ADCS

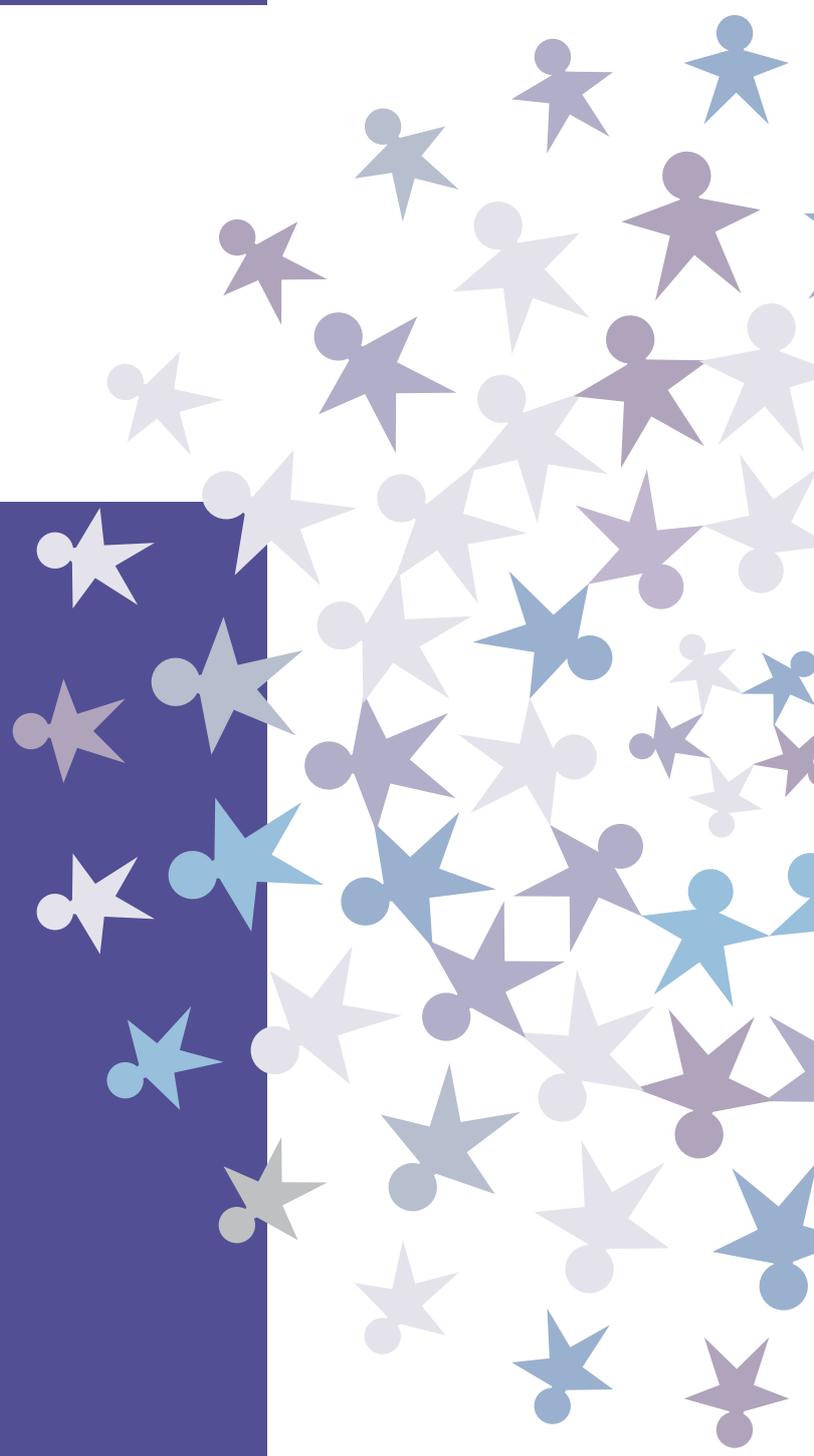# THE STAFF COLLEGE

PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

MENTOR PLUS

Mentoring scheme
for new directors of
children's services

ADCS
Leading Children's Services

Contents

Foreword

As part of our commitment to high quality leadership in children's services, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) will, with effect from April 2016 commission the Staff College, formerly known as the Virtual Staff College (VSC), to provide mentoring support for new directors of children's services (DCSs). The ADCS commission means there will be no charge to the employing local authority of a newly appointed DCS for this core mentoring support offer. In addition to this core offer, enhanced mentoring support, and coaching for experienced DCSs are also available from the Staff College. More information on enhanced support can be found here.

Change continues apace in children's services - nationally, regionally and within local authorities – and in recognition of that we believe that current or recently serving DCSs are best placed to provide mentoring support for colleagues undertaking their first DCS role. This mentoring support should be seen as complementary to induction programmes offered by individual local authorities. Participation in the mentoring scheme is entirely voluntary, however, we strongly urge every new DCS to undertake a period of mentoring.

This handbook provides essential information for both mentees and mentors. Section 2 of this handbook contains information specifically for mentees.

Further information is also provided on the Staff College website.

1: Mentoring for new directors of children's services

1.1 Aims

As part of its commitment to systems leadership within children's services, the Staff College on behalf of ADCS will ensure that all newly appointed first-time directors of children's services have access to a mentor.

Mentoring is one important strand in professional development for new leaders of children's services, but cannot meet the full range of needs that such leaders may have. While induction is fundamentally the responsibility of the employer, mentoring sits alongside induction and more formal training opportunities. Mentoring can be highly instrumental in assisting new colleagues to settle capably and confidently into the job. By offering mentoring arrangements, the Staff College on behalf of ADCS will seek to provide an effective and highly personalised professional support network during the critical early months of new DCSs taking up post.

The main aims of the mentoring scheme are to:

- provide all new DCSs with an experienced serving DCS who can offer advice, guidance and experience to illuminate circumstances and issues that are faced by new DCSs. The mentor will not be expected to offer (or provide) specific solutions or courses of action, but rather to enable the new DCS to reach his or her own conclusions and reflect upon options

- give new DCSs access to experience and knowledge that they may judge to be limited or insufficient in their own career to date

The mentoring scheme is expected to improve the understanding, knowledge and skills of mentees, help them to identify areas in which they will benefit from further professional development, and give them professional support.

1.2 Entitlement and access

The scheme is available to all directors of children's services taking up a first post as a DCS.

This offer is also available to colleagues who:

- may be experienced directors of other services within the local authority, most commonly adult social services, but who have the statutory remit of the director of children's services added to their portfolio

- are 'acting-up' in the DCSs role for a period of 6 months or more

- are newly appointed chief executives of children's services trusts, or other alternative delivery arrangements

Participation in the scheme is purely voluntary and is intended both to offer a significant measure of support to newly appointed DCSs and also contribute to the development of wider system leadership. Every new DCS is strongly encouraged to undertake a period of mentoring.

The mentor coordinator will make contact with the mentee as soon as is practicable following the DCS appointment in order to take the mentee through the initial stage and matching process outlined in section 1.3.

1.3 The framework

The Staff College maintains a national database of mentors who are serving directors of children's services. This database includes individual pen portraits of all mentors and sufficient personal details to enable potential mentees to make an informed choice in selecting their preferred mentor.

Stage 1: Initial contact

Once the Staff College becomes aware of a new DCS appointment, the mentor coordinator will contact the DCS and offer mentoring support. If the offer is accepted, the mentor coordinator discusses the mentee's mentoring preferences and creates a mentee profile.

The scheme includes an optional needs analysis process for new directors of children's services that can be completed by self-assessment or with the mentor.

It is based on the Staff College children's services leaders and managers' competence framework, and links to the former DCS Leadership Programme. The analysis, which is included in this handbook in section 2, can be wide-ranging and rigorous, or may be simply used as a tool to assist mentees in identifying their needs and possibly informing the initial focus of the mentoring arrangement.

The role of the **mentor coordinator** is to:

- contact each new DCS between the time of appointment and taking up post to explain the wider leadership support that the Staff College offers, and the mentoring scheme in particular; this contact will either be by phone or email

- discuss whether or not the new DCS would like the support of a mentor and, if so, what particular elements of mentoring support they wish to receive

- agree with the new DCS the point at which the mentoring will begin, which may well be before the DCS starts the appointment

- provide pen portraits of suitable mentors and facilitate the matching process

- ensure that the mentoring progresses, is quality assured and oversee the resolution of any difficulties

- provide mentors and mentees with regular information regarding the opportunities for appropriate further professional development for their mentees

Stage 2: Matching process

In matching mentors and mentees, the mentor coordinator will take account of the identified needs and preferences of the mentee, which may include some or all of these factors:

- geography – for face-to-face mentoring sessions, there is an expectation that the mentee will travel to the mentor. Mentees may therefore prefer a mentor to be in the same region, although, there may be good reasons why this should not be the case

- professional background and particular experience(s) of the mentor – for example, a mentee may seek a mentor from a particular type of council (eg unitary), a particular background (eg social care) or particular

experience (eg working in a department that has been involved in intervention)

The mentor coordinator will seek to offer a choice of potential mentors to the new DCS. Selection should, wherever possible, be by positive preference, accepted without question and with no explanation or reason required on the part of the new DCS.

It is essential for the effective operation of the scheme that the pairing arrangements should have the full support of all concerned. Either the mentee or the prospective mentor may decline a particular pairing without being required to give any explanation or justification. The overriding factor will be the preference of the mentee, and, based on all relevant considerations, the mentor coordinator will seek to secure a pairing that aligns with these preferences as closely as possible.

To assist in the pairing process, both mentees and prospective mentors will be asked to provide summary information about their professional background, current span of responsibility and any special interests.

Stage 3: Mentoring phase

The mentor and mentee make contact, complete a needs analysis if appropriate and agree the frequency of mentoring sessions.

The mentor and the new DCS should work within the framework of this handbook. The Staff College provides an induction process for mentors within the scheme.

This core mentoring support scheme commissioned by ADCS provides four mentoring sessions for up to 12 months, plus a one-day DfE Induction session, subject to availability of places.

In the event of a pairing breaking down for any reason (which may include incompatibility between the mentor and mentee or a contingent factor such as illness or the mentor leaving post), the mentee should alert the mentor coordinator. Whilst in principle mentoring should be available for four sessions spread over 12 months, a pragmatic judgement will need to be made in such cases between the mentee and the mentor coordinator as to whether a replacement mentor should be secured.

Stage 4: Evaluation phase

At the conclusion of the mentoring arrangement, the Staff College will seek a short report from both parties evaluating the effectiveness of the mentoring experience, and a commentary on any outcomes and/or advice for the future. These reports will serve to audit the strengths and weaknesses of the process, together with outlining the scope for the future development of the scheme.

The mentor coordinator will provide feedback to the mentor and will discuss the options for ongoing support for the mentee, as appropriate.

1.4 Conduct of the scheme

Within the overall framework of the scheme, the mentor and mentee together will decide on the style and content of the discussions, including the form and use of any records. The prime consideration throughout must be what will be of most benefit to the mentee rather than strict adherence to any predetermined agenda.

All discussions and outcomes will be strictly confidential to the mentor and mentee, and neither should breach this confidence unilaterally. They may, however, agree in a particular instance that the assistance or advice of a third party be sought. In this event, the third party is similarly bound to strict confidence. The report to the mentor coordinator at the end of the period of mentoring has to do with the quality and effectiveness of the mentoring process itself and not the content of the discussions.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which the mentor has very serious concerns about the performance and/or wellbeing of the mentee. There are, in these exceptional circumstances only, some boundaries to the commitment to confidentiality. These arise when the mentor has clear reason to believe that the mentee is in breach of his or her statutory responsibilities or is, through action or inaction, placing children and young people at risk. These will be such that they exceed any thoughts of 'a bad week' or 'a passing problem'. In such circumstances, the mentor is duty bound to advise the mentee that they must refer their concerns, as mentor, to another person. This stage should only be reached after reasonable attempts by the mentor to facilitate the mentee resolving their issues personally have been exhausted.

In such circumstances, the mentor should contact the mentor coordinator, informing the mentee that they will be doing this. This would only be done with the knowledge of the participant and with full disclosure of the reason for the concern.

1.5 Professional development opportunities

It is an important part of the mentor coordinator's role to provide the mentor with information on possible professional development opportunities which may be appropriate for his or her mentee. This will be available to mentees not only at the outset when the needs analysis is considered, but throughout the period of the mentoring arrangement.

1.6 Mentor recruitment

The identification of appropriate mentors is crucial to the success of the mentoring scheme. Mentors need to be matched to the support needs of the mentees and thus it is essential that the Staff College's database contains sufficient information on potential mentors to allow effective matching to take place.

Through ADCS, the Staff College will periodically invite existing directors of children's services with two or more years' experience as a DCS to consider becoming mentors.

The Staff College manages the registration and induction processes for all prospective mentors. Registration also serves to gather information on each mentor, covering professional background, areas of expertise, special interests, type of local authority experience and strategic and operational challenges and achievements.

The Staff College provides an induction seminar for all mentors, covering the essential elements of the mentoring scheme, the particular style and approach to mentoring the Staff College endorses (see section 1.3) and the links between mentoring and systems leadership.

The purpose of this induction is to ensure that all mentors have a clear understanding of the model of mentoring adopted by the Staff College and are familiar with the Mentor Plus framework.

The induction seminar will provide the opportunity for mentors to:

- review the experience of being a mentor and share learning

- develop the model of mentoring with specific applicability to DCSs

- explore dilemmas and challenges in taking up the mentoring role

- extend their understanding of emergent leadership at senior level in children's services

1.7 Mentor Plus costs

The core mentoring support scheme is financed by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) as part of its commitment to supporting the development of systems leadership.

2: Identifying the needs of newly appointed directors of children's services

The mentoring process will work best when the mentee is clear what it is that he or she is seeking from the mentor. This section is designed to help the mentee to do that and should be used flexibly depending on the mentee's wishes and the outcome of the early discussions between the mentee and mentor. This section:

- may be completed by the new DCS on his or her own, or with the mentor in the early stages of the relationship

- may be completed prior to taking up post, after having done so or the process can be started prior to taking up post and completed afterwards

- can be completed in this handbook

Section 2.1 is designed to help mentees to identify the issues, both organisational and personal, that will rank as high priorities in the early stages of their role as a DCS.

The needs will change and develop over time, and tracking these changes will be an important part of the mentoring process which should be informed and supported by the outcomes of the analysis.

2.1 Identification of priorities

This section has been designed as an optional process which might help you, as a new DCS, to make an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and development needs of both the service that you are leading (or are about to lead) and yourself.

Please complete Table 1 below at a point when you feel you have sufficient information to analyse your service and your strengths. You may feel able to do this without any further work, in which case, you could use your completed Table 1 to help to focus the discussion with your mentor at your first meeting. Alternatively, you may judge that you need to undertake a more detailed analysis of the service and an analysis of your personal strengths and areas for further development. The simple audit tool in section 2.3 is intended to support you in doing this, after which you should be able to return to Table 1 and complete it.

Table 1: Priority action list

Service areas in need of priority action	How those actions might be met (see below)
Personal areas in need of priority action	How those actions might be met (see below)

You may find it helpful to use the identifier letters in the list below as codes to set alongside the list of priority actions in Table 1.

A: personal reading and study

B: briefings from colleagues

C: visits to make contacts and gain first-hand impressions

D: mentor advice and support

E: short intensive programme of skills development

F: extended programme of study or skills development

G: other (specify)

2.2 Identifying the priorities in the service you lead

Think about the children's services for which you are responsible in your new role and the context as these appear to you at this stage. The service will have challenges to face across the whole range of its activities, but which of these seem to you to be particularly pressing in the short- to medium term? Which will particularly require your personal involvement?

Note that some of the challenges may derive simply from the constant pressure of change, whereas others may have more to do with the quality of performance. To help with this, the work of the service is categorised under a number of headings in Table 2 (the audit tool) below. At the end of each section, consider to what extent you will need to be personally involved in the response to the challenges and mark it on the scale. The scale runs from 1 (need only to ensure that the challenges are being addressed by the right people) to 5 (strong personal involvement in directing and managing change).

2.3 Audit tool for planning priority actions

Table 2: Audit tool

Strategic planning

(eg, monitoring and evaluation, statutory plans)

Perceived strengths					
Perceived weaknesses					
Key challenges					
1					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
2					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
3					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5

Contribution to the corporate agenda

(eg, member relations and political leadership, community strategy, best value)

Perceived strengths

Perceived weaknesses

Key challenges					
1					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
2					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
3					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5

Contribution to partnerships

Perceived strengths

Perceived weaknesses

Key challenges					
1					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
2					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
3					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5

Service provision

(eg, quality of links between the local authority and schools, service level agreements, outsourcing)

Perceived strengths

Perceived weaknesses

Key challenges					
1					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
2					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
3					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5

Quality assurance

(eg, performance management, outcomes of external regulation/inspection, outcomes of a regional peer challenge)

Perceived strengths

Perceived weaknesses

Key challenges					
1					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
2					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
3					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5

Administration

(eg, communication, restructuring, information management, publications)

Perceived strengths

Perceived weaknesses

Key challenges					
1					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
2					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5
3					
Level of DCS involvement	1	2	3	4	5

2.4 Your personal development needs

In this section, you, as a new DCS, are asked to reflect on your personal experience, knowledge and skills as you start to take up the duties of your new post. As with the other parts of section 2, it is entirely up to you how you use this section – in full, in part, or flexibly.

You may have development needs within the broad categories of knowledge and skills. The questions you might consider (which are related to each other) are:

- Which are the key aspects of information that will be of critical importance for you as you take on the role of DCS?

- Where do you feel there may be deficiencies in your current knowledge (for instance, because in your previous roles you specialised in some aspects of the work rather than others) that need to be addressed? How urgent are these?

2.4.1 Knowledge

Think about areas of knowledge that are crucial to you in your new role and where some personal development may be required. These may be in the following categories:

- legislation and current developments in public policy

- government departmental structures and key relationships

- overall council strategy, policies and structures

- service strategy, policies and structures

- the council and the service in the local context, including partnerships and outcomes of any sector led improvement processes

- children's services provision in the area: features, strengths and weaknesses

- current research findings and other evidence in key aspects of public service strategy and delivery

In Table 3 below identify which of these areas you judge you already have a sound knowledge of (1) through to those where you identify significant gap(s) in your knowledge (5).

Table 3: Identification of priority areas

Legislation and current developments in public policy	1	2	3	4	5
Government departmental structures and key relationships	1	2	3	4	5
Overall council strategy, policies and structures	1	2	3	4	5
Service strategy, policies and structures	1	2	3	4	5
The council and the service in the local context	1	2	3	4	5
Children's services provision in the area	1	2	3	4	5
Current research findings and other evidence	1	2	3	4	5

2.4.2 Skills

Consider your personal competence in key areas of activity, bearing in mind that on the one hand there will be a general expectation of a high level of competence in everything you do, but on the other that the great majority of practical tasks should quite properly be delegated within the organisation.

The use of the Staff College children and young people's services management functional map (the competence framework) might assist you in this process. It might also help to plot each competence on a five-point scale, from 1 (strong, not a priority for attention) to 5 (weak, definite need for improvement). These may be in the categories shown in Table 4 below, any of which you may wish to substitute for more appropriate ones.

The competence framework is available to download from the Staff College website.

Table 4: Personal competence scores

Strategic planning and management (unit A of the competence framework)	1	2	3	4	5
Information management, including ICT skills	1	2	3	4	5
Representation and advocacy (at all levels, and in all directions) (unit A of the competence framework)	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership, teamworking and delegation (units A, B and D of the competence framework)	1	2	3	4	5
Communication and motivation (units A and C of the competence framework)	1	2	3	4	5
Negotiation (units A, B and C of the competence framework)	1	2	3	4	5
Financial understanding and management (unit D of the competence framework)	1	2	3	4	5

3: Mentoring practice

3.1 The mentoring relationship

At the heart of the mentoring process is a professional relationship between two colleagues. The experience of mentor support can be powerfully positive and enabling, helping the mentee to develop a greater sense of confidence and enhancing the personal and professional skills of both mentor and mentee. Equally, a less effective mentoring relationship can be inhibiting, encouraging dependency, and reducing self-confidence and the sense of autonomy on the part of the mentee.

For this reason we are drawing a clear distinction between coaching and mentoring on this scheme. Coaching is an appropriate support and challenge process for those who have been in post for some time, have settled into the role and feel confident in their position and understanding of the organisation. Further information on enhanced mentoring support and coaching is available from here.

Mentoring, on the other hand, is particularly applicable to the context of new appointments where the mentor can offer advice and guidance based on his or her own experience and provide examples of dealing with similar situations, issues and challenges whilst supporting the mentee in analysis, reflection and determining appropriate action. In short, the mentor supports the mentee in developing a growing understanding of the organisational and social dynamics of their new working context.

Ensuring the success of this relationship will depend on a number of factors:

- clarity about roles and responsibilities

- clear communication

- a shared and agreed understanding of the available forms of support and the purposes of that support

- a commitment in practice to the principles and values of the mentoring scheme

- regular reviews of the relationship itself

On one level, it is clear that mentoring is designed to make an important contribution to both the professional and personal development of the mentee. However, it is equally the case that an effective mentoring scheme will have an impact on other levels, supporting the development of the mentor and the wider organisation, as well as the mentee.

For the **mentee**, the mentoring process can help to:

- encourage reflection on practice

- develop understanding and skills

- recognise effective practice

- identify areas for development

- help to develop an overview of the mentee's own role

- value the mentee and validate their actions

- enhance self-confidence and self-esteem

- provide a sense of being supported (and reduce any sense of isolation or stress)

- provide a role model

- provide professional information and advice – offer personal support

For the **mentor**, mentoring can:

- improve job satisfaction

- develop specific skills

- encourage self-reflection leading to developments in the mentor's own practice

- develop professional relationships

- enhance peer recognition

- assist career development

3.2 The mentor's role

The main purpose of mentoring is to support the development of the mentee. The actions and abilities and the qualities and values of the mentor will play a central role in the achievement of this goal.

The mentoring relationship will be most effective if the mentor:

- possesses good communication skills

- has a commitment to learning and development and is willing to learn themselves

- is knowledgeable about issues relevant to the mentee's work

- is relatively experienced

- commands respect and has credibility within their own organisation

- is committed to quality in their own work and clear about standards of performance

- is able to devote sufficient time and energy to the role

- is able to establish mutual respect and trust – is non-judgemental in verbal and non-verbal responses

- is clear about the purpose of the mentoring relationship

- listens well

A mentor will more effectively support the mentee if he or she can:

- demonstrate an ability to listen sensitively and with an open mind, show empathy and understanding (a key quality is to be non-judgemental)

- act as a sounding board

- see an issue from the mentee's perspective, but also be able to question the mentee's assumptions, pushing the mentee to think them through

- affirm the mentee's strengths and help the mentee identify areas for further growth and development

- encourage the mentee, helping him or her to reflect on previous achievements as motivation for new achievements

- reflect and clarify the mentee's thoughts and feelings

- give constructive feedback following observation of practice or data collection from various work activities

- help the mentee recognise potential barriers and difficulties

- guide the mentee, suggesting where the mentee might look for new knowledge and insights and wherever possible draw upon their own experience and understanding

- on occasions, take action on the mentee's behalf that directly or indirectly smoothes the way for something else to happen

- provide reassurance

3.3 Mentoring sessions

Sessions will need to be planned at appropriate points to review progress. As the relationship develops, the mentor will need to make adjustments to the way he or she works with the mentee, checking the support required, reacting to personal and professional issues and problems the mentee brings to the sessions, and encouraging reflection and analysis.

The mentor and mentee will need to be prepared for the first formal session. Experiences in numerous organisations indicate that the initial session is critical in setting the tone for the mentoring relationship. It is essential to establish:

- a shared understanding of the purpose of the relationship in the given context

- clear expectations of one another

- ground rules for an effective relationship in terms of process and outcomes

- clear parameters of confidentiality, which feed into creating an honest, open, trusting relationship

- desired learning outcomes

- forms of support that might be helpful within the formal and informal structures of the relationship

Thereafter, the mentor and mentee will need to decide how often they want to be in touch with each other. If face-to-face sessions are desirable, the expectation is that the mentee will travel to the mentor.

After four meetings, the mentor should inform the mentor coordinator that this concluding stage has been reached so that final evaluation forms can be provided.

4: Mentoring: an overview of successful practice

The definition of mentoring by Anderson & Shannon (1988) places emphasis on a range of mentoring activities: teaching, counselling, guiding, developing, advising, sponsoring, protecting, promoting, supporting, challenging, modelling and befriending.

They believe that mentoring can be defined as:

A nurturing in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the protégé.

Anderson & Shannon,1988 (vol 39, no 1, pgs 38-42)

Mentoring implies a particular relationship between individuals. Each mentoring arrangement will be unique, and its particular nature will be established according to the very personalities of the two individuals concerned (Fisher, 1994; Cooper & Palmer, 1993).

Mentoring is about relationships that encourage and enable learning (Fisher, 1994; Parsloe, 1992). A mentoring relationship is one that is enabling and cultivates a relationship that assists in empowering an individual within the working environment. A mentoring relationship is not a prerequisite for advancement or success. It does, however, enable individuals to draw on the unique contributions of their mentors, to assist them to be successful in their own right (Cooper & Palmer, 1993).

For Parsloe (1992), the important aspects are to do with listening, questioning and enabling, as distinct from telling, directing and restricting. Mentors are crucial to good management development since they can exert great influence on developing attitudes and encourage good managerial practice.

4.1 Mentoring styles

The personal attributes and behavioural styles of mentors are significant factors in the success or otherwise of mentoring relationships. Research has shown that we can broadly group mentoring attributes and behaviours as outlined in Tables 5, 6 and 7 below and overleaf.

Table 5: Attributes

Good mentoring	Bad mentoring
Permissive not authoritarian	Opinionated, dogmatic, negative
Well informed	Credibility can be questioned
Analytical	Too directive
Committed to training and development	Not aware of the value of staff training and development
Good communicator	Poor communicator
Good open questioner	Use of closed questions
Good listener	Poor listener
Good knowledge of organisation	Knowledge limited to department/section
Can apply theory to practice	No real understanding of management theory
Well organised	Disorganised
Knowledgeable of the value of action learning	Insensitive to the process
Clear and decisive	Lack of clarity
Good time managers: time devoted to role of mentor	Poor management: always insufficient time for mentor role

Table 6: Characteristics

| Type	Characteristics	Description
Fairy godmother (positive effect)	Managementors	First they have personal skills to manage the process itself. This involves time management and the ability to plan, set goals and action plans and deliver objectives.
	Agreementors	They have the ability to give responsibility at the right time and in the right way. They have skills to delegate and negotiate to a high degree, therefore also empowering mentees with a flair for appropriately releasing responsibility.
	Developmentors	They believe in the development of themselves and others and intuitively seem to know what people need to understand and learn, and this is demonstrated by their words and deeds. They have a track record of involvement with learning and development of themselves and others.
	Experimentors	They are tolerant of ambiguity, and are happy to try things out for themselves and encourage others to do the same. They often question the status quo and never assume that learning is about making mistakes. They can accept failure if this results in the right motives and intent.
	Implementors	They get things done. They can transform thoughts and ideas into action, and know where to find the resources required and the information and support that will make the difference.
	Implementors	Tend to be pragmatic, action oriented and are usually good problem-solvers.
	Assessmentors	They can provide feedback that is clear, open and unbiased. They are critical in an objective way, not afraid to report what they see, whether it is positive or negative. They do this in a way that avoids blame, personal comments or judgements but instead focuses on the future. They build up trust, demonstrating interest and care for others and offering any comments with appropriate timing.
Wicked uncle (negative effect)	Argumentors	They can appear to be interviewing in conversation, seeking to influence, interpret and ascribe hidden motives. They are unable to tolerate different points of view and seek to bring others, through challenge, around to their point of view.
	Regimentors	Regimentors never let people try things out for themselves or do things in a different way. They only ever see one way of doing things – their way and have a strong tendency to impose goals, timetables, solutions and opinions. They have a tendency to get people stuck – and leave them high and dry. They hate change and regard organisational structures as something designed to fix people into roles. Changing roles and responsibilities upsets them.
	Commentors	The biggest failing of commentors is that they talk too much. They have an opinion on everything and are poor at listening.

Table 7: Skills

Core skills	Analytical skills	Interpersonal skills
Communication Listening is the most vital of all the skills of communication. However good the presentation, it is meaningless unless someone hears, and understands, what is being said.	**Interpretation** In order to make an informed response, the listener needs to digest what has been said. This will lead to better understanding and to the next stage of the process.	**Observation** A mentor must be able to interpret behaviour accurately. They must be aware of body language, facial expressions and tone of voice, and be sensitive to language, though not so much that the personality changes.
Effective or active listening This needs practice. Because we speak at a pace four times slower than the brain can process the words, we have spare mental capacity when we are listening. If the mentor allows their mind to wander when listening to a point made by a protégé, there is a danger of destroying some of the trust, which is essential for the relationship to succeed.	**Creative thinking** Creative thinking is necessary for mentors, who will need to absorb another's thinking process, and thus unblock some of their own mindsets. The ability to think divergently and to include optional answers to questions that a protégé may pose is another skill which must be acquired and practised. Creative thinking requires individuals to adopt an imaginative and intuitive approach, to consider alternative answers to a problem and to take more time over the evaluation of a problem.	**Questioning** The ability to ask questions that will take the protégé into areas of self-exploration of the situation is essential. These questions must be structured and meaningful. The interviewing skills of asking open and direct questions, and offering prompts without leading the conversation, must be developed.

Source: Fisher, 1994

4.1.1 The four bases mentoring model

Figure 1 below shows the four bases model proposed by Carter & Lewis (1999). These bases describe a sequence and areas of activity, as well being a means for measuring the strengths and weaknesses of mentors, schemes and participating organisations.

Figure 1: The four bases mentoring model

The Organisational Base

The Interpersonal Base

The Development Base

The Context Base
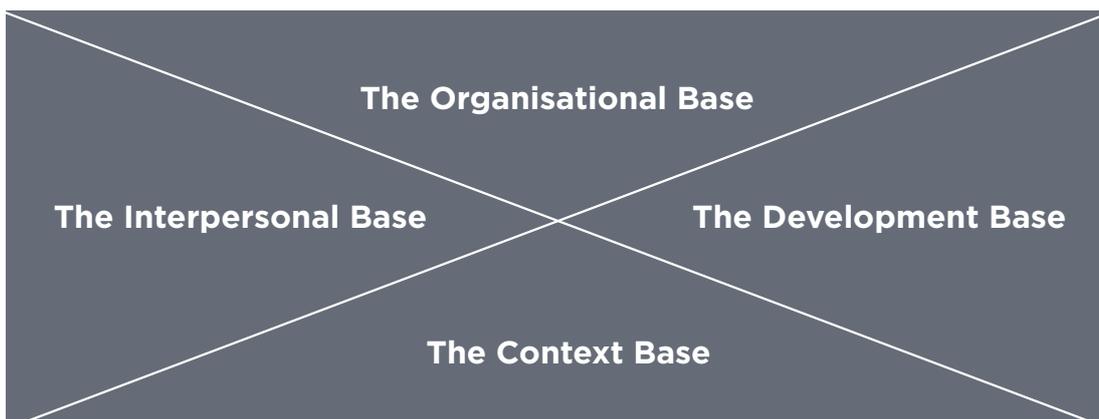
The organisational base relates to the positional strength of the individual mentor within the organisation and to the readiness or fit of the process to the culture of the organisation. Mentoring is much less likely to succeed if it does not have legitimacy and support from the organisation as a whole, and particularly from senior management. The positional strength of the mentor shows commitment, but also puts into the system a substantial core of expertise, experience and knowledge of the organisation. It is related to the qualities of management perspective, organisational know-how and credibility.

The interpersonal (or relationship) base requires commitment and skills to understand and empathise with the needs of others. In many ways, this is the core area of skill, because without it the rest will not follow. It is related to the qualities of accessibility and communication.

The developmental (or learning) base in which mentoring is featured has individual, personal development at its core. It is therefore important that mentors have some understanding of the notion of learning, particularly about learning at work. This base is related to the qualities of developmental orientation and flexibility.

The context base involves the purposes of the developmental relationship. The requirements will change depending on whether the context is formal or informal, whether it is a structured programme of learning and so on. It also has a limiting or defining effect on the other three bases.

Most importantly, the process of mentoring must be centered upon the needs of the mentee rather than artificially adhering to theoretical models since, 'each mentoring arrangement will be unique, and its particular nature will be established according to the very personalities of the two individuals concerned.'

(Fisher, 1994; Cooper & Palmer, 1993).

5: Resources and references

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6: Links to other useful resources

Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/271429/directors_of_child_services_-_stat_guidance.pdf

Children's social care reform. A vision for change (DfE, Jan 2016) https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/491968/Childrens_social_care_reform_a_vision_for_change.pdf

Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (HM Government, March 2015) https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408604/2903652_RotherhamResponse_acc2.pdf

Statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) This document contains links to further supplementary guidance on particular aspects of safeguarding issued by DfE and other government departments/agencies https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

School Inspection Handbook https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/458866/School_inspection_handbook_section_5_from_September_2015.pdf

Common Inspection framework; Education, Skills and Early Years https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/461767/The_common_inspection_framework_education_skills_and_early_years.pdf

Ofsted SIF/LASI https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-local-authority-childrens-services

Lowell Goddard Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse https://www.iicsa.org.uk/

ADCS website http://adcs.org.uk/

> Media and press comments http://www.adcs.org.uk/type/press

> Social Work Evidence Template http://www.adcs.org.uk/care/article/SWET

> Age Assessment guidance http://www.adcs.org.uk/safeguarding/article/age-assessment-information-sharing-for-unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children
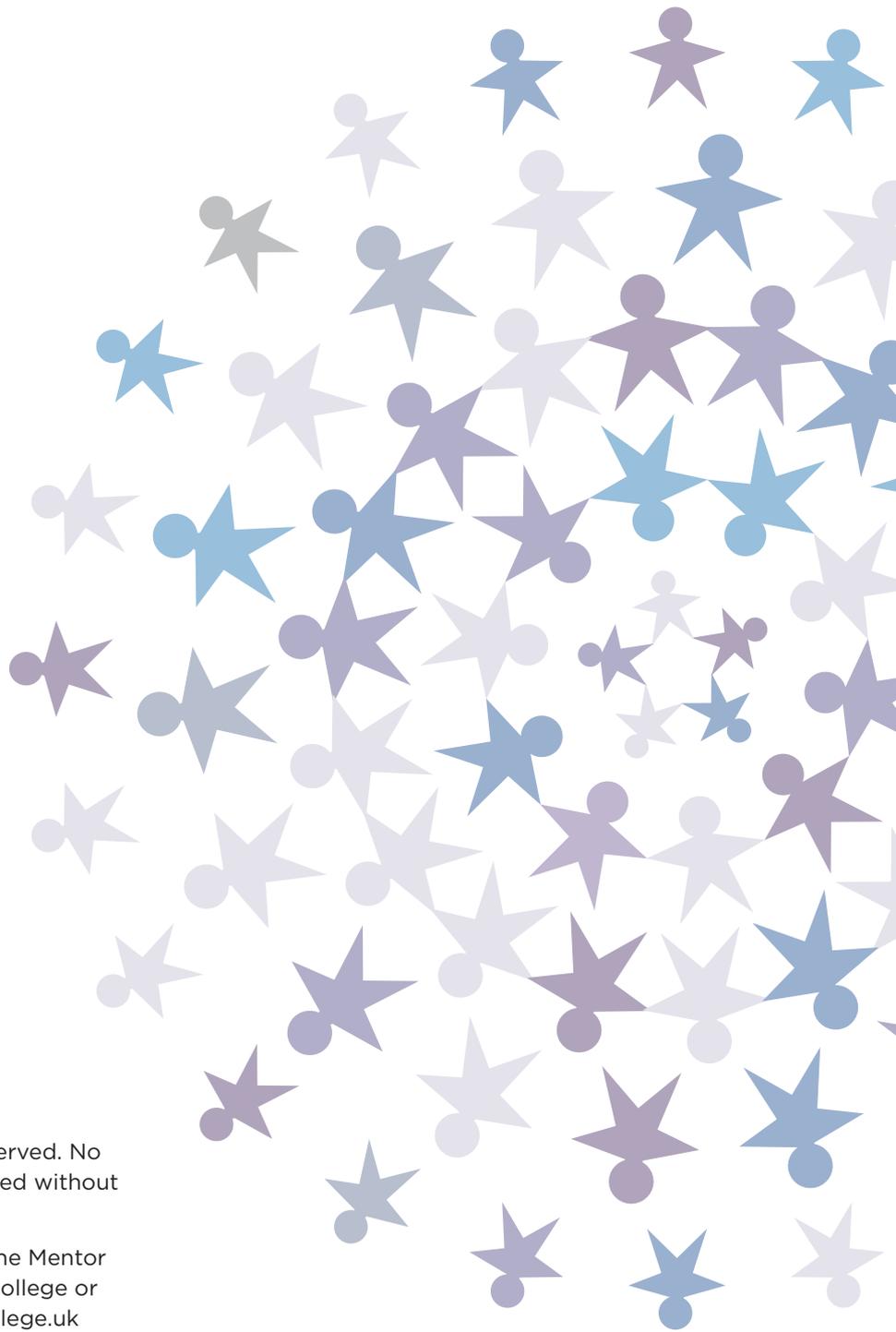
> Safeguarding Pressures research phases 1 – 4 http://www.adcs.org.uk/safeguarding/article/safeguarding-pressures

> Out of area placements for children in care. Resource of secure contact details for LAs http://www.adcs.org.uk/contacts/out-of-area-looked-after-children-notifications

> ADCS DCS Update 2016 http://adcs.org.uk/general-subject/article/adcs-dcs-update-2016

The Staff College website http://www.thestaffcollege.uk

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