Reducing Youth Crime in Ireland:
An Evaluation of Le Chéile Mentoring

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Jeremy Nicholls
Chief Executive Officer
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Foreword

"Reducing youth crime in Ireland" is a significant piece of research as it quantifies the impact of mentoring in significantly reducing reoffending and in delivering positive economic and social benefits. This research confirms what we have known from experience, that Le Chéile mentoring is making a positive difference for young people, their parents and society overall.

Critically, this report shows that Le Chéile mentoring reduces offending behaviour. This is a significant finding, with young people reducing their offending behaviour by an average of 28%. This contributes to reducing the economic and social impact of crime. The evaluation found that for every €1 the government and EU invest in Le Chéile, there is an impressive return of €4.35.

What is interesting is the range of outcome areas where mentoring has a positive impact. This evaluation quantifies for the first time positive impacts on soft skills areas such as communication skills and self-confidence, which are fundamental skills to empower our young people to progress to a better future.

Le Chéile's mentoring service is innovative internationally, in that parents or carers of young people who offend also have an option of parent mentoring. The report shows significant positive impacts on improving parenting skills, self-confidence and child-parent relationships. This confirms our belief that it is vital to work with the family, as well as the young person, to support positive change.

We are delighted to see the role of volunteer mentor, supported by Le Chéile staff, highlighted as a key strength. Volunteers work tirelessly for their mentees, giving 3,678 hours of mentoring in 2015. Mentees view our mentors as impartial, outside the system and are trusted because they willingly give their own time to young people on a voluntary basis. I want to pay tribute to the hundreds of volunteers who have played their part in supporting young people and their parents/carers since Le Chéile began in 2005

The partnership between Le Chéile and the Probation Service, professional working relationships, co-location and a shared commitment to the well-being of the young people, provide the foundation for the effectiveness of the mentoring service.

Given the significant benefits of Le Chéile mentoring and in the interests of equal access to services nationally, the evaluation recommends that additional resources should be provided to allow expansion of Le Chéile services to areas of the country that are not currently served. Le Chéile fully supports this recommendation and is committed to working with the Probation Service, the Irish Youth Justice Service and other partners to achieve greater access.

The decreasing number of young people on probation, coupled with increased funding of youth justice services by the EU, provides an ideal opportunity to ensure that all young people in the Justice system who would benefit from mentoring, will have access to mentoring when and where they need it.

Anne Conroy, CEO, Le Chéile

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Le Chéile for the opportunity to carry out this evaluation and the many people who contributed to its completion.

I would like to thank in particular the young person mentees, parent mentees and parents of mentees who were willing to share their personal experiences with me in face-to-face interviews, in focus groups or by phone. Mentoring is about them and it was essential their voices be heard.

I would also like to thank the many volunteer mentors who participated in the focus groups and those who participated in interviews in person or by phone. They are at the heart of mentoring and their insights were invaluable.

The co-ordinators were equally generous with their time and opinions and their active participation in the focus groups was greatly appreciated. I would like to thank too the Probation Service staff who took part in the focus group and in face-to-face and phone interviews. I am grateful also to all respondents to the surveys – mentees, mentors and co-ordinators alike.

Much of the field work for the evaluation centred on two regions (which are not named in the report in order to protect identities) and placed an additional burden on the two co-ordinators in question. I have to say that they could not have done more to facilitate and support the evaluation.

Le Chéile HQ staff provided additional support and information. Mary Henihan was liaison person for the evaluation and was a constant support throughout.

I am grateful also to the key organisational stakeholders who participated in a focus group at a critical stage and to Dr Sinead Hanafin, Research Matters, who provided expert advice on various aspects, notably the methodology and the social return on investment.

Finally I am very grateful to the members of the evaluation steering group (Anne Conroy, Darren Broomfield, Mary Henihan and Alan Quinn) who offered advice and support at key stages all through the process.

I offer a sincere thank you to one and all. I hope the evaluation does justice to people's experiences of mentoring.

Kieran O'Dwyer, KC Consulting

Executive Summary

In 2015 Le Chéile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Services commissioned this evaluation to assess the impact of Le Chéile's mentoring services for young people who offend and their parents/carers, looking at a range of potential outcomes for both groups. Le Chéile also commissioned an assessment of the social return on investment.

A range of stakeholders took part in the evaluation, including young people and parents who were mentored, volunteer mentors, Probation and Le Chéile staff and other significant professionals.

The research methodology comprised both qualitative and quantitative methods, including face-to-face or phone interviews, focus groups, surveys and case file analysis.

The evaluation found that young people who were mentored by Le Chéile come from a variety of backgrounds. The outstanding common feature is of course that they have committed an offence and appeared before the courts. This marks Le Chéile mentees as different from mentees under other programmes in Ireland and internationally. The mentees share many features found among young offenders generally, for example, impulsivity, indifferent attitudes to offending, negative peer group influence, poor school attendance, poor supervision, and alcohol and drug use.

A major finding of the evaluation is that mentoring has significant positive impacts for young people who engage with the service, with the biggest gains made in the areas of self-confidence, hopefulness, communications, engagement in activities and, crucially, offending behaviour. The finding of a reduction in offending behaviour of 28 percent is significant given international experience.

For parent mentees, the most significant benefits are in the areas of self-confidence and emotional well-being. Benefits also accrue in terms of improved self-esteem, hopefulness and ability to manage stress, improved parenting skills and family relationships and greater involvement in activities outside the home.

The evaluation found the current Le Chéile model of mentoring to be robust and effective, with the strong positive relationship between the mentor and mentee a key feature. The fact that mentors are volunteers was highlighted as a major strength of the model. Mentoring was also seen as having a valuable role in providing support for young people during care and in transition from care.

The partnership between Le Chéile the Probation Service was recognised as important and was regarded as positive and professional.

The total value of Le Chéile's mentoring service in 2015 is calculated at €4,850,146 and costs at €1,093,647, giving a social return on investment of €4.35 for every €1 invested in Le Chéile. The report was assessed independently by Social Value International and satisfied the requirements of its report assurance process.

Regarding Le Chéile's pilot mentoring in detention service, mentees and their families appreciated the support at a difficult time and mentors commented that it strengthened the basis for mentoring after release.

Given the high social return on investment from mentoring and in the interests of equal access to services nationally, it is recommended that additional resources should be provided to enable expansion of Le Chéile services to areas of the country that are not currently served. Consideration should be given to providing mentoring earlier before young people become involved in serious or recidivist offending.

Overall the evaluation found that Le Chéile's model of mentoring for young people and parents is effective and produces significant positive impacts over a range of areas for both young people and parents who participate in mentoring.

Chapter 1　　　Introduction to Le Chéile Mentoring Services

1.1　　　Origins and development

Le Chéile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Services was established in 2005 to provide a mentoring service to young people aged 12-18 years referred by the Courts to Young Persons' Probation, the division of the Probation service that deals with young people under 18 years of age. Its mentoring service enabled the provisions of the Children Act 2001 to be activated as regards the Mentor (Family Support) Order. Initially established in North County Dublin, the service now covers the Dublin, Cork, north-eastern, midlands, south-eastern and south-western regions. Le Chéile has developed to provide a holistic wrap-around service for young people and their families involved with the justice system, including parent and youth mentoring, family support and restorative justice services. Le Chéile empowers communities by recruiting, training and supporting local volunteers who support the young people and their families with a view to the young people reducing their offending behaviour and achieving their full potential as individuals. Le Chéile is a child-centred, non-judgemental service, with restorative practices at the heart of its way of working. It is funded by the Irish Youth Justice Service through the Probation Service.

In 2008, a Parent Mentoring service was introduced to work with parents or carers of young people who offend. The range of support services to the family of the young person also now include parenting programmes and individualised interventions customised to meet the individual family's needs. A Restorative Justice service was established in Limerick and was evaluated in 2014. The evaluation found that the service had significant benefits for the participating young people, their families and victims of crime and that for every €1 spent, €2.92 was returned in social value (Quigley et al, 2014). In 2015, the mentoring service was accredited by the UK Mentoring and Befriending Foundation as meeting all the requirements of this quality assurance framework and was the only organisation in Ireland to have been awarded this accreditation. Also in 2015, a pilot programme of mentoring in detention was initiated with seed funding from the Loreto Fund. It caters for young people who already had a mentor prior to detention and for initiation of mentoring for other young people while in detention. Mentoring in detention is a specific focus of this evaluation, reported in Section 5.3.

In 2015 a new strategy *Inspiring Change, Transforming Lives* was adopted by Le Chéile. Among other things, this sets out the vision, mission and values of Le Chéile.
The vision is:
> "For every young person at risk – the right supports at the right time, to make the most of their lives".

The mission is:
> "Le Chéile is a community-based volunteer mentoring and family support service, which works with young people involved in or at risk of offending".

The values are:
> "We listen – respect – empower. We are non-judgemental and believe in the potential of every young person. We work collaboratively with young people, families and other agencies. We use a restorative practice ethos. We deliver quality services."

Four strategic objectives were identified:
- Further developing the quality and effectiveness of services
- Expanding access so that more young people may benefit
- Developing the organisation to effectively achieve Le Chéile's mission and
- Communicating and promoting the distinct value of Le Chéile and its work.

1.2   Young Person Mentoring

The Le Chéile strategy describes its youth mentoring as "a one-to-one relationship-based support which provides a positive role model to a young person. Mentors help young people improve their self-esteem, working on relationships and communication skills, and addressing anti-social behaviour". The relationship aspect was highlighted by one Probation Officer quoted in the strategy document:

> "It's the potential to develop a very different relationship with the young person. A Le Chéile mentor does not focus on the negative behaviours of the young person and this can be a 'breath of fresh air' for the young person".

The young person mentoring programme has developed since its inception in 2005. It is now rare for Le Chéile's young clients to be subject to a Mentor (Family Support) Order. They are almost invariably on a probation bond which includes mentoring as one of its conditions. Occasional referrals are also made by Gardaí in two regions under the Garda Diversion Programme. Mentees referred under a court order are under the supervision of a Probation Officer for its duration and the Probation Officer is case manager. The service is free to young people and their families.

Mentors for young people act as a positive role model, advisor and friendly supporter. They offer them support, stability and general guidance and help them make choices as well as set achievable goals and realistic challenges. They listen to, care about, give advice to, and share information and life/career experience with them. They get involved with them in various structured and planned activities and help them build self-esteem and self-confidence. At the beginning of the mentoring relationship, they engage in social, fun activities such as bowling and playing pool, designed to help build a relationship. After this time, they jointly set some longer term goals such as working on literacy skills, joining a sports club or class, working on the driver theory test, and re-engaging with education or training.The mentors typically work with the young people for about two hours a week for between six months and a year and sometimes for longer periods.

As referenced in Chapter 2, international research has found that mentoring of young people who have offended has positive effects on at least one of the following: crime, behaviour, attitude, alcohol and drugs, school and relationships and has greatest impact on the factors which contribute to crime such as substance abuse and school attendance, rather than crime itself. The research identified criteria for effective mentoring, notably combining mentoring interventions and leisure-time programmes; an intensive intervention of at least a year in duration; inclusion of a personal and committed relationship with an adult; emphasis on the importance of the young person's psychological and social development; parental involvement; and volunteer mentoring with screening, training, matching, support and supervision by professionals. Le Chéile's mentoring model

Case Study – Daniel*

Daniel was 17 when he appeared in the Circuit Court on charges of assault and violent disorder. He was one of a number of youths involved in an incident fuelled by an evening of heavy drinking. Although well known to the Gardaí, he had never been involved previously in anything of this nature. He was referred to Young Persons Probation for assessment. The assessment identified three main risk factors: the negative influence of some of his friends, his use of alcohol and his lack of commitment to education which meant that he had a lot of spare time on his hands. At the next Court hearing, Daniel was placed on probation supervision and a plan was agreed with the family.

Mentoring was a key element of the plan and he was matched up within a month with a female mentor, which was his preference. Daniel was unsure about mentoring at first but from the beginning he got on well with his mentor, a young woman in her twenties, and she quickly became a trusted support. They had 25 mentoring sessions together over almost 13 months, meeting more frequently initially and then less often as agreed at review. He said that the mentor helped him set goals for the first time in his life and take responsibility. Among other things, he re-engaged with education and got involved again in sporting activities. As well as mentoring, he worked with the local restorative justice project and completed a victim empathy programme which helped him to fully understand the impact of his behaviour on the victim, his family and the wider community. His Probation Officer also worked with him on his alcohol misuse and liaised closely with staff at the local training centre to get his education back on track.

Reflecting overall, he commented "I was very much inside myself, depressed, feeling so bad about what I had done. It helped me to like myself again. It really lifted me to a better place. I was sorry about what I had done but I learned to accept it." He said that he felt he got a lot of confidence from meeting and getting to know a stranger and it helped him set goals and practise interview skills. He said finally that he would love to be a mentor himself one day.

Meanwhile, Daniel's mother was linked up with a parent mentor and also attended a parenting programme. Her mentoring started and finished around the same time as her son's. She commented "I've learned things that have helped with my own children but also with my grandchildren. I'm much calmer now. It was great to have the mentor to confide in." She said that she was depressed over the matter and was bottling things up with no-one else to talk to at the time. Commenting about Daniel, she said that he got confidence through having someone new to meet and talk to and that it eased pressure on both of them. She concluded that he was "a different young man from going around with his head between his knees to now holding his head back up again" and that he "wouldn't be where he is today without them, just would not be".

Having steered clear of any further trouble, Daniel's case was ultimately finalised by way of a suspended sentence. He completed his leaving cert applied and went on to third level education and part-time employment.

*Names have been changed

encapsulates these criteria. Research in Ireland found that the presence of 'one good adult' was a key indicator of how well a young person is connected, self-confident, future-looking and able to cope with problems. Le Chéile's own feedback from young people, parents and Young Persons Probation has identified Le Chéile's volunteer mentors as fulfilling this role for many of the young people referred to its services.

According to Le Chéile's annual reports, 162 young people were mentored in 2014 and 152 in 2015. The ages of mentees ranged from 12 to 21 in 2015. A total of 1,204 mentoring sessions took place in 2015 involving 2,120 hours of mentoring, averaging 1.8 hours per session (up from 1.7 in 2014). Work is done with the young people in respect of a number of outcome areas: self-esteem, meaningful use of time, communication, alcohol and drug use, education training and work and pro-social behaviour.

1.3   Parent Mentoring

Le Chéile also provides mentoring to the parents of young people involved with Young Persons' Probation. The Le Chéile strategy states that

> "Parent mentoring helps parents develop their own parenting skills and gives support with parenting issues. Parent mentoring gives a non-judgemental time and space outside the family home to parents under pressure".

The focus of Le Chéile's vision and mission statements is primarily on young people. Its statement of values refers partly to young people but can be applied also to parent mentoring (e.g. listening, respecting and empowering, working collaboratively and restoratively).

The role of the parent mentor is to offer support and a listening ear and to provide some help in managing their child's offending behaviour. They meet parents for about two hours a week outside of the home. Similar to mentoring with the young people, the initial weeks comprise social activities, such as meeting for coffee or going to the cinema, designed to build a relationship between parent and mentor. After that, they start to set out achievable goals together, such as working on parenting issues, stress management, motivation and building confidence in parenting. Parents are assigned a mentor for the duration of their child's involvement with Le Chéile or Young Persons' Probation but they can choose to end the relationship before then and it can also be extended beyond the period of their child's involvement. Parent mentoring is also provided to other parents whose children are not themselves being mentored but who are on probation. Le Chéile can fund child-minding services for parents in limited circumstances where required. There is flexibility in time and place of meeting and incurrence of expenses to eliminate potential practical barriers to engagement by parents.

In 2015, Le Chéile worked with 49 parent mentees. A total of 739 mentoring sessions took place, involving 1,559 hours of mentoring (an average of 2.1 hours per session). Corresponding figures for 2014 were 50 parent mentees, 802 mentoring sessions and 1679 mentoring hours (average 2.1 hours per session.)

1.4   Policy context

The current policy context can be seen in the Government's programme for government, the national policy framework for children and young people 2014-2020 and the youth justice action plan 2014-2018. Mentoring is clearly relevant to many of the areas of action identified.

The programme of the Partnership Government (Section 8.4 "Giving Vulnerable Young People the Best Chance in Life") emphasises a change in approach from expensive reactive interventions to proactive supports and long term planning starting from birth. It highlights youth crime as one of four areas where it says it makes sense to intervene, not only in terms of value for money, but so that every person has the opportunity to meet their full potential in life. It again highlights youth crime in identifying a need to plan earlier for adolescents and young adults with care needs (such as special education, disability, juvenile justice) so they too can play a valued role in our society.

The programme supports extending Garda Youth Diversion Programmes for young people promoting restorative justice, and other voluntary organisations that contribute to our young people's future direction. It also commits to providing ongoing support to Tusla in delivering targeted intervention services and supporting increased use of therapeutic intervention services for children in detention within Oberstown (Department of the Taoiseach, 2016).

The national policy framework for children and young people 2014-2020 "Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures" sets out a vision of Ireland to be "one of the best small countries in the world in which to grow up and raise a family", and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled, where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future. It identifies a need to focus on why some children slip through the net and potentially suffer disadvantage and damage that "can cripple their capacity to learn, grow, have a healthy life and productive relationships". It says that it is necessary to identify the twenty percent that need additional support and intervene early.

This framework seeks to make sure that young people who are marginalised or 'at risk' or who demonstrate challenging or high-risk behaviour have access to an integrated range of supports and services to help them achieve their best possible outcomes. It also seeks to ensure that no young person falls through the cracks because of fragmented services. Five key areas for action are set out under headings of:
o   active and healthy with positive physical and mental well-being,
o   achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development,
o   safe and protected from harm,
o   economic security and opportunity, and
o   connected, respected and contributing.

The aims under the first outcome area are that all children and young people are physically healthy and able to make positive health choices, have good mental health, have a positive and respectful approach to relationships and sexual health, and that their lives are enriched through the enjoyment of play, recreation, sports, arts, culture and nature. The aims under achieving full potential are to

ensure that all children get the best foundation in learning and development, have social and emotional wellbeing, and are engaged in and achieving in education.

The aims under safety and protection are that all children and young people have a secure, stable and caring home environment; that they are safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation; that they are protected from bullying and discrimination; and that they are safe from crime and antisocial behaviour. The aims under economic security and opportunity are that all children and young people are protected from poverty and social exclusion; that they are living in child/youth-friendly sustainable communities; that they have opportunities for ongoing education and training; and that they have pathways to economic participation, entrepreneurship, fulfilling employment and independent living.

The aims for the final outcome area are that all children and young people have a sense of their own identity, are free from discrimination and are part of positive networks of friends, family and community; furthermore, that they are civically engaged, socially and environmentally conscious, and are aware of their rights as well as being responsible and respectful of the law (Department of Children and Youth affairs, 2014).

The Youth Justice Action Plan 2014-2018 sets out two high level goals that are particularly relevant to mentoring. High Level Goal 3 is to review and strengthen targeted interventions to reduce offending and divert young people from the criminal justice system. It emphasises the need to engage young people in a process of learning and development that will enable them to make positive lifestyle choices and encourage them to engage in pro-social behaviour. One action point commits to ensuring that young people identified at risk of offending receive appropriate and adequate care. High Level Goal 4 is to promote and increase the use of community measures, including restorative justice, for young people who offend. It refers among other things to the community sanctions provided for in the Children Act 2001, which include mentoring orders, and commits to developing initiatives to break the cycle of offending, provide alternatives to detention and enable better integration of young people subject to community sanctions. Actions include a focus on further development of programmes, informing the judiciary of developments in youth justice and strengthening and extending restorative justice practices for young people who are subject to community sanctions (Department of Justice and Equality, 2013).

1.5   Youth offending and the youth justice system

Mentoring also takes place against the backdrop of youth offending and in the context the youth justice system. The Children Act 2001 is the primary legislation governing youth justice in Ireland. Among other things, it emphasises the use of detention as a last resort. Diversion is the cornerstone of the Act and the Garda Diversion Programme is the primary mechanism for diverting children aged 10-17 from further offending (Convery and Seymour, 2016). All offences are eligible for referral. Children who are admitted to the programme may be given a formal or informal caution. Those who receive a formal caution are placed under the supervision of a Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) for a period of up to 12 months.

Diversion from custody and court is influenced by labelling theory which recognises the potentially negative consequences of being formally labelled as an offender or troublesome person. Diversion is commonly seen as

> "an enlightened approach, as it prevents youngsters being 'labelled' as criminals (the inevitable consequence of a formal conviction) and decreases the likelihood of institutional confinement which in many cases will be more criminogenic than rehabilitative" (O'Malley, 1994:312).

Children deemed unsuitable for the Diversion Programme are referred for prosecution. This may arise for a number of reasons, including not accepting responsibility for their actions, circumstances of the offences, or re-offending after caution. The Children Court has jurisdiction over all minor matters and may opt to deal summarily with all but the most serious indictable offences, which are tried in the Central Criminal Court. The Children Court has a number of sanctioning options apart from detention, including family conferences, community-based sanctions, community service orders, supervision orders under the Probation Act 1907 and adjourned supervision (whereby the judge postpones sentencing and places the child under the supervision of the Probation Service). All under-18s are assessed and supervised by Young Persons Probation, a division within the Probation Service.

As regards detention, female offenders aged under 18 are detained on remand or under sentence in Oberstown Children Detention Campus, as is the case with male offenders aged under 17. Those aged 17 may be detained in Oberstown or another place of detention such as Wheatfield. Snapshots of the daily population between 2009 and 2013 point to an average daily occupancy of 39 children, with over 80 percent on remand (Convery and Seymour, 2016). Since 2008, the number of children detained by the Courts annually on criminal conviction has dropped consistently, the space required in the new facilities at Oberstown was reduced to approximately half of what was estimated in 2008 and youth crime has decreased (Department of Justice, 2013:2)

As regards scale of offending, in 2013, just under 20,000 offences were referred to the Garda Síochána in respect of almost 10,000 children. Most offences were minor in nature, with public disorder, theft and criminal damage accounting for almost two-thirds of offences, often committed under the influence of alcohol. Just under three-quarters of children referred were admitted to the Programme, with half being given an informal caution and a quarter a formal caution. Some 1582 (16 percent) were deemed unsuitable for the programme and were forwarded for prosecution (Garda Síochána, 2014).

Most young offenders can be expected to grow out of crime as they become more mature and responsible. An analysis of Garda offence data 1999-2009 indicates that the majority of young offenders desist from offending in their early twenties and the age/crime curve is similar to neighbouring jurisdictions (IYJS, 2011:19). Nevertheless, not all children and young people simply grow out of youth crime and factors such as individual attitudes and behaviours, intellectual capacity, school performance, family circumstances, choice of friends and the influence of other adults can serve to entrench and prolong offending behaviour (IYJS, 2011:20).

In the aforementioned report on community-based projects supported by Young People's Probation, various risk and protective factors were identified. Risk factors included the following:

- little capacity to deal with everyday problem solving without some form of antisocial presentation perhaps typified by a 'short-fuse' response,
  - young people with poor emotional literacy, limited ability to manage anger or aggression, a tendency toward impulsiveness, lacking the capacity for reflection, good judgement and empathy towards others;
  - poor self-identity they often makes it difficult to be considerate or demonstrate 'empathy' towards others;
- seeing little wrong with their offending behaviour and consequently little motivation toward change;
- mental health issues and learning disability, playing both direct and indirect roles in offending behaviour;
- widespread drug (and alcohol) usage, manifesting itself in a number of ways including
  - the way that young people use their leisure time;
  - directly elevating youthful misbehaviour into more serious public order crime;
  - offending prompted by the need to service a habit or a debt deriving from addiction;
- education problems,
  - poor school attendance and behaviour to the degree that many young people are effectively excluded from large parts of mainstream school activity;
  - a significant lack of expectation in terms of educational performance by young people themselves but also by parents;
  - young people with a lower than normal intellectual capacity adding another level of complexity in sustaining affection for school;
- a negative peer or friendship network in terms of elevating and facilitating offending behaviour but also in the sustenance of antisocial attitudes and antipathy toward authority figures;
- family, including
  - poor capacity of parents to promote the healthy social, emotional and physical development of their children;
  - lack of nurturing experience of home life for children;
  - developing negative attitudinal norms in young people; and
  - active engagement of parents and other family members in criminal activity.

A number of projects reviewed indicated situations where parenting was ineffective, where parents had effectively relinquished responsibility for effective supervision and/or where young people experienced violence as a norm in the home. Some projects reported circumstances where parents and/or family networks were actively complicit in offending behaviour, excessive drug, and alcohol use or more generally in promoting anti-social attitudes. In a small number of situations problematic family influence was under-pinned by an added negative neighbourhood influence (IYJS, 2011).

Protective factors can be seen as the flip side of the above factors e.g. families and peers promoting pro-social values and assisting development of their children, participation in education, support to get away from substance abuse, and developing capacity to reflect and develop understanding and empathy. The Probation projects, and indeed mentoring, seek to promote protective factors and reduce risk factors.

Chapter 2   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

This literature review focuses on youth mentoring as there is a fairly extensive literature on the subject. This is not the case as regards mentoring of parents of young offenders, although much of the material on mentoring of young people and mentoring more generally is relevant to them. The lack of material in respect of mentoring of parents of young offenders suggests that Le Chéile's service is quite innovative and likely to be of interest internationally.

Mentoring has been around for a long time. The concept of mentoring originated at least as long ago as early Greek civilization when, according to Greek mythology, Odysseus left for the Trojan War, placing Mentor in charge of the care and upbringing of his son (Holmes et al, 2010). In more recent times, mentoring has been adopted in many fields, including education, business, medicine and criminal justice. Mentoring as a form of prevention dates back to the late-19th century when the Friendly Visiting campaign recruited middle class women to work with poor and immigrant communities (Freedman, 2008 in OJJDP, 2011).

The concept of youth mentoring was first developed in the US in 1904 when the Big Brothers/Big Sisters programme was established as a formal response to concerns over social welfare and exclusion (Newburn and Shiner, 2006). By the 1980s, youth mentoring had become a well-established intervention (White, 2014) and had expanded rapidly so that in 2011, there were said to be over 5,000 programmes serving about three million youths across the US (DuBois et al., 2011). Mentoring as a preventive measure for at-risk youth generated increasing interest in the latter part of the twentieth century and was seen as offering such youths a protective factor to counter the risks they faced in their daily lives (OJJDP, 1998).

In the UK, mentoring for at-risk youth developed in the mid to late 1990s, heavily based on the US programmes (White 2014). The Dalston Youth Project was one of the first UK youth mentoring programmes targeting at-risk youth aged 11-18, involving year-long mentoring with a focus on personal development and education. It was argued to be "the most influential" such programme in the UK (Benioff, 1997). A period of development followed and a number of Mentoring Plus schemes were established, targeting disaffected youth and involving a "plus" element of education and employment training (Shiner et al, 2004). The Youth Justice Board, established in 1998, embraced mentoring as an intervention and by 2000 had funded and supported almost 1,000 mentoring schemes (White 2014:6).

In the context of mentoring for at-risk youth, the mentoring relationship can be understood as
> "a relationship over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where an older, caring, more experienced individual provides help to the younger person as [he or she] goes through life" (CSAP, 2000:2).

Tapia et al. (2013:2) describe mentoring programmes as
> "interactive helping relationships between two individuals over an extended period, wherein an approved adult mentor develops trust, spends quality time, and passes along knowledge and skills to the mentee."

Newburn and Shiner (2006:25) point to a degree of ambiguity about what is meant precisely by mentoring which, as a set of practices, may be held to cover at least one or more of the following: "facilitating, coaching, buddying, befriending, counselling, tutoring, teaching, life-styling and role-modelling." Different styles of mentoring, discussed later, may differ in effectiveness, as suggested by Goldner and Mayseless (2008), Langhout et al. (2004) and Rhodes and Lowe (2008).

Different models of mentoring can be identified. Formal mentoring occurs when programmes provide volunteer or paid mentors, compared with informal mentoring when a youth has an ongoing, naturally-occurring relationship with an older person who provides guidance (OJJDP, 2011:2). These have also been described as 'planned' mentoring (featuring structured programmes with formal mentor-mentee matching processes) and 'natural' mentoring (occurring through friends, family, neighbours and schools, for example)(DKR, 2012:22). Several models of formal mentoring have emerged. Community-based mentoring is the traditional model (and is Le Chéile model), supplemented more recently by school-based (also referred to as site-based) mentoring, group mentoring, e-mentoring and peer mentoring (DuBois and Rhodes, 2006).

Much of the literature on mentoring focuses on at risk children rather than those who have come into contact with the criminal justice system and especially the courts. The profile of the young people differs significantly therefore from that of participants in the Le Chéile programme. Offending behaviour is not the only distinguishing feature and the age profile of mentees is also typically lower than in the Le Chéile programme. There are other features that make comparison difficult notably around style of mentoring (not always one-to-one, sometimes using paid mentors, often incorporating group work or focusing on specific activities), and duration (not always 12 months), frequency (not always weekly), intensity (varying number of hours) and location (sometimes in mentoring premises). However, common themes emerge such as the importance of finding a good match between mentor and mentee, the need for training and support of mentors and the desirability of a durable mentoring relationship.

2.2   Theoretical foundations

Most mentoring programmes are premised on the belief that "a created relationship between an older and younger person will be a support to a young person facing adversity in their lives and will help them to have a positive sense of themselves and their future" (Dolan et al., 2011:2). Many programmes adopt a positive youth development approach, along the lines of Big Brothers Big Sisters Ireland, rather than focusing on deficits or what the young person lacks (Dolan et al., 2011). The programmes are designed to give at-risk youth help and guidance so they can become responsible adults and compensate for their presumed lack of natural mentors (DKR 2012:22). Programmes typically aim at reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors. Anton and Temple argue that "The ultimate purpose of mentoring programs is to change the trajectories of the lives of young people and set them firmly on the path to becoming successful, productive adults who contribute to society" (2007:26).

Mentoring programmes stress different objectives (and some do not set out clear objectives). The study of BBBS Ireland proposed a hypothesis that "mentoring would improve emotional well-being, improved attitudes to school, reduced risk behaviour, better perceived social support and improved

parental and peer relationships" (Dolan et al., 2011:3). Collins (2011) identifies assumed outcomes as including psychological and social development, academic and pro-social competency and reductions in truancy, substance use, and crime but states that it is a common mistaken belief that all mentoring programmes and relationships produce the same outcomes; she distinguishes between initial and subsequent outcomes, citing the development of a good relationship between the mentor and young person as an initial outcome. Sometimes, this initial outcome is all that is emphasised in programmes and considerable effort is put into building the relationship; benefits are assumed to follow.

Philip and Spratt (2007) discuss the context in which mentoring of young people at risk takes place. They suggest that a social capital framework may help explain how mentoring processes relate to support available from family, peer and community networks and comment that theories of resilience and attachment and ecological theory have influenced the development of mentoring but that they fail to account fully for all aspects of mentoring. Philip and Hendry (2000:213 in Tarling et al, 2004:56) refer to benefits to both mentors and mentees and view mentoring as a form of 'cultural capital'.

2.3   Overall effectiveness of mentoring

A large-scale study of the US Big Brothers Big Sisters programme found a wide range of benefits for participants: they were less likely to drink alcohol or use drugs, had increased competency in their school work, less truancy, better grades, and better relationships with their families and friends and no negative effects were found (Grossman and Tierney, 1998). A later US meta-analysis of 55 evaluations, based primarily on perceptions of youths, mentors and parents, found only modest benefit for the average youth. Importantly, however, it found that results were significantly improved if best practice was followed and the mentor-mentee relationship was strong. It also found that poorly-led programmes can have a damaging effect (DuBois et al, 2002). Similar results were reported from a review of research by Rhodes (2008) who concluded that positive effects were modest at best and that poor relationships could have negative impact. Roberts et al. (2004) commented that research "does indicate benefits from mentoring programmes for some young people, for some programmes, in some circumstances, in relation to some outcomes".

The large-scale evaluation of the Big Brother Big Sister programme in Ireland found positive results on some dimensions (Dolan et al, 2011). As regards emotional well-being, the study reported significant positive findings as regards hopefulness (Children's Hope Scale) and perceived social support, positive trends in parental assessment of pro-social behaviour and no significant findings in respect of social acceptance. As regards education, mentoring was found to have no impact on scholastic efficacy, plans for school and college and school liking and no impact on parents' perception of their children's academic performance. As regards risk behaviour, there were positive but non-significant trends in relation to delayed drug and alcohol use but no impact on misconduct. It should be noted that the programme combined one-to-one mentoring with regular youth activities and the study related to children aged 10-14, so is not directly relevant to the Le Chéile service which targets an older cohort of young people on probation.

A systematic review of mentoring studies by the Danish Crime Prevention Council concluded that all the studied programmes for at-risk youth had at least one positive effect and mentoring interventions were described as 'promising'. They noted positive effects within various measures of crime, behaviour, attitude, psyche, alcohol and drugs, school and relationships with family and friends. They also noted variations between programmes and that not all the effects were present in each study. Impacts were greatest on mediating factors that influence crime rather than crime itself and were greatest for younger children (aged 11-14) in urban environments with various socio-economic problems who are not already committing offences. The age and non-offending characteristics mark the programmes studied as different from Le Chéile's cohort of mentees (DKR 2012:6).

An evaluation of mentoring schemes supported by the UK Youth Justice Board discerned no clear impact on reoffending rates (see below) but found evidence of improved educational performance, including better school attendance, a reduction in disruptive behaviour and less risk of school exclusion. Results were best for low-tariff offenders or at risk youth and where the schemes provide a structured educational component. The evidence as regards improvements in self-esteem was inconclusive but showed, for a small sample, equal risks of an improvement or diminution in self-esteem (Tarling et al., 2004:44-45). Another study of schemes supported by the Youth Justice Board found evidence of greater likelihood of entering education or training but failed to improve problematic behaviour and basic education skills or reduce drug or alcohol use (St-James-Roberts et al., 2005). However, the average age of participant was 14 and attrition rates were high, so the results may not be representative of other programmes. Newburn and Shiner (2006) carried out a large-scale evaluation of UK mentoring schemes for disaffected young people and found evidence that suggests that the programmes were particularly successful in increasing young people's involvement in education, training and work, but less successful in reducing offending. This is unsurprising, they argue, given that much of the core content of the programmes centred on education, training and work and contained relatively little activity focused on the avowed aim of reducing offending. They also argue that the programmes were generally under-theorised, failing to provide an explicit model of how and why change was to be brought about.

In a research synthesis for the UK Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, Philip and Spratt (2007) reported that mentoring can produce positive outcomes where implemented alongside other interventions but it was not clear that the same effects result from mentoring alone; they noted that in some cases, mentoring helps to improve family issues, encourages mentees into education, and increases involvement with the community. Piper and Piper (2000) identify benefits regarding education, training and employment but suggest that this only applies to the average youth. They argue that those who are labelled as disaffected are stigmatised, and that the stigma is reinforced by involvement in mentoring which suggests that there is something wrong that needs to be changed and is reinforced further by differences in status between mentor and mentee. They conclude that an empowerment approach is required in programmes.

Renshaw (2008) evaluated 28 pilot mentoring programmes in the UK for looked after children (mostly in foster or residential care) mostly aged 13-15. Participation in mentoring was voluntary. Meetings between children and mentors were generally once a week for at least two hours and relationships typically lasted for 9 months or more. Service providers frequently supplemented the

1:1 meetings with group activities such as workshops and homework clubs. The profile was thus again different from the principal Le Chéile target group. The findings were positive. Most of the young people reported that all areas of their schooling had improved as a result of the mentoring relationship, especially their homework and their behaviour. They also reported extremely positive views of how they felt about themselves and their future, with most rating these as improved. Most said they were more likely to stay out of trouble and that their relationships with others had improved. Several young people specifically mentioned that it was the mentor who had made the difference for them. Several also indicated that the voluntary nature of the relationship was particularly important as the mentor was not seen as 'strict'. These views were borne out by the stakeholders, who indicated that the greatest improvements occurred in the areas where the young people had the greatest level of need. Around 90 percent of the stakeholders' comments noted that positive gains had been made in self-confidence, schoolwork and relationships with others. Many felt that it was important that the mentor was there specifically for the young person and the time spent together was dedicated solely to them. SDQ scores (which measure conduct problems, relationships with peers, emotional problems, inattention/hyperactivity and pro-social behaviour) provided some objective evidence of a positive effect on the young people's well-being and social skills.

A small number of studies have highlighted potential negative effects of mentoring. These tend to be associated with short-term mentoring relationships or breakdowns in relationships and cause lower self-worth or negative peer influence (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002; DKR 2012). Rhodes et al. (2008) point out that while mentor/mentee relationships can have a positive influence on factors such as personal relationships, academic success, behaviour and self-perception, if the mentees lack a strong bond with their mentors, feel that they cannot trust them, or have been let down by them, then the mentoring can have a damaging effect that outweighs the positive (in White 2014:8). Philip and Spratt (2007:46) report in a synthesis of published research in the UK that "Several UK studies have found mentoring had little impact on offending behaviour and some participants were *more* likely to be involved in criminal activities *after* being mentored, than those who did not take part." Philip et al. (2004) warn of the danger that mentoring could inhibit as well as encourage development of natural social relationships.

2.4   Effectiveness with regard to re-offending

The evidence on the impact of mentoring on re-offending is of more recent origin and somewhat ambivalent. A 2016 UK Ministry of Justice report described findings from recent reviews and meta-analyses as 'promising' but suggested a need for caution in interpreting results because of the variability of type of scheme implemented and the limited detail in studies of what mentoring actually involved and of key successful implementation characteristics (Adler et al., 2016). An earlier Ministry of Justice report noted that few mentoring programmes had been robustly evaluated for their effect on reducing reoffending or other outcomes and that of those that have been evaluated, some, but not all, programmes had demonstrated a positive impact; the effectiveness of mentoring was therefore described as 'mixed/promising' (Ministry of Justice, 2014). A Campbell Collaboration systematic review of 46 studies in 2013 reported positive effects from mentoring of 'high-risk' youth as regards delinquency (including offending and anti-social behaviour) and three other associated outcomes: aggression, drug use and academic performance (Tolan et al., 2013). The effects were

described as significant but 'modest'. In a rapid review and meta-analysis for the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, Jolliffe and Farrington (2008) examined 16 studies and suggested that mentoring reduced reoffending by about four to ten percent. They note that, oddly, the better results were associated with lower quality studies and that higher quality evaluations did not find that mentoring had an appreciable beneficial effect on re-offending. They accordingly describe their conclusions as 'tantalising' and describe mentoring as a "promising intervention with some very hopeful results but also with some puzzling features" (p39). They call for more research to determine the conditions in which mentoring is more or less effective in reducing reoffending. The Danish Crime Prevention Council also conducted a systematic review of studies of mentoring for at risk children and looked also at the impact of combined mentoring and leisure time activities. They concluded that the effects were 'promising' although they "are neither unequivocal nor consistent and vary from study to study" (DKR, 2012:169). However the programmes studied by DKR focused primarily on younger children typically in the 11-14 age bracket and 'at risk' rather than necessarily already offending.

Other studies have produced less promising results. A study of 80 UK mentoring programmes supported by the Youth Justice Board failed to find 'convincing evidence' of a reduction in offending or in severity of offending during the first year after the start of a mentoring relationship (St James-Roberts et al., 2005). For 658 mentored youth for whom data was available, 80 percent were convicted at baseline (i.e. 12 months prior to being matched) compared with 54 percent in the 12 months after being matched. However, similar results were recorded in respect of a comparison group of 558 non-mentored youths (82 percent and 55 percent respectively), suggesting that reductions could not be attributed to mentoring. Tarling et al. (2004) reviewed 36 mentoring schemes funded by the Youth Justice Board and compared reoffending rates for 359 mentees and equivalent national cohorts. They found that after controlling for differences between the two groups, those on the mentoring programme fared a little worse than the national cohorts with just over half of mentees known to have reoffended within one year (55%, similar to the finding by St James Roberts et al.) and little impact in terms of frequency or severity of re-offending. Newburn and Shiner (2005) evaluated a group of ten programmes called Mentoring Plus. The 'Plus' element comprised an education/training component and the programme targeted 'at-risk' youths aged 15-19. Recruitment took place twice a year, usually beginning with a three-day residential stay and mentoring typically lasting 10-12 months. Based on self-reporting, the mentees recorded clear reductions in offending and frequency of offending after 12 months which were largely maintained for the following six months also. However the comparison group reported an even great decline and other inconsistencies were noted too, such as participants who claimed that the programme helped them reduce offending not showing corresponding reductions in their offending. The researchers concluded that "the reductions in offending could not be attributed to the programme with any confidence".

Of interest, however, is the variability in impact across programmes. Joliffe and Farrington (2008) reported evidence that some mentoring programmes were more successful than others. Tolan et al. (2014) similarly noted substantial heterogeneity in effect size across programmes. This suggests a potential for more substantial benefits from mentoring if organised in ways to maximise features associated with larger effects. Unfortunately, the studies were very limited in descriptions of actual programme activities and implementation processes which prevented identification of key features

to be replicated (Tolan et al., 2014) A confounding factor is the mix of studies included in these meta-analyses. Of the 46 studies included in the Campbell Collaboration analysis, only about 25 percent seem to have involved young people who had committed offences and programmes varied in key respects including duration, intensity, focus and nature of interaction. The Jolliffe and Farrington review had similar variability, as did the Youth Justice Board review albeit to a lesser extent.

Another issue of interest is the timing of effect. Some studies (e.g. Jolliffe and Farrington, 2008:8) comment that mentoring only appeared to have an effect during the period of the mentoring. Many of the studies mentioned above measured re-offending over the period of mentoring, i.e. from the beginning of mentoring and for periods approximating the period of mentoring (often 12 months). Others speculate on the possibility of longer-term positive impacts on reoffending on the basis of indirect benefits of mentoring associated with desistance.

2.5   Mentoring of offenders in detention

The aforementioned UK Ministry of Justice report described the impact of mentoring in criminal justice as 'mixed/promising' but commented that the evidence as a whole suggested that mentoring might be most beneficial when it began in prison and lasted beyond release. It also suggested that mentoring was most likely to be effective when the relationship was maintained over time "rather than consisting of just one or two sessions". The report cited evidence that participants in a mentoring scheme in Wales who received between two and six contacts after release were reconvicted at a significantly lower rate than a (broadly matched) control group of those who did not maintain contact (Ministry of Justice, 2014:28).

Macmillan and Rees (2015) report on the findings of a survey of mentees in the Trailblazers programme with young offenders in four institutions in the UK. The model involves community-based volunteers who receive significant training mentor given the challenging environment in which they will operate. Mentoring relationships begin six months pre-release and last up to 12 months post-release. Mentees are volunteers and are assessed by a project manager. Matching is described as "partly a pragmatic matter of availability and 'case-load', but is crucially also about background and personality" (p6). Building a relationship and establishing a trusted connection are emphasised as key early processes. Mentors become trusted sources of support but this does not prevent them from asking challenging questions. The mentoring process is supported by materials on different topics but these are not used in all cases and are not used prescriptively. Each mentoring relationship was seen as unique and therefore no single formula for a successful match with positive outcomes was identified. The survey showed that mentees were very positive about being part of the programme and about the prospects of addressing a range of practical issues they may be facing. They were also positive about a range of issues associated with desistance. A subset of mentees provided evidence of changes in outlook prior to release: movement was positive on 14 out of 16 issues measured.

Jarjoura (2011:9) reports on two US projects. One was a mentoring programme in New Jersey that was compulsory for young people leaving a residential correctional facility and while almost all said that they were not motivated to take part, many went on to praise their relationship with their

mentor. The programme was said to be successful in reducing recidivism. The second programme, called AIM, was also in a correctional facility and the young people were encouraged to enroll prior to release and participation then became part of their release conditions. The goal was to have enough contact between mentor and mentee prior to release to enable the youth to feel committed to the relationship after release. Dramatic reductions in recidivism were reported for AIM participants, suggesting that mentoring can have a positive impact even when participation is less than completely voluntary.

Barnoski (2002) researched reoffending rates for 78 mentees from a mentoring programme for incarcerated juveniles in Washington State compared with a matched group. The results suggested that mentees were less likely to reoffend (45 percent) compared with the controls (54 percent) in a 12 month follow-up period post release, but this difference was not statically significant. Under the programme, the mentor met monthly with the youth in the five to six months prior to release and was required to meet or write to the youth for six months after release. Johnson and Larson (2003) evaluated a faith-based pre-release programme in Texas that involved mentoring alongside other activities such as education, work, life skills, 'values restructuring' and religious instruction (n=177). Mentees had 6-14 months left to serve (suggesting that they were older offenders) and mentors met them for two hours a week before and after release. The programme showed no practical impact on re-offending measured by arrest rates after two years: 36 percent for the mentee group compared with 35 percent for a matched comparison group.

2.6   Factors critical to success in mentoring

Several studies have identified how effectiveness of mentoring could be enhanced. DuBois et al. (2002) in their meta-analysis of 55 evaluations reported that effects were greater where the mentoring involved more frequent contact and emotional closeness, where the duration was of six months or more and where there was intensive training, structured activities, greater support from parents and programme monitoring; they summarised that when best practice is followed and the relationship is strong, results are significantly improved.

The Danish Crime Prevention Council recommended that programmes should be "intense with weekly meetings lasting several hours and involving a supporting, trusting and emotional relationship for a period of at least a year… and that especially volunteer mentoring should include professional staff to screen, match, train, support an supervise the mentors" (DKR 2012:6). The research identified other criteria for effective mentoring, including combining mentoring interventions and leisure-time programmes (see below), emphasis on the importance of the young person's psychological and social development and parental involvement.

The Campbell Collaboration meta-analysis found that programmes that stressed emotional support and those that emphasised an advocacy role on behalf of the mentee had larger effects while teaching and modelling/identification were regarded as "worthwhile foci of attention in mentoring design" (Tolan et al., 2014:17). They reported that effects were larger when mentors were motivated to participate by interest in advancing their professional careers (e.g. by fulfilling work requirements or by gaining experience that would make them more attractive for educational or occupational opportunities. In summarising international evidence, Adler et al. (2016:21), noted that

"when meetings lasted longer and took place once a week (as opposed to less frequently), mentoring had a greater effect on reducing re-offending". Jolliffe and Farrington (2008:8) reported that "Importantly, those in which the mentor and mentee spent more time together per meeting (5 hours or more) and met at least weekly were more successful in reducing reoffending" but this length of meeting is not typical of other studies.

Tolan et al., 2014 found no evidence of differential impact by whether the mentoring was a standalone intervention or co-delivered with other interventions but Joliffe and Farrington (2008:8) report from their rapid evidence assessment that mentoring only had a beneficial effect on reoffending when it was part of a larger set of interventions. This latter would fit with recommendations by St James-Roberts et al. (2005:4) that programmes should be based on assessment of young people's needs (involving integrated experts services) and coordination and continuation of services over age. The Danish Crime Prevention Council also recommended combining mentoring interventions and group leisure-time programmes (DKR, 2012:6).
In judging what makes for an effective mentoring intervention, Tarling et al (2004:53) suggest focusing attention on three broad areas: the organisation and administration of schemes (including strong co-ordinator, critical mass, support for volunteers), the attitudes and attributes of volunteer mentors (realistic expectations, early matching, patience) and the nature of the mentoring relationship (good start, agreement, trust and respect, minimum 12 months, planned endings).

As regards relationship quality, Sale et al. (2008) reported greater impact on social skills for youths who felt higher levels of trust, empathy and mutuality from their mentors. Goldner and Mayseless (2008) reviewed US and UK literature and concluded that mentors needed to transverse between the roles of other caregivers such as parents, friends, teachers and therapists, reflecting similarities of each role rather than personifying them. Langhout et al. (2004) found different impacts according to four categories of style: moderate, unconditionally supportive, active and low-key. The moderate group reported benefits in the most areas, while the unconditionally supportive group reported the least benefits and an increase in alienation from parents. They concluded that mentors needed to be less like friends and more like parents. White (2014) says that this is supported by the Rhodes and Lowe (2008) finding that guidance and boundaries are also crucial to success.

Duration of the mentoring relationship is important. Grossman and Rhodes (2002) looked specifically at this variable in respect of the Big Brother Big Sister programme. They found that youths who had been in mentoring relationships of more than one year showed greater academic, behavioural and psychosocial improvements than those who were in relationships of between six and 12 months. They found that those in relationships of less than 6 months experienced a decrease in self-worth and perceived academic ability and an increase in alcohol use. They noted that younger youths had longer relationships and that mentor characteristics influence duration. Rhodes et al. (2005) similarly found a link between long-term relationships and successful outcomes and negative and sometimes harmful effects where relationships dissolve early. On the other hand, Jolliffe and Farrington (2008) reported from their rapid analysis for the Swedish Crime Prevention Council that programmes that had a longer duration were not more effective than shorter programmes. They speculated that this might be because of difficulty in continuing to recruit high quality mentors or because longer periods are associated with youths who are more anti-social. Although based on an analysis of many studies, their view seems at odds with the general consensus.

2.7   Conclusions

Most evaluations of mentoring have been in relation to programmes that are quite different to Le Chéile's. Key differences are that young people who are mentored in evaluated programmes are typically a good deal younger and are 'at risk' rather than actual offenders and mentoring is often delivered in tandem with other interventions (e.g. educational components). There is a growing body of research into mentoring of young offenders in residential or community settings but some key differences remain, notably delivery as part of a suite of interventions. Overall it can be said that the effects of mentoring have been positive, if sometimes modest, in terms of academic, behavioural and psychosocial improvements. Much of the early evidence suggests that mentoring is more effective with younger participants before they become embroiled in offending behaviour. More recent evaluations for programmes involving young offenders show what have generally been accepted as 'promising' results in terms of reduced reoffending.

Importantly, many studies have established or suggested that effects can be much stronger where best practice is followed and mentoring relationships are strong. There is no reason not to believe therefore that the Le Chéile mentoring programme can achieve significant benefits once these conditions are fulfilled. These become critical foci of the present evaluation.

Chapter 3   Methodology

3.1   Stakeholder Mapping

A first step in the methodology was to identify all groups who were potentially affected by the mentoring services, either positively or negatively. A 'stakeholder map' was developed based on interviews with key Le Chéile staff and members of the evaluation steering group (see section 3.9 below), Le Chéile documentation and the literature review. To ensure no groups or individuals were omitted, co-ordinators in the two selected regions were also asked if there were others who might be affected by the services. The approach was validated also by a group of key institutional stakeholders, including the Garda Síochána, Probation Service, Children Detention Centre, Irish Youth Justice Service and an academic with expertise in juvenile offending.

The primary groups affected by the mentoring services were identified as young people and parents who were mentored, the parents and families of mentees and mentors. Other groups potentially affected in a material way were identified as criminal justice agencies and the community generally (as a result of reduced offending and anti-social behaviour) as well as the health services (as a result of healthier lifestyles for mentees). These were ultimately included in the calculation of the social return on investment (see Chapter 7). Other possible beneficiaries included schools (as a result of better attendance and performance by young person mentees, community (as a result of integration of mentees as productive, pro-social members) and Probation and Garda services (as a result of more compliant young person mentees). Schools and Gardaí were not included in the interview schedule or social return on investment as any impact would be widely dispersed and not thought substantial enough to be material and their omission from the social return on investment was consistent with the principle of conservatism in assumptions. Key stakeholders on the input side were identified as the Probation Service who fund the mentoring services and provide staff time, as well as mentors who give their time as unpaid volunteers.

3.2   Young Person Mentees

3.2.1   File Analysis

Sixteen files were examined in respect of young person mentees in the two regions selected by Le Chéile to be the focus of fieldwork. The files were selected on the basis of purposive sampling from the anonymised case database supplied by Le Chéile. Sampling was designed to provide a mix of cases varied by year of referral, age and gender of mentee and status of mentoring. The breakdown between urban and rural location was in rough proportion to the caseload profile. The selection provided a basis for examining differences in the mentoring experience of different groups, notably differentiated by broad age group and gender and rural/urban location. Differing mentoring experiences were explored in subsequent interviews and focus groups.

The first selection was amended because of duplication in selection arising from the use of new case references each year, even for cases carried over from the previous year. The profile of cases finally selected is set out in Table 3.1. It had been hoped to access Probation Service files to supplement Le Chéile information on reasons for referral and risk profile but it was not possible to do so for reasons of confidentiality.

Table 3.1 Young Person Mentees - Selection of cases for file examination

Selection criterion		Region 1	Region 2
Year of referral	2013	4	6
	2014	7	3
	2015	5	7
Birth year at referral	1991	0	1
	1992	0	1
	1993	1	0
	1994	1	2
	1995	4	5
	1996	4	1
	1997	2	3
	1998	3	0
	1999	0	3
	2001	1	0
Gender	Male	13	12
	Female	3	4
Status	Active	6	4
	Completed successfully	7	8
	Terminated early	3	2
	Awaiting placement	0	1
	Into custody	0	1
Referral source	Probation Service	16	15
	Garda – JLO	0	1

3.2.2 Interviews

From this list, six mentees were selected for interview in each region. The sample base was limited to those whose case status was either 'active' or 'successfully completed' since the purpose was to explore the experience of being mentored over a sufficiently long time for expected impacts to have materialised. Again duplicates arising from multiple case reference numbers were replaced, with selection by the evaluator. The interviews were voluntary and not all mentees were available or willing to be interviewed for reasons of imprisonment (3), not being contactable (1) or not being interested (2). These were replaced in similar fashion. A further mentee proved uncontactable later but it was too late to replace her so ultimately a total of 11 interviews was completed. Interviews were semi-structured and enquired primarily about expectations of mentoring, outcomes and impacts, relationship with mentors and the mentoring process. Key open questions included what mentees hoped to get from mentoring, what the most significant outcome was and what worked well and why and what worked less well and why (see Appendix 1). Prompts were used only when needed and after the interviewee had a chance to respond unprompted. This process provided an opportunity for direct beneficiaries to identify outcomes and influence theories of change in a meaningful way. It also provided an opportunity to capture unintended outcomes.

Interviews were face-to-face in eight cases but phone interviews were conducted in three cases where it proved too difficult to meet. Face-to-face interviews were recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis while contemporaneous notes were made of phone interviews, making use also of the survey form. Individual consents and, where relevant, parental consents were obtained.

The parents of seven mentees were also interviewed. Two were mentees themselves and one had two children who were being mentored. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, recorded and transcribed. Interview questions were similar to those for mentees (Appendix 1).

3.2.3   Focus Groups

Focus groups of young mentees were intended in both regions. In the event, one took place in Region 1 with four participants and none was proceeded with in Region 2. The primary purpose of the focus groups was to develop themes for exploration in subsequent interviews. The focus group in Region 1 helped in this regard but was limited in other respects such as developing theories of change. Twelve names were suggested to the co-ordinators with further names in reserve. It was necessary for the co-ordinators to make assessments of who would be suitable for participation, taking account of factors such as logistics (geographical spread of mentees), mentee safety, capacity and likely level of participation in a group setting and then check individual availability and willingness. The co-ordinators put significant effort into preparing for the focus groups. Taking the experience of Region 1 into account, where field work had started earlier and was well advanced, it was considered that no great benefit would accrue from holding a focus group in Region 2.

3.2.4   Survey

A survey of young person mentees was also carried out. This was not part of the original evaluation proposal, but was introduced in order to strengthen the quality of information and provide a better evidence base for the SROI. The survey was conducted in the six regions other than the two primary evaluation sites and sought the views of mentors and co-ordinators (in respect of named young person mentees), as well as mentees themselves. A simple questionnaire was designed, in language thought likely to be easily understood and facilitating completion in five minutes or less (Appendix 2). The same questionnaire, with minor syntax changes, was used for all three groups. Responses were sought in respect of ten mentees in each region. The survey was voluntary and confidential. Selection was by the evaluator and the sample comprised mentees who were or would be aged over 18 at the time of the survey and who had been mentored for at least four months. In a small number of cases where replacements were necessary, these too were selected by the evaluator. Survey Monkey was used to collect responses from mentees, with the invitation to participate and a reminder issued by co-ordinators using a standard script. Survey Monkey was recommended and accepted as suitable given the widespread use of smart phones by the mentees. An option of using a hard copy was also offered. Co-ordinators and mentors completed the survey independently, using a hard copy which was issued to mentors by co-ordinators and returned direct to the evaluator. The variables on which impacts of mentoring were measured were similar to questions asked in interviews and the survey responses on Survey Monkey were supplemented by scores assigned by mentees in interviews in the two primary evaluation sites.

In the event the response rate by young person mentees in the six regions was low. Only ten responses were received, six directly via Survey Monkey and four returned in hard copy. One of these proved incomplete and unusable because it only contained end scores for four variables and no start or attribution scores. The nine responses were supplemented by responses in respect of eight mentees who were interviewed. The response rates from co-ordinators and mentors were significantly higher. A total of 53 responses was received from co-ordinators (a response rate of 88.3 percent), with missing cases attributable to staff changes. A total of 39 responses was received from

mentors (a response rate of 65 percent), with missing cases largely attributable to the mentor having left Le Chéile, not being in a position to furnish the information due to passage of time or not wishing to participate. Responses were received in respect of the same mentee in 36 instances, allowing a comparison of co-ordinator and mentee scores (60 percent of cases), while responses were received in respect of another 20 individual mentees.

The survey returns were analysed via Excel. Some returns by co-ordinators and mentors showed a lowering in scores over the period of mentoring with many of these accompanied by a positive attribution to mentoring. Diminished scores were verified with co-ordinators. In such situations the positive attribution is interpreted as meaning that mentoring prevented situations from deteriorating further rather than the unlikely interpretation of mentoring making things worse. In a handful of cases it appeared that respondents were likely to have made an error in recording a deterioration (e.g. where the change was attributed 'completely' to mentoring and the deterioration was inconsistent with other responses). Responses in such instances were omitted since they were highly likely to be misleading but at the same time it would not be safe to assume opposite values either.

3.3   Parent mentees

3.3.1   File Analysis, Interviews, Focus Group

Ten parent mentee files were examined (five in each of the two regions) and nine mentees were interviewed (seven in Region 1 and two in Region 2). Files and interviewees were selected by the evaluator, with replacements agreed for clients whom it was thought were not suitable for inclusion or who could not be contacted. Sampling was purposive and included a mix of cases according to year of referral and current status (active, terminated early, successful completion). All mentees were female and all were referrals from the Probation Service, in keeping with the overall profile of mentees. The interviews were face-to-face and were recorded and transcribed, with the exception of one telephone interview. Questions were broadly similar to those posed to young person mentees, including key open questions about hopes, outcomes and what worked well and less well and why (Appendix 3). Focus groups were intended originally but only one parent turned up for the focus group organised in Region 1 (and she was interviewed instead) and it was decided not to proceed with a focus group in Region 2 given that experience, the added logistical challenges in Region 2 and the fact that evaluation themes had been clarified. Some of the parents who failed to appear for the focus group participated subsequently in individual interviews.

3.3.2   Survey

A survey of parent mentees was also carried out. As was the case with the survey of young people, this was not part of the original evaluation proposal, but was introduced in order to strengthen the quality of information and provide a better evidence base for the SROI. The survey was conducted in the same six regions as for the young person survey and was confined to the mentees themselves. The decision not to include co-ordinators and mentors was informed by the interview experience, which showed greater similarity in responses than for the young mentees, and based on an anticipated higher survey response rate than from young mentees. Again, a simple questionnaire was designed, in language thought likely to be easily understood and facilitating completion in five minutes or less (Appendix 4). Responses were sought in respect of six mentees in each region. The

survey was again voluntary and confidential. Selection was by the evaluator. Co-ordinators issued the invitation to participate and a reminder. Survey Monkey was used to collect responses from mentees, with an option to use a hard copy if preferred. The variables on which impacts of mentoring were measured were similar to questions asked at interview.

The response rate by parent mentees in the six regions was significantly higher than for young persons at 44 percent. Sixteen responses were received, eight directly via Survey Monkey and eight returned in hard copy. These 16 responses were supplemented by responses in respect of two mentees who were interviewed in Regions 1 and 2 (and had given scores in the same format as for the survey), giving a total of 18 valid cases. The survey returns were analysed using Excel.

3.4 Mentors

Five mentors were interviewed in Region 1 and four in Region 2. The interviews were semi-structured and explored motivations for becoming a mentor, mentoring objectives and outcomes, theories of change underpinning mentoring and experiences of mentoring, including the relationship with mentees and interaction with Le Chéile. All bar one were by phone with contemporary notes taken by the evaluator. Focus groups were held in advance of the interviews in both regions, attended in each case by a different set of mentors to those subsequently interviewed. The focus groups took place on 12 May and   18 July, with each attended by seven mentors with different levels of experience and covering the same topics as were addressed at subsequent interviews. Most mentors had experience of mentoring young mentees only and five had experience of mentoring parents.

3.5 Professionals

Interviews were held with three Probation Officers in Region 1, two face-to-face which were recorded and transcribed and one by phone. A former Senior Probation Officer from the region was also interviewed in Dublin. A focus group with a Senior Probation Officer and five Probation Officers in Region 2 was held on 18 July. A focus group with Le Chéile co-ordinators was held over two days on 30 June and 19 July. A focus group with Le Chéile senior staff was held in Dublin on 27 July and with senior stakeholders on 11 November. The interviews and focus groups discussed themes similar to those addressed by mentees and mentors, such as objectives and impacts of mentoring and process issues, as well as theories of change underpinning mentoring and case referral criteria.

3.6 Mentees in detention

The original evaluation proposal centred on mentees in Oberstown detention centre and envisaged examination of eight case files, focus groups, interviews (4 mentees, 4 parents and 4 mentors) and one case study. The period of reference was 2015. It emerged that this was not feasible given the small number of mentees in Oberstown and the proposed methodology was amended to incorporate examination of ten case files (including some who were no longer in detention or subject to mentoring), dispense with focus groups, conduct 16 face-to-face or telephone interviews (6 mentees, 4 parents and 6 mentors), and conduct face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders. The scope was broadened to include centres other than Oberstown, notably Wheatfield, Midlands, Cork and Limerick prisons. Three cases from 2016 were also included.

Twelve mentees who spent time in detention were identified for file examination, allowing for possible need for substitution. The cases were selected by the evaluator from a list supplied by Le Chéile. Two cases proved unsuitable for file examination because the mentees were not in fact mentored in detention. A replacement suggested by the relevant co-ordinator was accepted in one such instance. Eleven cases were ultimately reviewed, five of which were by means of phone conversation with the co-ordinator. It was only possible to interview one of the eleven mentees, two parents and four mentors. The focus of the study was on experiences and value of mentoring in detention, taking account of the challenges and importance of mentoring in such circumstances.

3.7 Social Return on Investment

The methodology used in the calculation of the social return on investment (SROI) is explained, with results, in Chapter 7.

3.8 Cost and other information

Details of Le Chéile costs and revenues were supplied by Claudio Marmo, Accounts and Corporate Services Manager and other administrative and policy information was supplied by Mary Davis, Policy and Communications Officer

3.9 Evaluation oversight

The evaluation was supported throughout by an Evaluation Steering Group. This comprised Anne Conroy (CEO Le Chéile), Darren Broomfield (Senior Probation Officer), Mary Henihan (Regional Manager, Le Chéile) and Alan Quinn (Co-ordinator). The group met on six occasions and also provided views and comments by email at various stages. Copies of the draft report and SROI were supplied to the Evaluation Steering Group for review and verification and detailed feedback was provided to the evaluation team and is incorporated in this final document. Presentations of findings were also made to the Board of Le Chéile in January 2017 and will be made to Le Chéile staff in February. It is intended that the final report will be available on Le Chéile's website after its official launch in March.

Chapter 4   Mentoring objectives

4.1   Profile of mentors and mentees

4.1.1   Profile of Mentors

According to Le Chéile, the profile of youth mentors is that they are caring, mature persons, aged 20 or more, and enjoy working with young people, are non-judgmental, un-biased in their approach and have a good understanding of young people and the issues and challenges they face. They comprise men and women from all walks of life and do not need to have any specific educational qualifications. According to the Annual Report 2015, they "bring life experience, skills and a wholehearted belief in the capacity of young people to change". They are members of the local community and give their time on a voluntary, unpaid basis. They go through a strict recruitment procedure that includes an individual interview and various checks (Garda, reference check and identification). They must also complete an intensive training course (comprising seven modules and 24 hours of training) and commit to ongoing supervision and support.

Parent mentors are over 25 years old and are often parents themselves. They too undergo a thorough recruitment procedure and intensive training. Selection criteria include the ability to listen, understanding of the needs of the parents, the ability to work with parents and to deal with parenting issues, their motivation and their positivity. They are trained as youth mentors first and then attend special parent mentor training based on the evidence-based Parents Plus Adolescent Programme. They also receive continuous ongoing training, case supervision and support. Surveys of youth and parent mentors show high levels of satisfaction with the support and with their role as mentors.

In 2015, 180 volunteers worked with Le Chéile. Le Chéile stresses the key part played by volunteers in its approach to working with young people who offend and its commitment to supporting its volunteers. It conducts an annual survey of volunteers using Survey Monkey which ensured anonymity and produced high response rates. The results show consistent very levels of satisfaction with induction training, on-going training, group supervision, on-going support and overall experience of mentoring. See Table 4.1.

Table 4.1   Mentor views on Le Chéile support

	2015	2014	2013
	n=118	n=106	n=114
	% 'excellent' or 'very good	% 'excellent' or 'very good	% 'excellent' or 'very good
Overall experience of induction training	97	95	92
Overall experience of on-going training	92	86	90
Overall experience of group supervision	98	94	96
Overall experience of volunteering	94	92	--
	% 'very useful' or 'useful	% 'very useful' or 'useful	% 'very useful' or 'useful
Usefulness of group supervision	94	96	91

Source: Le Chéile Volunteer Surveys 2013-2015

These high levels of satisfaction with Le Chéile were confirmed in mentor focus groups and interviews as part of this evaluation. Mentors universally praised the initial and on-going training and support and liked that they were consulted about topics for training and discussion (such as self-harm, eating disorders, drugs). They felt valued by Le Chéile: one mentor said that Le Chéile was 'second-to-none' while another said he had been a volunteer with many services but Le Chéile was 'by far the best'. One referred to constant recognition through small things such as birthday greetings and food at group supervision.

Group supervision entails elements of peer support, shared learning, clarity about policy and best practice, policy discussions and organisational updates. Most mentors find all elements are useful, particularly the first three practice-focused elements. Le Chéile also keeps in touch directly with volunteers by means of newsletter, Facebook, Twitter and Linked-in. Most volunteers are familiar with and read the newsletter (82% in the 2015 survey) but a minority read or follow the social media methods (49 percent Facebook, 18 percent Twitter and 14 percent Linked-in). A National Volunteer Committee provides a forum for mentors and other volunteers (notably in the restorative justice programme or administration) to contribute to the decision-making process in Le Chéile.

As regards the profile of mentors, the analysis for this evaluation shows that mentors come from a variety of backgrounds. In the two regions examined, most had experience as volunteers in other areas, including services for the elderly and hospices, youth groups, education, suicide prevention, citizen information centres, homeless services, fund-raising, prison visits, charity groups and social movements. Others had general relevant experience and /or relevant professional experience. Many were students but mentors also included people who were retired, working in the home, self-employed, employed full-time or part-time and unemployed. They comprised a wide range of ages, ranging in Region 1, for example, from mid-20s to early-70s with a majority in their 30s and 40s. The ratio of female to male mentors Region 1 was 1.8 to 1. Female mentees are always matched with a female mentor and male mentees are just as likely to be matched with a female as a male mentor. Nationally, there was a perception that more male mentors were needed, especially younger males.

Common motivations to become a volunteer articulated by mentors in the two regions were pursuit of education and a sense of wanting to give something back to society, to make a contribution or a difference. A number of mentors began mentoring as part of a requirement to undertake a practical assignment as part of their studies e.g., in the field of social care. Others had been on placement in other services and had heard about mentoring there. Others wished to prepare themselves for a return to education and give themselves ideas and experience. A number said they were motivated by professional development and thought the experience would look good on their CV. One had been a help-line volunteer previously but liked the idea of face-to-face contact. One mentioned a political motivation, tied in with ideas of social justice: he felt that there had to be alternatives to sending people, especially young people, to prison. Another mentioned a sense of obligation or duty and felt he had no right to have an opinion about society if he was not prepared to contribute. Others were motivated by a reflection that they had been fortunate in life and learned from mistakes in their own lives, had strong social values or wanted new challenges and had time. Others had come through difficult experiences with their own child and could see the value of the service

for parents and young people in similar circumstances. Some had particular skills that they were happy to share with mentees if they were interested. Most believed in the concept and saw it as a better way of doing things to help young people get rid of the 'trouble' label and see a positive alternative.

As regards staying involved, mentors mentioned that they found mentoring an enjoyable and satisfying experience. Many of those in focus groups or interviewed had several years' experience involving several mentees. According to Le Chéile's Volunteer Survey 2015, 42 percent had been volunteers for two years or more and 22 percent had been volunteers for three years or more. They got satisfaction from seeing the mentee, young or old, benefit from the interaction. It could be a slow, frustrating process but some good usually came from it eventually. It was gratifying to see the mentee take advice and try something different. Most recognised the good, positive points and talents in the mentees, despite all the challenges they faced. Many said they got a lot out of the experience themselves, often feeling personally challenged and stretched by the interaction, with mentions of 'personal growth' and 'development of personal and social skills.' Several said it was fun and not exactly hard-going. They enjoyed the company of the mentee and valued the relationship. One mentor acknowledged 'days that you hate it' but 'thoroughly enjoyed' it overall. Many said that it made them feel good about themselves. Frequently they mentioned loyalty to co-ordinators and regional managers as factors that kept them involved. They liked too that there was no real pressure on mentors and they could lead at their own pace. One said, to general agreement, that it was very fulfilling even if only one person was impacted positively.

4.1.2 Profile of Mentees

Young person mentees also come from a variety of backgrounds. The outstanding common feature is of course that they have committed an offence and appeared before the courts. This marks Le Chéile mentees out from mentees under other programmes in Ireland and internationally. The mentees share many features found among young offenders generally, for example, impulsivity, indifferent attitudes to offending, peer group enforcement, poor school attendance, poor supervision and minimising attitudes by parents, and alcohol and drug use as identified by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2013:8). Many mentees also exhibit other features associated with offending such as anti-social attitudes, low empathy, poor emotional literacy, limited ability to manage anger or aggression, mental health issues and learning difficulties (Irish Youth Justice Service, 2011:22)

Other commonly observed factors emerging in this evaluation were the absence of a positive male role model in many mentees' lives, poor communication skills, a lack of engagement in structured activity, low self-esteem and self-confidence and lack of hope or direction for the future. Relationships with parents, other family, peers and persons in authority were also problematic for many young person mentees. The profile of young people under these headings at the start of mentoring is reported in Section 5.1.

It is clear that not all mentees experienced difficulties under all of these headings. Many enjoyed good relationships with their family, for example, but experienced problems with substance abuse or

negative peer influences or lacked a sense of purpose in life. Few scored consistently low across all dimensions measured in the survey.

A total of 196 young person mentees were on Le Chéile's books in 2015. This comprised cases designated as active (34 percent), completed successfully (33 percent), never commenced (15 percent), awaiting placement (9 percent) and terminated early (9 percent). Of the total, 85 percent were male and 15 percent female. Almost nine out of ten were described as Irish nationals (89 percent). Age at referral ranged from 13 to 22 – see Table 4.2. The majority of mentees were in the 15-18 age bracket at time of referral.

Table 4.2 Age of young person mentees, 2015

Age	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Total
Number (n)	1	12	25	28	76	33	12	5	3	1	196
Percentage (%)	1	6	13	14	39	17	6	3	2	1	100
Cumulative n	1	13	38	66	142	175	187	192	195	196	
Cumulative %	1	7	19	34	72	89	95	98	100	100	

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Index offences are dominated by theft, criminal damage, assault, burglary and public disorder. In the two regions, the 32 files examined also revealed offences of robbery, arson, hoax calls, threatening behaviour and possession of a weapon. Some had a previous offending history but information was not always provided in referral forms on this topic and it is not possible to give a clear picture. A small number were known to come from family backgrounds where parents, siblings or other relations had criminal histories, occasionally for very serious offences. Six mentees in the two regions were known to have been in Oberstown or prison previously. The position as regards drug use, mental health and learning difficulty is similar – insufficient evidence from referral forms to be comprehensive but several examples of issues under these headings, including a small number who were described as having considered or attempted suicide. It is known from interviews as well as case files that a number of mentees had been in residential therapy for substance abuse. Several were involved with Tusla, either in state care or subject to monitoring and support in the community. Domestic violence had been features in several cases and the mentee's father was absent in many instances either through separation/divorce, death or abandonment. Occasionally parents had mental health or other issues themselves. A number came from Traveller backgrounds. A feature of the Region 2 in particular was the geographical spread where mentees were based. The majority could be said to come from complex, challenging, disadvantaged situations.

A total of 66 parent mentees were listed in Le Chéile's case database in 2015. The breakdown by case status was 41 percent active, 32 percent completed successfully, 14 percent never commenced, 12 percent awaiting placement and two percent terminated early. Thus compared with young person mentees, a substantially greater proportion of cases were active and fewer were terminated early, while the percentages completed successfully and never commenced were more or less the same. A higher proportion of parents were female – 61 out of 66, and both parents were mentored in one instance. Most mentees were Irish nationals – 62 of 66, with the remainder made up of two Nigerians, one English and one Latvian.

Parent mentees comprised those whose children were also being mentored and those whose children were not being mentored, either because they were never mentored or their mentoring had ceased. It was not possible to establish the precise break-down. In Region 1, seven parents were mentored during 2015; four were being mentored although their child was not (and had not been) while the son of one was also mentored during 2015 and the sons of two others had been mentored previously. In Region 2, three parents were mentored in 2015, including one whose son was being mentored contemporaneously and one whose son had been mentored previously. The picture from co-ordinators in other regions appears mixed.

Parent mentees in the two regions came from a wide variety of backgrounds. They were often parenting on their own or with a new partner, had other children and/or and had limited opportunities to get outside the house. Some had experienced domestic violence, which had been witnessed by their child. In some cases Tusla social workers were or had been involved in their families' welfare. Some were disadvantaged economically and a number had faced accommodation issues. Many were educated to second level or higher and valued education for their children. All wanted the best for their child who was in trouble and for their other children but were struggling under the pressures of the situation. Some needed to improve their parenting skills but many did not and just needed general support, advice and reassurance. Some faced specific parenting needs such as regaining control and respect in their home, dealing with their child's substance abuse or managing children with learning disabilities. Some were also struggling with personal issues such as mental ill-health or alcohol use. Some faced multiple challenges across a range of issues including the behaviour and health of their children, accommodation, finance, disadvantage and relations with services and authorities. Nationally, a small number were involved with the Probation Service themselves. The survey of parent mentees showed low average scores at the beginning of mentoring for involvement in activities outside the home (2.8 on scale of 1-10) and in education, work or training (2.4) and emotional well-being (2.8) with average initial scores under 4 also for self-confidence, self-esteem and ability to handle stress. Full details are provided in Section 5.2

4.2   Theory of change

A critical part of the evaluation of the Le Chéile mentoring services was in identifying and measuring outcomes. Outcomes were identified in a number of ways, including developing a theory of change for each service – young person mentoring and parent mentoring. A theory of change seeks to explain how mentoring brings about desired change, the sequence of events and changes that lead to final outcomes for participants. It helps clarify the chain of interaction between the interventions and activities of the services, the intermediate outcomes and the ultimate outcomes. It helps understand in broad terms how mentoring works. It also helps identify themes for investigation in the evaluation, notably in interviews and surveys.

A theory of change was developed for each of the two mentoring services since they operate in different ways. Outline theories were developed based on initial interviews with Le Chéile staff and the Evaluation Steering Group, the literature review and examination of Le Chéile materials, including the tools used to set goals and review progress with mentees. These outlines were then discussed and refined at focus groups and interviews with Le Chéile managers and support staff, Probation Service staff, co-ordinators and mentors. Direct beneficiaries had an opportunity to influence them by answering open questions at interview about hopes from mentoring, main

outcomes, and what worked well and less well and why. The theories of change used in this evaluation are informed by this process.

The theories pick up on important elements of the mentoring process, such as mentees building a trusting relationship with someone who is interested in them and engaging in positive leisure activities. The intermediate stage is increased awareness of options and goal-setting and the final stage is realisation of these goals and improvements. The extent of the various impacts of mentoring are investigated and reported in Chapter 5 and valued in Chapter 7. Not all impacts that are measured in Chapter 5 are included in the social return on investment for reasons explained below.

The theory of change for young person mentees was agreed as follows:

➢ through mentoring, young people build a trusting relationship with an adult who is interested in them, develop communication practice, engage in positive leisure activities, and build self-confidence and self-esteem;
➢ this in turn leads to increased awareness of choice and goal-setting as regards substance use, education/work/training and peer groups;
➢ this results finally in achievement of positive outcomes, notably improved relations with parents, other family, peers and persons in authority, engagement in education/work/training, improved general well-being, desistance or reduction in substance misuse and reduction in anti-social activities, development of pro-social behaviour and integration as productive members in the community.

The quality of the relationship between mentor and mentee is examined closely in Chapter 6. It is seen as key to all mentoring outcomes but is not treated as an outcome in its own right. Changes in communication skills are measured but are not included explicitly in the social return on investment because they are judged to be incorporated in other impacts. Engagement in joint leisure activities is seen as a vital part of building the mentor-mentee relationship but continued involvement in positive leisure activities is also seen as an important final outcome in its own right. Building self-confidence and self-esteem are important steps right through the process and measured and valued. As regards final outcomes, all are measured explicitly except the development of pro-social behaviour and integration as productive members in the community, which are judged to be incorporated in other outcomes. Improved relations with persons in authority are measured but their value is considered to be incorporated in the value of other outcomes. See Table 4.3.

Table 4.3   Theory of Change, Impacts Measured and Impacts Valued – Young Person Mentees

Theory of change	Impacts measured	Impacts valued
Trusting relationship	Not applicable	Not applicable
Communication practice	Communication skills (5.1.12)	Incorporated in other impacts
Engagement in positive leisure activities	Involvement in activities outside home (5.1.6)	Involvement in activities outside home (7.2.4)
Building self-confidence and self-esteem	Self-confidence (5.1.9)	Self-confidence (7.2.7)
Improved relationship with parents	Relationship with parents (5.1.3)	Improved family relations (7.2.2)
Improved relationship with other family members	Relationship with other family members (5.1.3)	
Improved relationship with peers	Relationship with peers (5.1.4)	Improved peer relations (7.2.3)
Improved relationship with persons in authority	Relationship with persons in authority (5.1.5)	Incorporated in other impacts
Engagement in education, work or training	Engagement in education, work or training (5.1.8)	Engagement in education (7.2.6)
Improved general well-being	Well-being – hopefulness, happiness (5.1.10)	Well-being (7.2.8)
Desistance or reduction in substance misuse	Alcohol misuse, drug misuse (5.1.7)	Substance misuse, benefit to mentees (7.2.5) and health service (7.2.11)
Reduction in anti-social activities	Offending behaviour (5.1.11)	Reduced re-offending (7.2.9), detention avoided (7.2.10)
Development of pro-social behaviour and integration as productive members in the community	Incorporated in engagement in education, work, training and reduction in offending behaviour; uncertainty over timing and extent of other impacts	Incorporated in engagement in education, and reduced re-offending

The theory of change for parent mentees was agreed as follows:

➤ through mentoring, parents build a trusting relationship with a peer who is interested in them, develop communication, feel supported, engage in activities outside the home and build self-confidence and self-esteem;

➤ this in turn leads to increased awareness of choice and goal-setting as regards their personal development, their relationship with their children and development of parenting skills;

➤ this results finally in achievement of positive outcomes, such as improved relations within their family, improved parenting practice, engagement in personal development, participation in leisure activities outside the home, improved general well-being and support for their child(ren) in desisting from negative activities.

Building a trusting relationship and feeling supported are seen as key to all mentoring outcomes but are not treated as outcomes in their own right. As was the case for young person mentees, changes in communication skills for parents are measured but are not included explicitly in the social return on investment because they are judged to be incorporated in other impacts. Likewise, engagement in activities outside the home is seen as a vital part of building the mentor-mentee relationship but

continued involvement in activities is also seen as an important final outcome. Building self-confidence and self-esteem are important steps right through the process and measured separately but valued jointly. As regards final outcomes, all are measured explicitly except support for their child in desisting from negative activities, as this is judged to be incorporated in outcomes for their child. A number of outcomes are combined for purposes of valuation. See Table 4.4.

Table 4.4   Theory of Change, Impacts Measured and Impacts Valued – Parent Mentees

Theory of change	Impacts measured	Impacts valued
Build trusting relationship with peer	Not applicable	Not applicable
Develop communication	Communication skills (5.2.4)	Incorporated in other impacts
Feel supported	Not applicable	Not applicable
Engage in activities outside home	Involvement in activities outside home (5.2.3)	Involvement in activities outside home (7.3.2)
Build self-confidence and self-esteem	Self-confidence and self-esteem (5.2.9)	Improved self-confidence and self-esteem (7.3.6)
Improved relations within family	Relationship with child (5.2.5), other family members (5.2.6)	Incorporated in other impacts (7.3.3)
Improved parenting practice	Parenting skills (5.2.8)	Improved parenting skills (7.3.5)
Engage in personal development	Involvement in education, work and training (5.2.7)	Engagement in education, work and training (7.3.4)
Improved general well-being	Emotional well-being (5.2.10), ability to handle stress (5.2.11), hopefulness (5.2.12)	Improved well-being (7.3.7)
Support for child(ren) in desisting from negative activities	Not applicable	Not applicable

4.3   The Objectives of Mentoring

4.3.1.   Overview

Le Chéile sets out the objectives of youth mentoring as making "positive changes in the lives of young people who offend and their families" and "working in partnership with Young Persons Probation to reduce the level of crime in the community". It describes youth mentoring as "a one-to-one relationship-based support which provides a positive role model to a young person" and says that mentors help young people "improve their self-esteem, working on relationships and communication skills and addressing anti-social behaviour". It describes parent mentoring as "help[ing] parents develop their own parenting skills and giv[ing[support with parenting issues", providing "a non-judgemental time and space outside the family home to parents under pressure."

The research sought the views of mentors, co-ordinators and Probation Officers and Le Chéile managers on what they understand the objectives to be. Mentees were not asked about the objectives of mentoring per se but rather their own reasons for participating in mentoring and what they hoped to get out of it.

The research participants listed many objectives for mentoring, some relevant to particular individuals and others more generic. It was interesting that, with the exception of some Probation Officers, few spontaneously identified reducing reoffending as an objective, although several mentioned keeping young mentees out of prison, which perhaps can be seen as approximating reducing re-offending. When prompted, people tended to agree that reducing reoffending was an underlying objective and a justification for funding by a criminal justice agency. This lack of prominence as an objective may be that the immediate focus of mentoring is on other goals and that reducing reoffending can only be achieved by acting on factors that influence offending. This fits entirely with the theory of change that explains how mentoring works and with the literature (e.g. DKR 2012), with impacts required on several fronts before an impact can be had on re-offending. One co-ordinator argued that a young person is confronted anyway by enough services that focus on offending and that they do not need another service hammering home the same message.

Several co-ordinators and mentors identified a particular objective of mentoring as giving mentees a belief that change was possible and introducing them to different concepts and social groupings. Many alluded to the objective of bringing about longer term change rather than necessarily achieving immediate impact. This is an important point. It highlights the value of planting a seed that may not germinate and take root for some years, of making an investment that may not pay dividends for some time. It is not possible to put a specific value on this and is easy to dismiss but many mentors and co-ordinators referred to it and it may be worth researching in the future.

4.3.2 Mentee views

Young people's initial motivation to be mentored varied. For some, it was clear from the interviews and focus group that many went along with it because the Probation Officer had suggested it or because they thought the Court expected it. Some did not appreciate fully that they had a choice but, like others, found that they started to like it and then engaged fully. For others, they were willing to try something even if they were not fully sure what it entailed. Several mentees specifically mentioned reasons such as being tired of being in trouble and willing to try something that might help them stay out of trouble and/or turn their lives around. One described it as a second chance and a way of getting away from negative influences, nothing to do with court or pressure from his probation officer.

Parents of mentees echoed these sentiments. A number spoke of feeling they had no choice but recognised early the potential benefits for their child. Some alluded to having been reassured at their meeting with the co-ordinator. Several said they were only too pleased to access the service and have something outside the home that would occupy their children and keep them out of harm's way. Parent mentees for the most part said that they responded promptly and positively to suggestions from their child's probation officer, the co-ordinator and/or the regional manager. One said that she faced complex family issues at the time and did not have access to any other service. Several mentioned as reasons for participating the opportunity to get parenting support, get a break, have someone to talk to and help their child. A number said that they were reluctant or nervous about the idea initially but again were reassured by the Le Chéile people and overcame their fear that mentors would be too like social workers.

4.3.3 Mentor views

Mentors as a group stressed the objective of helping young people to realise that there is a different way to live and behave and creating a space for them to get away from negative influences. They mentioned linking in with young people who feel alienated and disrespected and recognising that damage has often been caused wilfully or through neglect and a wrong to them needs to be put right. They expressed empathy with young people and again emphasised the importance of not being judgemental and being honest. They emphasised the good in them rather than the bad – 'the surprise is not that they are as bad as they are but that they are as good as they are'. They saw a big difference between Probation Officers and themselves in that they had more freedom and choice in their relationship and they had a more personal involvement. Individually, other mentors mentioned providing a listening ear and supportive environment, developing coping skills, building confidence, offering an alternative role model , promoting a healthier lifestyle, empowering mentees to be more independent, helping them identify longer-term aspirations for themselves, giving hope, getting them to respect and believe in themselves. Several referred to the absence of adequate supports and positive voices in the young people's lives. More than one mentioned that their mentees lacked basic necessities, sometimes arriving hungry, on occasions homeless. Getting the mentee from one week to the other could be the main objective initially, according to one experienced mentor. Objectives had to be realistic at the beginning – one mentor knew that asking her mentee to stop using drugs was like "asking the Pope not to pray".

Mentors also spoke about their understanding of the motivations of young people being mentored. For most mentees, having someone to talk to was the most an important motivation, especially if they had moved away from negative peers who were previously their only friends. This could be viewed as filling a gap until they had re-established themselves. For others, they came because they felt they had no choice and their initial position tended to be that they had no problems, no need to talk. It could take a long time to build up enough trust and ease to open up. For some, the motivation was space and stability in otherwise chaotic lives. Sometimes, the need was as basic as having a square meal, being fed. The various activities available with mentoring were also motivating factors. These were seen as hugely important in many respects, including learning social skills, overcoming fear that they would not be welcome, doing things that they would not dream of doing on their own, opening up new ideas and discovering that they are accepted as part of the community. They or the young people did not see the activities in any as rewards for previous bad behaviour. There had to be something positive in it for the young people and they note that many activities involved things that we take for granted.

Only a minority of mentors had experience of mentoring parents. They see the objective essentially as supporting parents and giving them somebody to talk to. They can provide a different angle on the parent's parenting practice although they are clear that the parent is best placed to provide support for the young person. One mentor saw the objective of parent mentoring as ensuring consistency of messages received by young people at home and messages received from mentoring. Mentors saw the parents' motivations as more clear-cut than for young person mentees – some time out for the parents themselves and a chance to talk without being criticised or blamed. Support to improve parenting skills was not identified as a motivating factor.

4.3.4   Views of Probation Officers

A number of Probation Officer identified reduction in re-offending as a key objective for young person mentees. One argued that eliminating re-offending was not a realistic objective but reducing frequency or lessening seriousness could be. One also stressed the importance of changing attitudes and providing better structure to their lives and it was necessary to take the family profile into account in setting objectives. Another stressed the provision of a pro-social model in a young person's life and putting in place someone to listen and be a friend, someone objective, independent and non-professional. As regards parent mentees, they saw the objective in terms of giving them time for themselves, relieving stress and helping provide an environment where the young person can thrive. One referred to providing support for parents "to stay strong in relation to continuing to parent the child". Some seemed to see the primary objective in terms of supporting parents per se while others also saw the support as a step to supporting their children.

4.3.5   Views of Co-ordinators

Co-ordinators tended to identify objectives such as supporting young person mentees in education, providing a positive role model, developing social and life skills, improving self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth, having a positive effect on mental health, developing communication skills and integrating them back into the community. Supporting the young person in education was seen as critical as it was more likely to bring about significant change in their lives. The experience of co-ordinators was that many mentees had left education feeling bad about the experience and getting them to re-engage was a long process and had to be at their pace. They did not have a mind-set of acknowledging deficits and looking for help. In some Le Chéile regions, few if any of the mentees were in education and the priority typically was tackling substance misuse. The question was usually how much weed they were using rather than if they were using.

As regards positive role models, co-ordinators identified as common backgrounds the absence of a constant adult male, families with negative influence such as ambivalence about offending or violence, and families which simply failed to recognise and encourage achievement. Some mentees would not know anybody who had a job and mentors would be the first people to believe in them and begin the process of thinking about a better future. Developing social skills and life skills was an important objective in all this, often learning to do things that would be considered normal everyday things by most people. Concerning development of communication skills, co-ordinators noted that a lot of the young people were not used to having a conversation or dialogue and are also fearful of their views not being taken seriously or being ridiculed. "Their experience of communication is more shouting to be heard." So, small things such as using open questions, ordering in a restaurant or asking opinions on a movie could be powerful. This helped to develop self-confidence and self-esteem and helped them to feel part of the community. Any re-connection to their community could in turn reduce anti-social behaviour and offending.

For parent mentees, co-ordinators and mentors emphasised building self-esteem and self-worth and developing self-care and parenting skills, and improving family relations. Parents' self-esteem typically takes a battering when their child gets into trouble. They often feel criticised and blamed in

court and in dealing with the criminal justice and other statutory services. This feeling extends into their day-to-day interaction in the community. Their self-confidence, which is often low to begin with because of their own challenges (including domestic violence), is eroded further by how they think they are perceived by neighbours and wider family. Many neglect their own needs and put their energy into the child who has offended and other family members. A co-ordinator made the analogy of the airplane safety announcement about use of oxygen masks – you put your own mask on before attending to others in your care – but parents usually prioritised their children's needs over their own. Their parenting skills were also often weakened by the situations of tension and conflict they found themselves in and they needed to be supported in recognising, applying and developing their skills. They had sometimes lost control of their home and needed support to re-establish their position. Co-ordinators and mentors felt that mentoring helped address all of these issues, sometimes through mentoring alone and regularly through sign-posting and supporting participation in other services.

Le Chéile managers referred to many of the objectives mentioned above for both young person mentees and parent mentees. As regards young people, they also spoke about changing their 'life narrative', being a 'positive influence in their lives', helping them develop basic life skills, build resilience and self-confidence, and overcome disadvantage and marginalisation, as well as offering hope for the future. They also recognised the underlying objective of reducing offending, even if this had to be achieved indirectly. As regards parent mentees, they highlighted the need to provide space to talk and deal with issues, relax and de-stress, and to overcome feelings of stigma, shame and anger. There was also a role of sign-posting and advice and providing support to change their own behaviour and develop a relationship with their child. There was an emphasis on building confidence and providing a wrap-around support for the family as a whole. Reducing offending by the young people was also part of the underlying objective in supporting parents.

4.3.6   Specific hopes from mentoring

Young person mentees expressed a variety of specific hopes, often related to their stated reasons for participating (e.g. to avoid prison). They generally had to be prompted to get replies and then tended to agree with the most of the prompts, notably to get an occasional change of scene, to talk to someone outside their family and usual circle, to try new leisure activities, to learn to communicate better, to access education or training, to get a job, to build skills and to improve self-confidence. Building better relations with family and friends were rarely cited. One said that he thought about setting goals for the first time in their lives. Some had heard about mentoring from friends and stated their hopes in terms of activities, including in several cases going for the driver theory test. The hope of others was about getting support or achieving happiness. Some said that they had no specific hopes. Parents of mentees emphasised having a positive role model and someone for their child to talk to as their key hopes. Parent mentees for the most part had a narrower range of hopes around having someone for themselves to talk to and a change of scene, with some also mentioning support in parenting. They all wanted to be able to do something for their children.

Co-ordinators noted that many young person mentees are just drifting and do not mention specific hopes or interests because they do have any. Others are just concerned about getting through the

system and will more or less go along with whatever is suggested. Once they begin, things can change for them and they become more actively involved and there is a chance to support and work with them. Whatever about their motivation to start, they become motivated to stay. As regards parents, co-ordinators pointed out that many are frightened about what will happen to their children or their siblings and are willing to consider anything that will help them. Many also want support and information around issues such as mental health, drug use or gangs, even if this is not something where mentoring can offer direct solutions.

According to mentors, most young mentees lacked hopes for the future. One commented that he sees it as a huge accomplishment if his mentees develop a passion and some kind of hope. Sometimes to complete an education is a specific hope. For parents, a hope can be to get tools to parent in such a way as to cause less chaos and antagonism at home, to learn how not to react. They can get this through interaction with their mentor and also through programmes such as Parents Plus and Non-Violent Response.

4.4 Overall strengths and weaknesses of mentoring

4.4.1 Summary

This section looks at stakeholder views on the overall strengths and weaknesses of the Le Chéile mentoring model. Key strengths identified across all groups were the space and time for the mentee and the exclusive focus on them; the patience and persistence of mentors and co-ordinators; the fact that mentors are unpaid volunteers; the personality of mentors and close relationships of mentees with their mentors; and mentoring values such as being non-judgemental and attentive. Interest groups also mentioned strengths that were particularly relevant to themselves. Young person mentees, for example, highlighted the availability of activities and the chance to try new things. Mentors referred to the support and supervision that they received. Probation Officers referred, among other things, to the structure and routine that mentoring brought into young people's lives. Co-ordinators drew attention to the flexibility of mentoring and the ability to customise the mentoring to individual needs, as well as the community location of mentoring of sessions. Mentees tended to have fewer specific thoughts about weakness and suggestions for improvement. Mentors and co-ordinators were more outspoken and their ideas are reported below. They related to involvement of parents, public relations, recruitment and recognition of volunteers, the national volunteer committee, the administrative burden, and protecting the volunteer ethos.

4.4.2 Mentee views

As regards mentees and parents of mentees, there were many things that they liked about mentoring which are reported elsewhere in this report. Asked specifically about overall strengths, they highlighted a variety of factors, often personal to them. Several young people referred to the access to someone to talk to: "someone you can be open with, who understands you, someone you feel comfortable with", "people listening, people you feel you can tell things to". This aspect was often also mentioned as part of other mentees' responses on overall strengths. Another highlighted the fact that it takes you out of the house: "It gets you out, you're doing things, you're not stuck around, being bored like, you have things to do like". Another liked that mentoring challenged him

and credited the "great people, you couldn't fault them." Others emphasised the mentor traits as key strengths – the right people, sense of humour and so on.

Several young people referred in summing up to the relationship with the mentor, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. One identified the relationship as critical and that his mentor "made me realise that I'm something, I'm not worth nothing like …. Told me not to be throwing my life away, that I was worth something at the end of the day … I just thought there was nothing in life for me." Another referred to the talking and listening aspect of the relationship: "I was talking to him and wasn't revealing too much at once but he was listening and it was the first time I met someone who listened, genuinely listening, and didn't just want me to tell them something they wanted to hear. Straight away we clicked." This mentee also emphasised the patience and perseverance of the mentor and co-ordinator, particularly at the start of the mentoring "Once I didn't turn up for a meeting and once I didn't meet [the co-ordinator] but they were forgiving like." In a similar vein, another mentee spoke about the difficulties early in his mentoring in keeping appointments but that the mentor didn't give up on him – "I left her there a few times … without even appearing like … The mentor would have seen me few times with a black eye and hands broken up … She never gave up".

One young female mentee identified as a key strength the fact that mentors were not there because it was their job. In her own words, "They're not there for themselves and to have their paperwork correct at the end of the month. They're there to help me. They had my best interests at heart and wanted the best thing for me". The opportunity to get a break was also important to her: "it was a good escape as well because when I met up with [my mentor], it wasn't all talk about you need to do this and that, or this is what you've done and you need to change … We wouldn't always talk about what needs to be done."

These themes were taken up by the parents of the mentees. One mother saw the main benefits for her son in terms of having an outlet outside the house where he could speak in trust and confidence and be relaxed. She identified key strengths the "very good people, who never lost faith in him, were not judging him and …. could see beyond the trouble, could see the goodness in him … they are there for the kids". Her son accessed other services including rehab and counselling but in her opinion "mentoring was what pulled everything together" for her son. Another mother liked that mentoring pushed her son out of his comfort zone to try new things and give him confidence, through going to restaurants and art galleries. Another highlighted the value of her son having someone to relate to who was neutral, not an authority figure. A fourth mother highlighted the mentors and the activities as things that work well and said that the mentors "got them [two children] out of themselves" more than anyone or anything else. Several mothers commented on the difference in their child in terms of looking forward to meetings with their mentor or "coming back in great form". One said that her son would ring his mentor to make the appointments rather than the other way around. A number said that their sons were happy, for the first time in a long time.

Parents who were mentees themselves gave similar answers. One, highlighting the voluntary nature of mentors, said that "I think a lot of people, like social workers, it's only like a job to them; a mentor, they're there because they want to be there." Another emphasised the importance of the whole mentoring team from the mentor ("she just had a way about her that you take to straight

away") to the regional manager, co-ordinator and probation officer ("they know what they are doing and they are so fantastic, they are so helpful, they look down on no-one). Another parent mentee emphasised the time given to her "so it's the fact that it's persistent when other services may have come and left … and being there in very difficult times". She also highlighted that they were non-judgemental, a neutral party, with "no hidden agendas"; she said she would have trust issues with other services that she did not have with Le Chéile. Other parent mentees also mentioned the relationship with the mentor and time given to them as key strengths of mentoring. One co-ordinator highlighted being non-judgemental as regards parenting as particularly important to parents.

4.4.3 Mentor views

Mentors for their part agreed that the voluntary nature of their service was valuable and helped build the relationship with mentees. One commented that young person mentees are impressed that you actually want to spend time with them. Another said that it was 'a huge thing' for mentees that mentors were not being paid, adding that she would not actually do it if she was paid. A number also mentioned having somebody you can trust that will listen and tell you the truth. In terms of what worked well for both young person and parent mentees, a number also mentioned the relaxed, casual, enjoyable nature of the interaction, good listening skills and being non-judgemental. Several commented specifically that they enjoyed the company of their mentees. It could be appreciated that they shared the view expressed by one mentor that they were all good kids who needed a break. Almost invariably, mentors spoke in positive terms about their mentees, recognising their talents and potential while acknowledging the challenges they faced. One commented that it was not surprising how bad mentees were but how good they were, given the multiple and complex difficulties they were confronted with.

From the mentors' own perspective, supervision was also a major strength and support. They have formal supervision, generally in groups linked to geographical areas and can get informal supervision and advice anytime. They valued the supervision in terms of overcoming isolation and feeling part of a group as well as clarifying boundaries (such as not giving lifts, not being friends on Facebook). Given potentially volatile situations, they felt reassured by the level of supervision and support. They also praised the initial and on-going training and appreciated the opportunity to suggest areas for training. They took strength and confidence from being part of a team of mentors and like-minded people. They also highlighted good relations with co-ordinators and the fact that you could raise anything with them with confidence.

4.4.4 Views of Probation Officers, Co-ordinators and Le Chéile Managers

One Probation Officer, as well as acknowledging the importance of the voluntary status of mentors, highlighted the regularity of the mentoring sessions and meetings as strengths. Mentoring brought a degree of structure, routine and stability that was often lacking in the lives of young person mentees. Another probation officer identified the non-payment of mentors as a key strength – "that's very important: they're in it because they want to". Echoing this, another said that mentees saw a clear distinction between volunteer mentors and people who were mandated or paid to work

with them. She also saw strength in the breadth of experience and variety of backgrounds of mentors and the options that that presented for optimising matches.

Co-ordinators and managers identified as a key strength of the service that it is flexible and can be customised to the specific needs and circumstances of mentees: mentees may present with similar case characteristics but when matched with their mentors, the directions followed can be quite different. Like others, they highlighted as a strong point the fact that mentors were not professionals, noting that that this was a big selling point for mentoring. At the same time, when you looked at mentors' profiles, you could not fail to be impressed by their experience, wisdom and skills. There were other strengths, including the relative informality of community-based settings of mentoring sessions, with no desks, diaries or computers. Several mentioned their persistence, one co-ordinator referring to them light-heartedly as "stalkers" who do not give in until they make contact, following up by calls, texts and any other means when the mentees have not been in touch. They will try everything and offer multiple opportunities before they ever give up. "We actually stick with them even when they make mistakes, they come back to us, we're the ones that are still there in the end" said one co-ordinator. Another perceived strength was the general approach with mentees, asking their preferences and seeking their views rather than imposing decisions.

4.4.5   Overall weaknesses and suggestions for improvement

Few mentees had any comment on things that worked less well or suggestions for improvement. When asked, many simply said there were no weaknesses. Two commented on the lack of activities available in their area while. Some commented that professionals in the system did not really care about you but that mentors did. Picking up on this, another mentee also suggested earlier intervention: "maybe there should be a service put in place for younger kids, before they get in trouble. If I had something like this when I was in care, I'm not saying that I would have worked but I might not have ended up in trouble. … the only thing that I was involved with when I was in care was with the HSE and …the way I saw them was they were authority and I just think if they had something outside the HSE for kids or teenagers when they are in care and make it a voluntary thing. If it's a mandatory thing they're not going to want to engage." Several mentors made similar calls for earlier intervention and greater use of mentoring overall. The mother of one mentee suggested longer sessions initially because it took her son a long time to settle. Another parent mentee whose son was also mentored commented that it was a pity that Le Chéile did not have more influence at professional meetings with other services on behalf of her family. One parent mentee suggested a more relaxed approach about ground rules: she would have liked, for example, to be able to introduce her son to the mentor when they met on the street and to be able to buy her mentor a present.

Most mentees responded to the question about weaknesses with further positive comments such as: "I think it's grand, I wouldn't like to see anything changed or improved." "No, the people are brilliant… all fantastic people… strict but strict in a sense that they care. They don't want you to go to prison so they do their best to help you."

One recommendation from mentors was for greater involvement, possibly through being mentored themselves, of parents who were mistrustful or sometimes even resentful of the service for their

child. Other suggestions were for greater connection of the National Volunteer Committee with volunteers on the ground and a greater public relations effort to explain to the general public what the service was all about. A specific suggestion was for replacement of the plaques presented to members with a T-Shirt that helps advertise the service. Recruitment of more male volunteers was also flagged.

Co-ordinators identified a number of weaknesses, challenges or things that might be done better. One remarked on a perceived pressure for mentoring sessions to be more task-oriented and to be held in places like libraries. Some thought there was a gender imbalance among mentors, with fewer males, but this was not a universal experience. A shortage of younger males was mentioned in some regions but other saw no great problem with this, with many advantages attached to older males. Several co-ordinators and mentors suggested a revamp of promotional material, seeing a need for greater use of Facebook, social media and radio, explaining what Le Chéile's mentoring is, and perhaps using mentors or engaging a well-known person as ambassador. They recognised the challenge in getting mentees to speak and respected their right to get on with their lives privately. A number of co-ordinators felt that there was increasing pressure on volunteers to do more and called for greater understanding of what it takes to get new volunteers up and running with ease and confidence. All recognised a need for the organisation to continue to show its appreciation of mentors. In their opinion, it would be important to avoid giving any impression of treating them as paid employees or expecting similar behaviour. They would not like the essence of voluntary mentoring to be lost along the way. Several felt that the administrative system was getting tighter, less flexible and that paperwork was becoming more onerous.

Chapter 5   Mentoring Outcomes

5.1   The impact of mentoring of young people

5.1.1   Overall effectiveness

Perceptions of the overall effectiveness of mentoring were very high among mentees. Young people interviewed generally gave it an overall rating of 8-10 on a scale of 1-10, with the majority giving it a score of 10. Parent mentees were, if anything, even more positive, as were the parents of mentees. This positive outcome may be influenced to some degree by the composition of the sample with whom interviews were actually carried out, notwithstanding that they were chosen randomly. Co-ordinators, mentors and probation officers were somewhat more nuanced, saying that it was difficult to average over all their mentees but also that mentoring worked really well with those who embraced it and engaged with it. Assigning an overall score was also complicated by having to factor in the impact of external influences and other services. Co-ordinators commented that mentoring worked best in tandem with other services. They also felt that benefits, albeit more limited, accrued to those who participated at any level, while acknowledging that for a small number of clients, you were 'hitting your head off a wall'. Experiences differed as regards impact on different sub-groups with one co-ordinator finding that mentoring was very effective with female mentees and parents but less convinced about the readiness and capacity of some younger boys for mentoring.

5.1.2   Introduction

Mentoring of young persons has impacts for mentees across a range of areas. These include, notably, improved relations with family and peers, engagement in education/work/training, desistance or reduction in substance misuse and reduction in anti-social activities/development of pro-social behaviour. These feature as discussion headings in initial and review mentoring meetings that set goals and examine progress and can be seen as objectives or hoped-for outcomes of mentoring. They are also prominent in the theory of change outlined earlier. The evaluation provides strong evidence of impacts under these headings, not for all mentees (even where they are relevant to their needs), but on average across the totality of mentees.

The initial and review meetings also focus on goals and outcomes under other headings, namely involvement in activities outside the home, improvement in communication skills and development of self-confidence and self-esteem. The theory of change identifies these impacts as intermediate outcomes that contribute to the achievement of desired final outcomes. This seems to suggest that they are not valuable outcomes in their own right, which is not the case. In particular, the building of self-confidence and self-esteem are not just foundations for achieving other outcomes but have substantial recognised value on their own merits. Involvement in activities may have a physical health value that has distinct value not incorporated in other impacts (such as well-being and self-confidence). On the other hand, the development of communication skills may have intrinsic value but is largely associated with or subsumed in other impacts.

5.1.3   Mentee relations with parents and other family members

It is difficult to generalise about the family situation of young person mentees at the time of mentoring on the basis of information collected in the evaluation. Many mentees share the general profile of other young offenders, often lacking a positive male role model in the home. The evidence

from the surveys and interviews confirm this in many instances but shows that mentee-parent relationships are often good and also vary widely. The co-ordinator/mentor survey results show a fairly even distribution of scores at the start of mentoring between 2 and 7 on a scale of 1-10 with only six scores of 1 (the lowest extreme) and seven scores of 8 (and none higher). By the end of mentoring the percentage at the lower ratings had dropped significantly and had increased at the higher levels. Just over half of responses recorded no change over the mentoring period. In some cases, this would have been because the relationships were not unduly problematic to begin with. In a number of cases, mentoring was attributed with helping to keep things on an even keel – in other words, mentoring can have a positive impact in maintaining the status quo, in preventing deterioration in relationships. This potential contribution of mentoring is perhaps not fully recognised. It is of note that in three cases, a negative change occurred over the period of mentoring, signifying a deterioration in relations despite mentoring.

Relationship with parents – Scores at start and end of mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=90)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	7	6
- Score of 1-3	31	13
- Score of 4-7	61	69
- Score of 8-10	8	18

Overall, the average improvement in mentee-parent relationships was 11 percent. The attribution to mentoring was relatively modest. Mentees themselves reported a greater level of improvement over the period of mentoring (26 percent) and a greater attribution to mentoring (62 percent). This direct evidence from mentees suggests that the more modest results from co-ordinators and mentors provide a conservative basis for calculating the value of the impact.

Relationship with parents		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=90)		
- Average improvement	1.13 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	1.89 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	51%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=14)		
- Average improvement	2.57 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.85 scale points	Scale of 1-4

The relationships of young person mentees with other members of their families, where they were present, showed less change over the period of mentoring than for relationships with parents. They started from a stronger base, with two-thirds of ratings at 5 or higher on the 1-10 scale. Six out of ten responses recorded no change over the mentoring period while three recorded a deterioration. The average improvement in mentee-other family relationships was eight percent. The reported contribution of mentoring was again relatively modest at 21 percent. The combined evidence from the mentee survey and interviews again reveals a greater level of improvement over the period of mentoring (20 percent) and a greater attribution to mentoring (63 percent). This direct evidence from mentees also suggests that the more modest results from co-ordinators and mentors are conservative.

Relationship with other family members		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=90)		
- Average improvement	0.83 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	1.63 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	60%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=12)		
- Average improvement	2.00 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.90 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.1.4   Mentee relationships with peers

Young people who offend or engage in anti-social behaviour are often influenced negatively by peer groups. They can get endorsement and a sense of value and belonging in such groups that may be lacking from other sources in their lives. The more isolated they become from positive, pro-social influences, the greater is the risk that they become entrenched in the ways that have got them into trouble. Yet breaking away from friends and associates is a hard thing to achieve for young people, especially in the absence of immediately available replacements. Mentors can play a vital role in helping to bridge the gap and support young people who are minded to move away from negative peers until they find their feet, a benefit attested to in the evaluation by mentees, mentors and others. Other young offenders are not so much influenced by negative peers but lack a network of friends and may feel isolated and have underdeveloped social skills. Some mentees included in the evaluation were reluctant to engage with others because of the sense of shame that they felt. Both sets of dynamics are encompassed in the measure of change in relationships with peers. It is noted that still other offenders had little or no problem with either of these aspects of relationships with peers. The evaluation looked at changes in peer relationships and changes in peers. Both can have positive results for the young people in terms of well-being (as well as indirect benefits such as involvement in pro-social activities and reduced offending). The interviews and file reviews showed instances of both types of change and mentoring helping mentees make the transition.

Changes in ratings in the relationships of young person mentees with peers lie between changes in ratings for relationships with parents and other family members. They started from a stronger base, with almost 77 percent attracting ratings between 5 and 8 on the 1-10 scale. Well over half of responses recorded no change over the mentoring period and there were no negative changes. The average improvement in mentee-peer relationships was nine percent. The estimated contribution of mentoring was again relatively modest at 23 percent. The direct evidence from mentees was significantly more optimistic than the results from co-ordinators and mentors. The combined results from the mentee survey and mentee interviews again reveals a higher level of improvement over the period of mentoring (24 percent) and a greater attribution to mentoring (64 percent).

Relationship with peers		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=91)		
- Average improvement	0.86 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	1.69 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	57%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=14)		
- Average improvement	2.43 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.92 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.1.5 Mentee relationships with persons in authority

Young people engaged in offending or anti-social behaviour often have poor relationships with authority figures, especially Gardaí. A negative attitude towards authority can get young people into trouble in the first place and exacerbate situations later. Thus, offending may be both cause and effect of current poor attitudes and authority figures can be positive or negative influences on outcomes. The evaluation sought to measure changes in mentee relationships with authority figures but put the emphasis on relations with figures such as teachers, Probation Officers and others in authority rather than Gardaí. The exclusion of Gardaí was on the advice and assumption that mentee views about Gardaí would be unduly negative, that mentees would have limited and specific involvement with Gardaí and that their dealings with others were more frequent and important in daily life. These relationships also impact on likelihood of getting into and staying in education, work or training. The interviews with young people did provide an opportunity to elicit views on interaction with Gardaí: some were positive enough about Gardaí whom they said acknowledged the change in their behaviour while many continued to have negative views but they had learned not to respond antagonistically.

Changes during mentoring in the relationships of young person mentees with authority figures were relatively strong. They started from a modest base, with 79 percent given initial ratings of between 1 and 5 on the 1-10 scale. Most recorded improvement over the mentoring period with only 16 percent of cases showing no change and two cases showed negative change.

Relationship with persons in authority – Scores at start and end of mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=92)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	13	1
- Score of 1-3	47	5
- Score of 4-7	51	75
- Score of 8-10	2	20

The average change in mentee-peer relationships was 23 percent. The attribution to mentoring was relatively high too, averaging 49 percent. Mentees reported a substantially greater level of improvement over the period of mentoring (51 percent) and attribution to mentoring (62 percent). This direct evidence from mentees again suggests that the results from co-ordinators and mentors are somewhat conservative.

Relationship with persons in authority		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=92)		
- Average improvement	2.26 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.46 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	16%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=14)		
- Average improvement	5.14 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.86 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.1.6   Mentee involvement in activities

The surveys and interviews asked participants about mentee involvement in activities (such as hobbies and sports) outside the home in their own time. Goals are usually set for mentees under this heading at initial and review meetings. Some mentees are involved in such activities at the time of mentoring but some have let activities lapse or were never involved to any great extent. Benefits from increased activity are expected to accrue in the areas of mental and physical health, development of social and communication skills, enhancement of self-confidence and self-esteem, and involvement in pro-social networks. By being involved in activities, mentees have greater structure to their day and less time, energy and inclination to get into trouble.

Changes during mentoring in involvement in leisure activities were relatively strong according to co-ordinators and mentors. They started from a low base, with over three-quarters given initial ratings of 3 or lower. Some 18 percent of cases recorded no change over the mentoring period and at the end of mentoring, a quarter were still on scores of 3 or lower. Changes were substantial for several mentees and made a big difference to their lives. One listed football, snooker, fishing and gym as new activities, adding "I wouldn't have done anything like that before. I would just sit down and smoke weed. That's all I did. ... I did nothing but sit around all day."

Involvement in activities – Scores at start and end of mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=92)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	37	2
- Score of 1-3	77	25
- Score of 4-7	22	60
- Score of 8-10	1	15

The average improvement in involvement was 28 percent. The attribution to mentoring was relatively high (53 percent). Mentees themselves reported a similar but slightly lower level of improvement (27 percent) and attribution to mentoring (51 percent). Involvement in activities was thus the only dimension on which mentees did not report better results than co-ordinators and mentors.

Involvement in activities – Young people		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=92)		
- Average improvement	2.77 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.59 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	18%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=15)		
- Average improvement	2.73 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.54 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.1.7   Substance misuse

Alcohol plays a big part in offending by many mentees, although far from all of them. The surveys asked about the extent to which alcohol use by mentees played a part in their lives. The survey of co-ordinators and mentors showed that alcohol played little or no role in the lives of over a third of mentees, with over a fifth given the lowest rating of 1. At the other end of the scale, alcohol played a

large part in the lives of about a quarter of mentees. The remainder were fairly evenly distributed across middle scores.

Alcohol Use – Scores at start and end of mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=90)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	22	
- Score of 1-3	37	47
- Score of 4-7	37	44
- Score of 8-10	26	9

Improvements during mentoring as regards alcohol amounted to an average 12 percent, according to co-ordinators and mentors. Over half of cases recorded no change over the mentoring period, hardly surprising given that alcohol did not play a significant role in so many cases. A worsening of position was recorded in five cases. The overall shift is reflected well in the distribution of scores after mentoring, which indicates that for some individual mentees the shift was significant. One mentee said that he used mentoring as a crutch to avoid going drinking or to cut down on his drinking: "They would be asking me to go drinking but I would say no, I have to go and meet my mentor, like" adding that his mentor did encourage him "in a very placid way" to cut down on alcohol and drugs. The attribution to mentoring was reasonably high, at 26 percent. Mentees themselves reported a substantially higher level of improvement over the period of mentoring (33 percent) and a higher attribution to mentoring (49 percent).

Alcohol Use		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=90)		
- Average improvement	1.19 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	1.78 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	56%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=16)		
- Average improvement	3.31 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.47 scale points	Scale of 1-4

Drug use can also play a large part in the lifestyles of and offending by many mentees, although again far from all of them. The surveys asked about the extent to which drug use by mentees played a part in their lives. The survey of co-ordinators and mentors showed that at the start of mentoring drugs played little or no role in the lives of just over forty percent of mentees but played a large part in the lives of a third. By the end of mentoring the distribution of scores had shifted with drugs playing little part in the lives of over a half of mentees and a large part in only seven percent of cases. For some individual mentees, the shift was clearly significant.

Drug Use – Scores at start and end of mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=87)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	28	
- Score of 1-3	41	55
- Score of 4-7	27	38
- Score of 8-10	32	7

Changes during mentoring as regards drug use amounted to an average of 16 percent according to co-ordinators and mentors. Just under half of cases recorded no change over the mentoring period,

consistent with the fact that drugs did not play a significant role in so many cases to begin with. Two cases recorded a disimprovement. The attribution to mentoring was slightly higher than that for alcohol, at 30 percent. This seems realistic given the primary role of treatment and counselling in entrenched drug misuse but the positive role of mentors in supporting efforts by mentees. The combined evidence from the mentee survey and mentee interviews shows a substantially higher level of improvement over the period of mentoring (37 percent) and a higher attribution to mentoring (55 percent). According to one mentee, without mentoring "I would still be at home smoking joints."

Drug Use		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=87)		
- Average improvement	1.62 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	1.89 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	48%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=15)		
- Average improvement	3.67 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.64 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.1.8   Engagement in education, work or training

According to co-ordinators and mentors, many mentees were not engaged at all or poorly engaged at the start of mentoring, with almost half said to be not at all engaged and more than two-thirds poorly engaged. This low level was confirmed in the survey of mentees. At the other end of the scale, only 6 percent were on scores of 8-10 (i.e. well engaged). Significant change occurred such that by the end of mentoring, the percentage that were not all engaged had dropped to 15 percent and the percentage on scores of 8-10 had more than trebled to 26. Five mentees were said to have disimproved despite mentoring and a quarter of mentees showed no change.

Engagement in education, work, training – Scores at start and end of mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=89)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	48	15
- Score of 1-3	69	30
- Score of 4-7	25	44
- Score of 8-10	6	26

According to the co-ordinators and mentors, improvements in engagement in education, work or training averaged 25 percent. The attribution to mentoring was similar to that under other headings, at 43 percent. Mentees themselves reported a substantially higher level of improvement over the period of mentoring (38 percent) and a somewhat higher attribution to mentoring (50 percent). Several interviewees voiced the opinion that mentoring was a critical part of their decision to re-engage in education and their ability to sustain the commitment. According to one: "That was all [Name], me going back to education, he broke his back trying to get me in places". Another said his mentor pushed him to do his Leaving Cert and helped him to get back into Youthreach to finish it. A third mentee who completed FETAC modules and a personal portfolio during mentoring, said "I did get into college with mentoring – they helped me do that".

Engagement in education, work, training		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=89)		
- Average improvement	2.50 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.29 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	25%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=16)		
- Average improvement	3.81 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.50 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.1.9   Self-confidence

Many offenders have low self-confidence which can manifest itself in several ways, including vulnerability to being influenced by negative peers and reduced ability to take initiatives and pursue positive activities. The surveys and interviews asked about self-confidence at the beginning and end of mentoring and confirm relatively low initial levels of self-confidence among mentees. Co-ordinators and mentors assigned low scores of 1-3 for almost half of mentees, with ten percent given the lowest rating of 1. Only four percent could be described as having high levels of self-confidence. In contrast, at the end of mentoring, only four percent of mentees were in the low score category and 30 percent in the highest. While two responses indicated negative change over the mentoring period, fully a quarter (25%) of mentees were adjudged to have improved by four or more scale points, indicating significant shifts for some individual mentees.

Self-confidence – Scores at start and end of mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=89)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	10	
- Score of 1-3	45	4
- Score of 4-7	51	66
- Score of 8-10	4	30

Improvements during mentoring as regards self-confidence amounted to an average of 24 percent according to co-ordinators and mentors and more than four out of five cases recorded at least some improvement over the mentoring period. The attribution to mentoring was 57 percent. The combined evidence from the mentee survey and mentee interviews shows substantially higher levels of improvement (45 percent) and attribution to mentoring (71 percent).

Self-confidence		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=89)		
- Average improvement	2.45 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.70 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	18%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=16)		
- Average improvement	4.50 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.13 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.1.10   Well-being

It was the view of many co-ordinators and mentors that most mentees lack a sense of hopefulness about the future when they are referred for mentoring. Many appear to be drifting without much sense of purpose or optimism. As with self-confidence, this can make them vulnerable to negative

peer influence and inability to be pro-active and set goals for themselves. Many do not see much way out of their current situation. Hopefulness is not a dimension around which goals are discussed at initial or review meetings but is generally seen as an important barometer of well-being and progress.

The surveys and interviews asked about hopefulness at the beginning and end of mentoring. Co-ordinators and mentors assigned low scores of 1-3 for just over half of mentees with only two percent assigned top scores of 8-10. In contrast, at the end of mentoring, only seven percent of mentees fell into the lower bracket and almost two-fifths were in the highest bracket. The evidence from mentees confirmed the low initial levels of hopefulness, averaging 1.7 on the 10-point scale. While negative change was indicated in three responses, almost four out of five cases recorded at least some improvement over the mentoring period and over a quarter (28%) were adjudged to have improved by four or more scale points, indicating significant shifts for some individual mentees. One said that he felt prior to mentoring that "there was nothing here for me. … I would wake up at four or five o'clock in the day. … Now I will try to do something with my life". Another commented that mentoring "was giving me lots of thoughts about what to do with my future." Another said that at the start of mentoring "I had no plans for the future, nothing like that. I was stuck in a rut. I was getting worse but now I'm working full-time, I'm in private rented accommodation that I sourced myself. I have plans for the future. I can see one."

Hopefulness – Scores at Start and End of Mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=89)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	11	1
- Score of 1-3	51	7
- Score of 4-7	47	75
- Score of 8-10	2	18

According to co-ordinators and mentors, the improvement during mentoring as regards hopefulness amounted averaged 25 percent and the attribution to mentoring was 52 percent. Mentees were much more positive in their assessment, reporting significantly higher levels of improvement (61 percent) and attribution to mentoring (79 percent).

Hopefulness		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=89)		
- Average improvement	2.51 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.56 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	21%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=15)		
- Average improvement	6.13 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.36 scale points	Scale of 1-4

The surveys and interviews also asked about happiness at the beginning and end of mentoring. Co-ordinators, mentors and parents pointed out that most mentees are unhappy with their life at the beginning of mentoring, and some are deeply unhappy, although the manner in which they present often masks this unhappiness. They may feel trapped in their lifestyle but their felt dissatisfaction with life indicates potential for them to accept support to improve. Like hopefulness, happiness is

not a dimension around which goals are discussed but is a direct measure of well-being and progress and was included in the survey for this reason.

Co-ordinators and mentors assigned the lowest scores of 1-3 to four out of ten mentees. Only three percent received ratings of 8-10. The views of mentees supported this evidence, with an even lower initial average score of 2.38 on the 10-point scale. At the end of mentoring, in contrast, only one out of ten mentees got scores of 1-3 and 21 percent had scores of 8-10. Two responses recorded negative change, despite mentoring, but more than four out of five cases recorded at least some improvement over the mentoring period and 22 percent were adjudged to have improved by four or more scale points, indicating significant shifts for some individual mentees. One mentee who received professional support for depression for a period acknowledged his mentor's additional support: "I could talk for an hour and a half and he would just sit and listen … and that would help a lot".

Happiness – Scores at Start and End of Mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=90)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	12	1
- Score of 1-3	41	10
- Score of 4-7	56	69
- Score of 8-10	3	21

The average improvement during mentoring as regards happiness amounted to 23 percent and the attribution to mentoring was 45 percent. Mentees themselves again reported a significantly higher level of improvement (49 percent) and attribution (61 percent).

Happiness		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=90)		
- Average improvement	2.27 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.34 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	19%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=13)		
- Average improvement	4.85 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.83 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.1.11 Offending and anti-social behaviour

A reduction in offending and anti-social behaviour is a key underlying objective of mentoring. The evidence from evaluations of other mentoring services who engage with offenders found little evidence of an impact on offending. Re-offending is usually measured in research by objective measures such as police arrests or court convictions comparing the cohort of mentees with a matched group of non-mentored offenders over similar time periods. It was not possible to carry out this kind of authoritative comparative study in the present evaluation, primarily for reasons of data protection in relation to criminal justice data. However, self-reporting by offenders can provide a reliable measure, especially when allied to views of informed persons such as case workers. In this instance co-ordinators and mentors have regular, privileged contact with mentees and can be expected to know mentees and their behaviour fairly well. Attribution is also a key issue, since reductions in offending can be attributed to many sources, not least the shock of court appearance,

the simple process of maturing or significant changes in family circumstances. The evidence from the evaluation is that offending and anti-social behaviour did reduce over the mentoring period and mentoring was a significant contributing factor. One mentee who had been in prison said "Now I don't offend at all" and that his mentor "helped a lot and dragged me to the straight and narrow" and that "I could have seen myself going back down without a support in place".

Many mentees were recorded as involved in offending and anti-social behaviour at the start of mentoring, with almost a third in the highest bracket (scores of 8-10) with only 15 percent at the other end of the scale (scores of 1-3). Mentees indicated an average rate of involvement in offending and anti-social behaviour of 6.71 on the 10-point scale. Just under 18 percent showed no change over the period of mentoring but by the end of mentoring, the percentage that were showing high levels of involvement had dropped to ten percent and the percentage on scores of 1-3 had increased to 54 percent. A higher level of offending at the end of mentoring was recorded in seven responses (by co-ordinators in six cases and by one mentor) but no mentees were given the highest score of 10.

Offending Behaviour – Scores at Start and End of Mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=91)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	7	27
- Score of 1-3	15	54
- Score of 4-7	55	36
- Score of 8-10	30	10
- Score of 10	8	0

According to co-ordinators and mentors, the reduction in offending and anti-social behaviour averaged 28 percent. The attribution to mentoring was quite high, at 49 percent. Once again, mentees reported substantially higher levels of improvement (48 percent reduction in offending and anti-social behaviour) and a higher attribution to mentoring (63 percent).

Offending Behaviour		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=91)		
- Average improvement	2.77 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.46 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing no change	18%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=14)		
- Average improvement	4.79 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.07 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.1.12 Communication skills

The survey of and about young person mentees also asked about how good mentees were in talking and listening to people at the beginning and end of mentoring. This is one of the dimensions that is discussed at initial meetings with mentees and reviewed at subsequent meetings. It includes verbal and non-verbal communication skills such as engaging in conversation, ability to express oneself clearly, making eye contact and awareness of body language. Engaging in conversation requires a degree of comfort and confidence that can improve with practice. The ability to listen is also a key skill, the absence of which risks misunderstandings and damage to relations. Many young offenders

are perceived to be poor at communication in general social interaction in the community, which can be a significant barrier to inclusion and personal development.

Co-ordinators and mentors assigned scores of 1-3 for a third of mentees while only four percent received ratings of 8-10. At the end of mentoring, in contrast, only two percent of mentees got scores of 1-3 and 33 percent had scores of 8-10. Nine out of ten responses (90 percent) recorded at least some improvement over the mentoring period and a fifth (20 percent) were adjudged to have improved by four or more scale points, indicating significant shifts for some individual mentees. No negative change was recorded. According to mentees, the average initial score was 3.29, supporting the finding of low levels of communication skills at the start of mentoring.

Communications – Scores at Start and End of Mentoring		
Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=92)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	2	0
- Score of 1-3	34	2
- Score of 4-7	62	65
- Score of 8-10	4	33

Changes during mentoring as regards communications amounted to an average improvement of 24 percent. The attribution to mentoring averaged 53 percent. The combined evidence from the mentee survey and mentee interviews once again shows a significantly higher level of improvement (41 percent) and attribution to mentoring (76 percent).

Communications		
1. Co-ordinator/mentor survey (n=92)		
- Average improvement	2.40 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	2.60 scale points	Scale of 1-4
- Percentage showing change	90%	
2. Mentee survey/interviews (n=15)		
- Average improvement	4.07 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.29 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.2   Impact of parent mentoring

5.2.1   Introduction

The analysis of impacts of parent mentoring is based on quantitative information from the survey and qualitative information from interviews. Impacts were assessed under several dimensions: involvement in activities outside the home; communication skills; relationships with the child in trouble and other family members; involvement in education, work and training; parenting skills; self-confidence, self-esteem and emotional well-being; ability to handle stress; and hopefulness for the future. The impacts are presented below. The valuation of these impacts and calculation of the associated social return on investment is discussed in Chapter 7. The presentation of impacts begins with an assessment of the benefits of mentoring overall.

5.2.2   Overall impact

Participants in the survey were asked to rate how helpful mentoring had been to them overall, on a scale of 1-10. The average score was 8.82. Almost six out of ten (59 percent) gave the maximum score of 10 and the lowest score was 5. This provides very strong evidence that parents of offenders benefited significantly from mentoring. This is borne out by individual testimonies. One mother said that she would give mentoring a score of 11, that "it saved my life". Another said that it was a "lifeline" and that "I don't know how we'd have managed without them, what way we'd come out the other end". The high level of endorsement of mentoring was consistent across all interviews.

The vast majority of parent mentees are female and all survey participants and interviewees were in fact female. A common experience of parents of offenders is that their lives revolve around the offending child and any other children to the detriment of their own lives. It is a common complaint that they have little time for themselves and they can become isolated and neglected. They can feel that there are many services focused on their children but little support and relief available for them. It was a recognition of this that gave rise to parent mentoring in the first place.

5.2.3   Activities and interests outside the home

The survey of parents asked about involvement in activities and interests outside their home in their spare time. Such involvement is seen as a step towards creating personal space for the parent that will help build self-confidence and self-esteem, ultimately leading to relief of stress, self-development and improved relations with their family. The survey results testify to significant change for a majority of mentees and high attribution to mentoring. Survey responses were available for 18 parent mentees, including two who were interviewed. Most were finished with their mentoring (12) and five were still being mentored, with one blank response. Over a third had not been involved in external pursuits at all at the start of mentoring (score of 1 on 10-point scale) while seven in ten were not involved to any great extent (score of 3 or below). The average starting score was below 3. By the end of mentoring, the average had increased to 6.53 and only a single mentee gave a score less than 3. Four indicated no change over the mentoring period but gave credit to mentoring for helping to maintain their level of activity. Where change occurred, it was credited to mentoring to a very large degree, with an attribution of 76 percent.

Involvement in activities – Parents		
Mentee survey/interviews (n=18)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	35	0
- Score of 1-3	71	6
- Score of 4-7	23	59
- Score of 8-10	6	35
- Average improvement	3.71 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.29 scale points	Scale of 1-4

Evidence of this level of change and its value is provided by the interviews with parent mentees. One parent had joined a gym and undertaken a number of courses; she also referred to the fact that she had made a few friends through engaging more with other mothers when dropping off her children; she attributed the change entirely to her mentor who pushed and encouraged her all the way.

Others got involved in volunteer activities, knitting classes, taking the driver theory test, taking driving lessons, taking a holiday and walking regularly. Not everyone was in a position to get involved in activities outside the home because of commitments to the rest of the family, some of whom often had particular needs, and a lack of support options. In such situations getting out of the house to meet the mentor was the critical activity and stimulation.

5.2.4   Communication skills

Respondents rated themselves reasonably strongly as regards how good they were at talking and listening to people before mentoring began but there was nevertheless significant improvement over the mentoring period for the majority of mentees and for some individuals in particular. The interviews illustrated that for some mentees, mentoring simply filled a gap in having anyone to talk to and engage with. The improvement in communication skills and confidence was reported as having a calming influence on the home atmosphere in some cases and improving relations within the family. The survey showed an average starting score of 4.59 on the 10-point scale. One respondent gave the lowest score of 1 at the start of mentoring and just over a third gave scores of 1-3. By the end of mentoring, the average had increased to 8.18 and none gave a finishing score of less than 6. Two indicated no change over the mentoring period, from high initial positions. Mentees credited the change to mentoring to the same degree as for activities outside the home, 76 percent.

Communications – Parents		
Mentee survey/interviews (n=17)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	6	0
- Score of 1-3	35	0
- Score of 4-7	59	35
- Score of 8-10	6	65
- Average improvement	3.59 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.29 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.2.5   Relationship with their child

Respondents were asked in the survey to rate how they got on with their son or daughter who was in trouble. The average starting score was 4.94 on the 10-point scale, indicating that relationships were often good to begin with. Half gave scores of 5 or higher. The lowest starting score was 2, given by almost a third. Three out of four reported making progress and for some, the gains were significant. One woman said that mentoring helped her acknowledge some fault on her side as regards her son who lives away from home: "I can say to him some things were my fault and I can take responsibility for that … Now I get on great with him on the phone." Another said that at the start of mentoring for her son and herself, their relationship was poor: "he had total disregard for me and lack of respect" but things had "hugely changed".

By the end of mentoring, the overall average had increased to 8.31 and none gave a finishing score of less than 5. Four indicated no change over the mentoring period, three of these from high initial positions. Mentees again attributed the change to mentoring to a significant degree, 76 percent. Interviewees often indicated greater improvement where their child was also being mentored.

Relationship with their child		
Mentee survey/interviews (n=16)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1-3	44	0
- Score of 4-7	31	31
- Score of 8-10	25	69
- Average improvement	3.38 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.27 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.2.6   Relationship with other family members

Respondents were asked a similar question about relationships with other members of their family. Scores were higher again, perhaps not surprisingly, than for the relationship with the child in trouble, yet sizeable improvements occurred and were largely attributed to mentoring. The average starting score was 5.75 on the 10-point scale. By the end of mentoring, the average had nevertheless increased to 8.25 and none gave a finishing score of less than 5. Three indicated no change over the mentoring period, two of these from initial scores of 10. Mentees credited the change to mentoring to an even greater degree, giving an average attribution of 82 percent.

Relationship with other family members – Parents		
Mentee survey/interviews (n=16)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1-3	6	0
- Score of 4-7	75	19
- Score of 8-10	19	81
- Average improvement	2.50 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.46 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.2.7   Involvement in education, work and training

The survey and interviews also provided evidence of improvement in personal development such as involvement in education, work and training. It was not particularly relevant to many mentees but very significant for others. Examples of improvement included achieving permanency at work, exploring a Community Employment scheme placement, doing "a few courses" and lining up a course for after mentoring. In the survey, participating mentees reported generally low initial scores, with average starting score of only 2.38 on the 10-point scale. Half were not involved in such activities at all (score of 1) at the start of mentoring. One parent said that she "didn't realise or even know there was courses here" but that her co-ordinator raised the idea of education every time they had a review.

By the end of mentoring, the average had increased to 5.88 and only one mentee still gave a score of 1. Two indicated no change over the mentoring period. The average can mask significant changes in individual cases. For example, four mentees increased their involvement in education, work or training by at least six scale points and all four attributed this change completely to mentoring. Overall, mentees credited the change to mentoring in large measure, giving an average attribution of 77 percent.

Involvement in education, work and training – Parents		
Mentee survey/interviews (n=16)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1-3	75	19
- Score of 4-7	25	50
- Score of 8-10	0	31
- Average improvement	3.50 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.31 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.2.8   Parenting skills

Improvements were also noted in parenting skills. Some mentees felt that their skill base was adequate but that they had lost confidence in their ability, often undermined by criticism from family and friends. The ability to talk to and be supported by a non-judgemental mentor helped them realise they were not so bad, making adjustments where needed. One parent said: "I thought I had no skills but in hindsight I probably managed a lot better than I thought I was managing" and that mentoring brought about "a realisation and reinforcement". Some benefited from participation in family or parenting courses as well as mentoring. In the survey, respondents gave an average starting score for parenting skills close to the mid-point (4.76), but it is significant that just under a quarter gave starting scores of only 1-3. By the end of mentoring, the average had increased to 7.94 and none rated themselves less than 5. Two indicated no change over the mentoring period, both at scores of 6. Changes were significant in some individual cases, with one increasing skills by six scale points and two by five points, all three attributing this change completely to mentoring. Overall, mentees attributed most of the change to mentoring, with an average attribution of 79 percent.

Parenting skills		
Mentee survey/interviews (n=17)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1-3	24	0
- Score of 4-7	76	24
- Score of 8-10	0	76
- Average improvement	3.18 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.38 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.2.9   Self-confidence and self-esteem

It is clear that, as was the case with young person mentees, mentoring had a sizeable impact on self-confidence and self-esteem of parent mentees. Significant improvements were achieved and mentees credited mentoring with this in large measure. Parents of offenders are usually bruised and deflated by their child's offending and subsequent experience of the criminal justice system. For some mentees, their self-confidence and self-esteem was at rock bottom when they were referred to the service. They often commented that they were at the end of their tether and that there were no other services for them. They observed that having someone outside their normal circle to talk to was of huge benefit in a context of constant criticism and self-doubt.

In the survey, parents were asked to rate their self-confidence and self-esteem separately. Ratings were consistent across the two questions for most individuals and the overall averages were similar. The average starting scores were relatively low at 3.35 and 3.47 respectively. The equivalent percentages at the end of mentoring were significantly higher, with no parents rating themselves

less than 5 on either variable and almost half giving themselves scores of 8 or higher. The respective improvements were 42 percent and 39 percent and attributions to mentoring were high (3.38 and 3.40, equivalent to 79 percent and 80 percent respectively). There was consistent endorsement of the survey findings in the interviews. Several interviewees spoke about a complete lack of confidence that prevented them from taking on activities and engaging in conversations.

Self-esteem – Parents (n=17)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	35	0
- Score of 1-3	53	0
- Score of 4-7	41	53
- Score of 8-10	6	47
- Average improvement	4.18 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.38 scale points	Scale of 1-4
Self-confidence – Parents (n=17)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	29	0
- Score of 1-3	53	0
- Score of 4-7	35	53
- Score of 8-10	12	47
- Average improvement	3.88 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.40 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.2.10 Emotional well-being

An even greater impact can be observed as regards emotional well-being. In the survey, the average starting point (2.76) was even lower than for self-confidence and self-esteem and, while the average end point was also lower, the average gain and the attribution to mentoring were higher. Almost two-thirds rated their emotional well-being 1-3 at the start of mentoring while at the end of mentoring none did so. The extent of improvement was significant in many cases, with almost half making gains of at least five scale points. The attribution to mentoring was the highest of all variables, at 81 percent. Again, this is consistent with evidence from interviews.

Emotional well-being – Parents		
Mentee survey/interviews (n=17)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	29	0
- Score of 1-3	65	0
- Score of 4-7	35	41
- Score of 8-10	0	59
- Average improvement	4.47 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.44 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.2.11 Ability to handle stress

Many parent mentees are in highly stressful situations to begin with, for a variety of reasons, including their child's behaviour in the home (whether aggressive or subdued), impact on other children (who often have their own specific challenges), economic and social disadvantage and their own personal issues. Mentoring was experienced by all bar two survey participants as improving their ability to cope. Many were starting from low positions: parents rated their ability to handle stress prior to mentoring at an average of 3.63 on the 10-point scale, with 81 percent rating

themselves 5 or lower. The average score after mentoring was 6.88, an improvement of 33 percent. After mentoring, only one parent rated their ability at 1-3, and even she had experienced a slight improvement. The attribution to mentoring was lower than for other variables, at 69 percent, but the attribution score of just over 3 still indicates that mentoring helped 'a lot' to bring about the change.

Ability to handle stress – Parents		
Mentee survey/interviews (n=16)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	19	0
- Score of 1-3	56	6
- Score of 4-7	31	38
- Score of 8-10	13	56
- Average improvement	3.25 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.08 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.2.12   Hopefulness

Scores for hopefulness almost doubled over the mentoring period. Asked how hopeful they were about the future, parents gave an average initial score of 4.00 on the scale of 1-10 and an end score of 7.56. Some maintained high levels of hopefulness throughout the period of mentoring but for some, initial hopefulness was low, with fully half of participants giving scores of 1-3. At the end of mentoring, no parent rated their hopefulness at less than 5 and almost a third made gains of six or more scale points. The attribution to mentoring was equivalent to 71 percent. Again the evidence from the interviews supported these levels of improvement and attribution to mentoring. In the words of one mentee who said that Le Chéile supported her in a period where she lost her house "Now I have plans for the future, [for]all my kids … I ended up in a nice house and really happy".

Hopefulness – Parents		
Mentee survey/interviews (n=16)	Start (%)	End (%)
- Score of 1	2	0
- Score of 1-3	50	0
- Score of 4-7	44	44
- Score of 8-10	6	56
- Average improvement	2.73 scale points	Scale of 1-10
- Attribution to mentoring	3.14 scale points	Scale of 1-4

5.3   Impacts for mentees in detention

Mentoring initiated in the community is generally continued while the young person is in detention (including prison in this discussion) where this is possible. It offers several benefits, including support for the young person at an exceptionally difficult time for them, putting the mentoring relationship on a strong footing for when the young person returns to the community and easing the young person's reintegration back into the community. It also offer support to parents of children in detention. The literature on mentoring in detention (Chapter 2) suggests good potential, especially where continued post-release, notwithstanding that the models reviewed are somewhat different to that operated by Le Chéile.

In practice, opportunities for mentoring in detention may be limited. Decisions are influenced in large measure by the length of term of detention, the age of the young person, whether Probation Service involvement has ended and the practicalities for mentors. Probation Service involvement can end for a number of reasons, including expiry of a probation bond, reactivation of a suspended sentence, completion of assessment or the young person reaching their 18th birthday. Probation Service involvement is a critical determinant of whether mentoring can continue, as with all young person mentoring cases. Mentoring has also occasionally commenced in detention where preparations have been made prior to detention. Preliminary stages completed would include Probation Service referral, Le Chéile assessment, co-ordinator meeting with the mentee and family or even the initial meeting with the mentor. A pilot programme of mentoring based on referrals initiated in Oberstown Centre commenced in late 2015. Experience is limited to date and it is not yet possible to draw conclusions. The cases discussed below were referred to Le Chéile by the Probation Service prior to the commencement of detention.

Issues specific to mentoring in detention include practical difficulties such as access, available time for mentoring and suitability/privacy of facilities. For those in the prison system, transfers at relatively short notice can complicate organisation of mentoring visits. The detention model also differs from the general model in that options for activities are severely restricted. Furthermore, for many mentors, visiting a place of detention is a new and unsettling experience and it is likely that not every mentor is willing or able to commit to visiting mentees in detention, not least because of the limited window for a visit and the overall time commitment including travel.

One case examined as part of the evaluation involved a continuation of mentoring that had begun in the community and which was continued for some weeks after release. The mentor travelled from outside Dublin to Oberstown, which entailed a significant time commitment. On his first visit, he was accompanied by a Le Chéile representative (which is standard practice), introduced to staff and shown around. His first meeting with the mentee was relatively short and he visited three or four times in all. Sessions were not restricted time-wise and lasted 30-40 minutes during which the mentee was quite talkative. No activity was possible and they shared tea and a snack together instead. The shorter time than would be the norm in the community was considered adequate and comfortable in the circumstances. The mentor nevertheless felt that engagement would be better and easier if facilitated by access to a games room and with greater privacy. The mentee appreciated the visit and the continued mentoring. The mentor thought it was 'absolutely important' to continue mentoring in and after detention. In another similar case involving a continuation of mentoring during detention, the young person, parent and mentor all commented positively on the value of the continuation. The adults commented additionally that detention was a wake-up call for the young person none of whose associates visited him. The mentor helped fill the gap left when he distanced himself from his former friends and he appreciated the extra effort by the mentor.

In another case from outside Dublin, mentoring had begun prior to imprisonment with more than a dozen sessions in the community. Nine sessions had taken place in prison at the time of the evaluation. Visits had been difficult to organise initially because of inter-prison transfers. Prison transfers are required for operational reasons, often at short notice, and often to facilitate court appearances, as in this case. The mentor was very receptive to the idea of going into the prison.

Visits took place in the professional visits area and were booked in as Probation Service interventions with the prisoner. The co-ordinator attended the first meeting and attended a number since for part of the session. The absence of activities was not seen as a problem given that the pre-existing mentoring relationship was on a sound footing and meetings lasted typically 1½–1¾ hours. Sessions were fortnightly but it was acknowledged that they would have to be less frequent if the mentee was moved to Dublin. The fact that visits are classified as 'professional' according to the prison authorities, similar to visits by Probation Service staff and solicitors, means that they do not interfere with normal family visits. It also gives greater privacy than the general visit area.

Another case showed the challenges caused by prison transfers. Ten mentoring sessions had taken place prior to imprisonment and this helped overcome subsequent difficulties, including cancellation of one scheduled session because the mentee had been transferred that morning for three weeks. As in other places of detention, visits were private and screened and no activity was possible. In this instance, the visits facilitated about 40 minutes of contact time. The mentor had experience of prison visits and was comfortable in the environment.

In another case, mentoring during detention in a Dublin prison was felt to have had a significant impact on the mentoring relationship and outcome. The young person had been negative and antagonistic about mentoring on the first contact in the community but was more amenable on a follow-up occasion. A match had been arranged when the young person was placed in detention unexpectedly. The mentor was willing to engage despite this and the match meeting took place in the prison. Three subsequent sessions took place in the prison and the mentoring continued post-release – 25 sessions in total. The mentoring was judged to have ended on a positive note and to have helped the young man turn his life around, despite a number of challenges. The visits were screened and lasted about 30 minutes. This was felt to be enough and was not due to pressure from the prison service. It was not possible to arrange an activity such as playing cards or draughts but some kind of scrapbook project using the prison library or education service was considered. The mentor said that he found the first visit 'very daunting', including going through the search and drug dog screening. Being accompanied by the co-ordinator made it easier. He thought the visits were appreciated and were a good way to build the relationship for afterwards. He was asked on later visits for professional identification and a letter from the co-ordinator sufficed for this purpose. The mentee's mother thought the mentoring was a significant help to her and her son. She benefited from parental support while he was away. It was of benefit too that the mentoring sessions in Wheatfield were not at the expense of family visits.

A case from outside Dublin where mentoring was initiated in Oberstown involved the mentor, co-ordinator and young person's mother visiting the young person together the first time. After that the mentor went alone. He commented that it "got us off to a fantastic start" and that "it was very wise of [the co-ordinator] to arrange it" although he had been "dreading it" initially. The meetings were in "a bare function room". Another case from outside Dublin also involved matching in Oberstown. The co-ordinator and mentor were accompanied by the mentee's guardian, to make the most of the travel opportunity. The guardian also visited the young person on the occasion of a previous meeting between the co-ordinator and young person. The mentoring back in the community was terminated early for a number of reasons. One of the factors highlighted in the case was the time demand on

mentors and co-ordinators, in travelling to Oberstown in particular, and volunteers would not always be in a position to take a day off work each time.

It was not always possible to arrange matching and mentoring while in detention, as the young people were sometimes released more quickly than anticipated. Mentoring is possible post-release if a relationship with the Probation Service continues. In one such case, the mentee was mentored post-release for just under six months. In another case, the young person had engaged well with Le Chéile prior to imprisonment but was then released earlier than anticipated, without conditions, and mentoring ended. A number of co-ordinators and mentors felt that it was especially important to be able to continue mentoring for a period post-release and that it should not depend on continued involvement of the mentee with the Probation Service. In a number of cases mentoring was suspended for the duration of detention and resumed thereafter.

Four other cases of mentoring in detention were examined, all from Dublin. In the first such case, the young person had built up a relationship with his mentor prior to detention in Oberstown. It was that bit easier then to continue in Oberstown where the co-ordinator and mentor each met him twice over four months, including one case review. Mentoring continued for about four months post-release. At the time, it was possible to meet in a separate visit room and play pool, which also helped. In the second case, the co-ordinator met the young person prior to his detention in Oberstown and he expressed a willingness for a mentor to visit him. He agreed subsequently to being mentored post-release and although a number of sessions took place, there was no time to build a relationship before he was committed to prison on new charges. In a third case, the match meeting and two mentoring sessions took place in Oberstown in what was described as a room with bare floors and walls, no furniture and poor acoustics. The young person met the mentor twice post-release but his case was closed subsequently due to non-engagement. The final case involved assessment, matching and three mentoring sessions in Oberstown. Mentoring continued post-release but the young person's attendance was sporadic and eventually ceased. He was subsequently detained in a Dublin prison and, at the request of the Probation Service, mentoring recommenced with a new mentor, the previous mentor no longer being available. One session took place in the prison but the young person disengaged again before a relationship could be formed.

These cases illustrate the challenges of mentoring in detention cases, not least because of the particularly complex background factors and chaotic lifestyles in the lives of many young people who pass through detention. They also show the potential to support them through mentoring and the willingness of volunteers, Le Chéile staff, Probation Officers and the detention centre authorities to facilitate it as best they can.

Case Study – Helen*

Helen was referred to Le Chéile when she was twenty-one. She was matched to a Le Chéile Volunteer Mentor for one year. She told her story at a conference in Dublin Castle and this case study draws on her account there as well as Le Chéile material and an interview conducted as part of this evaluation.

Her mother suffered from serious mental health issues and her father was an alcoholic and extremely violent. When she was six weeks old, the family were evicted from their house due to rent arrears and they moved from one private rented property to another. Her mother left her father when she was three years old. When she was five, her mam was admitted to hospital and she and her sister went to live with her grandparents that summer, the only place she says she could ever call home. Her mother was readmitted two years later and this was when she first went into a foster placement officially. That placement broke down after about eight months and she and her sister were moved to a group home. They lived there for about two years before going home for another two years and then back into care. Within an eighteen month period she had lived in six different foster placements, while her sister stayed mostly in residential care. All in all, she was in the care system for eight years, in numerous foster placements and at the group home. Over the eight years she said she felt wanted and part of the family in just two foster families, making a total of fourteen months out of eight years where she felt 'settled and safe'.

She was about twelve years old when she first started to drink and had her first joint. She and her friends accessed drink belonging to her foster-carer. She ran away from this foster placement on a number of occasions and was brought back by the Guards. The first time she really got into trouble with the Guards was when she was fourteen. She had been drinking at a friend's birthday and crashed a car. She was cautioned under the Garda Diversion Programme. Subsequent incidents involving the Guards were mostly around being brought back to foster placements drunk or after running away. From the age of thirteen to twenty-one she was 'heavily into E's, speed, weed and drink'. She saved her lunch money through the week to spend at weekends on drink and drugs. From the age of eighteen to twenty, she shop-lifted clothes and make-up and stole drink from supermarkets.

At sixteen she left the care system and returned home to her mother's. She left school and got a job in the local chipper and then in a hairdresser's and things were going quite well. When her mother went into rehab for addiction issues she stayed on in the house on her own. At this point, she started to take Valium. When she was about eighteen she moved out on her own and her drinking got heavier. A FAS training course provided enough money to pay for her drink but when the course finished, she started stealing drink again. She eventually got charged with these offences and came before the court.

This led to her being put on Probation. Her Probation Officer was the first authority figure whom she felt ever genuinely cared and she felt able to open up to her. The Probation Officer referred her back into a training place she had fallen away from, a local training course which combined FETAC modules with work experience, and she completed a bronze level Gaisce Award. She was also referred to a service for women who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

She was referred to Le Chéile for Mentoring at this point also. Since she trusted and respected her Probation Officer, she trusted the organisations she referred her to. She was introduced to the Le Chéile co-ordinator who she found 'easy to talk to' and she told her some of her interests and former hobbies. These included sports which she had fallen away from by the age of thirteen. The Co-ordinator matched her with Sally* and they 'clicked straight away'. Meeting Sally felt more like meeting up with a friend rather than an authority figure. They started running, she was introduced to the local running club, and they researched Gaelic football clubs locally. She also undertook a local youth project, which was a personal and social development pilot programme that allowed her to carry out research on children in care. As she had no Leaving Cert, she completed FETAC modules with the local training organisation and with her project portfolio, she got accepted into college.

She says that she could call Sally to talk about nothing or everything, "the good stuff and the bad stuff, and the stuff she might need help with again". As an example, she says that Sally, Le Chéile and the local training organisation all supported her with her application to college. College was a big change for her and she was not prepared for what was required. Sally and Le Chéile, she says, helped her work through the issues and prepare herself for a return. She has since got a steady job and is renting a place of her own.

Her final comments were that "I wish I had gotten a Sally when I was much younger and maybe I would never have ended up in trouble at all."

* Names have been changed

Chapter 6   Mentoring Process

6.1   Referral stage

6.1.1   Source and conditions of referral

The Probation Service makes the vast majority of mentoring referrals to Le Chéile. Only a handful are made by any other service, viz. the Garda Síochána (Juvenile Liaison Officers - JLOs). The number of mentoring referrals in the years 2013-2015 is shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Mentoring referrals 2013-2015 by type and source

		Probation Service	Garda Síochána	Total
2013	Young Person	127	2	129
	Parent	24	0	24
	Total	151	2	153
2014	Young Person	121	7	128
	Parent	41	1	42
	Total	162	8	170
2015	Young Person	108	4	112
	Parent	33	1	34
	Total	141	5	146

In 2015, the Probation Service referred 108 young people for mentoring. The mentoring was a condition of the Probation Bonds under which the young people remained at liberty in the community and in respect of which a report was subsequently prepared for the court. When Le Chéile was established in 2005, it was to enable use by the courts of the Mentoring Order under the Children Act 2001. Mentoring Orders are rarely used nowadays and a view commonly expressed at interviews with Probation Service and Le Chéile staff was that the Probation Bond allows greater flexibility than the Mentoring Order, with greater discretion, for example, around breaching a young person for non-compliance. The Probation Bond also offers a degree of choice to young people that is absent in a court order, and which is thought useful in encouraging their participation. The Garda Síochána referred four young people for mentoring in 2015 under the Garda Diversion Programme. Mentoring is effectively a voluntary process for young people referred in this way since it has already been decided to deal with their case by diversion and they have already been cautioned under the Diversion Programme. In 2015, the Probation Service also referred 33 parents for parent mentoring and the Garda Síochána referred one parent. Parents' participation in mentoring is entirely voluntary. It is sometimes at the parents' own request to either Probation Officers or Le Chéile co-ordinators and take-up and commitment are high.

Some referrals were made where mentoring contributed to activity carried out under Community Service Orders, primarily for parents but also for young persons. No such cases were identified in the file examination as part of the evaluation and numbers may be small. Co-ordinators reported that mentees tended to be enthusiastic in such cases. According to the Probation Service, community service is intended to help the community and is an alternative to imprisonment. Participants can expect to work in a supervised group carrying out practical tasks such as painting, gardening or graffiti removal or be on an individual placement helping in a charity shop or in a food centre

providing meals for persons in need. Mentoring would appear to be different kind of activity and its suitability as a Community Service Order activity may merit further reflection.

6.1.2   Regional variations in referral rates

Referral rates vary by region and within regions. Where a Young Persons Probation (YPP) team operates, that can be the main source of referrals but YPP teams do not operate everywhere and they normally deal with under-18s only so that Le Chéile relies on a wider range of individual officers for referrals of young adults. In Region 1 in 2015, one YPP officer accounted for the vast bulk of referrals (19 of 24) while another four (including another YPP officer) accounted for the remainder. In Region 2, seven Probation Officers accounted for the total of 12 young person cases in 2015, with two referring three cases each and one (from a YPP team) referring two. The region covers a wide geographical area involving a number of different probation areas. Staff mobility may also explain some of the differences. It is clear from interviews with Probation Service and Le Chéile staff that the availability of local services influences referrals to mentoring. In Region 1 a variety of such services is available. In Region 2, it was reported that referrals tended to be made in one urban area to a local service rather than to mentoring, although mentoring was acknowledged as having a different focus and offering potential benefits.

Probation Officers differ in their approach and preferences as regards referrals. Probation Officers are case managers for offenders assigned to them and must have discretion in referring them to whatever service they think is most appropriate. In one expressed view, mentoring was a favoured option often in conjunction with referrals to other services. Another view was that it was important to observe the principle of minimum intervention and tailor services very closely to identified needs: often services offered similar benefits. Some also felt that multiple referrals risked confusing young people and setting them up to fail. However, the Le Chéile experience was that mentoring helped mentees make sense and keep control of their commitments and appointments, including court appearances. It may be that some Probation Officers have a certain understanding of mentoring and could benefit from greater exposure to it. From remarks made by some Probation Service staff, the volunteer status of mentors was an impediment to referring clients with particular needs such as mental health or aggressive behavioural issues where professional expertise would appear more appropriate. Some would also see types of offending as rendering them unsuitable. This would appear to underestimate the variety of experience and expertise among mentors. In the past, Le Chéile itself did not accept referrals for young people with convictions for serious offences such as assault causing harm or sexual offences but exceptions have been made where there is no risk to volunteers and there are volunteers with the necessary experience. Mentoring in such cases requires approval from the CEO. Le Chéile would encourage Probation Officers to discuss cases with Co-ordinators before rejecting mentoring and would like to see mentoring almost as the default option and rejected only where there were strong reasons against. Their experience showed that all cases are different and sometimes the cases that appear most improbable initially are the ones that have the most successful outcomes.

Further investigation of variations in referral rates would appear warranted. The further development of agreed referral criteria or guidelines could also help standardise policy and practice across the regions. It would be important to retain flexibility in the criteria so as not to automatically

rule out categories of offence or offender. A good working relationship between co-ordinators and relevant Probation Officers was seen as crucial.

Co-ordinators made a number of comments about the referral process. Noting that Probation Officers were gatekeepers to the mentoring service, some commented that they encouraged Probation Officers to give mentoring a chance even if the initial assessment was that it would not work. Some co-ordinators said that they would also encourage consideration of mentoring where referrals to other services broke down, or despite assessments that young people were too chaotic or already had sufficient supports (e.g. in residential care). It was noted that children sent into detention had often failed to engage with other services but mentoring had not usually been offered. Le Chéile staff and a number of mentors also pointed out the importance of Probation Officers 'selling' mentoring to young people, while some young mentees referred to the positive relationship they enjoyed with their Probation Officer and that this influenced their agreement to mentoring.

6.1.3   Impact on case loads

Differences in referral practice among Probation Officers may be reflected in differences in Le Chéile caseloads between regions. Some co-ordinators have had to operate waiting lists of referrals in their regions while others mentioned having to be creative in ways of generating referrals (such as JLO cases). Consideration should be given to ways in which such differences could be ironed out, exploring the scope, for example, for inter-regional transfer of cases in bordering areas. In some instances, high referral numbers included some whose suitability was perhaps questionable and early terminations resulted. However, the general preference seemed to be for getting higher rates of referral even if this involved higher rates of non-engagement than getting low rates of referral with only 'safe bet' cases. Le Chéile managers pointed out that mentoring could succeed in cases that did not look very promising on paper and that they would be reluctant to deny a young person the opportunity. One manager remarked that "sometimes the most challenging cases with the most difficult to engage [young people] turn out to be the best cases".

Differences in referral practice may impact on co-ordinators' control of targets although this was not raised as a problem. Co-ordinators have a Key Performance Indicator target of ten young person mentees and five parent mentees whose cases are currently active. The experience differed in the two Le Chéile regions focused on in the evaluation. In Region 1, 24 cases were listed in total including nine active at the end of the year and 16 at mid-year. In Region 2, twelve young person mentee cases are listed for the whole of 2015, including six cases still active at the end of the year and seven active at the mid-year point. It is important that the targets are interpreted flexibly and take account of fluctuations and constraints outside the control of the co-ordinator. They may be more important as guides to ensure that quality of service to mentees and support for mentees is not undermined and unreasonable burdens are not placed on co-ordinators. They should be reviewed from time to time in consultation with co-ordinators.

A number of co-ordinators and mentors made a case for mentoring greater numbers of young adults. The rationale was that they were more mature and more likely to engage, recognising that they may have squandered supports available to them along the way. Referrals from this age

category would require buy-in from a broader range of Probation Officers in adult offender teams. Others suggested that older or younger clients were most likely to engage but ones in the middle category less likely. It was pointed out that in some regions, priority is given to under-18s and referral of young adults is subject to approval of the Senior Probation Officer.

6.1.4   Parent mentee referrals

Parent mentees have a child who is under Probation supervision at the time of referral although the child may not be mentored. Referrals of parents were not reported to be problematic. All are approved by the Probation Service and many originate from that Service. JLOs make a small number of referrals in two regions, since 2014. Co-ordinators may also identify suitable cases and carry out a degree of preparatory work before bringing the case to the attention of the Probation Service. In Region 1, seven cases were listed for 2015, with six active at the end of the year and all seven active at mid-year. In Region 2, three parent mentoring cases were listed for 2015, with one active at the end of the year and two active at the mid-year point. Referral forms for parents are relatively simple and include information about the mentee, the family composition, status of their child vis-à-vis the Probation Service, the Probation Officer's perception of strengths within the family, areas of work in order of preference and the intended duration of mentoring. Not all fields are always completed.

6.1.6   Risk and safety

Safety of mentors is always a key consideration. Le Chéile requires full disclosure of risk and while it was claimed that assessed risk level was not provided in a number of instances, it is likely that co-ordinators would be informed of any perceived heightened risk. File examination in Region 1 showed that information on risk level was included in referral forms in four cases out of 16 files (two 'medium', one 'low' and one indicating that the child was 'known to Gardaí as out of control'. Le Chéile managers reported that referrals were rarely refused but had been where there was a perceived risk arising from gang membership and feuding or a mental health diagnosis.

6.2   Initial stage and matching

In 2015, Le Chéile had a total of 196 young person mentees cases on its books. Of these, 30 cases (15 percent) never commenced. Reasons were provided on file for 20 of these cases: 13 referrals were withdrawn, four went into custody and three did not engage. Potential reasons for withdrawal are that the young person fails to engage with the Probation Service in the first instance or makes it clear to the Probation Officer that he or she does not wish to avail of the service. Parent mentee referrals are more likely to go ahead, but nevertheless in 2015 eight out of 66 cases (12 percent) did not commence. Often co-ordinators put considerable effort into trying to set up initial meetings in such cases.

Once a referral is received, co-ordinators set about making contact with the potential mentee. Co-ordinators stated that this initial contact can sometimes be difficult, especially for young adults where contact has to be direct rather than through parents. Follow-up contact can also be problematic. One co-ordinator referred to an experience of achieving only four contacts out of 16 that were set up. This is frustrating and time-consuming but they are slow to give up and make

numerous attempts. A substantial amount of paperwork is also involved. Sometimes, co-ordinators have more than one meeting and possibly an activity before they tackle the paper work lest it put potential mentees off. It can be important to build a relationship before it is possible to ask personal questions and complete forms. Patience early on can pay dividends later but they recognise that they must operate within certain time constraints. A number of co-ordinators commented that the interview is a two-way process and mentees are assessing co-ordinators too.

For young person mentees, they must complete an application form which asks among other things about their skills and interests, ideas and areas where a mentor could help, activities they would like to get involved in, personality characteristics they would ascribe to themselves, the type of person they would like as a mentor and why they want a mentor. An initial meeting form is also completed to record details of the meeting and key messages and commitments (e.g. concerning confidentiality, turning up for meetings). Consent forms are completed that convey agreement to take part, provide medical and other personal details and agree to sharing of information with named services with which the young person might also be engaged.

The completed application form informs the process of matching the individual with a mentor. The quality of information is uneven. Most provided information on interests, although co-ordinators pointed out that expression of interest did not always equate with actual level of activity. Interests varied widely and common interests included sports, gym, horses, cars, shopping and cinema. Prominent among ideas and areas where a mentor could help were getting back into education, getting a part-time job and tackling the driver theory test, although roughly a quarter expressed no preference. It is not clear to what extent mentees identified possible areas from friends who were mentored or from co-ordinators or came up with the ideas themselves. Applicants identified a wide range of possible activities. Popular activities included sports, horse-riding, fishing, mechanics, pool and cinema while cultural activities such as reading, galleries and drama were mentioned by a minority. The young people tended to be fairly positive in describing themselves in terms of being funny, fun-loving, out-going, chatty and sporty although many also described themselves as shy and even lazy. As regards preference as to mentor, most mentees were not very specific, asking for someone who was 'nice', 'sound', 'chatty', 'easy to talk to', 'up for a laugh' or sharing similar interests. Most did not express a strong preference as regards the gender of the mentor although some did. Reasons for wanting a mentor also tended to be quite general, with most referring to having something to do or someone to talk to, to keep them out of trouble, keep their mind occupied or get them out of the house. Several said that they did not want a mentor initially but would try it. Others said that they wanted to be motivated or supported to make something of their lives. One specifically mentioned making a fresh start after a spell in Oberstown.

A different, more open approach is taken with parent mentees. The initial meeting form includes consent and commitment elements, a statement of what they hope to get from mentoring, identification of key strengths within their family and setting of goals in respect of their child (managing their child's behaviour, their relationship with the child and their ability to help the child to learn and develop), their family (behavioural problems that they would like to change) and themselves (self-development as regards skills, interests and hobbies).

Based on the referral contact with the Probation Officer and initial meeting with the mentee, the co-ordinator identifies a mentor to be matched with the mentee. Co-ordinators typically know their volunteer team well and spoke about often having a mentor in mind as the discussion with the mentee progresses. They complete an assessment of mentor suitability and confirm their availability. The matching process is crucial to the success of mentoring and entails consideration of personalities and interests. In rural areas, geography plays a role with a limit on how far mentors (and to a lesser extent participants) can be expected to travel. The success of the matches is borne out by the fact that the vast majority of cases involve just a single mentor over the whole period and that where a change is required, the reason has to do with changes in mentor circumstances such as a new job. In Region 1, all bar two mentees out of 16 had a single mentor, while one had two mentors and one had three. A similar picture emerged in Region 2, with 14 of 16 selected cases involving the same mentor throughout and two cases involving two mentors each. One mentor in Region 2 referred to a 'clash of personalities' with his mentee but found subsequently that the second mentor also experienced a 'clash of personalities'. Overall, Probation Officers and mentors spoke positively of the matching process and the co-ordinators' ability to establish successful matches. In many ways, this is hardly surprising given the calibre of mentors that make it through the screening and training process and their willingness to embrace change. But the final matching still requires careful and artful matching by the co-ordinator taking several factors in to account. Mentor flexibility is important – one mentor who was matched four times said that his charges were all different, that there was no 'magic wand' and that "you use your life experience really … they're all individuals and individual scenarios".

The time lapse between referral and start of mentoring sessions can vary. The national average in 2015 for the 63 cases that were deemed to be 'successfully concluded' was 65 days. The national average for 145 cases that commenced (including those terminated early) was 28. Not too much can be read into the range of values since a small number of extreme values (e.g. minimum 0, maximum 562) are artefacts of record-keeping. The lowest value related to artificial, retrospective file entries and the maximum value reflected a first date of referral rather than the relevant recent date of re-referral. The average can be influenced by seasonal factors, especially the Christmas break, as well as other factors alluded to above such as difficulties establishing contact.

6.3 Activities and goal setting

Two phases can be identified: a relationship-building phase and a more challenging, target-focused phase. Both are seen by all parties to be important but a need for flexibility in timing was emphasised. The first phase is critical and takes priority. The focus for mentors and mentees is on getting to know each other and on building trust. This is achieved primarily through participation in fun, non-threatening activities and simply sharing time talking. One co-ordinator likened in to going on a date: "you go on the activity to distract from the fact that you're getting to know each other there". Co-ordinators and mentors pointed out that to rush this phase risks undermining the quality of the relationship and ultimate failure. Several co-ordinators remarked that it was the activities that drew mentees into mentoring to begin with and they only began to engage meaningfully once the activities had progressed: "Now they're in, now they're engaging, now let's look at the other stuff". Co-ordinators said that mentees who just went along for the activities and did not engage were the exception rather than rule. They also pointed out that just keeping appointments is an important

step and indicator of progress. Many noted that mentees often began to take care of their appearance and dress more smartly for their meetings and this improved their self-image.

Co-ordinators and mentors recognised the need to move from trust building to goal setting phases. The relationship-building phase is expected to last 6-8 weeks but in practice it is often longer and is tailored to the individual. One mentor stressed this need for adapting to the capacity and readiness of mentees to set goals: he currently had a young person who after 18 months was not yet ready to be challenged - he would have run a mile if goals had been set earlier. Other mentors referred to steadier, subtle promotion of positive lifestyle choices and getting mentees to do things for themselves. They also thought it was necessary to accept as normal that young people are not sure about what they want and change their minds. Some felt that setting specific goals and targets was not the be-all and end-all and it could be enough for mentees to learn self-worth which would take them on to the next stage themselves. This was particularly true if they came from backgrounds where their achievements were put down or not celebrated. An important message was also that here was value in just being healthy and staying out of trouble. At the same time, mentors saw the value of coaxing them along and suggesting trying something different, weaning them way from the comfort of routine.

No-one saw the activities as 'rewards for bad behaviour' although it was a criticism they sometimes heard. Some co-ordinators also commented that mentoring was open to being perceived as an easy, fun option: mentees might talk about doing the driver theory test or having their nails done, without mentioning other more challenging aspects of mentoring.

One co-ordinator commented that a key objective is integration of the mentees and "an activity is integration in itself". Several co-ordinators and mentors remarked on the relevance of the context and background of mentees. Some young mentees were arriving hungry and having a meal was a basic prerequisite to anything else. Others had little experience of basic social conventions (e.g. ordering food or using utensils) or felt that they did not fit in. One mentor pointed out that what some might see as a 'reward' (e.g. a meal in Supermacs, a game of pool) was something that practically everyone else would see as normal but would be alien to many mentees. Participation in simple activities helped overcome shyness, build confidence and bring about a sense of belonging and equality. Several co-ordinators made the point that sharing experiences not alone built a relationship of trust as a step towards goal-setting but also facilitated mentees opening up and discussing concerns in ways that might not work in formal counselling.

The types of activities undertaken vary widely depending notably on mentee preferences, local availability of activities and duration of mentoring. Based on experience in the two regions, common activities for young people included meals, cinema, pool, bowling, go-karting, walks, and pitch and putt. For female mentees, typically activities also included shopping and getting nails or hair done. Individual mentees also participated in sport, jogging, cooking, theatre, circus and ice-skating. Activities for female mentees also included a make-up course and pregnancy yoga classes. Visits to libraries and internet cafes often centred around the driver theory test. Mentors sometimes accompanied mentees to other services, including MABS and the dentist. In one case, a frequent activity was a visit to the local barber's where the mentee enjoyed and contributed to the banter, becoming more integrated in the local community as a result. Some mentees and mentors in more

rural areas regretted the absence of options locally, even for meals. A number of co-ordinators commented on this too, with some having identified potential activities but not being able to arrange access because of a lack of rural transport. In some cases examined, activities were not listed, sometimes because the mentee left the area or the case terminated early. The principal activities for parent mentees were going for coffee or meals and walking and talking. These were supplemented from time to time by activities such as having hair and nails done and very occasionally a cinema visit.

Co-ordinators and mentors emphasised the need to go softly-softly as regards target-setting and stressed the importance of the mentoring process itself. Specific targets for young people may be set in terms of issues like a return to education, driver theory test, engagement in activities outside the home or tackling substance use but the more formal target-setting tends to take place at review meetings (see Section 6.5). Mentoring is more about challenging behaviour and attitudes in subtle, progressive, encouraging and supportive ways at a pace that the mentee can manage. Role modelling is key and mentors demonstrate appropriate behaviours and attitudes. Co-ordinators and mentors emphasise the values of respect, understanding and persistence. Challenging occurs in the context of on-going conversations over the period of mentoring. This applies to parent mentoring also but targets are usually set more systematically and earlier for parents, building on the initial meeting between parent and co-ordinator.

Co-ordinators check in with mentees and mentors on an on-going basis during mentoring, by phone or text. This is seen as particularly important in the early stages.

6.4   Mentor-mentee relationship

Young person mentees who were interviewed were universally positive about their mentors. Average scores for mentor-related variables ranged from 9.0 to 9.9 on a scale of 1-10. See Table 6.2. They consistently spoke very highly about them. Many commented that they just 'hit it off' or 'clicked' from the beginning. They frequently commented that their mentors were really 'nice' or 'sound'. A typical enough comment was "I just liked the way she was, like. She talked and had a good personality. She was a nice person. I got on with her from the start." Another commented that "I liked a lot about him. He would listen, was always there, reliable, a good friend and good support, a good help. He was just a great person to be honest". Another said that "they connected very well, he was a very nice man, very easy to talk to and was not too strict". Several admired their knowledge and patience. A young female mentee related that "we clicked and I liked that I could be honest with her and she would tell me the answer whether I wanted to hear it or not. She didn't beat about the bush but was nice about it."

Parent mentees who were interviewed were even more positive – see Table 6.2 for average scores, which ranged from 9.2 to 9.9 on a scale of 1-10. One commented spontaneously about her mentor: "Oh she's lovely, she's been great, a great listening ear … we have a lot in common, she wasn't just anybody, she had children and experience and life skills and that was evident." Others liked the mentor's sense of humour, willingness to share experiences and constant support.

The quality of the mentoring relationship is likely to be a major factor in explaining the positive scores for impact and attribution in Chapter 5.

Table 6.2 Mentor-Mentee Relationship

Extent to which, on scale of 1-10, the mentee	Young person	Parent
… liked/got on with/enjoyed the mentor's company	9.4	9.8
… felt good in the mentor's company	9.2	9.4
… felt bored in the mentor's company	1.2	1.0
… mentor was interested in them	9.6	9.8
… mentor was focused on them	9.8	9.2
… mentor took their preferences and interests into account	9.7	9.7
… felt satisfied	9.6	9.7
… could trust the mentor	9.9	9.9
… felt valued/liked by the mentor	9.9	9.6
… felt challenged by the mentor	9.3	-
… felt supported by the mentor	9.4	9.5

6.5   Review meetings and closure

Review meetings are an important part of the mentoring process. They allow a review of progress to date and a look at areas on which the mentor might work with the mentee in the future. The same emphasis is put on acknowledging strengths and positive achievements as identifying relative weaknesses and areas for improvement. After the initial relationship-building phase, a first case review meeting is held to check in with the young person and mentor that the match is working out and to set a bench mark for outcome areas that will be monitored at subsequent case review meetings.

Le Chéile guidelines urge that review meetings should be client-centred and child-friendly and that the co-ordinator should ensure that they are as friendly and non-intimidating as possible. The guidelines recommend that mentors talk the mentees through the format of the meetings in advance. The experience of young person mentees who were interviewed as part of the evaluation was generally very positive as regards involvement and overall satisfaction, the two aspects enquired into. They gave an average score of 9.0 out of a maximum 10 on both issues and scores ranged from 6 to 10 (n=6).

Mentors at interview and in focus groups expressed the view that the review meetings were valuable and that actual practice was good. Positives were stressed and young people were often surprised and encouraged by indications of progress. So were their parents: one mother said she found it "nice to hear good things about her son" for a change. Co-ordinators also said they were useful meetings for checking in regarding mentor-mentee boundaries and for explaining why mentors were not always able to do things (e.g. a particular mentoring activity).

Le Chéile used an eight-dimension outcome measurement tool until early 2016. It involved participants assigning scores of 1-10 on how they perceived mentees on each outcome area. In theory this would allow measurement of progress over time but it was also useful, and perhaps most

useful, in facilitating a structured discussion and identifying areas of relative strength and weakness. See Figures 6.1 and 6.2 for a description for the outcome areas and measurement tool used during the period of the evaluation.

Figure 6.1 Description of Le Chéile Outcome Areas

Outcome Area	Description
Meaningful Use of Time	i.e. attendance at Mentoring Sessions, Level of Engagement with Mentor, Trying new activities, Engaging in Pro-Social Activities
Communication Skills	i.e. Verbal and Non-verbal Communication skills e.g. eye contact, body language, initiating conversation, ability to express themselves clearly
Positive Lifestyle Choices	i.e. Physical health, emotional well-being, substance use
Relationships	i.e. Relationships with family members, friends, peer groups, in school, community
Offending	i.e. Understanding of impact of offending behaviour on self, peers, family, wider community, willingness to make amends for offending behaviour, reduction in risk of re-offending, reduction in level of offending
Pro-social Attitudes & Behaviours	i.e. Understanding impact of anti-social attitudes and behaviour on self, community, peers, adults. Improved pro-social attitudes and behaviours.
Personal Development	i.e. Identity and self-image, decision making, goal setting, life-skills, self-esteem, self-confidence, thinking about the future.
Education & Training	i.e. commitment to learning/seeking employment, planning and researching learning options/job opportunities, participation in learning or employment

Co-ordinators and mentors acknowledged a need to measure progress but felt that the scores at review meetings were not a good basis for analysis – they should be used for the purpose for which they were designed, namely, as a tool for having a structured discussion with the young person about past progress and future plans and not as a precise measure of outcomes. One mentor suggested that they "should be used for the young person not for the file or for Le Chéile".

Some co-ordinators questioned the ability of mentees to be truly self-reflective and some who were involved with several services were prone to talking the talk rather than being open and honest. At the same time, mentors said that unrealistically high scores by the mentees were challenged appropriately. One mentor expressed reservations about a tendency of some young people to be negative in assessing themselves but this was not universal. Many co-ordinators and mentors felt that the tool and paperwork were challenging for young people and "difficult for them to relate to". A simple approach was desirable. Initial reaction to the new tool introduced in 2016was that it was an improvement. One probation officer thought that reviews could be a little drawn out and wordy and involved too much paperwork; in her opinion, they should be more conversational and free-flowing.

Figure 6.2 Le Chéile Young Person Mentoring Outcome Measurement Tool
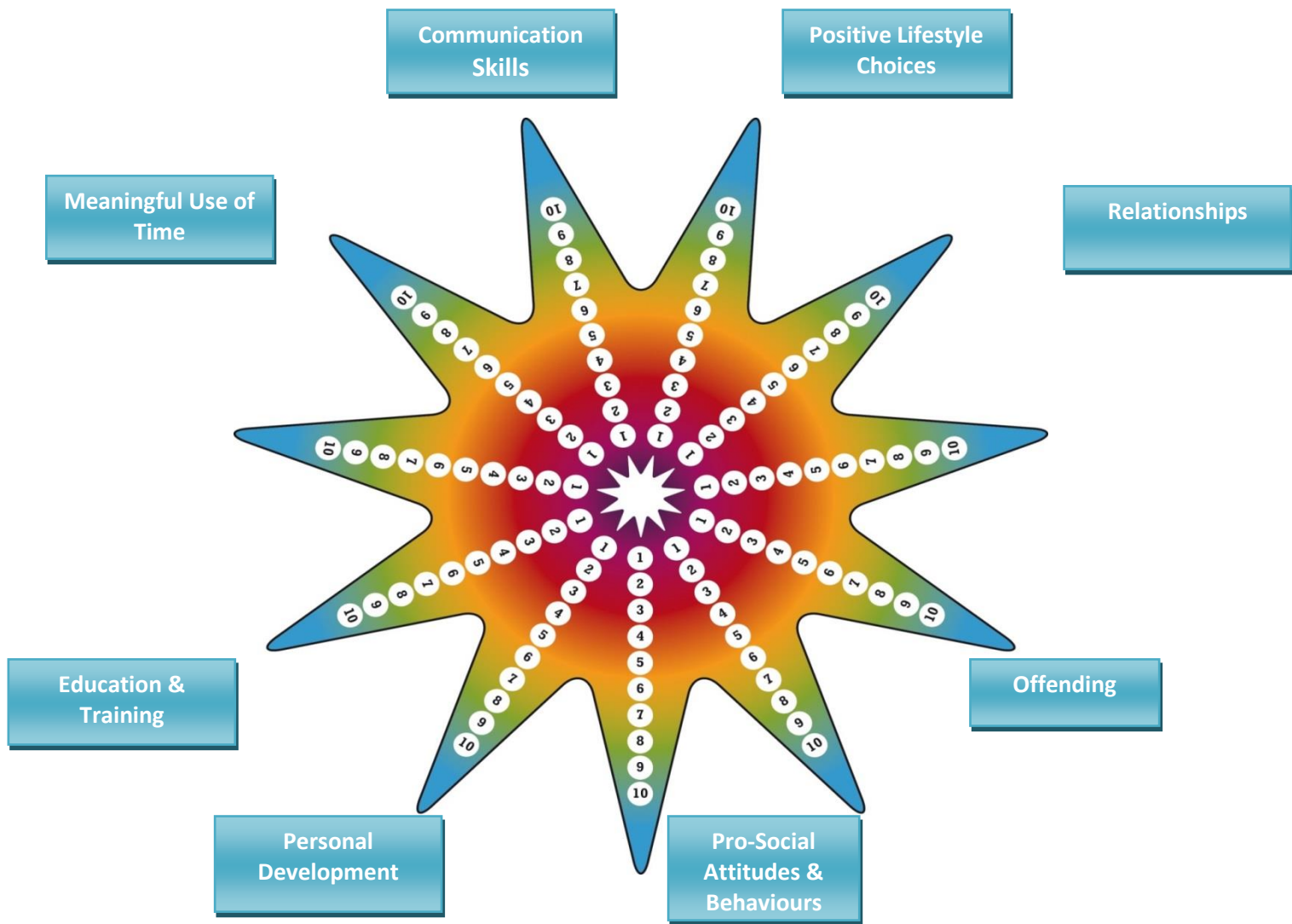
Review meetings are not necessarily held as frequently as recommended in Le Chéile guidelines. Co-ordinators spoke of an expectation to hold them every three months but it is not always possible to comply. No review meetings were held in seven of the 16 cases examined in Region 1, but five of these were of relatively short duration and the mentees did not engage and/or there was little activity to review. Another five cases had review meetings more or less as expected but others were held considerably after the due date, due to the mentee cancelling arrangements or not being contactable, the case being on hold or the mentee being preoccupied with other things going on in their lives. Informal contact between co-ordinator and mentee would typically take place in the absence of formal reviews. Reviews were somewhat more frequent in Region 2 and only two of 16 files examined showed no reviews, including one that terminated early and one whose mentoring was interrupted by a term of imprisonment. Co-ordinators in the focus group argued that flexibility was needed as regards timing of reviews to take account of client capacity and usefulness. They mentioned difficulties where mentoring sessions were not regular and frequent – if it was hard to

get mentees to attend something that was fun, how could they entice them to review meetings. On the other hand, one mentor felt that consistent review meetings were a major strength, especially compared with other services.

The co-ordinators' and mentors' experience varied as regards presence or absence of Probation Officers at mentoring review meetings. Le Chéile guidance suggests that they should attend and that meetings could even take place in Probation offices. Views differed as regards the impact of their presence. Some co-ordinators and mentors reported very positive relations between young people and their Probation Officer and felt that they contributed constructively in support of the mentee. They could also provide additional useful information to which they were privy. It could also be good for them to hear positive things about their clients or to see different sides to them. Others felt that even where they were supportive, they still represented officialdom and that having them present could change the ethos of mentoring and weaken the relationship with the mentor. They felt that young people were sometimes a bit more guarded in their presence. Examples were also cited of differences of opinion about when and how to focus on setting goals and changing behaviour, particularly during the relationship-building phase. Probation Officers interviewed thought it was important to attend reviews where possible and that a structured review was always good. They recognised at the same time that the dynamic could be affected negatively if the mentee's relationship with the Probation Officer was poor and that it could be hard for young people to open up in a formal setting, with one acknowledging that "if I go to a review with them they might hold back and not talk". A Senior Probation Officer argued that all voices were important and thought Probation staff should continue to be involved.

Review meetings and on-going check-in by co-ordinators also take place with parent mentoring but are very straightforward and unproblematic in comparison. The paperwork is also simpler, with a focus on discussing progress towards past goals and setting new ones.

Le Chéile guidance stipulates that at the end of mentoring a case review is arranged 6-8 weeks prior to the end and an exit strategy is devised with the young person. This exit strategy is designed to look at supports available outside of mentoring and help the young people set future goals for themselves. Such planned meetings work well where they take place. However, they are the exception rather than the rule, for a variety of reasons including failure of the young person to maintain contact, relocation of the young person to other parts of the country or abroad, committal to detention or imprisonment, or ending of the Probation Bond period (through breech proceedings or expiry of the period). One mentor also mentioned the arrival of a temporary visiting judge who took a hard line and ordered detention of several young people, including a mentee with whom great progress had been made; continuation of mentoring proved impossible due to lack of access.

Mentors felt that it was important that mentoring relationships end appropriately. Ending could be difficult at the best of times since a good relationship has usually been built up. This is especially the case with parent mentees where the period of mentoring is nearly always significantly longer than with young person mentees. It was inevitable that mentors built friendships even though they work within clear boundaries and it was hard to walk away. Co-ordinators commented that final review meetings were positive celebratory events almost by definition because the mentoring concluded successfully – the negative cases were usually already off the books.

Co-ordinators and mentors were critical of premature ends to mentoring relationships that often took a long time to build up but which had unfinished business. Normally, mentoring ends when probation supervision ends but flexibility was needed sometimes to allow continuation after the formal period agreed with the Probation Service. Flexibility was said to be available in some regions but seemed increasingly hard to get. It usually required the approval of the Senior Probation Officer because the young person was put on voluntary probation. It was felt that there could be pressure from time to time to reduce the number of people on voluntary probation for reasons totally unrelated to mentoring and individuals' needs for support. Furthermore, the impact could be exacerbated if the ending of mentoring coincided with the withdrawal of other services. Specific examples of where needs arose included transition from care, imminent Leaving Certificate results, recent loss, particularly difficult personal circumstances and progression from addiction. Flexibility had been allowed in some of these instances but not in all. A number of mentees who were interviewed said that they would have liked their mentoring to continue for a while longer. Given that parent mentees participate in mentoring without any court requirement and that the average period of mentoring is longer than for young person mentees, there would seem to be scope to provide for a degree of flexibility around closure dates.

For young person mentees, the average duration of mentoring in *successfully completed cases* in 2015 was 10.2 months. The maximum period was 50 months and relates to an exceptional case interrupted by a period spent abroad. The average duration of mentoring in *active cases* in 2015 was 7.7 months, calculated to the end of the calendar. The maximum period in active cases was 45 months. Almost a third of successfully completed cases lasted more than one year and 18 percent of active cases had already lasted more than one year by year's end. Further information is provided in Table 6.3.

For parent mentees, the average duration of mentoring in *successfully completed* cases in 2015 was 14.5 months. The maximum period was 34 months. The average duration of mentoring in *active cases* in 2015 was 9.9 months (calculated to year's end) and the maximum period was 29 months. Almost a half of successfully completed cases lasted more than one year and 30 percent of active cases had already lasted more than one year by year's end. Further information is again provided in Table 6.3.

A comparison of the figures shows that parent mentoring is of longer average duration than young person mentoring and that mentoring of relatively long duration is not unusual for both young people and parents.

These figures overstate actual durations since the date of completion is somewhat arbitrary and reflects the co-ordinator's decision to consider the case closed. Sometimes this can be quite a while after the last contact with the mentor or co-ordinator. Cases are often kept open in the hope that the mentee will respond to efforts to get them to re-engage. This is commendable of course but the date of completion becomes an unreliable indicator of actual duration of mentoring. A more reliable indicator would be date of last mentoring session or review. It is noted also that four young person cases denoted as 'successful completions' lasted less than three months.

Table 6.3   Duration of mentoring (2015)

Duration of mentoring	Young Person Mentees				Parent Mentees			
	Successfully completed		Active		Successfully completed		Active	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Less than six months	23	35	41	61	1	5	12	44
Six months	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
More than six months	40	62	26	39	20	95	15	56
Total	65	100	67	100	21	100	27	100
More than I year	21	32	12	18	10	48	8	30
More than 2 years	3	5	4	6	3	14	3	11

Active cases: durations calculated to 31 December

Chapter 7   Social Return on Investment

7.1   Introduction

Activities are normally considered worth pursuing if the benefits exceed the costs or sometimes if they exceed them by a certain amount. Measurement of costs and benefits is not always easy and is particularly challenging in the area of social interventions. Greater significance is often attached to things that can be bought and sold and have a clear market price but many important things get overlooked as a result. It is generally easier to measure costs than benefits.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) was developed from cost-benefit analysis and social accounting and is about value rather than money. It provides a framework for measuring and accounting for a wider range of impacts of actions and activities than is normally captured in measurement techniques. It seeks to consider social and environmental costs and benefits as well as traditional economic costs and benefits based on market price. It uses monetary values to represent all such costs and benefits and attempts to establish monetary values for all inputs and outcomes.

A challenge in evaluating programmes is that it is often difficult to get good outcomes data and to find suitable measures for important benefits. Proxies are often used where direct measures are not available. Much of this is often speculative and judgemental where there are no right or wrong answers. It is important therefore to set out clearly what assumptions are being made and the basis for choosing specific measures. Key SROI principles include stakeholder involvement, understanding what changes as a result of the intervention being measured, only including what is material (i.e. what might influence a stakeholder's decision), avoidance of over-claiming and transparency of calculation. Avoidance of over-claiming puts a premium on conservatism in estimation.

The process of identification and involvement of stakeholders has been described in Section 3.1 and the process of developing theories of change in Section 4.2. Understanding changes induced by mentoring was further refined in consultation with the Evaluation Steering Group and in focus groups with Le Chéile and probation staff and mentors. Only including what is material was achieved by excluding impacts that were unlikely to exceed a threshold of relevance and significance or were too uncertain to be relied upon. The value of pro-social behaviour by mentees and their integration in the community was excluded accordingly because of part incorporation in other impacts (engagement in education and reduction in offending) and uncertainty about timing and extent of occurrence. Impacts on probation and police supervision caseloads and school discipline were also excluded because they were not deemed significant enough to influence decision-making. Avoidance of over-claiming was ensured through adoption of conservative assumptions throughout, including, for example, use of the least favourable survey findings of impact and attribution, generally using coordinators and mentors as the source rather than mentees. All assumptions and calculations are fully transparent and have been shared with the Evaluation Steering Group and key stakeholders and will be available for wider scrutiny.

Calculating an SROI for any programme of action involves a number of stages, notably (i) mapping outcomes and impacts for all relevant stakeholders (showing relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes), (ii) verifying and putting a value on outcomes, and (iii) accounting for impacts that

cannot be attributed to the programme (that might have happened anyway or might be attributable to other factors). These steps need to be taken in consultation with identified key stakeholders and results verified with them. Actual calculation involves summation of positive impacts, subtraction of negative impacts and comparison with costs/investment.

The SROI calculated value is discounted to take account of a number of factors. To begin with, the expected duration of each benefit is considered. Durations can vary. The benefit from a medical operation may last a lifetime, for example, whereas the benefit of a short course of acupuncture or physiotherapy may be considerably less. The duration of many final outcomes of mentoring can be expected to be relatively long-lasting and similar to each other and the estimated durations are set out in Chapter 7 for each outcome. Values in years 2 to 5 are discounted at a cumulative rate of 5.0 percent, in recognition of the higher value of cash today compared with cash in future years. The rate of 5 percent is the standard rate recommended by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in its Public Spending Code 2012. Drop-off is a related concept that addresses the reduction over time in causality between the intervention and the effect: the intervention is less directly responsible for the outcome each year as the direct impact weakens.

A reduction for deadweight and attribution also needs to be considered. Deadweight is the term used for change that would have occurred anyway in the absence of the intervention being evaluated. Attribution is the term used to take account of change caused by interventions by other services and agencies. In the present evaluation deadweight and attribution were considered jointly: participants in surveys and interviews were asked to estimate the contribution of mentoring taking account of both what could have been expected to occur anyway (for example due to natural maturing or experiences of the criminal justice system) and what might have been due to other interventions (such as counselling, restorative justice or family supports).

Displacement is also normally considered in SROI calculations. This refers to the causation of negative effects to others by the intervention being measured. There was no evidence of positive impacts on mentees or others being offset in any way by negative impacts anywhere else. A small number of cases were noted where mentee positions were worse at the end of mentoring but there was nothing to suggest that mentoring caused or contributed to this deterioration but that they were the continuation of existing trajectories under the influence of negative factors that were already at play.

The end result of an SROI is a simple ratio of benefits to costs. This crystallises the value of a programme in an easily-communicated figure and can be very useful in its own right. However, the process of calculation may be more important in that it facilitates strategic discussions between stakeholders and a focus on understanding the constituent elements of the social value and ensuring that the overall social value is maximised. It can provide an opportunity to change the way things are done and complement any strategic review.

7.2   Impact of young person mentoring

7.2.1   Scope of impacts

In this evaluation, the benefits of mentoring are attributed for SROI calculation purposes to those who complete mentoring successfully, i.e. are mentored for a sufficiently long period that expected benefits can accrue. Le Chéile had a total of 196 Probation Service-referred cases on its books across all eight regions in 2015. Of these, 65 were classified by Le Chéile as having been 'completed successfully' and 67 were classified as 'active', with the remainder 'awaiting placement', 'never commenced' or 'terminated early'. Of the 65 completed cases, 42 lasted six months or more. Of the 67 active cases, 26 had been active for more than six months at the end of the year. Le Chéile had a further five cases categorised as Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) cases. Of these one had been active for more than six months by the end of the year. For purposes of calculating the SROI, the benefits of mentoring are attributed to the 27 mentees whose cases were active for at least six months and the 42 whose mentoring was completed after at least six months, 69 in total.

Benefits of mentoring can also apply to cases which were of less than six months duration. Some recognition needs to be given to this in calculating the SROI. However, it would be imprudent to assume the same level of impact as for those of longer duration or to include cases that were of less than four months duration. To err on the side of caution, cases which were of between four months and six months duration are included in the calculation of the SROI at half the value of the impact for cases of longer duration. Of the 65 completed cases, 13 lasted less than six months but more than four. Of the 67 active cases, another 13 had been active for less than six months but more than four. Of the JLO cases, one 'successfully completed' case had been active for less than six months but more than four. Thus impacts at half rate apply to 27 cases.

Some impacts of mentoring are seen as intermediate outcomes contributing to other outcomes and to include them in the calculation of the social return on investment as a separate impact would be to double count their benefit. Thus, impact on relationships with authority figures is seen as an intermediate outcome contributing notably to involvement in education, work and training, improvement in relationships with parents and other family and improvement in well-being and is not valued separately. Likewise, improvement in communication skills is not included in the calculation as it largely associated with or subsumed in other impacts, such as improved relationships, self-confidence and well-being that are already included.

The percentage improvement for each impact is a combination of the quantitative results from the survey of co-ordinators and mentors and the survey of young person mentees. The percentages emerging from the young person survey are higher than those from the co-ordinator and mentor survey for all but one impact (involvement in activities). The higher scores are not used in SROI calculations because of the principle of conservatism and also because the sample size for young persons is relatively small and potentially biased. Not to factor them in, however, would be to ignore the word of the people directly affected and the qualitative evidence from the interviews and focus groups. The combined score used for SROI purposes is a simple mean of the two scores. Thus for the value of improved family relations, the percentage improvements from the co-ordinator and mentor survey and mentee survey respectively were 11.3 percent and 25.7 percent and the value used in

the calculation of the SROI is 18.5 percent. The same pattern of scores emerges in respect of attribution (i.e. higher scores by the mentees themselves) and the scores are combined in the same way for purposes of calculating the SROI.

Mentoring impacts on many parties. The primary parties affected are the mentees – young people and parents – and the families of mentees, including parents of young mentees who are not themselves being mentored. State agencies impacted include the criminal justice system (police, courts, probation service, prison/detention services) and the health service. The benefits accruing to these stakeholders are set out in the following sections. Communities are also affected in terms of reductions in offending and anti-social behaviour and benefits are included in respect of cost of crimes avoided. Costs of mentoring are calculated in respect of Le Chéile and Probation Service staff and volunteers (even though the volunteers are not paid). Benefits to volunteers arise in respect of satisfaction and self-development but were not measured as part of the evaluation and are not considered other than as part of sensitivity analysis. No other costs are included. In future evaluations it may be necessary to include costs in respect of referring agents such as Gardaí and detention centre staff but the current level of referrals from these sources is too low to make a material difference. No negative effects or displaced costs are attributed to mentoring in the SROI calculation. The literature warns of possible negative effects on young people whose mentoring breaks down prematurely because of withdrawal of mentors but no evidence was found in the evaluation of such withdrawals. The impacts of mentoring can be short-term and long-term. The focus of the SROI is on the near future and impacts beyond five years are not included in most instances because of uncertainty and likely dilution effects.

7.2.2   Value of improved family relations

The value of improved family relations cannot be measured directly. A common proxy value is the cost of family therapy sessions. This is the approach that was used in calculating the SROI for Le Chéile's restorative justice service: a proxy value of six family therapy sessions was used, valued at €600 (Quigley et al, 2014). The rationale is that people would be prepared to pay this amount to achieve improved relationships. A drawback with this approach, however, is that it values an outcome in terms of the cost of another input. An alternative is to value the well-being that ensues from improved relations and it is this approach that is adopted here. The value used is that of the New Economic Foundation (NEF Consulting 2010: 33) which assesses the value of supportive relationships at £15,500. This is a monetary representation of the value to an individual who benefits from supportive relationships, defined as frequent and high quality relationships with close friends, family and others who provide support. Some of these supports are valued separately under other headings in this report and an adjustment is made therefore to take account of the value of improved relationships with peers (7.2.3) and improved well-being overall (7.2.8). The adjusted value of improved family relations is £722 equivalent to €857 (www.xe.com/currencyconverter, used on 12/9/16).

Given the nature, intensity and duration of the mentoring service compared with Le Chéile's restorative justice service, a drop-off rate of 20 percent is considered reasonable, which compares with a drop-off rate of 30 percent used in the evaluation of the restorative justice service (Quigley et al, 2014). Given that deadweight is already incorporated in the attribution rate, no separate

adjustment for deadweight is necessary. The duration of benefit is calculated at four years and the standard discount rate of 5 percent is applied. The SROI value is calculated therefore as shown in Table 7.1 and incorporates the value for young person mentees of improved relations both with parents and other family members.

Table 7.1 Value of improved family relations

Unit value	€857	€857
Number of mentees	69	27
Percentage improvement	18.5%	9.3%
Attribution to mentoring	0.44	0.44
Period of benefit	4 years	4 years
Drop-off	20%	20%
Discount rate	5%	5%
Value	€14,337	€2,805
Total value	€17,142	

The parents and other family members of young person mentees also benefit from improved family relations. Some parents are themselves mentored and the benefit to them of improved family relations is included in Section 7.3. It was not possible in this evaluation to establish the number of parents whose children are mentored but who are not themselves mentored. It has been estimated, however, at roughly 50 percent. To err on the side of caution, a figure of one-third has been used here for SROI calculation purposes, and, in the absence of information on mentee family composition, no provision is made for benefit to other family members. The same proxy value is used as for the mentees themselves, namely the value of supportive relationships, valued at £15,500, equivalent to €18,398. The full amount is used here without adjustment since there is no provision elsewhere in the SROI calculation for any element of the benefit to this group. The same assumptions are made as regards deadweight, drop-off, duration and discount rate as for young person mentees.

Table 7.2 Value of improved family relations – parents of mentees

Unit value	€18,398	€18,398
Number of beneficiaries	23	9
Percentage improvement	18.5%	9.3%
Attribution to mentoring	0.44	0.76
Period of benefit	4 years	4 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	20%	20%
Value	€102,597	€20,073
Total value	€122,670	

7.2.3 Value of improved peer relations

This evaluation adopts the same approach to valuing improved peer relations as was used in the evaluation by Quality Matters of Le Chéile's restorative justice service (Quigley et al, 2014). They used Fujiwara's Subjective Wellbeing work which calculates the monetary value of a good or service by estimating the amount of money that would be needed to keep individuals as satisfied with life as if they could not enjoy that good or service. They estimated the value of being a member of a social group at £1,850. The value for a person aged under-25 is higher at £2,959 which is equivalent to €3,511. The drop-off rate and the duration are assumed to be the same as for improved family relations.

Table 7.3 Value of improved peer relations

Unit value	€3,511	€3,511
Number of mentees	69	27
Percentage improvement	16.4%	8.2%
Attribution to mentoring	0.43	0.43
Period of benefit	4 years	4 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	20%	20%
Value	€50,887	€9,956
Total Value	€60,843	

7.2.4 Mentee involvement in activities outside the home

The impact on mentees of involvement in activities outside the home can be viewed as contributing to other outcomes (notably development of social and communication skills and self-confidence, involvement in pro-social activities and reduction in offending and anti-social behaviour). However, there are other separate benefits as regards mental and physical health which need to be considered over and above health benefits from reduced substance misuse.

The value of improved involvement in activities draws on the work of Fujiwara on social wellbeing. The value of frequent moderate exercise is calculated at £3,848 or €4,565 (Value Calculator version 3.0, May 2016). For SROI calculation purposes, the benefit is expected on average to last four years with similar deadweight (zero) and drop-off rates as assumed for improved relations with parents and family.

Table 7.4 Value of improved health from activity outside the home

Unit value	€4,565	€4,565
Number of mentees	69	27
Percentage improvement	27.5%	13.8%
Attribution to mentoring	0.52	0.52
Period of benefit	4 years	4 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	20%	20%
Value	€134,165	€26,250
Total Value	€160,414	

7.2.5 Substance misuse

For purposes of calculating the SROI, the benefit of alcohol and drug use are taken together given that there is considerable overlap between mentees as regards both sets of usage. For example, 45 percent of mentees had the same rating for alcohol and drug use at the start of mentoring and 46 percent at the end and differences tended to be small and compensatory, with a slightly greater improvement as regards drug misuse. The percentage improvement for substance abuse is the mid-point of the alcohol and drug values. The values for the various SROI constituents are shown in Table 7.5. The proxy indicator for the value of an improvement is that used in the restorative justice service evaluation, namely, the value of a state-funded, NGO-managed substance misuse 12-week day programme. The benefit is ascribed to the same number of mentees as before, given that the lower number of mentees with substance misuse issues is factored into the percentage improvement figure. The duration of benefit and drop-off rates are assumed to be the same as for the evaluation of the restorative justice service and, as with other impacts, no adjustment is made for deadweight because it is already factored into attribution.

Table 7.5 Value of reduced substance abuse

Unit value	€1,650			€1,650
Number of mentees	69			27
Period of benefit	4 years			4 years
Discount rate	5%			5%
Drop-off	20%			20%
	Alcohol	Drugs	Combined	Combined
Percentage improvement	22.5%	26.9%	24.7%	12.4%
Attribution to mentoring	0.37	0.42	0.39	0.39
Value	€32,667			€6,391
Total Value	€39,058			

7.2.6 Involvement in Education, Work and Training

The value of re-engagement in education or engagement in work and training for Le Chéile mentees can be encompassed in the estimated value of re-engagement in education alone on the basis of the available evidence indicating that a minority were actually engaged in work after mentoring and the majority who experienced change primarily got involved in education or training at different levels. Following Quigley et al. (2014), the value of remaining at school is calculated based on the average additional income received once employed if the individual had completed secondary education. The same approach is adopted here. The figure is based on an estimate of net present value of second level education divided by the estimated work life. This amounted to $2,847 for males and (although not included in the previous evaluation report) $2,361 for females. Using both figures and weighting for the gender divide of mentees, the value of having completed send level education is calculated here as a weighted average of $2,775 (i.e. $2,847*0.852+$2,361*0.148) or €2,444. The assumed duration of benefit is the same as for the earlier evaluation and drop-off is included at 20 percent. It is noted that levels of education and skill are also generally associated with social outcomes such as levels of health, trust, democracy and social cohesion but no separate

allowance was made for these in the previous evaluation and none is made in the current calculation. A small number of mentees were identified as having gone on to third level education but details were imprecise as regards completion rates and levels achieved. No value was included in the SROI calculation therefore, based on the criteria of including only what is material and avoiding over-claiming.

Table 7.6 Value of engagement in education

Unit value	€2,444	€2,444
Number of mentees	69	27
Percentage improvement	31.5%	15.8%
Attribution to mentoring	0.46	0.46
Period of benefit	5 years	5 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	20%	20%
Value	€88,866	€17,387
Total Value	€106,252	

7.2.7   Self-confidence

The value of the change is based on Fujiwara's Subjective Wellbeing work again. The May 2016 value calculator assigns a value of £9,283 to improvements in youth confidence, equivalent to €11,013. The period of benefit is assumed to be four years and a drop-off rate of 20 percent is applied. A separate adjustment for deadweight is again not required.

Table 7.7 Value of improved self-confidence

Unit value	€11,013	€11,013
Number of mentees	69	27
Percentage improvement	34.7%	17.4%
Attribution to mentoring	0.64	0.64
Period of benefit	4 years	4 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	20%	20%
Value	€502,662	€98,347
Grand Total	€601,009	

7.2.8   Well-being

Hopefulness and happiness are not just contributing factors to other valued impacts but outcomes with intrinsic value linked to mental well-being. They were measured separately in the surveys but are combined to provide a single indicator of well-being. To include them separately would be to double-count the impact. A proxy of relief from depression and anxiety is used for SROI calculation purposes here and has a value of £11,819 for youth (Value Calculator version 3.0, May 2016), equivalent to €14,022. Duration and drop-off rates are assumed to be similar to those for self-confidence.

Table 7.8 Value of improved well-being

Unit value	€14,022			€14,022
Number of mentees	69			27
	hope	happiness	combined	Combined
Percentage improvement	43.2%	35.6%	39.4%	19.7%
Attribution to mentoring	0.65	0.53	0.59	0.59
Period of benefit	4 years			4 years
Discount rate	5%			5%
Drop-off	20%			20%
Value	€669,914			€131,070
Total Value	€800,984			

7.2.9 Re-offending

Reduction in criminal and anti-social behaviour has a value for offenders which can be measured by reduced stress from less frequent involvement with the criminal justice system. In the present evaluation, that value can be said to be subsumed already in the valuation of hopefulness and happiness.

Of far greater importance is the value to potential future victims and the criminal justice agencies of crimes avoided. Estimating what might happen in the absence of an intervention is difficult and should take account of a number of factors, notably initial likelihood of re-offending and expected desistance patterns (e.g. aging out of offending). In the absence of authoritative evidence about the mentee group, reliance has to be placed on other sources. Of particular relevance is the Central Statistics Office (CSO) work on three-year recidivism rates of offenders who were subject to probation orders (Central Statistics Office, 2015). The CSO analysis established an overall recidivism rate of 37.3 percent, with higher rates for males (38.3 percent) and especially young males (65.2 percent for under 18s and 41.6 percent for males aged 18-24). Rates varied by original offence type, with rates of 41.8 percent for theft type offences, 37.8 percent for criminal damage and 41.6 percent for public order offences. The rates refer to reported, recorded offences committed within three years of commencing probation that resulted in a court conviction. They could therefore be seen as a conservative estimate of re-offending. All young people referred by the Probation Service for mentoring by Le Chéile are on probation bonds or similar. A composite re-offending rate of 40 percent therefore seems reasonable for the mentee cohort.

To calculate the value of avoided crime, estimates are needed of the number of offences that would have been committed and the associated costs of those offences. The CSO analysis does not show frequency of new offending, merely first new offence. UK Ministry of Justice statistics for proven re-offending for England and Wales for the year ending September 2014 found a re-offending rate for juveniles of 37.8 percent within one year and an average frequency of re-offending of 3.19 new offences. Lower rates of re-offending (30.8 percent) were found for juveniles given a non-custodial sentence and for those aged 18-20 (28% approx.). Using Ministry of Justice data as a guide, it might be expected that re-offenders in the mentee age bracket would, if unchecked, commit an average of one recorded offence and, drawing on CSO data, that the offences most likely to be committed would be public order/drug offences, theft, burglary, criminal damage and assault. It seems likely that the mentee cohort would commit at least two other unreported or unrecorded offences.

The Home Office (2005) estimates the economic and social costs of crimes against individuals and households. It includes costs in anticipation of crime (defensive expenditure and insurance administration), costs as a consequence of crime (physical and emotional impact, value of property damaged or stolen and not recovered, victim services, lost output and Health Service costs) and costs in response to crime (total criminal justice system, including policing, prosecution, courts, probation and detention). In 2003/2004, costs were calculated as £634 for theft (other than vehicle-related), £3,268 for burglary, £866 for criminal damage, £1,440 for common assault and £8,056 for wounding (assault causing harm). No cost figures were available in respect of public order and drug offences but these consist primarily of criminal justice system costs and averaging the criminal justice system element of costs for assault, theft and criminal damage might reasonably be assumed to be £227. On the other hand, unreported or unrecorded offences would by their very nature exclude criminal justice system costs. In 2003/2004, adjusted costs for unrecorded offences would be £333 for theft (other than vehicle-related), £2,131 for burglary, £740 for criminal damage, £1,185 for common assault and £7,078 for wounding (assault causing harm). See Table 7.9. The economic and social cost of crimes avoided through mentoring might be considered a composite of the cost of the above offences multiplied by 1.0 (number of new recorded offences in a year) plus the adjusted cost of unrecorded crime by 2.0 (number of new unrecorded offences in a year). This yields a cost of crime per offender of £1,399 or €1,660.

Table 7.9 – Estimated costs of crime (£)

	Recorded crime	Unrecorded crime
Theft (other than vehicle-related)	634	333
Burglary of dwelling	3268	2131
Criminal Damage	866	740
Assault	1440	1185
Wounding	8056	7078
Public order offences	227	--
Drug offences	227	--

Source: Recorded crime: Home Office Online Report 2005 (p7)

The period of benefit is estimated for SROI purposes at 5 years, as was the case in the evaluation of Le Chéile's restorative justice service (Quigley et al., 2014). The drop-off rate is the same too, at 30 percent. No separate adjustment is made for deadweight as it is already included in the attribution rate. See Table 7.10.

Table 7.10 Value of reduced re-offending

Unit value per crime	€1,660	€1,660
Number of mentees	69	27
Percentage improvement	37.8%	18.9%
Attribution to mentoring	0.56	0.56
Period of benefit	5 years	5 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	30%	30%
Value	€77,131	€15,091
Total Value	€92,222	

7.2.10   Value of detention avoided

The Home Office figures for the economic and social costs of crime include an element of costs for the criminal justice system which include costs of policing, prosecution, courts, probation and detention. They are average costs across all offences and offenders and factor in likelihood of conviction and imposition of a custodial sentence. However, they are likely to underestimate the likelihood of detention for offenders who are already known to the system as offenders and who have avoided custody in relation to the index offence for which they have been referred for mentoring. A number of the mentees have in fact served time in detention or prison in the past. Therefore an additional allowance has been made for detention avoided through the reduction in offending outlined in Table 7.10.

The estimated re-offending rate is 40 percent, as outlined in Section 7.2.9. This equates to 27.6 of the 69 mentees who were mentored for at least 6 months and 10.8 of the 27 mentees who were mentored for between four and six months. Thus in the absence of any mentoring impact, 38 mentees could be expected to re-offend, be convicted and face a potential sentence of detention or imprisonment. Given their prior offending, a conservative estimate of the number who would be so sentenced is 12 – roughly a third.

For evaluation purposes it is assumed that with the support of mentoring eight of these do not re-offend and thus savings in detention arise in respect of eight. The surveys and interviewees provide supporting evidence. According to the survey of co-ordinators and mentors, there was an increase of 19 in the number of mentees given the lowest rating of 1 ("not at all") for re-offending at the end of mentoring and eight mentees improved by the three highest margins possible (7, 8 or 9). The survey of mentees showed an increase of six in those on scores of 1, from a smaller sample size, with four improving by scores of 7, 8 or 9. Individual testimonies of mentees who were interviewed provide further supporting evidence.

The value of the saving is the marginal cost of detention or imprisonment. Offenders of the age profile of Le Chéile mentees are detained in the Oberstown Children Detention Campus or in adult prisons. An average of the detention and prison costs is therefore used. The annual cost of a child in a child detention centre in 2013 was €314,000 and the annual cost of an adult in prison in 2015 was €68,628 (Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2016). Averaging these costs and calculating the marginal costs at 20 percent of the total cost, the marginal cost of an individual offender is €38,263. This figure applies to the 8 young persons who without mentoring might be expected to spend time in detention school or prison. The period of benefit is estimated at six months (estimated average period of detention) and no adjustment for discount or drop-off is required. The net value of €85,709 is a conservative estimate and takes account of the fact that cost of detention is factored into the cost of crimes use (Table 7.9) in calculating the value of reduced re-offending (Table 7.10).

Table 7.11 Value of detention avoided

Unit value	€38,263
Number of mentees	8
Attribution to mentoring	0.56
Period of benefit	0.5 years
Value	€85,709

7.2.11   Value of benefits to the Health Service

The value of benefits to the Health Service of reduced alcohol and drug abuse also need to be considered. The same approach to SROI calculation is adopted here as was used in the evaluation of the Le Chéile restorative justice service. Through the survey of co-ordinators and mentors, substance misuse was found to have improved by 24.7 percent on average. Between a quarter and a third of mentees were given high ratings (8-10) as regards the part alcohol and drugs played in their lives at the start of mentoring (26 percent and 32 percent respectively). The percentage with these ratings dropped significantly after mentoring (9 percent and 7 percent respectively). A majority of mentees with high ratings had high ratings for one substance but not both, implying about 45 percent with problematic use before mentoring and about 13 percent after mentoring. Applying these percentages to the 69 mentees who had been mentored for at least six months suggests that about 31 mentees were in the highest range at the start of mentoring and about nine mentees remained in that bracket at the end of mentoring. Thus 22 mentees could be said to have moved away from problematic use. This is evidenced by testimonies of individuals interviewed. Others also reduced their substance use from lower starting points. Some mentees received help from other services, including residential treatment, but attribution to mentoring was 39 percent on average and higher for those in the higher use bracket. The cost of individual treatment for problematic substance use was estimated at €7,054 in 2012 (Quigley et al., 2014, 13.2). The period of benefit is estimated at two years, with drop-off of 20 percent, the same as in the restorative justice evaluation.

Table 7.12 Value of health service costs avoided

Unit value	€7,054
Number of mentees	22
Attribution to mentoring	0.39
Period of benefit	2 years
Discount rate	5%
Drop-off	20%
Value	€94,532

7.3   Impact of parent mentoring

7.3.1   Scope of impacts

The benefits of mentoring are attributed for SROI calculation purposes to those who are mentored for a sufficiently long period that expected benefits can accrue. Le Chéile had a total of 66 parent mentoring cases on its books across all eight regions in 2015. Of these, 21 were classified by Le Chéile as having been 'completed successfully' and 27 were classified as 'active', with the remainder

'awaiting placement', 'never commenced' or 'terminated early'. Of the 21 completed cases, 20 were of at least six months duration. Of the 27 active cases, 15 had been active for more than six months at the end of the year. For purposes of calculating the SROI, the benefits of mentoring are attributed to the 20 whose mentoring was completed after at least six months and the 15 mentees whose cases were active for at least six months, 35 in total.

Reduced benefits of mentoring are also calculated for cases which were of less than six months but more than four months duration. To err on the side of caution, half the value of the impact is included in the SROI calculation for such cases. Of the 21 completed cases, 1 fell into this category as did 18 of the 27 active cases. Thus impacts at half rate apply to 19 cases.

As for young person mentees, some impacts of mentoring are seen as intermediate outcomes contributing to other outcomes and to include them in the calculation of the social return on investment as a separate impact would be to double count their benefit. Thus, in the case of parents, improvement in communication skills is not included in the calculation as it largely associated with or subsumed in other impacts, such as improved relationships, self-confidence and well-being that are already included. A number of other impacts are combined to avoid double counting.

The source of quantitative information on impacts is the survey of parent mentees, informed also by the qualitative information from parent mentees and from co-ordinators, mentors and Probation Service staff.

7.3.2   Mentee involvement in activities outside the home

The impact on mentees of involvement in activities outside the home can be viewed as contributing to other outcomes such as self-confidence and well-being. However, there are other separate benefits in the area of physical health which need to be considered. The value of improved involvement in activities draws on the work of Fujiwara on social wellbeing. The value of frequent moderate exercise is calculated at £2,880 for adults or €3,417 (Value Calculator version 3.0, May 2016). For SROI calculation purposes, the benefit is expected on average to last four years with a drop-off rate of 20 percent. Deadweight is incorporated in attribution.

Table 7.13 Value of improved health from activity outside the home

Unit value	€3,417	€3417
Number of mentees	35	19
Percentage improvement	37.1%	18.6%
Attribution to mentoring	0.76	0.76
Period of benefit	4 years	4 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	20%	20%
Value	€100,437	€27,262
Total value	€127,699	

7.3.3   Value of improved family relations

In calculating the SROI in 2015 for Le Chéile's restorative justice service, the evaluation team used a proxy value for improved family relationships of the equivalent of six family therapy sessions (Quigley et al., 2014). This is a conservative estimate of the value of therapy since it equates to the input cost of sessions rather than the benefit that flows from the intervention. An alternative considered here is the value of the well-being, ability to handle stress and hopefulness that flows from improved relationships. This is discussed in Section 7.3.7 and summarised in Table 7.16 and it is not necessary to include a separate valuation here.

7.3.4   Value of increased involvement in education, work and training

The nature of improved engagement in education, work and training for parent mentees is different from that of young person mentees. Many parents had already completed second level education and their increased activity in the period of mentoring took the form of involvement in shorter courses and vocational training. A small number got part-time or full-time employment. The basic starting point in valuing the impact is similar however: the proxy used is the average additional income of an individual who has completed secondary education. This is the notional value even if the parent does not subsequently enter the workforce. The figure is based on an estimate of the private net present value of second level education divided by the estimated work life. This amounted in 2013 to $2,361 for females and this figure is used since the vast majority of parent mentees were female. This equates to €2,079 (www.xe.com/currencyconverter, used on 12/9/16). The assumed duration of benefit is the same as for the young person mentees. A higher drop-off of 30 percent is included. No adjustment is required for deadweight, which is already included in attribution.

Table 7.14 Value of engagement in education, work and training

Unit value	€2,079	€2,079
Number of mentees	35	19
Percentage improvement	35.0%	17.5%
Attribution to mentoring	0.76	0.76
Period of benefit	5 years	5 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	30%	30%
Value	€61,602	€16,721
Total value	€78,323	

7.3.5   Value of improved parenting skills

A similar approach to the valuation of improved family relationships (in 7.3.3 above) is adopted here in valuing improved parenting skills, using a proxy value of the equivalent of six parenting skills sessions, which is valued at €800 (based on cost of course provided by Barnardos, 2016). The SROI value is calculated therefore as shown in Table 7.15.

Table 7.15 Value of improved parenting skills

Unit value	€800	€800
Number of mentees	35	19
Percentage improvement	31.8%	15.9%
Attribution to mentoring	0.79	0.79
Period of benefit	5 years	5 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	20%	20%
Value	€25,582	€6,944
Total value	€32,525	

7.3.6   Value of improved self-confidence and self-esteem – parents

For purposes of calculating the SROI, the scores for self-confidence and self-esteem are combined, as they measure much the same thing. The value of the change is based on Fujiwara's Subjective Wellbeing work. The May 2016 value calculator assigns a value of £13,065 to high confidence in adults, equivalent to €15,500. The period of benefit is assumed to be four years and a drop-off rate of 20 percent is applied. A separate adjustment for deadweight is again not required, since it is incorporated in attribution.

Table 7.16   Value of improved self-confidence and self-esteem – parents

Unit value	€15,500	€15,500
Number of mentees	35	19
Percentage improvement	40.3%	20.2%
Attribution to mentoring	0.79	0.79
Period of benefit	4 years	4 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	20%	20%
Value	€514,466	€139,641
Total value	€654,106	

7.3.7   Value of improved wellbeing, ability to handle stress and hopefulness

Emotional well-being, ability to handle stress and hopefulness were measured separately as cross-checks but are related. They are contributing factors to other valued impacts but they are also outcomes with intrinsic value linked to mental well-being. A proxy of relief from depression and anxiety is used here for SROI calculation purposes and has a value of £36,949 for adults (Value Calculator version 3.0, May 2016), equivalent to €43,837. Duration and drop-off rate are assumed to be similar to those for self-confidence. The improved well-being flows directly from parent mentoring and indirectly from improved family relations.

Table 7.17 Value of improved well-being

Unit value	€43,837	€43,837
Number of mentees	35	19
Percentage improvement	38.6%	17.8%
Attribution to mentoring	0.75	0.75
Period of benefit	4 years	4 years
Discount rate	5%	5%
Drop-off	20%	20%
Value	€1,323,019	€359,105
Total value	€1,682,124	

7.4   Costs of mentoring

The main costs of mentoring arise in respect of Le Chéile and the Probation Service. For SROI purposes, a value is also assigned to mentor time It is assumed that the costs of mentoring time (costed at for example the minimum national wage) are cancelled out by these benefits. No other costs need to be factored into the SROI calculation, e.g. Garda or detention services that support mentoring to a very small extent through JLO referrals and facilitating meetings in detention.

Le Chéile costs attributed to mentoring (both parent and young person services) amounted to €923,265 in 2015. This total comprised direct costs of €812,006 and support costs of €111,259. The mentoring costs account for the bulk of Le Chéile's budget with family support services in all regions and the restorative justice service in Limerick accounting for the rest.

Probation Service costs arise in respect of Senior Probation Officer time, primarily in relation to HQ and regional activities, and Probation Officer time at the referral stage and at initial meeting and review meeting stages. The average annual salary cost of a Senior Probation Officer is estimated to be €65,000 (as in the Quality Matters evaluation of the restorative justice programme). A figure of €93,658 is used in the SROI calculation to include salary-related costs, notably PRSI (+2.01 percent), pension (+13 percent) and overhead (+25 percent) in accordance with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform guidelines (Public Spending Code, 2012). It is estimated in the SROI calculation that Senior Probation Officers spend 24 hours per annum at meetings in Le Chéile Head Office and another 48 hours per annum in the regions. At an estimated €62 per hour (Public spending Code, 2012), the total annual cost is €4,430.

The average annual salary cost of a Probation Officer is estimated to be €49,000 (as in the Quality Matters evaluation of the restorative justice programme). A figure of €76,653 is used in the SROI calculation to include salary-related costs, notably PRSI (+10.75 percent), pension (13 percent) and overhead (25 percent). Probation Officer time is spent at referral and initial meeting stage ('stage 1') and at review stage ('stage2'). A working assumption of four hours per referral at stage 1 has been made for 150 referrals. The latter is derived from the figure of 108 young person and 33 parent referrals in 2015 with a margin for caution and to cover JLO referrals (3 in 2015). A working assumption has been made of 2 hours per review case, 180 active and completed cases per annum, 2.5 reviews per case per annum and attendance by Probation Officers at 25 percent of reviews. At

an estimated €50 per worked hour, the total annual cost is €41,172. This gives a total cost for the Probation Service of €45,603

As regards volunteer mentor time, total mentoring and training/support hours have been estimated at 5,598, calculated as follows. Mentors were reported to have spent 2,120 hours mentoring young person mentees in 2015 and 1,558 hours mentoring parent mentees, a total of 3,678 hours (Le Chéile, 2015). To this should be added the number of hours spent at training and support sessions at local and national level, estimated at four sessions per annum, four hours per session, for 120 mentors: a total of 1,920 hours giving and the grand total above of 5,598 hours. Using average hourly earnings of €22.29 (Central Statistics Office: Quarter 1, 2015), the total cost would be €124,779.

The combined total cost of Le Chéile and Probation Service provision and volunteer mentor time is thus €1,093,647.

7.5   Summary of benefits/costs

A summary of values of benefits and costs is presented in Table 7.18. This shows total benefits worth €4,755,614 and total costs of €1,093,647. This yields a net benefit of €3,661,967. The ratio of benefits to costs, i.e. the social return on investment, is thus €4.35. In other words, every €1 spent on Le Chéile mentoring returns €4.35 in social value.

This can be broken down between young person mentees and parent mentees. A clear separation of benefits for each of the two groups exists since the valuations were calculated separately. However the costs of mentoring for each group are not separated so easily. An estimate can be provided by assigning joint costs in proportion to the number of cases. If referrals are used as a basis for allocation, the ratio of Young Person referrals to Parent Mentee referrals 3.27:1 (based on a ratio of 108:33 in 2015). If, instead, active or completed cases are used as the basis of allocation, the ratio of Young Person to Parent Mentee cases is 2.75:1 (based on a ratio of 132:48 in 2015). A compromise ratio of 3:1 is used in the present estimate. On this basis, costs allocated to Young Person mentoring would be €820,235 yielding a net benefit of €1,360,602 and a Social Return on Investment of €2.66. Costs allocated to Parent mentoring would be €273,412 yielding a net benefit of €2,301,365 and a Social Return on Investment of €9.42. This higher return on parent mentoring derives mainly from the high valuations of confidence/self-esteem and well-being/ability to handle stress/hopefulness.

Table 7.18   Summary of benefits and costs and Social Return on Investment

	Benefits	Table	Value (€)
Young Persons	Improved family relationships – young mentees	7.1	17,142
	Improved family relationships – parents	7.2	122,670
	Improved peer relationships	7.3	60,843
	Increased involvement in activities	7.4	160,414
	Reduced substance misuse	7.5	39,058
	Increased engagement in education, work, training	7.6	106,252
	Increased self-confidence	7.7	601,009
	Improved well-being	7.8	800,984
	Reduced re-offending, anti-social behaviour	7.10	92,222
	Reduced detention	7.11	85,709
	Reduced health costs	7.12	94,532
	Total – young persons		2,180,837
Parent Mentees	Increased involvement in activities	7.13	127,699
	Increased engagement in education, work, training	7.14	78,323
	Improved parenting skills	7.15	32,525
	Greater self-confidence, self-esteem	7.16	654,106
	Greater well-being, ability to handle stress, hopefulness	7.17	1,682,124
	Total – Parent mentees		2,574,777
All mentees	Grand Total Benefits		4,755,614
	Costs		
Young Persons	Costs - 75% of total costs		820,235
	Net Yield		1,360,602
Young Persons	Social Return on Investment		2.66
Parent Mentees	Costs - 25% of total costs		273,412
	Net Yield		2,301,365
Parent Mentees	Social Return on Investment		9.42
All mentees	Le Chéile costs		923,265
	Probation Service costs		45,603
	Volunteer mentors		124,779
	Total costs		1,093,647
	Net Yield		3,661,967
All mentees	**Social Return on Investment**		**4.35**

7.6   Sensitivity Analysis

The purpose of sensitivity analysis is to assess the extent to which the SROI result would change if some of the underlying assumptions were changed. The aim of such an analysis is to test which assumptions have the greatest effect. A standard requirement is to check changes to estimates of deadweight, attribution and drop-off, valuations of outcomes (financial proxies), the quantity of the outcomes, and the value of inputs where non-financial inputs have been valued. The approach recommended by The SROI Network (2012:69) is to calculate how much each estimate needs to be changed in order to bring the social return ratio to 1:1. This shows the sensitivity of the analysis to changes in estimates.

The sensitivity analysis in this section looks at changes to deadweight, attribution and drop-off, valuations of key benefits (particularly to parents) and the percentage improvements reported under key headings. It finally looks at the effect of excluding benefits from mentoring for periods of less than six months duration.

It should be noted that the assumptions made in the SROI calculation are conservative to begin with and sensitivity analysis is not suggesting that the revised lower assumptions are more realistic. Sensitivity analysis is merely testing the impact of making different assumptions.

Deadweight was incorporated in attribution in the current study since people were asked about the effect of mentoring taking account both of other services and what would have happened anyway, without differentiating. Cutting the combined rate of attribution and deadweight by half had the effect of reducing the SROI by half to €2.17. Doubling the drop-off rate for each impact brought the SROI down to €3.25. This involved changing 20 percent and 30 percent drop off rates to 40 percent and 60 percent respectively, which are exceptionally high rates.

Reducing by half the value of improved well-being for young person and parent mentees reduced the SROI to €3.21 while halving the unit value of all impacts reduced the SROI to €2.17.

Limiting the benefits of mentoring to those who have undergone at least six months of mentoring, ignoring the benefit attached to mentoring for those mentored for between four and six months, had the effect of reducing the SROI to €3.55.

To reduce the SROI to €1.00, it would be necessary to make changes of the following order: benefits from mentoring for less than six months excluded, unit values of benefits reduced by 50 percent and the amount of improvement reduced by 45 percent, with all these changes made in combination. On the upside, the only sensitivity test carried out was in respect of inclusion of volunteer benefits. The evaluation did not collect information that would allow calculation of benefits for mentors as was done for direct beneficiaries (including number of beneficiaries, extent of change and attribution to mentoring). The social return on investment does not therefore include these benefits. However the evaluation did provide information on volunteers' reasons for becoming and continuing as a mentor from analysis of mentor files and mentor interviews and focus groups. In one region, eight of 18 mentors reported that they were pursuing third level education courses that required a practical placement and they chose mentoring for that reason. Others cited altruistic reasons such as wanting to give something back to society or help young people facing challenges in their lives. Many reported satisfaction, self-development and skill formation. Le Chéile's annual national surveys of volunteers in 2014 and 2015 also provide information on benefits of volunteering, under four headings: new perspectives, experience, new skills and opportunity to contribute to the community. In the absence of harder information from mentors it is not possible to value benefits to them and it is merely noted that if the benefits equalled the costs, the social return on investment would be €4.91. Future evaluations should seek to quantify such benefits.

In conclusion, it is worth pointing out again that the original assumptions are conservative and err on the side of caution, including exclusion of benefits to volunteers from mentoring. The sensitivity testing was on the basis of making assumptions even more restrictive. All the sensitivity tests give

confidence that the SROI is soundly based and show that returns are high even under extremely negative and unrealistic assumptions.

Chapter 8   **Findings and Recommendations**

8.1   **Findings**

Finding 1   **The Impact of Mentoring**

Mentoring has significant positive impacts on a range of fronts for young people and parents who engage with the service. For young person mentees, key benefits include reductions in alcohol and drug use and offending behaviour; improved self-confidence, hopefulness and happiness; greater involvement in structured activities outside the home and in education, work and training; and improved communication skills and relationships with parents, other family, peers and persons in authority (Section 5.1). The majority of young person mentees experienced some level of improvement and for many the changes were substantial and significant, including as regards moving away from negative peers, re-engaging with education, reducing alcohol and drug use and becoming more pro-social. The biggest overall gains were made in the areas of self-confidence, hopefulness, communications, engagement in activities and, crucially, offending behaviour. The reduction in offending behaviour is a significant finding given international experience (Chapter 2) and the offender profile of Le Chéile mentees (Section 4.2). Not all mentees experienced improvement in all areas since many did not have significant problems to begin with (for example they enjoyed good family relationships or did not have substance abuse problems) but mentoring was credited even in such instances with keeping things on an even keel or minimising deterioration. While recognising the contribution of other interventions, the attribution to mentoring was high.

For parent mentees, benefits accrue in terms of improved self-confidence, self-esteem, emotional well-being, hopefulness and ability to manage stress; improved parenting skills and better relationships with their child and other family members; and greater involvement in activities outside the home (Section 5.2). The most significant benefits for parent mentees were in the areas of self-confidence and emotional well-being. Parents identified having a space for themselves and having someone to talk to as critical elements of mentoring. Parental well-being and support are seen as important for parents in their own right and as prerequisites for working constructively with young people in their care.

Finding 2   **Social Return on Investment**

The total value of Le Chéile's mentoring service in 2015 is calculated at €4,850,146 and costs at €1,093,647, giving a social return on investment of €4.43. In other words, every €1 spent on Le Chéile mentoring returns €4.43 in social value (Section 7.5). This represents a significant return on investment. The social return on investment provides a framework for taking account of a wider range of impacts of actions and activities than is normally captured in traditional cost-benefit analysis. It seeks to include social and environmental costs and benefits as well as more familiar economic costs and benefits. Some of the positive impacts of mentoring are interim steps or building blocks towards achieving final outcomes, while others have intrinsic value of their own as well as contributing to final outcomes. The basis for the calculation of the social return on investment of €4.43 is set out in Chapter 7. It excludes intermediary benefits where appropriate to avoid possible double-counting.

Finding 3   Mentoring Model

The current model of mentoring for young people and parents is robust and fit for purpose. Key stages are the initial mentee meeting with co-ordinators and the subsequent matching of clients and mentors (Section 6.2), relationship-building and goal-setting phases (Section 6.3) and on-going reviews and closures (Section 6.5). Joint participation in enjoyable activities at the start of mentoring was seen as critical to relationship-building and laying the foundation for subsequent change. A striking feature and key strength of Le Chéile mentoring is the extremely positive relationship between mentor and mentee (Section 6.4). Other key strengths include co-ordinator relationships with offender, families and mentors; flexibility in arrangements; persistence and perseverance; the volunteer nature of mentors; being non-judgemental, supportive and challenging; and the focus on the mentee (Section 4.4). Although possible areas for minor improvement are identified in the report, the current model works well for youth and parent mentees.

Finding 4   The Role of Volunteer Mentors

The vital role of volunteers in delivering mentoring was stressed throughout the evaluation. Their abilities and experience are acknowledged and valued by Le Chéile at all levels. The fact that mentors are volunteers was highlighted repeatedly in the evaluation as a key strength of the Le Chéile model. Mentees themselves appreciated that someone would be interested enough in them to give of their own time. This helped strengthen the mentoring relationship and was cited as a factor in mentees turning up for sessions, often at critical stages. Le Chéile devotes considerable energy to supporting volunteers and mentors spoke highly of this, consistent with the very levels of satisfaction revealed in the annual volunteer surveys as regards induction training, on-going training, group supervision, on-going support and overall experience of mentoring (Section 4.4).

Finding 5   Areas of Unmet Need

Field work for the evaluation focused in particular on two regions. Mentoring is provided in six other regions. Their experience was also taken into account, primarily through co-ordinator focus groups and surveys. All regions are subject to the national performance targets of having an average of ten young person mentee and five parent mentee cases open at any one time. This takes account of other Le Chéile services such as family support programmes and restorative justice. The profile of cases and case mix varies between regions. In some regions, waiting lists operate and not all referrals can be accepted. In other regions, co-ordinators identified scope for greater numbers of referrals, whether of young people or parents. In rural areas it was felt that potential cases might not be referred because of anticipated practical difficulties of access to mentors and activities. All this suggests an element of unmet need even in existing regions. However, offending by young people is not confined to the existing regions and it seems likely that similar need arises elsewhere. No service is currently available in the North West and West for example and may be scarcely available in some other counties or parts of counties. It seems unfair that the clear and substantial benefits of mentoring should be denied to offenders, their families and communities by dint of geographical location, notwithstanding logistical challenges in reaching more isolated cases.

Finding 6   The Case for Early Intervention

The vast majority of young person referrals to Le Chéile originate in the Probation Service, with a handful of referrals from the Garda Síochána's Juvenile Liaison Officers in two regions. Probation Service referrals are made by Young Persons Probation teams and adult teams. A number of mentees and their parents commented that they would have benefitted from earlier access to mentoring and wished that they could have done so (Section 4.4). This was recognition of the value of mentoring to them but also an acknowledgement of hardship that might have been avoided. Some mentors and co-ordinators made similar comments and felt that mentoring was sometimes seen as a service of last resort, when other interventions failed. They too favoured earlier intervention, while acknowledging that some mentees might not be ready to engage fully with mentoring at a younger age. Their main point was that it was too late for some young people when they had got involved in offending and had gone through the court system. This may be reflected in the fact that about a quarter of cases referred in 2015 never commenced or terminated early and an unknown number are deemed unsuitable by the Probation Service to begin with. It is also possible that mentoring impacts might be stronger if intervention was earlier. Two possible points of intervention were identified: (i) when school attendance became a problem or when family support services became involved and (ii) when the young people came to the attention of the Gardaí and their cases were processed under the Diversion Programme. Several mentors and co-ordinators also made a case for mentoring for older age cohorts, up to age 25 (Section 6.1). They thought that many in this age category would have matured but could make the transition from offending behaviour more quickly and smoothly with the help of a trusted older mentor.

Finding 7   Mentees from Care Backgrounds

A number of cases examined as part of the evaluation involved young people from care backgrounds. Mentors in one focus group noted a significant difference in cases involving young people from such backgrounds. They said that they typically involved a lot of self-criticism and complexity, with a back-story of rejection, and they argued for specific consideration of the topic to ensure an effective service for this vulnerable group. The mentors also referred to specific scheduling and facilitation difficulties in respect of accessing children in care which had caused frustration and which they felt were avoidable. One mentee said that if she had had something like mentoring when she was in care, she might not have ended up in trouble (Section 4.4). She thought that it would be beneficial if mentoring was available for young people in care independent of Tusla and accessible on a voluntary basis. As regards the transition from care on reaching the age of 18 (or later in some cases), mentoring was seen as having a valuable role in providing support through this difficult phase. The mentee above highlighted the value of flexibility in her case and acknowledged continued support of the Probation Officer, co-ordinator and mentor after leaving care. Other cases revealed the difficulty of staying in touch with young people who changed addresses during the period of State care, either with foster carers or in residential care or both.

Finding 8   Mentoring in Detention

Experience with mentoring in detention, whether in Oberstown or one of the prisons, has been broadly positive (Section 5.3). The mentoring can be a continuation of mentoring started in the

community or be initiated in detention. Mentees and their families appreciated the support at a difficult time and mentors commented that it strengthened the basis for mentoring after release. It was not always possible to arrange mentoring in detention, particularly if detention occurred or ended unexpectedly, was of short duration or brought an end to Probation Service involvement. Transfers between prisons at short notice also frustrated attempts to visit in some instances. Practical challenges arose in respect of travel and access, suitability of facilities and inability to participate in an activity together. Travel to Oberstown, from rural areas in particular, raised issues of time and cost. Visits to prisons normally took place in professional visit rooms which are screened but it was an advantage that they were in addition to family visits rather than at their expense. Mentors found visits daunting initially. Individual experiences showed that the limitations identified were not insurmountable barriers. A pilot programme of mentoring initiated while in Oberstown commenced in late 2015 and it is not possible yet to draw conclusions.

Finding 9   Referrals

The Probation Service makes the vast majority of mentoring referrals to Le Chéile, referring 108 young people and 33 parents in 2015 (Section 6.1). Most young person mentees are subject to Probation Bonds, with mentoring as a condition. Reference was made to mentoring being part of community service orders in a small number of cases. The evaluation showed significant variations in referral rates across and within regions. Some Probation Officers were frequent referrers to Le Chéile, sometimes referring to other services also, while others made few referrals to mentoring. It was recognised that Probation Officers are case managers for their clients and must have discretion in referring them to whatever service they consider the most appropriate to their needs. Nevertheless, co-ordinators identified potential for mentoring in a greater number of cases, including cases seen as challenging or where referrals to other services had failed. They encouraged Probation Officers to discuss cases with them before rejecting mentoring. It was felt that updated referral criteria or guidelines could be helpful in standardising policy and practice. It would be important at the same time to retain flexibility so as not to automatically rule out categories of offence or offender.

Finding 10   Closure Stage

The duration of mentoring for youth mentees is determined by the length of their probation supervision, with mentoring ending when that supervision ends (Section 6.5). In a small number of cases, it is beneficial for the young person to continue mentoring beyond this point because of continuing need. Examples of needs identified in the evaluation included transition from care, imminent Leaving Certificate results, recent bereavement, particularly difficult personal circumstances and progression from addiction. Mentoring beyond the originally agreed period generally requires that the young person be put on voluntary probation but the number of young people on voluntary probation could be restricted for reasons unrelated to mentoring and the individuals' need for support. Flexibility had been allowed in some such instances but not in all and it was said to have become more difficult to achieve. The impact could be exacerbated if the ending of mentoring coincided with the withdrawal of other services. Co-ordinators and mentors called for greater flexibility, mainly for short extended periods. The fact that parent mentees participate in mentoring without any legal requirement and for longer periods than for young person mentees

would suggest scope for greater flexibility for young people. Extensions would need to be short to ensure that other young people would not be deprived of mentoring opportunities.

Finding 11   Parent Mentoring

Parent mentees do not necessarily have a child who is or was being mentored, although they always have a child who is subject to Probation Service supervision. Nationally, parent mentees seem just as likely not to have as to have a child being mentored. Benefits of mentoring accrue regardless and the parent is better placed to deal with the child who is in trouble and to restore and develop a healthier home environment for themselves and any siblings. Much anecdotal evidence emerged from Probation Officers, co-ordinators and mentors that mentoring works best where parents are supportive and pro-active and least well where parents are obstructive or unsupportive. Many parents and their children benefit from involvement in family support and parenting programmes which can supplement mentoring.

Finding 12   Public Profile

Le Chéile is conscious of the need to promote the mentoring service and is very active in doing so. A number of co-ordinators and mentors suggested a revamp of promotional material, seeing a need for greater use of social media and radio to explain what Le Chéile's mentoring is. This might help address any gender imbalance among mentors: a shortage of younger males was mentioned in some regions although this was not always perceived as a problem (Section 4.4).

Finding 13   The Partnership with Probation

The relationship between co-ordinators and Probation Officers is recognised as important, not least in generating referrals, and was generally regarded as positive and professional. Where it existed, co-location of offices helped build and maintain good levels of interaction. Co-ordinators understood clearly that Probation Officers were case managers for their clients and needed to be kept informed of their progress in mentoring. Opinion was somewhat divided among Probation Officers, co-ordinators and mentors about the extent to which Probation Officers should be involved in mentoring review meetings. Advantages and disadvantages of different approaches were outlined. Advantages included contribution of relevant case information, hearing first hand of client progress and giving encouragement. Disadvantages included a risk of the client being more guarded, a premature focus on tasks and goals and the collaborative ethos of mentoring and the mentor-mentee relationship being weakened (Section 6.5).

Finding 14   Information Systems and Case Tracking

Le Chéile's information systems capture information required for case recording and case management purposes. Hard copy files on each mentee and mentor are retained locally. Case information is also kept electronically although printed output from the system proved difficult to use. Summary details of each case are also kept regionally and nationally on Excel spreadsheets. These records show, among other things, dates of referral and start and completion of mentoring as well as current status of cases. The evaluation highlighted some limitations of the data, including

lack of a unique identifying number for cases carried over from one year to the next and completion dates that recorded case closure rather than date of last mentoring activity (Section 6.5).

A number of co-ordinators and mentors commented that the administrative system was getting tighter and less flexible and that paperwork was becoming more onerous. The need for comprehensive referral information and accountability to funders was recognised but some felt a review was warranted. Le Chéile is aware of the challenge and has taken a number of initiatives in recent times, including the introduction of tablets for use in client reviews (Sections 6.2, 6.5).

Co-ordinators and mentors also queried the level and type of information sought from mentees at reviews. Many felt that the old outcome measurement tool was challenging for young people, difficult for them to relate to and produced questionable scores and responses. The new measurement tool was seen as an improvement. They pointed out nevertheless that the review was primarily about having a constructive meeting with the mentee to review progress to date and identify future steps and not collecting data per se. (Section 6.5).

8.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1 Service Expansion

Le Chéile should continue to be resourced to provide mentoring services in existing regions to both young people and parents as mentoring makes significant differences to the lives of mentees, delivers benefits for wider society and provides excellent value for money. Given the high social return on investment from mentoring and in the interests of equal access to services nationally, additional resources should be provided to allow expansion of Le Chéile services to areas of the country that are not currently served. Consideration should also be given to building capacity to deliver mentoring to greater numbers in existing regions where there is unmet or latent demand.

Recommendation 2 Mentoring Model

The current model of mentoring for young people and parents is robust and fit for purpose and should be retained. Key stages are the initial meetings with co-ordinators, matching clients and mentors, regular mentoring sessions, on-going reviews, relationship-building and goal-setting phases and closures. Key strengths include co-ordinator relationships with offender, families and mentors; flexibility in arrangements; persistence and perseverance; the volunteer nature of mentors; being non-judgemental, supportive and challenging; and the focus on the mentee. These should continue to be nurtured and best practice identified and shared.

Recommendation 3 Early intervention

Given the benefits associated with early intervention, consideration should be given to providing mentoring to offending or 'at risk' young people before they become involved in serious or recidivist offending. This could involve Le Chéile accepting referrals from sources such as Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers (in an expansion of the current practice) and Tusla (the Child and Family Agency). Experience with such early intervention should be monitored closely and reviewed.

Recommendation 4   Volunteer Mentors

The input of volunteers is critical to the success of mentoring and is widely recognised: Le Chéile support for volunteers in the form of on-going supervision, training and conferences, is highly valued and should be maintained and developed. Experiences should continue to be reviewed on an on-going basis and best practice should be identified and shared across regions. Le Chéile's policy and procedures manual should continue to be reviewed and updated regularly.

Recommendation 5   Mentees from Care Backgrounds

A review should be carried out of the mentoring needs of young people from care backgrounds and Le Chéile's flexibility to adapt its response, including earlier intervention, provision of mentoring in residential care settings, and continuing service after age 18 or after the expiry of legal orders such as probation bonds.

Recommendation 6   Mentoring in Detention

Experience to date with mentoring in detention, whether initiated in the community and continued in detention or initiated in detention and continued after release, has been broadly positive and the new funded programme to develop mentoring in detention settings can be expected to make a further positive impact. The experiences and challenges documented in this report should be taken in to account in developing the programme.

Recommendation 7   Referral Criteria

Le Chéile and the Probation Service should review existing referral criteria and encourage higher and more consistent referral rates across Probation regions and staff. Referrals should of course continue to take account of the needs and suitability of mentees and the availability of other services, as well as the safety of mentors. While referral of young people with increased levels of need could entail a higher risk of early termination, they would at least have the opportunity to engage. Probation Officers are key gatekeepers to the service and ways to maximise take-up should be examined and shared. Consideration should also be given to expanding the service to young adults up to age 25, in line with emerging European Union norms.

Recommendation 8   Closure Stage

Mentoring generally ends with the expiry of a probation bond or probation supervision. The current flexibility to prolong mentoring beyond that point should continue so as to avoid ending support where there are ongoing needs or upcoming significant life events (such as exam results or leaving home).

Recommendation 9   Parental Involvement

In the light of evidence that the impact of mentoring on young people is greater if their parents are involved proactively, ways to encourage their involvement should be developed, through their participation in parent mentoring, family programmes or other parenting and communication courses or otherwise. In the light of evidence of benefits directly to parents and indirectly to their children, the participation of parents in parent mentoring even where their child is not a mentee should continue.

Recommendation 10   Public Profile

Given its success, the profile of mentoring should be raised with a view to promoting client referral and take-up, volunteer satisfaction and recruitment, greater understanding by the public and increased funding. Promotional material about mentoring should be reviewed so as to make it attractive to target groups such as younger male volunteers.

Recommendation 11   Case Reviews

The structure and format of case reviews should be reviewed to create a standard, consistent approach. The review should take account of experiences to date and incorporate the views of co-ordinators, mentors and Probation Officers, as well as senior managers. The review should consider, among other things, how to promote and protect the ethos and process of mentoring while accommodating the case monitoring and review needs of referring agencies.

Recommendation 12   Information Systems and Case Tracking

Le Chéile's data systems should be reviewed in the light of findings in this evaluation, building on work underway in 2016. Initiatives to reduce the administrative burden on mentors and co-ordinators (such as the introduction of tablets for use in client reviews) should be developed further. An appropriate balance should be sought between the need to take account of mentee capacities to provide information and the need for accountability and measurement. The information should be analysed on an on-going basis to update some of the findings in this evaluation and assist recommended reviews of practice.

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Appendix 1   Focus Group / Interview Questions – Young Person Mentees and Their Parents

1.   Focus Group / Interview Themes – Youth Mentees

Personal details / basic case data
Begin by confirming known personal details before moving on to more in-depth reflections. Include:
- o   number of mentors
- o   reasons for change if more than one
- o   gender of mentor(s)
- o   period of mentoring in months.

Overall view on mentoring
View on overall usefulness/effectiveness of the mentoring programme for their child, on a scale of 1-10

Reasons for participating in mentoring
Ask about the most important reason
Explore other reasons
Possible reasons include
- o   *felt had no choice*
- o   *wish to avoid court sentence*
- o   *pressure from family*
- o   *desire to use opportunity offered to change life*
- o   *fed up with hassle from Gardaí, etc.*

What you hope(d) to get from mentoring
Ask about the main thing they hoped for
Explore other hopes
Possible hopes of young mentees include
- o   *get occasional change of scene*
- o   *talk to someone outside family and usual circle*
- o   *try new leisure activities*
- o   *learn to communicate better*
- o   *improve relations with parents and family*
- o   *improve relations with friends*
- o   *improve relations in school*
- o   *get help tackling alcohol, drug and/or tobacco use*
- o   *access education or training*
- o   *get a job*
- o   *build skills*
- o   *get less hassle in the community, and*
- o   *improve self-confidence.*

What you get/got from the mentoring
- o What was the most significant outcome for the mentees?
  To what extent would they attribute this outcome to mentoring?
- o What other programmes and services have they been involved with over the mentoring period?
  To what extent might these programmes and services have influenced this most significant outcome?
- o What other significant events in their lives might have influenced the outcome?
- o To what extent did the mentoring help mentee set and achieve goals (on scale from 1-10)?

Relate also to any hopes mentioned from list above

The extent of change, if any
In relation to the following specific areas, measure extent of movement by reference to self-rating on scale of 1-10 at beginning of mentoring and end/now:
- o how use spare time – level of engagement in hobbies, sports, leisure activities outside home and school/training/work
- o how like, listen to and get on with others
  - ✓ ease and extent of communication and listening
  - ✓ relationship with parent(s)
  - ✓ relationship with other family
  - ✓ relationship with friends, peers
  - ✓ relationship with people in authority
- o alcohol and drug use
  - ✓ consumption of alcohol
  - ✓ use of hash
  - ✓ use of other drugs
- o education, training and work life
  - ✓ extent of engagement, whatever level, including quality of attendance
  - ✓ extent of academic, training or other achievement
  - ✓ identify nature of previous and current activity (e.g. school, Youthreach)
- o attitudes and behaviours in the community
  - ✓ involvement in new offending, after mentoring began, after mentoring finished
  - ✓ involvement in anti-social behaviour
  - ✓ involvement in pro-social behaviour (positive community activities such as club)
- o how feel about self
  - ✓ self-confidence
  - ✓ self-esteem
  - ✓ emotional well-being
- o hopefulness about future
  - ✓ level of hopefulness about a positive future for self

Check extent to which mentees attribute each change mentioned to the mentoring programme, using scale of 1-4 where 1=not at all, 2= a little, 3=a lot, 4= completely

Relationship with Mentor
- anything liked in particular about the mentor
- anything disliked in particular about the mentor

On scale of 1-10:
- extent to which liked/got on with/enjoyed company of mentor
- extent to which felt good in mentor's company
- extent to which felt bored in mentor's company
- extent to which felt mentor interested in the mentee
- extent to which mentoring was focused on the mentee
- extent to which felt mentor took mentee preferences and interests into account
- extent to which felt satisfied or dissatisfied
- extent to which felt could trust mentor
- extent to which felt liked/valued by mentor
- extent to which felt challenged by the mentor
- extent to which felt supported by the mentor.

Review Process (Scale of 1-10, elaborate on answers)
- Extent of involvement in review meetings
- Satisfaction with review meetings
- Extent of involvement in closure of the mentoring
- Satisfaction with closure
- Why did mentoring end?
- Would you have liked it to continue?

Overall strengths of the mentoring
- what worked/s well and why?

Overall weaknesses
- what might work better, where could improvements be made?

2.   Focus Group / Interview Themes – Parents of Youth Mentees

Personal details / basic case data
Begin by confirming known personal details before moving on to more in-depth reflections.
Confirm age and gender of young person participating in the youth mentoring.
Check if parent is also participating as a parent mentee; if yes, see about completing section below as well.

Overall view on mentoring for their child
View on overall usefulness/effectiveness of the mentoring programme for their child, on a scale of 1-10

Overall view on benefit to the parent of child's mentoring
View on overall usefulness of their child's mentoring programme for them as parents, on a scale of 1-10

Reasons for agreeing to child's participating in mentoring
Most important reason
Other reasons
Possible reasons include
- o   *felt had no choice*
- o   *wish to avoid court sentence*
- o   *pressure - if yes, from where*
- o   *desire to use opportunity offered to change life*
- o   *fed up with hassle from Gardaí, etc.*

What you hope(d) your child would to get from mentoring
Main hope
Other hopes
Possible hopes include
- o   *be influenced by a positive role model*
- o   *get out of the house*
- o   *talk to someone outside family and usual circle*
- o   *try new leisure activities*
- o   *learn to communicate better*
- o   *improve relations with parent(s) and family*
- o   *improve relations with friends*
- o   *improve relations in school*
- o   *get help tackling alcohol, drug and/or tobacco use*
- o   *access education or training*
- o   *get a job*
- o   *build skills*
- o   *get less hassle in the community and from the guards,*
- o   *move away from negative influences, and*
- o   *improve self-confidence.*

What you think your child gets/got from mentoring?

What is/was the most significant outcome for him/her?

To what extent would you attribute this outcome to mentoring?

What other programmes and services has their child been involved with over the mentoring period?

To what extent might these programmes and services have influenced this most significant outcome?

What other significant events in their lives might have influenced the outcome?

To what extent do they think the mentoring helped/s their child set and achieve goals (on scale from 1-10)?

Relate also to any hopes mentioned from list above

The extent of change in your child, if any

In relation to the following specific areas, measure extent of perceived movement by reference to rating on scale of 1-10 at beginning of mentoring and end/now:

- how child uses spare time – level of engagement in hobbies, sports, leisure activities outside home and school/training/work
- how child likes, listens to and gets on with others
    - ✓ ease and extent of communication and listening
    - ✓ relationship with parent(s)
    - ✓ relationship with other family
    - ✓ relationship with friends, peers
    - ✓ relationship with people in authority
- child's alcohol and drug use
    - ✓ consumption of alcohol
    - ✓ use of hash
    - ✓ use of other drugs
- education, training and work life
    - ✓ extent of engagement, whatever level, including quality of attendance
    - ✓ extent of academic, training or other achievement
    - ✓ identify nature of previous and current activity (e.g. school, Youthreach)
- child's attitudes and behaviours in the community
    - ✓ involvement in new offending, after mentoring began, after mentoring finished
    - ✓ involvement in anti-social behaviour
    - ✓ involvement in pro-social behaviour (positive community activities such as club)
- how child feels about self
    - ✓ self-confidence
    - ✓ self-esteem
    - ✓ emotional well-being
- hopefulness about future
    - ✓ level of child's hopefulness about a positive future for himself/herself

Check extent to which parents attribute each perceived change mentioned to the mentoring programme, using scale of 1-4 where 1=not at all, 2= a little, 3=a lot, 4= completely

Child's Relationship with Mentor

On scale of 1-10:
- extent to which child seemed to like/get on with/enjoy the company of the mentor
- extent to which child seemed satisfied or dissatisfied with the mentor
- extent to which child seemed committed to the mentoring in terms of attendance.

Nature of Benefits for the Parent

Possible benefits include:
- *better atmosphere, less tension at home*
- *better relationship with child*
- *improved ability to talk things over with child*
- *improvement in behaviour at home, doing what ask*
- *greater confidence as a parent*
- *improved ability to challenge inappropriate behaviour by their child*
- *less worry*
- *greater hopefulness and optimism about the future*
- *more time for themselves*
- *other*

Overall strengths of the mentoring
- what seemed to work well for their child and why?
- what worked well for them as parents and why?

Overall weaknesses
- what might work better for young mentees, where could improvements be made?
- what might work better for parents of young mentees, where could improvements be made?

Le Chéile Mentoring Service

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey. It should take about 5 minutes to complete. Your answers will not be traced back to you so please be as honest as you can. You can skip any question you prefer not to answer. In answering, please tick a box or circle a score.

How old are you?   18 ☐   19 ☐   20 ☐   21 ☐   22 or over ☐

Is your mentoring   finished? ☐   still happening? ☐

Q1a   When you started the mentoring first, on a scale of 1-10, how would you rate how good you were at talking and listening to people?
Very poor 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Excellent

Q1b   How would you rate how good you are now?
Very poor 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Excellent

Q1c   On a scale of 1-4, how much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?
Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q2a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate how you got on with your parent(s)?
Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very well

Q2b   How would you rate how you get on with your parent(s) now?
Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very well

Q2c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?
Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q3a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate how you got on with others in your family?
Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very well
Please tick here if you do not have other family and skip to Q4:

Q3b   How would you rate how you get on with them now?
Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very well

Q3c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?
Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q4a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate how you got on with people your own age?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Very well

Q4b   How would you rate how you get on with them now?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Very well

Q4c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q5a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate how you got on with people in authority (for example: teachers)?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Very well

Q5b   How would you rate how you get on with them now?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Very well

Q5c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q6a   At the start of mentoring, how much were you involved in activities outside the home in your spare time (for example hobbies, sports)?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Very much

Q6b   How much are you involved now?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Very much

Q6c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q7a   At the start of mentoring, how much of a part did alcohol use (by you) play in your life?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Very much

Q7b   How much of a part does it play now?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   Very much

Q7c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q8a   **At the start of mentoring, how much of a part did drug use (by you) play in your life?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very much

Q8b   **How much of a part does it play now?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very much

Q8c   **How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q9a   **At the start of mentoring, how much were you engaged in education, work or training?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very much

Q9b   **How much are you engaged in education, work or training now?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very much

Q9c   **How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q10a   **At the start of mentoring, how would you rate your self-confidence?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q10b   **How would you rate it now?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q10c   **How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q11a   **At the start of mentoring, how would you rate how hopeful you were about the future?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q11b   **How would you rate it now?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q11c   **How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q12a   **At the start of mentoring, how would you rate how happy you felt with your life?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q12b   **How would you rate it now?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q12c   **How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Remember, this is an anonymous survey and you can skip any question

Q13a   **At the start of mentoring, how would you rate your involvement in offending and anti-social behaviour?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q13b   **How would you rate it now?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q13c   **How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return it using the stamped addressed envelope provided.

Thanks again.

Appendix 3   **Focus Group / Interview Questions – Parent Mentees**

Personal details / basic case data

Begin by confirming known personal details before moving on to more in-depth reflections. Include:

- o family make-up
- o number of mentors
- o reasons for change if more than one
- o gender of mentor(s)
- o period of mentoring in months
- o whether child participated in youth mentoring service.

Overall view on mentoring

- o View on overall usefulness/effectiveness of the mentoring programme for their child, on a scale of 1-10

Reasons for participating in mentoring

Ask about the most important reason

Explore other reasons

Possible reasons include

- o *help their child make positive life choices*
- o *get support in parenting*
- o *identify and develop parenting skills*
- o *develop self-confidence, motivation and stress management skills*
- o *have a positive peer*
- o *develop interests outside the home*
- o *other*

What you hope(d) to get from mentoring

Ask about the main thing they hoped for

Explore other hopes

Possible hopes of parent mentees include

- o *get occasional change of scene*
- o *talk to someone outside family and usual circle*
- o *try new activities and interests*
- o *learn to communicate better*
- o *improve relations within family*
- o *access education, training or work*
- o *build skills*
- o *get less hassle in the community, and*
- o *improve self-confidence,* self-esteem, emotional well-being.

What you get/got from the mentoring - Outcomes
- o What was the most significant outcome for the mentees?
  To what extent would they attribute this outcome to mentoring?
- o What other programmes and services have they been involved with over the mentoring period?
  To what extent might these programmes and services have influenced this most significant outcome?
- o What other significant events in their lives might have influenced the outcome?
- o To what extent did the mentoring help mentee set and achieve goals (on scale from 1-10)?

Relate also to any hopes mentioned from list above

The extent of change, if any
In relation to the following specific areas, measure extent of movement by reference to self-rating on scale of 1-10 at beginning of mentoring and end/now:
- o *involvement in activities and interests outside the home*
- o ease and extent of communication and listening
- o *relations with child who is in trouble*
- o *relations with rest of family*
- o *involvement in personal development - education, training or work*
- o *parenting skills*
- o *self-confidence*
- o *self-esteem*
- o *emotional well-being*
- o *ability to handle stress*
- o *hopefulness about future*
- o *What else has changed for them*

Check extent to which mentees attribute each change mentioned to the mentoring programme, using scale of 1-4 where 1=not at all, 2= a little, 3=a lot, 4= completely

Relationship with Mentor
- o anything liked in particular about the mentor
- o anything disliked in particular about the mentor

On scale of 1-10:
- o extent to which liked/got on with/enjoyed company of mentor
- o extent to which felt good in mentor's company
- o extent to which felt bored in mentor's company
- o extent to which felt mentor interested in the mentee
- o extent to which mentoring was focused on the mentee
- o extent to which felt mentor took mentee preferences and interests into account
- o extent to which felt satisfied or dissatisfied
- o extent to which felt could trust mentor
- o extent to which felt liked/valued by mentor
- o extent to which felt challenged by the mentor
- o extent to which felt supported by the mentor.

Review Process (Scale of 1-10, elaborate on answers)
- Extent of involvement in review meetings
- Satisfaction with review meetings
- Extent of involvement in closure of the mentoring
- Satisfaction with closure
- Why did mentoring end?
- Would you have liked it to continue?

Overall strengths of the mentoring
- what worked/s well and why?

Overall weaknesses
- what might work better, where could improvements be made?

Appendix 4   Survey questionnaire – Parent mentees

Le Chéile Mentoring Service

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey. It should take about 5 minutes to complete. Your answers will not be traced back to you so please be as honest as you can. You can skip any question you prefer not to answer.

In answering, please tick a box or circle a score.

Q1   Is your mentoring   finished? ☐   still happening? ☐

Q2a   At the start of mentoring, how much were you involved in activities and interests outside your home in your spare time?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very much

Q2b   How much are you involved now?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very much

Q2c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q3a   When you started the mentoring first, on a scale of 1-10, how would you rate how good you were at talking and listening to people?

Very poor 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Excellent

Q3b   How would you rate how good you are now?

Very poor 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Excellent

Q3c   On a scale of 1-4, how much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q4a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate how you got on with your son or daughter who was in trouble?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very well

Q4b   How would you rate how you get on with him or her now?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very well

Q4c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q5a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate how you got on with others in your family?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very well

Please tick here if you do not have other family and skip to Q6:

Q5b   How would you rate how you get on with them now?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very well

Q5c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q6a   At the start of mentoring, how much were you engaged personal development such as education, work or training?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very much

Q6b   How much are you engaged in such activities now?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very much

Q6c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q7a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate your parenting skills?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q7b   How would you rate it now?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q7c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q8a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate your self-confidence?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q8b   How would you rate it now?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q8c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q9a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate your self-esteem?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q9b   How would you rate it now?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q9c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q10a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate your emotional well-being?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q10b   How would you rate it now?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q10c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q11a   At the start of mentoring, how would you rate your ability to handle stress?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q11b   How would you rate it now?

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q11c   How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q12a   **At the start of mentoring, how would you rate how hopeful you were about the future?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q12b   **How would you rate it now?**

Very low 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very high

Q12c   **How much would you say mentoring helped bring about any change?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   Completely

Q13   **Overall, how helpful has mentoring been to you?**

Not at all 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Very helpful

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return your questionnaire using the stamped addressed envelope provided.

Thanks again.

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Approved Provider Standard

Le Chéile Mentoring & Youth Justice Support Services is an approved provider of Mentoring under the Mentoring & Befriending Foundation UK