An Exploration of Mentors' and Teachers' Experiences of Peer Mentoring during the Transition from Primary to Secondary School

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ABSTRACT

Multiple studies have found the transition from primary to secondary school can be distressing for students. This study explored the experiences of mentors and teachers who delivered a peer mentoring for school transition programme with the aim of reducing distress. The project tasked Year 7 students with mentoring Year 6 students, who were identified as 'vulnerable' and were receiving an alternative provision nurture programme, before and after starting their secondary school to support mentees through the transition.

A critical realist epistemological approach was taken to explore five mentors' and five teachers' experiences of the programme through semi-structured interviews. Interview schedules were developed in collaboration with a young person consultant who had mentoring experience. Thematic analysis of the transcripts led to the development of themes. Mentors discussed the need for confident, responsible and mature mentors who wanted to help mentees. They described using their skills to share experience and build trust. And with the time and support needed, this led to mentors developing transferrable skills and mentees settling in and developing a more positive relationship to help. Teachers explored the need for collaboration and engagement with the programme provider, a suitable environment and support for mentors. They highlighted the importance of shared experience within the mentoring relationship and trust within the programme system. They believed outcomes included transferrable skills for mentors and extra support and positive behaviour change for mentees.

These findings provide support for the use of peer mentoring programmes as a form of support for young people which can reduce transition distress and promote peer- and school-connectedness. This prevention and early intervention approach provides accessible and normalising support, at a time when one-to-one professional support is increasingly difficult to access.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

DfE – Department for Education

DoH – Department of Health

GT – Grounded theory

IPA – Interpretive phenomenological analysis

MH – Mental health

MP – Mentoring programme

NHS – National Health Service

PAEI – Prevention and early intervention

PM – Peer mentoring

PMP – Peer mentoring programme

PS – Peer support

SBM – School-based mentoring

SBPM – School-based peer mentoring

SSI – Semi-structured interview

ST – School transition

TA - Thematic analysis

UK – United Kingdom

YP – Young people

YW – Youth worker

1.0. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

This literature review will ground the aims of the current study using a narrative review due to the extensive scope of literature available. It will begin by highlighting the status of research into young people's (YP's) mental health (MH) and the recommendations for practice in education and health provision. The specific impact of school transition (ST) on MH for YP is critically considered; the rationale for the development of the studied mentoring programme (MP).

'School transition' is used throughout this paper; it is recognised that this can be interpreted in different ways dependent on the culture within which it is described. In this paper it will be understood within a UK educational context; students transitioning from Year 6 in primary school (for children aged 5-11) at the age of 11 to Year 7 in secondary school (for children aged 11-18).

The author will outline the current research and recommendations for prevention and early intervention (PAEI) MH initiatives for YP. A recent green paper (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017) has recommended that these approaches should be prioritised within educational settings.

The review will map out current research on PAEI initiatives for YP: peer support (PS), peer mentoring (PM) and school-based peer mentoring (SBPM). Each will be critically analysed regarding their rationale, key characteristics and evidence base. The author will focus on the outcomes of these initiatives which relate to psychological mechanisms for both mentors and mentees.

The review of research will be concluded with a systematic review of the literature focusing on 'school-based peer mentoring for school transition'. Linking the research reviewed with the current study, the rationale for the study based on the current evidence base will be provided and the aims and research questions of the study will be outlined. See Appendix A for a summary of definitions of terms used throughout this chapter.

1.2. Young People's Mental Health

The project studied upholds the aim of reducing the potential distress of ST for 'vulnerable' students. Therefore, the focus on YP's MH is relevant in two domains: the MH difficulties which are more likely to be experienced by 'vulnerable' students, and the impact of ST on MH.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists (2010) report that approximately half of adult MH difficulties develop before the age of 14. The most recent Department of Health report stated that 10% of YP in Great Britain describe experiencing a diagnosable MH disorder (Green, McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford, & Goodman, 2004).

Together these findings suggest that interventions during childhood could reduce distress across the lifespan. Counter to these needs, child and adolescent MH services (CAMHS) are increasingly difficult to access; with a quarter of children who are referred by professionals being turned away (Frith, 2016).

1.2.1. Adolescence as a Period of Increased Mental Health Risk Factors

To design relevant and effective interventions for YPs' MH it is important to understand the key stressors during this period of development. Garbarino (1985) describes adolescence as representing a stage of rapid personal, emotional, spiritual and social development within a complex system of relationships, structures and policies. Although universal patterns of change

may be recognised, it is important to consider that research also suggests the timing of adolescent development is individual and varies widely as a result of complex interaction of internal and external factors (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006; Nield, 2009; Parker, 2009).

The following emotional and social skills and tasks have been identified as developing during adolescence: psychological independence, a sense of identity, self-esteem, constructing personal values, decision-making, problem-solving, and behavioural regulation (Barber & Olsen, 2004; Chen & Gregory, 2009; Fenzel, 2000). Waters et al. (2012) suggest that an absence of the opportunities to develop these skills can lead to MH difficulties which can persist into adulthood. However, this study was based on an Australian sample, therefore, limiting the generalisability to the United Kingdom (UK) population.

This research provides an evidence base for adolescence as a critical period for emotional and social development and therefore a critical period for developmental support. This provides a rationale for the provision of support at both the individual and system level to promote positive outcomes for adolescents, and the adults they will become (Waters et al., 2012).

1.3. School Transition and Mental Health

Research has established the evidence for adolescence as a period of rapid development and a time when YP may experience MH difficulties. This section will explore the specific impact of ST on the MH of YP.

1.3.1. Evidence for the Link between School Transition and Mental Health

ST has been repeatedly identified as a time of increased stress for YP (Jindal-Snape et al., 2020; McGee, Ward, Gibbons, & Harlow, 2003; Eccles, 1999; Dryfoos, 1990), with some research suggesting children experiencing ST can exhibit signs of extreme stress (Robinson et al., 1995). In one study, 31% of

students in their sample experienced a 'difficult' or 'somewhat difficult' ST (Waters et al., 2012). It has been estimated that these stresses and difficulties will be ongoing for one in ten students (Smyth, McCoy, & Darmody, 2004; McArdle, 2006). These studies span different countries and education systems suggesting a wide-reaching pattern, but also limiting generalisability to UK contexts as there is not enough UK research to build a full picture.

1.3.2. Causal Factors of Increased Stress during the Transition Period

At a conceptual level, Tobbell (2014) described ST as embodying multiple changes at social, academic and structural levels, whilst managing social and emotional adjustment following physical relocation. Eccles et al. (1993) highlights that when students enter their new school, they are already undergoing physical, cognitive, biological, and interpersonal changes and this can exacerbate transition difficulties.

> Secondary schools *'emphasize competition, social comparison, and ability self-assessment at a time of heightened self-focus; they decrease decision-making and choice at a time when the desire for control is growing; they emphasize lower level cognitive strategies at a time when the ability to use higher level strategies is increasing, and they disrupt social networks at a time when adolescents are especially concerned with peer relationships and may be in need of close adult relationships outside of the home'* (Eccles et al., 1993, p.140).

Mellor & Delamont (2011) reviewed research over the last 40 years about the anxieties and challenges of children during ST in the UK and found these had not changed significantly over time. Students consistently appreciated more interesting lessons and improved facilities, but worried about coping with a new environment. Myths passed down about secondary school maintained a source of anxiety over time. Murdoch (1986) also identified myths as a key characteristic of transition, commonly concerning 'rites of passage'. They found myths could promote anxieties about transition, but they could also play a

positive role in preparing students for new demands, particularly new relationships and power structures.

Zeedyk et al. (2003) found similar concerns across students, parents and teachers: increased workload, bullying, getting lost, and peer relationships. Opinions about ST were similar between parents and students; whereas, teachers saw institutional factors as more influential than an individual's ability. The authors suggest the teachers' perspective could risk creating a sense of helplessness for students.

Hirsch and Rapkin (1987) observed that students transition from being the oldest and most knowledgeable students to being the youngest and least knowledgeable, a role change that creates a sense of discontentedness. Entwistle (1988) described this phenomenon as 'Top Dog', stating that transition stress comes from the traumatic move to a new school where students immediately become the 'Bottom Dog' (p. 585).

These studies identify numerous ST stressors which remain consistent across generations (Mellor & Delamont, 2011), focused on the themes of coping with new demands, both environmental and relational.

1.3.3. Individual Risk Factors

When considering how to support YP through ST, it is important to not just understand the causes of distress, but to determine who is most impacted by these stressors. Research has consistently reported that ST disproportionately negatively impacts students whose families are living in poverty, particularly in urban environments (Akos & Galassi, 2004; Cauce, Hannan, & Sargeant, 1992; Mosley & Lex, 1990; Ramey & Ramey, 1994; Seidman, Allen, Aber, Mitchell, & Feinman, 1994). It may be hypothesised that these students are more likely to experience additional stressors outside the school environment; this has been found to be a factor that increases the chance of a difficult transition independently from the experience of poverty (Akos & Galassi, 2004; Mosley &

Lex, 1990). Cauce et al. (1992) specified that students who belong to ethnic minority groups and receive free school meals experience greater stress levels during ST and experience the new school culture as distant and non-supportive. Although this research is 29 years old, data suggests child poverty levels in London are higher than ever recorded since 1994 (Department for Work & Pensions, 2020); therefore, the impact of this association currently is likely to be even greater than found when this study took place.

In Australian (Waters et al., 2012) and American (Akos, 2002) populations, girls have been found to report higher levels of worry about ST than boys and retrospectively report a more difficult experience. Kingery and Erdley (2007) reported girls demonstrate higher friendship quality and social skills during this period and hypothesised that girls may experience increased stress during transition due to disruption of these closer friendships. Further to this, Simmons and Blyth (1987) found that for girls and boys, going through pubertal changes at the same time as ST led to increased risk of truancy, behavioural difficulties and long-term motivational difficulties. There is limited recent research on gender differences in experiences of ST; this may have changed as constructions of gender develop across generations.

Midgley, Feldlaufer and Eccles (1989) suggested that ST can be particularly challenging for academically lower-achieving students. They hypothesised that these students may have already experienced feelings of failure and the impact of new school difficulties can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon. Tomlinson (1995) suggested that ignoring quieter students who may be struggling academically may lead to a continuation of suffering and the expression of frustration in more risky ways. On a related note, Longobardi, Prino, Marengo, & Settanni (2016) found that students' ratings of their relationship with their teachers were a protective factor against a stressful ST.

Taking a different perspective, Cotterell (1986) suggests that a successful transition centres on the student's individual appraisal of the experience, whether it is harmful and their coping abilities. He recommended that providing

sufficient information about the student's new school is vital for a successful transition. Robinson et al. (1995) supported this assertion, finding that students with a negative attributional style and low self-esteem were more likely to experience symptoms of depression following ST. From an interpersonal skills perspective, Erath, Kaeppler and Tu (2019) found American students who had greater self-reported and teacher-reported conflict resolution skills were less likely to report experiencing loneliness and peer victimisation across the ST. These findings represent the complex interactions between internal and external factors which can contribute to the ST experience.

Simmons & Blyth (1987) suggested an overarching factor, that transition difficulties occur when the child is not ready to make the move to the new environment. They state this could include both students who have developed earlier and later than average. They found that students coped better with the transition if they had access to 'an area of comfort' (p.352). They described this as an area of life that is stable and not subject to change where the student can safely retreat to as a secure base. Connected to this, Jindal-Snape et al.'s (2020) systematic review concluded that both positive and negative impacts of ST were linked to the closeness of relationships to peers and teachers at the new secondary school.

The current evidence base identifies numerous internal and external risk factors which can be used to identify which students could benefit from additional support. Many of these studies are small-scale and were carried out several years ago; this highlights the need for new research about which students may need ST support.

1.3.4. Transition from Alternative to Mainstream Provision

For the mentee population studied in the current research, in addition to a primary-to-secondary school transition, they were also experiencing a transition from alternative to mainstream provision. In their case, from a nurture programme in their primary school to a mainstream secondary school. Trotman et al (2019) interviewed young people in alternative provisions and those

responsible for their welfare and found transitions between and within schools to be a common concern. They described concerns about losing the teacher-pupil relationships they had enjoyed in primary school and a feeling of being 'lost', both physically and emotionally. This highlights the intensity of transition for the mentees in this project; potentially amplifying the stressful outcomes of transition. For example, the change in size of environment and closeness with staff is likely to be an even greater change for children transitioning from alternative provision.

1.3.5. Identified Outcomes of a Stressful Transition

Research has explored the potential outcomes associated with a stressful ST. This research should influence how transition interventions are designed to optimise effectiveness, as well as provide a clear rationale for interventions for both individual and societal benefit.

Cotterell (1986) found adjustment after ST can take from 12-18 months and suggested that delays in academic achievement during this period supports this. Numerous studies have found that stressful STs negatively impact academic performance and school attendance (Collins, 2000; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Otis et al., 2005; Reyes et al., 2000). A survey of 71,739 Israeli children compared the experience of children who experienced a ST and those who did not. They found children who transitioned began with a more positive perspective of the school climate, but after transition had an equal or lower perspective compared to those who did not transition (Madjar & Cohen-Malayev, 2016). With a longer-term view, research has found a difficult ST can be associated with school drop-out; leading to social costs for the individual and society (Larsen & Shertzer, 1987; Reyes & Hedeker, 1993). Up-to-date studies are needed to confirm whether these longer-term effects still hold.

Testerman (1996) suggested that students experiencing academic difficulties following transition would either go unnoticed and unsupported by teachers or they would behave in a disruptive way until they obtained the teacher's attention. Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan (1996) hypothesised that the narrow

academic focus and polarisation of students through streaming by results can lead to isolation and fragmentation of the student's experience. Wide-ranging social implications have been associated with students experiencing a difficult ST: crime, substance use, suicidal ideation and dying by suicide (Seidman et al., 1996). They suggest a negative ST can have long-lasting effects on the individual and their systems.

Negative impacts on MH outcomes include lowered self-esteem (Eccles, Lord, & Midgley, 1991) and higher levels of anxiety and depression (Kazdin, 1993; Rice et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2012; Zeedyk et al., 2003). Rice et al. (2011) concluded limited international longitudinal evidence suggests these MH difficulties continue beyond the initial transition stage.

Together, this research suggests wide-ranging negative outcomes associated with a stressful ST. However, Lester, Cross, Shaw and Dooley (2012) suggest that the lack of longitudinal research to describe the full impact of transition experience is a key limitation. It is important to note that a small number of studies have found no effect of transition on academic outcomes (Weiss & Kipnes, 2006) and a positive effect on self-esteem, peer relationships and perception of school climate (Barber & Olsen, 2004; Booth & Gerard, 2014).This contrasting evidence bolsters the need for more longitudinal research with larger sample sizes across a variety of contexts.

1.3.6. Improving the Transition Period

Research highlighting the negative outcomes associated with ST has led to an increased governmental focus on the development of interventions to improve this experience (Zeedyk et al., 2003). Stelfox and Catts (2012) support this, arguing that current outcomes associated with ST suggest schools need to focus more on their responsibility for student welfare by taking notice of the relational aspects of transition. Hargreaves et al. (1996) further argue that schools should not just provide programmes for children at-risk but develop a more supportive environment for all children. Although schools are becoming more aware of the impacts of transition, the interventions developed to support students are rarely evaluated and there is little evidence provided for their

efficacy (Tobbell, 2014). This conclusion highlights the need for evidence-based and evaluated transition interventions.

1.4. Prevention and Early Intervention

In response to the findings that YP are experiencing increasing rates of MH difficulties, there has been a focus in British government on PAEI initiatives for optimising the MH of YP (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017). This section will explore the rationale for these initiatives, setting up the context for discussion of how peer support (PS) initiatives may be used to improve the experience of ST; particularly as ST occurs at a key developmental period which has been identified as a time when MH difficulties may be more likely to develop (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2010).

1.4.1. Rationale

Research has suggested 50% of adult MH disorders have an onset before the age of 18-years-old (Jones, 2013; Kessler et al., 2007). Costello, Erkanli and Angold (2006) report rates of depression in adolescence as 6% and in childhood as 3%; YP with a diagnosis of depression are seven times more likely to die by suicide (Gould et al., 1998) and suicide accounts for 9.1% of deaths in people aged 15-19 years old, the third highest cause of death in this group. Together this evidence highlights the common experience of MH difficulties beginning in childhood and the impact this can have on their childhood and adult experience. If PAEI programmes could reduce the experience of MH difficulties in childhood and adolescence, they could have wide-ranging impacts on the development and well-being of current and future populations.

Further research has focused on how interventions during this stage of life can increase strengths in this population. It has been posited that interventions that aim to increase the capacities of YP's systems to nurture YP's strengths, will in turn increase the capacities of the YP to be resources for the healthy development of themselves and others (Lerner, 2004).

<u>1.4.2. Policy</u>

Based on PAEI initiatives for YP research, a green paper, 'Transforming Children and YP's MH Provision', was released reporting that the Departments of Health and Education intended to improve PAEI provision for YP (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017). The report aimed to ensure that all YP would have access to high-quality MH and wellbeing support through their educational setting. They set out the following targets:

1. To incentivise and support all schools and colleges to identify and train a Designated Senior Lead for MH.

2. To fund new MH Support Teams, which will be supervised by NHS children and YP's MH staff.

3. To pilot a four-week waiting time for access to specialist NHS children and YP's MH services.

This commitment represents a recognition of the distress experienced by children and adolescents and the benefits of working at PAEI levels. It highlights the shift to integrate MH provision into educational settings to improve accessibility.

1.5. Peer Support Interventions

PS interventions are one type of intervention which can be used as a PAEI initiative. The author will evaluate PS, and more specifically PM, concepts and evidence, before exploring how these approaches can be applied as school-based interventions for ST.

<u>1.5.1. Defining Peer Support Interventions</u>

Houlston, Smith and Jessel (2009) define PS as '*an umbrella term that describes a range of activities and systems within which the potential of people*

to be helpful to one another can be fostered through appropriate training' (p.235). PS programmes build on the natural helping resources already available in friendships (Cowie & Wallace, 2000). Examples of these programmes can include: mentoring, befriending and peer-counselling (Cowie, 2000).

1.5.2. Prevalence of Peer Support Interventions

Houlston et al. (2009) surveyed 130 primary schools and 110 secondary schools and of these 186 schools ran PS schemes. The researchers calculated an adjusted estimation that 62% of UK schools run PS programmes. They found PS initiatives were more common in secondary schools, a finding supported by Samara & Smith (2008). Chedzoy and Burden (2008) suggest this may be due to a greater need for PS at a time of academic, personal, social and organisational change. Additionally, adolescents have been found to put a greater emphasis on the importance of PS than younger children and are more likely to seek support from a peer than a teacher (Boulton, 2005; Helsen et al., 2000). Contrastingly, Smith and Watson (2004) found PS programmes to be used more frequently in primary schools; suggesting patterns of adoption of programmes may change across time and context.

1.5.3. Evidence for Peer Support Interventions

Multiple studies suggest that PS interventions provide added benefit above adult-led support, as a peer is uniquely placed to offer the most effective social support (Cowie, 2009; Dolan & Brady, 2012). Topping (1996) described how peers *'can reach where not only the teacher, but any adult, cannot'* (p.23).

Having a source of information about their new school, whether organically through an older sibling or through the assignment of an older student has been found to improve students' experiences of transition (Anderson et al., 2000; Woods & Measor, 1984). PS programmes have been found to increase students' ratings of social support and social and emotional well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Houlston et al., 2011). On a wider system level, PS has been

found to decrease incidences of bullying among the school community (Cowie & Smith, 2010; Sharp, 2007). Leyden and Miller (1996) described how PS interventions 'can play a major part in furthering the practice of inclusive education by bringing in peers from the periphery to a position of prominence' (p.3).

In summary, PS initiatives appear to be widely used in school settings. Research across the last four decades has found PS to be beneficial for interpersonal outcomes. However, the number of studies is limited; more longitudinal research is needed to investigate the long-term impact of initiatives. A challenge to this area of research is the context-specific nature of initiatives making it difficult to apply and evaluate projects across different contexts.

1.6. Peer Mentoring Interventions

This section will focus on PM, a form of PS used by the project examined in this paper. This section will provide an overview of the characteristics of PM and the evidence for its outcomes.

1.6.1. Definition of Peer Mentoring Interventions

Karcher (2007) defines PM as *'an interpersonal relationship between two youth of different ages that reflects a greater degree of hierarchical power imbalance than is typical in a friendship and in which the goal is for the older youth to promote one or more aspects of the younger youth's development'* (p.267).

Karcher (2007) highlights a clear distinction between mentoring and tutoring; although, like tutoring, mentoring may sometimes use goals, the focus is still primarily on promoting the well-being and development of the mentee. Therefore, mentoring is primarily concerned with a developmental approach to relationship building, with progress being associated with the development of the friendship.

1.6.2. Outcomes of Peer Mentoring Interventions

There have been no large-scale, multi-site, randomised control trials evaluating the outcomes of PM initiatives; however, studies of single-site programmes have consistently produced positive outcomes (Karcher, 2007). Findings of beneficial outcomes for child PM are in-line with those found for adult-to-child mentoring (Portwood & Ayers, 2005) and in both domains programmes have been found to positively impact both mentor and mentee (King et al., 2002). Powell (1997) suggests that PM can reduce the stigma of asking for help and model for both mentees and mentors effective help-seeking processes.

1.6.3. Characteristics of Effective Peer Mentoring Interventions

Karcher (2007) made the following recommendations for characteristics of an optimal PM programme (PMP), based on the current literature base:

1. Mentors are trained in a developmental approach to avoid becoming tutors;
2. Mentors who report greater social interest and less self-interested motivations are strategically recruited;
3. Mentors and mentees differ in age by at least two years, and the mentors are in high school;
4. Programs provide mentors sufficient structure to keep the matches actively engaged, but the mentors' focus is clearly on strengthening their relationship;
5. Mentoring interactions are monitored for signs of "deviancy training";
6. Mentees are taught how best to utilize their mentors for support; and
7. Mentors are required to participate in formal termination processes.
(p.11-12, Karcher, 2007)

Podmore, Fonagy and Munk (2014) carried out a scoping review and found the following characteristics of effective mentoring programs: providing training and support, matching personality style, recruiting mentees with intermediate

behavioural difficulties, nurturing mentoring relationships, and using outcome measurements throughout.

Multiple studies have focused on the impact of recruitment of both mentors and mentees on the success of programmes. Karcher (2007) suggested a mix of needs levels should be aimed for when selecting mentees, to reduce any sense of stigma. It has been reported that successful PMPs recruit mentors with strong social interest and lower self-interest (Karcher & Lindwall, 2003), a low chance of deviancy training (Patterson et al., 2000) and a high level of commitment and consistency (Karcher, 2005, 2007; Lakes & Karcher, 2005)

Another area of interest is the importance of training. Research has found that the self-efficacy ratings of the mentor are predictive of improved outcomes for mentees (Karcher, Nakkula, & Harris, 2005). Follow-up training, mentee training and training which focused on a developmental approach have all been found to improve outcomes (Karcher, 2005, 2007). Research has highlighted that the impact of PM initiatives can decrease or become negative if insufficient support and training is provided (Karcher, 2007).

A further central characteristic is the level of structure in PMPs. Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper (2002) state that although structure has not been systematically reviewed, meta-analyses show structured PM projects could have as much as double the impact compared to unstructured projects. Karcher (2007) suggests there is increasing evidence that PMPs that are not structured can risk doing harm; therefore, adhering to good practice guidelines is vital. The issue of structure is particularly salient in the context of local users adapting a standardised programme to enhance relevance to the setting. This practice remains controversial in the area of evidence-based PAEI interventions and is labelled the 'local adaptation-fidelity debate' (Elliott & Mihalic, 2004).

Karcher (2007) argues that with the increasing use of PMPs, there is an increased need for evaluation of programmes, particularly regarding for whom and how it works.

1.7. School-Based Peer Mentoring Interventions

1.7.1. The Context of School-Based Peer Mentoring Interventions

Karcher (2007) described how peer *'mentoring typically takes place in school settings as a means of supporting younger students within the school environment'* (p.3). In America, school-based mentoring (SBM) has become the most common form of mentoring (Karcher & Herrera, 2007); this level of provision has outpaced the research needed to evaluate this work (Portwood & Ayers, 2005). Prevalence of SBPM interventions has not been investigated in the UK; this makes it difficult to know whether provision has outpaced research in this area.

1.7.2. Rationale for School-Based Peer Mentoring Interventions

A school-based approach provides unique benefits not easily available in community-based contexts: accessible staff supervision, mentors who have experienced the same environment as mentees and opportunities for the mentoring to influence school peer interactions (Karcher & Herrera, 2007).

Accessibility is enhanced as children whose parents may not have the resources to arrange mentoring outside of school may be able to access the opportunity in school (Herrera, 1999). Herrera (1999) highlighted how SBPM can influence school-related outcomes, such as the mentee wanting to attend school more or trying to avoid detentions to impress their mentor. In some situations, the mentor may act as a voice or an advocate for their mentee.

1.7.3. Characteristics of Effective School-Based Peer Mentoring Interventions

SBPMPs are commonly developed and facilitated by outside agencies. In these cases, the success of the programme also depends upon the buy-in from the

school and the co-operation and communication between the school and the agency (Karcher & Herrera, 2007). Herrera (2004) found agency support for mentors to be associated with the development of strong and long-lasting mentoring relationships. It was concluded that the mentor's perception of support provision was important for their reflection on the mentoring relationship as successful. For the mentor to feel supported by the agency, the agency must be integrated into and supported by the school. SBPM must be well structured and supervised to avoid possible negative impacts (Karcher, 2007).

Multiple studies have identified age as a predictor of successful outcomes. Smaller effects are found in PMPs where students aged 5-13 acted as mentors in comparison to mentors aged 14-18 (Akos, 2000; Bowman & Myrick, 1987; Switzer et al., 1995; Westerman, 2002). Selman (1980) suggested that younger students may not have developed the cognitive ability to be able to see things from their mentee's perspective. There are no studies regarding the impact of age on PM projects in the UK, therefore, it is not possible to know if this pattern is replicated in the UK education system.

In schools, mentoring sessions have been found to be fewer and shorter (Karcher, 2007). Herrera, Sipe and McClanahan (2000) found SBM averaged half the dosage of community-based mentoring. Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper (2002) performed a meta-analysis on the evaluations of 55 programmes and found school-based programmes had smaller effect sizes than community-based. Lower dosage may account for part of this difference in effect size. However, this meta-analysis reviewed adult-to-youth mentoring, which is likely to differ from PM. Portwood & Ayers (2005) suggested that lower dosage in SBPM is likely due to timetabling constraints. They suggested the decreased contact time could limit emotional closeness and longevity of relationships.

1.7.4. Outcomes of School-Based Peer Mentoring Interventions

1.7.4.1. For mentees: Multiple studies have found a wide range of positive outcomes for mentees through SBPM: increased school- and peer-connectedness (Bowman & Myrick, 1987; Karcher, 2005c, 2007; Stoltz, 2005),

increased self-efficacy (Stoltz, 2005; Tomlin, 1994), increased academic achievement (Karcher, 2007; Karcher et al., 2002; Stoltz, 2005; Tomlin, 1994), social skills gains (Dearden, 1998; Karcher, 2007; Karcher et al., 2005), decreased behavioural problems (Bowman & Myrick, 1987; Karcher, 2007), decreased antisocial behaviour (Sheehan et al., 1999), preventing escalation of issues for the mentee and bolstering the efforts of teachers to identify and tackle bullying (Cowie, 2009; Cowie & Smith, 2010). Additionally, studies have found that PM can have gains on ratings of school-connectedness significantly above that of adult-to-child mentoring (Dubois et al., 2002; Karcher, 2006)

1.7.4.2. For mentors: Research has found that, despite not being the intended recipients, mentors can uniquely benefit from being part of PM initiatives in the following ways: improved interpersonal skills (Dearden, 1998), improvements in moral reasoning and empathy (Ikard, 2001), school- and community-connectedness (Hansen, 2005, 2006; Karcher, 2008; Stoltz, 2005), improved self-esteem (Karcher, 2008; Noll, 1997), development of skills and experiences which can further personal and career development (Karcher, 2007), and the ability to relate better to parents, improved conflict resolution skills and improved organisational skills (Noll, 1997).

In summary, a wide range of research has supported beneficial social and academic outcomes of PS, PM and SBPM. However, much of the recent and larger studies are based in the American school system; more research is needed in UK contexts to understand whether beneficial outcomes generalise.

1.8. Psychological Mechanisms

Throughout the literature the centrality of the mentoring relationship to a successful intervention has been discussed. However, the majority of research focuses on the outcomes of a mentoring intervention rather than analysing how this change is enabled through the mentoring relationship. Deutsch & Spencer (2009) highlighted that *'there is still little work on what makes for effective*

practice within dyads or what program elements help to sustain relationships.'
(p. 48).

1.8.1. Theoretical Underpinnings

Karcher (2005a) identified the following theories that make specific reference to the psychological mechanisms which have been proposed to lead to beneficial outcomes in PM.

The neo-Piagetian theory of social perspective taking (Selman, 1980) describe the developmental progression of social perspective taking during childhood. They suggest YP at the age of ST can hold in mind another person's perspective, a key ability for a successful mentoring relationship.

Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development theory can be used to describes how mentees can develop new skills or knowledge through collaboration with an older peer who has a more sophisticated understanding in the specified domain; allowing for the mentor to scaffold the mentee's understanding.

Harris's (1998) group socialization theory hypothesises that YP identify with a peer group and tailor their behaviour to the norms of that group. Peer groups differentiate themselves from each other through the adoption of differing norms. She therefore concluded that older peers can be powerful influencers for their younger peers.

Bandura (1982) wrote about the psychology of chance encounters; an unintended meeting of unfamiliar persons. Karcher (2005a) suggests PM could be described as a chance encounter and therefore seen to influence each other's life paths through the reciprocal influence of social and personal factors. This theory highlights the opportunity within PM to build relationships which may not occur spontaneously, therefore leading to unique opportunities for growth.

1.8.2. Current Research

Brady, Dolan and Canavan (2017) explored the social support mechanisms identified in an Irish adult-child mentoring programme. Thematic analysis of 66 semi-structured interviews with mentors, mentees, parents and caseworkers led to the identification of five themes:

'Concrete support' was identified as the practical support provision within mentoring (Cutrona, 2000; Dolan & Brady, 2012). This was linked to 'companionship support', described as giving mentees a sense of belonging (Wills, 1991), on the basis that these were supportive acts that provide the foundation for a beneficial mentoring relationship. 'Emotional support' was defined as providing information that raises the mentee's awareness that they are cared for (Cobb, 1976). This was referred to by participants in forms such as feeling listened to, expressions of empathy and feeling comfortable to share difficulties. 'Esteem support' was recognised and described as one person expressing love and concern for another (Cutrona, 2000b). Mentees expressed experiencing this through their mentor voluntarily giving their time and providing praise and encouragement; this was found to be reciprocal in valued mentoring relationships. 'Advice support' was defined as the provision of guidance and information (Cutrona & Russell, 1990). This was reported to be particularly helpful in an established relationship when the mentee does not feel patronised by the advice.

This research explores a variety of psychological mechanisms in the form of types of social support. It has strength in its exploration of a variety of perspectives from many participants. However, it important to note this research focuses on an adult-child mentoring programme; the mechanisms in this type of mentoring may differ from those in PM.

An unpublished doctoral thesis specifically qualitatively analysed the psychological mechanisms involved in a PM process within a UK secondary school context (Powell, 2016). They developed a model using grounded theory analysis:

'The model proposes that effective PM is synonymous with a nurturing experience characterised by feeling of security bestowed by a relationship with boundaries, the feeling of being at ease and therefore open to engaging with the programme, the feeling of being able to relate to someone with a shared experience of the system and a feeling of trust in the process/school staff. These mechanisms are best understood as an interaction between relationship-level and system-level elements of the programme.' (p.93-94)

This research highlights how the interaction of relational and system variables form mechanisms central to the change process. However, the generalisability of this research is limited as it has not been peer-reviewed.

This review of PM psychological mechanisms demonstrates a variety of theoretical understandings of these mechanisms, but there is limited research about whether the mechanisms discussed in theory are experienced in practice.

2.0. SYSTEMATIC REVIEW: PM FOR PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL TRANSITION

This section of the literature review focuses specifically on SBPM for ST, the focus of evaluation in the current study. The literature was systematically reviewed to identify research evaluating PMPs for the primary to secondary ST. The search terms used are included in Appendix B and the diagram illustrating the search process can be seen in Appendix C.

2.1. Dearden (1998)

'Cross-age PM in Action: The process and outcomes' by educational psychologist, Jackie Dearden (1998) describes the development, facilitation and the evaluation of a SBPMP for ST. Ten Year 10 mentors (aged 14-15) mentored ten Year 6 mentees (aged 10-11) at their feeder primary schools in preparation for ST. They aimed to develop friendship links to ease transition, provide learning opportunities for mentees, develop the interpersonal and helping skills of mentors.

Mentors and mentees met weekly for the first term and fortnightly for a second term. At the end of the second term, mentees reported that they enjoyed seeing their mentor, having individual attention and learning about their secondary school. Mentors reported that they had enjoyed being part of the project and felt they had done a good job. They reported that they would have liked more frequent sessions, but also there were some concerns about being under pressure to catch up on work missed.

Following this feedback, it was decided to run the project for a second year with twenty Year 10 mentors and twenty Year 6 mentees. 95% of mentors completed a feedback questionnaire stating: 65% agreed they had developed

new skills, 70% agreed they had developed interpersonal skills, 90% agreed they helped their mentees to learn and 100% agreed they had helped their mentees feel less worried about secondary school. 50% of mentees completed their questionnaire. 90% agreed they had developed new skills, 80% agreed they had developed interpersonal skills and 100% agreed that the mentoring had helped them learn and know more about secondary school.

Six primary teachers reported that they were happy with the scheme and wanted it to continue. Two teachers felt the mentees had improved their learning through mentoring but felt this was secondary to the importance of the development through social contact. Two teachers shared that they felt the mentoring had helped prepare the mentees for ST and reduced their worries. Challenges reported included finding rooms for sessions to take place, misbehaviour of mentors, staff not having the time to supervise and selection of mentees to optimise support across students.

Dearden (1998) concluded that the feedback from mentors, mentees and staff provided evidence of the social benefits of the mentoring programme: the development of friendships, an easier transition, greater learning opportunities, increased confidence, development of interpersonal skills and an awareness of and responsibility in being able to help others.

Although the conclusions focused on the social aspects of mentoring, this scheme did have an emphasis on learning, meaning it could be described as tutoring rather than mentoring. However, this study still provides evidence that cross-age PS can benefit both mentees and mentors in their social development. The small scale of this study limits its generalisability to wider contexts and there is little information about the methods of interviewing; this makes it difficult to interrogate the design of the study.

This study was published as a way of sharing PS initiatives which can be developed and delivered by educational psychologists. Consequently, the study

is less rigorous in its methods than you may expect from a larger study within an academic rather than practice context. It also important to note this paper is now over 20 years old and therefore is less likely to be comparable to current experiences of PM for ST.

2.2. Nelson (2003)

'PM: A Citizenship Entitlement at Tanfield School' by Anne Nelson (2003) reviewed the use of PM for ST as part of the school's citizenship curriculum. The project aimed to strengthen links between older and younger pupils and ease the school transition.

During the first phase, three mentors met their Year 6 mentees once before the summer holidays and then multiple times once they had begun Year 7. Frequency of sessions was agreed by the pair based on the mentee's needs.

A self-report questionnaire and structured interviews found that mentors reported choosing to volunteer because they wanted to help younger students and make a difference. All three mentors felt they had helped their mentee settle in, grow in confidence and develop their communication skills. They all reported thinking the scheme should continue, but that there should be more sessions prior to the transition to help build the relationship prior to transition.

All the mentees reported feeling glad to hear they would have a mentor and feeling less worried knowing they would have a friend in secondary school. All mentees felt the sessions had made them feel more confident and helped with specific problems like finding their way around school. They all felt the programme should continue, but that the sessions should be more frequent and begin earlier in primary school. All the mentees wanted to be trained as mentors to help other people.

This feedback was used as a rationale to expand into a second phase with sixty Year 9 pupils. A positive internal evaluation of the second phase led to the development of a third phase which included sessions beginning earlier in primary school and occurring on a more frequent basis. All Year 10 students were trained as mentors and allocated to Year 6 mentees. Mentees reported increased confidence and a less daunting transition. Mentors reported feeling more confident, more focused on their learning and having a greater sense of self-esteem.

This evaluation shows how PM for ST can be successfully expanded to benefit whole year groups both by teaching curriculum-based skills and developing support within the school community. It provides a picture of co-development in the way the expansion was guided by participants' feedback.

However, the published evaluation focuses only on the small first-phase project. Although the author shares how internal evaluation produced positive results, these are not evidenced and cannot be critically evaluated. This information could allow comparison between different aspects of different phases, for example, the use of matching. The author's conclusions therefore must be considered in the project's specific context and the small sample size limits the generalisability of the findings.

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

'Big Brothers Big Sisters: Mobilising PS in schools: An evaluation of the BBBS school based mentoring' by Brady et al. (2012) evaluates an Irish SBPMP for transition run by the charity 'Foróige'. Students in their first year of secondary school (age 12-14) were mentored by an older student (age 15-19). The project aimed to support younger students through ST by providing them with a safe space where they could build a supportive friendship to help develop their self-esteem and confidence. It was hoped that mentors would develop leadership experience which could benefit their personal and professional development.

Pairs met in a group setting for 40 minutes a week for seven months, facilitated and supervised by a teacher. The project was run across 65 schools; this report involved the following sample: 38 teachers, 50 mentees, 56 mentors and 12 programme staff. Evaluation was carried out using one-to-one interviews and focus groups. Mentors reported wanting to become involved to help others, develop skills and have fun. They believed mentees benefited from having an older student to talk to, through developing confidence and being less likely to be bullied. They felt the programme could be improved with more planning and supervision.

Mentees said they thought the programme was about having an older student who you could talk to and could help with your problems. They said they chose to take part to meet new people, have fun and become more familiar with the school. They felt the benefits were making new friends and knowing there was someone to look out for them. They felt more activities and outings would improve the project.

Teachers reported the programme helped mentees to feel more safe, secure and settled and to develop support networks. They suggested mentoring improved confidence and self-esteem and reduced bullying. Teachers felt the peer element of programme was key to its success and complemented teacher-led support. They reported choosing an external programme because it had an established evidence base. They identified the challenges as timetabling issues, teacher workload, selection, absenteeism and unsuccessful matches.

The interviews with charity staff who co-ordinated the programmes revealed ways in which schools may be non-compliant with the programme: using group mentoring rather than one-to-one, making cross-gender matches and not organising sessions weekly.

The authors concluded that the programme could be considered a model of good practice, as it included the key aspects identified within the literature:

screening, training, evaluation and supervision. They suggested that the responses from interviewees confirmed the programme met its aims.

This report provides qualitative evidence for positive social outcomes of a PM for ST with a large sample size and respondents from a range of different roles. This programme took a different approach to previously reviewed programmes, by beginning mentoring sessions in the mentee's first year of secondary school rather than their last year of primary school. This approach changes the focus from preparation to supporting the mentee's integration into their new school.

An important point for consideration is that the sample was selected based on the schools' fidelity to the model; this allows for more in-depth understanding of how the programme works as it was designed, however, this approach prevents the exploration of the effects of poor fidelity to the model.

2.4. Brady, Dolan and Canavan (2014)

Brady et al's (2014) paper uses the data from Brady et al's (2012) report but focuses on the teachers' perspectives. The interviews with 21 link teachers and 17 head teachers were thematically analysed leading to the development of 5 key themes: the young person being more likely to listen to and seek support from an older peer, a supportive relationship with decreased power imbalance, support in day-to-day interactions, a sustainable relationship, and challenging the negative power dynamics that can exist between older and younger students. Three themes focused on challenges were also identified: timetabling difficulties, added workload for the link teacher and deciding how students are selected.

They concluded that PS is not a panacea to the difficulties of YP, but it offers a valuable adjunct to adult-led support. They suggest that this programme mobilises support between older and younger students and offers uniquely tailored support which may not be available through other sources. This paper

has the benefit of having the context of the wider report, but also being able to focus more deeply on one frame of perspective. It would be of benefit to also have this level of analysis applied to the interviews with mentees, mentors and facilitators.

3.0. THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

This part of the literature review will focus on describing the context and development of the project analysed in this paper.

3.1. The Mentoring Programme Model

The MP is a PMP developed and implemented by a community charity and funded by the Department of Health. The project trains peer mentors to mentor younger mentees who may be experiencing emotional difficulties with the aim of building a supportive relationship and promoting help-seeking to prevent the development of MH difficulties. The programme consists of 10 two-hour mentoring sessions, facilitated by youth workers (YWs), who are supervised by psychologists and a psychiatrist.

This particular project recruited mentees from an alternative provision nurture programme in a primary school. This nurture programme was provided for students with social, emotional and mental health needs, which were not able to be met in the standard provision. Therefore, an aim of this project was to specifically provide additional support through PM for mentees who have been identified as 'vulnerable'.

The MP was developed based on 5 Core Principles of PS for Children and YP's MH and Emotional Wellbeing:

- Work where YP 'are at'

- Involve the right people

- Focus on relationships

- YP's ownership

- Be safe and boundaried

These principles were developed in a consultation with YP, in-depth description of each principle is included in Appendix D.

3.2. Rationale for the Transition Project

Peer mentoring research findings were used to develop the MP for secondary school students to help prevent MH difficulties for YP. Feedback from the original programme found mentors developed new skills and felt they had helped their mentees. Mentees reported being able to talk about things they could not with other people and feeling listened to. Following this positive participant feedback and school requests, a PM project was developed for ST.

The standard application of the MP has now been evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively by an outside agency [reference removed to protect participant anonymity]. This report is described in Appendix E.

3.3. Research Rationale

3.3.1. Originality

There are numerous studies examining 'PM' and 'ST' as separate constructs but limited research into 'PM for ST'. The author has identified no UK research in this area since 2003 (Nelson, 2003). Existing research has mainly been carried out by those who are running the programme, limiting objectivity. There is only one piece of research which uses thematic analysis rather than the

presentation of raw data (Brady et al., 2014); this lack of analysis limits the depth in which the data is explored. The current study will add to a small evidence base and provide a different perspective through its independence from the project and the use of thematic analysis.

This study is the first in the UK to evaluate a project which engages mentees transitioning to mainstream secondary school after being in alternative education due to experiencing emotional, social, and MH difficulties during primary school.

This research will focus on the providers of the programme in the school: the mentors and teachers. This approach aims to provide a more comprehensive exploration of the experience of delivering the programme as these perspectives are less examined in current research than the experience of mentees. By focusing on providers this study will provide original insight and allow for a more in-depth analysis which would not be possible with the time and resources available if the experiences of mentees were included. Further to this, another project within the research hub explored the experiences of mentees' and facilitators' experience of a PM for ST project based in a different area but using the same model (Lakin, 2020). Therefore, having one research project focusing on the providers and one on the receivers was seen to be a complementary approach, providing more original findings to the field.

This research investigates which psychological mechanisms are involved in the experience of change from this group's perspective. Psychological mechanisms of PM have not been studied previously and has been an exploratory approach recommended by previous research (Karcher, 2005a).

From a wider perspective, there is a sparsity of research which focuses on the voice of the young person (Greig et al., 2013). This study aims to incorporate the voice of the young person both through having a young person consultant

co-develop aspects of the research design and by having the mentors' experiences as central to the findings of this study.

3.3.2. Relevance to Clinical Psychology

A great number of MH difficulties have been found to develop during childhood (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2010b) providing a strong rationale for increased research focus on PAEI in childhood to a reduce distress across the lifespan (McGee et al., 2003) and help to reduce pressure on CAMHS. Research into the experiences of mentors and teachers and their views on processes of change in PM for ST provides a more in-depth understanding into how this PAEI approach could reduce distress for mentees. This development in knowledge could improve the effectiveness of the approach leading to further reduced distress.

Psychology has a societal role to not just treat difficulties but to prevent potential distress and promote well-being. Researching PAEI programmes for YP benefits the development of interventions which can be widely accessed by YP to promote well-being.

Within this project model, clinical psychologists were involved in developing the model and on a continued basis in supervising the facilitators and having input in the supervision of mentors. This represents a way clinical psychologists can become involved in PAEI projects at a community level, in a way that can impact many more young people than could be seen in this time-frame through traditional one-to-one therapy.

3.4. Research Questions

Through consideration of the current evidence base, the following research questions were formulated:

- How do mentors describe their experiences of a PM project for ST?
- How do mentors understand any process of change related to PM?
- How do teachers describe their experiences of a PM project for ST?
- How do teachers understand any process of change related to PM?

4.0. METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the epistemological position taken within this research and then the methodological approach and process, providing context for the development and setting of the project. The author will outline the process of thematic analysis and explore personal reflexivity.

4.1. Epistemology and Ontology

The research takes a critical realist epistemological stance; an approach which accepts an observable material reality whilst acknowledging that this is also a social world where observation is fallible (Trochim et al., 2016). This stance has been taken because the study focuses on the school system which functions based on a material reality of many concepts such as 'curriculum'.

Braun and Clarke (2006) describe how a critical realist stance recognises that people make meaning of their experiences and therefore social context influences these meanings; however, it allows the researcher to retain a focus on the material reality. It is recognised that there is an inherent subjectivity in the production of knowledge (Madill et al., 2000), but it is contended that a reality exists outside of this discourse (Willig, 1999). Therefore, within the research context, critical realists do not view data as a direct parallel of reality, however, they assume the data can still shed light on reality (Harper, 2011); a reality that should be understood as 'imperfectly apprehendable' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This research takes an ontologically realist position; a position that relies on the belief that external reality does not rely on the cognitive structures of the interpreting researchers. Therefore, the subject matter of the research is assumed to be real; in this case the concept of PM for ST.

Taking this approach allows for the analysis of data to go beyond the level of the text and to explore meaning, to explore the experiences of mentors and teachers. The combination of critically realist epistemological and ontologically realist positions facilitates an analysis which can hold onto what the participants consider as external realities, whilst also critically exploring how multiple contexts influence this construction of meaning.

4.2. Rationale for Qualitative Approach

This research is exploratory in nature and a qualitative approach allows for the exploration, rather than measurement, of personal and social meanings ascribed to experiences. This approach allows for the production of descriptive data with an emphasis on social context and meaning. Thompson and Harper (2012) highlight how this leads to researchers being able to develop an understanding of participants experiences, a central aim in this research.

4.3. Rationale for Thematic Analysis

Prior to selecting Thematic Analysis (TA) as the most appropriate research method for this study, numerous other qualitative approaches were considered:

The primary aim of Grounded Theory (GT) is to produce new theory guided by data (Green & Thorogood, 2010). GT was considered with the potential aim of producing a new theory about the psychological mechanisms involved in PM for ST. However, the aims of this research were to perform a preliminary exploratory analysis in an area with little other research to understand the experiences of mentors and teachers. Therefore, it was decided that TA would be more appropriate than GT to facilitate the initial evidence base with the hope that further research would aim to develop theory.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) aims to analyse how people make sense of their personal and social worlds (Smith & Osborn, 2008). This core aim would fit with this study's aims. However, IPA requires a homogenous sample for its form of analysis which is not provided through this study, as there are both mentors and teachers.

Discourse Analysis was discounted as this form of analysis focuses on the use of language in the construction of reality (Willig, 2009) and this analysis of language was not an aim of the study.

Braun and Clarke (2006) describe TA as a qualitative method which is used to identify and analyse patterns of meaning and to allow for data to be organised and described by themes. Thematic analysis was judged to be most appropriate for this study primarily for its exploratory nature and its lack of attachment to a single theoretical approach. Therefore, the epistemological and ontological position could be selected based on the frame of the research.

4.4. Development of the Research Project

This research project was developed primarily through the author's research supervisor's existing relationship with the MP. The supervisor works in the area where the MP had been piloted and approached the strategic lead of the programme to see if they would like a doctoral student to evaluate their projects.

Research hub meetings were organised including two doctoral students, the supervisor, the facilitators of the MP and researchers from the external evaluation teams. The first research hub meeting was used to plan which projects were chosen for evaluation. For this study, the ST with mentees recruited from a nurture programme was selected. For the other student, a project was selected in a different borough with mentees recruited from the mainstream Year 6 classes. This meeting was also used to plan which groups of participants would be interviewed and the best ways to approach recruitment.

Following this, meetings with the supervisor were used to discuss approaches to different aspects of the research and meetings with the research hub to share updates on research projects.

4.5. Co-Development Consultation with Young People

This study was developed in collaboration with a young person consultant. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989) states that, *'children have the right to express views freely in all matters affecting the child'* (Article 12), as well as the *'freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds'* (Article 13). In application to research, researchers have a responsibility to empower the children they are researching to voice their own views, as well as finding ways to effectively listen to the child.

Numerous benefits of co-developing research with children have been identified: reducing the power imbalance between the researcher and participant; gaining better insider knowledge; providing positive peer role modelling and enhancing validity of findings and providing learning opportunities (Greig et al., 2013). However, there is limited evidence supporting these benefits (Hill et al., 2004) and it is important to consider how the constraints of real world research may limit the impact of co-development (Davis, 2009).

The young person consultant was a mentor who had volunteered from a different MP. This had the benefits of the young person having 'insider knowledge' whilst also not reducing the potential pool of mentors who could be interviewed in the study. The young person was provided with an information sheet (see Appendix F) and completed a consent form (including parental consent) (see Appendix G).

I met with the young person at a time that suited them within the school day in a classroom. The young person was asked for their perspective on the design of the study; they were encouraged to draw this out in a mind map. Then the same

was done for the interview schedules for both mentors and teachers. The young person also annotated copies of the schedules, particularly where they felt words needed changing.

The feedback was then reflected on with the research team and the following changes were made:

- Changing of wording from helpful/unhelpful to good/bad to be more easily understood
- Incorporating questions on how the mentors were selected as the young person reported being chosen rather than volunteering
- Adding a question about how mentors found the matching process as they discussed how 'speed mentoring' was a memorable part of the programme and important for building the relationship
- When asking what was good/bad about the mentoring, using prompts if needed: 'Did it affect your schoolwork?' 'Did the mentees come to see you outside of sessions?'

4.6. Design

Taking a critical realist approach to the research questions, this study aimed to explore PM for ST through the thematic analysis of dialogue produced in semi-structured interviews (see appendices H and I for interview schedules) with the MP mentors and teachers.

Potter & Hepburn (2005) critically evaluated semi-structured interviews (SSIs) and noted that responses can be shaped by the questions asked in schedule. This was addressed by encouraging participants to talk freely and openly; using the interview schedule as a guide rather than a rigid script. They specified that a key problem in this design is when the researcher ignores the interactional element of the interview and analyses data as if the interviewer's contributions

have no impact. This was considered by including all the interviewer's contributions in the transcripts for coding and using a research journal to pay attention to personal reflexivity, as well as exploring the impact of this in the discussion chapter.

The SSI schedule was developed in discussion with the research supervisor and the research hub. The young person consultant's feedback was then used to adapt the schedule accordingly.

4.7. The Mentoring Programme Description

Based on the core principles described in the previous chapter and Appendix D, the MP team developed a training manual for peer mentors and a structure for a SBPM project. Prior to the mentoring sessions beginning, the mentors attended a 2-day training course delivering the following modules: *the mentoring role; change; it's all about relationships; taking care;* and *taking notice*. The training encouraged the mentors to explore issues and themes through activities, discussion and role play.

Once this training was completed and the mentees were selected by the school (either self-referred or asked if they wanted to take part by a teacher), then the mentoring sessions began. There were 10 mentoring sessions planned; the first session involved 'speed mentoring' where each mentee and mentor speak for 1 minute and use this experience to provide a confidential preference for their match. These preferences were used to form pairs which were then announced in the second session before the mentoring begins. Each mentor-mentee pair were allocated space to meet as a pair in a larger room, to provide a sense of privacy but also allow adequate supervision. There were board games and pens and paper available if they wished to do activities whilst speaking. They met for approximately 45 minutes before the mentees went back to class and the mentors met for a 45-minute supervision session with the facilitator. This aimed

to provide the space for mentors to reflect on what went well and how to tackle any challenges.

4.8. Participants

The participants were recruited using purposive sampling with the support of the MP facilitators. Five mentors were interviewed from three different secondary schools who all participated in this specific MP, which recruited mentees from a nurture programme. Five teachers were interviewed; two from the primary school nurture programme and three from the three different secondary schools.

This MP involved six mentors; this research project involves the interviewing of all but one mentor, who did not gain parental consent. Four of the mentors identified as female and one identified as a male. Ages ranged from 13 years 9 months to 14 years 6 months at the time of interview. The average age of mentors was 14 years 0 months. The mentors described their ethnic identities as Black–African, Asian–Bangladeshi, White-Albanian and two mentors identified as White-English.

Due to a combination of mentees leaving the nurture programme prior to the programme beginning and mentees attending different secondary schools to those expected, there were two sets of paired mentors who mentored one mentee together. To contextualise this in the analysis and findings, the paired mentors were Rachel and Kirsty, and Millie and her co-mentor who was not interviewed (pseudonyms used to protect participant anonymity). Rashid and Julia were sole mentors to one mentee each.

This MP involved one primary school nurture programme and three secondary schools. Two teaching assistants from the primary school nurture programme were interviewed; at the time of the MP, the nurture programme was run by these two teaching assistants and one teacher, who no longer works at the

school and so could not be interviewed. The three teachers were the link teachers for the MP in each of the participating secondary schools. All five teachers identified as female. Four teachers described their ethnic identities as White-English and one teacher described their ethnic identity as Black-African.

The schools involved were all state schools in a London borough. These schools are located in a multicultural borough with relatively high levels of poverty and disability compared to other boroughs. Only general information is provided to protect the anonymity of participants.

4.9. Ethical Considerations

4.9.1. Informed Consent

All participants were provided with an information sheet (see appendices J and K) explaining the research aims, design and procedure.

A consent form (see appendices L and M) was completed by all participants. Before the interviews began, participants were reminded they could withdraw from the interview at any point. Researcher contact details were provided on the information sheet and participants were encouraged to make contact if they had any questions or requests. They were again told at the end of the interview that they could withdraw their data at any point.

Participants had also provided individual and parental consent to the MP before becoming a mentor and to the external evaluators. As the mentors were under eighteen, parental consent was also obtained (see Appendix L).

4.9.2. Confidentiality

The following demographic data was collected (see appendices N and O for demographic data sheet) from participants: age, primary and secondary school,

gender identity and ethnic identity. Once collected, data was anonymised and stored securely.

Interview voice recordings were encrypted and stored as a password-protected file until the transcript was produced. The transcript was anonymised by removing identifying data and then encrypted and stored as a password-protected file. I produced the transcripts and these were only read by myself and my supervisor. The research report maintains this anonymity; with no identifying data included in quotes.

These confidentiality procedures were explained to participants before the interview began; as well as being included in the consent form and information sheet. They were also informed that confidentiality may be broken if risk of harm to self or others was identified; however, this was not necessary as a result of any of the interviews that took place. They were reminded that they were welcome to discuss any queries with myself, or they could inform their teacher who could contact me and reminded that they could withdraw their data at any point if they wished to. However, this did not occur throughout the process.

4.9.3. Debriefing

Debrief sheets (see appendices P and Q) were provided to all participants, adapted to be age-appropriate for mentors. These described the research questions, reiterated the right to withdraw and provided contact details for further questions and support.

4.9.4. Ethical Approval

The charity running the MP provided a letter evidencing consent for the recruitment of their mentors and link teachers (see Appendix R). UEL ethical approval was obtained prior to the research commencing (see Appendix S and T for ethical approval certificates).

4.10. Recruitment

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling. The MP studied was planned to include 14 mentors from seven different secondary schools and 14 mentees. However, when the first mentoring session started there were only 10 students in the primary school nurture programme, therefore eight mentors paired up to mentor one mentee together. This group met for three mentoring sessions which occurred before the summer term at the primary school. Following the summer holidays, the MP facilitators contacted the secondary schools to arrange the seven mentoring sessions planned to occur in the autumn term. They only received a response from three of the seven secondary schools and therefore could only continue sessions with the six mentors and four mentees in these three schools. This level of drop out from the project will be explored in the discussion chapter.

I was provided with contact details of these three schools by the MP team. The research contacted each school by email and/or phone to discuss whether they would be interested in participating in the research. All three schools said they would be interested so they were sent information sheets and consent forms for both the mentors and teacher. A time was arranged to set up the interview if they were happy to provide their consent, and if the mentor's parents were also consenting.

4.11. Data collection

4.11.1. Mentor Interviews

Mentor interviews were arranged to occur at school within school hours. These interviews were designed to occur jointly in the two schools where there were two mentors to promote discussion between different perspectives. Rachel and Kirsty mentored one mentee together and were interviewed jointly. Millie also had a co-mentor who was not interviewed due to not gaining parental consent,

so she was interviewed alone. Rashid and Julia were sole mentors to one mentee each and were interviewed jointly.

For each interview, a room was allocated by the school and a time was found that best fitted the mentor's timetable. All interviews were concluded within an hour. This provided a private and quiet space to allow for mentors to speak freely. Interviews began with an introduction and explaining the purpose of the interview and the research and answering any questions the mentors had. Consent forms and demographic sheets were collected. Mentors were reminded of the standards of anonymity in the study and that they could withdraw at any point. They were reminded that if they spoke about anything that could indicate risk of harm to themselves or others, confidentiality may have to be broken and reported to their school. All mentees agreed with these terms, so the interviews proceeded.

The interviews were guided by an interview schedule (see Appendix H), but mentors were encouraged to respond freely to these questions with no restriction to their answers. Where there were two mentors in an interview, if only one mentor answered the question, the other mentor was prompted as to whether they would like to add their perspective. The interviews were concluded by thanking the mentors for their participation and giving them their debrief sheets. They were again reminded they could withdraw at any point if they wished and my contact details were highlighted on the debrief form for this purpose.

The interviews were recorded on a digital audio recording device. Once complete, the recordings of the interviews were transferred onto a password-protected computer and deleted from the Dictaphone. The single interview had a duration of 36 minutes and 40 seconds; the joint interviews had durations of 43 minutes and 25 seconds and 49 minutes and 6 seconds.

<u>4.11.2. Teacher Interviews</u>

All teachers were interviewed separately due to them working in different schools and it not being logistically possible to interview them together. The two teachers in the primary school nurture programme could not find a time to be interviewed together and so were interviewed separately.

Three of the teachers' interviews occurred face-to-face during school time in an allocated space within the school. Interviews were conducted using the same process as the mentors' interviews but with an interview schedule designed specifically for the teacher's perspective (see Appendix I).

Two of the teachers' interviews were conducted over the phone as they could not find the time to meet in-person. Interviews were conducted through the same process, but consent and demographic forms were collected electronically, and the debriefing form was sent electronically.

The interviews that took place in person had durations of 29 minutes and 30 seconds, 45 minutes and 38 seconds and 44 minutes and 51 seconds. The telephone interviews had durations of 29 minutes and 51 seconds and 19 minutes and 45 seconds. The durations varied much more widely for teachers due to their differing availability, the impact of this on the data is considered in the discussion chapter.

4.12. Process of Thematic Analysis

The process of TA followed the 6-step process developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), therefore the description of the current study's process of TA has been framed within these steps.

An inductive approach to TA was taken; a 'bottom-up' approach where codes and themes are developed purely through analysis of the data. This contrasts

with a theoretical approach where identification of codes and themes are driven by existing theoretical findings. An inductive approach leads to themes developed which are closely linked to the data set (Patton, 1990) and do not need to be fitted into a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The TA was conducted at a latent level, interpreting the data at a deeper level by examining the underlying ideas, conceptualisations and assumptions in participants' responses. This allowed for a more in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and the mechanisms of change in PM.

4.12.1. Familiarising Yourself

This initial stage involves firstly transcribing the data, the process of transcription involved typing up audio accounts verbatim, differentiated by which participant was speaking. Once the transcriptions were completed, I read and re-read the data and captured initial ideas using a research journal (See Appendix U for excerpts).

4.12.2. Generating Initial Codes

The next stage involved creating codes for insightful features of the data across the data sets. At this stage, the mentors' and teachers' transcripts were separated to allow for a separation of codes and themes by these groups. This allowed more in-depth analysis into the separate experiences of mentors and teachers to fulfil the research questions.

To enable this process, each transcript was printed onto different coloured paper; the same colour was then used to identify data attributed to a code. This allowed a visualisation of how participants' responses were spread across codes. On each transcript the right margin was used to mark where codes had been attributed (see Appendix V for example of transcript with potential codes annotated). This process allowed for cross-referencing across transcripts, codes and eventually, themes. When codes were identified, they were written on index cards and the data attributed to each code was written on the back of

this card with the colour of the transcript, again allowing for visual cross-referencing across the data set (see Appendix W for examples of this process).

4.12.3. Searching for Themes

Once the coding process was complete, the index cards with each code on were rearranged in different ways to consider connections between codes and how they could be grouped into themes. Using index cards allowed for a visual representation of all the codes at one time and freedom to test out different groupings (See Appendix X for an example of this representation). The attributed data on the back of each index card allowed for a concurrent deeper understanding of each code, facilitating a search for themes which continuously fed back into the original data.

4.12.4. Reviewing Themes

Themes were then continually reviewed according to their relation to both the codes and the original data attributed to each code. Special attention was paid to the spread of participants' responses across codes and themes. Once the codes and themes were felt to represent the responses of the participants, the process of organising a thematic map began. The codes on index cards were used to visually represent the themes and were moved around to try out different map combinations (See Appendix Y for an example of this representation). This process was repeated until the thematic map was felt to best represent the responses of participants.

4.12.5. Defining and Naming

Once the map was constructed, I began defining and naming sub-themes and then themes. Both the codes and the original data set were referred to, as well as consideration of the groupings, to construct clear names and definitions for each theme and sub-theme. These names and definitions aim to not just encompass the codes, but also describe the overall story of the data.

<u>4.12.6. Producing the Report</u>

Once this process was complete, the extracts felt to represent most fully and add most interest to the exploration of themes were selected. The analysis of these extracts was then used to describe the experiences of the participants and represent the story of the data.

4.13. Quality Checking for Thematic Analysis Framework

My supervisor reviewed and coded a single transcript. This was then used to compare approaches and interpretations. This facilitated discussion about how to best represent the responses of participants. This allowed me to raise my awareness of how my assumptions and expectations impact on the analysis and to be more purposeful about attending to the areas which could be more easily missed.

4.14. Reflexivity

As I take a critical-realist epistemological approach, I recognise that I am not just an objective observer, but someone whose subjective interpretation leads to a co-production of results (Silverman, 1997). Therefore it is important to reflect on how I influence the development and carrying out of the research, particularly interviews, and the interpretation of its data (Willig, 2001).

I am a 29-year-old White British female who has lived in London for 10 years. I was raised in a town outside London, in a family which cared for foster children from when I was the age of 12. I believe this experience led to my awareness of the lack of emotional support available for children in distress. This has led to a passion for working to increase provision of accessible MH support through educational settings. This passion led to my interest in research with YP in educational settings.

I am aware that although I now live in the local area, I have not had the experience of growing up and going to school in London. Throughout the research I have tried to attend to how my assumptions and expectations about going to school and ST may have affected the questions I ask and how I interacted with participants. Consultation with a young person was particularly helpful in recognising that my own experience was very different to that of the YP I was speaking to. Further to this, I feel it is important to consider how my whiteness has also privileged my experiences. I have not experienced the racism in multiple dimensions in the way many of my participants will have and it was important that I try to maintain awareness of how my privilege has affected my assumptions.

To increase my awareness of personal reflexivity, I kept a research journal throughout the research process. This allowed me to record my reflections and facilitated evaluations of my subjective responses to the development of the research, the interview process and the interpretation of the data (Finlay & Gough, 2003). This process also promoted transparency when it came to my own assumptions and expectations (Willig, 2013). Excerpts from the research journal can be found in Appendix U.

5.0. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of the mentors' and teachers' descriptions of their experience of the PMP organised by themes and sub-themes developed through thematic analysis of the interview data. They are illustrated with extracts to demonstrate how participants' data has formed the themes, with pseudonyms and line numbers.

It is important to note that these themes are described as distinct, however, within the interviews these themes overlapped and interacted. Further to this, I recognise my own subjective influence on developing the themes from the data.

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

- How do mentors describe their experiences of a PM project for ST?

- How do mentors understand any process of change related to PM?

- How do teachers describe their experiences of a PM project for ST?

- How do teachers understand any process of change related to PM?

5.1. Mentor Interview Data
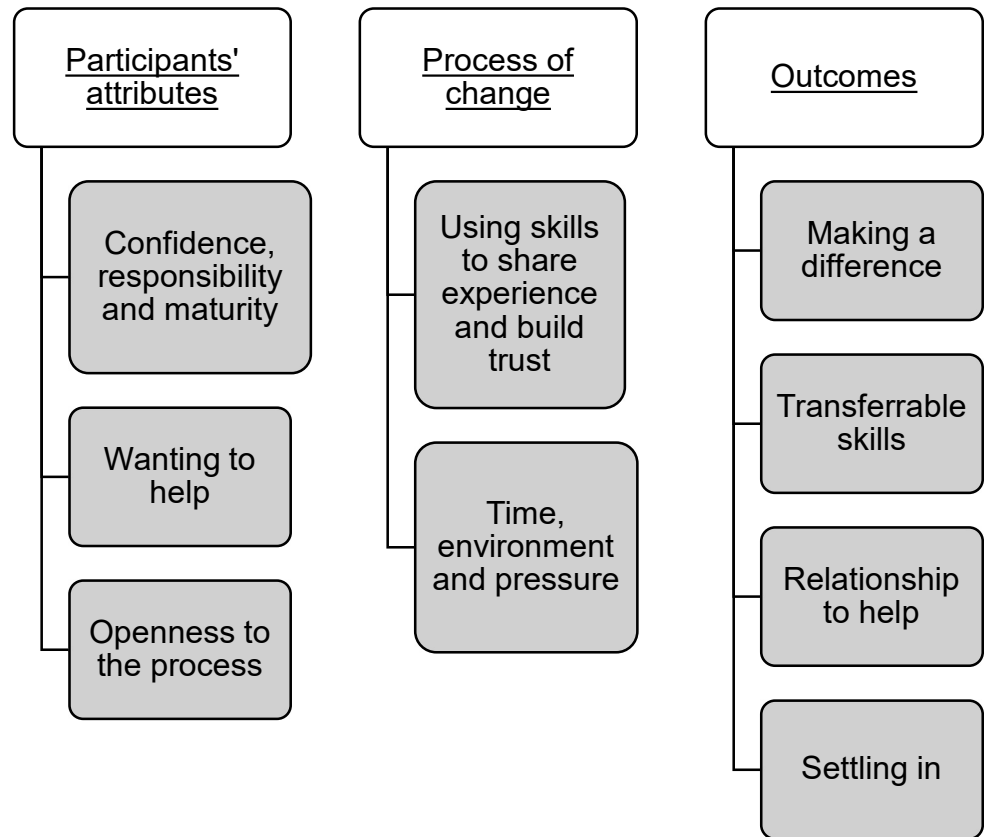
Figure 1. Thematic map derived from mentor interview data.

5.1.1. Theme 1: Participants' Attributes

When discussing what went well, mentors focused almost exclusively on the kind of people involved in the programme. These discussions arose in response to questions about why they thought they were asked to be involved and their motivations. Discussions developed through speaking about how the training focused on these traits and how the mentoring relationship led to positive change for themselves and their mentees.

5.1.1.1. Maturity, responsibility and confidence: All mentors discussed characteristics they felt were reasons they were selected as mentors: confidence, responsibility and maturity. They described developing these through training which enabled them to be more effective mentors.

Rashid: 637

> Erm for me, I feel like we were chosen because of how responsible and mature we were.

Rashid attributed their selection to their teacher believing they were responsible and mature enough to manage the role; this position agreed upon by the teacher in their interview. Selection based on a perceived high level of commitment and consistency from mentors has been found to improve outcomes for mentees due to the reduced chance of poor attendance (Karcher, 2005, 2007; Lakes & Karcher, 2005). Although 'responsibility and maturity' and 'commitment and consistency' are not directly comparable characteristics, it could be proposed that responsibility and maturity incorporate the elements of commitment and consistency.

Millie: 99

> I mean I'm just like an outgoing person anyway. So I don't think anything like really awkward. Because I think if we didn't learn the skills, we wouldn't have been as confident as we were.

Millie identifies how her pre-existing trait of being outgoing allowed her to fulfil her role. She goes on to recognise how this trait was reinforced and developed through the training programme. This follows existing findings that high self-efficacy ratings in mentors which are reinforced by training and support can improve outcomes for mentees (Karcher, Nakkula, & Harris, 2005).

5.1.1.2. *Wanting to help*: Three of the five mentors identified 'wanting to help others' as a key motivation for taking part. This linked to 'making a difference' as a rewarding outcome and appreciating developing skills in knowing how to help younger people. It was striking to hear how outward-looking all the mentors interviewed were and their passion for helping others. This motivation was echoed in Brady et al.'s (2012) study where mentors reported wanting to become involved in PM to help others.

Kirsty: 499

Because I've always wanted to help a load of people. And he kind of reminded me of my brother.

Kirsty's choice of language in how she's 'always wanted to help a load of people' indicates that helping people is an important and constant value in her life. Going further she connects this to a personal motive, seeing a need for this support in her own brother gives her another form of connection to the project.

Millie: 75

Like, we all like helping people and have similar personalities, but we had our own thing to bring as well.

Millie: 83

Yeah, we all wanted to, like no one was lazy about it, no one really didn't want to do it. We were all passionate about it.

Millie focused on how the group of mentors bonded in training over their shared passion for helping people. She identified how this connected with them having similar personalities and developing social bonds within the training programme, whilst maintaining individual and unique qualities. Existing literature has identified that programmes that recruit mentors with a greater social-interest and lower self-interest as motivations are more likely to report successful outcomes (Karcher, 2007; Karcher & Lindwall, 2003)

5.1.1.3. Openness to the process: Three mentors identified characteristics of mentees that they felt contributed to an effective mentoring relationship; this was encompassed by the concept of 'openness to the process'.

Millie: 447

I did think it was gonna be like, I thought it was gonna be worse than this, like, he wouldn't want to talk to me. Like, I had, like, all these questions. What's he gonna be like? But then when I met him, I was like, Oh, yeah, this is gonna be alright.

Millie expressed an expectation that her mentee might not want to talk to her and therefore would be difficult to engage. However, she suggests that when she met him, she realised they could talk together, and this was an important part of why their mentoring relationship worked well.

Millie: 244

And he was fine to sit down like after he had run around. He was fine to sit down. But like everyone else was struggling to get everyone to sit down, but he was like fine.

She further describes a situation when her mentee's engagement enabled their relationship in comparison to others where the mentor had to work harder to get their mentee to sit down and talk to them.

Rachel: 475

I thought it was gonna be a bit more engaging. And like, we could actually like, have a good talk. But it just really wasn't.

In contrast, Rachel talks about how the difficulty of engaging her mentee challenged her expectations of would PM would be like. She emphasises how her mentee's reluctance to be engage, limited their connection and the opportunity to 'have a good talk' and potentially use this to enact positive change. Karcher (2007) suggested that mentees should be supported and taught how to best utilise the support of their mentor for the best programme outcomes.

<u>5.1.2. Theme 2: Process of Change</u>

Mentors focused heavily on what they thought made the mentoring beneficial for themselves and their mentee; these mechanisms centred on how they built their relationship and how this relationship could lead to rewarding outcomes. They widened the frame of discussion by talking about the challenges they faced. This allowed for discussion of what key elements were needed for a programme to run successfully and how they might design things differently to overcome these challenges.

5.1.2.1. Using skills to share experience and build trust: Four mentors spoke about using skills they had developed in training to build their relationship with their mentee. One of these key skills was tailoring their practice to their individual mentee. There was discussion about how their training helped them to do this, but also the sense that the mentor's pre-existing relationship building skills fed into these abilities. Further to this, mentors highlighted the importance of having shared experience of transition and school-life with their mentee which helped to build trust and to offer practical support.

Millie: 203

So, like, we had the skills to talk to him, at some points it was awkward, but like, because we knew those skills, we like we didn't make it awkward anymore. And that I think, without the training we would go in and we would quite struggle to find something to talk about.

Millie focuses on how training enabled communication skills and that without this, talking and therefore relationship building would have been a greater challenge. In line with Millie's suggestion that trained skills enabled relationship building, Karcher (2007) found without sufficient support and training impacts would be significantly decreased or negative.

Kirsty: 543

So, we would play whilst I asked him questions, and then he would calm down once he did a bit of colouring. And so, I would ask him questions once he was calm.

Kirsty gives an example of a time where she has used skills over time to identify what her mentee needs to feel calm and engage with talking; a foundation to the mentoring relationship. This example links to previous findings that structured programmes have much greater impact than unstructured (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Karcher, 2007). This mentor explains how a structured activity gave rise to her mentee feeling more comfortable and open to engage with talking.

All mentors referred to building trust over time as a mechanism in developing the mentoring relationship. Some mentors referred to trust directly, and some referenced the concept in how the mentee became more comfortable over time.

Rashid: 278

So, when I first met him, he wouldn't like, open up that much. He wasn't talking. I was trying to like, I was trying to lead the conversation. And then I was told that with A, you have to repeat some stuff. Most of the time, because he would have, like, trouble trying to understand. And also, like, as time went on, I feel like he began to trust, like, he began to trust me.

Rashid describes how he helped his mentee to 'open up' by tailoring his communication to their needs. He discusses how over time the mentee felt heard and began to trust him.

Kirsty: 635

> Yeah, because at first, he was like, he put up walls to keep us out. But they were slowly breaking down. And I got to know him a lot more. And he became a lot nicer.

Kirsty describes the change in relationship over time through the metaphor of breaking down walls suggesting communication barriers were put up by the mentee to protect his vulnerability. As they spent more time together, the mentee trusted her more and felt more able to show vulnerability. Connected to this, Brady, Dolan and Canavan (2017) suggested that PM provided 'emotional support', defined as providing information that raises the mentee's awareness that they are cared for (Cobb, 1976). This can be identified in these extracts as mentees are described as becoming more comfortable and building trust so they can be more open to emotional support from their mentor.

Three mentors discussed how their shared peer experience with their mentee gave them the opportunity to be relatable, reassure them about secondary school and use their specialist knowledge to problem solve together.

Millie: 221

> We already knew what it was like to be a year 6 kid. And we related to that. So whenever like he was doing something, we could relate our stories to that and then be like, 'Oh, yeah, this happened last week, as well', and like, we just always had like anecdotes and personal stories.

Millie: 421

> And then yeah, it just helped him a bit, I think. Knowing that someone else has gone through that. And they've told him their story.

Millie references her specialist knowledge of 'being a year 6 kid'. She links how this made them more relatable mentors and sharing these experiences was

reassuring for their mentee. Past studies have supported the supposition that peers are uniquely placed to provide the most effective support above adult-led support due to improved relatability and shared experience (Cowie, 2009; Dolan & Brady, 2012; Topping, 1996).

> Julia: 386
>
> And I think they, I think they got quite nervous when it came to exams, because they thought 'Oh God, this is like...', but then I explained to them that they're just progress checks throughout the year to make sure that you're doing well, I think, I think it came to a shock to them how, how more responsible, they needed to be.

Julia acknowledges how secondary school brought many new anxiety-provoking experiences for mentees. She speaks of how she used her specialist knowledge to reassure her mentee and explain a concept which may have otherwise gone unexplained. Previous findings have identified a source of sufficient information about the new school to predict a successful transition (Anderson et al., 2000; Cotterell, 1986; Woods & Measor, 1984).

5.1.2.2. Time, environment and pressure: Four mentors discussed how they felt they could have effected more change if there were more sessions over a longer period of time. They also spoke of how mentee absences impacted on the ability to make change.

> Rashid: 525
>
> And time went very quickly. When they weren't here, it would, you know, we'd need more sessions. Because we didn't get to talk as much. And find out more about each other.

Rashid: 585

He just like began to talk to me, like he started talking. Like, as I said previously, he's always started the conversation. And yeah, he I think if we had more time, I feel like our relationship would have grown stronger.

Firstly, Rashid describes a barrier of mentee absence to having enough time for talking and therefore relationship building. He later builds on this observation, explaining that he felt more time enabled a building of trust which bolstered his mentee's confidence to talk. And that if more of this talking had occurred, the relationship would be stronger, referencing the mechanism of making change through the building of relationship.

Rachel: 270

Yeah, it's kind of disappointing. Just you know, I was excited and then we got there. He wasn't there.

Previous findings have supported that SBM tends to provide a lower 'dosage' (Herrera et al., 2000; Karcher, 2007); both Rashid and Rachel highlight how mentee absence can limit 'dosage', as well as the disappointment this can leave the mentor with. Rashid expressed that having less time limited the emotional closeness of the relationship; supporting a hypothesis put forward by Portwood & Ayers (2005).

Four mentors spoke of how the environment affected how easy it was to engage their mentees; particularly having a space with enough privacy for mentees to feel comfortable and calm.

Kirsty: 306

He started to calm down after he left [Primary School] where we did our mentoring. 'Cause we went into the meeting room in the library, where there was comfy chairs, and he calmed down when the lights were off but the lamps were on.

Kirsty spoke of how decreased environmental stimulation allowed the mentee to feel calmer and less observed which gave rise to better engagement and relationship building. This topic discussed has not been reviewed in existing research and will be explored in greater depth later in the discussion.

Three mentors spoke about how the gravity of the mentee's needs could place a pressure on the mentor which could be difficult to cope with.

Rachel: 35

It sounded fun but very, very, like nerve-wracking. Trying to teach Year sixes, what's like gonna happen, could be a bit pressuring.

Rachel discusses mixed feelings held before and during the training process, about the pressure of the task to support mentees to make positive change. This highlights the challenge of preparing mentors for the task as well as supporting them in their own worries.

Kirsty: 423

I thought I was going crazy! (laughter) Because it felt like I was just talking to myself.

Kirsty described her mentee having a short attention span and being difficult to engage in conversation. She speaks about the direct impact this had on her, feeling like she 'was going crazy' when trying to engage her mentee. Previous

findings suggest mentees with an intermediate, rather than severe, level of challenges are more likely to benefit from PMPs (Podmore, Fonagy and Munk, 2014), this approach would also reduce pressure on the peer mentor.

All mentors discussed the impact of taking part in the programme on their schoolwork with varying concern. They were differentially impacted as some had their sessions after school, but all mentors described having to catch up on work in their own time.

> Millie: 327
>
> Yeah, we missed lessons four and five on a Thursday. Which my teachers were ok with 'cause I always caught up on work. But then towards the end I think my teachers were like, 'You need to start doing more work at home'.

Millie discussed how she didn't mind doing work at home or lunch time but over time her teachers became more concerned about her missing out, particularly because it was the same lesson every week. This speaks to the challenge of scheduling sessions for multiple mentors and mentees in different schools and the impact of timetabling on students. This is an influencing factor not previously discussed in the literature, representing a novel finding which will be explored later in the discussion.

5.1.3. Theme 3: Outcomes

Mentors spoke about the outcomes of the programme, but rather than focusing on the change for mentees they spent a large proportion of the discussion talking about the symbiotic gain from the process for themselves and their mentee.

5.1.3.1. Making a difference: Four mentors spoke of the sense of achievement they felt by being able to make a difference in the life of their mentee. This was considered both a motivation to become involved and a rewarding outcome.

> Julia: 660
>
> And for other people who just enjoy helping people and just want to see change in people and help them become better and better themselves.

Julia spoke of how she would recommend becoming a mentor to others because they can make a difference not only to their mentees, but to themselves.

> Rashid: 647
>
> I feel like it made me feel better as a person. I didn't do this because oh I was told to, I did it because out of the kindness in my heart.

Rashid speaks of the intrinsic reward of selflessly doing something good for someone else. This sense of intrinsic reward has not been identified as a motivating factor in previous research, although it could be linked to the selfless motivation of mentors previously mentioned.

5.1.3.2. Transferrable skills: All mentors spoke of a range of skills they had developed through training and the mentoring process that they would use in other areas of life.

Millie: 57

Yeah, I think it was good for like your whole life as well. It wasn't just because of mentoring. Like if mentoring wasn't there, I think you'd need these skills anyway. Like, if you got a job in like mentoring and like safeguarding stuff then it's good for you as well. Cause like, you've already got that one step further than everyone else.

Millie speaks of being 'one step further than everyone else', referring to a sense of this experience giving her skills that her peers would not normally have. This is in line with Karcher's (2007) finding that the development of skills and experiences through PM can further personal and career development.

Rashid: 641

And I feel like it made me feel it made me more confident, and that I can do a lot of things. I can do anything because, not long ago, I didn't know, I had no clue about how to mentor someone.

Rashid speaks of gaining confidence in his abilities to learn and take on a new role. The strength of this can be felt in his statement 'I can do anything', representing a powerful aspect of the experience for Rashid in discovering that when he applies himself to something, he can create change in ways he did not expect of himself. A gain in confidence and self-esteem are mentor outcomes supported by previous research (Dearden, 1998; Karcher, 2008; Nelson, 2003; Noll, 1997).

5.1.3.3. Relationship to help: Three mentors spoke of how they thought the mentees' learning to talk to them and ask for help had led to greater confidence in speaking to others, such as teachers, and asking for help. This connects with a construct referred to as 'relationship to help' by Reder & Fredman (1996); the idea that people may have different styles of relationship to those who offer help based on past experiences and that this relationship to help changes with new experiences.

Millie: 371

I think he talks to his teachers more about it now as well. Because like, he has that confidence, he knows that he can talk to me so he knows that he can talk to his teachers.

Julia: 567

And I think it's just now she's way more independent, and like, how she talks to people, how she gets help from teachers, because when she was struggling with her work, I would tell her, you can go to a teacher after lesson. And, like, talk to, talk to them. So, I think talking to me, she felt more confident to talk to teachers as well.

Julia focuses on how their mentee has learnt to ask for help in a different way which makes it more likely that she will receive the help she needs; a skill that could benefit the mentee beyond the mentoring sessions. These reports of PM reducing the stigma of help-seeking are supported by Powell (1997) who suggests programmes can promote effective help-seeking processes for both mentors and mentees.

5.1.3.4. Settling in: Four mentors spoke of behaviour change in their mentees relating to settling in and feeling more confident in their new environment.

Millie: 392

And I think he was getting more detentions in primary school because he knew he was leaving, like and that, that like, adrenaline of moving schools like, it gets you a bit anxious and stuff. So, when he got here, I could see that he was anxious like making friends, but then he's really just settled in really well. Everyone's been nice to him, like he hasn't got bullied.

Millie shows great insight into how the mentee may have been feeling in anticipating the change of transition. This empathy likely enabled her to reassure and support him to settle in successfully. This could be linked to previous findings that PM eases transition by improving peer- and school-connectedness (Bowman & Myrick, 1987; Karcher, 2007; Karcher, 2005; Stoltz, 2005).

5.2. Teacher Interview Data
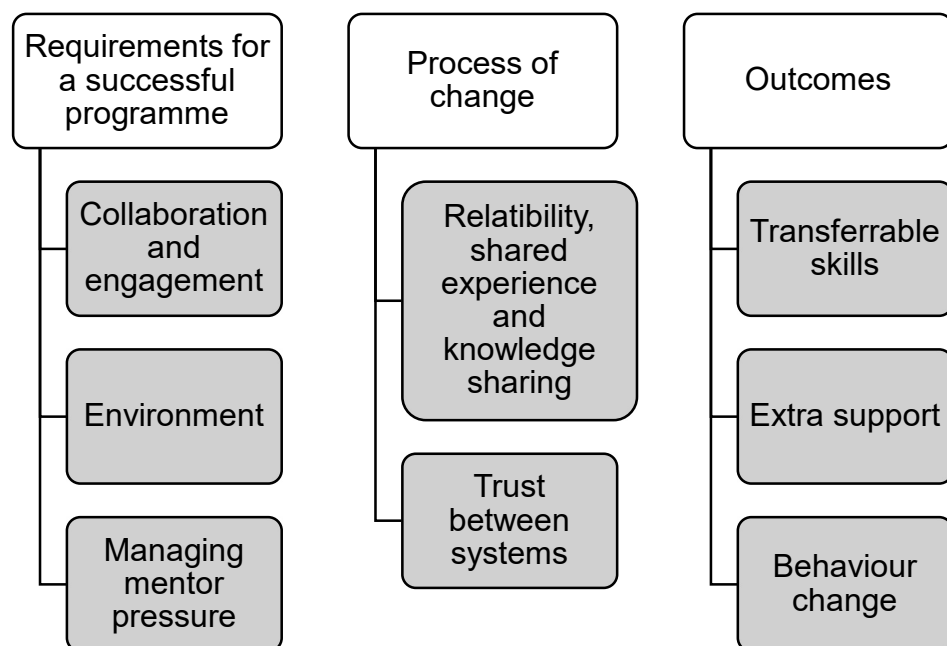
Figure 2. Thematic map derived from teacher interview data.

5.2.1. Theme 1: Requirements for a successful programme

In comparison to the mentors who spoke largely about participants, teachers spoke more about organisational factors when discussing what they thought contributed to a successful programme.

5.2.1.1. Collaboration and engagement: Four teachers spoke about organisational challenges and benefits; the proportion of discussion about challenges compared to benefits seemed to be related to which YW was

leading their programme. It appeared that those working with the more senior YW reported a smoother process and greater confidence in their abilities to manage the programme.

Helen: 94

I felt frustrated by the lack of organisation from [The MP team] coming in and them knowing time frames and finishing stuff off. Like it didn't seem to be enough time for stuff to be finished for them. Erm, and they had to chase me all the time, please don't get me wrong. Like, I haven't been the easiest person to work with for sure.

Helen recognises the difficulties experienced in planning and communication; and notes the relational aspect of these difficulties. The teachers in Brady et al.'s (2012) identified similar challenges: ensuring mentors met for the time required, timetabling issues, workload for link teachers and absenteeism.

Sandra: 108

And so, some kids were there. Some kids weren't there, that there, there was no continuity, some of the staff would arrive late with the mentors

Sandra identifies two central issues; the inconsistencies in mentees' attendance and other schools arriving late to sessions at the primary school. This centres on the challenge of involving multiple schools in one programme. This highlights the balance between designing an innovative programme and maintaining structure and workload. Existing findings suggest structure and ongoing support is vital for a successful programme and to prevent negative effects (Dubois et al., 2002; Karcher, 2007; Podmore et al., 2014).

Two teachers spoke to the importance of teacher engagement for the programme to be integrated and implemented in the school system. They suggested this limited the change that could be affected by the process.

Sandra: 673

I think when you get secondary schools sign up, you have to say, thank you, but can you commit you know. The member of staff that's going to be running it, do they have the time? Because it's just a waste of time, isn't it, if you do that and then just drop it.

Sandra discussed the drop out of other secondary schools, believing this was due to their lack of staff capacity. She highlights that although the MP team may be keen to get schools on board but they should make workload expectations of link teachers clearer to decrease the likelihood of disappointment. Karcher and Herrera (2007) found the success of a programme depends upon the buy-in from the school and the resulting communication. Elliott and Mihalic (2004) highlighted how this can be an issue where standardised programmes are adapted to different contexts.

Four teachers discussed the benefits of working with the MP team and the positive impact this had on outcomes. Even teachers with bad experiences of preparation and communication, praised the competence of facilitators when it came to engaging the mentors and mentees.

Layla: 60

Erm so it was really easy. Everything was through email so everything was sent to me with dates I needed, what I needed to organise, what the process was. So anything that was updated, or anything that I needed to know, was sent me way in advance. And any questions that I had, I literally picked up the phone, someone was there to answer my question straightaway. And the emails were responded to straightaway. So yes, the communication was fantastic.

Layla reported a positive experience of communication in contrast to that of the experience mentioned earlier. This may be linked to these teachers communicating with different facilitating YWs, as well as the dynamics of the specific relationship between the teacher and YW.

> Fatma: 60
>
> The coordinators themselves, they, they made it easy because they first they came down to everybody's level, they made it easy for us as well.

Fatma spoke of how she felt the YWs experience and skills enabled them to relate to the students in a way which supported a successful process. This level of engagement links closely to the challenges described by other teachers; the benefits described here may act against the challenges to promote the buy-in and engagement described in literature (Karcher & Herrera, 2007).

5.2.1.2. Environment: Similarly to the mentors, teachers raised the issue of the impact of the environment on the degree of success of the programme; namely the need for a supervised space with enough privacy for mentor-mentee pairs to feel comfortable to talk.

> Helen: 285
>
> And providing that private space, whilst also keeping an eye.
>
> Helen: 470
>
> You could have them all in that space, just dotted around. And they would be able to speak quietly enough that they wouldn't, you know, when focused on their pair, they shouldn't be overheard, necessarily.

Sandra: 145

And I just think that it would have been better if the mentors and mentees were just put in separate rooms or separate areas to build their relationships.

These quotes bring into consideration what is an ideal balance of supervision and privacy to provide both a space for relationship building and a place of safety. This is likely to differ by school and by participants. This has not been discussed in previous research and therefore will be explored in more depth later in the discussion.

5.2.1.3. Managing mentor pressure: All teachers discussed their concern that the needs of the mentee cohort could put too much pressure on the mentors. Mentors also identified this challenge, both identifying challenges with mentees' high behavioural needs making it difficult to create a space for talking and relationship building. This relates back to research which suggests PM should recruit mentees with an intermediate level of need to promote change but also manage mentor pressure (Podmore et al., 2014).

Helen: 175

But I, that's quite a lot of pressure on the mentors. Or for us maybe you'd say it's a little bit kind of foolhardy to just go 'Oh, well, the best intervention we'll do is to give them two Year 8s.' You know, that, that to me. They're so anxious when they come from [Year] 6 to 7 and they're so delicate. And then that transition is so important that I would, I would never just give them [The MP]. I would maybe just have that as part of a kind of support offer, I guess.

Helen describes the transitioning children as 'so anxious' and 'so delicate', emphasising the vulnerability and additional need of this group. She points out that PM should not be used as a replacement for support already provided, but instead provide a different layer and form of support. Her account speaks to the

importance of recognising the level of need during transition and that it would be ineffective and unfair to put the weight of this support only on peer mentors.

Four teachers referred to the importance of the conscientiousness of the mentors, both in their ability to manage the pressure and in their persistence with relationships building with their mentee. This could be linked to the mentors' discussion of their key attributes of confidence, responsibility, maturity and wanting to make a difference. It connects with previous findings that high levels of social-interest and low levels of self-interest predicted better programme outcomes (Karcher, 2007; Karcher & Lindwall, 2003)

> Layla: 133
>
> Obviously as their head of year I was concerned of them being able to catch up, but because they are so bright. And they are so forward-thinking anyway, they were able to catch up.

Layla highlights the issue of mentors missing out on school time and therefore how it was important for her to select mentors for whom she felt that the missed time would not have a detrimental effect on their education.

5.2.2. Theme 2: Process of Change

Teachers discussed factors which they felt were the mechanisms which led to positive change; these were discussed at the level of the mentor-mentee relationship and at the level of relationship between systems.

5.2.2.1. Relatability, shared experience and knowledge sharing: Four teachers spoke of how they felt these aspects of the mentoring relationship contributed towards change. This links closely with the aspects identified by the mentors: sharing experience, reassurance and problem solving.

Fatma: 150

So, like, these are, say, children, that are just Year 7 or Year 8. But then they have this sense of high standard of responsibilities like and then. But at the same time, they still understood the children they knew about their games, they knew about the music, they knew about everything, so that like the ones that we had, the mentees were looking at the mentors. Like oh, so you know, this.

Fatma spoke of how the peer element of the programme led to mentees feeling understood and able to build a relationship with less power imbalance and how in turn this can exert positive peer pressure on mentees. Cutrona and Russell (1990) reported peer mentors can be particularly helpful in providing 'advice support' as the mentee is less likely to feel patronised by the advice.

Fatma: 239

They have a series of stories about kids who were chucked out of secondary school without knowing exactly. So, you can see some of them asking 'oh, blah, blah, blah', they were asking even the mentors 'is this is that?'

Fatma's response specifically references the perceived benefits of knowledge sharing where the mentor can be seen as holding specialist relevant knowledge. This can be used for reassurance and 'myth-busting'. Myths passed down about secondary schools have been found to be a sources of anxiety (Mellor & Delamont, 2011; Murdoch, 1986). Contrastingly, Murdoch (1986) also suggested myths could have a positive preparatory effect especially in the domain of new relationships and power structures.

Debbie: 1211

And I think having mentors. It, it helped. It will do amazing for children. And I think as well, I honestly think behaviour will change as well, too. By having a role model.

Debbie describes how she thought behaviour change and support were facilitated through the mentor acting as a role model. She sees this role modelling as a novel motivation for mentees to think differently about their transition and even change how they may behave in relation to it. This could occur through processes such as Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development theory, allowing for the mentor to scaffold the mentee's understanding, or Harris's (1998) group socialization theory which hypothesises that YP identifying with a peer group tailor their behaviour to the norms of that group.

5.2.2.2. Trust between systems: When considering what was integral to a successful PM process, four teachers focused on the relationships at different levels of the system, including between the school and the MP team, the MP team and the mentor, and MP team and the mentee.

> Sandra: 461
>
> Because whatever you say, it's all about relationships. If relationships between the mentors, and [The MP team], like [charity name]. And then the mentors to the mentees. And then both their relationship with me. And also our kids here, I don't know about in other schools, but here, they very much feel the school is like a family. And they, they, if they feel that they're being listened to and that they're happy with what's going on, they'll engage, as soon as they get the feeling that somebody, oh they're not that bothered. Then you can, it can make a difference then.

Sandra emphasises how she feels without the strong sense of relationship at multiple levels, the programme is limited in its outcomes. She speaks about the importance of mentees feeling heard and understood by all levels of the system to enable openness to the process. Research has supported this view, at the level of relationship between the school and the agency (Karcher & Herrera, 2007), the agency and the mentors (Herrera, 2004) and the agency, school, mentor and mentee (Powell, 2016).

5.2.3. Theme 3: Outcomes

Teachers discussed the beneficial outcomes of the programme in relation to both the mentors and the mentees. Similarly to the mentors, they expressed that they felt the mentors also benefitted significantly from the process even if they were not the original identified recipient.

5.2.3.1. Transferrable skills: Three teachers identified that mentors gained a range of transferrable skills from the programme, ranging from the academic benefits of gaining a qualification to developing their communication skills with younger children. This sub-theme was also identified by mentors who felt they developed a range of skills which could be applied in other areas of their lives, supported by the multiple previous studies discussed (Dearden, 1998; Ikard, 2001; Karcher, 2008; Nelson, 2003; Noll, 1997).

> Layla: 264
>
> Erm obviously kind of, it's something great for them to say they've done. Obviously, to put on their CVs, obviously, it's another thing that they've done. And I think they just became a little bit more understanding that some people find it more difficult than others. I think it made them a little bit more sympathetic and empathetic about those students that we had coming up.

Layla notes the range of outcomes identified for mentors; both extrinsic factors such as academic achievement and intrinsic factors such as development of empathy.

> Helen: 613
>
> And I think that's probably why we've got mentors saying they got so much out of it because it's something they were interested in.

Helen explains that by asking mentors to volunteer for the role she felt that they were particularly well positioned to commit to the process and develop the skills they were interested in.

5.2.3.2. Extra support: Four teachers spoke of how they felt the MP offered an extra level of support to mentees which was distinct from what they already received. This fulfils the motivation factor of extra support and reiterates the mentors' discussion of extra support as an outcome of the programme for mentees. Teachers interviewed by Brady, Dolan and Canavan (2014) also identified outcomes relating to extra support for mentees: mobilising support between older and younger students, better understanding of challenges, and preventing escalation of problems for mentees. However, they also highlighted that PS was not a panacea for stressful STs, but it was a valuable extra layer of support alongside adult-led support. This links back to the sub-theme of 'Managing mentor pressure', where teachers identified that this programme is only suitable as an addition to pre-existing support systems not a replacement.

> Layla: 52
>
> And they definitely used them because I remember Julia and Rashid coming and saying 'Miss, so and so have come and spoke to me today and they've had a good day, and this is what they've done'. So it worked straight away, which was really nice to see.

Layla identifies how mentees were quickly able to go to the mentors to catch up about their day, possibly in a way that would be difficult for a busy teacher in an office to do. This could be considered as 'companionship support', supportive acts taking little effort from the mentor which can give mentees a sense of belonging (Wills, 1991).

Fatma: 193

And the good thing that they did was that a child got a mentor from the secondary school that they were going to go to. So there was this continuity, they knew that when they go to school, they would still see these people,

Fatma's response recognises how this programme provides a continuity not usually offered to children going through this transition. She felt this added a unique layer of extra support that vulnerable students could benefit from.

Layla: 278

I would recommend all schools to do it, I just think it makes the transition for those vulnerable people going up to secondary school so much easier.

Within their recommendation, this teacher centres on how the programme provides a unique added support which specifically makes transition easier for students who might not have this support in other areas of their lives. This a key outcome supported by multiple previous studies (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Dearden, 1998; Houlston et al., 2011).

5.2.3.3. Behaviour change: Four teachers discussed how behaviour change in the mentees following the programme evidenced for them the success of the programme.

Fatma: 526

But it was an individual change. Especially for the children that were we thought were the tough ones that, you know, has ego, those that didn't believe, that think that nobody can talk to them. They're not going to enjoy. They've already, they've been saying negative talk about the mentoring thing. No, it's not going to work. No, no, they have to think that they didn't have a choice but just to succumb to the fact that it was fun. As hard as they fought, as stubborn as they were, they ended up joining in. So, so I would say individually it worked perfectly with each child because they have different mentors, from different groups. So each mentor presented their mentorship in different ways to suit the child that they were mentoring anyway, which was fine.

Fatma discusses how the programme challenged some mentees' expectations and assumptions about the value of talking and expresses that she feels this could have a long-term positive effect. She particularly references the 'tough ones' and how 'as stubborn as they were', that the PM approach offered something unique in being able to break through this 'ego' and engage them. This could be seen to counter Podmore et al's (2014) suggestion that PM works best for those with intermediate rather than severe needs.

Layla: 200

So one of the students we had, he was a bit of a mute. And he'd only really talk unless he really, really got to know you and if he liked you. And Rashid was able to get him on side straight away, He'd go and find him in the playground. You'd see them chatting. When they were playing, they were laughing. And he really opened up to him. He was great at building that relationship with him straight away. And with the other student that we had, and it was her confidence, it literally went from zero to 100, just having that familiar face. And she really enjoyed the sessions as well, because it was laid back like they just play games, like board games and things and just sit and chat. And where they were put into a calm environment. The conversation was easier for her to have. And then due to that her confidence grew. So yeah, one of the students he finally started talking and expressing himself and showing his personality, and then the other student, she, she just grew in confidence.

Layla similarly recognises each mentee's specific support needs and how mentors were able to tailor their support to their mentee to effect change, importantly noting that change outcomes are likely to differ across mentees based on their individual context. This has been exemplified by a range of positive outcomes recorded in pre-existing literature: social skills gains (Dearden, 1998; Karcher, 2007; Karcher et al., 2005), decreased behavioural problems (Bowman & Myrick, 1987; Karcher, 2007), decreased antisocial behaviour (Sheehan et al., 1999), preventing escalation of issues for the mentee and bolstering the efforts of teachers to identify and tackle bullying (Cowie, 2009; Cowie & Smith, 2010).

This quote speaks to many of the themes developed through exploration of the experiences of both mentors and teachers. She discusses how the mentors had the characteristics and skills to build a warm and trusting relationship which could give rise to processes of 'opening up' and 'expressing themselves'. And that these processes led to unique outcomes for the mentees, tailored to their situations, for one, he 'finally started talking and expressing himself' and for the

other, she 'grew in confidence'. Representing a journey through key ingredients, processes and individual outcomes described throughout the interviews in the stories of the participants; often encapsulated by the centrality of the mentor-mentee relationship.

6.0 FURTHER DISCUSSION

This chapter will revisit the research questions and explore how the analysis can respond to these within the context of the relevant literature base. The research will then be critically reviewed leading to a discussion of the implications of the findings for future research and clinical and educational policy and practice. A conclusion will provide a summary of the research report focusing on the key areas of relevance for current research, policy and practice.

6.1. Answering the Research Questions

The rationale for this study centred on the paucity of research about the experience of peer mentoring for school transition, particularly recent research that has occurred in the UK (none recorded since 2003; Nelson, 2003). Further to this, existing research has frequently been carried out by those running the programmes, adding a potential bias to the presentation of findings. Apart from one Irish study (Brady et al., 2014), the small current research base presents raw quantitative and qualitative questionnaire data, whereas this study provides an in-depth thematic analysis of interview data. Therefore, this research aims to answer the research questions with recent, in-depth and independent findings.

6.1.1. How Do Mentors Describe their Experiences of a Peer Mentoring Project for School Transition?

Mentors' descriptions of their experiences progressed through talking about the type of people who needed to be involved, how processes led to change and what these changes were for mentors and mentees. This section will discuss the participant attributes and outcomes identified by mentors within the context of literature. The processes of change identified will be further discussed in relation to the second research question.

6.1.1.1. Participants' attributes

Mentors focused their discussion on the people involved in the project and their characteristics. Whereas, the teachers spoke more about external factors such as organisation and environment.

Mentors spoke about believing they had been selected for the role because of their confidence, responsibility and maturity, and that these were key attributes to fulfil the expectations of the role. Together these identified characteristics contribute to a sense of trust in the mentors that they will be able to reliably commit to and fulfil their roles as mentors. This relates to research by Karcher (2005) which aimed to understand the processes which mediate the repeated finding of increased structure in a programme and more positive outcomes for mentors and mentees (Dubois et al., 2002). They found a significant relationship between the mentors' attendance and the mentees reporting increased social skills and self-esteem following mentoring. They also found mentor attendance was a better predictor of mentee change than mentee attendance. Therefore, they concluded that the relationship of increased programme structure to positive outcomes may not be due to the content of the programme as previously hypothesised, but to the consistency of attendance from the mentor. They suggest that mentees make self-appraisals of their likeability and social skills based on the availability and consistency of their mentors. These findings support the foundational hypothesis that mentors who can reliably commit and attend to their role are more likely to support positive processes of change for their mentee.

Mentors also referred to the importance of their sense of confidence as being important in being able to fulfil their role effectively. This is supported by Karcher, Nakkula and Harris (2005) who found at two and six months after being matched, the best predictors of mentor-mentee relationship quality were how much the mentor believed they would be successful and how much the mentee sought the support of the mentor. This links the mentors' description of confidence with a sense of self-efficacy and how this can directly relate to the quality of the relationship.

When talking about what motivated them to be involved in peer mentoring, mentors frequently referred to a desire to help others; as well as speaking about how in their wider lives, helping others was a key value they identified with. Mentors from Brady et al.'s (2012) study also described 'wanting to help' as both a motivation and a reward. They described how their own experience of being a mentee previously had helped increase their confidence and decrease their fear and how they now wanted to help a mentee in similar ways in the role of a mentor. They said that seeing how they could help their mentees both practically and emotionally was a rewarding experience for them.

Karcher and Lindwall (2003) found that peer mentors reported higher levels of social interest compared to high school peers who did not volunteer to be mentors. Further to this they found mentors who reported higher levels of social interest were more likely to mentor for longer than mentors with lower ratings of social interest. From a wider perspective, research has suggested that YP who report higher levels of social interest are more likely to engage with and maintain involvement in altruistic activities (Crandall & Harris, 1976; Hettman & Jenkins, 1990). This is reiterated in Clary et al.'s (1998) study which identified a desire to 'protect others', 'share with others' and 'give back to the community' as key motivations for volunteering; all of which could be related to the mentors' identification of 'wanting to help others'.

Mentors also spoke about the attributes of mentees and what attributes may provide a foundation for a more successful mentoring outcome. They most frequently spoke about this in relation to how 'ready to talk' their mentees were. This sub-theme relates to the sub-theme of building trust as an important process of change and how this process can be challenged when a mentee finds it difficult to engage.

In a review of research on cross-age peer mentoring, Karcher (2007) concludes that the current literature base provides evidence to support the orientation of mentees to a mentoring programme, to help them use this type of support in the most beneficial way. A key supporting study found the best predictors of high

relationship quality in a peer mentoring programme were the self-efficacy rating of mentors and how often the mentee sought the support of the mentor (Karcher et al., 2005). This highlights the importance of the attitude and commitment of both mentors and mentees when entering a mentoring relationship, and that the mentee's openness to engage with the process has a significant impact on the quality of this relationship.

6.1.1.2. Outcomes

Similarly to the teachers, mentors spent a significant amount of time in the interviews speaking about the outcomes of the programme for both themselves and the mentees. These comments were not restricted to responses to questions specifically about change; mentors linked outcomes to a range of experiences, for example, training experience of the mentoring relationship. This section will further explore how the outcomes they identify sit within the current literature.

Mentors spoke about 'making a difference' as a sense of achievement which they interpreted as a key outcome for themselves, framed as a fulfilment of their original motivation for taking part. This fulfilment of motivation is reiterated by Flanagan and Faison (2001) who suggest mentoring can provide YP with an outlet for social interest and a way to fulfil the desire to give back to the community. The sense of achievement described by mentors was also seen in DuBois and Neville's (1997) study. They found that when mentors' motivations were fulfilled, they reported greater personal gains and were more likely to continue engaging with volunteering opportunities.

This is summarised in a quote from Topping (1988, p.3):

'Peer tutoring is "humanly rewarding" (Goodlad, 1979). *The tutors learn to be nurturant towards their tutees. They develop a sense of pride and accomplishment, and learn trust and responsibility.'*

Mentors said that taking part in the programme had led to the development of a range of skills for them which they saw as valuable for the mentoring relationship, but also for future opportunities, where they may now be ahead in skills compared to their peers who had not had this experience. Karcher's (2007) review of peer mentoring research reported the development of transferrable skills for mentors as a reliable outcome in a variety of studies, and that these skills can further both the personal and career development of mentors. These beneficial effects are in line with those found in other volunteering opportunities for YP, for example, service learning and peer mediating and tutoring (Stukas et al., 1999; Yogev & Ronen, 1982).

Mentors referenced a gain in confidence, particularly confidence that they could develop relevant and effective skills, through their experience of training and working successfully as a mentor to bring about positive change. This gain in confidence and self-esteem has repeatedly been reported by peer mentors in previous research (Dearden, 1998; Nelson, 2003; Noll, 1997). Mentors also particularly identified developing communication and social skills such as listening skills; this again is supported by the reports of mentors in previous studies (Dearden, 1998; Ikard, 2001).

Karcher (2007) draws attention to the importance of sufficient training and support within a programme to enable the development of these skills, but also to prevent potential shrinkage of these effects or even negative impacts of a poorly supported programme. This is a reminder of the processes of change needed to reach these outcomes for mentors and the centrality of providing programmes that consistently nurture these processes.

Mentors thought that through building confidence in talking to them, mentees had more confidence to talk to teachers, and particularly asking for help when needed. Powell (1997) also found that peer mentoring programmes can increase effective help-seeking for both mentors and mentees. She found that mentees reported seeing mentors as more approachable than teachers and therefore easier to build confidence in talking to them and asking for help.

Powell (1997) took this further by designing a programme which recruited mentors who had 'at-risk' backgrounds, aiming to decrease the stigma of help-seeking for both the mentor and mentee. She reiterated how important it was for these mentors to have adequate training and support to manage their own needs as well as those of the mentees. They reported positive social and academic outcomes for mentors and mentees when these important structures were in place.

Reder & Fredman (1996) described the concept of 'relationship to help' within clinical psychology practice as: how both the clinician's and the client's experiences and resulting beliefs about help impact on how they form their helping relationship. Applied to mentoring, the stories described by mentors suggest that a positive helping relationship built between mentor and mentee allows for the mentee to develop more openness to asking for help from teachers.

Mentors discuss the benefits of mentees feeling more confident in their new surroundings as a result of the extra support of the programme. They frequently describe this as the programme helping the mentee to 'settle in' to the school. In the literature, the concept of peer- and school-connectedness is commonly referred to as representing how a child can develop more connections in these settings and therefore feel a stronger sense of belonging. Previous research has consistently found well supported peer mentoring programmes have led to improved peer- and school connectedness (Bowman & Myrick, 1987; Karcher, 2005, 2007; Stoltz, 2005).

Karcher (2006) compared six randomised trials of school-based mentoring programmes and found that three PMPs showed large effect sizes in relation to increased school connectedness, compared to only small effect sizes in the three adult-youth mentoring programmes. On other outcomes, the different types of mentoring performed similarly, suggesting this increased school-connectedness could be a central motivator for selecting a peer mentoring approach.

6.1.2. How Do Mentors Understand Any Process of Change Related to Peer Mentoring?

Previous studies have largely focused purely on outcomes for mentors and mentees. Karcher (2005) suggested that future studies should aim to examine the processes of mentoring which led to these outcomes. Mentors discussed multiple processes which they felt enabled or inhibited positive change in their mentee.

6.1.2.1. Mechanisms: Using skills to share experience and build trust

Mentors described how they thought that they were able to use the specific mentoring skills they were trained in to share their peer experience and develop a trusting relationship with their mentee. Karcher's (2007) review of peer mentoring research suggests that the high-quality training needed to provide these foundational skills has consistently been found to be necessary to provide a programme with positive outcomes.

Sharing experience is a distinctive aspect of peer support and previous studies have suggested this offers a unique opportunity for peers to provide the most relevant and effective support in a way that adults cannot (Cowie, 2009; Dolan & Brady, 2012; Topping, 1996). Previous research has suggested a key part of this mechanism is that peers can provide mentees with a source of sufficient information about the new school which in turn predicts a more successful transition (Anderson et al., 2000; Cotterell, 1986; Woods & Measor, 1984). Further to this in his review, Topping (1996) suggested that *'Peers can speak to each other in the vernacular, directly, with the credibility of participants in the same culture and without any overtones of social control and authoritarianism. Peers listen to each other.'* (p.24).

Mentors spoke about how these mechanisms were foundational to the development of the key mechanism of building trust to build the mentor-mentee relationship. They often referred to how building trust allowed their mentee to

open up and develop new skills to help their transition. In their study of the forms of social support in youth mentoring relationships, Brady, Dolan, & Canavan (2017) suggested that emotional support was provided, raising the mentees' awareness that they are cared for. This could be interpreted as part of the mechanism of building trust which allows the mentee to open up and invest in the mentoring relationship. This process can also be related to Kohut and Wolf's (1978) self-psychology theory which posits that self-esteem develops through the empathy, praise and attention from idealised others within a relationship, as well as the emulation of these idealised others, and that this self-esteem development can then facilitate increases in interpersonal connectedness.

6.1.2.2. Challenges: Time, environment and pressure

When discussing barriers to the processes of change, mentors spoke about needing more time, a more contained environment and reducing the pressure on them in relation to both the needs of their mentee and the impact of missing school time.

The limited amount of time for the programme has been much discussed in the peer mentoring literature, particularly as school-based programmes have been found on average to provide less mentoring time than community-based programmes (Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000; Karcher, 2007). In the studied programme, mentors also spoke of the challenge of mentees being absent from school, taking away from the planned mentoring time. One mentor spoke about how they felt this limited the process of change, as they needed time for their mentee to build trust and 'open-up' to lead to the development of confidence. This points towards a way of understanding how limited mentoring time can limit positive outcomes through reducing the space for a trusting relationship to develop.

Mentors discussed how the physical environment could impact on the building of a trusting relationship. Mentors' spoke of how an overstimulating environment could lead to difficulty engaging their mentees and feeling their mentees might

be less likely to 'open up' with their peers in listening distance. These concerns highlight the importance of not just considering the training needed to allow the process of engagement and trust-building, but also the setting and how this can create barriers to these mechanisms. This is a theme not previously widely explored in the peer mentoring literature; two studies have identified mentor reports that adequate access to school space and resources are associated with match quality and longevity (Herrera et al., 2007; Karcher, 2005a). Therefore, this could be a new avenue of consideration for those designing and co-ordinating programmes.

Mentors spoke about the pressure the programme could create for them, both in relation to the needs of the mentee and to meeting their own concurrent needs of keeping up at school. They said that when it was a challenge to engage their mentee in conversation because of distractions and their mentee's attention span, it made their role of building a relationship, listening and sharing difficult and frustrating. This echoes the recommendations of Podmore, Fonagy and Munk (2014) that the needs of mentees need to be carefully considered when designing the programme; too low a level of need can lead to the programme being of limited use, whereas too high a need can lead to difficulties with engagement and limited positive impact for mentees as well as the potential of mentors finishing the programme with a sense of disappointment or failure.

Largely, mentors did not express great concern about the impact of missing time at school on their academic outcomes. They spoke of feeling content to catch up on this work outside of school hours. This may point towards the greater social interest exhibited by these mentors. However, it is still important to consider any potential negative outcomes and how to actively manage these for mentors. This has not been previously discussed in the peer mentoring research. This new aspect of the experience of mentors should be explicitly addressed when setting up a programme to promote relationships across the system where the needs of all participants are considered.

6.1.3. How Do Teachers Describe Their Experiences of a Peer Mentoring Project for School Transition?

6.1.3.1. Requirement for a successful programme

Differing from mentors, teachers focused more on organisational rather than participant factors when discussing what is needed for a successful programme. This perhaps highlights the position of the link teacher in integrating the programme coming from an outside agency into the established functioning of the school system.

Teachers discussed the importance of the organisational relationship between the school and the YWs delivering the programme; specifically, how the quality of communication in this relationship impacts on the structure of the programme and therefore the potential for beneficial effects. This could also be linked with the process of change subtheme of 'trust between systems'; teachers noted the impact of relationships at different levels of the system. A strong relationship between the school and YW was an important foundation for the relationship between YW and mentor.

When discussing challenges around their peer mentoring programme, teachers in Brady et al.'s (2012) study highlighted mainly organisational difficulties: timetabling issues, attendance and workload for link teachers. This points towards similar concerns for teachers hosting peer mentoring programmes focused on integrating an outside project into the everyday working of a school setting. However, the reports in this study differ in that teachers also identified communication difficulties with the facilitating YWs. This may be because in Brady et al's (2012) study, schools were selected for the study based on their adherence to the programme structure; this may represent a sample with strong communication with their YWs.

Previous studies have reiterated the importance of ongoing support and structure throughout a programme, something that may be less present if the

communication between school and outside agency is challenging (Dubois et al., 2002; Karcher, 2007; Podmore, Fonagy, & Munk, 2014). Mentors report closer mentor-mentee relationships when they have more access to support and training from agency staff (Herrera et al., 2007; Karcher, 2005b); this may also be influenced by the relationship between school and agency staff. It is still possible for mentors to experience the presence and support of the agency even when the communication between the school and agency is not optimal. However, in both these studies, mentors also reported communication between school and agency staff as associated with match quality and longevity, suggesting communication at this level does impact on the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.

Four out of five teachers expressed positive experiences of working with YWs, focusing on their ability to relate to the YP and a positive experience of communication. This reinforces the findings of positive communication and trust between school and agency, as well as agency and mentor, being linked to positive outcomes for the mentors and mentees (Herrera et al., 2007; Karcher, 2005b) as all teachers attributed positive outcomes for participants to the programme.

Teachers also spoke about the impact of the physical environment on the processes of engagement for the mentor-mentee relationship, as well as the impact on their relationship with the programme, in feeling they could safely supervise and support the context. Karcher and Herrera (2007) highlighted how planning a suitable programme environment can be part of the process of getting 'buy-in' from the schools, as planning aspects such as the location of meetings can facilitate a process where needs are addressed at multiple levels of the system.

Teachers spoke about managing the pressure on mentors as a key concern for them and a task they saw as central to their role. They described the competing demands of an increase in students needing extra support, such as peer mentoring, and the need to protect older students from managing the needs of

other students in a way that could have a negative impact on them. This finding connects the need for careful consideration of the level of mentee need (Podmore et al., 2014) and the communication between the school and the agency. If a school feels the agency has not managed this balance of needs, they may withdraw their engagement and support from the programme, disrupting the functioning of relationships between systems and potentially limiting the positive outcomes of the programme (Karcher & Herrera, 2007).

6.1.3.2. Outcomes

As identified by mentors, teachers also felt mentors developed a range of transferrable skills, including confidence, empathy and listening skills. They believed that these skills could help them academically and in their future careers, as something that may set them apart from their peers. The development of this range of transferrable skills has also been found in multiple previous studies (Dearden, 1998; Ikard, 2001; Karcher, 2008; Nelson, 2003; Noll, 1997). One teacher explained how she felt that mentors developed so much through the programme because they had volunteered and showed a passion for the project, highlighting how the investment of mentors in the programme could relate to the positive outcomes they gain from it.

Teachers spoke of how they felt a key outcome of the programme was a form of extra and unique support for mentees. They described how the peer support offered a form of support that was not accessible with teachers and built on the mentee's support network within the school. However, they were also cautious that this was not a replacement for the existing support structures but instead in addition to a variety of other measures. This was an opinion reiterated by teachers in the Brady et al. (2014) study. This extra layer of support has also been found to be particularly important for students who have limited support in other areas of their lives when they are going through school transition (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Dearden, 1998; Houlston et al., 2011).

Teachers focused on how this extra support led to positive behaviour change for mentees. They discussed how mentors were able to use their skills to tailor

the support to the specific needs of the mentees, for example, using encouragement to build confidence. They also referenced how the mentors were able to quickly get on the same level as the mentee to build the trusting relationship needed to enable change. This may highlight a unique benefit of the peer mentoring approach (Cowie, 2009; Dolan & Brady, 2012). This outcome of behaviour change is framed through the process of having the foundation of the support and training to allow the mentors to build a trusting relationship with mentees which is then used to enact change.

6.1.4. How Do Teachers Understand Any Process of Change Related to Peer Mentoring?

6.1.4.1. Relatability, shared experience and knowledge sharing

When discussing processes of change, teachers linked how mentors could share experience and act as role models to the outcome of positive behaviour change for the mentee. This can be connected to theories of child development, such as Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development theory, where the mentor provides key insights and role models key behaviours which can scaffold the mentee's learning to help them cope with school transition. The observations of these processes could also be linked to Harris's (1998) group socialization theory, suggesting that mentors become a peer group that the mentees are influenced by and therefore want to emulate, leading to behaviour change following role modelling, a form of positive peer pressure.

Importantly this again highlights a form of support that is more readily available through peer support than adult support. The process of change can occur at a more accessible level for the mentee, with guidance potentially being less patronising and more believable (Cutrona, 2000a), making change an easier prospect for the mentee.

6.1.4.2. Trust between systems

Teachers emphasised how the process of change is not just influenced by the mentor-mentee relationship, but by the relationships at all levels of the system. They discussed how the relationship between the school and the agency, and the engagement of the teacher within this, was an important part of how successful they interpreted the programme to be. This laid the groundwork for the relationships between the agency and mentors and the agency and mentees, and how well supported and prepared they felt (Karcher & Herrera, 2007). This support was described as key for the development of a trusting mentor-mentee relationship which can facilitate positive change and is supported by previous research (Herrera, 2004; Powell, 2016).

This process identifies the importance of developing a system with a culture of shared values and goals. A dissonance in perceived values and goals are interpreted here as a barrier to trust in the system and therefore a barrier to support at all levels of the system and resulting positive change. Whereas, alignment of values and goals lead to a strong and trusting relationship across the system and facilitate the support needed through the process of positive change.

6.2. Critical Evaluation

In this section I will critically evaluate the design and methodology of the study and how it has answered the research questions. Spencer and Ritchie (2011) developed a selection of principles and questions regarding quality standards in qualitative research: contribution, credibility and rigour. This framework will be used to ensure a thorough and wide-reaching evaluation of the study. There is debate around whether a quality framework should be applied to qualitative research in the same way as quantitative research. However, many researchers have argued for more flexible guiding principles which recognise context (Beck, 1993; Kirk & Miller, 1986; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

6.2.1. Contribution

This principle concerns the value and relevance that the research adds to the evidence base. This study primarily aimed to fill gaps in the evidence by exploring the experiences of mentors and teachers who have taken part in a peer mentoring for school transition project. A study focused on this in the UK has not occurred since 2003 (Nelson, 2003). Further to this, the majority of research in this area focuses on quantitative questionnaire data designed and delivered by the provider of the programme. Therefore, this study offers a more in-depth and exploratory approach with greater objectivity.

Further to this, this study has investigated the processes through which successful mentoring can take place. Past research has focused on outcomes of peer mentoring, leading to a paucity of research and resulting theory about how these outcomes are reached (Karcher, 2005a). Future research could build on this initial exploration of processes of change in peer mentoring, and a larger evidence base could lead to the development of new theory.

There is debate surrounding whether qualitative findings can be applied outside of the original context of the study and whether wider inferences can be made. This study explores the experiences of five mentors and five teachers who took part in a specific project within an inner London setting. The small sample size and specific nature of the experience limits wide generalisation of findings. However, this study aims to be an initial exploration of a little researched area to generate new hypotheses and understandings, rather than aiming to produce more systematic, generalisable findings.

6.2.2. Credibility

Credibility refers to Spencer and Ritchie's (2011) conceptualisation of interpretive validity, the adequacy of representation of the raw data in the findings. This means the transparency of which the thematic analysis can be

connected to the raw data and the process through which this analysis was reached. In this study, transparency has been attended to through the provision of raw data in the form of extracts in the analysis chapter. Further, the thematic analysis process followed guidelines for thematic analysis in psychological research (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and each stage of this process was photographed and included in the appendices.

Triangulation of the thematic analysis process was sought through the research supervisor coding a transcript. This coding process was then discussed between myself and my supervisor to consider the process taken and to allow exploration of how I may have approached this process differently and the importance of attending to how values and expectations can influence the process. A reflexivity journal was kept to reflect on these experiences throughout the thematic analysis process.

To improve the credibility of the design, I recruited a YP consultant who had acted as a mentor in a different programme run by the same charity. The aim of this was to promote the relevance of the research to the population that it focused on. The YP consultant was involved in designing the questions to be asked in the interviews and how the interviews would be conducted. If a larger number of participants were recruited, I would have aimed to conduct focus groups collaboratively with the YP consultant. If the resources and time were available it may have been optimal to take a participatory action approach, where YP worked collaboratively as researchers throughout the process.

6.2.3. Rigour

The auditability of this research relies on the clarity and replicability of the method chapter. This section aimed to provide sufficient detail linked to a clear and full appendices section. Anonymised transcript extracts were included in the appendices (see Appendix X) to provide evidence of the raw data and allow the reader to see how the thematic analysis process occurred from raw data to

development of themes. Further to this, the supervisor of the research performed an audit of the themes generated.

The defensibility of the research was laid out in the method chapter, particularly the justification of the epistemology, design and analysis method sections. This clearly explains why the approaches for each of these were selected, as well as explaining why other potential approaches were not selected.

There is debate around whether qualitative research should be objective; instead, qualitative researchers most commonly take the approach that their values and attitudes will influence the research and so instead aim to be aware and open about reflexivity. Within the method chapter, I explored how my values and experiences may influence the design and execution of the study. I kept a reflexivity journal to maintain an attendance to how my values and attitudes may be influencing the process and how I responded to this. Extracts from this journal are included in Appendix S.

6.2.4. Dissemination

The initial findings of this research were shared in an education conference setting through presentation of the key themes identified. As well as sharing findings within the research and wider education community, key recommendations outlined below were shared with the charity running the project who plan to use this to frame future trainings. This will be used to design future PMPs in a variety of settings, including as part of training for new education mental health practitioners working in schools and providing PAEI support across the country. The findings have also been disseminated as a leaflet (see Appendix Z) for both mentors and teachers. This leaflet includes a request for participants to contact the researcher with their feedback and comments regarding these findings.

<u>6.2.5. Methodological Limitations</u>

6.2.5.1. Epistemology

Willig (2013) describes reflecting on epistemological assumptions as a central part of qualitative research. The critical realist stance taken in this study allowed for the acknowledgement of the material reality of the experience of the mentors and teachers, particularly within their school context. This was felt to be important as this was preliminary exploration research that aimed to be used within contexts which acknowledge the material realities of school life, such as transition and teacher support. However, Edwards, Ashmore, & Potter (1995) criticise a critical realist approach, suggesting in these research contexts a relativist approach could be taken, which would allow for the differentiation between discursive and non-discursive. I acknowledge this limitation and aim to counter the criticism through reflexivity, promoting awareness and reflection on their assumptions and beliefs about the data. Further to this, I have attended to language, the latent level of the data and the social context of perspectives; allowing for exploration at the level of social context.

6.2.5.2. Thematic Analysis

TA was selected as the means of analysis for this study due to its flexibility fitting with the epistemological stance and allowing the openness needed for this exploratory research. However, I recognise that this openness also leads to TA being reliant on my interpretations, potentially increasing the influence of bias even when reflexivity is used to try and respond to this. Further, TA relies on what is verbalised by the participants about their experience. This may be a particular limitation when considering the mentors' responses as they may not have yet developed the vocabulary to frame their experience in the ways that they wish. There may also be a limitation in what perspectives participants express through interview as opposed to what may be expressed if naturally occurring data could be used.

It is important to note here the link between the research question and one of the themes: process of change. This link could be seen to represent how the researcher's interpretation can inform the themes identified due to confirmation bias. I recognise the potential for this bias, but would argue that both mentors and teacher spoke in a form that could be represented as 'beginning, middle and end'. Although the participants did not use the terminology 'process of change', this was felt to be the closest psychological concept to encapsulate what was described. Therefore, although the name of the theme is closely linked to the research question; it was felt that the contributing to the theme was not gathered as a result of direct questioning. The closer links between the names of the sub-themes and the language of the participants represents this.

6.2.5.3. Consent of mentees

Consent was not requested from the mentees who had taken part in the programme discussed as they were not interviewed. Ideally, I would have also sought their consent, as they were often a focus of the discussion with both mentors and teachers. I would have liked to interview all participants in the programme (incorporating mentees, YWs and parents), but the time and resources were not available to conduct a study of this scale. If this were a possibility it would have also allowed for consent to be sought more widely from participants.

6.2.5.4. Programme drop-out

There was a significant drop-out of schools participating in the second half of the mentoring programme occurring at the secondary school after transition (three out of seven schools). The charity tried to contact these schools to arrange the next stage of the programme but could not make contact. If the time and resources were available, I would have attempted to contact these schools to interview their link teachers to understand why they had not continued with the programme. However, this would have likely been challenging, considering their lack of contact with the charity and would have split the focus of the analysis leading to a less in-depth analysis. Although it was not possible to explore this pattern in this study, better understanding drop-out in the peer

mentoring context could provide further insight into the processes needed to sustain a successful programme.

6.2.5.5. Mentoring in pairs

Three of the mentors interviewed were mentoring in pairs, this was not a plan for the programme, but a consequence of drop-out and school changes. Rachel and Kirsty reported challenges with engaging with their mentee; but when asked they both said they felt there being two mentors and one mentee helped rather than hindered their mentoring relationship. Millie also reported that she felt mentoring as a pair added to the experience as both mentors could offer different points of connection and different skills. Although the mentors felt this did not negatively impact their experience, it is a deviation from the way the programme was developed to run. If this had been known when the interview schedule had been developed, it would have been useful to explore further the experience of mentoring as a pair and how this relationship could impact the relationship with the mentee. This has not been previously explored in the literature.

6.2.6. Reflexivity

6.2.6.1. Reflexive Review

Willig (2013) notes the importance of engaging in reflexivity in qualitative research; acknowledging the impossibility of remaining neutral and objective within one's research and therefore highlighting the need to enhance awareness of and critical evaluation of one's assumptions and interpretations.

In the method chapter I acknowledged my own contexts which were likely to influence how I approached my research. I referenced being a young White-British woman living locally to the schools studied but not having experienced the London school system myself. I also discussed my aim to work as a clinical psychologist in school settings focusing on preventative and early intervention

work, an interest which may make me more likely to be affected by confirmation bias.

To examine my own biases and assumptions I tried to maintain a critical and questioning approach to my interpretations and to explore these reflections in my reflective journal and through thesis supervision. To enable these reflections, I would ask myself questions such as: 'Why have I had that emotional reaction to that response?', 'How am I using my school experience to try to understand the mentors' experiences?', and 'How might my experience of contact with this teacher be impacting how I interpret their views?'

6.2.6.2. Power dynamics

Throughout the design and execution of this study, the research has aimed to take a reflexive position to raise awareness and try to counter the impacts of power relations within the processes (Harper, 2003). When interviewing the mentors, I was aware of trying to resist the teacher-student dynamic, particularly as these interviews took place in a school setting. I did this by beginning the discussion by explaining my role and that I would like to learn about all aspects of their experience which they deemed as important as they are the experts on their experiences. I also aimed to take an informal tone in our discussions and to only use questions as prompts to expand exploration rather than a formal question and answer exchange. I felt that the mentors were confident enough to openly describe their experiences and take the lead in the discussion. However, I did note that it felt more difficult for them to explore the challenges of the programme compared to what they felt went well. I reflected that this may have been because of the relationship they held with the youth workers and a wish to protect that relationship. Additionally, I thought that the mentors were students who may hold the role of being 'a model student', and that exploring challenges may conflict with upholding this role.

I felt teachers may have been influenced by demand characteristics within the interview, due to their ongoing relationship with the charity and plans for future peer mentoring programmes. However, all teachers did also speak about

challenges of the programme, particularly organisational difficulties, suggesting that they still felt able to provide criticism despite these continued relationships.

6.2.6.3. Differences in data contributions from mentors

During the data gathering stage of the research, I interviewed one mentor on their own and the other four mentors in two pairs. I chose to interview mentors in pairs where possible to provide the opportunity for the dynamic between the pair to yield new and different material to what may be produced within an individual interview. Ideally, I would have liked to form a focus group to optimise this dynamic; however, this was not logistically possible due to time, staffing and transport limits, as mentors attended three different schools. Conversely, it may have been that individual interviews could reduce peer influence in the form of demand characteristics and would allow for more freedom to express opinions.

In Millie's interview, the mentor who was interviewed on her own, there was more time for her to express her experience and views as she was not sharing this time with another mentor. This led to Millie contributing more data to the analysis than each of the other mentors singly. Therefore, it is likely that Millie's contribution had a greater influence on the formation of themes. This is reflected in Millie's quotes being the most prevalent in the analysis chapter. The single interview occurred because Millie's co-mentor did not gain parental consent to take part. Ideally, to ensure a more even balance of contributions from mentors, all mentors would have been interviewed in the same group size.

6.3. Implications for Future Research

6.3.1. Further Understanding of the Processes of Change in Peer Mentoring Across Contexts

This research was the first in the UK to examine the processes of change identified by mentors and teachers to describe how peer mentoring for school transition can lead to positive outcomes for mentors and mentees. Future research could expand this area of understanding to see if teachers and mentors in other programmes identify similar processes suggesting a consensus of central processes of change. This research could further understanding by examining unique identifications of processes of change in peer mentoring and how these may build on existing understanding and relate to the context in which the research takes place. This provides an opportunity to better understand whether processes of change differ by context, for example, geographical location or age group of participants, and if so to be able to connect which processes of change are central in which contexts.

Future research should aim to consult the experience of all participants involved in a programme to enquire about how they explain the processes of change from their perspective, particularly mentees, YWs and parents. This will allow comparison between perceived processes of change and analysis of both similarities and differences, adding greater depth to the understanding of these mechanisms.

6.3.2. The Need for Longitudinal Research

This research takes a snapshot of the experience of mentors and teachers between two and six months after the programme has taken place. If the time and resources were available, I would have interviewed participants during the programme and at shorter- (3 months) and longer-term (1 year) intervals afterwards. The aim of this would be to see how the participants' descriptions and explanations of their experience may change over time, as well as to see if the positive outcomes described were the same in the longer term. This direction for future research is supported by previous studies who suggest a lack of longitudinal data to describe the wider impact of the experience is a key limitation in this research area (Karcher, 2007; Lester, Cross, Shaw, & Dooley, 2012; Tobbell, 2014).

6.3.3. The Voice of Young People in Research

Within this research, a YP consultant collaborated with the design of the process and content of the interviews for both mentors and teachers. However, I would have liked to have been able to involve YP researchers at all stages of the research process, ideally through participatory action research. This was not undertaken in this study due to the lack of time for both YP and the researcher to engage in this process throughout the project and the pressure this would have put on the YPs' school timetabling. A larger scale project would benefit greatly from working with YP researchers right from the start of the designing of the study through to the analysis of findings and dissemination. This is supported by Ben-Arieh et al. (2001) who argues that to explore a YPs' experience, they must be involved throughout all stages of research concerning them.

6.4. Implications for Practice and Policy

6.4.1. Key Aspects of Experience in Peer Mentoring for School Transition

This study has identified the key aspects of the experience of peer mentoring for school transition. For mentors these were the importance of confident, mature and responsible mentors with a desire to help and mentees who are open to the experience. They reported that these attributes in combination with the shared experience to build a trusting relationship and enough time in a suitable environment led to the outcomes of mentors developing transferrable skills and feeling they had made a difference, and mentees settling into their new school and improving their relationship to help. For teachers, engagement with the agency, a suitable environment and good management of mentor pressure was needed to support the relatability, shared experience and knowledge sharing between mentor and mentee as well as trust between all levels of the system. The positive outcomes of these processes were identified

as transferrable skills for mentors and extra support and positive behavioural changes for mentees.

The implications of these findings are important in designing future peer mentoring for school transition programmes, to incorporate these key aspects to optimise the mechanisms needed for the aimed for positive outcomes. This can also allow for the monitoring of the processes of change throughout the programme to optimise the potential for positive outcomes for both mentors and mentees. For example, a programme could use outcome measures to help mentors and mentees to keep track of whether they have shared experiences and knowledge in their sessions.

6.4.2. Clinical Practice and Policy

6.4.2.1. Clinical psychology outside of the therapy room

This research has implications for how clinical psychology can be applied outside of the context of direct one-to-one therapy. This study demonstrates how psychological mechanisms can be applied in settings outside of the therapy room and enact positive outcomes which may not be available through direct therapy. Particularly, this research highlights how peer approaches can be facilitated and supported with the help of psychologists to provide a more normalised approach with inbuilt social support within the space where the YP is spending the majority of their day. Therefore, the PAEI care is provided where and when it is most needed; a prospect which is extremely challenging to achieve in stretched CAMHS services (Frith, 2016). This could facilitate a more wide-reaching and cost-effective use of limited psychology resources.

The development of psychologically protective processes was demonstrated through the mentors' identification of the mentees' improved relationship to help (Reder & Fredman, 1996). This shows how facilitating school-based peer approaches can lead to the development of outcomes which could support

vulnerable children's help-seeking; in the longer term, building their support system and potentially preventing the escalation of difficulties.

Further to this, both the mentors and teachers identified how the programme allowed for mentors to develop transferrable skills. This could lead to them also developing a more effective relationship to help and to being to use their skills to help and support other peers outside of the formalised programme. This highlights how ripple effects can occur following a school-based PM programme which can lead to a growing and sustainable change. If properly supported, prior mentees could be supported to become mentors, becoming 'experts by experience' and benefitting both themselves and their community.

6.4.2.2. Prevention and Early Intervention

In the introduction chapter, policy plans for a focus on prevention and early intervention support as well as school-based provision were laid out (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017). Numerous studies have reported how psychological distress that goes unidentified and unsupported in childhood can lead to varied and wide-reaching negative outcomes (Gould et al., 1998; Jones, 2013; Kessler et al., 2007). With community mental health services being under great pressure (Frith, 2016), the provision of evidence-based programmes which can reach a wide number of children is likely to reduce psychological distress for part of this population and prevent negative consequences for them.

With the clear need and desire for prevention and early intervention programmes, particularly school-based, there is a resulting need for research to design and evaluate these programmes. This study has identified key processes needed for a successful peer mentoring for school transitions programme in this context. Particularly, the need for strong communication between school and agency, a suitable environment and enough time to develop a programme within which trusting relationships can be built between all levels of participants. Further research is needed to design and evaluate

programmes, to promote the effectiveness and sustainability of this form of approach and prevent harm.

6.4.3. Educational Practice and Policy

6.4.3.1. Integration of outside programmes into school settings

The interviews with teachers in this research demonstrated a clear desire for more support for their most vulnerable students, within a system which does not always have enough time and resource to meet these needs. This highlights the need for outside programmes to provide the extra support that may not be available in school. However, the potential lack of time and resources within the school could challenge the relationship between the school and the outside agency. Within this study, this was highlighted by teachers through the 'collaboration and engagement' sub-theme. One teacher whose role focused particularly on mentoring described how she had observed that programmes were more difficult to develop and maintain in schools where the link teacher's time is split across multiple roles.

This highlights the systemic challenge of how an outside programme can be integrated into the culture of a school. Stelfox and Catts (2012) suggested that secondary schools needed to take more responsibility for changing their culture so that transition was not such a challenge for many students. The shift to a more business-like approach in secondary school compared to primary school may make the assimilation of a relationally focused outside programme more challenging.

6.4.3.2. Evidence-based practice in schools

Whether internal or external, programmes in schools are often designed and facilitated without an evidence base or monitoring and evaluation (Tobbell, 2014). This is a central policy and practice issue for multiple reasons. Firstly, the programme may not just be ineffective, but harmful and there may be limited awareness of this if monitoring and evaluation is not taking place. Secondly,

schools have finite time and resources to deliver these programmes. Programmes that are not effective are not likely to be sustainable and take resources away from programmes which could provide benefit to children.

6.4.4. Recommendations

The following recommendations for school-based PMPs have been derived from the findings of this research:

- Provide preparation for mentees in the form of an introductory session or training to promote engagement and reduce pressure on mentors
- Ensure an appropriate environment for effective mentoring; providing a balance of both privacy for open conversations and supervision for safeguarding.
- Develop a relationship with strong communication and shared values and goals between the school and agency through face-to-face and virtual contact prior to starting the programme.
- Have a clear focus in mentor training on how shared experience can be used to build a trusting relationship.
- Select mentors with a desire to help others and with the potential to have the confidence, responsibility and maturity to mentor effectively. As well as considering how training can support mentors to utilise these attributes.
- Select mentors and mentees who want to be part of the programme and show a willingness to engage.
- Ensure support for mentors and mentees at both school and agency level to increase the opportunity for them to build a trusting relationship which can lead to positive change.

6.5. Conclusion

This study has provided an in-depth exploration of the experience of a PMP and the processes of change leading to the positive outcomes of mentoring. As set out in the recommendations, this has provided multiple specific findings for how school-based PMPs for transition can be delivered to produce the best outcomes. From a wider perspective, this study supports the use of PMPs as a PAEI approach in schools. Both mentors and teachers expressed how the programme provided extra support to improve outcomes for mentees. This is support they would not have received otherwise, particularly at a time when school systems struggle to meet the growing emotional needs of students (Department of Health & Department for Education, 2017) and community mental health services do not have the resources to meet many school referrals (Frith, 2016).

The Department of Health & Department for Education (2017) identified key targets of integrating MH support for YP into schools and PMPs provide an effective way to do this. PMPs offer much needed support at a time of increased stress for YP (Waters et al., 2012), and deliver a type of support which is both accessible and normalising, reaching students unreached by more formalised approaches. Uniquely, PMPs also have the potential to build ongoing social support between students beyond the timeframe of the formalised programme; offering a more sustainable form of support compared to the current reliance on one-to-one time-limited professional support. Further to this, PMPs are a more time- and cost-effective intervention, with a large group of YP reached by a small team of professionals.

Teachers and mentors discussed how the programme not only supported mentees, but also benefitted mentors through the development of transferrable skills and being able to feel they had 'made a difference'; a finding also reported in previous studies (Brady et al., 2014). The benefit to both mentors and mentees partaking in the programme, further widens the supportive reach and positive outcomes of a PMP.

In conclusion, the innovative approach of a PMP for school transition can effectively utilise limited resources to accessibly support a wide number of YP and provide positive outcomes for mentors, mentees and the school community. This demonstrates how a use of psychology in the community can not only support a great number of YP, but also how it can deliver mental health support which is more normalising and accessible than in-clinic provision, with the potential of also building sustainable PS within the school community.

I will end with the words of a YP who so generously contributed his voice to this research. Rashid insightfully describes how when YP can be enabled to effectively support each other, an interactional process can become the foundation for personal growth for each individual in the dyad; leading to a symbiotic relationship which facilitates support and reduces distress.

'It will just help them grow as a person. It won't just help the mentee it will help them as well. So, a bit like you can mentor each other.'

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Definitions of Terms Used

The term 'MH difficulties' will be used throughout the literature review as this as the primary term used in the literature base, as well as in the school context in which this research is based. I recognise the limitations and implications of medicalising distress in this way. However, it is important for this research to be useful and relevant to the educational context and the language of 'MH' is the language used to explore these issues in this system. Further to this, the terms 'vulnerable' or 'at-risk' are used in reference to students who are experiencing distress and/or adverse childhood experiences. The author recognises that these terms can be interpreted as reductionist and stigmatising and so the terms are used from a critical standpoint with the aim of understanding the individual circumstances behind these labels.

'Adolescence' will be used to describe the transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Although this term is widely accepted, particularly in western cultures, it is important to recognise that this term represents a social construction which varies widely across time and culture (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999). The use of the term 'adolescence' can be used to reduce YP's experience to a single description rather than recognising the variety of individual experience. This paper will aim to take a critical view on this, highlighting how experiences at this stage of life are complex and individual.

Appendix B – Key Search Terms for Literature Review
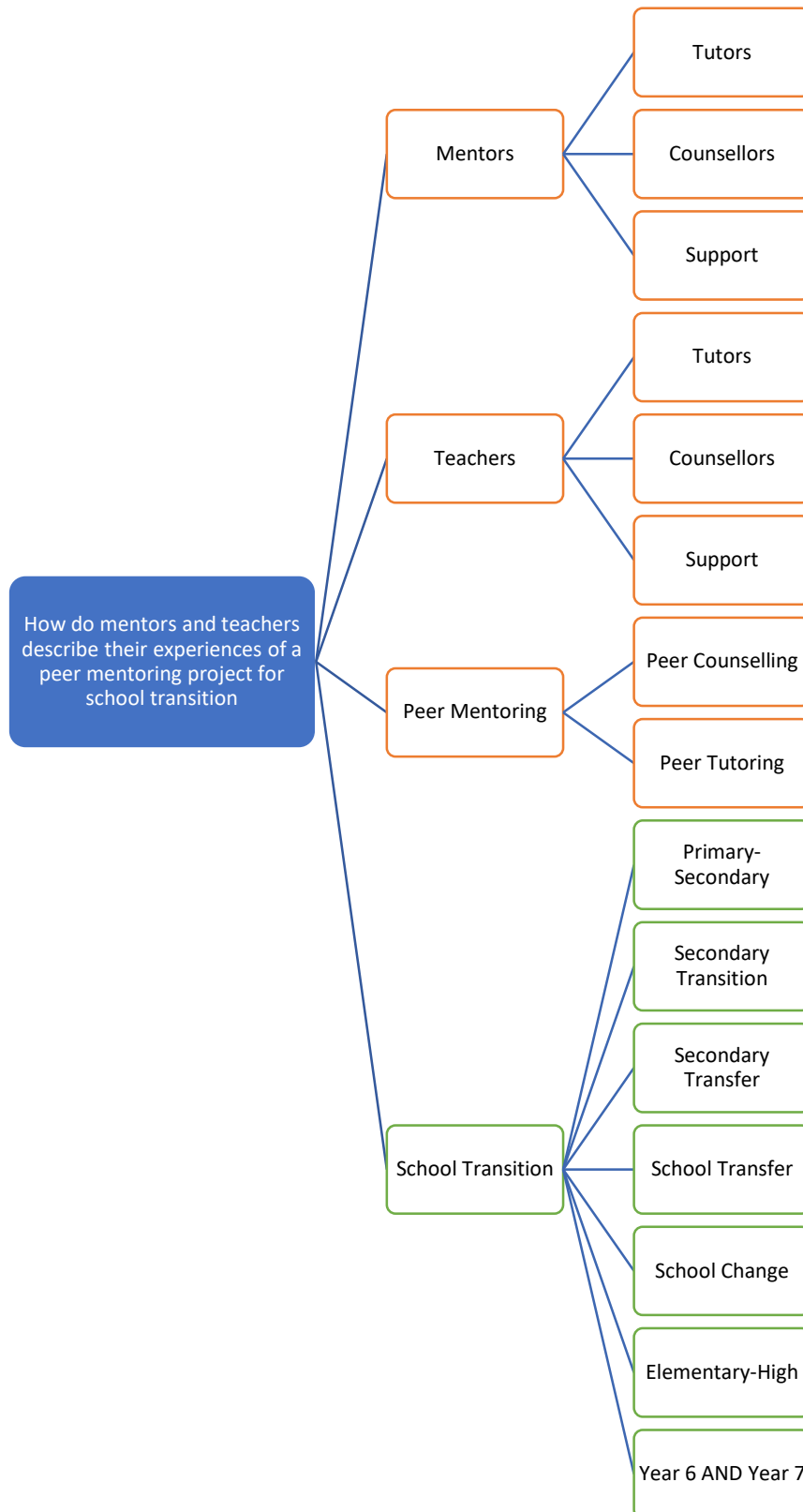
Figure B1. Key search terms identified to guide literature review.

Appendix C – Diagram Illustrating Search Process

Search Engine	• EBSCO Host (including Academic Search Complete, British Education Index, Child Development & Adolescent Studies, Education Abstracts, Education Research Complete, Educational Administration Abstracts, ERIC, PsycINFO, Teacher Reference Center, CINAHL Plus)
Search Terms	• "peer" AND "mentoring*" AND (school transition OR primary to secondary school)
Search Results	• 173 Papers Removing Books and Magazines: 145 Removing Exact Duplicates:88
Exclusion Criteria	• mentor and mentees aged 10-16, school-based, school transition, not university or college, not purely academic, not adult mentors
Paper Exclusions	• By title: 38 • By abstract: 21 • By whole paper: 17
Remaining Relevant Papers	• 4

Figure C1. Diagram illustrating search process

Appendix D – Five Core Principles of Peer Support for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Principle 1: Work where young people 'are at'

This principle focused on developing the project to meet the needs of the young people that the facilitators wish to engage. This can take the form of ensuring the project is aimed at the right developmental level and using resources and settings that suit the young people. They suggest the key to this is to co-develop projects with young people. This provides the opportunity to design projects that meet the needs and wants of the population that is targeted. It also recommended to use creative methods and resources to engage young people as fully as possible.

Principle 2: Involve the right people

This principle concerns the selection of involvement of mentees, mentors and staff. It highlights the importance of selecting mentees for whom the need is not too high, in a way that could overwhelm a peer mentor. It is emphasised that the programme is not a replacement for specialist support, but support for t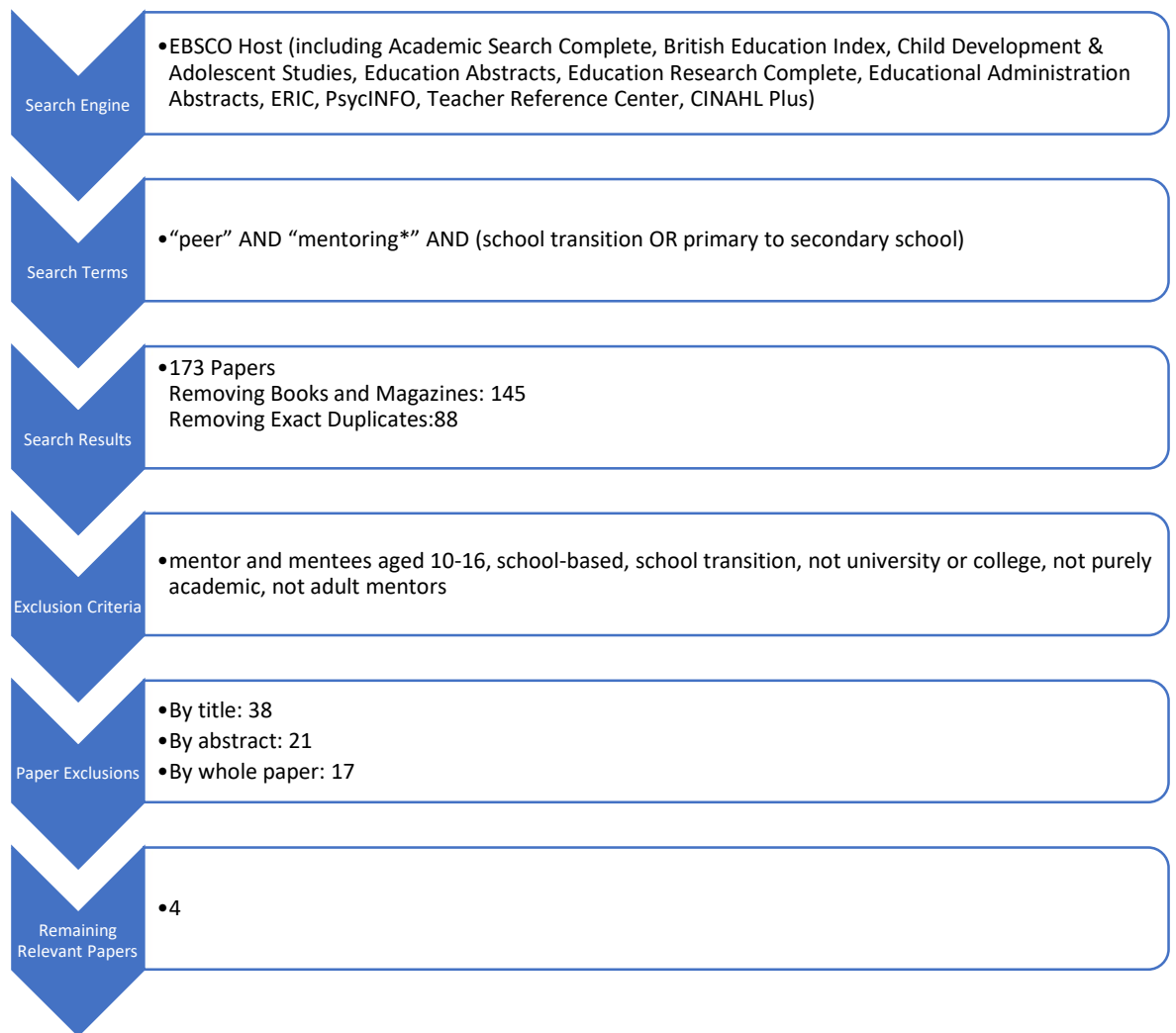hose young people who may be at risk of MH difficulties and could benefit from peer support. They also suggest that selecting mentors who could be described as 'experts by experience' may increase the likelihood of increased empathy and understanding between the mentor and mentee and a more beneficial relationship. Furthermore, they highlight the need for this sense of empathy and understanding to be modelled by the staff facilitating. They also recommend building a staff team with supervision and support, rather than relying on a single staff member and increasing the risk of the staff member becoming overwhelmed by the task.

Principle 3: Focus on relationships

There is an emphasis on building trust within the mentee-mentor relationship to allow the mentee to feel supported and therefore to believe change can occur for them. They highlight how trauma or adverse childhood experiences may

have led to mentees having difficulties communicating or trusting others. Therefore, it is central that mentors are trained in how to engage their mentees even when there are communication difficulties. They also emphasise the importance of supervision from facilitators to support mentors in these contexts. They suggest together, this network of support can enable the mentee to engage in a healthy and caring relationship which can help build their resilience and support their help-seeking in the future.

Principle 4: Young people's ownership

This principle focuses on the importance of young people feeling they have a sense of agency and ownership over the process in order to feel an ability to make change. They suggest this sense of ownership should be nurtured through co-design, co-development and co-facilitation. They highlight the unique insight a young person has on how the project can be most engaging and of most benefit to peers. The young people who consulted on the principles also made note of how young people can be uniquely placed to consider potential risk and impact.

Principle 5: Be safe and boundaried

This aims to note the importance of mentors being trained and supervised effectively to understand and follow processes related to safeguarding, confidentiality and boundaries. Within the training, discussions and role plays are used to explore these themes, but it is also important to carry through the teaching and learning in the form of regular supervision. In the wider system, it is also considered key that the facilitators have close links with wider support, for example, staff such as the school safeguarding lead or a CAMHS link worker.

Appendix E – Summary of Evaluation of Standard MP Programme

[Reference removed to protect participant anonymity] evaluated the original MP project in secondary schools, with older mentors (mean age = 15.53) and younger mentees (mean age = 13.45) within the same schools. They found mentees reported significant improved ratings of mental health difficulties and significantly decreased emotional difficulties, difficulties with peers, hyperactivity and perceived stress scores after the programme. Mentors reported significantly lower emotional difficulties, difficulties with peers, hyperactivity and perceived stress scores after the programme. In regard to protective factors, they found family connection scores and self-esteem scores improved significantly over time for both mentors and mentees.

They also carried out semi-structured interviews with four mentors and four mentees. They found mentees reported feeling, thinking or coping in a more positive way, noticing improved relationships and improving in social skills after taking part in the programme. They reported finding it helpful knowing their mentor was there to help and provide support and guidance. When asked what they found challenging, they said they would have liked longer mentoring and that sometimes the advice their mentors gave them was not helpful. Mentors reported having positive feelings about thinking they had been able to help someone; they also noted improvements in relationships and social skills. They described feeling they had positive and productive relationships with their mentees and feeling supported by the programme team. When asked what they found challenging, they spoke about how it could be difficult at first to make the sessions helpful, but this became easier with practice; they agreed that they would like more mentoring sessions.

The researchers concluded that both mentors and mentees reported improvement over time regarding stress, wellbeing and connection ratings. They suggested the qualitative data indicated the young people recognised these improvements and enjoyed the programme. They recommend interpreting these results with caution due to the small sample size. Additionally, they

recommend interpreting these results within the context of influencing factors such as young people taking exams around the time of data collection. They suggest the next stage of evaluation is to analyse the impact of the programme on school attendance and attainment data, as well collecting data a year after the programme has finished to understand longer term impacts.

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 XXX. 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 "[MP] Transitions Project" based in XXX. 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 teachers 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 be a peer mentor, 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 XXX

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee XXX

Appendix G – Young Person Consultants' Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

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

Exploring the [Programme name]

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 hereby 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 H – Mentors' Interview Schedule

Mentor's Focus Group Schedule

<u>Research Questions</u>

- How do mentors and teachers describe their experiences of a peer mentoring project for school transition

- How do mentors and teachers understand any process of change related to peer mentoring

<u>Interview Questions</u>

1. How did you find out about [MP]? Why do you think you were asked to be involved?
2. What made you want to be involved with [MP]?
3. How did you find the training experience? What was good/bad/missing?
4. What did you think about the way you were matched with your mentee?
5. What was it like when you first met your mentee? In the group setting and one-to-one.
6. What were the sessions like? Format? Where? When?
7. What do you think was good/bad/missing about the mentoring sessions?
8. Were there any differences between mentoring before and after the summer? Why?
9. What do you think was good/bad/missing about the supervision sessions?
10. What was your relationship like with your mentee? Why?
11. Do you think there have been any changes for your mentee because of the mentoring? Why/Why not?
12. Do you think there have been any changes for yourself because of the mentoring? Why/Why not?
13. Why do you think those changes did/didn't occur?
14. How do you feel about the mentoring experience now that it has finished?
15. Would you recommend being a mentor to others? Why?

Appendix I - Teachers' Interview Schedule

Teachers' Interview Schedule

Research Questions

- How do mentors and teachers describe their experiences of a peer mentoring project for school transition

- How do mentors and teachers understand any process of change related to peer mentoring

Interview Questions

1. How did you find out about [MP]?
2. What made you want to be involved with [MP]?
3. What are your thoughts about the school transition process? What do you think is helpful/unhelpful/missing during this process?
4. How did you find the set-up process? Helpful/unhelpful/missing?
5. What was your experience when the mentoring sessions were taking place?
6. What do you think was helpful/unhelpful/missing about the mentoring sessions?
7. Do you think there have been any changes for your pupil because of the mentoring? Why/why not?
8. How do you feel about the mentoring experience now that it has finished?
9. Would you recommend peer mentoring for school transition to other schools?

<u>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET</u>

My name is XXX and I am a University of East London student. As part of my studies I am asked to do a research project.

Before you agree to take part, you need to understand what taking part will involve. Please try to read the information below carefully.

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

Do you want to take part in this research project?

This form aims to give you the information you need to think about whether you want to take part. This research project is part of my Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of East London.

Project Title

An exploration of mentors' and teachers' 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 "[MP]" project about their experience. I'll also be asking some teachers 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?

If you agree to take part in this study, I would meet with you and a group of other young people who were also mentors in this project, some people might be from your school. 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 about 60 minutes and will be at school.

What will happen to the things you tell me?

The groups discussions will be recorded on tape so that we can remember what everyone says for my research project. 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. Any details about you, like your name, will be changed so that anyone who reads the research will not know who you are. When the research project has ended the recordings will be deleted, and in two years all other written information will be deleted.

Do you have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part in the study. You can stop or leave at any time without needing to say why, and there won't be any consequences for this. If you decide you do not want your information included in the research project any more, please contact me by XXX.

Contact Details

If you would like more information about my research or have any questions or worries, please ask school to get in touch with me.

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 worries about how the research has taken place please contact the research supervisor XXX

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: XXX

Appendix K - Teachers' Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

My name is XXX. 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 teachers in.

Before you agree to take part, it is important that you fully understand what taking part involves. Please take time to read the information thoroughly.

If you decide to take part, you will need to sign the attached consent form to give permission.

Research Project Title

An exploration of mentors' and teachers' 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 teachers of students who took part in the "[MP]" transition project in XXX. Particularly how teachers became aware of or involved in their student's involvement in the mentoring scheme, their thoughts about it, and if teachers noticed any impacts on their student.

One of the project aims is to investigate if the project might work for other young people. I'll also be asking the mentors who took part about their experiences too.

What would participation involve?

If you agree to take part, I would meet with you and a group of other teachers of young people who were being mentored as part of the [MP]' project. Some of these teachers might have students at the same school as your student, others may not. The group discussion will be led by myself, and will last around 90 minutes. It will take place at XXX on XXX. I will be asking questions about your experience of the project, but it is up to you how much you say.

Confidentiality arrangements

The group discussion will be audio recorded so 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. Any identifying details, such as your name, will be changed so that anyone who reads the research will not be able to know who you are. The audio recordings will be deleted once the study has ended. Written information will be kept for two years after the study ends. We will also agree a confidentially agreement within the group of teachers before the discussion begins.

Will anyone know I have taken part?

I will not share with the students or school which teachers 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 research project. 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 you do not want your information included in the research project after the group discussion has taken place, please contact me by XXX.

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 your school's link teacher, 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 XXX

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: XXX

Appendix L – Mentors' Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in the research project:

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

Name of Researcher: XXX

• XXX would like to talk to me about my experience of the "[MP]" project.

• XXX gave me an information sheet to read. I understood what it said.

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

• I am able to ask XXX about any questions I have.

• XXX and a young person researcher will lead the group discussion.

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

• XXX will not use my personal details, like my name, in the research so that other people will not know that they are writing about me.

• Only XXX and their supervisor will have access to my identifying information (my name, age etc.).

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

• I can say 'no' to taking part or my information being used.

• XXX will not mind if I say no.

• This will not affect any support that I get.

• I can change my mind without having to say why.

• I know that if I do not want my information to be included, I need to tell XXX by XXX

My Decision (please tick the relevant box):

I agree to take part XXX's research ☐

OR

I do not want to take part in XXX'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 M – Teachers' Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to participate in the research project:

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

Name of Researcher: XXX

• I am aware that XXX would like to talk to me about my experience of the "[MP]" project.

• I have been provided with an information sheet and understood the information.

• I can stop talking to XXX or the group at any time with no negative consequences.

• I was able to and will be able to ask XXX any questions I had/have.

• XXX will record the group conversation and will transcribe what people say.

• XXX will not use any identifying details in the research report, so what I say will remain anonymous

• Only XXX and their supervisor will have access to identifying information.

• 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 needing to say why.

• I know that if I do not want my information to be included, I need to tell XXX by XXX

My Decision (please delete as applicable):

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

Participant Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………………………………………………………………………………..

Participant's Signature

………………………………………………………………………………...

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

………………………………………………………………………………...

Researcher's Signature

…………………………………………………………………………………

Date: ………………….…….

Appendix N – Mentors' Demographics Form

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

[   ] / [   ] / [   ]

What primary school did you attend?

_____

What Secondary school do you currently go to?

_____

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

Male ☐   Transgender ☐   Non-binary ☐

Female ☐   I don't know yet ☐   Prefer not to say ☐

Gender Fluid ☐   Other ☐

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:

Appendix O – Teachers' Demographics Form

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?

☐ / ☐ / ☐

What Secondary school do you currently teach at?

_____

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

Male ☐   Transgender ☐

Female ☐   Other ☐

Gender Fluid ☐

Prefer not to say ☐   Non-binary ☐

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 P – Mentors' Debrief Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Thank you for coming to talk with me and the other mentors today. You have helped me understand more about what the experience of mentoring is like. By telling me your thoughts I can share with others what the experience of mentoring is like and this can be used to develop helpful peer mentoring projects.

If there is anything we have talked about that you found upsetting or worrying, it is important that you tell your parent/carer, a teacher, me or my supervisor so that we can help.

You can contact me by emailing …….

You can contact my supervisor by emailing ………

You could also call Childline by phoning this number for free: 0800 1111 or you could visit their website: www.childline.org.uk

If you decide that you do not want me to include your contributions in my research, please contact me or my supervisor using the email addresses above. Please try and contact within 2 weeks if you can.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research project was done, please contact the research project's supervisor XXX

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: XXX

Appendix Q – Teachers' Debrief Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Thank you for coming to talk with me and the
other teachers today. You have helped me
understand more about what the experience of
the [MP] project has been like for you. I aim to
use this understanding to develop a research
report that can help others to design and
implement successful peer mentoring for school transition projects and
understand the mechanisms it can work through. The research will aim to
answer the following questions:

- How do mentors and teachers describe their experiences of a peer
  mentoring project for school transition

- How do mentors and teachers understand any process of change related
  to peer mentoring

If you decide that you do not want me to include your contributions in my
research, please contact me or my supervisor using the email addresses above.
Please try and contact within 3 weeks if you can.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study was done, please
contact the study's supervisor XXX

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: XXX

Appendix R – Charity Collaboration Consent Form

Dear XXX,

I am writing to confirm XXX and the [MP] projects' collaboration with the University of East London to support the following research projects:

An exploration of mentors' and teachers' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school – XXX, UEL Trainee Clinical Psychologist

And

An exploration of mentees' and parents' experiences of peer mentoring during the transition from primary to secondary school – XXX, UEL Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Yours Truly

XXX

XXX, Programme Manger

Appendix S – Ethical Approval Certificate

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

REVIEWER: Sonya Dineva

SUPERVISOR: Neil Rees

STUDENT: Rebecca Allgood-May

Course: Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Title of proposed study: An exploration of the experience of mentors and teachers involved in the [MP] school transition peer mentoring project in the London Borough of XXX

DECISION OPTIONS:

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.

APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before 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.

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, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES

Minor amendments required (for reviewer):

- Please make sure you have met all the dietary requirements when you select the refreshments for your focus groups;

- Please reconsider the withdrawal period for your participants because in focus groups it is very hard to delete someone's speech when they speak along with several other people in the recording (therefore, you cannot actually delete someone's recording without destroying the whole recording);

- Please clarify if the transcripts will be accessible to representatives of the [External Evaluators] and [The MP] because you mention that you will seek participants' consent for them too;

- This is not very clear but does the permission from XXX serve as a permission to contact the pupils at the chosen school and use their premises? If not, please provide such.

- Please prepare the attendance of school staff at pupils' focus groups very carefully because it may affect pupils' responses.

Major amendments required (for reviewer):

Confirmation of making the above minor amendments (for students):

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name (Typed name to act as signature): Rebecca Allgood-May

Student number:

Date: 28/01/2019

(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER (for reviewer)

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

YES

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

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

☐
HIGH

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

☐

MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

☒
LOW

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

Reviewer (Typed name to act as signature):   Sonya Dineva

Date: 25 January 2019

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

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's Insurance, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard

Appendix T – Ethics Amendment Approval

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology

REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

FOR BSc, MSc/MA & TAUGHT PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS

Please complete this form if you are requesting approval for proposed amendment(s) to an ethics application that has been approved by the School of Psychology.

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).

HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THE REQUEST

Complete the request form electronically and accurately.

Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (page 2).

When submitting this request form, ensure that all necessary documents are attached (see below).

Using your UEL email address, email the completed request form along with associated documents to: Dr Tim Lomas at t.lomas@uel.ac.uk

Your request form will be returned to you via your UEL email address with reviewer's response box completed. This will normally be within five days. Keep a copy of the approval to submit with your project/dissertation/thesis.

Recruitment and data collection are not to commence until your proposed amendment has been approved.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

A copy of your previously approved ethics application with proposed amendments(s) added as tracked changes.

Copies of updated documents that may relate to your proposed amendment(s). For example an updated recruitment notice, updated participant information letter, updated consent form etc.

A copy of the approval of your initial ethics application.

Name of applicant: Rebecca Allgood-May

Programme of study: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Title of research: An exploration of the experience of mentors and teachers involved in the [MP] school transition peer mentoring project in the London Borough of XXX

Name of supervisor: Dr Neil Rees and Dr Jenny Jim

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

Proposed amendment	Rationale

Change of title to: An Exploration of Mentors' and Teachers' Experiences of Peer Mentoring during the Transition from Primary to Secondary School	Title submitted in ethics application included more specific detail in error. The new title maintains the same focus but removes potential identifying details to maintain participants' confidentiality.

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

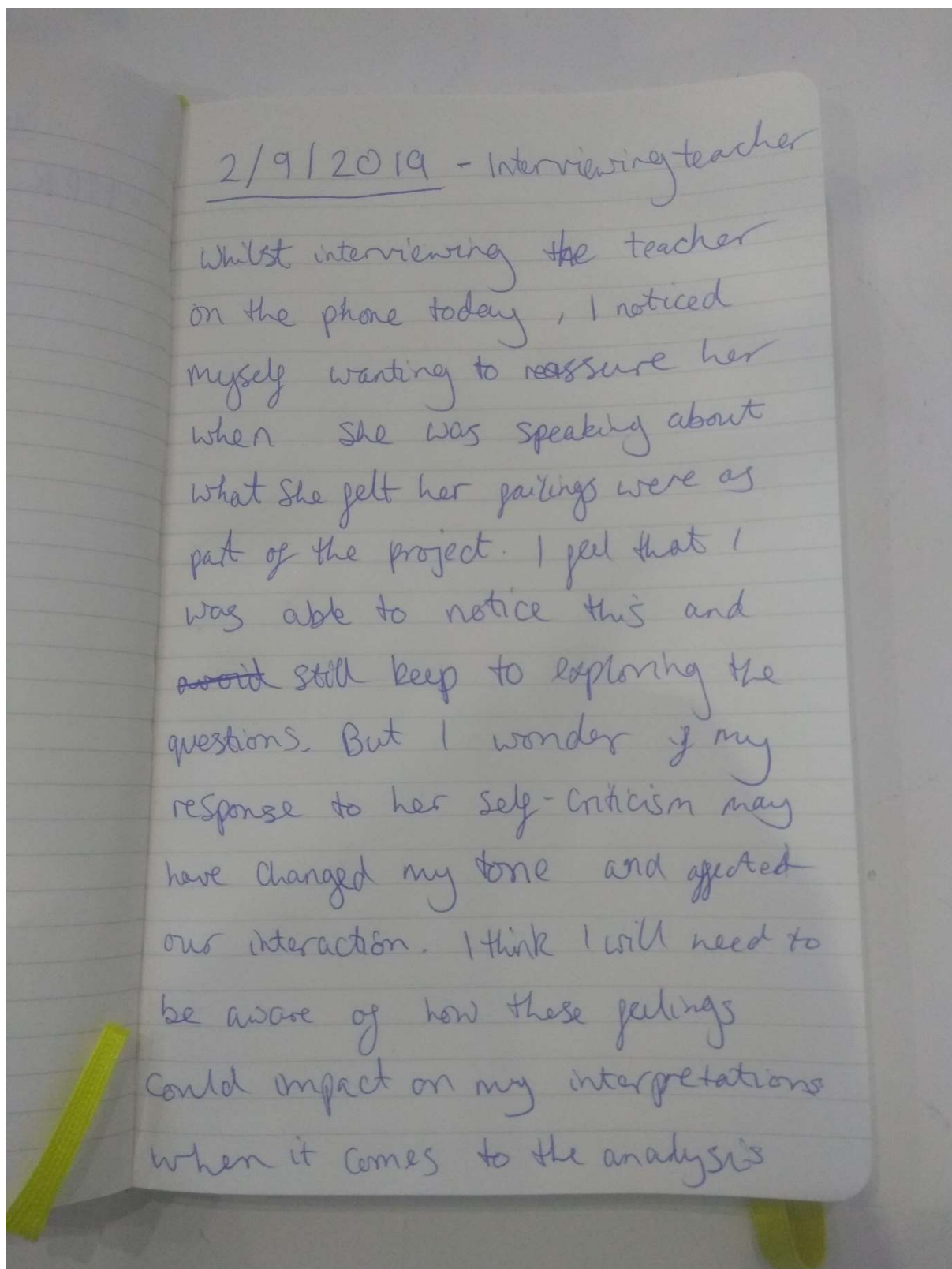Student's signature (please type your name):   Rebecca Allgood-May

Date: 17/01/20

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

Reviewer: Tim Lomas

Date: 17.1.20

Appendix U – Research Journal

2/9/2019 - Interviewing teacher

Whilst interviewing the teacher on the phone today, I noticed myself wanting to reassure her when she was speaking about what she felt her failings were as part of the project. I feel that I was able to notice this and ~~avoid~~ still keep to exploring the questions. But I wonder if my response to her self-criticism may have changed my tone and affected our interaction. I think I will need to be aware of how these feelings could impact on my interpretations when it comes to the analysis

37   mentees, and then I kind of clicked with mine straight away because he was like a really funny guy.   — Mentor Reward (MR)
38   Yeah, it was really cute. And then like just seeing him move, and seeing him Mature is really good.   Click
39   It's really nice.

40   **Researcher** 3:08 That's lovely to hear. It sounds like it all went quite quickly. So you were asked, a
41   couple of weeks, then you had the training, a couple of weeks, and then you started the sessions.

42   **Ma** Yeah pretty much. It went really quickly.

43   **Researcher** And what did you think about the training?   — MR – social

44   **Ma** 3:22 I thought it was really fun because like, you get to meet new people, like everyone there I
45   Made friends with, even now, after, I still talk to them, even after we finished. And, like, with the
46   training, like the officers there were really nice, and it was like a really easy to, like, take in, because   — MR – training
47   like they done activities with us to help us take it in. We didn't have to just read text like, you can't
48   do this. They showed us you can't do this but you can do this to help. So yeah.

49   **Researcher** 3:48 Yeah. And you did some role plays and stuff?

50   **Ma** 3:51 Yeah, we done role plays and stuff. Like, it was really nice, and then we done like big
51   posters about mentees and, like, how we can help them with different thing, we Made like different
52   scenarios about If this happens, what we should do. So like if one of the mentees was getting too   — MR – training
53   personal, you just, like, tell them to calm down a bit and then you go to an officer to tell them. It was
54   really easy to get involved with it.

55   **Researcher** 4:19 So it sounds like that was some creative stuff, but you also were learning things
56   that you needed to know like safeguarding.

57   **Ma** Yeah, I think it was good for like your whole life as well. It wasn't just because of mentoring. Like   — MR – training
58   if mentoring wasn't there I think you'd need these skills anyway. Like, if you got a job in like   — MR – transferable skills
59   mentoring and like safeguarding stuff then it's good for you as well. Cause like, you've already got
60   that one step further than everyone else.

61   **Researcher** That Makes sense. So those skills you could use not just a mentoring.

62   **Ma** 4:49 You can use them, like, just in general life.

63   **Researcher** 4:53 That's really nice to hear. So what was your, what would you say was your
64   favourite bit about the training

65   **Ma** 4:58 Probably just meeting new people really. Like getting to see these different people and   — MR – Training
66   how they interact with certain things. It was just a really good time to be honest.

67   **Researcher** 5:07 It's nice to hear that you're still in touch as well.
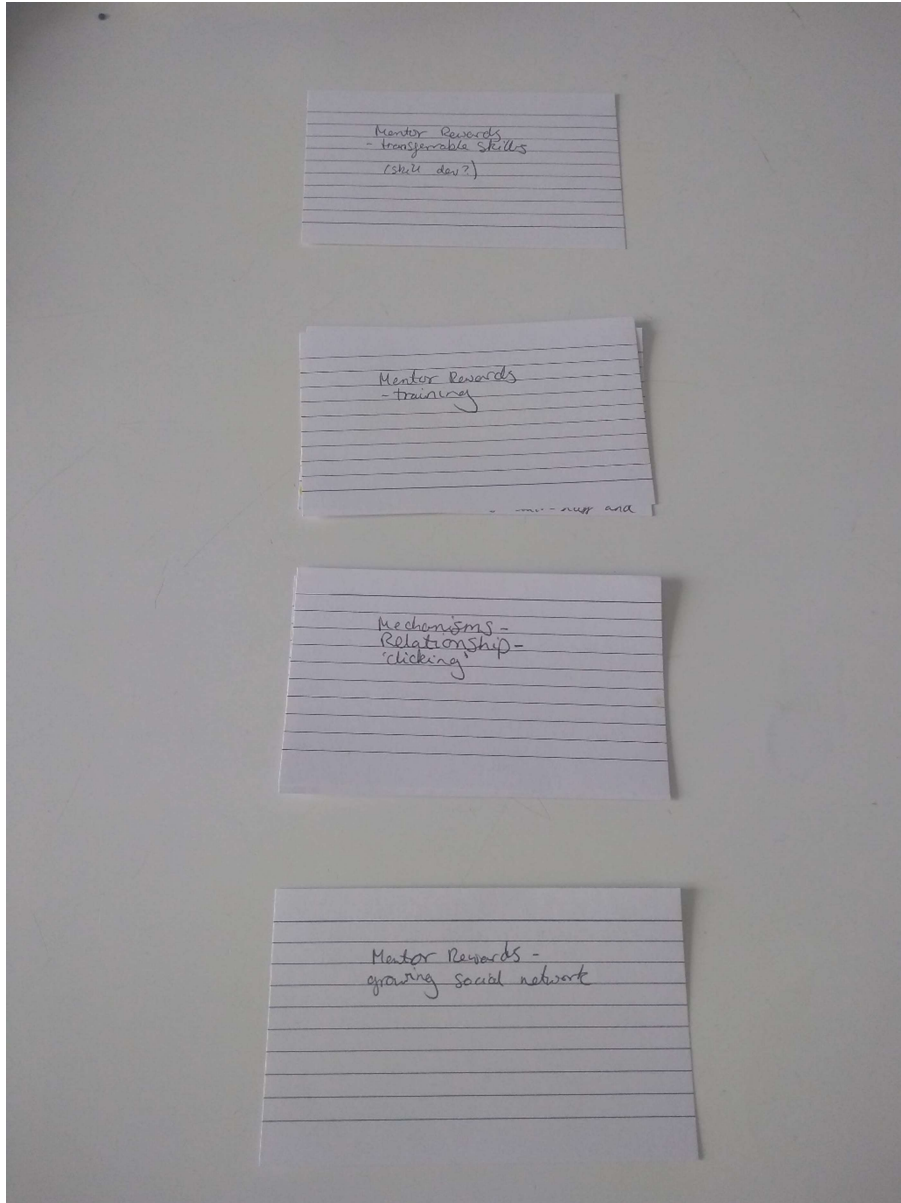
68   **Ma** 5:09 Yeah, it's really nice.

69   **Researcher** 5:10 And so you went to JR. Right? And that was that was okay to go there.

70   **Ma** Yeah that was fine, because I had some friends there anyway. So like, after I saw some of my old
71   friends, because I used to go to priMary school with them. So yeah it was really nice to go there,
72   cause like none of the students were like coming up to the doors or anything. If they saw us they just
73   walked past and left us. It was really easy, yeah.

74   **Researcher** And why do you think you all got on so well in the training?

Appendix W - Generating Codes

I think it was good for like your life as well. It wasn't just because of mentoring, like if mentoring wasn't there I think you'd need those skills anyway, like if you've got a job in like mentoring and like safeguarding stuff then it's good for you as well, 'cause like you've already got that one step further than everyone else. You can use them, like, just in general life.

• I thought it was really fun because you get to meet new people, like everyone there I made friends with, even now, after, I still talk to them, even after we finished. And like with the training, like the officers that were really nice, and it was like a really easy to, like, take in, because they done activities with us to help us take it in.
• It was really easy to get involved in
• Yeah I think, it was good for your whole life as well. It wasn't just because of mentoring. Like if mentoring wasn't there I think you'd need

these skills anyway, like if you got a job in like mentoring and like safeguarding stuff then it's good for yourself as well, 'cause like you're already got that one step further than everyone else.
• Probably just meeting new people really. Like getting to see loads different people and how they interact with certain things. It was just a really good time to be honest.
• I think it's just because we have a good group of people.
• I think it all worked out perfectly. Especially like teaching you but also doing creative stuff and

• I kind of clicked with mine straight away because he was like a really funny guy. Yeah, it was really cute.
• And then my mentor was like perfect for me and K, because like, we just all got along really well.
• I think it was really nice because me and K are close anyway, like so us having that close connection, but also having a time, we knew when to separate so we could talk to our mentors by ourselves as well.

• We didn't even have to say to it to each other. We just like knew straight away.
• We still like me K + T all had something to talk about with each other, we had like, we got a strong connection straight away.
• And I think we just like clicked straight away
• I don't know how it works. It was just like an automatic click
• I think if it was anyone else, it wouldn't have been like that, but, like, it's like we were

• I thought it was really fun because like, you get to meet new people, like everyone there I make friends with, even now, I still talk to them, even after we finished.

Appendix X – Searching for Themes

Appendix Y – Reviewing Themes

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Peer Mentoring for School Transition Research Project

<u>Research Questions:</u> How do mentors and teachers describe their experience of a peer mentoring project?

If they think it leads to change, how do they think this change comes about?

<u>Mentors</u>

- Successful mentors are confident, responsible and mature, and want to help others
- It helps when mentees are open to the experience
- Mentors thought they helped mentees to change by using their shared experience to build a trusting relationship
- Mentors described challenges of needing more time, space and managing behaviour being too much pressure sometimes.
- Mentors felt a sense of achievement through making a difference and developing transferrable skills
- Mentors thought mentees learnt how to ask for help and were able to settle in better

<u>Teachers</u>

- Teachers highlighted the importance of the relationship between the school and the agency; particularly how communication and trust facilitate a successful programme
- Teachers said it was important to have an environment where pairs could have private but supervised conversations
- Teachers felt it was very important to not put too much pressure on mentors and choose mentees who could engage well
- Teachers believed change occurred because mentors could relate to and share experience with mentees
- Teachers thought mentors developed transferrable skills and mentees gained extra support which helped them to make positive changes

The researcher, X, would like to thank you for taking part in this research which will be used to design peer-mentoring projects to better meet the needs of young people and schools. I would love your feedback and comments about the research, I can be contacted on X