New Deal for Young People

Mentoring Research Report

Summary evidence of qualitative and quantitative research from local authorities, funding bodies community organisations, young people, and analysis of secondary data

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List of abbreviations

BAME   Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic

CAMHS   Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CCE   Child Criminal Exploitation

CYP   Children and Young People

GLA   Greater London Authority

GP   General Practitioner

HAF   Holiday and Food Programme

ICC   Institute for Connected Communities

LGBTQ+   Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or sometimes Questioning), and others.

LRaPP   London Research and Policy Partnership

NCVO   National Council for Voluntary Organisations

NPT   Normalization Process Theory

NDYP   New Deal for Young People

NEET   Not in Education, Employment or Training.

SEND   Special Education Needs Disability

VCS   Voluntary and Community Sector

YEF   Youth Endowment Fund

Acknowledgements

New Deal for Young People Mentoring Research Report

Executive summary

About this study

This is a mapping study that focuses on mentoring opportunities for young Londoners. The study was commissioned by the London Research and Policy Partnership (LRaPP) and Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2022. This report provides evaluative evidence and insights into mentoring opportunities for vulnerable and at-risk groups of young people aged 10 to 25, and considers the key characteristics of location, quality and partnerships/collaboration influencing the shape and availability of mentoring provision in the capital. The findings in this report have been systematically gathered and analysed using both primary and secondary data. The main research methods used were a rapid evidence review of selected peer-reviewed and grey literature published since 2000, online surveys completed by Councils in London (*N*=28), mentor providers (*N*=88) and funding bodies (*N*=6), which were supplemented with telephone interviews undertaken with mentor providers (*N*=17), and one focus group meeting with young people *(N*=14). The goal of the fieldwork has been to gather multiple perspectives (e.g., bottom-up and top-down) into the gaps, best practices, and challenges in mentoring opportunities in the capital to help inform and steer the roll-out of the New Deal for Young People Mentoring Grant Programme. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following key research questions:

• What existing mentoring is available for young Londoners most in need of support? What are the gaps (target groups, locations, and effective practice)?
• What effective partnerships, collaborations and best practices are currently in place, and what can we learn from them?
• What are the opportunities to expand and improve the quality of mentoring, and support partnerships and collaboration where they are recommended most?
• How might policymakers strengthen mentoring across London (guidance and suggestions)?

In practice, a research team led by the Institute for Connected Communities (hereafter ICC) elicited responses from commissioners and providers (e.g., public, VCS and funding bodies) and beneficiaries from across London on mentoring opportunities that ran between April 2021 and March 2022. The secondary data were obtained from open data sources to build an accurate picture of the levels of need experienced by young people across London (see Appendix 1). This was done to help contextualise what 'good mentoring' should look like in each sub-region for different types of beneficiaries and to determine if the right level of mentoring provision was being delivered at sub-regional/borough level.

The New Deal for Young People Programme defines mentoring as:

> "Building a trusted and positive relationship with a young person over time. A good mentor uses that trust to motivate and equip a young person to change their lives, supporting the development of skills, coping strategies and confidence. The skill and drive required to build transformational trusted relationships is a fundamental principle of high-quality youth services and community work."

Accordingly, the idea of mentoring adopted throughout this study goes beyond the narrow definition of 'academic tutoring,' which is focused solely on examination support and/or transition from school into training or employment. We consider mentoring to be wide-ranging in focus area, adopting different approaches and models, and grounded in a relationship-centred practice that focuses on advice and guidance, which should form the basis of enhancing self-understanding, self-esteem, and self-confidence to support the next steps in the beneficiary's life journey.

Purpose of the research

The New Deal mission seeks that by 2024, all young Londoners in need will have access to a personal mentor and have access to quality local young people activities. Specifically, the New Deal mission is to improve the life chances and opportunities for young Londoners by:

- Enabling more young people in need to benefit from quality mentoring and young people activities.

- Improving the quality of mentoring by building capacity of the youth services sector.

- Increasing strategic investment in London's young people and mentoring activities.

- Empowering system change and sustainability within the youth services sector.

Priorities vary between groups

The study identifies that there is a wide range of mentoring opportunities available to young Londoners, evenly spread across each of the boroughs, but with certain groups of young people being underserved. For example, there is an evident lack of access to high-quality person-centred mentoring for young parents, young carers, and young people with chronic health conditions. Their difficulties are compounded by the cost-of-living crisis[1,i] with increasing numbers of young people living in poverty and/or experiencing trauma or at risk of re-traumatisation. It is evident that partnerships/collaborations across the system lack a coordinated approach (e.g., joint commissioning and outcome framework) to proportionally plan mentoring services based on known needs, to share best practice, and to effectively

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[1] The likely impact of the cost-of-living crisis and looming austerity

A summary of the likely scenarios impacting young people resulting from the cost-of-living crisis:

- There is greater poverty and more presenting problems for children and young people, particularly for low-income families, meaning that they have more difficulties and problems and fewer resources, combined with a greater demand for mentoring.
- The real-term reduction in family income and resources will negatively impact the logistical side of mentoring, such as travel, internet connectivity and facilitating technologies being prohibitively expensive.
- There will be reduced resources for related statutory agencies, such as schools, social care, and the NHS, leading to serious reductions in the quality and quantity of their provision.
- There will be many specific and problematic implications linked to greater poverty, such as the likely increase in poor physical and mental health, greater child criminal exploitation, and increased anxiety about the importance of good school performance leading to successful academic progression and/or employment.
- Generally, there will be a greater need for mentoring from third-sector organisations, to counter the increases in difficulties and problems for young people, combined with reduced and overstretched provision by statutory agencies.

reach and engage marginalised groups of young people in the community. This is put down to pressures inherent in short-term funding of mentoring opportunities, and the limited amount of intelligence sharing and networking between local authorities, funding bodies, schools/colleges, and mentor providers. Also, young research participants have cited the general lack of understanding that peers have about the purpose of mentoring, and, when mentoring opportunities have been accessed, it has generally been reactive and rarely an early intervention. Mentor providers who took part in the study emphasised the lack of sustainable funding, which serves to weaken their ability to widen access, to recruit skilled and experienced staff, to train volunteers, to extend the time spent with mentees, and, crucially, to undertake long-term service planning to make improvements.

Key findings

What existing mentoring is available for young Londoners most in need of support?

Having used a non-probability sampling method to distribute the surveys, we received a positive response. Therefore, we can confidently say that there is a wide range of mentoring provisions currently available to vulnerable groups of young people living in London. However, despite the elevated level of diversity, there is a lack of understanding of the appropriateness, acceptability, and accessibility of mentoring opportunities from both the providers' and beneficiaries' perspectives. What is borne out in this study is that young Londoners experience an inequity of access to mentoring opportunities due to poor signposting. In other words, access to the right mentoring provision, at the right time, is not guaranteed for all young Londoners. Primarily, what is recommended is improvements in education on mentoring, and better promotion and signposting to access mentoring opportunities, with the caveat that, once accessed, mentoring opportunities should be more 'racially', culturally, and linguistically responsive to match the diverse cultural needs and backgrounds of young Londoners from Asian, Black, Mixed, White, Gypsy, Irish Traveller and other groups to ensure their increased engagement and participation (detailed later).

Identified through the study, the most common areas of focus for mentoring opportunities commissioned in London during 2021–22 have been centred on 'employability' or 'general wellbeing'. There is a noticeable lack of mentoring opportunities that have focused on supporting young Londoners to navigate access to the right service, at the right time (e.g., when stepping-down from statutory services to community-based support services, and transitions within health care and education etc.), which correlates with the underserved groups of young people who have difficulties accessing support services due to having dependents/caring responsibilities and long-term health concerns. Research also suggests that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people, social worked young people and young people exposed to the criminal justice system have low uptake of health and employment services, resulting from social inequalities and/or lack of trust. The study also noted a lack of 'racially' or ethnically targeted mentoring opportunities for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic young people, despite plenty of studies identifying the important role mentoring can play in the lives of marginalised Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people.

This study showcases how many mentoring opportunities for at-risk groups of young people have been delivered directly by councils or commissioned out to the voluntary sector. This has resulted in shaped threshold criteria, which were sometimes offset by grants from funding bodies across all boroughs. As a result, mentoring opportunities by delivery and focus were seen to be evenly spread across each of the recorded 28 boroughs in London –

with only minor variations. However, what is not apparent from the data is the role of the private sector (e.g., sole traders) and precisely *where* and *how* they fit into the capital's mentoring landscape.

What are the gaps (target groups, locations, and effective practice)?

As mentioned, all the Councils reported in this study provide an extensive range of mentoring opportunities for young people, with a few notable gaps in provision where the level of need among young people does not match the prevailing focus areas for mentoring in the sub-region and borough. There is also evidence of effective practice in preventing the emergence of gaps. For example, London councils have signified a commitment to continue the same level of funding for their current Youth Offer into 2023–24, despite pending budgetary cuts caused by the economic downturn – which forms the spinal column to mentoring in London. London Council's Youth Offer strategies provide a diverse range of work opportunities and activities for children and young people, and this is the central organising mechanism for the delivery of early, targeted, and remedial interventions – including mentoring opportunities – in each borough, delivered either in-house by the Council, or, as alluded to, commissioned out to the voluntary sector. Mentoring provision delivered in-house tends to be targeted at high-risk groups that fall under the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities (e.g., care experienced and looked after children) to ensure that all young people up to 18 years of age (25 for young adults with learning difficulties) participate in education or training.

A significant gap in mentoring provision is the number of available mentors with the right skills and expertise and lived experience to match with young people seeking mentoring (e.g., ex-offenders, ex-young carers, and young males from Black, South Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds). This is a recruitment and training concern that urgently needs to be addressed, and a pan-London strategic approach is recommended to pool and train volunteers, including key stakeholders such the Violence Reduction Unit, NCVO, GLA and London Councils and the Department for Education.

What effective partnerships, collaborations and best practices are currently in place, and what can we learn from them?

The commissioning model follows a similar pattern across London boroughs, with Councils commissioning voluntary sector organisations to deliver the bulk of the mentoring opportunities in the community, and the Councils working with at-risk groups in-house. The study shows that the contractual nature of this commissioning model is undermined by short-term, time-limited contracts and the lack of co-produced commissioning in the design of the mentoring model. This problem necessitates a cultural change in the way commissioners work with suppliers, from purchasing and monitoring mentoring opportunities to establishing relationships to co-design and problem-solve together. This way, mentoring opportunities can be responsive to young people's changing needs, and can incorporate emerging best practice in the field. A further hindrance undermining a helpful relationship between the commissioner and the supplier is the absence of a common outcomes framework to help measure the effectiveness of the mentoring opportunity to better evidence and unlock future funding.

Young research participants said that they valued a trusted mentor–mentee relationship, with a mentor who can create an atmosphere and relationship so that they can freely air their

concerns and issues and be provided with tailored advice and guidance. As such, mentors not only need to be equipped and skilled in the areas challenging young people, but also matched by ethnicity, 'race', disability, lived experience and so forth to establish the foundations of a trusting relationship. Likewise, mentor providers cited the constant need and challenge to access a wider pool of potential volunteers to mentor young people, and capacity issues to provide mentors with ongoing training and supervision. Good supervision is particularly recommended for mentors providing guidance to beneficiaries engaged in high-risk behaviour and experiencing adverse life circumstances.

What are the opportunities to expand and improve the quality of mentoring and support partnerships and collaboration where it is recommended most?

The study highlights that when it comes to the design and delivery of mentoring opportunities, one size does not fit all, and that young research participants appreciated a hybrid delivery model – a residual from the pandemic. There is opportunity here to share best practice and strengthen mentoring provision across London through the New Deal Quality Framework, which would enable mentors both to improve the quality of their own provision in a way that is comparable with others, and to better evidence the effectiveness of their service. Returning to young people, this study has not delved deep into the quality of mentoring in London, but it provides a partial insight into what matters most to beneficiaries from their subjective perceptions.

Young research participants said that they wanted to increase their understanding of the purpose and benefits of mentoring, and better promotion of mentoring opportunities; in other words, to demystify the purpose and pathways into mentoring (e.g., benefits, age range and different mentoring opportunities open to people). In turn, mentoring opportunities need not be a one-off episode, and can be an early intervention rather than being accessed at an acutely critical moment in a young person's life.

Issues that need to be addressed to improve the quality of mentoring include the coordinated recruitment of highly skilled mentors with a range of skills, knowledge, and experience to be able to impactfully give advice and guidance to enable and empower young mentees to make decisions about the next steps in their life.

How might policymakers strengthen mentoring across London (guidance and suggestions)?

Mentor provider research participants cited that the biggest challenge to their service currently is sustainable funding, linked to the cost-of-living crisis. This is anticipated to place an increased burden on the voluntary sector to recruit and retain enough volunteers to deliver mentoring opportunities at a time when vulnerable young people's problems are compounded by living in poverty and the contraction in the job market. Added to this is the short-term contractual relationships that suppliers have with commissioners, which places the survival of mentoring opportunities at increased risk. In addition, a strategic policy response is recommended for the promotion of mentoring opportunities and pathways across the system, to increase potential beneficiaries' understanding of mentoring and how to access opportunities in a turbulent time when young people most in need of advice and guidance will not necessarily have the knowledge and confidence to engage and participate in mentoring opportunities.

The following section provides a summary of key lessons learnt out of this study.

Key lessons learnt

Gaps in mentoring provision: underserved sub-groups, pandemic catch-up, hybrid approaches, explaining and amplifying the purpose of mentoring

- Equity of access to mentoring opportunities forms the most significant barrier to young Londoners accessing the right mentoring provision at the right time.
- More mentoring provisions should be designed to accommodate and target young parents, young carers and young people living with chronic health conditions, who are all currently underserved.
- young Londoners feel that they have fallen behind in their career planning and find it difficult to move into meaningful employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they need mentoring support to plan their future careers.
- To help widen access to mentoring opportunities, providers should involve young people in co-producing, and utilise multimedia platforms to build awareness and understanding of the purpose of mentoring along the life course.
- Mentoring is often accessed as a reactive rather than an active source of help following a critical moment in a young person's life, and it should be an early rather than a remedial intervention. Anchor institutions (e.g., London Councils, GLA, NCVO, Violence Reduction Unit and schools/colleges) should better promote the purpose of mentoring at an early age and improve pathways to early help.

Partnerships and collaborations: poor commissioning practices, sustainable funding in an economic downturn, strengthening the recruitment and retention of volunteers

- A whole system approach is recommended to stimulate the mentoring market to address emerging gaps in provision.
- A joint commissioning panel for mentoring provision for London is recommended that addresses the requirements of vulnerable young people at a hyperlocal neighbourhood level, to ensure that a mentor is available within walking distance. For example, a register bank of mentors needs to be established and maintained offering continued training, drawing on pooled-funding and oversight through a joint commissioning process.
- A sustainable funding scheme is recommended by mentoring providers in the voluntary sector to help recession-proof themselves to sufficiently sustain mentoring opportunities during the economic downturn.
- A joint approach is recommended to better recruit and train mentors who reflect the diverse identities and backgrounds of young Londoners.
- Mentors made more available and accessible are essential to best shape and resource future mentorship and support services for young Londoners. This suggests that capacity, resourcing, and sustainability of funding could positively contribute to better services.
- Improved partnerships across funding organisations, local authorities and schools are necessary to better shape and resource future mentorship and support.

Quality of provisions: racially responsive provisions, evidence-based service design and delivery

- The cost of travel to attend in-person mentoring opportunities for young Londoners adds a further physical barrier to full participation, which should be addressed by hybrid models of delivery.
- Improved efficacy in the delivery of mentoring opportunities is recommended for young Londoners traumatised and/or at risk of re-traumatisation, supported by agile commissioning models.
- Good mentoring opportunities require a high degree of cultural competencies – which should be at the heart of the provision – to ensure that services are culturally responsive to the lived experience of young Londoners.
- A common framework is recommended to better understand the outcomes/impact of mentoring opportunities commissioned for young Londoners.

Introduction

This report provides key learning and insights into mentoring opportunities in the capital to help inform the New Deal for Young People Mentoring mission. By 2024, the GLA's recovery programme goal is to provide access to a personal mentor for 100,000 disadvantaged young people, and for all young Londoners to have access to quality local activities for young people. The idea of mentoring – with the mentee–mentor relationship at its centre – is commonly delivered at early, targeted, or remedial levels with young people, and delivered by councils, and the voluntary or private sector (or in combination). Mentoring for young people has been overwhelmingly time-limited, focused on subject-based learning, personal growth and, in some cases, a step change in lifestyle or behaviour. Returning to the mentee–mentor relationship, future relationships should be marked by empathic and compassionate conversations to develop an atmosphere to express problems, build a shared understanding and find solutions together.

This report focuses on what mentoring and support provision could look like for young Londoners who: have special educational needs and disability; are not in education, employment, or training (NEET); are at risk of becoming involved in violence; are refugees and asylum seekers; are impacted by domestic violence; are excluded or at risk of school exclusion; are living in low-income families (or poverty); are looked-after etc. It is important to mention that none of these categories are mutually exclusive. Evidence has been rapidly gathered and assessed from both peer-reviewed and grey literature to better understand the tailored and targeted role that mentoring can play in helping and supporting young people in subject learning, as well as to navigate and negotiate life circumstances.

This report is organised around the central research questions. It starts with a look at the known gaps in effective practice and underserved groups, and it provides a snapshot of focus areas, mentoring opportunities and gaps in each London sub-region during 2021–22. The report than moves on to look at collaborations and partnerships, with an emphasis on mentoring opportunities for young people commissioned by London Councils and delivered largely by Voluntary and Community Services (VCS) in each sub-region. This section also focuses upon mentoring opportunities supported by funding bodies across London. The next section explores the potential areas for improvement in the quality of mentoring opportunities, and it includes synthesis of findings from the rapid evidence review of best practice in different delivery models for a range of vulnerable and at-risk young people. The final section concludes with a discussion of how policymakers can potentially help to strengthen the sector, and it outlines a set of recommendations.

Background and context

By 2024, the New Deal for Young People programme aims to provide 100,000 disadvantaged young people with access to a personal mentor, and all young Londoners will have access to quality local activities for young people. The GLA want to improve the life chances and opportunities for young Londoners by:

- Enabling more disadvantaged young people to benefit from quality mentoring and activities for young people.
- Improving the quality of mentoring by building capacity of the youth services sector.
- Increasing strategic investment in London's youth services and mentoring activities.
- Empowering system change and sustainability within the youth services sector.

In recent times, the difficulties of young people in the UK have been characterised by cultural thinkers as generation 'rent', 'jilted', 'precariat', 'pinch', 'feckless' and 'chavs' (Willetts, 2010; Howker & Malik, 2013; Standing, 2014; Jones, 2020), each in their own way arguably pointing to young people's growing sense of hopelessness and alienation in their education, entry into meaningful employment, secure housing and ability to build liveable lives in 21st century Britain. It would be disingenuous to say that all young people are equally disadvantaged. Some young people live in adverse situations through no fault of their own, and they need a source to acquire credible advice and guidance. The idea of 'mentoring' is one way of attaining advice and guidance through a trusted relationship (e.g., peers and adults) to help young people navigate and negotiate often turbulent transitions into adulthood.

The long-term impacts of the pandemic on young people's welfare and futures are still being researched by academics, and iteratively addressed by educators and practitioners focusing on young people. Without a doubt, the access to employment and health and wellbeing support services (e.g., counselling, and mentoring provision) for young people was negatively impacted between March 2020 and July 2021 by the pandemic lockdown. Paradoxically, at a time when support services were arguably most needed, the lockdown restrictions made it difficult to access services, to prevent the spread in community transmissions. Physical distancing also meant mandated 'home working' (i.e., apart from essential workers, which included teachers, doctors, nurses, the fire service, food retail etc.), and the closure of, and/or limited access to, schools, colleges, and training centres. Trainees and employees were furloughed and/or made redundant, so in some cases they lost their jobs.

The UK already had a weak (or patchy) support infrastructure for young people before the pandemic, and it was unable to cope with the scale of the challenge. As a result, many young people felt alone in coping with challenges to their mental health and wellbeing, and planning for their futures. Research highlights that some young people experience one or a combination of problems with non-affirming family environments, schooling, work and training, social isolation, and, indirectly, heightened anxieties caused by economic hardship, and, in some cases, the physical and emotional effects of the pandemic on employment opportunities were compounded by loss and grief.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a range of health inequalities, particularly amongst marginalised and disadvantaged groups of young people (Palomino et al., 2020). For instance, young Black men are one such group who have faced historic injustices, and many of the challenges they encounter have a long-term and devastating effect on their psychological wellbeing. Findings from a survey conducted in 2020 found that young Black

men (aged 16–25) are amongst the hardest hit by the fast-changing labour market and are more likely to report a fall in income because of lockdown in the UK. In addition to the concerns about employment, young Black men also experienced significant inequalities in education over the past year. As a result of some of these COVID-19-related challenges, young Black men are at high risk of mental distress during the pandemic compared to other groups of young people (Abdinasir & Carty, 2021).

Results from a mixed-method online survey of young LGBTQ+ communities in the UK confirmed that those who experienced a greater impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and its associated social distancing orders reported poorer mental health. Factors associated with lower levels of mental health were lack of social supports, negative interpersonal interactions, unsupportive and non-affirming living environments, and the inability to access mental health services and gender-affirming interventions and supporting programmes (Jones et al., 2021). More specifically, loss of structure and routine through not being able to go to work or college/university was associated with worse mental health. In relation to formal mental health supports and services, young people experienced some barriers to engaging with these remote services. For example, due to an overwhelmed system and busy schedule, timely referral was very slow. Social anxiety experienced by young people, especially regarding making their voices heard, was mentioned in the study, which prevented them from utilising telehealth interventions. A key finding for the service providers is that some young people were unable to access gender-related care to monitor hormone levels, and gender-affirming surgeries were postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. All these medicalised and non-medicalised factors have led to poor mental health amongst young LGBTQ+ communities (Jones et al., 2021). A blog for LGBTQ+ young people in Scotland revealed that homophobia and transphobia has been a challenge in their local area during the pandemic (see LGBT Youth Scotland, 2021).

Table 1.1 – How the pandemic changed young people lives and mentoring opportunities

Young people's perspective on their needs and stumbling blocks to accessing mentoring opportunities during the pandemic	Mentor providers' perspective on how mentoring opportunities have pivoted during the pandemic
- Help to apply for jobs - Help to build confidence for an interview - Help with writing a personal statement - Help to find work placements - Help in gaining experience of going into a work environment - Help with academic pressure and frustration - Help to build resilience in Higher Education - Help for new young employees with invisible disabilities	- Moving from in-person to virtual appointments, texting, and mobile supportive conversations - Developing and testing new digital pathways to access services - Extending the hours they work, and offering more flexible times for appointments - Producing more resources online to encourage self-help - Updating online safeguarding policies and procedures - Streamlining services, balancing need versus demand

• Help to access a range of appropriate training opportunities • Help to build self-confidence and to plan next steps in education, work, and training	• Pausing and renegotiating access with gatekeepers to groups of children and young people • Switching from group-centred to individual-tailored work • Additional team training and support to stay connected, and to cope with greater volume and/or intensity of work

Source: Sharpe, D. and Rajabi, M., 2021. *The Impact of COVID-19 on the Health and Economic Wellbeing of Young People Accessing Support Services: Living in Limbo?* Institute for Connected Communities, University of East London.

Summarising the main impacts of COVID-19 and lockdowns on mentoring practices, mentoring meetings have moved to more online formats, such as those described and evaluated by Mobilise Public (2021) in their "One Million Mentors" project and described in Ravenscroft et al. (2022).

There are pros and cons of online versus in-person modes of mentoring, and a hybrid approach that is agreed and structured around the circumstances of the mentor and mentee seems to be the preferred mode of delivery expressed by young people going forward. For example, performing the initial matching and having initial meetings in person to establish a quality relationship, and then moving to more convenient online meetings, with an agreed balance of online and in-person meetings.

The presenting problems of many children and young people will have changed, and probably got worse, with issues such as increased anxiety, social isolation, family problems and conflicts, poorer mental health in general, and worsened academic performance and progression.

Generally, both mentor and mentee, like everyone else, will be 'settling down' to new ways of meeting and communicating, which are still evolving.

Quality in mentoring: What is known from evidence?

In this section, we consider, in a general sense, what the value of mentoring is, and what its key characteristics are, based on reviews and meta-analyses (Armitage et al., 2020; Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014; Burton et al., 2022; McQuillin et al., 2022). We then consider the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on the presenting problems for children and young people that mentoring aims to address, and the changes in mentoring practices that have been brought about, such as the movement to online meetings and communications (Kaufman et al., 2022; Mobilise Public Ltd, 2021). This is followed by a consideration of even more recent changes to the mentoring landscape, as we face a cost-of-living crisis and looming austerity.

The following sections then consider more specific mentoring requirements for different vulnerable and at-risk groups of young people.

Evidence of the value of mentoring, and its key principles and characteristics

Contemporary mentoring research literature suggests that the mentoring process can be an important intervention for young people development. A large-scale meta-analysis of the effectiveness of mentoring programmes was conducted by DuBois et al. (2011) in the United States, which covered 73 independent evaluations, in a context where it was estimated that more than 5,000 mentoring programmes served around 3 million young people. This drew on a developmental model of mentoring relationships proposed by Rhodes (2002; 2005):

> "This model posits an interconnected set of processes (social-emotional, cognitive, identity) through which caring and meaningful relationships with nonparental adults (or older peers) can promote positive developmental trajectories. These processes are presumed to be conditioned by a range of individual, dyadic, programmatic, and contextual variables."
>
> DuBois et al., 2011, p. 57

They found, overall, that mentoring was effective for improving outcomes across behavioural, social, emotional, and academic domains of young people's development. Mentored young people showed positive gains in outcome measures, whereas non-mentored young people showed declines. They concluded:

> "It appears then that mentoring as an intervention strategy has the capacity to serve both promotion and prevention aims. Programmes also show evidence of being able to affect multiple domains of youth functioning simultaneously and to improve selected outcomes of policy interest (e.g., academic achievement test scores)."
>
> DuBois et al., 2011, p. 57

DuBois et al. (2011) conclude, based on their available evidence, that mentoring is a positive intervention strategy that is particularly fruitful when there is the interest in, and need for, promoting positive outcomes across "multiple areas" of a young person's development. Interesting nuances that they also state is that mentoring relationships can be more enduring when they are community-based, rather than being linked to the academic calendar, and that setting and matching that is based on shared interests is particularly relevant in achieving positive outcomes.

Summarising other work, Ravenscroft et al. (2022) point out that,[2] more specifically, mentoring can: have a positive impact on self-esteem (Schwartz et al., 2012, pp. 18–19); reduce anti-social behaviour (Roberts et al., 2004); foster adult thinking, which enables adolescents to become more receptive to adult values, advice and perspectives (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008); facilitate identity development (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008); and contribute to the improvement of educational performance in relation to gender (Odih, 2002). As non-parental adults, mentors can provide reliable support, communicate moral values, teach various skills, and enhance interpersonal relatedness, leading to fewer problem behaviours,

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[2] This paragraph is taken from: Ravenscroft, A., Salisbury, C., Voela, A. & Watts, P. (2022), 'Addressing the safety and criminal exploitation of vulnerable young people: Psychosocial transformations before, during and after COVID-19 and lockdown', Chapter in *After Lockdown – Opening Up: Psychosocial Transformations in the Wake of COVID-19*, Voela, A. & Ellis, D. (Eds), 151–171, Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Group.

more positive attitudes towards school, less nonviolent delinquency, and lower levels of anxiety and depression (Southwick et al., 2007). They can also provide emotional regulation and conflict resolution, whilst promoting a young person's future orientation (Dzoba, 2014).

Another lens on to the value and process of mentoring, provided by the young people themselves, was provided by Bruce & Bridgeland (2014), in what was the first national survey, in the US, of young people's perspectives on mentoring. This showed that young people felt that mentoring had positive and complementary effects across personal, academic, and professional areas of development. In brief, this report has findings complementary to those of DuBois et al. (2011) that, put simply, young people with mentors are more likely to "report engaging in positive behaviour", which is then reflected in higher expectations and better educational performance.

Principles and characteristics of effective mentoring

In a summary of the characteristics of effective mentoring, Ravenscroft et al. (2022) point out[3] that positive academic and/or behaviour adjustments of a young person are often conditional on the development of a strong bond with their mentor, characterised by mutuality, trust and empathy (Rhodes & Dubois, 2008). Other research highlights the length, intensity, and quality of the relationship as being important for positive outcomes (Schwartz et al., 2012; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Dubois & Silverthorn, 2005; Rhodes et al., 2006), with the most successful mentors being those who invest time and energy, and who have frequent and prolonged contact with the children and young people they guide (Southwick et al., 2011).

Successful mentoring takes time and has significant benefits when it is centred around young people and flexible in style, taking into consideration the young person's preferences and interests (Rhodes & Dubois, 2008). The mentor's experience, the setting of the meetings and the management of expectations are all influential on the outcomes (Dzoba, 2014).

A significant finding that is reinforced by the Bruce and Bridgeland report (2014) is that the longer the duration of the mentoring relationship, the greater its value for the young person. Although this may seem somewhat self-evident, it has important practical implications, particularly when considered against the greater endurance of mentoring relationships within the community, compared with those linked to the academic calendar and context. Practically, mentoring relationships lasting a year or longer were reported to be more helpful and productive than those lasting for less time.

DuBois et al. (2011) point out that benefits from mentoring apply across age groups, from early childhood through to adolescence, and that those engaging older peers and group

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[3] The following two paragraphs were taken from: Ravenscroft, A., Salisbury, C., Voela, A. & Watts, P. (2022), 'Addressing the safety and criminal exploitation of vulnerable young people: Psychosocial transformations before, during and after COVID-19 and lockdown', chapter in *After Lockdown – Opening Up: Psychosocial Transformations in the Wake of COVID-19*, Voela, A. & Ellis, D. (Eds), 151–171, Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Group.

formats have comparable levels of effectiveness to those involving adult peers. However, DuBois et al. (2011) also point out that there is variability in programme effectiveness, so we cannot simply assume that all mentoring is similarly effective; instead, they say:

> "In analysing this variability, we find that programmes have been more effective when (a) participating youth have either had pre-existing difficulties (including problem behaviour specifically) or been exposed to significant levels of environmental risk, (b) evaluation samples have included greater proportions of male youth, (c) there has been a good fit between the educational or occupational backgrounds of mentors and the goals of the programme, (d) mentors and youth have been paired based on similarity of interests, and (e) programmes have been structured to support mentors in assuming teaching or advocacy roles with youth."

They go on to point out that positive outcomes are reliant on decisions about which mentors and young people are involved in a programme, paying careful attention to how mentoring relationships are established, and then using that relationship to provide guidance towards the activities that are relevant to the goals of the programme.

A more recent rapid evidence summary of "What makes effective mentoring programmes for young people" was conducted and reported by Armitage et al. (2020), based on 16 international studies. Their concise Executive Summary echoes some of the earlier findings above, stating:

> "We found that youth mentoring programmes can improve outcomes across academic, behavioural, emotional, and social areas of young people's lives. These impacts are small, but nevertheless significant. There is no evidence that youth mentoring programmes can improve physical health, although few studies examine this particular outcome. The evidence provides several insights into what makes youth mentoring programmes effective, including that longer mentoring relationships are associated with better outcomes, the importance of training and motivation, the need for goal-orientated programmes and the key role of the matching process."
>
> Armitage et al. (2020), p. 4

To elaborate on this summary, they suggest that commissioners and providers should consider the following five recommendations:

- Allow time and resources to set up a programme, to recruit and train mentors, and to match them with mentees.
- Focus on the fundamental role that matching plays in successful programmes.
- Balance giving agency to mentees in decisions around their mentors with the evidence that shared interests and backgrounds and cultural sensitivity produce better outcomes.
- Ensure that mentors and mentees are supported to develop and sustain longer term mentoring relationships, as these lead to better outcomes.
- Focus on how to measure progress and outcomes.

Synthesising principles and characteristics of successful mentoring

Synthesising the findings above, the principles and characteristics of successful mentoring are:

- Allow time and resources to set up a programme, to recruit and train mentors, and to match them with mentees.
- Consider using peer-mentors and group mentoring where resources and/or contexts make these options more desirable.
- Focus on the fundamental role that matching plays in successful programmes, considering the experience and interests of the mentor alongside the experience, interests, and any presenting problems of the mentee.
- Balance giving agency to mentees in decisions around their mentors with the evidence that shared interests and backgrounds and cultural sensitivity produce better outcomes.
- Support the formation of a strong bond between mentor and mentee, characterised by mutuality, trust and empathy.
- Ensure that mentors and mentees are supported to develop and sustain longer term mentoring relationships, as these lead to better outcomes.
- Support mentors and mentees to have meetings and other communications that achieve a frequency that maintains a quality relationship.
- Have a suitable degree of flexibility in how the mentoring relationship is structured and conducted, so that the personal and contextual circumstances of the mentor and mentee are harmonised as far as possible.
- Focus on how to measure progress and outcomes.

Study design

This report draws together evaluative findings from the rapid evidence review of peer-reviewed and grey literature from 2000 to 2022, supplemented by open-source data on young people in London and primary data collected through online surveys completed by 28 of the 32 Councils in London on their Youth Offer strategies (including mentoring) (*N*=28), mentoring providers (*N*=88) and non-statuary funding bodies (*N*=6). We have also used held survey data collected by Partnership for Young London (*N*=1,658), as well as running a young person's online focus group meeting (*N*=14) and stakeholder telephone interviews (*N*=17).

We used a framework analysis (Spencer et al., 2004) to help build an accurate picture of the numbers, demographics and needs of young people at a borough and sub-regional level. This analytical lens was particularly useful when investigating vulnerable groupings of young people where little research has been conducted. The second stage of the analysis involved a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012), which comprised reading through the framework analysis results looking for evidence of mentoring gaps, partnerships/collaboration, and effective practice. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis (Fisher & Marshall, 2009), this time looking for pathways through the data sets for emerging mentoring delivery patterns. This allowed us to interpret, and later synthesise, the different data sets to arrive at insights to help build our understanding of the gaps, quality, and partnerships/collaborations in mentoring opportunities for young Londoners.

Research questions

To restate, this research will support the London Recovery Board's New Deal for Young People (NDYP) Mission, and the work of London's Violence Reduction Unit. The research questions set out to answer:

- What existing mentoring is available for young Londoners most in need of support? What are the gaps (target groups, locations, and effective practice)?
- What effective partnerships, collaborations and best practices are currently in place, and what can we learn from them?
- What are the opportunities to expand and improve the quality of mentoring and support partnerships and collaboration where it is recommended most?
- How might policymakers strengthen mentoring across London (guidance and suggestions)?

The study approach is informed by Pawson and Tilley's realist evaluation principles (1997), which focus on the question of: What works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how? This approach stresses the need to explore existing mapping provisions and gaps within the geographical, social, and cultural context, and to assess what mechanisms and processes are acting to produce which outcomes. The development of primary research tools and an analytic framework were also informed by Normalisation Process Theory (May & Finch, 2009), which conceptualises the adoption, implementation, embedding, integration, and sustainment of new initiatives/programmes. LRaPP, the Greater

London Authority (GLA) and London Councils acted as gatekeepers during the research process. The study involved three distinct sets of research activities:

1. Rapid evidence review of the types of services/approaches available in London to support young people to gain and/or retain employment. The rapid evidence reviews identified gaps in mentoring provisions. This phase was desk-based research: we analysed peer-reviewed and grey literature on trends set against the London Research and Policy Partnership model (and regional variations).

2. Survey data collection: We used three surveys to collect data from local Councils, third sector organisations in London, and funding bodies supporting mentoring programmes for young people. The surveys explored existing services and mentoring provisions for young people, access, and gaps in engagement from the perspectives of the three target groups (Councils, third sector, funding bodies).

3. Qualitative data collection: The research team carried out telephone interviews with mentor providers, and a focus group with young people, to obtain a bottom-up perspective on how mentoring opportunities are experienced. Interview participants self-nominated themselves in Surveys 2 and 3. If they wished to participate in the interviews, they were asked to indicate it in the appropriate section of the survey, and to provide contact details. The interviews were carried out by phone or via Teams, and they were audio recorded, subject to permission from interviewees. The audio recorded data were partially transcribed (e.g., pulling out high-quality example sentences and vignettes) by the research team, and analysed using a framework, and later a thematic, approach. The focus group participants were recruited through our networks and mentor providers, and the meeting took place on Teams. The meeting was recoded, and it underwent the same process of analysis as the telephone interviews with mentor providers.

Table 2.1 – Sampling Methods | Types, Techniques

Secondary Data	Local Government Association Local Authority Survey	This database collected by the London Councils consists of **28 research participants**, each representing a different London borough, and it illustrates provisions for young people offered by local authorities in each borough.
	Partnership for Young London Youth Survey 2021	This database is compiled from a survey completed by **1,658 young participants** aged 16 to 25 years old, and it shows the demographic breakdown of young people who completed the survey, and their experiences with mentorship focus and availability.
	Open-Source Data	This is a compilation of **8 databases** obtained from public open sources that offer insights on 8 different issues that are relevant to young people provisions and mentorship.
Primary Data	Local Mentoring Providers Survey	This is a survey completed by **88 local providers** describing the provisions and mentoring services that their respective organisations provide to young people in the different London sub-regions.
	Funding Bodies Survey	This is a survey completed by **6 funding bodies** describing the provisions and mentoring services that their respective organisations fund for young people in the different London sub-regions.

		This is a series of interviews and focus groups conducted with **31 research participants** of the Local Providers Survey and the Funding Bodies survey, as well as young local participants, to provide qualitative insights on the extent of provisions for young people in their respective London Areas.
	Interviews & Focus Groups	

Table 2.1 illustrates the different sources of information gathered, where secondary data illustrate the extent of local authority provisions, the demographic characteristics of the young people using the services and the typical issues they face in the different London sub-regions, and primary data aim to complete this information with self-reported assessments of the extent to which organisations in the VCS implement and fund provisions and mentorship for young people in London, as well as qualitative insights into the lived experiences of both local providers and young people.

Analytical framework

Primary data, such as the qualitative telephone interviews with mentor providers and the young people's focus group meeting data, were analysed using a framework approach followed by a thematic analysis and organised around the core themes of 'quality' and 'partnership/collaborations' in mentoring, and inductively coded using the NPT process evaluation normalisation framework (Murray et al., 2010). Secondary data were compiled from Government sources and local authorities, where the goal was to collect information about the level of need of young people and mentoring services at the borough and overall London levels. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse quantitative data collected through the surveys, organised to focus on 'gaps' in provision. The study obtained research ethics approval in September 2022 from the University of East London Research Ethics Committee (No. ETH2223-0021).

What existing mentoring is available for young Londoners most in need of support? What are the gaps (target groups, locations, and effective practice)?

Summarising the main points of what 'mentoring' means to young focus group participants:

- When an experienced person shares their knowledge and experience with the young person, so they can learn or progress.
- Advice and support to someone who needs guidance.
- Being able to vent your concerns.
- Someone that is there to listen non-judgementally.
- Able to give advice on how to move forward.
- Helping a mentee gain better understanding of a subject.
- Help and understanding of a situation you may be going through, but also safeguarding that person's response.
- Building a trusted relationship with your mentee.

In ranked order, the key areas that young focus group participants would like to see mentoring opportunities focus upon:

- Emotional/relationship-centred mentoring.
- Academic-centred mentoring.
- Career-centred mentoring.
- Vulnerability-centred mentoring.

A summary of the key groups and drivers that young focus group participants said would increase uptake in mentoring opportunities:

- Young people most in need and cannot afford private mentoring support.
- Students who are smart and just need a little support.
- Young people under 18 with a disability and from LGBTQ+ communities.
- Older teens who now feel the need to open-up.
- Pupils who find school teaching hard to understand.
- Young people still in secondary school or college.
- Young people who have time.
- Young people who feel that they will be listened to.

Local mentor providers succinctly discussed gaps in mentoring support for young Londoners (Tables 3.1 and 3.2). Short-term provisions and lack of structure with funding schemes have been reported to cause less impact, and inadequate client relationship, and to contribute to underfunded and/or unsustainable mentoring opportunities. Gaps also include inequalities not being considered, such as language, special needs, access, and support for parents. One respondent also highlighted that schools are generally too academically focused, with less focus on wellbeing, for which mentoring would have most impact.

Table 3.1 – Gaps in effective mentoring practices from the perspectives of local providers

	Short term provisions & lack of structure	Inequalities not being considered	Lack of commitment & coordination from delivery partners	Demand (mentees) outstrips supply (mentors)	Schools mentoring is too academically focused, rather than holistic
London total	8	2	1	2	1

(Source: Local Providers Survey, 2022)

Fourteen local providers responded to this question, out of a possible 88 respondents.

Mentoring providers also shared their thoughts on pending gaps in effective mentoring practice triggered by the cost-of-living crisis.

Imagining future gaps in effective mentoring practices due to the cost-of-living crisis

- Fewer mentors; as people struggle, they have less time to volunteer and give back.
- Organisations are less able to bring in high-quality staff, as they are squeezed with finances.
- There will be increased demand, and good services will be stretched further.
- Getting to and from the sessions and to travel around London.
- Mentors need to know the local Youth Offer.
- The pressure to earn, rather than to study or engage in personal development.
- Poor self-image and low confidence.
- Just worrying about survival and feeling unmotivated.
- Children more impacted by domestic abuse.
- Digital poverty.

Table 3.2 – Gaps in effective mentoring support from the perspectives of funding bodies

	Short term provisions & lack of structure	Few businesses mentoring	Not based on needs
London total	2	1	1

(Source: Funding Bodies Survey, 2022)

Four funding bodies responded to this question, out of a possible 6 respondents

Table 3.3 illustrates responses from the local providers surveys, where participants disclosed how mentoring opportunities have been delivered by their respective organisations across sub-regions.

Mentoring opportunities with the largest percentages were: One-to-one mentoring (89%), Online mentoring (11%) and Business mentoring (33%) in Northwest London, and Community mentoring (65%), Group mentoring (46%), Therapeutically informed mentoring (33%), Youth professionally led mentoring (31%), Learning mentoring (23%) and Peer mentoring (40%) in Northeast London.

Table 3.3 – The methods of delivery of mentoring opportunities by local providers in North London

	North Central London	Northeast London	Northwest London	London average
Community mentoring	46%	65%	44%	48%
One-to-one mentoring	79%	81%	89%	88%
Business mentoring	21%	31%	33%	29%
Group mentoring	38%	46%	11%	28%
Peer mentoring	29%	40%	7%	24%
Therapeutically informed mentoring	25%	33%	7%	19%
Online mentoring	4%	10%	11%	8%
Youth professionally led mentoring	8%	31%	4%	14%
Learning mentoring	8%	23%	4%	11%

(Source: Local Provider Survey, 2022)

Table 3.4 shows how mentoring opportunity has been supported by funding bodies in the sub-regions. Notably, Business mentoring was absent from all North London sub-regions, and Youth professionally led mentoring and Learning mentoring were absent from North Central London and Northwest London.

Table 3.4 – The methods of delivery of mentoring opportunities supported by funding bodies in North London

	North Central London	Northeast London	Northwest London	London average
Community mentoring	100%	92%	100%	98%
One-to-one mentoring	100%	100%	100%	100%
Business mentoring	0%	0%	0%	0%
Group mentoring	100%	83%	100%	97%
Peer mentoring	100%	83%	100%	97%
Therapeutically informed mentoring	100%	58%	100%	92%
Online mentoring	100%	58%	100%	92%
Youth professionally led mentoring	0%	25%	0%	5%
Learning mentoring	0%	25%	0%	5%

(Source: Funding Bodies Survey, 2022)

Table 3.5 shows how mentoring opportunities are provided by local mentor providers in the South London sub-regions. Community mentoring and Business mentoring had the highest percentages in Southwest London (53% and 35% respectively), while having below average percentages in Southeast London (33% and 26% respectively). The largest percentages in Southeast London were One-to-one mentoring (96%), Group mentoring (37%), Peer mentoring (30%), Therapeutically informed mentoring (22%), Online mentoring (15%), Youth professionally led mentoring (26%) and Learning mentoring (15%).

Mentoring opportunities that were severely below average were in Southwest London, and were Group mentoring (6%), Therapeutically informed mentoring (6%), Learning mentoring (6%), Online mentoring (0%) and Youth professionally led mentoring (0%).

Table 3.5 – The methods of delivery of mentoring opportunities by local providers in South London

	Southeast London	Southwest London	London average
Community mentoring	33%	53%	48%
One-to-one mentoring	96%	94%	88%
Business mentoring	26%	35%	29%
Group mentoring	37%	6%	28%
Peer mentoring	30%	12%	24%
Therapeutically informed mentoring	22%	6%	19%
Online mentoring	15%	0%	8%
Youth professionally led mentoring	26%	0%	14%
Learning mentoring	15%	6%	11%

(Source: Local providers survey, 2022)

Table 3.6 shows what types of services received support from funding bodies in South London. Notably, Business mentoring was absent from all South London sub-regions, as was Youth professionally led mentoring and Learning mentoring.

Table 3.6 – The methods of delivery of mentoring opportunities supported by funding bodies in South London

	Southeast London	Southwest London	London average
Community mentoring	100%	100%	98%
One-to-one mentoring	100%	100%	100%
Business mentoring	0%	0%	0%
Group mentoring	100%	100%	97%
Peer mentoring	100%	100%	97%
Therapeutically informed mentoring	100%	100%	92%
Online mentoring	100%	100%	92%
Youth professionally led mentoring	0%	0%	5%
Learning mentoring	0%	0%	5%

(Source: Funding bodies survey 2022)

Table 3.7 shows the different groups of young people for whom mentoring opportunities have been targeted. Percentages of mentoring opportunities provided to young disabled people (33%) and young people with SEND (48%), young people excluded from school or college (26%), young people associated or impacted by gangs (19%), young people NEETs (52%), young people experienced or impacted by domestic violence or abuse (15%), young refugees or asylum seekers (11%), young people with social workers (26%), young people from low-income families (89%), young carers (33%), young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (0%) and young people with low educational attainment (56%) were below average in Northwest London.

Young NEETs (48%), young people with a social worker (25%), young carers (27%) and young people living with a chronic condition (25%) had below average percentages in Northeast London.

Young people excluded from school or college (21%), young people associated with gangs or impacted by exploitation (13%), young people experiencing or impacted by domestic

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abuse (17%), young people with a social worker (25%), young people from low-income families or living in poverty (88%) and young carers of pre-school children (4%) had below average percentages in North Central London.

Table 3.7 – Vulnerable groups of young people who are targeted for mentoring by local providers in North London

	North Central London	Northeast London	Northwest London	London average
Young disabled people	42%	48%	33%	41%
Young people with Special Education Needs	67%	63%	48%	60%
Young people who are excluded from school or college	21%	29%	26%	27%
Young people who are associated with gangs or impacted by exploitation	13%	29%	19%	22%
Young people not in Education, Employment or Training	54%	48%	52%	54%
Young people who are experiencing, or have been impacted by, domestic abuse	17%	27%	15%	20%
Young refugees and asylum seekers	17%	27%	11%	17%
Young people with a social worker	25%	25%	26%	28%
Young people from low-income families or living in poverty	88%	92%	89%	91%
Young carers of pre-school children	4%	10%	11%	5%
Young carers	38%	27%	33%	36%
Young people from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities	4%	13%	0%	4%
Young people with Mental Health needs	67%	63%	63%	58%
Young people living with a chronic condition	38%	25%	41%	33%
Young people with lower education attainment	58%	63%	56%	57%

(Source: Local providers survey, 2022)

Table 3.8 shows the targeted cohorts on which funding bodies are focusing their projects in North London. Noticeably, young carers of pre-school children are absent from all sub-regions, whereas young carers and young people with a chronic condition are absent from North Central and Northwest London.

Table 3.8 – Vulnerable groups of young people who are targeted for mentoring by funding bodies in North London

	North Central London	Northeast London	Northwest London	London average
Young disabled people	100%	75%	100%	95%
Young people with Special Education Needs	100%	75%	100%	95%
Young people who are excluded from school or college	100%	75%	100%	95%
Young people who are associated with gangs or impacted by exploitation	100%	100%	100%	100%

Young people not in Education, Employment or Training	100%	100%	100%	100%
Young people who are experiencing, or have been impacted by, domestic abuse	100%	75%	100%	95%
Young refugees and asylum seekers	100%	92%	100%	98%
Young people with a social worker	100%	75%	100%	95%
Young people from low-income families or living in poverty	100%	100%	100%	100%
Young carers of pre-school children	0%	0%	0%	0%
Young carers	0%	17%	0%	3%
Young people from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities	100%	58%	100%	92%
Young people with Mental Health needs	100%	75%	100%	95%
Young people living with a chronic condition	0%	8%	0%	2%
Young people with lower education attainment	100%	67%	100%	93%

(Source: Funding bodies survey, 2022)

Table 3.9 shows the different cohorts which services for young people are targeted towards. Percentages above average were found in Southeast London for young people with SEND (70%), young people who are excluded from school or college (37%), young people who are associated with gangs or impacted by exploitation (33%), young NEETs (59%), young people who are experiencing, or have been impacted by, domestic abuse (30%), young refugees and asylum seekers (19%), young people with a social worker (41%), young people from low-income families or living in poverty (100%), young carers (37%) and young people with lower educational attainment (63%).

Percentages above average were found in Southwest London for young NEETs (59%), young carers (47%) and young people living with a chronic condition (35%).

Table 3.9 – Vulnerable groups of young people who are targeted for mentoring by local providers in South London

	Southeast London	Southwest London	London average (mean)
Young disabled people	41%	41%	41%
Young people with Special Education Needs	70%	53%	60%
Young people who are excluded from school or college	37%	24%	27%
Young people who are associated with gangs or impacted by exploitation	33%	18%	22%
Young people not in Education, Employment or Training	59%	59%	54%
Young people who are experiencing, or have been impacted by, domestic abuse	30%	12%	20%
Young refugees and asylum seekers	19%	12%	17%
Young people with a social worker	41%	24%	28%
Young people from low-income families or living in poverty	100%	88%	91%
Young carers of pre-school children	0%	0%	5%

Young carers	37%	47%	36%
Young people from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities	4%	0%	4%
Young people with Mental Health needs	44%	53%	58%
Young people living with a chronic condition	26%	35%	33%
Young people with lower education attainment	63%	47%	57%

(Source: Local providers survey, 2022)

Table 3.10 shows the targeted groups of young people for which funding bodies support mentoring opportunities in North London. Noticeably, young carers of pre-school children, young carers and young people living with a chronic condition are absent from all sub-regions.

Table 3.10 – Vulnerable groups of young people who are targeted for mentoring by funding bodies in South London

	Southeast London	Southwest London	London average
Young disabled people	100%	100%	95%
Young people with Special Education Needs	100%	100%	95%
Young people who are excluded from school or college	100%	100%	95%
Young people who are associated with gangs or impacted by exploitation	100%	100%	100%
Young people not in Education, Employment or Training	100%	100%	100%
Young people who are experiencing, or have been impacted by, domestic abuse	100%	100%	95%
Young refugees and asylum seekers	100%	100%	98%
Young people with a social worker	100%	100%	95%
Young people from low-income families or living in poverty	100%	100%	100%
Young carers of pre-school children	0%	0%	0%
Young carers	0%	0%	3%
Young people from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities	100%	100%	92%
Young people with Mental Health needs	100%	100%	95%
Young people living with a chronic condition	0%	0%	2%
Young people with lower education attainment	100%	100%	93%

(Source: Funding bodies survey, 2022)

Figure 1.1 shows that the mentoring focus areas for both local providers and funding bodies across London have been overwhelmingly Mental Health & Wellbeing and Work/Career related opportunities.

Figure 1.1 Mentoring focus areas for young people by mentor providers and funding bodies in London
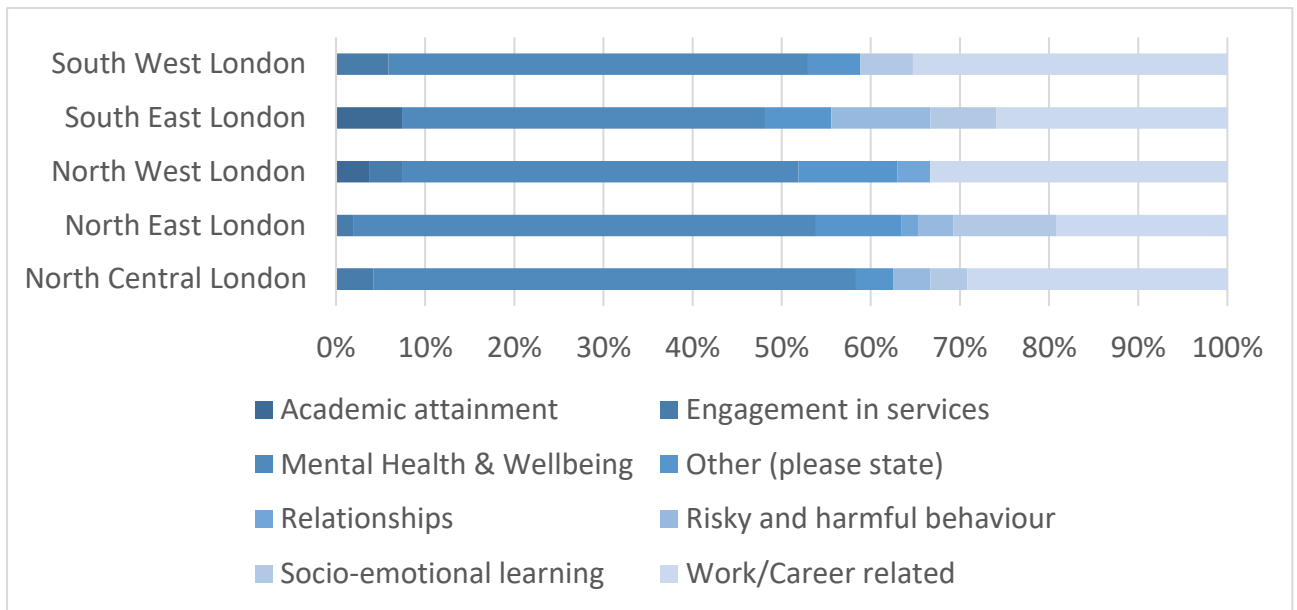
(Source: Local providers & Funding bodies survey, 2022)

Figure 1.2 shows the age groups that mentoring opportunities have been focused upon. In most sub-regions, those age groups were 15 to 17 years old and 18 to 25 years old with no SEND (i.e., the 18 to 25 years old group has been divided between participants with SEND and participants with No SEND). North Central London, Northeast London and Southeast London had the most balanced proportion between age groups, and Northwest London had the least.

Figure 1.2 – Targeted age groups of young people for mentoring opportunities by sub-region
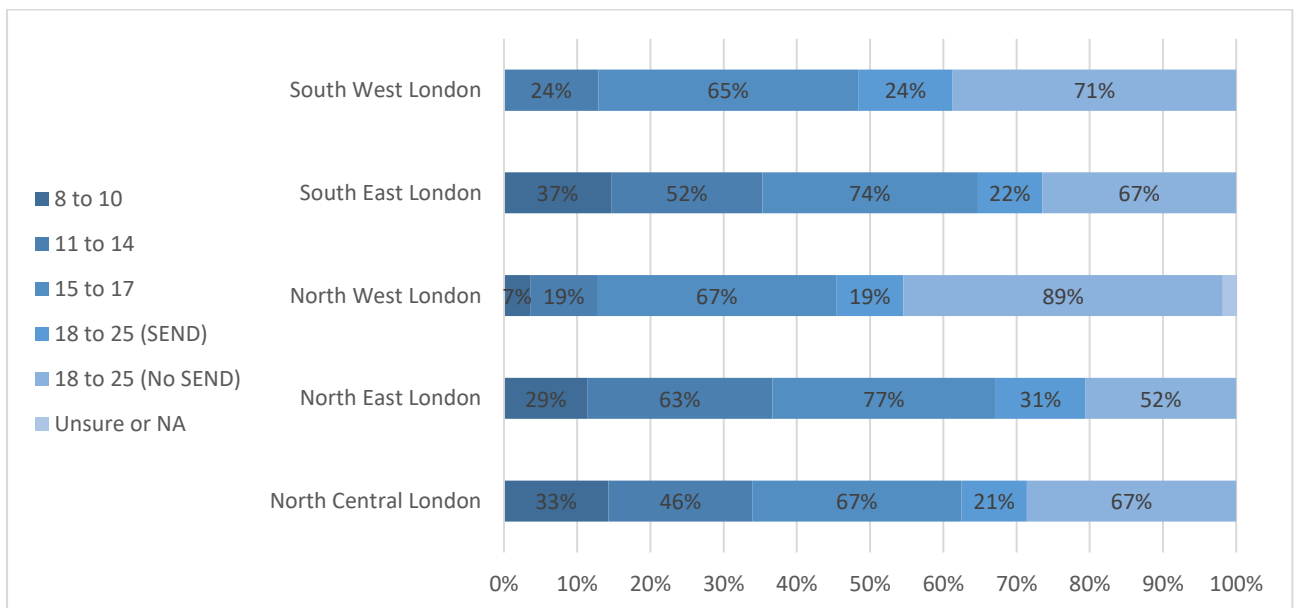
(Source: Local providers & Funding bodies survey, 2022)

Figure 1.3 shows the average number of staff in organisations providing young mentoring; Southeast London and Northeast London had a higher proportion of large organisations than Southwest London, North Central London, and Northwest London.

Figure 1.3 – Staffing capacity of mentoring provisions across London
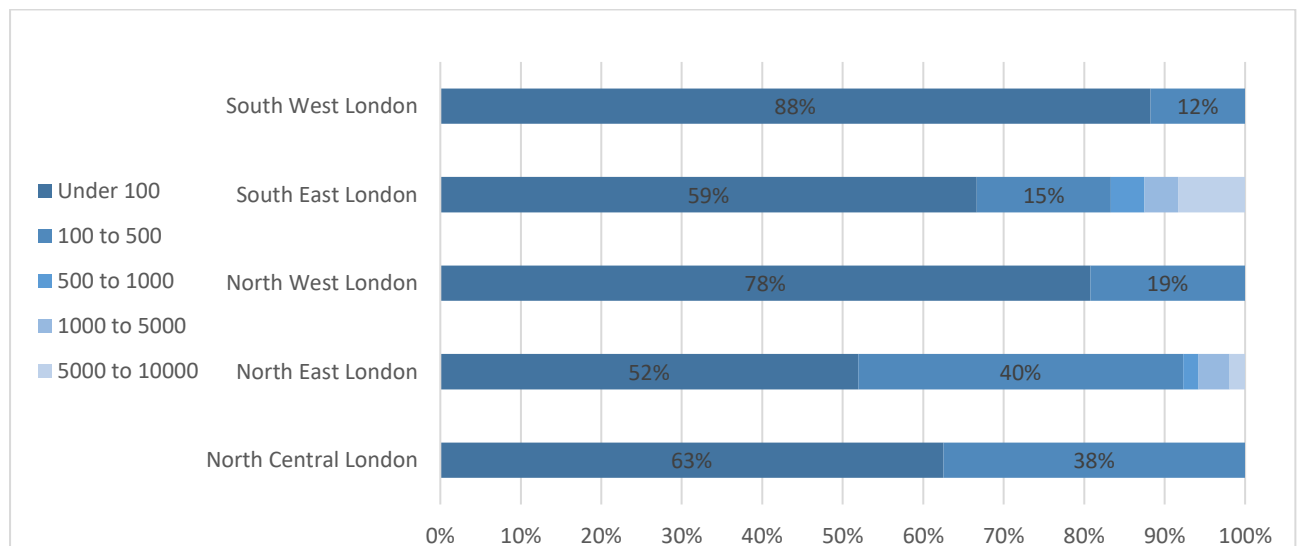
(Source: Local providers & Funding bodies survey, 2022)

Figure 1.4 shows the presence of mentorship across sub-regions according to the Young People's Survey, 2022. The largest percentage of research participants who declared to have a mentor was found in Northeast London (32%), and the lowest was found in Southwest London (23%).

**Figure 1.4 – Proportion of young people who declared to have a mentor by sub-region**
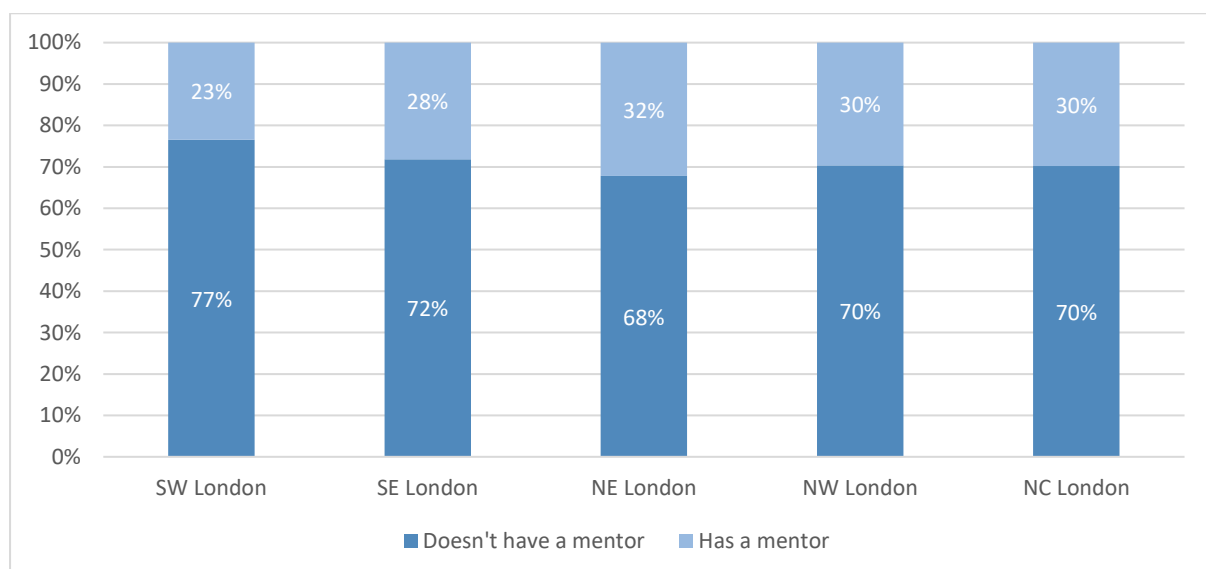
(Source: Young People's survey, 2022)

Figure 1.5 shows the need of mentorship across sub-regions. The largest percentage of research participants who declared to desire a mentor was found in Northwest London (55%), and the lowest was found in Southwest London, Southeast London, and North Central London (53%).

Figure 1.5 – Proportion of young people who wanted a mentor by sub-region
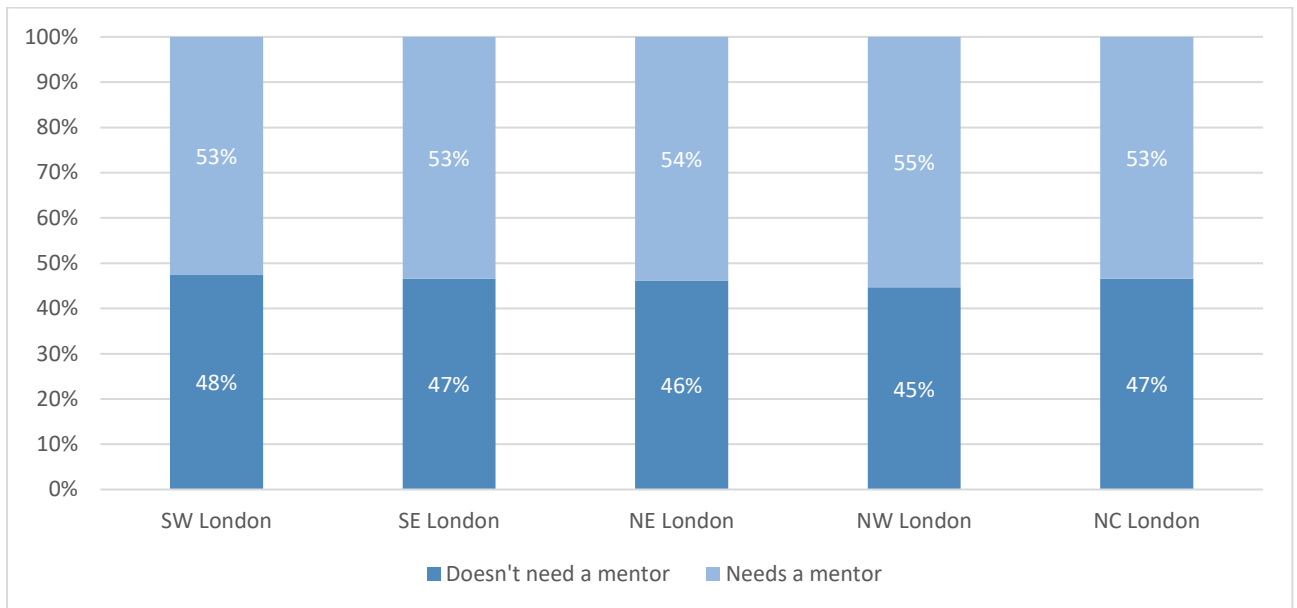
(Source: Young People's survey, 2022)

A total of 547 participants declared that they wanted a mentor but did not have one. Figure 1.6 shows that out of those 547 participants, 120 (21.94%) were in Southwest London, 117 (21.39%) were in Northeast London, 114 (20.84%) were in Southeast London, 102 (18.65%) were in North Central London and 94 (17.18%) were in Northwest London.

Figure 1.6 – Number of young people who would like a mentorship and currently do not have one
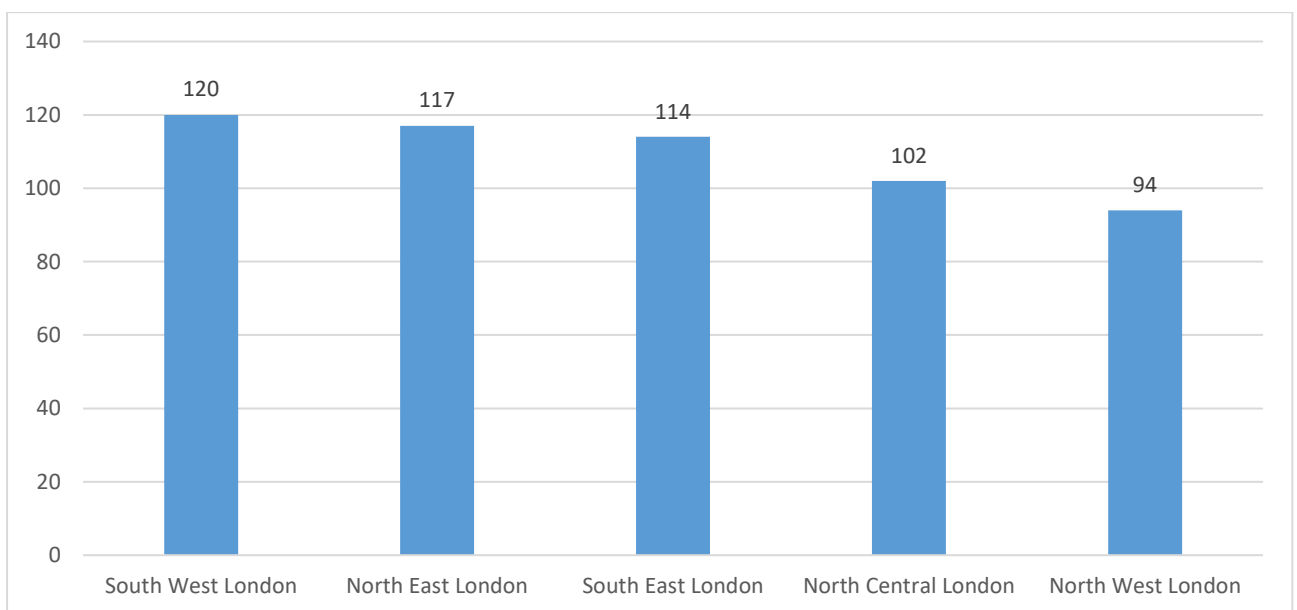
(Source: Young People's survey, 2022)

Figures 1.7 and 1.8 show that, according to the London Councils Youth Offer Survey, the largest provision was serious youth violence or exploitation, out of which Universal and Specific funding streams were the two main forms of delivery.
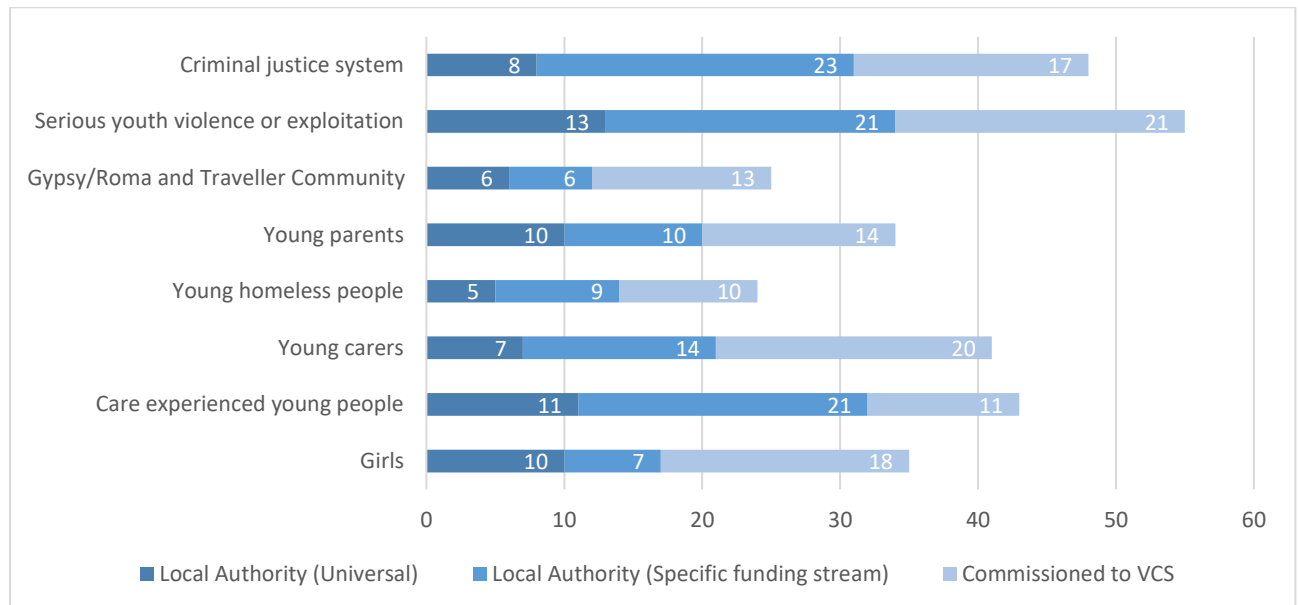
Figure 1.7 – London Council's targeted Youth Offer provisions focus areas in 2021–22

(Source: London Councils Youth Offer Survey, 2022)

Figure 1.8 – London Council's targeted Youth Offer provisions in 2021–22
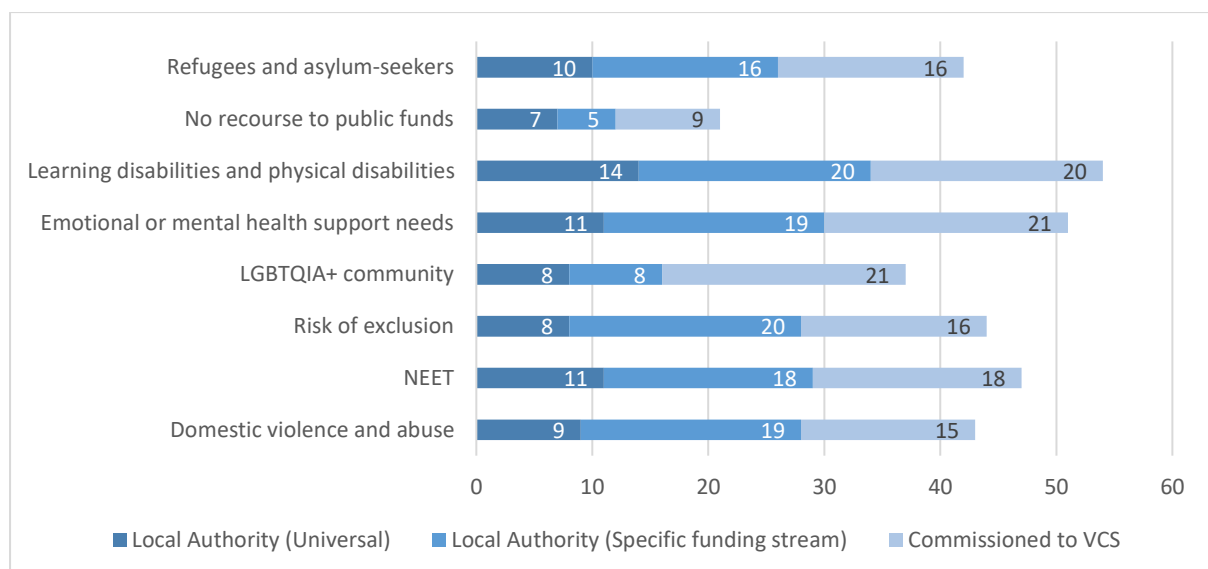
(Source: London Councils Youth Offer Survey, 2022)

Whilst various activities for young people are currently on offer addressing specific needs, local authorities acknowledge the rising needs within some key geographic areas. It is also important to note that many local authorities report that most services are anticipated as remaining stable in 2022–23. The list below summaries the reported categories of needs and initiatives planned by local authorities in London:

- Vulnerable group support
- Bridging peer gap
- Refugee support
- Holiday and food programme (HAF)
- Health and wellbeing
- Youth safeguarding
- Children and youth centre
- New service providers (VCS)
- Youth-led committee and foundation

A summary of the different types of support services for young people that have been decommissioned by London Councils between 2021 and 2022 includes:

- Dedicated council youth service
- Gangs mentoring
- Good Citizenship awards
- Health and wellbeing projects
- Detached youth work and outreach
- Youth hub coordination
- Duke of Edinburgh awards

Figure 1.9 – Type of mentoring opportunities taken up by young people in 2022 by sub-region
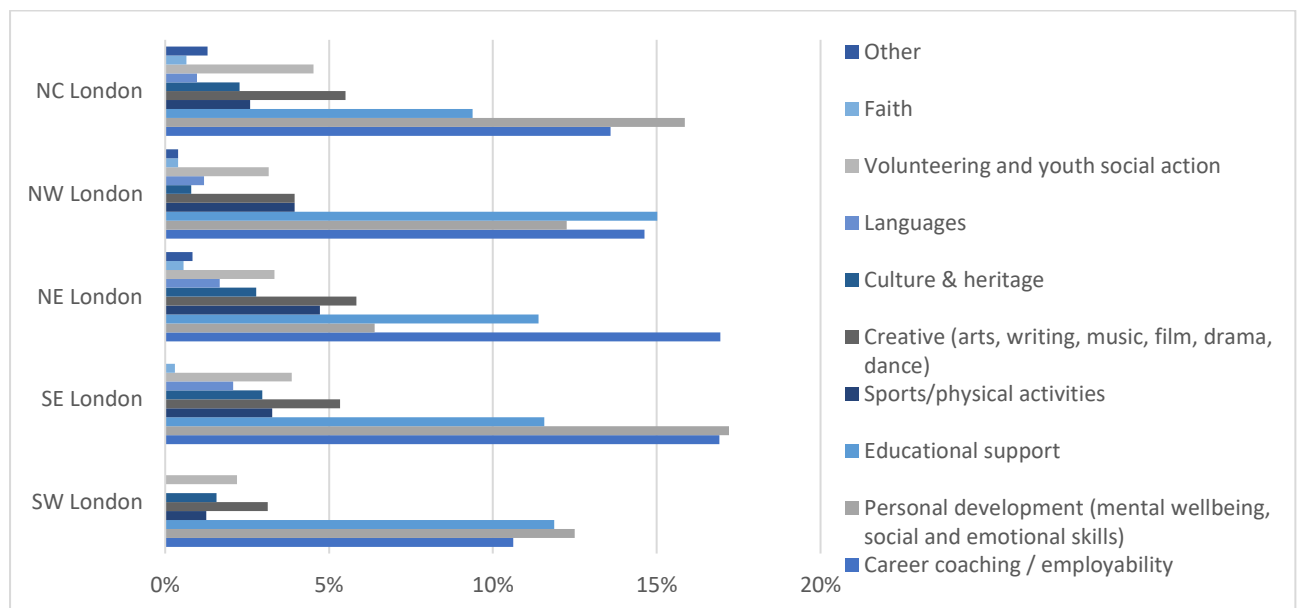
(Source: Young person's survey, 2022)

Examples of vulnerable beneficiaries accessing mentoring

Research participants cited that they support young people who often lack social networks and might exhibit antisocial behaviour:

> "We aim to support largely young people who have high potential but low social capital so they may meet one or more of recognised disadvantage criteria such as receiving or having received

free school meals, pupil premium, perhaps recently received government benefits, and looking at the social mobility." (One Million Mentors)

This also includes young people living in poverty or socio-economic difficulties:

"… we support young refugees [living] in Home Office accommodation. Many of them have faced trauma and very horrific experiences both in their countries, on their journeys, and they are separated from their families, They will be receiving just £40 a week to live off, like £5 a day, so things like tuition fees, even being able to travel to college [is hard] you know, they can't afford to do that, and then also maybe if a young person part of their wellbeing they want to join a football team, going to dance, or even going to the doctor's appointment … they can't afford the travel or they can't afford to do things like that. We think that, you know, mentoring is fantastic, you know, we are a mentoring organisation, but the mentors can support the young person to access education." (Hope for the Young)

Most research which might involve those vulnerable groups of young people focuses on the prevention of them getting involved in gangs or violence, being excluded from school, preventing domestic violence, or becoming NEET, rather than on those who are already within those vulnerable groups. Regarding those who live in poverty, and refugees, research is even more limited. Youth with disabilities is one of the vulnerable groups about which more research has been conducted related to mentoring and its effectiveness.

Illustrations of effective practice

Recurrently, research participants suggested that they practice a personalised needs-led approach towards mentoring:

"... we really focus ourselves on being needs led, so really thinking, you know, how we can support a young person get from A to B, wherever that is, so, you know, we really try and kind of tailor our support according to each young person needs, and goals, and aspirations for the future." (Hope for the Young)

Another example of effective practice is having the ability within the service delivery model to provide mentoring extensions:

"… mentoring usually last for six months, that's the initial commitment, but beyond that it can be extended for another six months, and then it can go on as long as the young person really needs that support, but we do try and wind things down ..." (Hope for the Young)

Providing additional mentoring sessions when they are recommended is not always straightforward, and undermines the work completed with beneficiaries:

"We provide support via volunteers, so we run a befriending service, at the moment it's only for up to 12 sessions, but one of the things that I'd like to do is have it for longer because that's what young people have asked for, especially where we're getting multi issues being presented, so I'm always like peeling an onion you take one layer off, now you deal with the next issue, deal next issue, that a short 12 session doesn't really touch the surface …" (Moorings Project)

Seeking opportunities to share best practice in VCS:

"... I think too often in the charity sector, we work really separately and we kind of see us as opportunity to share our best practice with other organisations kind of in the name of making sure that services for children are the best that they can possibly be through, so this links to the capacity building that we're doing in West London at the moment." (The Kids Network)

Seizing networking opportunities to share best practice:

> "… we also have a community partners process by which we establish relationships with partners who we've kind of vetted and kind of vouch for their services being of a really high quality, and then we commit to kind of sharing best practice with them, but we also want more onboarding any partners to, say, for example, a school or a corporate partner." (The Kids Network)

Sharing safeguarding polices to keep young people safe from harm:

> "... we will also share our safeguarding policy and our shared language with them, just to kind of communicate the best practice there." (The Kids Network)

> "safeguarding is a big factor that we have to take into account, in terms of the safeguarding disclosures, and the risks of the young people are in, you know, in terms of suicidal ideations, self-harm, all of those things ... then in the newspapers they are reading that people are going to be sent to Rwanda, you can see how we are fighting a losing battle, and so it is a systemic issue that is a challenge as well …" (Hope for the Young)

The importance of outcomes in providing a trauma-informed and person-centred mentoring approach is emphasised:

> "I think for me it is the importance of being trauma informed and looking at how trauma-informed practice can extend beyond programmes so, for example, like funders and the way that funding works is not trauma informed, you know being asked to report on specific outcomes isn't empowering for the communities that we might be working with, what is empowering is asking them to set their own goals, and then being able to report on those, so I'm really hoping that there's kind of a shift in terms of expectations from funders." (The Kids Network)

Case study

Hope for the Young provides mentoring to young refugees (asylum seekers in the UK, those who have been given refugee status, or have been trafficked) aged 14 to 15 across Greater London. Their mission is to remove the educational and wellbeing obstacles that these vulnerable young people face, through mentoring, advocacy, and financial support. Young people have an initial assessment and based on their needs and on the volunteer (mentor) skills, background and experiences, mentees and mentors are matched. Considering that the programme is needs-led, the support is initially provided for six months, but it can be extended for another six months to a year, or sometimes longer, according to young people's goals, needs and aspirations for the future. Moreover, to support mentees who are facing exceptionally challenging circumstances to access education, integrate into their communities, and realise their full potential, this organisation offers small grants. Face-to-face mentoring meetings are arranged in places that are convenient for both mentors and mentees, including London cafes or libraries, while always considering the needs of the young person, such as their confidence and financial ability to travel.

To achieve effective practice, this organisation considers that being a young people's needs-led organisation, the structure, flexibility, and support provided to mentors are crucial. Young people's needs and preferences are considered when matching them with their mentors. Structure, such as rules, boundaries, and confidentiality, are agreed upon. Also, not only are evaluations carried out through surveys at the start and end of the programme to assess the impact of the programme, but also individual reviews with mentors and mentees, and checks in the fifth month to discuss further steps are used. However, there is an understanding that young people might find it hard to attach such structures; therefore, flexibility is in place and structure is recreated according to individuals'

needs. Additionally, this organisation provides quarterly workshops and training for all its mentors. However, this organisation has a long waiting list, as they have only one coordinator who supports 35 mentor–mentee relationships, which is already a high workload.

However, this is only one example of an organisation providing mentoring to young people in London, as others consider other vulnerabilities, such as poverty, abuse, domestic violence, Black and minority ethnicities, special educational needs, or those in the care system.

What effective partnerships, collaborations and best practices are currently in place and what can we learn from them?

In general, effective mentoring and achievement of mentees' goals and outcomes has been related to positive and trusting mentor–mentee relationships, which should last beyond the end of the programme, and mentor–mentee matching criteria that should consider factors such as gender and ethnicity (although some studies did not find evidence for this), communication style, the mentor's professional background (peer mentoring seems to be effective as well), length of the mentoring, planned and structured mentoring programmes with established outcomes, the mentor's experience in mentoring, consistent and regular mentoring sessions, training provided to mentors, and many studies highlighted parents/family involvement.

Across most boroughs, local providers, who may themselves be young people organisations, generally partner up with young people organisations to deliver mentoring services in London. Community organisations, and local schools and colleges, as well as corporate organisations and local businesses, are also amongst the regular existing partnerships.

The young focus group participants identified and agreed upon how they would like local authority, schools/college, and mentors to work better together in the provision of mentoring. They cited:

> "I feel like there are always the same questions asked, which makes us go over things that may be uncomfortable, from the beginning, over and over again. There should be a file to ensure better communication."

> "Important that they are having more communication with each other to better meet the needs of young people by having more meetings and talks."

> "Better communication across the different sectors and specialisms in order to better meet the needs of young people."

> "To really support students and not rush into isolating them/giving harsh punishments. Provide them with real opportunities."

> "Safe spaces at school if you need a time out for you to complete the schoolwork – can be given by giving students a card they can use only once a week."

> "I feel that we need more communication between mentors, so that young people feel a sense of communion and it's easy to follow."

A summary of the main points raised by young focus group participants on where they would like to see improvements made to increase take-up of mentoring opportunities. They include:

- Better promotion and communication
- Better interactiveness between mentor and mentee
- Better support
- Better access to early interventions
- Better continuity

- Better representation of young people's backgrounds in mentors (e.g., matching mentee and mentor)
- Better relatability (age, gender, etc.)
- Mentors showing that they truly care for your development
- Mentors fully able to provide support
- A larger range of ages

Provisions

Representatives for each of the 32 London boroughs were asked in which manner provisions for young people were offered in their respective local authorities; 28 boroughs participated.

In-house, universal provisions for young people were offered by 32.14% of the boroughs (9), young people Hub Zones were offered by 28.57% of the boroughs (8), independently funded targeted work was offered by 25% of the boroughs (7), and detached, street-based or mobile provisions for young people were offered by 39.28% of boroughs (11).

Universal provisions for young people were commissioned to VCS in 17.85% of the boroughs (5), whereas 14.28% (4) commissioned young people Hubs, 10.71% of the boroughs (3) commissioned independently funded targeted work, and 17.85% of the boroughs (5) had commissioned detached, street-based, or mobile provisions for young people.

Partnership between local authorities and VCS offered Universal provisions for young people, young people Hub Zones and Independently funded work in 35.71% of the boroughs (10), whereas 17.85% (5) of boroughs had offered detached, street-based, or mobile services for young people in this way. Figure 2.1 illustrates these proportions according to each category.

Figure 2.1 – Proportion in how London Councils deliver the Youth Offer (inc. mentoring)
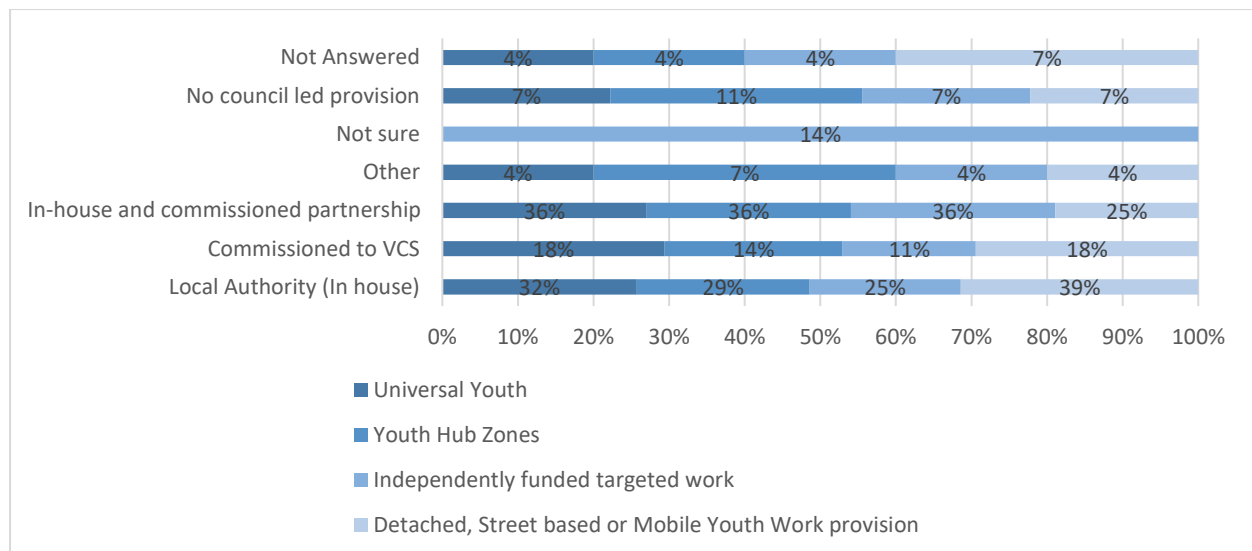
(Source: London Councils Youth Offer Survey, 2022)

Figure 2.2 shows that most boroughs concentrate their young people's provision services under Early Help and Personal, Social and Emotional development services. Employability, Leisure/Places to go and Prevention of Crime are also services where young people's provisions are commonly found and, less commonly, Education or under other denominations.

Figure 2.2 – Where youth provisions (inc. mentoring) sit within London Councils' departments/teams
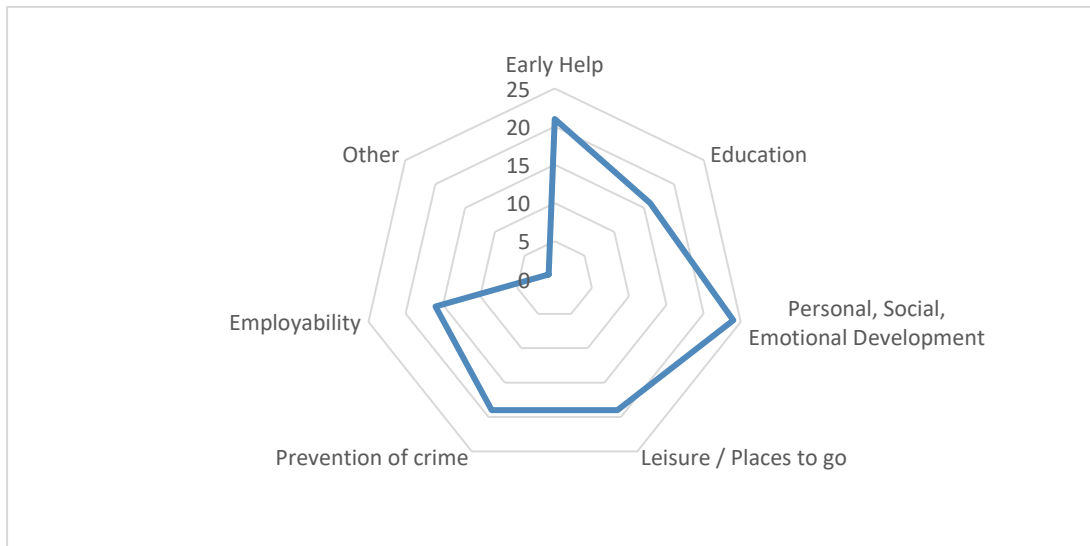
(Source: London Councils Youth Offer Survey 2022)

Figure 2.3 shows Cultural, Creative and Performing Arts young people services were the most offered young people services across boroughs within the Local Authority and VCS scope, followed by Sports, Outdoor education, and Physical activity. Services commissioned to VCS were the most common type of service provision, followed by Local Authority Universal Provision.

Figure 2.3 – Who is delivering Youth Offer provisions (Local authority and VCS)
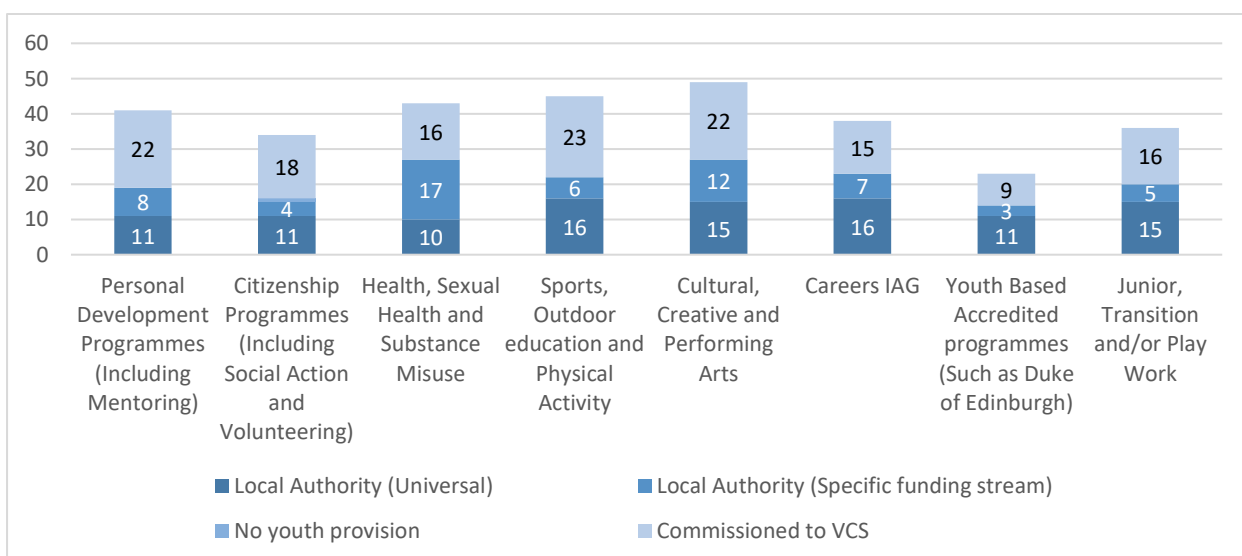
(Source: London Councils Youth Offer Survey, 2022)

Figure 2.4 shows that Sports, Outdoor Education and Physical Activity was the most offered provision for young people by the private sector and the public sector outside local authorities. The public sector was the main service provider for all categories, except Junior, Transition and/or Play Work.

Figure 2.4 – Who is delivering Youth Offer provisions (public and private sector)
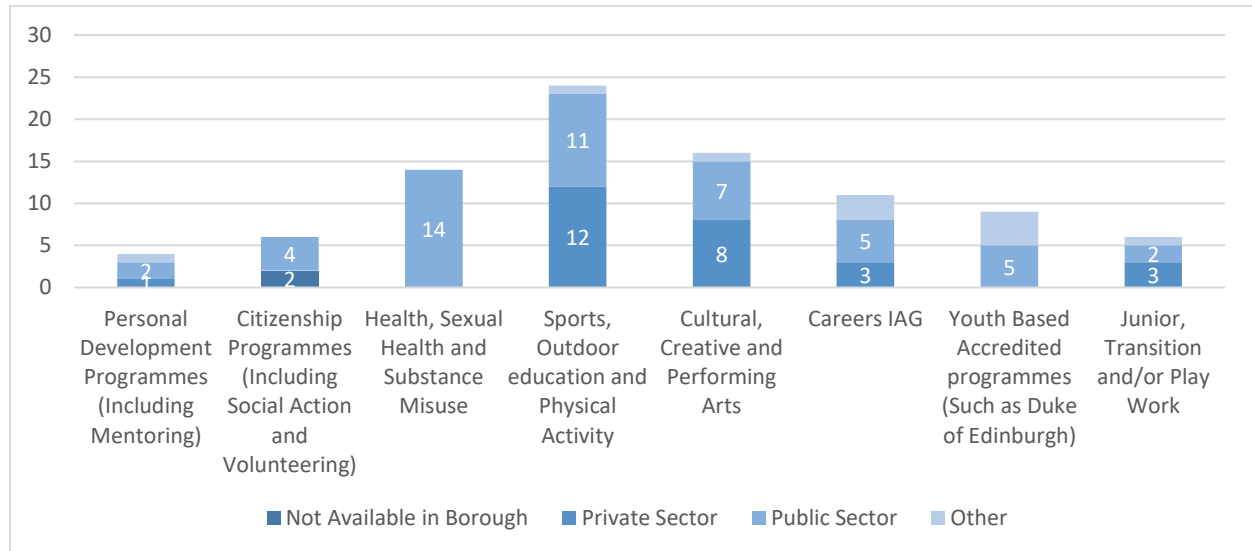
(Source: London Councils Youth Offer Survey, 2022)

Figure 2.5 shows that 60.71% of the boroughs were delivering Youth Offer through providers not under one organisation/agreement and through VCS (17), followed by 35.71% of boroughs who delivered services through local in-house authority provisions.

Figure 2.5 – Broader Youth Offer delivery
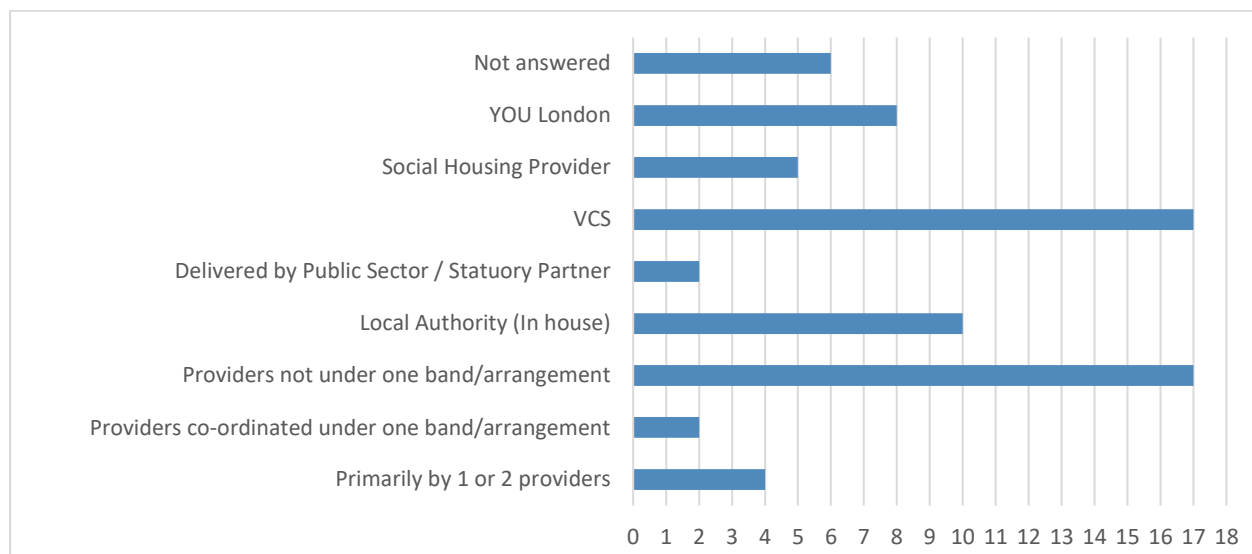
(Source: London Councils Youth Offer Survey, 2022)

A summary of what works well and is considered important in mentoring from the perceptions of local mentor providers.

Effective local authority and VCS partnerships:

> "At the moment we've got a contract with the local authority, so we provide up to 20 hours of mentoring within the community with the aim is to help young people to improve their socialisation skills or if they have anxiety issues, which a lot of them have. Also helping them to reintegrate back into the community. We do work within the community, we take them into restaurants, we take them on our activities, trampolining, bowling, cinema, anything that's going to help them to have an experience outside of the norm." (One Million Mentors)

Effective collaborations between VCS, schools, and private business:

> "The way that this programme is set up is that we match a school in Tower Hamlets – that's a secondary school – with a company in the borough. It could also be in the city, and the volunteers from the organisation provide professional mentoring to the young people. They meet once a month, usually at the company offices, but sometimes at school ..." (One Million Mentors)

Opportunities to support a growth in partnerships and collaboration

Outreach work to hold targeted conversations with schools to better access young people in need of mentoring:

> "We know most of the schools now in the borough, so we opened the opportunity to all of them, and we pursued that interested and we make sure that we spoke to as many of those schools as we could. We told them about the programme and the opportunities that are available, and then we help them promote it to their students." (The Switch, Q2)

Networking to maintain and expand the existing referral pathways into the service:

> "We are actually contacted by Haringey local authority to provide mentoring to some of their unaccompanied children, but we receive referrals from people like the Red Cross, the Refugee Council, Freedom from Torture, the Children Society and also from local authorities, social workers." (Hope for the Young)

> In the past, we've also had referrals from other kind of third sector organisations and local authorities, so kind of social workers and an early family support have referred children to us in the past." (The Kids Network)

Good stepdown process, including a referral process out of mentoring into other agreed services:

> "… during the child's mentoring programme, if they want additional support or have particular interests, then we would be looking to signpost them to other community partners in our network ..." (The Kids Network)

Being agile around time-limited work:

> "[Young people] with additional adverse childhood experiences or experiencing trauma might need support from their mentor for longer. We do extend the programme for an agreed amount of time." (The Kids Network)

However, research is extremely limited and inconclusive, so there is a huge gap in research regarding whether mentoring programmes are effective or not, that is, whether the above factors are all implemented, how these are adapted, and what specific strategies need to be in place to make mentoring effective in the context of different vulnerable young people groups.

What are the opportunities to expand and improve the quality of mentoring and support partnerships and collaboration where it is recommended most?

There is a lot of mentoring research that talks about the general benefits of mentoring, which include improvement in self-esteem, self-confidence, social, communication and emotional skills, academic achievement, and, in some instances, career development/knowledge.

Some research includes vulnerable young people groups, and although these might include some specific factors related to each vulnerable group, there is a lack of research on specific strategies, both to reach those targeted groups and to make mentoring effective for them.

Also, a lot of research reflects mentoring within educational environments, thus, the major focus is on school-aged children, but there is not much about mentoring for vulnerable young people aged up to 25 who are part of those disadvantaged groups.

Mentoring for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

A range of research agrees on the positive outcomes that mentoring has on young people, including those with disabilities. More than 10 articles (Shpigelman & Gill, 2013; Shpigelman, Weiss & Reiter, 2009 Rhodes & DuBois, 2004; Lindsay & Munson, 2018; Leake, Burgstahler & Izzo, 2011; Stumbo et al., 2011; Sword & Hill, 2003; Lindsay, Kolne & Cagliostro, 2018; Lindsay et al., 2017; Shpigelman, Reiter & Weiss, 2008; Britner et al., 2006) suggest goal achievement, social skills, employment knowledge, and development of communication and emotional skills as some of those positive outcomes. Moreover, a range of these articles have commonalities in their findings.

It was found that there is still a lack of research regarding factors related to the effectiveness and success of mentoring for young people with disabilities, and that the major focus has been on academic achievement; thus, research on mentoring employment for young people with disabilities is even more limited. However, some research has identified some factors related to the effectiveness of employment mentoring for young people with disabilities.

It is also suggested that communication style plays an important role in the effectiveness of mentoring young people with disabilities. Mentoring is more effective and successful when the communication between mentees and mentors is mutual, attentive, frequent, trusting, responsive, bidirectional, empathetic, warm, conversational, and supportive. Having more informal conversations in which mentors include their own emotions and experiences, as well as humour, and ask direct questions, seems to be more beneficial to the effectiveness of mentoring programmes than those in which mentors perceive it as unidirectional and

instrumental. Conversely, when communication is more distant and formal in the language and tone used, it seems that mentoring programmes are more unsuccessful. Moreover, it is suggested that some mentors who receive delayed responses from mentees demonstrate an accusatory and critical tone. Also, delays in response, especially those which are unexplained, might lead to infrequent communication, which impacts upon the mentoring process, and thus upon mentees' outcomes. Moreover, it gives rise to anxiety and angry feelings, which in turn lead to the end of the mentor–mentee relationship.

Regarding disability awareness, research states that not all mentees are aware of their own disabilities; thus, it is suggested to work first on disability identity, which encompasses self-awareness, self-acceptance, and acceptance of own disabilities and unique competencies, to make the mentoring process effective (Shpigelman & Gill, 2013). Besides, some mentors may ignore questions from mentees about disabilities, and may perceive disability as a private issue, which altogether is linked to unsuccessful mentoring.

Mentors' backgrounds appear to be another common factor in the effectiveness of mentoring. About four of the already cited articles suggest that mentoring seems to be more successful when mentors have experience and are from educational, vocational, and helping professional backgrounds, as well as from therapeutic disciplines, as they focus upon social and emotional support, personal development, and empowerment of the individuals. Moreover, it is suggested that structured training and supervision of mentors seem to be important factors related to the success and effectiveness of mentoring young people with disabilities, as they become more aware of disabilities (Shpigelman & Gill, 2013).

A few articles (Shpigelman & Gill, 2013; Shpigelman, Weiss & Reiter, 2009; Lindsay et al., 2017; Shpigelman, Reiter & Weiss, 2008) mention that e-mentoring reduces the visibility of individuals' disabilities, taking this as a positive aspect, as individuals seem to feel more like neurotypical individuals, which allows mentees to feel more comfortable talking about their needs and life experiences, and mentors focus more on the individual's goals, rather than on their disabilities.

As to the mentoring delivery method, research suggests that individuals with special needs benefit from computer-mediated communication, because by using electronic communication these individuals broaden their communication opportunities, acquire, and internalise behaviour skills, and cultivate personal relationships. Moreover, it has been suggested that online mentoring for young people with disabilities increases their efficacy to make career choices and decisions, as their knowledge about career options increases, and also benefits career adaptability, and assertiveness when looking for a job, and increases their knowledge about employment services and support. Besides, online group mentoring has demonstrated reduced feelings of loneliness, and improvements in self-esteem, social skills, internet, and computer skills, independence, and employment preparedness. Also, it seems to be beneficial when communication combines texted and synchronised (live) meetings. In addition, because in e-mentoring, the communication is not always synchronised, it allows mentees time to appropriately read, think and reflect before replying to messages/emails from their mentors. However, other research (Lindsay & Munson, 2018;

Sword & Hill, 2003; Lindsay, Kolne & Cagliostro, 2018; Shpigelman, Reiter & Weiss, 2008) suggests that e-mentoring can be challenging for some individuals with special needs, as they might have language limitations, including a lack of comprehension or typing skills. Moreover, they might face technical problems when using the internet due to cognitive difficulties. Not all technology is accessible to everyone; thus, adjustments need to be made and resources provided to enable young people with disabilities to get involved in online mentoring programmes. Accordingly, mentors need to adapt their online communication to mentees' needs and abilities, and training should be provided to facilitate the process, and to enable mentees to participate without technology being a barrier.

Regarding mentor and mentee matching criteria, there is evidence that when both mentors and mentees have disabilities, they develop positive and supportive, as well as unique and meaningful, relationships. Young people with disabilities who have adult mentees with disabilities have shown quicker and stronger development of communication skills, as sharing similar disabilities makes them more comfortable talking openly about their needs; however, this might trigger complex dynamics. On the other hand, it is also suggested that individuals who have adult mentors with no disabilities have shown greater goal achievement than those who have not.

It is also mentioned that age, gender, and disability type are suggested not to represent a critical influence in the mentoring process, although another study suggests that ethnicity, gender, and type of disability might influence the effectiveness of mentoring programmes.

Creativity has also been mentioned, as it is considered an important factor to keep mentees motivated and engaged in the mentoring programme by implementing innovative strategies and practices to meet mentees' needs and make mentoring programmes effective.

Stakeholders' (parents, family, friends, and other professionals) involvement seems to have a positive effect on the outcomes of mentoring for young people with disabilities, as they can provide support for young people with disabilities to work towards their goals.

Learning insights into mentoring young people who have Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

What works well:

- As a mentor to young people with disabilities, it is important to have a supportive, empathetic, and warm communication style. This means being patient and understanding and validating their feelings and experiences. Additionally, it is important to build a positive disability identity with these young people. This entails exploring their unique competencies and helping them to accept and embrace their disability. Mentors should also have relevant experience in the fields of education, vocational, therapeutic, and helping professions to ensure they are equipped to meet the needs of the mentees.

- E-mentoring can be a great way to help young people with disabilities develop the skills they need and to make them feel more comfortable. Texting and in-person sessions can be beneficial for building stronger and more meaningful relationships.

- Matching a mentor with a mentee who has disabilities can create a unique and beneficial bond that can help both the mentor and mentee reach their goals. Additionally, involving parents, family members, and friends in professional mentoring sessions can provide invaluable support and guidance for both parties.

What works less well:

- It is important for mentors to recognize the importance of creating a safe and inclusive environment. No question should ever be seen as a private issue when it comes to disabilities. Mentors should be open to answering questions about disabilities and provide helpful information to their mentees.

- It is essential that young people with disabilities have access to the same technology and resources as their peers in order to fully engage in e-mentoring sessions. There are organizations that focus on providing access to technology specifically for those with disabilities. It is also important to ensure that the technology is designed to be user-friendly and accessible for those with disabilities. Mentors can also provide support in finding solutions to access technology and resources.

- It is true that different types of disabilities can influence the effectiveness of equitable access, engagement, and participation in mentoring opportunities. However, it is important to remember that with the right support, many people with disabilities can still benefit from mentoring.

Mentoring for young people who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET)

Research about the effectiveness of mentoring programmes for this vulnerable group is very limited. There are some reports about how to prevent young people falling out of education. The mentoring available for NEET seems to be more within the context of education and educational settings; thus, the focus is on academic achievement and on the prevention of young people becoming NEET. Some programmes focus on helping young people aged 16–17 to return to, or not to leave, education, although little is known about how to reach NEET young people aged up to 25.

Moreover, the benefits of mentoring are widely mentioned, as well as ways to prevent young people becoming NEET, but little is said about effective practices that mentoring programmes should have in place to get young people engaged in the programme, and to make it effective, that is, to get NEET young people back into education, training, and employment.

However, the Education Endowment Foundation suggest that successful mentoring for NEET is linked to programmes that include clear structures and expectations, and to training provided to mentors, who in turn will meet regularly with their mentees. Moreover, they highlight the importance of training provided and effective mentor recruitment, as they need to be reliable individuals who demonstrate kindness, consistency, calmness and a supportive approach and attitude (Richmond & Regan, 2022).

A report from the University of Reading (Francis-Brophy & McCrum, 2010) exhibits a project initially developed by stakeholders, and subsequently supported by and working in partnership with charities, local organisations and business, as well as with the local council, in which NEET young people got involved in an online mentoring programme that aims to engage them for more than half a day weekly, keep them motivated by encouraging them to imagine a better future, and inform, assist and set up goals related to education, training and employment. They considered digital inclusion and the importance of training business mentors to effectively support young people at disadvantage, or who face multiple challenges, such as those who are young and pregnant, or who have a history of offending or living in care.

It is suggested that group mentoring might also have negative outcomes (Dixon & Crichton, 2016); research conducted in the US demonstrated that high-school-aged people who got involved in the Quantum Opportunity Program, which helps individuals to complete their high school and get involved in higher education, were more likely to commit crimes and be arrested in their 20s than those who were not part of the programme. According to the research, this might happen because grouping together high-risk young individuals might expose them to negative peer influences.

Learning insights into mentoring young people who are NEET (not in education, employment, or training)

What works well:

- Mentoring can be a powerful tool to help NEET young people from disadvantaged backgrounds reach their educational goals and transform their lives. With the right guidance and support, mentoring can be an effective way to help young people build the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to succeed.

- Through mentoring, young people can learn how to identify and make the most of their strengths and resources, while gaining the self-determination and resilience necessary to navigate life's challenges.

- When remote mentoring opportunities are available, it's important for mentors to make a real effort to engage NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) young people for more than half-a-day per week. This can be done through developing creative and interactive activities that keep the young person's attention and help them stay engaged. Developing a structured and organized programme is also key, making sure to provide a variety of activities that are both educational and fun.

What works less well:

- While mentoring opportunities in educational settings can be beneficial to NEET young people, it is also important to consider other mentoring options outside of these settings. Community-based mentoring can provide NEET young people with an opportunity to receive guidance and support from an individual who is not necessarily a professional.

- Group mentoring can be a great way to bring people together to learn from each other, however, it's important to be mindful of the potential risks. Facilitators should consider the size of the group, the location, and be aware of any wider risks associated with the group. To ensure a positive outcome for the mentees, facilitators should also ensure the group is

- well managed, that everyone is involved, and that there is plenty of room for dialogue and feedback.

- Mentoring opportunities are most effective when they are tailored to meet the specific needs of young people with complex lives. It can be beneficial to have an initial discussion with the young person to get an understanding of their individual needs and preferences, and then design the mentoring programme around that. (e.g., early morning sessions and high levels of reading and writing)

Mentoring for young people who are at risk of becoming involved in violence

Some studies evidence either support for young people through a range of programmes that do not necessarily/clearly involve mentoring, or support for young people through mentoring as complementary to wider programmes that aim to prevent or intervene in cases of young people involved in violence. Moreover, some research links gangs with young people involved in violence, and other research in which workers specialised in young people are suggested to act as role models and mentors to young people involved in violence. Research on mentoring focused on young people involved in violence is also very limited, and even more so on the effectiveness of mentoring programmes for this particularly vulnerable group.

A review that included 41 previous studies (Limbos et al., 2007) focused on youth violence intervention and prevention, and suggested that strategies implemented were 49% effective. Those strategies include the support from different organisations that work with young people and focus on conflict resolution programmes, adjusting violent behaviours, social development, studying the relationship between crime in families from high- to low-poverty boroughs, preventing substance abuse, education about the consequences of violence, and also consider abused and neglected individuals. However, none of these specifically mention mentoring as part of their strategies.

Other research (Grossman, Johns & McDonald, 2014) on a programme that aimed to combine mentoring with sports, through which they attempted to transform attitudes and behaviours related to sense of belonging, interaction with people from different backgrounds, and ultimately the use of violence to resolve problems, suggests that participants noted improvement in their self-confidence and self-esteem in relation to negotiating cultural differences and stereotypes. Thus, the programme facilitated friendships with different cultural groups, and strengthened and expanded young people's social networks; altogether, this is related to the reduction of violence among young people. Moreover, participants learned discipline, which is associated with self-control in situations where conflict may arise. Young people seemed to develop a sense of civic engagement and responsibility to the wider community through their participation.

More specifically to mentoring, research suggests that peer mentoring helped young people to avoid increase in attitudes that support violence, as well as the escalation of aggressive behaviours. Moreover, it mentioned the benefits of peer-mentoring in decreasing violent attitudes and improvement in self-esteem (Sheehan et al., 1999).

Another study (Taliep et al., 2022) evaluated the effectiveness of mentoring intervention in violence among young people from low-income backgrounds. The most relevant findings suggest that the effectiveness of the programme depends upon the level of responsiveness of participants. Moreover, the importance of safe space and the trust participants experienced with their mentors was highlighted as an important factor for the success of the programme.

In contrast to a range of research, a study suggested that young people with behavioural and emotional problems might have difficulties building positive relationships with their mentors; thus, mentoring programmes might not be appropriate for them, as mentoring does not seem to directly improve those aspects. Perhaps, short, and unsuccessful relationships with mentors can be harmful to young people. This study also suggested that when parents are involved in the mentoring process, it might work better (Hayashi & O'Donnell, 2004).

Learning insights into mentoring young people at risk of becoming involved in violence

What works well:

- Mentoring support should be tailored to the individual needs and preferences of the young person. It should be coordinated with other care and support to ensure that the young person's overall wellbeing is addressed.

- As mentors, you can help those who are in conflict by using their experience and knowledge of conflict resolution. Mentors can adjust violent behaviours, help with social development, and understand the relationships between crime and families in high to low-poverty areas. They can also help prevent substance abuse, provide education and guidance to those who are victims of abuse, neglect, or violence.

- As a mentor, it is important to help young people build social capital and develop meaningful, lasting friendships with people from different cultures. One way to do this is to create safe spaces for meaningful conversations, where youth can learn more about each other and build relationships. When it comes to developing discipline and self-control, mentors should focus on providing positive reinforcement and guidance. For example, providing rewards for good behaviour, helping youth reflect on their actions, and teaching problem-solving strategies.

What works less well:

- It is important to understand that young people with behavioural and emotional problems can often have difficulty forming positive relationships with their mentors, and mentors should strive to support them in a way that best meets their needs.

- Mentoring is an effective type of intervention for young people who are at risk of becoming involved in violence, however in some circumstances other forms of care and support may be more effective. In these cases, it is important to provide young people with the necessary resources and support they need to address the underlying issues that may be putting them at risk.

- It is true that short or unsuccessful relationships with mentors can be potentially damaging to young people, particularly those who may be at risk of getting involved in violence. However, it is important to remember that the involvement of parents is a key factor in helping to ensure the success of mentorship programmes. Parents can provide critical

> guidance and support for the mentor and can help bridge the gap between the mentor and the mentee, creating a more cohesive and effective mentoring dynamic.

Mentoring for young people who are refugees and asylum seekers

Asylum seekers and refugees are also under-represented groups, about which research in general is very limited. It is suggested that this might be because they are immigrants and, in many cases, they speak different languages to the researchers, which might be a barrier to conducting research.

The research included here has been conducted in places such as North Korea, the US, Germany, and Switzerland (Emery & Yang, 2022; Della Fera, 2022; Nabors, Stanton-Chapman & Toledano-Toledano, 2022; Jaschke et al., 2022).

Research on mentoring for young refugees seems to be more focused on school-aged people; thus, there is very limited research on employment mentoring for this community and its effectiveness. Moreover, some studies include mentoring as part of wider programmes that also include school enrolment and external partnerships, so that pupils can participate in sports and other activities outside the school.

Also, mentoring for young refugees seems to have some positive outcomes on the settling process, as well as on improving social and emotional skills, including self-esteem and self-confidence. However, there is not much said about what strategies are implemented with refugees aged up to 25 and within employment contexts.

It is also suggested that mentoring has positive effects, as it helps to reduce depression symptoms in young refugees; the mentoring seemed to be more successful in those individuals who had strong attachments with their parents or teachers, whereas it was less effective in those with weaker attachments. In this study, mentors were provided with training in which confidentiality, time spent with mentees, the importance of building trustable relationships, awareness about mentees' backgrounds, and step-by-step planning of the mentoring process were highlighted factors related to effective mentoring. This study was within the context of adolescent students.

Moreover, in multi-level mentoring for young refugees, which consists of both adult and peer mentoring, mentees can benefit from both forms of mentoring. This report considers factors that might be related to the effectiveness of the programme. For instance, the programme encourages integration, whilst also respecting the cultural identity of refugees, in which mentors and mentees accept, recognise, value and respect differences. Trauma processing, in which trauma awareness should be in place, can better support these individuals. As in any other mentoring programme, to be successful, it is important to build confidence and positive relationships with mentees, and the resettlement process should be supported by considering civic identity and involvement, citizenship, community, and leadership.

There is a study that mentioned positive outcomes for accommodation, as refugees were able to find better quality housing. Moreover, they found no great implications in terms of employment, which they associate with the facts that mentors were 25 or younger (which means that their training is not completed), and that this study included non-government organisations, which in turn focus more on social connections by encouraging refugees to participate in leisure and cultural activities (Crooks et al., 2019).

Learning insights into mentoring young people who are refugees or asylum seekers

What works well:

- Mentoring for young refugees and asylum seekers can be a great way to support them during their settling process. Working with external partners, schools can introduce mentoring programs that focus on sports and other activities outside of the classroom. Through this, young refugees and asylum seekers can find a sense of belonging and connection, while also having a consistent source of support.

- Mentoring for young refugees and asylum seekers should include activities that foster social and emotional development such as engaging in team-building exercises, role-playing scenarios, and meaningful conversations. Mentors should also provide guidance on setting goals, building self-esteem and confidence, and developing a positive outlook on life.

- It is important to recognize the trauma and re-traumatizing experiences they may have endured and to be mindful of this when providing mentorship. One way to help them is by engaging in activities that promote civic identity and involvement. Additionally, helping them find good accommodation is key.

What works less well:

- Research into mentoring these groups is focused on school-aged refugees or asylum seekers, but there is very limited research on employment mentoring and the effectiveness of mentoring. This means that there is little known about mentoring strategies implemented with refugees aged up to 25 and with an employability focus.

- For those mentees who are having difficulty developing relationships with their parents or teachers, it is important to focus on building their self-confidence and helping them to develop their own support networks. This could include providing access to tutoring, extracurricular activities, or even just providing a safe space for them to talk about their experiences. It is also important to be conscious of the cultural differences that may exist between the mentee and the parents or teachers, and to be mindful of how this may impact the relationship.

- Mentoring young refugees and asylum seekers comes with many unique challenges. One way to help build social connections and give refugees a sense of belonging is to encourage them to participate in leisure and cultural activities in the wider community.

Mentoring for young people who are experiencing or have been impacted by domestic violence and abuse

There is very limited research about mentoring programmes and the effectiveness of mentoring for young people impacted by domestic violence. The available research is focused either on women in general (with no focus on young people), or on the prevention of domestic violence through the implementation of programmes that include getting young people involved in the community, sports and social activities, and some mention mentoring as part of a bigger programme.

Research suggests the prevention of domestic violence by getting young people involved in mentoring, which in turn focuses on mental wellbeing and cultural identity. The aim is to promote healthy relationships among young people; however, the effectiveness of this approach is unclear (Crooks et al., 2019).

Regarding challenges in mentoring for women from domestic abuse contexts, a study

Learning insights into mentoring young people who are exposed to domestic violence

What works well:

- Mentoring young people impacted by domestic violence is about more than just providing guidance and advice. It's about providing a safe and supportive environment for these young people to build trust and to learn new strategies for managing their lives.
- A great way to provide wrap-around support for young people is to build relationships with and support local organizations that specialize in aiding young people affected by domestic violence (e.g., sports, social and community activities). These organizations are typically equipped to provide counselling, therapy, and other resources to help young people heal and cope with their experience.

What works less well:

- It is clear that there are many challenges that must be overcome in order to provide effective mentoring for young people impacted by domestic violence. It is concerning that research into the effectiveness of mentoring for girls and boys is significantly lacking. Additionally, the reliance on volunteer peer mentors must be reduced, as there is likely to be an uneven distribution of support and quality of mentoring.

suggests that in the UK these include lack of funding, exclusion from the statutory system and larger funded services, lack of suitable peer mentors, and reliance on volunteer peer mentors (Gilbert & Compagno, 2019). There is a lack of research about effective strategies to be used in mentoring programmes for young people who are within domestic violence contexts.

Mentoring for young people who are associated with gangs/offenders or impacted by exploitation

Mentoring that helps to prevent negative behaviours among mentees is suggested to be crucial in the success of intervention and rehabilitation programmes in the context of young people involved in gangs and violence. Moreover, research suggests that early intervention and proper mentorship can prevent delinquent behaviours, violent practices, and gang involvement. Thus, mentoring programmes for vulnerable young people should be offered in disadvantaged communities, in which they are encouraged to stay away from gangs. Also, mentoring should support them to enhance resilience to negative influences and contribute to young people's development. Moreover, the effectiveness of mentoring for this vulnerable group is suggested to be related to the length of the mentor–mentee relationship, which should last beyond the programme, training received by mentors, and mentor–mentee compatibility, considering gender, age, ethnicity, and personal interests and preferences.

A study conducted in Australia (Delaney & Milne, 2002) suggests that mentoring for six months or more for young offenders seems to be beneficial, as individuals themselves, families, and the police notice improvements in terms of reduced offending behaviours, increased community involvement, and improvement in communication skills, self-esteem, and motivation. As a result of their changes in behaviour and attitudes, young people seem to have better relationships with their parents and family members. Mentors act as role models, and provide social and emotional support, as well as encouraging the development of skills and modifying undesirable behaviours. Moreover, they complement mentoring with other activities in which young people can socialise and have fun within supportive environments. Cases in which mentors work in partnership with parents seem to be successful in the young people's outcomes (behaviours).

Another study (Hanham & Tracey, 2017) investigated how mentoring supported young people who were going through the transition from a juvenile justice centre to their first year of re-entry into the community, as they were concerned about employment and educational opportunities available to them. This study highlighted the importance of mentor recruiting criteria, in which their roles, expectations and training are established, and the importance of mentors adopting authoritative and non-hierarchical relationships to make the mentoring programme effective.

An article (DuBois & Felner, 2016) proposes a range of points to be considered to deliver successful mentoring to young people exposed to, or involved in, gangs. First, a planned and structured programme must be in place. Second, establish the activities that should be undertaken during the mentoring sessions, and assess whether the mentor has the time, commitment, and personal qualities to carry out those activities, and to be a safe and effective mentor. Third, ongoing training is essential for mentors, as this helps them to develop positive relationships with the mentees, and to use appropriate communication and approach. Fourth, matching is very important in terms of availability, interests, locations, gender, and ethnicity. Fifth, the relationship should be regularly monitored/supervised, so

that both mentors and mentees can talk about what is working and what is not within the mentoring programme. Moreover, regarding young people involved in commercial sexual activity, they suggest that research about the effectiveness of mentoring for this vulnerable group is very limited. However, for mentoring to be effective, it is recommended to build positive and trusting relationships with mentees, provide peer mentoring when possible, implement structured approaches and develop psychoeducational programmes.

Learning insights into mentoring young people associated with gangs

What works well:

- One of the most effective ways to prevent negative behaviours among young people associated with gangs is to provide mentoring and support during times of transition and/or when they have been exposed to the criminal justice system. Research has shown that early mentoring and support can help prevent the escalation of anti-social behaviours and gang involvement. To ensure maximum effectiveness, mentoring should be targeted to the most disadvantaged communities, and should focus on helping young people learn how to stay away from gangs and make positive life choices.

- It is important that mentors and mentees have similar backgrounds to act as credible role models and provide meaningful support. To ensure that this is successful, mentors should receive training and ongoing support to monitor and supervise their relationship with the mentee. Additionally, it is important to provide resources to the mentee to give them the tools they need to make positive changes in their lives and ultimately find success.

- Mentoring can help them to build better relationships with parents and family members, while providing a safe and supportive environment in which they can socialise and have fun. To ensure the best outcomes, mentoring should last for a minimum of six months. To build on this, it is a good idea to compliment the mentoring with other activities such as sports, music, and art workshops that can help to build positive relationships amongst young people.

What works less well:

- It is true that mentoring can be a difficult task for young people associated with gangs, especially when parental involvement is limited. However, it is important to remember that mentoring can be much more than a tool to achieve academic or employment goals. Mentoring can be a great way to build relationships and help young people develop social, emotional, and life skills. It is important to focus on the individual needs of each young person and find creative ways to engage them in activities that could benefit them beyond the traditional academic and job goals. Mentoring can be a great way to help young people feel supported, gain a sense of self-worth, and build meaningful relationships.

- One of the biggest challenges associated with mentoring young people who are involved or associated with gangs is finding the right balance of authoritative versus non-hierarchal relationships. It can be difficult to establish trust and respect with a mentee, especially if they are coming from a highly structured or hierarchical gang environment. Additionally, mentors need to be aware of the mentee's availability, location, and interests and need to be able to adjust their approach accordingly.

Mentoring for young people who are excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from school or college

Research on these vulnerable groups is also very limited, and what is available focuses on preventing school exclusion, rather than on providing mentoring to those who are already excluded. Moreover, the focus is on academic achievement, and nothing is said about employment or how effective mentoring is; a few studies agree that there is a lack of research.

Mentoring this group can also be particularly complex and resource intensive, as it can be linked to broader issues of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), which can also involve poverty, being at risk of violence and being associated with gangs

However, some organisations work on programmes to prevent school exclusion, and mentoring is one of the strategies used. A study conducted in the UK suggests that young people in schools wanted a mentor, and those who had mentoring indicated that having a mentor who is unconnected to school helps them to talk about how to deal with difficult feelings. However, some others reported negative experiences related to how their relationships with their mentors ended (Beattie et al., 2016).

A study that analysed 37 studies (Valdebenito et al., 2019) about school-based interventions suggests that mentoring implementation, among other strategies – such as enhancement of academic skills, counselling, and training for teachers – reduced school exclusion in the short term. More specific to mentoring, this study mentioned structured and positive relationships between young people and an adult who acts as a role model and supports them with academic, emotional, and behavioural difficulties.

The importance of working in partnership with parents has also been highlighted, as their involvement in the mentoring process, or any other prevention strategy or intervention, is believed to have positive effects on the outcomes and effectiveness of programmes with young people. This was a pivotal consideration within a specialised intervention that was conducted by the London Borough of Newham that supported children identified as being at risk of exclusion and criminal exploitation during transition from primary to secondary school. This was evaluated by a team from the University of East London (UEL) that is reported in Ravenscroft et al. (2020) and reflected upon in the context of the impact of lockdown in Ravenscroft et al. (2022). Although this was a complex and multi-agency intervention, the key component of this was the role of a 'coach' assigned to specific families, who performed practical roles for the families and a mentoring role for the young people. These relationships with the coaches, who were 'trusted adults' who provided mentoring to the young people and were 'always available' for the families to help as issues arose, were considered highly valuable and effective. They supported the children's emotional, behavioural, and educational development, coaching them in aspects such as how to manage their emotions and improve their decision making, alongside raising aspirations, and supporting and consolidating successful transition.

Learning insights into mentoring young people who are risk of school and/or college exclusion

What works well:

- As a mentor, it is important to not only provide support and guidance, but also to create a safe, non-judgmental space for these young people to talk about their feelings and experiences. It's also important to work in partnership with their parents, to ensure the best outcomes for their academic achievement.

- Early help is essential for preventing school exclusion and can be accomplished through a number of mentoring strategies that enhance academic skills, such as providing tutoring and study skills guidance, as well as offering counselling and emotional support. Training for teachers is also key for reducing school exclusion in the short term, as they can be better equipped to recognize the signs of potential exclusion and intervene early.

What works less well:

- Another challenge is ensuring that the mentoring experience is successful and lasting. It is important to establish clear expectations between mentor and mentee, and to continuously evaluate progress to ensure that the mentoring experience is effective. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for mentoring relationships to suddenly end, often due to a misunderstanding or lack of communication.

- Finally, mentoring young people within a school setting can be challenging due to the existing power dynamics between mentor and mentee. It is important to ensure that the mentor-mentee relationship is kept separate from the teacher-student relationship.

Mentoring for young people who are from low-income families/living in poverty

A study (Holbrook, 2021) evaluated the outcomes of a music-based mentoring programme delivered for a year, in which low-income students took part and their maths, writing and reading skills seemed to show some improvement. Besides, after two years, their speaking showed great improvement, which in turn is related to success and resilience. This mentoring aimed to promote social and emotional development, student resilience and wellbeing. The study mentioned social connections and parents' involvement as factors related to the effectiveness of mentoring.

A study conducted in Chicago (Wathen at al., 2021) evidenced that geographic factors and family characteristics of a peer-mentoring programme influenced the number of sessions they attended. Young people in poverty tend to live in high-crime neighbourhoods; thus, their safety whilst travelling to attend the sessions was the main concern. However, it is suggested that due to assumptions that neighbourhoods with high crime rates are all the same, teachers, policymakers and other professionals must avoid making assumptions that poverty and crime have similar impacts on programme outcomes. This mentoring programme offered some financial incentive, which was associated with higher attendance by those in the greatest poverty and lower incomes. This study also suggested that there were no differences in the effectiveness of mentoring based on ethnicity. Moreover, the study suggested that the more experience the mentor has, the more effective the mentoring seems to be.

Learning insights into mentoring young people who are living in low-income families/living in poverty

What works well:
- Music-based mentoring programmes can be an effective way of helping young people from low-income families and living in poverty. These programmes can help promote social and emotional development and can help build resilience and wellbeing in mentees who are going through hardships. It is also important to ensure that social connections and parental involvement are incorporated into the mentoring programme, as this can help create a supportive environment for the young people to thrive.
- To ensure success, it is important to match mentors with mentees based on their backgrounds and life circumstances, as this will help to establish trusting relationships. Additionally, it can be useful to provide financial incentives to mentors to ensure that those with more experience are more likely to be involved in the mentoring process.

What works less well:
- It is important to ensure that all mentees have equitable access to mentoring services and consider their family characteristics. It is also important to consider the safety of mentees when travelling to and from mentoring sessions. This can include ensuring they have adequate bus fare or other transportation, providing meals if needed, and having access to safe streets. Additionally, it is important to be aware of any local resources that may be available to mentees in need of assistance.

Mentoring for young people who have a social worker (Children Looked After, with a Child Protection Plan, Children in Need and Care Leavers)

Research suggests (Hudson, 2013) that young people living in foster homes remain at high risk of homelessness, poverty, early parenting, and incarceration; thus, they would benefit from mentoring, as it might motivate them to get into vocational training or higher education, prevent negative psychosocial outcomes and improve their quality of life in the transition to adulthood. Quality of life includes physical and emotional health and social activities. It is suggested that the length of the mentor–mentee relationship, the consistency of contact, and strong emotional connections is crucial to the effectiveness of the mentoring. Moreover, mentors must consider that young people in foster care often suffer from trauma.

A study (Poon, Christensen & Rhodes, 2021) suggests that mentoring young people in foster care often aims to help to address their experiences of traumatic circumstances. However, the effectiveness of this approach has been evidenced to be small to medium, which seems to be related to young people who have experienced emotional abuse. Hence, they suggest that mentoring approaches, and the activities involved, should be adapted to the specific needs, concerns, and identities of young mentees. Moreover, it was suggested that peer mentoring might be more effective than adult mentoring, as individuals share their experiences, and mentees learn from those who have had similar or the same struggles. Also, it is suggested to deliver workshops related to employment and further education or training to promote young people's professional development.

Besides, there is a lack of empirically based guidelines to govern the practices of mentor programmes for young people in foster care. However, it is once again suggested that the length of the mentor–mentee relationship has a link with the effectiveness of the mentoring, as a programme of 12 months in which the relationship (young person in foster care–mentor) ended prematurely seemed to have worse outcomes.

A study conducted in the US (Diehl, Howse & Trivette, 2011) suggests that positive perception from mentees about mentoring is also important for its effectiveness. In this instance, a mentee finds a mentor to be someone who listens to them, so they feel more confident to talk openly and are keen to be taken for outings.

Another report (Taussig & Weiler, 2017) highlights that although demographic factors have been considered to play a role in the effectiveness of mentoring, there is a lack of evidence/research to support this claim. Moreover, they mention how mentoring might be less effective for young people at higher risk than for those who are at lower risk. They also mention that although the frequency of meetings, duration, and quality of the mentor–mentee match/relationship have been important factors in the effectiveness of mentoring, these are not consistently related to positive mentoring outcomes in research.

Learning insights into mentoring young people who are looked-after

What works well:
- Mentoring young people looked after can be a great way to help them transition into adulthood and reach their full potential. It can provide them with a positive role model, guidance, and support to help them make informed decisions about their education, career, and personal growth. With the right kind of mentoring, young people can gain the skills and confidence they need to make positive life choices and work towards their goals. Ultimately, providing mentorship to young people can help to prevent negative psychosocial outcomes and improve their quality of life during this transition period.
- It is important to be patient and understanding as the relationship develops. It is also important to remember that the length of the mentor-mentee relationship does matter and that it can take some time to establish an effective mentoring relationship.
- To ensure the best possible experience for mentees, it is important to have developed a comprehensive programme that includes regular meetings between mentor and mentee, with a focus on building strong relationships and providing guidance and support. Mentors should also be trained to lead workshops on employment and further education or training, so that mentees can develop the skills and knowledge they need to become successful.

What works less well:
- Mentoring young people who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can be a difficult but rewarding challenge. It is important to create a safe, non-judgemental environment to help build trust in the mentoring relationship. Mentoring can be a great way to provide these young people with the support and guidance they need, but it is important to remember that it may be more effective for those at lower-risk than higher-risk.
- It is also important to keep in mind that having a positive perception of mentoring is essential for success. Mentors should take the time to understand the individual needs of their mentees and provide the necessary support to help them reach their goals.

Examples of opportunities to expand and improve the quality of mentoring include the contract agreements on thresholds and target groups that might miss young people most in need:

> "We have to wait for them to be referred by social worker, so unfortunately it's not accessible to the local community unless they are in early help stages of getting involved in social care, and then we can get involved to prevent it going worse and stop them from going into the care system." (One Million Mentors)

Recruitment of diverse mentors could benefit from a coordinated strategic approach at a sub-regional or pan-London level:

> "We really try and recruit as many different, like, diverse volunteers, with a huge range of skills, backgrounds, experiences, so that we can do really great mentoring matching basically ..." (Hope for the Young)

Mentoring should be at the heart of the primary care response:

> "Mentoring should be available for children by the GP, and instead of them just putting them on drugs or referring them straight to CAMHS there's nothing else that GPs tend to do with children who might just be experiencing high levels of anxiety, and I think mentoring should be available to the GP that's why I would like to say ..." (Precious Moments and Health)

Case study

Different organisations partner with external organisations in different ways. For instance, The Connection Crew, which supports young homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, gets referrals from frontline partner organisations that provide shelter or food, and then refers young people to the mentoring programme, where support for independence and employment is provided. Also, The Switch has actively provided mentoring to BAME secondary school children for over thirty years and has well-established connections with other organisations that contribute to developing mentoring programmes, training volunteer mentors, and raising awareness about safeguarding. Hope for the Young works in partnership with organisation networks, and collaboratively discusses young people's needs and strategies to best support them. Moreover, The Kids Network works with a wide network of organisations, so that when young people face additional challenges/adversities during the programme, such as trauma, or they come to the end of the programme, they are connected to organisations where they can get further support. Within this organisation, it is also considered that, in general, the charity sector works individually, whilst they see collaborative work as part of good practice, as together quality services can be delivered to children and young people. Furthermore, One Million Mentors works with a wide range of organisations helping them to set up mentoring programmes, therefore, they highlight the importance of working with stakeholders, young partners, schools, colleges, and universities to implement mentoring programmes considering the structures and processes, as well as best practices with regard to safeguarding, quality, engagement, preparation, outcome, and impact of the mentoring journey itself. Indeed, working collaboratively with young partners to set up and develop the programme structure is considered key to delivering a high-quality service.

In addition to working in partnership with other organisations as part of best practice, organisations have also highlighted different factors, some of which seem to be common. These factors include person-centred and young people's needs-led approaches, as, in this way, their focus is on the young people and how best they can be supported; structured programmes that are also flexible according to young people's needs and capability to follow such structures; implementing different resources and strategies to tackle progress and make improvements; and providing mentors with the right training

and support. Moreover, the Kids Network ensures that trauma-informed and anti-oppression practices are actively embedded within the programme; thus, they implement practices against racism, sexism and disablism, and hold systems accountable for oppression.

How might policymakers strengthen mentoring across London (guidance and suggestions)?

Mentoring for young people might have some focus on employment and career development, but research related to vulnerable groups of young people focuses more on social and emotional skills, as well as on academic achievement; very little is said about young people getting into employment, career development or further growth and independence in their adulthood.

A summary of what else is recommended to enhance the quality of mentoring opportunities from the young focus group perspectives:

- Career opportunities
- Access to networks
- Exposure to other opportunities
- A larger range of mentors (e.g., age, gender, and ethnicity)
- Nice receptionists, so it feels safer when going
- A relationship where emotions can be expressed
- Connecting with other young people that are going through similar experiences

Suggestions about how best to shape and resource future mentorship and support services for young Londoners were also raised – see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 The majority of local providers and funding bodies across the boroughs believe that longer term provisions, covering core costs of local providers, and using existing tools or delivery organisations, would be the best practice in shaping and resourcing for mentoring programmes. As some partners involve mentoring in corporate organisations, senior management buy-in, changing perception of mentoring, and inclusion into existing organisation programmes are also key in making an impact. Nearly always, mentoring is reported as voluntary work; therefore, training and recruitment of mentors has been suggested as being important – for example, making it a paid position and attracting those with lived experience of relevant focus of the local providers would help to strengthen mentoring for young people in London.

Case study

Children and young people are becoming more aware of the challenges faced within their families due to the cost-of-living crisis, which makes them even more disenfranchised, especially when they live in disadvantaged areas of London. As a consequence, the cost-of-living crisis is directly affecting young people, as they have very limited opportunities to even attend a mentoring session, as well as to get into employment or education. Moreover, this uncertainty about their futures might have an impact on young people's mental health. Accordingly, structural changes need to be in place to provide a wider range of inclusive and quality services to young people, as well as employment and educational opportunities, by holistically considering the different factors that might affect them, such

as their migration status, home environments (abuse, domestic violence), socio-economic status, mental health, disabilities, or any other needs. Indeed, an organisation has suggested the need for structural changes, as mentoring should be offered by GPs as a middle point before putting young people on medication or referring them to CAMHS, as it might help to de-escalate mental health issues when holistic mentoring is in place. However, it is perceived that the system underestimates the value of mentoring. Moreover, refugees are likely to face extra pressure, as politics have a direct impact on them, and they might even be confused when receiving contradictory inputs from the news media and the support offered through mentoring. Also, due to the cost-of-living crisis, some organisations face challenges in terms of paying bills, rent for office spaces and facilities, and staff (including their training), so they suggest that the original budget does not match the current economic context to provide adequate support to young people; as a consequence, some organisations have had to reduce the amount (hours) of support provided, or the activities in which young people used to get involved, such as cinema or bowling. Accordingly, structural and policy changes are recommended to enable organisations to have the facilities and resources to train volunteers, mentors, and all staff members in holistic, trauma-informed, and anti-oppression approaches, reflected in providing more inclusive, wider, and better support to young people, empowering them, as well as enabling and guiding them to achieve their goals and reach their potential.

Respondents also suggested that mentors should be more available and accessible, including peer support in schools, taking consideration of cultural, special, and social needs, wider reach in schools, and access via GP, CAMHS etc. Lastly, local providers thought that partnerships across organisations, whether at local or regional level can be strengthened by more networking opportunities to increase connectivity between organisations. Particularly, partnerships would be most beneficial for grant applications, service delivery, training, knowledge-sharing, and exchange of best practices.

Table 4.1 – Suggestions of how best to shape and resource future mentorship and support services for young Londoners from local providers – by sub-regions

	Proper utilisation of, and sustainable funding scheme	Commitment from employing organisations	Training & recruitment of high-quality mentors	Needs-based, co-production programme design & delivery	Mentors made more available & accessible	Partnerships across organisations, LA, schools
North Central London						
Barnet	1				1	1
Camden	1			1	2	1
Enfield	1		1		2	
Haringey	1				1	1
Islington	1				1	
Total	**5**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**7**	**3**
Northeast London						
Barking & Dagenham	2			1	1	
Hackney	2		3	4	1	2
Havering	1				1	

Newham	2			1	1	
Redbridge	1				1	1
Tower Hamlets	5	1	2	2	1	2
Waltham Forest	3				1	1
Total	**16**	**1**	**5**	**9**	**7**	**5**

Northwest London						
Brent	1				1	
Ealing	1				1	
Hammersmith & Fulham	1				1	
Harrow	1				1	
Hillingdon	1				1	
Hounslow	1				1	
Kensington & Chelsea	1				1	
Westminster	3				1	1
Total	**10**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**8**	**1**

Southeast London						
Bexley	2			2	2	1
Bromley	2		1	2	2	1
Greenwich	1			1	1	1
Lambeth	1		1	2	1	2
Lewisham	1				1	
Southwark	1			1	1	
Total	**8**	**0**	**2**	**8**	**8**	**5**

Southwest London						
Croydon	1				1	1
Kingston upon Thames	1				1	
Merton	1				1	
Richmond	1				1	
Sutton	2				1	
Wandsworth	2		1		1	
Total	**8**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**6**	**1**

(Source: Mentor Providers Survey, 2022)

Table 4.2 – Suggestions of how best to shape and resource future mentorship and support services for young Londoners from funding bodies – across London

	Partnerships across organisations, local authorities, schools	Evidence-based, structured programmes for quality
London total	2	2

(Source: funding bodies survey, 2022)

Summarising the funding body insights into how improvements can be made to the quality and scope of provision. They include:

Increase access to best practice examples:

> "Predominately evidence gaps in understanding what works best for who and under what circumstances." (Funding body respondent)

Increase number of employment-focused mentoring opportunities:

> "Business mentoring, enabling young people to apply their training and learning to the workplace, in applying for jobs and in work support." (Funding body respondent)

Increase number of person-centred versus group-centred mentoring, and extend length:

> "There is not enough for 1-2-2 quality and long-term mentoring for young people based in building positive relationships and strengthening attachments/resilience." (Funding body respondent)

Increase resourcing to be able to deliver high-quality mentoring:

> "Having enough resources to manage the mentor matches for young people. You can have lots of mentors in place, but this needs to be made safe and effective for young people by having a structure and team around them." (Funding body respondent)

Funding bodies' insights into how we can best shape and resource future mentorship and support services:

Embed mentoring into existing programmes:

> "Link into the YEF toolkit and team on any technical, implementation and impact outputs that we share." (Funding body respondent)

A system-wide definition is recommended to raise standards:

> "There needs to be a clear definition of what is meant by mentoring and what expectations there are around it. The use of the word mentoring has become very vague, as such, there is a huge range of organisations which claim to do this, but the quality of the offer is varied." (Funding body respondent)

The design of mentoring needs to be evidence-based:

> "Stop being driven by unrealistic data sets. The focus should be on quality of service, not just quantity of mentoring sessions or clients. Find exceptional and evidence-based programmes like Friendship Works." (Funding body respondent)

A regional mentoring community of practice is recommended:

> "Having a regional group whereby services can offer each other peer support, share learning and make services the best value for money they can be." (Funding body respondent)

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Some of the challenges faced by organisations supporting vulnerable young people are opportunities to continue developing and improving services, and to best support young people. For instance, many organisations agree on the fact that one of their challenges is to keep young people engaged in the mentoring programme, which might be due to many reasons. For example, those who are referred by social services might be unable to complete the programme, even if they are keen to do so, as in

some cases parents seem reluctant to take up the mentoring programme, as they see it as not recommended. Some others are vulnerable individuals who come from challenging home environments where health and mental health needs are present, as well as abuse, domestic violence, and poverty – factors that affect young people and might make them feel disoriented and uncertain about their futures, which in turn makes mentoring goals difficult to be established. Therefore, the potential reasons for disengagement should be more deeply analysed to develop strategies and work collaboratively to best support young people through more holistic approaches, so they can be kept engaged in programmes. Conversely, many young refugees do not have families in the UK and are at risk of developing dependent relationships with their mentors, thus, having limited mentors makes it challenging to maintain boundaries and professionalism, whilst making young people feel supported and cared for. Indeed, organisations talk about funding as a significant barrier to having/employing a wider and diverse availability of mentors who can be appropriately trained, which would enable organisations to make better mentor–mentee matchings and enable mentors to confidently implement strategies in difficult situations, use trauma-informed approaches, consider young people's mental health, including suicidal thoughts, have more effective practice and be more aware of safeguarding. Moreover, funding also affects the length of mentoring provided; in some instances, it is as limited as 20 hours, which results in long waiting lists and workload for mentors and staff members who tend to overwork, which is likely to affect their physical and mental health. Additionally, organisations need to make huge efforts to demonstrate that funding is recommended, and to meet funding requirements that can be challenging and put pressure on staff members. Therefore, managing mentors' and mentees' expectations can be challenging, as time is needed to make significant progress visible, and these limitations in mentoring can lead staff and mentees to become frustrated. Moreover, it is suggested that different organisations focusing on young people work in partnership and provide complementary services to young people, which can be more positively impactful.

How can we work together to strengthen mentoring across London?

A summary of mentor provider ideas for improvements in the New Deal for young people mission

Annual networking or catch-up events to share best practice
Youth offer for young people being home educated
Mentors are local community-based volunteers
Include career support as part of the mentoring programme

Working closely with schools, local community, partnership and sharing ideas
Group mentoring
Monitor mentoring and evaluate quality
Have a 10-year plan
Expand school-based mentoring
Share successes/challenges with other areas of the UK

Conclusion and key lessons learnt

Despite research being conducted in different parts of the world, it is still very limited, and even more so in the UK.

This mapping exercise has shown that throughout London there is a range of mentoring provision designed and delivered to support young people to build skills and enhance knowledge to help navigate and negotiate challenging life circumstances. There is a large range of mentoring provision evenly distributed across 32 assessed boroughs. The study found that the central issue was about equity of access for different categories of young people. Underpinning this concern is acceptability, credibility, and appropriateness for the young person's set of life circumstance. One model does not fit all in the design and delivery of purposeful and person-centred mentoring. Funding bodies have suggested that they fund a range of mentoring projects across each of the 32 boroughs. Also, Local Government through the Youth Offer provide mentoring provision directly or indirectly across all 32 boroughs. The Youth Offer serves as the hegemonic ecosystem which structures and contextualises mentor provisions. The study shows that some young Londoners are being underserved in term of mentoring. They are young parents/carers and young people living with a chronic condition. There are limited data to ascertain the true number of young carers and young people from Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller communities to accurately determine if the number of tailored mentoring provision is in place at a borough level. The most commonly occurring monitoring provisions highlighted in the study are focused on academic and emotions/relationship needs.

The quality of mentoring is difficult to determine as part of the mapping exercise. The young people have shared their concerns around accessibility, acceptability, credibility and understanding of who mentoring is for and its role along the life course. In other words, mentoring is understood as time-limited academic support during secondary school and college, or remedial support for young people with disabilities or who are highly vulnerable. Local providers identify that the cost-of-living crisis will negatively impact their capacity to deliver the service; they are highly reliant on the good will of volunteers at a time when problems will be compounded for young people, particularly accessing limited meaningful work and training opportunities. Local mentor providers commonly cite the lack of access to sustainable funding to confidently plan and deliver their services during the economic downturn.

Another marker of quality has arisen out of existing and emerging mentoring partnerships/collaborations. Local government data suggest that most of the mentoring provision they commission is delivered by Voluntary and Community sector partners, and a minority of mentoring is delivered in-house, particularly for risk groups of young people. Despite this widely used commissioning approach, young people interviewed would like to see an improvement in the relationships between local government, schools/colleges, and mentor providers.

We can conclude that not all young Londoners understand the goal of mentoring along the life course, that there is a lack of knowledge of advertised mentoring opportunities in their local area, and that mentor providers, local government and funders work often in collaboration, but not in an evidence-based way to ensure that they are filling gaps in need. Furthermore, the contractual relationships between councils and VCS providers, or funding bodies and VCS, fail to promote evidence-based decision making or co-production in commissioning to better target limited resources to ensure equity for young people across the system. Perhaps the most important partnership/collaboration is between the mentee and mentor. Young people noted the value of requiring trusting and long-term relations with mentees, and, ideally, the mentee and mentor should partially match their demographics to help create the right atmosphere to work together.

Young participants from the focus group express what should ultimately be in place for mentoring to flourish in London for young people. The focus group participants encourage that funders:

- visit and talk to young people
- invest in young people/community spaces for young people
- there should be more visibility for opportunities that are accessible and can 'fast track' people into certain job roles
- be better; listen to us
- make sure you're really reaching young people, not the same people
- better access to mental health support; fund our clubs for young people and stop them from closing down
- give more allowance to young people's needs, especially though mental health support services/engagement services for young people
- even doing things like this focus group should continue.

Limitations

Whilst baseline provides a partial glimpse into young people's needs and trends in London, it is important to note that this study is not an audit on mentoring provision; therefore, the precise number of provisions, and the impact/outcome on young people, is unreported. Furthermore, this study did not cover mentoring opportunities provided by the private sector and focused solely on providers from public or voluntary sectors.

Accessing credible data sets reporting on young people's lived experiences in 2022 was not always easy due to the study timeline and useability of captured data. Therefore, the study draws upon a combination of open access and/or published data sources from 2019 to 2021. It is important to note that secondary data collected between 2019 and 2021 have been understandably biased by the pandemic affecting, for example, rates of school exclusion and unemployment of young people across London. We also found variations in how data on young people's life circumstances (NEETs, youth violence, asylum seekers, SEND etc.) are collected and reported, making the task of bringing together different data sets with varying internal organising logics problematic in terms of building a comprehensive picture of the potential mentoring needs of young Londoners. Finally, whilst we had a good overall response rate for the study, we should acknowledge that the survey respondents and research participants came from organisations and individuals known to the research team and commissioners. We did not reach sufficient private mentor providers operating within and across London to provide a full picture of the mentoring landscape in London.

To conclude, there are organisations across London that provide mentoring to vulnerable young people, including those with special educational needs, those who are in care, social services, or the justice system, those who come from diverse (BEM) and disadvantaged (poverty, abuse, low social capital) backgrounds, refugees, homeless or at risk of homelessness, and NEET. Different organisations support children and young people of different age ranges, such as 14 to 17/25, 10 to 18, 18 to 24, or 0 to 25. Mentoring to young people is provided for a certain length of time, according to capacity and programme structure; for instance, due to capacity, there is an organisation that provides 20 hours of mentoring, whilst others offer 12 weeks, 6/9 months, one year, or sometimes longer, according to young people's needs. As to frequency, most programmes offer weekly sessions from 45 minutes to 3 hours, depending on the nature of the session, as sometimes it is about mentors and mentees having a conversation or employability support sessions, and sometimes about integrating/engaging mentees in their communities by going to a restaurant, cinema, or bowling. Most programmes offer face-to-face sessions that take place in public places such as cafes or libraries, in a mutually convenient location for mentors and mentees, and, in most cases, within the young person's environment, as this approach is beneficial when building trustable and supportive mentor–mentee relationships. However, there is a programme that does initial home visits, and another that offers online mentoring. Also, there is a programme that offers mentoring in settings such as offices, schools, or police stations. Moreover, some provide mentoring within workplaces where young people are doing apprenticeships or work experience. Most organisations match mentors and mentees by considering mentors' backgrounds, experiences and skills, and mentees' needs and aspirations, as well as common aspects in personalities and interests. Regarding effective practice, each organisation has its standpoint; however, factors that seem to be common include being person-centred, focusing on young people's needs, flexibility, being organised and having a structured programme, tackling young people's progress, training mentors, appropriate matchings, and working in partnership with other organisations. However, some organisations have waiting lists, due to a lack of capacity to offer mentoring, which might be linked to limited funding. Also, there is limited mentoring focused on young

people's mental health, those involved in youth violence (victims and perpetrators), and those who might not speak English or speak it as a second language.

The following section provides a selection of key findings and high-level recommendations that come out of this study.

Key lessons learnt

Gaps in mentoring provision: underserved sub-groups, pandemic catch-up, hybrid approaches, explaining and amplifying the purpose of mentoring

- Equity of access to mentoring opportunities forms the most significant barrier to young Londoners accessing the right mentoring provision at the right time.
- More mentoring provisions should be designed to accommodate and target young parents, young carers and young people living with chronic health conditions, who are all currently underserved.
- Young Londoners feel that they have fallen behind in their career planning and find it difficult to move into meaningful employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they need mentoring support to plan their future careers.
- To help widen access to mentoring opportunities, providers should involve young people in co-producing, and utilise multimedia platforms to build awareness and understanding of the purpose of mentoring along the life course.
- Mentoring is often accessed as a reactive rather than as an active source of help following a critical moment in a young person's life, and it should be an early rather than a remedial intervention. Anchor institutions (e.g., London Councils, GLA and schools/colleges) should better promote the purpose of mentoring at an early age and improve pathways to early help.

Partnerships and collaborations: poor commissioning practices, sustainable funding in an economic downturn, strengthening the recruitment and retention of volunteers

- A system approach is recommended to stimulate the mentoring market to address emerging gaps in provision.
- A joint commissioning panel for mentoring provision for London is recommended to address the requirements of vulnerable young people at a hyperlocal neighbourhood level, and to ensure that a mentor is available within walking distance.
- A sustainable funding scheme is recommended by mentoring providers in the voluntary sector to help recession-proof themselves to sufficiently sustain mentoring opportunities during the economic downturn.
- A joint approach is recommended to better recruit and train mentors who reflect the diverse identities and backgrounds of young Londoners.
- Mentors made more available and accessible are essential to best shape and resource future mentorship and support services for young Londoners. This suggests that capacity, resourcing, and sustainability of funding could positively contribute to better services.
- Improved partnerships across funding organisations, local authorities and schools are necessary to better shape and resource future mentorship and support.

Quality of provisions: racially responsive provisions, evidence-based service design and delivery

- The cost of travel to attend in-person mentoring opportunities for young Londoners adds a further physical barrier to full participation, which should be addressed by hybrid models of delivery.
- Improved efficacy in the delivery of mentoring opportunities is recommended for young Londoners traumatised and/or at risk of re-traumatisation, supported by agile commissioning models.
- Good mentoring opportunities require a high degree of cultural competencies – which should be at the heart of the provision – to ensure that services are culturally responsive to the lived experience of young Londoners.
- A common framework is recommended to better understand the outcomes/impact of mentoring opportunities commissioned for young Londoners.

Appendix 1

YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS

Primary data – London boroughs and sub-regions

Table x.1 shows the proportion of young people in North Central London for each of the different circumstances affecting them, as described above, and compares them to the London average.

On average, the North Central London sub-region has a slightly higher percentage of young people than London as a whole (32.93%). The percentages of young people affected by knife crime and unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people are also above London average.

Notable above average percentages are those of young people not in education, employment, or training (4.97% in the North Central London area, as opposed to 2.54% for the whole of London), and young people suspended from state-funded secondary schools (5.71% in the North Central Area, as opposed to 4.91% for the whole of London).

The percentage of young people with special education needs in secondary schools was below average (9.58% for the North Central London region, as opposed to 10.25% for the whole of London), as was young people referred to social services (4.75% in North Central London, as opposed to 5.44% for the whole of London), and young people permanently excluded from state-funded secondary schools (0.05%)

Table 1 – Proportions of young people in North Central London as compared to the London average

	North Central London average	**London average**
Estimated young population	32.93% (502,494)	32.43%
Young people affected by knife crime	0.46% (405)	0.39%
Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children looked after	0.06% (47)	0.05%
NEETs or not knowns (16–17-year-olds)	4.97% (264)	2.54%
CYP referred to social services	4,75% (3127)	5.44%
SEND in secondary schools	9.58% (2048)	10.25%
Suspended from state-funded secondary schools	5.71% (1137)	4.91%
Permanently excluded from state-funded secondary school	0.05% (11)	0.06%

(Source: Open-Source Data Gathering)

Table 2 shows the proportion of young people in Northeast London for each of the different circumstances affecting them, as described above, and compares them to the London average.

On average, the Northeast London sub-region has a higher percentage of young people than that of London as a whole (34.52%). The percentage of young people affected by knife crime (0.40%) is also above London average, but that of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people is below average (0.04%).

Notable above average percentages are those of young people not in education, employment, or training (3.93% in the Northeast London area, as opposed to 2.54% for the

whole of London) and young people referred to social services (7.18% in the Northeast London sub-region, as opposed to 5.44% for the whole of London).

The percentage of young people with special education needs in secondary schools was also above average (10.84% for the Northeast London sub-region, as opposed to 10.25% for the whole of London), while young people suspended from state-funded secondary schools (4.75%) and permanently excluded from state-funded secondary schools (0.05%) were below average.

Table 2 – Proportions of young people in Northeast London as compared to the London average

	Northeast London average	**London average**
Estimated young population	34.52% (697,774)	32.43%
Young people affected by knife crime	0.40% (366)	0.39%
Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children looked after	0.04% (37)	0.05%
NEETs or not knowns (16–17-year-olds)	3.93% (259)	2.54%
CYP referred to social services	7.18% (5069)	5.44%
SEND in secondary schools	10.84% (2318)	10.25%
Suspended from state-funded secondary schools	4.75% (1004)	4.91%
Permanently excluded from state-funded secondary school	0.05% (11)	0.06%

(Source: Open-Source Data Gathering)

Table x.3 shows the proportion of young people in Northwest London for each of the different circumstances affecting them, as described above, and compares them to the London average.

On average, the Northwest London sub-region has a slightly lower percentage of young people than that of London as a whole (32.07%). The percentage of young people affected by knife crime (0.39%) is in line with the London average, but that of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people is above average (0.07%).

Notable above average percentages are those of young people not in education, employment, or training (2.91% in the Northwest London area, as opposed to 2.54% for the whole of London) and young people permanently excluded from state-funded secondary school (0.08%).

The percentage of young people with special education needs in secondary schools was below average (9.57% for the Northwest London sub-region, as opposed to 10.25% for the whole of London), as was young people suspended from state-funded secondary schools (4.68%) and young people referred to social services (5.36%).

Table 3 – Proportions of young people in Northwest London as compared to the London average

	Northwest London average	**London Average**
Estimated young population	32.07% (683,960)	32.43%
Young people affected by knife crime	0.39% (295)	0.39%
Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children looked after	0.07% (43)	0.05%
NEETs or not knowns (16–17-year-olds)	2.91% (143)	2.54%
CYP referred to social services	5.36% (3137)	5.44%
SEND in secondary schools	9.57% (1783)	10.25%
Suspended from state-funded secondary schools	4.68% (760)	4.91%

Permanently excluded from state-funded secondary school	0.08% (10)	0.06%

Table x.4 shows the proportion of young people in Southwest London for each of the different circumstances affecting them, as described above, and compares them to the London average.

On average, the Southwest London sub-region has a lower percentage of young people than that of London as a whole (31.18%). The percentage of young people affected by knife crime (0.39%) is also above London average, but that of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people is above average (0.07%).

Notable above average percentages are those of young people not in education, employment, or training (4.28% in the Southwest London area, as opposed to 2.54% for the whole of London).

The percentage of young people with special education needs in secondary schools was below average (9.85% for the Southwest London sub-region, as opposed to 10.25% for the whole of London), as was young people suspended from state-funded secondary schools (4.02%) and young people referred to social services (4.10%).

Young people permanently excluded from state-funded secondary schools had a percentage in line with the London average (0.06%).

Table 4 – Proportions of young people in Southwest London as compared to the London average

	Southwest London average	London average
Estimated young population	31.18% (471, 894)	32.43%
Young people affected by knife crime	0.27% (215)	0.39%
Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children looked after	0.07% (54)	0.05%
NEETs or not knowns (16–17-year-olds)	4.28% (212)	2.54%
CYP referred to social services	4.10% (2403)	5.44%
SEND in secondary schools	9.85% (1774)	10.25%
Suspended from state-funded secondary schools	4.02% (760)	4.91%
Permanently excluded from state-funded secondary school	0.06% (10)	0.06%

Table x.5 shows the proportion of young people in Southwest London for each of the different circumstances affecting them, as described above, and compares them to the London average.

On average, the Southeast London sub-region has a lower percentage (31.31%) of young people than that of London as a whole (32.43%). The percentage of young people affected by knife crime is higher (0.41%) than that of the whole of London (0.39%).

Other notable percentages higher than the London average are young people not in employment, education, or training (5.14%), young people referred to social services (5.71%), young people with special education needs (11.40%) and young people suspended from state-funded secondary schools (5.65%).

The percentage of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children was below average (0.03%), and the percentage of young people permanently excluded from state-funded secondary schools was in line with the London average (0.06).

Table 5 – Proportions and numbers of young people in Southeast London as compared to the London average

	Southeast London average	London average
Estimated young population	31.31% (568,151)	32.43%
Young people affected by knife crime	0.41% (354)	0.39%
Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children looked after	0.03% (25)	0.05%
NEETs or not knowns (16–17-year-olds)	5.14% (297)	2.54%
CYP referred to social services	5.71% (3777)	5.44%
SEND in secondary schools	11.40% (2344)	10.25%
Suspended from state-funded secondary schools	5.65% (1165)	4.91%
Permanently excluded from state-funded secondary school	0.06% (13)	0.06%

(Source: Open-Source Data Gathering)

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