'MAKING PROFESSIONAL FRIENDS': MENTEES' AND FACILITATORS' EXPERIENCES OF A SCHOOL-BASED PEER MENTORING INTERVENTION TO SUPPORT PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL TRANSITION

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ABSTRACT

Secondary school transition is a significant marker in children's education, which can have widespread negative impacts for some young people (Riglin, Frederikson, Shelton, & Rice, 2013). Preventative interventions to support social and emotional needs during the transition are gaining popularity (Department for Education, 2015); yet research into understanding approaches that work is limited. Young people prefer support from people who can relate to them; therefore peer approaches, predominantly peer mentoring interventions are increasingly being used in schools (Podmore, Fonagy, & Munk, 2018).

Little is known about the mechanisms of change in peer mentoring, particularly when used to support secondary transition. Therefore, the current study was developed to both explore the experiences of young people participating in a transition peer mentoring project; and to understand from the perspectives of the mentees and programme facilitators what aspects of the intervention they thought facilitated change. The study took a critical realist epistemological position and utilised a qualitative design to enable the voices of the mentees to be fully heard.

Three focus groups were held with thirteen mentees in year seven and three facilitators participated in individual interviews. The transcripts were subjected to two separate thematic analyses. Twelve of the mentees noticed positive outcomes following the intervention; including increased confidence, preparation for secondary school and relational changes. The participants emphasised the importance of building trusting, supportive relationships in facilitating change, and reflected that the peer support model worked well, as mentors could relate to the mentees' experiences.

This research supports the need to promote positive mental health and prevention in schools, and demonstrates the benefits of a continued relationship across the school transition. The limitations of the study are explored, along with recommendations about future research, including longitudinal explorations

of peer mentoring and the importance of collaboration between education and mental health settings.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CYP   Children and young people

CYPMHS   Children and young people mental health services

DfE   Department for Education

DoH   Department of Health

EMHP   Education mental health practitioner

FG   Focus group

LAC   Looked after child

LTPMP   London transition peer mentoring programme

MH   Mental health

NHS   National health service

NICE   National institute of clinical excellence

PM   Peer mentoring

PMP   Peer mentoring program

PS   Peer support

SEND   Special educational needs and disabilities

SES   Socioeconomic status

TA   Thematic analysis

UK   United Kingdom

Y   School year (e.g. Y7)

YP   Young people

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the current context for young people (YP) moving into secondary school, which in the United Kingdom (UK) typically occurs when YP are 11 years old. It will consider the impact of this on mental health (MH) and wellbeing, and will examine approaches that are currently used to support YP through this transition. I will outline the use of early interventions to support YP's MH, particularly those using peer support (PS) in school settings. A critical review of the available literature on peer mentoring (PM) programmes for this transitional period will be presented. I will then discuss the rationale for the current study, and reflect on the importance of understanding change mechanisms in PM for clinical psychologists and wider service providers before presenting the research questions.

1.1 Terminology and Literature Search

I have outlined my understanding of key terminology (children and young people [CYP], emotional wellbeing, MH, resilience and secondary transition) used throughout the study in Appendix A. This is by no means an extensive exploration of each topic, but a broad explanation of the pertinent subject areas relevant to the current project to give context for the research presented.

Between September 2018 and January 2020 I carried out an exhaustive search of literature to identify all research exploring PM supporting emotional and social transition between primary and secondary school (at age 11) using EBSCO an international online data base resource. The search terms 'peer' AND 'mentor*' AND 'school transition' OR 'primary to secondary school' were used (where * denotes truncated terms). The reference lists from retrieved papers were also manually searched for relevant publications. It is possible that the review has missed some crucial literature in the search due to the large discrepancies in the terminology in PM and as much of research is published in 'grey literature'. However all efforts have been made to avoid this as much as possible. Further details of the literature review can be found in Appendix B.

1.2 Young People's Mental Health

In the UK, the numbers of CYP experiencing MH difficulties are rising (Sadler et al., 2018) causing increased attention in popular media, MH services, education and government arenas. Currently, estimates suggest that one in every eight to ten CYP (aged 5-19) has a diagnosable MH disorder (National Health Service [NHS] Benchmarking Network, 2018; Sadler et al., 2018); which equates to around 850,000 CYP struggling at any one time (Office of National Statistics, 2016). However, figures are likely to be higher due to under-reporting and 'sub-diagnostic' difficulties. Differences in prevalence rates have been observed between primary and secondary school aged children; with around 8% of 5-10 year-olds having a diagnosable MH disorder, compared to nearly 12% of 11-15 year-olds (Green, McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford, & Goodman, 2004). This difference is heightened in 'emotional disorders' (difficulties including anxiety and 'depression'), where the older group are two and a half times more likely to be struggling emotionally compared to primary school age children.

Generally, similar rates of MH difficulties are diagnosed in girls and boys (12.9%, 12.6% respectively), however recent self-report data has indicated gender differences emerging between age 11 and 14. At 14 years old 18% of girls reported MH distress compared to 12% of boys (Patalay & Fitzsimons, 2018). One quarter of girls in this sample reported depressive symptoms compared to one in ten boys. Girls are more likely to be diagnosed with 'emotional disorders' and boys with 'behavioural disorders' (Sadler et al., 2018).This may reflect wider societal gender stereotypes about who can report and seek help for MH difficulties (Hamblin, 2016). It is difficult to establish accurate prevalence rates across time as parents (who frequently under report difficulties) often provide the data for younger children, and adolescents typically self-report (Office of national statistics, 2016).

It is important to consider the particular population relevant to this study as MH is impacted by a variety of environmental factors. Overall YP aged 5-19 living in London have similar rates of MH difficulties to the rest of the UK (Sadler et al., 2018). However, London has the second highest rate of CYP with three or more MH diagnoses; and girls in this area have been identified as a particularly high-

risk group for developing 'emotional disorders' (Sadler et al., 2018). These high rates of MH problems may be linked to the fact that London contains 14 out of the top 20 local authorities with the highest rates of child poverty across the UK (Child Poverty Action Group, 2018). This is important as children and adults living in households in the lowest 20% income bracket are two to three times more likely to develop MH problems than those in the highest income bracket (Green et al., 2004).

The rates of MH difficulties are elevated in certain groups of CYP who could be considered to have increased 'risk' of developing poorer MH (Department of Health [DoH] & Department for Education [DfE], 2017). These include young carers, YP with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), YP in low socioeconomic status (SES) households, looked after children (LAC) and those with a parent with a physical or MH difficulty. Figure 1. outlines the estimated prevalence rates for these 'vulnerable' groups (DoH & DfE, 2017).
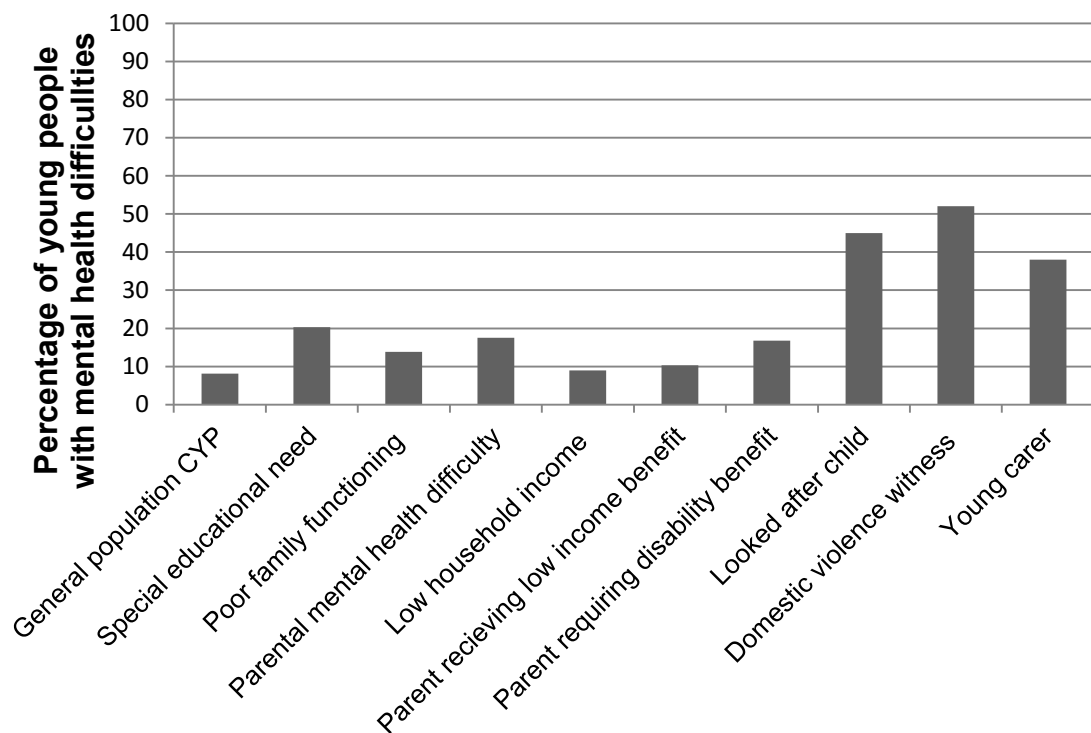
Figure 1. Rates of mental health difficulties in children and young people (CYP) across different groups (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017).

Poor MH in childhood can have lasting negative impacts into adulthood (DoH & DfE, 2017). Half of adult MH difficulties develop by age 14 (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2010), and can impact on physical health, life expectancy, education and work prospects, criminal behaviour, and relationships with others (Parliament UK, 2019). Therefore, we must consider what experiences in early adolescence could contribute to this increase in MH difficulties in middle-late adolescence (Patalay & Fitzsimons, 2018). One experience that most YP undergo is the transition to secondary school, around age 11. Following this move there is a widely recognised dip in wellbeing for most YP (e.g. Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm, & Splittgerber, 2000). In recognition of this, the DfE have commissioned research (e.g. Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012; Evangelou et al., 2008) to examine the factors that contribute to a 'good' transition in order to protect and support YP's wellbeing over this transitional period.

1.3 School Transition

1.3.1 *Experience of School Transition*

The move from primary to secondary school can be a time of increased stress for children (McGee, Ward, Gibbons, & Harlow, 2003) with approximately 16% of pupils feeling unprepared for the move (Rodda, Hallgarten, & Freeman, 2013). Nearly all children express some concerns prior to the transition, typically related to getting lost, bullying, increased workload and friendships (Zeedyk et al., 2003). Three quarters of YP in the UK report that these concerns diminish during the first term (Riglin, Frederikson, Shelton, & Rice, 2013); and starting secondary school can be fulfilling for some children (Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008). However, it is estimated that whilst around 31% of children experience a 'difficult transition' (Waters, Lester, Wenden, & Cross, 2012) less than 10% of pupils have ongoing problems stemming from transition (Evangelou et al., 2008; Smyth, McCoy & Darmody, 2004). Yet, there is a lack of longitudinal research tracking YP beyond the end of the first year at secondary school, therefore many of the long-term impacts remain unknown.

Two-thousand UK pupils, parents/carers and teachers suggested positive transitions are associated with academic and behavioural involvement in school

and a feeling of belonging in the school environment (Riglin et al., 2013). Having supportive friendships and the perceived friendliness of older pupils also makes transition easier (Evangelou et al., 2008; Hall & DiPerna, 2017; Hirsch & DuBois, 1992; Ward, 2000). Anderson (2000) suggests YP who have a source of information about the school, for example an older sibling at the school or a peer mentor, can help YP cope with the change. The transition can be equally difficult for parents/carers who worry about bullying, safety and homework (Zeedyk et al., 2003). However, once they become familiarised with the new routine of the school they report being less concerned (Rice et al., 2019).

1.3.2 *Transitional Risk Factors*

There is a widely recognised dip in attainment and wellbeing for most YP following school transition (e.g. Anderson et al., 2000), however some YP may be at an increased risk of finding secondary school transition challenging:

- Girls report higher levels of worry about moving schools and find the transition more difficult (Akos, 2002; Kingery & Erdley, 2007; Walters et al., 2012).
- YP coping with personal or familial difficulties during the transitional period find it more difficult (Chedzoy & Burden, 2005).
- YP from minority ethnic backgrounds can find it harder to 'fit in' at secondary school, suggesting socio-cultural factors also affect the success of transition (Graham & Hill, 2002).
- YP from low SES households can also find it more difficult to settle into secondary school (Evangelou et al., 2008).
- YP who are anxious in primary school have more pre-transition worries which negatively impacts on their transition (Duchesne, Ratelle, Poitras, & Drouin, 2009).
- Evangelou et al. (2008) found that being bullied had the most negative impact on transition for YP.
- Having SEND does not increase the difficulty with transition directly, however, it does increase the likelihood of bullying therefore these YP often do experience more challenging moves (Evangelou et al., 2008).

1.3.3 *Impacts on Wellbeing and Mental Health*

The age of transition coincides with the average onset age of anxiety and 'impulse control' problems (Kessler et al., 2005), with a high frequency of diagnoses occurring in 10-11 year-olds (Green et al., 2004). Difficult transitions have not only been linked to poorer social and emotional wellbeing, including higher levels of anxiety and 'depression' at the end of year seven (Y7; Waters et al., 2012); but also to poorer self-image (Reyes, Gillock, Kobus, & Sanchez, 2000), increased loneliness and conduct problems (Benner & Graham, 2009; Riglin et al., 2013). These challenges can increase early school leaving, poorer MH and socio-economic disadvantage in later life (West, Sweeting, & Young, 2010). However, it is unlikely that school transition alone would lead to the development of a MH problem, but it could act as a trigger. This could be particularly true for YP who are in situations that make it more likely they could develop MH difficulties, such as LAC and children in the lowest SES households (DoH & DfE, 2017).

Good wellbeing and MH prior to transition is a particularly important component of a positive adjustment to secondary school (Hall & DiPerna, 2017). When YP feel they belong in school their wellbeing improves, even if they struggled with MH difficulties in primary school (Vaz, Parsons, Falkmer, Passmore, & Flakmer, 2014). Kingery, Erdley and Marshall (2011) found that positive peer relationships predicted better transition experiences, increased self-esteem and decreased loneliness. Thus peer relationships during the transition are a key protective factor for later MH difficulties, and positive impacts can last up to two years post-transition (Cantin & Boivin, 2004).

1.3.4 *Facilitating Positive Transitions*

Therefore, interventions to enhance school engagement and peer relationships prior to and after the move could facilitate better future wellbeing for pupils. Additionally, spending time and money improving pupils' wellbeing in primary schools could act as a protective factor for the transition. The DfE have produced policy and guidelines outlining supportive interventions to enable positive school transitions (DfE, 2015). This guidance, amongst other more

general CYP MH policy now focuses on early intervention, with the hope this could prevent problems escalating. This would benefit individuals and their families, as well as being more cost effective for society as it can reduce the need for more intensive services later on. The current government believe schools are best placed to lead this (DoH & DfE, 2017) as UK child and young people's MH services (CYPMHS) are overstretched with increased demand for limited services (Frith, 2016) with only 30% of CYP with a diagnosable MH condition receiving NHS treatment in 2017-2018 (Parliament UK, 2019).

1.4 Prevention and Early Intervention

Growing awareness for earlier preventative support to build resilience and promote wellbeing is being recognised as necessary to meet CYP's MH needs, as services are unable to cope with the volume of support required. The mounting concern around MH and wellbeing of YP has provided an impetus of policy change, in an attempt to provide more targeted approaches to prevention, promotion and treatment (Spratt, 2009). Preventative support aims to reduce the risk factors and increase resilience to help people cope with difficulties more easily and build strengths within the individual and their systems. Prevention can target whole populations, or focus on preventing difficulties in groups of people with known 'vulnerabilities' (Gordon, 1987). It can either work to prevent difficulties developing or to reduce further impact of the problem (Caplan & Grunebaum, 1967). Research suggests that early intervention has the most benefit when it is specifically targeted towards groups based on pre-identified risks; for example LAC or YP in the lowest SES group (Early Intervention Foundation, 2018); although it is important to remember these 'vulnerabilities' do not determine or predict later difficulties at an individual level. A large systematic review of prevention and early intervention MH initiatives revealed that school-based interventions produced the largest reduction in low mood and anxiety symptoms, and that outcomes were best when they matched the needs of the specific populations they were designed for (Das, Salam, Aeshad, Finkelstien, & Bhutta, 2016).

Based on this promising evidence for prevention initiatives, a green paper, 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision', was

released by the DoH and DfE in 2017. This proposed a prevention and early intervention strategy to promote resilience amongst students, enabling them to navigate their way to resources that encourage and sustain wellbeing (DoH & DfE, 2017). The report places schools at the heart of the intervention delivery as they have the widest influence on CYP in the UK. While the term 'resilience building' is key within these reforms and is somewhat of a buzzword in education, CYP services and policy currently, its use needs to be carefully considered to ensure it is not blaming of individuals, nor enabling reduced responsibility from care-providers, including schools, social care and MH services.

1.4.1 The Role of Schools

Schools, as universal free services in the UK, play a key role in the development of CYP for at least 11 years of their lives. Schools have statutory responsibility to promote the wellbeing of students (National Institute of Clinical Excellence [NICE], 2009), and attending school alone enhances wellbeing (Gutman & Feinstein, 2007). Therefore, the latest UK government strategy asks schools to contribute to the improvement of CYP's wellbeing and MH (DoH & DfE, 2017). With thoughtful implementation, school-based interventions can boost children's chances of a positive future, even when optimal environmental conditions for development are not possible (Newman, 2004). Positive adult role models and peer contact are associated with increased resilience during childhood and adolescence (Daniel & Wassell, 2002) which are factors schools provide as standard. However, schools can be challenging environments academically and socially, which can expose CYP to adversities. Yet, support to overcome these challenges can subsequently promote resilience. Schools can also be places where CYP exert agency, and provide social networks and extra-curricular activities which are associated with improved wellbeing (Allen, 2014). The focus of true and meaningful preventative support in schools should therefore be on the development of appropriate resources and adaptive capabilities rather than focusing on the absence of symptoms or risks (Yates & Masten, 2004).

Moreover, school environments can be less-stigmatising places to receive MH support, which may help CYP and their parents/carers seek interventions more readily (DoH & DfE, 2017). A recent online survey co-produced with CYP, parents and MH professionals demonstrated CYP agree with this (Healthy London Partnership, 2019). Of the 448 YP that responded 56% reported they would go to a friend or family member if they needed help with their MH; they said they would not like to see a professional as it is 'admitting you need help'. Yet, if they were to seek professional support, younger CYP would feel more comfortable accessing this in an education setting compared to older CYP who prefer health services. Around half of CYP surveyed thought online peer support (PS) would be helpful, and allow them to talk to other people who have had similar problems and experiences.

1.5 Peer Support as an Early Intervention

YP say they would prefer to seek assistance from peers of a similar age who can relate to them (Coleman, Skyes, & Groom, 2017; Healthy London Partnership, 2019). Peer-to-peer support has the potential to engage CYP in the school environment, and aims to support 'emotional resilience', promote wellbeing and positive MH (DoH & DfE, 2017). In 2007 it was estimated that PS programmes were being implemented in 62-68% of schools in the UK (Houlston, Smith, & Jessel, 2009). However, it is now believed to be much more prevalent, perhaps as it is a cost-effective alternative to adult-led support (Coleman et al., 2017). Approaches to PS are varied and often use different terminologies such as 'befriending' or 'mentoring'. They typically have three common features; CYP helping and supporting each other, support being offered in a planned and structured way, and supporters that are trained to fulfil their role (Coleman et al., 2017). The Anna Freud centre in collaboration with CYP developed five guidelines for facilitators of PS projects: working where YP are at; selecting appropriate YP to participate; focusing on the relationship between YP; encouraging ownership of programs, and ensuring safe and boundaried delivery (Barnes & Munk, 2019).

PS programmes have been found to increase social support and emotional wellbeing (e.g. Houlston, Smith, & Jessel, 2011), and decrease incidences of

bullying within the school community (Cowie & Smith, 2010). A review reported that an overwhelming proportion of PS programmes demonstrated positive results (Tzani-Pepelasi, Ioannou, Synott & McDonnell, 2019); which included increased peer interactions and social participation and improved academic engagement and perception of school belonging. PS interventions also show benefits for CYP who have experienced bullying and trauma (Cowie 2011; Houlston et al., 2011; Turunen & Punamäki, 2016) and those with SEND (Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape, & Norwich, 2012; Dolva, Gustavsson, Borell, & Hemmingsson. 2011).

However, due to the variation in PS interventions it is difficult to evaluate what aspects of programmes contribute to any positive outcomes. A government review (DoH, & DfE, 2017) concluded that programmes had more success if they were: supported by senior management, well run and had a co-ordinator role within the staff team; whereas staff workloads and time constraints had negative impacts on the project outcomes. Houlston et al. (2009) compared PS schemes in 186 UK primary and secondary schools; they found primary schools focused more on outcomes for the whole school, whilst secondary schools aimed to support specific students. Despite the usefulness of the PS strategies, the funding for the development of such programmes is often minimal (Mead, Hilton, & Curtis, 2001). For PS programmes to become useful for educational organisations more evidence must be collected on how schools that already use PS set up and deliver programmes, as well as how these can be improved. One area of PS that has received more research and implementation attention is peer mentoring (PM).

1.6 Peer Mentoring

Mentoring schemes in schools have become a common way of delivering PS programmes to promote wellbeing and resilience for YP (Podmore, Fonagy, & Munk, 2018). However, despite being widely used, the effectiveness of these interventions continues to be evaluated. The multidisciplinary and applied nature of mentoring programmes has meant many reports have been published in the 'grey literature' which makes them difficult to disseminate widely. Yet,

single-site studies consistently produce positive results (Karcher, 2007), particularly in relation to wellbeing (DoH & DfE, 2017).

Typically PM (or cross-age mentoring) involves a younger child being mentored by a peer, usually at least two years their senior (Karcher, 2007); however there are varied definitions (see J. Powell, 2016). Currently in the UK, mentoring interventions are primarily offered to 'vulnerable' teenagers, and are more likely to be offered in London and in community settings; with the aim to support the mentee's social and emotional development (Children's Commissioner, 2018). Some research suggests PM is more influential than adult support (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Karcher, 2007; Philip & Spratt, 2007). YP feel peers can offer academic and emotional support in a more comprehensible way (Dyson, Gallannaugh, Humphrey, Lendrum, & Wigelsworth, 2010), which may improve engagement and make it easier for them to ask for help (M. Powell, 1997).

1.6.1   Benefits of Peer Mentoring

A meta-analysis of PM interventions suggested well-run programmes could improve emotional, social, behavioural and academic development (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011); for both mentees and mentors (Podmore et al., 2018). This makes PM an effective use of finances if the correct YP are selected to participate. While many peer mentoring programmes (PMPs) focus on academic outcomes (e.g. Herrera, Kauh, Cooney, Grossman, & McMaken, 2008), this study is interested in social, emotional and behavioural changes, and therefore will focus on interventions with these aims. Recently the UK government published results of their 'Peer Support for Mental Health and Wellbeing Pilots' (Day, Campbell-Jack, & Bertolotto-Ecorys, 2020). The participating YP's self-reports were positive, with the mentees reporting to feel happier and better supported; however changes on psychometric measures were less noticeable. The schools felt the peer-led format alleviated pressure on pastoral and welfare teams and strengthened YP's support networks.

1.6.1.1. For mentees

Effective and enduring mentoring is associated with a wide range of positive outcomes for mentees. These include higher quality social relationships, increased social skills, improved school engagement and connectedness and enhanced self-efficacy (Dearden, 1998; Karcher, 2005; Karcher, 2007; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Stoltz, 2005); decreased behavioural problems (Karcher, 2007) and reduced antisocial behaviour (Sheehan, DiCara, LeBailly, & Christoffel, 1999). Mentees also report feeling happier, more confident and having better emotional wellbeing (Brady, Dolan, & Canavan, 2017; Day et al., 2020). Positive relationships with mentors can enable YP to interact with others more effectively (Rhodes, 2005). However these improvements are not seen in all studies (e.g. Herrera et al., 2008; Parsons et al., 2008).

1.6.1.2. For mentors

Mentors, although not the intended recipients, experience increased self-awareness and self-reflection, and improved social and communication skills following the mentoring process and relationship (Podmore et al., 2018). Being a mentor can also increase school connectedness and empathy skills (Karcher, 2009).

1.6.2 Theories Guiding Peer Mentoring

Rhodes (2005) suggests the benefits of mentoring come from three interrelated processes; enhancing social relationships and emotional wellbeing through empathy, improving cognitive skills through conversation and instruction, and good role modelling which can promote positive identity development. This model is based on the developmental theories proposed by Vygotsky, Piaget and Sullivan (Damon, 1984). These all emphasise interactions between social and cognitive development, and the importance of socialising to develop social perspective-taking skills (Karcher, 2005). Rhodes (2005) highlights the impact of parents, peer relationships and the child's development on the formation of any mentoring relationship and the subsequent outcomes of the intervention. This model was developed in relation to adult-child mentoring; however it is frequently used in PM as specific models for cross-age mentoring have not

been developed. Other adult mentoring models have been suggested, though a detailed review is beyond the scope of this overview (See Karcher, 2005).

1.6.2.1. Developmental considerations

It is important to consider the developmental stage of both the mentees and mentors in PM and the potential impact on the mentoring relationship. The mentors in PMPs in secondary schools can be as young as 12 years old and therefore are still rapidly developing themselves. According to Piaget (1936) these YP are only just transitioning into the formal operational stage and consequently their ability to see situations from others' perspectives, a key mentoring skill, may still be developing. This could impact on their ability to form a relationship with their mentee and offer a useful intervention, although skills and maturity levels will vary between mentors (Rhodes, 2005). Moreover, YP at this stage may find it more difficult to control their impulses to have fun with peers rather than remaining focused on their mentee. Some research suggests that PMPs may be more successful when the mentors are over 14 years old (Akos, 2000).

However, younger children's capacity to 'mentor' is seen in sibling relationships through modelling, empathy and perspective taking (Brody, Kim, Murry, & Brown, 2003; Howe & Ross, 1990; Tucker, McHale, & Crouter, 2001). Vygotsky (1978) asserts that development of more complex skills occurs when people are supported by more capable peers; through encouragement, modelling and supporting the practise of new skills. This may form one of the key mechanisms of change in PMPs, for both mentees and mentors (Karcher, 2005). Thus, it is important that mentors are trained to form developmentally appropriate expectations of their mentee, as relationship breakdowns often occur when the mentor is not sensitive to this (Spencer, 2007).

1.7 Peer Mentoring Programmes

There is limited research on the elements of PMPs that contribute to effective delivery (DuBois et al., 2011), and even less on the mechanisms of change that result in the outcomes. Two scoping papers identified several areas that appear to impact the success of programmes (Karcher, 2007; Podmore et al., 2018).

Adhering to good-practice PM guidelines is vital, as structured projects appear to have double the success compared to unstructured ones (Dubois et al., 2002) which can do as much harm as good (Karcher, 2007). The following sections outline the key areas.

1.7.1 Selection Processes

1.7.1.1 Mentors

It is important to choose mentors that are committed to the full duration of the planned relationship (Barnetz & Feigin, 2012; Sipe, 2002) as short-term relationships are related to negative experiences of PM (Spencer, 2007). Mentors' ability to model positive attitudes towards school and engagement with younger pupils also needs to be considered, as negative attitudes to school can reflect in their mentees' outlook post-mentoring (Karcher, Davidson, Rhodes, & Herrera, 2010). Consequently, some programmes select mentors on the basis of teachers' recommendations (DuBois et al., 2002).

1.7.1.2 Mentees

A recent meta-analysis suggests that YP with intermediate levels of difficulty are likely to benefit the most from PMPs (DuBois & Karcher, 2013). This aligns with the preventative ethos of PMPs as these CYP may not meet thresholds for other types of support (Podmore et al., 2018). YP who are more 'vulnerable' may find building and sustaining a mentoring relationship difficult (Phillip & Spratt, 2007), and may also find the termination of these relationships more damaging (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Moreover, mentors working with YP experiencing more severe behavioural problems can become overwhelmed, reducing their confidence and therefore success of the intervention (Karcher, 2007). Therefore, the selection of mentees should be carefully considered prior to commencing the intervention.

1.7.2 Matching

Research indicates that mentors and mentees need to be matched thoughtfully and appropriately (DuBois et al., 2002; Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, & Grossman, 2013). Programmes have attempted to match based on shared

characteristics, such as gender (Nelson, 2003). However, research suggests enjoyment of shared interests facilitates a more emotionally supportive relationship (Day et al., 2020; DuBois et al., 2011; Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000). Some researchers have suggested this drives the change for the mentee, as trust in the relationship leads to the mentee sharing more and being increasingly open to their mentor's advice (Brady et al., 2017). Karcher (2005) found mentors and mentees reciprocally selected each other in 80% of matches after a few hours of interacting. However, evidence suggests that good matches are not as critical as training and supervision (Herrera et al., 2000).

1.7.3 Training and Support

The literature suggests that it is important to train mentors prior to the programme (Barnetz & Feigin, 2012; Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; DuBois et al., 2002; King, Vidourek, Davis, & McMekkan, 2002) as more confident and knowledgeable mentors tend to have greater success (Parra, DuBois, Neville, Pugh-Lilly, & Povinelli, 2002), and lack of skills can cause premature intervention termination (Spencer, 2007). Podmore et al. (2018) suggest mentors might benefit from training on how to encourage mentees to sustain interest in the intervention. Initially staff facilitators might assist the relationship development with the aim of providing a sense of mastery among mentors; however as the mentoring progresses they will work with increased independence (Liang, Spencer, West, & Rappaport, 2013). Ongoing supervision is vital to monitor the programme fidelity and provide support (DuBois et al., 2002).

1.7.4 Mentoring Relationship

It appears that one of the key factors in the success of PMPs is the relationship that develops between the mentee and mentor (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005a; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2014). Qualitative research has attempted to identify the relationship characteristics that are essential for good mentoring and better outcomes; these are thought to include frequency of contact, emotional

closeness, and relationship longevity (Podmore et al., 2018) as well as trust and closeness (DuBois et al, 2011; Rhodes, 2005; Spencer, 2006).

1.7.4.1 Approach to relationship

Many PMPs take a developmental approach (unstructured, nondirective, focus on relationship building) in order to help mentees understand their value, and facilitate character development by providing empathy, friendship and attention to the mentee (Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002). Research has found mentees are more satisfied with their PM relationship if their mentor takes this approach (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). However, as mentoring relationships are often organised by schools or organisations they will always have some degree of formality to them, which has been found to have negative impact on the mentoring relationship when compared to natural mentoring relationships (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005a; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Behrendt, 2005).

1.7.4.2 Types of support

There is less research examining the impact of the type of support provided in PMPs on the outcomes. I was unable to locate any such literature for PMPs, but will use adult-led mentoring literature to examine this potential mechanism of change. Social support is a key factor in enabling positive wellbeing for YP (Bal, Crombez, Van Oost, & Debourdeaudhuij, 2003); mentoring programmes aim to formalise this. Through nine interviews with mentees, Brady et al. (2017) investigated the degree to which social support found in non-mentoring relationships was also apparent in mentoring relationships. Companionship and practical support were seen in all pairings, even before close relationships developed. This led to increased feelings of wellbeing in the YP, and formed the basis of the relationship in which emotional, esteem and advice support could be more readily offered and accepted. This reflects Rhodes (2005) model of youth mentoring in which shared activities are critical for relationship development, from which more substantive outcomes can emerge.

In the study (Brady et al., 2017), examples of emotional support included the mentor listening to and empathising with the YP. Rhodes (2005) suggests self-esteem support can contribute to the process of identity development; a core

process of mentoring. The mentees derived self-esteem support from the mentors giving up their time for them, as well as through praise and encouragement. The mentors felt this support was reciprocal, and the authors proposed the mutuality of support in turn further increased the self-esteem of the mentees as they were making a worthwhile contribution to the relationship. Bandura (1984) proposes that mentors who provide praise, and focus on positive activities and conversations, set realistic goals and expectations will be idealised by their mentee; resulting in increased connectedness with other authority figures (e.g. parents, and teachers), improved social skills (through role modelling) and increased self-esteem for the mentees (Karcher, 2005).

1.7.5 Evaluation

Many mentoring programmes are not evaluated which makes it difficult to capture important findings which could impact on future research and funding. Podmore et al. (2018) suggest that a broad range of evaluative wellbeing measures should be incorporated into the core structure of all programmes to continually improve the intervention for both mentors and mentees. Experiential evaluations of the programmes are missing from much of the literature and should be a focus in order to establish the psychological mechanisms that contribute to change.

1.8 School-Based Peer Mentoring Interventions

Estimates indicate that approximately one half of all schools in England offer a form of PM (Houlston et al., 2009; Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 2011); however, the number is likely to be higher due to the recent government endorsement. Unfortunately, much of the data collected from school programmes is of poor quality (Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012), and is therefore not included in reviews, which means less is known about the effectiveness of school PMPs. However, school programmes may offer unique benefits compared to community contexts, for example; access to mentors who have experienced the same challenges to mentees, opportunities for mentoring to influence school peer-interactions and accessible staff supervision (Karcher &

Herrera, 2007). Roach (2014) reported higher levels of life satisfaction and improved perceptions of school satisfaction following a review of 22 PMPs in English schools for children aged 9 to 12 compared to YP that were not selected to participate. In London, a multi-site school PMP demonstrated a significant reduction in mentees' and mentors' emotional and peer related difficulties following a 10-week mentoring intervention (Stapley, Yoon, Farr, & Deighton, 2019). Both groups reported increases in their self-esteem and wellbeing, and those who attended more sessions reported higher school connectedness. Qualitative evaluation revealed that mentees felt they could cope with difficulties in a more positive way, and both mentees and mentors had noticed improvements in their relationships with others (Stapley et al., 2019).

However, some research has proposed that school-based programmes are less likely to produce long lasting effects, due to the shorter average duration of school mentoring (Herrera et al., 2000; Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012). Yet, the success of the programme also depends on the buy-in from the school and communication between the school and the agency providing the scheme (Day et al., 2020; Karcher & Herrera, 2007). There are often practical difficulties in running these programs, with some teachers viewing the schemes as time consuming and less valuable than other pastoral interventions (Brady et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important to consider PMPs in the wider systemic context, as engagement with all stakeholders throughout the intervention has a positive impact on the success of the programme (Day et al., 2020; Larose, Cyrenne, Garceau, Brodeur, & Tarabulsy, 2010).

1.8.1 Relationship Duration

A number of studies indicate that the duration of the mentoring relationship has a significant impact on its effectiveness (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005b; Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2012; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011); especially when the interventions have a focus on emotional and social outcomes (DuBois et al., 2002, Rhodes & DuBois, 2006, Herrera, Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & Feldman, 2007, DuBois et al., 2011). One review found progressively greater benefits as relationship duration increased. Mentees in relationships that lasted less than three months showed declines in

some areas (e.g. self-esteem) in comparison to peers that did not receive mentoring (Hererra et al., 2011). Premature endings can have particularly negative effects for YP who have MH difficulties, and for those in 'vulnerable groups' who are often included in PMPs (Karcher, 2005; Philip & Spratt, 2007; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012).

1.9 Peer Mentoring for School Transition

Despite broadly positive outcomes for YP taking part in school-based PMPs, research investigating PM for school transition is limited in the UK. Transition gives an opportunity to build resilience (Allen, 2014), and support at this stage may be beneficial particularly as there are links between poor transition and later wellbeing and MH difficulties (e.g. Walters et al., 2012). A systematic review of the literature (See Appendix B) revealed four studies that aimed to explore PMPs specifically targeted at transition to secondary school for YP aged 11.

1.9.1 Dearden (1998)

This UK study explored the processes and outcomes of a mentoring project that involved year 10 (Y10) mentors from a large secondary school mentoring Year six (Y6) pupils in four feeder primary schools. They aimed to develop the self-confidence and interpersonal skills of the mentors, and form friendship links to help the mentees' transition. Y10 pupils received initial training, and teachers matched them to a mentee. Y6 children with mild learning or emotional needs were selected by teachers to participate as mentees. The sessions focused on educational tasks and lasted for around 20 weeks.

Dearden (1998) developed a questionnaire to evaluate personal development and interpersonal skills. Two-thirds of mentors reported improvements in both areas, and 95% felt they had helped the mentees feel less worried about secondary school. Only 50% of mentees completed the questionnaire; of these YP 90% responded positively to statements about increasing their personal development, 80% agreed with statements related to increased interpersonal skills, and all said they had been helped to learn. There is little information in

the study about the development of the measure, and why the items were chosen. Many of the questions are positively framed, and therefore may have been difficult to disagree with. Six teachers were asked for their comments; they highlighted preparation for secondary school and increased confidence as the primary outcomes for the mentees.

Dearden (1998) concluded that the programme provided evidence for the social benefits of mentoring, an easier transition, increased confidence and interpersonal skills, and an awareness of helping others for the mentors. However, as the mentoring sessions focused mainly on academic work they could be better described as tutoring, making it difficult to interpret the programme's social benefits. The small scale nature of this study limits its generalisability, particularly as so few mentees were involved in the evaluation.

1.9.2 Nelson (2003)

This PMP project hoped to improve mentor's citizenship skills, strengthen links between feeder primary and secondary schools, and develop self-confidence through broadening friendships for mentees to assist the move to Y7. In 1999, three Y10 were pupils matched with three Y6 pupils, based on gender, choice of hobbies, and having attended the same primary school. Nelson (2003) hoped this matching process would form a good base for a cross-age friendship. The pairs met for one session in the summer term of Y6, subsequent sessions were agreed on by the mentoring pair. No documentation of the meetings was recorded and the sessions were not supervised.

The programme was evaluated qualitatively through self-evaluation sheets (details of this were not included) and structured interviews with participants. Mentors said they had improved communication and problem solving skills, and felt more responsible for their own learning. They said they had helped their mentee build confidence and settle into the school. Mentees reported to feel less worried about starting secondary school and more confident in general. Both thought more meetings prior to the transition would be beneficial.

Following this positive feedback the programme expanded for a further two years, culminating in the whole of Y10 being trained as mentors. However, an evaluation of the whole-year approach to PM was not included in the paper and therefore the evidence cannot be critically evaluated, which would have been a useful advancement in the literature. Moreover, the data is 20 years old, and therefore its relevance to YP in schools today needs to be held in mind while considering the findings.

1.9.3 Brady, Canavan, Cassidy, Garrity and O'Regan (2012)

Big brothers big sisters, is an Irish school-based PMP for school transition. Older pupils (aged 15 or 16) offer YP starting secondary school mentoring sessions to help them feel more settled at school, with the aim to keep more YP in school through increased friendships and positive role models. Mentors and mentees were trained separately and matched based on 'expected compatibility' and gender; and subsequently met for 40 minute weekly sessions comprised of individual and group-based activities for one school year.

The researchers evaluated the project in 23 schools (out of 65 involved in the project) in 2010-2011. Fifty mentees said the main benefit of having a mentor was having someone to talk to about problems, making new friends, and knowing someone was 'looking out for them' at school. Fifty-six mentors identified a sense of satisfaction from helping, and spoke about development of their confidence, listening and communication skills. Mentors reported mentees had increased confidence following the mentoring and were less likely to be bullied. However, they thought better supervision would ensure commitment from mentors and mentees.

Interviews with 38 teachers highlighted the importance of the PS element of the program, and suggested this was the key to the positive outcomes. They thought the mentees felt safer and more settled at school, and had better friendship networks. Teachers attributed the mentoring intervention to the increases in self-esteem and confidence for the mentees and mentors and the reduction of bullying in the school. They identified challenges in setting up the

program, finding the time for the YP to meet regularly, and in the mentee selection process.

Twelve programme staff offered thoughts on the experience of working with different schools. They reported some operational difficulties, which included schools complying with the model and matching process, and the differing levels of support offered by the link staff member in the different schools. They also noticed a contribution of the programme to the wider school ethos particularly when the programme had been running for over five years.

The researchers concluded that this PMP can be considered a model of good practice when compared to best practise school PM guidelines (Karcher, 2007). They suggested that although PM is not a panacea to the challenges of school transition it can offer a unique and valuable contribution in addition to other preparatory events and pastoral initiatives. This study benefits from a larger sample and input from all main stakeholders; however, generalisability is limited as the sites were selected on the basis of best fidelity to their model, which may have positively skewed perceptions compared to the broader range of schools involved. This is important as schools are often unable to stick strictly to intervention models due to staffing and time pressure.

1.9.4 Brady, Dolan and Canavan (2014)

This qualitative paper uses data from Brady et al.'s (2012) report but enhances the quality of the research by analysing the data collected from 21 link teachers and 17 head teachers thematically. They identified some key benefits of PM: mentees being more likely to listen to older peers compared to staff; the usefulness of support extending to day-to-day interactions beyond the reach of teachers (e.g. in the playground); and mentoring disrupting the power dynamics of the older and younger pupils which can be the precursor to bullying. The challenges they highlighted with the programme were difficulties with timing and availability of the students, decisions about selection of mentors and mentees and the added workload for teachers.

From this analysis, the researchers concluded that PS is a useful addition to adult-led provisions. The programme mobilised support between the older and younger students, which had an impact on the wider culture in the schools. This paper benefits from the context of the full report (Brady et al., 2012) but adds to the knowledge base by using a more rigorous analysis method compared to the evaluative methods used in other reports (e.g. Dearden, 1998; Nelson 2003). The literature would benefit from a qualitative analysis of the data from all stakeholders.

1.10 Rationale for the Current Research

The literature examining PMP for school transitions is limited, and much of it is over 15 years old, which restricts the applicability to interventions in schools and with YP today. I have not identified any UK research since 2003 (Nelson, 2003) despite large changes in UK society since then (for example, the increased use of social media and more discussions about MH at schools and in the media). Moreover, updates to policies about school transition and PS (e.g DoH & DfE, 2017) have occurred since 2003, and therefore this research may be out of date. The more recent study was completed in Ireland, and although geographically close to the UK, school systems and the wider culture is different and therefore may not fully explain the experiences of YP receiving PM in the UK.

Moreover, in all the studies presented in the literature review the researcher or the organisation providing the PMP was involved in the evaluation, which may have inadvertently biased the research processes. Further, in half of the studies (Dearden, 1998; Nelson, 2003) the participants knew the researcher, and therefore may not have felt free to provide honest feedback. Only one piece of research applies analysis to the data (Brady et al., 2014), which limits the depth of exploration. Although the studies presented all comment on similar positive findings for mentees and mentors, (Brady et al., 2012; Brady et al., 2014; Dearden, 1998; Nelson, 2003) none explore the mechanisms that contribute to the changes. Plus, only Brady et al.'s (2012) study explores a programme that was built to primarily benefit mentees rather than mentors. Positively, all the

studies give weight to YP's experiences, which are often excluded from research (Greig, Taylor, & Mackay, 2013).

1.10.1 Importance for Young People, Services, and Clinical Psychology

The literature indicates that starting secondary school is a time of amplified stress (Mcgee, et al., 2003), and that preventive interventions supporting YP during this transition may reduce the likelihood of later MH difficulties (DoH & DfE, 2017). Clinical psychology has a role in society to prevent potential distress and promote wellbeing. Research into the effectiveness of school interventions is particularly important in the current UK economic climate as CYPMHS are often unable to support to YP with 'milder' difficulties due to funding restrictions (Frith, 2016). This research could add to the literature base for PMPs and therefore assist in ascertaining funding for the expansion of PMPs in UK schools. This could result in wider-reaching interventions to promote wellbeing for YP.

1.11 The Current Project

This project aims to interrogate a transition PMP that was designed primarily to support mentees. The focus of the research is on the experience of the YP and the facilitators delivering the interventions due to this gap in the literature. This study aims to approach this topic from as impartial a position as possible, as I have not been involved in designing or delivering the intervention. All schools involved in the PMP were invited to participate, to hear views from programmes that were delivered 'on model' as well as those that differed slightly, as this is the reality of PMPs in school environments.

The previous literature lacks exploration of the change processes or components of the programme that enable emotional, social and behavioural change in pupils transitioning to secondary school. This is therefore the focus of this study. The research explores these questions through one London-based PMP which I will call London transition PMP (LTPMP) to protect confidentiality. This project is run by a charity commissioned by the NHS in an inner-city London borough. I ensured all participants were able to have a voice during the

process, and promoted this through the use of YP consultants, and placing mentees' experiences at the centre of the research process, analysis and its dissemination.

1.11.1 The Transition Mentoring Project

Following a positive evaluation of the PMP in secondary schools outlined earlier in this chapter (Stapley et al., 2019) the providers decided to adapt this scheme to support YP transitioning to secondary school. The charity leading the programme hoped mentoring would promote wellbeing and resilience to enable better long term outcomes for YP who teachers anticipated would find the transition difficult. The focus was on YP who were not already receiving additional support across the transitional period. Therefore pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) were not included, which follows PM effectiveness evidence (Podmore et al., 2018).The project tasked Y7 or Year eight (Y8) students from feeder secondary schools with mentoring Y6 pupils before and after starting secondary school (See Appendix C for a fuller explanation of the project).

1.12   Research Questions

- How do mentees and facilitators describe the mentees' experience of a PM project for school transition from primary to secondary school?
- How do mentees and staff facilitators understand any process of change related to PM for the mentees?

2. EPISTEMOLOGY & METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the epistemological assumptions and methodological approach and process in this research. The importance of involving CYP in the research process is highlighted; and the data collection procedures are described before the ethical considerations are stated. Lastly, the process of transcription and analysis is outlined and the importance of reflexivity is considered.

2.1 Epistemological Position

The epistemological position influences all aspects of research including the choices about methodology, analysis and interpretations, therefore it is important that it is explicitly stated (Willig, 2012). All epistemological positions come with a particular set of assumptions about how knowledge is constructed and related to concepts of fact, truth, belief and subjectivity (Armstrong, 1973; Scotland, 2012). A critical realist approach to research was adopted for this project; aiming to explain the complex real-world through a critical lens (Robson, 2002). In research, a critical realist approach assumes that a 'real world' exists independently of the researcher, their beliefs and theories. Importantly, it also assumes that this 'real world' cannot be directly observed as the information gathered by the research is influenced by the context in which it was generated. For example, the concept of 'vulnerability' may refer to an underlying concept that exists independently in the world. However, the literature and my understanding of the term now acts as a lens through which my observations of 'vulnerability' are made and shapes the conclusions I have drawn.

In addition, YP in this study are identified by teachers as vulnerable. I acknowledge that regardless of my knowledge (or anyone else's knowledge) of 'vulnerability' there is a material reality for some YP, such as housing instability, which results in 'real' disadvantage and therefore vulnerability. Although it is important to be critical about the use of this socially constructed label, and how it can position inequality as natural rather than as a consequence of one's

environment, (Bhaskar, 1989; Miller & McClelland, 2010; Robson, 2002), one must not dismiss or minimise a person's 'reality' through understanding it as a construction of society. Therefore, by adopting a critical realist epistemology I am able to attend to the impact of participant's backgrounds, social contexts, and individual differences while pursuing knowledge about the mechanisms at play in PMP interventions.

As critical realists posit that knowledge is developed in a dynamic process between the researcher and the researched (Robson, 2002), the interpretations made in this study are located within the present historical, cultural, political and economic context (Harper, 2011). Yet, drawing on one perspective by collecting data at different levels of the PMP systems can also provide an insight into the potential similarities or discrepancies between the programmes intention (e.g. to improve transition experiences) and what is understood and felt by YP (Patton, 1990).

Lastly, critical realist approaches aim to understand underlying causal mechanisms (why 'a' causes 'b'), within the complex system in which it operates (Matthews, 2003). As such, this study aimed to explore the processes in mentoring interventions that lead to change, rather than to simply focus upon outcomes. Situating the research within this paradigm has enabled the possibility of focusing on the process, rather than simply the outcomes, and has provided a rich understanding of how this phenomenon is experienced, through a cautious and critical lens (Pilgram & Bentall, 1999).

2.2 Methodological Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of YP and staff. The qualitative rather than quantitative methodological design was determined by the epistemological stance adopted, as meaning making and associated processes are central to the research questions. Exploring these using qualitative methods can facilitate an in-depth enquiry of how individuals' experience and understand their world (Willig, 2013).

A variety of qualitative methods are available. Thematic analysis (TA) was selected as it most complemented the exploratory nature of the research questions by paying attention to the subjective understandings of participants. Other approaches to analysis were considered and discounted. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis was not selected, as the primary task of the analysis was not exploring the use of language in the construction of reality (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was discounted due to its very specific attention to individuals' experience of a particular concept (Willig, 2013). While this is of interest to the current study, only pursuing this method would not have enabled a wider exploration of conceptual understandings of mentoring and its mechanisms of change, and was therefore ruled out.

Participants' understandings and perspectives can be comprehensively explored using TA. The approach draws out recurring features of the data in order to facilitate the development of 'rich descriptions of phenomena and processes' (Harper, 2011, p. 84). The process of TA identifies analyses and reports on patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006); these are also conceptually interpreted to address the research questions. Therefore, TA was elected as it "works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of reality" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

To ensure the identified themes were connected to the data, an inductive, rather than deductive, approach was used as the analysis was not driven by any predetermined frameworks or theories (Patton, 1990). The themes were broadly identified at the latent level (Boyatzis, 1998), to identify underlying assumptions, ideas and conceptualisations from within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Nevertheless, I acknowledge that themes are not developed in an epistemological vacuum and 'researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

2.2.1 Research with Young People

Research has historically been done on, rather than with YP (Darbyshire, MacDougall & Schiller, 2005), particularly for children under 12 (Greig et al.,

2013). However, paradigm shifts in childhood studies (James & Prout, 1997), and new discourses about children's rights (HM Government, 2004; United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, 1989), have highlighted that CYP have the right for their opinion to be heard and acted on in any matters that affect them. Government policy and research now emphasises positioning YP as experts about their own lives, and seeking their participation (see Greig et al., 2013).

Participatory methodologies have been developed to enable YP to make meaningful contributions to research processes (Coad & R. Evans, 2007; R. Evans, 2012). Ideally, the researcher should ensure the study has real relevance and capacity to make an impact for the participants (Lansdowne, 2001). Each researcher needs to make a judgement about what is realistic given legal, ethical, institutional and practical constraints (Davis, 2009). However, there continues to be a limited amount of research about CYPs MH and wellbeing that includes their views, and even fewer that include YP as active researchers.

This research project has been designed to hear and prioritise YP's voices in the data. Through inviting YP to act as consultants, I have attempted to involve YP in the research process at as many levels as feasible within the study's time-frame, resources and practicalities within school settings. Following advice for research with YP under 12 years old (Greig et al., 2013) I will collect data using small focus groups (FGs) in school settings and will present questions in a simple format as well as facilitating productive peer-to-peer interaction for all group members.

2.3 Young People Consultants

I was acutely aware of my responsibility to creatively seek and actively respond to the views of the YP consultants to safeguard their voices in the research process. When considering consultation for the project, I was conscious of the embedded power structures in secondary schools, which may impact the extent to which the YP could truly participate (Hobbs, 2006). I aimed to mindfully manage and reduce the power imbalances where possible through asking

teachers to leave the room, and encouraging YP to address me by my first name, which is not typical in UK school settings.

2.3.1 Consultation Recruitment and Process

I consulted with three mentees who took part in the LTPMP transition project in the same year as the participants. All mentees from one of the secondary schools involved were invited to take part as consultants through information sheets given to them by their teacher (See Appendix D). Three mentees in Y7 and their parent/carers gave informed consent for their involvement (See Appendix E). A meeting lasting 60 minutes was held with the YP consultants at their school. All the YP spoke positively about the project and their mentor; this meant the consultant perspectives may have been skewed due to their similar positive experiences. I anonymously minuted the meeting, and stored this in line with the project data management plan (See Appendix F). Following this the YP were informed about further involvement opportunities. Each consultant was provided with an individual letter to thank them for their participation (See Appendix G).

2.3.2 Consultation Feedback

The consultants commented on the mentee's participant information, consent and demographic data forms that I had drafted. We then broadly discussed what to ask mentee and facilitator participants about the LTPMP process and reviewed the draft FG and interview schedules. The full feedback can be found in Appendix H.

Following the consultation process I reviewed the feedback with my supervisor. Almost all the changes were upheld, with two exceptions. Firstly, I decided to keep the ethnic identity question on the demographic data form, as it is important to know if the research sample is representative of the wider target population for generalisability purposes. This decision was explained to the consultants during the meeting. Secondly, the consultants suggested altering the use of the words 'pros' and 'cons' to 'good' and 'bad' respectively. I felt these words were more emotionally loaded, and could therefore elicit slightly

different answers. In compromise, I initially used 'pros' and 'cons' but prompted with the words 'good' and 'bad' if the YP in the FGs did not appear to understand the question.

2.3.3 Reflections on Consultation

The YP were extremely forthcoming with their views and were reflective about the proposed FG questions. Unfortunately, one of the teachers remained in the room, and occasionally interjected in the conversation, which possibly impacted on the consultants' ability to be honest. The school wanted to continue the programme the following year and therefore the teacher did not want the YP to speak about negative experiences. The YP were later asked if they wanted to co-facilitate the FGs, however the teacher reported they all declined the offer. This was disappointing as the research philosophy had been to include the YP in research about them in a meaningful and proactive way to enable different conversations with the mentee participants.

2.4 Procedure

A timeline of the research process including the planning, recruitment and data collection can be seen in Appendix I.

2.4.1 Collaborations

My supervisor knew the psychiatrist leading the LTPMP. They both agreed to collaborate on two qualitative evaluations of the scheme to supplement an ongoing quantitative review. A research team from another organisation had been commissioned to undertake a review of the intervention delivered by the community organisation across different settings (secondary schools, community groups and the transition project). This was a three year review which was directly related to funding and the roll out of the intervention. They asked the YP (mentors and mentees) to complete standardised measures of emotional wellbeing and to provide brief qualitative feedback, and also used school collected attendance and attainment data (Stapley et al., 2019). As the transition programme was only run in the final year of this longer term

evaluation, the team thought additional qualitative research could meaningfully contribute to the research base. Following a meeting with the team, I decided to explore the perspectives of the mentees and facilitators, and the other clinical psychology trainee researched the mentors' and teachers' experiences. It felt important not to duplicate the work and useful that all stakeholders' perspectives could be considered. I took part in LTPMP team and school progress meetings, and after the data collection I observed three mentoring sessions to better understand the structure; none of the mentees involved in the research were observed.

2.4.2 Recruitment Strategy

The LTPMP assisted with the recruitment of the mentees in three secondary schools in the same London borough, and organised a project liaison teacher. It was hoped that inviting the teachers to support the recruitment process rather than the LTPMP staff approaching the YP directly would reduce any sense of coercion. All mentees that took part in the programme in 2018 (excluding those offered consultant positions) were invited to participate. The staff participants were purposefully sampled from those that ran the mentoring programme. There was no upper limit on participant numbers for any group.

I emailed the named teachers to request the school's involvement in the project. Information sheets were handed out by the teacher to the mentees and their parents/carers (See Appendix J). The school collected the consent forms from the YP (See Appendix K) and I collected them at the time of the FG. The schools also provided information sheets to the parents/carers who were asked to contact me directly if they wished to be involved in the research (See Appendix L). No parents volunteered and therefore this part of the research did not go ahead (See Appendix M for more details).

The staff participants were already known to me at the time of recruitment; therefore I emailed them directly to enquire if they wished to be involved as a participant. They were then provided with an information sheet and consent form (See Appendix N) which they completed and returned prior to the interview.

2.4.3 Inclusion Criteria

2.4.3.1 Mentee participants

YP who had taken part in the transition programme in 2018 and were in Y7 at the time of the research study (no criteria were set around the number of sessions they attended).

2.4.3.2 Staff participants

Staff who had delivered LTPMP transition intervention in both primary and secondary schools. They did not have to be employed by the project directly.

2.4.4 Participant Demographics

2.4.4.1 Mentees

Thirteen out of a possible 17 mentees participated in the study. Seven boys, five girls and one gender fluid YP (as self-defined) participated. Their ages ranged from 11 years 8 months to 12 years 8 months, with the average age being 12 years 3 months. All YP were in Y7 at time of data collection and attended three secondary schools in the same borough (5, 4, 4 participants from each school). Two YP identified themselves as Asian British, two as Black African, one as mixed Black and White British, one as Black British, three as White Other (these have been grouped to protect anonymity), and four as White British. The ethnicities of the participants are broadly proportionate to the borough's population (ONS, 2017). The demographic details collected for individual participants have not been presented to protect their confidentiality as the number of mentees from which the participants could have been drawn was small.

2.4.4.2 Facilitators

Three staff members participated in the study. Two worked for the LTPMP team within the host charity, one in a senior management position and the other as a youth worker. One participant was a mentoring lead in one of the secondary schools (no mentees from this school were included as participants). All participants had been trained to deliver and supervise the mentoring sessions and took part in their delivery in 2018. No other demographic details were

gathered for these participants in order to protect their anonymity due to the small pool of staff they were recruited from.

2.4.5 Data Collection

2.4.5.1 Mentee participants

Data was gathered from three FGs conducted during the school day in the summer term of 2019 (May-June); one group was run in each participating school and there was four or five participants in each FG. The mentee participants had taken part in the mentoring programme between June and November 2018 and had transitioned to secondary school in September 2018. One staff member at each school arranged the time, room facilities and excused participants from their lessons. The teachers did not remain in the room in two of the schools, but remained nearby. In one school the teacher was required to remain in the room. I conducted a risk assessment (See Appendix O) which was followed on each occasion.

Prior to the FG each participant had been provided with an information sheet; the contents of this were reiterated at the start of the FG and ground rules for the group were collaboratively set. Participants were reminded that they could leave at any time, that all personal and identifying data would remain confidential and protected and that the conversation would be audio recorded for transcription purposes. I made it clear that they were not obliged to answer any or all questions. They were then asked if they were happy to continue with the interview to ensure informed consent. Participants then completed a demographic questionnaire (See Appendix P) prior to the group commencing. Participants were asked to provide their ethnic and gender identity. Additional demographic information such as SES was not collected as it would have reduced the anonymity of the participants due to the small number of mentees in the project. The project team did not have a record of referral reasons therefore I was not able to access this information.

The FGs lasted between 35-55 minutes and were based on a semi-structured interview schedule (See Appendix Q). The questions and prompts aimed to be as open and non-directive as possible in order to explore the YP's true

perspectives (Flick, 2009; Willing, 2013). The language used was developmentally appropriate for the age of the participants and I attempted to make space in the group for all participants to contribute if they wished to (Greig et al., 2013).

Following the FG all participants were thanked for their participation and given a debrief sheet with contact numbers for supportive organisations (See Appendix R) as well as my details in case questions arose, or they wished to withdraw their consent to participate. All participants requested a summary of the research findings.

2.4.5.2 Facilitator participants

The staff participant interviews were conducted individually on the telephone. The participants were emailed the information sheet and consent form (See Appendix N), which they returned signed prior to the interview date. The participants were aware that the phone call was being recorded for transcription purposes. They were informed they could end the call at any time, and they had the right to withdraw their consent for the data to be used. To ensure informed consent, I explained that their identifying details would remain protected and confidential, however highlighted that people within their organisation may be able to identify them depending on the information they chose to share during the interview.

The interviews lasted between 35-45 minutes, and followed a semi-structured interview schedule (See Appendix S) which aimed to be as non-leading as possible and enable participants to elaborate on salient aspects of the questions. Following the interview all participants had an opportunity to reflect on the process of taking part and were provided with a debrief sheet including my contact details in case they had questions, or if they wished to withdraw their consent to participate (See Appendix T). All participants requested a summary of the research findings.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

2.5.1 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was granted by the University School of Psychology Research Ethics Subcommittee (See Appendix U). Amendments to the ethics application were approved in June 2019 to include facilitator participants to provide a similar perspective to a parental viewpoint in terms of outcomes for the mentees, as no parents came forward to be interviewed (See Appendix V). A second amendment to the title was agreed in March 2020 (See Appendix W).

2.5.2 Usefulness of the Research

The research study was considered necessary and novel, as there has not been an exploratory evaluation of mentoring for secondary school transition in the UK since 2003. To date, no study has looked in detail at the psychological mechanisms of change in mentoring programmes. The research questions are therefore needed in order to explore experiences of those participating and leading PMPs as they are being widely used. It could be argued that continuing to fund and deliver these interventions without further evidence is unethical (Beauchamp & Childress, 2008). I attempted to answer these questions in the least intrusive and time consuming way for the participants in order to comply with the beneficence and non-maleficence ethical principles for vulnerable groups outlined by Beauchamp and Childress (2008).

2.5.3 Accessible Information

Researchers working with YP have highlighted the importance of paying attention to the language, layout, and inclusion of pictures in information (Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson, 2010). The ability to make an autonomous free choice through proper understanding of all information is also built into the ethical principles for CYP (Beauchamp & Childress, 2008). Therefore, all information provided to the YP was designed to support understanding and the process of gaining informed consent. YP consultants

also provided feedback on all materials and refinements were made on the basis of this (Alderson & Morrow, 2004).

2.5.4 Choice and Informed Consent

Given the age of the mentees, parental consent for participation was required, as well as the YP independently giving or refusing to consent to participate; in line with the guidance on rights of the child (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2002). I ensured both parents/carers and YP understood the implications and nature of the research prior to consenting. Age-appropriate information sheets and consent forms (See Appendix J and K) were given to all YP and their parents/carers which explained the research aims, data collection procedures and data management plan (See Appendix F). Both YP and a parent/carer provided written consent. Staff participants were also given an information sheet which explained the nature of the research and the limits of confidentiality as a result of them working for the project team. Written consent was given by all prior to the interview commencing.

I also had conversations with the lead teachers, emphasising the voluntary nature of the study for the mentees. I was aware that mentees might have worried that teachers would think negatively of them if they did not agree to participate. Therefore, I ensured that the information sheet clearly stated that participation was entirely voluntary and that it did not relate to school in any way. Schools themselves may also have felt pressurised to be involved in the research as all wanted to repeat the intervention with the charity the following year. However, the school had no personal gain from assisting with the recruitment and organisation of the research. Moreover, the mentoring staff delivering the intervention may have felt pressure to participate as the project manager knew they had been asked. The manager explained to them that participation in the research was entirely voluntary and not linked to their employment.

All participants gave verbal consent before the interviews and they were reminded they were able to leave at any point without negative consequences. The contact details for me, my supervisor and university ethics lead were

provided for queries about the research. An age-appropriate debrief form was also provided including information on data withdrawal procedures (See Appendix R and T). No participants requested to withdraw.

2.5.5 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Mentees were asked to provide their age, school, gender and ethnic identity (See Appendix P). All participants were informed that their personal data would be kept confidential and that their responses would remain anonymous. They were all informed that confidentiality would only be broken if I was concerned about safeguarding risks following the interview. Mentee participants were told their teachers and LTPMP staff would not know what they had said individually; however the teachers would know who had taken part as they arranged the FGs and that they might be able to identify them if they shared specific experiences or stories in the interview that staff were already aware of. Confidentially agreements between mentees were decided at the start of each FG. I spoke to all staff participants about other colleagues potentially identifying them in the data due to the small number of staff on the team; however they were happy to continue.

Only I listened to the audio recordings and transcribed all interviews. All identifying information was removed during the transcription process to protect anonymity. Access to the transcriptions was limited to supervisors and examiners. All data was stored securely in line with the approved data management plan (See Appendix F) which follows General Data Protection Regulations (2016).

2.5.6 Dissemination

The findings from this study will be disseminated in an accessible way for the participants, future LTPMP pupils, schools and organisations that run PMPs and that support YP's emotional wellbeing. Some of the mentees expressed a wish to be involved in this process and I will continue to encourage and support their role in this to enable further participation (Greig et al., 2013). I also hope to

submit the study for publication. The findings may also be used by the LTPMP project team in a variety of ways, such as in funding applications and training.

2.6 Transcription

I transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews verbatim using transcription conventions adapted from Banister et al. (2011). As the focus of the research was not on examining speech patterns or rhetorical devices the transcription format was simplified (Jefferson, 2004). The transcripts were checked several times for accuracy; mentees were allocated a code and facilitator's names were replaced with pseudonyms (selected to indicate gender) to ensure anonymity. Appendix X. demonstrates an example of a worked transcript. This process increased my familiarity with the data and began the analysis process (Banister et al., 2011).

2.7 The Process of Data Analysis

I followed the six phase TA procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013). As part of this process my supervisor reviewed and coded one transcript. This enabled a comparison of interpretations, and facilitated discussion about how best to represent the responses of participants and drew my attention to other areas of the transcript.

a) Familiarisation with the data

After transcription I re-read the transcripts to familiarise myself with the data and noted my initial thoughts.

b) Generating initial codes

Following this, the transcripts were examined for pertinent details which were noted in the right margin. I then completed a more detailed systematic analysis of these extracts to produce initial codes; these were noted in the left margin (See Appendix Y for an example). I aimed to establish succinct labels for key aspects of the data during this process.

c) Searching for themes

Next, I looked for connections and patterns between the codes. I used mind maps to facilitate this (See Appendix Z for an example).

I completed separate analyses for the mentees' and facilitators' data to enable their different perspectives to be examined more clearly. Phases one to three were repeated individually for each transcript and the influence of the previous ones was acknowledged to try and ensure an open approach to analysis. I then re-analysed all the codes and grouped them to form broader 'meaningful groups' that formed initial themes. These aimed to capture significant information relating to the research questions, which required a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. I completed this by colour coding each participant and transcript to enable differentiation between them (See Appendix AA for an example). This gave me a view of the whole data and made sure the themes related back to the original data.

d) Reviewing themes

I then reviewed the data within each theme and formed sub-themes and master themes (as seen in Appendix BB). This moved the analysis to a more conceptual level, with thought given to how these themes connected to the research questions.

e) Defining and naming themes

In the final stage of analysis, I defined and named the themes. This process enabled me to ensure the overall story of the data was captured within the named themes.

f) Producing the report

To complete the analysis, I selected extracts to illustrate the themes. I will present and discuss these final themes in the following chapter using an

analytic narrative which aims to describe but also conceptually interpret the data.

2.8 Reflexivity

Within the critical realist position, it is acknowledged the researcher subjectively co-produces data and knowledge (Silverman, 1997); therefore personal reflexivity is a vital aspect of the analytic process. This enables consideration of the researcher's influence on the development of the research, the data collection processes, and the interpretation of these (Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Nightingale & Cromby, 1999; Willig, 2001). I have therefore attempted to maintain a thoughtful, curious self-awareness of the ways in which my identity, experience, values and interests may have influenced the selection of this topic, how I asked about it, and how the data has been interpreted.

I am a White British female in my twenties, undertaking this research in the context of my professional doctoral training in clinical psychology. I was born and raised in the UK, and went through the UK education system, outside of London. I attended a school that had primary and secondary departments within it and therefore did not have to move schools between Y6 and Y7, but did experience increased independence and a larger site in Y7. Therefore, my experience of school transition was different in many ways to the participants of this study and the wider experience of transition in the UK. However, I changed schools four times, and therefore although did not transition between Y6 and Y7 I have considerable experience of moving between schools. This has some parallels to the primary secondary transition, such as learning about new environments and making new friends, but is also different in a number of ways. Importantly I am of a different generation to the YP in this study and did not grow up with many of the challenges they face, such as social media, levels of violent crime and gang membership and a results driven culture in schools.

I have some knowledge of the current UK education system as many of my family and friends are teachers. I have never had the experience of being a mentee, or running a mentoring programme but I am interested in children's MH, particularly prevention strategies and the role of schools in delivering

these. YP having a voice in discussions about education, MH and the wider wellbeing sphere is important to me, and I am enthusiastic about inviting these voices that are often excluded or dismissed.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis will first present the mentees' experience, followed by the perspectives from the facilitator's interviews. These have been organised by themes and sub-themes developed through TA of the data, and are discussed in relation to relevant literature and illustrated with quotations from a range of participants. Although I have presented the themes and sub-themes as distinct, they overlapped and interacted. I acknowledge that my epistemological position and subjective engagement with the data influenced the identification and naming of the themes.

The analysis and discussion aims to respond to the following research questions:

- How do mentees and facilitators describe the mentees' experience of a PM project for school transition from primary to secondary school?
- How do mentees and staff facilitators understand any process of change related to PM for the mentees?

3.1 Mentees' Analysis

An overview of the themes and subthemes identified in the analysis of the FG transcripts can be seen in Figure 2.
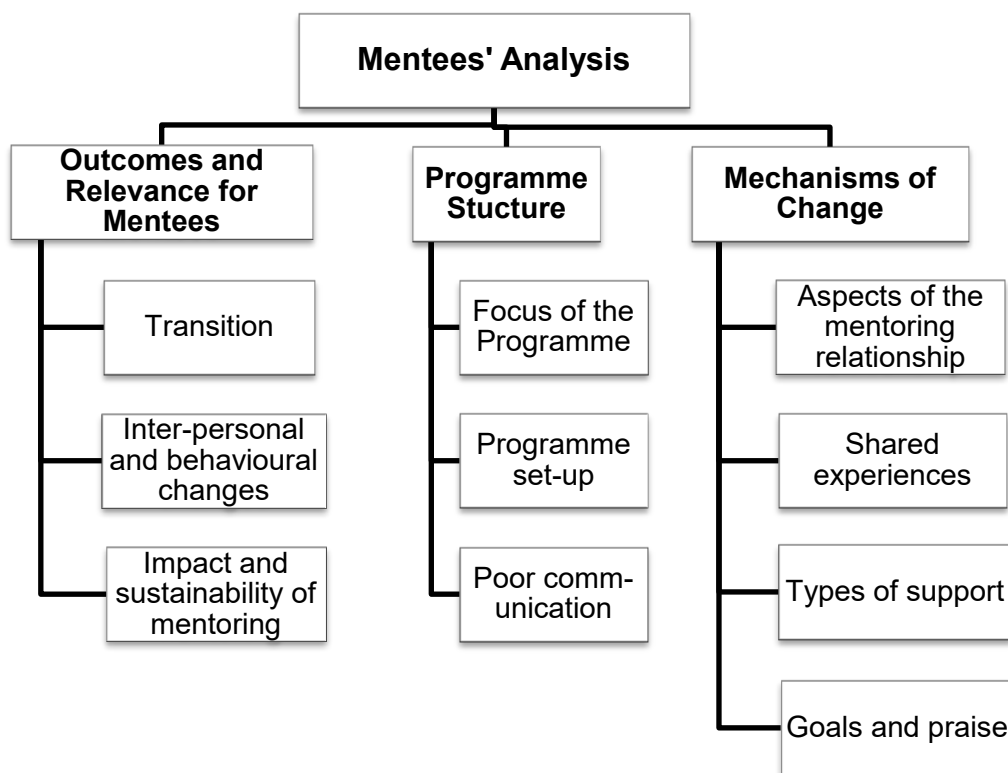
Figure 2. Overview of themes and sub-themes derived from a thematic analysis of the mentee's data.

3.1.1 Theme One: Outcomes and Relevance for Mentees

Almost all the mentees had noticed or experienced change as a result of the programme. These individual outcomes were wide ranging. The mentees in FG3 offered many examples of this, while in FG2 mentees had less to say about outcomes. Only one mentee reported no positive outcomes as a result of the intervention, and said he felt the same after the mentoring, but did not say if he had hoped the result to be different.

> FG3:P4:289
>> No, I am the same boy.

3.1.1.1 Transition
At least half of the mentees said they were not worried about transitioning to secondary school. Many had siblings in the school and already felt prepared, which can help YP cope with the change (Anderson et al., 2000). Of the ones

who did share concerns, their worries focused around friendships, school rules and bullying; these are similar to previous findings on pre-transition worries (Zeedyk et al., 2003). The outcomes the mentees spoke about in relation to transition were also split. Some mentees said the mentoring made no difference to their experience of transition or settling into the school.

FG1:P5:291

The transition day told us about the school. So I think it was about the same.

For other mentees the primary school mentoring helped them prepare and feel less anxious about the move, similar to findings of other studies (Brady et al., 2012; Nelson, 2003). Moreover, they felt reassured by having an older pupil looking out for them, which reflects Simmons and Blyth's (1987) ideas that peer mentors can act as a supportive 'secure base' during the transitional period.

FG3:P2:362

I would have been super worried.

FG3:P3:351

It helped because it made it easier to understand what was happening.

Not all mentees felt they were the most appropriate students to take part in the programme, and were not sure why they had been selected. Most said they would recommend the programme to students who were shy, or find it difficult to make friends. The following example highlights one mentee's perspective who didn't find the intervention helpful.

FG2:P2:358

I think I was just one of the wrong people. I feel it is more for confidence…but I already had that so it was kind of irrelevant.

Her use of the word irrelevant, demonstrates her strong sense that she should not have been asked to participate. Mentees need to have enough difficulty to

benefit from the PMP (DuBois & Karcher, 2013). Therefore, selection needs to be carefully considered in order to maximise outcomes for participants, time invested by the school and cost of the intervention to run; particularly in a climate where there is limited opportunity for preventative wellbeing support in schools (Frith, 2016).

3.1.1.2 Interpersonal and behavioural changes

Many of the mentees, particularly the girls, spoke about the mentoring increasing their confidence and resilience, predominantly talking in class and to peers; an outcome also found in previous studies of successful PMP (Brady et al., 2012; Dearden, 1998; Nelson, 2003; Stapley et al., 2019). The extracts below demonstrate examples of mentees' increased confidence.

> FG3.P2:285
>> I used to be so unconfident, but now I feel kind of confident.

> FG2:P4:443
>> Before I had mentoring I was a little shy, but after coming I was out of my shyness.

> FG1:P5:612
>> It made us more confident and…be more resilient.

This mentee used the word 'resilient' however, many of the mentees did not know what this meant, but said their mentors had used the word. Perhaps this mentee used the word because they thought this was the expected outcome of the programme.

The mentee in the extract below thought speaking to the mentors helped her make friends.

> FG3.P2:15
>> Before I came here I was kind of shy, but because we worked so hard in secondary mentoring I felt confident making friends.

Another mentee profoundly discussed their improved interpersonal skills and ability to build friendships. Other successful PMPs (Dearden, 1998; Karcher, 2005) have also resulted in mentees having higher quality social relationships and increased social skills. Moreover, positive relationships with mentors can generalise, enabling YP to interact with others more effectively (Rhodes, 2005).

> FG3:P3:272
>
> I was nicer to people…I stopped hurting people.

Some mentors also spoke of how mentoring had equipped them with skills to change their behaviour at school; for example being on time to lessons and responding to frustration differently, as the extract below demonstrates. This has been previously noted as a primary outcome of PM (Karcher, 2007).

> FG3:P2:294
>
> When I was having my mentoring I was being calm, like when people annoyed me I just walked away from them.

> FG2:P2:269
>
> I'm always early now. That's the only thing.

Several of the mentees spoke about learning something about themselves through the mentoring process. The mentee referenced below spoke proudly about the change he made since learning about his anger.

> FG3:P3:307
>
> Apparently I used to get angry really easily…I have more patience now because of the mentoring.

3.1.1.3 Impact and sustainability of mentoring

The mentees had a mixed response to whether the mentoring had contributed to the changes they had noticed about themselves. Some recognised the change they had made personally through mentoring, demonstrating increased self-efficacy (Stoltz, 2005).

FG3:P3:274

I changed my behaviour.

Other mentees put the change solely down to their mentor and did not recognise their role in this, appearing not to have internalised the advice or support.

FG1:P1:255

Because he never speaks to me, and I never speak to him…[I only remember the advice] if I speak to him.

The mentees in the extracts below thought the process of mentoring had facilitated a specific outcome for them.

FG3:P1:244

I passed my SATS because of mentoring.

FG1:P4:273

Talking to mentors they gave me confidence to speak to people.

However, a couple of mentees did not think the mentoring had any role in their progress, despite recognising that their mentor had given useful advice.

FG2:P3:194…274

There was stuff that was useful but I didn't really use it. I just found my own way…I think it was because I got used to the school.

All the mentees in FG3 spoke about the reversal of their progress after the mentoring intervention ended. Shorter mentoring relationships have been described as a consequence of school based programmes which can be less likely to produce longer-term effects (Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012). The mentee in the first extract insightfully offers his alternative way of coping with his lack of confidence; behaviour that teachers may see as 'challenging' rather that indicative of underlying difficulties with self-esteem.

FG3:P1:217…240

I was so good when I did it [mentoring], as soon as it stopped I got into trouble…all my confidence and all my things have dropped, so I started being a clown.

FG3:P2:295

I was being calm…but as soon as it [mentoring] stopped I started to go angry easily.

One of these participants strikingly spoke how much progress they felt they could have made if the programme had continued, which perhaps demonstrates the impact it was having for them.

FG3:P1:274

If I had continued, woah, I would have been the best student in school.

3.1.2   Theme Two: Programme Structure

The mentees initially struggled to remember the intervention; however after prompting they were able to discuss both positive and negative aspects of the programme experience.

3.1.2.1 Focus of the programme

The mentees across all three FGs had similar hopes for the mentoring programme that focused around learning about their secondary school and making friends. The mentees' expectations for the sessions broadly matched the session content, illustrated below in this extract where one mentee talks about the emphasis on preparation for secondary school in the sessions.

FG1:P5:160

The first three sessions were talking about the school…about if we were scared about meeting new people, going into secondary school and stuff.

Some mentees spoke about the sessions being focused on their worries, building confidence and resilience, which they were not expecting; however these themes were not universally discussed and some mentees wanted more of this. Mentees in FG2 felt some topics were pushed onto them, and found the mentors asking about their family life intrusive and irritating. Mentors may have jumped into sensitive topics too quickly without establishing a rapport first, perhaps because of lack of training (Karcher, 2007) or due to feeling pressure to talk about certain topics to help the mentees. The mentee below very strongly states this; her use of the word 'invaded' suggests she had not been prepared for these types of conversations.

FG2:P2:188

It was a bit irritating because at home that's where I am, no else is there and they invaded my personal life. That's my comfort zone.

Other mentees in FG2 would have liked the sessions to be less focused on the school and more about them. This supports arguments indicating that the relational aspects of transition and individual wellbeing are also important to attend to (Stelfox & Catts, 2012).

FG2:P1:245

They should have made it more about us rather than the school.

3.1.2.2 Programme set-up

The mentees in all groups spoke about matching, programme length and session content. They found the matching process positive as they had some choice, which previous literature suggests facilitates increased relationship quality (Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Madia & Lutz, 2004). Most of the mentees said they picked their mentor based on who they felt comfortable with.

FG3:P5:395

I felt more comfortable [with him] more than the other mentors. I picked the one I felt more comfortable with.

However, mentees in FG2 discussed the lack of common interests with their mentor and the negative impact of this on their relationship; which replicates findings that perception of similarity contributes to higher quality mentoring relationships (DuBois et al., 2011; Herrera et al., 2000).

Views about the length of the programme were more inconsistent. Most of the mentees in FG1 and FG3 would have liked it to have continued as it felt rushed. School-based PMPs are often criticised for being too short, which can negatively impact the relationship and outcomes (Karcher, 2007; Portwood, Ayers, Kinnison, Warris, & Wise 2005).

FG2:P2:337

It just sort of ended. One minute you were there and then you are not.

FG3:P1:342

I would like it longer, as in more weeks…until year 8.

Other mentees disagreed and felt the programme and sessions were long enough. The mentee in the extract below thought the intervention was sufficient to learn about the new school, which may reflect their understanding of the programme's aim.

FG3:P1:577

Yeah it was enough…it was enough to learn about the school.

Hererra et al. (2011) found that mentoring relationships that lasted less than three months resulted in decline in mentee self-esteem. Although this programme covered five months, they only met 10 times together, and so mentees may have experienced some negative impacts of ending, which perhaps can be linked to the changes not being sustained following the loss of the relationship. Premature endings have a particularly negative impact for 'vulnerable' YP (Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012), of which all the mentees in the programme have been identified as.

When asked about the sessions themselves, the mentees described spending time speaking and playing games with the mentors. This supports the literature suggesting shared activities are critical for relationship development and subsequent outcomes (Rhodes, 2005). Many did not remember what happened in the sessions until prompted by other participants, although most did positively recall the snacks that were provided.

> FG2:P3:64
>> We would eat together and speak together and then we separated off.

Mentees in FG2 particularly felt the sessions became repetitive and boring and would have liked more activities. Other groups thought the sessions could have been more fun.

> FG2:P3:216
>> They repeated the same things over and over again and it was just getting boring.

3.1.2.3 Poor communication

One unanimously negative aspect of the experience was the communication about the programme. The mentees all spoke about not understanding the purpose of the programme before it started. Some thought it was for learning support, others imagined it was to help them work harder before going to secondary school. All groups also commented on not knowing the intervention was continuing into secondary school.

> FG3:P2:55
>> In the very beginning about the mentoring I didn't know what it was about.

> FG3:P2:90
>> That's the first time I heard that word [mentoring].

3.1.3   Theme Three: Mechanisms of Change

Many of the mentees struggled to think about mechanisms within the PMP that enabled any change; and perhaps on reflection this concept is too abstract for an 11-year-old to fully understand.

3.1.3.1 Aspects of the mentoring relationship

The mentees offered some suggestions on what had helped them build a relationship with their mentor, which many referenced as the key benefit of the programme. This has consistently been found as the main tenet of successful PMPs (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005b; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2014). Aspects of the relationship that facilitated change for some mentees are discussed below. However, importantly not all mentees in FG2 described having a relationship with their mentor.

Mentees said that initially they felt shy and a bit intimated by their older mentors. However, with time they began to feel more comfortable which enabled different conversations to happen. Many of the mentees spoke about this in relation to trust, which they referred to as a key mechanism in developing the relationship which contributed to positive outcomes. This mentee was able to quickly build trust because she felt comfortable with her mentor, which enabled a positive outcome for her.

>   FG3:P2:425
>   I trusted my mentor so I told him… [a secret] I just felt
>   comfortable...he was nice.

Mentees who had less positive outcomes from the programme spoke about a lack of trust and thought this was the reason they struggled to connect with their mentor. Some mentees acknowledged their difficulty in trusting anyone, and thought it was not personal to the mentors. Several mentees said they did not know the mentors well enough to share their worries or personal lives. Perhaps the programme could have supported these mentees to utilise the support from their mentor more effectively as suggested by Karcher (2007).

FG2:P2:414

I share things with my best friends and they weren't really them.

FG3:P1:421

If I told them about my family they could say anything to anyone…I don't trust anyone.

Three mentees in FG2 elaborated strongly on this and felt their mentors were 'forcing' and 'persuading' them about the school, which impacted on the usefulness of the intervention for them. Mentors are often selected for their ability to model positive attitudes towards school (DuBois et al., 2011), however these mentees felt this was disingenuous.

FG2:P1:512

They weren't helping us a lot because we knew they weren't spreading the truth.

FG2:P3:243

Instead of forcing us and persuading us, instead of lying, be honest.

Almost all of the mentees gave examples of qualities they had seen in their mentor that enabled them to build a relationship with them; including being nice, sharing things about themselves, and being interested in their mentee by asking questions. This is positive as previous research has found that recruiting mentors with high social interest in mentees predicts more successful outcomes (Karcher, 2007; Karcher & Lindwall, 2003). The mentees described a 'developmental approach' (unstructured, empathetic) to the mentoring relationship, which often provides the best outcomes (LaRose et al. 2010) and mentee satisfaction (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). This enabled the mentees in FG1 and FG3 to feel able to speak to any of the mentors and not just the one they were matched with which may be a benefit of a group programme. Mentees in FG1 said developing friendships with the mentors was the most helpful part of mentoring.

FG1:P1:69

They were nice to everybody because we got a chance to speak to all of them.

FG3:P1:4

If you don't know no one you can go to mentoring and speak to them and get to know them…the first person we got to know is them.

Mentees in FG3 reflected on the importance of their mentor wanting to take part and taking an interest in them which they appreciated. Perceived high commitment levels from mentors positively impacts on outcomes for mentees (Barnetz & Feigin, 2012; Karcher, 2005, 2007; Lakes & Karcher, 2005).

FG3:P1:311

They were so into it. They were not rude or anything. They wanted to take part.

All the groups discussed the prospect of becoming mentors, which almost all wanted to do. Through these conversations they indirectly identified characteristics their mentors displayed that they would like to replicate. They spoke about mentors being people that mentees could count on, who teach people, share their knowledge and help mentees build their confidence. Mentees said mentors want to help people because it feels good. Brady et al., (2012) also found that passion for helping others was a key motivator for mentors.

FG2:P3:491

I like helping people and it feels better if you help people.

For some, their mentor acted as a 'role model'. One particular mentee profoundly recognised the emotional strength of the mentors as a useful and positive quality, which he wanted to emulate. He later reflected that through the mentoring both mentor and mentee can inspire each other. This acknowledgment of making a mutual and valuable contribution to the mentoring relationship can further increase mentees' self-esteem (Brady et al., 2017).

FG3:P1:474

> The mentors are not probably strong physically but they might be strong verbally and mentally.

They explored the prospect of mentors getting something out of the experience themselves. One mentee insightfully hypothesised they would feel proud of themselves, and the process of being a mentor would help them relax and take their mind of their own stresses. He strikingly suggested a symbiotic process where mentors help mentees to relax, but also find it relaxing themselves; an outcome that has been supported by existing literature (Cutrona, 2000; King et al., 2002).

FG2:P4:475

> [Mentees] could be something that takes their mind off that [GCSE's] and relax them. They are there to relax us and we are there to relax them.

3.1.3.2 Shared experiences

The mentees disagreed about the most suitable age for the mentors. Roughly half thought that having older mentors would have improved their experience as they would have more knowledge about the school. Karcher (2007) suggests the most effective PMPs involve mentors who are at least two years older than the mentees, ideally over 14 years old (Akos, 2000).

FG3:P2:435

> I think it should be Y10 because they have more experience in secondary school so they could tell us more.

Others thought Y8's were most suitable because they could remember what it was like to be in Y7, and therefore understand their perspective more. These views line up with the unique opportunities within school-based PMPs where mentees have access to mentors that have had similar experiences to them (Karcher & Herrera, 2007).

Several mentees referenced the usefulness of the mentors having been through similar experiences. They found this supportive and encouraging as their mentor modelled successful outcomes. This highlights the benefits and effectiveness of PS over and above adult-led interventions as peers are more relatable (Cowie, 2009; Dolan & Brady, 2012).The mentee in the extract below found having a shared experience with his mentor motivated him to manage his frustration outside the session, and he appeared to have internalised the message of 'if we can do it you can' in order to complete his exams.

> FG3:P1:247
> They were saying it [SATS] was easy, don't give up. He said you could do it. If we can do it you can.

3.1.3.3 Types of support

The mentees spoke about the mentors providing emotional support and reassurance, as well as practical support and problem solving. Most of the mentees spoke about the helpfulness of their mentor listening and offering support which enabled them to share more difficult experiences. This empathetic support is usually found in more developed PM relationships and can lead to more substantive outcomes (Brady et al., 2017) resulting from the mentee feeling cared for (Cobb, 1976).

> FG3:P1:142
> We did talk about school…I said it was awful. I didn't make friends that's why.

Empathic listening from the mentors, a crucial component of emotional support (Brady et al., 2017), and having mentoring sessions as a space to 'offload' was also referenced in indirect ways during the FGs. One mentee said the sessions helpfully reminded them of therapy. Other mentees spoke about their difficulty regulating emotions and problem-solving after the end of the programme, and missing the emotional support; indicating the emotional space was as an essential part of the mentoring (Podmore et al., 2018). The mentee below gives an example of this.

FG3:P1:294

> When I was having mentoring I was being calm…but as soon as it stopped I started to go angry easily.

All groups felt reassured by their mentor in different ways, but found it helped them feel more settled at school. The mentee below felt reassured after her mentor told her there were not going to be bullies at secondary school, as this was her main worry.

FG2:P3:147

> One of my worries was if there were girls that bullied. They said no, so that was good.

Other mentees were reassured by their mentor being in the school building; knowing they would look out for them. One mentee linked this directly to her increased confidence.

FG1:P5:268

> They told us they would see them at school, like we will see them somewhere around so I felt more confident.

A few mentees said they knew they had been specially selected for the programme by teachers who thought they could benefit from it and were grateful for the opportunity. Rhodes (2005) suggests that knowing mentors have given up time for them increases mentees' self-esteem, as seen in the current study. This may also have contributed to feelings of emotional closeness needed for a successful mentoring relationship (Podmore et al., 2018).

FG1:P5:610

> It was nice to get pulled out when we were in Y6 and speak to people.

The mentees also spoke about their mentors giving them useful, relevant information and advice. They said it gave them ideas of what to do. Cutrona and

Russell (1990) suggest that mentees can accept advice from peers more easily, as it is less likely to feel patronising.

> FG3:P2:468
>> It gives you some top ideas of what to do.

The mentees remembered that the mentors suggested strategies; however they could not remember them. Others recalled being helped to problem solve difficult situations, like the mentee in the quote below. Mentors also helped mentees find out about other support in school, a resource that has been widely found to be key in predicting a successful transition (e.g. Anderson et al., 2000).

> FG3:P2:105
>> If we had any problems and if we did we spoke to them and it would be sorted out.

3.1.3.4 Goals and praise

All the mentees remembered setting, or being set goals by their mentor; although not all knew what they were. Realistic goal setting is important for the relationship between mentor and mentee (Bandura, 1984). It appeared as though different emphasis had been placed on setting goals in each school. Those that had used them found them helpful and relevant, particularly when they met them and reportedly felt proud.

> FG1:P1:258
>> So at some point we achieved it and that was helpful.

Mentees who did not use goals throughout wished they had, as they could see their value. One mentee in FG3 was particularly disappointed that goals were not used regularly as he thought it would have helped him and his mentor remember his aims and highlight his achievements.

FG3:P1:389

> So it would be like [name] have you achieved your tasks, no then we do it next week, keep on going until he does it. Keep bugging him until he does it.

Previous research has suggested that mentors who acknowledge achievements are liked more by their mentee, and can facilitate improved social skills and increased self-esteem (Karcher, 2005). None of the mentees spoke about their mentor offering praise, but one mentee from each FG said their parents noticed and acknowledged their progress.

FG3:P1:292

> My mum did, she said this thing was good…she said you need to learn from it.

3.2 Facilitators' Analysis

An overview of the themes and subthemes generated from the facilitators' transcripts is outlined in Figure 3.
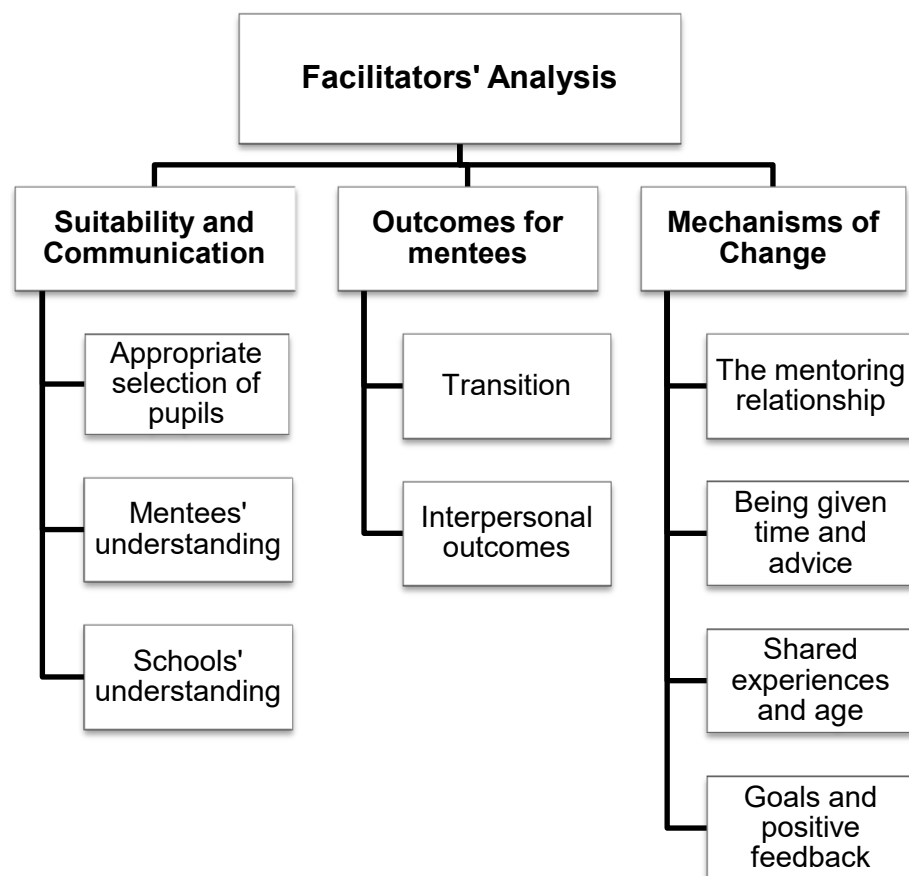
Figure 3. Overview of themes and sub-themes derived from a thematic analysis of the facilitators' data.

3.2.1 Theme One: Suitability and Communication

3.2.1.1 Appropriate selection of pupils

Two facilitators spoke about the importance of mentor selection for the process. Luis described how picking mentors who teachers felt would make good leaders enabled them to form 'professional friendships' with their mentees. His description of them in this way is striking, as it highlights the PS nature of the programme and need for the mentors to be more than friends and offer an organised package of support. He also said that although the mentors deserved a reward, they participated without one, implying they were genuinely interested in helping their mentee. This echo's findings in Brady et al.'s (2012) study, where mentors reported wanting to be involved to help others.

Luis:L94

I think we picked out our mentors really well they were generally people who…would make good leaders, making professional friends, and understand their role…without reward.

For Julie, the importance of correct mentor selection came from experiences of mentors being inappropriately chosen. She felt some mentors had only participated for their CV; this was in contrast to others who she felt took the role more seriously.

Julie:147

At one school it felt like the mentors that were selected weren't the best in terms of their bond with their mentee. It was more…an opportunity…to provide mentoring so I can put it on my CV…so it looks good.

These reports are in line with existing literature that suggests that the recruitment of mentors with a greater social-interest and lower self-interest as motivations predicts more successful outcomes (Karcher, 2007; Karcher & Lindwall, 2003).

All three facilitators spoke about the mentee selection process. Mike clarified that the primary school teachers were given a criteria for the mentees, asking for pupils with medium-level difficulties to be referred; as previous literature has found this has enabled the most positive outcomes (DuBois & Karcher, 2013; Podmore et al., 2018).

Mike:17

We…gave them criteria of the type of person that would…get the most out of the programme, and who potentially wouldn't. A young person who had a social worker or under CYPMHS, or may be very complex and have high needs we wouldn't think they were suitable.

However it was not clear to the facilitators why some mentees had been chosen. Below, Julie describes not immediately seeing a reason why the students were selected.

> Julie:13
>
> I think for some of them it made sense but for others it didn't. For some…there was a bit of a behavioural difficulty…or they had lower confidence, but for others they seemed quite confident and self-assured.

More than this, she felt some students were inappropriate for the scheme, and saw it primarily as a 'get out of class pass'. She described these mentees disrupting the sessions. However, she later reflected that some of these mentees were using their confidence as a coping mechanism and perhaps were appropriate referrals.

> Julie:337
>
> I saw a lot of confident mentees but…when I had time to speak to them you could see that was a cover up…a coping mechanism.

All the facilitators spoke about not knowing the reasons the teachers had referred the students. Luis described the mentees as 'vulnerable' however recognised individual information could have enabled a better understanding of the mentees' needs.

> Luis:10
>
> They didn't necessarily tell us but under the impression that they were vulnerable young students…I think it would have been better if we did.

All of the facilitators thought that the schools should have put more consideration into the referrals. Mike said many of the mentees had already been highlighted as requiring additional support at secondary school; therefore other YP who did not meet thresholds for other support could have benefitted from the programme in line with preventative approaches (Podmore et al., 2018).

Mike:49

The secondary school already had these young people identified that needed additional support…[we asked them to select] young people who might just miss that who aren't on the secondary schools' radar.

3.2.1.3 Mentees' understanding

Another key factor in the discussion was the mentees not understanding the programme. Julie said some mentees were confused about mentoring and thought they were attending as a punishment for their behaviour.

Julie:53

A lot of them don't understand why they are there; some of them think they are there because they have got in trouble or because they get sent out of class.

She reflected on the 'scary' experience of this for the mentees, and the impact on the mentoring relationships and subsequent outcomes. She suggested that a pre-programme session for mentees could be useful, as many of the primary schools do not know enough about it to explain it properly. This follows research that mentees benefit from being taught how to utilise the support of their mentor for the best programme outcomes (Karcher, 2007).

Julie:493

We could have those discussions so that they are more aware of why they have been chosen…cause I think just chucking them in and saying you need to go to mentoring and just leaving it at that is scary…and then the bonds can be built a lot quicker if they know what it's all about.

3.2.1.4 Schools' understanding

Throughout all the conversations the facilitators spoke about challenges in communication between the organisation and schools. Mike reflected that organising the programme in schools can be difficult; this is often reported in school-based projects (Brady et al., 2012). Mike thought this had a negative

impact on the mentees, as the intervention started too late into the term for it to be beneficial for transitioning purposes.

Mike:219

Schools' not knowing their timetable…it falls off some of the teachers' radars over the summer and they are a little bit slow to pick it up.

However, Luis had been approached by the head of year about the mentees' progress. Not only did the teacher think the mentee selection was appropriate, he had also noticed that after mentoring sessions the students were more able to manage and move on from difficult days.

Luis:162

Their head of year…explained that it was a good programme…he could see the progress in them and if something had gone wrong in a day at school that mentoring kind of levelled it out and they were kind of getting back on track.

This acknowledgement of the programme within the wider school is important as the school's 'buy-in' to the scheme and communication with the provider is often related to its level of success (Karcher & Herrera, 2007). Luis spoke about the need for the teachers to learn more about the programme so it can contribute to the schools preventative MH support. This follows previous research that suggests engagement with all stakeholders has a positive impact on the success of the intervention (Larose et al., 2010).

Luis:278

The other teachers should be aware of what it is…and how important the programme is because like I said about how mental health is something that isn't stressed enough in schools.

3.2.2 Theme Two: Outcomes for Mentees

All the facilitators spoke about noticing positive outcomes for the mentees. However, Julie did not see progress for all of them. This is important as improvements are not seen for all mentees in previous PMP studies (e.g. Herrera et al., 2008; Parsons et al., 2008). They felt the outcomes were individualised; Luis summarises this below, and describes the mentees as having 'breakthroughs', which strongly places importance on their achievements.

> Luis:43
>
> They all had their different breakthroughs and they are all getting on in their different ways.

<u>*3.2.2.1 Transition*</u>

Mike was clear that transition-related outcomes were the primary task of the programme. Initially the mentees worried about school size, but later focused on rules and detentions. Julie uses the word 'humongous' to describe the secondary schools in the following extract, which creates a powerful image of a small Y7 student entering the new school, feeling overwhelmed.

> Julie:85
>
> The school is absolutely humongous how am I going to remember how to get around…once they transitioned it was a lot around the rules of the school.

Although the mentees were daunted by the transition, Julie thought the mentoring helped with their understanding of the new school. Previous research indicates that having information about the school can help YP cope with the change (Anderson, 2000). Moreover, the mentoring prevented mentees getting in trouble, which the extract below indicates. This connects to the importance of enabling a better relationship with school to promote a successful transition (Riglin et al., 2013).

Julie:404

If they hadn't had the mentoring I think they would have gone into secondary school and been really confused as to how they would have fit in because it's a daunting experience…so for the ones that had behavioural difficulties I think if they hadn't had the mentoring it may have been a difficult experience for them.

Luis was keen to emphasise that he thought the mentees would have managed the transition without mentoring, but the sessions sped up the settling-in process. This echoes Riglin et al.'s (2013) study that demonstrated that three-quarters of YP were comfortable at school after the first term.

3.2.2.2 Interpersonal outcomes

All participants recognised increased confidence and friendships as other benefits for the mentees. Mike described these as 'softer interpersonal skills'. Other PM research has found similar outcomes (e.g. Brady et al., 2017; Dearden, 1998; Karcher, 2005, 2007).

Mike:152

We see the mentees become more confident, make friends…so some of them softer skills interpersonal skills is what we have seen during the session, but…its really difficult for us, because we only see them for those two hours per week, and it's a different environment to what it usually is.

Here Mike begins to think about how these changes were translated out of the sessions and into the school environment.

Julie gave an example of one mentee feeling more able to access support at school through the programme. Offering an intervention in line with YP's needs can build engagement and subsequently make it easier to ask for help (M. Powell, 1997).

Julie:323

One of the mentees is a lot happier now she understands that she needs to speak to people about what she's going through.

Luis highlighted the importance of the programme in raising YP's awareness of their identity, and realising that they can cope with the challenges of secondary school, which enabled them to go their 'separate ways' with their new friends at the end of the intervention.

Luis:33

She ended up…finding out who she was I guess.

Luis also touched on the importance of the programme acting as a preventative intervention. He described one mentee who he thought benefitted from mentoring because it prevented him from finding school more challenging. This echo's the 'resilience building' motto attached to preventative and PS interventions (Podmore et al., 2018).

Luis:36

[Mentee] would have been a lot more challenging, in the sense that he is excited and nervous…and he wants to fit in, he doesn't seek attention in necessarily in a bad way but he likes to make a lot of jokes.

3.2.3 Theme Three: Mechanisms of Change

3.2.3.1 The mentoring relationship

Several of the facilitators thought the matching process was vital to the success of the mentoring relationship. This is in line with previous research that suggests thoughtful matching leads to better emotionally supportive relationships and therefore more positive outcomes (DuBois et al, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2013).

Mike:89

> We always try to match from the mentee's preference. It is easier if they feel like they have a connection with the mentor.

All three facilitators highlighted the importance of allowing the mentors and mentees time to build their relationship, to get comfortable. They noticed that it took the mentees time to talk about more difficult problems to their mentors. The facilitators linked this to increased trust and closeness over time within the relationship; a finding which is widely seen across the literature (Brady et al., 2012; Dearden, 1998; Nelson, 2003).

Julie:233

> Some towards the end started to open up about their personal lives but this was probably like session 7-8…I think it just took them that bit longer to get used to their mentor.

Mike:68

> Some really good relationships in the end and some really good trusted relationships being built as well.

Luis described the mentoring relationships very strikingly as a 'professional family' in the following extract. This reflects the closeness he thought the YP had formed and the importance of them having each other during this transitional period in their lives, not just with their mentor but with the whole group.

Luis:318

> You can almost see it like a professional family in a sense because last year some of them got into groups and played games and then went back into their…pairs…it was just nice for them to have each other.

They all also reflected on the end of the relationship. Luis felt that informing the mentees that staff and mentors would still be available after the programme was

comforting for them. Luis describes this below. His use of the word 'completely' implies his experience of the endings were positive.

Luis:106

But their mentor did say to them that I'm always here if you need me and we stressed that as well…so…they were completely comfortable and happy.

Julie poignantly talked about the continuity of relationships, describing them as 'bonds'. The strength of the relationships is noted through the double use of the word 'really'.

Julie:468

There was a few bonds that were made at [school] that I really, really noticed so I think those will definitely continue.

3.2.3.2 Being given time and advice

One primary factor that all participants spoke about was the importance of the mentee being given a reliable and regular time to talk. Mike and Julie particularly highlighted the fact that for some mentees this may have been their only opportunity to have someone to speak to individually. Willis (1991) suggests this 'companionship support', which takes little effort from the mentor, can enhance mentees' sense of belonging.

Mike:248

Mentors just taking the time to sit down and listen to the mentees they have got all their attention for a whole hour over the 10 weeks when some of the mentees may not necessarily get that anywhere else, and usually the mentees can see the time the mentor have invested.

Luis reflected on the usefulness of mentees knowing the time was protected for them. There was something helpful for the mentees in being 'held in mind' by their mentor that enabled the relationship and subsequent progress. Raising mentees' awareness that they are cared for (Cobb, 1976) can be a key benefit of PMPs (Brady et al., 2017).

Luis:56

It was just nice to have someone to talk to during school, it wasn't rushed and it was planned, it was a time set aside for them.

Further, all the facilitators commented on the importance of mentors not being teachers or people that the mentees knew. Julie eloquently explains this in the following extract; she highlights a key mechanism of the mentees feeling calmer was having a space to offload. Julie was clear that she felt the relationship was the most impactful change agent in the intervention, which enabled the YP to feel able to say when they were struggling.

Julie:257

I think it was just having someone to talk…a lot of young people don't have the right people to talk to…your friend might not necessarily understand your situation, sometimes you need someone outside of your friendship group to look in…and give you advice based on that. Maybe they don't even have anyone to talk to at all so just having someone that's allocated to you for an hour a week that you can offload to even just to talk about anything whatsoever can be really calming for you.

All three facilitators felt the mentors advice and practical support enabled the mentees to make changes. This ranged from them sharing who to get support from in school, to explanations of rules, to suggesting strategies for specific situations. Previous findings suggest YP may be able to take on the advice of peers as they feel less patronised (Cutrona & Russell, 1990). Julie gave an example of this. She appeared surprised at the capacity of the mentor to offer useful advice to the mentee.

Julie:371

I think the mentee was getting [detentions] for being late, talking back to teachers…so the mentor advised that he packs his bag the night before…to make sure he has everything, and then if he feels like he is going to get in trouble in class, to distance himself away from the people who are going to distract him…I didn't think that they would actually have a conversation like that.

The example demonstrates how the mentor scaffolded and encouraged the younger peer to practise new skills. Vygotsky (1978) believes this peer modelling is the way YP develop new skills. It has been suggested that this process is one of the key mechanisms of change in PMPs (Karcher, 2005).

Throughout the conversation Luis was keen to talk about pastoral support in schools. The mentors reassured their mentees by proactively giving them information about where to get help, which resulted in them feeling supported in school. He reflected that the mentees were surprised about this, and had not expected there to be ongoing support in school. He linked this to them feeling more comfortable in the school environment.

> Luis:244
>
> I think that helped them as well just to think oh ok, cause a few of them that I spoke to did look a bit surprised that you do have something like that here…so it was more comforting for them.

3.2.3.3 Shared experiences and age

All spoke about the usefulness of the mentors and mentees being similar ages and having shared experiences. Luis felt that older students would have forgotten what it was like to transition and be less interested in the younger students.

> Luis:87
>
> 100% it works with them being close, I think if they were older…I don't even think the older students would be able to really help a Y7 because they are too far…into other things.

Mike spoke about the usefulness of the mentors being able to share their recent similar experiences and solutions. This unique opportunity of having peers to share their experiences is a key benefit of PMPs (Brady et al., 2012; Dolan & Brady, 2012).

Mike:180

It's someone within their own age bracket, and they can share their own personal experience, whether that is a mentor telling a mentee…I've had that same issue, worry, concern, so I know how you feel, this is how I dealt with it…it may not work for you but I know what you're going though, they can relate to the issues that the mentees are currently going through.

However, Julie felt Y8 was too young for the mentors, and thought Y9 was a more suitable age. Having at least two years between mentor and mentee is recommended by previous literature (Karcher, 2007).

Julie:526

I think Y9 is the right age. I don't think Y8 is because they are still quite young, they've only just found their feet, so I think it's still too soon for them to be mentoring.

Some of the mentors in Julie's groups were selected because they were high-achieving and well behaved. She felt this was detrimental to the intervention as they had not experienced the same difficulties at school as their mentees. Mentees needing to relate to mentors was discussed in all interviews and in previous literature (Brady et al., 2012; Cowie, 2009).

Julie:175

The mentors…are all A* students so there's not that life experience whereas some of these mentees had struggled in the primary school with teachers, with behaviour, with concentration but they couldn't necessarily relate to the mentors because they had not experienced that.

However, Luis reflected that mentors need to be a good role model in order to support mentees. One of the mentees in his group wanted to be a mentor for the following year, but felt he was still getting into too much trouble, which was insightful of the Y7 pupil. DuBois et al. (2002) found benefits of including mentors who have positive attitudes to school so these can be modelled and adopted by mentees.

Luis:119

One of them thought about it, but then he decided himself maybe the role wasn't for him especially because he does get in a little bit of trouble, he thought he wouldn't be the best role model right now.

3.2.3.4 Goals and positive feedback

All the facilitators spoke about the role of goals in the intervention. Mike principally thought the goals helped mentees reflect on their progress and feel a sense of achievement, which was hard for them to acknowledge themselves. This may be because goals contribute to 'self-esteem support' which results in identity development (Rhodes, 2005).

Mike:161

When we revisit the [goals]…they can see how they are progressing…the mentees do say they have made changes…and they feel different or they have accomplished something.

However, Julie had a mixed opinion on the usefulness of goals in promoting change. The mentors she worked with did not offer much praise and she felt some of the goals that were set were not relevant and impossible to achieve. Interventions need to be developmentally appropriate (Spencer, 2007), and goals should be realistic to enable success (Bandura, 1984).

Julie:283

I think some of them got something from having goals and achieving them, but not all of them, because…some of the goals weren't really relevant.

In terms of positive feedback, Mike and Luis spoke about the importance of mentors in this process. In the following extract Mike describes the mentors being 'tuned into' mentees' changes, which implies they are paying attention and seeking opportunities to praise them.

Mike:170

The mentors really do notice, they do a whole training session on how do you take notice of the changes and what we do is try to get the mentors once they see that change to encourage the mentees to carry on, really praise them on that change. So the mentors are quite tuned into spotting the changes.

Luis also sought external praise for the mentees from their parents. The language he uses in the following extract suggests he thinks it is important for them to build a positive relationship with school.

Luis:181

I used to call some parents…it's better for them to know the progress of their child. It was nice to let them know your child is doing well, or what progress they can make.

4. FURTHER DISCUSSION, EVALUATION AND IMPLICATIONS

The final chapter will return to the intended aims of the research and summarise the key findings with reference to broader existing literature in this area. I will then critically evaluate the study and explore possible directions for future research, before considering its implications for clinical practice and policy.

4.1 Revisiting the Aims of the Research

The aim of this research was twofold; first to examine the experience of the mentees taking part in a PMP for secondary school transition. Secondly, to explore and identify mechanisms in the mentoring process that enabled changes for the mentees. This study was the first UK study (to my knowledge) that has attempted to do this qualitatively in over 17 years (Nelson, 2003). In highlighting the mechanisms of change involved in PM it is hoped the findings can contribute to the research base behind this growing intervention.

The previous chapter addressed the research aims through qualitatively evaluating the data collected from three FGs attended by 13 mentees and individual interviews with three facilitators. The TA produced six overarching and interacting themes, three for each analysis. The similarity of themes in the mentees' and facilitators' analyses was striking; therefore I decided to bring them together in this chapter to answer the research questions. First, I will present a brief summary of the analysis before then answering the two research questions in relation to the literature and broader contexts affecting CYP (Greig et al., 2013).

4.1.1 Brief Summary of the Findings

Twelve out of the thirteen mentees noticed positive outcomes following the LTPMP; including increased confidence, preparation for transition, and interpersonal and relational changes. The facilitators also felt the mentoring sped up the 'settling in' process. There were mixed views on whether the mentoring contributed to the changes. Around half felt it was a combination of

their mentor's advice and their ability to put this into practise; however they noticed a reversal in their progress after the end of the mentoring. Moreover, the facilitators were unsure how the outcomes translated into the school environment. All the participants identified the mentoring relationship as the most important mechanism of change, particularly trust, and being listened to. The facilitators added that having a regular time to talk was useful. Having shared experiences and being a similar age was spoken about positively by the participants. All thought the PS aspect of the programme worked well, especially when the mentors could relate to the difficulties the mentees were experiencing. The participants suggested that the mentees and school staff should be given more information about the programme before it started.

4.1.2 Research Question One

How do mentees and facilitators describe the mentees' experience of a PM project for school transition from primary to secondary school?

Firstly, this study aimed to explore how the mentees and facilitators involved in this PMP describe the mentees' experience of participating. All the participants identified a number of factors they associated with the experience of the programme. These were related to outcomes, particularly for transition to secondary school, the programme structure, and communication about the scheme.

4.1.2.1 Outcomes

The changes that occurred as a result of the PMP were wide reaching. Many participants highlighted that the mentees had increased confidence and sense of self following the programme, and that PM 'sped-up' the settling in process. However, Evangelou et al. (2008) noted the transformative nature of transition on YP's confidence, and Riglin et al. (2013) found 75% of YP felt comfortable and more confident after the first term of Y7. These findings make it difficult to know whether the PMP facilitated these changes, or whether it would have happened anyway. In the current research, the mentees and facilitators implied that confidence equated to settling in. Several participants felt that some mentees were inappropriately selected as they were already confident,

suggesting that YP who are less confident require additional support settling in. A UK government report suggests that low-confidence is linked to low resilience and can lead to a poorer transition (Roberts, 2015). They suggest PS programmes such as this one can build this 'emotional resilience', increase confidence, school behaviour and social skills (Coleman et al., 2017). These findings were mirrored in this research study.

Socio-cultural theories acknowledge the impact of transition on a person's identity, highlighting the relationship between the individual and their social and cultural context (e.g. Zittoun, 2006). Several of the mentees spoke about increased self-awareness as a result of the mentoring. Both the mentees and facilitators gave examples of individualised progress of the participants that captured a shift in identity, for example, taking responsibility for one's behaviour and self-regulating emotions. It has been suggested this change in sense of self is related to increased confidence (Crafter & Maunder, 2012). Interestingly, the mentees who felt they were already confident did not report as much progress. Moreover, the facilitators noticed the impact of social context on the mentees' outcomes and behaviour, and wondered whether any changes were sustained outside the mentoring session. The mentees picked up on this too, stating that much of the progress reversed at the end of the intervention.

4.1.2.2 Programme structure and set up

The mentees discussed the length of the intervention. School based PMPs have been criticised for not providing a long enough 'dosage' and therefore having less impact (Karcher, 2007; Portwood et al., 2005). Yet, this programme specifically aimed to support the transition. The mentees that understood this felt it was long enough to learn about the school. Yet, some wished the programme was longer. However, as neither the current study nor other programmes running for the full academic year (e.g. Brady et al., 2012) have examined longitudinal outcomes, it cannot be determined if longer interventions improve mentees' experience. This makes it difficult to justify funding lengthier interventions, particularly when resources for wellbeing and MH support are scarce (Frith, 2016).

Similarly, services need to make decisions about who can best benefit from interventions. This raises ethical questions about who selects whom for additional support and the impact of being selected or not. The facilitators spoke at length about the LTPMP selection process. The programme asked teachers to select YP who they perceived to be vulnerable across the transition. The current definition being used by the UK government states a vulnerable child is one who has a social worker or an EHCP (DfE, 2020). However, this does not include many of the YP that the LTPMP aimed to support, including those with emotional or self-esteem difficulties and those that have been bullied.

The primary schools referred more YP with behavioural difficulties. This coincides with previous research that suggests teacher help-seeking is higher for children with behavioural compared to emotional difficulties (Loades & Mastroyannopoulou, 2010); perhaps due to the increased visibility and impact of behavioural challenges in the classroom. Both the mentees and facilitators suggested that some YP were inappropriately selected, especially as many of the mentees were already receiving additional support from the secondary schools. This meant those that would have otherwise not been getting any help missed out on this intervention, perhaps undermining the preventative intention of this PMP. The mentees said they thought the programme was beneficial for YP who were shy. While shyness does not meet criteria for any CYPMHS or EHCP support, it is linked to difficulties within school settings (Kalutskaya et al., 2015). Yet, shy children can go unnoticed by teachers (Nyborg, Mjelve, Edwards & Crozier, 2020). Therefore the LTPMP needs to be more specific about their definition of vulnerable to promote a broader range of referrals to capture the spectrum of suitable YP.

All the participants thought having a better understating of the selection process would have improved mentees experience of the programme; as some had never heard the word mentoring and did not know what to expect. Consequentially, some mentees experienced the programme as invasive and did not feel prepared for conversations about their home life. The facilitators suggested having a session dedicated to preparing the mentees for the intervention. Karcher (2007) similarly suggests mentees who are taught how to utilise the support have the best outcomes from PMPs.

4.1.3 Research Question Two

How do mentees and staff facilitators understand any process of change related to PM for the mentees?

When examining the mechanisms through which changes were facilitated, I noticed that these broadly mapped onto Rhodes (2005) model of adult-child mentoring. This suggests that the benefits of mentoring stem from three interrelated processes; enhancing social relationships and emotional wellbeing through empathy, improving cognitive skills through conversation and instruction, and good role modelling to promote positive identity development. The following three sections summarise the aspects of this study that fit into this model, suggesting these findings provide evidence that Rhodes's (2005) model is also true for PM.

4.1.3.1 Peer-support

As previously stated, using PS for wellbeing interventions is increasingly being used in schools (Houlston et al., 2009). The mentees in this study were clear that the peer aspects of the intervention were beneficial. In early adolescence peer relationships accrue greater importance, with YP depending more on peers for support (Berk, 2009), making secondary school transition a salient time to use PS. The facilitators in particular credited the outcomes of the programme to the PS component of the intervention, suggesting YP listen more to peers than adults. Teachers in Brady et al. (2014)'s study and YP themselves (Coleman et al., 2017; Healthy London Partnership, 2019) have reported this, particularly as YP feel peers can understand what it is like to be in their position. This is reflected in the results of the current study. The participants felt having shared experiences and relatability were important in enabling the outcomes for mentees. The mentees noted that if this did not happen they felt the mentors were disingenuous.

The facilitators also thought that mentors who had solely been selected for their ability to be a good role model were less able to relate and offer useful support to the mentees. Appropriate participant selection is reflected as a vital tenet of PS programmes in recent guidelines (Barnes & Munk, 2019). The mentees and

staff had split views on the optimal age of the mentors. Around half of the mentees would have preferred older mentors, in line with previous literature suggesting they should be two years apart (Karcher, 2007). However, others felt the closeness in age provided a unique opportunity for the mentees to offer directly relevant advice. Moreover, several facilitators felt that older students would have forgotten about transition; therefore the recency of the mentor's experiences acted as a mechanism of change.

The findings suggest that mentees recognised and benefitted from the symbiotic process of PM. Although this study did not ask mentors about their participation, previous studies have suggested mentors find the process enjoyable and rewarding (Brady et al., 2012) and benefit from improved communication skills (Podmore et al., 2018). Brady et al. (2017) suggest that mentees noticing the usefulness of participating for mentors can increase their own self-esteem, as they feel they are contributing to the relationship, which might occur less in adult-child support.

4.1.3.2 The mentoring relationship
The mentoring relationship was acknowledged by nearly all participants as the most beneficial aspect of the programme, which replicates the studies identified in the literature review (Brady et al., 2012; Brady et al., 2014, Dearden, 1998; Nelson, 2003). Building trust was spoken about in all interviews, which is often referenced as essential for good mentoring relationships (DuBois et al., 2011; Rhodes, 2005; Spencer, 2006). Moreover, increased time appeared to enable mentees to feel comfortable, leading them to share more personal problems in the final sessions. The participants in one FG did not describe having a relationship with their mentor. These mentees experienced less positive outcomes from the intervention, adding to the evidence that the relationship is a mechanism that drives change.

Almost all the participants felt the mentoring relationship improved the school transition. The relational aspect of this mechanism can be understood using the social learning theory, 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998). The framework suggests that spending time with members of a new community, learning its cultural and social practices can develop group belonging (Wenger, 1998). In

this study, many of the mentees noticed changes which they conceptualised as settling in. This connects to school belonging and connectedness which is often referenced as a key factor in a successful transition (Vaz et al., 2014) and has links to more positive school and life experiences (Evangelou et al., 2008). In order to feel a sense of belonging, people pursue lasting and positive interpersonal relationships (Wegner, 1998). The mentees' and facilitators' narratives indicate that developing friendships was intertwined with a sense of settling into their new schools. The facilitators in particular recognised the importance of the friendships between the groups of mentees and mentors as a whole. Luis captured this in his reference to them as 'professional friends' and a 'professional family', which highlights the benefit of a group based PS intervention. These findings could indicate that it is the peer-relationships that facilitate smoother school transitions.

4.1.3.3 Support and advice

However, both the mentees and facilitators thought the changes were facilitated by more than just time and friendship. The findings demonstrated that having a space to 'offload' with people outside their usual family and peer networks was a vital mechanism behind the outcomes. This type of 'empathetic support' leads to more substantive outcomes but takes time to build (Brady et al., 2017), which perhaps partially explains why some outcomes were not sustained after the intervention. The facilitators reflected that many of the mentees did not have other people they could speak to about problems and that the 'companionship support' (Wills, 1991) the mentors offered by allocating a regular space for them facilitated changes. Cobb (1976) proposes this enhances the mentees sense of belonging through feeling cared for, which is hypothesised to improve their peer and school connectedness (Karcher, 2007; Stoltz, 2005). The mentees felt reassured by their mentor, both by what they said, and by their presence in the new school. This fits with evidence that suggests perceiving older pupils as friendly assists with successful adjustment to secondary school (Evangelou et al., 2008; Hall & DiPerna, 2017).

Interestingly, while the participants in this study thought the mentors offered useful advice and assisted with problem solving, they found it difficult to retrieve examples. This may indicate that this mechanism is less important than the

mentoring relationship. The mentees spoke more about the impact of the advice, for example feeling encouraged and supported. This reflects a broader theme in MH interventions, as research consistently finds it is the therapeutic relationship rather than specific models or therapy techniques that facilitate change (e.g. Karver, De Nadai, Monahan & Shirk, 2018).

The mentees and facilitators spoke about the usefulness of goals and achievement in facilitating changes for mentees. They said goals helped to focus the programme; however some facilitators felt they were not realistic, which is an important aspect of PMPs (Karcher, 2005). Goals that YP set themselves can be the most important measure of change (Law & Jacob, 2015), yet, adhering strictly to the achievement of goals can undermine the 'developmental approach' to mentoring which YP report to prefer (Brady et al., 2017). However, Stallard (2002) suggests that goal setting can empower YP to discover alternative ways of thinking or behaving. Focusing on their goals allows YP to co-create the agenda. This is unusual for YP who usually work towards pre-set objectives outlined by adults (Moss & Petrie, 2002). The mentees in the current study reflected this when they spoke about feeling their mentors were pushing their own agenda about the school onto them. This did not match their goals for participation in the programme and led to poorer outcomes for those mentees.

4.2 Critical Evaluation of the Research

In the following sections I have used the principles outlined by Spencer and Ritchie (2011) to review and critique the study in relation to epistemology, methodology and quality assurance processes.

4.2.1 Credibility

Part of qualitative research is ensuring the plausibility and credibility of its claims (Spencer & Ritchie, 2011). I attempted to ensure my study met this principle in a number of ways. Firstly, I presented the initial research rationale to the YP consultants, who confirmed its appropriateness and relevance.

Secondly, I was able to discuss my interpretations and reflect on alternative perspectives with my supervisor, who is an experienced CYPMHS practitioner. However, due to unexpected school closures it was not possible to gain 'member-validation' (Angen, 2000) from the YP consultants or participants. Thirdly, I presented the initial findings at an education conference and to the LTPMP lead psychiatrist (See Appendix CC). These professionals felt the findings resonated with their experiences, particularly that relationships are central. They liked that YP were involved in the process, but asked about longitudinal outcomes. The facilitator participants have also had the opportunity to comment on the dissemination documents.

When considering credibility I was also mindful that the YP spoke as part of a group. This introduced a social desirability dynamic, and I noticed that YP were cautious about raising negative aspects of the programme. Therefore, I asked specifically about these to permit these perspectives. Moreover, the group setting meant that YP wanted to conform to the 'group leader'. I noticed that the YP who the other children might have perceived as the 'popular' member of the group often spoke first. Following this the other YP tended to agree with what this mentee said about the programme and the experience. This was particularly apparent when the 'group leader' shared a negative view of the intervention, such as in FG2. I encouraged all mentees to speak (Greig, et al., 2013); however this was challenging for some participants. As I heard other narratives or opposing views emerging from other group members I attempted to capture these more fully by asking direct questions to the participant who had raised the point. On some occasions these YP felt able to share their thoughts, but this did not always happen, particularly in the smaller FG. Time permitting, follow-up interviews with some YP would have been beneficial to explore their hidden narratives; however this was not feasible for the schools involved. On reflection, I wonder if incorporating written activities to facilitate discussions could have enabled richer and more balanced conversations (Greig et al., 2013).

4.2.2 Rigour and Transparency

Rigour assesses the strength of the design and transparency of the research process (Yardley, 2000). Subjectivity is assumed within most qualitative research, therefore consistency and reliability can offer difficulties. I have attempted to address this by describing the analytic approach in Chapter Two and utilising verbatim extracts from participants in Chapter Three to ensure a transparent process (See Appendix Z and AA). In addition, I attempted to present quotations from a range of participants in Chapter Three, to demonstrate the variety of language used in different accounts (Willig, 2013). Moreover, I also completed an audit of the themes generated, and my supervisor reviewed and coded one transcript to explore differences and assumptions.

It is also important for me to be to be transparent about the research timing, which was driven by my availability to collect data. This resulted in me asking YP about an intervention that ended more than four months previously. Given their age, this was difficult for them to remember. Therefore, the findings of the study need to be considered within this context.

4.2.3 Contribution

Spencer and Ritchie (2011) posit that contribution refers to the value and relevance of research, in relation to the advancement of theory, policy and practice. These findings are drawn from a small sample from one specific PMP, in one London borough. Though the sample includes more than 75% of the programme's mentees and facilitators, I recognise the limitations in generalising the findings to wider populations, who may have very different experiences and perspectives. Consequently, this research does not aim to represent the experience of mentees participating in similar projects in different contexts; and understands that the findings are limited to the UK context. Yet, by largely focusing on the mechanisms of change within the PM, the current study provides a valuable perspective to a previously limitedly explored area.

4.2.4 Epistemology

Willig (2013) emphasises that an essential component of qualitative research is reflecting on the underpinning epistemological and methodological assumptions. Typically, research within educational settings follows a more realist epistemology viewing change in a more classical input, process, output series (Luke, 2009). This largely ignores alternative explanations of how things come to be and the complex ecologies of schools, and the socio-political and cultural contexts in which they sit (Luke, 2009).

A critical realist position enabled me to consider the material reality of the participants whist also attending to context in their accounts. For example, participants' described the reality of moving schools. This is relevant but needs to be grounded in the context influencing these YP transitioning to secondary school. I was aware and acknowledge the critiques of critical realism that suggest that the analysis can be achieved from a relativist perspective (Edwards, Ashmore & Potter, 1995). As well as arguments suggesting meaning is derived from the researcher's perspective (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007).I have continually reflected on the process in order to address this, to ensure the analytic claims are grounded in participants' descriptions of their opinions and experiences, while also considering the political and social context.

4.2.5 Thematic Analysis

Some mentees found the reflexivity required within the qualitative approach difficult and struggled with open ended questions about their experience, perhaps due to their age, or the delay in data collection. Subsequently, I offered more prompting questions to provide more clarity, which could have influenced the data. This meant interpretations made during the analysis were at a more latent level, so the essence of what the mentees said could be extrapolated from their conversations. In maintaining personal reflexivity within this process and using the mentees' words to illustrate the themes, I hope the quality and accuracy of these interpretations was maintained.

The flexibility of TA allowed me to address material, contextual and construct issues within the themes, fitting with the epistemological position. However, I recognised that TA relies on the accounts from the participants, meaning that aspects of their experience that they did not articulate cannot be analysed. Additionally, I acknowledge the similarity between the research questions and themes. I undertook steps to 'distance' from the data (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, Snelgrove, 2016), but although this enabled a critical re-reading of the analysis, it did not alter my perspective on the labels and arrangement of the themes. I attempted to set aside my prior knowledge of the LTPMP programme and PM, however it is impossible to unknow knowledge once it has been understood (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). In order to ensure the analysis was as unbiased as possible, I completed the literature review 6 months prior. However, as the research topic is very specifically linked to a 'real-life' programme it was difficult to move away from the structures suggested by the research questions.

4.2.6 Challenges within the System

Gaining a contextual understanding is fundamental to research with CYP. Therefore, I was keen to engage parents in the research in order to facilitate a richer understanding of the YP and their lives. However, no parents came forward to be interviewed. This limits the understanding of the usefulness of the PMP as the mentees found it difficult to remember and reflect on the intervention. This may reflect a wider change in communication and engagement with YP's parents in secondary schools compared to primary (Campbell, 2011).

Moreover, arranging the research with the schools posed challenges. Busy school environments and lack of staffing and funding contributes to the difficulty of conducting school-based research more broadly (Greig et al., 2013). The social capital of the psychiatrist leading the programme introducing me to the relevant staff helped in this case. However, staff time pressures impacted on the level of participation from the YP consultants. Teachers were unable to support them to co-facilitate the FGs, which would have been a novel aspect of this study. Involving the consultants in the data collection could have impacted

the results as YP talk to peers and adults differently (Coleman et al., 2017; Healthy London Partnership, 2019). Unfortunately due to time restrictions it was not possible to interview all the stakeholders for this study. However, a complementary research project has taken place interviewing the mentors and teachers involved in the LTPMP intervention.

4.2.7 Demographic Data

To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants as far as possible I only asked the YP participants to provide their ethnic and gender identity. Due to the small number of YP that took part in the programme as mentees each year, I made the decision to further anonymise the participants by presenting demographic information at the group level. The primary use of this data was to ensure that the group had a roughly equal split of genders, and that the ethnic identity of the participants broadly reflected the wider population, to ensure this study was representative of the YP in the local area. The impact of different demographic features was not commented on in the analysis nor discussion as the sample size was too small to make any distinctions within the group in a meaningful way. A larger sample may have afforded the opportunity to build on findings found in the quantitative exploration of this project (Stapley et al., 2019) which suggested YP from black ethnic backgrounds demonstrated larger improvements in self-esteem compared to those of white ethnicity, as measured by the Student Resilience Scale (Sun & Stewart, 2007).

Similarly, additional demographic data could have enhanced the analysis and interpretations of the data collected. A useful of avenue of exploration would have been to examine the links between mentees' experiences and outcomes and the reason they were referred to the programme. The literature for secondary school transition clearly highlights certain groups of YP who have an elevated risk of experiencing a poorer transition based on certain demographic factors, such as parental MH difficulties (DoH & DfE, 2017). Yet, as previously discussed, the referral reasons were not collected by the LPMP team so this was not possible to examine in this study. Moreover, the YP consultants advised against asking YP directly, therefore this data was not collected. Research exploring PMPs has not traditionally explored the impact of

demographic 'risk factors' on the outcomes of the intervention. If such links were found then preventative interventions could be more targeted towards those YP for whom it might be most beneficial.

4.3 Reflective Review

4.3.1 Personal Reflexivity

It is essential for the researcher to engage in reflexivity when undertaking qualitative research, to ensure they are attentive to their impact on the construction of meanings throughout the research process (Willig, 2013). Therefore, I have reflected on my professional and personal context throughout the process to enhance my awareness of the factors influencing my engagement with this data. I am particularly aware that my interpretations are informed by my previous experience of working in schools and CYPMHS settings, and the value I place on preventative interventions. My training experiences include an emphasis on a critical approach to psychology, focusing on power and social constructions. These perspectives will also have influenced my analysis. I was also mindful that my personal experience of moving schools, and conversations with the LTPMP team could have influenced the subsequent analysis. Through continual reflection about my own assumptions and frameworks throughout the process, I hoped to remain aware of these influences. I did this through asking myself where ideas had originated and if I was attending to certain aspects of the data due to my experience or knowledge. I hoped this process would reduce the impact of my assumptions being reflected in the data. However, I acknowledge my role in identifying patterns and themes in the data, selecting those of interest and reporting them (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.3.2 Power

Throughout the research process I aimed to retain a critically reflective position to identify and address power imbalances between myself as a researcher and a professional, and the participants (Harper, 2003). There was an inherent power differential in the relationship with the mentees as within UK society

children have less power than adults. This may have impacted on their perceived freedom to decline participation, and on their contributions in the FGs. Yet, in the FGs the YP made jokes, and led the conversation, which suggests they did not notably feel the power difference. I included YP as research consultants in order give greater power to the YP in shaping the knowledge produced. However, the implicit power differential in the researcher-participant relationship was present through my initiation of the research and invitation of participation (Ringer, 2013). Within the relationships with the facilitators the power differential was more keenly felt, particularly when they asked for my thoughts about aspects of the intervention. Moreover, there was a power issue embedded within the facilitators agreeing to participate. They were loyal to the programme and wanted to positively promote the organisation. I wondered if the questions felt like a personal review of their work, and they therefore did not want to say anything too critical.

4.4 Dissemination of Findings

To ensure the YP's voices were truly able to influence policy and practice, I considered disseminating the findings crucial. Firstly, as mentioned above, I presented the initial findings to over 150 educators at a conference in Ireland. In order to ensure YP, parents, school staff and other professionals involved in MH support in schools can access the findings, I prepared a summary poster and leaflet, as recommended for disseminating research to YP (Van Blerk & Ansell, 2007; See Appendix DD and EE). These documents have been reviewed by a SEND co-ordinator for accessibility, and have been sent to the participants to complete the participation loop (Greig et al., 2013). The LTPMP team also received copies to disseminate to their partner organisations and local schools. The results will be included in their training sessions to education mental health practitioners (EMHPs), who can disseminate the leaflets in the schools in which they work. I also have plans to speak to the LTPMP about my findings. The participants' feedback will be a key element in preparing the study for publication which I aim to do in a timely manner in order to present the research to wider audiences.

4.5 Directions for Further Research

4.5.1 Longitudinal Methodologies

The educators who reviewed the initial findings asked about longer term outcomes for the mentees. Unfortunately due to time, this study could not achieve a longitudinal methodology and to my knowledge no other studies exploring PM for transition have taken this approach. However, this design could answer questions about whether PMPs during the transition prevent longer term outcomes associated with more challenging moves to secondary school. As around half of adult MH difficulties develop by age 14 (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2010), following up with YP about school and relationships at this age could be a good marker of the success of any preventative PM transition intervention. This would be useful in building the PM evidence base, in order to make informed decisions about their long-term usefulness and cost-effectiveness.

4.5.2 Multi-Site Sample

Qualitative research depends greatly on the sample of people involved. Therefore, a replication of this study with mentees involved in the programme in different geographical areas would be beneficial. This would offer a comparison of the experiences of mentees in different environments, such as a more rural area, perhaps where secondary schools are not so large, which has been found to impact transition experiences (Jindal-Snape, Cantali, MacGillivray & Hannah, 2019). An NHS survey found variable rates of MH and behavioural difficulties across the UK with percentages of YP identifying with any 'disorder' varying between 9% in London and 15.5% in the south west (Sadler et al., 2018), which could impact the usefulness or outcomes of PMPs. In other areas, the programme would not be run by its developers which might also offer a useful perspective on the importance of model fidelity and adaptability for different environments.

4.5.3 Valuing School-Based Research

This study demonstrated that schools and services are finding it difficult to resource evaluations of school-based interventions. This has led to a dearth of research in PS interventions, which raises ethical implications for the running of programmes in schools without evaluation or accountability mechanisms in place. Prior to this study there has not been an in-depth look into the aspects of PM that facilitate the positive outcomes that are consistently reported. Traditionally 'gold-standard' evidence relies on randomised control trials (D. Evans, 2003). These are not possible, or even useful with PS interventions, as they are unique to a specific context. Yet, schools offer the opportunity to research 'real-life' effectiveness of interventions, as they are busy environments in which intervention-fidelity is challenging (Greig et al., 2013). Therefore, until the research hierarchy shifts, school-based research will continue to be lost to the 'grey literature' making it difficult for researchers, clinicians and educators to know what works for whom, and what evidence based practice looks like. Consequently, YP are missing out on interventions that could positively impact on their wellbeing. Policy makers in education and health should commission school-based research to support this. It is hoped this study can provide one such real-life example of PM research and strengthen the rationale for the roll-out of PMPs for school transition.

4.5.4 Goal Setting

While goal setting has been demonstrated to benefit other wellbeing interventions with young people (Stallard, 2002), there is little research exploring participant-led goal setting and reviewing for PMPs in school settings. This study revealed the importance the participants placed on goal setting. Both the mentees and facilitators described it as an important process in the intervention, particularly when the goals felt relevant and realistic. Yet, there is little guidance on how goals should be set, and limited research exploring the relationship between goals and intervention outcomes. Neither the two key scoping reviews focused on YP's PMPs (Karcher, 2007; Podmore et al., 2018), nor a recent government evidence review of PS programmes (Day et al., 2020) pay much attention to goal setting. Additional research exploring the impact of

goals on intervention outcomes, and further investigation into the experience of those involved in setting and reviewing goals would usefully enhance the literature base, and positively support the planning of new programmes. This would be particularly beneficial in relation to exploring the barriers to reviewing goals, as this is an area that often receives little attention clinically (Karcher, 2007) and was highlighted in this study as a negative aspect of the intervention experience.

4.6 Implications for Clinical Practice and Policy

4.6.1 Individual Peer Mentoring Programmes

The following recommendations for PMPs in schools have been derived from the findings of this study. These are relevant both to the LTPMP programme and transition support, but may also be useful in the broader context of school PM and PM schemes in other fields.

- There is a need to offer mentees information about the programme and an understanding of why they were selected to participate. This may enable clearer informed consent improving engagement with the intervention.
- The organisation running the intervention should offer clear advice and training to the referrers about suitability of pupils for the scheme. In this case this should follow the preventative ethos of the programme by including YP who would otherwise not receive support from the secondary school.
- It is advantageous if the mentors are able to relate to the specific challenges the mentees are experiencing. In this project, choosing mentors who are confident, high-achieving students might not be the best fit. Moreover, as PS is a symbiotic intervention it is more cost effective to select mentors who might also benefit from participating.
- Offering mentees a choice in the matching system is well received and appears to form the basis of the mentoring relationship being successful.
- The mentoring relationship is thought to be the primary change agent in PMPs; therefore it should be prioritised.

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- Attention should be paid to reviewing goals that are set in the intervention. The mentees did not remember this happening frequently, but felt it would have enhanced the utility of the intervention and drawn attention to their achievements, which reflected positively on their self-confidence.

- A systemic understanding of wellbeing in schools could enhance the 'buy-in' to PMPs and improve outcomes for the YP. This working relationship could be supported through additional staff training about the importance of the intervention from the delivery team.

- Future PMPs should include an evaluation of the mechanism's underpinning any change, rather than solely focusing on evidencing outcomes. This will facilitate better intervention design and delivery, and will enable useful PMPs in other contexts to be developed.

- The literature would benefit from further explorations of the mentoring relationship across different populations and contexts, both within schools and other areas such as adult-adult PMPs.

4.6.2 Mental Health Services

The findings of this study also have wider implications for MH service delivery and clinical psychology more broadly. This intervention stems from a shift in the current government's agenda towards MH support outside the clinic. This model is beginning to force MH practitioners to expand their thinking about MH difficulties from diagnosis to include broader definitions of wellbeing such as self-esteem and promoting preventative interventions (Patel et al., 2018). This study has outlined key benefits of early MH interventions in schools for those pupils who would not typically meet the threshold for support. MH services are recognising the need to run preventative interventions in schools, leading to increased budgets for CYP's MH in schools' teams with the hope this this will reduce the pressure on CYPMHS's which are buckling under the increased rate of referrals (Frith, 2016). However, it is important to note that the MH professionals that are being recruited to work in schools (EMHP's) are on a lower pay band than clinicians in more typical CYPMHS, which may reflect the true value the current system places on preventative work. However, as the findings of this study demonstrate, the introduction of positive MH interventions

in schools can increase awareness of the importance of these approaches for other teachers.

4.6.3 Whole School Approaches to Early Intervention

Schools have the most contact with YP, and therefore have the opportunity to promote wellbeing (NICE, 2009). However, despite the UK government's drive to encourage schools to take a lead on preventative interventions for CYP's MH, there are no robust accountability procedures to ensure access to training and support. The most recent data (2015-2016) revealed that only 32% of UK school inspections made reference to wellbeing (Thorley, 2016).Teachers have reported that increasing workloads and stress get in the way of supporting their pupils' wellbeing, and two-thirds of school staff feel inappropriately trained to identify MH needs (Cowburn & Blow, 2017). In carrying out this research I encountered difficulties with staff not having sufficient time to support YP. This systemic impact of over-worked teachers on the MH of their pupils is beginning to be recognised, and school inspectors can hold head teachers to account for the wellbeing of their staff (Ofsted, 2019). The government approach to having a designated school MH lead was seen in this research. One teacher at each school was involved in the organisation of the intervention. While positive, it gives the impression that wellbeing is a specialist issue, rather than something the whole school community should proactively be involved in. The current analysis revealed the need for more teachers to be involved and trained in the intervention to promote better outcomes for the YP. Evidence suggests that whole school approaches are most effective in promoting wellbeing and good MH (DfE, 2016). This study highlighted the need for all staff to be better supported to recognise the value of MH interventions in order for full system change to occur.

4.6.4 Working Together to Achieve Prevention and Early Intervention

This PM intervention is one example of the UK government's drive for MH support services to be embedded within schools. Their preventative strategy aims to reduce risk factors and promote resilience particularly in the school environment (DfH & DfE, 2017). Due to the amount of contact schools have with

pupils, they can offer a useful place for preventative support, and those at risk can be identified and supported early. However, in order for this to be effective, health and education policy must collaborate at all levels, to ensure fair access and joined up funding strategies. While these statutory services are beginning to integrate, there are challenges within this process. School MH leads are being recruited from their existing staff, who are already overstretched (House of Commons, 2018). Moreover, MH practitioners are often encouraged to roll-out pre-made interventions into schools, and do not have the resources to tailor this to the individual environment, which would offer the best results (Das et al., 2016).

The participants in this study saw more use in targeted rather than universal prevention interventions for school transition. Clinical psychologists have a role in delivering training and consultation to enable school staff to feel more able to identify those who require additional support early so a graduated approach can be adopted. The YP in this study said they preferred support from peers, which schools are more easily able to facilitate. However, while YP can access interventions in a familiar setting, it may increase stigma of help-seeking for some YP (e.g. Gronholm, Nye & Michelson, 2018). In order to reduce this, MH services need to be more present in school settings, and clear and valued whole-school approaches to positive MH need to be prioritised within policy and funding streams.

The aims for programmes such as this one should also be considered more widely within schools and MH services. Several of the mentees in this project spoke about the intervention improving their ability to manage feelings of anger and frustration. In general, PMPs for anger and frustration have not been explored in depth (Day et al., 2020) and this is perhaps a new avenue for research and practise. As part of the quantitative review of the LPMP, the researchers found a small decrease in self-reported conduct problems following the 10-week intervention (Stapley et al., 2019). However this finding was not significantly different and feelings of anger were not measured directly. The YP in this study both noticed changes in their behaviour when they were angry but also reflected they felt calmer within themselves, which is not commented on widely in the literature base. One mentee in this study insightfully commented

on the link between frustration and low confidence for him, and how he thought others perceived his behaviour. As MH and education professionals we know that anger and frustration is often an outward sign of underlying challenges with confidence, mood or anxiety for children (NICE, 2017). The relational aspect of PM for the YP in this programme appeared to have the most impact on their reduction in feelings of anger. This finding tentatively suggests that PMP could be a useful way of supporting YP who find anger difficult to manage. However, additional research is needed to ascertain specific elements of PM that assist in this outcome, and how other mentees would experience a PMP with this aim.

4.6.5 Involving Stakeholders in Design and Delivery

Rather than MH practitioners directly transporting interventions from clinical environments they should work with schools and YP to ensure their relevance to the setting. This study underscores the importance of schools and MH providers jointly investing time and energy into developing preventative projects. Teachers can offer insight into what interventions might be palatable for the YP in their schools, as well as what the staff could practically facilitate. Therefore, MH services should develop, facilitate and evaluate interventions with the whole school community.

Likewise, YP should be involved in in all stages of research about their wellbeing (Ben-Arieh et al., 2001). This study aimed to provide opportunities for mentees to voice their experiences and understandings of the programme, and included consultants in the research planning. However, the limitations of the participation in this project are acknowledged. Future research would benefit from employing more participatory approaches by including YP in co-producing the initial research questions to ensure it is truly meaningful and relevant to them, which will reflect upwards into more meaningful policy. This would benefit the literature base as children's voices are richer than the adults who act on their behalf (Sorin, 2003).

4.7 Concluding Comments

Preventative approaches to CYP's MH, wellbeing and 'building resilience' are slowly gaining popularity (DoH & DfE, 2017). Yet, there remains an absence of research into understanding approaches that work, despite schools continuing to run programmes. This study offers an exploration of the mechanisms driving change in a preventive PMP for transition to secondary school, which is a time of increased stress (McGee et al., 2003) with widespread impacts on YP's lives (e.g. Riglin et al., 2013). All 13 mentees who contributed to the research emphasised the importance of building a trusting, supportive relationship with their mentor as vital to the success of the intervention. The continued relationship across the environmental change enabled a smoother transitional process. The mentees insightfully noticed PM is a symbiotic process, whereby the intervention not only supports the wellbeing of the YP receiving it, but also offers opportunities for growth for those delivering it. This makes PS a financially advantageous method of delivering preventative MH support.

Many of the YP involved would have not otherwise met threshold for emotional support, and instead been lost to their *'humongous'* secondary schools, perhaps requiring much more support later on. This research supports the need to promote positive MH and prevention, rather than responding reactively to MH crises (Frith, 2016). MH professionals need to consider ways in which this approach can be prioritised in a time when government targets for recovery dominate the narratives in MH services. Similarly, our education colleagues must find ways to incorporate wellbeing interventions into schools in a climate of exams results and funding cuts. Facilitating the best possible outcomes for YP is our duty as health and education professionals (NICE, 2009; NHS England, 2016).

I was struck by the impact that a mentoring relationship with an older pupil lasting just 10-sessions had on these YP in terms of their wellbeing, confidence and relationships. While the long term outcomes of this cohort have not been tracked, these factors have a demonstrated association with more positive future outcomes (Cantin & Boivin, 2004; Riglin et al., 2013). Consequently, there should be more opportunities for YP to participate in such interventions. As such, I hope that the findings presented here can be used to ascertain

funding for the expansion of PMPs in UK schools, resulting in wider-reaching interventions to promote wellbeing for YP across this challenging transitional period in their lives. Moreover, I hypothesise that the mechanisms that have transpired in this study as facilitators of change are not unique to this context, and may usefully be applied to PMPs in other settings.

I would like to end with the words of one mentee who insightfully summarised the relational aspect and symbiotic value of the PMP for those that took part.

> "Before I came I was kind of shy, but because we [mentor and mentee] worked so hard in secondary mentoring I felt confident making friends".

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6. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Overview of Key Terminology

Children and Young People: Technically, by law in England, a child is someone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (yet there are exceptions, for example the age of consent and criminal responsibility). Although people under 18 are often referred to as 'young people' (YP), there is no universally agreed definition and the age of youth ranges from 10-25 in different definitions (United Nations Department for economic and social affairs, 2016; World Health Organisation, 2014). In the UK, youth is typically seen to coincide with adolescence, which is characterised by biological, cognitive, social and psychological changes; typically YP experience increased independence and peer-relationships (Carr, 2015).

Emotional Wellbeing: Emotional wellbeing refers to aspects of psychological functioning, such as feelings about self, relationships and MH (Blinn-Pilke, 2007). Given that 'wellbeing' has different connotations for different individuals and communities it should be interpreted in a sociocultural context and considered to be a continuum. Due to the broad definition of wellbeing, it cannot be assumed that studies presenting results of wellbeing are comparing the same construct.

Mental Health: Wellbeing connects closely to MH, which the World Health Organisation (2001) defines as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community. Good MH is integral to overall health, and is more than just the absence of MH disorders (DoH, 2011). It is influenced by a range of socioeconomic, biological and environmental factors. I have used the terms MH difficulty and problem interchangeably; reference to a MH 'disorder' is only used if specifically referred to within the original research.

Resilience: Resilience encompasses the process of developing successful adaptation despite challenging, adverse or threatening circumstances (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990) and is widely used in education, MH and public health settings. An individual's resilience is a lifelong dynamic process involving the interaction of individual, family and community factors (Yates & Masten, 2004). The complex interplay of risk (factors that increase the chance of an undesirable outcome affecting a person), vulnerability (something that makes a person more susceptible to a threat) and protective factors (circumstances that moderate the effects of risk; Newman, 2004) contribute to one's ability to be resilient. This is dependent on contextual factors, therefore wider inequalities in power and resources can be reflected in the unequal development of resilience. However, no child, no matter how 'resilient', will be impervious to the effects of extreme and prolonged risk (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1997). Therefore, it is crucial that 'resilience' it is not utilised in a way that is blaming of the individual.

Primary to Secondary School Transition: In the UK, YP typically transition from primary school (Year [Y] 6) to secondary school (Y7) at age 11. In the United States (USA), children transition from elementary to middle school around age 10, and to high school at age 14 (dependant on state) and in Ireland, YP transition when they are 12 years old. It is the most significant education transition (Stringer & Dunsmuir, 2012). YP must negotiate differences in the size, culture, teaching experiences and social opportunities of secondary school (Zeedyk et al., 2003).

Appendix B: Outline of Literature Review

I began my literature search using the publication databases PubMed, PsycINFO, PsycArticles, IBSS, SCOPUS, Web of Science and ScienceDirect. During the initial review of the literature, in order to identify relevant research for inclusion, I used the following varied combination of terms:

- School Transition

-Transition & Mentoring

- Transition & Peer *

- Secondary Transition

To narrow down the search to the specific topic of non-academic peer mentoring for secondary school transition, the search terms 'peer' AND 'mentor*' AND 'school transition' OR 'primary to secondary school' were used (where * denotes truncated terms). The reference lists from retrieved papers were also manually searched for relevant articles and publications, however this did not highlight any new papers.

The search was limited to publications written about young people aged 10-16 years old, within an unrestricted timeframe. Age limiters were used as the focus of the research was the transition between primary and secondary school within a UK setting which occurs around the age of 11. Therefore studies exploring PM for university transition and to 'high school' in the USA were excluded. Studies that did not mention transition between educational settings were not included. Studies with a solely educational purpose of PM were also excluded as the current study is exploring social and emotional impact of PM. Articles published in a language other than English were also excluded. The parameters of the search lead the review to draw mainly from the literature based on PM in UK schools as these are regarded as more contextually and culturally relevant to the current research.

All study types were included in the review, including: empirical studies, clinical cases, longitudinal studies, and systematic reviews as well as informal reports. The exploration of the literature was conducted in a reflexive framework in which the researcher put aside, as best they could, any preconceptions and

theoretical assumptions regarding PM based on prior knowledge of the project, to enable the possibility of new understandings to emerge from the literature. This bracketing of knowledge (Schutz, 1970; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) is a conscious effort to sit aside judgements about the expected findings of the review.

The figure below illustrates the number of papers included at each stage of the literature review process. The initial search strategy identified 173 papers. After removing duplicated papers, the titles and abstracts where necessary were read to identify studies which broadly fit within the relevant area. Where titles and abstracts did not provide the required information, full papers were accessed and appraised to determine eligibility. It is possible that the review has missed some crucial literature in the search due to the large discrepancies in the terminology in PM and the publication of school based research in the 'grey literature'. However all efforts have been made to avoid this as much as possible.
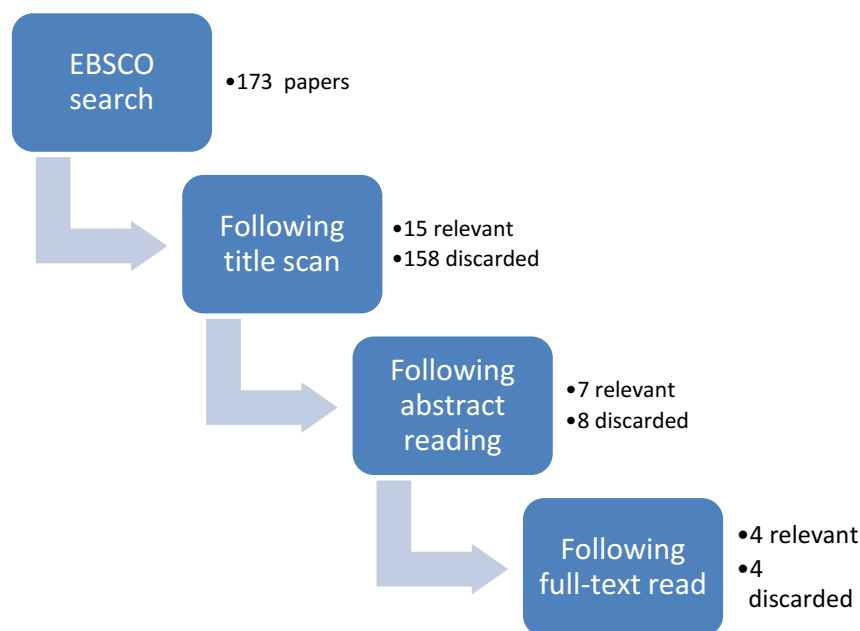
Appendix C: The Peer Mentoring Programme

The London PMP was set up in London to address early MH needs in secondary schools in order to improve resilience, confidence, school attendance and attainment by pairing younger students with older pupils acting as peer-mentors to support them for a short term intervention. The team developed the intervention based on the five principles for peer support (Barnes & Monk, 2019). Initially the project ran in secondary schools offering mentoring sessions to pupils in year 7-9 from older students. In 2018 the team adapted the intervention to support the transition between primary and secondary schools.

The London Transition PMP (LTPMP) pairs mentees in Year 6 with mentors in Year 7 or Year 8. They meet for 10 mentoring sessions, three in primary school and then seven more once the mentee's have transitioned to secondary school. The sessions take place during school time and occur at the end of the summer term in Year 6 and the beginning of the autumn term in Year 7.

The team asks teaching staff in primary schools to select year 6 pupils who they feel could benefit from the programme to be mentees, the programme suggest they should choose young people who they feel might be vulnerable to a poorer school transition. Secondary schools select their own mentors, these are typically pupils who they feel would be good role models and who could manage missing lessons and catching up in their free time. In 2019-2020 21 mentees and mentors took part across four schools. The sessions are run by youth workers and school staff who have received training to be facilitators. The staff member also provides supervision to the mentors following the mentoring sessions. The facilitators receive supervision from a local CYPMHS practitioner.

Prior to the intervention, the peer mentors attend a two day training course covering the following modules: the mentoring role; it's all about relationships; change; taking notice; and taking care. The training is interactive and encourages the mentors to explore key issues and themes through discussion, activities and role play. For example, mentors are asked to role play their first interactions with their mentees using either closed or open questions and note the differences allowing the mentor to learn how their communication style can influence the flow of conversation.

Each session begins and ends with a group activity. The mentoring pairs spend time talking individually for the majority of the session; however the facilitator is there in case they need support. Following the session the facilitator offers group supervision to the mentors to explore the themes of their conversations and act on any safeguarding concerns that arose.

Appendix D: Consultant Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET FOR YOUNG PEOPLE CONSULTANTS

You are being invited to help on a research study as a young person consultant. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

If you decide you want to take part, then you and your parent/carer will need to sign a consent form to give permission.

Who am I?
My name is Sara Lakin. I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist, studying at the University of East London. As part of my studies I am conducting a research project that I would like some help from young people with.

What is the research?
I am conducting research into the transitions project based in X. I would like to ask the young people who took part about their experience of the project, and if they found any parts of it helpful. I might also ask some parents for their thoughts on the project too. After we have designed the project and decided on useful and interesting questions to ask, I will invite other young people that took part to discuss their thoughts with me in small groups.

Why have you been asked to help?
I think that it is important that the young people who took part in the project have the opportunity to be involved in planning and conducting the research project. They know what it is like to have the mentoring, and might know more about what type of important questions to ask, or how young people would like to be asked these questions.
The main tasks that I would like for you to be involved in would be:

- Meeting with me in the next few weeks to discuss the main project aims, and thinking about if it is relevant to your experience of the project
- Helping me write the questions for the group interviews
- Being involved in running the groups if you would like to

There might be other opportunities to be involved as the project develops. I would meet you at school, with their permission.

Why would you want to be a young people's consultant?
Taking part would be a good experience that would help you develop skills that would be useful for your future studies, for example critical thinking and presenting skills.

Your taking part will be safe and confidential.
What you say during our meetings will not be recorded alongside your name, so it will remain confidential. I will make notes of suggestions, and these will be written up in the project, but your name will not be mentioned.

What if you want to decide not to take part?
You are free to change your mind about being involved in this role at any time without needing to say why, and there won't be any consequences for this. But if you do decide leave, I would be able to use anything we have previously discussed to help with the project development.

Contact Details
If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please ask school to get in touch with me and I can answer any questions.

If not, then please return the consent form to school, who will pass it on to me, and we can arrange our first meeting.

Thank you very much for reading this.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Neil Rees, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: X, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

Appendix E: Consultant Consent Form

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Consent to participate in a research study as a Young Person Consultant

Exploring the transition project' in X

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above project and the role I am agreeing to as young person consultant, and have been given a copy to keep. My role in the research project has been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this information. I understand what is involved and what to expect.

I understand that my involvement in this project and any data from this research will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher(s) involved in the study will have access to identifying data.

I fully consent to participate in the study as a peer consultant. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without consequences. I also understand that if I withdraw, the researcher can use my anonymous data as part of the project.

Young Person's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………………………………………………
………………………………………….

Young Person's Signature

………………………………………………
…………………………………………..

Parent/Carer Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………………………………………………
………………………………………….

Parent/Carer's Signature

………………………………………………
…………………………………………..

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………………………………………………
…………………………………………..

Researcher's Signature

………………………………………………
………………………………………………

Date: …………………..…….

Appendix F: Approved Data Management Plan

UEL Data Management Plan: Lite

For PGRs to submit to PhD Manager prior to Examination

This 'lite' DMP is written at project completion stating what will happen to your research data: if you already have a DMP from earlier in your project you do not need to complete this form.

Plans must be sent to researchdata@uel.ac.uk for review.

Research data is defined as information or material captured or created during the course of research, and which underpins, tests, or validates the content of the final research output. It is often empirical or statistical, but also includes material such as drafts, prototypes, and multimedia objects that underpin creative or 'non-traditional' outputs.

Administrative Data		
Researcher	Name: SARA LAKIN	
	Email: X	ORCiD:/
Research title and description	**Making professional friends': Mentees' and facilitators' experiences of a school-based peer mentoring intervention to support primary to secondary school transition** The proposed research aims to explore how young people (aged 11) experienced the school transition peer mentoring project. The aim of the research project is to analyse the experience of mentees involved in this novel program. In particular to identify any psychological mechanisms involved in the mentoring relationship and how these may relate to associated change. The perspectives of staff running the mentoring programme will also be sought, particularly in relation to any process of change they noticed for the mentees' as they worked with them across the transition from primary to secondary school. Focus groups were held with mentees and individual interview with staff running the project as no parents could be recruited.	
Research Duration **dd/mm/yy**	Start date: 11/01/2019	End date: 01/10/2020

Ethics application reference	n/a	
Funder	N/A – Part of professional doctorate	
Date of DMP	First version:01/02/2020	Last update: 13/03/2020 (to reflect amendment of title)
Related Policies	e.g. Research Data Management Policy	
About your Data		

What data have you collected and where is it stored?	**Data type**	**Format**	**Volume**	**Storage location**	**Back up location**
	Anonymised transcripts	.docx	250KB	UEL OneDrive	Personal locked laptop
	Audio recordings of 3 focus groups and 3 individual interviews.	.WAV	1.5GB	UEL one drive (Separate file)	H: Drive
	Consent forms	.pdf	250KB	Paper versions in a locked box at personal address	Electronic back up on H;drive

These have been encrypted

for additional security |

Which data (if any) is personal or sensitive?

	The audio recordings - Audio recordings and
	Anonymised transcriptions will be saved on the researcher's password protected laptop. The laptop is a personal, non-networked, laptop with a password only known to the researcher.
	Audio recordings will be saved in separate folders on the H Drive. Each audio file will be named with the participants' initials and the date of the interview. Each participant will be attributed a participant number, in chronological interview order. Transcription files will be named e.g. "Participant 1".
	Consent forms contain name, gender and ethnicity – Paper versions will be kept in a locked box at personal address. For additional security these will be scanned and uploaded onto the H Drive immediately after the interview which that can only be accessed by the researcher (using the researcher's password). These will be encrypted for additional security, and will be kept separate from the anonymised transcripts.
Documentation and Metadata	
What documentation and metadata accompanies the data?	Participant information sheets, consent forms, list of guide interview questions and debrief sheet. Audio files and transcripts of interviews.
Data Sharing	
Other researchers may be interested in your data: can you share on UEL's repository**?**	Anonymised transcripts will be shared with the research supervisor via UEL email. File names will be participant numbers e.g. Participant 1 or focus group number e.g. focusgroup1 Extracts of transcripts will be provided in the final research and any subsequent publications. Identifiable information will not be included in these extracts. Anonymised transcripts will not be deposited via the UEL repository, as the participants have not given consent for this to happen. I decided not to ask them about this as they are taking about personal issues for a specific purpose and would not be appropriate to use by other people.

Data Retention	
Which data are of long-term value and should be kept?	Audio recordings and electronic copies of consent forms will be kept until the thesis has been examined and passed. The audio recordings will then be erased from the UEL one drive and H-Drive. The consent forms will then be deleted from the H-drive and papers copies will; be destroyed. Transcripts will be erased from the personal laptop once the thesis has been examined and passed. As the researcher will no longer have access to the UEL servers after graduation – before this (but after all other data has been deleted as stated above) a copy of the anonymised transcripts will be saved onto the researchers personal locked laptop for three years in line with GDPR regulations – the transcripts will then be deleted from the UEL server.
Review	**Please send your plan to research data@uel.ac.uk**
Date: 18/02/2020 Date: 13/03/2020	**Reviewer name:** ███████ **Research Data Management Officer**

Appendix G: Consultant Post-Participation Letters

Dear X,

Thank you for giving up your time to meet with me last week. It was really helpful for me to hear all your great ideas about the ▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮ project and the best questions I could ask in my research. It is important for me to find out the things you think I should include in the research as you are an expert on the project because you have completed it.

I really liked what you said about the focus on goals and asking how the mentors helped you set and achieve these. I think that's a great question to ask, and something I didn't know happened during the sessions. I also thought your feedback on the form asking about people's gender and ethnicity was really important, and something I will change.

I will be speaking to your teachers about other ways you might be able to help me out with the project, like running the interviews with me or designing leaflets to tell other people about the results. It will be up to you if you want to be involved.

I hope you found it useful to share your experiences. I am glad you enjoyed the mentoring and found it helpful.

Best Wishes,

X

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Dear X,

Thank you for giving up your time to meet with me last week. It was really helpful for me to hear all your great ideas about the ▊▊▊▊ ▊▊▊▊ project and the best questions I could ask in my research. It is important for me to find out the things you think I should include in the research as you are an expert on the project because you have completed it.

I really liked what you said about making sure there was a question asking about young people's experience of any changes to their confidence. I think that's a great question to ask, and something I hadn't thought about. It was also really helpful for me to learn about the way the mentees were given a choice about their mentor because I didn't know about that before our meeting.

I will be speaking to your teachers about other ways you might be able to help me out with the project, like running the interviews with me or designing leaflets to tell other people about the results. It will be up to you if you want to be involved.

I hope you found it useful to share your experiences. I am glad you enjoyed the mentoring and found it helpful.

Best Wishes,

X

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Dear X,

Thank you for giving up your time to meet with me last week. It was really helpful for me to hear all your great ideas about the ▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮ project and the best questions I could ask in my research. It is important for me to find out the things you think I should include in the research as you are an expert on the project because you have completed it.

I really liked what you said about asking people how the mentoring changed their worries about going to secondary school. Moving schools can be very stressful and it will be important for me to find out what pressures the young people felt in Year 6. I also thought your feedback about making sure it was even more clear on the consent form that the young people say they are happy to take part in the research was really important.

I will be speaking to your teachers about other ways you might be able to help me out with the project, like running the interviews with me or designing leaflets to tell other people about the results. It will be up to you if you want to be involved.

I hope you found it useful to share your experiences. I am glad you enjoyed the mentoring and found it helpful.

Best Wishes,

X

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Appendix H: Consultant Feedback

The following outlines the consultant's feedback on the information sheet, consent form and demographic sheet:

- Needs more explanation of the role of 'trainee clinical psychologist' on the information sheet.
- To add 'are you happy to take part' on the consent form before the signature line.
- To remove the ethnic identity question on the demographic questionnaire. They were unclear why this was necessary to the project.

The following outlines the YP consultant's suggestions for questions:

- What have you learnt?
- What were your hopes for the mentoring?
- How do you feel about school now?
- Did you enjoy it?
- Were you able to select your mentor (did you get one of your choices)?
- Did your mentor cover the school rules?
- Did your mentor set your goals? Were they relevant? Did you meet them?
- Did the mentors help you achieve the goals?
- Did your confidence change?
- Would you recommend it?
- They suggested the removal of the question asking if YP knew why they had been selected for the mentoring, due to it being upsetting for the YP.
- They also were slightly confused about the wording of pros and cons and suggested good and bad instead.

The decision was made to take out the question asking mentees if they knew why they had been selected for the project based on the consultants' feedback as it was acknowledged it may be upsetting for them to answer this, particularly in a group setting. The decision was taken to add in a question about the matching process between the mentee and mentor on the basis of the information provided by the consultants. Prior to this, I did not know there had been a collaborative section

process; adding this question would enable exploration of the beginning of the mentoring relationship. The same was decided about the goal setting process. Other questions were also changed on the basis of the consultants' feedback including adding in descriptors to help the YP understand some questions, such as, 'did your confidence change', 'was there a difference in how you settled into the school', 'did your mentor explain the rules'. There was a discussion about altering the use of the words 'pros' and 'cons' to 'good' and 'bad' respectively, but it was decided that these words were more emotionally loaded, and could therefore elicit slightly different answers, therefore I would initially use 'pros' and 'cons' but prompt with the words 'good' and 'bad' if the YP in the focus groups did not appear to understand the question. The only change the research team did not make that was suggested by the consultants was to remove the ethnic identity question on the demographics form, as this information could be important when analysing the data and making interpretations. This decision was explained to the consultants during the meeting.

Appendix I: Timeline of Research Process

Date	Action
July 2018	First meeting with LTPMP team to discuss research focus.
September 2018	Meeting with LTPMP and Local authority transitions lead of the relevant borough. Attempts to contact one secondary school to recruit YP consultants (no reply).
October 2018	Decision to change secondary school used to recruit consultants. An email was sent to set up meeting about this.
November 2018	Research Proposal Submitted. Meeting with LTPMP clinical team to update on project progress.
January 2019	Ethical approval was received. Meeting with 3 YP consultants.
February 2019	Meeting with supervisor and co-researcher to discuss and amend research plans based on YP consultant feedback. Meeting with LTPMP and other agencies involved to discuss coordination of research projects being undertaken about the LTPMP projects.
March 2019	Meeting with all schools involved in TLTPMP projects in LA.
April 2019	All secondary schools were emailed about recruiting participants.
May 2019	1st focus group (YP). Meeting with supervisor about lack of interest from parents, subsequently made changes to the ethics form and discussed interviewing mentor staff
June 2019	2nd Focus group (YP). Ethical form resubmitted with amendments. Observing mentoring sessions at primary schools. 3rd Focus group (YP)
July 2019	Observing mentoring sessions at primary schools.
August 2019	First individual interview with Staff participant
November 2019	Second individual interview with Staff participant
December 2019	Third individual interview with Staff participant
December – January 2020	Complete analysis
January 2020	Present Initial findings at conference
February – May 2020	Write up the research
May 2020	Send dissemination documents to participants for comments

Appendix J: Mentee Participation Information Sheets

a) For Mentee's

INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Sara and I am a student at the University of East London. As part of my training I am asked to do a research project.

Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. If you would like to take part, I will be the person who talks to you.

If you decide you want to take part, then you and your parent/carer will need to sign a consent form to give permission.

Do you want to help me with my project?

The reason for this letter is to give you information to think about whether you want to take part. This study is being done as part of my Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of East London.

Project Title

An exploration of mentees' and parents' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school.

What's the project about?

I would like to ask the young people who took part in the project about their experience. I'll also be asking some parents about their experience of the project too.

Why do I want to do this project?

I want to hear young people's experience of the project to understand how it has worked for them, and if it might work for other young people.

What would you need to do?

153
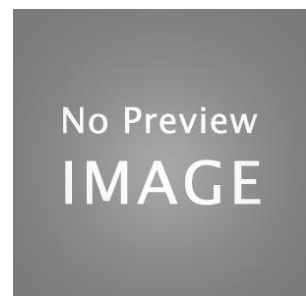
If you agree to take part in this study, I would meet with you and a group of other young people from your school who were also involved in this project. The group discussion will be led by myself and another young person who has taken part in the same project in a different area, so they will not be from your school. We will be asking questions about your experience of the project, but it is up to you how much you say. The group discussion will last between 60-90 minutes and will be at school.

What will I do with the things you tell me?

The group discussions will be recorded on tape so that I can remember what everyone says. This information and any written information will be kept confidential. This means that I won't share your details with anyone outside the project team. Your name and any other details about you will be changed so that anyone who reads the research will not be able to tell who you are. After the study has ended the recordings will be deleted, and in two years all other written information will also be deleted.

Do you have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part in the study and should not feel forced to. You are free to stop or leave at any time without needing to say why, and there won't be any consequences for this. If you agree to take part but change your mind after the group discussion, please contact me by the end of term.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please ask school to get in touch with me and I can answer any questions.

If you are happy to take part then please return the consent forms to your teacher.

Thank you very much for reading this.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Neil Rees, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: X, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

b) For parents/carer for their child's participation

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET FOR THEIR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION

My name is Sara Lakin. I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist, studying at the University of East London.

As part of my studies I am conducting a research project that I would like to include young people in. As the young people involved in the project are under 16, we also need parents/carers to consent if their child wishes to participate.

This information sheet explains the research project and what would be involved if your child decided to take part. If you agree to their participation please sign the attached consent form.

Research Project Title

An exploration of mentees' and parents' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school.

What's the project about?

I would like to ask the young people who took part in the project about their experience of how it was and if they have noticed any changes as a result of taking part. One of my main aims is to think about if this project might be helpful for other young people. I'll also be asking some parents about their experience of the project too.

What would your child need to do?

If you and your child agree that they wish to take part in this study, I would meet with them and a group of other young people from their school who were also mentees in this project. The group discussion will be led by me and another young person who has taken part in the same project in a different area. We will be asking questions about your child's experience of the project, but it is up to them how much they say. The group discussion will last between 60 and 90 minutes and will be at school.

What will I do with the things your child tells me?

The group discussions will be recorded on tape so that I can remember what everyone says. This information and any written information will be kept confidential. This means that I won't share your child's details with anyone outside the project team. Your child's name and any other details about them will be changed so that anyone who reads the research will not be able to identify your child. After the study has ended the recordings will be deleted, and in two years all other written information will also be deleted.

Does your child have to take part?

No, your child not have to take part in the study and should not feel forced to. Your child or you can decide they do not want to participate at any time, and there won't be any consequences for this. If you or your child decide you do not want their information included in the research project after the group discussion has taken place any more, please contact me by the end of term.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please ask school to get in touch with me and I can answer any questions.

If not, then please return the consent form to school, who will pass it on to me.

Thank you very much for reading this.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Neil Rees, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: X, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

Appendix K: Mentee Participation Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in a research study

An exploration of mentees' and parents' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school.

Name of Researcher: Sara Lakin

• Sara would like to talk to me about my experience of the project.
• Sara gave me some information to read. I understand what it said.
• If I want to, I can stop talking to Sara or the group at any time.
• I was able to ask Sara any questions I had.
• Sara and a young person researcher will lead the group discussion.
• Sara will record the group conversation and will type up what people say.
• Sara will not use my real name or personal details in the research so that other people will not know that she is writing about me.
• Only Sara and her supervisor will have access to identifying information (my name, age etc.).
• I understand that my data will be stored on secure system.
• I can say 'no' to taking part.
• Sara and my school will not mind if I say no.
• I understand my decision will not affect any help I get.
• If I say yes I can change my mind without having to say why.
• I know that if I do not want what I say included in the research after the group has happened I need to tell Sara by the end of term.

My Decision (please tick the relevant box):

I agree to take part Sara's research ☐

OR

I do not want to take part in Sara's research ☐

Young Person's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…………………………………………………………………………………….

Young Person's Signature

…………………………………………………………………………………..

Parent/Carer Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………………………………………………………………………………………..

Parent/Carer's Signature

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Researcher's Signature

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Date: ……………………..…….

Appendix L: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Parent Participation

PARENT/CARER PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Sara Lakin. I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist, studying at the University of East London. As part of my studies I am conducting a research project about the programme that I would like to include parents/carers in. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

If you are interested in taking part, or have more questions then please email me at X and we can discuss it more and arrange a time to meet for the interview.

Research Project Title

An exploration of mentees' and parents' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school.

What is the research?

I would like to hear about the experiences of parents'/carers' of young people who took part in the transition project. Particularly how parents/carers found out about their child's involvement in the mentoring scheme, their thoughts about it, and if parents/carers noticed any impacts on their child. One of the project aims is to investigate if the project might work for other young people. I'll also be asking the young people who took part about their experiences too.

What would participation involve?

If you agree to take part in this study I would meet with you either individually or with other parents/carers of young people who were being mentored as part of the project. Some of these parents/carers might have children at the same school as your child, others may not. The individual/group discussion will be led by myself, and will last around 60-90 minutes. I will be asking questions about your experience of the project, but it is up to you how much you say.

Confidentiality arrangements

The discussion will be audio recorded so I can remember what was said. This information and any written information will be kept confidential. This means that I won't share your details with anyone outside the project team. Your name and any other identifying details will be changed so that anyone who reads the research will not be able to tell who you are. The audio recordings will be deleted once the study has ended. Any other anonymised information will be kept for two years after the study ends. If you are taking part in a group discussion we will also agree a confidentially agreement within the group of parents/carers before the discussion begins.

Will anyone know I have taken part?

I will not share with the young people or school which parents/carers have been involved in the research project. Your name will not appear in the final report or any published documentation related to it.

Do you have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part in the study and should not feel forced to. You are free to stop or leave at any time without needing to say why, and there won't be any consequences for this. If you decide to you do not want your information included in the research project after the group discussion has taken place you will need to contact me by 30th July 2019.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please email me at **X**.

If you would like to take part please email me to let me know. Please either attach the consent form included with this letter, or I can email you an electronic copy to complete once I have heard from you.

Thank you very much for reading this.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Neil Rees, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: X, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in a research study (Parents)

An exploration of mentees' and parents' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school.

Name of Researcher: Sara Lakin

• Sara would like to talk to me about my experience of the project.

• Sara gave me some information to read. I understand what it said.

• I can stop talking to Sara or the group at any time

• I was able to ask Sara any questions I had

• Sara will record the conversation and will type up what people say.

• Sara will not use my real name or details in the research, so what I say will be anonymous

• Only Sara and her supervisor will have access to identifying information (e.g. name).

• I understand that my data will be stored on secure system

• I can say 'no' to taking part, and understand there will be no negative consequences

• If I say yes I can change my mind without having to give a reason

• I know that if I do not want my information to be included I need to tell Sara by 30th July 2019

My Decision (please delete as applicable):

I agree to take part Sara's research / I do not want to take part in Sara's research

Participant Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)   **Participant's Signature**

……………………………………………………   ………………………………………………………………….

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……………………………………………………………   **Date:** ………………..........

Appendix M: Decision to Alter Participants

Recruiting parents/carers to be participants in the project proved challenging. To protect confidentiality the schools had to contact them directly and provide them with the information sheet. The parents/carers were requested to contact the researcher directly if they were interested in participating in the project. In order to facilitate better engagement of parents before the final decision was made to alter the participants, the decision was taken to offer individual face-to –face or phone interviews. The appropriate ethics amendments were submitted and approved prior to this offer. However no parents/carers had been in touch by June 2019. Therefore after a meeting with my supervisor and the project team lead an alternative plan was proposed.

The purpose of seeking the views of the parents/carers was to understand any changes noticed by others from before and after the mentoring program. The only other adults involved in the project who would be able to give a perspective on this would be the staff running the mentoring sessions (facilitators).There were four facilitators that could be contacted to request participations. Therefore it was thought this could be an alternative way to explore any changes in the young people following mentoring. An ethics amendment was submitted before purposeful recruitment of these participants.

Appendix N: Facilitators Information Sheet and Consent Form

Information Sheet for Facilitators

STAFF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Sara Lakin. I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist, studying at the University of East London. As part of my studies I am conducting a research project about the programme that I would like to include staff who delivered and worked with the Transition project in X. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

If you are interested in taking part, or have more questions then please email me at X and we can discuss it more and arrange a time to meet to discuss this face to face or arrange a time for a phone call discussion.

Research Project Title

An exploration of mentees', parents' and staff facilitators' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school.

What is the research?

I would like to hear about the experiences of the staff that facilitated and ran the transition project particularly if staff have noticed any impacts on the young people that took part. I'll also be asking the young people who took part and some of their parents about their experiences too.

What would participation involve?

If you agree to take part in this study I would meet with you individually face-to face or on the phone for around 30-60 minutes. I will be asking questions about your experience of the project, but it is up to you how much you say.

Confidentiality arrangements

The discussion will be audio recorded so I can remember what was said. This information and any written information will be kept confidential. This means that I won't share your details with anyone outside the project team. Your name and any other identifying details will be changed so that anyone who reads the research will not be able to tell who you are. The audio recordings will be deleted once the study has ended. Any other anonymised information will be kept for two years after the study ends.

Will anyone know I have taken part?

As there is a limited number of staff involved in running the program, there may be the possibility that the team will be aware of staff that have participated. However I will not share with the team the names or positions of the staff I have spoken to. Your name will not appear in the final report or any published documentation related to it.

Do you have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part in the study and should not feel forced to. You are free to stop or leave at any time without needing to say why, and there won't be any consequences for this. If you decide to you do not want your information included in the research project after the interview has taken place you will need to contact me by 30th July 2019.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please email me at **X**.

If you would like to take part please email me to let me know. Please either attach the consent form included with this letter, or I can email you an electronic copy to complete once I have heard from you.

<div align="center">Thank you very much for reading this.</div>

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Neil Rees School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

<div align="center">**or**</div>

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee X, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

Facilitator's Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in a research study

An exploration of mentees', parents' and staff facilitators' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school.

Name of Researcher: Sara Lakin

• Sara would like to talk to me about my experience of the project.

• Sara gave me some information to read. I understand what it said.

• I can stop talking to Sara at any time during the interview.

• I was able to ask Sara any questions I had.

• Sara will record the conversation and will type up what people say.

• Sara will not use my real name or details in the research, so what I say will be anonymous.

• Only Sara and her supervisor will have access to identifying information (e.g. name).

• I understand that my data will be stored on secure system.

• I can say 'no' to taking part, and understand there will be no negative consequences.

• If I say yes I can change my mind without having to give a reason.

• I know that if I do not want my information to be included I need to tell Sara by 30th July 2019.

My Decision (please delete as applicable):

I agree to take part Sara's research / I do not want to take part in Sara's research

Participant Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)   **Participant's Signature**

…………………………………………………………   ………………………………………………………………….

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……………………………………………………………

Date: …………………......

Appendix O: Risk Assessment

UEL Risk Assessment Form

Name of Assessor:	Sara Lakin	Date of Assessment	07/12/2018
Activity title:	Thesis Research – Focus Groups	Location of activity:	
Signed off by Manager (Print Name)	Neil Rees	Date and time (if applicable)	Unknown at present

Please describe the activity/event in as much detail as possible (include nature of activity, estimated number of participants, etc)
If the activity to be assessed is part of a fieldtrip or event please add an overview of this below:

Focus Group meetings with Young people (aged 11-12) and Parents.

Overview of FIELD TRIP or EVENT:

1) Meeting a group of 6-8 young people on two occasions in participating schools in [redacted] The meeting will last between 60-91 minutes. It will take place either during school hours or after school at 4pm. There will be other staff in the building when I meet with the young people. However, no other staff will be in the room.

2) Meeting a group of 6-8 parents on one occasion. This will take place at one of the participating schools. The time is yet to be decided but will be approximately 17:00-19:00. There will be no other staff in the room during the meeting, however there will be other staff in the building.

Guide to risk ratings:

a) Likelihood of Risk	b) Hazard Severity	c) Risk Rating (a x b = c)
1 = Low (Unlikely)	1 = Slight (Minor / less than 3 days off work)	1-2 = Minor (No further action required)
2 = Moderate (Quite likely)	2= Serious (Over 3 days off work)	3-4 = Medium (May require further control measures)
3 = High (Very likely or certain)	3 = Major (Over 7 days off work, specified injury or death)	6/9 = High (Further control measures essential)

Hazards attached to the activity

Hazards identified	Who is at risk?	Existing Controls	Likelihood	Severity	Residual Risk Rating (Likelihood x Severity)	Additional control measures required (if any)	Final risk rating
Trips/Slips/Falls during the focus groups meeting	Researcher/ Young people/ Parents	Any liquid spillages will be cleared up immediately.	1	1	1	-	1
Allergy reaction to refreshments provided	Young People/ Parents	Young people/parents will be advised to check labels on food products if they have allergies. School staff members will be on site for any emergencies.	1	2	2	-	`1
Young People/ parents becoming upset/ distressed	Young People/ Parents	Participants will be informed they can leave at any point. Debrief will be provided at the end of the meeting	2	1	1	-	1
Participants becoming angry/ aggressive	Researcher/ other participants	Research will be vigilant for signs of aggression/ anger. Researcher will outline appropriate behaviour at the start of the sessions. If any participant displays aggressive behaviour, they will be asked to leave. If they refuse everyone else will be asked to leave the room. School staff will be on site in case of an emergency.	1	1	1	-	1

Review Date
07/12/2019

Appendix P: Demographic Questionnaire for Mentee Participants

Please fill in the questions about you below.

If you do not want to answer any of the questions then you do not have to. Your responses will be anonymous in the final research.

What is your Date of Birth (your Birthday)?

e.g. If my birthday is 5th December and I was born in 2000 my date of birth would be 05/12/2000

[ ] / [ ] / [ ]

What primary school did you attend?

_____

What Secondary school do you currently go to?

_____

How would you describe your gender identity? (please tick)

Male ☐   I don't know yet ☐

Female ☐   Other: ☐

Gender Fluid ☐   (please describe if you would like) _____

Transgender ☐   I'd prefer not to say ☐

How would you describe your ethnic identity? (please tick)

White:
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish ☐
Irish ☐
Any other White background ☐
Please describe: _____

Asian/Asian British:
Indian ☐
Pakistani ☐
Chinese ☐
Bangladeshi ☐
Any other Asian background ☐
Please describe: _____

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups:
White and Black Caribbean ☐
White and Black African ☐
White and Asian ☐
Any other mixed background ☐
Please describe: _____

Black/Black British:
African ☐
Caribbean ☐
Any other Black background ☐
Please describe: _____

Any other Ethnic group, please describe: _____

Appendix Q: Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1.   How was the project introduced to you?

   -   What was explained?

   -   Were you given a choice if you wanted to be involved?

   -   What did you hope to get from the project?

4. What was the process of matching you with a mentor? How did you find it?

   -   Did you get a choice?

   -   Did you get who you wanted?

   -   Did you like that system?

   -   Would you change it?

3.   What was it like when you met your mentor for the first time?

4.   How often did you meet?

5.   Where did you meet?

6.   Did you set goals with your mentor? How were they agreed/ were they helpful?

7.   What was it like having mentoring in primary school?

8.   What about once you got to secondary school?

9.   Did you have any worries about moving to secondary school?

-       If yes, what were the main things you were worried about?

10.   Were the things you were worried about covered in your mentoring sessions in Year 6?

11.   What were the main things you and your mentor spoke about?

12.   What was it like over the summer holidays not having mentoring?

   -   Did you think about it?

   -   Were you able to remember what you had spoken about with your mentor?

   -   Did you know the plan for the project at secondary school?

   -   What was it like meeting with your mentor again?

13. Do you think there have been any changes for yourself because of the mentoring? (e.g. confidence, settling in, behaviour, friendships…)

   - Why?/Why not?

14. What was helpful or unhelpful about the sessions? (- good/ bad things)

15. Did/how did the mentor help you reach your goals/ targets?

16. What do you think happened during the sessions that made a difference? What did the mentor do/things they said/things you did?

17. Do you think the mentoring made a difference to your move from Year 6 to Year 7? - How? /Why not?

18. What was your relationship like with your mentor? Did you feel comfortable talking to them? / What would you have changed? What did you think about their age?

   - Were there clear boundaries about their role/relationship?

   - Were there clear boundaries about the relationship with the other young people with mentors? Did you all talk about your mentoring together?

19. Do you still speak to your mentor?

20. Would you recommend the project for other young people?

   - Why?/why not?

21. Are there things that you think could be different/ improved?

22. Now that the mentoring is finished what have you remembered/ taken away?

23. Would you want to be a mentor? Have you asked for this year?

Appendix R: Mentee Participant Debrief Sheet

Thank you very much for coming to talk with me in the group discussion today. By talking to me you have helped me understand how you experienced the project that you took part in across Year 6 and Year 7.

Sometimes people find talking about things upsetting. It is important that you tell your Mum/Dad/Guardian, a member of staff at school, me or my supervisor if you feel upset so that we can help you.

Contact details for further support:

You may also like to ring Childline by phoning free: 0800 1111 or visit their website: www.childline.org.uk to talk about anything on your mind. Head start also has a good website that covers difficulties you might have at school among many other topics which you might be interested in looking at: https://www.headstart-thechallenge.org/

If you decide to you do not want your information included in the research project now that the group discussion has taken place, please contact me by XXX.

Once I have looked at the group conversations in more depth I will be back in touch with you through school to let you know the results of the research project.

Study Contact Details:

Sara Lakin: X

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study was done or anything you spoke about, please contact myself or my supervisor, Dr Neil Rees, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. (Tel: 0208 223 4475. Email: n.rees@uel.ac.uk).

Or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: X, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

Appendix S: Facilitator Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. Were you aware of the reasons the children were included in the mentoring program?

   - What did you understand/make of that?

2. What did you think about the selection process?

3. Did you think the selections made by teachers were appropriate for the program?

4. How well did you know the young people when they were in primary school/ how much information did you have about them?

5. Did the young people express any concerns about the mentoring? Did you feel they understood the purpose?

6. Did the young people express any worries about moving to secondary school?

7. What are your thoughts about the school transition process? What do you think is helpful/unhelpful/missing during this process?

8. Did you notice any changes in the mentees attitude towards moving to secondary school following the mentoring sessions in Year 6?

9. Was there any preparation for the summer break and mentoring in secondary school during the programme in primary school?

10. How did the mentees and mentors relationships develop?

    - Were there any difficulties? What sense did you make of that?

11. What types of things did the mentors and mentees speak about?

12. What was your experience when the mentoring sessions were taking place?

13. What do you think was helpful/unhelpful/missing about the mentoring sessions?

    - change processes – identifying expectations/ unique outcomes/ deciding on new approaches and trying them out / mapping out existing and potential resources / appreciating strengths and abilities…

14. Do you think there have been any changes for the mentees because of the mentoring?

    - Why/why not?

    - Did they notice any changes in themselves?

    - Did the mentors feedback any changes they had noticed?

15. Did school mention any changes they had noticed about any of the mentees?

16. Do you have any ideas about what could have caused these changes?

17. Is there anything you would have liked to have been different?

Appendix T: Facilitator Participant Debrief Sheet

Thank you very much for taking the time to share your experiences and thoughts about the project. We focused on your thoughts about the mentees experiences and outcomes, as well as ideas you have about why peer mentoring works or doesn't work.

If you found any part of the discussion challenging, have been left feeling worried about the conversation or would like further support please contact myself or my supervisor.

Once I have looked at the group conversations in more depth I will be back in touch with you to let you know the results of the research project. If you would like to withdraw your consent to participate, please let me know by the 31st January 2020.

Study Contact Details:

Sara: [X](X)

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study was done, or anything you spoke about, pleasec contact myself or my supervisor, Dr Neil Rees, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. Or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: X, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

Appendix U: University Ethics Application Form and Review Decision

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE RESEARCH IN CLINICAL, COUNSELLING & EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

SECTION 1. Your details

1. **Your name**: Sara Lakin

2. **Your supervisor's name**: Neil Rees

3. **Title of your programme**: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (ClinPsyD)

4. **Submission date for your BSc/MSc/MA research:** May 2020

5. **Please tick if your application includes a copy of a DBS certificate (see page 3)**

6. **Please tick if your research requires DBS clearance but you are a Prof Doc student and have applied for DBS clearance – or had existing clearance verified – when you registered on your programme (see page 3)**

   ☑

7. **Please tick if you need to submit a DBS certificate with this application but have emailed a copy to Dr Tim Lomas for confidentiality reasons (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee)**X

8. **Please tick to confirm that you have read and understood the <u>British Psychological Society's</u> <u>Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009)</u> and the <u>UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics</u>** (See links on page 1)

☑

<u>SECTION 2. About your research</u>

9. **What your proposed research is about:**

The proposed research aims to explore how young people (aged 11) and their parents experienced the school transition peer mentoring project in the London Borough of X. The project was designed to support pupils in Year 6 identified by their teachers as 'vulnerable' during the transition to secondary school using a peer mentoring scheme. Year 7 mentors from their feeder secondary school met with the mentees for 6 sessions during the summer term of Year 6. They met again for 6 sessions when the mentees began secondary school during the autumn term. This approach aimed to support the mentees practically and relationally during this transitional period. The programme developers hoped the process would offer relational and practical support to enable a positive continuation of the young people's education and social environment.

The aim of the research project is to analyse the experience of mentees' and parents' involved in this novel program. In particular to identify any psychological mechanisms involved in the mentoring relationship and how these may relate to associated change. A critical realist approach has been taken for this research question and therefore it is proposed that the focus group transcripts will be analysed using thematic analysis. Young person consultants will be recruited as peer researchers to co-develop the interview schedule and co-facilitate the mentors' focus group.

Research Questions:

- How do mentees and facilitators describe the mentees' experience of a PM project for school transition from primary to secondary school?
- How do mentees and staff facilitators understand any process of change related to PM for the mentees?

10.Design of the research:

The study will use a qualitative approach, specifically a thematic analysis of focus group dialogue method is proposed to enable the researcher to explore themes of participant experience across groups.

The young people involved are used to meeting in groups as part of the mentoring project therefore a focus group is suggested as this will be a familiar environment for discussion for the mentees. Focus groups will also enable more young people and parents to participate.

The researcher will aim to recruit participants for 2 focus groups for young people and 1 focus group for parents. Each focus group will aim to include 6-8 people and last 60-90 minutes.

Semi structured question schedules will be developed with young people consultants (who themselves used the transition service) relating to the research questions. These will then guide the focus group discussions. Where appropriate, the young people consultants will be asked if they would like to help facilitate the running of these groups.

11. Recruitment and participants (Your sample):

The participants will be purposively sampled from the group of 21 young people that took part in the transition project from January 2018-January 2019 across four schools in X(excluding the two young people consultants). The charity running the project will support recruitment. No other specific characteristics will guide inclusion criteria for the study.

All mentees will receive information about the study and names will be chosen at random if more than 16 express interest. Parents/carers of mentees will be approached through the project records. The same sampling procedure will be used for parents/carers. All participants have provided informed consent to take part in the project; however additional consent will be sought for this research.

12. Measures, materials or equipment:

A demographic questionnaire will be used to collect age, gender identity and ethnic identity of the young people. This is attached. The researcher will also obtain the original reason for referral given by teachers to the project.

The focus groups will use a semi-structured interview schedule. A draft of this is attached. However this may be altered after collaboration with the Young People consultants to ensure relevance. Participants themselves may also suggest other topics.

Other required resources anticipated for the project are:

- Meeting space for 3 focus groups provided by the schools

- Recording equipment for the focus groups provided by the researcher

- Refreshments for participants provided by the researcher

- Supervision for Young people researchers provided by the researcher

- Supervision for the researcher provided by the supervisor

13. If you are using copyrighted/pre-validated questionnaires, tests or other stimuli that you have not written or made yourself, are these questionnaires and tests suitable for the age group of your participants?

NA

14. Outline the data collection procedure involved in your research

Young People Consultants:

- One school involved in the project will assist with recruitment of 2 young people consultants through teacher selection.

- These young people will be provided with information sheets to explain the role, and they and their parent/carer will be required to give informed consent if they wish to take on the role.

- The researcher will meet with the young people consultants to plan the interview schedule for both the mentees and parents focus groups.

- Young people will then assist with facilitating the young people's focus groups where appropriate (dependent on whether peers from their school are attending to maintain confidentiality)

- Young people will be provided with a full debrief following this.

Young People Participants:

- The researcher will make contact with the 4 schools involved to enable recruitment of the young people mentees.

- Young people and their parents will be given an age-appropriate information sheet explaining the research aims and procedures (see attached)

- Once young people and their parent/carer have given written informed consent to participate (see attached) they will be invited to attend a focus group with 6-8 other mentees.

- Focus groups will take place at their school or a local school (if this is the case the school will provide transport).

- Focus groups will last approximately 60-90 minutes.

- Where appropriate a young person researcher will co-facilitate the focus group discussion (not if there are any young people from their school in the group).

- Young people will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire asking for their age, gender identity, ethnic identity and school name.

- Focus group discussions will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis by the researcher within three months.

- Before the group begins the researchers and participants will set confidentiality and ground rules for the session.

- The discussion will follow a semi-structured interview using questions developed by the researcher and Young People consultants. Participants may also raise other topics.

- The participants will be given a debrief sheet, and the opportunity to speak to the researcher if they have questions or queries about the process.

- They will be informed of the last possible date to withdraw their data in case they decide they no longer wish to take part in the study.

Parent/Carer Participants:

- The project will provide information to enable the researcher to contact parents/carers of the mentees about the study.

- Parents/carers will be sent an information sheet to explain the aims and procedure of the study. They will be provided with the researchers contact details if they wish to ask questions.

- Parent/career participants will be required to give written informed consent prior to participation.

- Once consent has been given the parent/carer will be invited to attend a focus group.

- This will be located in a local school (it may or may not be the school their child attends).

- The researcher aims to recruit between 6-8 parents/carers to the group.

- The group will last 60-90 minutes and will be facilitated by the researcher using the semi-structured interview schedule.

- Focus group discussions will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis by the researcher within three months.

- Before the group begins the researchers and participants will set confidentiality and ground rules for the session.

- The discussion will follow a semi-structured interview using questions developed by the researcher and Young people consultants. Participants may also raise other topics.

- The participants will be given a debrief sheet, and the opportunity to speak to the researcher if they have questions or queries about the process.

- They will be informed of the last possible date to withdraw their data in case they decide they no longer wish to take part in the study.

SECTION 3. Ethical considerations

15. Fully informing participants about the research (and parents/guardians if necessary):

All participants will be provided with an age-appropriate information sheet explaining the research aims and procedure, including data management plan. Parents will be given a separate information sheet explaining their child's participation. Before the information sheet and consent form are given to participants the young people consultants will approve them to ensure they are age-appropriate. Contact details for the researcher, supervisor and UEL ethics lead will be provided for queries or concerns about the research

16. Obtaining fully informed consent from participants (and from parents/guardians if necessary):

Written informed consent will be given by all participants prior to participation and parental consent will be required for mentees. Verbal consent will be sought before the focus group and participants will be reminded they can leave at any point without any negative consequences. Contact details for the researcher, supervisor and UEL ethics lead will be provided for queries or concerns about the research. These consent forms have will also be approved by the young people consultants before they are used to ensure they are suitably understood by the target age group.

17. Engaging in deception, if relevant:

The proposed research involves no deception.

18. Right of withdrawal:

Participants will be advised of their right to withdraw from the research study at any time without any disadvantage to them and without being obliged to give any reason. They will be assured that withdrawal will not affect their relationship with school or the team. This will be made clear to participants on the information sheet and consent form. Withdrawing from the project would include removing the individual's direct quotes from the focus group transcript where possible. Themes may have to be indicated if it is vital for the transcript to make sense. All participants will be given a final date on which they need to let the research know they want to withdraw. After this it will not be possible to remove data due to anonymization and data analysis.

19. Will the data be gathered anonymously?

  NO

20. If NO what steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of participants?

The researcher will use participant's names and contact details for contacting them about the study. Once consent has been given participants will be allocated a number and all information will then use this. This data will be anonymised and stored securely. The researcher will keep a record of the participant name and allocated ID until the date by which participants have to express internet to withdraw (around 3 weeks after data collection) to their data to ensure withdrawal is possible. After

this date this list will be deleted. Demographic data will only be included in the report if it is non-identifying. Demographic data will be destroyed once the analysis of the data has taken place.

Focus group recordings will only be kept until they are transcribed. The transcript produced by the researcher will be anonymised through removing names and any other identifying data and will only be accessed by the researcher and supervisors. The recording and transcript will be encrypted and stored as password-protected files and will be deleted two years after the research project ends. The final report and any subsequent dissemination will maintain this anonymity; no identifying data will be included in quotations or analysis.

Participants will be made aware of these confidentiality procedures before consenting to participate and will be informed that confidentiality may be broken if risk of harm to self or others is identified. The researcher will agree a group confidentiality contract before each focus group with participants. YP researchers will not co-facilitate focus groups with peers from their school to ensure confidentiality.

21. Will participants be paid or reimbursed.   NO

SECTION 4. Other permissions and ethical clearances

22. Research involving the NHS in England

Is HRA approval for research involving the NHS required?   NO

Will the research involve NHS employees who will not be directly recruited through the NHS and where data from NHS employees will not be collected on NHS premises?
                                                                                NO

If you work for an NHS Trust and plan to recruit colleagues from the Trust will permission from an appropriate member of staff at the Trust be sought and is a copy of this permission (can be an email from the Trust) attached to this application?

                                                                                N/A

23. Permission(s) from an external institution/organisation (e.g. a school, charity, workplace, local authority, care home etc.)?

Is permission from an external institution/organisation/workplace required? YES

If YES please give the name and address of the institution/organisation/workplace:

 (email to demonstrate this collaboration is attached).

In some cases you may be required to have formal ethical clearance from the external institution or organisation or workplace too.

24. Is ethical clearance required from any other ethics committee?

NO

SECTION 5. Risk Assessment

25. Protection of participants:

There are no potential hazards or risks of injury or accident to participants. Participants may become upset if they talk about topics that are distressing or emotional. The researcher will look out for any signs that someone is becoming upset or distressed, and ask the participant what they would like to stay. The researcher will inform the YP at the start of the session that if they have concerns about their safety or if they become distressed during the session the researcher will need to inform their teacher/parent/carer. The researcher will provide a debrief sheet for all participants which will have details for organisations that can offer support.

26. Protection of the researcher:

There are no specific risks to the researcher. Interviews will be conducted at Secondary schools in X known to the team and the Clinical Supervisor will be aware of the times of interviews. School staff will also be onsite during the interviews. Supervision will be available if the interviews evoke an emotional response for the researcher. Risk protocols will be in place to protect the researcher, and in case a participant raises a concern related to risk.

27. Debriefing participants:

Participants will be given time at the end of the interview to ask any questions. There is no deception involved in the study. Participants will be reminded of what will happen to the data and asked if they are still happy to take part in the study. All this information will also be outlined on the debrief sheet. The participants will be sign-posted to other organisations for additional support if the interviews evoke an emotional response. The young people consultants will be offered debrief interviews after the focus groups.

28. Other: NO

29. Will your research involve working with children or vulnerable adults?*

YES

If YES have you obtained and attached a DBS certificate?   YES

If your research involves young people under 16 years of age and young people of limited competence will parental/guardian consent be obtained.

YES

If NO please give reasons. (Note that parental consent is always required for participants who are 16 years of age and younger)

29 Will you be collecting data overseas?   NO

SECTION 6. Declarations

Declaration by student:

I confirm that I have discussed the ethics and feasibility of this research proposal with my supervisor.

Student's name: Sara Lakin

Student's number: u1725793   Date: 11/01/2019

Supervisor's declaration of support is given upon their electronic submission of the application

<u>Ethics Review Decision</u>

<div align="center">

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

</div>

REVIEWER: William Pennington

SUPERVISOR: **Neil Rees**

STUDENT: Sara Lakin

Course: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Title of proposed study: An exploration of mentees' and parents' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school.

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.

2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED <u>BEFORE</u> THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is <u>not</u> required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made <u>before</u> the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.

3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

APPROVED

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

Major amendments required *(for reviewer):*

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES / NO

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

If the proposed research could expose the <u>researcher</u> to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

☐ HIGH

☐ MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

☒ LOW

Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any).

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature)*: William Pennington

Date: 25/1/2019

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

Appendix V: First Amendment to Ethics Application

This request was made to alter the participants from staff to facilitators and to allow phone interviews to be conducted rather than face-to face.

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology

REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

FOR BSc, MSc/MA & TAUGHT PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS

Note that approval must be given for significant change to research procedure that impacts on ethical protocol. If you are not sure about whether your proposed amendment warrants approval consult your supervisor or contact Dr Tim Lomas (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee. t.lomas@uel.ac.uk).

Name of applicant: **SARA LAKIN**

Programme of study: **PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Title of research: **AN EXPLORATION OF MENTEES' AND PARENTS' EXPERIENCES OF PEER MENTORING DURING THE TRANSITION FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL.**

Name of supervisor: **NEIL REES**

Briefly outline the nature of your proposed amendment(s) and associated rationale(s) in the boxes below

Proposed amendment	Rationale
1. Changing the method of data collection for parent participant from focus groups to individual interviews if required.	There has been some initial difficulty in recruiting parent participant to the study, particularly enough to form a focus group. Collecting data by individual interviews would enable smaller number of participants to be included without needing to recruit enough to form a group.
2. Offering parent participant the option to complete an individual interview by phone call.	Due to other commitments parents may not be able to attend the school for the interview. Giving the opportunity to complete the interview by phone could help increase recruitment of participants.

3.Recruiting Staff who ran the mentoring programme for interviews (either individual or focus group).	There has been some difficulty recruiting parents to be participants in the study. The purpose of including parents in the study was to gain a perspective of any changes in the young people before and after the mentoring. Youth workers from the Charity and specially trained school staff delivered the programme both before and after transition and therefore may be able to reflect on any changes they noticed as a result of the mentoring process for the mentees. These Staff would be recruited to participate in an individual interview or a focus group.

Please tick	YES	NO
Is your supervisor aware of your proposed amendment(s) and agree to them?	X	

Student's signature (please type your name): Sara Lakin

Date: 07/06/2019

TO BE COMPLETED BY REVIEWER		
Amendment(s) approved	YES	
Comments		

Reviewer: X

Date: 17.6.19

Appendix W: Second Amendment to Ethics Application

The second request was to change the title to more accurately depict the project as it no longer involved parents.

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology

REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

FOR BSc, MSc/MA & TAUGHT PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS

Note that approval must be given for significant change to research procedure that impacts on ethical protocol. If you are not sure about whether your proposed amendment warrants approval consult your supervisor or contact Dr Tim Lomas (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee. t.lomas@uel.ac.uk).

Name of applicant: **Sara Lakin**

Programme of study: **Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology**

Title of research: **AN EXPLORATION OF MENTEES' AND PARENTS' EXPERIENCES OF PEER MENTORING DURING THE TRANSITION FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL.**

Name of supervisor: **Dr Neil Rees and Dr Katie Berg**

Briefly outline the nature of your proposed amendment(s) and associated rationale(s) in the boxes below

Proposed amendment	Rationale
Change of title to: 'Making professional friends': Mentees' and facilitators' experiences of a school-based peer mentoring intervention to support primary to secondary school transition	During the course the research process the participants altered from the initial plan (a separate amendment form was submitted and approved for these changes). Therefore the new title more accurately reflects the project. Moreover I have included a short quote from the research results which summarises one of the key findings.

Please tick	YES	NO

Is your supervisor aware of your proposed amendment(s) and agree to them?	X	

Student's signature (please type your name):   Sara Lakin

Date: 13/03/2020

TO BE COMPLETED BY REVIEWER		
Amendment(s) approved	**YES**	
Comments		

Reviewer: X

Date: 13.3.20

Appendix X: Example of a Worked Transcript

Transcript of Focus Group 3

279 Researcher: Because of the mentoring. What do you think was
280 helpful about it, that made you stop that?

[handwritten: connected to previous helping Rx. Reminded of techniques / offloading support! Art as helpful / creativity?]

281 P3: It reminded me of when I had therapy.

282 Researcher: Is there anything specific?

283 P3: Art

284 Researcher: What about the changes for you (to B)

[handwritten: change in behav. + feelings confidence.]

285 P2: I remember in drama my favourite subject. I used to be so
286 unconfident. Now I feel kind of confident. But my heart still beats
287 fast.

288 Researcher: Was there a change for you (to P4)

[handwritten: no change recognised / seen.]

289 P4: No I am the same boy.

290 Researcher: Do you think other people would notice the change in
291 you, like your parents or your teachers at primary school?

[handwritten: Parental acknowledg- ment +ve]

292 P1: my mum did. She said this things was good. But as soon as they
293 stopped it she said you need to learn from it.

294 P2: I was just thinking how I was acting in my behaviour before
295 mentoring finished. When I was having my mentoring I was being
296 calm, like when people annoyed me I just walked away from them
297 but as soon as it stopped I started to go angry easily eg. Me and my
298 best friend just argued I start screaming at her. I never used to be
299 like that but now I just have problems like I can't, basically I get mad
300 easily.

[handwritten: noticing changes reflecting - maybe for first time now? calm - emotional change - offloaded? but not lasted after. why not remained? what would they need now.]

301 (P3: I have more patience now because of mentoring)

302 Researcher: You thought when you were doing mentoring that was
303 a bit better?

[handwritten: change at the time]

304 All: Yes

305 Researcher: what were you saying about patience?

[handwritten: another reflection on change during others telling them not self reflection]

306 P3: I actually have more patience now because of the mentoring.
307 Apparently, I used to get angry really easily.

308 Researcher: What do all of you think that happened during the
309 sessions that made the difference to you?

[handwritten: nice - supportive rekind empathy understanding listening]

310 P3: People being nice

311 P1: They were so into it. They were not rude of anything. They
312 wanted to take part. There was only one guy that looked like he
313 didn't want to be there. A guy called Noah and another girl Ellen.
314 She was so rude.

[handwritten: feeling like Mentors wanted to be there into it? interested nice / kind wanted → thought about held in mind]

315 Researcher: Was she rude mentoring or now

Appendix Y: Example of Initial Coding Phase in Thematic Analysis

Appendix Z: Example of Initial Thematic Mapping of Codes
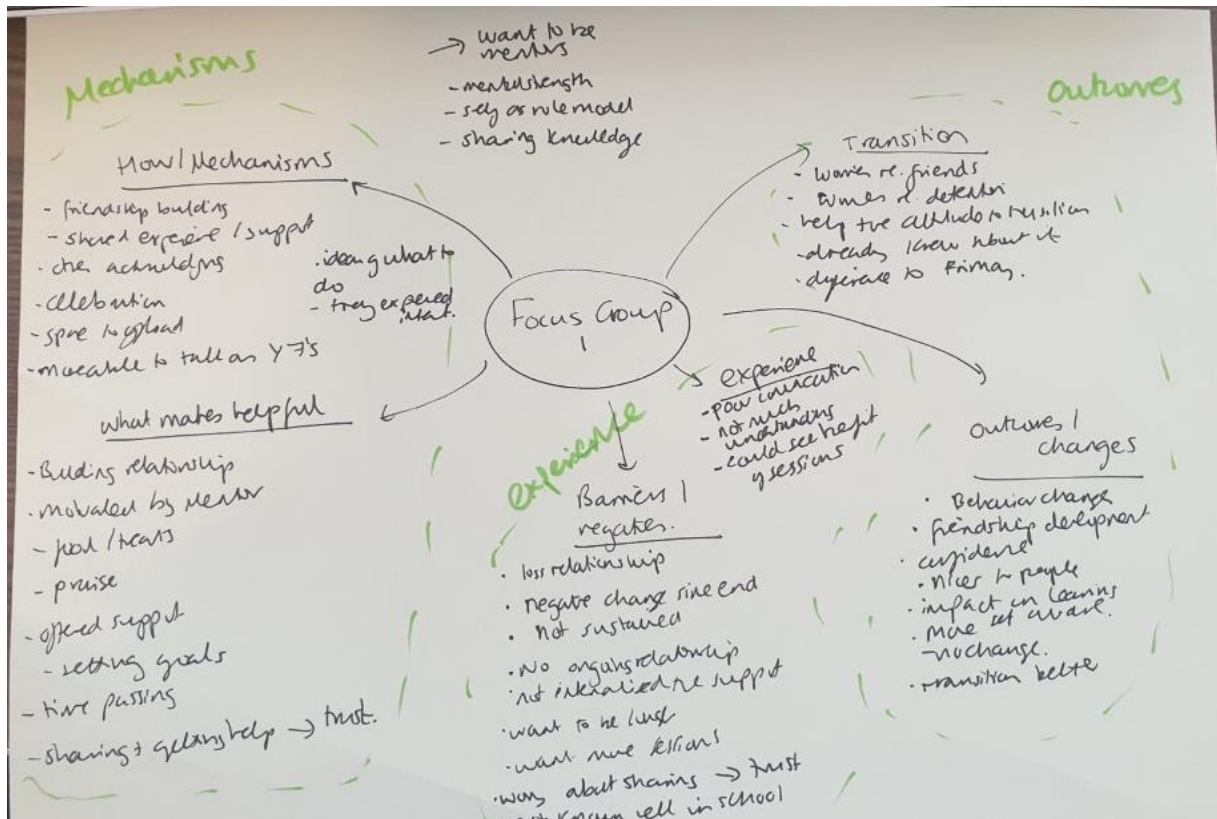
Appendix AA: Examples of Mapping the Developing Subthemes for Individual Transcripts

Appendix BB: Examples of Developing Subthemes across Transcripts
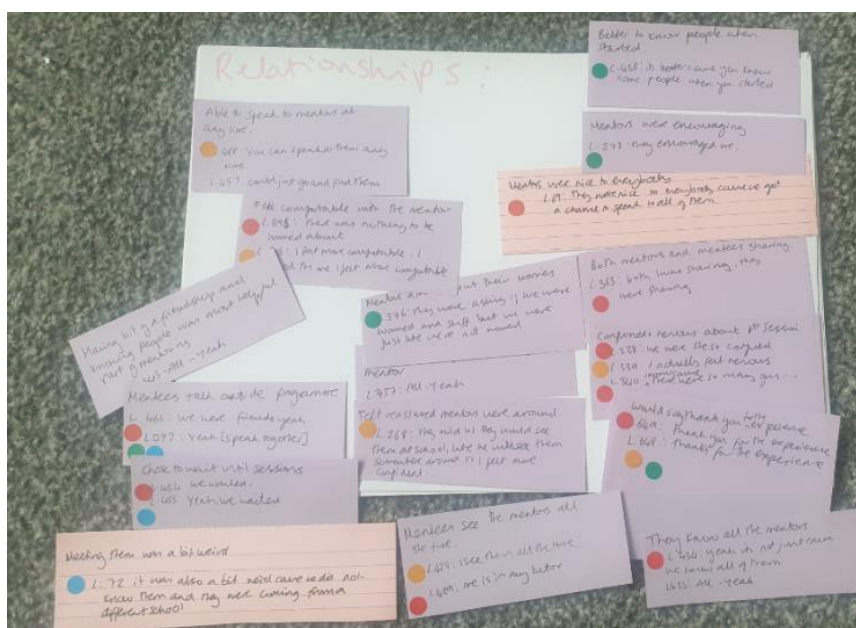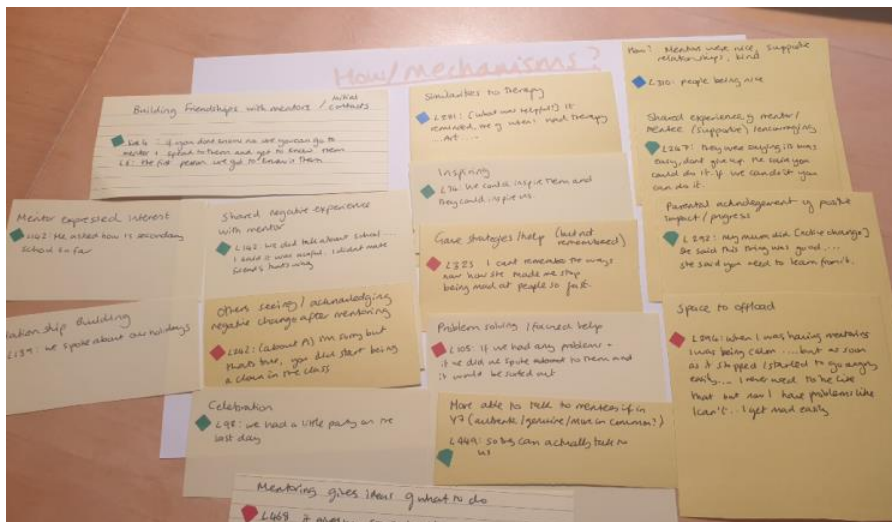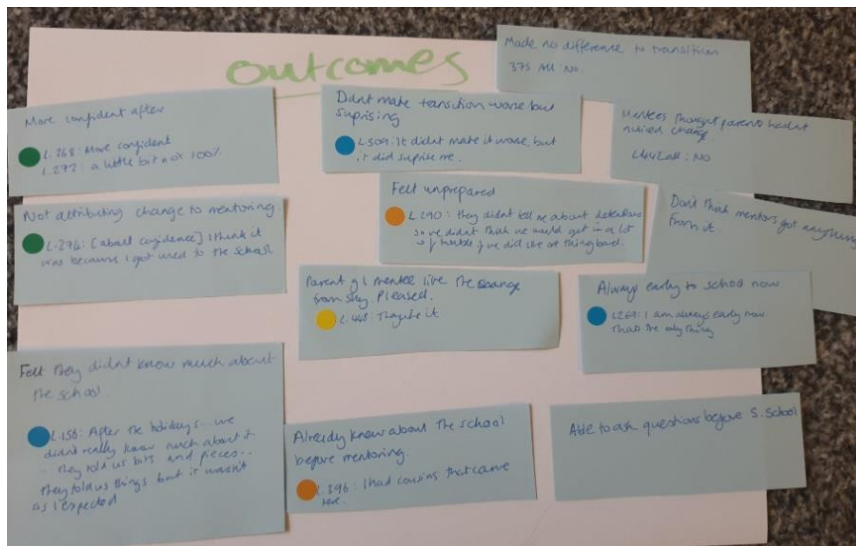
Appendix CC: Education Conference Dissemination

Slides presented as part of a larger presentation about the transition PMP at an Education Conference in Ireland. The slides discuss the initial findings of the Mentees analysis.

Slide 21

A role for Peer Support in Primary School Education

& Sara Lakin

Slide 22

Evaluation of the Transition programme

- Qualitative evaluation
- Quantitative evaluation

Slide 23

Qualitative Exploration

Research Questions:

- How do mentees describe their experience of More than Mentors mentoring for school transition?
- How do mentees understand any process of change related to Peer Mentoring?

Slide 24

The Research Process

- Three focus groups were run with Year 7 Mentees in three secondary schools between May and July 2019.
- 13 (out of a possible 17) mentees participated in the study.
- Seven boys, five girls and one gender fluid YP (as self-defined) participated.
- The average age was 12 years 3 months.
- Mentees self-identified as: two Asian British, two black African, one mixed black and white British, one black British, three white other (three have been grouped to protect anonymity), and four white British.
- The data was analysed using Thematic Analysis to capture the exploratory nature of the research questions to enable a rich exploration of the data.

Slide 25

The Initial Findings from Mentees

1. Positive outcomes for mentees

- Increased Confidence
- Impact on Learning
- Behaviour Changes
- Helps with Transition
- Relational Changes
- Friendship Development

Slide 26

The Initial Findings from Mentees

2. Longer term impacts

- Changes reversed after program ended
- Not attributing change to mentoring

Slide 27

The Initial Findings from Mentees

3. Helpful aspects of mentoring/Psychological mechanisms of change:

- Mentee expressed interest
- Space to Offload
- External acknowledgement of change
- Problem solving focused help
- Knowing people at school
- Similar experiences
- Reassurance/encouragement
- Achieving Goals

Slide 28

The Initial Findings from Mentees

4. Relationship between mentees and mentors

- Having a contact at school
- Sharing help
- Sharing negative experiences
- Mentors were nice
- Trusting relationship

Slide 29

The Initial Findings from Mentees

5. Negatives of the process

- Mentors not being honest
- Repetitive sessions
- Mentor asking about home
- Not knowing mentor well enough
- Poor communication from staff

Slide 30

The Initial Findings from Mentees

6. Why be a Mentor

- Relaxation
- Feeling Proud
- Helping People

Slide 31

Qualitative Evaluation: Summary

- The relationship and friendship appeared to be the most importance aspect of the process.
- Confidence and peer relationships was the most important outcomes for many of the mentees.
- Barriers or negatives also appear to be related to the relationship e.g. poor communication from team about not knowing how long mentoring will continue for, not knowing mentors enough to share honestly.
- Mentees suggest that the positive outcomes lasted during the process, but not all were able to continue the changes after the end of the relationship with the mentor.

Appendix DD: Feedback Poster for Young People

PEER-MENTORING
FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TRANSITION

A COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT | SARA LAKIN TRAINEE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

1 **QUESTION:** What is it like for mentees taking part in a peer mentoring* program to help with transition to secondary school? What, if anything about the mentoring is helpful?

*Peer mentoring is when older students (mentors) meet with younger students (mentees) to talk and help them out with problems

2 The evaluation focused on a programme called ▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮ **in London**. Mentors from Year 8/9 had 3 mentoring sessions with a group of Year 6's in primary school to help them prepare for the transition. They had 7 more sessions at secondary school (in Year 7) to help them settle in.
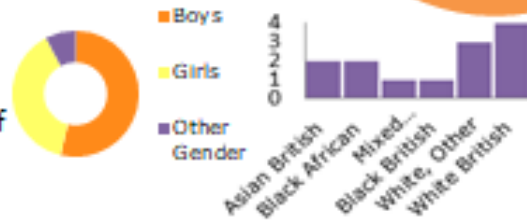
3 ### WHO TOOK PART?
13 YEAR 7'S | 3 SCHOOLS | 3 PROGRAMME STAFF

a. Three Year 7 pupils helped design the questions to ask other mentees about their experiences of mentoring.
b. Three focus groups ran in the summer term of 2019 at mentee's schools to ask the questions.
c. The researcher asked the staff separate questions individually.

- Boys
- Girls
- Other Gender

(Chart axis: 4 3 2 1 0 — Asian British, Black African, Mixed..., Black British, White, Other, White British)

4 ## What were the main benefits for the mentees?
*(Only 1 mentee didn't notice any change...)*

| Prepared for Transition | Had Increased Confidence | Made More Friends | Got in Less Trouble |

BUT...one group of mentee's said their mentor's didn't tell the truth about school. Which they didn't like!

5 ## Did the programme staff agree? | What caused the changes?

✓ They agreed mentees' had more confidence & settled into school quicker.   YES!
✓ They thought the main reason for the mentees' progress was because they had built a 'professional friendship' with their mentor!
✓ Being a similar age helped because they could relate to each other and because young people prefer advice from peers than from adults!
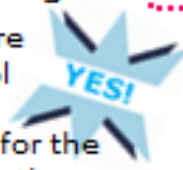
- Having a relationship with their mentor
- Trusting their mentor
- Setting and achieving goals
- Mentors being similar age (sharing experiences)
- The advice the mentor's gave

Appendix EE: Dissemination Leaflet

This leaflet outlines the process and findings of the study for YP, parents, educators, MH professionals and other professionals.

(Side 1)

PEER-MENTORING
FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TRANSITION

A COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

SARA LAKIN
TRAINEE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

WHAT DID WE WANT TO FIND OUT?

*Peer mentoring is when older students (mentors) meet with younger students (mentees) to talk and help them out with problems

1 What is it like for mentees taking part in a peer mentoring* programme to help with transition to secondary school?

2 What, if anything about the mentoring is helpful?

3 What do the mentees and the programme facilitators think made those changes possible?

The evaluation focused on a programme called _____ which is run by a charity called Links and is based in **London**.

As part of their transition project mentors from Year 8/9 (age 13/14) pair up with mentees in Year 6 (age 10/11). They met for 3 mentoring sessions in the last term of primary school to help the mentees prepare for the transition. They had 7 more sessions at secondary school (in Year 7) to help them settle in.

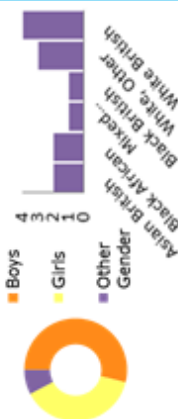### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PEER-MENTORING IN THE FUTURE?

This research is an example of a peer mentoring programme working well. It contributes to the evidence that this type of support helps young people.

In the future, mentees should have more information about the programme. The facilitators should know more about the mentees before they start.

The facilitators need to help teachers know who to refer to the programme.

The facilitators could work with schools to make sure they understand the intervention.

Future research looking at peer mentoring should see how the mentees are going when they are older to see if participating helps long term wellbeing.

Mental health services and schools should work together to promote positive wellbeing for students transitioning to secondary schools. This could help prevent mental health difficulties.

WHAT WAS THE EXPERIENCE OF TAKING PART IN PEER MENTORING?

The focus of the programme was right. Their expectations broadly matched what was covered.

Some mentees wanted more sessions. But others thought there was enough.

The mentees said they would have liked to know more about the programme before it started.

They found the matching process positive as they had some choice!

Some said not having things in common with mentor stopped them building a relationship.

WHAT DID THE FACILITATORS THINK?

- The groups developed into a "professional family" and became "professional friends".
- Other teachers need to know more about mentoring to make it successful in schools.
- It would have been useful to know why primary schools selected the mentees.
- The mentees need to know what it is so they don't think it is a punishment!

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(Side 2)

What caused the changes?

👆 Mentees having a **relationship with their mentor**

👆 Mentees **trusting** their mentor

👆 The mentor **empathetically listening** to the mentee's problems (being kind and understanding)

👆 Setting and achieving **goals**

👆 The mentors being a **similar age**

👆 Mentors having **similar experiences** to the mentees

👆 The **advice** the mentor's gave

👆 The mentors genuinely **wanting to help** the mentees

YES!

Did the facilitators agree?

✓ They thought the main reason for the mentees' progress was because they had built a 'professional friendship' with their mentor!

✓ Being a similar age helped because they could relate to each other and because young people prefer advice from peers than from adults!

✓ Having a set time to talk to someone, about their problems and emotions as lots of young people don't have that.

BUT... One facilitator said they need to make sure the right mentors are selected!

BUT...one group of mentee's said their mentor's didn't tell the truth about school. Which they didn't like!

WHAT WERE THE MAIN BENEFITS FOR THE MENTEES?

(Only 1 mentee didn't notice any change...)

Prepared for Transition	Had Increased Confidence	Learnt about new school
Made More Friends	Got in Less Trouble	
Learnt things about them self	Improved interpersonal skills	Sped-up settling in process

WAS THE PROGRESS BECAUSE OF THE SESSIONS WITH MENTORS?

The mentees couldn't decide...

⇒ Some thought they made the changes on their own.

⇒ Others thought it was all down to their mentor's advice.

⇒ Other mentees thought it was a mixture. They learnt from their mentee but they put it into practise!

The facilitators weren't sure how much the positive outcomes continued outside the sessions.

Some mentees thought their progress hadn't lasted after the end of the programme.

WHO TOOK PART IN THE RESEARCH?

13 YEAR 7's | 3 SCHOOLS | 3 PROGRAMME STAFF

1. As the research is about young people. It is important that they were involved in creating the project. Three Year 7 pupils helped design the questions to ask other mentees about their experiences of mentoring.

2. 4 or 5 mentees met together in a focus group in the summer term of 2019 at mentee's schools. They talked about the project and answered the questions. This happened three times in 3 different schools.

Gender chart: Boys, Girls, Other — 0, 1, 2, 3, 4

Ethnicity: Asian British, Black British, Mixed, Black African, White, Other, White British

3. The researcher asked the facilitators separate questions in individual interviews on the phone. Two staff members worked for More than Mentors. One was a teacher that facilitated the sessions in their secondary school.

4. The researcher looked what the participants said using a technique called thematic analysis. This looks for patterns in people's comments and groups them together to make themes and sub-themes.

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