

EVIDENCE ANNEX

Mentoring and befriending Practice Guide: for care-experienced children & young people, and those at risk of entering care

Introduction

The following annex sets out the evidence underpinning each of the six recommendations specified in the Practice Guide.

Influenced by our evidence toolkit standards, the table pulls out the key methodological information which defines the strength of evidential certainty behind our recommendations. We also provide the evidence underpinning our key principles, as well as providing recommendations for further research and testing in England.

A reference list of evidenced studies can be found at the end of this document.



Department
for Education

Go to the Mentoring & Befriending Practice Guide: <https://foundations.org.uk/toolkit/practice-guides/mentoring-and-befriending>

Find out more about the series of Practice Guides: foundations.org.uk/practice-guides



Evidence underpinning the recommendations

Recommendation	Citation	Study design	Sample size	Population	Study Risk of Bias (RoB 2)	Primary findings
Recommendation 1. Offer evidence-based mentoring programmes to children in out-of-home care due to experiences of significant harm, to support their general mental health and improve post-traumatic symptoms <i>(Strong evidence)</i>	Taussig et al. (2019)	RCT	426 (193 in control; 233 in intervention)	Children aged 9 to 11 years who were placed in out-of-home care (e.g., foster care, kinship care, residential treatment) due to maltreatment (experiences of significant harm)	Low risk	<p>Taussig et al. (2019) Taussig et al. (2019) found that at 10 months follow-up, children in the intervention group had a mental Health Index score significantly higher than that of the control (Cohen's $d = -0.25$; CI: $-.46, -.03$; $p = 0.02$). The Mental health Index is comprised of the Post-traumatic Stress and Dissociation scales of the Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children, internalizing scales of the Child Behaviour Checklist and the Teacher Report Form.</p> <p>Taussig et al. (2019) also found that at 10 months follow-up, post-traumatic symptoms as measured using the Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children, were significantly lower in intervention group compared to control (Cohen's $d = -.20$ CI: $-0.41, 0.00$; $p = 0.04$).</p>
	Taussig and Culhane (2010)	RCT	156 randomised (79 in intervention; 77 in control)	Children aged 9 to 11 years who were placed in foster care due to maltreatment (experiences of significant harm)	Low risk	<p>Taussig and Culhane (2010) found that at one-year follow-up, children in the intervention group had a Mental Health Index score significantly higher than that of the control (Cohen's $d = -0.51$, CI: $-0.84, -0.19$; $p = 0.003$).</p>



Recommendation	Citation	Study design	Sample size	Population	Study Risk of Bias (RoB 2)	Primary findings
Recommendation 2. Offer evidence-based mentoring and befriending programmes to young people who are involved, or are at risk of involvement, with the youth justice system to reduce offending and re-offending <i>(Good evidence)</i>	Leathers et al. (2023)	RCT	152 (77 intervention; 75 control)	Young people aged 17 to 21.25 years, in foster care.	Some concerns	In their evaluation of the Adult Connections Team (ACT) programme, Leathers et al. (2023) found an overall positive effect direction, finding that offending and arrests were significantly lower in the enhanced services intervention group at follow-up compared to the control group (ES = 0.46, $p = .01$).
	Taussig et al. (2021)	RCT	Self-reported offending outcomes: 391 (174 control and 217 intervention) Court records of offending charges: 425 participants (193 control and 232 intervention).	Children aged 9-11 years in an out-of-home care (i.e., congregate care, kinship care, foster care) by court order due to maltreatment (experiences of significant harm)	Low risk	Using both self-report and court records, Taussig et al. (2021) identified that those in the intervention group scored significantly lower on non-violent (Effect Ratio (ER) = 0.95, 95% CI = 0.95, 0.96; $p < 0.001$) and total offending (ER = 0.97, 95% CI: = 0.95, 0.99; $p = <0.01$) records at 6-months follow-up. Court records of offending charges showed that the intervention was associated with a 62% decline in total offending charges and a 77% decline in violent offending charges. Also, court records showed that at 7 years follow-up, those in the intervention group were significantly less likely to have a violent crime on their record ($p = <0.05$).



Recommendation	Citation	Study design	Sample size	Population	Study Risk of Bias (RoB 2)	Primary findings
Recommendation 3. Offer evidence-based mentoring programmes to care-experienced children and young people, to improve successful (and long term) reunification (<i>promising evidence</i>)	Taussig et al. (2012)	RCT	Subsample of 78 children with parental rights (37 children in the intervention group; 41 in the control).	Children aged 9 to 11 years who were placed in foster care due to maltreatment (experiences of significant harm)	Low risk	Taussig et al. (2012) Explored a subsample of children of whose parental rights had not been terminated. They found that at 1-year post-intervention, 19 out of 37 (51%) youths who participated in the intervention had reunified, compared with 12 out of 41 (29%) of those who did not receive the intervention. ($p = <.05$). In the foster care subsample, 12 out of 21 (57%) youths who participated in the intervention had reunified, compared with 5 out of 21 (24%) youths in the control group ($p = .03$).
Recommendation 4. Offer evidence-based mentoring to young people who are in out-of-home care due to experiences of significant harm to achieve greater permanency (<i>promising evidence</i>)	Taussig et al. (2020)	RCT	245 (125 teenagers in intervention; 120 in control)	Teenagers aged 13-15 years, with experiences of abuse and neglect.	Low risk	In a study of Fostering Healthy Futures for Teens, Taussig et al. (2020) found that intervention participants were significantly more likely than control participants to self-report permanency at 2.5 years follow-up (OR [95% CI] 7.2 [2.1–25.1]; $p=0.002$). Also, those in kinship care were over five times more likely to achieve permanency compared with those in non-kin care (OR = 5.5; CI: 1.6, 19.5; $p = 0.008$).



Recommendation	Citation	Study design	Sample size	Population	Study Risk of Bias (RoB 2)	Primary findings
Recommendation 5. Offer evidence-based mentoring programmes to young people with special education needs, or severe mental health challenges, to increase self-determination skills and support transitioning from care <i>(promising evidence)</i>	Blakeslee et al. (2020)	RCT	293 (149 control and 144 intervention)	Young people aged 16.5-18.5 years in foster care, including those with or without disabilities and mental health challenges	Some concerns	The study by Blakeslee et al. (2020) reported on the My Life model among foster children, with and without special educational needs. The intervention group showed greater improvement on self-determination at post-test ($p = 0.030$, Effect Size = 0.24) and at 12 months follow-up ($p = 0.025$, ES = 0.27).
	Courtney (2011)	RCT	179 randomised (88 in intervention & 91 in control)	Young people in intensive foster care who had a service plan goal of independent living or long-term substitute care.	Some concerns	In an evaluation of the Massachusetts' Adolescent Outreach Programme (MAOP), Courtney et al. (2011) found that intervention participants were significantly more likely to remain in extended foster care at two years follow-up ($p = 0.013$, Effect Size = 0.35).



Recommendation	Citation	Study design	Sample size	Population	Study Risk of Bias (RoB 2)	Primary findings
Recommendation 6. Offer evidence-based mentoring programmes to young people to improve employability <i>(promising evidence)</i>	Leathers et al., (2023)	RCT	152 (77 in intervention; 75 in control)	Young people aged 17 to 21.25 years, in foster care.	Some concerns	Leathers et al., 2023 reported a positive effect direction, finding that young people who participated in the Adult Connections Team programme had significantly more hours per week of employment (ES = 0.36, $p = 0.05$) than control participants at 14 months follow-up. Young people in the intervention group also reported a higher average weekly income (ES = 0.31). However, the difference in the intervention and control groups was not statistically significant for weekly income ($p = 0.09$).



Qualitative evidence underpinning the key principles

Key principle 1. Develop strong leadership that maps local programmes, understands their interactions, and facilitates collaboration to improve outcomes.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
1. Young people value mentoring programmes as providing a unique and important form of support and identify a variety of positive outcomes arising from the relationship with their mentor.	k. Mentoring can support young people who lack community supports to develop healthy peer relationships, alternative social networks and address community level barriers.	Low confidence	Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Mendes, 2011	H
			Greeson et al., 2015b	H
	m. Young people with experience of care express a need for mentoring as a source of independent emotional support.	Moderate confidence	Wesley et al., 2020	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
	r. Mentoring increased young people's confidence and provided new positive relationships to deal with difficulties with greater emotional stability and resilience.	High confidence	Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Smith et al., 2023	H
			Smith et al., 2023	H



Key principle 1. Develop strong leadership that maps local programmes, understands their interactions, and facilitates collaboration to improve outcomes.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
4. Mentors and young people value leadership and support from organisations delivering mentoring programmes with training, supervision, and thoughtful matching of mentors with mentees.	e. Having a mentor of a different ethnicity may be a barrier to engagement for some young people from minority ethnic groups.	Moderate confidence	Cosma and Soni, 2020	H
			Greeson et al, 2015	H
			Smith et al, 2023	H
	f. With appropriate vetting of mentors and youth coaching, youth-initiated mentor selection can facilitate identification of mentors and increase youth and mentor engagement.	High confidence	Spencer et al, 2018	M
			Spencer et al, 2019	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
			van Dam et al., 2017	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
	g. Training and supervision of mentors in the skills and expectations of their roles increases mentor confidence and engagement, and reduces young people's experiences of further rejection.	High confidence	Lee, 2021	H
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2013	M
			Smith et al., 2023	H
			Greeson et al., 2015c	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M



Key principle 1. Develop strong leadership that maps local programmes, understands their interactions, and facilitates collaboration to improve outcomes.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Furey & Harris-Evans, 2021	H
	o. Matching young people to mentors with similar characteristics (gender, ethnicity, family background, interests and aspirations) could increase engagement and reduce stigma.	Moderate Confidence	Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			van Dam et al, 2019	M
			Denby et al., 2016	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2013	M
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
6. Mentoring programmes and individual mentoring relationships are more successful when they are supported by organisations and leadership which value the programme and work effectively with other agencies.	i. Consistent, committed leadership and clear alignment between programme aims and wider organisational priorities are required to successfully implement mentoring and befriending programmes.	Low confidence	Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2014	M
			Smith et al., 2023	H
			Gomez et al., 2021	H



Key principle 1. Develop strong leadership that maps local programmes, understands their interactions, and facilitates collaboration to improve outcomes.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
	j. Cooperative multi-agency partnerships between professionals, mentors, young people and parent/carers were highly valued.	Low confidence	Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Lee, 2021	H
			Nathan & Chaffers, 2022	H



Key principle 2. Develop flexible programmes that allow additional, tailored support to be provided to a child or young person so they can sustain a meaningful mentor-mentee relationship.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
2. Mentoring relationships can vary depending on the specific needs of young people, including those related to their age, gender, temperament, and life experiences.	a. Pairing of older youth with mentors may be less successful due to previous rejection and a greater desire for autonomy.	Low confidence	Greeson et al., 2015c	H
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M
	b. Young people may require socio-emotional support to engage with mentoring due to factors such as communication skills, experiences of trauma and, behavioural problems.	Moderate confidence	Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
	c. Whilst young people desire mentor support to reduce isolation, instability and uncertainty in previous adult relationships are barriers to young people establishing and sustaining mentoring relationships.	High confidence	Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
	n. Engaging young people in mentoring is challenging and requires work to build trust and self-esteem and make clear the intended benefits.	Moderate confidence	Newton et al., 2017;	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020;	H
			Wesley et al., 2020;	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020;	H



Key principle 2. Develop flexible programmes that allow additional, tailored support to be provided to a child or young person so they can sustain a meaningful mentor-mentee relationship.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
			Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
4. Mentors and young people value leadership and support from organisations delivering mentoring programmes with training, supervision, and thoughtful matching of mentors with mentees.	e. Having a mentor of a different ethnicity may be a barrier to engagement for some young people from minority ethnic groups.	Moderate confidence	Smith et al., 2023	H
			Cosma and Soni, 2020	H
			Greeson et al, 2015	H
			Smith et al, 2023	H
	f. With appropriate vetting of mentors and youth coaching, youth-initiated mentor selection can facilitate identification of mentors and increase youth and mentor engagement.	High confidence	Spencer et al, 2018	M
			Spencer et al, 2019	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
			van Dam et al., 2017	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
	g. Training and supervision of mentors in the skills and expectations of their roles increases mentor confidence and engagement, and reduces young people's experiences of further rejection.	High confidence	Lee, 2021	H
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2013	M
			Smith et al., 2023	H
			Greeson et al., 2015c	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M



Key principle 2. Develop flexible programmes that allow additional, tailored support to be provided to a child or young person so they can sustain a meaningful mentor-mentee relationship.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Furey & Harris-Evans, 2021	H
	o. Matching young people to mentors with similar characteristics (gender, ethnicity, family background, interests and aspirations) could increase engagement and reduce stigma.	Moderate Confidence	Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			van Dam et al, 2019	M
			Denby et al., 2016	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2013	M
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H



Key principle 3. Give young people autonomy and control over the content and form of their mentoring or befriending relationship.				
Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
3. Young people value interventions which give them autonomy and control over the content and form of their mentoring.	d. Mentoring sessions which are led by young people's interests, preferences and goals facilitate engagement.	High confidence	Lee, 2021	H
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Powers et al., 2018	H
			Smith et al, 2023	H
			Cosma and Soni, 2020	H
			Greeson et al, 2015	H
			Smith et al, 2023	H
			Spencer et al, 2018	M
	f. With appropriate vetting of mentors and youth coaching, youth-initiated mentor selection can facilitate identification of mentors and increase youth and mentor engagement.	High confidence	Spencer et al, 2019	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
			van Dam et al., 2017	M
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2014	M
			Powers et al., 2018	H
	q. Young people did not have strong views on structured intervention content and duration but	Moderate confidence	Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Newton et al, 2017	H



Key principle 3. Give young people autonomy and control over the content and form of their mentoring or befriending relationship.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
	wanted a mentoring/befriending relationship that was guided by their needs produced a sustainable relationship.		Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Smith et al., 2023	H
			Gomez et al., 2021	H
			Powers et al., 2018	H
5. Mentoring relationships are most beneficial to young people when the mentor can commit significant time and energy to form a long-term, close, and trusting relationship with their young person.	h. Time and constancy from their mentor facilitate better youth engagement with mentoring and befriending.	High confidence	Wesley et al., 2020	H
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Greeson et al., 2015c	H
			Lee, 2021	H
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2014	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
			Wesley et al., 2020	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
		Moderate confidence	Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H



Key principle 3. Give young people autonomy and control over the content and form of their mentoring or befriending relationship.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
	n. Engaging young people in mentoring is challenging and requires work to build trust and self-esteem and make clear the intended benefits.		Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Furey & Harris-Evans, 2021	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
	p. Mentoring is facilitated by building a trusting relationship and providing a sustained and unconditional emotional support.	High confidence	Spencer et al., 2019	H
			van Dam et al, 2019	M
			Denby et al., 2016	M
			Cosma and Soni, 2020	H
			Greeson et al, 2015	H
			Smith et al, 2023	H
			Spencer et al, 2018	M
			Spencer et al, 2019	H



Key principle 4. Target mentoring support at young people leaving care, living in supported or temporary accommodation, and living independently.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
1. Young people value mentoring programmes as providing a unique and important form of support and identify a variety of positive outcomes arising from the relationship with their mentor.	k. Mentoring can support young people who lack community supports to develop healthy peer relationships, alternative social networks and address community level barriers.	Low confidence	Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Mendes, 2011	H
			Greeson et al., 2015b	H
	m. Young people with experience of care express a need for mentoring as a source of independent emotional support.	Moderate confidence	Wesley et al., 2020	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
	r. Mentoring increased young people's confidence and provided new positive relationships to deal with difficulties with greater emotional stability and resilience.	High confidence	Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Smith et al., 2023	H
2. Mentoring relationships can vary depending on the specific needs of young people, including those related	a. Pairing of older youth with mentors may be less successful due to previous rejection and a greater desire for autonomy.	Low confidence	Greeson et al., 2015c	H
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M



Key principle 4. Target mentoring support at young people leaving care, living in supported or temporary accommodation, and living independently.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
to their age, gender, temperament, and life experiences.	b. Young people may require socio-emotional support to engage with mentoring due to factors such as communication skills, experiences of trauma and, behavioural problems.	Moderate confidence	Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
	c. Whilst young people desire mentor support to reduce isolation, instability and uncertainty in previous adult relationships are barriers to young people establishing and sustaining mentoring relationships.	High confidence	Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
	n. Engaging young people in mentoring is challenging and requires work to build trust and self-esteem and make clear the intended benefits.	Moderate confidence	Newton et al., 2017;	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020;	H
			Wesley et al., 2020;	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020;	H
			Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
8. Young people leaving care, living in supported accommodation, and living independently, may be the hardest for mentoring services to reach. However,	c. Whilst young people desire mentor support to reduce isolation, instability and uncertainty in previous adult relationships are barriers to young	High confidence	Nathans & Chaffers, 2022	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Mendes, 2011	H



Key principle 4. Target mentoring support at young people leaving care, living in supported or temporary accommodation, and living independently.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
these are often the young people most in need of the support which mentors can offer.	people establishing and sustaining mentoring relationships.		Greeson et al., 2015b	H
			Wesley et al., 2020	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
	k. Mentoring can support young people who lack community supports to develop healthy peer relationships, alternative social networks and address community level barriers.	Low confidence	Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
	m. Young people with experience of care express a need for mentoring as a source of independent emotional support.	Moderate confidence	Smith et al., 2023	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al, 2021b	M
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2013	M
			Spencer et al., 2019	H



Key principle 5. Carefully match mentors and mentees taking into consideration interests, experiences and personal attributes.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
4. Mentors and young people value leadership and support from organisations delivering mentoring programmes with training, supervision, and thoughtful matching of mentors with mentees.	e. Having a mentor of a different ethnicity may be a barrier to engagement for some young people from minority ethnic groups.	Moderate confidence	Smith et al., 2023	H
			Cosma and Soni, 2020	H
			Greeson et al, 2015	H
			Smith et al, 2023	H
	f. With appropriate vetting of mentors and youth coaching, youth-initiated mentor selection can facilitate identification of mentors and increase youth and mentor engagement.	High confidence	Spencer et al, 2018	M
			Spencer et al, 2019	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
			van Dam et al., 2017	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
	g. Training and supervision of mentors in the skills and expectations of their roles increases mentor confidence and engagement, and reduces young people's experiences of further rejection.	High confidence	Lee, 2021	H
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2013	M
			Smith et al., 2023	H
			Greeson et al., 2015c	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M



Key principle 5. Carefully match mentors and mentees taking into consideration interests, experiences and personal attributes.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Furey & Harris-Evans, 2021	H
	o. Matching young people to mentors with similar characteristics (gender, ethnicity, family background, interests and aspirations) could increase engagement and reduce stigma.	Moderate Confidence	Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			van Dam et al., 2019	M
			Denby et al., 2016	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2013	M
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
2. Mentoring relationships can vary depending on the specific needs of young people, including those related to their age, gender, temperament, and life experiences.	a. Pairing of older youth with mentors may be less successful due to previous rejection and a greater desire for autonomy.	Low confidence	Greeson et al., 2015c	H
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M
	b. Young people may require socio-emotional support to engage with mentoring due to factors such as communication skills, experiences of trauma and, behavioural problems.	Moderate confidence	Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H



Key principle 5. Carefully match mentors and mentees taking into consideration interests, experiences and personal attributes.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
	c. Whilst young people desire mentor support to reduce isolation, instability and uncertainty in previous adult relationships are barriers to young people establishing and sustaining mentoring relationships.	High confidence	Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
	n. Engaging young people in mentoring is challenging and requires work to build trust and self-esteem and make clear the intended benefits.	Moderate confidence	Newton et al., 2017;	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020;	H
			Wesley et al., 2020;	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020;	H
			Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H



Key principle 6. Ensure mentors are supported to meet the needs of mentees through training and supervision.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
4. Mentors and young people value leadership and support from organisations delivering mentoring programmes with training, supervision, and thoughtful matching of mentors with mentees.	e. Having a mentor of a different ethnicity may be a barrier to engagement for some young people from minority ethnic groups.	Moderate confidence	Smith et al., 2023	H
			Cosma and Soni, 2020	H
			Greeson et al, 2015	H
			Smith et al, 2023	H
	f. With appropriate vetting of mentors and youth coaching, youth-initiated mentor selection can facilitate identification of mentors and increase youth and mentor engagement.	High confidence	Spencer et al, 2018	M
			Spencer et al, 2019	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
			van Dam et al., 2017	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
	g. Training and supervision of mentors in the skills and expectations of their roles increases mentor confidence and engagement, and reduces young people's experiences of further rejection.	High confidence	Lee, 2021	H
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2013	M
			Smith et al., 2023	H
			Greeson et al., 2015c	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Newton et al., 2017	H



Key principle 6. Ensure mentors are supported to meet the needs of mentees through training and supervision.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
			Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Furey & Harris-Evans, 2021	H
	o. Matching young people to mentors with similar characteristics (gender, ethnicity, family background, interests and aspirations) could increase engagement and reduce stigma.	Moderate Confidence	Mantovani et al., 2020	H
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			van Dam et al, 2019	M
			Denby et al., 2016	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021b	M
			Nesmith & Christopherson, 2013	M
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H



Key principle 7. Consider using self-motivated (volunteer or natural) mentors who can foster an independent relationship with a child or young person.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
7: Mentees highly value mentors who are self-motivated and can foster an unbiased relationship with the young person. Mentees identify their mentor's authentic positive regard as a key precursor to a trusting relationship forming within the programme. This may include using volunteers, independent visitors, or exploring naturalistic mentors from within a young person's existing social network.	f. With appropriate vetting of mentors and youth coaching, youth-initiated mentor selection can facilitate identification of mentors and increase youth and mentor engagement.	High confidence	Mendes, 2011	H
			van Dam et al., 2017	M
			Greeson et al., 2015b	H
			Wesley et al., 2020	H
			Mendes, 2011	H
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
	m. Young people with experience of care express a need for mentoring as a source of independent emotional support.	Moderate confidence	Newton et al., 2017	H
			Newton et al., 2017	H
			Dallos & Carder-Gilbert, 2018	H
			Cosma & Soni, 2020	H
			Furey & Harris-Evans, 2021	H
			Mantovani et al., 2020	H
	p. Mentoring is facilitated by building a trusting relationship and providing a sustained and unconditional emotional support.	High confidence	Spencer et al., 2019	H
			van Dam et al, 2019	M
			Denby et al., 2016	M
			Spencer et al., 2019	H
			Greeson et al., 2015c	H



Key principle 7. Consider using self-motivated (volunteer or natural) mentors who can foster an independent relationship with a child or young person.

Evidence Statement	Systematic Review Finding	Confidence in Finding (CERQual)	Supporting Studies	Study CASP Assessment
			Narendorf et al., 2020	M
			Spencer et al., 2018	M
			Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021a	H

Advisory group

Before work on the Mentoring and Befriending Practice Guide began, we developed a long list of academics, stakeholders and professionals within the field. We have met face-to-face multiple times across the course of conducting the systematic review and writing the Guide, as well as correspondence over email.

The aim of the advisory group has been to help with designing the aims of the review, unpicking its findings and with writing the Guide itself. By including a broad range of perspectives, the principles reflect key voices in the sector and will hopefully ensure the Guide can have meaningful impact to its readers.

Recommendations for further evaluation and testing of interventions in England

- There is a need for further UK-based research to evaluate the impact of mentoring and befriending practice and interventions for at-risk and care experienced children and young people.
- There is a need for intervention development research to build the consensus around a theory of change that is relevant to, and takes account of, the lives of at-risk and care-experienced children and young people in ways that are contextually meaningful and relevant. Future studies should aim to measure the short- and long-term outcomes along the mentoring and befriending journey that matter most to at-risk and care-experienced children and young people. As such, children and young people should be meaningfully involved in designing programmes and defining goals, change, and impact in ways that matter most to them.



- Future research should focus on evaluating the impact of what works for whom and under what circumstances, with regards to mentoring and befriending programmes, and ensure that all at-risk and care-experienced children and young people have an equal opportunity to benefit from mentoring and befriending regardless of their sex/gender, race/ethnicity age or other vulnerable characteristics.



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