

Subject: Mayor's Mentoring Programme Programme Final Report and Evaluation

Report to: GLA Oversight Committee

Report of: Head of Paid Services/Assistant Director
Health and Communities

Date: 22 October 2015

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an end of project report about the Mayor's Mentoring Programme (MMP) for the GLA Oversight Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the report and discussion with the Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture and the Assistant Director of Health and Communities be noted.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Mayor's Mentoring Programme was targeted at boys aged 10-16 of black or mixed ethnicity, resident or attending school in one of eight boroughs, some of which, at the time the programme started, were the focus of the Trident Gang Crime Command. The objective of the programme was to provide a positive and sustained mentoring experience for up to 12 months for boys aged 10-16 of black origin who had been identified as being particularly at risk of exclusion, having poor educational attainment, or being already known to the criminal justice system.
- 3.2 To be eligible for support on the programme, boys also needed to be classified as 'at risk' according to specific criteria. The programme was targeted at black boys because analysis undertaken to develop the programme showed that young black men were disproportionately affected, both as victims and perpetrators, of serious youth violence. The focus on a relatively young age group aimed to offer early intervention and prevent 'at risk' young people from getting into serious trouble as they got older. (List of referral criteria is at **Appendix 1**.)
- 3.3 The original grant agreement to deliver the MMP was given to a consortium of the University of East London (UEL) and the London Action Trust in 2011. However, London Action Trust was unable to continue and withdrew from the partnership. This left UEL, whose original role was to design and deliver training to mentors, to manage the programme. Despite a number of strengths

in their model, UEL was unable to secure enough referrals. In addition, centralised training caused delays to mentors starting the programme.

- 3.4 A second phase of the programme revised the delivery model so that it became less centralised with a managing agent organisation supporting a group of ten Local Delivery Partners (LDPs). The LDPs, selected through an open and competitive tendering process, were primarily locally-focused organisations which took pride in their excellent standing in local communities and strong relationships with local people, schools and other support agencies. (List at **Appendix 2.**)
- 3.5 The ten LDPs' role was to recruit, vet and train mentors, match the mentor with an eligible young black boy manage the referral process and engage with families in order to secure parental or guardian consent and help to arrange the mentoring sessions. The LDPs supported the matched relationships for up to 12 months. The MMP programme was delivered in eight London boroughs: Brent, Croydon, Hackney, Haringey, Lambeth, Southwark, Waltham Forest and Westminster. Across the programme a total of 1,497 referrals were made to the LDPs and 1,506 mentors were trained.
- 3.6 At the end of March 2014, it was reported that the Mayor's Mentoring Programme had exceeded the target of 1,000 matched mentoring relationships. In total the LDPs were paid for 1,093 matched relationships to the end of April 2015. Their sustainment over the course of the programme was 77% at six months (3% below target), 58% sustained for nine months (12% below target) and 53% for 12 months (7% below target).
- 3.7 During the course of the programme the managing agent established a network between the LDPs, provided programme e-bulletins and regular network meetings. These were an opportunity for the LDPs to share good practice, problem solve issues and for the managing agent to identify and respond to common issues and challenges. They also provided the opportunity for the delivery partners to engage with the evaluation on a regular basis. Some of the LDPs identified that the summer holidays were a particularly difficult time for sustaining mentor and mentee relationships and so additional funding was provided to support summer activities such as day trips, BBQs and other activities.
- 3.8 During the course of the programme delivery, an internal audit was completed which noted that the LDPs were not using the referral criteria consistently regarding the number of risk factors. Following discussions with the LDPs this was revised the number of referral criteria from two to one. The effect of this was to increase referrals of boys.
- 3.9 The total programme spend was £1,151,000. A payment by results model linked payments to the achievement of various milestones, for example, the recruitment of volunteers and matched mentoring relationships. The payment by results model was adjusted a number of times during the course of the programme to (i) increase overall payments to LDPs, (ii) provide one-off payments for additional summer activity and (iii) increase payments for the 12 months sustained relationship milestone. This was in response to the cash flow difficulties delivery organisations were experiencing due to the unanticipated high up-front costs required to administer the programme.

4. Issues for Consideration

Mayor's Mentoring Programme Evaluation Report

- 4.1 The evaluation by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion was completed following the end of the programme in April 2015. The evaluation was undertaken through four waves of qualitative interviews during the programme delivery.
- 4.2 The evaluators previously completed an interim report in July 2014 and the summary report was circulated to the Oversight Committee. The interim report focused mainly on the set-up phase and the impact of the payment-by-result model on local delivery partners. The interim evaluation report confirmed the need to amend the payment by results model (as previously discussed in 3.9).
- 4.3 Engaging mentees in the evaluation proved extremely difficult for the evaluator. The main issue was the need to have parental consent to participate in the evaluation. This reduced the overall pool of mentees which could be reached. Once consent was received the evaluator took a number of steps to engage mentees including: voucher payments for completing questionnaires (both online and paper), visiting LDPs to engage with mentees and cascading information via mentors to encourage mentee input to the evaluation. The evaluators did have some success in conducting in-depth interviews with mentees.
- 4.4 The evaluators undertook surveys and interviews that engaged 80 mentees. Therefore although the individual comments and experiences of these mentees informed the evaluator about the impact of the scheme, it is not appropriate to make any widespread statements / conclusions as to the impact of the programme's interventions on the full mentees cohort.

Mentee outcomes

- 4.5 Mentee profiles show that the main reason for referral was underachievement at school. Over one third of the mentees were referred on the basis of exclusion from school and more than 80% were referred because of consistent low achievement at school. The average age for joiners to the MMP programme was 13 and the majority of the mentees were aged 12, 13 and 14.
- 4.6 Mentees identified as excluded from school were least likely to sustain the mentoring relationship beyond six months. Mentees identified as NEET were slightly more likely to sustain the relationship to six months.
- 4.7 Fewer of the mentees with high needs or higher level risk factors sustained the relationships with mentors. There was a relationship with the higher the number of risk factors and the lower the likelihood of remaining in the mentoring relationship.
- 4.8 Successful outcomes for the majority of the mentees related to school: return to school, higher school attendance, fewer temporary exclusions, better grades for school work and overall, better engagement with education.
- 4.9 Feedback gained from the mentees indicate that the mentoring relationship had helped: with their confidence, especially meeting new people; when considering longer term consequences of

behaviour and with respect to better decision making and help with relationships, especially with teachers and family.

Mentors

- 4.10 The evaluators also engaged mentors through two waves of surveys during and at the end of the programme (183 responses and interviews). Additional information was obtained from LDPs (via surveys and interviews) and from organisations referring boys to the programme (surveys).
- 4.11 Feedback gained through mentor surveys and focus groups shows that mentors were highly motivated to help young people succeed. Mentors also recognised that the training they received was useful for them personally and, for some, the experience of being a mentor encouraged them to take up a related career.
- 4.12 The training provided, along with ongoing support and/or additional training, was critical to the confidence, retention and satisfaction of the mentors.
- 4.13 The LDPs have all continued to use the mentors in on-going work or referred them to other mentoring projects. Mentors were also encouraged to join Team London in order to access other volunteering opportunities across London.

Factors for successful delivery across the LDPs

- 4.14 The LDPs were all community based providers and delivered the mentoring through existing youth based provision, in schools or at other community venues.
- 4.15 The evaluation report outlines a number of factors which appear to support more successful delivery:
 - Embedding the mentoring programme within a larger organisation which can provide additional services, especially to provide structured opportunities for young people for example sport or youth provision.
 - Locations for meetings with mentors set the tone and context for the relationship. Both schools and youth centre venues have advantages and disadvantages; the primary advantage was that they could better ensure a captive audience in a safeguarded environment.
 - Training for volunteer mentors was an essential element of the programme and the mentors reported that additional on-going support and training was required on top of the initial induction training.
 - Administrative support is required to enable the organisation of training and organisation of mentor/mentee meetings, along with frequent reminders to young people and the chasing up of a record of the meetings having taken place.
 - There was significant variation in the sustainability of mentoring relationships achieved by the different LDPs with the provider delivering the most sustainable delivery losing only 5% of its mentees during a 12 month period. One difference was the approach of the LDP

to re-matching , many but not all put in place processes so that when a mentoring relationship breaks down re-matching can take place; often successfully.

- 4.16 Factors in the delivery model of this particularly successful LDP which may have helped explain their success include the fact that they had a pool of youth workers and a fathers' group, (both groups had been trained to work with young people and had been DBS [Disclosure and Barring Service] checked already), whom they could draw on to deliver support. This enabled them to establish relationships quickly. Another element which appeared unique to the project was the volume of support that mentors received which included: ongoing supervision, weekly mentor group sessions to discuss their experiences and opportunities for those new to mentoring to shadow experienced mentors. The project also had prior experience of delivering mentoring programmes.

5. Lessons learnt

- 5.1 The evaluators note the following factors as essential for future programmes:

- Size and focus of the provider organisation – This has an impact on the provider's ability to manage payment by results including administration, networks into the local community and a range of other services which can provide a wider network of support and structured activities for young people.
- Setting for mentoring meetings – This has an impact on the types of activities, meeting space and young person's perception of mentoring relationship i.e. school or youth centre.
- Preparedness for payment-by-results – Small organisations struggle with the cash flow requirements and so need to be part of a bigger partnership or consortium. Payment-by-results also has higher levels of administration in terms of evidence than a traditional grant arrangement.
- Training and support for mentors – Initial training content, but also on-going training and support are essential. Further training would be required for mentors to support more vulnerable or at risk young people.
- Additional necessary delivery requirements for the programme:
 - The payment milestones and evidence requirements need to be suitable for the programme aims and the provider.
 - Monitoring systems need to be embedded within the commissioning process.
 - Evaluation aims and objectives need to be clearly understood by the provider and commissioned at the outset ahead of programme delivery starting.

Future activity

- 5.2 Findings from the MMP evaluation and the Leadership Clubs evaluation¹ identify similar key findings that i) providers have been largely successful in engaging schools and pupils; ii) feedback from participating schools has been positive; iii) in Leadership Clubs that there has been some evidence of initial impact on pupil progress (specifically in maths). These findings have informed

¹ Launched in 2012, Leadership Clubs have taken place in 35 schools and over 1,700 pupils aged 10 – 14 years have benefited, exceeding the programme's lifetime target of 1,500. Final evaluation due in 2016

the development of the *Stepping Stones* programme.² Some of the Leadership Clubs' providers worked on the transition from primary to secondary schools with their participants and the *Stepping Stones* programme will specifically focus on that recognised, challenging period of transition for vulnerable young people and build in mentoring as an integral part of the delivery design.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 The Committee has the power to consider this report.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Referral criteria

Appendix 2 - List of the local delivery partners (LDPs)

Appendix 3 - Executive summary of the evaluation report October 2015

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
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² The *Stepping Stones* programme is a schools-based, preventative intervention aimed at vulnerable young people who are considered *at risk* during the transition from primary (Year 6) to secondary school (Year 7). It is a "proof of concept" exercise which will ultimately provide resources, in the form of a tool-kit, to all primary and secondary schools in the capital about how best to effectively support the transition from primary to secondary for their most vulnerable students