

Peer Mentoring Progress Report

I came into post as Peer Scheme Supervisor on 1st March 2018, along with Sam Parkin as the Mentor Manager. Andrew Mouse, Adopter Development Coordinator for South and Marnie Freeman-Hacker, Adopter Development Coordinator for North have also been involved in the shaping and implementing of the service. The Cornerstone staff involved in the process have been; Anna Burke, Lorna Mackie and Clare Brasier and Helen Costa.

It's important to differentiate the peer mentoring scheme from the typical 'buddying' relationships which social workers would initiate for adopters. Peer mentoring is structured and very much part of the OAWY core offer of adoption support services. The scheme offers support to adopters from Stage 1 to Post Order support. The mentors offer emotional support to families and signposting to resources and/or services.

One of the initial objectives was to spread the word about Peer Mentoring and establish a good reputation for the service. I attended various team meeting in order to champion the service and ensure staff understood the scheme and made appropriate referrals. I have presented at both OAWY Celebration Events and at Preparation training. I was present at the family finding profiling event on 19.7.18 and completed an interview for the Newsletter. I have liaised with Eva Booth, Shelagh Ethell and Julie Pocklington from the centre of excellence to arrange further support and information for mentors to better support families.

Prospective adopters can find information on the website and at Information Evenings. Peer mentoring is featured in the newsletters to inform current adopters.

Recruitment and training mentors:

The initial ambition was to recruit 15 mentors. An email was sent to all the mailing lists combined from all LA's inviting adopters to apply to be a mentor. We had a fantastic response with 41 applications.

Sam, Marnie and Andrew completed the interviews and over 3 formal training days we have trained 24 mentors. Sam and myself completed 3 Informal sessions to recruit 5 additional mentors who could not attend the other dates. Sam is also an active mentor (outside her working hours). Therefore we have 30 mentors.

Referrals:

Following our first recruitment and training event the service went live in June 2018 and started to accept referrals.

Referrals have been received from all areas of OAWY and the complexity of issues in referrals have varied including issues such as EPP and families experiencing violence, sexualised behaviours and issues with education being a consistent theme.

Breakdown:

Mentoring Set up	Target number of mentors	15 in first instance – 30 by the end of the first year
	Applications received	41 applicants
	Interviews completed	27 face to face interviews during initial recruitment drive. Additional interviews as required, both face to face and phone interviews conducted by Sam and myself.
	Mentors trained	11 in June 7 in July 6 in September 4 in October (informal training session with Sam Parkin) 1 in November (informal training session with Trisha and Sam) 29 in Total
Mentoring management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stage 1/2 (23) ▪ Approved and waiting (8) ▪ Pre-order (7) ▪ Post-order (33) ▪ EPP (1) 	3 referrals were received in June 13 referrals have been received in July 10 August 5 September 9 October 9 November 15 December 8 January 72 referrals in total
	No. of families being mentored now	42+ 3 spoken to needing match with mentor 12 new referrals not called (some contacted but not spoken to directly yet).
	No of families who did not want to proceed / not made contact	15 total 4 not wanting to proceed before match with mentor 2 matched but not wanting to engage 1 safeguarding issue 8 no response
Added value services	<p>5 of our peer mentors have become involved in the preparation training for adopters. They have met with Pam Crossley and the dates for all of next year's preparation training will have an adopter present throughout. This is a good step forward in becoming more adopter led.</p> <p>One mentor is in discussion about becoming an Adoption panel member.</p>	

Mentor & Mentee Feedback	<p>Families have feedback to their social workers that the support they received has been beneficial, some families indicating that they wish they had had it sooner. One family feedback that “our mentor couldn’t have been better and always makes herself available” (mentee 29.1.19)</p> <p>One mentor said “I’m absolutely buzzing with positivity after my first peer mentoring meet tonight...couldn’t think of a better way of giving something back.” October, 2018.</p>
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Support to Mentors:

Mentors are supporting families dealing with huge complexities, the emotional impact of that is potentially significant and therefore supervision and support for mentors is an important element of the service.

The support offered to active mentors;

- Day to day enquiries with Mentor Manager
- Quarterly individual supervision sessions with Scheme Supervisor
- Bi Annual group supervision / get together / information sharing organised by Scheme Supervisor

The voucher policy was agreed in August 2018. Mentors are given a supermarket or High street voucher as a thank you for their voluntary hours every month. The amount varies depending upon their number of allocated families.

- 1-3 families = £30.00
- 4-5 families = £50.00
- Additional families = £10.00 per family

Next steps:

The intention is to send out a survey to the mentors and families to complete and gain further feedback about the service.

Develop training/ workshops that mentors can become involved in delivering to adopters.

Recruit specific mentors – EPP, single or those with birth children to meet the needs of the referrals being received.

Ongoing Development's

Voluntary Adoption Agencies

The VAA's are setting up some peer mentoring services and it is essential that we work together so as not to duplicate work. They are yet to establish a service but I intend to continue an open dialogue to ensure collaborative working. A meeting took place with Julie McVeigh (VAA's) on 23.1.2019 to share all the OAWY training, policies and procedures.

Challenges:

The vast geographical area of West Yorkshire has been a challenge. Firstly to recruit mentors from varied locations and secondly to match families with mentors from similar locations and experience. As we recruit more mentors this is becoming easier but then creates more work load and cost of supporting those additional mentors.

Ambitions:

To continue to fully imbed and grow the service within one adoption, to ensure that mentors are fully supported and trained to provide good quality support to families.

In January 5 mentors met with Julie Pocklington to gain a greater insight into education services. Education is a common theme in referrals and we want to skill mentors up to provide excellent and consistent information around education to families.

Cornerstone have a training model for support sessions that are run by a social worker and mentor manager to supplement adopter's learning. The topics of these sessions are;

Meeting birth parents, Contact, Adoptive family life, Children's Profiles, Adopter's profile, Therapeutic Stories, Managing the wait, Early Placement, Blocked care, Keeping connected with your teenager, Transitions in Education, Life story work for Teens/tweens.

I think it would be beneficial to explore the content of these training sessions in order to share this information with staff, mentors and families. These workshops could be integrated into twilight sessions, or run additionally, the resources could be available to staff completing assessments and mentors to support families, and they could be delivered more informally at support groups by mentors themselves. The options are varied to maximise on this learning and to utilise the resource of experienced adopters who are passionate and willing to get involved to share their experience and knowledge.

To continue to work closely with Pam Crossley in further developing the adopter led approach for Preparation training.