

Peer Mentoring in Psychiatry: A trainee-led initiative

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Aims and Hypothesis

Our overall aim was to:

- ❖ Establish a peer mentoring network within Psychiatry Training in Northern Ireland.

As part of this, we hoped to recruit mentors from within our cohort of higher trainees and aim the scheme initially at supporting first year core trainees (CT1s) through their transition and first 12 months of Psychiatry Training.

Secondary aims of the scheme included:

- ❖ To create a mutually beneficial experience for both mentors and mentees.
- ❖ To promote a supportive and nurturing environment within Psychiatry training in Northern Ireland.
- ❖ To reduce the stress and potential negative experiences of our most junior trainees during a difficult transition period.

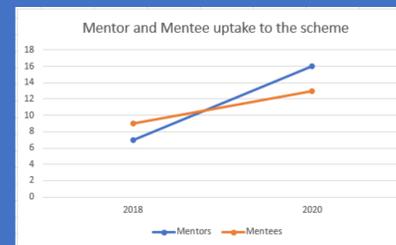
Background

- ❖ Transitions of any kind can be a daunting and potentially stressful prospect.
- ❖ As junior doctors, we have first hand experience of numerous career transitions and know only too well how these can be managed- either successfully, or otherwise.
- ❖ Entering a new specialty training programme can be a particularly stressful time.
- ❖ We wanted to ensure that our new CT1s were well supported and believed that a peer mentoring relationship, external to clinical and educational supervision, would bring added value.
- ❖ Given that mentoring was beginning to develop within other specialties locally, we decided to address the mentoring "gap" within our training programme.

Methods

- ❖ The scheme began in 2018, when two lead consultants affiliated with NIMDTA (Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency) advertised and recruited two higher trainees to take on the role of "Lead Mentor".
- ❖ These two trainees then took the lead in co-ordinating the scheme.
- ❖ Information regarding the scheme was circulated to the entire body of higher trainees, asking those interested in becoming a mentor for a CT1 to apply using a brief application form.
- ❖ Prospective mentors were then asked to complete a one day mentoring training session through NIMDTA.
- ❖ Mentees were recruited through a number of methods, including an introductory presentation delivered by the Lead Mentors at the Psychiatry training induction, as well as follow up emails.
- ❖ The scheme was not compulsory for all CT1s, but was highly recommended by lead educators.
- ❖ The scheme leads then "matched" mentor/mentee pairs based on basic information provided in application forms. Efforts were made to match those in similar locations and with similar sub-specialty interests.
- ❖ Once matched, both mentor and mentee were provided with each other's contact details. The CT1s were strongly encouraged to take the initiative and make the initial contact with their mentor.
- ❖ Information was provided to both parties as to the intended frequency and nature of contacts. The mentoring relationship was intended to last for one year and pairs were advised that they should meet face to face at least twice during this time.
- ❖ Check-in emails were sent by the Lead Mentors at 6 months and feedback evaluations completed at 12 months.
- ❖ Following positive feedback received, the scheme ran for a second year in 2019 and has now just entered its 3rd year in August 2020.
- ❖ The processes for recruitment remain unchanged, however, there is some thought being put into making the scheme compulsory for all CT1s and making a mentor available to those who wish to avail of it in CT2.

Results



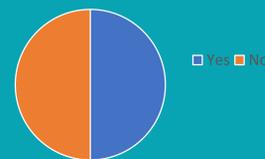
Recruitment to the Peer Mentoring Scheme has been steadily increasing for both mentors and mentees since it began in 2018.

2018 Feedback

- 86% of **mentors** provided feedback:

All of the mentors "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that their role as a mentor had been enjoyable and rewarding.

Did you face any significant challenges in your role as mentor?



- 50% commented on difficulties meeting their mentee in person as they worked in different trust locations.

- All mentors reported some benefit in their personal and professional development, with most reporting a "moderate impact".
- 100% of mentors would recommend participation in the scheme to other colleagues.

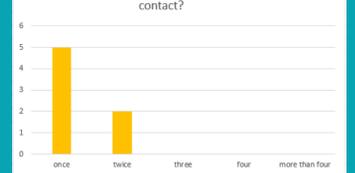
- 78% of **mentees** provided feedback:

Most common to least common areas of mentor-mentee discussions included:

Career direction (5)
Examination advice (5)
Work-Life balance (4)
ARCP information (3)
Use of e-portfolio (2)
Personal support (2)

Support relating to professional relationships (1)
Advice relating to Serious adverse incidents (1)

How many times did you have face to face contact?

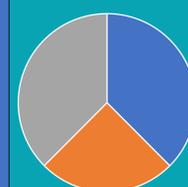


- Most had face to face contact once or twice; Other methods of contact included email and text messaging.

- 100% of mentees found the scheme beneficial

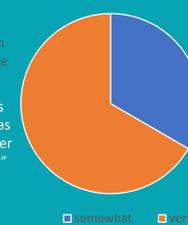
2019 feedback:

Mentor Feedback



- ❖ Mentors told us that, during the relationship, they focused on areas such as examination and interview preparation, as well as the mentee's professional development

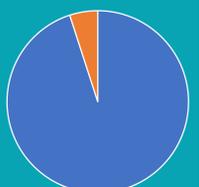
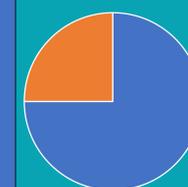
100% of respondents stated that their role as mentor had been either "somewhat" or "very" beneficial.



- ❖ Skills developed included: Listening, Coaching and Supervisory skills

- ❖ 100% reported that they would recommend the scheme to a fellow higher trainee.

Mentee Feedback



75% of mentees reported having found the experience of having a mentor useful

- ❖ 95% of mentees would recommend the scheme to a future CT1

Benefits reported by mentees included:

- ❖ Improved awareness of educational opportunities
- ❖ Preparation for professional exams and interviews

A small number of CT1s highlighted 6 monthly changeover and resultant change of locations as a barrier to maintaining face to face meetings

Conclusions and Next Steps

- ❖ As above, the Peer Mentoring Scheme is growing annually with increasing recruitment of mentors and mentees.
 - ❖ The majority of feedback received, from both mentees and mentors, has been positive.
- ❖ We have taken on board trainee comments about the potential impact of location, (due to six monthly changeover), on maintaining face to face contacts.
- ❖ We are considering ways to overcome these challenges including use of video calling, which has very much come to the fore during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ❖ We hope to expand the scheme to include trainees of other grades, as well as inter-deanery transfers. At the present time, we are making moves to expand the scheme to include our current CT2 trainees and those new to Northern Ireland.