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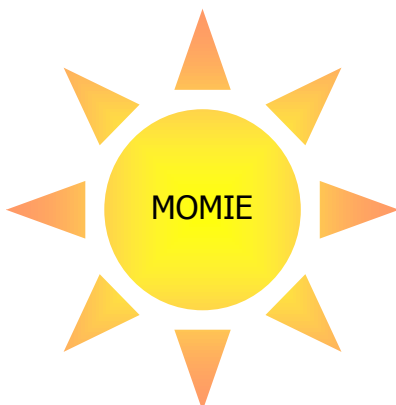
Thematic review of existing
evidence on mentoring and
peer mentoring

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1 Introduction

- 1.1** This paper presents findings from a review of existing research evidence on the effectiveness of peer mentoring programmes in reducing offending and promoting social inclusion. It has been produced to inform the development of the ESF project, *Models of Mentoring for Inclusion and Employment* (MOMIE). An initial paper, based on previous reviews, was prepared to inform discussions at the "Train the Trainers" event that took place in May 2010. Findings from this initial review have been combined with a thorough review of research evidence on both mentoring and more specifically peer mentoring.
- 1.2** Further details on the methodology for this review can be found in Annex A.

Review purpose and questions

- 1.3** The purpose of this review was to systematically collect and assess recent quantitative and qualitative findings on the impact and effects of mentoring and peer mentoring schemes, with a particular focus on reducing reoffending. The aim was to:
- identify the changes mentoring and non-peer mentoring bring about amongst target groups, the research methods used, and how success and failure are defined and measured
 - inform the development of the peer mentoring schemes being established by the transnational partners through MOMIE
 - contribute to the development of evidence-based success criteria against which the interventions can be measured
 - contribute to the broader debate on the effectiveness of peer mentoring schemes.
- 1.4** The primary question was: *What works in relation to peer mentoring schemes that seek to reduce reoffending?*
- 1.5** This primary research question was sub-divided into five more specific questions:

- Which groups of people have seen the greatest benefit from participating in peer mentoring schemes?
- What is the relative effectiveness of peer mentoring schemes compared to standard mentoring schemes?
- Under what circumstances are peer mentoring schemes most effective (e.g. location, frequency of contact, relative experience of peer mentors)?
- What type of person makes a good mentor?
- What major issues arise in the implementation of peer mentoring schemes that may impact on their efficacy?

1.6 The central task of the review was to identify and synthesise recent international evidence-based findings. Most of the literature reviewed comes from the UK and North America. We hoped to also focus on evidence from the respective countries of our transnational partners participating in the MOMIE project. However partners were not aware of any previous or current mentoring research in Hungary, Portugal and Romania. This reflects the fact that (peer) mentoring is a relatively new concept in those countries.

What is mentoring?

1.7 Before proceeding with the review, it is worth clarifying how mentoring has been defined within the research that has been considered in this paper. For the purpose of their systematic review, Tolan *et al* (2008) describe mentoring as having four characteristics:

- interaction between two individuals over an extended period of time
- inequality of experience, knowledge, or power between the mentor and mentee (recipient), with the mentor possessing the greater share
- the mentee is in a position to imitate and benefit from the knowledge, skill, ability, or experience of the mentor
- the absence of the role inequality that typifies other helping relationships and is marked by professional training, certification, or predetermined status differences such as parent-child or teacher-student relationships.

What is peer mentoring?

1.8 It is more difficult to define 'peer mentoring'. While it can be said to incorporate all aspects of the definition of mentoring outlined above, the 'peer' element of the intervention is open to interpretation.

1.9 The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2002) uses this definition to describe 'peer education':

'The use of same age or same background educators to convey educational messages to a target group. Peer educators work by endorsing "healthy" norms, beliefs and behaviours within their own peer group or community and challenging those who are "unhealthy".'

1.10 The difference between mentoring and peer mentoring can therefore be described as the mentors being of 'the same age or same background' as their mentees. One feature of peer mentoring would be for the mentor to have been in a similar situation to their mentee, which corresponds to the 'same background' element of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's definition.

1.11 This review, in order to form analysis of peer mentoring, will consider the definition above and understand 'peer mentoring' to be 'mentoring' as described by Tolan *et al*/by mentors of the same age and/or who have been in a similar situation and/or come from a similar background as their mentee.

1.12 It is important to note however that analysing evidence on peer mentoring is problematic. This is because studies of some interventions which do not label themselves as 'peer' mentoring do in fact match their participants on the basis of a similarity in age, background or shared experience, making them similar to studies of interventions which do describe themselves as peer mentoring focused. This is not to discredit evidence drawn from studies of either type of intervention. Both sources of evidence are useful because they can show what factors are important for effective mentoring to take place.

2 Thematic review

Does mentoring work?

- 2.1** An examination of existing research into mentoring programs from around the world provides a highly inconsistent evidence base. At present there is no consensus that mentoring has a significant positive effect on mentees.
- 2.2** There are some studies which provide some promising evidence of the potential for mentoring to reduce recidivism and increase sociable characteristics. A large study by Public/Private Ventures (PPV) in 1995 of the Big Brother/Big Sister programme in the US found that the mentoring programme improved mentees' attitudes and behaviour with regard to substance abuse, violence, interpersonal relationships, and academic achievement compared to youths who were placed on a waiting list (cited in Clayton, 2009).
- 2.3** Tolan *et al* (2008) carried out a full systematic review of 39 evaluations of mentoring interventions aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency and associated problems. The authors found modest positive effects of mentoring on four different outcomes: delinquency, aggression, drug use, and achievement
- 2.4** Dubois *et al* (2002) also found some evidence that mentoring has some impact on reducing high-risk behaviours and improving education and employment outcomes. These studies suggest that mentoring has some effect on recidivism, and produce other desirable outcomes for participants.
- 2.5** They concluded that the findings of their review provide support for the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs. However, they also acknowledged that, although positive, the benefits to participants were 'relatively modest', and concluded that:
- Given the modest size of the effects that thus far have been able to be established for mentoring, there clearly is a rationale for innovation and experimentation with enhancements to program design.*
- 2.6** Joliffe and Farrington's (2007) rapid evidence assessment considered 18 studies of mentoring schemes that aimed to reduce reoffending and found that seven demonstrated a positive impact on re-offending. They concluded

that, overall, the results suggested that mentoring significantly reduced subsequent offending by 4 to 11 per cent. However, they added a caveat that this overall result was primarily driven by studies of lower methodological quality. The most rigorous studies did not find that mentoring led to a statistically significant reduction in re-offending.

- 2.7** Similarly, while the overall results of the review by Tolan *et al* (2008) were positive, the authors were highly critical of the studies they reviewed. They concluded:

While these findings support viewing mentoring as a useful approach for intervention to lessen delinquency risk or involvement, due to limited description of content of mentoring programs and substantial variation in what is included as part of mentoring efforts detracts from that view. The valuable features and most promising approaches cannot be stated with any certainty.

- 2.8** The most comprehensive single evaluation of mentoring schemes was commissioned by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales. The Institute of Education, University of London undertook a comprehensive evaluation of 80 community mentor projects for young people who had offended or were at risk of offending. The projects ran between 2001 and 2004. The evidence from the overarching evaluation, which incorporated four different studies, was mixed.

- 2.9** Positives from this study included:

'...heartening evidence that the mentor projects in this scheme were successful in some respects and, particularly, in reintegrating the targeted young people into education, training and the community.'

- 2.10** However there was no evidence of improvement in numeracy, literacy or behaviour. In addition they also found that the anticipated chief advantage of mentoring programmes, low cost, was not proven; other interventions produced similar results at a lower cost. (Cited in Meier, 2006).

- 2.11** Overall, based on the findings from all four elements of its study, the YJB concluded that:

Pending any more positive findings from a longer term follow-up, the evidence available here does not support a more widespread roll-out of mentor programmes as a means of preventing or tackling youth crime.

- 2.12** Findings from a meta-analysis on intervention programs for serious delinquents by Lipsey et al (2000) found that programs involving peer mentoring showed 'positive but not consistent' results, which seem to be in line with the YJB's findings. It appears there is evidence of mentoring having a positive impact, but the positive results are inconsistent, often having an effect in one area but not in another, e.g. an improvement in reintegration into education but no effects on the mentee's behaviour, as found by the YJB (2005).
- 2.13** In some cases mentoring was found to have a negative impact. For example, a study on the 3-year Buddy System concluded that the peer-network effect helped reduce recidivism among offenders although it increased offending in those peers who had not committed delinquent acts (Clayton, 2009).
- 2.14** Although the evidence of direct positive effects on outcomes such as recidivism is mixed, a number of studies have suggested that mentoring often plays an indirect role in producing positive outcomes (see Clayton, 2009). For example a study conducted by PPV found that mentoring helped to curb depression experienced by youths, which in turn led to lower adverse outcomes such as fighting, substance abuse, and recidivism (cited in Clayton, 2009).
- 2.15** It has also been noted that it is difficult to isolate the direct effects of mentoring, as a number of studies have considered the effectiveness of mentoring within a package of interventions. Furthermore, evidence is mixed on whether mentoring schemes work in isolation or as part of a broader package. Joliffe and Farrington (2007) suggested that mentoring was only successful in reducing re-offending when it was one of a number of interventions given. By contrast, Dubois *et al* (2002) found:

... little evidence that the potential for programs to yield desirable outcomes is dependent on such considerations as whether or not mentoring takes place alone or in conjunction with other services, whether it is provided in accordance with the most widely implemented model... or whether programs reflect relatively general... as opposed to more focused (i.e. instrumental) goals.

The evidence for 'peer' mentoring

- 2.16** Evidence from studies that have considered 'peer' mentoring directly is scarce. But from the few studies available, peer mentoring has been shown to be effective.

- 2.17** The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (2003) advises that young people are more likely to listen to other young people, because they can understand the context in which they operate, and can convey information in a way that they can understand. This suggests that peer mentors can be more effective in reaching those individuals deemed 'hard to reach'. It must be noted that this is not proven, but is a stated recommendation by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The use of 'real life stories' by mentors to communicate information was also presumed to be a useful tool, as mentees could learn by 'copying' and comparing actions to gain a sense of how they could improve and change aspects about their lives (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2003).
- 2.18** Furthermore, peer mentoring has been used successfully in various intervention programs, particularly in the health field. In one study it was found that retention rates were higher among the peer-mentored group than the non peer-mentored group in an exercise program for older people (Dorgo *et al* 2009). A peer-mentor-supervised, self-management intervention effectively increased self-efficacy and reduced self-reported health distress in patients with arthritis. Similarly, peer support successfully decreased anxiety in cardiac patients during hospitalization and effectively enhanced quality of life in breast cancer patients. Peer mentoring has also been reported to be a helpful and effective intervention method for other populations such as HIV patients, burn patients, and those with diabetes (cited in Dorgo *et al*, 2009).

What works?

- 2.19** As noted above, it is difficult to determine conclusively that mentoring (peer or otherwise) works. Previous studies have produced both positive and negative outcomes. However from these studies it is possible to examine what aspects of the programs are thought to lead to more positive outcomes. The major themes are explored below.

The Mentee: Who responds best to mentoring?

- 2.20** Research suggests that populations who have been placed 'at risk' benefit the most from mentoring programs in comparison to other populations. Young Mind (2006) stated that young people whose emotional development lay more or less midway between well-functioning and poorly-functioning may be most likely to benefit from mentoring. This means that mentees deemed to be 'at risk' may be more likely to benefit than those who are already demonstrating significant personal problems. The latter group are thought to require assistance from a range of professionals rather than non-professional volunteers. The previously cited Youth Justice Board review of 80 programmes from 2001-2004 supports this, having found that those who did not have a history of offending were more likely to have a more successful outcome from mentoring.
- 2.21** Research also points to mentoring being a less effective intervention for the 13-16 age group, with 65 per cent of relationships more likely to terminate than in the 0-12 age group (Young Mind, 2006). The evaluation by YJB also found that young age can predict a more successful outcome. At present there is no evidence that outlines the effectiveness of mentoring between adults.
- 2.22** Take up and retention of mentoring schemes by young offenders was highlighted as an issue in the YJB study. This created problems, not only for the evaluation, but also, more importantly, for the delivery of the mentor programmes.

Many young people referred to the projects declined to participate or failed to engage with their mentors, while many volunteers failed to become mentors... the reluctance of young offenders to take part in mentor or other community intervention programmes is now amply documented, raising questions about their appropriateness as a

stand-alone intervention and highlighting issues about service value and cost.

2.23 This suggests that there needs to be a certain level of enthusiasm on the side of the mentee and a willingness to take part for the mentoring to be effective. This perhaps can be more important to mentoring than other interventions due to the need for an effective relationship between mentee and mentor. Knowles and Parsons (2009) stated 64 per cent of mentoring scheme co-ordinators in their evaluation of a peer mentoring scheme attributed mentor and mentee enthusiasm, commitment and reliability to the successful implementation and development of a peer mentoring project.

2.24 It is worth therefore considering methods of raising enthusiasm amongst mentees. Sutcliffe *et al* (2009) stated one of the strengths of the peer mentoring project she evaluated was the level of enthusiasm amongst participants. This was felt to be a result of:

'...extensive formative research, an extremely dedicated staff, and study aims that spoke to the needs and interests of the target population.'

The Mentor: Who makes the best mentor?

2.25 Close, effective mentoring relationships seem to be facilitated when adults possess certain skills and attributes. Evidence suggests that schemes which recruit people who have already had experience of, and success in, helping roles are more likely to build positive relationships with mentees (see Young Mind, 2006; Meier, 2006; Clayton, 2009). An ability to demonstrate appreciation of salient socioeconomic and cultural influences in the youth's life, and a sense of efficacy for being able to mentor young people is also valued (Rhodes and Dubois, 2006).

2.26 The ability to model relevant behaviours, such as skills required for job performance in the work setting, appears to be of further benefit as does refraining from actions (e.g., substance use) that may encourage other young people to adopt unhealthy behaviours (Rhodes and Dubois, 2006 & Clayton, 2009).

2.27 Evidence from YJB (2005) states that overall, female mentors achieved more successful outcomes than male mentors with both female and male mentees and that female mentors matched with female mentees were especially successful. The same evaluation also found that ethnicity could affect mentoring outcomes; mentors with black or minority ethnic backgrounds

were more successful than white mentors in improving the family relationships of mentees with black or minority ethnic backgrounds. However other literature suggests that matching partners based on ethnicity, race or gender have had no significant effects on the quality of relationships (Young Mind, 2005; Newburn and Shiner, 2006; Dubois et al, 2002), but that matching according to similar interests and personalities produced more effective results.

Compatibility of 'a goal'

- 2.28** It is clear that mentoring schemes need to have a goal. However research has found that mentoring schemes and mentees inevitably have different agendas. Colley (2003) found that young people often resisted the employment and training outcomes as the focus of their mentoring relationships. Some sought support for more personal issues in their lives such as mental health problems. Others saw mentoring as a space to relax, escape the pressures of their lives, have fun, and get some unconditional attention from adults (cited in Meier, 2006). It is important that there is a basic compatibility between the mentee and mentor's goals for the relationship. When goals are agreed upon by both, this leads to an effective relationship (Rhodes and Dubois, 2006).
- 2.29** The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2003) recommend that peer mentors should be 'developmentally appropriate'. This essentially means mentors need to understand what stage their mentee is at when they start on a peer mentoring scheme, compared to where they want to be and what they are aiming for. This understanding should lead to a compatibility of goals, which in turn leads to an effective relationship as stated by Rhodes and Dubois (2006).
- 2.30** This supports Young Mind's findings that the quality of the relationship is largely dependent on the capacity of the mentor and their ability to take cues from their mentees to strike a comfortable balance between having fun, working toward practical goals, and exploring emotions (Young Mind, 2006).

Characteristics of effective mentor relationships

Matching

- 2.31** The research on matching in the general mentoring literature has produced mixed results. Some research suggests that matching mentors and mentees based on ethnicity, race or gender have had no significant effects on the

quality of relationships (see Young Mind, 2006; Newburn and Shiner, 2006; Dubois et al 2002). However, Roberts *et al* (2005) found that where mentors and mentees were not matched on gender, mentees were less likely to complete a mentoring programme. Parsons *et al* (2008) also found that providing a female mentee with a male mentor was deemed less successful.

2.32 There is further evidence that suggests matching mentors to mentees on the basis of background and experiences is beneficial. Results from the evaluation of the JUMP program, found that younger boys who were paired with male mentors were less likely to engage in substance abuse than boys paired with female mentors. Project C.O.R.E matched their youth with mentors who were of the same gender and shared similar backgrounds. They believed this would help sustain the relationship and produce more positive outcomes by providing youths with more realistic role models who were able to overcome similar structural and institutional barriers to lead healthy and productive lives (Cited in Clayton, 2009).

2.33 It has been argued that more important factors in matching include mentors and mentees having similar interests and the way the individuals interact with each other. Parsons *et al* (2008) found that matching seemed to be most successful when students were matched according to similar interests, hobbies and personalities.

Relationship type and quality

2.34 According to Meier (2006), mentoring appears to work best when it replicates the role of a parent in providing consistent and continuous support. A 2002 study of ten youth mentoring programmes, found that 'youth are more likely to benefit if mentors know [their mentees'] families' (cited in Meier, 2006). Family members can often provide insight concerning the youth that the mentor might not be able to see within the parameters of the mentor relationship (Clayton, 2009).

2.35 Research also suggests that natural mentoring relationships are the most successful. Natural mentors are those mentors with whom the mentee may have already established a relationship, outside of a structured programme, through their community or family. Such relationships, if sustained over a number of years, have 'potential for tremendous impact' (Clayton, 2009).

2.36 Alternatively, Knowles and Parsons (2009) discussed the importance of keeping the relationship between the mentor and mentee formal for the success of the peer mentoring programme they evaluated. Mentors

themselves felt that the mentee had to have a certain level of respect for their mentor and in return mentors should not 'cross the line' and become a friend as they had to keep authority and control in a way that a regular friend would not. One of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (2003) recommendations corroborates this finding, advising that mentors,

'...should maintain a professional relationship with their mentee at all times and establish clear boundaries from the beginning.'

2.37 This conflicts with Clayton's (2009) claim for the efficacy of natural mentoring relationships. However it could be argued that peer mentoring requires more distinct boundaries, as the natural boundaries are not immediately as obvious, as for example, in an adult/child mentoring scenario.

2.38 What appears to be more important than the type and matching of relationships is the mentors' ability to form an effective bond with the mentee. Forming a bond with the mentee is important because it has a direct impact on the duration and quality of the relationship. Tolan *et al* (2008) found that:

Effects tended to be stronger when emotional support was a key process in mentoring interventions, and when professional development was an explicit motive for participation of the mentors.

2.39 Rhodes et al (2006) suggested that a certain level of understanding is necessary between the mentor and mentee. A mentor's ability to respond empathically to their mentees needs is a key contributor to the quality and nature of the mentoring relationship. The authors stated that if a bond did not form, the mentoring relationship may not last long enough to have a positive impact. They stated that without some connection, involving qualities such as trust and mutual respect, 'positive developmental outcomes are unlikely to unfold'.

Duration

2.40 There has been a wealth of evidence to suggest that the success of a mentoring relationship is determined by the length of the relationship (see Yukiko and O'Donnell (2004), Clayton (2009), Mclearn et al (1998), Rhodes and Dubois, (2006)). Meier (2006) found that young people who were in mentoring relationships that terminated within the first three months experienced significantly larger drops in feelings of self-worth and lower perceived scholastic competence than young people who did not receive any

mentoring at all. On the other hand, young people who were in matches that lasted more than 12 months reported much higher levels of self-worth, social acceptance, and scholastic competence than the control subjects. This is supported by Grossman and Rhodes (2002) who found that mentoring relationships which lasted a year or more reported the largest number of improvements. During their evaluation of the American Big Brothers Big Sisters programme (in which relationships are intended to last at least one year) it was found that, where the relationship lasted three months or less, the young people concerned showed significant declines in their global self-worth, and did less well at school (cited in Young Mind, 2006)

2.41 However Joliffe and Farrington's (2007) findings were contradictory. Their results showed longer mentoring programmes were no more effective than shorter programmes. The authors of the review suggest this may be a result of the difficulty in recruiting high-quality mentors throughout the period that the individual was mentored.

2.42 Evidence also suggests that the frequency of contact between mentors and mentees (see Yukiko and O'Donnell, Hall, 2003, Meier, 2006, Rhodes and Dubois, 2006) is crucial for the effectiveness of mentoring. Mentoring that lasts only a few months and which includes only minimal contact (e.g. an hour a week) was not found to be as effective (Meier, 2006).

2.43 This is backed up by findings from Joliffe and Farrington (2007) who found that programmes where the mentor and mentee spent more time together at each meeting and met at least once a week had more successful outcomes.

Supervision

2.44 There is conflicting evidence on whether supervision for mentors contributes to the success of a mentoring program. However on the whole, there appears to be more support for supervision in a mentoring programme.

2.45 Rhodes (2002) has argued that supervised volunteers were more likely to stay with the scheme, and that mentoring schemes in which caseworkers supported mentors to discuss the emotional costs of mentoring may help mentors sustain their relationship with the young person (cited in Young Mind, 2006).

2.46 The YJB (2005) also found that supervision of mentors was a feature of more successful mentoring programmes and found that programmes who

were guided by a steering group produced more effective outcomes than those without. Knowles' and Parsons' (2009) study of peer mentoring matches the YJB's findings, stating that the most successful peer mentoring relationships had strong, supportive systems, administered by co-ordinators. The co-ordinators role was to provide support and encouragement to the mentors and was considered to be a significant factor in the success of the programme.

Structured activities

- 2.47** Although the DuBois et al (2002) study found that the presence of structured activities for mentors and mentees correlated to improved outcomes, it did not record specific data on what kinds of structured activities these were. Rhodes (2002) found that four key factors contributed to positive relationships: working together on academic activities; spending more than ten hours per month together; joint decision-making and spending time on social activities (cited in Young Mind, 2006). The claim for structured activities as being effective for a mentoring relationship is supported by Hall (2003), Newburn and Shiner (2006), Meier (2006) and Rhodes and Dubois (2006).
- 2.48** Many mentoring schemes last for a year. In reality, since mentors are predominantly volunteers, it would be unreasonable (and could be counterproductive in terms of recruitment) to expect an extended, or even open-ended, commitment from them. It is therefore vital for schemes to plan the ending of the relationship (Young Mind, 2006).
- 2.49** Planning activities that address feelings of loss, such as creating a timeline which includes the termination date, or a planned fun activity prior to the final meeting, can help prevent the end of the relationship from contributing to the young person's feelings of being abandoned (Young Mind, 2006).

3 Conclusions

Effects of mentoring

3.1 This review of current evidence on mentoring and peer mentoring gives some important information on how to successfully implement a mentoring scheme. However it cannot be said that there is substantial evidence to show the positive effects of mentoring; but rather that evidence is weak in general across current literature. Key findings from the literature show:

- There is no clear definition of peer mentoring. This can make analysis of peer mentoring difficult with regards to comparing it to 'regular' mentoring and other forms of intervention.
- Although the literature as whole suggests mentoring can have a positive effect on a number of outcomes, many findings have to be treated with a significant degree of caution due to methodological limitations (Tolan *et al*, 2008, Dubois *et al*, 2002).
- The positive results from studies on mentoring and peer mentoring often are not consistent or statistically significant (Lipsey *et al*, 2000, Joliffe and Farrington, 2007).

3.2 Positive effects shown by some of the research literature include:

- positive effects on intermediate outcomes, such as mental health, which may in turn have a positive effect on outcomes such as recidivism
- improvements in mentee attitude and behaviour
- improvements in interpersonal relationships and integration into the community
- some reductions in recidivism
- some improvements in academic achievement and integration into education and training.

3.3 However, the evidence is very mixed. Many of the studies reviewed reported no significant impact on the outcomes noted above, including recidivism, or on intermediate outcomes such as attitudinal improvements, or increases in levels of numeracy or literacy.

Recommendations for mentoring

- 3.4** The literature did give a strong lead on what was needed for an effective mentoring initiative. The following points are seen as important factors for an effective mentoring and peer mentoring relationship.
- 3.5** People 'at risk' rather than people who are already demonstrating significant personal problems are more likely to have a successful outcome from taking part in a mentoring scheme.
- 3.6** Enthusiasm and a willingness to take part are essential characteristics for both the mentor and mentee for a successful mentoring relationship.
- 3.7** Evidence suggests people who have had experience in 'helping roles' make more effective mentors.
- 3.8** There are mixed results that matching by gender, age or race had a positive effect on a mentoring relationship. Some evidence showed matching by gender, particularly female mentors to female mentees and race, particularly amongst black and ethnic minorities had a positive effect. However the consensus in the literature seems to be that matching on background and/or similar experiences produces more desirable outcomes.
- 3.9** A number of authors discussed the importance of setting clear boundaries between mentor and mentee and ensuring the mentor retains authority and professionalism.
- 3.10** The duration of the mentoring scheme and the time spent with the mentor are important factors in the success of a mentoring scheme. The literature suggests longer schemes (e.g. a year or more) with frequent contact of once a week or more are more effective. Some studies found short-term mentoring relationships had negative effects.
- 3.11** Having a strong support system in place for the mentoring scheme is desirable as this has been found to have a positive impact on outcomes.
- 3.12** Completing structured activities such as working on academic work together or joint-decision making has been found to be an effective way of building positive relationships.
- 3.13** Finally, the research suggests that mentoring is more likely to yield positive results when it is used as a component within a wider programme of support for those at risk.

What are the gaps?

- 3.14** There are several gaps in the research literature which are of relevance to this study. Firstly, there is little research on mentoring relationships between adults. There is also little evidence on the specific impact of peer mentoring on vulnerable and marginalised groups. Finally, there is little evidence on the cost effectiveness of mentoring or peer mentoring schemes.
- 3.15** The MOMIE project should therefore look to fill these gaps in its work on peer mentoring with adults from vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Annex A - Research Protocol

Search strategy

“Snowballing” from previous reviews

- 3.16** We compiled source papers from the references of Joliffe and Farrington’s (2007) rapid evidence assessment of the impact of mentoring on re-offending and the systematic review of mentoring interventions to affect juvenile delinquency and associated problems by Tolan et al (2008). Once we conducted an initial “snowballing” and reviewed relevant articles from this list, we aimed to keep any successive articles to a peer mentoring theme as we found we had a significant number of articles on mentoring but fewer articles on peer mentoring arose from the references of these reviews.

Contacts with network of experts

- 3.17** We will seek relevant papers (either published or unpublished) on mentoring programmes held by our partner organisations in this project, SOVA and St Giles’ Trust. We will also ask out transnational partners to identify any relevant research literature on mentoring programmes in their countries. Where relevant papers are unavailable in English, we will seek to have them translated.
- 3.18** St. Giles’ Trust, a partner organisation in this project, has been able to provide us with an evaluation of their peer mentoring project.
- 3.19** Our transnational partners in Hungary, Romania and Portugal were unable to identify research from their respective countries, as mentioned above, due to peer mentoring being a particularly new concept in those member states.
- 3.20** We issued an email to UK and European contacts on the company database to request information on peer mentoring research projects. We have not yet had the non UK responses translated but will translate documents later in the project. We have made an initial assessment of the relevance of the articles from their abstracts. Most responses were either not strictly relevant to mentoring or were not an evaluation of a project including statistical evidence, and therefore not deemed robust enough to be included in the literature review.

Search of national and international organisation's websites

3.21 Not all evidence-based literature relevant to peer mentoring may have been published in academic journals or papers. We therefore searched the websites of the following organisations:

- Home Office
- Ministry of Justice
- Youth Justice Board
- NACRO

3.22 We located a Youth Justice Board study on youth mentoring and the Home Office's Evidence Assessment by Farrington and Joliffe. We restricted our search of these websites to evidence-based literature rather than case studies of projects which had not been evaluated.

Review of academic databases

3.23 We searched for peer-reviewed academic research contained in databases of electronic journals, such as Cambridge Scientific Abstracts.

3.24 We garnered most of our information in this manner. We widened the search criteria to include material on peer and non peer mentoring which was not necessarily linked to (re)offending. Material covering (peer) mentoring and offending was limited so we included articles that dealt with, for example, peer mentoring and its affect on drug use desistance, to try to ascertain any positive reported affects peer mentoring might have on certain problematic behaviours.

3.25 The aim of this component is to identify and assess English language studies published after 2000 which investigate a causal connection between peer mentoring and reoffending. It is proposed that the minimum research design for inclusion for quantitative studies for drawing conclusions about impacts should include a matched comparison group. Qualitative research will be used to add to our understanding of the impacts (particularly those that cannot be easily quantitatively measured). Relevant qualitative studies that provide evidence on the aims of the review will also be examined.

3.26 The search for articles and reports began by using each first term with each second term.

First Term	Second Term
Mentor*	Offend*
Peer mentor*	Reoffend*
	Recidivism

3.27 The search did not yield a large number of studies when more than one search term was used, as the subject matter proved to be too specific. Whilst articles on mentoring could be found, the target groups were always varied and not involving adult offenders. Articles on juvenile offenders and mentoring were found. Other target groups involving mentoring were older adults, problem drug users and children deemed “at-risk” of social exclusion. Articles dealing with these target groups were also used to inform our conclusions about mentoring more widely. The identified abstracts were sifted on the basis of the following questions:

- Does the abstract address the research question(s)?
- Is the paper based on a primary study examining the effectiveness of peer and non-peer mentoring?
- Does the study use transparent, appropriate and robust methods?

3.28 If the answer to these questions was ‘yes’ then the full paper was reviewed.

3.29 Despite having inclusion and exclusion criteria to ascertain the relevance of articles, definitional variations between articles on the term “peer mentoring” restricted the number of articles reviewed further.

3.30 A review template is provided below. We used this template to record relevant information for each of the studies identified in the review, regardless of how the study was identified. Three reviewers reviewed articles for this literature review and saved the templates in the same location. An evidence review list was compiled to keep track of which articles were being reviewed by whom and a note of how relevant an article was to make it easy to extract material from each article.

Literature Summary Template

	Publication Date:	
Author: Title:		
Author interest in subject: (i.e. independent evaluator, government dept etc)		
Geographical scope:		
Published location/ journal:		
Research aims:		
Research methodology: * method; * treatment and comparison group; * primary or secondary; * quantitative or qualitative; * sample size and how the sample selected; * response rates.		
Summary of article: (include any country-specific details/ factors that may limit comparisons to UK)		
Relevant Findings: (include page numbers for data and quotes)		
Relevant Recommendations		
Name of reviewer:		Date Reviewed:

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