Housing Justice

M&M Project Year 1 Evaluation
Executive Summary

In part one of this evaluation project background, aims and objectives and methodology are described. Some detail is given of the circumstances of the seventeen formerly homeless clients who were mentees on the project.

Part two gives the findings of the project.

At the start of the project the mentees were assessed using the Outcomes Star. The areas that mentees scored lowest in were emotional and mental health, meaningful use of time, social networks and managing money. At the end of the project, the Outcomes Star assessment was repeated. These results show that the area of greatest change for clients was ‘meaningful use of time’. ‘Meaningful use of time’ means clients doing things that they find interesting and satisfying and for some it means moving towards education, training or employment. This finding correlates to the fact that at the time of evaluation five mentees were in work, one was on a work placement and one was in study. The second highest area of change was ‘emotional and mental health’. The third highest area of change was an increase in ‘social networks and relationships’.

We have had low success with clients who are heavy drinkers and the time limited nature of this project makes it less suitable for alcoholics. Our lack of success in mentoring clients with high needs shows the need for more screening and for more confidence in saying no to referrals that do not meet our criteria.

The semi structured interview showed that all the mentees interviewed liked their mentors. They listed work placements and referrals for debt management as the practical support they received the most. When asked what difference the project made in their lives nearly all expressed an increase in their confidence.

Similarly mentors were happy with the support they received throughout the project. They felt that the project had been most beneficial to mentees in the areas of building their confidence, giving them someone to talk to and giving them a fresh perspective. They felt that as volunteer mentors they had grown in their interpersonal skills, their understanding of homelessness and they enjoyed the relationships.

In conclusion I argue that these finding show that the most important aspect of the project is the relationship between the mentee and the mentor, and if the mentee is offered a non judgemental and supportive relationship they will grow in confidence and other areas of development may grow from this. The project has been successful in helping mentees to grow in confidence and in supporting them to find meaningful uses of their time. It would be exciting to see if these results can be built on in the second year for the M&M Project.
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1 Introduction to Project

Research Review

In order to set the context, below is a short research review on the benefits and challenges of mentoring and befriending people who have been homeless.

Benefits and Outcomes

- Mentees and mentors value the relationship (Hall, 2003¹ and Philip, Shucksmith and King, 2004²).
- Schemes consulted who were running mentoring and befriending services felt the work was of value, and a valuable complement to their service provision (Cullen, 2006³).
- Because many mentors and befrienders are young people with similar experiences to the service users, such schemes can be almost as beneficial to the volunteers (Cullen, 2006).
- Mentoring and befriending is important in helping problem drug users make transitions in their lives:
  
  “I don’t think there are services to meet the needs of certain people. I think there’s the need for more mentoring support and a lot of softer support, more long-term. I mean there’s lots of drug treatment and people access that as part of ending their drug-use, but we get clients that are nowhere near the labour market and need more mentoring or possibly over a longer period and that isn’t available, so more people get lost.’ (Bauld, Hay, McKell, Carroll, 2010⁴).

- One to one support or mentoring is considered to be a critical success factor in moving into long-term employment (Singh, 2005⁵).

Challenges

- There is little research and evidence to demonstrate that mentoring makes and impact on single homeless people (Hall, 2003 and Cullen, 2006).

- Although it is generally felt that mentoring and befriending make a difference it is complex to show how it contributes to people’s ability to reflect on and address the issues facing them (Philip, Shucksmith and King, 2004).

¹ Mentoring and Young People: a literature review. (Hall, 2003)
² Sharing a laugh? A qualitative study of mentoring interventions with young people. (Philip, Shucksmith and King; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004),
³ Mentoring and Befriending for Young Homeless People. (Cullen, S; Shelter,2006)
⁴ Problem users’ experience of employment and the benefit system. (Bauld, Hay, McKell, Carol; University of Glasgow/University of Bath, Research Report No. 640, Department for Work and Pensions, 2010).
⁵ No home, no job. (Singh, P; Off the Streets and Into Work, 2005).
Background to Project
Housing Justice is a national voice for churches on housing and homelessness. Housing Justice supports forums for winter shelter and soup run providers and trains volunteers in preparation for working in those environments. We provide practical support to churches and related groups working with homeless people.

Our proposal to run a pilot mentoring and befriending project arose from, and was an extension of, our practical support activity. In preparing the proposal we worked closely with the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation and we secured funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) via Islington Council.

The project was initially named ‘The Mollie and Maisie Project’ in memory of Maisie Ward Sheed and Mollie Walsh who set up the Catholic Housing Aid Society in 1956. However we shortened the name to ‘The M&M Project’ because clients told us that the project name put them off finding out more about the service.

Proposed Project Aims
The overall aim of the project was to test and develop the contribution that formal befriending schemes can make to ending rough sleeping by supporting current and former rough sleepers as they move through church-based winter shelters and into more permanent accommodation.

Proposed Project Outcomes
To improve clients’ confidence, motivation, social networks, mental well being and use of time
To increase the skills of volunteers to become befrienders and mentors
To encourage the development of further volunteering and befriending schemes
To continuously improve the quality of the scheme

Proposed Project Outputs
- Provide accredited training for up to 130 volunteer befrienders/mentors at three or four winter shelters
- Deliver group supervision for volunteers
- Achieve between 30 and 50 matches with clients and provide on-going support for these relationships
- Evaluate the success of the training and the progress made by the clients
- Produce a resource pack (based on the project and the evaluation of the project) tailored to both faith groups and homelessness
- Work towards the Mentors and Befrienders Approved Providers Standard
An additional outcome was added at the request of the DCLG – to support up to 10 RS205 clients (entrenched rough sleepers)

Project Methodology
The project began in mid-January 2010 and ran to mid-January 2011. A Mentoring and befriending coordinator was recruited and tasked with setting up and running the project. It was decided that the referrals for the project would come from four cold weather winter shelters: CARIS Islington, Robes (Lambeth and Southwark), Finchley Churches Winter Night Shelter and Kingston Churches Winter Night Shelter (KCAH). It was also decided that the majority of volunteers would be recruited from these shelters.

Consulting to shape the M&M Project
We consulted with agencies already running mentoring or befriending projects with homeless or formerly homeless people to learn from their experience. These agencies included Hope WorldWide, Broadway, Crisis, St Mungos, ASLAN and SPEAR. In addition we also consulted with the Coordinators of the four cold weather shelters we were working with and we consulted with guests in the night shelters.

Developing a model for M&M
Following consultation the coordinator created systems for running the project. It was decided that mentor and mentee should meet weekly for one to two hours for a six month period. This decision was based on what other agencies had found worked and also on our short funding cycle. It was also decided to work from a client centred perspective. The systems for running the project can be seen in the forthcoming Mentoring and Befriending in Shelters Toolkit.

Mentoring and befriending are similar activities as both involve the development of one-to-one relationships based upon trust, confidentiality and mutual involvement. Mentoring tends to be a more structured support with goal setting. Mentoring and befriending relationships are voluntary and are about empowering individuals through valuing them and giving them time to explore issues and potential actions.

Clients chose if they wanted to work on specific goals and have a mentor or if they were more interested in having social contact without a focus on goals and have a befriender. The majority wanted a mentor but some preferred to have a befriender. In this document if a client is using the mentoring or befriending service they are referred to as mentees or befriendedees. At times ‘mentees’ is used as shorthand to refer to both mentees and befriendedees.

Training, screening and recruiting volunteers
Training was held in Kingston, Barnet, Islington and Southwark churches and in the Housing Justice office from February to May 2010. Hope Worldwide co-facilitated the training with Housing Justice. Six training days were held and a total of ninety-three people attended the training.

Thirty-six volunteers were recruited to be mentors or befrienders. Our screening process involved observing people on the training day, inviting those who were interested to apply, following up references, interviewing and CRB checking.
Recruiting and goal setting with mentees and befrienderes

Night shelter guests heard about the project through night shelter coordinators or through the M&M coordinator visiting the shelter and telling them about the project. They were given a leaflet with information about the project. Non night shelter referrals heard about the project through their referral agency (usually their key worker).

On receipt of a referral the M&M coordinator arranged an assessment meeting with the client. During the assessment the clients carried out an Outcomes Star assessment and set goals with the coordinator.

Matching mentors and mentees

‘Matching’ involved deciding which mentor would be the best fit for the mentee. Geographical location, availability, gender and age preference, skills and interests were all taken into consideration. Then a three way meeting between the mentor, mentee and coordinator was arranged. After this meeting mentor and mentee met weekly in a public place, such a coffee shop, for 6 months.

Unfortunately our referral numbers were not high enough to match up all volunteers with clients. This was particularly the case in Barnet because we didn’t receive any referrals from the Barnet night shelter. A positive learning point from this is that this is a popular volunteering opportunity.

Supervising the relationships

Supporting and supervising the relationships is a crucial aspect of the project. Mentors submitted log sheets or email logs of their meetings. The Coordinator called both parties on an occasional basis to check that they were satisfied with the service. Group supervision sessions were held for mentors and most mentors attended two sessions. A three way meeting was held between mentor, mentee and coordinator at the mid way point of the relationship to review progress and an ending meeting was also held to signify the close of the formal relationship.

Means of measuring the impact of the relationships on mentees and mentors

Fourteen of the seventeen mentees and befrienderes who sustained a relationship for the course of six months participated in an exit interview and carried out a pre- and post- Outcomes Star. Three did not complete their stars and exit interview due to difficulties in arranging meetings at the time the evaluation was being carried out.

The Homeless Outcome Star

The Outcomes Star for the homelessness sector is a tool for supporting and evidencing change when working with adults who are homeless, formerly homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Star is an outcomes tool, which means that it enables organisations to measure and summarise change across a range of service users and projects.

The Star focuses on ten core areas that have been found to be critical to supporting people in the move away from homelessness:

- Motivation and taking responsibility
- Self-care and living skills
- Managing money and personal administration
- Social networks and relationships
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Physical health
- Emotional and mental health
- Meaningful use of time
- Managing tenancy and accommodation
- Offending

During assessment all mentees rated themselves on the Outcomes Star in each of the above areas and at the end of the project this process was repeated with 14 of the mentees.

**Semi structured interview**
We designed two short questionnaires and used this to structure exit interviews with clients and mentors.

**Resource pack**
The M&M coordinator wrote a ‘Mentoring and Befriending in Shelters Toolkit’ to resource Winter Night Shelter Coordinators with the information that they need to set up and run a mentoring and befriending project in their Winter Night Shelter. The toolkit includes lessons that have been learnt from M&M and through engaging with The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation’s (MBF) recommended best practice for mentoring and befriending programmes. The toolkit has been reviewed by The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation and it will be available for free download from our website ([www.housingjustice.org.uk](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk)).

**Encouraging the development of further volunteering and befriending schemes**
In addition to the creation of the tool kit we held a forum for organisations working in homeless, some of whom were church based, who were thinking of starting up a mentoring or befriending project or who were already running one. There was a good interest in this and people were keen for this to become a more regular meeting.

Staff at Camden Cold Weather Shelter (C4WS) were interested in setting up their own mentoring project. The M&M Coordinator offered support and shared the resources that she had developed for M&M. The C4WS Welfare Worker commented that she found the M&M Project:

“...a great help to C4WS in setting up our own mentoring project. (The Coordinator’s) expertise, knowledge and experience has been invaluable and she was always available to offer advice and support. It has given us the best possible start for this project and I am very grateful for the assistance”.

**Mentors and Befrienders APS standard**
The M&M Project is working towards The Mentoring and Befriending Foundations Approved Provider Standard (APS).
Who was referred to the project?
Over the course of the twelve month pilot project, a total of thirty five formerly homeless persons were referred to the project. They were referred by winter night shelters and by some homeless agencies [see Table 1 for break down of where the referrals came from].

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Referral</th>
<th>Number Referred</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robes Night Shelter</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope Worldwide</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Night Shelter</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islington Night Shelter</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Muninos</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeless Action Barnet</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All thirty five clients referred met with the Coordinator and were briefed on the project. Thirteen changed their minds and decided that they didn’t want a mentor or befriender and either expressed this directly to the Coordinator or more typically expressed it by not attending subsequent meetings.

**Learning:** Referral agencies should be sure clients understand the project and want a mentor before referral. We will produce a specific briefing paper for referral agencies to help in this process.

Twenty two formerly homeless persons decided that the project suited their needs and they were matched with either a mentor or a befriender depending on their preference. Of these twenty two mentees and befrienderes, only five relationships did not workout. Some of them didn’t meet again after their first meeting and others only lasted for a couple of months (this is discussed further below).

In all seventeen relationships endured for the planned six month project duration.
Housing
All of the mentees had experienced homelessness in the last year – and most with in two months prior to referral to the project. During the mentoring relationship the majority of mentees (ten) were living in private rented accommodation, four were living in temporary housing provided by different homeless organisations, one was in older peoples sheltered housing, one was in a night shelter and one was rough sleeping.

Client’s gender, age, ethnicity and reasons for referrals

Table 2 Ages of clients

Two mentees were female and fifteen were male\(^6\). Client ages ranged from twenty four to sixty four years of age as illustrated in Table 2.

Seven clients were black African, six were white British, two were ‘other white background’, one was black British and one was Bangladeshi (see table 3 below).

Table 3 Ethnicity of clients

Four clients were refugees from African countries and sought mentoring to help them find work, to have companionship with a British person and to improve their English. Six clients were migrants to the UK from Africa and Eastern Europe. They wanted a mentor to help them find work, to deal with an addiction or to increase in their confidence (or a combination of these). Seven clients were British and wanted mentoring to help them find work, to deal with an addiction and/or to increase in confidence.

\(^6\) One client who I have statistically classified as male is transgender and would self identify as female.
Unsuccessful relationships
Five relationships didn’t work out. Two of the clients were classified as ‘RS 205’ which meant that they were long term entrenched rough sleepers and they had only recently come off the streets into accommodation. Both were initially keen to have mentors. One of them had very complex needs and after the first couple of meetings was never available at the arranged meeting point when the mentor came to meet him. The other got arrested and then left the hostel and went back to the streets so the mentor wasn’t able to meet him. Both of these mentees were heavy drinkers (see annex 1 and 2 for case studies).

Three other RS 205 clients were referred to the project but following assessment did not turn up for the next meeting. With hindsight the needs of these clients were too high/complex for the project and their life styles were too hectic. Clients who stayed at winter night shelters tended to be less chaotic because they had to keep to a timetable of moving from church to church each evening.

Of the remaining three clients who left the project early, one of them had too high expectations of his mentor and had high support needs. Two clients just didn’t show up for their meetings but never gave any reason for this. Neither had very strong grasp of English so understanding may have been a factor.

Learning:
Clients with high support needs – heavy drinkers and/or serious mental health problems have not had successful outcomes in the project.

A good grasp of a common language is essential for mentor and mentee.
2 The Results

Client Outcomes

Baseline data
Baseline data taken at the start of the project using the Outcomes Star showed that mentees, taken as an average, scored themselves lowest on:

- emotional and mental health (6.3)
- meaningful use of time (6.3)
- social networks (6.9)

This shows that these were the areas that clients had the most room for improvement in.

The areas where they, on average, scored themselves highest were:

- offending (9.6),
- substance use (9.0)
- physical health (8.7)
- motivation (8.5)
- managing tenancy (8.5)
- living skills (8.5)

This shows that these were areas that clients were not necessarily having any difficulties in.

‘Managing money’ fell in between these two categories (with clients scoring an average of 7) showing that this was a problem area to some extent.

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Clients scored lowest in the areas of emotional and mental health, meaningful use of time and social networks at the start of the project.

7 All these scores are out of ten — with the highest possible score being ten and the lowest being one).
Mentees had the greatest change in the area of meaningful use of time as a result of the project. This was followed by an improvement in their emotional and mental health and their social networks and relationships.

The effects of the project measured by outcomes star

By the end of the project, taking scoring as an average, there was a positive increase in self scoring in each of the ten areas with exception of ‘offending’ in which there was no change in score.

1) The most significant area of change was ‘meaningful use of time’ - mentees moved up this scale by an average of 2.1 points. 62% had a positive outcome; 6% (one person) had a negative outcome and 32% had no change.

2) The second most significant area of change was ‘emotional and mental health’ - mentees moved up this scale by an average of 1.6 points and 56% had a positive outcome. One person (6%) had a negative outcome and 38% had no change.

3) ‘Social networks and relationships’ was the third most significant area of change - mentees moved up this scale by an average of 1.2 points and 50% had a positive outcome.

4) ‘Managing money’ improved by an average of 0.8 points and 50% of clients had a positive outcome in this area.

5) ‘Motivation’ improved by an average of 0.9 points and 31% of clients had positive outcomes in this area.

6) ‘Living skills’ improved by an average of 0.9 points and 25% of clients had positive outcomes in this area.
7) ‘Substance use’ improved by an average of 0.6 points and 19% of clients had positive improvements in this area (no clients had negative outcomes).

8) ‘Managing tenancy’ improved by an average of 0.4 points and 19% of clients had positive outcomes in this area. 25% of clients had a negative outcome in this area and 56% had no change.

9) ‘Physical health’ had virtually no improvement with an average improvement of 0.1 points. 12% of clients had a positive outcome and 12% had a negative outcome in this area.

10) ‘Offending’ had no change in outcome – with 6% having positive outcomes and 6% having negative outcomes.

The Homeless Link Outcomes Star database enables the user to benchmark the organisation’s outcomes against that of other organisations that use the Star with formerly homeless clients. According to this bench mark average changes in our outcomes are very slightly higher than the benchmark (0.1 points higher). Positive outcomes for M&M clients were 17% higher than the benchmark and negative outcomes were -12% lower than the benchmark. Learning from this is that volunteer mentors and befrienders achieve results comparable to those achieved by paid professional services. Part of the reason for this may be that mentors are focusing on a one-to-one relationship whereas staff usually have a large caseload.
The effects of the project measured by semi-structured interview (mentees)

Information received by mentees at start of project & satisfaction with mentor

All fourteen mentees questioned felt that they received enough information at the beginning of the project. All fourteen said they were happy with their mentor. Some of their comments relating to this are shown below:

**Frequency of meetings**
Thirteen mentees said that they found the frequency of meetings (1-2 hours/week for six months) was about right and one said that they would have liked to have seen their mentor more often.

**Perceived benefit of mentoring**
When asked to tick the areas that mentoring or befriending has benefited them, most mentees indicated that they had grown in confidence, felt more motivated to achieve their goals and that their social network had grown as a result of the project (eight out of fourteen felt change in all these areas). Some also felt happier in themselves (six out of fourteen) and three felt happier with the way they used their time. See the table below.
Specific support received
When asked to tick what specific support they had received through the project, four ticked work placements, three ticked support to find work, three ticked support to find voluntary work and four ticked referral for debt support.

Some clients added that, in addition, they received support in English speaking, opening a bank account and finding housing.

The difference mentoring has made in mentees own words
Mentees were asked to say in their own words what difference, if any, did they feel that the project has made in their life. Mentees talked mostly about growing in confidence in answer to this question. Some also talked about improving their English, work readiness and having someone to talk to:

I feel more confidence and have greater self esteem. I need to grow in these areas to source a job so I see the mentoring as a success. He put me at ease, gave good advice and was practical. (Male, 30s).

I used to get very stressed before interviews but now I feel more confident. My CV is better. When I wasn’t working I didn’t feel confidence. The project is very good and helped me a lot. (Male, 20s).
Ways mentees felt the project could be improved

Finally mentees were asked how they felt the project could be improved for next year. One mentee talked about wanting more clarity about what goals he could work on within the project:

Mentees could be supported to balance personal objectives with professional ones more. It was only in the last meeting that I shared some of my personal objectives. I would have liked to explore this sooner but I was unsure where the boundaries lay. (Male, 40s).

Some clients thought the project should work more with people from within specific groups:

More people from Eastern Europe should have access to a project like this. They need more signposting as at present if people become unemployed they have no where to turn so they drink and can turn to crime. (Male, 50s).

Maybe you could have more support for ‘special needs’ - such as alcohol, drugs etc. (Male, 30s).
Some would have liked us to have worked with more organisations to have more opportunities for them:

Maybe more work placement opportunities. (Male, 30s).

Organisations need to work together more. (Male, 30s).

Others felt happy with the project the way it was:

It has helped me and let's hope it can get bigger and stronger so it can help more people like me. (Male, 30s).

I would give the project 95% as it is. (Male, 30s).

The project is enough as it is. (Male, 60s).

I can't see it being any different. (Female, 40s).

It is simple and it works. (Male 50s).

The project has done its job. (Male, 30s).

It is good that we were the same age. You should continue to think about this when you match people. (Male, 30s).

The effects of the project based on knowledge of the clients

Three mentees were given placements on the Ready to Work Scheme (part of Business in the Community) and two of them have secured employment as a result of the project. One of them is on placement at the time of writing. One mentee was referred to A4E and secured employment through them. Two mentees found employment independently while being mentored. Therefore a total of five mentees secured employment whilst in the project.
Two mentees had alcohol addiction. One of them faced up to his addiction whilst being mentored and he is now attending counselling and AA meetings. The other has used his befriender to share why he drinks. He is also accessing support to stop drinking. However the time limited nature of the project has been a constraint in working with both of these mentees. Both relationships needed to be extended to accommodate these mentees needs. It is significant that these two mentees sought help and advice for their alcohol use in part due to the mentoring project. This means that whilst other areas have not improved, this huge obstacle of recognition of problem has been tackled.

Learning:

The time limited nature of this project doesn’t work well with the needs of those with addiction issues. Although they are accessing specialist support the mentoring support of six months didn’t feel like long enough. In one case we offered a longer relationship to accommodate this but even a twelve month relationship does not seem long enough for this type of work.

A mentee who has been an ‘invisible person’ in the UK due to being refused refugee status has been able to find accommodation and has applied for the leave to remain under the ‘legacy programme’. He felt that his motivation increased and he is now attending training courses.

Another mentee felt inspired to start creative writing again as a result of being encouraged by his mentor.

The effects of the project measured by semi structured interview (mentors)

Eighteen volunteers carried out a semi structured exit interview. Sixteen felt that the training day had equipped them for the role and two felt that it had to some extent. One mentor, after quite a difficult mentoring relationship, commented that he would have liked more on the ground rules and boundaries. Two mentors would have liked more signposting information and information regarding benefits. One mentor would have liked more information about alcoholism as his mentee was an alcoholic. All of this feedback will be incorporated into future trainings.

Seventeen felt that their mentee was a good match with them. One mentor didn’t feel that his mentee was a good match with him but he didn’t feel that anyone would have been because the mentee was difficult to get along with.

Fifteen felt that the time commitment of the project was ‘about right’ and three said that they found it ‘too much’.

Mentors were asked what difference they felt mentoring made in the life of their mentee. Responses have been grouped into the categories of ‘very little’, ‘someone to talk to’, ‘confidence’ and ‘a fresh perspective’.
Very little:
- “Possibly he has learnt a little about accepting that other people have their own issues. It became an issue of him getting a free packet of fags and a meal from me”.
- “I am not sure. He has enjoyed meeting me socially but he hasn’t followed up leads quickly”.

Someone to talk to:
- “He values having someone who cares about him. He says he tells me things that he doesn’t talk to other people about. He drinks less than he did and is seeking help”.
- “It has been a stress release for him - chatting through the anniversary of splitting up with his wife helped him get through it. He has a lot going on and mentoring helped him focus”.
- “I was someone for her to see once a week. I gave her a chance to offload her stresses outside of her family situation”.
- “Everybody needs a friend - someone to make them feel valued. Someone to support him and to give him some contact with the outside world. Our meetings got him up and out every Tuesday. It was positive”.

Increase in confidence:
- “He has gained in confidence, focus and he realised that he could succeed. It was good for him to have someone stable to talk to. He is now in work and has moved house”.
- “Having a regular meeting gave him responsibility to do the things he said he would do. I have seen a big change in him - he has a greater sense of his own value than he had at the start. He is growing in self confidence. He is more emotionally stable”.
- “He seems more confident, he has made achievements (getting work, a home, opening a bank account)”.
- “I feel that it gave him support - he didn’t know anyone in London. He has grown in confidence. And he has a job as a result of the project”.
- “I was someone he could talk with about what he has been going through. I think it has helped to build his confidence”.
- “It helped with her English. I think I am her only English friend. Also it gave her more confidence”.
- “As part of the package of getting accommodation and befriending through Robes this is an example of what can be done. He showed me where he used to sleep rough - there has been such an enormous change in his life. He is more confident”.
- “In a small way I hope that I have been a positive encouragement. He has had negative attitudes towards himself and I have tried to sow some good so that he can believe in himself”.
- “He appreciates that he has made a friendship that will last. Our meeting gave him a chance to have English conversation and it gave him accountability in his job seeking. We also enjoyed a multi-faith dialogue”.

Mentors felt the project helped them in the areas of: improving their listening and interpersonal skills, increasing their understanding of homelessness and they found it an enjoyable experience.
**A fresh perspective:**

- “I hope he was more energised and that he was able to think about things that he could do. He was quite close minded before so I hope he is a little more open minded. I also hope he can think more about processes in how he does things”.
- “I think he is thinking about a few things in different ways:
  - his attitude towards others
  - negativity
  - more reflective”.

Mentors were asked what difference mentoring has made in their life. Their responses can be grouped into three areas, ‘listening and interpersonal skills’, ‘understanding of homelessness’ and ‘enjoyable’.

**Listening and interpersonal skills:**

- “I have enjoyed working closer with people who have a need for one-to-one support. I was building on my existing listening and non judgemental skills”.
- “It has helped my listening skills. I had to battle against my style of being directive”.
- “It has given me confidence. I know I can keep my commitments and I can deal with institutions. (I had a stroke some years ago and haven’t been able to go back to work so this has been a major achievement for me)”.

**Understanding of homelessness:**

- “It has had quite an important impact on me. Seeing how someone’s life has gone backwards - he lost so much. I had first hand insight into what it’s like to live with alcohol dependence and I am grateful for the experience”.
- “It has been really positive - even the tough issues that we have had to deal with have been positive. It has helped me to understand homelessness and the issues that people face”.
- “First hand experience of a different way of life. I understand homelessness a bit more. I would have liked to have been able to have done more”.
- “It increased my awareness of what asylum seekers go through. It has helped me to be a better citizen. It has also helped me develop my skills in relationship building and I have learned things about myself”.
- “First hand experience of a different way of life. I understand homelessness a bit more”.
- “I really liked it. It gave me an increased awareness of alcoholism and unemployment. I enjoyed his friendship”.


One mentor found that his mentee helped him review his own life goals!

“He has helped my with goals in my life - through talking with him I decided to go part time in my work so I could pursue my music. He has a very positive outlook on life”.

- “It has been a wake up call to the multiple complex barriers people can have to employment and social engagement”.

Enjoyable:
- “I found it very rewarding. I probably got more out of it than I got. If I have even made a small difference then it has been worth it”.
- “I have appreciated the opportunity to make a difference in someone else’s life. Someone who I wouldn’t normally have met. I can get quite immersed in my own projects and this was a very different type of interaction”.
- “I developed a friendship that I will keep. I enjoyed the firsthand knowledge of his Muslim faith”.
- “I enjoy helping people. My awareness of other services has increased. I also learnt more about his country and culture”.
- “He has helped my with goals in my life - through talking with him I decided to go part time in my work so I could pursue my music. He has a very positive outlook on life”.
- “I hope I was doing some good. It has been positive. I am glad to have done it and have enjoyed J’s friendship”.
- “She is fantastic - I so enjoyed it. I was looking for something to do after the night shelter and this was just right”.
- “It has been fun - it has been an added dimension to my life”.

All mentors felt that the level of support that they were offered by the Project Coordinator was ‘about right’.

Mentors were asked how many group supervision sessions they would have liked over the course of a six month relationship. The majority (8) wanted to have two group supervision sessions with five people wanting only one and four people wanting three.

Mentors were asked if the expenses available (£8/week) were sufficient. The majority (14) said that it was sufficient but three said it wasn’t and £10 would have been better.

Finally mentors were asked if they would like to volunteer again as a mentor with the M&M Project. Twelve said that they would, five said maybe depending on their commitments next year and one said no.
Costs
The total project budget was £40,000, £4,000 of this went towards developing a resource pack, leaving a remainder of £36,000.

We worked with twenty two relationships so this works out at a cost of about £1,600 per relationship. Seventeen relationships were successful so this works out at a cost of about £2,100 per successful relationship.

A number of research studies have provided evidence on the costs of homelessness. Studies indicate that homelessness is more expensive to society than the costs of solving the problem. Homeless people use a variety of public services in an inefficient and costly way. Preventing a homeless episode or ensuring speedy transition into stable permanent housing can result in significant cost savings, as well as dramatic improvement to the lives of homeless people. Research indicates that there is an annual cost to the state of between £24,000 - £26,000 for each homeless person (see http://www.homeless.org.uk/costs-homelessness).

3. Discussion of findings
Although the project was tailored to work with winter night shelters more than half of referrals were from other homeless agencies. This may have been due to timing of project set up coinciding with the closure of the shelters – or it may indicate that there is not a demand for this type of support from winter night shelter guests.

Our lack of success in mentoring clients with high needs and chaotic life styles shows the need for more rigorous screening and for more confidence in declining referrals that do not meet the project’s criteria. We have had low success with clients who are heavy drinkers and the time limited nature of this project makes it less suitable for alcoholics.

At the start of the project the areas that mentees scored lowest in were emotional and mental health, meaningful use of time, social networks and managing money. As all had been recently homeless it is not a surprise that many were feeling low and that they didn’t have a strong social network. Indeed had they a high social network it would have been less likely that they would be homeless.

The outcomes star results show that the area of greatest change for clients was ‘meaningful use of time’. This means clients doing things that they find interesting and satisfying and for some it means moving towards education, training or employment. This finding correlates to the fact that at the time of evaluation five mentees were in work, one was on a work placement and one was in study.

The second highest area of change was ‘emotional and mental health’. An increase in emotional and mental health for some may be due to their improved use of time as discussed above. It also correlates to the emphasis that both mentees and mentors put on seeing an increase in mentees’ confidence as a result of the relationship.

The third highest area of change was an increase in ‘social networks and relationships’. This may be in part due to mentors and mentees continuing informal contact once the project ended. Some mentors worked quite intentionally to help their mentee build up their social network.
Managing money was the fourth highest area of change. Most mentees talk about struggling to live on benefits and those who had got into work were still waiting to see what difference a salary would make to their monthly income. Two clients commented that being referred for debt support was very helpful.

The semi structured interview showed that all the mentees interviewed liked their mentors. They listed work placements and referrals for debt support and money management as the practical support they received most consistently. When asked what difference the project made in their lives nearly all expressed an increase in their confidence. Their statements used the words ‘confidence’, ‘self esteem’, ‘trust’, ‘talk’ and ‘focus’.

Similarly mentors were happy with the support they received through out the project. They felt that the project had been most beneficial to mentees in the areas of building their confidence, giving them someone to talk to and giving them a fresh perspective. They felt that as volunteer mentors they had grown in their interpersonal skills, their understanding of homelessness and they enjoyed the relationships.

In conclusion these finding show that the most important aspect of the project is the relationship between the mentee and the mentor. If the mentee is offered a non judgemental and supportive relationship they will grow in confidence, and from this can come other areas of development. As a pilot the project has been successful in supporting mentees in finding a meaningful use of time and in growing in confidence. It would be exciting to see if these results can be built on and expanded in the second year for the M&M Project.

Recommendations

- For Housing Justice to secure funding that goes beyond the 12 month funding cycle for the M&M Project. This would enable us to receive referrals in two tranches – one tranche at the beginning of the year with referrals from night shelters (Feb – March) and one in summer with referrals from day centres, homeless agencies etc.
- For Housing Justice to support night shelters and other agencies running homeless services to set up their own mentoring and befriending projects. To promote good practice in mentoring and befriending through the tool kit and through forums.
- For Housing Justice to continue running an operational M&M project and developing more experience and expertise at supporting mentees to get back into education, training and employment. To work with more agencies to enable this.
- For Housing Justice to work with clients with low support needs as this evaluation shows that this is where the strength and success of the project has been.
Annex

Annex 1 Two case studies of relationships that did not work out

Case study 1

Duncan is a fifty seven year old man who had been an entrenched rough sleeper for the last thirty years. He had been a heavy drinker. One year ago through engagement with a street outreach team Duncan agreed to try out living in supported accommodation. He was referred to the M&M Project as staff felt that it would be helpful for him to have a non staff member to talk to. They felt it would help him settle more into his new life if he had someone to get out and about with.

Duncan was matched with an experienced mentor called Paul. During the assessment and the matching meeting Duncan seemed really keen to have a mentor and he and Paul seemed to get on well. Paul and Duncan had a meeting one week following this and Paul felt they were building a good rapport. They planned to go out together to a museum the following week but when Paul arrived Duncan wasn’t home.

We were later informed that Duncan had been involved in an incident in the hostel and that he had been arrested. He was then moved to another hostel and Paul planned to try to visit him there however we were then informed that he had returned to streets.

Case study 2

Frank is 32. He has learning difficulties and mental health difficulties. He slept rough since leaving care in his late teens. He was a solvent user and a heavy drinker. He agreed to try living in semi supported accommodation and was there for six months when he was referred to the project. During assessment he seemed really keen to have a befriender to go out for coffee with once a week. He was matched with Tracey and during the matching meeting they seemed to get on well. However following this meeting he only turned up for one more meeting. Thereafter he was never home when Tracey came to visit at the times he had arranged.

These case studies illustrate the lack of success that this project has had in working with formerly entrenched rough sleepers with high support needs.
### Annex 2 Data tables of Outcomes Star results

#### Average increase and decrease in client scores from the Outcomes Star

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Average at assessment</th>
<th>Average for exit star</th>
<th>Average change (outcomes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Motivation</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Living skills</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Managing money</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Social networks</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Substance use</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Physical health</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Mental health</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Use of time</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Managing tenancy</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Offending</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Percentage of positive and negative changes in client scores from the Outcomes Star

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Positive outcome</th>
<th>Negative outcome</th>
<th>No change in score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Motivation</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Living skills</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Managing money</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Social networks</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Substance use</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Physical health</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Mental health</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Use of time</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Managing tenancy</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Offending</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>32%</strong></td>
<td><strong>9%</strong></td>
<td><strong>59%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>