

# Learning Mentor Practice Guide

## CWDC Learning Mentor Co-ordinator Peer Support Team

**CWDC's vision** is to create a world-class workforce for children, young people and families.

**CWDC** exists to improve the lives of children, young people, their families and carers by ensuring that all people working with them have the best possible training, qualifications, support and advice. It also helps children and young people's organisations and services to work together better so that the child is at the centre of all services.

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## Foreword

The introduction of learning mentors to schools has been widely welcomed by students and pupils, parents and carers, teachers and school management teams, support agencies, Ofsted and many national bodies. Evaluation findings at national and local levels have been extremely positive<sup>1</sup>.

Learning mentors make a real and tangible difference to the lives and life chances of our children and young people. Their child- and family-centred approach embodies the ethos and objectives of the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* programme<sup>2</sup> and approaches developed through learning mentor provision are now being reflected in many related roles in our schools and communities.

I am very pleased that the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is now responsible for learning mentors<sup>3</sup>. In my trips around the country, I have been impressed with the role and contribution made by learning mentors. We are committed to continued support of their work and to using the learning mentor model to help us develop future models of provision, training and development.

This practice guide draws on the substantial experience of the Excellence in Cities initiative in delivering the learning mentor programme and in using it to help schools or partnerships introduce the role or improve current provision.

This guide would not have been possible without the hard work of literally thousands of people dedicated to the work of learning mentors. This formidable body of people includes the learning mentors themselves, their line managers and co-ordinators, the mentees and their families, school and education/children's service managers and the various people who have provided central support through the Department for Education and Skills and CWDC over the past seven years. They are the people who have made the work a success, and it is their experiences that have made this guide possible. I hope that you will use their experience and make sure this valuable work continues to improve and enhance the life chances of our children and young people.

I look forward to working with you in the future and I promise that we will do all we can to help you deliver the very best services for children and young people.

Jane Haywood, MBE, Chief Executive, Children's Workforce Development Council

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<sup>1</sup> See the evaluation reports on learning mentors at [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> See [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> The Council took over responsibility for learning mentors from the DfES in April 2006.

## Introduction

This guide is for everyone involved in developing and delivering learning mentor provision in schools. It is offered to school managers and to those taking on learning mentor roles. It is designed to help you to deliver effective provision and help children and young people to achieve the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

The guide is structured in line with the *Functional Map for the Provision of Learning Mentor Services* (DfES, 2003)<sup>4</sup> to give readers a thorough introduction to the role and its management. Such a detailed guide has not been offered before. It links with the new National Induction Training Programme for Learning Mentors<sup>5</sup> and draws on seven years of cumulative practice, development and evaluation findings.

The guide should be used in conjunction with *Supporting the New Agenda for Children's Services and Schools: The Role of Learning Mentors and Co-ordinators* (DfES, 2005). It builds on the original *Good Practice Guidelines* (DfES, 2002) and also takes account of the occupational standards which underpin the role<sup>6</sup>.

A range of materials has been produced to offer further practical support to programmes. These materials are available at [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors)

## About learning mentors

Learning mentors provide support and guidance to children, young people and those engaged with them. They work to remove barriers to learning in order to promote effective participation, enhance individual learning, raise aspirations and achieve full potential. They are skilled practitioners who work from a strengths-based, person-centred perspective.

Learning mentors were introduced in 1999 through Excellence in Cities (EiC), a government programme seeking to improve standards and achievement in schools. They were a key element of EiC and they worked with carefully identified pupils who were experiencing barriers to learning. They helped to identify the barriers and to construct strategies to overcome them.

Evaluation of learning mentor provision has shown that outcomes include improved engagement with learning, increased resilience and improvements in achievement<sup>7</sup>.

Ofsted found that 'the most successful and popular of EIC strands is learning mentors. The creation of these posts has been greatly welcomed and has enabled the majority of schools to enhance the quality of support they offer'

Learning mentor provision is now established as a mainstream option for all schools. It is supported by the national induction programme, by the suite of national occupational standards and by related nationally-accredited training provision — all underpinned by the *Functional Map for the Provision of Learning Mentors* summarised at **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1** outlines the aim of a learning mentor programme and its key elements. Each of the boxes 1 to 4 is underpinned by a set of detailed functions — ie, the things that learning mentors or their managers need to do to achieve the overall aim. This guide follows the structure of Figure 1 and offers discussion and practical advice on all the key functions.

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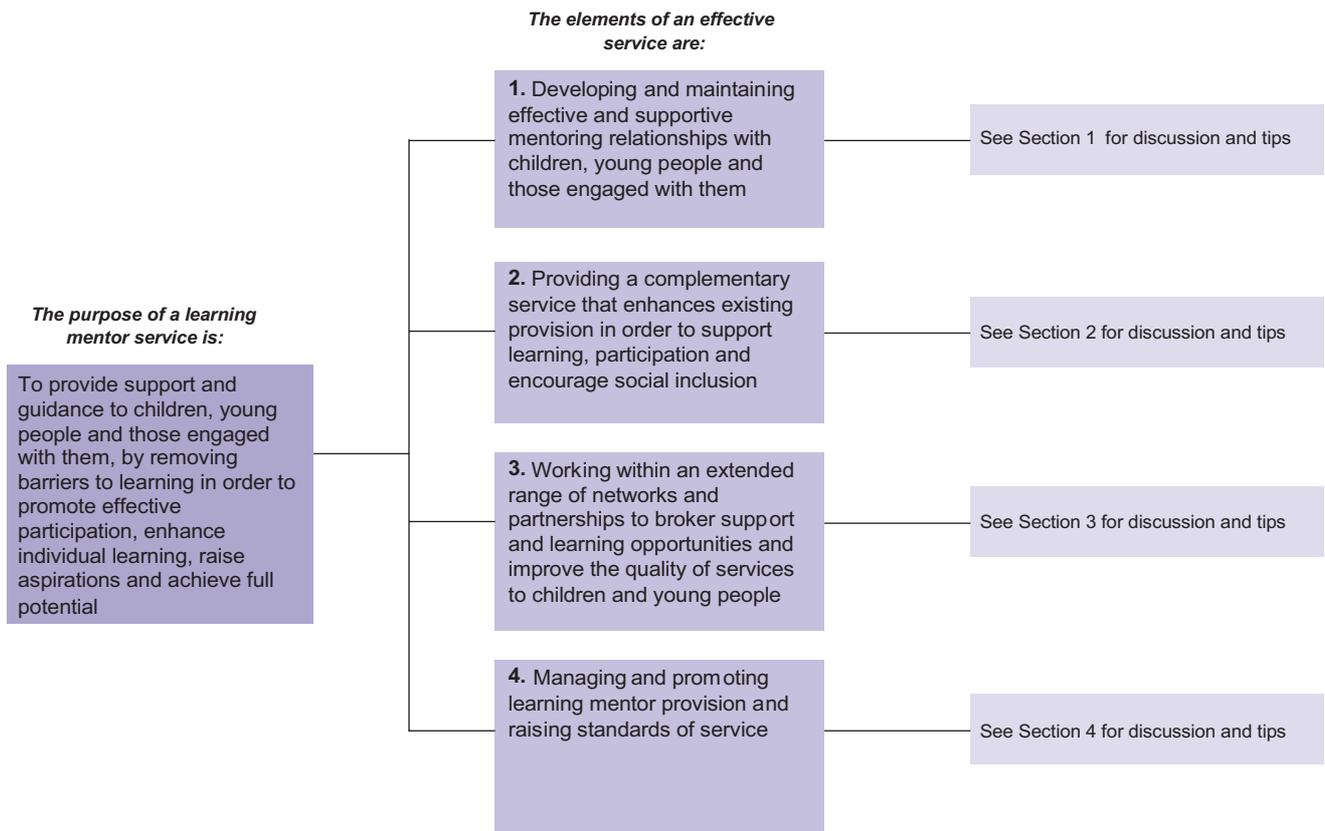
<sup>4</sup> Developed for learning mentors and their managers by training organisations and government and available at [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors)

<sup>5</sup> The new induction programme is being rolled out from January 2007 and is a revision of the previous Initial Training Programme for Learning Mentors.

<sup>6</sup> The National Occupational Standards for Learning, Development and Support Services are at [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors)

<sup>7</sup> See Ofsted, 2003 and Morris et al., 2004.

**Figure 1: The purpose and key functions of learning mentor provision**



*Functional Map for the Provision of Learning Mentors, DfES, 2003*

A full version of this can be downloaded from [www.cwddccouncil.org.uk/learningmentors](http://www.cwddccouncil.org.uk/learningmentors).

### Implications for schools

Learning mentors can have a positive impact on the culture and achievements of a school. However, those considering the introduction of learning mentors need to be aware that this can be done successfully only as part of a whole-school approach to promoting inclusion and raising standards.

From evaluations and inspections of learning mentor provision, we now have a clear picture of the range of factors that influence successful practice (see for example Ofsted, 2005). In particular, we know that practice is most effective when:

- There are clear line management arrangements with well-specified job descriptions
- Where there is a team of learning mentors, the team is led by a lead mentor appointed to manage the work of the others, and the lead mentor is managed in turn by a senior manager in the school
- Learning mentors are integrated carefully into the school's support services and their deployment has a clear rationale
- The referral system is rigorous and involves other professionals who might have an interest in the welfare of the child
- Other adult volunteer mentors are sometimes used, for example through Education Business Partnerships, local universities and businesses
- Assessment data and target levels are used well to monitor progress. Often this is supported by an action plan for each pupil.
- Exit strategies are clearly identified and there is follow-up after a few weeks to check on the pupil's progress
- There is regular, formal monitoring and evaluation of the work of the learning mentors and their impact on the progress of individual pupils

- Learning mentors share good practice through attendance at cluster meetings and local authority meetings
- Good links have been developed with parents and outside agencies, including social services and education welfare services
- Learning mentors are involved in a wide range of activities in schools, including study support clubs and recruiting and training pupils to be peer mentors
- Mentors take initiatives in providing for the pupils they are mentoring, such as leading development of the Key Stage 4 vocational curriculum.

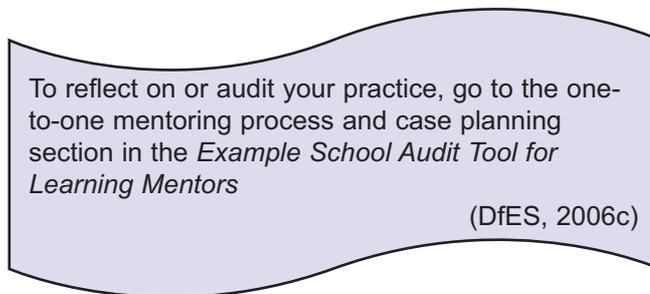
Conversely, where the effectiveness of the learning mentors is weak it is because:

- Their work has not been fully integrated with the rest of the school
- Teachers do not take into account the targets for pupils set by learning mentors
- The work of learning mentors is limited to helping a few pupils only or to focusing unduly on behaviour
- Their role is not clear to the teachers in school.

# Section 1: Developing and maintaining relationships

A learning mentor's core work is to initiate and maintain professional helping relationships with the children and young people who have been referred to them. This encompasses a range of functions:

- Establishing and developing effective one-to-one mentoring and other supportive relationships with children and young people
- Developing, agreeing and implementing a time-bound action plan with groups, with individual children and young people and with those involved with them, based on a comprehensive assessment of strengths and needs
- Facilitating access to specialist support services for children and young people facing barriers to learning
- Assisting in identifying early signs of disengagement and contributing to specific interventions to encourage re-engagement
- Operating within agreed legal, ethical and professional boundaries when working with children and young people and those involved with them



To be able to carry out these functions successfully, learning mentors and their managers will need to:

- a. Adopt a structured approach to referral, assessment, planning and review
- b. Understand how to initiate, maintain and end the helping relationship, in one-to-one and group settings
- c. Keep children and young people safe
- d. Keep trust, with appropriate procedures for confidentiality, consent and sharing information
- f. Understand and promote the values and ethics of learning mentoring.

## 1a. Adopting a structured approach

A structured approach to learning mentoring helps to keep practice intentional and focused on outcomes. It also helps to maintain boundaries so that learning mentors do not become overwhelmed with requests for support. It is supported by effective caseload management<sup>8</sup>. The flowchart at **Box 1** gives an overview of a structured approach to one-to-one mentoring, and introduces the types of records that learning mentors will need to keep.

<b>Box 1: Stages in a structured approach to one-to-one mentoring</b>	
<b>Step</b>	<b>Supporting documentation</b>
<b>1. Referral</b>	
The learning mentor receives a referral ▼	A referral form (including performance and tracking data, pastoral information, teacher assessment etc)
<b>2. Assessment and gathering information</b>	
Assessment helps the learning mentor to understand what is contributing to the child or young person's difficulties and what strengths and personal resources they have	Case notes profiling the child/ young person's learning, attendance and behaviour and participation (if not included in referral record)
Assessment involves gathering information and liaison with staff, parents/carers and the child or young person.	Case notes could include interviews with parents/carers, teachers, support staff or other practitioners involved with the child or young person
Gain consent of parents/carers and include them as part of the assessment process (see Section 1d) ▼	Letter to parent/carer, including information about learning mentoring, offering an opportunity to meet the learning mentor
Get the child or young person's perspective. They are the expert in their own lives. Their understanding of what is contributing to their difficulties and their perception of their own strengths is key. Learning mentors use a range of techniques for initiating the professional helping relationship, supporting children and young people to tell their stories ▼	Notes from the introductory meeting with the child or young person.  Many learning mentors use a range of self-assessment and profiling tools. These can be used as a baseline against which to measure progress
<b>3. Set goals</b>	
Once the learning mentor and the child or young person have decided on which issue they will work on, the learning mentor helps them to set challenging and realistic goals, and then breaks these down into smaller steps or targets, helping them to grow as a person, participate and learn better ▼	Record of the goals that the learning mentor and child/young person has identified
<b>4. Create a plan and take action</b>	
Based on the information from the assessment, an action plan is drawn up identifying what work the practitioner and the child or young person will do first  The action plan includes goals that specify the different behaviours and outcomes that will result from the work that the learning mentor and the child/ young person will do together ▼	Action plan and session plans
<b>5. Review progress</b>	
After a set period of time (usually specified in the action plan), the learning mentor and the child or young person will review progress. Parents/carers, teachers and other practitioners may be involved in the review. The review is not always a formal meeting	Record of review

<sup>8</sup> Caseload management is discussed at 4.e.

<p>If sufficient progress has been made, the learning mentor and the child or young person will begin an 'ending' process. However, if there is still work to be done together, a new action plan will be formed.</p>	<p>Monitoring/tracking the child or young person's progress.</p>
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The rest of this section gives 'pointers for practice' for each step in the above structure and for the record keeping which underpins the process.

### Pointers for practice: referral

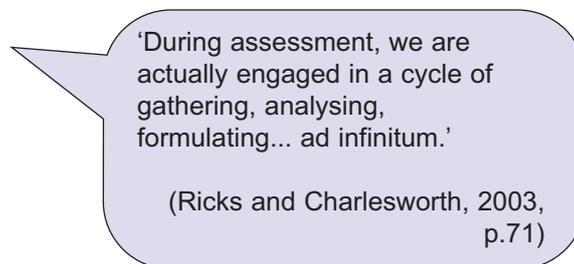
Children and young people referred to a learning mentor will be experiencing barriers to learning and participation. Procedures for referral to a learning mentor should therefore be robust and accountable. Many schools and settings use a referral form.

### Referral procedures may include the following:

- Performance and tracking data
- Teacher assessments
- Pastoral information (including risk factors such as child protection, bereavement or high mobility)
- Attendance data
- Behaviour tracking data (including fixed term exclusions)
- Information from families and/or other agencies involved with the child or young person.

### Pointers for practice: assessment and gathering information

Assessment is a process that helps the learning mentor understand what is contributing to the child or young person's needs and helps to identify their strengths and resources. During assessment, information is gathered, analysed, sorted and interpreted.



The process of assessment involves gathering information that will be useful in helping the learning mentor and the child or young person to formulate a plan. Assessment is also essential to planning and to building the helping relationship (see **Box 2**). It helps learning mentors and the children and young people with whom they work begin to answer two very important questions:

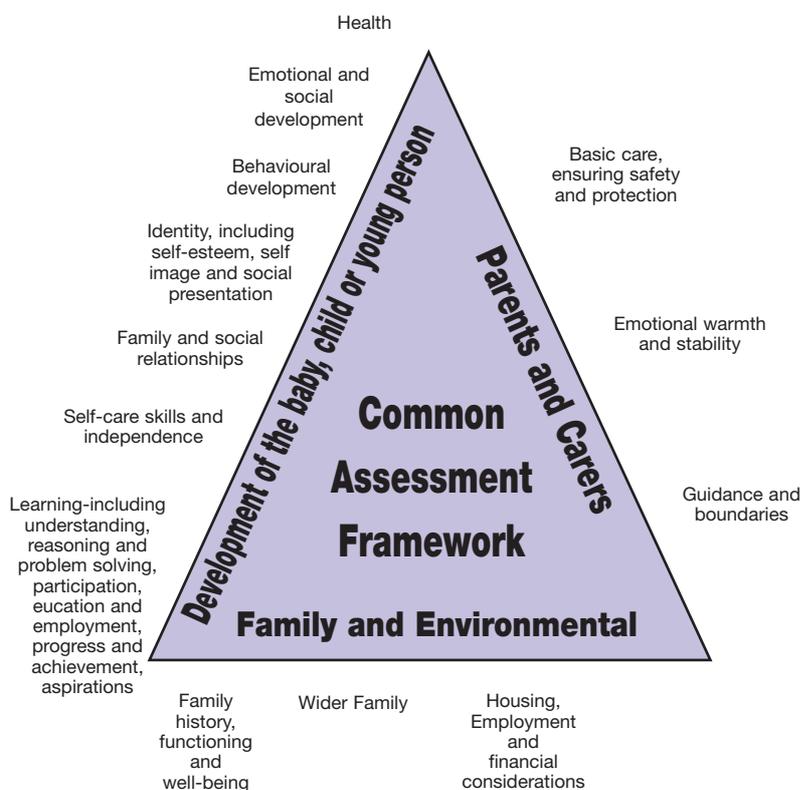
- What is going on?
- What can be done to bring about change?

<p><b>Box 2: Five reasons for spending time doing assessment</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment provides important information that underpins useful and realistic goals</li> <li>2. Assessment helps learning mentors recognise the uniqueness of every child and young person</li> <li>3. Assessment highlights strengths, not just difficulties</li> <li>4. Assessment reveals important historical information</li> <li>5. Assessment keeps learning mentor practice focused on the most important areas.</li> </ol> <p>(Adapted from Young, 2001, pp.149-150)</p>

There are many different tools and frameworks for assessing the needs of children and young people. However, as part of the integration of children’s services envisaged by *Every Child Matters*, a Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People (CAF) (DfES, 2006a)<sup>9</sup> has now been produced. The CAF is a standardised approach to conducting an assessment of a child’s additional needs and to deciding how those needs should be met. It can be used by practitioners across children’s services in England.

The CAF is a systematic and holistic approach to assessment. It has been developed from combining the underlying model of the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (Department of Health, 2000) with the main factors used in other assessment frameworks. The elements that form the framework for common assessment are shown in **Figure 2**. They have been grouped into three themes: development of the child; parents and carers and family and environmental elements.

**Figure 2: The dimensions of the Common Assessment Framework**



The CAF is intended as an initial assessment tool for use by all services and agencies working with children, young people and families. One of the aims of having a common tool is to assist more integrated working between agencies. For example, by using a common language and process, communication between services can be improved. And, as CAF is a family-held record, a copy of which is owned by the child, young person or family, essential information travels with them and so removes the need to repeat basic information gathering when a child or family meets a new practitioner.

<sup>9</sup> Available at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

Not all of the children and young people with whom learning mentors work, will require a common assessment. The CAF has been designed for use when:

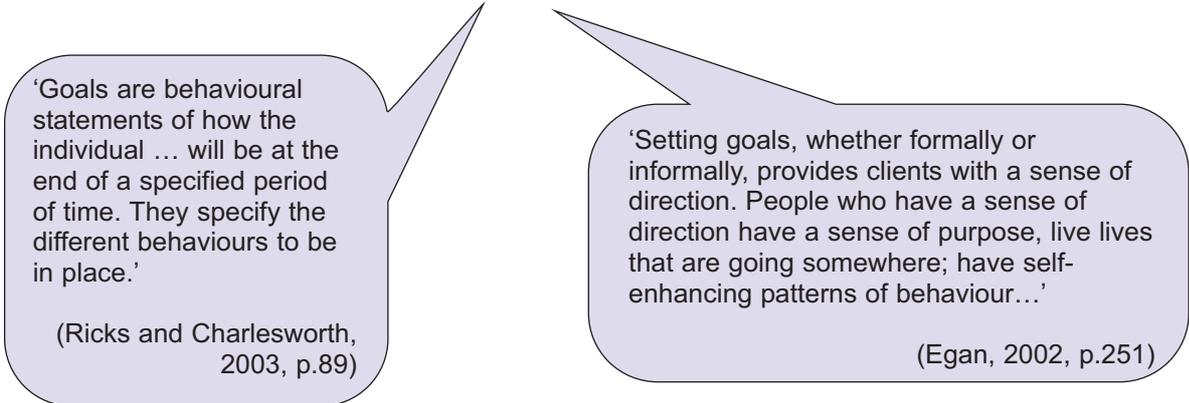
- There is concern about how well a child is progressing
- The needs are unclear, or broader than an individual service can address
- A common assessment would help identify the strengths and needs, and/or get other services to help meet them.

Learning mentors are ideally placed to undertake common assessment as they are trained in assessment practices. The knowledge and understanding learning mentors gain about a child's strengths and what is contributing to their difficulties is important evidence which will contribute to professional judgements made as part of the CAF process.

While a learning mentor may not always use the CAF with every child or young person, parent or carer with whom they work, their practice will always involve an initial — and then ongoing — assessment of a child or young person's strengths and needs.

### Pointers for practice: setting goals

The assessment process should enable the learning mentor, the child/young person and (where appropriate and possible) the parent/carer to reach a shared understanding of the issues facing the child or young person and what their priorities are. This can be recorded as a 'needs statement' (Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003, p.88). It is important to share the 'need statement' with the child or young person and the parent/carer where possible, as it forms the basis for setting goals and taking action.



'Goals are behavioural statements of how the individual ... will be at the end of a specified period of time. They specify the different behaviours to be in place.'

(Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003, p.89)

'Setting goals, whether formally or informally, provides clients with a sense of direction. People who have a sense of direction have a sense of purpose, live lives that are going somewhere; have self-enhancing patterns of behaviour...'

(Egan, 2002, p.251)

When writing goals, learning mentors are advised to:

- Write statements that describe what the client does, not what the practitioner does
- Write statements that specify an outcome or result rather than a process.

(Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003, p.93)

A goal describes what will be different at the end of the working relationship. An important part of the work that learning mentors do is to break goals down into manageable steps or **targets**, which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound ('SMART' targets). They also help children and young people develop strategies to achieve their targets, and eventually, their goals.

### Pointers for practice: planning and taking action

Action planning is a clear, step-by-step process to achieve a goal. It is essential in effective learning mentor practice, as it helps to keep the working relationship focused and intentional (see **Box 3**). However, there is no such thing as a good action plan in itself — action planning must lead to positive outcomes for the child or young person. The lack of a plan can lead to practice that is unfocused, lacking in direction and ultimately unhelpful.

**Box 3: The advantages of action planning**

- Plans help children and young people bring order to their thinking
- Plans help prevent children and young people from feeling overwhelmed
- Creating a plan helps the child or young person search for more useful ways of achieving goals
- Plans provide an opportunity to assess the realism and accuracy of goals
- Plans help to make the child or young person aware of the personal resources they have – and the resources they will need – to get what they want or need.

(Adapted from Egan, 2002)

Action planning is a process. Like assessment, it is important to distinguish the process from the product (the piece of paper on which the action plan is written). Right from the beginning of the helping relationship, learning mentors should begin to develop with the child or young person an ‘initial planning mentality’ (Egan, 2002, p.341). Thinking about planning must be introduced early on, though the formal plan may not be written until goals, targets and strategies have been agreed.

‘**Little plans**’, whether called such or not, are formulated and executed throughout the helping process.’

(Egan, 2002, p.336)

‘**Formal planning** usually focuses on the sequence of ‘big steps’ clients must take to get what they need or want... The strategies for accomplishing goals, divides them into workable steps, puts the steps in order, and assigns a timetable for the accomplishment of each step.’

(Egan, 2002, p.33)

**Box 4** sets out a series of **action planning questions** linked to the stages in the ‘skilled helper’ model developed by Gerard Egan (Egan, 2002).

<b>Box 4: Action planning questions</b>	
<p><b>Stage 1: What’s going on</b></p> <p>Choosing the right problems and opportunities on which to work</p>	<p>On which problems and/or opportunities do we need to focus first - what is most critical?</p> <p>Is there anybody else whom we need to ask to support this process - parents/carers, teachers, other practitioners, peers?</p>
<p><b>Stage 2: What solutions make sense?</b></p> <p>Choosing realistic and challenging goals</p>	<p>What do we want to achieve in our working relationship - what are our goals?</p> <p>What are the smaller steps (the targets) that will help us to reach our goals?</p>

<p><b>Stage 3: How do I get what I need or want?</b></p> <p>Possible actions and a plan</p>	<p>What strategies will help us to reach our goals?</p> <p>What sequence of actions will help us get to our goals?</p> <p>How important is the order in which these actions take place?</p>
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Action planning — helping children to take small planned steps towards goals — can be done even with very little children. It can be done formally or informally. There are no formulas in writing action plans, but some general principles are helpful:

Written action plans should:

- Record the child or young person’s needs and strengths
- Record goals and targets
- Set out some of the principle strategies to be used to bring about the desired change
- Set out the service or services and/or programmes that will be provided to support the child or young person achieve their goal
- State the date on which progress will be reviewed.

If more than one practitioner is working with the child or young person, only **one integrated action plan** should be developed, in which common goals and targets are agreed and all services or programmes that will support the child or young person achieve their goal are described (see section 3.b on multi-agency working).

‘Helping clients develop strategies to achieve goals can be the most thoughtful, humane and fruitful way of being with them.’

(Egan, 2002, p.312)

‘Planning (and practice) is a continuous and never-ending process of enquiry, interpretation and choice.’

(Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003)

**Pointers for practice: reviewing progress**

Reviewing is the process of monitoring the progress a child or young person is making towards achieving their targets — and therefore their goals. It provides a record of how the child or young person is progressing and whether the support provided is helping them to achieve their goal.

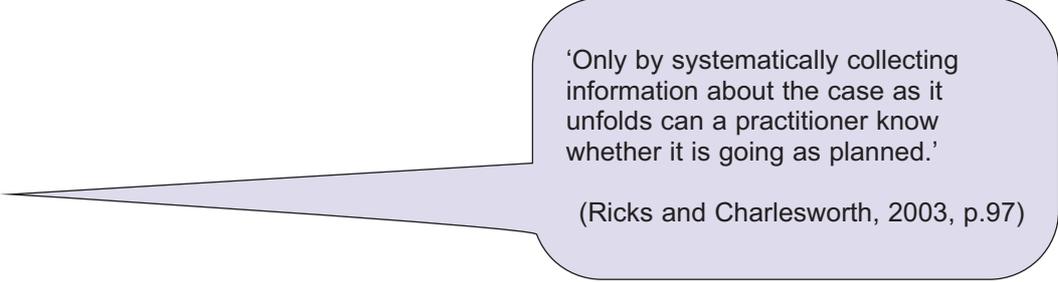
Most learning mentors find it helpful to formally review progress at regular intervals, for example half-termly or termly. The date when progress will be reviewed or evaluated is usually recorded in the action plan. This is a formal review of progress, but, as in the planning process, learning mentors should begin to help the child or young person to reflect on and evaluate their progress even at the very early stages of the working relationship. Integrating evaluation of progress into the whole process helps the child or young person to develop into someone who is **reflective**. It also helps to make a more formal review of progress less scary for them.

‘[Reviewing] is the monitoring of service delivery and goal progress in order to determine whether we did what we said we would do and whether we achieved the desired outcome, results or happy ending wanted by the client. [It] gives the practitioner a reading on how the client is progressing and how the practitioner is performing... [It] indicates whether a case is going to plan.’

(Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003, pp.95-97)

In order to review or evaluate progress, learning mentors need to use the available data to provide both quantitative and qualitative analyses of their work:

- Quantitative information is measurable and usually concerned with numbers
- Qualitative information is concerned with quality and is usually concerned with what people think and say.



'Only by systematically collecting information about the case as it unfolds can a practitioner know whether it is going as planned.'

(Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003, p.97)

There is a balance between collecting no information at all — and then being left to guess or speculate on progress — and collecting too much information and then using nothing. The point of collecting information must be to determine the following:

- Were the needs met?
- Were the goals met?
- Did we do what we said we would do and did we do it consistently?

(Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003, p.97)

Reviews are not about blaming individuals if things are not going to plan. If the case is not going to plan, then a new, more appropriate and more effective plan needs to be developed.

### Pointers for practice: endings

There is no ideal length of time for the learning mentor helping relationship to last — effective and efficient helping, rather than the length of time, should be the focus. However, it is important to have strategies for drawing the relationship — and the intervention — to a successful conclusion.

At the review stage, the learning mentor considers, with the child or young person, their parent/carer and other appropriate practitioners, whether the work they have been doing has been successful in helping the child or young person achieve their goals (see **Box 5**). If a lot of progress has been made, and there are no further important issues or problems, then the learning mentor and the child or young person may prepare to end the one-to-one sessions.

#### **Box 5: Knowing when to end — five useful questions**

1. Is the presenting problem under control?
2. Has the child or young person developed better coping skills and better self-confidence?
3. Has the child or young person achieved greater self-awareness and better relationships?
4. Are life and work more enjoyable for the child or young person?
5. Does the child or young person feel capable of being in school without the learning mentor relationship?

(Adapted from Sciscoe in Young 2005, p.274)

It is important to consider whether ending the one-to-one helping relationship is the right thing for a child or young person in the following situations:

- They have made very little or no progress, but have been in the helping relationship for quite sometime
- They have grown dependent on the helping relationship.

In the first case, it is important to consider what other support needs the child or young person may have and whether to refer on to another service or agency. In the second case, it is important to ensure that the child or young person is supported to handle their issues independently.

Sudden endings are not advisable and are not in a child or young person's best interests. Young (2001, p.345) cites other authors who recommend:

- That endings are discussed between three and seven sessions prior to a proposed ending
- That as much time as was spent in relationship building in the beginning should be devoted to endings.

His point is that there should be a period of preparation for endings. Children and young people — and learning mentors — will feel loss at the ending of their sessions together. **Box 6** provides some suggestions to help explore and resolve feelings of loss.

**Box 6: Exploring and resolving feelings of loss towards the end of one-to-one sessions**

- Bring up endings early
- Reframe endings as an opportunity for the child or young person to put new learning into practice
- If appropriate, suggest a limit for the number of sessions you might spend with the child or young person at the beginning of the helping relationship
- Use fading — spacing one-to-one sessions over increasing lengths of time
- Avoid making the relationship the central feature of helping — help the child or young person to see that it is their own actions that led to success
- Play down the importance of ending; play up the sense of accomplishment and the value of independence
- Use reflective listening to allow the child or young person to express feelings of loss.

(Adapted from Young, 2001)

Existing learning mentor practice has provided many specific examples of how to draw work to an effective end:

- Keep the work flexible: ensuring that learning mentors can deliver short or long-term interventions as required means that support can be structured in line with the child or young person's needs and avoids abrupt and untimely endings
- Start 'fading': where the length of time between each one-to-one session is increased, to encourage independence
- Gradually decrease the length of one-to-one sessions (eg, from 30 to 15 minutes)

- Provide time-limited support or observation back in the classroom to ensure that strategies developed in one-to-one sessions are transferred into the learning environment
- Offer drop-in sessions or learning activities out of school hours as a way of tailing off support
- Self-referral systems
- Encourage the child or young person to keep a diary to monitor her/his own progress, which is discussed with the learning mentor at agreed periods
- Use peer mentors/buddies to support pupils. It can also be effective in many cases to invite the child or young person to train as a peer mentor.

### Pointers for practice: record keeping

Like all practitioners, learning mentors keep records in order to keep a clear focus in their work and be accountable. The type of records that a learning mentor may keep will differ from case to case. Some general principles of good records keeping are set out in **Box 7**. It is important not only to think about the types of records but also the content of records and how much should be written.

Keeping records is a **delicate balance** between writing down all the details of a learning mentor’s work with children, young people and families and just recording basic information – too much or too little! Understanding what is required in law can be a useful guide in considering what and how much to write.

<b>Box 7: Some principles of good record keeping</b>	
<b>Gathering information</b>	<p>Learning mentors – and schools – are required to state the purpose for which personal information is being gathered (for example as part of the assessment process)</p> <p>Children/young people and their parents/carers should not be misled about the purpose of gathering information</p>
<b>Recording information</b>	<p>All information that is recorded must be factual. A learning mentor should not record anything about children, young people or families that they are not prepared to justify or say directly to them</p> <p>A learning mentor should be very careful about recording information given by somebody other than child, young person or their parent/carer. ‘Second hand’ information needs to be treated with caution</p> <p>‘Gut feelings’ or off-the-record conversations should only be recorded in exceptional circumstances</p> <p>Information needs to be complete enough to reflect the nature and level of the needs and type of support provided to the young person</p> <p>Only include information from other sources if it is accurate and supported by evidence</p> <p>Include all the information (evidence) that forms the basis of decisions that have been made</p> <p>Include the decisions made about a child or young person and the reasons for these decisions</p> <p>Provide sufficient information to make sure that the child or young person would continue to receive the right kind of help and support if the learning mentor was not available</p>
<b>Sharing information</b>	<p>As a general rule, learning mentors should not share information without the child/young person’s or parent/carer’s consent (see page 12 above)</p>

	Information must not be passed to another person for profit or financial gain (for example, to the press)
<b>Keeping information up-to-date</b>	Information must be kept up-to-date If a learning mentor has shared information with another practitioner or agency, then it is the responsibility of the learning mentor to contact these practitioners or agencies where there is a change of sensitive, personal information  Information should be checked on a regular basis to ensure that it is up-to-date
<b>Storing information/ pupil records</b>	Records should be stored safely in an archive or destroyed when no longer needed Learning mentors should know how long records should be kept  Files should be checked and 'weeded out' at least annually to make sure they are kept for no longer than necessary  Computer files should be password-protected with authorised access to certain levels only  Paper files should be locked away at all times when they are not in use  As a general rule, it is unsafe to take children's files or records off the school site. If files or records are taken off the school site, it should be with the permission of a senior manager and particular care needs to be given to their security

Learning mentors need to know and understand the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. Each school or educational setting will have its own data protection and security policy, which sets out how the school will hold records in compliance with the Act. Mentors should have access to or a copy of the institution's policy and they should read, understand the follow this policy (see **Box 8**).

<b>Box 8: What does the law say?</b>
The Data Protection Act 1998 sets out the regulations for processing personal information. It applies to paper records as well as those held on a computer. The Act gives individuals certain rights and protection concerning data (personal information) that is held about them. There are particularly strict rules about 'sensitive data' — ie, information about physical and mental health, sexual life, religious beliefs and racial background. The Act places obligations and a duty on any practitioner that records, holds and uses personal data to be open about how information will be used.

### 1b: Initiating and maintaining relationships

Initiating a relationship successfully with a child or young person depends to a large extent on the way the learning mentor communicates with them. 'Effective communication and engagement' is one of the six areas covered in the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce (DfES, 2006). It involves listening, questioning, understanding and responding to what is being communicated by children, young people and those caring for them.

'Communication is not just about the words you use, but also your manner of speaking, body language and, above all, the effectiveness with which you listen. To communicate effectively, it is important to take account of culture and context.'

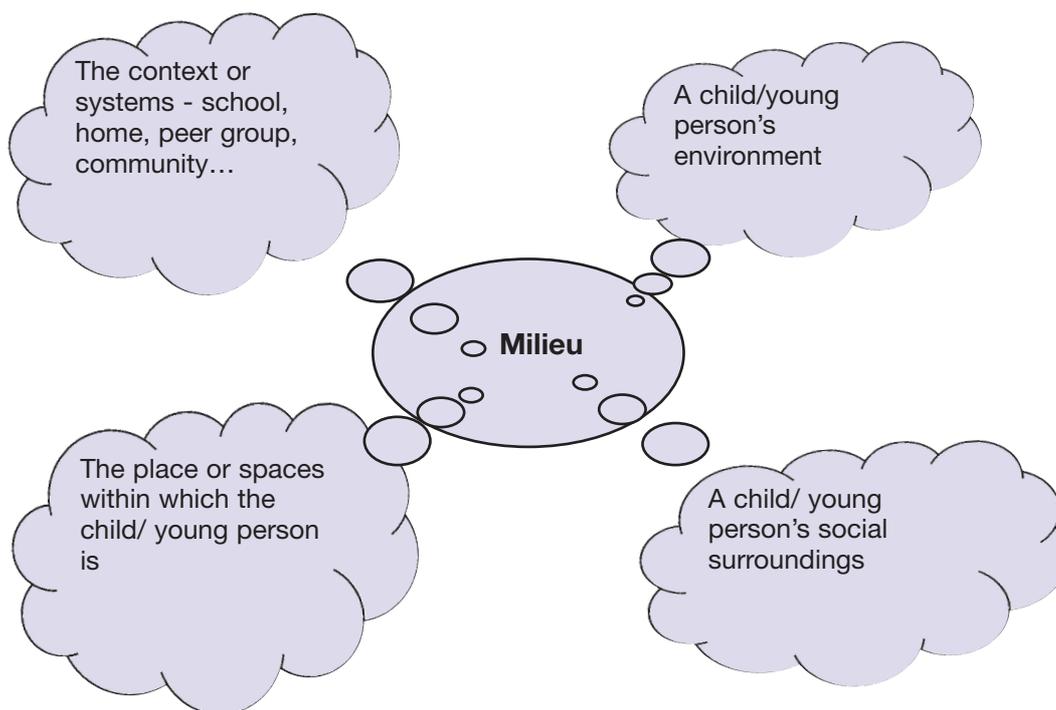
(Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, DfES, 2006)

In particular, the learning mentor can successfully initiate a professional helping relationship by using invitational skills to invite the child or young person to tell their story, and by using reflecting skills to explore issues more deeply (see **Boxes 9 to 11** below). In order to maintain the helping relationship, the learning mentor must remain intentional and focused.

### Pointers for practice: understanding milieu

Learning mentors do not just work with children and young people in a one-to-one context — they work in children and young people’s environment and social surroundings. One of the most important features of learning mentor work is that they work with children and young people **in the context of their lives**. This can be referred to as working ‘in milieu’ (See **Figure 3**). Milieu means the environment or setting. It is the totality of surrounding conditions and circumstances affecting growth and development.

**Figure 3: The milieu**



### Pointers for practice: skills for building empathy

Empathy is a key quality for learning mentors. It means ‘feeling oneself into another person’s experience’ (Young, 2001). It is a commitment on the part of the learning mentor to understand the child or young person as fully as possible and to help them in three different ways. The commitment is to:

- Understand each child or young person *from his or her point of view*
- Understand individuals in and through the *context of their lives* — the social settings, both large and small, in which they have developed and currently live and move and have their being
- Understand the *dissonance* or difference between the child or young person’s point of view and reality.

(Adapted from Egan, 2002, p.49)

Empathy occurs when the child or young person feels and may even say: ‘That’s it! That’s how I feel!’ In order for empathy to occur, learning mentors use what Young (2001) calls ‘invitational skills’ — skills that invite the child or young person to tell their story.

**Boxes 9 and 10** describe some ‘invitational’ and some ‘opening’ skills that can invite a person to talk.

<b>Box 9: Non-verbal invitational skills</b>	
<p>Non-verbal skills are the use of attentive silence, eye contact, appropriate voice tone, body position, and non-verbal encouragers such as head nodding or hand gestures that invite the child or young person to talk.</p> <p>The following examples are general, broad principles of communication. The goal is always for the child or young person to be comfortable, feel safe and know that the learning mentor is inviting them to talk. Noticing what makes a child or young person comfortable and adjusting communication skills accordingly is very important. Different cultures use and interpret non-verbal skills in different ways.</p>	
<i>Non-verbal skill</i>	<i>Example</i>
Eye contact	Direct eye contact with occasional breaks so that the child/young person remains comfortable
Facilitative body language	‘Open’ attentive body position
Appropriate use of silence	Allowing the child or young person to fill in the ‘voids’ or ‘gaps’ in conversation
Voice tone	Using a voice tone that reflects the child or young person’s and is appropriate in volume and rate, is genuine and shows warmth and support
Gestures	Encouraging the child or young person to open up with appropriate gestures and head nodding
(Adapted from Young, 2001)	

<b>Box 10: verbal or ‘opening’ invitational skills</b>	
<p>Opening skills are verbal encouragers. They ask the child or young person to explore a little deeper but are not invasive. They also reassure the child or young person that the learning mentor is following the story.</p>	
<i>Opening skill</i>	<i>Example</i>
Door opener	‘Tell me a little bit more about that’
Minimal encourager	‘Okay’ or ‘that’s interesting’
Open question	‘Would you like to tell me what happened today?’
(Adapted from Young, 2001)	

While ‘invitational skills’ encourage the child or young person to open up, another set of skills is needed in order to explore issues and feelings in a deeper way. Young (2001) calls these skills ‘reflecting skills.’ Reflecting involves summarising and repeating back to the child or young person their own thoughts and feelings, but in a way that shows understanding rather than judgement (**see Box 11**).

<b>Box 11: Reflecting skills</b>		
<i>Skill</i>	<i>How</i>	<i>Why</i>
1. Reflecting content — summarising or paraphrasing <i>What happened?</i>	Listen carefully to the child or young person's story  Feedback a summarised version of the most important aspects of the story in a non-judgemental way	To show that you are listening and to check your understanding  To keep the child or young person focused on the most important aspects of the story  To help explore issues in a deeper way
2. Reflecting feelings <i>How did you feel?</i>	Identify the child or young person's (often unspoken) feelings	To show you are listening and understanding
3. Reflecting meaning <i>What did it mean?</i>	Feedback the underlying emotions  Identify why the story, event or issue is significant  Feedback the child or young person's worldview	To bring the child or young person to a deeper level of understanding  To explore the underlying meaning of the story, event or issue  To bring the child or young person to a deeper awareness of meaning — which often shifts perspective  To enable the child or young person to explore their worldview — their views of self, others and the world
		(Adapted from Young, 2001)

### Pointers for practice: maintaining relationships

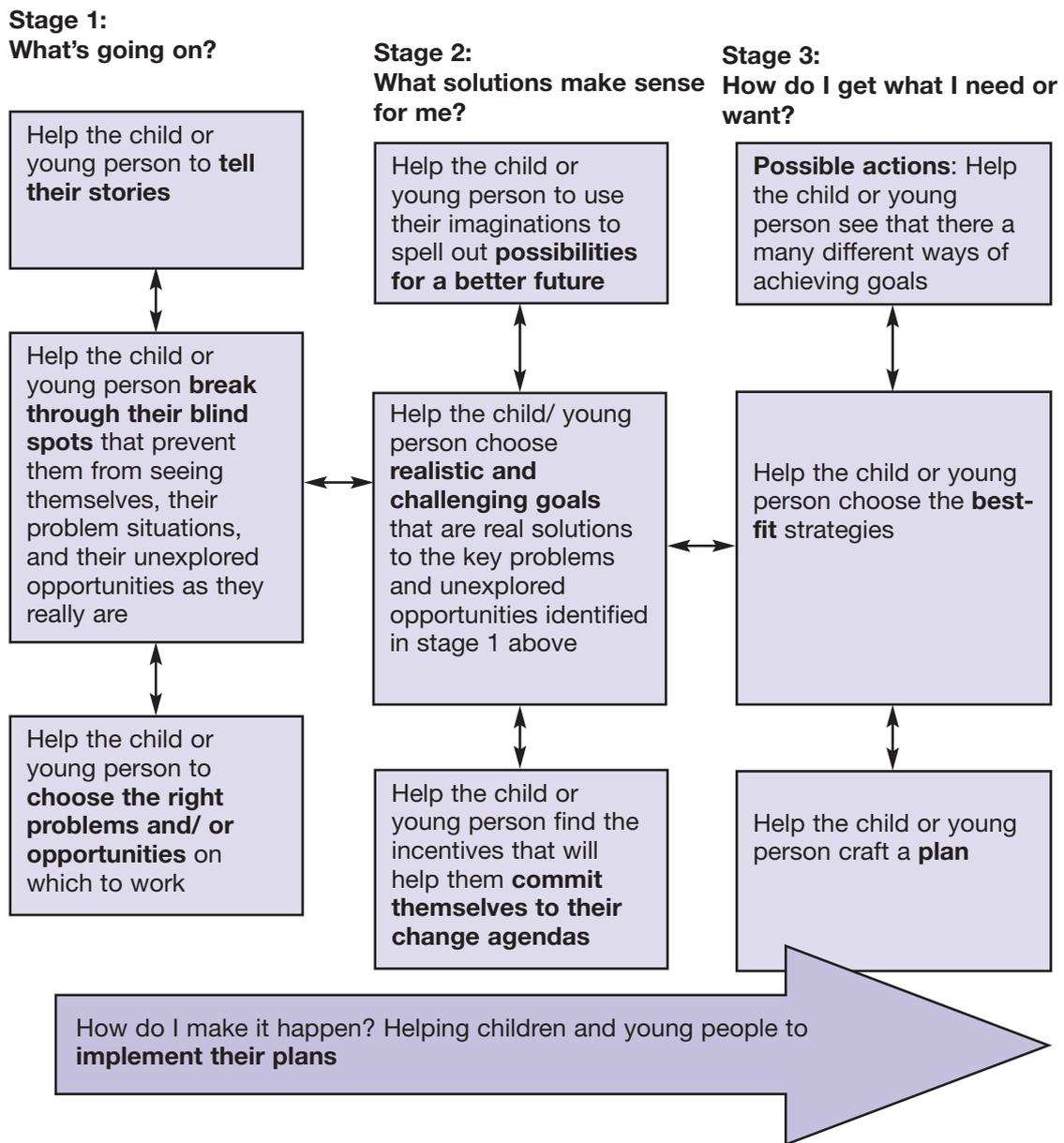
Once the relationship has been initiated, there are some key actions that learning mentors can take to help it progress successfully and to focus not just on problems but on opportunities — including opportunities to identify strengths and personal resources (see **Figure 4**).

If you find the 'skilled helper' framework in Figure 4 a useful one for your learning mentor work, it is important to remember that, in real life, children and young people do not move through an easily described set of stages and steps, and that their needs — not the model — must come first (Egan, 2002, p.38).

The skilled-helper model is an 'open-systems model', which means that learning mentors can use different theoretical perspectives. However, it is underpinned by **positive psychology**, which builds on people's strengths and looks optimistically at what they can achieve.

'Our message is to remind our field that psychology is not just the study of pathology, weakness and damage; it is also the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best.'  
(Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.7)

**Figure 4: The 'skilled helper' model**

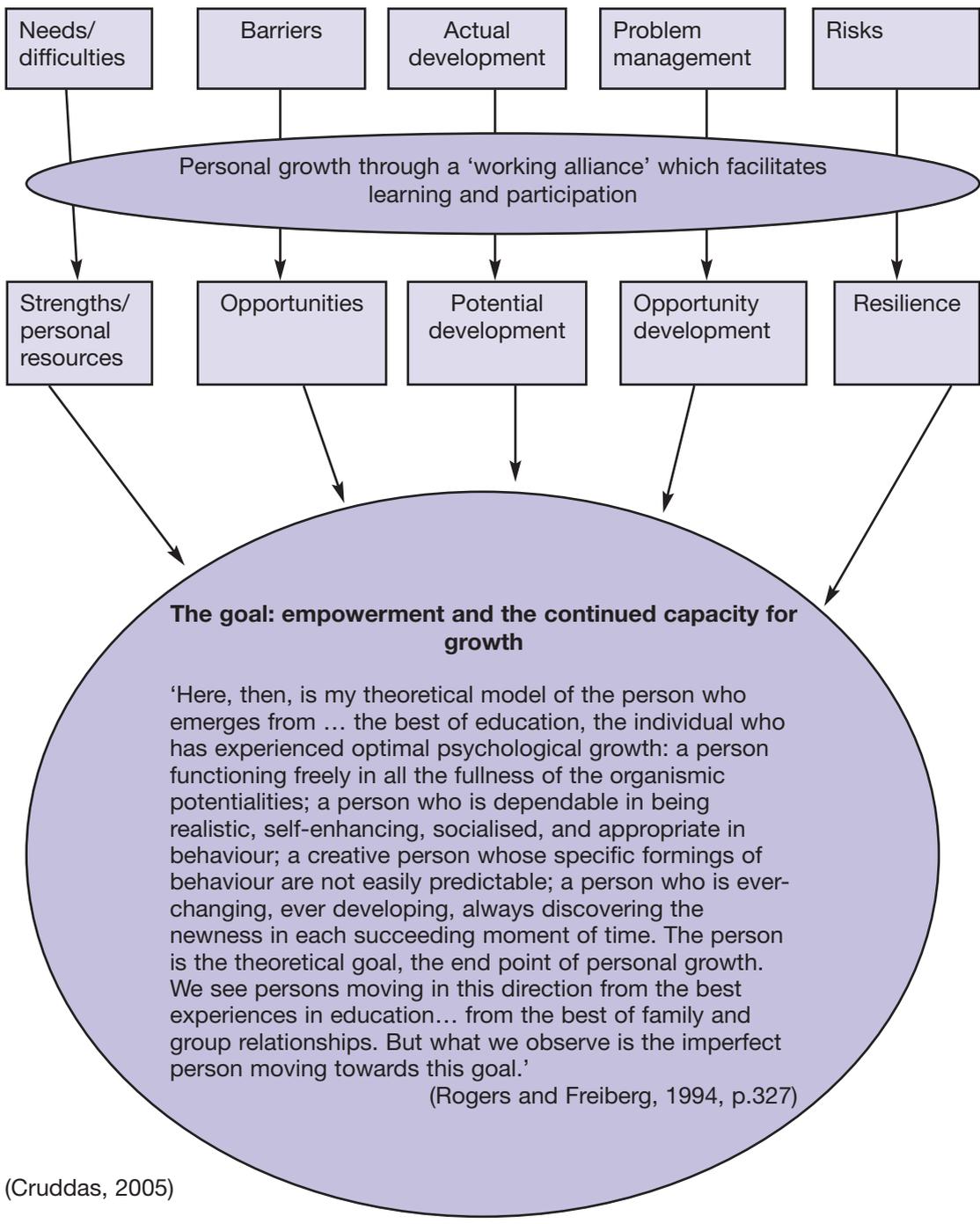


(Egan, 2002, p.21)

Drawing on the work of Egan, psychologists such as Carl Rogers and other theoretical perspectives, Cruddas (2005) develops a person-centred, capacity-building model of learning mentoring in which learning mentors support the child or young person to **move in the direction** of personal growth, learning and participation (see **Figure 5**).

In the model in **Figure 5**, the learning mentor's work focuses on solutions in that it concentrates on resources rather than deficits, on possibilities for a better future and on helping children and young people define their own goals and implement a change-plan.

**Figure 5: A person-centered, capacity-building model of learning mentoring**



### Pointers for practice: group work

In addition to their one-to-one work, learning mentors may also facilitate a variety of groups for children and young people, including circle time, issues-based groups and developmental groups. Group work provides a safe environment for young people to explore a range of issues that are important and relevant to them, individually and collectively within their peer group.

**Group work** can be particularly effective in helping children and young people develop:

- The skills of social interaction
- A greater understanding of themselves, their feelings and how they respond to the people around them
- Listening and communication skills
- Empathy and concern for others
- Confidence and the ability to participate
- The ability to learn how to learn.

**Circle time:** Circle time is widely used in primary schools and increasingly in secondary schools. In some schools there is a whole-school approach to using circle time where whole classes meet regularly to have circle time sessions. Learning mentors often use the method with identified groups of pupils with whom they work as a way of furthering their relationship with groups of children while at the same time fostering communication, working on self-esteem, and building. With Circle Time the group:

- Meets in a circle
- Meets regularly (ideally daily but at least three times per week)
- Follows a set format
- Plays an opening game/energiser (where possible facilitated by the group)
- Takes part in self-disclosure activity (to build trust and understanding)
- Carries out activity related to personal, social, emotional development, health issues or citizenship
- Has a closing round (to allow everyone to contribute with his or her personal view).

Some learning mentors follow the above structure exactly. Others modify it to fit the needs of the children and young people in the group.

**Issues-based groups:** The group is brought together and facilitated by a learning mentor (plus other support if appropriate) in order to address a specific issue. For example: there may have been incidents of bullying and the learning mentor may facilitate a group of bullies and their victims in order to promote understanding between each other and stop the bullying behaviour. There may be a person new to school who is having difficulty settling in, so the learning mentor sets up a friendship group in order to build relationships between the new pupil and other pupils in the school.

Some groups focus on particular topics. For example, a primary school may wish year 6 pupils likely to find the transition to secondary school difficult to participate in a transition workshop. The learning mentor could set up a group focused on easing this transition. Other examples of focus group could include reading groups and study skills groups.

**Developmental groups:** Through the use of group work, participants' skills in certain areas can be developed. For example, the learning mentor may run a group aimed at developing the social skills of participants and may therefore tailor the activities around developing sharing skills or listening skills. Other examples of developmental groups could include outcomes aimed at raising self esteem, building confidence, effective teamwork, improving communication skills, improving behaviour and developing anger management skills.

**Box 12: Some issues to consider when setting up groups**

How will you initiate relationships with the group members?

How will you invite participants to join the group? What will you tell them about why they have been asked to join the group?

What do you wish to achieve through the group work? What is the aim of the group? What are the goals?

What type of group work is this? Circle time? Developmental group? Focus group? Issue based group?

Who will be the group facilitators? Learning mentors often co-facilitate groups with other school staff, or outside agency staff, for example youth workers or education welfare officers

Who will be included in the group? Children and young people whose skills you are trying to develop? Does the group include children and young people who could model appropriate behaviours?

From whom will you need to seek permission for the group? Head teacher? Line manager? Parents/carers? Teaching staff? Prospective group members?

With whom will you liaise about setting up the group? School staff? Participants? Those with expertise around the group focus? Other agencies?

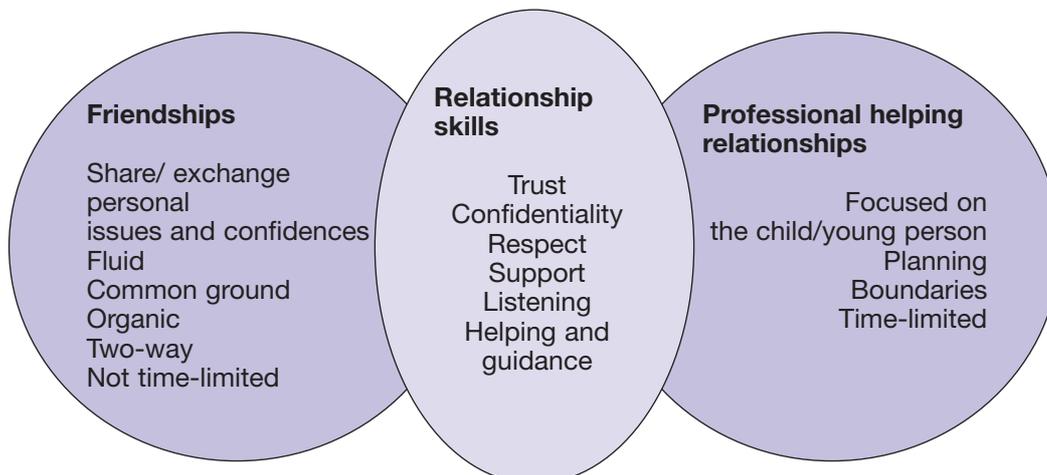
What practicalities will you need to address? When will the group meet — how often, what time, for how long? Where will the group meet? When will you prepare activities/ group session structure? How will you physically arrange the group? In a circle? On chairs? On the floor? What resources will you need and where will you find them? How will participants catch up on any work they have missed? What are the health and safety issues that need to be taken into consideration?

How and when will you evaluate? Using reflection sheets? Using questionnaires for participants, staff, parents/carers? Case study — what was the situation before the group work started, what strategies were used, what is the situation upon completion of group work sessions?

**Pointers for practice: boundary management**

Learning mentoring relationships operate within professional boundaries. Professional helping relationships are clearly different from other kind of relationships, for example friendships. A learning mentor is not the friend of a child or young person. **Figure 6** helps to distinguish between friendships and professional helping relationships. We use relationship-building skills in both.

**Figure 6: Different relationships**



The word 'boundaries' is often taken to mean 'limitations' or creating a distance between the practitioner and the child or young person. But there is another way of understanding boundaries that focuses *on how people relate to each other*.

Boundaries are one of the basic building blocks of identity that every person develops as part of their psychological growth. For example, very young babies have no sense of separateness between themselves and their carers. During the first year of their lives, as part of their psychological growth, they begin to be aware of their separateness — where their own body ends and their carer's body begins — and a sense of self begins to emerge. In a secure relationship, the young child will begin to explore the environment and accept their separateness from others. This is the first, early example of good boundaries.

If a carer doesn't understand this and tries to prevent this first stage of independence, or if a carer is inconsistent and the young child feels unsafe, the child may never develop a secure base — a secure sense of self — from which to experience the world. Learning mentors will work with these children and young people — 'their early attempts to stand alone have left them insecure and vulnerable' (Mann-Feder, 2003).

Thus boundaries, in the context of learning mentor practice, are not about limits or separation or emotional distance — and there are no hard and fast rules for setting boundaries. Boundary setting is rather the way that learning mentors relate to the children, young people and families with whom they work. It is the creation of authentic and professional relationships in which the learning mentor supports growth, learning and development.

Varda Mann-Feder outlines three important aspects in boundary management:

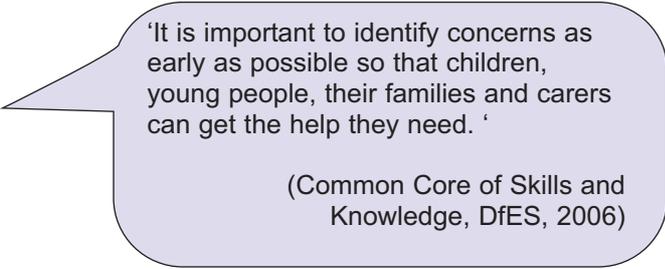
- Appropriate limit-setting
- Use of separations and reunions
- Awareness of one's own boundary issues.

Key points to remember are:

- Putting limits on inappropriate demands is essential and ultimately helpful
- Everyday comings and goings, separations and reunions are valuable moments for teaching and learning about boundaries
- Well-managed departures and session endings help build trust and security
- It is vital that practitioners stay aware of any unresolved conflicts within themselves and avoid these distorting the mentor-mentee relationship.

### **1c: Keeping children and young people safe**

'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people' is one of the six areas covered in the *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce* (DfES, 2006). It involves the ability to recognise when a child or young person is not achieving their developmental potential or when their health may be impaired, and being able to identify appropriate sources of help for them and their families.



'It is important to identify concerns as early as possible so that children, young people, their families and carers can get the help they need. '

(Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, DfES, 2006)

All learning mentors must have a thorough knowledge and understanding of:

- Child protection legislation
- Local safeguarding procedures
- The school's child protection policy and procedures.

In line with this, learning mentors will find it helpful to refer to the guidance: *What To Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused* (DfES, 2006b). This document, updated in 2006, assists practitioners to work together to promote children's welfare and safeguard them from harm. The guidance requires all professionals and agencies to be clear about:

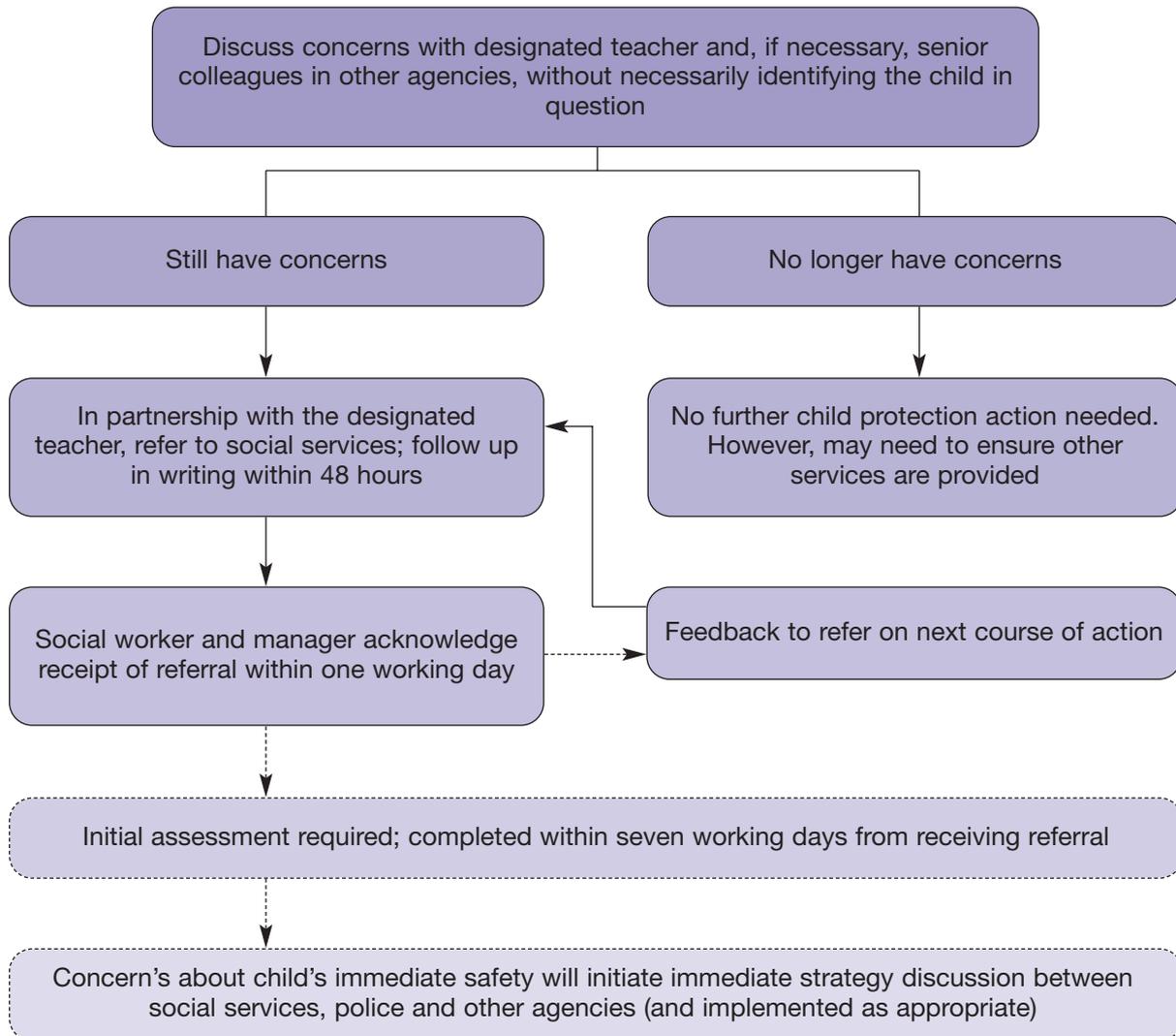
- Their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- The legislative basis for this work
- The protocols and procedures to be followed, including information sharing across professional boundaries.

The guidance highlights the importance of all practitioners who work with children being familiar with and following their own organisation's procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children in their area, and knowing who to contact within their organisation to express any concerns about a child's welfare. In the case of learning mentors, this would be via the designated teacher. The stages involved in responding to concerns about possible abuse are set out in **Figure 7**.

The purpose of the tool at Figure 7 is to agree whether to initiate a Section 47 enquiry and complete a core assessment under the Child Act 1989. Should a core assessment be required, learning mentors need to be prepared to:

- Contribute to the core assessment and the analysis of findings as requested by social services — this could include providing information the learning mentor holds on the child or parents/family, contributing specialist knowledge or undertaking specialist assessments
- Keep careful, detailed, up-to-date notes, recording any unusual events
- Further down the line, it may be necessary for the learning mentor to contribute to the school's written report in advance of a child protection conference, which would set out the nature of the involvement of school staff with the family.

**Figure 7: What to do if there are concerns about a child's welfare**



(Adapted from What to Do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused, DfES, 2006b, p.16)

### **The involvement of learning mentors in child protection conferences and core group meetings**

A learning mentor may be involved in two types of meetings: child protection conferences and the core group meetings which will follow the initial case conference. It is essential that they follow school and local authority guidance for these meetings and complete the required forms.

A **child protection conference** is convened by social services to determine whether a child is at continuing risk of significant harm and whether he or she therefore requires a child protection plan to be put in place. A learning mentor should attend if requested to by their school. They should attend with — not in place of — the school's designated teacher.

The learning mentor should provide a written report of the work they are doing with the child or young person. This report should include:

- Reason for referral
- Number of sessions
- Contact with family members and working relationships
- Focused areas of work

- Progress made
- Any concerns
- Any signposting to other agencies.

The learning mentor's report can be included in the school's report. The school's report should then be shared with the parent/carer in advance wherever possible and appropriate. At the end of the meeting, everyone including the learning mentor will be asked for his or her opinion on whether or not the child's name should be put onto the child protection register.

Minutes of the child protection meeting should be kept in the school according to policy.

The core **group meeting** is formulated at the initial case conference. It includes parent/carers and professionals who have direct and regular contact with the child. The key worker (usually the social worker) is responsible for ensuring the core group meet as planned. The core group take responsibility for developing the child protection plan as a detailed working tool and implementing it, based on the outline plan agreed at the initial child protection conference.

The learning mentor should provide a written update of his/her work with the child to the core group. This report should include:

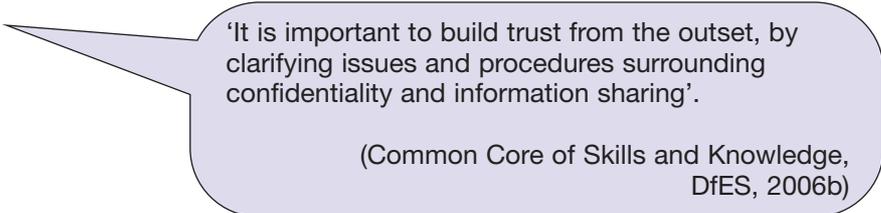
- Number of sessions and attendance
- Contact with family members and working relationship with them
- Focused areas of work
- Progress made
- Any concerns
- Any signposting to other agencies.

Again, the learning mentor's report can be included in the school's report and shared with the parent/carer in advance wherever possible and appropriate.

## 1d: Keeping trust: confidentiality, information sharing and consent

As we have seen, learning mentors build professional helping relationships with children and young people and their families. Within the context of these helping relationships, it is important that learning mentors **build and keep trust** with the children, young people and families with whom they work.

- **Building trust** (see Section 1.b) involves the qualities of empathy, listening and showing respect, as we have seen
- **Keeping trust** involves careful attention to confidentiality, consent, record keeping and sharing information.



'It is important to build trust from the outset, by clarifying issues and procedures surrounding confidentiality and information sharing'.

(Common Core of Skills and Knowledge,  
DfES, 2006b)

### Confidentiality

No practitioner can offer complete confidentiality to their clients. Even counsellors may break confidentiality under certain strict circumstances.

The Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy states:

'Situations in which clients pose a risk of causing serious harm to themselves or others are particularly challenging for the practitioner. These are situations in which the practitioner should be alert to the possibility of conflicting responsibilities between those concerning their client, other people who may be significantly affected, and society generally. Resolving conflicting responsibilities may require due consideration of the context in which the service is being provided.' ([http://www.bacp.co.uk/ethical\\_framework](http://www.bacp.co.uk/ethical_framework))

It is important that children and young people know that learning mentors cannot guarantee confidentiality. However, it is also very important that the child or young person understands that the learning mentor will **keep trust** with them. This is fundamental to the 'contract' or shared understanding that a learning mentor has with a child or young person.

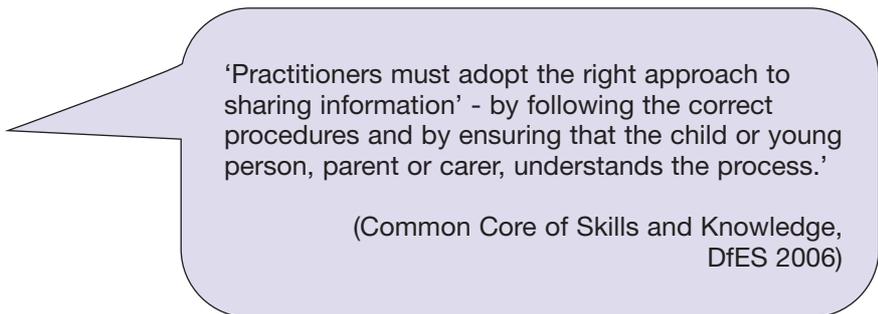
Learning mentors must carefully consider the following rights and responsibilities when deciding how to talk with a child or young person about confidentiality:

- The capacity of children and young people to give consent independently of a parent or carer
- The legal duty to safeguard and protect children and young people from harm
- The right of parents/carers to request school records — including learning mentor records under the Freedom of Information Act
- Access to learning mentors' records by appropriate senior members of staff within the school
- Transfer of learning mentor records between educational institutions
- Sharing information with other agencies.

### Information sharing - now branded as ContactPoint.

More information available on ContactPoint on [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/contactpoint](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/contactpoint)

Sharing information in a timely and accurate way is one of the six areas covered in the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce.



'Practitioners must adopt the right approach to sharing information' - by following the correct procedures and by ensuring that the child or young person, parent or carer, understands the process.'

(Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, DfES 2006)

A request for information cannot be disclosed to a parent/carer if a young person has forbidden a practitioner to do so.

A parent/carer can request information against the child/young person's wishes only if they are under 12 (see **Figure 8**). The child or young person can also request to see their school records

The safety and welfare of children and young people is of the utmost importance and there will therefore be certain circumstances when information may be made known to appropriate other professionals either with or without the child/young person's consent.

#### **Box 13: What does the law say?**

The Data Protection Act makes provision for certain circumstances when it may be necessary to share information without getting consent. This is when:

- Sharing the information with appropriate professionals prevents the child or young person from committing a criminal offence that could place others in danger or places the practitioner at risk of collusion
- The child or young person is at risk of significant harm or harming someone else
- The child or young person needs urgent medical treatment
- Information is required as part of a legal proceeding, for example by order of the court
- Information is requested by the police if investigating a serious crime
- Sharing the information is required to carry out a statutory function.

Sharing information with appropriate professionals without the consent of the child or young person, parent or carer, is a very serious decision — and one that should always be discussed with a senior colleague, child protection office or line manager.

If confidentiality has to be broken, the learning mentor will usually make sure that the child or young person, their parent or carer, is informed and given a full explanation for the decision — unless doing so would put the child at risk of harm. The learning mentor will keep a full, written and dated record, detailing with whom the information was shared and the reason why the decision to share the information was made.

Usually, however, confidentiality does not need to be broken. In order to keep trust, learning mentors will discuss with the child or young person and/or their parent/carer how and with whom they will share information. It is therefore important that learning mentors understand the law about **informed consent**.

#### **Gaining informed consent**

Consent is the key to successful information sharing. But issues of consent are not just about sharing information. They are also about the child or young person freely choosing to work with the learning mentor. Consent is therefore a key issue for effective practice (see Box 14).

Box 14: Gaining informed consent – effective practice

When getting informed consent from a child or young person, parent or carer to information being shared about them, learning mentors should:

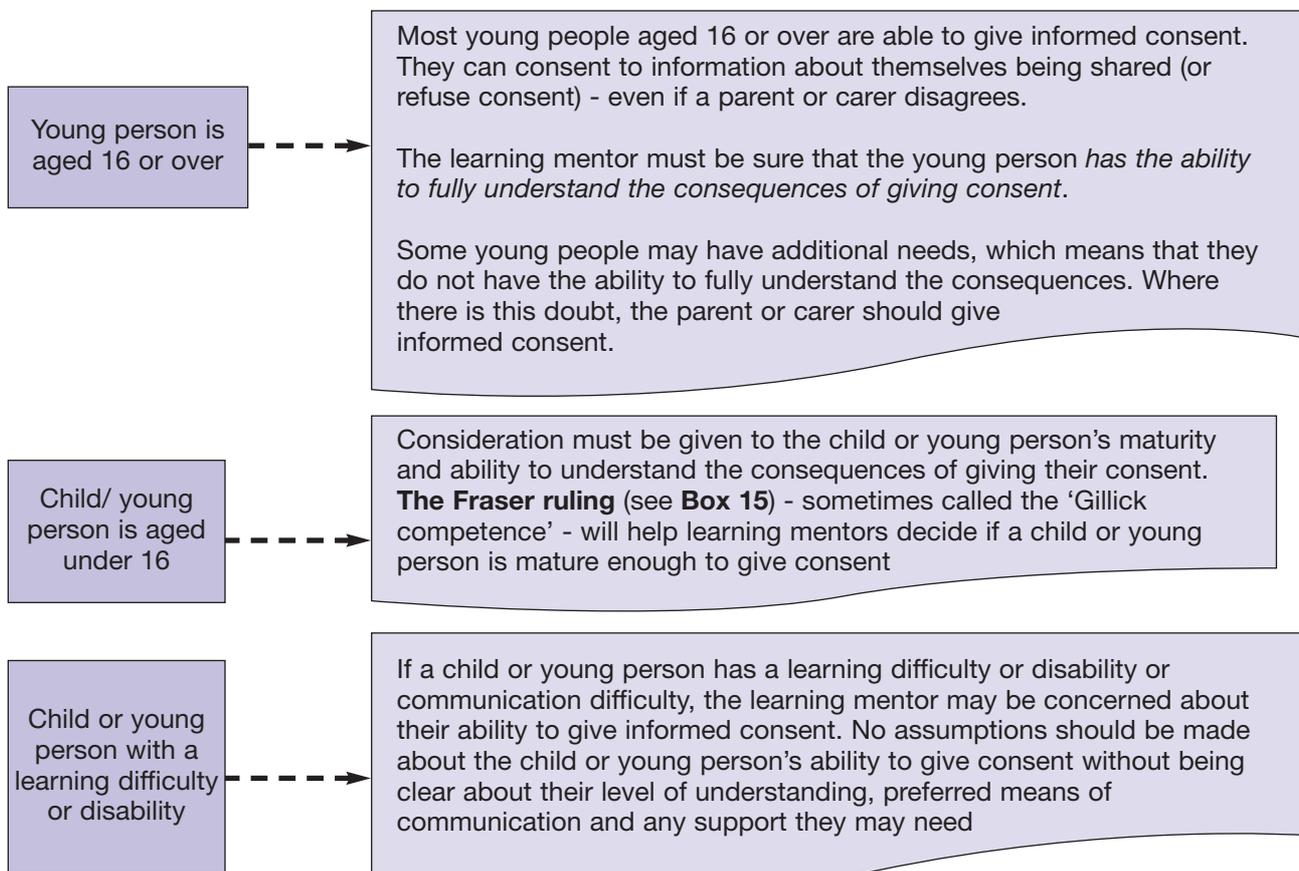
- Use clear and accessible language
- Remember that consent can be withdrawn at any time
- Get consent in writing, where possible
- Explain that there are times when confidentiality cannot be maintained
- Consider who can give consent.

Learning mentors should be absolutely sure that the child or young person, parent or carer from whom they are getting consent understands the following:

- The purpose of the information
- How it will be used
- With whom it may be shared and how it will be shared
- How long it will be held and in what form.

It is important for learning mentors to consider **who can give consent** (see **Figure 8**). In some cases, a child or young person can give – or refuse – consent for information to be shared about them without their parent or carer knowing, or if their parent or carer disagrees.

**Figure 8: Who can give consent?**



### **Box 15: What is the Fraser ruling?**

The Fraser ruling is a landmark ruling which provided criteria that have to be met in order to allow health professionals to provide contraceptive advice and treatment to young people under the age of 16 years without their parents' consent.

Lord Fraser ruled that the test to apply is whether the child has sufficient understanding and intelligence to fully understand any proposed intervention. Where this is the case, the young person has the right to make their own decisions.

Lord Fraser offered a set of criteria for judging 'competence':

- The young person understands the advice
- The young person cannot be persuaded to inform their parents or to allow the clinician to inform them
- It is likely that the young person will begin or continue to have sexual intercourse with or without the use of contraception
- The young person's physical or mental health may suffer as a result of withholding contraceptive advice or treatment
- It is in the best interests of the young person to receive contraceptive advice or treatment with or without parental consent.

However, Lord Fraser also said that the criteria ought not to be regarded as a licence to disregard the wishes of parents: 'Young people should be encouraged' to discuss the issues with their parents.

The checklist in **Box 16** is designed to help learning mentors and other practitioners share information with confidence.

### **Box 16: Checklist to help learning mentors share information with confidence**

- Is sharing the information in the best interests of the child or young person and/or their parent or carer?
- Have I got informed consent to sharing the information?
- Have I considered and worked within legal boundaries?
- Have I considered and worked within local procedures?
- Have I shared adequate information to meet the needs of the child or young person?
- Is the information up to date and accurate?
- Is the information based on evidence?
- Is the information shared in a secure way?
- Have I recorded how, with whom and why the information was shared?
- Have I checked if there are any organisations or people with whom that information should not be shared?

*(Common Assessment Framework training support materials)*

## 1c: Understanding and promoting the values and ethics of learning mentoring

There is now a set of national occupational standards for practitioners (including learning mentors) delivering learning, development and support services for children, young people and those who care for them. A 'value base' supporting the standards ensures that practice is ethical, that diversity and equality of opportunity are respected and that there is a commitment to providing high-quality services. The value base supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The ethical position outlined in the value base is set out in the box below.

'Practitioners must recognise that the welfare of the children and young people with whom they work is paramount. They must recognise the individuality of each child/ young person and promote their learning, development and welfare. This must be reflected in all work with children and young people and their families/ carers. The appropriate legislative frameworks must be implemented at all times.

Practitioners must adopt a client centred approach based on enhanced inclusion and access, honesty, trust and respect. They will promote equality, respect diversity and challenge stereotypes, helping to improve the life chances of their clients and the overall effectiveness of the service provision.'

(Value Base, National Occupational Standards, DfES, 2003b)

'Values are not just ideals. They are also a set of practical criteria for making decisions. As such, they are drivers of behaviour... Working values enable the helper to make decisions on how to proceed. Helpers without a set of values are adrift.'

(Egan, 2002, p.45-460)

'Helping-related values cannot be handed to you on a platter. Much less can they be shoved down your throat.... This does not mean that you will invent a different set of values from everyone else's. Tradition is an important part of value-formation and we all learn from the rich tradition of the helping professions.'

(Egan, 2002, p.46)

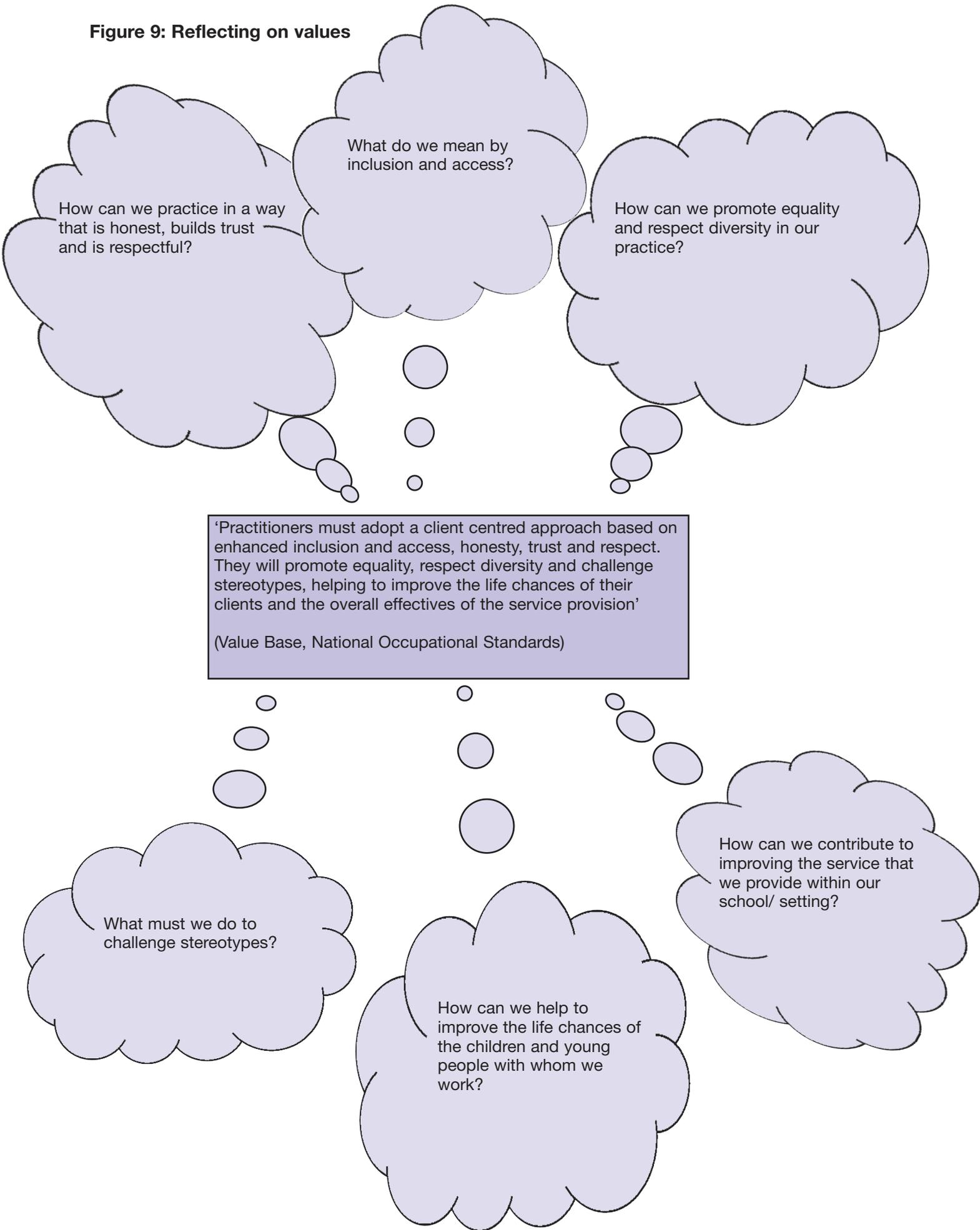
Egan (2002) calls **respect** the foundation value on which all helping relationships are built. For him, respect is not just an attitude; it is a set of behaviours that guide the practitioner's helping relationship. He provides some norms that 'flow from the interaction between a belief in the dignity of a person and the value of respect':

- Do no harm
  - Be competent and committed
  - Make it clear that you are 'for' the child or young person
  - Assume the child or young person's good will
  - Do not rush to judgement
  - Keep the child or young person's agenda in focus
- (Adapted from Egan, 2002: 46-47)

The values set out in the Value Base are drawn from what Egan refers to as the rich tradition of the helping professions. However, it is important that these values are analysed and debated, rather than handed out on a platter.

For example, what does it mean for a learning mentor to adopt an approach based on honesty and trust? What does this look like in practice, given the issues around confidentiality and the need to share information — in the most extreme cases without the consent of the child or young person? There are no simple answers. Learning mentors, in the process of their own value-formation, must analyse, reflect on and debate these issues.

**Figure 9: Reflecting on values**

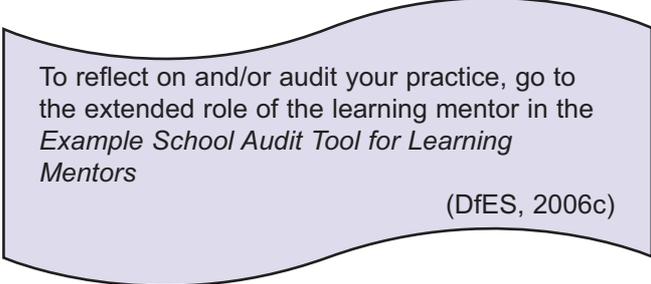


## Section 2: Providing a complementary service to enhance existing provision

While one-to-one work is at the heart of the learning mentor's work, mentors also have a much wider role within the school or institutional setting. This encompasses a range of functions:

- Assisting children and young people to make a successful transfer between educational establishments and transition at key stages in their learning
- Contributing to the comprehensive assessment of children and young people entering educational establishments and the review of their progress and achievements
- Contributing to the identification of barriers to learning for individual children and young people and providing them with a range of strategies for overcoming the barriers.

See **Appendix 2** for the table setting out the supporting sub-functions.



To reflect on and/or audit your practice, go to the extended role of the learning mentor in the *Example School Audit Tool for Learning Mentors*

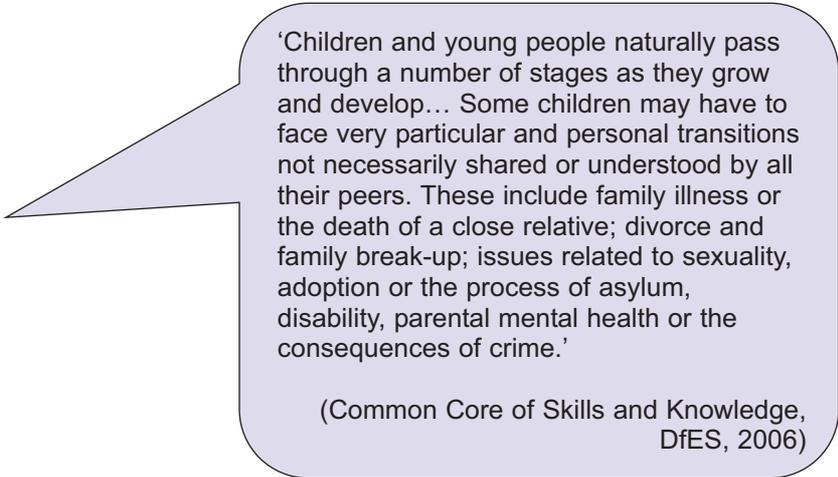
(DfES, 2006c)

To be able to carry out these functions effectively and enhance existing school provision, it will often be necessary for learning mentors to become involved in:

- Supporting transitions
- Contributing to specific programmes within the school
- Contributing to extended services.

### 2a: Supporting transitions

Supporting transitions is one of the six areas covered in the *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce* (DfES, 2006).



'Children and young people naturally pass through a number of stages as they grow and develop... Some children may have to face very particular and personal transitions not necessarily shared or understood by all their peers. These include family illness or the death of a close relative; divorce and family break-up; issues related to sexuality, adoption or the process of asylum, disability, parental mental health or the consequences of crime.'

(Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, DfES, 2006)

Transitions are the important life changes that children and young people experience. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines transition as: 'A passing or change from one place, state or condition to another.'

As such, transition is a change, journey or movement, from one stage, state or position, to another. It is not necessarily sequential and transitions may pass unnoticed or, at the other extreme, cause chaos in life. Transitions happen to babies, children, young people and adults alike throughout life. It is the process of managing transition and change that has profound effects on the individual.

For the majority of children and young people, the key transitions from babyhood to childhood to adulthood will take place in a relatively secure home and educational environment but change may still be traumatic and challenging. Managing transitions successfully remains one of the vital developmental tasks for young people and some of the greatest challenges and risks to learning come in the form of transitions.

### Transfer between schools

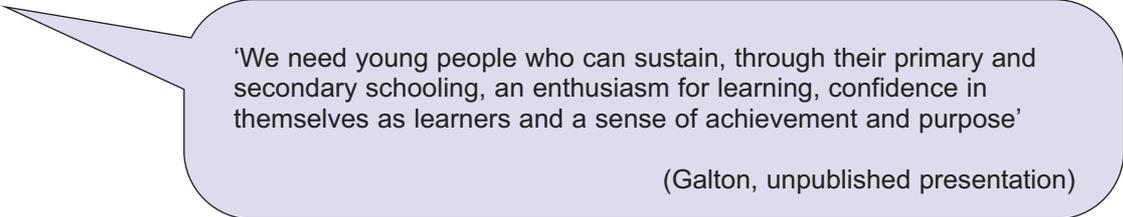
Transfer refers to a particular type of transition, namely the move between schools or educational establishments. Research has shown that:

- Two out of every five children fail to make expected progress in the transfer between primary and secondary school
- Transfer can impact negatively on children and young people's anxiety, motivation and enjoyment
- Some children and young people doing well at school are actually being 'turned off' school
- Schools need to do more to prepare children and young people for significant changes in teaching and learning, decrease anxiety and increase motivation and enjoyment.

Schools are increasingly good at:

- Managing the administrative side of transfer
- Meeting social and personal needs
- Ensuring that there is continuity in the curriculum.

However, few schools pay attention to programmes that support children and young people in managing their own learning.



'We need young people who can sustain, through their primary and secondary schooling, an enthusiasm for learning, confidence in themselves as learners and a sense of achievement and purpose'

(Galton, unpublished presentation)

In times of transition there is a need for information, emotional support, practical help and resources. A learning mentor's role will vary in ensuring this can be put in place, depending on circumstances and the nature of the transition, and what other support is available to the child family.

### **Box 17: Ten principles for supporting effective transitions**

- Identify key changes, critical moments and transition points for children and young people, including those most children will experience, such as moving school, and those that some children will experience, such as family break-up or bereavement, and ensure the relevant people are aware of the impact of change and the importance of support through transition
- Ensure mainstream work with children and young people builds life skills, including emotional resilience and empathy, and emphasises the importance of asking for help and support when they are needed
- Develop curriculum and project work that focuses on transitions and helps children and young people understand the range of transitions they will experience as they move from puberty, through adolescence and into adulthood
- Prepare children and young people for leaving school or leaving care well in advance, providing an opportunity to reflect on successes and challenges and to celebrate their work together
- Identify individuals who may need particular support through transitions. Identify the support mechanisms and agencies that are available for the child and their family. Work in partnership to provide this support, where possible
- Involve children and young people in providing support to their peers as part of everyday friendships and relationships. This can be developed as peer support
- Involve and support parents and carers in transition work so they can celebrate the transitions and provide understanding and support
- Encourage optimism and work with the excitement and opportunities as well as with the fears and anxieties caused by change and transitions
- If the behaviour of a child or young person changes, encourage them to acknowledge it and talk about it. Are there issues relating to transition and change that are causing difficulties and what can be done to address these?
- Provide consistent responses to critical moments and events in the lives of children and young people, such as when they are bullied, bereaved or when parents are divorcing or separating. Ensure the child is at the heart of deciding what support and help they need. Discuss with a child when they are happy for their peers and others to know and understand what has happened, and who they would like to tell them

*(Spotlight, November 2005)*

### **2b: Contributing to specific programmes within the school**

Learning mentors are most successful when they are integrated carefully into the school's support services and their deployment has a clear rationale. Learning mentors can be deployed to support existing or new programmes within the school or educational establishment, for example:

- The gifted and talented programme
- Anti-bullying programmes
- Programmes to support attendance at school
- School councils/pupil parliaments
- Programmes developing the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)
- Programmes supporting the school's procedures and policies for vulnerable groups, for example, looked-after children, refugees and unaccompanied asylum seekers, new entrants to the school
- Peer support programmes, including peer mentoring
- Programmes co-ordinating the work of volunteer mentors.

## 2c: Contributing to extended services

The government wants all schools to offer extended services by 2010. Extended schools will provide access to a 'core offer' of services and activities for children, young people and families defined as:

- High-quality, 'wrap-around' childcare provided on the school site or through local providers, with supervised transfer arrangements where appropriate, available from 8am to 6pm all year round
- A varied menu of activities, such as homework clubs and study support (at least two hours per week beyond the school day for those who want it), music tuition, dance and drama, arts and crafts, special interest clubs such as chess and first aid courses, visits to museums and galleries, learning a foreign language, volunteering and business and enterprise activities
- Parenting support, including information sessions for parents at key transition points, parenting programmes run with the support of other children's services, and family learning sessions to allow children to learn with their parents
- Swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services such as speech therapy, child and adolescent mental health services, family support services, intensive behaviour support and (for young people) sexual health services. Some may be delivered on school sites
- Providing wider community access to information and communications technology (ICT), sports and arts facilities including adult learning.

*(Extended Schools: Access to opportunities and services for all, DfES, 2005b)*

Learning mentors can play a key role in contributing to the school's core offer. They often run or oversee a variety of clubs and activities before, during and after the school day, which can meet the requirement to offer a 'varied menu of activities'. These include:

- **Breakfast clubs:** these aim to give children and young people a healthy start to the day and can support the National Healthy Schools Status standard (Department of Health, d2005). Breakfast clubs can also have a positive impact on school attendance for many children and young people
- **Lunch-time clubs:** these often target children and young people who may be vulnerable in the playground and those who may wish for a dedicated and supervised space to engage in specific activities
- **After-school clubs:** these are wide-ranging and can include homework clubs and study support, sporting activities and dance, drama, arts and crafts, and special interest clubs
- **Holiday programmes:** these can involve a wide variety of activities during the school holidays
- **School trips and visits.**

### 3: Working within an extended range of networks and partnerships

A child or young person does not exist just in their educational setting but also as part of a family and of a wider community. Issues and relationships in one area are likely to have an impact on how the young person responds in all other environments and situations. Learning mentors are a key resource in schools to help make the links between school, family and the wider community.

To reflect on and/or audit your practice, go to the following sections in the *Example School Audit Tool for Learning Mentors*

- Working with parents, carers and families
- Integrated working

(DfES, 2006c)

As well as supporting children and young people in schools or educational institutions, learning mentors' work is also 'outward focused' — they work within an extended range of networks and partnerships beyond the school. They:

- Develop and maintain appropriate contact with the families and carers of children and young people who have identified needs
- Negotiate, establish and maintain effective working partnerships with other agencies and individuals in order to address needs and help remove barriers to learning for children and young people
- Contribute to the identification and sharing of good practice between individuals and partner agencies to enhance mentoring provision.

This section will look at:

- a. Working with parents, carers and families
- b. Multi-agency and integrated working, including being a lead professional.

#### 3a: Working with parents, carers and families

Learning mentors collaborate, work and communicate effectively with parents and carers in a variety of ways, such as:

- Engaging with the parents/carers of children with whom they work
- Developing or contributing to family learning programmes
- Working with young carers
- Playing a role in home-schools liaison.

#### Engaging with families and working for change

Each child, young person and family is unique. The problems learning mentors encounter may appear to be similar, but it is important to consider each situation afresh and adopt a problem-solving approach. In order to negotiate successfully with parents and carers, learning mentors need to form a partnership with them wherever possible. Ensuring parents are part of the decision-making process with the learning mentor acting in the role of 'facilitator' or 'enabler', sharing their expertise, empowers parents for the future.

Using a family-systems approach can help practitioners to understand that families are complex organisations. It can also help develop the necessary knowledge and skill required for working with families.

**Box 19** sets out some questions learning mentors can ask to review the way they work with families.

**Box 19: working with families**

- Have I met the family?
- Do I have regular two-way communication with the family?
- Do I respect and value the family?
- Have I identified the parents' abilities and resources?
- Do I give them choices about what to do?
- Have I identified their aims?
- Do I adjust according to their joint conclusions?
- Do I assume I have to earn their respect?
- Do I believe they can change?
- Do I consider the child/young person in the context of their family?
- Do I respect and value the child/young person as a person?
- Do I feel the family has strengths to help the child/young person?
- Do I always act as honestly as possible?
- Do I listen to them?
- Do I negotiate with them?
- Do I assume they have some responsibility for what I do for their child?
- Do I make the assumption that we might disagree about what is important?
- Have I tried to identify the parents' perceptions of their child?

Learning mentors often have a role in home-school liaison, or where there is a home-school worker in place, ensure a close working relationship.

**Pointers for practice: family learning**

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education defines family learning as all forms of informal and formal learning that involve more than one generation (Haggart and Spacey, 2006). 'Family' members can include friends as well as family, reflecting the range of support relationships that individuals rely on in the 21st century. Family learning includes: learning about roles, relationships and responsibilities in relation to stages of family life; parenting education; and learning how to understand, take responsibility and make decisions in relation to wider society, in which the family is a foundation for citizenship.

NIACE believes families are not only the first and most important teachers but that they also teach children and young people the most important things in life. The values, attitudes and culture learned from their families can stay with young people throughout their lives. Children and young people acquire knowledge from school but that knowledge is given a context by the family. For example, children learn to read at school but it is often the family that nurtures a love of reading. History can seem remote in textbooks, but a grandparent's stories of the past can bring it to life.

Without family support, a child's formal education is an uphill struggle. There is evidence that family learning can overcome difficulties associated with a disadvantaged background for both parents and children. Family learning schemes are also often a second chance for parents, and

grandparents to return to learning, creating a host of fresh opportunities to pursue previously thwarted ambitions.

Family learning can also help tackle issues facing society such as social exclusion, and poor health. It can have a positive impact on health, family relations, lifelong learning and active citizenship.

All families have the potential to learn and develop and in family learning, parents and carers are respected for the skills and experience they bring. In this way, family learning can strengthen family relationships.

#### **Some of the benefits of family learning are:**

- Improved attitudes and behaviour of children
- Improved attainment at school
- Improved family relationship
- Improved parenting
- Increased understanding of child's learning needs and the education system
- Better use of services
- Family learning can lead to further study and/or employment opportunities for parents.

#### **Pointers for practice: working with young carers**

Young carers may be taking responsibility for a parent, grandparent, brother, sister or any other family member who is sick or disabled. Some may be the only person providing care, while others may take on responsibility alongside other members of the family. Many young people undertake their caring roles willingly and however difficult this may make their lives, wish to continue helping.

Young carers may experience a number of barriers to learning and participation and may not be achieving their potential because of their caring responsibilities. They may:

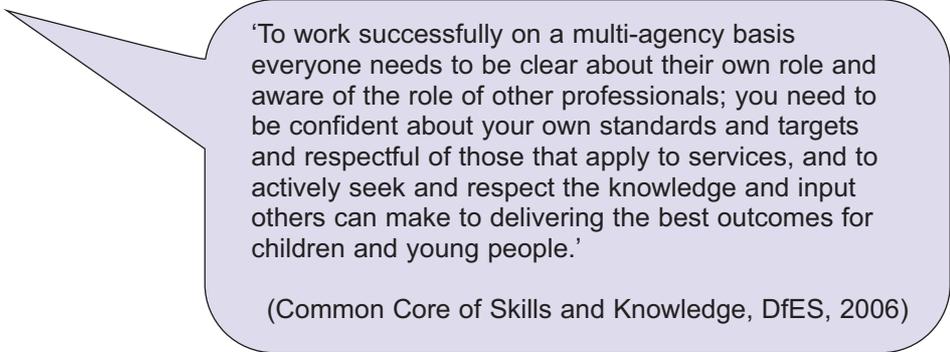
- Miss school
- Arrive late for school
- Have difficulty in completing home work
- Not fulfil their learning potential
- Be bullied at school
- Have limited time for social and leisure activities
- Experience health difficulties, for example, caring for a physically disabled adult may lead to back problems for the young carer
- Experience difficulty in feeling like young person in their own right — with a future and deserving of positive outcomes for themselves.

#### **Learning mentors can support young carers by, for instance:**

- Recognising and supporting young carers
- Providing direct support and guidance
- Signposting information about practical help and services that are available
- Working in partnership with a range of agencies to access appropriate support
- Working with teachers and other school staff on understanding and meeting the needs of young carers
- Empowering and supporting young carers so that they can raise awareness within their peers about their caring responsibilities.

### 3b: Multi-agency and integrated working

Multi-agency working is becoming increasingly common as a way of supporting children and families with additional needs as it can help to secure real improvements in their life outcomes. For this reason, multi-agency working is one of the six areas covered in the *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce* (DfES, 2006).



'To work successfully on a multi-agency basis everyone needs to be clear about their own role and aware of the role of other professionals; you need to be confident about your own standards and targets and respectful of those that apply to services, and to actively seek and respect the knowledge and input others can make to delivering the best outcomes for children and young people.'

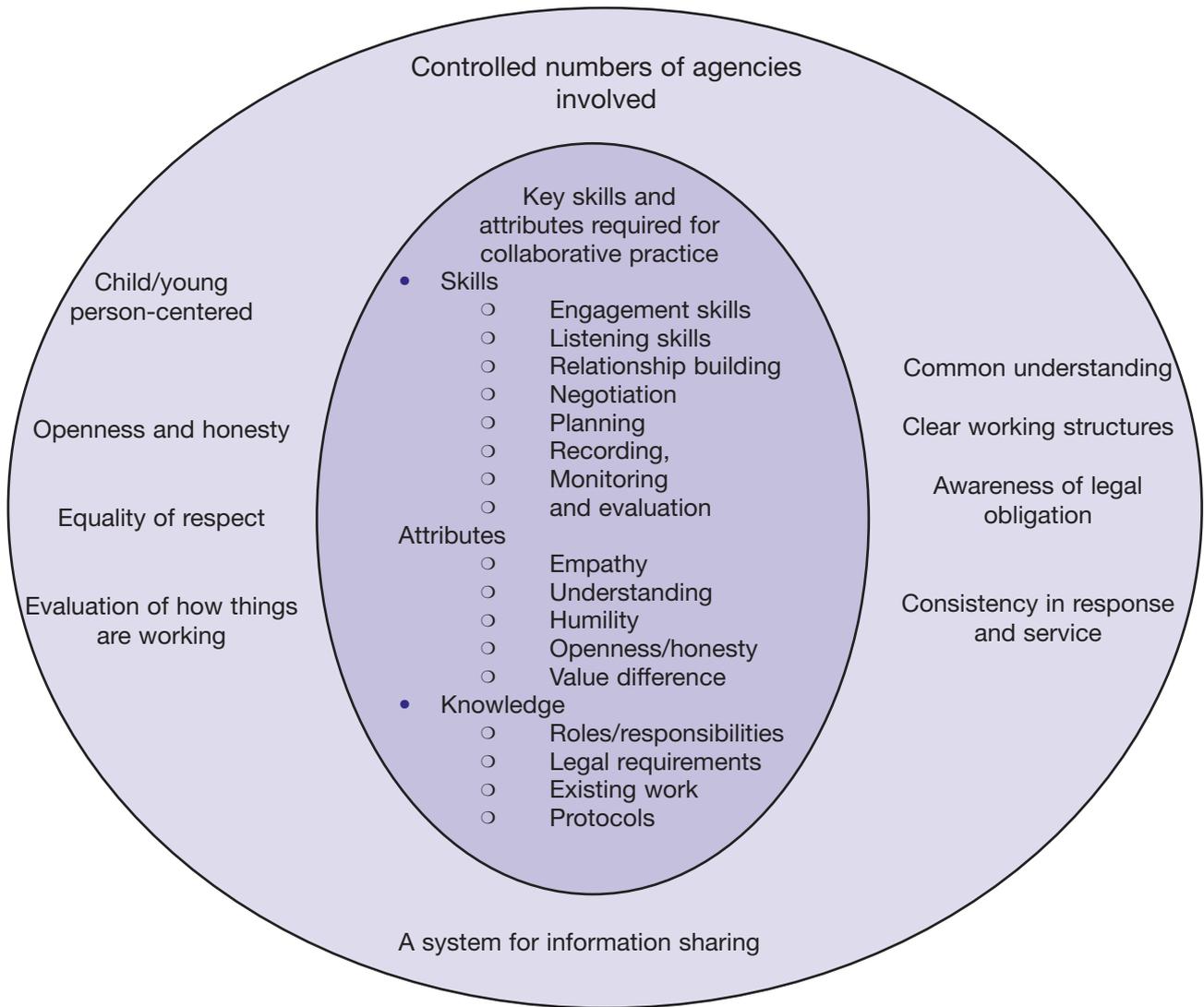
(Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, DfES, 2006)

Some commonly identified outcomes of multi-agency work are:

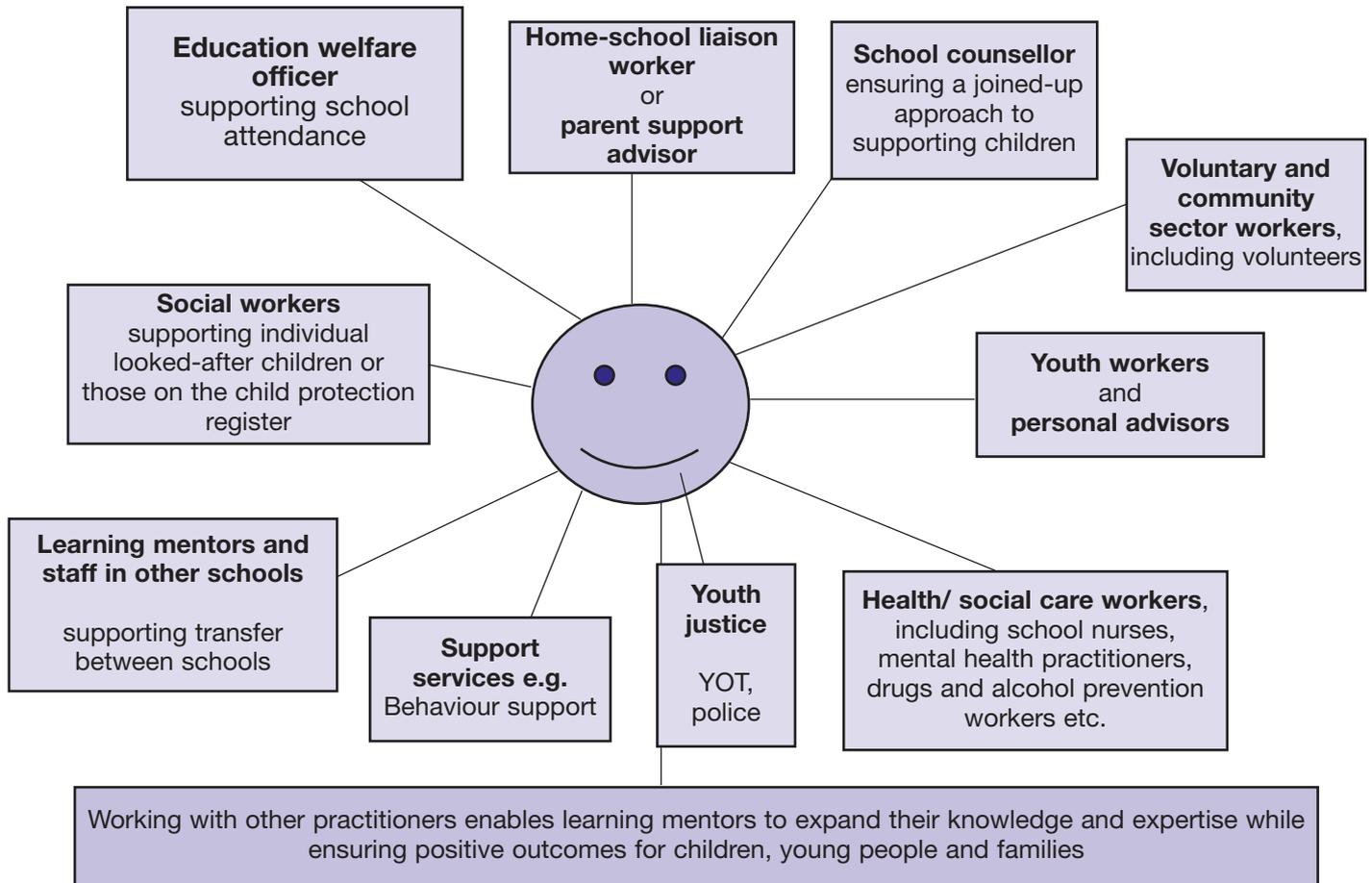
- Access to services not previously available, and a wider range of services
- Easier or quicker access to services or expertise
- Improved educational attainment and better engagement in education
- Early identification and intervention
- Better support for parents
- Children's needs addressed more appropriately
- Better quality services
- Reduced need for more specialist services.

However, it can be difficult for schools to participate in multi-agency working due to time and capacity issues. Learning mentors have a key role to play here. The skills, attributes and knowledge they need for effective multi-agency working are shown in the core of **Figure 10**. The key principles that should underpin collaboration are shown in the outer circle of the diagram. Examples of the range of practitioners with whom learning mentors may find themselves working collaboratively are outlined in **Figure 11**.

**Figure 10: Key principles underpinning effective multi-agency working**



**Figure 11: Some of the practitioners outside school with whom learning mentors work**



Practitioners new to multi-agency working can find more information in the *Practitioners' Toolkit* available at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/multiagencyworking](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/multiagencyworking)

**Pointers for practice: being the lead professional**

Where a child or young person has multiple additional needs, a range of other practitioners is likely to be involved (see **Figure 11**) to provide support in a holistic way. In these instances, local areas are being encouraged to introduce 'lead professional' models of working, where one of the practitioners takes responsibility for ensuring that services are coherent, co-ordinated and achieving intended outcomes.

The lead professional is not a job title or a new role, but a set of functions to be carried out as part of the delivery of effective integrated support. The core functions of the lead professional are to:

- Act as a single point of contact for the child or family
- Co-ordinate the delivery of the actions agreed by the practitioners involved
- Reduce overlap and inconsistency in the services received.

Deciding who is best placed to be the lead professional can be done most effectively when all parties, including the child and family, have discussed the identified needs, agreed the intended outcomes and agreed the contribution that each will make in achieving the intended outcomes.

The lead professional should be the practitioner who is most relevant to the child's plan and who has the skills to carry out the specified functions. This is not necessarily the practitioner who first becomes involved with the child or family or who carries out the CAF. In some instances it will be appropriate for learning mentors to take on this work.

Local authorities set out clear criteria by which lead professionals are chosen and a clear process to facilitate this choice. Such criteria could include reference to such issues as:

- The predominant needs of the child or family
- The level of trust built up with the child or family
- The wishes of the child or family
- Who has primary responsibility for addressing the child or family's needs
- A clear statutory responsibility to lead on work with the child or family
- Previous or potential ongoing relationship with the child
- The skills, ability and capacity to provide a leadership and co-ordinating role in relation to other practitioners involved with the child or family
- An ability to draw in and influence universal and specialist services
- An understanding of the surrounding support systems that are available to manage and sustain collaborative working.

Where a learning mentor is the practitioner who is most relevant to the child's plan and has the skills, ability and capacity to provide a leadership and co-ordinating role, it may be that the learning mentor is identified as the lead professional. Where a learning mentor is identified as the lead professional, it is likely that additional line management and supervision arrangements within or beyond the school will need to be place to support this function.

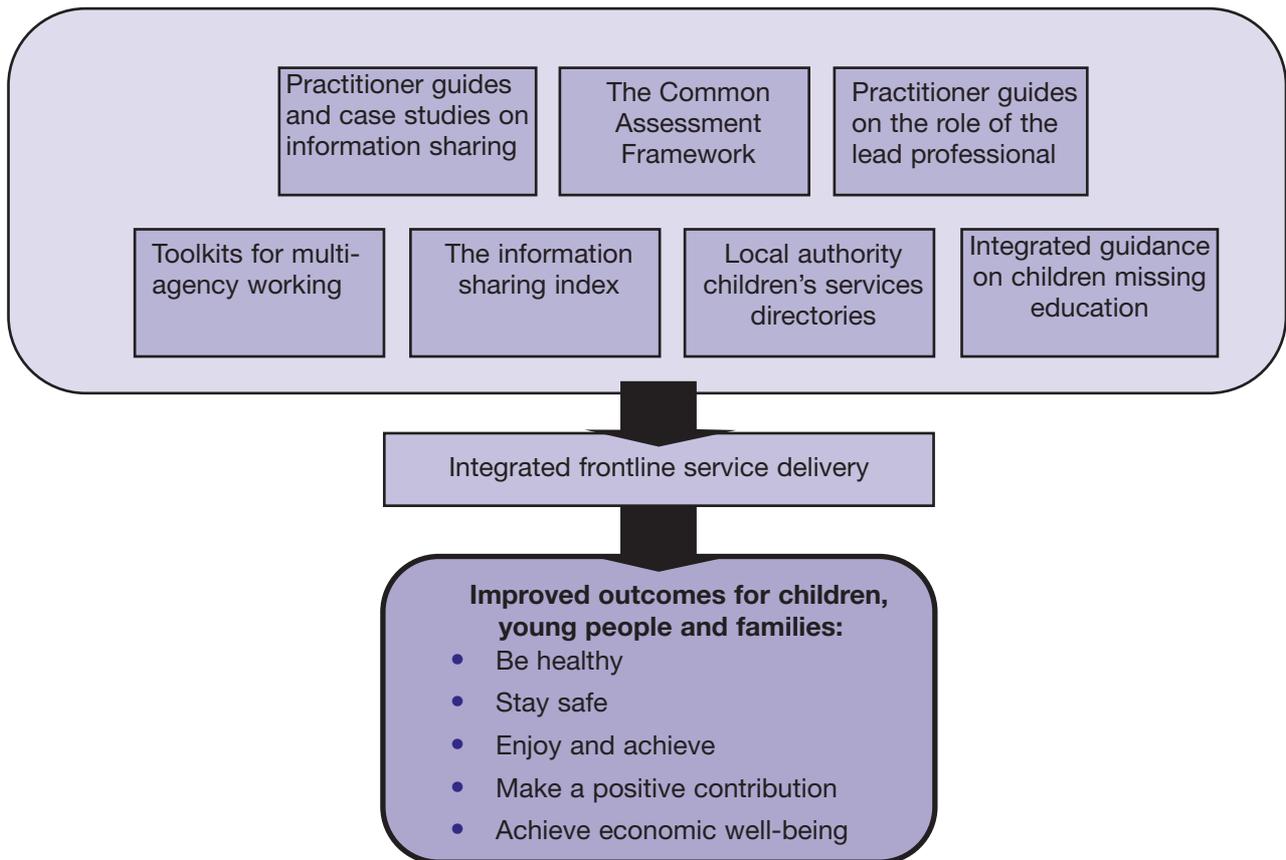
For this reason, it is important for learning mentors to be aware of policy and practice on lead professionals in their area. Each local authority will have a policy and an inter-agency management framework to support the lead professional role. Before carrying out the function of lead professional, learning mentors should be trained by through their local authority training programme.

### **Other aspects of integrated working**

The *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* programme is encouraging more integrated working in the frontline delivery of services. Working together in multi-agency teams or networks and operating a lead professional model are two routes to becoming more integrated.

A number of other processes and tools are being developed to supported integrated front-line delivery. These are shown in **Figure 12**.

**Figure 12: Processes and tools to support integrated working**

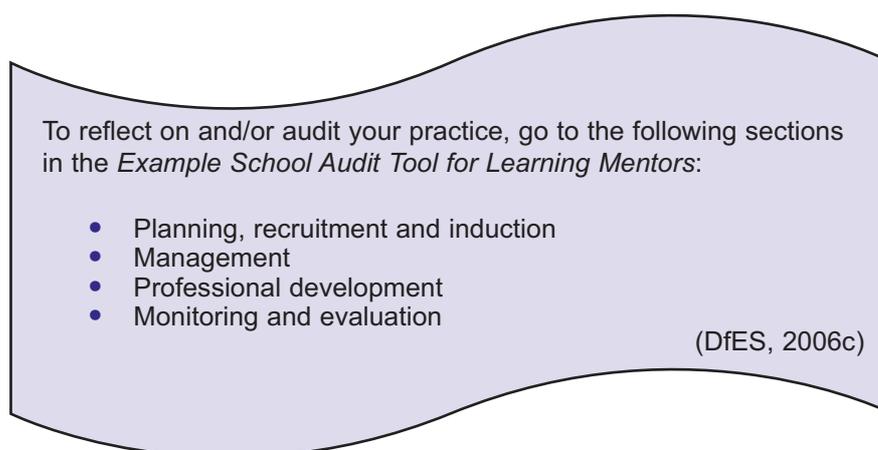


Learning mentors should be aware of all of these developments and support tools. More information on all of these areas is available at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk). Mentors should also find out about integrated working initiatives in their area.

## 4: Managing and promoting learning mentor provision

The fourth key area in the functional map for the provision of learning mentor services encompasses leadership and management functions, namely:

- Contributing to the development of policies and practice which will promote social inclusion, engagement and educational achievement
- Integrating learning mentor support and processes with other provision
- Co-ordinating and managing learning mentor provision within educational institutions
- Promoting, monitoring and evaluating learning mentor provision across institutions, organisations and areas.



Practice shows that a successful learning mentor programme, which has a real impact on the achievement of children and young people, will have:

- A clear rationale for the programme in relation to all other school programmes, and coherence with developing education and support agendas
- The commitment of the senior leadership team and governing body
- A clear understanding of the learning mentor role, supported by clear job descriptions based on national occupational standard
- Effective line management linked to whole-organisation planning and priorities
- Involvement of staff in appropriate, planned continuous professional development and performance appraisal
- Fit-for-purpose approaches to monitoring and evaluation
- A planned approach to the management of change at all levels within the organisation.

All of these features depend on strong, effective leadership. Therefore, this section considers the key managerial processes of:

- a. Policy development and planning
- b. Recruitment
- c. Induction, training and development
- d. Caseload management
- e. Practice sharing and networks
- f. Line management and supervision
- g. Performance management
- h. Monitoring and evaluation.

#### 4a: Policy development and planning

Schools have a duty to analyse and devise strategies for dealing with differences in achievement and to ensure that all groups of pupils in the school are achieving as highly as they can and participating in school life. There are now many different types of support roles in schools. Schools must ensure that all strands of support — including learning mentor support — are complementary.

*The Index for Inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools* (Booth et al., 2000, p.7) is a 'systematic way of engaging in school development planning, priorities for change, implementing developments and reviewing progress'. The dimensions identified in the index help schools to consider how they can create inclusive cultures, policies and practices.

##### A definition of inclusion:

'The process of increasing participation in their schools and communities of people subjected to exclusionary pressure and practices'

(Booth et al., 1997, p.101)

##### A definition of support:

Support is defined in *The Index* as 'all activities which increase the capacity of a school to respond to student diversity'

(Booth et al., 2000, p.11).

Historically, schools have predominantly employed two kinds of support staff: teaching assistants and special needs assistants. It is important to understand how these support roles are different from the role of learning mentors. A clear definition of the difference between low attainment and underachievement can support this understanding.

#### Box 20: The difference between low attainment and underachievement

Pupils with special educational needs may have **low attainment** when compared with their peers due to a 'long term limitation of physical, intellectual or sensory function' (adapted from Disabled People's International, 1981, cited in Booth et al., 2000, p.14). Schools must be confident that these pupils are achieving their potential, even though their attainment may be lower than their peers.

**Underachievement** is where pupils are not achieving their full potential because they are experiencing barriers to learning which are not due to a long term limitation of physical, intellectual or sensory function.

Some pupils with special educational needs may have low attainment and may also be underachieving. Schools have increasingly sophisticated ways of assessing pupils' potential and then comparing their potential with their actual attainment as a measure of whether they are underachieving.

It can be helpful to think of the distinctions between teaching assistant, special needs assistant and learning mentor as follows:

- Teaching assistants work under the direction of teachers to provide direct support for teaching and learning
- Special needs assistants work under the direction of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to provide support for pupils with special educational needs
- Learning mentors are senior support workers who practice with a high degree of independence aiming to reduce barriers to learning and participation leading to underachievement.

‘Learning mentors work with children and young people who are not achieving their potential because they are experiencing difficulties... in the broader social and personal contexts of their lives, and this is affecting their learning and participation at school. These barriers may be internalised taking the form of low self-esteem, lack of confidence or unmanageable feelings of anger, loss, sadness etc. Other barriers can be identified in external behaviours, such as aggressive, self-harming, violent or withdrawn behaviours. They may present in children’s isolation from their peers or in their affective development. They may affect attendance at school, engagement in learning, or social and emotional development.’

(Cruddas, 2005)

School policy and planning needs to take account of the full range of different support roles. An inclusion policy that sets out the range of support roles and school procedures for accessing the support available can be helpful in ensuring that support is complementary, responsive to the diversity of the school’s population and targeted at improving achievement and participation.

School planning also needs to ensure rigorous monitoring of the impact of support on improving outcomes for children and young people.

‘There is no longer a statutory requirement for schools to hold a special educational needs register. In the interests of increasing capacity to respond to pupil diversity, some schools have developed inclusion registers that map support across the school and monitor and track pupils’ learning and participation. Inclusion registers have the added advantage of supporting teaching and learning, as teachers can plan lessons from the point of view of a good understanding of pupils’ abilities and needs, ensuring that lessons are responsive to pupil diversity.’

(Cruddas, 2005)

#### 4b: Recruitment

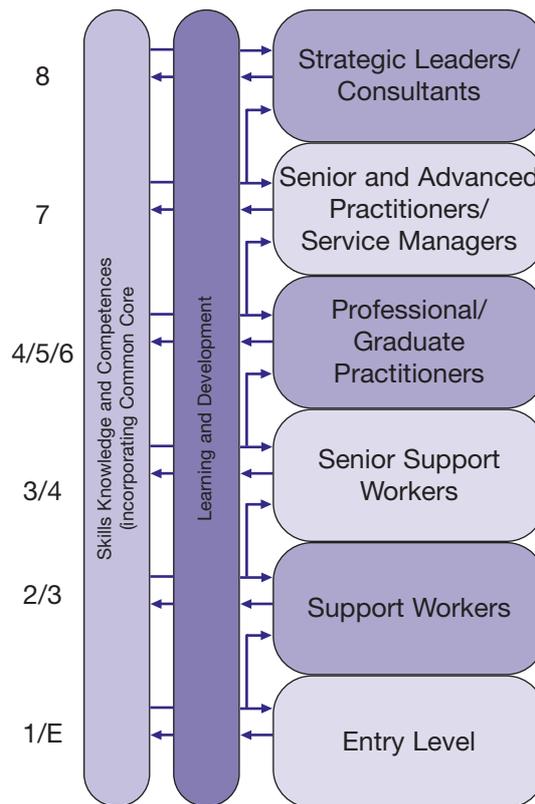
Integral to the success of the learning mentor role is the recruitment of the most appropriate candidate.

‘Competency is assured by hiring competent people who can use models and frameworks.’

(Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003, p.17)

At entry level, learning mentors are senior support workers. There are now a range of qualifications that learning mentors can undertake which means that schools can choose to recruit a learning mentor with a wide range of responsibilities at professional practitioner level. **Figure 13** sets out skill levels according to the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 2004)

**Figure 13: Skill levels**



### Job descriptions

Job descriptions and person specifications should be based on the National Occupational Standards for Learning, Development and Support Services (DfES, 2003b). These standards also cover the work of education welfare officers, Connexions personal advisors and other occupationally similar roles.

#### **Box 21: The national occupational standards**

National Occupational Standards for Learning, Development and Support Services were published in December 2003. The standards consist of 61 units of competence, which relate directly to individual job functions. They define how a skilled and competent worker carries out each function. They describe the actions, knowledge and understanding needed to do the job properly. There are seven standards which define the minimum level of competence for learning mentors.

The standards should be used for:

- Information about job roles
  - job description
  - recruitment
  - promotion
- Training and development
  - induction programme design
  - training programme design
  - assess existing skills and knowledge
  - evaluate the effectiveness of training and development
  - identify training needs
- Quality assurance
  - benchmarks for best practice
  - monitoring tool

- performance management tool
- The development of qualifications

Many local authorities - particularly former Excellence in Cities or Excellence Cluster areas - will have guidance on recruitment, job descriptions and person specifications. In some local authorities, jobs have been graded through workforce remodelling processes. Schools should consult their local authority and have regard to model job descriptions provided.

#### **Box 22: Job descriptions, support and advice**

##### **Support and advice**

Learning mentors now have an occupational home in the Children's Workforce Development Council. The national website for learning mentors has an electronic facility for queries from schools.  
learning.mentors@cwdcouncil.org.uk

#### **4c: Induction, training and development**

As schools prepare to deliver the Every Child Matters agenda and assume greater responsibility for children's personal development and well-being, extended services, common assessment and multi-agency working, it is in the interests of schools to have a highly trained and skilled workforce able to take on increasing responsibilities.

##### **Initial training: induction**

Learning mentors have historically had access to a national programme of initial training, funded by the DfES. An early programme of initial training was delivered by Rotherham Excellence Partnership. More recently, the Liverpool Excellence Partnership, through Liverpool John Moore's University, was contracted by the DfES to develop, deliver and quality assure the national programme of initial training for learning mentors.

To reflect changes in the policy context, the national programme of initial training has been reviewed and a new induction training programme is now available for delivery at local authority level, as part of each authority's integrated working programme.

The new induction training programme is compliant with the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce (DfES, 2006) and supports the CWDC's Common Induction Standards. The induction training programme has generic and role-specific modules. This means that the generic modules can be delivered in multi-agency groups. See **Box 23**

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<sup>10</sup>Key policy developments have been: the National Occupational Standards for Learning Development and Support Services (DfES, 2003b); the mainstreaming of learning mentor programmes with the end of Excellence in Cities; the Every Child Matters agenda, including the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge (DfES, 2006), more multi-agency working and integrated training; the establishment of the Children's Workforce Network and the devolving of responsibility for sector skills to the CWDC; and the draft Common Induction Standards for Children's Services.

## Box 23: Overview of the induction training programme

### Generic modules

Module	Theme	Details
Module 1	Theme 1: Working in a principled way	Recent legislation and policy, including Every Child Matters, The Children Act 2004, Integrated working, Children's workforce development, the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, and Principles and values underpinning work with children, young people and families, including person-centred practice
	Theme 2: Promoting equality and diversity	The context for equality and diversity Relevant legislation relating to equality and diversity Working with children and young people with disabilities, emphasising the social model and its impact on practice Prejudice and discrimination
Module 2	Theme 1: Human need, learning and development	Maslow's hierarchy of human needs and social, emotional and behavioural development of children and young people Strategies to support self-esteem Prochaska and DiClemente's change and motivation cycle Play and development Humanist or person-centred psychology
	Theme 2: Attachments, boundary management and child development	Attachment theory - how babies and children form attachments and the possible effects on their social, emotional and behavioural development Boundary management Child development theories, including overviews of Piaget's cognitive development theory, Vygotsky's social learning theory and Erikson's theory of psychosocial development
	Theme 3: Understanding behaviour	An introduction to understanding behaviour The observable and the hidden aspects of behaviour Working to change challenging behaviour
	Theme 4: Understanding contexts	The impact of eco-systems on a child or young person's development Fostering resilience to support development.
Module 3	Theme 1: Building helping relationships and communicating effectively with children, young people and families	Developing effective helping relationships and establishing boundaries Barriers to effective communication The skills of effective communication Working with parents/carers Working with young carers
	Theme 2: A structured approach to work with children, young people and their families; and supervision	A structured approach to work with children, young people; and their families Assessment The principles and value of effective record keeping The purpose of supervision
	Theme 3: Transition	What are transitions? Transitions and change within families Principles for managing transitions Key steps to support transitions
Module 4	Theme 1: Safeguarding and protecting	Legislation and national guidance relating to safeguarding and protecting children The different forms of abuse including the signs and indicators of possible abuse What children want and need in order to feel safe with key principles and procedures for child protection Workplace policies and procedures
	Theme 2: Health and safety	The laws and guidance for health and safety Working safely including risk assessments.

Module 5	Theme 1: The processes and tools of integrated working	The Integrated Working strategy A continuum of needs and services Information sharing, including consent and confidentiality The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) The lead professional
	Theme 2: Working with others as part of integrated working	What multi-agency working means, including the benefits and challenges of working in partnership with other agencies Managing conflict with other organisations

### Learning mentor-specific modules

Module A	Theme 1: Values, beliefs and behaviours	Value statement supporting the national occupational standards Personal practice values and beliefs and how they might impact on practice
	Theme 2: A structured approach to learning mentoring	Barriers to learning and participation Balancing needs and strengths Multiple intelligences A structured approach to learning mentoring, including initiating, maintaining, reviewing, evaluating and ending the professional helping relationship Egan's skilled helper model Setting goals and action planning with targets

Module B	Theme 1: Supporting transfer and transition and working with those in crisis	Working with children and young people in context Supporting children and young people through transitions Working with children and young people in crisis.
	Theme 2: Working with parents, carers and families Theme 3: Working with children and young people in groups Theme 4: Working with other practitioners as a learning mentor	Family learning and why it is important Supporting families to contribute to the <i>Every Child Matters</i> five outcomes Types of groups The stages of group development Establishing a group Planning and facilitation of groups Who learning mentors might work with Learning mentor contributions to integrated working

#### Box 24: Key resources for induction, training and development

The Common Core Prospectus can be downloaded from [www.everchildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everchildmatters.gov.uk) ...

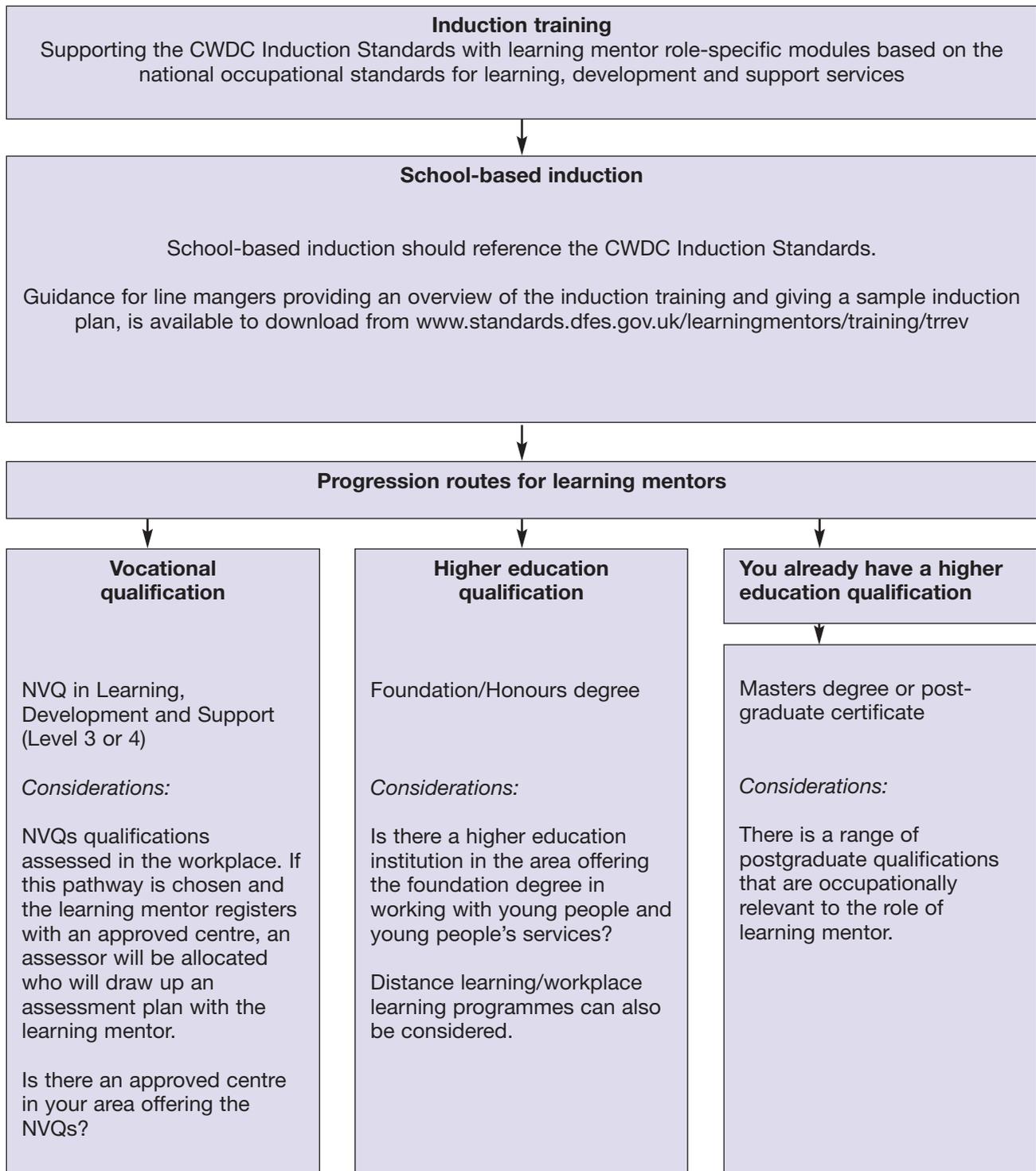
The CWDC Induction Standards can be downloaded from [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)

Guidance for line managers on induction training and school-based induction can also be downloaded from [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)

### Progression for learning mentors

With the publication of the national occupational standards for learning, development and support services, there is now a range of accredited programmes and qualifications for learning mentors (see **Figure 14**).

**Figure 14: Programmes and qualifications for learning mentors**



**Continuing professional development**

Like all staff, learning mentors need access to continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to keep their practice safe, effective and up-to-date. A range of local CPD opportunities are relevant to the learning mentor role, for example:

- Child protection training
- Health and safety training
- Information sharing training
- Family learning training

- Working with parents, carers and families training
- Circle time training
- Training for staff supporting peer mediation/peer mentoring programmes
- Solution focused training
- Training in inter-generational work.

Training needs can be identified through a training needs analysis or in the context of performance management.

One of the benefits of the learning mentor accessing local training is the opportunity to train alongside a range of other practitioners and to build professional relationships.

Schools should also consider whether to put their learning mentor forward for training in the use of the CAF and in carrying out lead professional functions. Most local authorities have criteria for practitioners eligible to undertake this training.

### Reflective practice

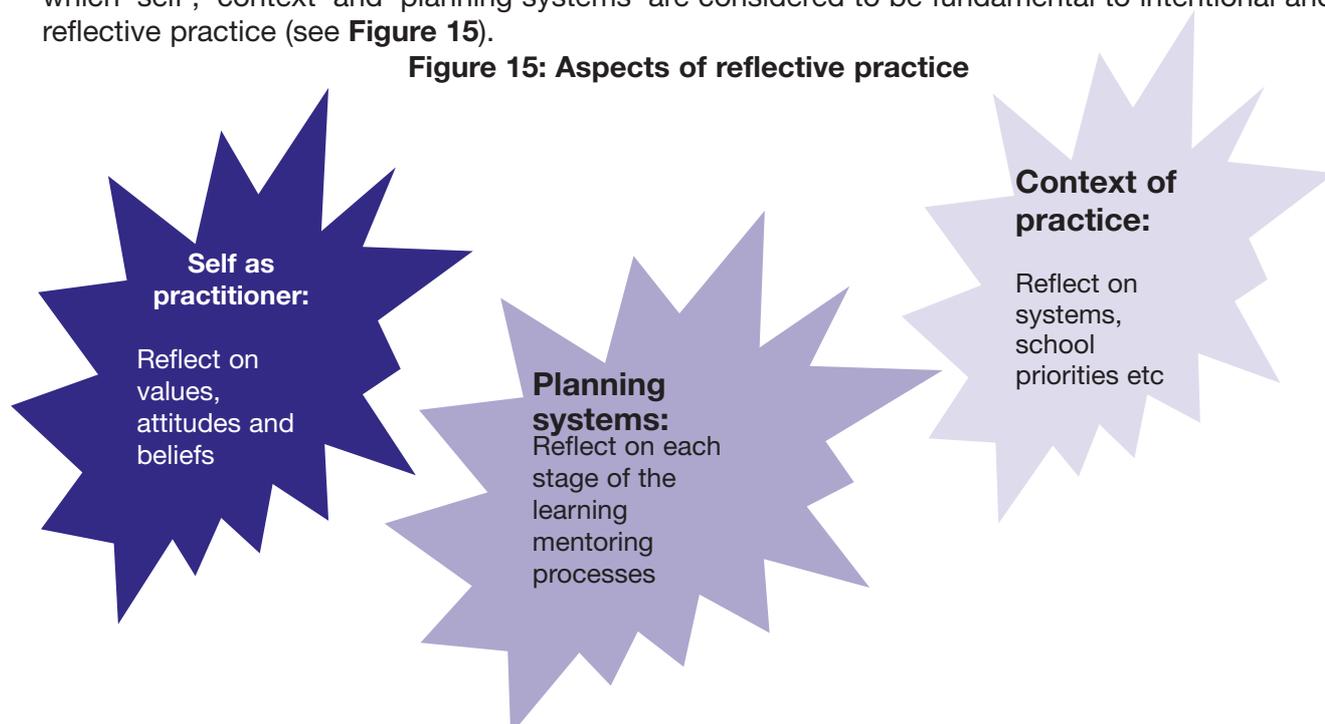
The value base supporting the National Occupational Standards for Learning, Development and Support Services (DfES, 2003b) articulates the importance of critical reflection as a key aspect of professional practice. As part of the national vocational qualification, learning mentors are asked to complete a reflective practice log to demonstrate their commitment to being a reflective practitioner.

Reflection is the process of taking a closer look at your practice and exploring it in greater depth. The key to reflection is to examine practice with a view to changing or developing it. Line managers have a vital role in supporting learning mentors in reflecting on and developing their practice. Line managers should open up the possibilities of purposeful learning. One of the ways to do this is to be — and to encourage the learning mentor to be — constantly curious about practice.

A key aspect of reflecting on practice is taking into consideration the views of children, young people and families. Line managers should ensure that systems are place to do this.

Ricks and Charlesworth (2003) have developed a framework of emergent practice planning in which ‘self’, ‘context’ and ‘planning systems’ are considered to be fundamental to intentional and reflective practice (see **Figure 15**).

**Figure 15: Aspects of reflective practice**



#### 4d: Networking and sharing practice

One of the key standards of practice for learning mentors set out in the national occupational standards is the ability to operate within networks. Learning mentors must:

- Maintain membership of networks
- Exchange information within networks.

Networking is an important activity if learning mentors are to keep up-to-date with developments in their own and related work areas.

Line managers have a responsibility to support learning mentors in identifying appropriate networks. Networks should:

- Be of benefit to the work of the learning mentor
- Comply with relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidelines and ethical requirements.

The line manager should ensure that learning mentors:

- Are able to make contributions which are constructive and effective
- Maintain contacts within the network to ensure effective integrated working
- Identify problems within networks and take appropriate action to address them.

Many local authorities have established learning mentor networks. These are important forums in which practice is exchanged and strengthened and relationships across schools are developed.

#### 4e: Line management and supervision

Learning mentors work with pupils in a way that differs from that of teachers. Line management and supervision is important because learning mentors work in a one-to-one context and carry caseloads, which usually include very complex and difficult cases. Line management and supervision are key components of safe and effective practice. They also create an important space for reflective practice. Box 25 sets out some of the key questions that line managers can ask themselves to ensure that they are providing appropriate line manager support for all the learning mentor's core functions.

##### **Differentiating between line management and supervision**

Managing and supervising the work of learning mentors is complicated and is necessary to address the complexity of their work. It is useful to differentiate between line management and supervision functions, but there are also areas of overlap. **Figure 16** serves to identify supervision and line management areas as well as the areas of overlap.

## Box 25: Core functions of learning mentors and line manager responsibilities

Your learning mentor will establish and develop effective one-to-one mentoring and other supportive relationships with children and young people.

What do you, as a line manager, need to do to:

- *Ensure this practice is safe and impacts on learning?*
- *Support and monitor this practice?*

Your learning mentor will develop, agree and implement a time bound action plan with groups and individual children and young people and those involved with them based on a comprehensive assessment of their strengths and needs.

- *What do you, as a line manager, need to do to support your learning mentor in developing this aspect of their work?*
- *How will you monitor it?*

Your learning mentor will facilitate access to specialist support services for children and young people with barriers to learning.

What do you, as a line manager, need to do to:

- *Ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to referrals to external agencies?*
- *Support and monitor this?*

Your learning mentor will assist in the identification of early signs of disengagement and contribute to specific interventions to encourage re-engagement.

What do you, as a line manager, need to do to:

- *Implement this area of learning mentor practice*
- *Support and monitor this practice*

Your learning mentor will operate within agreed legal, ethical and professional boundaries when working with children and young people and those involved with them.

- *What policies and procedures within the school will you, as a line manager, ensure that your learning mentor knows and understands?*
- *How will you monitor your learning mentor's practice in relation to these policies and procedures?*

Your learning mentor will assist children and young people to make a successful transfer between educational establishments and transition at key stages in their learning.

What do you, as a line manager, need to do to:

- *Implement this area of learning mentor practice?*
- *Support and monitor this practice?*

Your learning mentor will contribute to the comprehensive assessment of children and young people entering educational establishments and the review of their progress and achievements.

What do you, as a line manager, need to do to:

- *Implement this area of learning mentor practice?*
- *Support and monitor this practice*

Your learning mentor will contribute to the identification of barriers to learning for individual children and young people and provide them with a range of strategies for overcoming the barriers.

What do you, as a line manager, need to do to:

- *Implement this area of learning mentor practice?*
- *Support and monitor this practice?*

Your learning mentor will develop and maintain appropriate contact with the families and carers of children and young people who have identified needs.

What do you, as a line manager, need to do to:

- *Implement this area of learning mentor practice?*
- *Support and monitor this practice?*

Your learning mentor will negotiate, establish and maintain effective working partnerships with other agencies and individuals in order to address needs and help remove barriers to learning for children and young people.

What do you, as a line manager, need to do to:

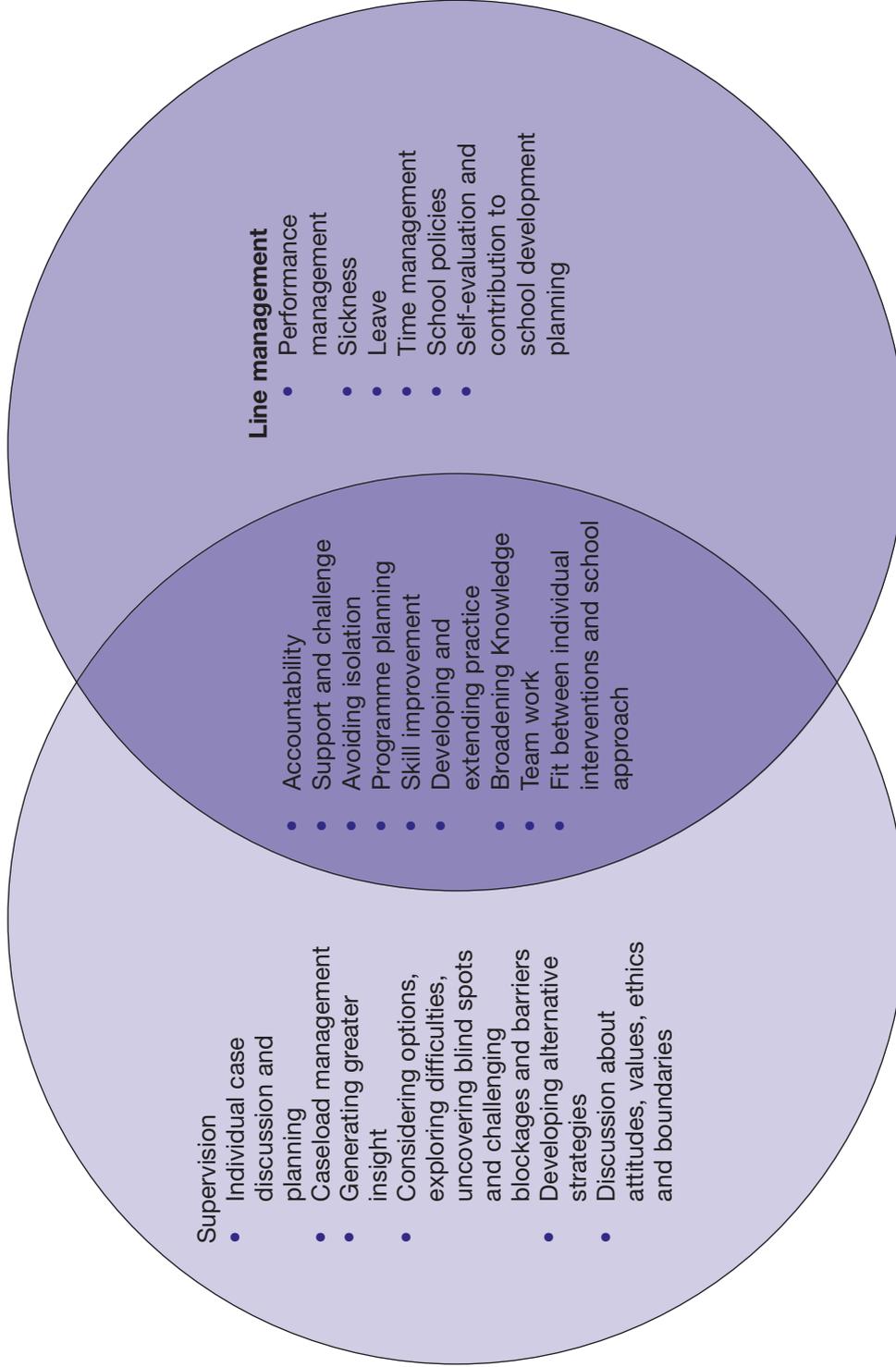
- *Implement this area of learning mentor practice?*
- *Support and monitor this practice?*

Your learning mentor will contribute to the identification and sharing of good practice between individuals and partner agencies to enhance mentoring provision.

What do you, as a line manager, need to do to:

- *Implement this area of learning mentor practice?*
- *Support and monitor this practice*

**Figure 16: Line management and supervision – differences and overlaps**



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Where line managers are not trained in supervision practices and techniques, schools should consider buying in supervision support for their learning mentors. Education psychology services and mental health services sometimes offer a supervision service.

Some local authorities — particularly former Excellence in Cities or Excellence Cluster areas — have arrangements for providing supervision to learning mentors in addition to the line management arrangements within a school. Schools should take advice from their local authority programme managers, where appropriate.

If supervision is undertaken separately to the line management function, the learning mentor, line manager and supervisor should have a written agreement about roles, responsibilities, accountability and escalation.

Effective line management and supervision of learning mentors involves frequent, regular and dedicated time (see **Box 26**) and it requires clarity about the respective roles and responsibilities of supervisor and supervisee (see **Box 27**)

<b>Box 26: Key elements of line management and supervision</b>	
<p><b>Frequency:</b> The frequency of meetings will depend on the number and complexity of cases that the learning mentor is holding. Practice suggests that fortnightly meetings are most effective.</p>	<p><b>Duration:</b> The duration of the sessions will also depend on the number and complexity of cases. Practice suggests that an hour is the minimum period that should be scheduled for the supervision meeting.</p>
<p><b>Expectations:</b> The line manager and learning mentor should agree a set of common expectations for supervision. Both should come prepared to the supervision session. It is good practice to agree beforehand which cases will be brought to the supervision session.</p>	<p><b>Documentation:</b> The supervision sessions should be recorded. At the beginning of each session, cases discussed at the previous session and actions agreed should be reviewed.</p>

### **Box 27: roles and responsibilities in the supervisory process**

#### **Roles and responsibilities of the line manager/ supervisor:**

- Identify the role of supervision as a key component of safe practices
- Agree the frequency of meetings
- Clarify the context, accountability and arrangements for supervision
- Clarify and agree roles, responsibilities, obligations and commitments
- Negotiate the content and the agenda for each session
- Manage the use the anxieties around supervision to engage in non-defensive reflection, during and following supervision
- Use question and challenge as a tool for development
- Agree arrangements for monitoring and reviewing supervision

#### **Roles and responsibilities of the learning mentor**

- Manage, organise and present material clearly and openly
- Recognise appropriate cases and aspects of work which require attention in supervision
- Bring mistakes and difficult moments in practice to supervision
- Use supervision for both practical management of cases and on-going reflection and learning
- Use your reflections in the supervision meetings to inform aspects of work with children and young people
- Review the processes, outcomes and continuing effectiveness of supervision against the aims and objectives and consider any possible changes including unresolved issues, future requirement and ways of achieving these

## Perspectives

Charles and Gilberg (2002) suggest that a strengths-based perspective, as used by practitioners, can also be applied by supervisors and managers.

### Pointers for practice: a strengths-based perspective

They identified the following as attributes which support this approach to supervision:

- **Experiential:**  
Encouraging practitioners to explore different interventions or approaches with rationales to support these to ensure children's safety.
- **Ability to translate:**  
Translating a range of areas of information about practice. For example, policy or legislative requirements or offering another set of interpretations for behaviour demonstrated by a child/young person.
- **Encouraging autonomy:**  
Asking questions not just giving answers highlights that supervisors may have the expertise but they do not necessarily have to be the experts.
- **Creativity:**  
Encouraging creativity, both in children and in the practitioners the manager supervises. Highlighting the need to look beyond the presenting behaviour and developing innovative interventions.
- **Being action-focused:**  
Supervision provides time to reflect on particular issues or individuals; however eventually a decision or choice needs to be made. It is essential that action be broken down into manageable and realistic tasks or strategies.

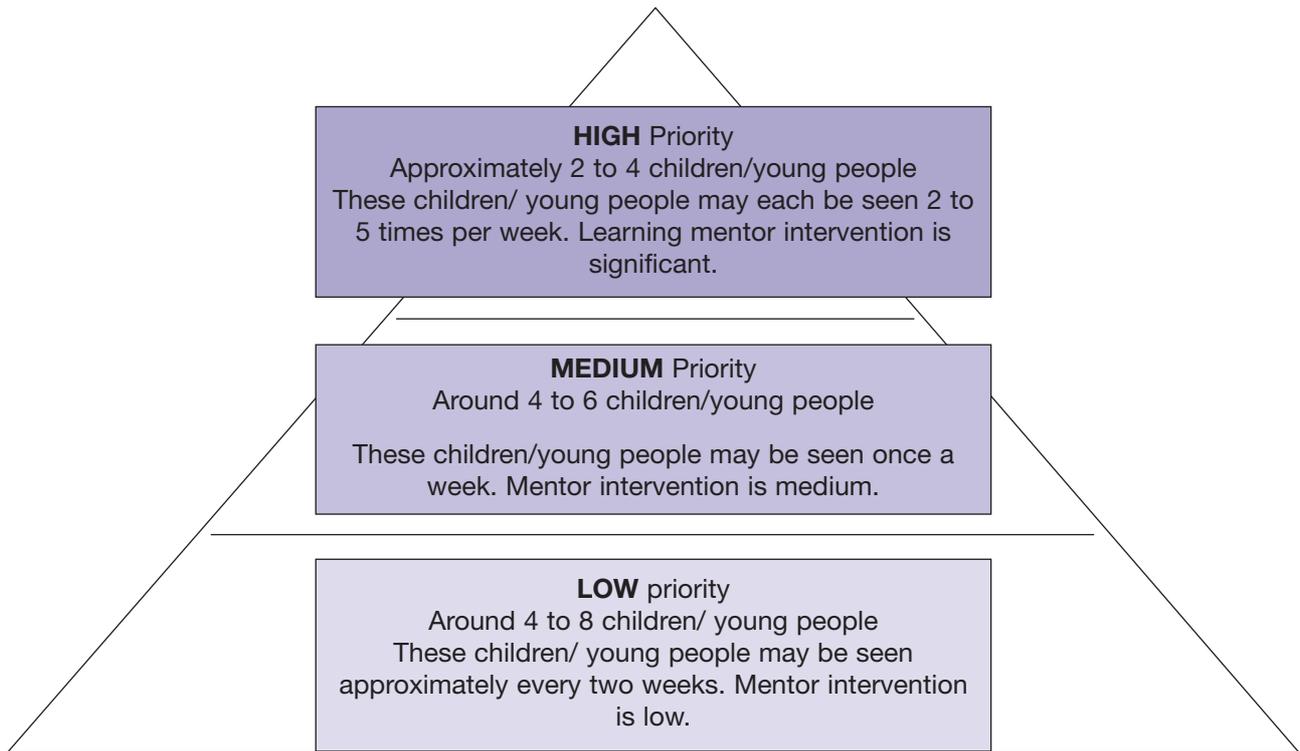
## Managing the caseload

Learning mentors often have complex caseloads and one of the roles of the line manager is to support mentors in managing this caseload effectively. Typically:

- A full time learning mentor will have a caseload of approximately ten to 15 children or young people with whom they are working in one-to-one settings.
- In addition to the one-to-one caseload, learning mentors will also work with groups of children and young people
- While it is recognised that learning mentors will work on occasional basis with many more children and young people (for example, through 'drop in' services, involvement in school councils or other groups, incidental incident resolution), these would not be classed as part of the official learning mentor caseload.
- It is advisable that any learning mentor who is new to the role, builds up their caseload gradually.
- The learning mentor caseload is a moving caseload. (See section 1.b for guidance on endings.)

Children and young people on the one-to-one caseload should be prioritised according to need (see **Figure 17**)

**Figure 17: Levels of need**



**Pointers for practice: short, medium and long term intervention**

Learning mentors will be working with children/young people on their caseload according to whether intervention will be short term, medium term, or long term.

How long a child/ young person will be on the caseload will depend on a number of factors:

- How embedded is the issue?
- How severe is the issue?
- How long has it been an issue?
- How complex is the issue?
- Does the child/young person accept that there is an issue?
- Is the child or young person ready and prepared to change?
- What additional support is available?

It is important to maintain a balance between long-term and short-term intervention. There is a danger that learning mentor caseloads can become jammed with long-term complex cases. Part of thinking about what solutions make sense — and what support the learning mentor can offer — is careful consideration of the range of cases that the learning mentor is holding.

**Pointers for practice: individual case planning**

Case planning is integral to the supervision process.

‘Practice is not a mindless adventure. It is deliberate action directed towards the practitioner’s intent or purpose.’

(Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003, p.32)

Line managers support learning mentors to be intentional in their practice. A structured approach to supervision involving case planning helps to keep practice intentional and focused.

As illustrated in **Box 28**, the key areas of case work that should be discussed during supervision are:

- Assessment
- Action planning
- Ending work.

<b>Box 28: Structuring supervision of individual cases</b>	
<b>Assessment</b>	
<b>Learning mentor role</b>	<b>Line manager role</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open a pupil folder</li> <li>• Ensure informed consent of the parent(s)/carer(s) is sought for learning mentor involvement</li> <li>• Develop an understanding of what is contributing to the difficulties of the child or young person, and their strengths</li> <li>• Involve the parent/ carer and the child/ young person in the assessment process</li> <li>• Gather, analyse sort and interpret information gathered during assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check that informed consent has been given</li> <li>• Create an opportunity for the learning mentor to reflect on information that has been gathered and what meaning has been attributed to it. As this is extremely difficult to do effectively in isolation, the line manager should provide a support and challenge function</li> <li>• Ensure a strengths-based approach is being maintained</li> <li>• Review pupils records and ensure that practice is safe and effective</li> <li>• Where information is shared with other agencies or professionals, ensure that the school's procedures are followed and that accurate records are kept</li> </ul>
<b>Action planning</b>	
<b>Learning mentor role</b>	<b>Line manager role</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an action plan based on assessment</li> <li>• Set clear goals and targets with the child/ young person based on their strengths and needs</li> <li>• Review progress regularly, eg, every six weeks</li> <li>• Share and confirm action plan with others               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Line manager</li> <li>○ Child/young person</li> <li>○ Teacher and other professionals</li> <li>○ Parent/carer</li> <li>○ Link sessions to action plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure endings are signposted, discussed and prepared for with changes in levels of intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure action planning is integrated with other types of pupil planning in school</li> <li>• To review action plans with learning mentors when initially developed and then review on a regular basis</li> <li>• Discuss plans for ending with individual children/young people</li> <li>• Monitor outcomes through the review process</li> <li>• Review pupil records and ensure that practice is safe and effective</li> <li>• Where information is shared with other agencies or professionals, ensure that the school's procedures are followed and that accurate records are kept</li> </ul>

Endings	
Learning mentor role	Line manager role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan how to end the work with a child or young person</li> <li>• Conduct a closing review to celebrate progress</li> <li>• Continue to monitor and track progress following the ending</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support with planning for endings</li> <li>• Monitor that outcomes have been achieved</li> <li>• Review pupil records and ensure that practice is safe and effective</li> <li>• Where information is shared with other agencies or professionals, ensure that the school's procedures are followed and that accurate records are kept</li> </ul>

### Exploring values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour

'By understanding how our beliefs and values are reflected in our injunctions or rules, we can see how they influence our practice. Our beliefs and values are evidenced in our thoughts, feelings, and actions when we are deciding what to do in the moment...'

(Ricks and Charlesworth, 2003, p.7)

Creating a process for learning mentors to understand how their practice is affected by their values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour is integral to the supervision process. An exploration of how personal values and beliefs are influenced by and are in agreement or conflict with organisational beliefs and values is also important.

#### 4f: Performance management

Performance management is a process of professional dialogue for assessing the overall performance of a practitioner in the context of the individual's job description and national benchmarks of practice like national occupational standards.

It is good practice to manage the performance of all staff in a school or educational setting. Performance management helps to develop a culture where all staff feel confident and empowered to participate fully in their own and others' development and understand how they are contributing to school/ organisation improvement.

The National Occupational Standards for Learning, Development and Support Services provide the backdrop to discussions about performance and development. They also define the professional attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills required in specific roles.

**Box 29** sets out the minimum standards of competence required for learning mentors. A sample performance management template is available via the DfES Standards Web site <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors>

<b>Box 29: Minimum standards of competence for learning mentors</b>	
Facilitate children and young people's learning and development through mentoring	Identify the learning and development needs of children and young people
	Plan with children and young people how learning and development needs will be addressed
	Review the effectiveness of mentoring with children and young people
Support the child or young person's successful transfer and transition in learning and developmental contexts	Plan for transfer and transition
	Support the child or young person to prepare for transfer or transition
	Monitor the success of transfer and transition and identify continued support needs
Contribute to the protection of children and young people from abuse	Identify signs and symptoms of possible abuse
	Respond to a child's disclosure of abuse
	Inform other professionals about suspected abuse
	Promote children's awareness of personal safety and abuse
Ensure our own actions reduce risks to health and safety	Identify the hazards and evaluate the risks in your workplace
	Reduce the risks to health and safety in your workplace
Review own contribution to the service	Assess own contribution to the work of the school
	Develop oneself to achieve work requirements
Enable children and young people to find out about and use services and facilities	Enable children and young people to find out about services and facilities
	Enable children and young people to use services and facilities
Operate within networks	Maintain membership of networks
	Exchange information within networks

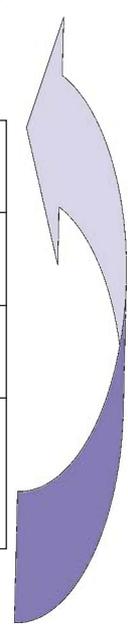
(Based on the National Occupational Standards for Learning, Development and Support Services)

#### 4g: Monitoring and evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation of provision is the cornerstone of continuous improvement and ensures that the needs of children, young people and their families are effectively addressed. This section will consider approaches to monitoring and evaluation which keep learning mentors focused on supporting children and young people to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

**Box 30** sets out the monitoring cycle. **Box 31** sets out a range of tools which can support monitoring and evaluation activity. There is no central requirement to use any of these tools. They are offered as part of an overview of the monitoring and evaluation tools and activities available to schools

<b>Box 30: A monitoring and evaluation cycle for learning mentor programmes in schools</b>	
How well are we doing?	Complete learning mentor self-evaluation form
What more could we aim to achieve this year and what must we do to make it happen?	Complete learning mentor programme action plan
How will we know if we have been successful?	Success criteria clearly linked to qualitative and quantitative evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data tracking at individual pupil level</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies (of individual pupils and of programmes)</li> <li>• Pupil views (interviews, questionnaires)</li> <li>• Other types of evidence</li> </ul>
When will we review?	Review learning mentor self-evaluation form

### Box 31: Tools supporting monitoring and evaluation activity

#### Programme implementation:

##### The learning mentor audit instrument:

The learning mentor audit instrument is an important tool for identifying what needs to be done for schools that are implementing a learning mentor programme.

The Example Audit is at [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors)

#### Programme evaluation (linked to school self-evaluation):

##### Supporting school improvement

In the context of *A New Relationship with Schools* (DfES, 2004a), all reporting requirements should support school self-evaluation and the five *Every Child Matters* outcome areas. The support materials, *Learning Mentors Supporting School Improvement* (DfES, 2005c), provide a self-evaluation framework for learning mentor programmes that directly references the five outcome areas and supports school-self evaluation.

*Learning Mentors Supporting School Improvement* is available via the DfES Standards Web site at <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors>

#### Qualitative data supporting self-evaluation:

**Case studies:** Case studies are very important and powerful evidence demonstrating the impact of learning mentor activity at individual pupil level. *Guidance for inspectors of schools Conducting the Inspection*: (Ofsted, 2005) states: 'As part of the testing of the school's procedures, the team should focus on the effectiveness of the school's arrangements through a sample of 'case studies' of vulnerable children. It is helpful if the school identifies a few vulnerable children and makes their records available to discuss with the member of staff most concerned.' Learning mentor case studies and pupil records can form an important part of the evidence of how a school supports pupils' enjoyment and achievement as well and their personal development and well-being.

[An example pro forma for case studies is at [where? Ed].

**Views of learners:** The views of learners are an essential part of the *Framework for the inspection of schools in England from September 2005* (Ofsted, 2005) and school self-evaluation. The report, *Carving a New Order of Experience, Learning Mentors Supporting Student Voices*, (Cruddas, 2005) provides an overview of how learning mentors enable students' views to be heard. Learning mentors may wish to collect specific qualitative data from learners about the impact and effectiveness of the learning mentor programme. This can be done in a variety of ways — for example through questionnaires, individual interviews and group interviews. It is important that learning mentors are able to demonstrate how they have fed back to learners and what action they have taken as a consequence of listening to their views.

*Carving a New Order of Experience, Learning Mentors Supporting Student Voices* is available at [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/downloads/studentvoices](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/downloads/studentvoices)

#### Quantitative data supporting self-evaluation:

**Individual level pupil data:** Many local authorities have developed sophisticated data reporting requirements. In the context of the *New Relationship with Schools* (DfES, 2004a), it is important that data reporting is convenient and helpful to school self-evaluation. There are some examples of learning mentor co-ordinators working with local authority data teams to customise management information systems so that data collection on pupils in the learning mentor programme is carried out as part of the local authority data collection processes. This fits with the government's expectation that data is collected once and used many times.

**Extended activities/services – measuring the difference:** Many learning mentors in schools offer out-of-school hours learning and study support opportunities. *The Study Support Code of Practice* (DfES, 2004b) provides valuable guidance on how to measure the impact of these activities. *The Study Support Code of Practice* is available via the 'library' pages at the Standards web site at [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/studysupport](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/studysupport)

## Section Five: Web-based materials

[www.bacp.co.uk/ethicalframework](http://www.bacp.co.uk/ethicalframework)

[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/contactpoint](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/contactpoint)

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/multiagencyworking](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/multiagencyworking)

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/downloads/studentvoices](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/downloads/studentvoices)

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors)

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors/training/trrev](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors/training/trrev)

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/studysupport](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/studysupport)

[learning.mentors@cwdcouncil.org.uk](mailto:learning.mentors@cwdcouncil.org.uk)

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[Suggestions:]

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Where to find the guide on the web





