

The value of employer mentoring



The idea of an adult supporting a young person to develop has been with us for most of human history. There are various forms of mentoring, but this paper will focus on mentoring of young people by employers and working people (employer mentoring).

Employer mentoring is a sustained relationship between an employer, an employee or a self-employed person and a young person or group of young people, focusing on personal or career development. Employer mentors can help to engage young people in the school, inspire and motivate them and provide them with meaningful encounters with the world of work.

The positive outcomes for young people associated with employer mentoring include improvements in behaviour, engagement, attainment and progression. The strongest evidence supports the impacts on behaviour and engagement.

The evidence base also suggests a number of challenges which need to be managed when implementing effective mentoring relationships



The Government recently announced new funding for The Careers & Enterprise Company (the Company) to lead a national campaign of employer mentoring for disengaged young people in England. To make the most of this investment it is critical that the mentoring programmes involved in the campaign are underpinned by the best evidence available. This paper sets out the findings of a rapid review of the current evidence on such employer mentoring.

There is a wide range of evidence on employer mentoring which supports the conclusion that employer mentoring can have a significant and observable impact on young people, as well as mentors and their employers. The most comprehensive recent meta-analysis suggests that school-based employer mentoring has a small but significant effect.

including: the difficulty of finding; training; and retaining sufficient mentors given the demands that mentoring makes on busy working people. Another challenge relates to the environment that schools offer mentoring programmes. School-based mentoring can be slow to start and mentors may find that their activities are disrupted by various events and other priorities in the school year. Finally, it can be difficult to sustain mentoring relationships over an extended period of time as the circumstances of both the mentor and mentee can change.

In brief



There is a substantial evidence base which supports the role of employer mentoring in schools.



We can describe the strength of this evidence as **moderate to good** as it includes **high quality studies** and a number of statistical meta-analyses.



The evidence suggests that mentoring can have a **significant** and **observable impact** on behaviour, attainment and progression.



However, the effect sizes are typically small.

Mentoring is a **moderate to low cost** intervention.



The evidence suggests that mentoring needs to be high quality in order to deliver any impacts and that badly organised mentoring can do more harm than good.

Effective employer mentoring

Lessons from the evidence



Foreword



Claudia Harris
Chief Executive of The Careers & Enterprise Company

At the Careers & Enterprise Company we have a passion for helping young people to make the most of their potential. Too many young people are disengaging from school at an early age. This can have negative effects on their success at school and their ability to build a career after they leave school.

Because of this, we are launching a new campaign around employer mentoring to support young people to stay engaged at school and make an effective transition to their careers.

All of the Careers & Enterprise Company's activities are based on the best evidence available. That is why we asked Professor Hooley to undertake this literature review for us. In it he finds that employer mentoring is an effective strategy that can support young people's engagement with school, their attainment and their transition to work. Critically he has also identified a wide range of evidence-based features that support effective mentoring programmes.

Our role is 'to join the dots' between schools, employers and mentoring organisations to amplify and support best practice. I hope this review can help inform our collective understanding of what is needed to support mentoring provision across the country.

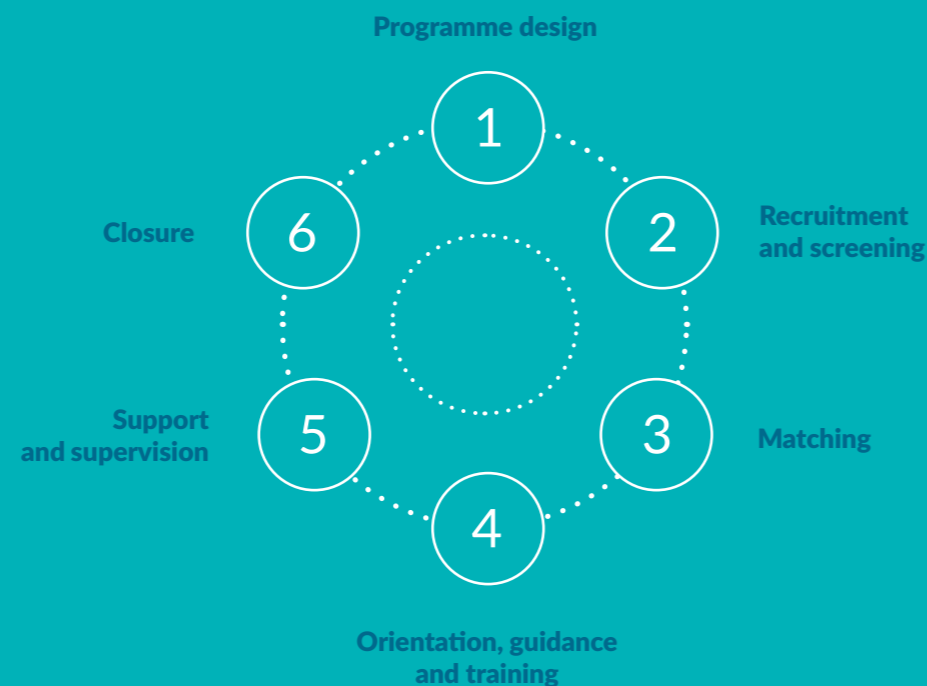
Together we can create a long term culture of change, that builds better futures for all of our young people.

Yours,
Claudia Harris

What works in employer mentoring



The evidence base identifies six key areas which a successful mentoring programme should attend to. The following model should be viewed as a description of proven practice. This does not mean that other approaches do not work. Rather the evidence base should be used as a stimulus for further innovation.



1 Programme design

Mentoring has to be a carefully designed, programmatic intervention that provides participants with structure. Key aspects of this design include the need for piloting, development and evaluation. It is also important to have a professional mentoring organisation involved, to set up relationships between the school and employers, and ensure that the mentoring is well managed and coordinated. It is also essential to get the timing, length and intensity of relationships right. On balance, the evidence suggests that the strongest model is for mentors to meet regularly with their mentee for a year. Meeting expectations is important, with some evidence of negative impacts where they are not met.

2 Recruitment and screening

It is important that both parties are motivated to participate and both have sufficient time to devote to the programme.

3 Matching

It is important to match mentors and mentees on the basis of shared interests and background, to help ensure the mentor is a role model the young person can relate to. If mentoring relationships fail it is possible to re-match, but the evidence suggests that re-matching can have negative consequences so this should be viewed as a last resort.

4 Orientation, guidance and training

It is important to induct mentors and mentees so that they both clearly understand the nature, purpose and boundaries of their respective roles in the relationship. Clearly defining the roles of the different parties and supporting this through relevant documentation and guidance is important, as is providing appropriate training for mentors.

5 Support and supervision

There is a need to support and supervise mentoring relationships to ensure that they are working optimally. Ongoing coordination and the involvement of the school are critical to this.

6 Closure

The end of mentoring programmes needs to be carefully managed.

Effective employer mentoring

You can read our detailed review of the evidence on employer mentoring on the Careers & Enterprise Company website.

www.careersandenterprise.co.uk

