

# Pan London Compact for Care Leavers - Mentoring

Focus Group Feedback  
on Mentoring by Care  
Experienced Young People

Report by Sancia Williams

## Introduction

Mentoring is an important developmental factor for young people to help them gauge a better understanding of life in different forms and aspects, depending on their individual needs such as, someone to talk to about finances, education or/ and housing.

Young people across London must be actively engaged in decisions made about them, for them. At the Pan London Children in Care Council event in May 2022, a mixture of 60 young people and participation workers attended a workshop about mentoring. The majority attendees were young people with care experience. The young people were from 12 London boroughs and aged between 13-26. At the workshop they were able to express their views and give their experiences of mentoring. They were asked questions such as whether they have previously had mentoring, what went well, what did not go well and improvements that could be made. This report explores the experience mentoring has on the lives of young people in with care experience and whether it would be beneficial for them to have a mentor in the future and the qualities that mentors need to have.

This report also explores who can be a mentor and what support young people expect to receive from one. From a sample size of 39 young people, we found that 41% of them have not received mentoring and 18% of them were unsure. However, most of the young people said that they would have benefited from mentorship.

The session was facilitated by Louisa Foyle, Sancia Williams, and Zhane Decembre, who are also care experienced young people.



Illustration by Drew Sinclair

## Methodology

Qualitative primary research about mentoring was collated from a diverse range of young people with care experience at a Pan London Children in Council event on the 31st of May 2022. The cohort was extremely diverse in terms of racially minoritised young people and young people with additional needs. Their ages ranged from 13-26 years old, and they represented 12 boroughs across London.

To gather feedback, we used menti-meter to allow young people to answer anonymously and we also hosted round table discussion sessions to gather information from the workshop.

The questions asked included:

- Have you had a mentor?
- What training should a mentor have to work with care experienced young people?
- What would you want a mentor to support you with?
- What Qualities Should Mentors Have?
- What do you want as a minimum from a mentor?
- Who is a mentor and who is not?

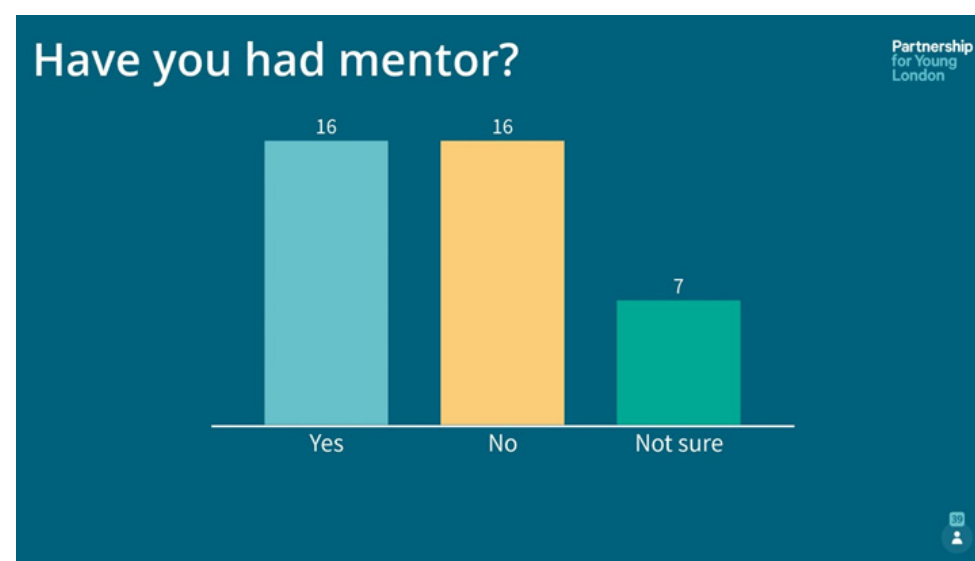
## Key Findings

- 41% of the young people said they had not previously received mentoring and 18% were unsure. Another 41% stated that they have received mentoring.
- Young people feel that mentors should have multiple types of training such as basic mental health, unconscious bias, and interpersonal skills training.
- Young people felt that mentors need to understand the needs of care experienced young people
- Young people said they would like a mentor to support them with aspects such as independence, reassurance, and signposting to services.
- Attendees stated that mentors should have qualities such as patience, trust worthiness, relatability, and empathy.
- Young people believe that mentorship can come from people such as peers, advocates, foster carers, and family members.



## Have you had a mentor?

We asked 39 care experienced young people whether they had previously received mentoring. 41% of the young people said they had not received mentoring before and 18% were unsure. Another 41% stated that they have received mentoring.



## What training should a mentor have to work with care experienced young people?

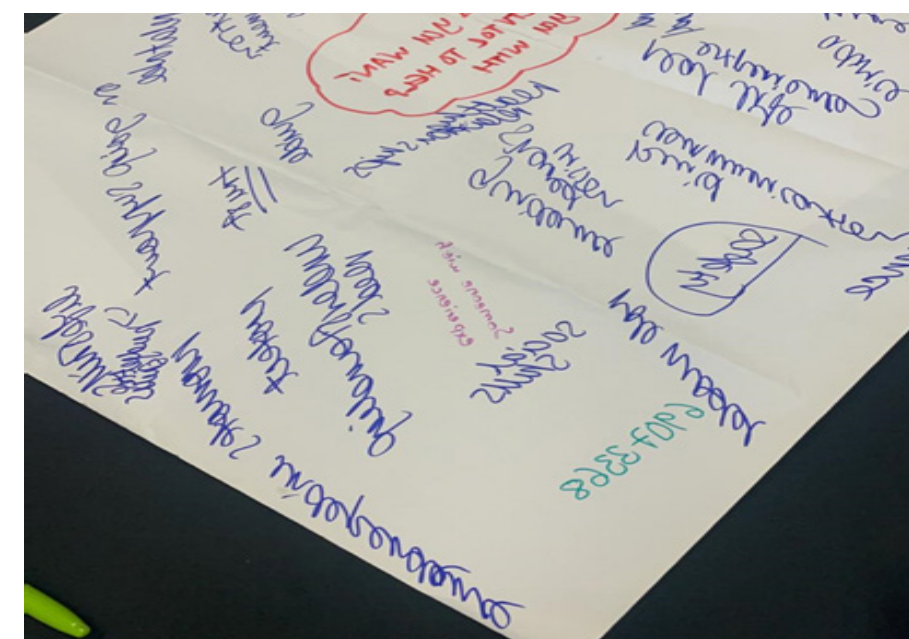
When asked what training a mentor should have the young people responded:

- Basic mental health training
- Listening and communicating skills
- Basic knowlegde about Children in Care i.e. What social care is and how to be professionally appropriate
- Culturally appropriate and unconscious bias
- Freedom of choice
- Interpersonal skills
- Informed but with boundaries
- They should be trained by care experienced young people i.e. on housing, education, finances

## What would you want a mentor to support you with?

When asked what they would want a mentor to support them with young people responded with a diverse range of views according to their needs and preferences:

- Social skills
- Motivation
- Independence
- Safety
- Reassurance
- Being a role model
- Understanding my needs
- Advice
- Identity and culture
- Healthy relationships
- Signposting to services
- Being an adovocate
- Having a laugh
- Education employment and training options
- Shared vision
- Someone to open doors
- To help understand background and past
- Future planning
- Life skills i.e. budgeting



Inspiration  
 Love  
 Cultural  
 movements  
 Opportunity  
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 Society  
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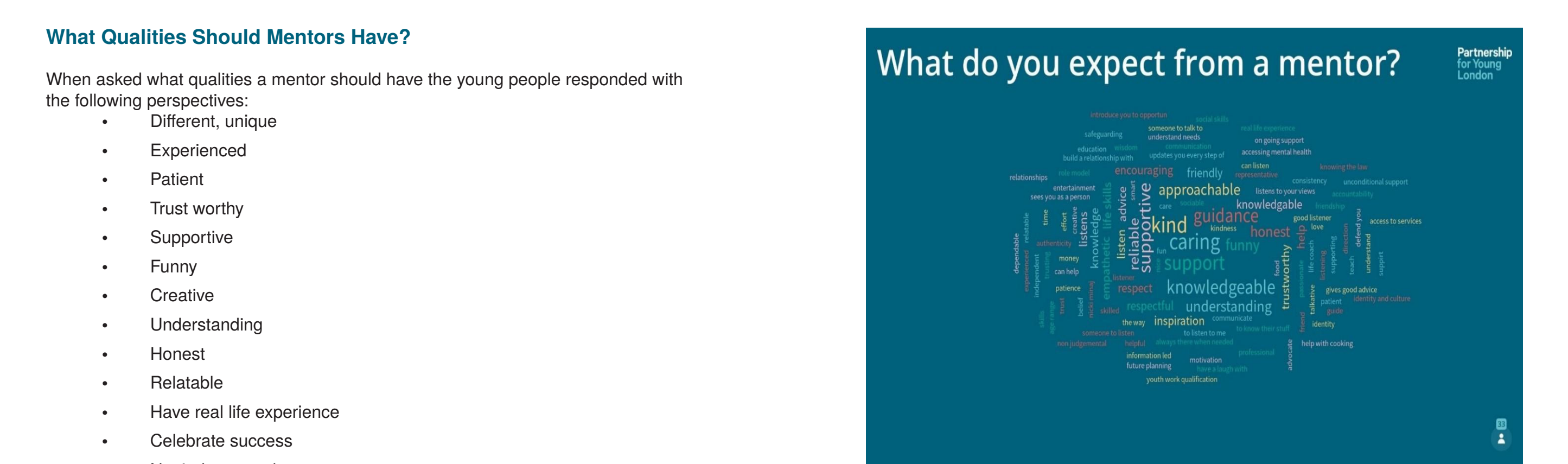
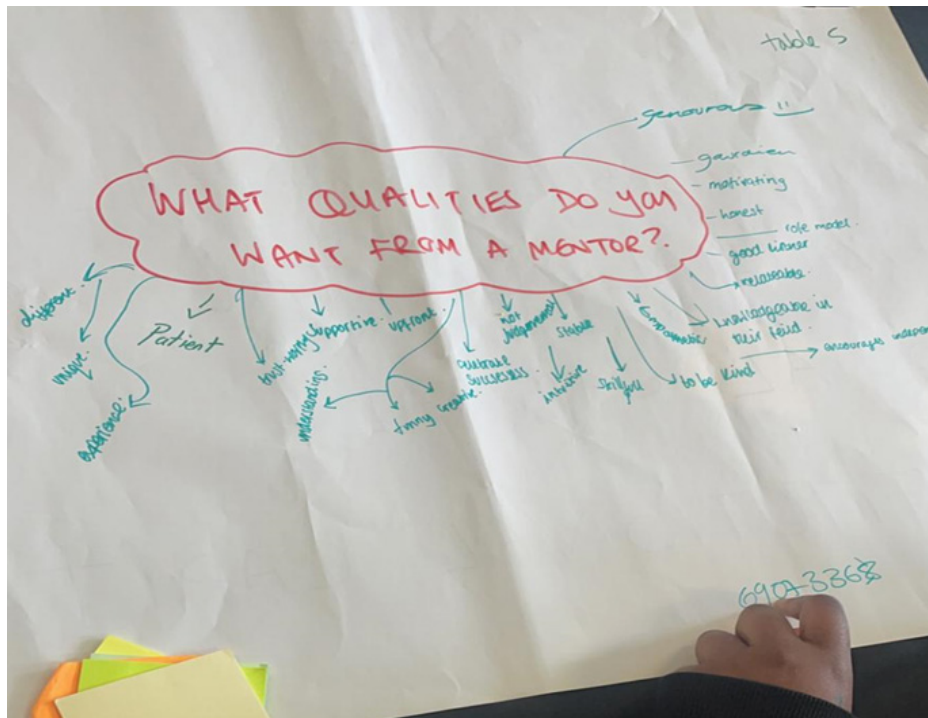


Illustration by Drew Sinclair





### What do you want as a minimum from a mentor?

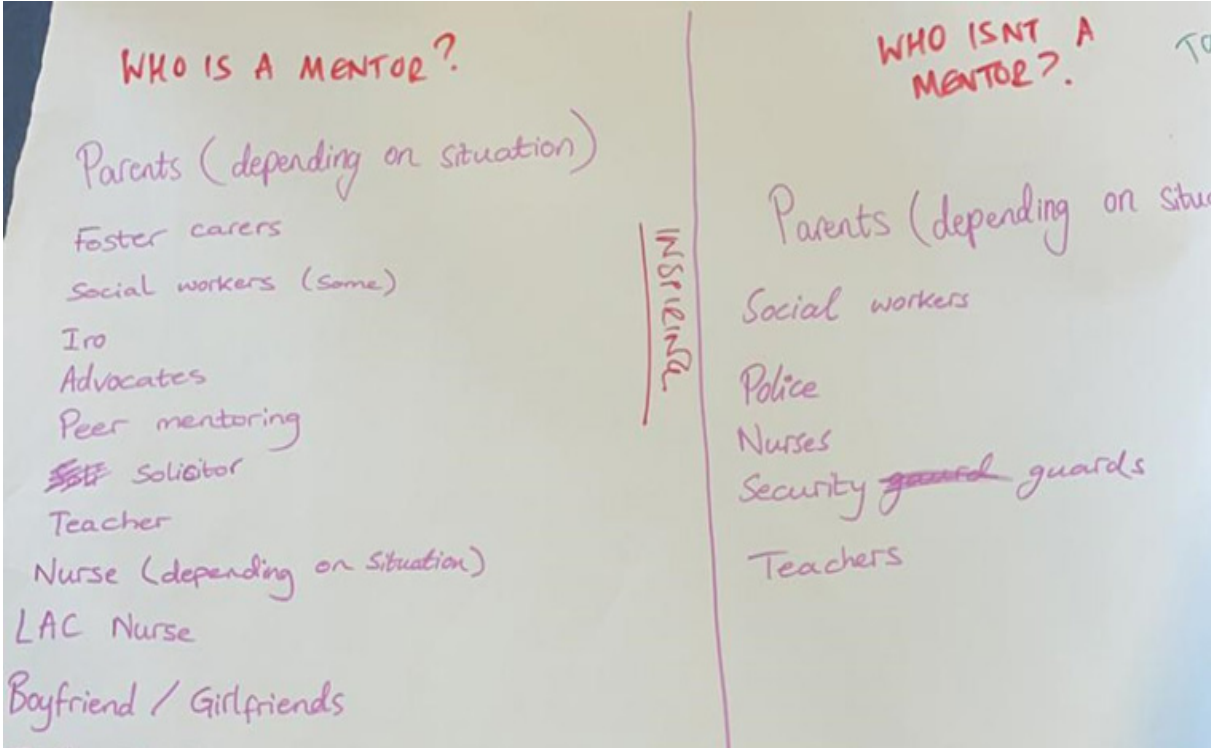
When asked what the minimum from a mentor should be, the young people responded:

- To be caring and understanding
- To be smart
- To be reliable
- Not to be forced on me
- Would want to be able to talk to them about anything
- To be able to connect and speak to them – nice to talk to
- To give helpful and useful advice
- Someone who tells the truth
- Someone who has gone through the same things
- Experienced around mental and physical health
- To be encouraging
- To offer special time and 1:1 meetings
- To do activities
- Someone who likes Nicki Minaj
- Someone who can act on your needs both tangible and intangible

### Who is a mentor and who is not?

In terms of who was a mentor and how was not seen as a mentor we had very variable feedback across the young people and each could sit in both of the different categories aside from the police who were universally not accepted as mentors by this group.

Who is a mentor	Who isn't a mentor
Parents – depending on the situation Foster carers IROs Advocates Peer Mentors Solicitors Teachers Nurses depending on the situation LAC nurse Girlfriends and Boyfriends Influencers Depends on the context – cousins, aunts, uncles, siblings, friends Anyone you think you can be open with and trust	Parents – depending on the situation Social workers Police Nurses Security Guards Teachers – depending on the situation





Inspiration  
 Love  
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It should be mandatory for every local authority to have or be in partnership with a mentoring program for young people. It is recommended that local authorities explain what mentoring is to young people and how they can access services. Mentors should be assigned to young people based on individuals' attributes and needs.

