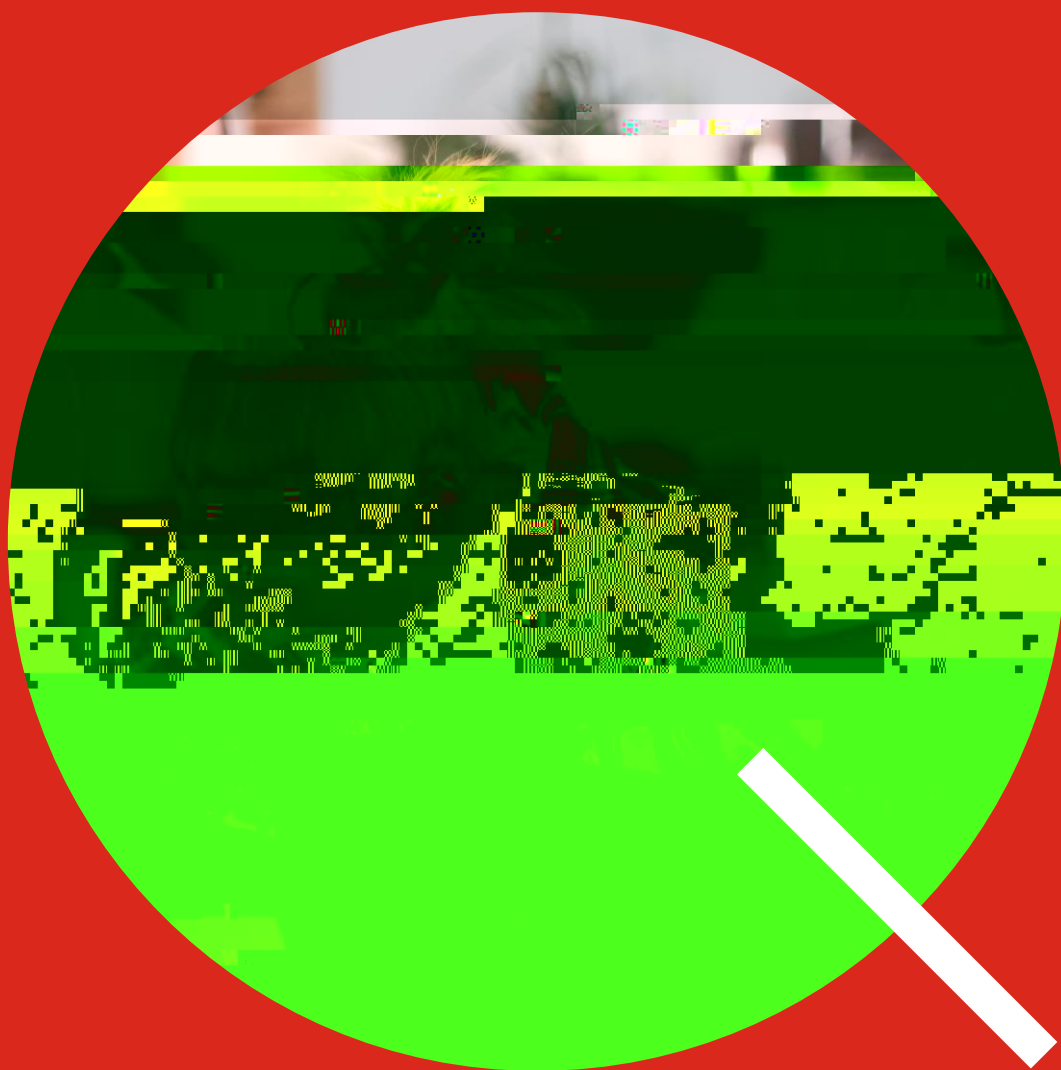


# The Mentoring Fund

Summary report



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and into employment. Such relationships also provide them with a significant 'encounter' with an employer as defined in the Gatsby Benchmarks, which were embedded within the Government's Careers Strategy in 2017.

### What was the Fund designed to do?

8. The Careers and Enterprise Company's Mentoring Fund Prospectus stated it intended to "level the playing field" for those young people at risk of disengagement in the run up to their GCSEs. The Company's *Effective Employer Mentoring* report (Hooley, 2016)

Following the lockdown situation imposed by COVID-19, with schools closed and many employers having to furlough their staff, it was recognised that providers would struggle to deliver a full mentoring programme over the summer term and that the target may not be fully achieved by that point. The Careers and Enterprise Company extended their period of funding to March 2021, putting in place a number of measures to help providers reach the policy target (which may include moving some mentoring activities online).

### Which young people were reached?

12. The Mentoring Funds were successful in reaching the target age group. In total 97 per cent of the young people involved in the programme were in Years 8, 9 and 10 (ages 12 to 15). The majority of participating schools were in the more disadvantaged LEP areas (as indicated by The Careers and Enterprise Company's Cold Spot Analysis<sup>3</sup>) and consultees reported that young people involved were those at risk of underachieving or disengaging.
13. The definition of what constituted 'disengagement' was applied flexibly, with some providers using metrics such as eligibility for Pupil Premium to influence selection, whilst others utilised schools' knowledge of the young people. The types of young people who participated included those who were at
14. It was not possible for providers to provide demographic data for all individual mentees in the monitoring return<sup>4</sup>(i)-(i)-4rn46 r43744 425.16 Tmls

persistently absent, previously (72 young people) persistently excluded (94 young people).

### Who became mentors?

15. Mentors, as became clear from the survey, came from a , with a high proportion from the professional, scientific and technical sector and financial sectors, but also from manufacturing, construction and education. The survey respondents were predominantly between the ages of 30 and 49, but spanned different age ranges, with some

The duration of the mentoring experience varied from a short intensive experience lasting a day or two, through to regular but infrequent interactions over the course of an entire academic year. The more usual model was to have a series of weekly or fortnightly sessions over the course of a full term.

Projects often used group mentoring as well as the more established one-to-one model. Some used a blend of both approaches, where some group engagements were used to establish early relationship building and to support matching but were followed by more intensive one to one sessions. Some projects chose to pair mentors who would then work together with a pair or small group of mentees.

Several projects included group activities (including celebrations) at the end of the programme.

20. To support this delivery, projects needed to recruit, train and security check mentors. They also spent time working with school leaders, administrators, year group heads and careers leaders to explain how their model worked and who would benefit.

«four or five students who had severe behavioural problems, there was a significant improvement following their participation in the programme. They could handle issues and incidents which arose in lessons with maturity, understanding how to resolve problem»





providers were more knowledgeable about the needs of their schools, and schools were better able to facilitate mentoring as they were familiar with the logistics and management processes involved.

young people in these schools were aware of the project and did not see participation as a stigma, making them more enthusiastic about being involved, and positively impacting on their commitment and retention.

33. Recruiting appropriate mentors, training them well and supporting them in the role to build [redacted] was essential. Mentoring is not for everyone, but many mentors really valued the experience and wished to do more. Three quarters of the mentors had previous experience in mentoring prior to the extension funding, and consultees reported working with many of the same mentors across both Funds. Mentors with experience of the processes, the needs of schools and working with young people benefited, heightening their impact on young people.
34. [redacted] as well as the [redacted] to use [redacted] with their mentees enabled mentors to undertake their role more effectively, making them more able to make a positive difference to their mentees. This was further strengthened by providers building in [redacted], enabling positive and impactful relationships.
35. Schools also made a positive difference, most especially by having a [redacted] between the provider, mentor and mentee. The Mentoring Fund and Mentoring Extension Fund provided mentoring free of charge to many schools, but it still required resources in terms of senior leadership commitment, provision of safe spaces for mentoring to occur, as well as the logistics of making arrangements and managing communications. Mentoring is one component of a school's careers provision and where this was recognised and properly resourced it worked best.
36. Mentoring relationships sometimes broke down, but most providers built an element of non-completion into their models to recognise this. The use of guidelines by providers (e.g. for selecting mentees), good communication and willingness to be flexible allowed projects to be implemented quickly and delivered well and safely.

### What were the challenges?

37. Mentoring is a challenging experience – both for those involved in the mentoring relationship and those whose job it is to facilitate it. Introducing mentoring at scale and pace, as the Funds were expected to do, created further challenges. Some Mentoring Funded projects could not make mentoring work in the time and place that they wanted. Others found that it worked in one setting but not another, or with one set of mentees or mentors but not another. Challenges experienced by providers related to engaging and recruiting schools, keeping delivery on track, and engaging the young people who would benefit most from the intervention. Specific challenges included.







£22.50 per hour per mentee for one-to-one mentoring

£14.54 per hour per mentee for group mentoring

£28.77 per hour per mentee for a combination of one-to-one and group mentoring.

### A broker can play a crucial role in facilitating the success of a mentoring programme

48. Relationship brokers can provide very necessary support in recruiting, training and supporting mentors and helping schools to identify and recruit the young participants. Schools need to identify staff who will be the key contact for the mentoring provider and provide space and timetabling resource and administrative resource to manage communications.

### Assessing the success of a programme is necessary to lead to future improvements

49. One of the challenges about identifying the short and longer-term impact of mentoring on

## About the Fund

52. The Funds were focused in areas defined by The Careers and Enterprise Company as 'cold spots' – areas where a high proportion of school children were known to be eligible for and claiming Free School Meals; where attainment (including entry in STEM subjects) was low; where progression into apprenticeships was low; where the proportion of young people who were not in education, employment and training (NEET) was high and the proportion of employer establishments who offered any work inspiration was low.

53.



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## About us

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SQW and Oxford Innovation are part of SQW Group.

### SQW

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### Oxford Innovation

Oxford Innovation is a leading operator of business and innovation centres that provide office and laboratory space to companies throughout the UK. The company also provides innovation services to entrepreneurs, including business planning advice, coaching and mentoring. Oxford Innovation also manages investment networks that link investors with entrepreneurs seeking funding from £20,000 to £2m.