



# MENTORING

# WORKS!

changes  
**LIVES**

saves  
**MONEY**

prevents  
**OFFENDING**

builds  
**COMMUNITIES**



# plusone

MENTORING

WINNER OF



Most Exciting New Project 2010



Innovative Team Award 2011

## **KENNY MACASKILL MSP,**

**Cabinet Secretary for Justice, The Scottish Government, said:**

“Early and effective intervention is all about providing the right help at the right time. Such an approach has provided not only to improve responses to young people’s needs and risks but also to achieve significant efficiency savings in terms of reduced bureaucracy and reduced use of formal and more costly interventions. I welcome this evaluation as it shows that mentoring has a valuable role to play in the early intervention process”.

## **JOHN CARNOCHAN,**

**Detective Chief Superintendent, Violence Reduction Unit, said:**

“The information and results from the evaluation of the Plusone mentoring programme provides an evidenced example of an effective intervention. The programme also confirms that there are assets that exist in our communities and the assets are the people, people who are enthusiastic about volunteering and people who are willing to give their time to accompany young people on a journey which will see them achieve better outcomes in their lives. There is no doubt that such mentors can have a powerful influence on young people’s lives and we must encourage more of this type of intervention. Plusone mentoring provides a cost effective intervention that works and I hope will be added to the services available to local authorities throughout Scotland.”

## **ANDREW LOWE,**

**President of the Association of Directors of Social Work, said:**

“ADSW, YMCA, police, Scottish Government, academics and local authorities have worked together as joint architects of this new model of early intervention - investing in each other’s strengths and producing results beyond those that even we had hoped for.

“Budgetary restraints within the public sector mean that the time for innovative thinking and transformational change has arrived. This mentoring approach moves beyond traditional practices and develops a new compact between the statutory and voluntary sectors. It awakens the latent willingness within communities to assist people who are struggling. Local communities were the backbone of this success, providing 2,796 hours of voluntary work.

“The method used has been assessed by academic evaluators as “highly successful” in addressing youth crime at an early stage. It not only salvages human potential but also, according to economic researchers, saves money.”

## **IAIN M FORBES,**

**Strategic Development Manager, Scottish Mentoring Network, said:**

“Both evaluations of the Plusone mentoring programmes provide ample evidence of significant social and economic benefits. Most of all they demonstrate that a properly thought out, structured and resourced mentoring programme provides vital independent support at a critical time in a young person’s life. This unique partnership of the statutory agencies of social work, education and the police Violence Reduction Unit, together with the YMCA’s delivery, is helping many young people turn their lives round and giving them real opportunities to achieve their potential.

“The staff and volunteers involved are to be congratulated on the very positive outcomes and Scottish Mentoring Network supports the call for appropriate levels of investment to roll this programme out across Scotland.”

**THIS PUBLICATION PRESENTS THE EVALUATION OF AND EVIDENCE BASE FOR A VERY** successful model of community-based mentoring, piloted and delivered by the YMCA in Scotland from 2009-2011 in partnership with local authorities. The national strategic partners included the Association of Directors of Social Work, the police Violence Reduction Unit and the Scottish Government.

In this publication the partners seek to convey both the positive outcomes and the cost savings available through this approach and to encourage local authorities to consider the inclusion of community-based mentoring as a core element of their prevention and early intervention strategies.

The two year programme was evaluated in May 2011 by the University of Dundee, part of the Scottish Institute for Policing Research, and also by Haldane Associates through the completion of a Social Return on Investment Report (SROI).

**“Plusone was found to have generated social value of over £1.05 million for an investment of just under £108,000.”**

MENTORING WORKS

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James Love House  
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All quotations presented in the following pages come direct from the external evaluations of the programme.

# The Context: Young People in Scotland

There has been a significant shift in our policy approach to young people in Scotland over the past several years moving steadily away from a reactive approach, treating problems, to one of identifying early risk in order to support an individual's healthy development and potential.

This change reflects our learning from the evidence and research available. It also requires a long term view, a significant challenge to governments limited to a particular term in office yet the continuity confirmed by the recent Scottish elections may provide the means to seriously impact upon a whole generation.

The preventative spending review conducted over the past year promises further reinforcement of long term investment in the tackling of identified early risk factors and the parallel building of resilience.

We do not need to conduct any more research to know who is at risk of future offending or who is at risk of school exclusion; we are perfectly able to identify those who most need intervention in order to thrive. Taking care not to label or judge, we can divert and re-engage vulnerable young people so that they achieve their full potential in life.

At the same time we need to take care that the cuts in public services do not eat away at the investments we might make elsewhere. There is a real danger in 2011 that significant withdrawals of community-based services for vulnerable children, young people and families will draw the disengaged back into anti-social behaviour.

**“For an intervention which appears to be a relatively small one in the lives of vulnerable at risk young people, the impact of mentoring is very significant.”**

Evidence from practice elsewhere (Farrington 1996; Whyte 2004) shows that a diversion from future persistent offending is possible by addressing the several areas where mentoring can have a positive effect, including social skills, self-esteem and independence, emotional resilience, engagement with institutions, school attendance and performance, or arrangements in family and community.

The Plusone mentoring programme was developed to target young people most likely to move further into the youth justice system and to do this at a stage of their development when change in behaviour and attitudes might be most easily achieved.

The approach has achieved outstanding results with significant change in behaviour at the six month stage.

*“Improvement was particularly strong in risk factors associated with young people’s behaviour (86% showed improvement); the young people’s attitudes to offending and other anti-social behaviours (86%); the level of risk for the young people presented by their neighbourhood (64%); and with developing young people’s skills and positive relationships (64%).”*

The evaluations demonstrate that the Plusone mentoring programme combines significant efficiency savings and effective diversion from crime with the re-engagement of the young people in positive development and activity.

It provides a proven model of early intervention that can trigger effective community engagement to complement and enhance the work of professional colleagues to divert and prevent further progression into the youth justice system.

The model adopted by Plusone mentoring reflected a youth work approach building a foundation of trusted relationship with the young person in a voluntary partnership. YMCA recruited and trained all volunteers and matched them to referrals from the local authority referral group.

Mentors were supervised by YMCA staff and met their young people usually once a week. Time spent together involved a range of safe activities with the goal of building self esteem and trust that would create the opportunity to reflect on choices, relationships and aspirations. This in close working partnership with colleagues from social work, schools and the police.



# The Participants

Pilot work in the Scottish Borders by YMCA Scotland since 2005 has been testing the optimum age of engagement and change for a vulnerable young person. Intervention is of course only where necessary and only lasts for as long as it remains necessary for the young person's healthy development.

The learning from the Borders shaped the early intervention approach to target an 8-14 age group receiving its participants through the local authority multi-agency referral groups. Of the 54 young people whose cases were included in the evaluation, referrals came from the following sources:

TABLE 1.0

REFERRAL AGENT	NUMBERS REFERRED
Social Work	20
School	19
Police	8
Community link worker	2
ASB Team	2
no information on who referred	2
SACRO	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>

Programme managers based in local community YMCAs co-ordinated the referrals, meetings with parents and the matching with trained volunteer mentors.

The programme designed a system of identifying the young people most likely to continue into the youth justice system based upon the presence of multiple risk factors in their lives. Table 2.0 shows the actual risk factors identified in the participants.

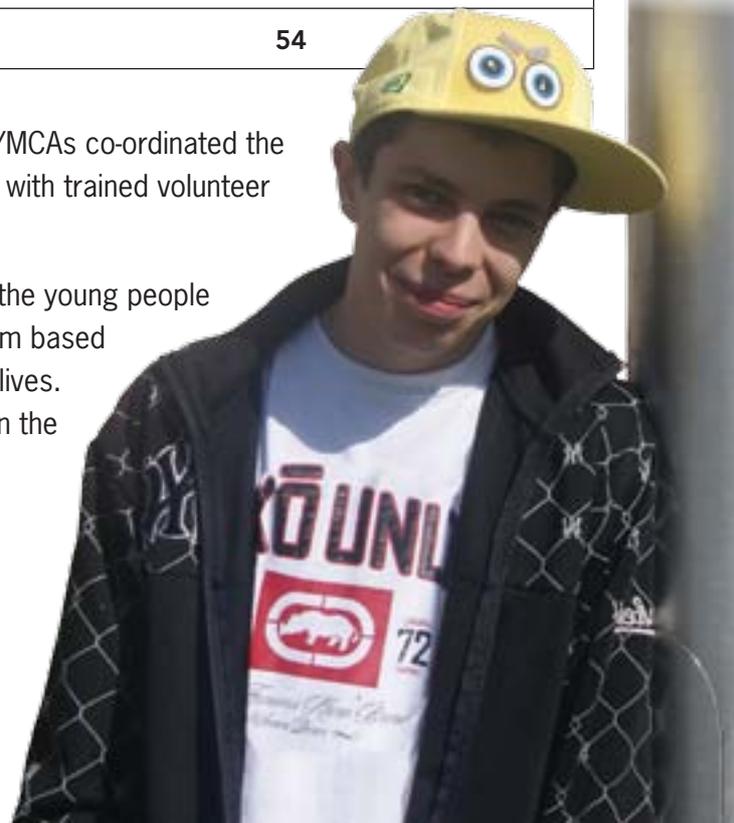


TABLE 2.0

PRIMARY REASON FOR REFERRAL INCLUDING THOSE NOT YET MATCHED					
Offending/ASB	Hostile/violent behaviour	Family problems	Substance misuse	School attendance	Other
21	16	5	5	5	6

TABLE 3.0

AREA OF RISK	AVERAGE SCORES ON REFERRAL
Family and personal relationships	3.4
Offending and anti-social behaviour	3.2
Education	3.1
Neighbourhood	3.1
Attitude to offending	3.0

The level of risk demonstrated across all referrals was high

*Note: A score of 4 indicates a very high risk.*

“Between them the referrals had committed at least 104 offences, and the majority had been referred for behaviour problems at home, at school or in the community; for some, their offending appeared to be well established.

- Seventeen young people had been excluded regularly from school, mainly for hostile or aggressive behaviour, or were on an alternative education programme.
- Twenty-one had poor attendance records, with some only engaging with school on a very limited basis.
- Ten young people had problems with substance misuse, mainly street drinking.

- Eight young people were receiving services from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service for mental health issues, mainly depression.
- Eight young people were flagged as being potential candidates for involvement in the adult criminal justice system if nothing changed.

The programme has been very successful in identifying the right young people who might benefit from mentoring and in diverting them from crime by addressing the key risk factors for future offending.”



# The Impact

In order to share the impact of the mentoring programme this section will only include direct data from the two evaluations. No additional comment or analysis is required.

The evaluation teams confirmed that...

“We often say that mentoring can only have a minor impact but this evaluation says that this particular approach is surprising in its impact at 6 months, its ability to build trusted relationship so quickly and to mark up impacts and change so early.

- 86% of the young people had significantly improved their behaviour.
- 86% of the young people had significantly changed their attitude to offending.
- 64% of the young people had significantly improved relationships in their neighbourhood .
- 64% of the young people had significantly improved their skills, talents or positive relationships.
- 28 young people with previous offences had not re-offended since being mentored.
- Assuming that patterns of offending would have stayed the same, 81 fewer offences were committed by young people following provision of a mentor.
- 8 young people were flagged at referral as being potential candidates for involvement in the adult criminal justice system if nothing changed, but they have made progress and have not offended.
- 6 young people have stopped being excluded or have reduced their level of exclusions.
- 9 young people have stopped or reduced their substance misuse.
- 13 young people have stopped their disruptive behaviour in schools.
- 5 young people have returned to a mainstream timetable.”

“The findings from the evaluation show that mentoring has had a positive impact on young people’s behaviour, perceptions and situations in multiple ways. It has significantly decreased risk factors for future offending and shows evidence of building young people’s individual resilience and strengthening their social involvement beyond the mentoring process.”

“The evidence is that this works in many cases, and that attendance levels have improved, pupils have returned to normal timetables, disruptive behaviour in schools has reduced and exclusions have fallen.”

“Plusone mentoring has proved successful in tackling the majority of key areas of wider need that are risk factors for future offending among the young people involved.”

“Parents report that their child was ‘more settled at home’ and happier, that some were now less influenced by other friends that they thought were leading them astray and had made new friends who were doing positive things together, and some were better able to put a bit of routine and structure into their lives (e.g. getting out of bed to go to school).”

“Plusone mentoring as a project addressing a younger age group (8-14) shows a high level of impact in improving behaviour and also in developing emotional and social resilience. It has proved to have positive effects also on areas such as education or family relationships.”

“Our findings show that mentoring is making a substantial difference in reducing risk factors across a wide range of measures for young people who are at high risk of offending behaviour.”

“Young people engaging with Plusone mentoring for six months or more demonstrated either improvement or non-deterioration in all areas of wider need apart from one in over 90% of cases and over 75% of young people showed this in all factors.”

“A number of young people involved in Plusone have had problems with substance misuse, normally street drinking. Although none of the young people interviewed

talked about this, the case files show a significant impact in some cases where this behaviour had stopped altogether.”

“In the case files, there were many reports of where the young people had made new friends, and in some cases, had been able to move away from more destructive relationships with other young people who were involved in offending.”

“All mentioned an improvement in relationships with their families: fewer arguments, feeling calmer at home and being able to control their anger.”

The evaluation teams also commented on whether the impacts recorded would be sustainable in the long term,

“There is ample evidence that the provision of a mentor has in the majority of young people led to change that will last.”

“YMCA’s mentoring pilot in the Scottish Borders has shown that outcomes for young people (and hence for other stakeholders) have generally been sustained for the period after mentoring has been completed – in this case, four years after. The young people involved in the programme there have continued to thrive, although this is based on the anecdotal evidence accumulated by the programme and the feedback from the schools and community organisations involved.”



# The Partners

Plusone mentoring was found to work very effectively in partnership with the many different stakeholders involved with participants.

“It has proven to work very effectively with partner agencies, using an early intervention and integrated child-centred approach to youth justice and child protection.”

“We conclude that Plusone mentoring has had a positive impact on young people not only directly, but also by mediating their contact with other institutions that are able to support them.”

The youth work approach adopted by the mentors focuses on building trust in a relationship based within the local community and without the stigma of any other authority. This enables the development of an honest relationship in which the young person agrees to engage in order to achieve the common goal of their own best interests.

This approach opens many opportunities for the mentor and the Programme Manager to impact on other areas of the young person’s school, social and family life that are more difficult to tackle for other professional colleagues.

“...the experience of a Youth Justice Representative on one of the referral panels who stated that several young people involved in Plusone mentoring related much better to police officers in their communities after talking about their experiences with their mentors.”

“The police do not have the time, nor the status with young people, to be able to engage with them to help them change their attitudes to their offending behaviour, but a Plusone mentor has the time to be able to do this, and this results for the police in less anti-social and offending behaviour to deal with in their communities.”

Parents noted significant changes in behaviour and an improvement in family relationships as a result of programme. They also recognised the positive role model provided to their child by the mentor.

“Parents talked about the value of having a respite from their child and their problems for the time that the mentor spends with them. This is not just that the young person is out of the house, but that the parent knows they are safe, and not getting into trouble: ‘I know where he is when he’s with his mentor’.”

“Parents and young people were arguing less, and the mentor had been instrumental in some cases in explaining and discussing things with the young person that their parents felt too embarrassed or awkward to talk about.”

Significant improvements were recorded in behaviour and attitudes at school including six young people who had stopped being excluded or had had their level of exclusion reduced, thirteen young people who had stopped their disruptive behaviour in schools, five who had returned to a mainstream timetable and twenty-one who had improved their school attendance.

The mentors were able to support social work colleagues,

“From analysing the case files, many families were getting on better, and needed less intervention by social work, consistent with their statutory responsibilities.”

“All programme managers reported that some families phoned them up to discuss issues that they might otherwise have raised with social work, and in some cases, family home visits by Plusone appeared to replace the need to speak to social workers.”

“Young people at risk are less likely to be involved with adult CJSW at a later date. Young offenders reduce their risk profile on offending and reduce the likelihood of adult CJSW being involved at a later date.”



These outcomes are of considerable value yet remain in the context of clear referral protocols and the recognition that Plusone mentoring is not a social work provision.

Overall the evaluation teams concluded that where Plusone mentoring was able to complement statutory partners this work was largely effective in progressing the agendas of those same partners.

“It is clear from the case files however that the input of other agencies with families and young people in the past has not changed things in the way that Plusone has been able to. The trends for these young people are downwards, and Plusone has been able to make an impact on these trends and reverse them in many cases.”



# The Volunteers

One of the critical successes of the programme was the very effective ability of the YMCA to recruit large numbers of volunteers, to train and to supervise them.

“The project.. is widely successful in producing skilled and experienced volunteers highly adept in supporting and engaging with young people at risk.”

“Across the 54 relationships involved in the evaluation the mentors completed a total of 2,796 hours of volunteering largely within a six month period. The evaluation recognised the professional support and training for the volunteers to enable them in turn to build and sustain an effective and safe relationship with the young person. This element of Plusone mentoring contributes towards policies that emphasise the building of community capacities as an alternative to public services such as ‘Changing Lives’ (Scottish Government 2006).”

“The findings from the evaluation show that Plusone mentoring has been successful in building community capacity, especially by building engagement between adult volunteers and vulnerable young people, and by developing volunteers’ skills in work with young people and their understanding of young people’s difficult situations.”

The mentors themselves also enjoyed the experience and found real value in the role,

“There is a high level of satisfaction among the mentors in terms of their expectations and experiences from the programme.”

Not least the young people themselves rated their mentors very highly,

“Fourteen out of fifteen young people interviewed for the project gave Plusone mentoring a score of at least 8 out of 10 when asked to mark their experience.”

# The Cost and the Value

The Social Return on Investment exercise completed a very detailed review of cost and value attributable to the different stakeholders involved in the lives of the young people concerned.

This calculation uses a complex process of attribution to ensure that the social value of Plusone only relates to the direct impact of the programme itself rather than including the influences of multiple other factors in the lives of the young person. It concluded...

'Plusone was found to have generated social value of over £1.05million for an investment of just under £108,000.'

"The social return from Plusone's activities for each £1 of investment ranges between £6 and £13, with the most likely return being just under £10."

The report also found that...

"Over half the value created by Plusone accrues to the statutory sector stakeholders, with a quarter of the value belonging to the criminal justice system."



The value to stakeholders of the impact of Plusone on each young person.

TABLE 4.0

STAKEHOLDER	VALUE PER YOUNG PERSON
Young people	£5,911
Mentors	£1,277
Family	£1,109
Multi-agency Chairs	£2,749
Police	£851
Local Authority Social Work	£441
Local Authority Criminal Justice	£2,368
Local Authority Education	£2,080
Schools	£1,480
YMCA Scotland	£493
Violence Reduction Unit	£2,201
Average value created per young person on the programme	£20,961

The particular approach of training and engaging volunteers to deliver the service was found to be not only safe and effective but also a significant efficiency saving.

“Given the cost differential that the use of volunteer mentors affords however, Plusone is a much more cost effective response to address the need for early intervention in offending in Scotland.”

Finally it concluded that the most significant savings accrued by Plusone mentoring would be most evident in the future as less young people move on into the criminal justice system.

“It is more likely that the impact of Plusone will only over time result in significant cash savings, as fewer young people than would have been expected become involved in the adult criminal justice system.”

# An Effective Alternative?

One of the key questions asked of the evaluation teams was,

“Can Plusone mentoring provide an effective alternative to statutory provision for these young people?”

The conclusion in response was....

“We conclude that Plusone mentoring successfully provides an alternative service that is effective in diverting young people from crime and thus saves time and effort of statutory agencies.”

“We identify Plusone mentoring as having a complementary function to the statutory services that is highly effective and efficient in reducing risks of youth offending.”

“A youth work approach to work with young people at risk of future offending can be a highly effective one.”

In exploring this further the evaluation teams considered the advantages of voluntary sector leadership and the critical perceptions of young people and their parents in terms of engaging with the programme.

“Some talked about how the fact that the YMCA is running Plusone, not a statutory agency, makes a difference. The YMCA does not carry the same stigma as the statutory agencies, and some families and young people are only likely to engage with Plusone as opposed to another programme, and so without the YMCA approaching them, the young people’s issues were unlikely to have been addressed.”

Even more powerful than this were those who had actively rejected support and help from statutory sources yet had felt able to engage effectively with the YMCA organisation.

“One mother talked about how their child had been offered the opportunity to go on a number of programmes, but he had turned them all down, and Plusone was the only one that their child had engaged with. ‘They don’t railroad him into anything’ and this was important for him – he made the decisions.”



“There are also a number of young people (and their families) who have actively refused to engage with these other agencies, and have refused the chance to take up other offers of help and support. Those young people for example with problems at school all have had behaviour support or community link staff involved prior to Plusone but their attendance has continued to be poor until their mentor has been involved.”

The evaluation also identified particular strengths of the YMCA organisation, especially its long established trust and local relationships gained through its youth and family community centres.

This was demonstrated through many parents having themselves previously experienced and engaged with the organisation and led the researchers to conclude that YMCA should continue to lead the initiative in the future.

“The good reputation of the YMCA in local areas has a positive effect on recruiting volunteers to the project.”

“We recommend that YMCA remains the key provider of Plusone mentoring because of its established relationships in local communities and its ability to attract a diverse range of volunteers.”

# Next Steps

The strength of the results of the evaluation confirmed by two separate research teams led to a clear recognition of the programme as best practice and recommendations for replication across Scotland.

“Plusone mentoring should be continued and long-term financial security provided in order to maximise the impact of the approach.”

“The project has the potential to be applied successfully in other localities. We recommend the Oversight Group of Plusone mentoring undertakes a mapping of the demand and provisions for young people at risk of future offending across Scotland in order to identify which localities would benefit most from the approach and where the institutional circumstances might accommodate the project most effectively in future.”

“The results of this SROI study suggest that the YMCA approach to helping young people through mentoring is cost effective. The theory of change used by Plusone is that relationships between a young at risk person and a supportive and non-judgemental adult are at the heart of its success.”

“The results suggest that Plusone should be rolled out elsewhere, and should focus on those young people who are at the age where it is possible to change and influence their attitudes and behaviour by providing an adult who can guide and support them.”

**Should you wish to explore the potential for development of this mentoring approach in your local authority area, please contact YMCA Scotland:**

**[peter@ymcascotland.org](mailto:peter@ymcascotland.org)**

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