



RECRUITMENT:

A GUIDE FOR LOCAL PROJECT COORDINATORS

Research Manager: Dr Gill Mezey

Research Assistants: Deborah Meyer and Fiona Clare

Research Administrator: Ros Hampton



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## 1 Foreword

Literature on mentoring programmes stresses the importance of strong project management and staffing to coordinate mentoring programmes and to produce an effective recruitment strategy. The importance of all Local Authority professionals working together with the coordinator to achieve this cannot be overstated. The aim of this document is to provide a framework to achieve this.

## 2 Part 1: Carmen Study Aim

The aim of the study is to develop a peer mentoring intervention to reduce teenage pregnancy in looked after young women and to assess the feasibility of evaluating the intervention. SGUL will look at whether giving a young woman in care, extra support from another young woman who has been through the care system is helpful and has positive effects on their general wellbeing, social life, relationships, attitudes to sex and thoughts about early pregnancy.

### **Numbers:**

For the phase 2 exploratory trial (mentoring to begin early 2012), SGUL are aiming to recruit 48 young women in care between the ages of 14-18 to become potential mentees.

Each local authority should recruit **16 potential mentees**. Half the young women who consent to take part in the study will be provided with a peer mentor, whilst

the other half will continue to receive their usual care. The reason for this is the need to compare the experiences of young women who have mentors with those who do not.

As mentors, SGUL are recruiting twenty four young women, aged 19 to 25, who have themselves been through the care system. Each local authority should **recruit 10-12** young women to be trained as mentors, with a view to **8 of them consenting to be a mentor**.

## Part 2: Criteria for recruitment of Mentees and Mentors

### **Mentees:**

The Local Authority Project Coordinator and other professionals such as social workers, residential home workers and foster carers will be relied upon to seek out potential mentees.

As well as proactively marketing the benefits of potentially becoming a mentee, evidence from the phase 1 pilot of the Carmen Study has illustrated the need for social workers and other professionals to be directive with a young woman who they feel is appropriate for the study in order that they participate.

St George's is not specifying whether the young people must be sexually active, or have been pregnant. However, these data will be collected at baseline and follow up.

### **Essential criteria:**

- ❖ A female
- ❖ Aged between 14 and 18
- ❖ Currently Looked After

### **Desirable criteria:**

- ❖ Age 14-15 (prior to transition to independence)
- ❖ In a foster home or residential placement (non-independent living)
- ❖ Has had 3+ placements (on the basis that they represent the most vulnerable group)

### **Mentors:**

Literature on mentoring illustrates that mentors with good interpersonal skills such as empathy, engagement, authenticity and the ability to empower are more able to create relationships which are associated with higher self-esteem. During recruitment, Local Authorities should take responsibility for decisions about who would make a good mentor. To help with the programme evaluation, local authorities should document how mentors were chosen.

### **Essential Criteria:**

- ❖ Aged between 19 and 25 who have experienced the care system and are therefore familiar with it
- ❖ High in relational qualities/interpersonal skills such as empathy, engagement, authenticity and empowerment.

- ❖ Agreement between the mentors' values and the programmes' values so that they will act as appropriate role models. (I.e. the mentor's attitudes towards teenage pregnancy and promoting healthy sexual behaviours should be consistent with the programme's desire to reduce teenage pregnancy. This does not automatically exclude mothers)
- ❖ Fully committed and able to meet the needs and demands of the role.
- ❖ Safe to work with children and vulnerable young people with a cleared Criminal Records Bureau check.
- ❖ Part 3: Guidelines for recruitment

## **2.1 Timescales:**

In order for the exploratory trial to begin on time (early 2012) in Ealing, Lambeth and Essex, mentee and mentor recruitment should take place between September and December 2011. The recruitment of mentees and mentors should take place simultaneously.

Potential mentees are required to **consent** to take part in the study at a face to face meeting with researchers. These meetings need to be conducted **between the middle of November and the end of December 2011**. Potential mentors will need to be identified by project coordinators. Potential mentors will be sent a letter to invite them to training a month in advance of the course.

### **1.1 General guidelines**

1. Ensure clear roles and responsibilities for the project coordinator/s are discussed and documented between each party (i.e. between project coordinators assistant project coordinators as appropriate).
2. Ensure the above roles and responsibilities are communicated to the researchers so they are able to contact the appropriate person regarding each section of recruitment.
3. Ensure regular and effective communication between project coordinators in Local Authority.
4. Ensure regular updates on recruitment to researchers.
5. Ensure over-recruitment of potential mentors and mentees, due to the likelihood of drop out (e.g. identify 10-12 potential mentors to attend the training).
6. Ensure progress on recruitment is documented (see part 5: Recording).
7. Ensure timesheets are completed each week and emailed to researchers (see appendix 2).

## ***1.2 Recruiting potential mentees: A 10 step process***

Each local Authority will recruit 16 potential mentees. Only 8 of those will be offered a mentor match. The study will need to be pitched to potential mentees to make sure they are aware that they have a 50% chance of having a mentor but there are no disadvantages to taking part for those that do not receive a mentor. They will become research participants. As research participants they will receive vouchers for their interview time at the beginning and end of the study and will be greatly contributing to improving the life chances of other young women in care.

**Step 1:** Local Authority professionals are contacted well in advance of mentor training to help identify potential mentees. **(Inc. social workers, foster carers, residential home managers, Children in Care Council, SOT workers & IRO's.)**

**Step 2:** The project coordinator emails the above professionals, attaching the project information leaflets (see Appendix 1). It will be extremely important that social workers attend a group meeting delivered by the project coordinator whereby the project and their role are explained. (If this is not possible, as a minimum, the recruitment guide for social work professionals can be sent to them).

**Step 3:** The project coordinator ensures there is backing by senior management for the above process. Senior management team are informed about progress, particularly when responses to the project coordinator from other professionals are slow.

**Step 4:** Professionals (highlighted in Step 1) begin to identify young women from within their care / case load and pass their details to the project coordinator (including their name, address, phone and D.O.B).

**Step 5:** The project coordinator invites potential mentees to attend a group information session with refreshments and activities. Potential mentees are invited to bring their social workers and / or carers to this meeting.

(As well as phone contact, the project coordinator can post the mentee the information leaflet and an initial contact letter enclosed with the date of the information meeting)

**Step 6:** After the meeting, a known professional phones / makes face to face contact with the potential mentee. They discuss the project and at this point the young person will either agree to meet researchers to consent or not.

**Step 7:** The known professional asks potential mentee for their availability to meet the researchers and whether the young person would like the known professional to be present at the consent meeting with researchers. Known professional will need to cross check their own availability.

**Part 8:** The known professional contacts the project coordinator and the researcher with the outcome, whether positive or negative (see appendix 3 for researcher contact details).

**Part 9:** Researchers telephone the potential mentee to confirm a date for a consent meeting. Researchers inform the project coordinator and the known professional of this date and perform any necessary risk assessment of the location. Researcher post a letter to the potential mentee confirming the agreed meeting date.

**Part 10:** Researchers telephone and text potential mentee about the consent meeting. The meeting takes place and young person consents to take part in the study. At this point, the researchers contact the Bristol randomisation service to find out whether the potential mentee will have a mentor or will be part of the care as usual group. The result will be communicated to the project coordinator and known professional. The researchers will inform the young person of the outcome and advise them, either that they have not been allocated to a mentor or, that once mentors have been trained the coordinator will be in touch with them regarding a mentor match.

### **1.3 Recruiting potential mentors: A 12 step process**

**N: B** Steps 1-4 below are the same as for mentees and should be administered concurrently. However the type of professionals contacted by the project coordinator may differ as mentors will be care leavers.

**Step 1:** Local Authority professionals are contacted well in advance of mentor training to help identify potential mentors. **(Inc. Leaving Care professionals, Children in Care Council and SOT workers)**

**Step 2:** The project coordinator emails the above professionals, attaching the project information leaflets (see Appendix 1). It will be extremely important that social workers attend a group meeting delivered by the project coordinator whereby the project and their role are explained. (If this is not possible, as a minimum, the recruitment guide for social work professionals can be sent to them).

**Step 3:** The project coordinator ensures there is backing by senior management for the above process. Senior management team are informed about progress, particularly when responses to the project coordinator from other professionals are slow.

**Step 4:** Professionals (highlighted in Step 1) begin to identify young women to become mentors and pass their details to the project coordinator (including their name, address, phone and D.O.B).

**Step 5:** The project coordinator invites potential mentors to attend a group information session with refreshments and activities. (As well as phone contact, the project coordinator can post the mentor the information leaflet and an initial contact letter enclosed with the date of the information meeting)

**Step 6:** After the meeting, a known professional phones / makes face to face contact with the potential mentors. They discuss the project and at this point the young person will either agree to attend mentor training or not.

**Step 7:** The known professional contacts the project coordinator with the outcome.

**Step 8:** The project coordinator sends interested young women a letter to invite them to training. The young women will be asked to confirm their attendance at training with the project coordinator. **N: B** The young women may need further prompting to confirm their intention to attend training.

**Step 9:** Project coordinator informs researchers of the outcome. For the purposes of the evaluation, project coordinator should inform researchers of the reason if young woman is unable to attend training.

**Step 10:** The training deliverers send the potential mentors a text message a day or two before training to remind them to attend and to welcome them. Training course happens.

**Step 11:** Following training, mentors decide whether to consent to become a mentor. If they would like to, researchers arrange to meet with them directly to conduct a baseline. Researchers will ask mentors about their preferences regarding a mentee match and will pass this information to the project coordinator.

**Step 12:** Once all of the mentor have consented to the project, the project coordinator (in communication with mentees social worker) can begin to match the mentors to the mentees (see criteria on following page).

### 3 Part 4: Matching mentors with mentees

Once mentor training has taken place and all potential mentees have been consented and allocated either to have a mentor or receive their care as usual, the project coordinator, in coordination with other professionals, will create mentor-mentee pairings. The main criteria for pairing mentors with mentees should be their geographical location, i.e. their proximity to each other. This is to increase the likelihood that the mentor and mentee will meet face to face every week. Ideally there should also be a 5 year age gap between the mentee and mentor.

However, the mentor training and baseline interviews may reveal to researchers that a young woman would be best placed with a particular type of mentee. This information, as well as anything which uncovers potential problems with matches will be passed to the project coordinators, to aid the process of pairing. The existing knowledge that project coordinators and other professionals have of the young women will also be useful.

The project coordinator should send details of the 8 mentor-mentee pairings to the researchers and once arranged, inform researchers of the date of the initial three-way meeting to introduce the relationship with mentor and mentee.

### 4 Part 5: Recording

#### 4.1 Recruitment process:

The researchers would like the following information to be collected by the project coordinator/s to enable the research team to monitor the process of recruiting mentors and mentees in each Local Authority in terms of costs and drop out. Project coordinators should provide feedback to the researchers on all information collected.

#### Mentees

1. How many posters and information sheets aimed at mentors were placed in each location in the Local Authority (Please note if anyone responded directly to the posters / leaflets and put themselves forward)
2. How many potential mentees were invited to an information meeting?
3. How many potential mentees (age14-18) attended that information meeting or were spoken to about the project on a one-to-one basis? (Who made initial contact?)

**(Point 2 and 3 would be the same number if there was full take up of info meetings)**

4. How many potential mentees arrange a consent meeting with researcher?
5. How many of those arranged consent meetings go ahead?
6. How many potential mentees consent to the study at that meeting?

## Mentors

1. How many posters and information sheets aimed at mentors were placed in each location in the Local Authority? (Please note if anyone responded directly to the posters / leaflets and put themselves forward)
2. How many potential mentors were invited to an information meeting about the project?
3. How many potential mentors (age19-25) attended that information meeting or were spoken to about the project on a one-to-one basis? And who made initial contact? (i.e. young woman who initially contacted the project coordinator or vice versa)  
**(Point 2 and 3 would be the same number if there was full take up of info meetings)**
4. How many invites to the mentor training course were sent?
5. How many potential mentors accepted the invitation / said they would attend the training course?
6. How many actually attended the training course?
7. How many that attended the training course consented to become a mentor afterwards?

### 4.3 Timesheets

As part of the exploratory trial we are recording the resource demands on all those involved. This is to allow the research team to make a sound estimate of the costs of a scaled up project and to set the benefits of the exercise in the context of its costs. Essentially we need a break down of the project coordinator's time spent on the various activities under three broad headings.

- Setting up the project
- Running the project
- Providing assistance to the researchers

The 'setting up' comprises all those tasks from the project initiation through to the project 'going live', i.e. the first mentor/mentee contacts. After that first contact we are in the realm of live running of the project. In practice there may be some overlap between setting up and live running as some first mentor/mentee contacts may precede others. Assistance to the researchers is defined as any activity that is only required because there is a research project taking place.

Project coordinators should complete a time sheet weekly. (If there are two coordinators, they are both required to do this). We ask that coordinators are conscientious in completing these, but recognise that the task can be seen as a diversion from the primary management tasks. Ideally they will be completed at the end of each day and totalled up for the week. (See Appendix 2 for detailed instructions on how to complete the timesheet).