women to mentors etc. Secondly, in terms of supporting and retaining the volume of volunteer mentors required, as feedback suggested that at times in some locations the paid peer mentor (from the other project) was required to step in and the mentor women.

4.5 PROFILE OF REFERRALS

During the evaluation period the male peer mentoring project received 152 referrals, and the women's project 70 referrals, achieving the original targets set, which 140 and 70 respectively. This section examines the profile of the individuals being referred to the two projects, and whether this met expectations gathered in the theories of change workshop.
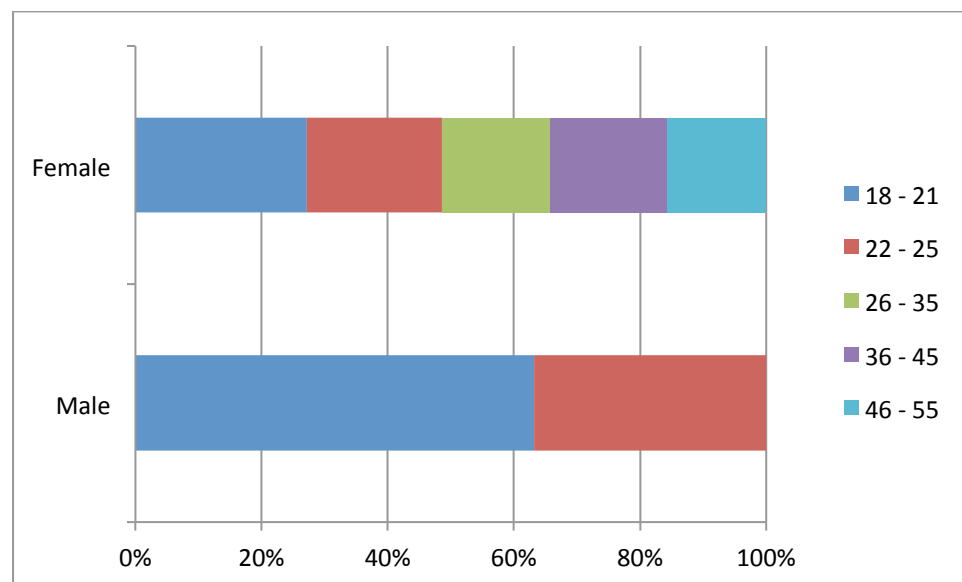

Figure 4-4: Age profiles of the individuals referred for mentoring

The projects targeted a different age profile of service users (Figure 4.4). The peer mentoring successfully targeted young men aged 18-25. The women's project did not have any set age criteria and did receive referrals from a significant number of young women (with almost half under 25 years old), but also older women – the oldest woman referred being 55 years of age.
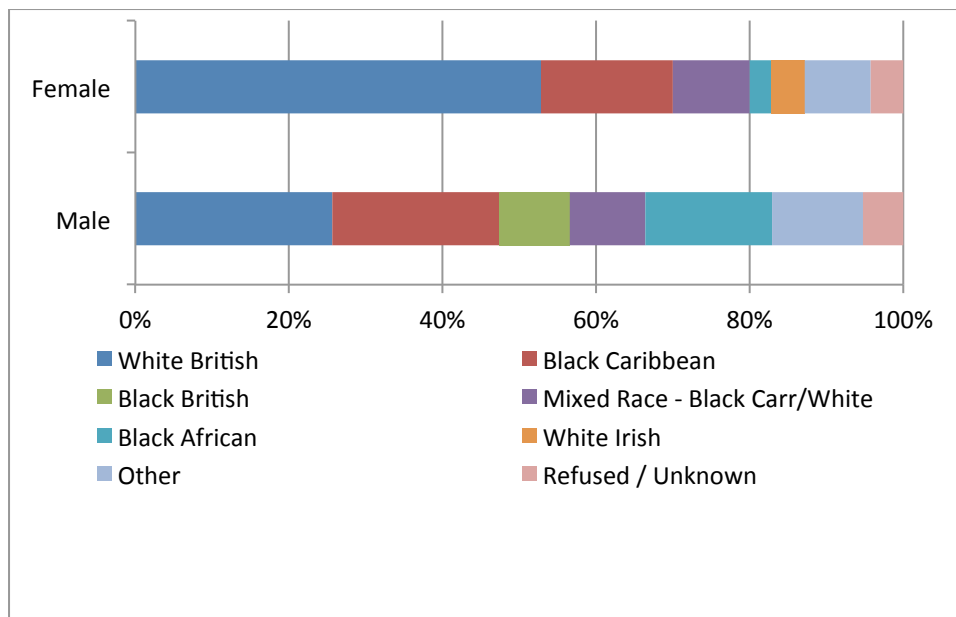
Figure 4-5: Race and ethnicity profile of the individuals referred for mentoring

When looking at the ethnicity of the individuals referred to the projects, Figure 4.5 demonstrates that again there were differences in the profile of the male and female service users. One quarter of the young male group identified themselves as 'white British'. This is lower than the approximately 40% of all cases under probation supervision across these four LDUs who are identified as being 'white British. For the women's project 52% of service users referred who were 'white British', higher than the general offender profile of LPT.
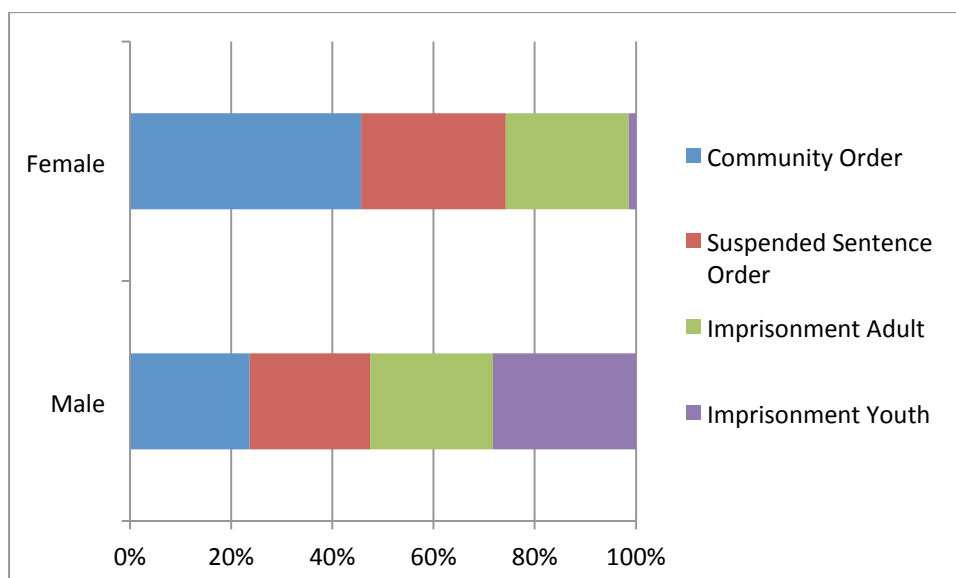

Figure 4-6: Sentence profile of those individuals referred for mentoring.

It was expected at the outset that the project would support individuals on community sentence, including those on the EXIT programme, the alternative to custody. However, as can be seen from Figure 4.6 there were a significant number of service users on licence from custody referred to both the peer and women's mentoring projects. In fact only 22 referrals (14% of the total number) were identified within the data as being cases proposed for the EXIT community order in court, and from these only 6 were then actually mentored on

an EXIT order. Further information provided by LPT confirmed that in the evaluation period there were a total 28 EXIT community orders made in the four LDUs where the mentoring project was available. This suggests that whilst the mentoring project could have been used in more cases, the numbers were relatively small, when compared to the initial expectation that the majority of the mentoring resource would be deployed for these cases as was envisaged at the time of implementation of both the EXIT and mentoring projects.

The length of orders varied significantly. However, on the whole the individuals referred were serving relatively long community sentences (some of two or three years) or were being released following a lengthy prison sentence. In the male peer project only one quarter were on a community order, with a further quarter on a suspended sentence order. In terms of the length just one third of these cases had a sentence length of 12 months, over a third were serving a custodial sentence of 2 years and a further fifth a custodial sentence of over 3 and a half years. Of the referrals, 7% (10 cases) were serving between 6 and 10 year custodial sentences. Although not as extreme, the women referred were also serving relatively long sentences, with 25% serving between 2 and 3 years and a further 12% between 3.5 and 7 year sentences.

The different sentence profile, which included so many individuals on licence as part of a lengthy custodial sentence, reflects a more serious offence and risk profile than had perhaps been anticipated. The following graphs illustrate the offence, risk of harm and risk of reoffending profiles of those referred to both projects.

- Burglary (all types)
- Violence (incl. Roberry, Wounding, Kidnap, Manslaughter)
- Possession weapon / firearm
- Drugs possession / Misuse
- Drugs intent to supply
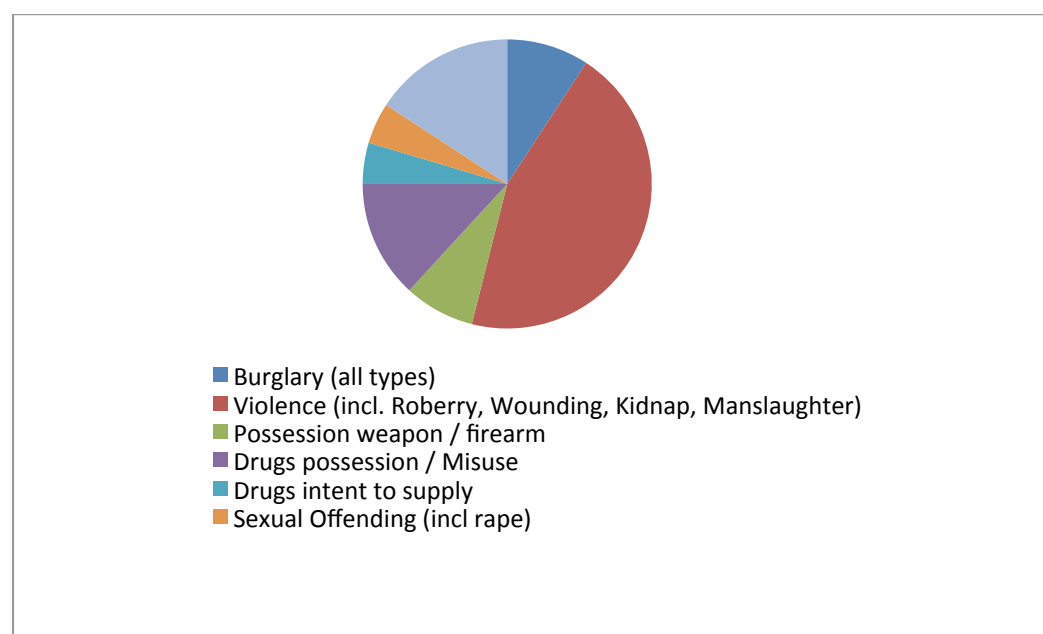- Sexual Offending (incl rape)

Figure 4-7: Offence profile of the young men referred to the peer mentoring project.
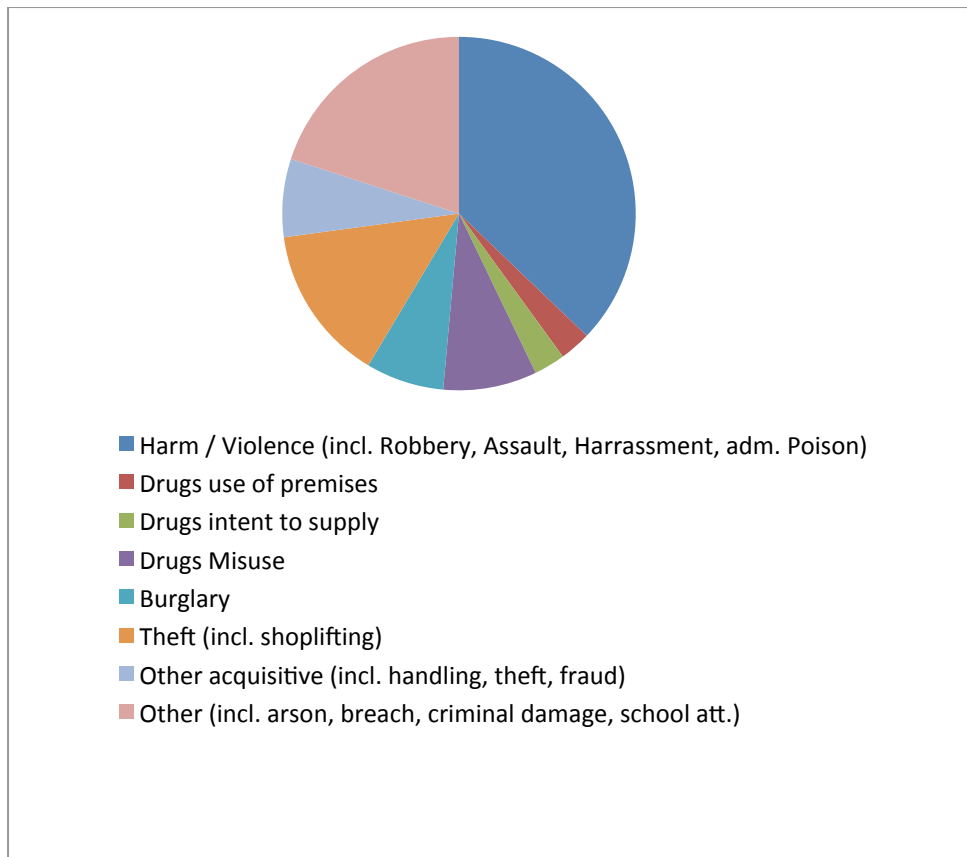
Figure 4-8: Offence profile of the women referred to the mentoring project.
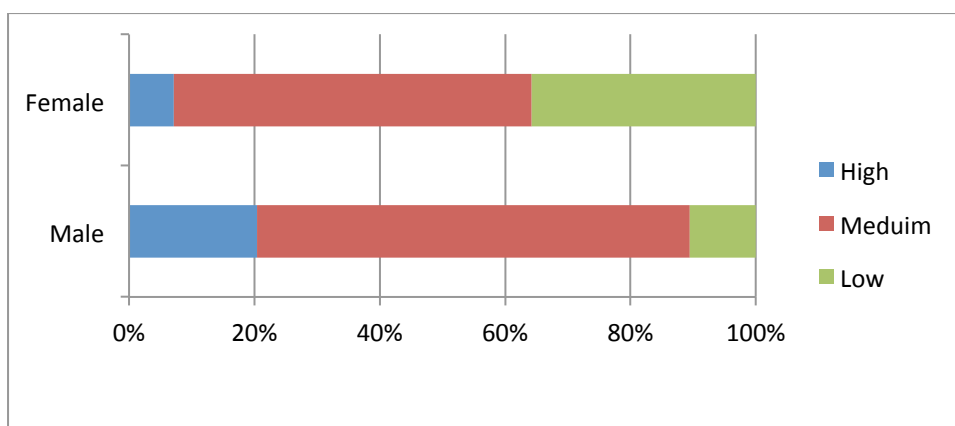

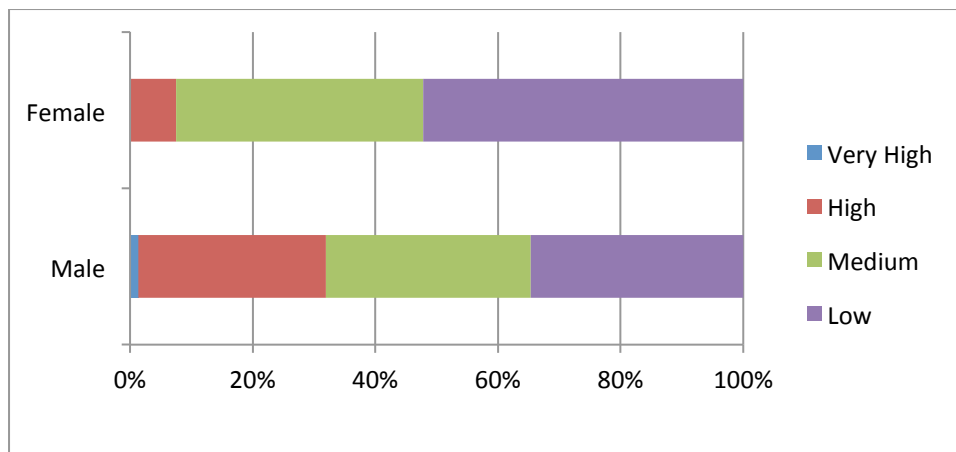Figure 4-9: Risk of Harm profile of those referred for mentoring.

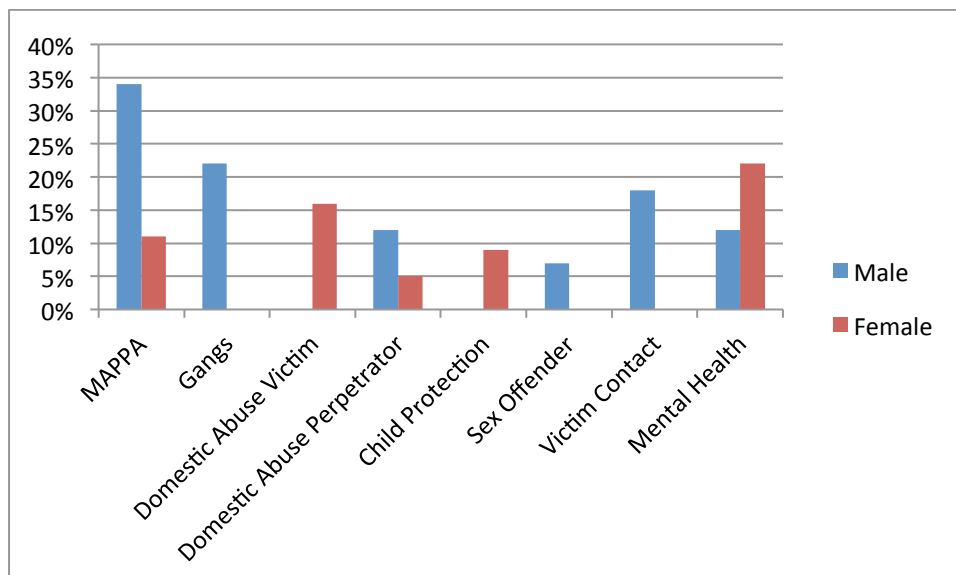Figure 4-10: Risk of Reoffending profile of those referred for mentoring

Figure 4-11: Case 'flags' for those referred to the mentoring project

The profiles illustrate that the offence and risk profiles of those referred are in a substantial number of cases individuals convicted of serious offences, assessed as presenting a range of risks both in relation to harm and reoffending, and being released following fairly lengthy prison sentences. This does not align with the expectations provided within the initial theories of change workshop, where it was reported that the majority of individuals would be serving community sentences, and where a short period of mentoring (i.e. 3 – 6 months) would support increased access to community based services. In reality, a significant number of those referred were so at a point where they are navigating re-entry into society with very little established social capital, and the consequences that such offence and risk profiles may have on their employment or housing prospects. These issues will be returned to in the later sections discussion both engagement, assessed needs and action plan target outcomes.

4.6 RECRUITMENT, TRAINING RETENTION OF MENTORS

Project documentation suggested that there would be three types of mentor delivering the service. The project delivered to 18-25 year old men would be staffed by peer mentors, some in a paid capacity and others as volunteer peer mentors. Initial discussions suggested there would be 20 mentors recruited for this project, with a small number paid and the remainder as volunteers. The women's project would use a different approach and recruit all volunteer mentors, with the specification and qualitative feedback from the initial period suggesting these individuals would be from mainly a 'business' or 'corporate' background. The project anticipated needing to recruit 40 volunteer mentors, to enable the pilot period of service delivery to the 50 women.

4.7 PEER MENTORS

4.7.1 PAID PEER MENTORS

The peer mentoring project has gone through a number of changes in personnel over the course of the pilot period. In particular, this reflects circumstances in two of the four locations. An issue identified through the qualitative interviews was that whilst staffing in Croydon and Hackney remained stable over the period of the pilot, Lewisham and Greenwich projects experienced issues with staff retention. A number of factors were viewed as potentially contributing to this situation, including the disillusionment with the initial low levels of referrals, other employment opportunities arising, and sickness. Whilst such issues may also be experienced with other staff groups, there was a sense that supporting peer mentors, particularly if young and / or lacking experience, was essential as the shift from ex-service user to practitioner could be challenging. This is recognised within the literature, with guides to setting up such projects identifying the potential need to provide intensive support to those making the shift from service user to practitioner[20].

Inevitably though changes in personnel can impact on the experience of service users, particularly when it is the relationship which is viewed as the key in facilitating change, where at all possible all efforts must be made to ensure consistency. In two of the peer sites the situation has been extremely stable. Interestingly both these individuals were recruited via general advertising and had significant experience in delivering similar roles, working in the criminal justice system or with vulnerable young people. Both the feedback and referral rates in these locations suggest that they were able to establish confidence of the probation staff they were working alongside, perhaps both as a result of their own characteristics and also the stability in staffing.

Once again the wider evidence base on peer mentoring interventions makes reference to the combination of interpersonal values, characteristics and training required to deliver this work. For example characteristics include a positive outlook and non-judgemental attitudes[21]. Other evaluations have identified the role of professional training in developing the skills of peer mentors, for example listening skills, problem solving techniques, organisational capabilities, assessment and coaching skills[22].

The evidence submitted to the evaluators indicated that some of the eight paid peer mentors had undertaken a range of in house training, and all had the Information, Advice and Guidance NVQ level 3 qualification.[23]

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[20] Clinks, 2012

[21] Fletcher, D-R and Batty, E. (2012) Offender Peer Interventions: What do we know? CRESR: Sheffield Hallam University.

[22] Morrison et al (2006) Ex-offenders as Peer Volunteers: promising practices for community programs. Knowledge Development Centre: Canada.

However, it was not clear from the records whether the mentors' qualifications had been acquired whilst working on this project or whether mentors had been recruited with them.

4.7.2 VOLUNTEER PEER MENTORS

As part of the original specification the providers indicated that they would recruit volunteer peer mentors on the project for the young men, to assist the paid mentor in their work. Initially, referral numbers and caseloads were such that this wasn't needed. Approximately four months into the project the process of recruitment and training began. A total of 19 volunteer mentors were recruited to the project. Of these 14 were viewed as being 'peers', in that they had previous experience of the CJS as a convicted person. The feedback from the paid peer mentors suggested that the experience of the recruited volunteers was mixed, with some taking up their role well and establishing direct mentoring relationships with service users and others supporting the paid mentor and requiring significant levels of support themselves.

4.7.3 EXPECTATIONS OF WHO THE MENTORS WOULD BE- WHAT IS A PEER?

In the initial stages feedback indicated expectations by some that the peer mentor service would be delivered by older Black men with a history of offending. As this was viewed as reflecting the profile of the age group of services users in the targeted locations, in particular the profile of those who would be on the EXIT orders. There was some disappointment that in two locations white females were recruited to take on the peer role, albeit that they had status as ex-offenders (four of the eight paid peer, mentors were female). This raises an important question regarding what particular personal or biographical characteristics represent a mentor as being a 'peer' to those on the project. Evidence from previous projects suggests there are a range of characteristics, either personal or biographical which can indicate peer status. These may include age, gender or background, or shared common experiences which support a depth of personal understanding[24]. It is these shared characteristics or experiences which facilitate a legitimacy or credibility which may enable the service user to engage with a message, or provide motivational or aspirational role model. The significant learning from this project is then not what characteristics create the 'peer' status, as they could arguably be a range of personal characteristics or past experiences, but that there is a *shared* understanding of this agreed among partners.

The project also experienced a further issue in relation to the recruitment of ex-offenders into the mentoring role, establishing a shared understanding of when an individual has sufficiently 'completed their own journey of rehabilitation' to enable them to become a mentor. Feedback from commissioners indicated that they had initially expected individuals to have successfully completed 12 months 'crime free'. This issue became heightened in that one original mentor was still under probation supervision when taking up the role of peer mentor. It is understood that this led to some resistance from offender managers to refer to the project, concerned over issues of both access to client information and potential risk to the mentor if interacting with other offenders locally. St Giles Trust, supported by Catch22, believed strongly that providers should make an assessment and that whilst a 12 month crime free period would be the norm, there could be exceptions. This was ultimately resolved by the issuing of a protocol by LPT which indicated that only in exceptional

[24] Morrison et al (2006) Ex-offenders as Peer Volunteers: promising practices for community programs. Knowledge Development Centre: Canada.

Boyce, I., Hunter, G. and Hough, M. (2009) St Giles Trust Peer Advice Project: An evaluation. London: St Giles Trust.

Finnegan, L. Whitehurst, D. and Deaton, S. (2010) Models of mentoring for inclusion and employment. Thematic review of existing evidence on mentoring and peer mentoring. London: Centre for Economic and Social Exclusion.

circumstances would an existing service user be recruited into a mentor role, such issues would have benefitted from shared understanding from outset.

4.7.4 REVEALING 'PEER' STATUS

Interviews indicated that offender managers did not routinely introduce mentors as ex-offenders. Similarly, the peer mentors tended not to reveal their 'peer' status as a matter of course but as and when this felt appropriate. For example, one mentor suggested it may be relevant if an individual was questioning 'what's the point, I've got a criminal record', but otherwise may not be relevant to reveal. However, one mentor indicated they viewed it as very important to tell the client routinely and early on in their relationship, as 'it breaks the barrier right down'. Further interviews with the male service users confirmed that they may not be aware of the mentor's 'peer' status. For example, one individual who was a number of months into the mentoring relationship certainly wasn't aware.

This raises an interesting question of whether this understanding of 'peer' status is an essential element of the project – is the success of the relationship based on the shared experiences and if so then this would require the client to be explicitly aware, or in fact is it through the more implicit words and deeds of the individual that this shared understanding is communicated. This may be something that requires consideration and guidance, for both mentors and offender managers.

4.8 FEMALE MENTORS – BACKGROUND AND SKILLS REQUIRED?

The project documentation and initial round of fieldwork indicates that the vision for the mentors on the women's project would be that they came mainly from a business or corporate context, with a view to them assisting female service users to start up their own business. This is confirmed through the initial recruitment and training of employees of both SERCO and the Met Police as mentors on the project. This approach had mixed success, with for example 33 business mentors being recruited and trained, but less than half retained and actively mentoring any service users. Various reasons were given for the attrition of mentors, including changing jobs or personal demands with led to commitment not being sustained. Following discussions between the commissioner and provider the definition of the women's mentors was broadened out to include other types of mentor. Details provided to the evaluators indicated that 140 mentors have been recruited (including the 33) business mentors, and of these 90 have actively mentored. Although how these relate to the 44 service users is less clear. This shift also responded to fear expressed by offender managers in the initial fieldwork that such 'business mentor' may have expectations of the women, focussed on the issue of future business, when they viewed many of the women as requiring support with other needs first. Some of the qualitative feedback pointed to the mentors for the women's project also being recruited from social work student placements with Catch22 and more generally students or others responding to general advertisement's for volunteers.

An issue which was raised specifically in relation to the women's project was the particular training requirements for the volunteer mentors working with the women on probation. Feedback from the small number of mentors that we spoke with suggested that whilst the training was of very good quality, the areas covered did not enable them to feel confident with the basics – what to actually do with the mentees, or the specific issues experienced by the women they subsequently supported – in relation to domestic abuse and mental health. In recognition that many women under probation supervision may have such personal experiences, training will need to enable mentors to feel confident of how to engage with such needs and what additional support may be available to signpost women to. Although through the qualitative work there was reference to recognition of this training need, no further details were provided with regards to additional training or qualifications secured by the mentors within the women's project.

Although a different context there seems to be a similar learning point across the two projects here in relation to establishing a clear and shared understanding of the design of the project and crucially the key characteristics and qualities of the mentors to be recruited, according to the profile and needs of the service user group. In addition, where the project has a clear sense of the personal development of the peer mentors this should reflect the existing skills and qualifications, and how these have been progressed within the current role.

4.9 THE MENTOR'S ROLE

A key question for mentoring of individuals on probation is the role boundaries between the mentor and the offender manager – given both are engaged in a one to one relationship with the service user. It was clear from the qualitative feedback that mentors can engage in a different way because their role is not statutory or enforcement focussed. So whilst the focus of their work may align with the objectives identified by the offender manager, if the service user did not feel that the mentoring was meeting their needs they would disengage. Importantly, the mentors were viewed as having the time to provide additional support and a different focus, something viewed as being inhibited by the workload of probation staff.

Inevitably though the mentor's work needs to be linked into that of probation staff and key here is communication. The feedback from both mentors and offender managers was that good working relationships required mentors to be visible in the local office with frequent attendance, if possible on regular days. The male service users spoken to were comfortable with the interaction between their mentors and offender managers, and none of the clients or staff spoke of any issues associated to the sharing of information. However, the young male service users reported the ways in which mentors establish a different relationship that the one with statutory criminal justice agencies, such as probation or the police.

> *'You're aware that your probation officer can recall you…you need to conduct yourself in a certain way. If you think the mentoring programme is linked to probation you'll behave the same around the mentor…you'll put up barriers rather than just open up, because you'll think whatever you say to him or her they'll go back and report to probation. When [mentor] first saw me, he said he's not probation, he's not the police, he don't get involved with them, he's nothing to do with them. But he also [explained] to me if he had information or I told him I'm going to harm myself, I'm going to hurt someone else or do this or that or break my licence conditions, he has to go and tell them'* Service User, Peer Mentoring Project

The women being mentored who we spoke with both had extremely positive relationships with the offender managers, and were looking for the mentor to perhaps offer a bit more time or help, on top of that experienced from the offender manager. It may be relevant however that the two female service users we spoke with were both in their 40's and therefore perhaps less likely to struggle with the relationship with the authority figure of the probation officer than would younger women.

4.10 THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

The frequency and duration of the meetings varied, depending on the situation. Mentors reported that they might meet a client who was experiencing a number of urgent needs, perhaps who had very recently been released from custody, several times a week. More generally, meetings might be once a week. For some clients, particularly far into the relationship/when thinking of winding it down, meetings might be less frequent. However, the paid peer mentors (working full time on the project) also said that they operated flexibly; they would have contact by phone in between meetings, and would see clients without appointments if they wanted to drop in and they were available. The male service users interviewed had only been with their mentors for a fairly short while at the time, so it was a bit early for them to comment on patterns, but they appeared comfortable with the frequency of contact at that point.

For both projects the minimum number of weeks the relationship lasted was one week and the maximum was forty weeks. On the peer project the majority of individuals were reported as having had 1 hour of mentoring a week. On occasion two hours a week were recorded, this was generally within the first 10-12 weeks, reflecting the initial intensive focus as described above. On only five occasions were 3 hours of mentoring activity recorded against the same individual. There were also weeks where no activity was recorded but it is not clear whether this was planned by the mentor or a result of non-attendance by the individual.

The recorded activity for the women's project reflected a less routine pattern of activity, with women again most likely to receive one hour of activity. However, the women may also have weeks where there were two, three or four hours of activity undertaken. Again there are weeks where no hours of activity are recorded. It would be helpful for future planning purposes for the project to examine whether the weeks with no activity are planned, and where increased activity occurs what this may signal, in order to better understand how the mentoring resources are being deployed. This could be understood through a mini audit of a sample of cases.
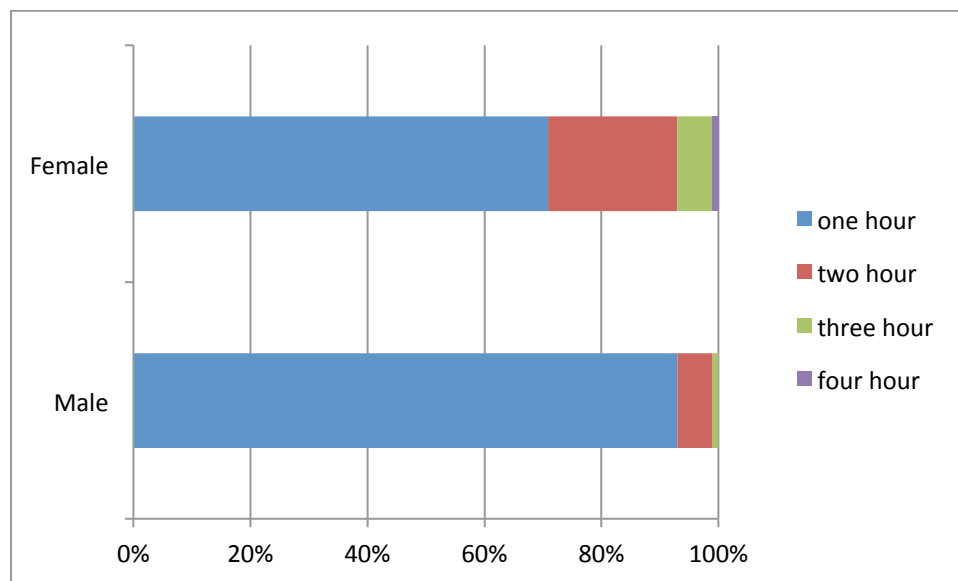

Figure 4-12: Average contact hours per week

The meetings between the mentor and the mentee were reported as generally taking place in one of three locations (a probation office, the providers office or a neutral venue such as a coffee shop) or whilst travelling between other appointments that the mentor was accompanying the service user to attend. A key question arose for the project regarding the use of home visits. Early on, these were prohibited under the mentoring protocol. This was a source of some frustration for the providers, and to an extent some of the mentors. The providers' argument was that this prohibition was an unnecessary restriction on how they could operate, and also meant that mentors might end up not seeing clients if they didn't have the opportunity to make home visits. It was also argued that it's possible to learn a lot about a client and how they are living/whether they are coping from a home visit. It could also offer the opportunity of identifying wider support networks for the individual if they lived with family or friends.

During the course of the pilot the restriction of home visits by mentors was lifted. However, following an allegation (which was investigated and not upheld) the decision was made to reinstate the prohibition on home visits. It seems that there remained differences of opinion across those interviewed regarding the use of home visits, with Catch22 viewing them as an effective tool that should be allowed with the usual safeguards, while LPT felt they should only be undertaken by probation staff.

The interviews conducted early in the projects implementation indicated that whilst there was a range of opinions regards how long a mentoring relationship would last generally speaking commissioners, providers

and offender managers suggested this should be 3-6 months. With some slight differences in relation to the women's project where it was felt relationship may continue for up to a year. These expectations hadn't been shared with service users however as those we spoke with in the initial period suggested it may be as long as their licence period (over 12 months), or even open ended. For one individual his understanding was that his mentor was someone he could remain in contact with, by swapping numbers and contacting him is needed. That the intervention was not viewed by this individual as being associated to the length of their order of the court reflected how in some cases the service was extremely disassociated from the wider criminal justice system.

The data suggests that for those who engage for 'full' the mentoring relationship (therefore engage until outcomes met or agreed exit) the relationship lasts for between four and forty weeks (one to ten months), and on average is twenty four weeks (six months) in length. For those who disengage part way through their mentoring it could be any time between week one and week forty, but in most cases by 4 months (65%) and in fact often in the first three months (48%). The average number of weeks an individual who disengages (before outcomes are met or planned exit) is sixteen weeks.

Interestingly, when we returned and spoke to mentors, providers and commissioners towards the end of the first year, the views regards how long the relationship would last had shifted to be more in line with that of service users, and the results of the analysis. Many reported that the expectations regards short three to six month relationships may be unrealistic in some cases, understanding that 'some relationships had gone on for longer than maybe we though they would, 3 months isn't long and 6 months isn't that long'. It seems that a real positive of the service is that it is responsive to the individual both in terms of some flexibility in the consistency of engagement but also the length of time the support remains. However, realistically the commissioner and the provider will need to understand how to resource such a design and ensure that practitioners are reflecting on how the resource being targeted. A number of the above findings would be relevant to any process of review of the length of mentoring relationships, including:

- The profile of service users (including community sentence or resettlement, offence type, risk and need profile)
- The amount and patterns of activity
- The types of activity

Reflecting on this in the context of available literature, the peer mentoring project in Wales where ex-substance misusers were supporting peers into employment found that on average peer relationships lasted for 7 months, with approximately 24 hours of face to face mentoring contact[25].

4.11 ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MENTORING PROJECTS

4.11.1 VOLUNTARY NATURE OF MENTORING

There was a strong consensus across both projects that the mentoring was a voluntary activity. This was supported by the feedback from service users. However, one individual did reflect feeling a certain amount of pressure to take it up. So although he was clear that he could have said 'no', he also felt that it may influence his chances of avoiding going back to prison as 'it would look like I'm willing to accept help, willing to change and turn a new page'. This is important to reflect on when services are offered in the context of statutory service delivery, and the potential for enforcement decisions. Similarly, this required some clarification with

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[25] Morrison et al, 2014

offender managers, who initially felt the mentoring activity could replace their supervision appointments which are enforceable. LPT clarified that the mentoring was additional, and voluntary.

4.11.2 IDENTIFYING THOSE 'MENTORED

A key challenge for the evaluation has been establishing a clear definition of who has been 'mentored' from the wider group of those referred to the project. The initial project contract suggested that the mentoring would involve the following steps:

- A referral from the offender manager (OM)
- A 3 way assessment meeting between the OM, mentor and service user
- An 'action plan' with established targets
- 4 appointments per month, for between 3 and 6 months

A number of these steps are not clearly indicated within the data gathered. As such the evaluation worked on the basis that all individuals who have EITHER (at the least) one target recorded (on the basis of an assessment meeting and action plan) OR (at the least) one hour of mentoring activity recorded within the data have been 'mentored'. Using this definition, of the 152 referrals to the peer project, 77 young men have been actively 'mentored' (as 12 were deemed 'unworkable' and 63 did not start any activity post referral). Of the 71 women referred to the project, 44 were actively 'mentored' (as 1 woman was deemed 'unworkable', and 26 did not start any activity post referral).
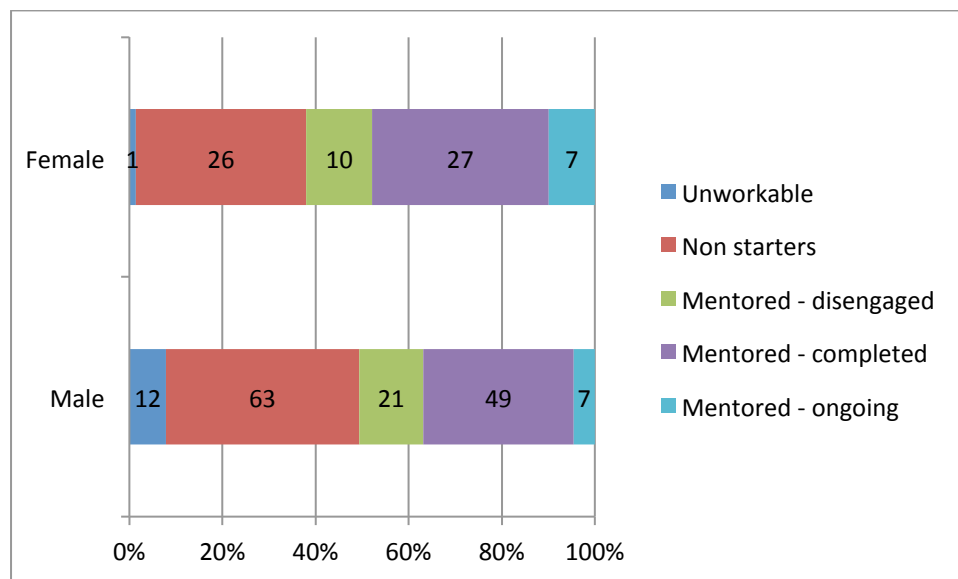
Figure 4-13: Engagement of those referred with the mentoring projects (Peer n= 152; Women n = 71)

The qualitative feedback from staff suggested that the attrition rate from the mentoring had been lower than expected. For example it was reported that LPT had allowed for a 40% drop out, and by the end of the first year this was closer to 30%. This is the cases where attrition is measured including only those who are 'mentored'. The data reflects that 70% of the young men on the peer project, and 73% of the women who started a mentoring relationship, were recorded as having completed the relationship. However, these figures do not include the substantial attrition of individuals referred who then do not go on to start any mentoring relationship, examined further below when trying to understand which individuals do not engage or disengage and why. Nor do these calculations of completion rates include those who were viewed as still being mentored even though they may be disengaged for short periods.

Although the numbers of those mentored on both projects are too small to test for statistical significance in the characteristics of those who are recorded as successfully completing the mentoring relationship as opposed to disengaging part way through, the profile of those in the two groups were examined for any indicative findings. For the peer project a greater proportion of the younger mentees, 18-21 year olds, completed (68%) compared to those aged 22-25 (59%). This is converse to the relationship generally found between age and compliance on orders. For the women's project older women especially those aged 46-55 were much more likely to complete the relationship than all other age groups (86%, 6 of the 7 women) compared for example to the twenty two 18-25 year old women of whom only 52% completed. For both projects those who identified as 'white British' ethnicity were more likely to successfully complete the relationship, however the numbers within the minority ethnic categories are too low to report any differences between these groups of mentees. On both projects those who had been assessed as having higher risk of harm or reoffending profiles were less likely to complete the relationship. In relation to the order type on both projects those on an SSO were most likely to complete, followed by those on licence, with those on a community order least likely to complete. This perhaps indicates that although the project is voluntary, those open to more punitive sanctions such as recall to custody were broadly more likely to remain engaged. However, on the peer project where those on an EXIT order had been mentored they were most likely to successfully complete the relationship (83%, 5 of the 6 cases). Also on the men's peer project 60% of those with a gang flag on their case records completed the project, and only 50% of those young men with a mental health flag. This very different to the profile of the women's project, where 91% (10 of the 11) cases with the mental health flag obn their case records completed the mentoring relationship. However, for this group of those who were identified as being victims of domestic violence less than half (3 of the 7 cases) went on to complete their mentoring relationship.

The service users interviewed provided insights into what benefits they viewed mentoring could bring to their particular circumstances. Broadly speaking this related to motivation and support, including 'some to push me to explore my options', building on exiting motivation to change and supporting with setting up appointments and improving timekeeping. The feedback from mentors and data analysis both confirm that engagement with the mentoring project is not linear, and can often be marked by periods of disengagement followed by reinstated contact with the service. It is as a result of this that tracking understanding who is 'actively' being mentored at any one time was challenging. In the initial interviews the mentors spoke of almost two thirds of their clients having drifted or reduced in their response to contact. In the later interviews they all then gave examples of individuals who had come back and were re-engaging with the project. When unpicking what may drive both the drift away from services and the process of re-engagement one underpinning factor was felt by the mentors to be the individual's accommodation status. That in order to be motivated to use the support of the mentor to address other areas such as employment or relationships, they needed to have somewhere to live. Beyond this wider personal circumstances were said to play a big part in whether the individual maintained contact.

The important feature of the project was viewed to be its consistent approach to being available to the service user. The mentors reflected that they felt this was a unique feature of their service, where with other services if you stopped engaging there may be consequences or you would have to start again, here the mentor continued to make contact via the phone. Both the mentors and offender managers we spoke with made reference to how many individuals do want to come back on board at a later point. This all suggests a need for flexibility in a mentoring relationship, one which recognises the process of engaging with services, and desistance from offending more broadly is non-linear.

4.12 ENDINGS AND EXIT STRATEGIES

Part of ensuring the resource is best deployed is being alert to the points at which individuals can be exited from the project, and the process by which this is done in order that the individual is supported and positive gains are sustained. The mentors indicated that this was undertaken on a case by case basis, when action plans were achieved or sufficient progress made. One mentor referred to it being when he could see 'they're taking responsibility for themselves'. There was also a clear sense that the process of ending the mentoring relationship should be undertaken with care and over time. This was something expressed by mentors and service users engaged in both projects, as there is a danger reported by service users that they could feel 'lost' after having such responsive support.

> *'Something you learn along the way is at what point do you stop giving client support. For as long as you are at the other end of the phone, they're always going to want to continue working with you, once you've built up that rapport. So I think it's being able to slowly pull back. And be conscious of when client is at stage when you can retreat a bit, so that they learn to depend on you a lot less. So it's not just pulling the plug'.* Paid Peer Mentor

The provider's project manager made reference to their involvement in this decision process and offering advice and support during the peer mentors supervision, including how the mentor feels about the decision

4.13 THE FUTURE

In the latter stages of the evaluation period, a decision was made by LPT to extend the period of project delivery. The qualitative feedback from when we revisited commissioners and providers gave some indication as to whether any changes had been made to the contract in light of the pilot period, recognising that at this stage the interim evaluation report was not yet available. Three distinct issues were referred to. Firstly, whether the peer mentoring project should be viewed as 'peer-led' rather than a peer delivered service. It was viewed that this would better enable the project demand to be met on an ongoing basis, when peer-mentors were not able to be recruited or retained. This has been highlighted in previous research where selection criteria reduced the potential numbers of peer mentors available[26]. Others have confirmed a view that unlike the Government's expectation of an 'army of old lags', in reality the 'pool of individuals possessing the requisite experience, aptitude and skills may be small' (Fletcher and Batty, 2012; p7).

Secondly, there seemed to be an acknowledgement that the length and intensity of relationship different to that previously anticipated, that it would be longer and that the number of contacts per month would be reduced from four per month to two. The latter point was amended formally within the contract. Then finally there was a sense that the commissioner would need to consider who would have the responsibility for those being referred to the service in the new split arrangements of probation service delivery. It was anticipated that the overwhelming majority would be low to medium risk of harm cases supervised by the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). However, the analysis within this report demonstrates that a proportion of those referred in the pilot period were assessed as being high risk of harm, in fact 20% of the male referrals and just under 10% of the women referred.

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[26] Boyce, I., Hunter, G. and Hough, M. (2009) St Giles Trust Peer Advice Project: An evaluation. London: St Giles Trust.

5. DOES IT WORK?

This section will draw on the various sources of evidence collated as part of the evaluation in order to draw some interim conclusions regarding whether the project is making progress against its intended outcomes. The sources include: the data collected by the projects in relation to the key needs assessed by the mentors included within the actions plans, and importantly the extent to which these targets were met; the self-report information gathered through the questionnaires which some individuals completed at both commencement and completion of the mentoring relationship. The analyses will be reported in the context of the qualitative feedback. A final report will use quantitative data on proven reoffending outcomes of those individuals who were identified by the project as being 'intended to treat'.

5.1 PROFILE OF AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR SUPPORT OR INTERVENTION BY THE MENTORING PROJECT

This first section will examine the two projects, exploring each area pathway in order to understand the areas identified as targets for change by the mentors and service users and the extent to which these were addressed through the mentoring relationship.

There was a great deal of consistency across the project locations in terms of the needs identified by the mentors through their assessment, and carried through into targets within the action plans. These generally come under four headings: Employment Training and Education; Positive Life Outcomes; Decreased Social Isolation and Access to Community Interventions.

5.1.1 EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AND EDUCATION

There were a range of outputs and intermediate outcomes captured under this heading, but all of them focussed on moving closer to employment through a range of steps which targeted confidence, skills and access to the job market.

Peer Project Data

In most of the peer mentoring cases developing a CV (n=56), gaining confidence in making applications (n=35) and confidence being interviewed (n=31) were part of the action plan. In the overwhelming majority of these cases (97%) these targets was achieved, even for many of those who did not go on to fully complete the mentoring relationship. Similarly a high number of individuals were referred for either a job interview (n=41) or college place interview (n=44) again high numbers achieved this target (100% and 90% respectively). For 27 of these individuals the target of securing a college place was achieved. For those who securing full time employment was an identified target (n=39) two thirds of those who stuck with the mentoring relationship to completion went on to secure a job, and many of those who drifted off also had achieved this before disengaging. In fact the mentors reported that in a small number of cases this can be a reason why they stop attending appointments as their employment and other probation appointments take priority. Securing part time and temporary work was similarly achieved two thirds of cases where it was identified as a target. In relation to those where setting up their own business was identified as a target, less than half were able to realise that outcome during the course of their mentored relationship (two of the five where this target was set).

Women's Project Data

For those mentored on the women's project a much smaller proportion were set the targets relating to ETE outcomes, yet where they were set there were high levels of achievement in achieving the targets. Whilst only

a small number of women had targets to achieve full time, part time and temporary employment (n= 4, 8 and 1, respectively) in 90-100% of cases these were achieved, even for those women within this group who did not go on to complete the mentoring relationship. A larger proportion of women had a target set to secure a college course (n=21), and in over 75% of these cases this was achieved. The women's service had a target for the women to undertake some volunteering, in just 4 cases this was a set target, and in half of these cases was achieved. For 8 women creating a CV was a target and all achieved this outcome. Similarly all the women for whom setting up their own business was an outcome (n=3) this was achieved.

Qualitative Feedback

This was the area which the offender managers we spoke with understood would be the focus of the mentoring service. Similarly the mentors indicated that this was the user-led focus of their work.

> *When I first meet them I ask 'what do you want to get out of this, what do you want?' 99% of them say 'I want a job'. That's it really, so that's what we focus on.* Paid peer mentor

The information collated by the mentors reflects the range of support offered in this area, but the key again being understanding the individual's strengths and interests and then developing a plan which would help them to make progress based on this. The peer mentors indicated though that it was important to support the individual to pursue realistic opportunities, rather than just any opportunity. An example was given where the individual was exploring commission based work, however the mentor felt that required some reflection as the individual did not have access to fund to support transport or cover bills in the interim period.

Finally, a key strength to the 'peer' aspect of this project was revealed in relation to the motivation of service users to engage in training, maintaining a belief that employment could be secured through using their journey as a model for what could be achieved. This resonated with service users and provided them with reassurance that their efforts would be rewarded. This supports evidence from a recent evaluation of a peer mentoring project in Wales, funded by the European Social Fund. The research examined the impact of peer mentoring on the employment outcomes of substance misusers, and demonstrated that 'helping ex-substance misusers into work is better led by substance misuse experts than employment experts' (Morrison et al, 2014; p.5). However, even within this context there was a recognition that navigating successful employment outcomes would be best achieved by having peer mentors working alongside other specialist practitioners, with such partnerships in co-location.

The LPT mentors would also take an advocacy role, attending the initial session or meeting with specialist providers or employers. Where a barrier to progress may be apprehension or confidence on the part of the service user and that extra step of support could make the difference to the individual engaging with a further service. However, there were other barriers which the mentor could not overcome with the individual. A key example here was for those service users who due to their age, being over 19, and therefore unable to access financial support with fees for a number of qualifications. For the mentors this demonstrated an equal need for the availability of a personalised budget fund for these service users, akin to that available for the female mentees.

> *My client engaged well at the beginning but because I couldn't produce the results that he wanted, he kind of went AWOL for a while. Then wanted to re-engage but still wanted to do the same thing. This was working on railway, he needs a special card and this costs money. The job Centre and probation can't provide the money. Thinks it's about £100. He'd been promised work if he could get the card. If we had the money I would definitely have put him forward to do the training for that, and that would have increased his chances for employment.* Paid peer mentor

Whilst for a small number of women the personal budget fund was used to secure progress in relation to training or establishing a business, on the whole ETE outcomes were viewed as less of a priority for this group in the context of other issues, discussed further in the sections below.

Peer ETE Outcome Star – self report change

The analysis of the responses to the ETE questions within the twenty completed pairs of pre and post Outcome Star questionnaires supports the targets outcome evidence and the feedback from mentors and service users – that this was often the focus of the relationships, and in many cases with some success in supporting progress. There was a self-reported improvement across all seven items assessed by the questionnaire including: skills, motivation, support searching for jobs, changes in life pattern, work practicalities and basic skills. In fact the perceptions and attitudes had significantly improved as measured across all but the basic skills item.

5.1.2 POSITIVE LIFE OUTCOMES

The targets for change included in this area focused on accommodation, family relationships, budgeting skills, personal confidence and emotional support.

Peer Project Data

The most commonly set target related to increasing the individuals confidence, set in 46 relationships and was recorded as having been achieved in all those where the relationship completed and most (80%) where the individual disengaged with the mentoring project. Similarly for those individuals where emotional support (n=19), improved relationships with family (n=16) our access bereavement counselling (n=2) all cases were recorded as having achieved the outcome. In over 50 cases a target was set in relation to accommodation, either securing permanent, temporary or being referred to a housing provider (n=18, 19 and 20, respectively). All those set the target for a referral to the provider were referred, and in fact 100% of those who did not complete their mentoring project but had a target for securing permanent accommodation achieved this. The success for achieving temporary accommodation was good for all mentees (90%) but for many of those who completed the mentoring project and had a target of securing permanent accommodation it was not achieved (43% of the 14 cases where the target was set).

Women's Project Data

The data indicated that the project was extremely successful in securing accommodation for women with 17 of the 18 women (94%) for whom this was a target successfully gaining permanent accommodation. Similarly, all those women who had a target to secure temporary accommodation (n=1) or be referred to a housing provider (n=5) met these targets. However, only 50% of the 4 women for whom budgeting skills was identified as a target achieved this outcome, however 82% of those women who were identified as needing support with benefits (n=17) were supported in this way. Only two women were referred to specialist domestic violence services, with only one of these women accessing the service. More success was reported in relation to securing support with substance misuse, where 90% of the women with a target (n=10) achieved this. All four women who were identified as needing support with bereavement were able to access such support, and most of the women identified as having a target to increase confidence (83%) or receive emotional support (90%) achieved this.

Qualitative Feedback

Accommodation was viewed by the mentors as being the key need for individuals engaging with the project, especially those who were released from custody. This was described as being critical to enabling the individual to engage with probation, mentoring and wider services. Often the service user's had been supported to find hostel accommodation, in many cases through the combined support of the mentor and the

offender manager. However, the goal was to identify more settled and secure living circumstances. There was different understanding among those spoken with regarding whose role it was to provide housing advice, with some commissioners suggesting this complex area should be addressed by specialist services. In reality the mentor's role was often to signpost to these services, and in some cases support the individual through attending initial appointments.

The lack of identification of drugs and or alcohol as an issue or focus of the service in the data was supported through the qualitative feedback. The peer mentors reported not having clients referred with drug problems of a more serious nature e.g. heroin or crack cocaine, nor clients with problematic drinking behaviours. Unsurprisingly, the most common issue identified for the young men related to cannabis use. The mentors acknowledged that this was in some cases related to motivational levels and sleep patterns of the young men, impacting on engaging with services and in particular making progress with employment. The focus then was about having frank conversations about this and encouraging individuals to reflect on and reduce their usage.

The feedback from the women's projects, with the clear caveat regarding the 'reach' of these qualitative interviews, indicated that the histories and in some cases current circumstances of the women were likely to include substance misuse and / or mental health issues. It seems that it is often these factors co-presenting that led the project staff to view the work with women as 'more complex'. In this context it was felt that there would be less evidence of 'hard' outcomes in relation to example ETE, and that for women the emotional support should be viewed as the key outcome of the mentoring relationship. This was confirmed by the female service users we spoke with who valued the mentor as someone who would be 'available to me outside the probation office hours' and someone who is 'willing to listen to me and help me'.

Finances, debt and benefits was a key area of focus in many of the mentoring relationships, and often targeted to supporting the individual with their access to benefits, rather than dealing with wider financial issues. This included helping individuals with benefit applications, supporting them to attend appointments, understand paperwork and respond to any requests from the benefits agency. This was reported in relation to one of the female mentoring relationships captured within the qualitative feedback. The outcomes reported here ranged from establishing someone on benefits, supporting the individual to have their benefits reinstated and engage better with the system, to supporting the individual through the process of coming off benefits and getting into work.

Peer Accommodation and Substance Misuse - Outcome Star

The analysis on the ten Outcome star items which relate to housing and substance misuse do not offer an conclusive evidence of self-report impact in the 20 cases where the measure was completed both pre and post the mentoring relationship. Whilst on all items the scores improve marginally post project, these differences are not enough even within this sub-set of mentees to indicate self-report progress in these areas.

5.1.3 DECREASED SOCIAL ISOLATION

There were four targets measured within this category of intermediate outcomes which focuses on relationships.

Peer Support Project Data

The data indicates that most individuals had a target of establishing a positive relationship with the mentor (n=40) and that in all cases where this was recorded it was achieved. Similarly the project reported achieving a positive impact in relation to improved relationship with family members (n=29; 97%) and increased use of the community as a resource (n=34; 90%). The other target in this area was in relation to spending more time with children. This was a target set in 12 cases, but only achieved in less than two thirds of these cases.

Women's Project Data

The outcomes for women in relation to decreased social isolation were similar to those of the men, most had a positive relationship with the mentor as both a target and one which was achieved (n=37; 89%). Of those 9 women for whom improved family relationships was a target most (78%) were reported as achieving the target. Of the 6 women for whom increased time with children was a target 85% achieved this and while only 3 women had a target to use the community more all these women achieved this.

Qualitative Feedback

The mentors who engaged in the qualitative interviews reported a range of different understandings and styles in relation to their role to address any particular thinking styles or attitudes within the mentees. For one mentor the service was focussed on the social capital of his clients – their job prospects, housing circumstances – reflecting that he did not view himself as 'one for talking'. Conversely however another mentors expressed a clear sense that his role was about discussing choices, understanding consequences and 'challenging perceptions'. This different approach was reflected in the discussions with the peer service users, where for one the value of the project would be supporting him to find work, whilst for another it was emotional support as much as practical help.

> *'[mentor] was there to support me, tell me 'you can't keep doing that'. It made me think, my thinking changed…gave me the time I needed to talk things through, look at the long term.'* Peer Servicer User

In relation to children and families, whilst recognising the influence that families and children in particular can have on motivating an individual to remain out of trouble and out of prison, on the whole service users were engaged singularly without much reference to wider networks of significant others. This was especially the case for the young men on the peer mentoring project. The focus on children and families is less clear for the female service users. Due to the design of the project – often one mentor with one service users – the ability to reflect on the qualitative information as representative of what was happening across the relationships is a challenge. However, the project staff we spoke with suggested that children and families were key issues, sometimes associated to rebuilding relationships post prison or dealing with histories of negative experiences within relationships including physical and sexual abuse.

5.1.4 ACCESS TO COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS

This set of outcomes covered supporting the individual to link into wider community based services which may support them to address any personal or health related needs.

Peer Project Data

The most commonly used target for the young male group in this area was attending the gym, of the 15 individuals for whom this was a target all of them achieved it. Similarly all those who were identified as needing to secure a GP (n=9) also successfully achieved this whilst on the project. Beyond this most (73%) of those 11 individuals who were identified as needing to attend counselling were recorded as doing so and most (12 of 15) also engaged with 'recreation activities' (no further details captured in relation to this broad target). Finally in 15 cases attending a college course in the community was identified as a target, this was achieved in 40% of these cases.

Women's Project Data

Only three of the targets for this group of outcomes were used within the women's project, and only for very small numbers of the women mentored. All four women with a target to secure a GP achieved this and of the four women with a target to attend some counselling three women achieved this. Of the three women

identified as attending a college course in the community two women completed this outcome. There were no recreation, gym or sports activities identified for the women mentored.

Qualitative Feedback

Whilst it is not captured in the targets beyond the outcomes of attending counselling the qualitative feedback revealed some response to mental health of those engaged in mentoring relationships. However, interestingly the offender managers spoken with identified a range of mental health needs and learning disabilities as being prevalent amongst their caseloads, but they viewed this as an area which they would work to support their clients with. The peer mentors in particular concurred with this and suggested that whilst they were aware there may be issues foe a number of service users they were not diagnosed and understood, or at least this information was not shared with them. On both the male and female projects there was some hesitancy to focus on mental health, perhaps underpinned by a lack of formal training and confidence.

However, the wider issue of 'well-being', and low level mental health issues such an anxiety, depression or coping with bereavement was something which was identified and address in a number of relationships. On the women's project there was evidence of support in accessing self-help or counselling services.

The other areas which came up as significant within the qualitative feedback were access to health services, and in particular a GP, and support with immigration issues so again help to navigate a system, forms and appointments which otherwise the service user may struggle with or ultimately ignore the demands of.

Peer Mental Health and Well Being Measure – self-reported outcomes

The analysis indicates that across the seven items responded to on this measure for the 20 cases where the questionnaire was completed both pre and post project levels of optimism, sense of usefulness, feeling relaxed, having clarity, feeling closeness and confident in one's own mind were all increased following project completion. However, these increases were not calculated to be close to any statistically significant increase within this small group of mentees.

5.2 REDUCING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The project was set the following target:

- 75% of service users to achieve 50% of the key targets within the action plan.

The project data provided to the evaluation team indicates that this has been achieved. Within the peer project 70% of the young men who completed their relationship with the mentor had achieved at least 75% of the targets set. In fact almost as many young men (65%) who disengaged prior to project completion had also met most (75%) of their targets. In relation to the women's project of those 27 women who completed their mentoring relationship 97% had achieved more than 75% of their set targets. However, for those women who disengaged they did so having often not completed almost half (48%) of their targets set.

Finally, of note, one area which was identified as a target both within the project documentation and the theory of change workshop held prior to project implementation was the potential for the peer mentoring project to reduce 'gang activity' of those engaged by the mentors. However, this was not quantified within the output and outcome monitoring and nor was it reflected in any of the intermediate outcome sources, either quantitative project data or any of the discussions with the individuals interviewed at various stages of the pilot. As such the evaluation cannot assess the extent to which this has been achieved, but given the range of sources examined and the lack of reference to this therein it is unlikely any impact has been established.

5.3 PERSONALISED BUDGETS – USE AND IMPACT

The Project Initiation Document proposed a personal budgets sum of £50,000 for the women's mentoring project, the eventual sum allocated for this was £30,000. The view from commissioners and providers alike was that this budget was about empowering service users, to support the to 'take ownership of their lives'. The aim was that any spending would be linked to the woman's action plan, and inevitably associated to goals aimed at reducing the likelihood of reoffending. The providers agreed the principle that the women would not be informed of the personal budget initially, in order it was said to avoid this becoming the motivation for the woman to engage in a mentoring relationshipIt is not clear how over time, and following published case studies of the service, such a feature would remain hidden however this was the initial approach taken on advice from trainers involved in delivering personalised budgets in health. The mentors were asked to use the possibility of funds to support progress creatively, to 'think outside the box' and not necessarily just target the money around delivery of ETE outcomes. The kinds of ideas expressed us by the commissioners and providers interviewed were opportunities or items that would improve confidence, self-esteem, and health, or reduce social isolation through developing positive social networks. There was no set limit per service user, however an approval process was established whereby sign off for over £500 would need to be overseen by LPT.

Applications for the funds were slow to take off, and four months into the project only one application had been made. This was viewed as in part due to the time required to establish a relationship between the woman and her mentor, and enabling this to be the basis upon which aspects would be identified. By the end of the first year 61 grants had been made totalling £11,111 of the £30,000 available. The average grant was £182, ranging from £10 to £980. Some women accessed the fund more than once with 10 women benefiting from approximately £1000 each.

With this being a key feature of the women's project and a relative lack of take up, there was increased motivation to use the personal budget fund. This coincided with the Christmas period and in a number of cases it was deemed appropriate by LPT to support a number of women to buy Christmas presents for their children out of the fund. While some individual's interviewed expressed an unease about this decision, there were also arguments articulated that this could be linked by to the core aim of the budget in reducing likelihood to reoffend. For example in the context of a woman's offending history being related to acquisitive crime associated to pressure to provide for family. However, all those we spoke to were aware of the sensitive nature of this issue, and inevitably concerned about how this may be perceived by the media and the wider public.

To provide a further example of this question regarding what the personal budget should appropriately be used to fund, one service user we spoke with reflected that they had successfully applied for money to take their children on a number of days out. This was a woman who was not living with her children at the time, was hoping to rebuild relationships with them. The relationship with her partner and children was an important in reducing her risk of future offending, the budget had therefore supported her doing activities with her children that she would not have otherwise been able to afford. In addition to these, there were examples given of where the availability of the personal budget has demonstrably supported women to progress in terms of their personal circumstances, whether by paying for course fees, passport identification, or equipment for own business (See Box 1). On the whole all those we spoke to from the commissioning and provider organisations, from strategic leads to project staff and mentors, were clear from anecdotal experience that the use of the personal budget had played a direct part in reducing the likelihood of reoffending by those woman who used it. Interestingly, a number of these individuals indicated the need for such a facility for the young men being mentored on the peer project. This echoed the views of mentors on that project, who had given examples of where progress in particular in relation to ETE had been halted due to lack of funds to support training or accreditation.

Box 1: Examples of personalised budget expenditure

Case study 1 (WL): £95 trainers and gym gear

After reviewing WL's action plan, WL wanted to get fit and improve her general health and wellbeing. WL used the personalised budget to buy herself trainers and gym gear after she joined her local gym. WL is now attending her gym and also reports to have started swimming. WL used the personalised budget also to buy a laptop so she can complete her Level 1 IT course. She has now completed both level 1 & 2.

Case study 2 (NM): £700 for 10 sessions of counselling (2hr sessions)

As part of NM's action plan, she felt that she needed counselling support around issues of self esteem, confidence, body and image appearance and agoraphobia. She is currently attending sessions and is engaging well with her mentor, who is positive about NM's engagement with her counselling and mentoring.

Case study 3 (AP): £809 for car and marketing materials to set up her own business

AP stated in her Action Plan she wanted to set up and run her own catering business. She applied to the personalised budget and received a van/car (£600) to deliver her catering. The business began making money but AP wanted to widen the scope and advertise herself further across London t and she received £209 for marketing materials This mentoring relationship has since been completed. AP's business is still doing well and she feels much more confident and positive about the future.

Case study 4 (MR): Waltham Forest - £300 for Asian Garment Making course

MR had lost custody of her children due to her circumstances and was feeling depressed. She wanted to occupy her time and therefore applied to the personalised budget for a course on Asian garment making. She has completed her course and has done other courses with the support of the PB.

6. IS IT WORTH IT?

In this report we set out some provisional costs of the intervention including direct costs, free and discounted costs and the costs to other public services. This data will contribute to either a Cost Benefit Analysis or a Break Even Analysis in the final report and will be developed further at that point. The resource available for the economic evaluation is very limited so extensive data collection to support the analysis of project costs has not been possible.

6.1 SET UP COSTS

London Probation Trust has incurred some set-up costs (see Figure 6.1). Normal practice is to amortise set-up costs over the lifetime of the project. However because the project has only run for approximately 18 months, when set-up costs are included in the calculating the annual cost of the project (see below) twelve eighteenths have been included in the annual costs.

Staff	Assumptions	Cost
Project Director	4.5 days for writing proposal, presenting to Senior Management Team and to ACOs and for writing tender specification and interviewing potential suppliers	£1,914.75
Project Manager	6 days for writing the mentoring protocol, liaising with ACOs, shotlisting supplier bids and interviewing suppliers	£2,139.00
Project Support	1 day supporting set-up	£224.25
Procurement	4 days procuring the suppliers	£1,702.00
Total cost		**£5,980.00**

Figure 6-1: One-off set up costs incurred by London Probation Trust

6.2 DIRECT COSTS

Direct costs have been incurred by all three organisations and are detailed in Figures 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4. An economic perspective has been taken in which we have attempted to capture the true economic cost of the intervention to each organisation. For this reason the total direct costs set out here are not the same as the budget for the same period. As is to be expected the bulk of costs for the project are staff costs (£195,553.02 or 69 percent of total costs).

Staff	Assumptions	Cost
Project Director	1 day per month, salary includes on-costs	£425.50
Project Manager	3 days per month, salary includes on-costs	£1,069.50
Project Support	6 days per month, salary includes on-costs	£1,345.50
Total annual cost		**£2,840.50**

Figure 6-2: Direct costs for London Probation Trust over first 12 months of the project

Staff	Assumptions	Cost
Mentoring Services Manager	0.75FTE, salary includes on-costs	£30,465.08
Womens' Coordinator	1.0FTE, salary includes on-costs	£26,685.80
Lead Peer Mentor X 2	2 posts both 1.0FTE, salaries include on-costs	£53,371.60
Administrator	0.5FTE, salary includes on-costs	£11,390.04
Staff costs		
IT, phones, training, etc.	Estimated by project manager to be 10 percent of staff costs	£12,191.25
Client costs		
Personalisation Fund	Based on data correct as at 25/03/14	£11,111.00
Total annual cost		**£145,214.77**

Figure 6-3: Direct costs for Catch22 over first 12 months of project

Staff	Assumptions	Cost
Project worker X2	1.0FTE, salary includes on-costs	£63,200.00
Senior Manager	A proportion of a senior manager's time for supervision, salary includes on-costs	£7,600.00
Staff costs		
Travel		£1,400.00
Training		£250.00

Volunteer costs		
Volunteer travel		£100.00
Running costs		
Telephony		£360.00
Office costs		£280.00
IT		£1,480.00
Client costs		
General expenses		£680.00
Travel		£500.00
Welfare		£1,450.00
Service costs		
HR, Legal, office accomodation, etc.		£14,300.00
Total annual cost		**£91,600.00**

Figure 6-4: Direct costs for St Giles over first 12 months of project

6.3 VOLUNTEER TIME

The project makes extensive use of volunteers. In the first year there were 13 active volunteers on the men's project and 42 active volunteers on the women's project. Based on the average amount of time volunteers were estimated by project managers to have donated on the men's and women's project and an estimate of the market value of that time (the cost of replacing volunteer hours with sessional workers) the total value of volunteering input was estimated to be £38,880.00 or 14 percent of the value of the annual value of the project. More detail is provided in Figure 6.5.

Volunteers	Assumptions	Costs
Peer project		
Value of volunteer time	13 active volunteers. Each volunteer doing approx 2-3 hours a week. Each volunteer active for 40 weeks of the year. Volunteer hour worth £12.	£18,720.00
Women's project		
Value of volunteer time	42 active volunteers. Each volunteer doing approx 1 hour a week. Each volunteer active for 40 weeks of the year. Volunteer hour worth £12.	£20,160.00
Total annual cost		**£38,880.00**

Figure 6-5: Estimated value of volunteers for first 12 months of project

6.4 COSTS TO OTHER SERVICES

Some provisional work has been undertaken on estimating the cost of the project to other services. Two main areas of possible cost have been identified: the cost of additional referrals to other services and a change in the number of breaches or recalls resulting from the additional contact with mentors. At this stage, based on a sample of 45 clients the two service providers have estimated the number of additional referrals to other services that have taken place. These are set out in Figure 6.7. A monetary value has not yet been placed on them.

Service referred to	Number referred	Percentage referred
Referred to Education provider (eg FE College)	12 out of 45 sample clients referred	27%
Referred to Employment provider (eg Job Centre or working links)	15 out of 45 sample clients referred	10%
Referred to ETE programme	10 out of 45 sample clients referred.	22%
Referred to JSA to make a claim	7 out of 45 sample clients referred	16%
Referred to Housing services	7 out of 45 sample clients referred	16%
Referred to counselling	2 out of 45 sample clients referred	4%

Figure 6-6: Referrals to other agencies

6.5 TOTAL COST

Based on the costs described above we estimate that the total economic cost of the intervention is 282,521 per annum. A breakdown of this cost is provided in Figure 6.7. This is higher than the budgeted cost of the project (£246,134) reflecting additional resources that the project has 'levered in' the most significant being substantial volunteering time.

Cost area	Assumption	Total
Set up costs	Assumed that project length is 18 months so 12/18s are recognised in the annual cost.	£3,986.67
Direct costs	Total direct costs for London Probation Trust, Catch22 and St. Giles	£239,655.27
Free or discounted costs	Value of volunteer time for both cohorts	£38,880.00
Costs to other services	No cost included at this stage	
TOTAL		£282,521.94

Figure 6-7: Total annual cost of project

6.6 UNIT COST

Using the annual cost of the project estimated above (see Section 6.5) and the number of clients that the project has worked with over a year we can estimate a unit cost for the project. Based on total referrals this cost is £1,266. However, if costs are apportioned only across those clients who were actively mentored the unit cost rises to £2,334.

Assumption	Cost per mentee
Total annual cost divided by number of referrals	£1,266
Total annual cost divided by number mentored	£2,334

Figure 6-8: Unit cost

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to recognise that the literature surrounding the implementation and impact of mentoring, and in particular peer mentoring or personalised budgets in the criminal justice context, is relatively under-developed. There are strong advocates for both approaches, and a range of documented case studies which are becoming available which illustrate their potential. However, at the time of implementation the pilots represented an innovative and emerging area of practice. Given this context it is unsurprising that a number of the design features and anticipated factors did not play out as expected. In this conclusion we examine to what extent the project was delivered as intended, and where it diverged from that defined in the project documentation and the 'theory of change' workshop, what lessons can be learnt. Each of the original output and outcome monitoring targets will be reviewed in light of the evidence available and a series of recommendations made.

7.1 THROUGHPUTS

7.1.1 REFERRALS

- ➤ 152 referrals were made to the peer mentoring project (against a target of 150)
- ➤ 71 referrals were made to the women's project (against a target of 70)

The volume of referrals in the pilot period met the set targets for the project. However, it is of note that for the peer project there was significant disparity in the numbers of referrals from the four participating boroughs. Furthermore, across both projects the profile of those referred differed significantly from that anticipated – discussed further below.

7.1.2 OFFENDERS MENTORED

- ➤ 77 young men aged 18-25 were mentored by the peer project (against a target of 100)
- ➤ 44 women were mentored by the women's personal budget project (against a target of 50)

Neither project met the target volume of individuals to be mentored in the pilot period, of note here is the significant level of attrition between referral and engagement in mentoring. The data indicated that this was not due to clients being 'unworkable' (i.e. not meeting the project criteria) but rather may reflect a number of factors including the increased number of individuals engaging with mentoring upon release from prison, and the multiple and complex factors associated to resettlement. See below for further discussion.

7.2 IMPLEMENTATION – LESSONS LEARNT

7.2.1 PROFILE OF SERVICE USERS

The characteristics of the service users mentored on the projects differed from that anticipated in a number of ways. For example the analysis demonstrates that those mentored by both projects are in a substantial number of cases individuals convicted of relatively serious offences, assessed as presenting a range of 'risks' both in relation to harm and reoffending, and being released following fairly lengthy prison sentences. This does not align with the expectations provided within the initial theories of change workshop, where it was reported that the majority of individuals would be serving community sentences, and where a short period of mentoring (i.e. 3 months) would support increased access to community based services. In reality, a significant number of those referred were so at a point where they were navigating re-entry into society with very little

support and with offence and risk profiles likely to have a significant impact on their employment or housing prospects. In addition the profile of both referrals and those mentored has over-representation both from certain locations and particular ethnic groups. For example within the peer project young BME men were over-represented when compared to wider caseloads in those delivery units. The converse was the case for the women mentored. These are findings which the projects may wish to reflect on to ensure that service users, regardless of location or personal characteristics, have equal opportunity to access and engage the mentoring support available. Further, the skills of the mentors and wider community resources they can support access to will need to reflect the profile and circumstances of the mentees being referred.

7.2.2 MENTORS: 'WHO WORKS?'

The small number of service users we spoke with had very positive regard for their mentors, as did the probation offender management staff. The key qualities and skills identified as being important included: someone who can motivate, listen and provide support in relation to key priorities - such as employment in the case of the young men accessing the peer service. The relevance of 'peer' status, and if or when such status should be revealed, was less clear with a range of expectations and understandings reflected across the mentors, stakeholders and service users. Similarly, the focus of business or corporate mentors for the women's project changed over time. Any adjustments to the type or focus of mentoring, and the resultant impact on the understandings and 'theory' regarding changes that will be produced by the approach, should be recorded and clearly communicated with all stakeholders including service users.

7.2.3 MENTORING: 'WHAT WORKS?'

Whilst the referral process was thought to work well in most cases, it does require a commitment from the referring offender manager to play an active role in sharing information and being part of initial meetings. In order that probation staff are able and willing to engage, these expectations will need to be clearly communicated to staff, alongside key features of the project. Experience from this project demonstrated that where mentors are visible and pro-active, with elements of co-location, they can play a successful role in referral and establish positive partnerships with probation practitioners. However, also of relevance is the 'outreach' nature of the mentoring relationship, their advocacy work, the potential to engage with family and wider supporters of the individual and that meetings can take place in 'neutral' surroundings. Further debate and guidance may be required to support these potentially conflicting elements of the mentoring service.

The voluntary nature of referral was viewed as being critical to both the engagement of service users and potential to support change. This was a key feature which distinguished the work of mentors from the wider process of probation supervision. One element of the mentoring service which emerges from this is the flexible and in some cases ongoing nature of support. This was indicated by the frequency of meetings and a wide range of duration lengths. For example in a number of cases there were substantial periods of inactivity or engagement, followed by direct contact with the mentor from the service user, and responsivity of the mentors to this re-engagement. This arguably reflects a service that is led by the user's perception of need, rather than the services requirement to determine fixed periods of support. However, in terms of planning resources this may become a challenge at times as mentors caseloads potentially become fluid. Further, it poses questions of 'endings', and how fluid such relationships are withdrawn from, and if or how this impacts upon the service user.

7.3 EARLY, PROVISIONAL FINDINGS ON OUTCOMES

The commissioners identified a series of outcomes, and in some cases defined quantitative targets for these outcomes. These will be reflected on in turn.

7.3.1 COMPLIANCE

An assessment of the project's performance against the defined measure of compliance – a 5% increase in successful completions as measured by order terminations – is not possible for two main reasons. The measure as defined in the contract assumes that the majority of mentees will be on community orders and those orders need to be completed in order to measure the proportion of successful outcomes. However, the profile data demonstrates that a significant number on both projects are licence cases, or where on community orders these are for extended periods. A challenge for measuring this then includes that all imprisonment orders 'expire', regardless of whether the individual has been recalled to custody. Further, the probation case recording systems have until very recently not been able to capture and report across aggregate groups 'recall to custody' activity.

However, there is tentative evidence that the project does engage individuals, both in relation to their ongoing voluntary contact with the mentors (as described above) and their success in meeting set action plan targets. This is no doubt reflective of the range of personal and practical support and progress individuals achieve, its voluntary nature and that the service is responsive to their priorities and issues. The extent to which this then can, and does, translate into compliance with the court sanctioned order or licence, remains to be confirmed.

7.3.2 REOFFENDING

The project's agreed target is a 5% decrease in proven reoffending for those individuals identified as 'intended to treat' by the mentoring service. This analysis will be undertaken following the required period, 12 months for further offences to be committed and 6 months for proven conviction[27]. However, as indicated within the methodology section of this report the small numbers of cases, and the significant level of attrition from referral to completion may make drawing conclusions of project impact from such analysis challenging.

7.3.3 EMPLOYMENT

Both of the mentoring projects collated a range of objective and outcomes data in relation to employment, training and education outcomes. For many individuals on the peer project progress in relation to this area was prioritised by the service user and a variety of progress outcomes recorded, for example, individuals completing steps towards being ready for and accessing work both in practical terms (with a CV, completing applications), and in relation to their motivation or confidence. With almost half of those actively mentored securing work or a college place. This progress was further reflected in the small number of pre and post outcome star self-report questionnaires that were completed. This supports other emerging evidence that peer support, whether CJS peer as with this project or substance misuse peer support (Morrison *et al*. 2014), can be important in engaging with and securing employment. Interestingly, there was an indication that for some young men a personal budget – akin to that available for the women's project – would have removed barriers experienced as a result of prohibitive course fees required for particular avenues of employment.

Importantly the original design for the women's project – that women would be supported by business or corporate mentors, and the availability of the personal budget, to make progress in relation to employment and specifically self-employment opportunities – did not occur to the levels anticipated. There was evidence of small number of women securing employment, but only in a few cases was self-employment established as a goal, and the project design has actively moved away from this focus.

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[27] The evaluation team's preferred approach will be to make use of the Justice Data Lab service.

7.3.4 HOUSING

The availability of and access to settled and suitable housing was unsurprisingly identified as a key goal for some mentees, with mentors acknowledging the challenge in supporting progress in other areas without resolving this. Both projects record some very positive outcomes for service users in relation to housing, inevitably though the mentor plays a specific role of support and advocacy and is reliant on other providers prioritising their clients. It is likely that those individuals who were referred but did not engage with the project, and then in many cases were recalled to custody, represent those most in need of housing. As such the benefits of any mentoring service will often rest on other more pressing needs such as housing being resolved first.

7.3.4 GANGS

Whilst this was identified in the initial 'theories of change' workshop as being a key outcome for the project this was not a theme identified through any of the evaluation methods. The profiling information for the peer project indicated that just over one fifth of the young men referred were assessed and flagged as 'gang involved' by probation staff within their case management system. However, no reference was made to this being a factor relevant to the referral of mentees or delivery of the mentoring service. Further, there was no reference to this being captured within the action plans, and as such no progress has been recorded in relation to 'reduced gang activity' as had been anticipated at the design of the project.

The qualitative feedback indicated that the mentors were aware of 'gang' or peer connections, or the potential for them, and in some cases this was a consideration for example when arranging locations for meeting or a relevant factor when trying to help with accommodation. There was a general sense in these cases that if individuals were successful in finding employment, or other useful social activities, they'd have less time inclination to associate with risky peers or 'gangs'.

7.3.5 REDUCED SOCIAL ISOLATION AND INCREASED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

There were a range of other activities captured within action plans which were recorded within the project data, and referred to within the qualitative research. These have been grouped into four themes: relationships and family; substance misuse and mental health; debt, finance and benefits; accessing community interventions. To varying degrees the mentoring service had a positive impact across all these areas. Improved confidence and provision of emotional support were captured as intermediate outcomes. On the peer project small numbers were referred to counselling services, but interestingly no issues were captured in relation to substance misuse services for this group. The qualitative feedback confirmed this, indicating that whilst there was some alcohol and cannabis use this wasn't viewed as 'problematic', other than with reference perhaps to motivation or lifestyle conducive to employment. The women's project identified substance misuse and mental health issues as being relevant in a number of cases, signposting women to community services. Similarly surprising in this group though was the extremely small number of women where family relationships or domestic abuse was identified as an issue. Only two women were referred to such services, this perhaps reflects that in the qualitative feedback there was some indication that this was an issue which mentors felt unskilled to respond to. Across both projects work focussing on finances was almost exclusively related to benefits, accessing them or support in order to get benefits reinstated. The qualitative feedback indicated that service users were struggling to navigate a benefits system, particularly without access to phone credit or transport fees to make appointments or query issues. In this context the advocacy role of the mentor was crucial in supporting the individual to establish stability from which they could address wider issues and make

positive progress. In terms of access to community resources and interventions small numbers across both groups registered with a GP with the support of the mentor. The young men on the peer project had some success in engaging with college and using gym facilities, whilst the key outcome for the women was in relation to volunteering but again only in a small number of cases. This suggests that it would be a good time to take stock of what issues the project anticipated support, what it is having success with and considering what areas are less represented – whether this reflects client needs or lack of resources and barriers to wider services.

When reflecting on success across all targets set for both groups the project exceeded the set targets.

➢ The project data demonstrated that 70% of the young men involved in the peer mentoring project achieved at least 75% of the set targets from the action plan.

➢ The project data demonstrated that 97% of the women achieved more than 75% of the set targets from the action plan.

7.3.6 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEER MENTORS

Upon request the project staff provided some information with regards the outcomes for the peer mentors on the project. The paid peer mentors, of which there were 8 were all reported to have the Information, Advice and Guidance NVQ, although some of these individuals had secured the qualification prior to the work on this project. What was apparent from the qualitative feedback from mentors and wider stakeholders was that the peer mentors were of varying experience, confidence and skill. Whilst there was evidence of regular support and supervision, information relating to the personal development of peer mentors had not been requested and reviewed as part of the contract between the Probation Trust and the providers as had been originally intended.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

To review and agree the nature of the mentoring projects, their underpinning principles and the relevant characteristics of the mentors in role, and reflect this both in the contract and communication to all stakeholders including the service users.

To further reflect on what constitutes being mentored. In the context of the voluntary status of this relationship, this may include recognition of an intermittent relationship, with success regarded even within partially completed relationships.

To recognise that the profile of the service users is significantly different to that anticipated and this may require a review of both the skills, knowledge and support of mentors and of the targets and outcomes set of the project. For example the duration of relationships, outcomes in relation to 'gang activity', compliance contract measure etc.

To improve the process for recording project data, and regular review of information to support effective project delivery and contract management. Much of the data used for the evaluation was recorded from a range of paper based systems in retrospect.

To review and further understand how the mentoring resource is being deployed, this may be in relation to the profile of the individuals referred, those being mentored and the frequency of and duration of the relationships. A regular mini audit process could support this and enable both equity and quality of service delivery to be evaluated by the providers.

To recognise that employment is a key priority for service users and area of impact for the peer mentoring project and examine how this can be strengthened further.

To consider introducing a personal budget for the young men's peer mentoring service, in particular when there is evidence that college / qualification registration fees are a barrier to prospective employment opportunities.

To acknowledge the reported success of the mentoring project in relation to housing outcomes for a number of mentees, and examine the potential to expand this area of impact given the critical nature of settled and suitable accommodation.

To review the intermediate outcomes currently captured for the women's project and explore whether there are aspects of impact not captured, and / or why a number of the targets are used so rarely.