Peer Mentoring Outcomes March 2020

Introduction

Inspiring Change Manchester is an 8 year, National Lottery Community Fund programme, led by Shelter, that is developing ways of working with people facing multiple and complex needs (homelessness, substance use, mental ill health and at risk of offending). The programme is running from April 2014 to March 2022.

As part of the programme, ICM developed a Peer Mentoring scheme that allowed people who were accessing the service to be supported by a Peer Mentor – an individual with lived experience of the same challenges that they were facing, to help provide motivation to people on their personal journeys, to overcome personal barriers when accessing services/activities and advocate for them when facing organisational barriers when accessing support.

This report gives oversight on the outcomes that have been achieved by people who have been peer mentored on ICM. It considers some of the impact of Peer Mentoring on individual's personal outcomes

ICM Peer Mentor Model

The ICM Peer Mentor support has been provided by Community-Led Initiatives (CLI) who help develop a team of dedicated Peer Mentors to support ICM Members to access both additional support services and everyday activities (ie. Cinema, leisure services etc.). This first began in April 2016 and will continue to the end of the project in March 2022.

The peer support was situated within wider ICM provision which included access to an Engagement Worker (provided by Shelter), education and training provision (through Back-On-Track) a Mental Health Support Worker (provided by Self-Help Services) and an ICM Hub which could put on various group activities.

The Peer Mentor model was broadly drawn into 4 different areas

1-1 Matching

Peer Mentors and ICM Members are 'matched' together and then the Peer Mentor will support them to access appointments, group work and other activities in the community.

2-1 Support Work

Peer Mentors worked with an Engagement Worker to offer additional support around engagement in the community and wider support work. The Peer Mentor would work alongside

Group Work

Peer Mentors attended Groups to help support people to attend and also help run the groups with staff members

ICM Hub Duty

Peer Mentors spent time at the Hub to help the team with day-to-day Engagement activity including welcoming people when they arrived at the Hub.

The ICM Model ensured that people were 'matched' with a Peer Mentor after a period with their engagement worker when their personal situation had stabilised and when they felt ready to be introduced to a new person. 'Matching' usually took the form of an impersonal meet-up to see whether the Peer Mentor was well suited to getting to know the individual and to build a mentoring relationship.

Brief methodology of this report

To consider the impact of peer mentoring on ICM clients we measured the Homelessness Outcomes Star scores that were used on the programme to measure people's progress. In addition, we also considered people's final destinations (for example, moved to other support, went into training etc) at the point of leaving the programme.

We only considered individuals who were 'peer mentored' on the programme, which meant directly supporting people through either 1-2-1 support or with an Engagement Worker. Support that could be offered through Group Work proved to be difficult to measure as the nature of contact was not always clear and Peer Mentors attendance at group activities was not always recorded.

We did not consider individuals who may have been 'matched' with a Peer Mentor but only met once or twice with them and then moved away from Peer Mentor support. This was so we could clearly consider the impact of Peer Mentoring on the programme.

Overview

Since 2016 there have been 121 people trained as peer mentors on ICM who have peer mentored 71 people through the project. This means mentored on either a 1-2-1 basis or supporting someone with an Engagement Worker. This works out at about 17% of the people we have worked with.

On average an individual will be with a Peer Mentor for 13 months (this could range from anywhere between 3.5 years to 1 month). This works out at about 42% of their time on ICM.

Contact with a peer mentor could vary, often with periods of high levels of contact, to periods of intermittent contact. In addition, the peer mentors could change over time as they moved on to new roles following volunteering. Across the 13 months, on average, an individual would have contact with a Peer Mentor 25 times – about twice a month.

It would take, on average, about 9 months for someone to be on ICM before they would be Peer Mentored. This is broadly in line with the model that was used.

Personal progress

The purpose of peer mentoring is to help provide motivation to people on their personal journeys, to overcome personal barriers when accessing services/activities and advocate for them when facing organisational barriers when accessing support.

We measured personal progress for people 'peer mentored' using the Homeless Outcomes Star (HOS) – A commonly used assessment that is implemented widely across the homelessness sector. Out of the 71 people, 62 people (89%) have shown progress in their HOS.

Peer mentored

No. with improved outcome stars	62	89%
No. with decreased outcome stars	8	10%
No. with the same score	1	1%

Average score changes

Average OS score at ICM start	33
Average OS score at last review	59
Average OS score change	27

Non-peer mentored

No. with improved outcome stars	176	74%
No. with decreased outcome stars	35	15%
No. with the same score	27	11%

Average score changes

Average OS score at ICM start	32
Average OS score at last review	47
Average OS score change	15

Evidence shows that those who were peer mentored were generally more likely to be improving their homelessness outcomes star scores than those who were not. The evidence shows that people went from a place where they were starting to believe in change, to a place where they were accepting more self-responsibility and control of their lives.

We have to be careful to make assumptions that it was peer mentoring that can account for this progress. As only roughly 17% of people on ICM had been peer mentored, and that it was mostly individuals who had been with the project for some time who would be peer mentored, we can assume that some individuals may have made these improvements without the need for a peer mentor. At the same time, the slight difference in results may suggest that individuals who had a good connection to a peer mentor were more likely to sustain good progress already being made.

Destinations

Another consideration is how individuals who had been peer mentored had come to end their time on the project. Due to the longevity of the time that people who have been peer mentored have had it is not surprising that most (71%) are still with ICM. This can be an important marker of how people have stayed engaged with the project but can also raise challenges about how people are able to move on from ICM as well.

Still with ICM	51
Client disengaged from the project	1
Moved out of area	2
Deceased	4
Moved to other support	8
No longer requires support	4
Prison	1

Destinations from ICM for people who are Peer Mentored

Another additional outcome for people on ICM was whether, through offering a peer mentoring scheme, they were able to take up peer mentoring once they felt ready to start to

support others. Since April 2016 8 ICM clients have gone on to become Peer Mentors and, in those cases, 6 people have moved forward to find employment.

Impact of Peer Mentoring

Therefore, one of the key questions we wanted to ask ourselves was whether peer mentoring had a clear and direct impact upon someone's homelessness outcomes star score across their time on ICM and how it then affected people's ability to move forward from the project. To do this we decided to measure whether increased contact with a peer mentor could be proven to have a direct benefit for ICM clients.

When measuring homelessness outcomes star scores against the number of contacts with a peer mentor we found that scores will generally increase – As shown below
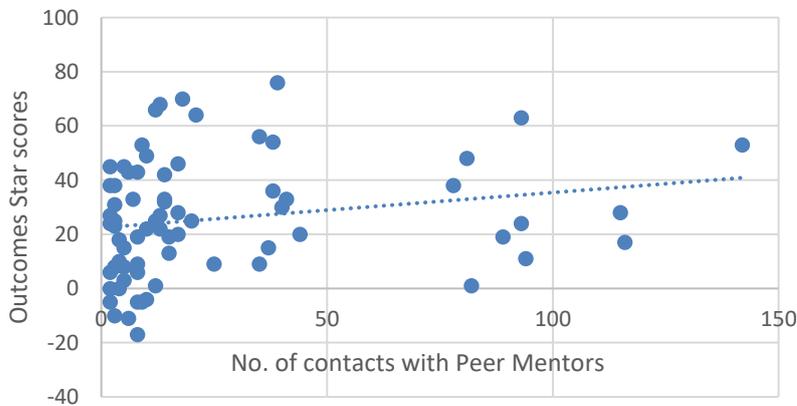

However, this looked at outcomes star scores across a person's journey, including prior to being peer mentored.

When we only looked at outcomes star scores post peer-mentoring we found that that there was no noticeable impact on scores with increased contact with a peer mentor.
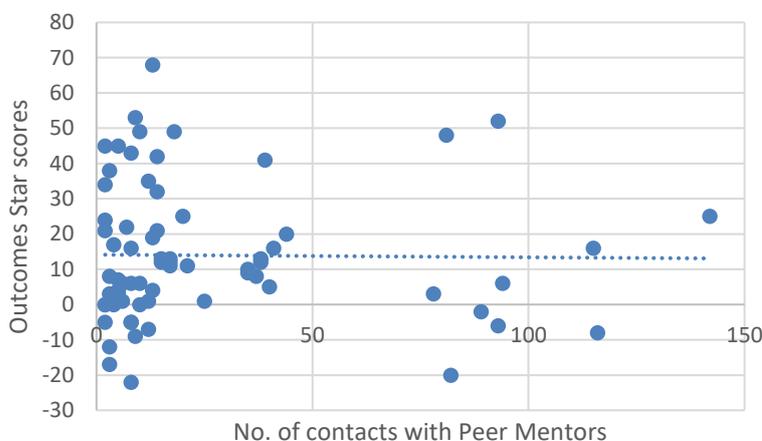
To explore this further we decided to see whether the increased *frequency* of contacts with Peer Mentors had a beneficial effect on ICM Members outcomes star scores. To do this we looked at the top 50% of those with Peer Mentor contacts (to gain a sufficient frequency of contacts for measurements to be made) and then measured contacts by the number of days they had been open to peer mentoring. This showed that where the frequency of contact with a peer mentor increased, then so will the outcomes star scores.
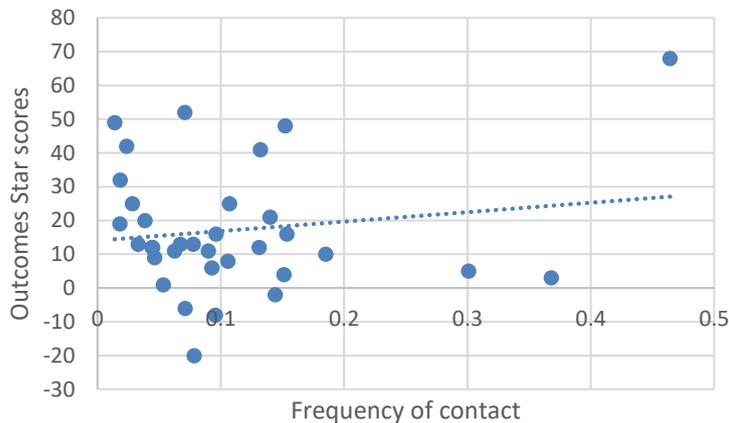
This evidence presents a slightly complicated picture, one which has to be considered within the wider ICM context. For example, where we can ensure that frequency of peer mentor contact is high, then it is likely to be mapped with a higher improvement in outcomes star. However, at the same time, we have to recognise that individuals are likely to be better engaged with peer mentoring where they have found greater stability in their own lives, possibly as a result of the on-going support of the Engagement Worker.

A 'marrying' up of the support offered needs to be considered here, with Engagement Workers often working in tandem with Peer Mentors and other staff members across ICM. Strengthening peer mentoring will likely occur when strong relationships have already been established, which may help to overcome initial problems in forming a new relationship with a peer mentor. What this suggests is that peer mentoring can come to reinforce good progress that is being made

In terms of people's destinations on leaving ICM, as we have seen, most of the individuals peer mentored have stayed with ICM during the course of the project and have yet to move on. It is understandable that individuals who have been with ICM for a longer period of time will have increased contact with a Peer Mentor as shown below.
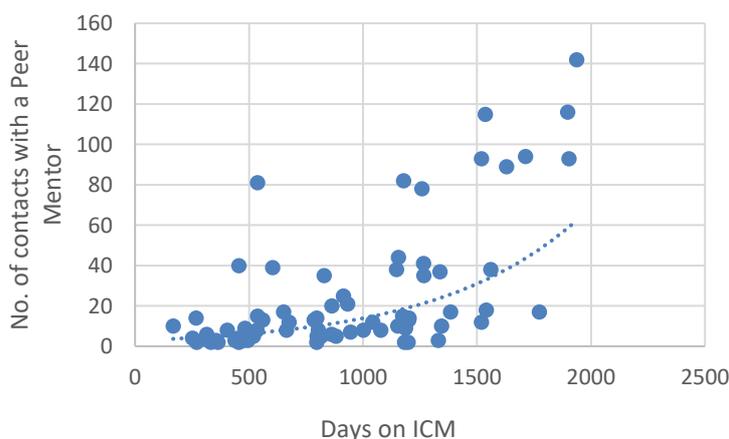
We should consider that these findings are representative of the model that was employed within ICM – with ICM clients being peer mentored at a time when they felt ready to be supported in a more informal way without the broader need for an Engagement Worker. At the same time, we have to consider that a volunteer service is always likely to face the challenge of people leaving as they find employment or simply move on to further opportunities. This can affect having a wider evidence-base to consider the impact of peer mentoring in this field.

Impact on Peer Mentors

One aspect of Peer Mentoring that is often over-looked is the potential impact of peer mentoring on peer mentors themselves. The ICM model was focused on ensuring that Peer Mentors could also progress and grow on their own personal journeys and consider the skills and abilities they would need to have a fulfilling work life. This was seen as an important stepping stone for people who were looking to move into employment.

Since April 2016 CLI have trained 121 Peer Mentors with 41 individuals going on to find employment (about 1 in 3). Further personal benefits to Peer Mentors have not always been measured, although ICM has begun to look at personal outcomes and journeys on the project. Anecdotally peer mentors have commented that, through peer mentoring, they have been able to build confidence, learn new skills, develop new networks and have greater control over their own lives.

Overall learning

ICM's peer mentoring scheme has continued to develop and evolve since it was first introduced in April 2016. Since then it has continued to offer support to ICM clients in various forms, from 1-2-1 support, to developing group work. Overall outcomes for the scheme seem to suggest it can benefit individuals who are already moving forward in their personal journeys and beginning to have greater agency and control over their own lives.

Some consideration here needs to be given as to how peer mentoring was situated within the wider ICM programme, what form it took and more broadly how peer mentoring has come to play a part with people facing disadvantage.

Peer mentor models can broadly vary from 1-2-1 'befriending and mentoring' models to more collective peer support models as is seen more widely in mutual aid networks. ICM has mainly focused on a specific 1-2-1 model, although it has also incorporated some of the broader peer support networks as seen elsewhere. This outcomes report has focused on the former, with outcome star scores being considered for individuals who had been worked with on a 1-2-1 basis or with an additional engagement worker.

The ICM peer mentoring scheme was situated within a wider provision of support for individuals where an Engagement Worker would already be in place and other forms of support may already have been developed. This pre-existing relationship will affect the results we have seen, although this does not diminish the potential for peer mentoring.

Therefore, there are some important considerations here as to what form peer mentoring could take when supporting people facing multiple disadvantage

- Peer mentoring can be used as an opportunity to reinforce progress being made for individuals where strong relationships with support staff already exist.
- More consideration as to how peer mentors could support people to transition through and out of a service, ensuring these transitions are both meaningful and successful
- Peer Mentors to supplement existing support networks, or, alternatively, to act as a lead in supporting an individual where relationships are not forming with existing support.

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