

intandem

External evaluation of Phase 1 (2017–2019)

For Inspiring Scotland

March 2019

Executive Summary

Introduction

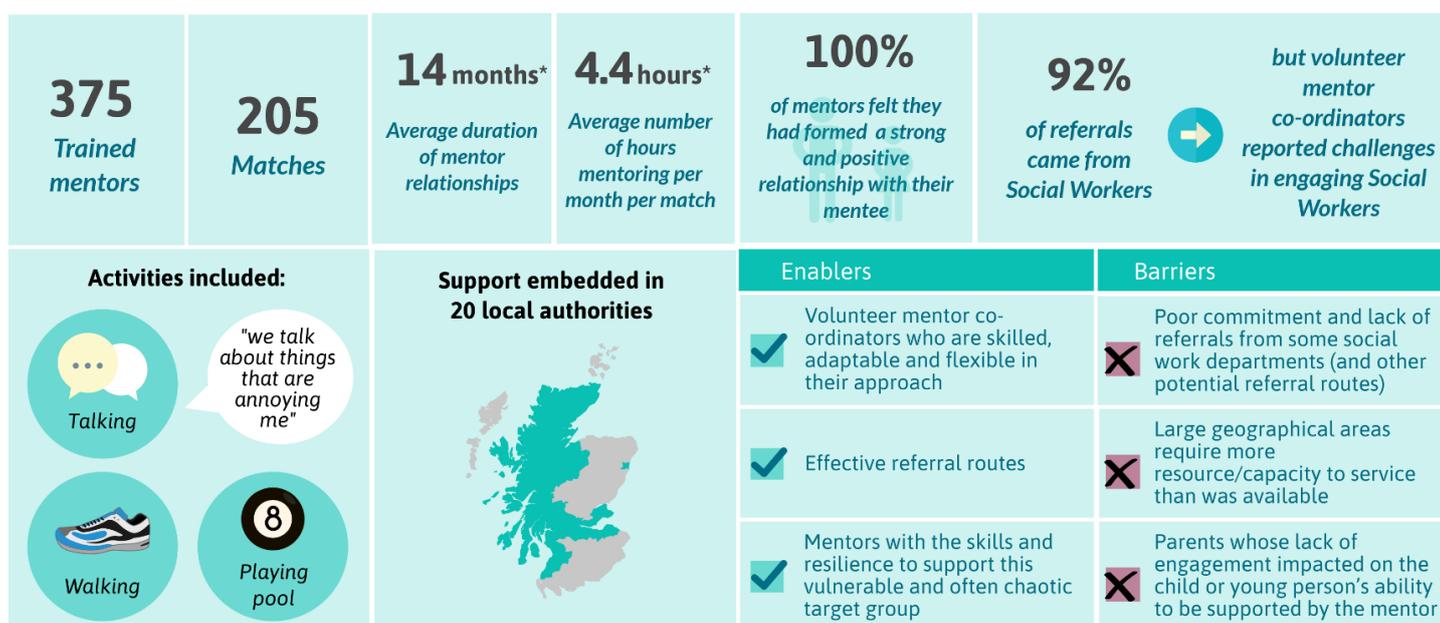
Inspiring Scotland commissioned Blake Stevenson to undertake an external evaluation of Phase 1 of the intandem programme, Scotland’s first national mentoring programme for children and young people who are looked after at home, from August 2017 to March 2019.

intandem provides weekly mentoring for children and young people looked after at home and offers them opportunities to have fun, learn new skills, develop their confidence and access their local communities within a safe environment, along with support to set and achieve their goals. The programme matches children and young people looked after at home with volunteer mentors, in order to build a trusting and supportive relationship and provide them with a positive adult role model.

Developed by Inspiring Scotland and 13 partner charities, the Scottish Government funded Phase 1 of the programme between November 2016 (with the first mentors in place in early 2017) and March 2019.

The infographics below set out our key findings related to the delivery and impact of the programme.

Delivery of Phase 1



* This data was not routinely reported by charities, but this is based on information provided by a sample of charities (six charities provided data about the number of hours and seven about the duration of relationships).

Impact



Conclusions

The intandem programme is providing important mentoring support to a group of children and young people who are among the most disadvantaged in society and who to date have had limited access to services of this type. Phase 1 has demonstrated the impact that such a service can have and is considered by those involved in delivery to be a vital support mechanism that would leave a real gap if it did not continue.

It has taken significant time for Phase 1 to bed in and reach capacity. This is to be expected given the complex needs of the target group, but many of those involved were surprised at the extent to which referral routes in particular were so challenging to establish in many areas. This had a knock-on effect on how quickly children and young people could be matched with mentors.

The programme is just reaching capacity. Those involved have identified a clear ongoing need for support for this group of children and young people, and the evidence gathered has shown that the model has achieved significant positive outcomes for children, young people and families. Phase 1 is coming to an end and Scottish Government funding has been extended until March 2020, but the programme has significant potential to be rolled out further: "it still feels like the start of the overall journey – there is so much potential for it to grow."

Inspiring Scotland and the partner charities are exploring future funding and delivery models for intandem. There are various opportunities being considered in discussion with the Scottish Government, including:

- making intandem available to a larger number of children and young people who are looked after at home;
- providing similar services for other client groups, such as children and young people in kinship care; and
- extending intandem to new geographical areas; and
- partnering and signposting to support for intandem families, such as one-to-one and group support for parents.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of our evaluation, we make the following recommendations in relation to future development and expansion of the programme:

Recommendation 1: We recommend that Inspiring Scotland continues to work nationally to raise awareness of the programme and encourage greater strengthening of referral routes from social work, education and other appropriate sectors. This may include, for example, developing stronger links between the programme and organisations such as COSLA.

Recommendation 2: In order to address gaps identified in the management information data collected by partner charities, including systematic collection of data such as the duration of matches and the number of volunteers who progress from completing the training to being matched with a child or young person, we recommend that Inspiring Scotland and partner charities review the management information collected and reported so that all the relevant data required to fully understand the mechanisms of the programme and the resources required to deliver it is collected.

Recommendation 3: Continue to review the usefulness and usability of Viewpoint to ensure that it continues to support outcomes data collection in the best way possible.

Recommendation 4: Our findings show that intandem has had a positive impact on some mentees' engagement with school. However, there is currently no data being provided by schools to verify this. As the programme develops further, greater engagement and data sharing with schools in relation to the impact on children and young people and referral would be beneficial.

Recommendation 5: Consider reducing the review meetings between partner charities and Inspiring Scotland to quarterly.

Recommendation 6: Consider expansion of the programme to other geographical areas where there is a clear demand demonstrated. This could be done through the existing 13 partner charities involved in Phase 1 but experience from this phase indicates that this might not provide sufficient experience or capacity and other organisations may need to be involved.

Recommendation 7: Consider extending the target group to include children and young people in kinship care.

Recommendation 8: Consider offering mentoring support to parents of those children and young people being mentored, and/or signposting families to further support such as one-to-one and group support for parents.