

# Evaluation of the Black Leadership Initiative





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# Summary

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Between July 2002 and August 2004, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded the Black Leadership Initiative (BLI). This innovative, positive action programme supported the progression of Black staff to senior management level in the post-16 sector. BLI provided secondments, mentoring and work-shadowing opportunities for Black staff, including a very successful inspection-shadowing programme with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). In September 2003, the LSC asked Zahno Rao Associates to evaluate the BLI. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the BLI, and support its transition to the Centre for Excellence in Leadership from September 2004.



# Contents

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	Page numbers
Foreword	iii
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Objectives of the evaluation	1
1.2 The Black Leadership Initiative	1
1.3 Methodology	4
1.4 Structure of the report	4
<b>2 Context</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000	5
2.3 The UK labour market	5
2.4 The Commission for Black Staff in Further Education	5
2.5 Success for All Strategy	5
2.6 The Learning and Skills Council	5
2.7 Network for Black Managers	6
2.8 The Centre for Excellence in Leadership	6
2.9 Other positive action initiatives	7
<b>3 Motivations and Expectations</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Introduction	8
3.2 Expectations of stakeholders	8
3.3 Motivation and expectations of Black participants	9
3.4 Motivation and expectations of mentors	9
3.5 Motivation and expectations of institutions providing placements	10
3.6 Expectations of releasing colleges	11
<b>4 Process and Practicalities of the BLI</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Introduction	13
4.2 Matching process for Black participants	13
4.3 Mentors' matching experience	14
4.4 Marketing and publicity	16
4.5 Initial process for Black participants	16
4.6 The practicalities of the programme for Black participants	18

<b>5</b>	<b>The Experience for Black Participants</b>	<b>21</b>
5.1	Introduction	21
5.2	The learning experience	21
5.3	Mentees	22
5.4	Secondees	23
5.5	Work-shadowing opportunities	23
<b>6</b>	<b>The Experience for Mentors and Institutions</b>	<b>28</b>
6.1	Introduction	28
6.2	The mentor training	28
6.3	The mentoring experience	29
6.4	Support offered by the BLI team	31
6.5	Experience of institutions providing secondments	33
6.6	Experience of institutions providing work-shadowing opportunities	34
6.7	Experience of releasing colleges	35
<b>7</b>	<b>Overcoming Barriers</b>	<b>37</b>
7.1	Introduction	37
7.2	Addressing barriers	37
7.3	Awareness of cultural differences	38
7.4	Supportive colleges	39
7.5	A Black initiative	39
7.6	Strategic colleges	40
<b>8</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>43</b>
8.1	Introduction	43
8.2	Black participants	43
8.3	Mentors	46
8.4	Institutions providing seconding and work-shadowing opportunities	47
8.5	Releasing colleges	48
<b>9</b>	<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>50</b>
9.1	Achievements and impact	50
9.2	Continuation of the BLI	50
9.3	BLI design	51
9.4	Process	51
9.5	Influencing colleges	54
9.6	The future	55
	Appendix 1: Respondents to the Evaluation Questionnaire	56
	Appendix 2: Glossary	58
	Appendix 3: Bibliography	60

# Foreword

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The publication of the *Report of the Macpherson Inquiry* into the murder of a young Black man, Stephen Lawrence, saw a sea change within public institutions in the prevailing attitudes towards race equality. Since that publication in 1993, we have seen great strides in legislation that are creating a better and more equal society. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a positive duty on schools and other public authorities to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and recognise the implications for racial equality in all their activities. Similarly, the Learning and Skills Act 2000 gave the LSC a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity in the delivery of education and training. This is reflected in all areas of our work, and is specifically set out in our Race Equality Scheme.

Our sector's workforce must reflect the diversity of society. We need more Black managers, at all levels, and more Black Principals. We must meet the challenges set by the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education, which found that, for instance, less than one per cent of college Principals were Black.

The Black Leadership Initiative that is the subject of this report is part of that change. The idea of a national initiative that would take practical actions towards promoting better opportunities for Black and minority ethnic staff in FE was suggested to us by a group of national organisations, colleges, representative groups and individuals, who came together voluntarily following the Commission's report. We welcomed their innovative approach of secondments, mentoring and work-shadowing opportunities for Black staff.

This evaluation by Zahno Rao Associates shows that the Black Leadership Initiative has been more successful than we could have hoped. It has significantly exceeded its targets, and the evidence points to a very positive effect on individual teachers and managers. It offers a great opportunity to make a real difference. For the future, we want to see the Black Leadership Initiative fulfil its potential to promote organisational change, as well as continuing to support individuals. The move of the initiative to the Centre for Excellence in Leadership provides the ideal platform for that, but we must all play a part in making it happen.

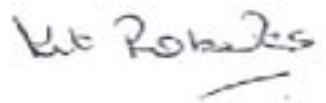
The evaluation highlights the success of the partnership behind the BLI. Our thanks go to:

- Stella Mbubaegbu, Chair of the Project Steering Group;
- the Association of Colleges for hosting the project;
- Rajinder Mann and Ann Simpson, the BLI team;
- Vivien Bailey and colleagues at Ofsted;
- Lynne Sedgmore and colleagues at the Centre for Excellence in Leadership; and
- Kamila Zahno and colleagues.

Thanks also go to the:

- Steering Group members, who guided the project with huge commitment;
- colleges, individuals and local LSCs involved in secondments, mentoring and work-shadowing; and
- the Black participants, who embraced the opportunities on offer with such enthusiasm.

I commend this report to you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Kit Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the name, there is a short, horizontal, slightly wavy line that serves as a decorative flourish or underline.

Kit Roberts

Director of Equality and Diversity, LSC



# Evaluation of the Black Leadership Initiative

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Objectives of the evaluation

In September 2003, The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) commissioned Zahno Rao Associates to evaluate the Black<sup>1</sup> Leadership Initiative (BLI). The BLI is a positive action programme that aims to develop and implement a strategic approach to the recruitment, retention and development of Black staff to management posts in the further education (FE) sector. The LSC provided funding for the 18-month pilot programme, which ran from November 2002 to May 2004. Between June and August 2004, the LSC and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Standards Unit jointly funded a three-month extension.

The objectives of the research were to evaluate:

- the extent to which the project addresses the under-representation of Black staff at management level;
- the extent to which Black managers value the support they received through the project;
- the general impact of the BLI, and the extent to which any career progression can be attributed to participation in the project;
- whether there has been any impact among a wider group of participants; and
- the sustainability and potential support for the continuation of the initiative.

### 1.2 The Black Leadership Initiative

The programme was intended to support and enhance existing professional development programmes for staff at all levels across the FE sector by developing and delivering a mentoring, secondment and work-shadowing programme. The idea behind the Black Leadership Initiative was originally developed by:

- the Association of Colleges (AoC);
- the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education (CBSFE);
- the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA);
- the Network for Black Managers (NBM), which has been a key driver, in that it has been working for some time to get the FE sector to recognise the need for positive action for Black senior staff; and
- the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).

This core group expanded into the BLI Steering Group. This comprised:

- an independent Chair, Stella Mbubaegbu (Principal of Highbury College in Portsmouth);
- representatives from the original five organisations;
- the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO);

<sup>1</sup> "Black" is a term used to include people of African Caribbean, Asian, African or Chinese origin, or other groups who experience discrimination on the grounds of race or colour (Source: Black Training and Enterprise Group [www.bteg.co.uk](http://www.bteg.co.uk))

- Principals to represent colleges; and
- a representative of the LSC with observer status.

A Project Director and Coordinator were appointed to run the BLI from October 2002 until the end of May 2004. They reported to the LSC at regular contract-monitoring meetings and to the BLI Steering Group. The AoC held the LSC contract on behalf of the BLI Steering Group. In the event, the project was extended by three months until the end of August 2004 to allow a sustainability strategy to be drawn up.

The BLI was contracted to deliver 30 mentoring partnerships, a pool of trained mentors and 10 secondments. It delivered 40 mentoring partnerships, a pool of 86 mentors, 11 secondments and 22 work-shadowing

opportunities. All the opportunities were advertised through the colleges, The Guardian and Times Educational Supplement, the Network for Black Managers and word of mouth. An application pack was sent to potential Black participants stating what the particular strands would entail. The application consisted of a simple form on which applicants wrote their personal details and why they believed they would benefit from participation and how that would further their career prospects. They attached a CV. Mentors had a booking form for the mentor training, which asked why they wanted to participate.

Table 1 gives the key characteristics of each of the three elements to the BLI.

**Table 1: Key characteristics of the BLI**

	Mentoring	Secondment	Work-shadowing
	Minimum 6 months Maximum 1 year Maximum contact time 15 hours	Minimum 3 months Maximum 1 year Full time (6) Part time (5)	Minimum 4 days Maximum 2 weeks
Black participant	Applications invited Initial telephone conversation with BLI team Mentee induction day Matching process (mentee meets with potential mentor) Mentor agreement signed Mentor relationship starts Ongoing one-to-one support from BLI team Focus groups.	Applications invited List of available secondments sent to successful applicants Personal interview with BLI Director to establish career aspirations Interview with seconding college for participants who matched criteria for the role Debriefing interview with BLI to highlight strengths and weaknesses Agreed release date with releasing college Signed secondment agreement	<i>Ofsted shadows</i> Applications invited Briefing day with Ofsted Selection process Successful shadows allocated an inspection by Ofsted Signed confidentiality agreement Received detailed briefing papers on inspection Shadowed inspection Evaluated process. <i>Local LSC shadows</i> Applications invited List of available opportunities sent to successful applicants Selected LSC to shadow

**Table 1: Key characteristics of the BLI (continued)**

	<b>Mentoring</b>	<b>Secondment</b>	<b>Work-shadowing</b>
		<p>Secondment starts</p> <p>Action-planning</p> <p>Internal support through college mentors</p> <p>Interim review meeting with secondee, seconding college and BLI team</p> <p>Ongoing one-to-one support from BLI team</p> <p>Final review meeting, including releasing college.</p>	<p>Received day-to-day plan of what to shadow</p> <p>Shadowed LSC</p> <p>Evaluated process.</p>
Host	<p>Applications invited</p> <p>Sent in booking form to mentor trainer on why interested</p> <p>Two-day mentor training</p> <p>Contacted by mentee</p> <p>Mentoring agreement signed</p> <p>Mentor relationship starts</p> <p>Ongoing support offered by mentor trainer (email and phone).</p>	<p>Expressions of interest invited</p> <p>Initial interview with BLI team to establish potential role</p> <p>Interviewed candidate</p> <p>Seconding agreement drawn up in the form of a legal agreement to vary participant's contract of employment</p> <p>Allocate line manager and internal mentor</p> <p>Action-planning</p> <p>Interim review meeting</p> <p>Final review meeting.</p>	<p><i>Ofsted shadows</i></p> <p>Offered to manage work-shadowing experience</p> <p>Set selection criteria</p> <p>Conducted briefing day with potential participants</p> <p>Agreed participants selected by the BLI</p> <p>Organised which inspections to shadow</p> <p>Briefed participants</p> <p>Supported participants</p> <p>Evaluated process.</p> <p><i>Local LSC shadows</i></p> <p>National LSC invited local LSCs to offer work-shadowing experience</p> <p>Local LSCs attended briefing day organised by BLI team</p> <p>Allocated a coordinator for the work-shadowing process</p> <p>Set up a day-to-day plan for the shadow</p> <p>Supported participants.</p>
Releasing college	<p>Mentee identified internal "college co-ordinator" to act as a point of contact and support within their home college.</p>	<p>Line manager or Principal signed form agreeing to release participant</p> <p>Participate in final review meeting.</p>	<p>Line manager or Principal signed form agreeing to release participant.</p>

## 1.3 Methodology

Our evaluation was mainly qualitative and consisted of telephone and face-to-face interviews. These comprised:

- 13 key stakeholders, most of whom were members of the BLI Steering Group;
- seven mentees, one of whom also participated in the work-shadowing;
- six secondees, one of whom was interviewed twice to look at impact after she had completed her secondment;
- six people who participated in the work-shadowing placements, including one who was also a mentee;
- seven mentors;
- six seconding colleges (both the secondees' line managers and their mentors), one of whom we interviewed twice;
- five work-shadowing placement providers; and
- nine releasing colleges, including one which we interviewed twice.

At the end of the programme in early June 2004, we sent out evaluation forms to all Black participants on all three programmes and received 29 responses (a 64 per cent response rate).

At the same time we sent out evaluation forms to 74 of the trained mentors and received 37 responses (a 50 per cent response rate).

We also attended one mentor-training event, one mentee focus group, one mentor focus group and the Ofsted briefing event for those taking part in the inspection shadowing.

We kept in constant contact with the BLI team and the LSC, and wrote a number of briefings and interim reports.

## 1.4 Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows.

- Section 2 sets out the context to the BLI.
- Section 3 explores the motivation and expectations of all those involved in the initiative, including stakeholders.
- Section 4 looks at the process and practicalities of the programme.
- Sections 5 and 6 look at how Black participants and participating institutions viewed their experience.
- Section 7 explores the barriers experienced by Black managers and how far the BLI has supported them to overcome these.
- Section 8 describes the outcomes and impact of the BLI.
- Section 9 sets out our recommendations for the future.
- At the end of each section, the key findings are highlighted.
- Appendix 1 gives a breakdown of the profile of respondents to the evaluation questionnaires. Appendix 2 is a glossary, and Appendix 3 contains the bibliographic references.

## 2 Context

### 2.1 Introduction

This section gives an outline of the legal definition of positive action and why such initiatives exist in the context of discrimination in the labour market and under-representation of Black staff at higher levels in the FE sector. It outlines the policy context of positive action initiatives in the FE sector and briefly describes existing initiatives.

### 2.2 Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Positive action, as defined under the Race Relations Act 1976, is an important way of addressing racial inequalities and is a lawful mechanism to tackle the under-representation of Black staff in employment. It allows an organisation to provide training and encouragement for people of a particular racial group who have been under-represented in certain occupations or grades over the previous years.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a new, enforceable duty on listed public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different racial groups. Specific duties require FE colleges to prepare a written race equality policy and to assess the impact of college policies on both students and staff from different racial groups. Colleges must design and deliver their services to reflect Britain's diverse society, and to reflect that diversity in their staff.

### 2.3 The UK labour market

The Cabinet Office report *Ethnic minorities and the labour market* (Cabinet Office, 2003) produced evidence that Black and minority ethnic individuals face discrimination in the labour market in that they do not attain

positions in the workplace that White people with similar qualifications attain. It is important that this trend is reversed. Apart from the clear inequality that exists, it represents a wasted opportunity, given that by 2009 Black and minority ethnic people will account for half the growth in the working-age population.

### 2.4 The Commission for Black Staff in Further Education

A report by the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education (CBSFE) *Challenging racism: further education leading the way* (CBSFE, 2002) established that Black staff were significantly under-represented at senior management level, particularly at Principal level, in the FE sector. The recruitment and retention policies of many colleges are not developed sufficiently to address these issues. Furthermore, it may be that the significant under-representation of Black governors and Inspectors is also an issue since they have a vital role to play in putting equality and diversity on the college agenda.

### 2.5 Success for All Strategy

The *Success for All* Strategy (DfES, 2002) was developed by the DfES and the LSC. Theme three of its four themes is to develop the leaders, teachers, trainers and support staff of the future, and leadership forms a key plank of this theme. All four themes of the *Success for All* Strategy include developing specific equality and diversity action plans.

### 2.6 The Learning and Skills Council

The LSC's annual equality and diversity report for 2002-03 (LSC, 2003) and its race equality scheme (LSC, 2002) both state that the LSC is committed to supporting the CBSFE in seeking to increase the number of Black staff employed at high-level positions within the FE sector. It has shown its commitment so far by providing funding for the sponsored places for

Black senior staff participating in the Senior Leadership Programme and for the Management Development Programme for Black middle managers. It has also provided funding for the Black Leadership Initiative (BLI).

The LSC has also recently established a new diversity committee comprising 12 independent members with expertise in all aspects of equality and diversity. The committee will ensure that equality and diversity issues receive high-level consideration and expertise. It will report twice yearly to the LSC's National Council.

## 2.7 Network for Black Managers

The Network for Black Managers (NBM) was set up in 1998 to address the under-representation of Black staff in the FE sector, with special reference to the small numbers of Black managers, senior staff and Principals. NBM exists to raise awareness of race equality issues in the learning and skills sector and seeks through its activities to develop and support measures that raise the numbers of Black staff at all levels of the sector, and to influence the experience of learners positively. Close synergy between the aims of the BLI and the NBM is assured through the Chair of NBM who is also the Director of the BLI.

## 2.8 The Centre for Excellence in Leadership

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) was established in 2003 to provide leaders and those who are aspiring to be leaders across the learning and skills sector with new and innovative programmes and services to support them. Some of these are linked to the BLI.

- The Senior Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) is a personal and professional development programme for the Principals and Chief Executives of the future and provides a challenging and stimulating learning experience

that increases the capacity of its participants to become successful and effective Principals and Chief Executives. It is structured around five modules and participants learn through one-to-one and whole-group activities, facilitated learning sets, self-managed group, e-learning and independent activities. There are subsidised places on the SLDP for Black aspiring leaders.

- CEL is launching a pilot programme for Black first-line managers which helps them to explore their potential and gives them the tools to start their professional development into leadership roles.
- CEL is also establishing a mentoring and coaching service to reach out to staff in the learning and skills sector. This is a generic facility for both Black and White staff, but will have obvious links with the BLI mentoring strand.
- The Association of Colleges established a work-shadowing scheme in 1995. This provides an opportunity for managers to gain a fresh perspective on leadership and management issues, while developing and strengthening links with external partners. Placements have been organised within the private, public or learning and skills sectors and are flexibly designed to meet the needs of both host organisations and shadows. It is aimed at both Black and White staff.
- In addition, CEL has offered subsidised places on all its programmes for Black staff, and is working up a strategy to offer more support across its entire suite of activities.



## 2.9 Other positive action initiatives

The BLI commissioned a review (Kenny, unpublished 2003) of the prevalence and type of positive action initiatives within the FE sector. This review used funding provided by the LSC. The review investigated:

- the BLI;
- the positive action strand of the SLDP; and
- the Management Development Programme for Black middle managers, which was a former initiative managed by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) and funded by the LSC.

The review also analysed responses from 147 colleges that responded to a questionnaire on positive action initiatives. The questionnaire asked colleges to report on whether they had taken positive action to increase the proportion of Black staff and whether they had set up initiatives to support the career development of Black staff. Almost half (45.6 per cent) of the respondents said they were doing the former, and 25 per cent said they had taken some form of positive action to support career development for their Black staff. Overall, 16 per cent of colleges provided internal initiatives. These included training and development of Black staff, the establishment of Black workers' groups and mentoring. Overall, 17 per cent of colleges taking part provided access to externally provided provision such as access to the BLI, the SLDP and the Management Development Programme for Black middle managers.

The conclusions of the review provided an insight in that there were strong recommendations on the need to place any initiative aimed at developing individuals in the wider context of activities taken by the college to address race-related issues at the organisational level. Another important conclusion was the importance of getting the

message across to both scheme participants and non-scheme participants, and to both Black and White staff, that participation does not guarantee a job nor give a special privilege, but simply offers individuals the opportunity to compete on a level playing field.

### Summary

- The Cabinet Office has identified that by 2009 Black people will make up half the growth in the working-age population but that there still exists labour market discrimination. Lack of achievement of Black people in the labour market could lead to serious economic consequences and social costs.
- The Commission for Black Staff in Further Education identified significant under-representation of Black staff at senior management level.
- The DfES and the LSC have stated a commitment to assisting the progression of Black staff in the learning and skills sector.
- The recently established CEL has established, or will establish, several initiatives that will link to the BLI. This will include both positive action initiatives and generic initiatives that give a similar offer to the BLI, such as mentoring and work-shadowing opportunities.
- Recent research has established that some colleges are providing positive action initiatives to further the career development of Black staff, but advises that these need to take place within the context of how colleges are tackling race-related issues at the organisational level.

## 3 Motivation and Expectations

### 3.1 Introduction

This section describes the key outcomes that stakeholders believed the BLI would achieve and the motivation and expectations of the Black participants and participating institutions.

### 3.2 Expectations of stakeholders

#### 3.2.1 *Aims of the BLI*

Most stakeholders believed that the BLI was set up to create supportive development opportunities for Black staff in recognition that there have been barriers to their progression to senior levels in the FE sector. The BLI would enable Black staff to have better career prospects at senior level. The long-term aim would be to increase the number of Black staff at senior levels, which would diversify the workforce profile.

#### 3.2.2 *Expectations of short- and longer-term outcomes*

However, it was recognised that a relatively small project operating within a constrained timescale would not make a great impact on the profile of the sector as a whole. What was more important was that the BLI would be able to produce a strong evidence base to demonstrate its positive impact on individuals and organisations. In the short term, therefore, stakeholders expected that an immediate outcome from the project would be a framework for the future and more robust arrangements for tracking individual progress.

Some stakeholders believed that the BLI was very much about individual staff, both Black and White, but did not believe that of itself the BLI could be expected to challenge discrimination on the part of colleges. They saw the BLI as part of a broader strategic approach that includes the Senior Leadership Programme and Management Development

Programme for Black middle managers. Some stakeholders pointed out that a major challenge in the sector is to make the necessary infrastructural changes that identify and remove the barriers within the system that are preventing the progression of Black staff. They said that an initiative such as the BLI, in the longer term, should be influencing colleges to put in place plans that are measurable and capable of implementation for the progression of Black staff. Thus stakeholders said that in the longer term they would like to see an initiative such as the BLI affecting college culture and influencing colleges to set up similar mentoring and secondment programmes. Although this was not an expected outcome for the BLI during the first 18 months, it was the sort of thing that would be expected in the future.

#### 3.2.3 *Qualitative measurements*

The immediate impact of the project would be measured qualitatively rather than in terms of the number of Black Principals. This qualitative information would include the impact, not only on Black staff, but also on participating colleges and their staff. It was expected that the BLI would expand the debate to college Principals and raise their awareness of the issues and barriers in a non-threatening way.

For Black staff, the BLI would be important, not only for the individual work that is done through mentoring and secondments, but also because it brings Black staff together so that they feel less isolated and can share their experiences.

Part of the reason why the BLI was thought to be effective was its ability to get key partners around the table to look at diversity and issues concerning the progression of Black staff within the sector.



### 3.3 Motivation and expectations of Black participants

#### 3.3.1 Mentees

The most common expectation that mentees cited was that they would receive support and guidance on their career plans, gain more confidence and learn from the mentor experience.

*I felt I had a big contribution to make but it's not easy (for a Black person) to become a leader in this country. I'm seen as a knowledge man rather than a leader. It helps to have someone supporting you and boosting your confidence.*

They felt that it would help break down barriers and support them:

*I was seriously considering leaving the profession because of the glass ceiling. The BLI came at an opportune time for me.*

Several mentees were very specific about the fact that they wanted the mentor to help them develop their careers in a structured way:

*I wanted to get structured support for my career development. I was not getting this within the college. I wanted the mentor to help me with creating a career path. This kind of opportunity does not come along very often and so I did not want to pass it up.*

Some mentees expected that the contact with a mentor at a higher level would increase their network and also their understanding of the strategic context of the FE sector.

#### 3.3.2 Secondees

Secondees wanted very practical outcomes from the secondment experience. They expected to get management experience and to look at senior management practice. But several expected that the experience would be wider than the impact on them as an individual: they had skills they could offer

the participating college and so viewed it as an exchange of skills, not a one-way experience. One secondee explicitly said that participation was a conscious decision to help raise the profile of Black staff in the sector:

*My reason for participating was not personal and not just to make a career leap, but to help raise the profile, and support the career development, of Black and other disadvantaged staff so that they have a relatively seamless career path. I was able to raise the profile of Black staff at my seconding college where there were no senior Black staff.*

#### 3.3.3 Shadows

Those participating in the work-shadowing scheme (referred to here as "shadows") expected that the experience would give them very practical skills and an insight into institutions that were very different from their own. They expected that they would develop their own skills and that their own credibility would go up in the estimation of their colleagues at their own colleges.

Those work-shadowing Ofsted inspections hoped that they would gain more knowledge about whether this was the sort of work they would like to do in the future; some hoped to become Inspectors. Most of all, they expected to be able to use their new knowledge in an actual inspection at their own college. Those work-shadowing at local Learning and Skills Councils (local LSCs) hoped to acquire new skills but were more uncertain about how they expected to use them although they said they thought they would gain more strategic experience and information on how LSC made funding decisions. They wanted to explore whether a local LSC would be the sort of body that they might want to move to eventually.

### 3.4 Motivation and expectations of mentors

Both the interviews and evaluation forms asked mentors what their motivation was for participating and what they expected to get

out of it. Mentors were committed to the programme, having seen many Black staff with talent and potential but with little support to nurture this. They understood the needs and issues facing Black professionals in the FE sector. They saw the BLI as part of a package of support for Black staff that includes management and leadership training. One Black mentor mentioned that she has always had an informal mentor to help her throughout her career and recognised the considerable contribution this can make.

In particular, many were keen to support the aims of the BLI by supporting the development of Black aspiring leaders. For the many for whom issues of equality were important, it gave the opportunity "to make a clear statement of support". Some of these mentioned the need to redress the balance by helping to increase the numbers of Black and minority ethnic staff in FE managerial positions, and some believed that this would benefit the sector as a whole. One respondent simply wanted to help others realise their potential.

They particularly understood the need for positive action programmes which would benefit not just Black individuals but also the FE sector as a whole. One mentor was keen to put the BLI in the context of the whole college's strategy on race equality and understood it as part of a package aimed at diversifying the ethnic make-up of the staff. The college had participated in the South African Tirisano exchange programme and she saw the BLI as building on this experience. She felt the college had benefited tremendously from the Tirisano project as it had led to a different external perspective on their custom and practice. She expected the BLI mentoring programme to be similarly beneficial and hoped that the college would benefit from the different experience of the mentee.

There was a widespread feeling of being in a position to make a contribution. Many mentors wanted to offer the benefits of their

own skills, background and experience. Some, particularly among the Black and minority ethnic mentors, said they wanted to "put something back", or "help others like myself". One noted that "there are not many Black mentors out there". Four respondents were motivated by having been in a mentoring relationship previously, whether as mentor or mentee.

Several respondents had felt that it would be good for them personally, by being fulfilling or by enhancing their personal development or their career development, or more specifically by adding mentoring to their skills base.

### **3.5 Motivation and expectations of institutions providing placements**

Most institutions wanted to get involved because the BLI would fit their diversity strategy and they wanted to contribute to the sector's diversity. They were committed to the aims of the BLI and acknowledged the barriers that had been identified in the CBSFE report (CBSFE, 2002). They wanted to demonstrate their commitment by providing a placement.

In the main, institutions providing placements believed that participation would be of benefit to the Black staff member concerned rather than it being of primary benefit to their institution. This was particularly so with work-shadowing opportunities which were short-term placements. Practically, the secondment or work-shadowing opportunity was expected to expose the participant to new ways of working and strategic issues. Most importantly it would help the participant to identify the skills used and then to self-assess their own skills in this light.

As far as benefits to the institution itself were concerned, some interviewees mentioned that they expected the secondee to provide a fresh perspective and an additional insight. They believed that any external perspective (not necessarily a Black perspective) would be good.

*These sorts of exchange experiences are usually rewarding because people often bring a special commitment to things that they are doing for the first time.*

One person mentioned that she expected to gain an increased awareness herself of the experience of Black colleagues and that this would be beneficial for her own experience and understanding.

### 3.6 Expectations of releasing colleges

Colleges releasing staff on secondment were motivated by the fact that this was a national initiative that was addressing the needs of Black staff and they were proud to be involved. Their expectations were that Black staff would be able to develop their careers, so they wanted to give this kind of support. It represented a development opportunity for their staff and they felt that were it not for the BLI, Black staff might not have gained access to such opportunities.

*Exposure to another institution would benefit the secondee. Such a privilege does not come along very often and the opportunity would allow the secondee to take risks and try things out as part of the secondment. The secondee has a lot of skills and sometimes these get taken for granted – in another place he might be able to shine.*

*It would allow the participant to see that there are different ways of doing things. You can train as much as you want and get qualifications, but it's an understanding of culture and politics that matters. A lot of decision-making is about shared values; if you're not from that group, it's difficult.*

Although colleges thought the secondment would benefit the college because of enhanced performance by the participant, they tended not to think of how they might use the participant's skills once the latter had returned to their own institution. Indeed, some colleges

releasing someone on a longer term secondment (typically a year) thought that realistically there may not be any direct benefits as they did not expect the secondee to return. One college mentioned that they hoped the programme would offer a two-way relationship and that they would also be able to receive secondees.

Colleges that had released staff to participate on an Ofsted inspection were more likely to state that they expected tangible benefits in terms of a staff member being more skilled to take on a key role during a college inspection.

#### Summary

- Stakeholders believed that the BLI would not only offer personal development and networking opportunities to Black staff, but also deliver a framework for the future which might have an impact on the sector as a whole.
- In the longer term, some stakeholders hoped that the BLI would be able to affect college culture and break down barriers for Black managers.
- Black participants wanted support for personal development and career progression. Some believed they had skills to offer the participating college. One person thought that by participating he would raise the profile of Black staff in the seconding college.
- Mentors participated because they wanted to support the BLI by helping to increase the numbers of Black senior managers. Some mentioned a much more strategic motivation and wanted to put the programme in the context of their college's race equality strategy.
- Those providing secondment or work-shadowing placements thought that they would be able to contribute to the sector's diversity. However, they generally felt that the BLI would benefit

the participants' career rather than believing that their own institution would benefit. Nevertheless, there were exceptions to this in that some believed that the institution would benefit from a fresh perspective or that they would benefit from an increased awareness of the experiences of Black staff.

- An interesting question to raise in this evaluation therefore is to what extent the BLI has affected the career paths of individual Black staff, and to what extent it has achieved the wider aim of influencing college culture and breaking down barriers for Black staff in more permanently.

## 4 Process and Practicalities of the BLI

### 4.1 Introduction

This section looks at how well the process and practicalities of the BLI were judged by participants and makes some recommendations for improvements.

### 4.2 Matching process for Black participants

The evaluation form asked how well Black participants were matched to their activity (that is mentor, secondment or shadow): 86 per cent answered "very well" or "quite well". There were two people, both in the secondment programme, who answered "not very well", one because of personal circumstances and the other who found that there was a "lack of communication between parties in relation to the role and development needs". One secondee and one mentee found that geography (distance) meant that the match was not ideal.

Several participants on the mentoring programme said they appreciated the way they had been able to choose a mentor from a shortlist and were assisted in matching the mentor to their needs. However, some of the interviewees pointed out that they would have liked more time to meet mentors. Respondents found that they were well matched for career goals and learning needs. In one case, a respondent wrote:

*Initially there were no finance people involved, but the BLI team found a suitable candidate for me.*

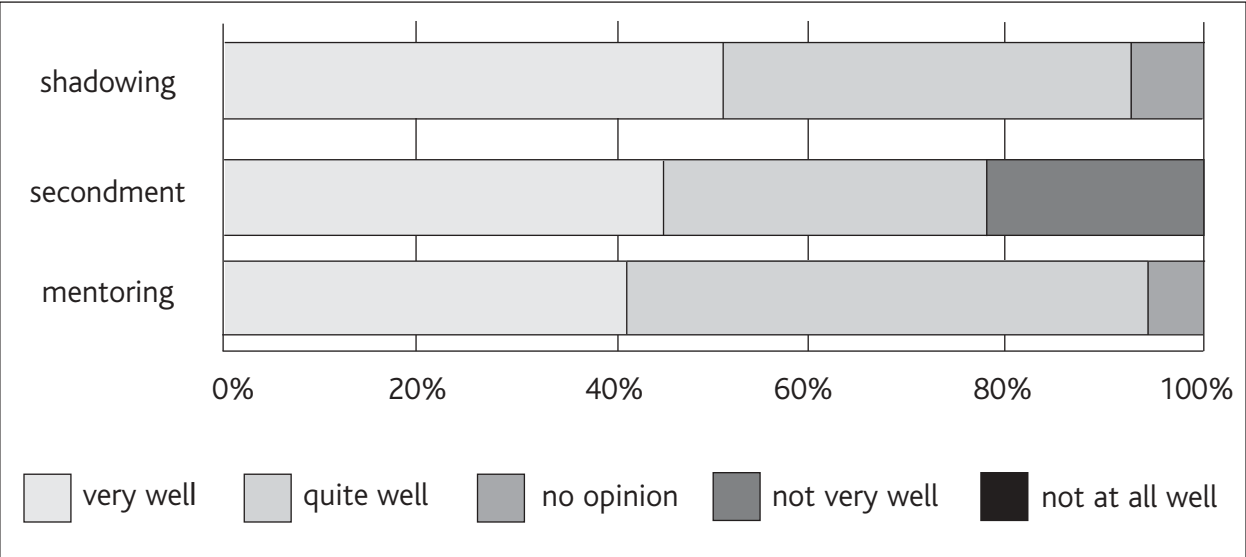
There was also praise for the personal qualities of the mentors: "easy to relate to personally", and "the relationship was good and productive".

For those on the work-shadowing scheme, several were pleased that the experience was related to their current job and previous

experience. One participant, for example, had just undergone a college inspection and wanted to experience the inspection from the Inspector's point of view. This participant was able to shadow an Inspector. Another respondent mentioned how the match would make their skills and experience more marketable, while another found the work-shadowing programme "useful for my own development". Again, there was praise for individual hosts: one was "extremely accommodating", and one was found to be "a really great guy, both professionally and personally. I could not have been better placed!"

Figure 1 shows the responses to Question 5 of the Mentee Questionnaire (on the matching process).

**Figure 1: Responses to Question 5 of the Mentee Questionnaire, “How well do you think you were matched to the activity?”**



Response	Shadowing	Secondment	Mentoring
very well	50%	44%	41%
quite well	42%	33%	53%
no opinion	8%	0%	6%
not very well	0%	22%	0%
not at all well	0%	0%	0%

**4.3 Mentors’ matching experience**

Although all 37 of the respondents to our evaluation form had received mentor training, only 22 had been matched to a mentee through the BLI. This is an unfortunate situation for those who had no mentee. One respondent wrote:

*I have not been attached to a mentee and that is disappointing. (I am) worried that the learning gained from the course will disappear and not be put into practice.*

They expressed disappointment, partly at not being matched, but also partly due to a lack of communication from the BLI team that a match had not been found and whether the

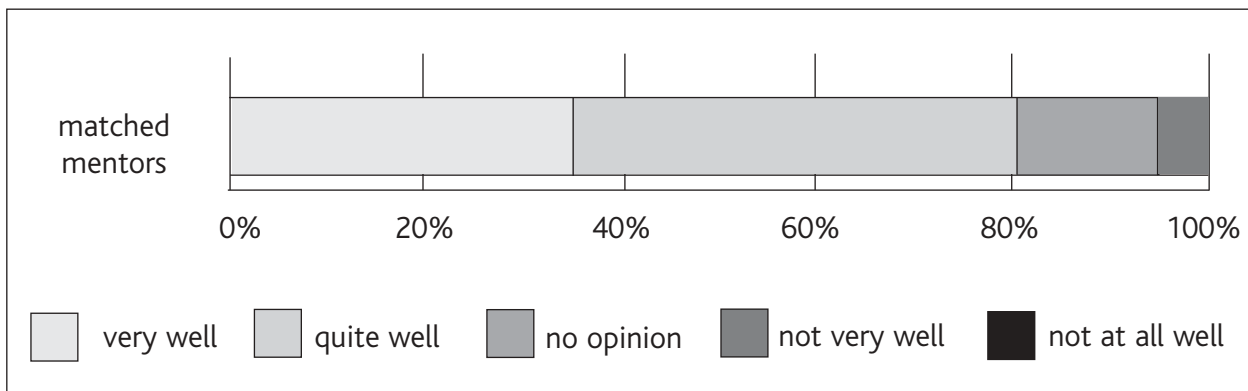
search was still on or off. However, we should note that a few of the 15 respondents hereafter referred to as “unmatched” (because they did not find a mentee through the BLI) have in fact been mentoring people outside the scheme, for example staff from their own organisation.

Among the 22 “matched” mentors, 36 per cent thought they were “very well matched” to their mentee, and a further 45 per cent thought they were “quite well matched”. Those who had no opinion had only recently started mentoring and thought it “too early to say”.

Figure 2 shows the responses to Question 4 of the Mentor Questionnaire (on the matched partner).



**Figure 2: Responses to Question 4 of the Mentor Questionnaire, “How well do you think you were matched to your mentee?”**



Response	Matched mentors
very well	36%
quite well	45%
no opinion	14%
not very well	5%
not at all well	0%

The comments of one of those who felt that they were “very well matched” illustrate some of the reasons others gave for the matching being successful:

*We have found it easy to work together: we work fairly near to each other but not so close for there to be any issues in relation to information given about the workplace; her experience in her management role is similar to that which I experienced when I first moved into management role; she was honest about the support she wanted.*

Geography and logistics were obviously important: two other respondents mentioned a “good match geographically” and one otherwise happy respondent reported a “poor match geographically”.

Sharing common ground was also frequently mentioned, for example, shared aspirations, common subject interests, professional background, for instance in the area of human resources (HR), and having shared the same experiences.

For some, however, it was something much less tangible that made the match a success: “Not sure why, we just seemed to work well together.” But it is unlikely that the number of good working relationships is entirely accidental. Two respondents mentioned the benefit of the mentee having had a say in the choice of mentor and one cited the “clear management potential” of the mentee. But perhaps most important was the mentee’s approach, whether “open”, “frank” or “keen”, and their “thirst for the relevant guidance”. The careful preparation and training of both mentor and mentee no doubt contributes a lot to this approach. The exceptional case of an awkward relationship suggests that it is possible for both sides to fall through the training net:

*(We had) a very long session about how he was being undermined at work and the bad relationship he had with others due to his race and I found it difficult at times to bring him back to the reason for my visit.*

## 4.4 Marketing and publicity

The BLI advertised its programmes through college Principals and HR Directors, through the Network for Black Managers (NBM) and through the press. Accordingly, Black participants responding to our evaluation form first became aware of the BLI schemes in a variety of those different ways:

- 11 through the Network for Black Managers;
- nine (all but one of them mentees) through their college Principal, Vice-Principal or line manager;
- eight (many of them shadows) through a newspaper advertisement; and
- one directly through the BLI, one through the LSDA and one through their Director of Personnel.

Some interviewees expressed surprise that they had not heard about the BLI through their college and suspected that many development opportunities for staff get lost.

## 4.5 Initial process for Black participants

Our evaluation form asked Black participants (mentees, secondees and shadows) to rate their experience of the initial application process, as well as the initial briefing sessions with the Project Director. All potential participants were invited to fill in a short application form giving their personal details, an account of how the particular component of the BLI would benefit their career prospects and their CV.

Potential mentees received a phone call from the BLI team to discuss the mentoring relationship further. Secondees were interviewed by the BLI Director to discuss their career aspirations, and then had an interview with the seconding college and a debriefing interview with the BLI team to highlight strengths and weaknesses. Ofsted

shadows were invited to apply for an opportunity to shadow an inspection against criteria provided by Ofsted, and attended a briefing day run by Ofsted. They were then selected by the BLI team, using the Ofsted criteria. The idea behind selecting people after they had attended the briefing was to open up the briefing day to a wider audience, so that they would understand more about the inspection process. LSC shadows applied to the BLI and, if successful, obtained a programme of activities they would shadow from the local LSC concerned.

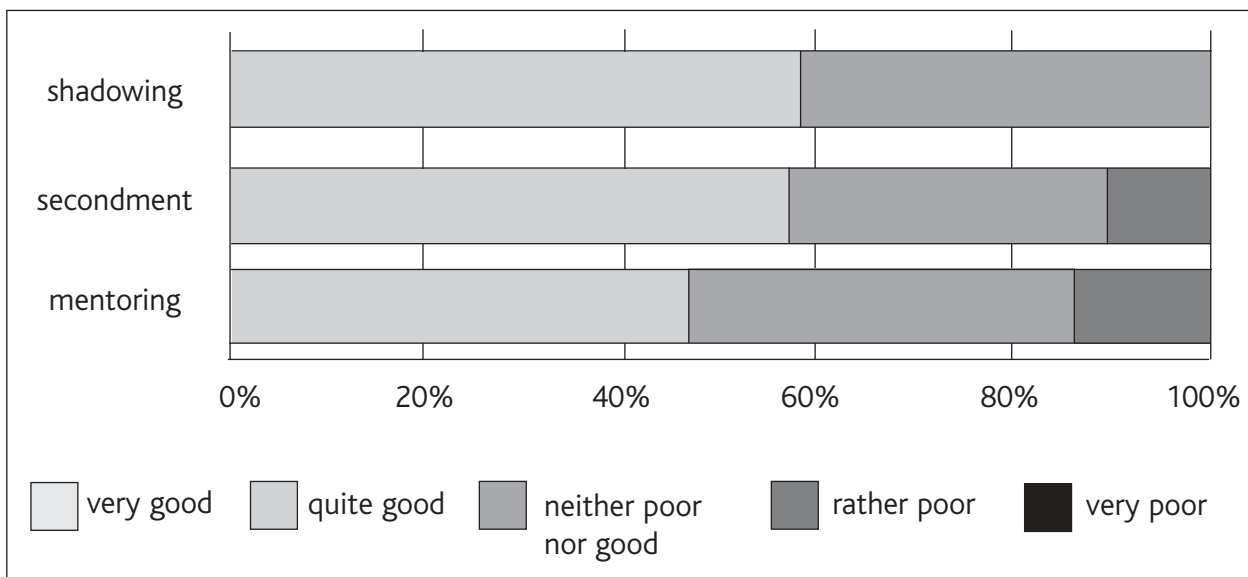
### 4.5.1 Initial application process

Ninety per cent of respondents rated the initial application process as "very good" (45 per cent) or "quite good", with the remaining 10 per cent (three respondents) rating it as "neither poor nor good". Among those adding comments, three described it as "straightforward", another said the whole process was "easy to complete", and two appreciated the fact that only relevant and appropriate information was required.

Figure 3 shows the full results for Question 3 of the Mentee Questionnaire (on the initial application process).



**Figure 3: Responses to Question 3 of the Mentee Questionnaire, "How did you rate the initial application process?"**



Response	Shadowing	Secondment	Mentoring
very good	0%	0%	0%
quite good	58%	56%	47%
neither poor nor good	42%	33%	41%
rather poor	0%	11%	12%
very poor	0%	0%	0%

#### 4.5.2 Briefing, induction or interview

There was a high degree of satisfaction with the initial briefing, induction or interview with the BLI Director among mentees, with 59 per cent rating this as "very good" and 24 per cent saying it was "quite good". Among the shadows and secondees, the "very good" rating was lower, at 33 per cent respectively, but for each of the schemes only one or two rated this as less than "quite good", and none rated it as "poor".

Several respondents praised the clear way in which aims and objectives were conveyed, or the clear and informative written and oral presentations. Another found it "encouraging" and liked the fact that there was a "range of

options given". There were two dissenting voices. One was from a participant who took up the mentoring scheme and the work-shadowing opportunity but did not take up the secondment opportunity:

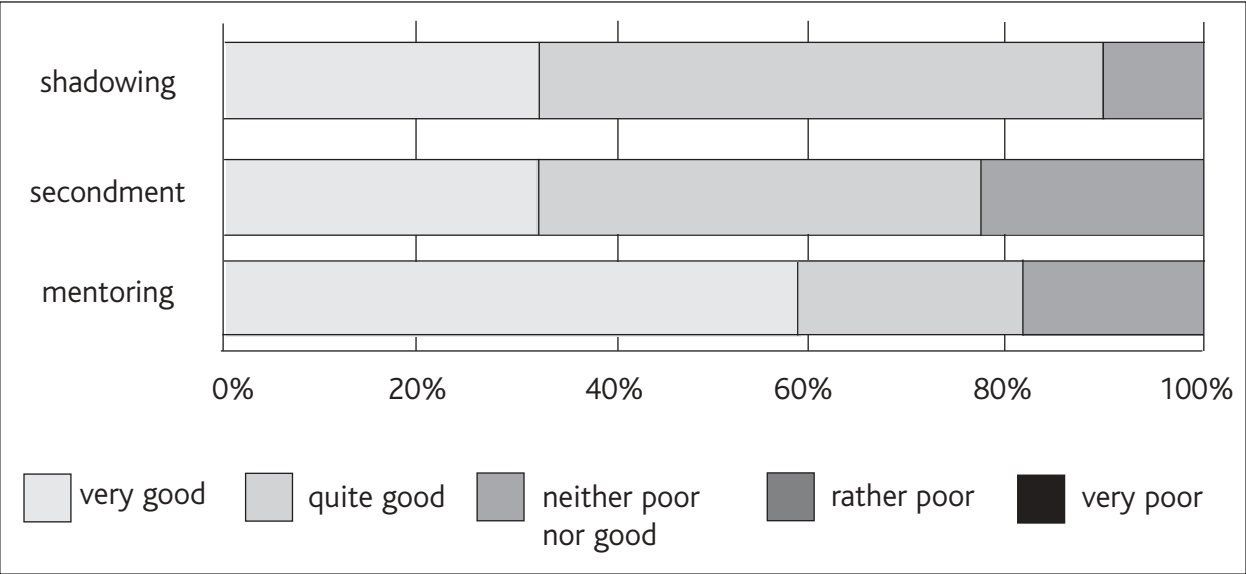
*It would have been beneficial to have more guidance on career progression and how I could use the secondments on offer to help, as it wasn't immediately apparent how they would help my development.*

The other was a secondee who felt that "a bit more time should have been taken to induct secondees to the BLI process and more notice should have been given before the scheduled interview".

Some shadows we interviewed also found the initial session a little confusing and wondered “was it a workshop or part of the application process? One suggested that the session should precede the application.

Figure 4 shows the full results for Question 4 of the Mentee Questionnaire (on the BLI briefing, induction or interview).

**Figure 4: Responses to Question 4 of the Mentee Questionnaire: “How did you rate the initial BLI briefing/induction/interview?”**



Response	Shadowing	Secondment	Mentoring
very good	33%	33%	59%
quite good	58%	44%	24%
neither poor nor good	8%	22%	18%
rather poor	0%	0%	0%
very poor	0%	0%	0%

One example of a good outcome from the interview process was a person who was interviewed for a secondment, which she did not get, but who was subsequently successful in an internal promotion. She attributed her success to the feedback she had gained from the BLI interview.

**4.6 The practicalities of the programme for Black participants**

Respondents were asked to comment on their experience of the practicalities of the

programme, that is, the management of the programme and the smoothness of the operation, rather than the actual content. Over half (54 per cent) of respondents said it was “very good” and a further 43 per cent said it was “quite good”. The only respondent to rate it “neither poor nor good” called for “closer monitoring of secondment and issues for host college and secondee”.

Two mentees (one of whom was also a shadow) commented that information sharing was “good” or “excellent”, while others praised the helpfulness of the BLI team. One mentee wrote:

*The team that managed the project were always available to provide guidance on related issues. The manner and approach was very professional and therefore raised the expectations of all parties involved. Indeed, they showed us a "can-do" attitude that will not be defeated against (any) odds.*

It appeared from analysis of the comments on the evaluation form that those who rated the practicalities as "quite good" had a particular issue that they wanted to report on, rather than the rating being a reflection on the whole process. For example, one shadow reported a hitch that had affected them in that they had been given the wrong directions to a venue by an Inspector. Another, work-

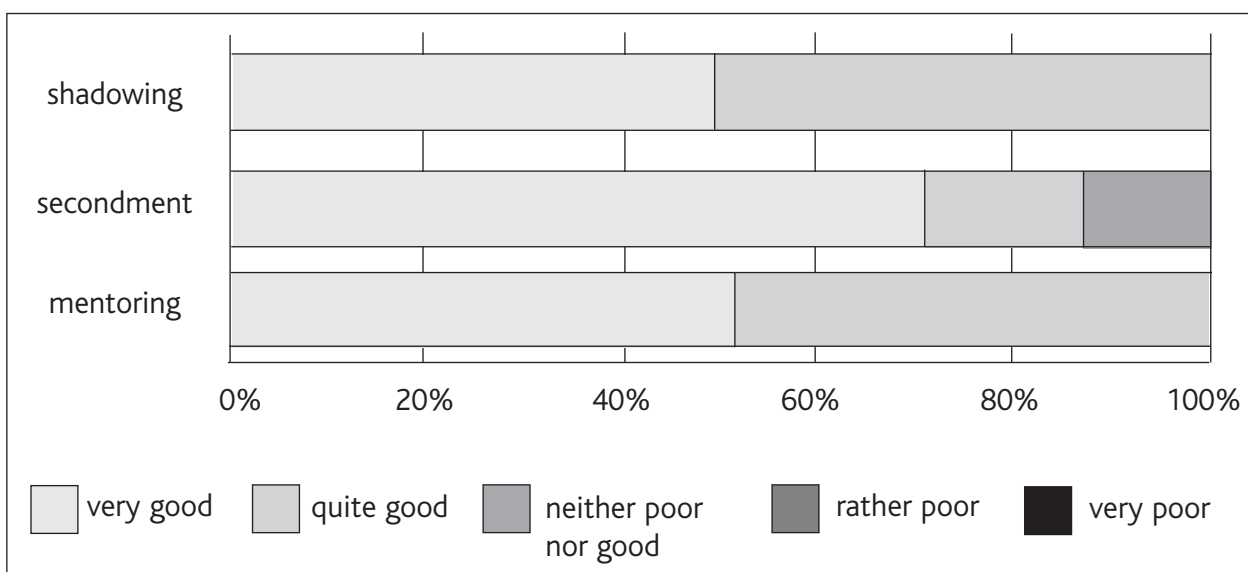
shadowing an Ofsted inspection, felt that:

*a lot of work is crammed into two weeks. Sometimes, a number of important issues are overlooked. We feel, however, that this is the nature and reality of the inspection process.*

Nonetheless, all the shadows rated their experience of the practicalities as "quite good" (50 per cent) or "very good" (50 per cent). A secondee we interviewed told us that her accommodation was not up to scratch – however, this was subsequently sorted out.

Figure 5 shows the full results for Question 6 of the Mentee Questionnaire (on the practicalities of the programme).

**Figure 5: Responses to Question 6 of the Mentee Questionnaire, "What was your experience of the practicalities of the programme?"**



Response	Shadowing	Secondment	Mentoring
very good	50%	67%	53%
quite good	50%	11%	47%
neither poor nor good	0%	11%	0%
rather poor	0%	0%	0%
very poor	0%	0%	0%
no response given		11%	

## Summary

- There was high satisfaction with the matching process from the Black participants' point of view, with mentees stating they were well matched for career goals and learning needs, and secondees and shadows finding the placement relating to their current job and experience. For the mentees there was an appreciation of choice of mentor.
- There was a pool of unmatched mentors, some of whom expressed disappointment. However it was always the case that this was likely to happen logistically, given the pilot project was small in scale and there needed to be a choice of mentors for the mentees. However, the expectations of mentors needs to be handled in any future programme, for example it could be more clearly emphasised that the acquisition of mentor skills is part of mentors' on-going development and they can also be used within their current job, as has indeed happened in some cases.
- The initial process for Black participants appears to work smoothly and there have been practical examples of where this has helped people in their career.
- Programme organisation was rated highly by Black participants with high praise for the Director and Coordinator. Some participants cited logistical and practical problems, leading them to rate the practicalities as "quite good", but in most cases these were sorted out by the BLI team.

## 5 The Experience for Black Participants

### 5.1 Introduction

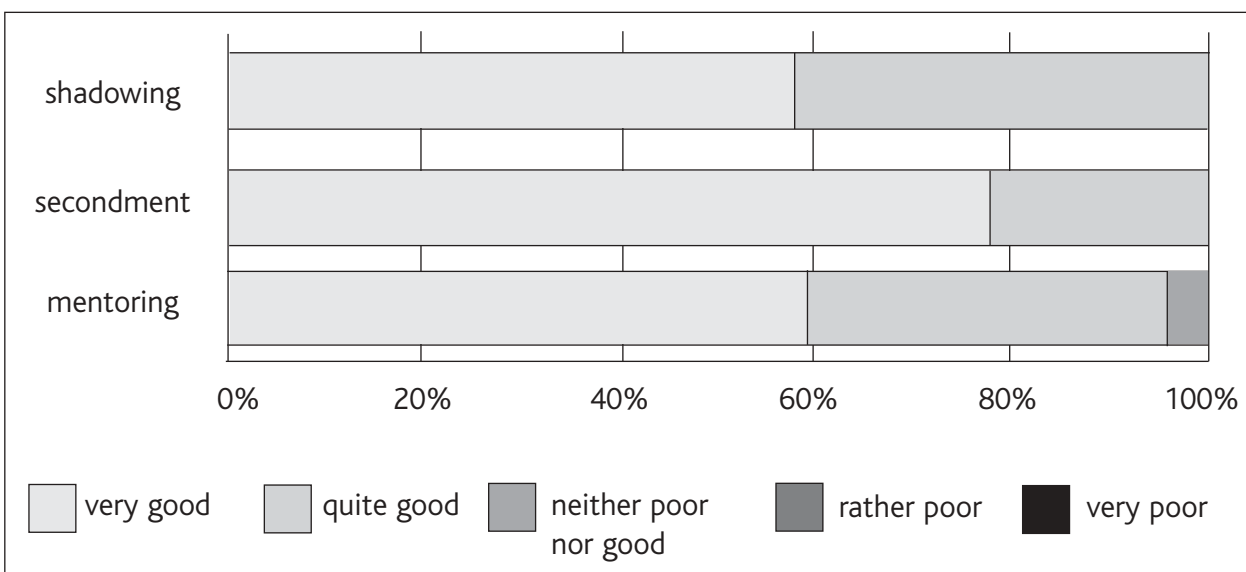
This section describes the experience of all components of the programme for Black participants and draws out key success factors. This section contains case studies describing the experiences of several of the BLI participants. The actual outcomes and impact are analysed in Section 8.

### 5.2 The learning experience

No fewer than 59 per cent of the respondents rated the BLI programme “very good” as a learning experience, with a further 38 per cent rating it as “quite good” (in fact the only respondent to rate it “neither poor nor good” was a mentee who had only just met their mentor and felt it was too early to comment). The highest proportion of “very good” ratings came from secondees (78 per cent).

Figure 6 shows the full results for Question 7 of the Mentee Questionnaire (rating the programme as a learning experience).

**Figure 6: Responses to Question 7 of the Mentee Questionnaire, “How did you rate the programme as a learning experience?”**



Response	Shadowing	Secondment	Mentoring
very good	58%	78%	59%
quite good	42%	22%	35%
neither poor nor good	0%	0%	6%
rather poor	0%	0%	0%
very poor	0%	0%	0%

Participants particularly appreciated the career workshops organised by the BLI and facilitated by Veredus Executive Resourcing and Tribal GWT. The BLI team organised three workshops, and evaluated these events. The workshops covered:

- career planning and goal-setting;
- applications;
- effective networking;
- dealing with assessment centres;
- interview techniques and support; and
- making the most of induction.

The vast majority of delegates found the sessions “very” or “quite” informative. This good experience was also fed back to us by people we contacted for our evaluation.

Also valued were the networking meetings between Black participants:

*I found that other mentees talked a lot of their experiences of being Black managers and they needed to share their experiences as some were quite isolated.*

### 5.3 Mentees

Comments from both the evaluation forms and the qualitative interviews were extremely positive. Respondents said that mentors were supporting the mentees specifically in career development and giving them wider support for working things out in their existing jobs. It provided a forum away from work to discuss and devise strategies for a variety of professional issues. One mentee who had just taken on a higher management position received specific suggestions on being assertive with team members, as well as talking about an improved work-life balance. Another talked about support at a difficult time in her career and said that her mentor had helped counter her fear of failure.

The specific nature of the coaching process was found to be particularly helpful as it

provided an explicit structure for setting tasks and deadlines.

In terms of career planning, mentors had helped with CVs, identified appropriate posts to apply for, talked mentees through potential interviews and helped them plan more strategically for the steps they should be taking. Mentors were able to help Black participants look at job profiles and then to apply for jobs.

One of the expectations of mentees was that the mentor would provide them with networking opportunities. One mentor mentioned that she wanted to undertake exchange visits between colleges and hoped to be able to introduce the mentee to staff in her college; however, this experience appeared to be unusual as contact between mentor and mentee was usually on a one-to-one basis. That said, mentees did say that they learned about the importance of making contacts with people with different experiences of work.

One important comment relates to the raised expectations of a mentee who told us that the college did not have a budget to facilitate training identified through the mentoring process. Even though her line manager was supportive, the college itself appeared not to have a strategy to invest in Black staff:

*There should have been greater contact between the BLI and the college to facilitate further opportunities. It is a feather in the cap of the college having got someone on the scheme but not much else besides – when it came to putting money where their mouth was, this is a different question.*

Success criteria for mentees would appear to be:

- well-matched partnership;
- Black and White mentors with an understanding of race equality and the experiences of Black staff within FE; and

- the ability of the releasing college to manage the expectations of the mentee.

## 5.4 Secondees

Most secondees we interviewed had a positive experience. They had a specific role to play within the host organisation, a specific project to undertake and an opportunity to do more strategic work than in their own college.

Support for secondees within the organisation was generally good, not only in terms of support on the particular projects but also some mentioned that they had received support and advice more generally on career development.

One secondee was particularly pleased that the secondment had provided her with the opportunity to shadow different workers in the organisation and to give her the time and space to find out more about policy and strategy in further education. Another had been able to go to high level principalship meetings, which demonstrated the college's faith in the secondee to be able to keep information confidential.

High praise for the whole experience is encapsulated in the comments of one secondee:

*I arrived with quite low confidence but found the induction process one of the best I have experienced. Although a little over whelming at first, all the elements have now become clear. I was impressed that they did not treat me as a secondee but as a full member of staff. They have provided me with help and time for my professional development. I found my post demanding and challenging, and in many ways a culture shock, but the college has always provided help when I asked.*

One secondee did not have a very positive experience and found the whole experience difficult. She felt that she had been thrown in at the deep end and not been inducted

properly. The post was new and she felt that it had not been tightly specified. Her line manager had not introduced her to other people in the college and she felt she had been left to drift.

What appeared to make the secondment experience effective was:

- thorough induction and agreement about what work the secondee was to take on;
- some element of work-shadowing;
- mentoring in the work placement;
- good relationship with the host and releasing colleges; and
- commitment from the releasing college to supporting and developing the secondee on their return.

## 5.5 Work-shadowing opportunities

Those who were work-shadowing the Ofsted inspections were very pleased with the experience and spoke of tangible facts and procedures that they had learned. They spoke of the variety of activities in which they had been able to participate – observations, interviewing, helping analyse data and being asked to contribute their own opinions. The participants we spoke to all mentioned the value of talking to members of the inspection team in the evenings. They were impressed by the level of commitment Ofsted and the inspection teams had to the BLI. They mentioned how well the team was briefed, and that they were made to feel welcome:

*The Inspector and the team made sure that I had demanding tasks to do and found the time to go through what I had done. I learned a lot from just watching how the Inspectors did their observations and conducted interviews. I saw it as my responsibility to take the initiative if I wanted to be included in meetings and*



*found that the team always responded positively to my requests. Although the Inspectors were very busy, they were well briefed and very good at imparting their knowledge. I gained a lot of confidence from finding that my evaluation of observations etc. was the same as theirs.*

*The college was also very welcoming and supportive of my participation. It's a very diverse city and college and I was the only Black person on the inspection team. I think that my presence was beneficial to the team*

*in that sense and through socialising with the team in the evenings, I felt I could broaden the team's minds.*

Those participants who were work-shadowing inspections were able to draw wider lessons from the experience:

*It enabled me to look at quality and standards within a broader perspective, rather than just restricted to preparation and delivery.*

### **Case Study 1: Philip – work-shadowing an Ofsted inspection**

Favney College<sup>2</sup>, the London college where Philip was a manager, was due to be inspected shortly. So he and the Principal welcomed the opportunity for Philip to shadow an Ofsted Inspector for a week during the inspection of Brackshire College.

Philip saw that this was also a chance to "develop his own skill set". Mary, the Ofsted Inspector, herself felt that one of the major benefits for Philip would lie in "identifying the skills that Inspectors use, and applying a self-assessment to his own skills".

Don, the Principal of Favney College, was aware of the need to give Black staff a broader range of experiences: "You can train as much as you want, but it's understanding the culture and politics that matters. A lot of decision-making is about shared values: if you're not from that group, it's difficult. That's why work-shadowing is really useful."

Philip was well prepared before the work-shadowing week began. He had a briefing paper explaining his role. When he received a pack of information about Brackshire College similar to those received by the Inspectors, Mary advised him how to approach the pack and what to focus on. Philip felt that Mary was "excellent" – he knew exactly what he had to do before he turned up.

With the positive cooperation of Brackshire College, Mary managed to ensure Philip had the widest range of experiences possible in his position as a non-Inspector: attending meetings, observing lessons, analysing evidence. His many helpful discussions with Mary were also important. He realised he needed to improve his report-writing skills and his sensitivity. He has since attended report-writing courses on his own initiative.

On his first day back at Favney College, Philip reported his experience to Don, who encouraged him to make a presentation about it to the Senior Management Team – a real boost to Philip's confidence and credibility, as well as being helpful to the college.

All the parties involved in the work-shadowing experience got something out of it. Mary, the Inspector, found Philip's questions and contributions brought a fresh perspective. Already actively involved in equality issues, she nonetheless gained further understanding of the experience of Black colleagues.



**Case Study 1: Philip – work-shadowing an Ofsted inspection (continued)**

Both Favney College and Brackshire College were proud to be seen supporting this positive equality initiative.

Philip gained enormous confidence from the experience. "I came back so empowered, it was incredible. I think only work-shadowing could give that experience". He successfully applied for a new senior job in another organisation. Don recognises that this was a sensible step for Philip.

Philip himself has now introduced work-shadowing as part of the workforce development in his present job – even among the catering staff! And the practical knowledge and skills he acquired are constantly in use: "Most things I do now are based on the *Common Inspection Framework* (ALI/Ofsted, 2001). The point is not just about (passing an) inspection, but about continuous improvement. We are inspection-ready; it's not an event".

We also interviewed three participants who were work-shadowing local LSCs. Two found that the experience was valuable. One commented that an important part of the experience was the briefings and debriefings provided by the host at the beginning and end of each day. This person had shadowed the Executive Director (Case Study 2 below) for a week when he had a busy schedule of internal and external meetings, the latter being with colleges as well as a regional level meeting. These various meetings covered a broad range of topics, all of which the participant found extremely useful. He felt able to contribute to some of the meetings where he felt it appropriate to do so, and these contributions were welcomed.

The other participants had a mix of people to shadow: whereas one participant found that the range of meetings and people helped boost her confidence, the other found that the quality of time with individuals varied and there was often duplication of information. The staff appeared busy with their own jobs and the participant found she had empty time on her hands.

### **Case Study 2: Mwera – work-shadowing the Executive Director of a local LSC**

Mwera hoped that the work-shadowing experience would provide him with skills and information but he didn't know exactly what kind until he started. He had chosen to shadow Jim, the Executive Director of LSC Leeshire, set in a predominantly rural region, for a week.

There was no initial preparation work to do, but Mwera found that Jim had chosen a week that was likely to be a fruitful one, as he knew that a Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting was scheduled as well as two different college SMT meetings. Jim hoped that he was able to show how his own SMT was looking at organising changes and also how he himself worked on a one-to-one basis with his own staff. Through a happy accident of timing, further areas were illuminated: how his organisation works regionally, and how it responds to a bolt from the blue – specifically, a budget shortfall that threw up issues of contingency planning.

Mwera shadowed most of Jim's work activities, including attending a Chamber of Commerce dinner one evening. Only two meetings were felt to be too confidential to share with Mwera but Jim ensured that Mwera was able to attend a relevant workshop that was taking place at the same time.

Mwera found he was able to participate, not just to observe; in fact he was encouraged to do so. Sometimes where he felt issues were new to him, he refrained from comment, but in meetings on curriculum issues, for example, he regarded himself as an equal participant. He found Jim to be an exemplary host. Not only did he brief Mwera before each meeting, but they also had post-meeting discussions evaluating what had been said. Mwera found what Jim said was clear and that he did all he could to give a clear picture.

Jim also got a lot out of the week: "Mwera is an extraordinarily clever man with a very interesting background, career and outlook on life. He would ask questions that were on the face of it simple, but actually were quite complicated, and everyone benefited from this."

By participating in the work-shadowing, Mwera feels he has enhanced his skills in the area of management duties and responsibilities, as well as having gained knowledge of the LSC's roles and its expectations. He also found it helpful to observe Jim's own participative and consultative leadership style. Mwera says he will definitely put these skills into practice when he has team meetings.

Mwera has now been given the opportunity to act as a Curriculum Manager at his own college. He says, "As a result of the BLI programme, I gained more confidence in managing people. I hope to continue to be a part of this initiative to enhance my understanding and knowledge of management duties and responsibilities."

His knowledge of the LSC has already proved useful: in one case where his own college was not meeting certain targets, Mwera was able to benchmark his college against the situation in Leeshire and see the problem from a national perspective.

Success criteria for work-shadowing appear to be:

- well-worked out programme which is clearly related to the learning needs of the participant;
- an opportunity for the participant to contribute positively; and
- commitment on the part of the releasing college to using the shadow's newly acquired skills and experience.

### **Summary**

- There was a high degree of satisfaction with the experience on all components of the BLI, with secondees being more likely to rate the experience highly. Work-shadowing was also rated highly, although there was one criticism about the shadow host not being as well prepared as they might be.
- There could be more opportunities for the receiving and host colleges to net work and share experiences, and we raise this issue in our recommendations in Section 9.

## 6 The Experience for Mentors and Institutions

### 6.1 Introduction

Mentors and institutions threw light on their own experiences of the process, and this section reports on their comments.

### 6.2 The mentor training

The mentor training was highly rated, both by mentors we interviewed and the 37 who responded to our evaluation forms. Participants found learning about coaching skills very valuable and the interactive nature of the course was highly praised.

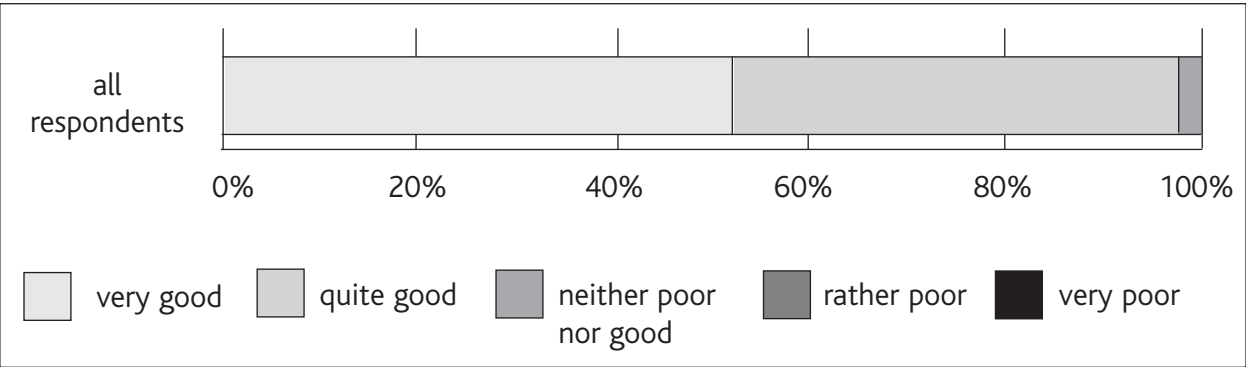
Fifty-one per cent of respondents to the evaluation forms rated the mentor training as “very good”, with a further 46 per cent rating it as “quite good”. There was much praise for the facilitator or trainer, who was described as “good”, “excellent”, “effective”, “experienced”, “knowledgeable about mentoring” and “knowledgeable about race issues”.

Most had praise, too, for the way the training was conducted, with a “positive atmosphere” and an “open and participative approach”. Two respondents liked the balance of activities: “professional, sensible – neither too much theory nor too much role-playing”, but one found the role-play less useful than the background to mentoring. Also appreciated were the “highly competent trainer and productive use of group members”, experience in supporting skills development” and the fact that the “small group allowed for in-depth discussions, lots of role-play practice and time for reflection”.

The training was also rated highly for its effectiveness – it “met objectives”, “addressed the issues we needed”, “gave insight into issues for Black and minority ethnic staff”. Some found that it provided them with transferable skills and taught them things about themselves, but above all it was confidence-building.

Figure 7 gives the full results for Question 2 of the Mentor Questionnaire (rating mentoring overall).

**Figure 7: Responses to Question 2 of the Mentor Questionnaire, “How did you rate the mentor training overall?”**



Response	Matched mentors
very good	51%
quite good	46%
neither poor nor good	3%
rather poor	0%
very poor	0%

### 6.3 The mentoring experience

The feedback on the experience from mentors responding to the evaluation forms and interviews was in general very positive, with few exceptions. Forty-one per cent of the "matched" respondents rated their overall experience of being a mentor "very good", with a further 50 per cent saying it was "quite good". The remaining "matched" respondents were still at an early stage in the mentoring relationship.

A positive aspect of the experience that respondents mentioned frequently was that it was good to make a difference and see the benefits to the mentee. Others described the experience as enjoyable and uplifting or spoke about what they had learned from the mentee:

*(It was) good to hear of the mentee's experience. A pleasure to listen and to be able to respond in a helpful way.*

An "unmatched" respondent who has mentored three staff internally wrote:

*It has been a very positive experience and provided me with new skills to help develop individuals.*

Time was a major factor in the experience. One respondent reported "some difficulties on available time" and another found the experience generally positive, other than the problem of the mentee's time management. The need to address this could be seen in a positive light, as one respondent comments:

*(It was) good to have "formal" recognition of undertaking the task as (it) justified taking time out to do it.*

Another factor that could sour the experience is unrealistic expectations. One respondent wrote:

*I think it is important that mentees are given an initial briefing which is pragmatic and realistic when looking at the time it takes to*

*achieve promotion, whether in their current institution or in another college.*

Among the other comments on the mentoring experience, three throw further light on what made it enjoyable or worthwhile:

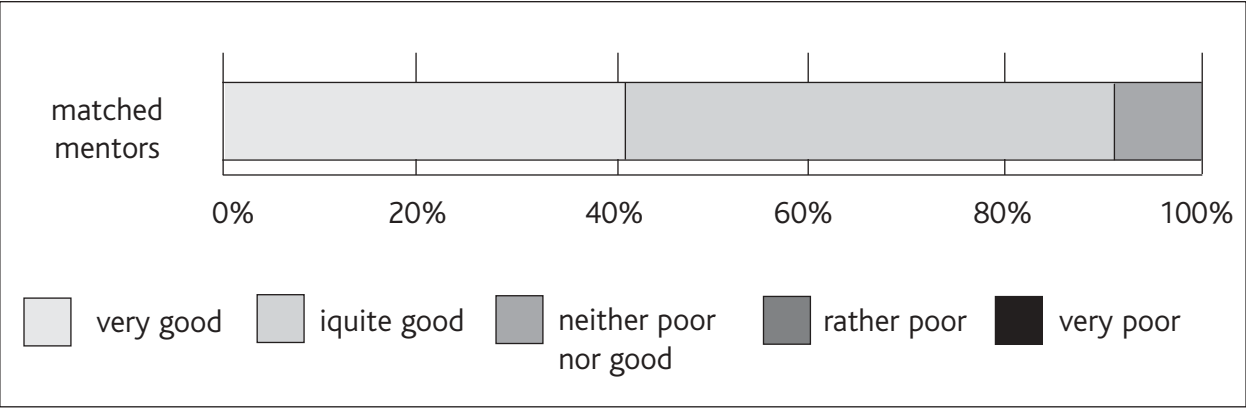
*A very open process with the mentee and a process where the feedback from the mentee has been good. The mentee has been responsive to ideas and willing to look at key issues and open to learn from the experience.*

*I have enjoyed meeting and supporting my mentee and have found the experience rewarding and emotionally draining. I suppose there is always this nagging fear in the back of your mind that you may be encouraging inappropriate actions on the part of the mentee. However, these are dispelled when you get feedback from the mentee at the next meeting to discuss actions taken and their results.*

*I have found the experience to be very valuable. We have struck up a very positive relationship which, I hope, will extend beyond the life of this particular project. I was very pleased to see that my mentee has now achieved an internal promotion within his current college. He feels that the mentoring he received has been a major factor in achieving this objective, particularly in terms of enabling him to have a clearer focus on his life goals and sparking his motivation.*

Figure 8 gives the full results for Question 5 of the Mentor Questionnaire (on the overall experience of being a mentor).

**Figure 8: Responses to Question 5 of the Mentor Questionnaire, “What was your overall experience of being a mentor?”**



Response	Matched mentors
very good	41%
quite good	50%
neither good nor poor	9%
rather poor	0%
very poor	0%

**Case Study 3: Jackie - benefiting from the mentor experience**

“I thought that Austley College could benefit from the mentoring relationship by gaining a fresh perspective on the way we do things here” said Jackie, mentor to Sushila. “I’d seen how beneficial such relationships can be and I knew the relationship could make a difference, to me, to my mentee and to the college.”

Jackie wanted to develop cross-college relationships, particularly to see the difference between managing a sixth form college like Sushila’s and Austley College’s A-level department. She also knew that the whole college would benefit from the fact that other Black managers at Austley would get to know of the BLI and see that Austley College is committed to its Black staff.

The mentor course proved very beneficial, especially the focus on coaching an individual by encouraging the mentee to define and undertake specific actions within a certain timescale. The course was very practical and interactive and gave her confidence to use the new coaching skills. Jackie found the coaching model gave her a different perspective on management, one that is less focused on the management culture of competition and targets, and one that is more person-centred and which emphasises the quality of teaching and learning. “There is a role that mentoring can play to create an awareness that leadership

**Case Study 3: Jackie - benefiting from the mentor experience (continued)**

skills are not just about financial skills and measurable student achievement, but also about a focus on students and learning.”

For Jackie, the whole relationship has made her think twice about how she manages individual members of her team and will make her more sensitive about the demands she places on them. Using a coaching model will help Jackie and her team to set clear aims and actions which can be realistically achieved.

## 6.4 Support offered by the BLI team

Some respondents to our evaluation form reported that they didn’t need, or didn’t have time, to use the support available from the BLI team.

However, most respondents had used material provided by the BLI team, with the vast majority rating it good or very good. Some gave details of which written materials they found useful:

*I found the initial materials and generic agreement document useful in that it helped us to set boundaries and targets at a time when we did not know each other.*

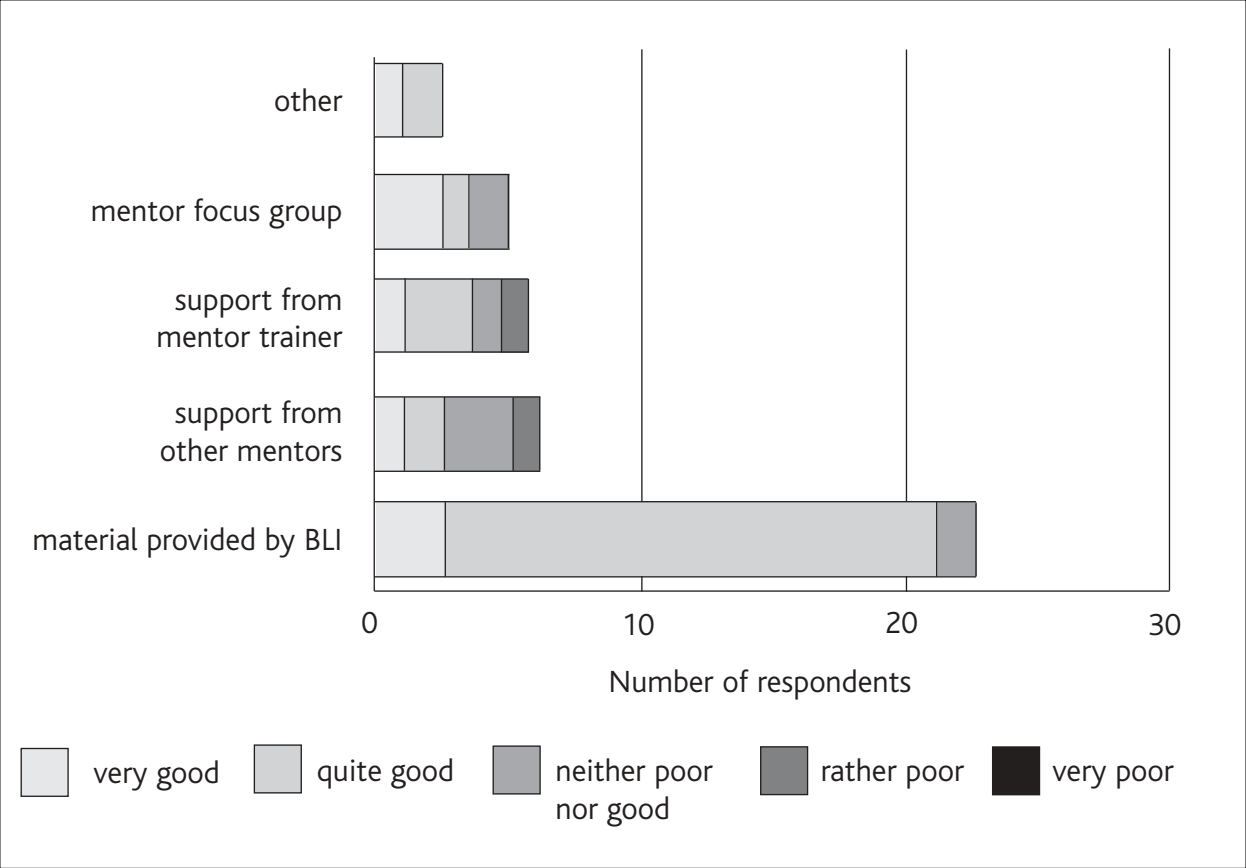
Take-up of other means of support was comparatively low. Those who used email or telephone support from the mentor generally found it good. For example, one respondent reported finding “the telephone support inspiring (and) very helpful for me and my mentee.”

Only six respondents had used the mentor focus group, with ratings ranging from “very good” to “neither good nor bad”. Geography may have played its part in this, with one (“unmatched”) respondent saying there was good support but adding that “Birmingham is not easy to get to”.

Seven respondents had used support from other mentors, but the ratings for this type of support were lower than other types.

Figure 9 shows the full results for Question 6 of the Mentor Questionnaire (on the use of support from the BLI team).

**Figure 9: Responses to Question 6 of the Mentor Questionnaire, “Have you used any of these means of support and how did you rate it?”**



Response	Other	Mentor focus group	Support (mentor trainer)	Support (other mentors)	BLI material
very good	1	3	1	1	7
quite good	2	1	5	2	15
neither poor nor good	0	2	1	3	2
rather poor	0	0	0	1	0
very poor	0	0	1	0	0



## 6.5 Experience of institutions providing secondments

The experience of colleges providing secondments varied. Some provided new short-term opportunities that were project orientated, while others provided secondments that were actual posts that would be filled in the future. All but one of our interviewees were very satisfied with the experience and felt that the secondee had been well matched and fitted into the culture of the organisation and had brought in valuable skills and experience. We discuss the benefits brought to the institutions in Section 8.

However, colleges had ideas on how the secondment process could be improved. Those suggestions are summarised as follows.

- Induction by the college should be thorough and should include the college giving some background to other colleagues about why the secondee is there and the aims of the BLi

- There should be a briefing for line managers by the BLI and they should participate in the mentor training. They would find both the concepts and the input on barriers that Black staff face useful.
- Continuing professional development should be encouraged – for example one college gave the secondee a mock interview.
- There should be freedom within the secondment to do development work, more strategic work or to take an opportunity to work-shadow. This may mean limiting the workload in the secondment itself.

However, in most cases there appeared to be little liaison between the seconding and releasing college. In Case Study 4, the fact that all parties involved in the secondment knew each other was a factor in the success of the secondment.

### Case Study 4: Barrat's College – providing a secondment

For Peter, a newly appointed Principal of a college with a low representation of Black staff, participating in the BLI was an exciting challenge. It would demonstrate the college's commitment to change.

Peter had worked with Amir previously and also knew the Principal of Amir's college, so there was trust and confidence between the three that helped to make the relationship work well. What also made the secondment successful was the fact that Amir worked on a project – a communications strategy – that was common to both colleges. Barrat's College was moving from a multi-site college to one site and the communications strategy was very important. Amir was able to bring ideas and information from his own college to develop the strategy. For example, he was able to use a marketing management technique he'd learned and apply it to Barrat's situation.

Amir also identified the intangible benefits. He believed he had raised the profile of Black staff in a college that had no senior Black staff: "It was good for other senior staff to see a Black person delivering."

For Peter, the whole experience will have a lasting impact: "It's helped me question and review my own practice."

## 6.6 Experience of institutions providing work-shadowing opportunities

Ofsted Inspectors found the experience positive and commented on the extensive written guidance from the BLI team. They found that the BLI participants were well prepared for the experience, having received a thorough briefing from the BLI team and from the inspecting team. The Ofsted

Inspectors told us that they had ensured that the participants could be involved in as many of the activities as possible (apart from the quality assurance procedure). Inspectors also confirmed that colleges had been well briefed and found the experience positive.

Local LSCs were briefed by the BLI team on their role and praised the written notes. One member of LSC staff said he had identified a busy week so that the participant could have a good range of experience.

### Case Study 5: Afshan – bringing back her experience into her college

For Afshan from Aveham College, work-shadowing an Inspector during an Ofsted inspection was bound to bring specific benefits. In the event, the effects were much wider.

Both Afshan and her Principal were aware that gaining an understanding of the *Common Inspection Framework* (ALI/Ofsted, 2001) and process would be invaluable ahead of an inspection at their own college. But her Principal also saw this as a development opportunity for Afshan, and important for other staff, as she is an important role model for other female and Black staff within the college.

It was a busy time: the Inspector, Bella, and her team made sure Afshan had demanding tasks to do and found the time to go through what she had done with her. She learned a lot from just watching how the Inspectors did their observations and conducted interviews, but found that the inspection team always responded positively to her requests to be included in their meetings. She observed lessons, took notes and graded lessons alongside the “real” Inspector, comparing grades with them afterwards. She gained a lot of confidence from finding that her evaluation of observations was the same as theirs.

Returning to Aveham College, Afshan took the key role in her own college’s inspection. She was due to take this role anyway, but without the work-shadowing, she might not have been as confident with her decisions. As it was, she returned being clear about the self-assessment process and what direction the college needed to go in. She was able to train Aveham College staff much more effectively.

Aveham College’s inspection went well and the college recognised that Afshan had done a very good job. She has gained a lot of trust and credibility from the staff, and is seen as a key member of the Senior Management Team. This is an important milestone for a college where many of the staff and governors had little or no experience of working with anyone from a Black background.

Afshan can point to several ways in which the experience helped her directly: presentation skills, analysing data, communication skills and, above all, confidence, whether she is handling different groups of people or knowing what she can and cannot say in different situations.

Her career aspirations, too, have been strengthened – she is now expecting to aim for a Principal’s job in three or four years, instead of seven or eight.

**Case Study 5: Afshan – bringing back her experience into her college (continued)**

Why did this placement work so well? As well as the willingness of the inspected college and the Inspectors to allow Afshan open access, the commitment and cooperation of all sides was a key factor. Then there was the “first class” Inspectorate host, the support and guidance of the BLI team, and the timing – not long before Aveham’s own inspection - which made it especially relevant.

**6.7 Experience of releasing colleges**

In general it appeared to us, admittedly through only the few qualitative interviews we undertook, that colleges releasing secondees had done relatively little to ensure that the secondee was still in contact with the work of the college and little to prepare for the participant’s return to the workplace. Colleges would have appreciated more ongoing formal meetings with the secondee. Where this differed was when the secondments were short term or part time.

Cover was a problem for some colleges. Some found this particularly difficult and in some cases this meant a delay in the secondment going ahead, while in other colleges cover was provided on an “acting up” (temporary promotion) basis. One exception was mentioned when the participant himself provided teaching materials for the cover, which worked well.

Several colleges in our early set of interviews acknowledged that the paper procedures took time – sometimes a few months. They said that unless this is streamlined, it might discourage other colleges from participating. However, we noticed a considerable difference in responses from our second set of interviews with colleges, which said that the procedures for arranging release for secondment were well thought out.

Some colleges mentioned that in retrospect they would have liked to have had a more proactive relationship with the receiving college and were aware that other colleges

did have a more effective partner relationship. This they saw as a developing model that they would want to build up if they became involved in any future secondment arrangement.

**Summary**

- There was high praise for the mentor training, its interactive process and its effectiveness. This appeared to be a very successful strand of the BLI.
- The quality of the mentoring relationship was also well received. It not only benefited the mentee, but also provided mentors with new skills that they could use in their own college to develop individuals. However, some respondents commented on the lack of time both they and the mentee had.
- Of the support used from the BLI team, by far the most common was the written material. Although take up of other forms of support was relatively low, those that did use it found it useful.
- It would appear that key success factors for the mentor include: effective training; the ability to make time to reflect on the relationship; and being matched with people who want to grow and develop.
- For those providing secondment places, the experience was generally good but some had suggestions for improvement, including offering the secondees an opportunity to work-

shadow colleagues and encouragement for the secondee's continuing professional development.

- Especially important was the suggestion that the secondee's line manager should have the opportunity to participate in the mentor training.
- Relatively little had been done to ensure that secondees remained in contact with the releasing colleges and we believe that there needs to be a more proactive relationship between the secondee and both the host and home colleges.
- The Ofsted Inspectors were very pleased with the way the whole work-shadowing experience had been organised.
- Local LSCs involved in work-shadowing said the whole experience had gone well. However, the shadows themselves differed slightly in their opinions. Key factors for success included a full and well-organised programme that was beneficial to the learner.

## 7 Overcoming Barriers

### 7.1 Introduction

This section raises some issues about how the BLI has helped Black participants overcome barriers to career progression, and the importance of a positive action programme. It also looks at how mentors reacted to the input on cultural differences on the training programme.

### 7.2 Addressing barriers

In our interviews, we asked Black participants in the programme whether they felt they had faced any issues or barriers as a Black manager in their career and if so whether the programme had helped them to address this better.

#### 7.2.1 Attitude to barriers

Some, but not all, participants identified barriers they faced in their career. Participants said it was not about overt and direct discrimination and was hard to pin down. One said that it seemed to relate to other people's perception of one's skills set, and several mentioned that they always feel that they have to prove themselves. However, most showed a resilience to discrimination and a will to overcome barriers:

*I don't like to hang on to barriers. I know I have a job to do and get on and do this. This is even though I have experienced discrimination such as accusation and assumptions that I have only got a job because I am Black.*

#### 7.2.2 Use of Black mentors

Whereas most mentees were open to both Black and White mentoring relationships, those with Black mentors were more likely to raise either general issues or specific problems relating to racism and discrimination with their mentors, and said this had been beneficial:

*You don't have to have a Black mentor all the time but it was important in our relationship. My mentor's own experience of race and racism was important in helping me understand my situation. An understanding of racism, discrimination and internalisation on the part of the mentor is important in helping Black staff to make sense of who they are and how to progress within mainstream organisations.*

One mentioned that because she lived in a county with few Black residents and professionals, she was quite isolated, with a sense of having no network to rely on. She felt that she is not kept abreast of developments in the sector regarding race equality and diversity issues. It seemed that her line manager was not taking the issues seriously – issues were ignored, overlooked or dismissed as not being an issue. For this mentee, it was even more important to foster awareness in such an environment. With her mentor, she has been able to discuss the barriers facing her as Black manager and staff member, at the same time as looking at her personal situation and career progression. Her mentor has asked her to consider the barriers she faces and to look at how they could be addressed.

The Black mentors we interviewed corroborated the comments of the Black mentees. Black mentors mentioned that they had enhanced the mentee's understanding of race issues.

*The mentee had not raised the fact that she might experience discrimination as a Black person. But I have enabled her to unpack some of the issues she was facing and enabled her to challenge them in a positive way. For example, another member of staff had been given an opportunity to develop a strategic piece of work, although originally the Director had suggested that it might be suitable for the mentee. The mentee took this problem to me and I was able to give her some suggestions. The mentee approached the Director face to face and reminded her of the previous*

*conversation. In fact the other colleague had been feeling somewhat unconfident about tackling the task and the mentee and the colleague ended up doing the task together.*

This raises the question of when it might be important to match a Black mentor to a Black mentee. One mentor told us of such a discussion on her mentor training. Her conclusion was that for someone new to management, it was important that the mentor be Black, so that they could share strategies on being Black in a White environment. But for more senior staff, she thought it would be appropriate to have a White Principal as mentor.

### **7.3 Awareness of cultural differences**

One of the expected outcomes of the BLI was to raise mentors' awareness of the experiences of Black staff. The mentor training therefore included a focus on cultural differences and raising the awareness and confidence of mentors to address the barriers that mentees might bring up. Our evaluation form for mentors included a question on how well they rated the focus in training on cultural differences.

Opinion was divided on this. It seemed to be more polarised among the White respondents, with a larger proportion of both very favourable and lukewarm or negative ratings. Of the two White respondents who found it "not very helpful", one commented, "there was very little input on cultural differences", while the other wrote, "I don't think it focused enough on cultural differences – it was more general". The reservations of those with "no opinion" also seemed to be due to feeling that "perhaps more emphasis could have been given to (cultural differences)".

At the other extreme, a White respondent rated it very helpful because "it opened my eyes to what my colleagues from ethnic minorities face every day". Another said:

*Being white, I had a slight nervousness in the beginning that I might be seen as inexperienced and naïve regarding the experience of Black staff - despite working in a college with a very high proportion of Black staff and managers. I needed that agenda to be up front. It was treated sensibly and sensitively.*

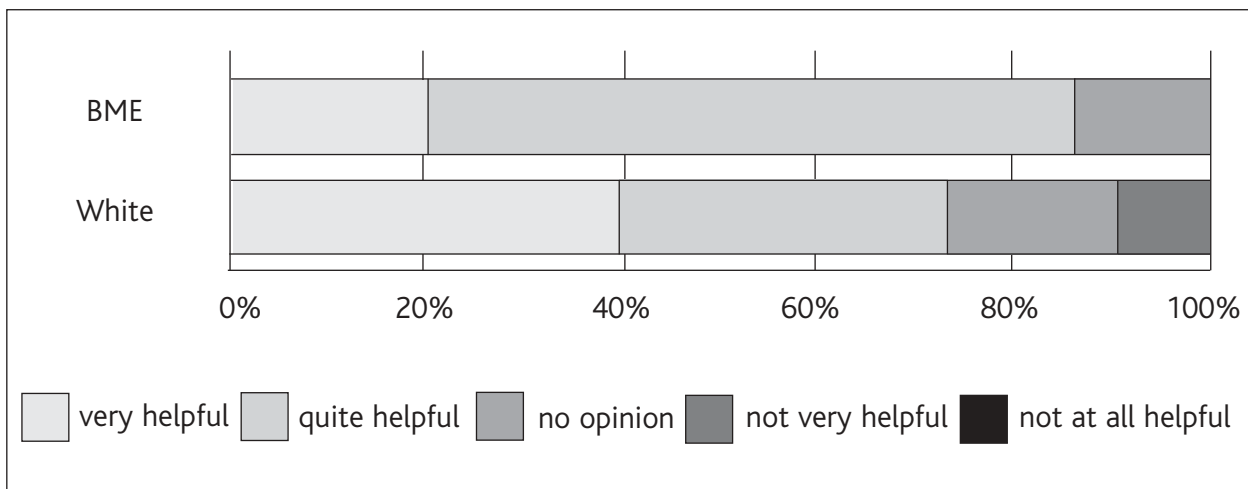
This was not the only respondent to find that the matter was handled "professionally and sensitively". Another respondent liked the way the training was "contextualised by the trainer and participants". The fact that the matter needed to be aired was evidenced by those who wrote that it was a "rare opportunity to consider the experience and context for Black staff without appearing indulgent" or that it was "helpful to explore and think about the issues", or even that "you think that you know about cultural differences from different sources but it was refreshing to hear about it from other perspectives".

From these responses, it seems that in general, as one Black respondent put it, "it was good input, particularly for the White participants". But it is possible, judging from the less favourable comments, that the examination of cultural differences was treated less thoroughly in some groups than in others.

Figure 10 gives the full results for Question 3 of the Mentor Questionnaire (on the focus on cultural differences).



**Figure 10: Responses to Questions 3, “How did you rate the focus on cultural differences?”**



	Black and minority ethnic	White
very helpful	21%	39%
quite helpful	64%	35%
no opinion	14%	17%
not very helpful	0%	9%
not at all helpful	0%	0%

## 7.4 Supportive colleges

A number of Black participants said that their line managers were not very supportive of their aspirations to further their career and did not show much interest in the BLI. One participant had been having difficulties with her colleagues. Her Principal had been sympathetic, but had lacked the confidence to address the issue. The respondent felt that the BLI should in the future consider developing practical tools to address issues that remain fundamental barriers to the progression of Black staff. One suggested that a future role for the BLI could be to develop a legal framework that would support Black staff in dispute with their employers, perhaps setting up a partnership arrangement with the BLI and the NBM. However, this may not address some of the more subtle aspects of discrimination.

## 7.5 A Black initiative

Some respondents we interviewed or spoke to within a mentee focus group said that some of their colleagues, both Black and White, felt the BLI did not have credibility because it is aimed at Black people. These colleagues could not see the need for what they considered “special treatment”. There were cases where participation in the BLI engendered resentment among colleagues.

Several people mentioned that the BLI was worth doing but that there was a need to persuade colleges of the benefits to their Black staff. Some said that colleges needed to be better prepared to take on the implications of taking part in positive action schemes, since not all colleagues fully appreciate the principles of positive action and mentoring

for Black staff. One shadow recognised that positive action is a delicate issue:

*Sometimes you feel you're there(only) because the initiative is there. I know that initiatives like this can cause a bit of resentment and this puts pressure on me to perform because any mistakes will get amplified.*

### 7.5.1 Advantages

We were interested in the Black participants' views of a positive action programme such as the BLI, so our evaluation form included a question on whether they would have participated in the BLI had it not been an initiative specifically for Black managers. Forty-six per cent of those who gave an opinion replied that they would, some commenting that they were "interested in any staff development". One wrote, "we need to be visible across all cultures as well as supporting specific initiatives". Even among the 46 per cent who replied that they would, a number commented on the advantages that an exclusively Black programme brought; they felt "more comfortable", it provided excellent role-models and it helped them build networks.

These three advantages were also cited by some of the 54 per cent who replied that they would not have participated if it had not been specifically for Black managers. Four respondents felt that they might not have been told about the BLI by their Principal or workplace had it not been a Black initiative:

*My colleagues in previous institutions I have worked in have attended staff training and I was not given the opportunity to participate. But because the initiative says Black, I could not be ignored or passed over.*

Four other respondents said they had either been frustrated by their inability to get on other courses in the past or had lacked the confidence to apply for a non-specific course. The ability to raise issues in a specifically Black forum was raised:

*An open-access leadership course might not have addressed the issues that Black managers tend to be concerned about.*

## 7.6 Strategic colleges

Colleges and other participating institutions tended on the whole to see the BLI as a form of personal development for staff without seeing that it could have an impact on the culture of the organisation as a whole. For example, most of the work-shadowing placement providers failed to see the BLI as in any way benefiting them, not even seeing a Black role model in a largely White institution as being an overt benefit.

Several colleges releasing people on secondment expressed a concern that progression routes might not be available to returning secondees, leading to their frustration at not being able to use their experience.

Another point raised by Black participants returning to their home colleges after a secondment was the reaction of colleagues to their participation. We heard of cases where colleagues expressed a kind of resentment and did not understand the importance of positive action. Colleges need to impart a greater awareness of the need for positive action in this respect.

Participation in the BLI must be a strategic decision on the part of the college. We feel that colleges must see participation in the BLI as both part of their race equality action plans and their leadership development plans, rather than seeing it solely as a national positive action programme for the benefit of Black individuals. There is a danger that participants will be seen on their return as a representative of Black issues, rather than a leader who has something to contribute to the development of the college. This means that the learning experience of participants must be used by releasing colleges. Colleges need to take ownership of the issues raised once the participant returns.



### 7.6.1 Good practice

There were examples of good practice where colleges had built in opportunities for the secondee on their return. In Case Study 6, some of the ingredients for success are identified, but the sector needs to see more examples of this and a solid evidence base built up to set precedents for colleges.

#### **Case Study 6: Cowan College – benefiting from the return of a secondee**

Cowan College, a large inner-city college, knows the benefits of positive action at first hand. It regards itself as a big player in the city and a major contributor to the creation of a skilled and trained workforce. This includes investing in its own staff as well as its students. "What we want is a workforce that can generate confident students," says Jill, the Vice-Principal. She continues, "We also know how taking part actively in initiatives such as (the BLI) can contribute to our own succession planning. We've had several of our Black staff take part in the Senior Leadership Programme and seen how they've developed."

One of the things that encouraged the college to take part was the framework and support offered by the BLI, especially regarding the contractual arrangements for the secondee, which would have been hard for the college to organise.

The experience has been beneficial for both the secondee and the college. "The change in Ann has been noticeable. Her confidence and self-esteem have increased," says Jill. The college was able to secure Ann a temporary promotion on her return from the secondment. She has also been able to apply some of her skills and act as a mentor to other managers who want to look at issues such as student retention.

Ann herself identified a number of specific systems she had learned from her secondment that she could pass on to Cowan College. She wants to suggest improvements to the college's management information systems, and also a better system for ordering equipment and resources.

Jill acknowledges that they sometimes lose Black managers who gain posts elsewhere in order to get promotion, but says, "we take the philosophical approach in that, by investing in our staff, we are investing in FE as a whole." She also acknowledges that they do need to develop a specific strategy to build on the secondment process, and that must feed into the college's succession strategy.

The experience has been positive and now Cowan College wants to recruit secondees of its own through the BLI.

## Summary

- Whereas mentees were quite open to both Black and White mentors, it does seem that Black mentors are better able to share experiences and discuss issues of racism. This raises the question of how to increase the confidence of White mentors to address issues of racism. Although the mentor training does raise this, perhaps there needs to be more focus or more guidance on this aspect or more support from the BLI during the relationship.
- People told us of instances where line managers of their home colleges were not very supportive of their aspirations. This wider institutional issue has not been addressed within the BLI programme, but if this still proves to be a blockage for Black managers, it means that some colleges may lose their Black staff to other colleges or even to other sectors. While it is inevitable in many cases that the college will not be able to progress the participant immediately, we make recommendations in Section 9 about how to capture the learning of the Black participant and support their aspirations.
- There were differing views among Black participants on the need for a positive action programme and whether they would have participated had it not been a specific initiative for Black staff. Even those who would have participated in a generic programme said they might not have been given the opportunity to do so by their college.
- A concern about positive action programmes was raised with several of our respondents, who thought that not all colleagues understood the need for such programmes. This needs to be

addressed by imparting a greater understanding of how the participating colleges deal with this lack of understanding within their institutions. We address this in our recommendations.

- Releasing colleges on the whole did not tend to set their involvement in the context of their race equality strategies or succession strategies, although there were some examples of good practice in this area. This needs to be a greater focus for the BLI in the future so that individual Black people are given more opportunities to develop.

## 8 Outcomes

### 8.1 Introduction

This section describes the achievements and impact of the BLI, not only on Black participants, but also on the mentors and institutions providing placements.

The BLI has exceeded its original target of setting up 30 mentoring partnerships and 10 secondment or work-shadowing experiences. It has set up 40 mentoring partnerships, trained a pool of 86 mentors, provided 11 secondments and 22 work-shadowing experiences.

In addition, it has organised three career planning workshops, and a major conference.

### 8.2 Black participants

Of the 45 participants in the programme, 29 replied to our evaluation questionnaire. Of these, 59 per cent had **applied for new positions**, and 29 per cent of all respondents had **successfully obtained new positions**. Of course it is difficult to say whether these particular outcomes are entirely due to participation in the BLI. Twenty-four per cent of the respondents said the experience had led to their **taking on extra duties** in their existing role, and 25 per cent had been prompted to **go on courses or conferences** that they would otherwise not have considered. All respondents thought that participation in the BLI would **help their career in the future**.

Regarding more qualitative outcomes, Section 3.3 of this report looked at the original motivation of Black participants. They wanted the BLI to have a positive personal effect on their current job in terms of:

- their career aspirations;
- career development;
- practical skills;
- strategic insights into the sector; and
- networking.

Some respondents also mentioned that they had participated because they wanted to help raise the profile of Black staff within the sector. The written evaluations and the interviews demonstrated that these expectations were fulfilled.

#### 8.2.1 Personal impact

All the respondents to the evaluation form felt that the BLI had had a personal impact on them. A large number across all three schemes reported that it had boosted their confidence. Some had learned to be more assertive:

*It helped me think through issues and find the best solutions and gave me support at a difficult time in my career.*

*It provided a forum away from work to discuss and strategise around professional issues.*

The impact of the BLI had, for many, raised their aspirations:

*Originally I did not have major ambitions to become a Principal but I now realise what is needed to undertake such a role and pursue such a career. Being a mentee has made me realise that in order to make changes within institutions, Black people need to be at higher levels and I now feel that I want to get to that higher level.*

Participating in the BLI was useful in terms of the skills gained, but also in clarifying what respondents wanted in the future. An example of greater awareness and increased confidence combined with realism is illustrated by the work-shadowing participant who wrote:

*...increased confidence observing managers and leaders in the LSC and realising that given the opportunity, and equipping myself accordingly, I believe I could do the same if not better. I've gained a greater awareness of the wider FE issues by being exposed to a variety of meetings and conferences that I would not ordinarily be invited to attend. Also, the experience has confirmed my decision not to be heavily involved in strategy and policy making, certainly not at an executive level. I prefer working more directly with people.*

### **Case Study 7: Abiodun – personal impact of mentoring**

Abiodun didn't know what to expect of the mentoring partnership. She thought it was about meeting and sharing experience with peers rather than people at a high level. When she found out that her mentor was a Principal she was at first overwhelmed, but also positively motivated: "It made me think that the BLI was taking it seriously."

With her mentor, Abiodun was able to talk about the barriers facing her as a Black manager. Her mentor asked her to consider the barriers she faces and how they might be addressed.

As a result of the mentoring experience, Abiodun now feels more confident, positive and motivated. She has discussed career plans with her mentor and has received practical advice. She's used the careers advice session organised by the BLI to update her CV and has asked her mentor for his comments. Her mentor has encouraged her to look beyond her current sphere, both in terms of career progression and in her day-to-day role. She now feels that she has a place in her own college to develop things and make them happen.

The college had been recently restructured and Abiodun had felt a great deal of uncertainty. But now she feels that she can control her own destiny: "I won't wait for things to happen. I will be proactive."

The biggest impact of Abiodun's experience as a mentee has been getting the opportunity to look beyond the immediate sphere of work and glimpse her potential; she sees scope for career progression, but also for promoting areas she's interested in. For example, she is passionate about adult and community learning, but because it currently represents only a small proportion of the college's work, it is not given a high priority. In this area, Abiodun says she will actively promote the cause and will readily speak out about it now.

### **8.2.2 Career development**

Many participants had found greater awareness of their own abilities and of the opportunities for career progression. This meant greater clarity regarding their career development.

There was much mention of being inspired or motivated, leading many to apply for positions at a higher level. Mentees found the mentoring relationship particularly helpful in getting ready for posts, talking through and preparing for interviews, gaining confidence and becoming aware of actual job opportunities. Participants also valued the strategic career planning days.

The opportunities and different experiences presented by secondment opportunities had an effect on secondees:

*The key conclusion I've reached from being a secondee is that I do want to move up the career ladder. The secondment opened me up to other senior work opportunities and the potential and interest in such work. I'm now considering a senior management position within or outside of the FE sector.*

### Case Study 8: Lorraine – career development

The chance to gain interview experience through the BLI helped Lorraine get promoted. Lorraine applied to the BLI for a secondment and found the initial interview with the BLI Project Director enormously helpful in identifying her strengths and weaknesses. "I found it inspiring. I left there feeling more capable in terms of being able to operate at a senior level. It gave me a belief in myself. I hadn't had that sort of one-to-one interview for some time and it enabled me to see how far I've travelled."

Lorraine was subsequently put forward for an interview for a secondment. Although she was unsuccessful, she found the feedback given helped her gain confidence. Lorraine added: "I came away thinking I could do anything!"

In fact the whole process encouraged Lorraine to go for a promotion at her own college. It was a much more strategic and cross-college role than she'd been used to. But the BLI interviews had made her aware of her transferable skills and how she could make the most of these. She felt more confident of handling a different area of expertise. Lorraine was successful at her interview and has been doing her new job for several months now.

### 8.2.3 Practical skills

All respondents to the evaluation form reported using the skills or knowledge gained from participating. For many, this meant more effective career development; narrowing down their career focus, rewriting CVs, applying for promotions. One mentee and a shadow had applied for and obtained a job "which I had previously perceived as out of reach".

Respondents said they were using the skills and knowledge gained in specific and more general context in a variety of ways within their existing job roles. Among the more general effects were: "being more willing to promote the work I am doing", "helping other Black staff", "using individual self-assessment procedures", "being a lot more proactive and challenging within my role", "following up on issues immediately", "working cross-college", "often acting as a mentor to colleagues" and "actively encouraging all staff to reach their potential".

Both secondees and those participating in work-shadowing opportunities were particularly keen to mention the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills and how they have applied this.

*I gained a lot of practical knowledge from the inspection shadowing; I noted 30 different points! Most things I do now are based on the Common Inspection Framework. The point is not just about passing an inspection, but about continuous improvement. We are inspection-ready; it's not a (one-off) event.*

*The shadowing experience was very positive. I feel reassured that what I knew previously about the (Common) Inspection Framework was right and I have gained a lot of confidence from this. The governors have said I seem more confident and assured when I am briefing them about the impending inspection. I am now clear what direction they need to go in and how to do the self-assessment process. In terms of specific skills, I have improved my presentation skills and have a much better understanding of what an inspection report should look like. My communication skills are better as a result of meeting lots of different people and I feel more confident at handling different groups of people. I feel better equipped about what I can and can not say in different situations and I'm much more confident about analysing data which I used to be nervous of.*



#### 8.2.4 Strategic insight

Several respondents and interviewees found they had a wider knowledge of the national, regional and local agenda and its impact on colleagues. This was particularly true for secondees and shadows.

*The secondment has given me time out of the nitty gritty of day-to-day management and a more strategic role. I have had time to network and meet with ex-colleagues from the sector. I've got involved with regional issues. I'm now interested in going into the policy field and the secondment confirmed my viewpoint, that my experience and skills would be invaluable in a policy job.*

#### 8.2.5 Raising the profile of Black staff

Some mentioned that participation had raised their profile in their current college and there were some instances where participants had gone back to their college and used their experience to support other Black staff. One mentee has set up a mentoring scheme for students at the college, using the BLI model. This mentee also pointed to the benefit of enabling another Black colleague to "act up" while she was on secondment, thus enhancing the latter's management skills.

One interviewee was optimistic for the future:

*For the longer term, the college has started to take a wider range of students and will therefore need more Black people in senior management positions so I am optimistic about the future.*

However, a few participants pointed out that there was no firm plan as to how the college would use their increased confidence, knowledge and skills within the institution:

*The college did not have a budget to facilitate training identified through the mentoring process, even though my line manager was supportive and understood the principles of the BLI. The college has still to realise that it needs to invest in my development. This should have been better*

*anticipated and perhaps there should have been greater contact between the BLI and my college to facilitate further opportunities. It is a feather in the cap of the college having got someone onto the scheme, but not much else besides. When it comes to the college putting money where their mouth is, it is a different question.*

*My confidence was boosted by participating in the Ofsted inspection and I learned a great deal about inspections and about the way other colleges do things. This has now increased my desire to become an Inspector. However, I do not feel I can put my learning into practice in my current job. My feeling is that my own college would have appreciated what I learned from my experience if it had come shortly before an inspection instead of shortly after one!*

### 8.3 Mentors

Mentors mentioned that their expectations of the mentoring relationship would have a direct impact on the mentee's career development and that it would also benefit themselves as mentors. The college might also benefit from having a different perspective.

#### 8.3.1 Impact on mentee

Some mentors responding to our questions were reluctant to talk about the impact on the mentee, believing that it was for the mentee to answer. Those who did answer corroborated what the mentees themselves said:

- it had prompted the mentee to explore a wider range of options and new ways of looking at their experience;
- mentors had been able to help the mentee to clarify their own focus and goals; and
- the mentoring relationship had helped the mentee in their own role at their college, for example by giving them the opportunity to talk through organisational politics and helping the mentee gain a better understanding of how to manage difficult staff.

There was a good example of how the mentoring relationship had made a difference:

*The mentee had just gained a new role in the college and she was feeling intimidated at first and unconfident. We talked through issues and I encouraged her to set targets about what she was going to tackle. By our third meeting, she had realised that specialist knowledge was not so important as being a competent manager and being able to liaise with her peers. She was able to assert herself and win the confidence of her new team. She was much clearer about what the job required.*

### **8.3.2 Impact on mentor**

Mentors said that the training and experience of mentoring had provided them with valuable coaching in the context of institutionalised racism. This type of mentoring and coaching was thought to bring out the human element of management because it looks at management as something that is less focused on competition and targets and more focused on the individual. One mentor found that this approach had made her rethink her own leadership style, in that it has alerted her to the possibility that she is over-burdening her own staff. She says she will now be more sensitive about this.

### **8.3.3 Use of mentoring skills and knowledge**

Mentors mentioned that the mentor training in particular had had a great impact on them. It had strengthened their listening skills, especially in a coaching situation, and they said they were now using this as part of their own management techniques.

### **8.3.4 Impact on the institution**

One mentor commented that the BLI experience had affected the organisation since several staff were involved and this had raised the profile of diversity and inclusivity within the institution. She reported that the BLI "has acted as a reminder that (diversity and inclusivity) are an ongoing part of the work of the institution".

Others respondents reported that they had not seen any change within their institution, but thought that the responsibility for change rested with individual colleges:

*Principals need to seize this type of initiative as part of their own equal opportunities strategies, engage with it and create placements. It is not the fault of the BLI if colleges do not do this.*

### **8.3.5 Wider impact**

There were a few comments about the wider impact of the BLI as a whole:

*Participating in the BLI has provided me with additional ideas for setting up such leadership initiatives and made me realise that initiatives such as the BLI need to be an integral part of leadership programmes.*

Others felt that the impact was small as yet and therefore would only have a wider effect if it were to be rolled out to a broader area.

## **8.4 Institutions providing seconding and work-shadowing opportunities**

Our research showed that the secondment and work-shadowing experience had generally had a good effect on the seconding college.

One secondee had gone into the college while it was undergoing an inspection. Her input was deemed especially useful, as her work partner at the college was relatively new to inspection issues. Every effort was made to forge relationships between the host and home colleges. For example, the secondee was particularly impressed by the host college's management information systems, and wanted her own college to look at it. The host college has since organised another secondment placement through the BLI and the first secondee has since been invited back:

*I have been asked back to staff training on diversity and I see this as a further signal that more colleges across the country now*

*want to develop greater consciousness around race issues.*

Another secondee has been involved in developing a communications strategy for the college. He was able to bring in an external perspective as well as information and ideas from his own college. The strategy was well received. There has been a direct impact on the host college, in that management training now makes reference to diversity and equality issues. Taking part in the BLI has also helped the person who is line-managing the secondee to question and review his own practice.

In general, colleges providing work-shadowing opportunities believed that the benefits mainly accrued to the shadow rather than the institution. However, there were some exceptions, although in the following example the benefit was identified by the participant rather than the host organisation:

*The fact that a Black woman undertook this role was valuable as a role model and because it added credibility to the inspection team in a college which has a diverse catchment area.*

One person hosting a shadow mentioned that he had personally benefited as the experience highlighted the importance of diversity issues. As an Inspector, he is required to make judgements about how successfully inclusion is being implemented in colleges.

## 8.5 Releasing colleges

Releasing colleges told us that they expected the participant to benefit personally from the BLI, but they tended not to think of how they might use the participants' skills once they returned. Two colleges did not expect the participant to return, and while they were pleased to support the wider aims of the BLI, they did not see that it would affect their college directly.

One Principal told us that the participant's involvement with the BLI had been organised by the line manager without the Principal's

knowledge. This Principal was extremely supportive of the BLI but was concerned that the opportunity had not been set within the college's race equality or human resources strategies, and therefore might not prove to be as effective as it might have been. A positive outcome arose however, since the college is keen to set up secondment and work-shadowing opportunities within the college and to organise its own mentoring partnerships with a neighbouring college. Several other colleges also pointed out that unless opportunities do come through the releasing colleges, this could frustrate individuals who hoped to take part. These colleges pointed out that if they could not find a career opportunity within the college, it might be that participants would have to move on.

Colleges whose staff had participated in the work-shadowing opportunities tended to identify tangible benefits, particularly where the participant had been work-shadowing an inspection. One Principal told us that the participant fed back what she had learned in a very direct way, by taking the key role on the college's inspection. This has been a good inspection and the participant played a part by helping the college improve on the grades awarded in its self-assessment. This was the college's first experience of the *Common Inspection Framework* (ALI/Ofsted 2001) and it was very helpful to have a real feel for how it works from the inside. The college feels good about it and the participant has gained a lot of respect from her colleagues and established her credibility. The Principal says the participant has gained a huge amount in terms of confidence and this has been very evident in her work in the six months since the placement.



## Summary

- In terms of outputs, the BLI has exceeded its targets.
- Of the participants who returned their evaluation questionnaires, almost a third have been promoted internally or externally, although we cannot say whether this is a direct result of participation of the BLI.
- The BLI has met the Black participants' expectations and they have gained personal benefits, greater clarity in their career aims, many practical skills and a strategic insight into the sector. Some also told us that participating in the BLI had raised their profile in their home college and raised the profile of Black managers generally.
- Mentors too had gained personal benefits as well as feeling that they had benefited their mentee. They were more circumspect about whether the BLI had had any impact on the college, or wider impact on the sector.
- There were some good examples of benefits gained for host colleges from secondments, but rather less impact on those providing work-shadowing experiences. This could be a missed opportunity.
- There were cases of positive impact on the releasing colleges, particularly where work-shadowing had taken place. However, there were not as many examples given as we would have expected, and it was clear that many releasing colleges had not thought of how to use the participants' experience, and had not placed it within their own succession strategies.
- All in all, impact on the Black participants has been demonstrated, but there has not been as much impact on the institutions as we would have

hoped, mainly because they have not embedded the BLI within their own strategies. We acknowledge, however, that this is a pilot and the BLI was not expected to have an immediate impact on colleges. The BLI has certainly worked hard to set up opportunities and the support it has offered through out all the relationships it has helped to set up has been tremendously valued. It is now poised to make a critical breakthrough and it needs to explore strategies for wider and more long-term impact. We make recommendations for achieving this in Section 9.

## 9 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 9.1 Achievements and impact

The BLI has exceeded its original targets of developing 30 mentoring partnerships and managing 10 secondments. It has managed work-shadowing placements and run additional events such as the successful career planning workshops.

More importantly, our evaluation has demonstrated a tangible impact on the Black participants and the mentors. There have been specific examples of benefits to the seconding and releasing colleges, although this is an area that could be improved.

There was high praise for the design of the programme by Black participants. When we invited them to make overall comments on the BLI, several took the opportunity to express their thanks to, and their appreciation of, the BLI team; in particular there was praise for the support and encouragement offered by it. A number described the programme as "excellent" or "brilliant" and expressed the hope that funding would allow the BLI to continue so that others could benefit from it.

Mentors also commended the BLI for its high standards and also took the opportunity to support its continuation:

*The (BLI) is one of, if not the, most successful and uplifting initiatives that has been developed and it has been delivered to an extremely high standard. Its success has rightly raised expectations in the sector of employers and employees. It should therefore be allowed to continue and develop further.*

*The (BLI) is leading edge and unique. Its distinctive approach needs to continue, whatever the future organisational structure.*

Mentors believed that the BLI was of strategic importance to the sector:

*This scheme is invaluable to mentees, mentors and the sector. It has been the only real serious effort made nationally (that I am aware of) that has made a positive and measurable impact to address the under-representation of Black staff in management positions. Its pragmatic approach is welcomed by HR professionals. All the excellent work of the BLI should not be allowed to be wasted through lack of funding.*

*I think this is an extremely worthwhile scheme. I would hope it would be supported financially in preference to a great many other initiatives. This one gets straight to the core of one of the most significant issues facing colleges.*

Although the design and delivery of the BLI and its beneficial impact on individuals are to be commended, the impact on the sector, both in terms of numbers of Black participants and the ability to tackle the institutional culture, has been small. The BLI was a short-term pilot programme testing out a particular model; our evaluation has demonstrated that the model has been successful, but now the BLI needs to have a greater impact. A long-term strategy to create a pipeline of future leaders and to identify a core of talented Black staff is needed. The creation of a sufficiently big pool of potential Black leaders is now the question.

### 9.2 Continuation of the BLI

During the summer of 2004, it was agreed that the BLI would be funded by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) starting in September 2004. It should be noted that this was a recommendation made by the CBSFE in its report. The BLI will be located and managed within the CEL but will retain its own BLI Steering Group. The remainder of this section gives some advice on the future of the BLI, including a discussion on potential improvements to the programme as well as a more strategic discussion on how it can increase its impact on the sector

and fit within a framework for leadership, as well as a framework for equality and diversity.

### 9.3 BLI design

The current mix of mentoring partnerships, secondments and work-shadowing experiences allows participants a variety of opportunities that gives them both support and different experiences. We recommend that this current mix continues as our evaluation has demonstrated its value.

During the pilot, the BLI added other opportunities that were valued by participants, for example the career planning workshops. Participants in our interviews and in the mentee focus groups also emphasised the importance of networking and sharing their experiences of being Black managers. Respondents also valued the opportunity to learn more about, and to be kept up-to-date with, new developments in FE sector strategy and policy. Another side-effect of the BLI was the opportunity to have a structured interview with the Project Director, which some participants found to be a very helpful experience for their careers.

We believe that the BLI could build on some of these aspects and therefore **recommend that it offers an expanded programme of opportunities, workshops and events** including, for example:

- application and interview skills;
- negotiation skills;
- career planning workshops;
- leadership workshops with charismatic speakers;
- strategy workshops; and
- networking events.

The most common way to offer such a programme is to take on a cohort of participants and offer them a curriculum of training and workshop events, based on the stated needs of the members of the cohort.

This is the way many leadership and management programmes are currently run. We considered this model, but it should be emphasised that a mentoring and work-shadowing experience programme is different. We think that the current rolling intake of participants is a better model as it allows for opportunities, particularly work-shadowing and secondments, to be developed throughout a particular year, rather than setting them all up at the same time. **We therefore recommend that an event programme is planned throughout the year and open to all participants who are in the programme at that time.**

**The development of a website for the BLI** is paramount. The website could:

- raise the profile of the BLI;
- set out the programme offer;
- give case studies and good practice examples; and
- allow networking between participants to take place.

### 9.4 Process

This evaluation has identified certain success factors for the various components of the programme: mentoring, secondments and work-shadowing. We recognise that the BLI has set up detailed processes for these, for example, mentoring agreements and agreements with secondees, releasing and host colleges. However, suggestions for improvements were made by our respondents, as summarised below.

#### 9.4.1 Selection of Black participants

The BLI was primarily aimed at middle and senior managers but there is only a small pool of Black managers in FE. If the BLI is to have a great impact on numbers, it would be beneficial to expand the intake of participants to include first-rung managers. For mentees, the BLI could benefit potential managers who demonstrate a desire to move on in their

careers. In actual fact the BLI did include some first-rung managers but few, if any, non-managers. There was interest in the first advertisement for mentees but a high proportion of those requesting further information did not send in applications. Since then, the BLI team has revised and simplified the application form, so that it is applicable to a wider range of applicants. This has resulted in a better response rate.

**We recommend that the mentoring partnerships be open to aspiring managers as well as current managers.** We believe it would be best to continue to target secondment and work-shadowing opportunities at a higher level, giving those already poised to enter higher management levels the opportunity to undertake more strategic and management work and the host organisations the opportunity to see Black role models in positions of influence.

#### 9.4.2 Mentors

There should continue to be a selection of Black and White mentors. We noted how mentees matched with Black mentors were more likely to talk of their experiences as a Black manager. Although the mentor training does include a discussion of the barriers for Black staff, some White mentors still lack the confidence to tackle these issues with their mentees, as might some Black mentees be in raising such issues with White mentors. It is important that mentors and seconding line managers (whom we recommend should undertake the mentor training) understand how to tackle issues arising over what might be unequal treatment. These are difficult and confidential issues but there is a need for the mentor training to give more practical and explicit strategies to adopt. It might help **if Black mentors and mentees are invited to talk at the mentor training course about their own personal experiences of barriers, and how other people have helped them overcome these.**

There is still a pool of mentors, trained through the BLI, who are not matched with a mentee. As the programme expands there will be a better chance of matching them. They can also participate in the other mentoring relationships offered by the CEL. However, they could use their new skills within their own college, and indeed there have been good examples of where mentors have done just that. **It is recommended that the BLI team prepare written guidelines on how to match mentors and mentees and also give specific encouragement to unmatched mentors to take up the help and advice line offered through the mentor trainer.**

#### 9.4.3 Secondments

It is critical to prepare the host colleges who take on secondments. Generally this has been done well by the BLI and secondments of different lengths (part-time and full-time) have been offered to suit both the secondee and the host college. There is an internal college mentor who can give encouragement and sort out teething problems in a confidential way.

In line with suggestions given by our respondents, **we recommend that in addition to the legal agreement (on the variation of employment contract) that the BLI puts in place, a more detailed agreement covering the participant, the seconding and releasing colleges should also be made.** This could cover the following aspects.

##### 9.4.3.1 Seconding college

- precise content and nature of the post;
- expected outcomes;
- development plan for the secondee; and
- nature of support offered by the seconding college including induction, supervision and mentoring, regular meetings and discussions with the releasing college.

#### 9.4.3.2 *Releasing college*

- process for covering the secondee's work; and
- reintegration process.

#### 9.4.3.3 *Secondee*

- expected outcomes;
- expenses;
- clear framework for secondment experience, including the nature of the support;
- framework for reintegration, including how the secondee is kept up to date with developments within the releasing college.

#### 9.4.3.4 *BLI*

- liaison and support arrangements for all three parties.

The BLI should also help both the seconding and host colleges to include a statement on how they will set their involvement in the strategic context, for example by:

- establishing a leadership development plan;
- amending their equality and diversity plan;
- amending their three-year development plan; and
- following these actions up in the monitoring and review process.

To accompany the agreement there should be **more precise guidelines on all aspects of the secondment**, including:

- background on the objectives of the BLI as this relates specifically to both the releasing and the seconding college to enable them to raise awareness of the nature of the positive action initiative to other college staff;

- cover arrangements for the secondee's permanent post;
- keeping in touch with the secondee;
- job definition and outcomes;
- induction;
- development plan;
- supervision;
- mentoring; and
- reintegration.

The idea behind the guidelines is not to prescribe what the college has to do, but to give good practice advice on these issues to guide colleges.

#### 9.4.3.5 *Initial briefing*

The BLI needs to provide a thorough briefing in these procedures and guidelines to all parties to make sure everyone knows their rights and responsibilities. **It is also recommended that the line manager of the receiving college also participates in the mentor training, as this would provide a useful background to the project and would provide them with skills they can use in their line management role.**

#### 9.4.3.6 *Mentoring and HR role*

Because of the sensitive and confidential nature of the mentor role within the receiving college, it is recommended that the HR Manager should not be the designated mentor since this can cause a conflict of interest where the HR Manager is party to confidential information that they may feel they can take no action on. **Therefore we suggest that the HR Manager needs to be involved, in addition to the line manager and the college mentor, to iron out any HR issues.**

#### 9.4.3.7 *Reintegration process*

Given that the secondment is about using the experience of the secondee to progress, the reintegration process is paramount if the



releasing college is to benefit. Therefore **it is recommended that there are regular meetings between the HR Directors and line managers of both colleges to discuss how to use the secondee's experience on completion of the secondment.**

#### **9.4.4 Work-shadowing**

Work-shadowing is a complementary thread to the whole programme and has obvious benefits for the participant and the college as (in the case of the Ofsted experience) new skills can be learned and experience shared in a more focused and shorter time span than in the secondment process. **More opportunities for such work-shadowing should be sought.**

##### *9.4.4.1 Project work*

Opportunities for a short project or piece of analysis should also be found within the work-shadowing process. Some of the Ofsted shadows did undertake analysis that was of use to the Inspectors. The Tirisano project (see Glossary at Appendix 2) also sets a good precedent for this. There are gains for participants who observe work being done, but project work means that the participant will bring a specific skill back to the releasing college as well as providing benefits for the participating institution.

##### *9.4.4.2 Work-shadowing guidelines*

Before more work-shadowing takes place, the BLI should provide a written set of guidelines on the process for all participants to ensure consistency and quality. This could include:

- expectations of the role of the shadow (Ofsted provides an outline of what is to be achieved and this should be used as a model for other work-shadowing opportunities);
- an organised programme offered by the participating institution (Ofsted offers a ready-made programme in the inspection itself, but LSC work-shadowing opportunities tended to be less well structured); and

- the BLI team holding a debriefing with the releasing college to see how the experience can be used to the advantage of both the shadow and the releasing college.

Some sort of follow-up of the shadow would be useful to see if the experience has been useful.

## **9.5 Influencing colleges**

In order that the participation is seen within some form of strategic context within the college, **we recommend that:**

- the BLI take some time to help the releasing college Principals, HR Directors and participants' line managers understand the need to set the BLI within the college's own staff development and race equality strategies;
- the staff development opportunities that arise from the cover necessary when a BLI participant is released on secondment be set within the college's other strategies rather than being seen as an inconvenience; and
- a debriefing session with the BLI should be used to encourage the college to discuss the steps it will take to ensure that development opportunities will be available to the participant. This could include continuous professional development as well as giving the participant more opportunities to take on short-term tasks that would further their career.

It may help to advise the college to set up an internal mentor for the participant on their return so that together they can look at strategies within the college for further progression.

We have already recommended that **the BLI gives assistance to the releasing colleges on how they might set their involvement in a strategic context.**

## 9.6 The future

The BLI needs to move from being a good, well-executed programme to being seen as raising a serious professional issue for the whole sector. It needs to be positioned in a way that achieves organisational change in the sector and contributes to a multi-cultural and diverse Britain.

We welcome the decision to locate the BLI within the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) because it can sit within a wider framework, fitting in with other leadership programmes such as the Senior Leadership Programme which is a joint LSDA and CEL initiative, and CEL's own mentoring and coaching programme. However, there are three aspects to raise here, which are discussed below.

It is envisaged that the BLI will be a project delivering a positive action initiative sitting within the overall diversity strategy of CEL. Currently the diversity strategy is being developed and there will be several project strands involved in the delivery of the strategy, of which the BLI is intended to be one. We have recommended that the BLI needs to be seen as a strategic initiative in addition to being a well-executed programme. We therefore see the BLI as having a role in influencing CEL's diversity strategy and influencing national thinking, rather than being seen only as delivering a good project. **We recommend that CEL devises a mechanism that enables the BLI to play such a strategic role.**

It is also envisaged that the BLI Steering Group will continue to operate and provide strategic direction for the BLI, but that the management of the BLI will remain with CEL. There is an advantage of the BLI's future location within CEL as it will give the sector the message that it is a mainstream initiative. It will also, as a result, link to other initiatives and programmes and influence CEL's diversity strategy. However, **there must be a mechanism to enable the Steering Group genuinely to influence CEL's thinking on Black issues, otherwise it risks becoming merely a "talking shop".**

The third issue relates both to added value and duplication. Placing the BLI within the CEL will allow it to link with the existing and planned leadership programmes, such as the joint LSDA and CEL Senior Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) which has sponsored places for Black aspiring Principals; the Aspire initiative (a positive action initiative for first-line managers) and CEL's own mentoring and coaching programme. There is also a work-shadowing initiative managed by the AoC that has a target for recruiting Black participants. Some of these initiatives will add value to the BLI, allowing opportunities for Black participants to benefit from several initiatives. We see the SLDP and Aspire as offering something distinct from the BLI, so BLI participants could benefit from all these programmes.

However, other initiatives run by the CEL are quite similar to the opportunities offered by the BLI and there is danger of duplication. For example BLI's trained pool of mentors could be used by CEL's own mentoring and coaching programme, but if CEL's coaching programme is paid for by colleges and the BLI's programme is free to participants and their colleges, the implication is that most Black participants (and their colleges) would opt for the BLI. This could also be true of the AoC's work-shadowing scheme, which is paid for by colleges. **We recommend that the potential for added value be explored and the potential for duplication minimised in the current negotiations being undertaken between the BLI and CEL.**

In conclusion, while we welcome a more stable situation for the BLI in terms of funding, and the location within the appropriate leadership body, we raise concerns about how it is positioned within CEL. We feel that it must not lose its uniqueness, its distinctiveness, and would wish to be assured that the BLI Steering Group has some autonomy to move it into a more strategic position so that it has a long-lasting impact on the FE sector.

# Appendix 1: Respondents to the Evaluation Questionnaire

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## **The mentees**

Evaluation questionnaires were sent by email to 45 of those who had participated in one or more of the three BLI schemes in question. Twenty-nine completed questionnaires were returned (a 64 per cent response rate). Seventeen (over half) of those responding had participated in the mentoring scheme, 12 in the work-shadowing scheme, and nine in the secondment scheme. Some had participated in more than one scheme: for example, two had participated in all three schemes, and a further four had been mentees as well as shadows.

Note that in the Figures and Tables, percentages represent the number of responses. Where a respondent has participated in multiple schemes, their rating of a particular aspect will be reflected in each relevant bar of the figures.

### ***Gender and ethnic identity***

Sixty-six per cent of the respondents were female and 31 per cent were male (with one undeclared). Eight described themselves as Afro-Caribbean, three as Black British, one as Black African and one as Black. Five described themselves as Indian, two as Indian British, one as East African Indian, three as Asian, and one as Pakistani. The remaining respondents described themselves as Mixed (or specified the mixture). Two of the respondents are disabled.

### ***Age range***

The respondents' ages ranged from 34 to 55, with an average age of 43.

## ***Salaries***

Respondents' salaries at the time of starting the BLI programme ranged from under £25,000 to over £50,000. The most common salary-range (10 respondents) was between £30,000 and £35,000.

## **The mentors**

Evaluation questionnaires were sent by email to 74 of those who have been trained as mentors by the BLI. Thirty-seven completed questionnaires were returned (a 50 per cent response rate). Twenty-two of those responding had been matched to mentee. A small number of these felt it was too early in their mentoring relationship for them to offer meaningful comments on the actual mentoring but, like those who had not yet been matched, were able to comment on the mentor training.

### ***Gender and ethnic identity***

Forty-six per cent of the respondents were female and 56 per cent were male. Sixty-two per cent were White (23 respondents). The remaining respondents were Indian (three), Pakistani (one), Black or Black British (three), African or Black African (three), Afro-Caribbean (one), Sino-Caribbean (one), and Mixed (one). One respondent did not answer this question.

### ***Age range***

The respondents' ages ranged from 33 to over 60, with an average age of approximately 48.



### ***Employment***

Ten of the respondents were Principals or former Principals and four were Vice-Principals. Five described their jobs as Director of HR or Director of Personnel. A wide range of other posts was represented, including two consultants (one being a former Principal), one Company Director, one Lecturer, and a number of Heads, Directors, Managers and so on.

# Appendix 2: Glossary

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This Glossary explains the abbreviations we have used in our report, with brief information on the organisation that are mentioned.

## ALI

The **Adult Learning Inspectorate** is a non-departmental public body established under the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Its role is to inspect and report on the quality of education and training for adults and young people funded by public money. [www.ali.gov.uk](http://www.ali.gov.uk)

## AoC

The **Association of Colleges** was created in 1996 to promote and represent the interests of further education colleges in England and Wales. [www.aoc.co.uk](http://www.aoc.co.uk)

## BLI

The **Black Leadership Initiative** is a positive action programme that aims to develop and implement a strategic approach to the recruitment, retention and development of Black staff to management posts in the further education sector.

## BME

Black and minority ethnic. We have taken the term "Black" to include people of African Caribbean, Asian, African or Chinese origin, or other groups who experience discrimination on the grounds of race or colour (Source: Black Training and Enterprise Group [www.bteg.co.uk](http://www.bteg.co.uk)).

## CBSFE

The **Commission for Black Staff in Further Education** is an independent body sponsored by a number of key organisations. Its broad aims are to investigate the under-representation of Black staff in further

education and to disseminate good practice for the recruitment, retention and promotion of Black staff in the sector.

[www.aoc.co.uk/aoc/commission-black-staff](http://www.aoc.co.uk/aoc/commission-black-staff)

## CEL

The **Centre for Excellence in Leadership** was established to provide leaders and managers within the learning and skills sector with innovative programmes and services to support them in leading their institutions. [www.centreforexcellence.org.uk](http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk)

## DfES

The **Department for Education and Skills**, is the government department responsible for education and training. [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

## FE

further education

## FENTO

The **Further Education National Training Organisation** is a national body with responsibility for workforce development for all staff in the further education sector in the UK. [www.fento.org](http://www.fento.org)

## HR

Human Resources

## Local LSC

A **local Learning and Skills Council** is one of the 47 local offices of the national LSC. [www.lsc.gov.uk/selectlsc.asp?section=/Corporate](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/selectlsc.asp?section=/Corporate)

**LSC**

The **Learning and Skills Council** is a non-departmental public body with responsibility for funding post-16 education, with the exception of higher education. It funded an 18-month pilot of the BLI between November 2002 and May 2004, and joint-funded its extension between June and August 2004

**LSDA**

The **Learning and Skills Development Agency** is a national body that has a government remit to provide research for the development of policy and practice in post-16 education and training.  
[www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

**NBM**

The **Network for Black Managers** was set up in 1998 to address the under-representation of Black staff in the FE sector.  
[www.feonline.net/feportal/display?id=1649](http://www.feonline.net/feportal/display?id=1649)

**Niace**

The **National Institute of Adult Continuing Education** is an independent organisation that works to advance the interest of adult learners. [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

**Ofsted**

The Office for Standards in Education has responsibility for inspecting all schools in England. It also inspects provision by local education authorities, teacher-training institutions, institutions for youth work and 16-19 education.

**SLDP**

The **Senior Leadership Development Programme**, part of the CEL, is a personal and professional development programme for the Principals and Chief Executives of the future.  
[www.centreforexcellence.org.uk/?Page=Programmes&id=74](http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk/?Page=Programmes&id=74)

**SMT**

Senior Management Team

**Tirisano project**

Tirisano, which means 'working together', is an inter-government partnership run by the British Council in the UK and the Colleges Collaboration Fund in South Africa. It sponsors an exchange programme that allowed Fellows from South Africa to be placed in UK FE Colleges for three months.  
<http://tirisano.nml.ru.ac.za/>

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# Notes

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