Key Evaluation Findings of the

West Midlands (WM) 1-2-1 Mentoring Scheme

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Biographies

Dr Basia Spalek is Reader in Communities & Justice within the Institute of Applied Social Studies at the University of Birmingham. Basia's research interests lie in community based approaches to counter-terrorism, criminal and social justice in relation to minorities, and faith/ethnicity and diversity in relation to victimisation. Basia has led two high-profile AHRC/ESRC funded projects under the *Religion and Society* research programme focussing upon exploring partnership approaches to challenging religiously-endorsed violence involving Muslim groups and police, with Dr Salwa El-Awa, Dr. Laura McDonald and Dr. Robert Lambert. Basia recently edited (2010) *Counter-terrorism: community-based approaches to preventing terror crime (*Hampshire: Palgrave). Basia is currently writing *Governing Terror: trust, community and counter-terrorism* (Bloomsbury Academic Press)

Professor Lynn Davies is Professor of International Education at the Centre for International Education and Research, University of Birmingham. Her research and consultancy interests are in the area of education governance, focussing on democracy, rights and equity, and on capacity development in fragile contexts. From experience in conflict and post-conflict societies such as Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Sri Lanka, a specific focus is on conflict and education, looking at education's role in mitigating or contributing to violence and conflict. Her book *Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos* won the Education Studies prize for the best book of 2004. She has also researched and written on the area of extremism, with her more recent book being *Educating Against Extremism* (Trentham, 2008). Current work lies in the areas of de-radicalisation, Islamophobia and violence in schools.

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An Executive Summary

This report presents **key findings** from an evaluation of the West Midlands One-to-One (WM 1-2-1) mentoring project. The project arose from a concern that there is a shortage of easily accessible and quality assured, accredited and vetted mentors who can provide one-to-one support to people assessed to be at risk of violent extremism (Al Qaeda influenced, extreme Right Wing and Animal Rights). The initial focus of the project was to design a structure for selection and recruitment of a suitable pool of mentors, with agreed professional daily rates; as well as to develop a governance plan to sustain the process after the first phase of recruitment.

Dr Basia Spalek, Professor Lynn Davies and Dr Laura Zahra McDonald from the University of Birmingham were commissioned to undertake an **evaluation study** of the scheme. This focussed on examining whether the WM 1-2-1 mentoring project was addressing its key objectives and whether it had a sustainable business model. It therefore looked at the managerial structure, the concept of mentoring, the support and training needs of mentors, risk, the measurement of success and how the project would enhance understanding of radicalisation and de-radicalisation. The methodology comprised interviewing in depth 16 people across the different management components of the scheme (Project Board, Steering Group, Mentor Selection Panel), observing meetings of these Boards and analysing documentation.   The evaluation is qualitative, presenting the views of participants, seeking patterns of agreement as well as debate, and relating to existing literature and research.

This report first explores **why such a mentoring scheme is seen to be needed**, There was clear agreement on the distinctiveness of the roots of extremism in ideology or politics rather than in other motivations for criminal acts.   New expertise and learning is involved. The project's value is in an additional resource for public sector practitioners and agencies in assessing risk in relation to an individual as well in the expertise needed in the interventionist work itself.

The **concept and process of mentoring** itself was investigated. There was agreement on a number of issues:
- That a diverse pool of mentors would be needed, to reflect the range of clients and to match different identities
- That mentors would be using both befriending and interventionist dynamics
- That the aim for AQ mentoring was however not to convert to a specific school of theological thought
- That empathy would be very important, both for building relationships and for assessing the client; trust and two way trust building were crucial, linked to the importance of the credibility of the mentor
- That the mentoring process should be ethically informed, with issues of confidentiality resolved
- That mentoring should represent a safe space to discuss issues
- That the aim should be some sort of empowerment for the client
- That mentors should ideally be local, albeit not exclusively

There were also issues on which the participants had **varying views**, and which the project will need to address in future phases or in training.
- Whether the overall aim was to support vulnerable individuals or to change them in some way
- Whether mentoring always involves challenging beliefs or whether the beliefs can be left alone and only the strategies to achieve personal or political goals questioned.

- Whether, with AQ extremists, de-radicalisation was a purely theological concern which could be solved with theological arguments
- Whether mentoring styles should be hard and confrontational or soft and empathetic, and when which was appropriate, and for whom
- Whether mentors should disclose personal information about themselves
- How far sessions can be planned and how recording should be done
- The extent of supervision and support of mentors that would be needed.

It was stressed however that these were not all issues that have to be finally 'resolved'. Positive dynamics and tensions should be retained, in order to continue the learning from the project.

The report examined the **management structure** for the scheme. Having a Project Board, a Steering Group and Mentor Selection Panel, with some overlapping membership, was mainly seen as having worked well for this initial phase. In future, a hybrid between the Project Board and Steering Group might allow for strategic level decision-making to continue but at the same time provide a mechanism through which aims can be delivered, risks assessed and accountability ensured. The current mix of statutory partners appeared appropriate, although the existing number of people involved in management could be reduced in the future. More direct links between the Channel project and the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme are emerging, particularly important in an era of austerity.

A **sustainable business model** will have to consider the high cost element of the project and the difficulties of estimating how long a mentoring process will take. The decision on when to exit, for example, may be on advice of a mentor, but with the final responsibility lying with a project manager. Caution was expressed with regard to outsourcing, as it was felt that local expertise and ownership was important. There was mainly consensus however on the appropriateness of modest payment to mentors, and on the requirement for an accreditation process for them. As well as providing career opportunities, formal accreditation relates to the need for mentoring to be seen as a fully professional activity, with professional responsibilities, including giving feedback to the project. However, in this mix of existing expertise and experience among mentors, the question of who is training whom will need to be resolved.

The **risks** were well recognised, and were put into four categories:
- Risks to the project (that the right mentors would not be selected)
- Risk to the mentor (physical or emotional harm, or even the risk of being radicalised by the client), implying the need for support and supervision, as well as consideration of whether mentoring should be conducted in pairs
- Risk to the client (the risk of (re) radicalisation as a result of the mentoring process)
- Risk to an organisation involved (of loss of reputation if a client committed an extremist act, or the project was not generally successful)

The **measures of success** of the project were grouped under three headings:
- Quantitative measures of output and usage, the number of mentors and mentoring sessions, and how much the project and its products were adopted for use by other agencies
- Qualitative assessments of reduced vulnerability of clients, the types of changes seen and the 'distance travelled' by the client
- Evaluation of whether there was greater understanding of violent extremism (and exit from it) as a result of the mentoring process and feedback.

The **conclusions and implications** were that the project is innovative and valuable, and is on stream to create a pool of accredited and vetted mentors. In order to ensure a sustainable business model, it is important for the profile of the mentoring scheme to be

raised amongst key stakeholders regionally and nationally, and a communication strategy developed. The accreditation of the scheme should be undertaken as soon as possible. A structure to oversee the financial model, including payment of mentors, costs of training and costs of mentor support, is clearly needed, as well as a body to ensure continued evaluation. A proposed management structure was outlined, with a Project coordinator reporting to a single Project Board and overseeing referral mechanisms, a Mentor Selection Panel, a Mentor Support Network, the training and guidance manuals, the training components and the accreditation of mentors. Different scenarios for the funding and role of a manager would clearly be indicated for an extension to a national scheme as opposed to remaining a local one.

Future research and feedback mechanisms were deemed essential. These should aim to establish an evidence base of the process of intervention, how different types of, and aspects to, intervention can have different outcomes and impacts, what might constitute success and how this is to be measured, alongside examining broader questions in relation to the management and governance structures of the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme.

1   Introduction and research focus

This report presents and discusses key findings from an evaluation of the West Midlands1-2-1 mentoring project, conducted between June-August 2010. The evaluation was commissioned by its manager, Zubeda Limbada, via its Project Board. The West Midlands 1-2-1 (WM 1-2-1) project has arisen out of a concern that there is a shortage of easily accessible and quality assured, accredited and vetted mentors who can provide one-to-one support to people assessed to be at risk of violent extremism. This perception seemed to be shared by local authority Preventing Violent Extremism (Prevent) leads from Coventry, Birmingham and the Black Country. For this reason, it was felt that a structured mentoring project was an agreeable way forward to create an organisation of those who can provide mentoring and assist with cases where there is an assessed vulnerability related to violent extremism (domestic and international).

The initial aim of this project as outlined in the business case is to design, plan and recruit a pool of mentors, with agreed professional daily rates; as well as to develop a plan to sustain the process after the first phase of recruitment. The project seeks to utilise professional expertise to design and plan the recruitment of the pool and will draw on the support and participation of partner bodies and statutory agencies in their role as service users.   The pool will act as a common resource supporting Objective 3[1] of Prevent requirements for the delivery of local PVE action plans, including Channel Projects (as appropriate) across the West Midlands region. The pool will be available to 'partnerships', police forces and other statutory partners to draw on, as necessary. The provision of mentoring support has a particular appeal for agencies involved in the care and rehabilitation of offenders (NOMS[2], Prison Service and Probation Service.) Mentors could be deployed to support a range of interventions during the stages of convicted custodial sentences, parole considerations and reintegration into mainstream society (Zubeda Limbada/Birmingham City Council, 2010).

The specific objectives were outlined as follows: [3]
1. Identify a credible and workable set of minimum set of standards to be applied to recruit a pool of mentors
2. Identify a credible and workable process for the application, sifting, selection, vetting and approval of mentors (including a process for effective oversight)
3. Identify a sustainable fee structure for the mentors
4. Establish a protocol, policy, and process for accessing the mentors and commissioning their services, and general operating guidance
5. Develop a communications plan supporting the introduction and implementation of the selection processes and project deliverables
6. Identify a multi agency selection panel
7. Identify a governance and maintenance framework (including contractual considerations)

The mentoring project was initiated in November 2009 and aims to go live in autumn 2010, once a governance and business model are in place. It was intended to be delivered within nine months of the outset, although this timeline has been extended. The project is currently funded through Birmingham City Council, Coventry City Council, Sandwell MBC and West Midlands Police CTU.   The total budget for the project is £75k, with the contributions being Birmingham City Council - £40k, Coventry - £15k, Sandwell - £10k and WMP - £10k. The

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[1] to support individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism
[2] National Offender Management Scheme
[3] P 4, Project Initiation Document, 25.09.09

Project Manager's post has been extended until 31st December 2010 with her salary costs being funded by Birmingham City Council.

Documents submitted for initial approval of the project detailed four Work Packages[4]:

Work Package 1:	Definition of the issue
Work Package 2:	Research into academic, social and professional practice and standards
Work Package 3:	Skills Requirements for mentors
Work Package 4:	Evaluation

This evaluation is the major part of Work Package 4.

The project has been delivered by the Project Manager using the "Prince 2" project management tools and methodology. The management structure that was initiated comprised a Project Board and a Steering Group, with a Mentor Selection Panel instigated later. The structures and project controls are discussed and analysed later.

2   The Evaluation Study

2.1. Background

Dr Basia Spalek, Professor Lynn Davies and Dr Laura Zahra McDonald from the University of Birmingham were commissioned to undertake an evaluation study of the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme briefly outlined above. The evaluation itself focussed on examining whether the WM 1-2-1 mentoring project is addressing the 3 key objectives of establishing:

1.   A pool of accredited and vetted mentors
2.   An end product that will be a sustainable business model
3.   A mentoring model to incorporate Al Qaeda influenced, Extreme Right Wing and Animal Rights extremism.

These objectives were broken down into the following set of broad research questions:

- What is the managerial structure to, and oversight of, the mentoring scheme? How do the 3 managerial/administrative bodies operate and what implications does this have for a sustainable (business) model? What type of management model/partnership model would be suitable to oversee the mentoring project post July 2010? How are key decisions taken across and within the 3 main bodies overseeing the mentoring scheme? Is there scope for future development here?

- What concept of mentoring do different actors use? How is the mentoring model to be used in the intervention perceived by different actors? How is the manual received?

- What are the security/income/training/support needs of mentors? To what extent are these currently being met? Might these be better met through accreditation and payment and further incentives to professionalise mentoring away from a model of voluntary mentoring? Through the perspectives of mentors and Project Board members (the Project Board will be future Commissioning Agency clients), what are the privacy and welfare needs of clients, to what extent are these currently being met and how might these be better met?

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[4] Project Initiation Document, 25.09.09

- To what extent is the local context an important factor to consider in relation to the mentoring scheme in terms of local politics, inter and intra group/community tensions?

- How is risk being conceptualised, assessed and responded to/managed by the different actors and agencies involved in the mentoring scheme?

- How might success be conceptualised and assessed? How do the different actors and agencies involved in the work conceptualise and measure success?

- What are the indirect benefits of dealing with violent extremism in an open and discursive manner? i.e. will the learning from this work enhance our understanding of grievances and the radicalisation process in the UK/West Midlands context?

Community focussed –v- community targeted approaches

It is important to note the wider context to this study. Although counter-terrorism policies and practices have been dominated by state-led approaches that have often placed nation state security above that of the security and other needs of specific communities, since 7/7 in the UK in particular, 'bottom-up', community-focussed approaches to counter-terrorism have developed, particularly within the Prevent strand of CONTEST and CONTEST 2. 'Communities can defeat terrorism' has become a counter-terrorism maxim (Briggs et al. 2006). Community-focussed approaches can perhaps be characterised by partnership between communities and state officials, by community consent and participation in the actual governance of the various strategies and approaches that are applied, and trust existing between state officials or security practitioners and community members (Spalek et al. 2009). This approach seeks to work with rather than to criminalise communities. It is therefore important to clearly situate the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme as a 'community-focussed' approach rather than a 'community-targeted' approach. Approaches to counter-terrorism based in the community often generate considerable controversy because there is insufficient clarity and distinction made by policy makers and security practitioners between a community-focussed and a community-targeted approach. Thus, community-based approaches have been experienced at times as a kind of Trojan horse for 'top-down' state security-led approaches that involve the penetration of communities to be used as spying networks (Goldsmith, 2005; Hanniman, 2008). Indeed, an accusation made against the Prevent strategy is that it may have alienated sections of Muslim communities because the policy may have encouraged community members to watch and share information on suspicious neighbours or friends with police (Kundnani, 2009). Openness, community participation and engagement can play a significant role in challenging community-targeted approaches and in developing and implementing community-focused initiatives (Spalek, 2010).

2.2   Methodology

Between April 29th & June 2nd 2010 sixteen individuals were interviewed, using a semi-structured interviewing approach which enabled specific questions to be asked but also provided space for participants to discuss themes they felt were important to them. The research participants play the following roles. Mostly they were interviewed individually, but sometimes with a colleague from the same organisation.

Participant	Roles
A (with Aa)	Steering Group member and potential mentor
B	Project Board member and Mentor Selection Panel member
C	Steering Group member. Mentor Selection Panel member and mentor to young people in relation to AQ linked extremism
D	Steering Group member and mentor to young people in relation to AQ linked extremism
E	Project Board member
F	Steering Group member and a potential, future mentor
G	Project Board member
H	Project Board member
I (with Ia)	Project Board member and steering Group member
J and K	2 mentors who mentor those deemed at risk of far right extremism
L	Steering Group member
M	Project Board member and Mentor Selection Panel member
N	Project Board member, Steering Group member and Mentor Selection Panel member

Actual clients experiencing mentoring were not interviewed owing to the time constraints of the evaluation and also owing to the sensitivities of the mentoring process. This evaluation comprises the documentation of the experiences and perspectives of those individuals involved in the managerial oversight of the WM 1-2-1 mentoring programme as well as an exploration of the mentoring process itself through the experiences and perspectives of mentors who currently mentor individuals deemed at risk from AQ and far-right extremisms. At the same time, the project includes the experiences and perspectives of individuals who do not mentor directly individuals deemed vulnerable to AQ or far-right but who mentor in other contexts, and whose skills might be applied to the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme. It is important to highlight that although the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme focuses upon responding to AQ, extreme far-right and animal rights violent extremisms, only one individual interviewed in the sample had any experience of mentoring in relation to animal rights extremism, this individual being a senior probation officer whose clients have included individuals convicted of violence in relation to animal rights extremism. This evaluation is not, therefore, an evaluation of a specific set of outcomes assessed against a base set of criteria, but is, rather, a process and implementation evaluation, documenting the process of providing managerial oversight of the mentoring scheme, whether a sustainable business model is achievable, and the process of mentoring, including how success might be conceptualised. All the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed using thematic analysis. The researchers also attended meetings of the various boards to learn of the issues discussed and how the decisions were taken. The sections that follow highlight the key findings of the study, with participants' own voices being drawn upon to help illustrate these further.

This evaluation report first explores the notion of mentoring in the area of violent extremism before presenting why a mentoring scheme is seen to be needed. It then looks at models of mentoring, first the areas where participants were in agreement and then raising some of the tensions or areas of disagreement among participants. This provides the framework for then examining the work of the various management groups, and how these were perceived. Areas of risk and risk management are explored, followed by how success might be measured. Brief summaries are given at appropriate points in the analysis. The final section summarises and provides implications for the future management of the project, as well as highlighting possibilities for future research.

3 Mentoring those deemed 'at risk' of Violent Extremism

3.1 Definitions

Post 7/7, in the aftermath of the terror bombings in London in 2005, terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism are notions that feature significantly in policy, academic and media arenas. These are complex and contested notions that have generated considerable discussion. As there is insufficient space in this report to debate the various merits and drawbacks to the multitude of interpretations that have been suggested, only those terms that are conceptually useful in terms of helping us to analyse mentoring in relation to violent extremism will be referred to and explored. Moreover, whilst the WM 1-2-1 West Midlands mentoring scheme was initially to focus upon mentoring in relation to Al Qaeda (AQ), extreme far-right and animal rights violent extremisms, data that was collected as part of this evaluation almost completely focussed on mentoring in relation to AQ and extreme far-right extremisms and it seems that mentoring in relation to animal rights extremism may not be possible as there are no appropriate or suitable mentors who can work with individuals deemed at risk[5]. Also, there appears to be considerable debate regarding the low numbers of individuals considered to be involved in violent activity in this area and whether these individuals could ever be effectively mentored. One police officer estimated that there were only 30 individuals involved nationally.

3.2 Why we need a West Midlands mentoring scheme

Mentoring is a broad notion, featuring in wide-ranging contexts in relation to education, youth services, criminal and community justice and so forth. For the purposes of this evaluation, rather than unpicking and examining the notion of mentoring per se, we examined what the process of mentoring in relation to the prevention of violent extremism might involve through the perspectives of individuals who already mentor those deemed to be at risk, alongside the perspectives of other key stakeholders in the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme. It appears that a definition of a mentor provided by a local mental health service provider most closely fits the type of work that the West Midlands mentoring scheme is in the process of implementing. According to Mekic (2010), '*a mentor is defined as a life experienced individual who has a positive developmental relationship with a vulnerable individual who is influenced by negative perspectives. The mentor is a positive influence and guide*'.

Before examining the many dimensions to mentoring that research participants raised as part of this evaluation, it is important to stress that a number of research participants highlighted that the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme was put together from a perceived need for such a scheme, both locally and nationally. This need relates to practitioners within wide-ranging sectors such as youth services or education coming into contact with individuals they perceive to be at risk of violent extremism but not having a specially tailored service available that might assess the specific risk that these individuals pose. It needs to be taken into consideration that criminal justice, youth service and other statutory sectors are not used to dealing with factors in relation to faith, ideology and politics, nor do they have a service that can work with an identified individual in order to reduce the perceived risk of them being involved in violent extremism. For example, Participant H had been approached by practitioners from various public sectors about the possibility of mentoring individuals deemed at risk of violent extremism and was not confident about placing these individuals with mentors unless the mentors themselves had the necessary skills and experience:

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[5] See Isakjee, A, *Unravelling extremisms* conference report June 2010

In the early stages of the Prevent agenda, I was often approached by local authorities, youth services or education who would be saying 'we're really worried about an individual and have you got somebody that could go and speak to them, try to work things out with them, who would you recommend, is there an Imam that we could use locally that might be able to help?' We found this very, very uncomfortable in terms of who to refer to…..I know some very convincing individuals, people that I would be confident would probably have the skills. We're talking about a vulnerable person, sometimes a vulnerable young person and there is an inherent risk in suggesting somebody that had not been fully tried and tested and you could be absolutely convinced they've got a history of working with perhaps young, vulnerable people or perhaps people who have some connection with mental healthcare issues etc. We have to be convinced about their...perhaps some qualification, about their general expertise and do they really intimately understand the drivers towards violent extremism which is an immensely complicated area of business I did here. Variously, different people are being used in that capacity without any consideration of their suitability. I'm not saying that they were unsuitable but there were real risks attached to that, risks that could severely damage everybody's efforts to move the Prevent agenda forward in a very constructive and supportive way for a lot of people and I wanted some safeguards that there were proper considerations and protections in place.

The following quotation from Participant I illustrates that the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme is useful in the context of there being individuals deemed at risk of violent extremism who either lie outside of public sector jurisdictions and so cannot be helped by the systems in place, or in cases where individuals deemed at risk may be in contact with public sector agencies like the youth offending service or with mental health practitioners but nonetheless do not have access to mentors because no suitable mentors exist within these contexts:

First of all it depends what has already been done with the individual before it comes to us because it might be that the youth offending service have already picked up a case and dealt with it. Therefore we may never hear it because they've been adequately equipped and tasked to deal with it. We would only deal with a case if it comes to us and we look into it and we find this person's issues are not being dealt with because the person may not have been with the youth offending service. Or that particular youth offending service may not have access to the individuals that we do. So effectively you bring them in when they add value but they don't necessarily always stand out independent. Quite often with most of our cases there is some sort of statutory involvement with them in some way, shape or form anyway. So if somebody is subject to mental health support for example it might be that the doctor might be dealing with all the mental health issues at a clinical level but I can think of at least one or two cases where the doctor said' oh well, I wasn't able to deal with the faith based issues', because they're clinicians. They're not mentors.

Participant I further highlights how mentors can add value to work already being undertaken by public sector practitioners working within a mental health context:

So in that sense they [mentors] actually add value to other professionals because the individual's issues can't always be dealt with on a purely clinical level. The fundamental mental health problem for example might well be a straightforward issue of the doctor prescribing whatever medication but it doesn't mean their underlying issues have gone away and nor does it mean that in a situation where they've stopped taking their medication they might vocalise whatever issues are inside their heads in a narrative that might smack of the Al Qaeda single narrative. That might make them vulnerable to somebody exploiting that. I can think of one case where the individual had just such a problem. And when you looked into his case he had

converted to Islam from another religion and nobody in goodness knows how many years of him allegedly being a convert had told him how to pray. He didn't know how to pray in the Islamic sense. When he tried to go to mosques he'd been rejected because he didn't come from the same background or heritage as was predominant in that particular mosque. So he had issues which were primarily mental health but when his mental health deteriorated his anger or whatever it was that he vocalised and his behaviour that came out was manifested in language that was reminiscent of the Al Qaeda single narrative and when you looked into what his understanding of his faith was it was negligible. It was zero. He was a Muslim in all but...well, he was a Muslim in name but he was mentally exploitable and the mentor that we put with him was then trying to teach him some of the basics around basic behaviour, as prescribed in the Islamic faith.

The significant matter of faith-based interventions and the theological background of a mentor is tackled in more detail in later sections. The following quotations further illustrate how mentors can help pinpoint and risk assess individuals showing signs of vulnerability, and the limits of existing screening tools such as Oasis:

We've had recently young Palestinian lad found on the back of a lorry, openly wants to go fight Allied Forces, wants to go to Pakistan on a training camp, looking at all sorts of things on the Internet, making teachers' lives and his foster parents' lives a misery, meeting strange people in gyms. And actually you think we need to put some resource and money into that. And I think if we got a mentor that was saying to us, 'Actually I think I'm making some progress for these reasons and that means a bit more money for a bit more time,' I think we'll be saying 'yeah'. If he said 'it's a lot more money for a lot more time' we'd probably still be saying yes. Whereas if they come back and say, 'He's got some distasteful views, he's looking at some stuff on the Internet but actually I don't think he's got the heart for it or the capability to do it. He's just a curious young man,' then we'd probably be thinking, 'well, we'll leave it there'. (Participant B)

If you're working with an offending probation you start off with a screening tool called Oasis, Offender assessment system, and it's a 30 odd page document. And you look at 13 particular areas of their life, you look at friends and associates, mental state, drugs, alcohol...and you identify which of those areas are a concern to them, or not a concern to them, but are a concern. Two different things. And at the end you score all that activity that you've done and it throws up the areas that you need to focus on. So it will be with one person drugs, housing and relationships....Those are the key areas. It's straightforward to that point, after that it isn't. But to that point you can identify, if you get someone's confidence they will say 'look, the problem is this', and they'll tell you. Not always but some people will tell you. How do you do that with someone's belief in the Koran? I couldn't assess it. Which is why we want mentors. (Participant M)

The following quotation from Participant J further illustrates that a need to mentor individuals deemed at risk from violent extremism exists:

What we do is, we do different interventions at the request of whoever refers us, it could be a youth service, it could be a counter terrorism unit, it could be a police force, then we'll go and meet the group or the young person or the individual... We'll meet them and then sometimes it's just a talk.

Participant B argued that just as the process of 'radicalisation' can be quick, so the process of 'de-radicalisation' can be equally as fast:

It (mentoring scheme) came from a real fear that we didn't have an ability to offer something on a partnership basis to some very vulnerable people, recognising that the radicalisation process is very quick and personal, or can be very quick and personal, and it's reasonable to assume, and there's probably I don't know whether you'd call it research, but some evidence, to suggest that deradicalisation is equally as quick and personal. So it was trying to find a process by which we could facilitate that deradicalisation process that recognised that some people were vulnerable for a whole host of reasons.

Whilst there are as yet no local statistics as to the number of individuals being referred to the Channel project, some of whose clients may require mentors as supplied by the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme, nationally there have been 228 referrals between April 2007 and December 2008. The known age range of those referred to Channel as potentially vulnerable to violent extremism and in need of multi-agency support was 7-50 years; the majority of referrals were aged between 15-24 years; and of those referred to Channel as potentially vulnerable to violent extremism and in need of multi-agency support, 93 per cent were male.[6]

The question of whether mentoring in relation to extremism is different from mentoring in general was raised. Here, participants argued that, whilst there may be similarities, there can also be significant differences, thereby further justifying the need for having a mentoring scheme. For instance, for Participant B is was about the credibility of the mentor:

I think that there are some similarities. I think that where the mentoring process is unique, and that's not to say that it couldn't be achieved at any of these other interventions, but this is a very specific opportunity to put a troubled, usually young man together with a carefully chosen individual that stands the best chance of convincing him that what he's doing is wrong. I'm sure that in prisons and in the Probation Service they are trained, they do know sorts of things to talk about but in my experience, this is about credibility. And it's about someone being faced with an individual that they think actually carries that credibility. And actually the thing I've learnt in the last two years of being here, that's immensely important. Because actually, not only do they look at people and think, is he credible or not, the place where they are with their religious belief, they would see the majority of other people as actually just being nobodies. They take the same view of the mass murder victims that actually they were less than human. And that's why I think the Probation Service I'm sure can do a lot and do do a lot, but if that's being done by a middle aged white Christian then the credibility is nowhere. And I think the real strength of this mentoring process is, as I've said, it's a one-off opportunity to put a bespoke plan around someone that says, 'We've thought about it and we think this is the best individual that stands a chance of turning you round.'

The specific issue of credibility is examined more in Section 3.4. Participant K argued for difference in the context of the personal responsibility of the client and how they have been influenced:

I'd say totally different, totally different. If you're mentoring somebody for say like a burglary you can tell them right, you're totally wrong, this is wrong, it's against the law, you cannot do this, you will be punished for it. if you're mentoring somebody who's involved in far right extremism sometimes it's not their fault, they've been born into that, it may be parents who've brought them up in a community or an environment where it's okay to use certain language, where they've been drip fed

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[6] (http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100105w0014.htm#10010561002321).

racism and so on, it's not their fault. So it's a totally different approach. It's all non blame.... So to mentor somebody, it's quite easy to change the views on using racist language, but once they've gone beyond that racist language and start to become a racist that's when it starts to get difficult. But it's a totally different approach.

Participant J also drew attention to the difference between crime and ideology:

But then we have come across a fair few who actually being influenced directly by the NF or BNP or whatever. And the EDL even, the English Defence League. But I think when you compare it to like we said about burglary that's a crime but it's not an ideology. Do you know what I mean, it's drug use and alcoholism, all the different things, but some of the ideological drives behind some of the thought processes, so I think it's totally different...We work with a guy in London, just outside London, and he's said things like he really thinks that there should be death camps in the UK, we said who for? 'Anyone who's not white and Jews'. So he's on that proper sort of anti Semitic tip as well. He was just horrible wasn't he? He was calling people all sorts of names, saying they should be killed. His words, half caste, obviously we don't use that term, but he said all half castes should be killed. And when I asked him why he said 'Well that would save any confusion'.

Participant K drew attention to the difference in how people see their futures:

So you could imagine the approach for mentoring that young guy would be totally different to mentoring somebody for stealing cars, taking drugs, alcohol, burglary. Totally different because you could sit down with people who rob and steal, and you can point out this is how wrong it is. But they're not wanting to be a councillor, they're not wanting to stand in local elections to be the best burglar, the ones around ideologies around the far right sometimes they're driven by 'Well one day I may become a leader'. I may get into council, I may have some power and then I can put some of these ideas into place. Totally different ideologies.

Participant B talked of the combination of knowledge and trust that is needed in order to break down a client's positioning:

I think you need a massive understanding of the beliefs because you will be in a position where they are saying things and unless you have you won't be able to rebut them or you won't be able to say 'well actually'...whereas with offending… we manage offenders all the time. … offenders have got complex needs that's usually housing, employment, drug or alcohol addiction, generally they're the main four. So with offenders you're working in quite an assertive way because they're offenders. They haven't really got a choice but to participate otherwise they go back to prison generally. And with young offenders it's about understanding why they're offending and then providing them with more positive alternatives…. With offenders, they know they're doing wrong. With these people, they don't. … some might, but as far as they're concerned they are really believing what they are saying. What they say, you know, it's like politics, everybody's got their own view on politics. You know, I think my view's right on politics, but it probably is different to everybody else's. So you're actually challenging somebody that has formed their views either from someone that they trust and like and believe… like if they've been befriended by people, which has happened a lot. Or from what people have read, if they have read stuff that they've found on the Internet. So you need to be careful but challenging, and have massive amounts of knowledge to be able to actually challenge… I think you could pull in somebody that naturally has the skills to work with offenders or young people or with drug users, but it'll take years to get that understanding of the ideology, because you

can understand it, but to have enough of an understanding to challenge somebody, I think is a totally different ball game.

Participant M also stressed the ideological aspect to the work, which is something new for statutory agencies such as probation:

This is quite new to probation. And it's controversial for a number of reasons that you know. It's controversial for reasons of personal faith, it's the fact that in the past probation officers have addressed criminogenic needs with individuals that maybe around things that are fairly standard. Housing, education, employment, those sorts of things. So if an assessment is made and someone is identified as having needs that will address their offending, that's fine. Here we're looking at a very different set of needs. It could be that people commit offences for ideological reasons as opposed to poverty or lack of housing or lack of work or lack of education and so on. And ideological beliefs are quite difficult to work with because you're addressing a person's soul really aren't you?... During the 70s or whenever it was, during the IRA troubles, the Irish troubles, probation officers in Northern Ireland were exempted from working with IRA perpetrators on the grounds that it was political crime and their work wasn't to do with ideology.

For Participant H, the risk is much greater when working with individuals deemed at risk of violent extremism, and specific skills are needed:

I think the types of mentoring that you've just discussed, particularly the mentoring that takes place in youth services, sometimes with young offenders under the probation service, it's very, very similar. The skills are generic in terms of how you would engage and break down barriers and develop dialogue on all the big issues and make recommendations about needs and support the person to move o39n in a more positive direction. What is specialist about this area is the specialist understanding of how somebody descends into a spiral of hatred and violence and could ultimately end up committing a terrorist offence. The risks in that respect are much higher therefore as well…. Most of the referrals to the mentoring scheme are people who are known to have an extreme disposition of moving through the processes of being divisive, hateful, violent and …convicted terrorists as well. So we have to be able to manage a very difficult one to one personal relationship which is also able to support the needs of a vulnerable individual but on occasions, where necessary, safeguard the general public.

The question of risk is returned to in Section 6.

Summary of 3.2
There is clear agreement that mentoring in relation to violent extremism is a distinct field because clients not only may have wide-ranging needs that would normally be found within criminal justice, youth justice and other sectors like housing, welfare or education, but also may be driven by ideological, political and religious motivations. It is these motivations that not only require specific and appropriate intervention, but may influence the actual risk assessment and management of individuals. Therefore, the work of mentors through the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme can add value to work already being undertaken by public sector practitioners working within wide-ranging contexts, like mental health, in relation to risk assessment and intervention. Moreover, it may be that individuals displaying various behaviours and attitudes that place them at risk of committing violent actions in relation to ideology, politics and/or religion lie outside of public sector jurisdictions and so cannot be helped by systems that already exist, making room here for the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme.

3.3 Mentoring as Befriending and Intervention

Interestingly, a consistent finding in this study is that mentoring in relation to AQ and far-right violent extremisms comprises both a befriending and an interventionist element. The word befriending is being used here to stress that mentoring is not about counselling an individual, as counselling itself involves a specialist set of skills and approaches. According to Mekic (2010), mentoring is '*a form of befriending by a more life experienced human being with a less experienced individual. This relationship is a practice run of a new positive experience with others. It is a positive attachment that replaces negative attachments and provides a time limited positive surrogate to an individual that has lacked positive guidance from others. It provides a positive model and enables the individual to have a more positive attachment with others in the future*'. This is the understanding of the notion of befriending utilised in this study.

Some research participants explained the importance of mentors having both befriending and interventionist skills and that the combination of both these sets of skills being located in one individual is both rare and yet crucial:

> *And someone who is either a youth worker or a teacher would have been taught those sorts of skills routinely in their teacher training or in their youth worker training or social work training because that's a core skill which you've got to have to be in that profession. And I think when you get an individual like {X} and {Y} who can combine both their skill sets it's really useful because you get so much more, as someone who's commissioning them, it gives you confidence that the person that you've put with them knows what they're talking about. It gives you confidence that okay, we thought this person was vulnerable, now this person has just confirmed this for us. Because what we don't want to be doing, because in a sense it almost acts as another filter which kind of makes sure almost for us that we have properly assessed this individual. And sometimes what we're finding is, something that we're looking to do, is to deploy {Y}… before we complete our risk assessment, to get the input of {Y}i because that can add real value to our understanding of the individual in the case. So that we get a stronger sense, not only from our own perspective but also from like an independent person's perspective to say yes, this person does have issues and they do need to be dealt with. (Participant I)*

> *It's like my background was in foundry work. so from when I was 16 for 16 years, until I was into my 30s, I was just shovelling sand, pouring hot metal, driving trucks, fork lift trucks ,loading lorries and people have often said, well, imagine if you'd have got into this work earlier. And I always say no, I'm glad I did the 16 years in the foundry because that's set me up for life really. Since then I've done a youth work degree, I've done a Masters degree, so I can do the academic arguments, but I can talk about it from a local perspective until it's coming out of my ears. But I don't ever use any of that with the kids that we're working with because it wouldn't mean... And then the football stuff that we do. We've both been to football for years and been involved with different silly things there, it's your experience. So I never use my Masters degree. I'm probably sitting there thinking well, I know why you're coming from that angle... (Participant J)*

> *it's quite complex. I don't think it's as straightforward as psychiatry or, you know, any of that. I think it's about challenging beliefs, but challenging beliefs from a very knowledgeable basis. So, you know, I couldn't challenge somebody's beliefs because I wouldn't know the opposite to put in front of them and I think that's quite a skill in itself. So I think from an inter-personal skills point of view, I think it's probably somebody who has counselling skills,] but I think from a knowledge point of view, it's*

somebody that can be quite challenging in yes listening, doing a lot of listening, but then being able to think straightaway what is the right way to challenge this which will make them realise that actually what they're saying is, you know, way from the truth. (Participant E)

One participant highlighted the importance of the mentor being self-disciplined and reflective:

But still we don't know that person. We'd need to know their background. That person could talk a fantastic fight, somebody could say yeah, yeah, I understand this, I understand that. But then put them in front of some kids who are going to say oh, I slept with your wife last night, she was brilliant, well is he going to bite? Yeah, we get some awful stuff. (Participant K)

In relation to mentoring involving a befriending dimension, participants argued that effective mentors should have a set of key generic skills that feature within mentoring generally. Mentors should be able to empathise with clients, where empathy might be viewed as the mentor attempting to understand the client emotionally and psychologically. For example:

It's understanding at what position they are in their life now for them to be referred to us or whatever, we can say right, totally understand what you're saying, totally understand that, understand where you've got the information from. I can understand that you feel under threat from people coming from other countries, we understand how you're feeling. (Participant K)

Building empathy is important for many reasons. Firstly, this helps mentors to build a picture of the client, of their needs and vulnerabilities, and this is important when making an accurate assessment of the client. Empathy is also an important aspect to building trust (Booth & Wheeler, 2007), and trust is a theme that many participants spoke about in terms of the effectiveness of mentoring.   According to Participant H:

The issue here on confidentiality is how do we continue that risk assessment through the mentors, without betraying confidences that may have established with the client. Because their interviews are on a one to one basis, no recording of any description in the interview and success in this respect is dependent on them developing trust in the relationship.

Trust relates to a two-way process of honesty. :

This sort of work you've got to be so truthful and honest and then all of a sudden when they open up and they're honest with you, you know when they're being honest (Participant J).

Well I think the most important one would be trust. I think trust is a two-way street which you need to build, you don't just get it. I think that's probably the most important thing if you want to kind of break through with a certain client. And no doubt they'll all come with varying degrees of issues. So I think one of the most important aspects is to build that trust (Participant F).

Participant E made links with drug intervention programmes that exist:

Because we always talk about drug users, and if we want to get a message across to drug users actually we try and do it through their key workers because they've got a relationship with them, they've got trust with them, and they've been working with them. So actually a message through a key worker will be received much better than

a message through somebody that might go along to talk to them once in a blue moon.

These quotations appear to be endorsed by research exploring how and why terrorists disengage from violent activity, in that researchers have highlighted the importance of not only the message but the credibility of the communicator when trying to implement change within an individual. For example, according to Horgan (2009: 149), in a book called **Walking Away from Terrorism**, *'the effectiveness of any counter-narrative will rely heavily on the credibility and relevant expertise of the communicator. While notions of trust are also significant, the effectiveness of the communicator to persuade will be influenced by the communicator's intention'*. A further interesting study to note is one by Garfinkel (2007), who examined the reasons why a group of religious extremists who had supported violent political solutions and/or had been fighters and leaders of militant groups, had undergone a process of change to embrace peace. The study highlights how stress, crisis, trauma and geographic relocation were factors identified as playing a key role in the process of change. At the same time, however, a key factor in transition was personal relationships, with Garfinkel arguing that '*change often hinges on a relationship with a mentor or friend who supports and affirms peaceful behavior'* (2007:1).

Another important dimension that was raised by participants was the importance of the mentor developing an ethically-informed relationship with the client, whereby the mentor is open about the purpose of the process and is open about what information will be passed on, to whom and for what purposes. According to Participant H:

> *There must be a very candid discussion at the beginning of the relationship which describes what the responsibility of the mentor is and what the conditions of confidentiality are. For me, that then plays out as absolute authority for the mentor to discuss intimate personal details on an entirely confidential basis, insofar as the mentor is still able to articulate any explicit serious threats to the general public. So that can play out in a number of ways insomuch as the mentor will have discussions about intimate personal issues which have impacted on an individual and they could involve things which have never been discussed in any other arena, whether it's to do with their treatment or perhaps abuse or exposure of violence which might have allowed to do criminality which they've never had to account for or be a witness to in any respect etc. All of these issues need to be very carefully protected, very intimate and very important but then it's the ability of the mentor to come back and in the debriefing to say I've discovered that as a young person, the client was very badly let down by people who he trusted. This appears to have created a personal vulnerability and distrust of people in responsibility…and they have not had interpersonal support network in their life. That has resulted in them really carrying emotional vulnerability because they haven't had somebody that they trust to discuss issues within their life, things have troubled them, they've always carried that burden themselves because they trust nobody else. Then on this one occasion when this particularly charismatic individual came into their life, they were vulnerable because there was nobody else they could discuss anything with…. They may not go into detail about the charismatic individual but they may say that when the first influence came into their life, they had nowhere else to turn, they don't naturally discuss with anybody else….. So what they're really lacking is an interpersonal support network, they need to be supported now, to get involved in group activities with a development of personal relationships, perhaps they actually need some counselling about interpersonal relationships and the value of them, how to establish and maintain them, how to make sure they don't damage you etc, etc. That's quite a common one actually, where people are distrusting of everything around them because of some very bad experience.*

It is also important for the mentor to highlight that if any information about criminal activities is provided by the client or if the client talks about any crime they are planning to commit then the mentor will report the client to the police:

The key is training people to be very upfront about it and upfront about if you communicate to the level that you are seriously going to do something, I will break confidence but I'm not going to break it if it's within this context, you know, it's alright for you to vent off on things or whatever, it's more if you're going to start planning to do something about it. (Participant A)

Because, you know, they need to know if they divulge information to you about a potential terrorist or terrorist incident, you can't keep it to yourself. So there is a certain rule around that with mediation that we commission. (Participant E)

The mentor may be saying to the client, I won't betray any details but what I want to do is to understand. So when I've finished this meeting, I would want to report back to say that I feel you would benefit from this or I'm concerned that this has affected you in a certain way and that we should offer support. They also need to be ….saying if, as a result of the way they're behaving and what they're saying, that if I feel you're demonstrating any serious and real threat to the general public, then I will have to take responsibility… So that may inhibit part of the conversation….but that honesty I think is non-negotiable. It would be down to a mentor to unpick their state of mind and their vulnerability and their determination and their intent in more subtle ways.

Researcher*: Because I'd have thought sometimes you'll get people saying that just to wind up the mentor.*

H*: Just to be provocative, exactly.*

Researcher*: 'I'm gonna be a suicide bomber tomorrow' so there's that sort of assessment as well being made.*

H*: Exactly and a mature individual who understands this, understands human beings, will know that somebody is just being provocative and is doing something for effect.*

This echoes standard procedures in probation work whereby clients are told that if they disclose an offence or an issue of risk this will be relayed to the appropriate authorities. Clients are also often asked to sign a confidentiality form at the start of their supervision. It also echoes research with children and young people in schools, where the ethical guidelines require telling participants that confidentiality may be broken if they disclose information that implies they or others are at risk.

Providing a safe space was another theme that was directly or indirectly raised by the participants of this study. By 'safe space' what is meant here is providing a non-judgemental, non-manipulative and confidential environment, as the following quotation illustrates:

They ask us more questions usually. But then once you've set that level playing field, we're not here to spy on you, whatever is said in this room stays in this room, you can use whatever language, let's keep it as honest as possible and as real as possible. And how often does that happen in school? Like I said, how often does a teacher say okay then, you can swear, you can use racist language, you can tell us stories, just today, that doesn't happen. And we've got to come down to that level to bring them back up to a level where we can work. (Participant K)

Providing clients with safe spaces in which to explore and discuss their views is particularly important when taking into consideration that there may not be such open spaces available

for articulating extreme viewpoints in wider society, as the following quotation serves to illustrate:

> *So this is not the stereotypical what we said earlier white working class estate, none of that. Intelligent guy. He's at college. I think he's doing sociology. So you look at race, gender. And when he got to the politics side of it he said 'look, I want to talk about, because they're leaning towards the BNP'. Put his hand up and he said 'well you're talking about Labour and the Lib Dems and all this', he said 'what about BNP, I want to talk about them and their policies. The lecturer said we'll have none of that in here, you're not going to be talking about the BNP, they're a racist party'. Well we know that... Now that lecturer in our view has done completely the wrong thing. He should have said okay, let's talk about it and exposed the policies as being racist, which they are. Inherently racist. Rather than driving it underground. Because now he's just chuntering away....Some people stifle people's...especially young people's views. And it just builds up and it festers and they end up more racist than they would have done. (Participant J)*

Providing clients with a safe space through which to explore their views is also an important mechanism through which an effective risk assessment can be made of the client. Thus, Participant A argued that:

> *The mentor has to learn about boundaries and risk assessment and has to be able to differentiate between an individual who says I want to kill the world and someone who will have the means and will go out and do it. We have to deal with that all the time because we work in the life business because we have some of our clients who say they want to kill themselves. What we have to manage is that serious and occasionally, we have to break confidentiality and say sorry, we're nervous now and we're concerned that we've got to take action.*

The issue of not manipulating clients is an interesting one, given that it is likely that the interventionist aspects to mentoring include providing clients with counter-narratives that may challenge their pre-existing frameworks of understanding. Non-manipulation here might be thought of as there being an open and honest relationship between the mentor and the client, with the mentoring process itself involving discussion of various political/religious and other ideologies. The mentor would openly challenge existing frameworks of understanding where these support the carrying out of violence, but with a view to empowering the client to make their own judgements about key concepts (like jihad for example) rather than using psychological/emotional or other coercion to induce in the client a particular mindset, a particular ideology, that serves the manipulator's hidden political or other agenda. Perry (1999) has suggested that a dualistic mindset is not displaced but modified out of existence, and that for these necessary modifications to be made, there must be modelling by a respected mentor or authority. Other people just being dismissive does not work. A relationship with a respected authority creates a safe space where fundamentalists have the courage to step out of the safety of dualism. It is important not to show hostility to beliefs, as this pushes people even further on the defensive. At the same time, it may be that there are tensions between a befriending and interventionist approach, tensions which may arise during the mentoring process itself. Such tensions are discussed further in the next section.

Empowerment itself is a key concept in relation to mentoring as containing a befriending dimension. Empowerment might be thought of as 'achieving reasonable control over one's destiny, learning to cope constructively with debilitating forces in society, and acquiring the competence to initiate change at the individual and systems levels' (Pinderhughes: 1995: 136). It is also important to note that the befriending dimension to the mentoring process does not necessarily have rehabilitation as its goal, whereby rehabilitation in the context of preventing violent extremism might mean de-radicalisation – 'the social and psychological

process whereby an individual's commitment to, and involvement in, violent radicalisation is reduced to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement and engagement in violent activity' (Horgan: 2009: 141). The befriending dimension may instead have the following range of goals (which of course may indirectly help rehabilitate a client): raising a client's self-esteem, helping a client to cope with their vulnerabilities in relation to mental health issues, isolation etc., or helping a client achieve their various psychological/material and other needs. For example, Participant L argued that:

> *From my understanding mentoring involves gaining confidence of the client, showing empathy and understanding and then hopefully finding ways we can empower the person and encourage the person, motivate the person, raise his self esteem and confidence.*

The befriending dimension may also mean empowering the client to articulate and challenge an actual or perceived injustice. Thus, Participant A argued that:

> *Social justice is an extremely important component because often people feel aggrieved and that can be that they've lost something or they feel they've not been listened to and they haven't got an outlet. Then in a sense, they're being sort of told possibly there isn't an outlet. So it's very important, you can't push that away, you can't sort of say move on from that because it's the elephant in the room. Therefore, what is important is for them to be able to explore other ways of getting their story heard, which might be writing it, it might be presenting it in theatre, it might be eventually doing a film about it. It's finding a way where there is. So for instance, if they come into an extremist belief because of poverty, because of unemployment, because of racism, they need an outlet to be able to say to the powers that be, actually, this is unfair, why am I homeless, you should be developing projects and things that help with that. So they need to be able to eventually have that voice and have that listened to and find some success in changing that. So it might be a young man creating a social enterprise that is a filmmaking about young people's grievances or something and then eventually a politician in power does look at it.*

According to Mekic (2010), vulnerability has multi-faceted dimensions that mentoring may be able to help the client with. Vulnerability might consist of 'a feeling of insecurity, lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, lack of trust in self and others, fear of the unknown, a sense of social injustice, feeling of being socially excluded and marginalised'. Vulnerability can be triggered by numerous factors, including a painful childhood, dysfunctional family life, racism, discrimination, a traumatic event (such as war), abuse by others, relationship breakdown, bullying, loss of job, unemployment, poverty, homelessness and poor education Mekic, 2010). As vulnerability potentially has so many different factors associated with it, this means that mentors need to be open and clear with the client about what activities will be supported by the mentor and which activities will not be supported. Participant A stated that:

> *So the mentor has to be in it and has to realise that they might have to become an advocate in some ways and actually stand by that individual and say look actually, you're getting an injustice here and actually sometimes be able to challenge the Police back and say hang on a moment, I don't think he actually did this very well, I'm standing by this individual...People will just not engage and that attachment will be irrevocably broken. So we'll often deal with clients, quite complex, perhaps a family court or court situation and we have to be able to say we're willing to support you on that, we're not willing to support you on that. So for example, there was a client yesterday, we're supporting this client to go through a complaints procedure, he's a father who, in a sense, has been disadvantaged by the school not really treating fathers properly on information. This particular father, we've said we support that. Then the father came and he said 'oh I rang up the head teacher and gave them a*

load of verbal' and I said 'well we can't support you to do that, that is wrong, we'll support you, we'll go to the meetings, we do the proper procedures and we'll stand by you but if you go off on your own and you do that, we will not agree with it, we can understand you being angry but we can't do that'. So he clearly knew what we were willing to do and what we were not willing to condone.

Another key theme to emerge from the data is that simply befriending those deemed at risk from violent extremism is insufficient, that specialist, intervention, work is also necessary. According to Participant C, you might be able to address an individual's housing, employment and other needs, however, this alone will not counter violent extremism:

But as I said, it's always a bit easier to kind of look at those forms of mentoring because they might be mentoring a young person about self esteem, they might be mentoring a young person about employability, they might be mentoring a person on academic needs. I think, as such, you always manage to pin something down as the need or as the relationship develops. I'm suggesting here that perhaps as long as we don't ignore faith based aspects of this issue, I then think a combination of the more worldly understanding of what mentoring means, the more kind of generic kind of thing but again, it's route must be challenging extremist ideology, you know, challenging it. But I don't think you can challenge extremist ideology with employability. I suppose you bring tools in that would encourage the resilience to be built. If some of those are employment based, housing based, welfare based, cultural, whatever, brilliant. That's the art of the mentor really.

The question of whether it would be possible for the same mentor to mentor clients from across three different extremisms – AQ, far right and animal rights – was posed to the interview participants. All argued that this would not be possible because of the kind of specialist knowledge a mentor requires as well as the psycho-social, physical and other characteristics specific to each extremism, as the following quotations demonstrate:

I'd always say there's similarities. But there's definite distinctions as well. Definitely. Like the people that are getting involved with, we do have some, that have been involved to different levels, with the AQ side of it, so similarities might be belonging, I think you mentioned earlier about machoism, there's a lot of that, testosterone, all that crap. So that's maybe similarities. But then the context, they're seeing themselves as fighting some war against an oppressor. Well the far right can't actually say that. They are and always have been oppressors. So I think the context is totally different. But some of the reasons for getting involved can be the same. (Participant J)

I think the principle side but I think you've got to understand the direction that they're actually coming from so you've got to stand in their corner. So if you're coming from, for instance, a religious extreme point of view, you've got to stand very firmly within the context of that religion and understand that. If someone's coming from animal rights, you've got to understand their belief and values about animals. It's no good to start a conversation with someone without some kind of knowledge and you can have that debate about things. So for instance, on the far right, you're talking about someone that would come from a white council estate, probably on the outskirts of the estate, that's had three generations of unemployment. You can't suddenly say well hang on a moment, I'm in Bourneville [laughter], you've actually got to understand what it's like to be in a tower block on the corner of the Worcestershire border and what it's like to be brought up in that. (Participant A)

It is important to highlight, however, that one participant argued that individuals who have violently extreme views are likely to have a whole host of prejudices, which may also need to be challenged during the intervention dimension to the mentoring process:

> *But it's a bit like if you say to people, say me as a white, able bodied, heterosexual, all that male, yes I benefit from the impressions of gender, so called race, disability, sexuality, we benefit from those things. So in a way it's almost like using that benefit to challenge some of the people who are oppressing based on any of those things. Because often, not always someone but often if somebody is really, really seriously bigoted in terms of racism they're often sexist as well, they're homophobic. And just going back to Hitler we know what happened with disabled people. So often they're bigoted in all, do you agree, in all the different areas. And it's not just so called racism. It's more than that.* (Participant J)

Interestingly, the issue of whether having more than one mentor involved at a time with any particular client or group of clients was raised by four of the research participants. For participant B, having more than one mentor per client is part of a risk management strategy, as demonstrated by the following quotation:

> *Because it provides some balance, doesn't it? Certainly if we can choose them at random from different places and we can be sure they don't know each other, then it all starts to reduce the fact that...or even only work with a probation officer or...I don't think a police officer would work but a probation officer might. And something that brings some checks and balances that says, 'Yes, we trust you but we just want to be sure.'*

More is said on risk management and risks in interviews in Section 6. Here the additional issue is that having two mentors might enable greater reflection over what has been said and done during the mentoring session, particularly important in a context where note-taking often doesn't take place during the session but afterwards:

> *sometimes when we've finished a session we've been sat back in the hotel an hour, an hour and a half, X in his room, me in my room, jot down everything that we can remember, then we come together and then we go through it all and then you can see where this person needs help.(Participant J)*

> *And especially in twos. If I've missed something X's picked it up, if X's missed something, I've picked it up. And it's vital that you get everything down. I can't see a young person saying yes, it's okay to write down everything I say.(Participant K)*

Summary of 3.3
A consistent finding in this study is that mentoring in relation to AQ and extreme far-right violent extremisms comprises both a befriending and a specialist, interventionist element. In relation to mentoring involving a befriending dimension, participants argued that effective mentors should have a set of key generic skills that feature within mentoring generally. Mentors should be able to empathise with clients, where empathy might be viewed as the mentor attempting to understand the client emotionally and psychologically. Building empathy is important because firstly, this helps mentors to build a picture of the client, of their needs and vulnerabilities, and this is important when making an accurate assessment of the client. Secondly, empathy is an important aspect to building trust, and trust is a theme that many participants spoke about in terms of the effectiveness of mentoring. Expression of views in a safe space was seen as important, as was, equally, the need to disclose when confidentiality had to be broken when risk to others was signalled. Another important dimension to effective mentoring in relation to violent extremism, as identified by this study

3.4 The credibility of mentors

It seems that when considering the interventionist element to mentoring it is important to take into consideration the credibility of the mentor, which is a theme that often emerged from the research data. By credibility it is meant the knowledge, the skills and even the identity of the mentor.

Far-right extremism
In relation to the question of identity with respect to mentoring far-right extremism, the issue of the physical presence of the mentor in relation to masculinity was raised:

> *You can't show any weaknesses because they pick upon it.*(Participant J)

> *You have to use anything necessary...and basically they were a bunch of dickheads and they didn't...you've got to speak to them, that's normal language. In a classroom with a teacher...what I'm saying in a classroom with a teacher, a teacher would not be able to speak like that and the kids know that. These young people know that. So when they swear at us we come down to the same level. We'll swear back. And then all of a sudden they'll sit up and they'll think this is different, two white skinheads giving us grief. And then they start to open up. And they have, they've opened up and they've even explained why they've actually committed some of the crimes, we haven't had to ask them, they've told us. So in a way, in like a group way, it's not mentoring, but it's a form of coaching.* (Participant K)

The importance of at times matching the identity of the mentor with that of the client was raised in relation to mentoring and far-right extremism:

> *This sort of work, let's just say if we're working with a group of outright racists we know that they're racist, it's not just racist language, they've got ideologies, how could you sit a black guy or an Asian guy in front of them to do this work? You can't do that. So for certain parts of this work it's got to be white guys, just that visual, it's got to be somebody white and preferably a male.* (Participant K)

In terms of knowledge and expertise, for far-right extremism knowledge of far-right groups and politics was raised as being important:

> *So these young people they'll test us, they might mention something about a far right group, well we already know and then we can say well actually that's totally wrong because it's been banned or this is why it was banned or whatever. (Participant K)*

Also, having experience and knowledge of gang violence and football firms:

> *But then they understand gang culture because they've been part of the football firm, i.e. a gang. They understand the violent side of it and they understand how far right are linked to football firms.* (Participant K)

> *And sometimes when the mentor does their mentoring they could be dealing with issues that have got nothing to do with faith. It could be that 9/10 of what they're doing has got nothing to do with faith. But it's the ability to be able to cover off all the*

angles, but provide someone from a faith background with somebody who might have issues with the Al Qaeda single narrative, what it means is that it closes down an avenue for the individual to reject another mentor. Because then it means that the argument that they might otherwise deploy about well, you're not of this particular faith and therefore I'm not listening to you, well that's just suddenly shut down. Suddenly if they meet somebody that knows a hell of a lot more than they do and can run rings around them intellectually, not intellectually but in terms of the understanding and the framing and dealing with arguments, it means that you've automatically shut down an avenue for that individual to reject thinking about what they've done. (Participant I)

AQ Extremism
Having knowledge of theology would appear to be key when mentoring those deemed at risk of AQ Linked or influenced violent extremism:

> *It will always be the case that I fundamentally still locate successful interventions on one's basic theological understanding. There are a couple of key drivers for me that if the person or the individual adheres to those manifestations of those concepts, they become technically resilient and less vulnerable to violent extremists.* (Participant C)

The question of how specific the standpoint of the mentor in relation to the specific theological strand should be was raised:

> *What I have always bled myself with trying to understand is if somebody who is Salafi is the only person who is going to tackle somebody who's Salafi, then do you understand Salafi ideology enough... I just worry about that because as I said, a Salafi who is passive, would he then be able to interact with a Salafi who's Jihadist?*

The following quotation from Participant D further highlights the need for specialist theological knowledge:

> *And I can remember the very first lecture we did, we did this one,.. just over here, there's an individual who allowed us to use a house, empty house it was, and it was a lecture that we did and it was quite...the title of the lecture was evidently was against Hizb ut-Tahrir and I can remember that day we came and the room was just full of members of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the teacher did the talk and once he'd done the talk and then it was just question after question fired at him from different members. And I can remember the discussion went on for a good three or four hours. But you see it was evident from there what they were saying and what they were doing with regards to manipulating texts different from our Koran and from the prophetic traditions.... And I think the main thing through all this is certain texts of our Holy Book, which they use and on the face of those texts they really do think they have a point of what they're trying to say. But it's not until you actually delve into the meaning of how that was applied by our Prophet during his life that you see that it's not necessarily the case of how they try and interpret it.*

The following quotation highlights a related theme: that it is important for mentors to know about the narratives of the theological strands that they are trying to provide counter-narratives for, and in this case Participant D gathered this knowledge through speaking to the actual leaders of various religiously-inspired movements:

> So *what I used to do was, I used to bypass all them and just the head honcho so I'd know straightaway that this is what they believe and what he's saying is a load of rubbish. So there was a matter to do with the theology that they were denying and*

saying, 'We never said that,' and that I was lying and not telling the truth about this organisation. So what I did was I actually bypassed them and went straight to the head man and I just asked him directly if this is something allowed or not allowed. Because normally the heads of organisations, they don't really care really. If they believe something they'll say it. Whereas the people on the lower level, they look for the right time, the right opportunity to tell individuals. See what they'll do is a lot of people on the low level, sometimes they don't genuinely know what the organisation actually believes or, depending on the situation, they won't necessarily tell the truth or they'll try to say it in such a way that they're not lying but they haven't really told you the whole thing either.

One person stressed that it was important for mentors dealing with AQ inspired clients to be practising Muslims, though this was not necessarily an agreed view:

Because what you've got to remember is that the individuals that are actually waging this whole Jihad, they're waging it because they're saying they want to bring Islam back as a way of life. Now if the person that you've got in front of him, you can tell that he doesn't practise at all or if the client was to ask the mentor, 'Do you pray yourself?' and he doesn't even do the basics, the client's going to turn off.... But if the mentor himself doesn't practise, even though he's a Muslim but he doesn't practise himself, it's going to be very difficult for him to come across. (Participant D)

The question of whether the theological positioning of the mentor needs to be matched with the theological positioning of the client was raised by Participant, D, who argued that this very specific type of matching would only be needed if the client wanted to speak to a person from a particular school of thought:

We want to be fair upon the individual. That if a person was to be from a Sufi school of thought and the person who's mentoring him is a...if that person himself was asked do they only want to speak to somebody from a certain school of thought or whatever, then that's fair enough. But if the person hasn't got any objections to that then really I think it would be stupid for Channel to put that in as a condition.

But that it is not about converting the person:

Can you admit or accept the nature of the offence was not located in any justifiable doctrinal position from within Islam? I'm not telling you to not be a Salafi anymore, see what I mean? (Participant C)

We haven't gone to speak to...you're not asking us to go to speak to that client about how he prays. You haven't gone to ask us in the month of Ramadan how does he fast in the month of Ramadan. You've asked us to go to speak to him about issues to do with extremism, radicalisation, certain organisations that have got radical views. (Participant D)

Participant D highlighted that confidence as well as knowledge is essential:

As far as experience is concerned, I think you can know the arguments but I think it's the confidence to say things. I think that's very, very important, that is.

Furthermore, Participants B and M raised the issue of whether the mentor needs to come from the same area as the client:

And the view of the individual was this was somebody who had credibility but also he came from where I come from. He knows the people I know. He knows the

difficulties, the communities and everything else. And what we've had here is previously we've brought a mentor, for want of a better description, up from London to speak to people and we've had the feedback that, 'What does he know about Birmingham?' And it's actually had quite the opposite effect. So I do think there's some value and I know, I forget the gent's name now, but who was described to me as an expert at the meeting before last, but he talks about there's only one message so therefore you don't need a million and one people. It doesn't really matter where you come from because it's all the same message. (Participant B)

Would you employ a mentor from Birmingham or would you prefer them to live 50 miles away? I don't think we've got that answer yet. And that might depend as well on the individual you're working with. So to have more than one mentor might be useful from different geographical locations possibly. (Participant M)

Summary of 3.4

In relation to the credibility issue with mentors, this study finds that it is important, though not necessarily essential in all cases, that the identities of mentors are matched to the identities of clients. Identity itself is a complex notion. According to Jenkins: 2004: 5), identity is about '..*our understanding of who we are and of who other people are and, reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us)*'. Matching the identities of a client with those of a mentor will differ on a case by case basis. Matching mentor and client identities in relation to class, politics, ethnicity, religion (including the specific theological strand), locality and other identity markers may be appropriate in certain cases. At the same time, it may be that whilst there are similarities between the mentor and client in terms of class, politics or religion there may be dissimilarities in terms of age, self-understanding, self-positioning in relation to wider social, political and other processes and structures and so forth. Therefore, it is important to stress that elements of similarity and dissimilarity are key, and can be an important way through which the client can explore their own multiple identities. It may be that matching some of the client's identities with that of some of the mentor's identities will empower the mentor-client relationship, enabling dialogue and interaction to take place, for there to be a flow of communication between the client and mentor that enables the client to gain a deeper understanding of both who they are and who they are not, using similarities and dissimilarities between themselves and the mentor as the framework within which to explore identity questions.

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4   Debates and tensions about mentoring

The previous section related the areas where participants had similar views. Not surprisingly, given the complexity and scope of the mentoring project, there were also different interpretations or understandings of many of the issues and models in play. These do not necessarily have to be resolved, but may need to be considered in terms of future phases of the project.

4.1   Aims and Goals

The perceived overall goal of the mentoring programme showed some variations. The basic shading of emphasis would be between those who saw mentoring primarily as about reducing the risk to the individual and those who were more, or equally concerned about the threat to society. As one respondent rightly asked:

> *Do we seek to rid ourselves of violent extremist ideology or do we seek to make people less vulnerable to it?*

Clearly, the two are linked together, but those people that focussed on the individual used concepts such as 'rehabilitation':

> *The primary focus is rehabilitation, it's about helping them to work through the issues that have influenced them, for their own benefit primarily.*

In a similar vein, the notion of 'vulnerability' was often repeated, and of 'support':

> *We're not in the business of policing people's thoughts, ..but we have to be in a position to provide some support to vulnerable people who have been made vulnerable by adverse influences.*

From this aim of support come objectives of enhancing self-esteem or confidence, or providing ways to reduce vulnerability such as helping with housing, jobs or training. The client is seen as someone who has needs which can be addressed directly or indirectly by the mentoring process.

In slight tension to this is the need of the mentor and of the programme to *change* that individual into taking different directions, which they themselves may not see as necessary or fulfilling anything for them. Sometimes this was directive, providing the 'right' view:

> *With offenders they know they're doing wrong, with these people they don't. It's about providing them with an alternative belief but one that's the right one in relation to the ideology as opposed to the twisted one.*

More often, respondents would talk more generally about providing alternative views and different 'choices'.

> *The whole idea of mentoring actually is to help them to make different choices or to provide them with the relevant information.*

Yet these choices were not open-ended. There would be an implicit value judgment on what was 'relevant'. This relates to the 'values-based' approach which is said to dominate the government's view of PVE, giving the impression that the government is overtly intervening to shape religious practice (Thomas 2009). One respondent (Participant C) was very clear however that it was *not* imposing a correct view, as this would simply be replacing one authoritarian pressure with another one:

> *If I say 'we need to bring you to the correct Salafi understanding', I've just reinforced the same ideology. Compulsion, coercion, imposition, you must do this.* Instead, 'Brother, you must wake up'. 'Wake up from what?' 'I don't know, ask yourself'.

Summary of 4.1

Encouraging the consideration of alternatives is very much part of the educational response to extremism (Davies 2008). The difference with regard to mentoring would be whether the aim of mentoring is always about 'challenging beliefs' or whether the beliefs can be left alone and only the strategies to achieve personal or political goals remaining to be questioned. This section shows a range of goals, from support, to providing alternatives to actually changing someone in a particular desired direction. Such diversity of goals would be closely related to the difference in the clients, and does not necessarily represent a problematic tension. Yet it would need to be picked up in the mentor training and the training manual, for

4.2   Theological debate

The above discussion relates in particular to mentoring of AQ susceptible people.

> *And ideological beliefs are quite difficult to work with because you're addressing a person's soul really aren't you? …*[We're saying] *their faith is not what they think it is. Their faith is actually something else and not what they believe it to be.*

Yet even within the experienced experts on Islam, there appeared a debate about whether mentoring was really about theological arguments and specific theological shifts.   For Participant N, it was not 'faith-led' nor theological in the sense that mentoring was *not* about conversion to a school of thought.   It was more about asking questions about sources. Similarly Participant D used exclusively original Koranic sources:

> *I've never had to ask [clients] what particular school of thought do you follow or where do you follow? But you can tell from which mosque they go to. And all I've done is refer them to books. We have the Koran. No two Muslims are going to differ with the actual Koran itself.*

Yet for one who talked about mentoring being about 'whole person issues',

> *this isn't just about quoting lines from a particular holy book or a particular tradition, it's about understanding the individual you're faced with, and what that individual may have gone through may be far more complicated than actually a theological argument. Theology might be a very small part of it. Theology might be just a way of that individual expressing other issues that may have happened in their lives.*

This articulates with the ReCora report on **Recognising and Responding to Radicalisation** (Meah and Mellis 2009) which talks of two parts of intervention – firstly 'binding' the individual to society through guidance to work, apprenticeship, education or other means of a structural association with 'others', and secondly, or preferably at the same time, an ideological intervention by a key figure capable of challenging the radical narrative.

In contrast to this dual approach, Participant C was clear that

> I *don't think you can challenge extremist ideology with employability. You need an articulation of the counter narrative, you need to deliver that in a fashion that retains your trust and credibility with the person but they have to go from point A to B because I do not see flirting with point A as the result of the intervention. There has to be a viable theological alternative, accept the "covenant of security[7]", accept that non-Muslims have the same rights as Muslims, accept that the UK is not in a state of war[8]*

He pointed very clearly not just to the technical difficulties of changing beliefs but the political ones:

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[7] The"covenant of security" terminology may refer to something repeated in the media and when referring to Al-Muhajiroon –now a proscribed terrorist organisation. It was often cited by their group members to be an informal agreement between British authorities and leaders of Muslim communities where there would be a high level of toleration in exchange for self-policing. Many commentators felt that post 7/7, this covenant had been breached.

[8] (Dar al-harb)

I obviously sit back and I go OK, what we're actually doing is trying to challenge people's prevailing theological understandings and replace them with newer ones, why don't we just be honest. ….Now I put on the civil servant hat. Me and you know…..there's no government on the planet that would able to stick its political reputation on the line by telling Muslims what to believe.

Summary and discussion of 4.2

Participants had varying views on how far the process of deradicalisation concerned deploying specific theological arguments. There would be agreement that it was not about changing a person to a particular school of thought; but after that, mentors would use different techniques, ranging from referring to specific scriptural sources to simply asking questions. The interesting issue for the future is whether the different ways the mentors have of providing the 'counter narrative' will simply be part of the richness of the mentor team or will lead to some continuing personal and interpersonal tensions. Literature and accounts of how or why people have exited from extremism show the influence of a range of different mentors or exposures, sometimes a sociology or history tutor, sometimes being presented with the range of scholastic Muslim disagreement, and sometimes a personal relationship (Husain 2007, Maher 2007, Nawaz 2007). All one can say is that it is difficult to predict what works, and that the range available – and the creative tension - in the mentor team will be a positive benefit. Mentors will also be reflecting and growing during this period and process.

4.3   Mentoring styles and relationships

Differences in preferred styles of dealing with clients emerged, closely linked to the type of extremism. Those dealing with Far Right extremists would take a 'hard' approach:

Because in these sessions we rip the hell out of them. ..You can't show any weaknesses because they pick on it. ..You couldn't put in, not being disrespectful to any geography teachers or PE. But you couldn't send somebody, his last words were, this guy in M15, you couldn't send somebody in who looks like a geography teacher because they'll tell him to fuck off out the room. Now with us they won't do that. You have to use anything necessary

This was not confined though to BNP mentors, but to those likely to be resistant:

So they're trained to resist every interaction that does not come from within their own cell. So you need somebody to go in there and just go straight for the jugular, intellectually speaking, and ..say listen you might well want to dismiss me but I'm going to say my thing and you're going to have to take it or leave it and they can hit them some quite hard messages, quite quickly. (Participants J and K).

In contrast are those coming from a therapeutic background[9] who emphasise listening skills, empathy, guidance, counselling, providing emotional support, personal and practical advice. These were discussed in the Steering Group, as well as emerging in the interviews.

….offering a 121 mentoring service where they can engage with somebody a bit older than them, a bit more experienced who they can eventually trust and hopefully

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[9] See Steering Group meeting minutes of 16th March 2010 which outlined a full discussion on the matter

> *learn something from… Not going to judge them or look down on them or give them advice that's going to be in opposition to what they need to hear or they want to hear.*

This last comment relates to the question of the background experience of the mentor. As said earlier, there would be agreement on the need for credibility of the mentor, relating to a similar cultural or religious background, with knowledge of the locality. Some nonetheless thought that the 'skill set' would be transferable, and of course the similarities in background would be necessary but not sufficient for building a relationship. A Muslim who did not pray nor understand the finer points of discussion would soon lose credibility with an ideologically strong client. And

> *Just cos someone is a drug abuser and wants to become clean and be a drug adviser doesn't mean to say they would be a good adviser.*

Those mentoring far right extremists talked of 'coming down to their level', using swear words or racist language, to gain trust in order to '*bring them back up to a level where we can work'*. For them, a therapeutic style argued against the idea of an 'expert' relationship in that it would create an imbalance; instead the real philosophy would be the client as teacher and mentor as learner. The question for some might be how honest it is to claim equality, relating as equal human beings, when the aim of the mentoring process is not just as a listening board or a conversation, but in the end some sort of guidance from a position of greater experience or knowledge or at least confidence.

It could be that all these different styles could be tailored to the different individuals that are referred, but there is a question of the background and training of mentors which would need to be surfaced and addressed in terms of the goals of this particular mentoring scheme. The importance of the work of the Mentor Selection panel is underscored here.

4.4 Disclosure

An interesting difference, related to style, was how much a mentor should disclose to the client about themselves. This relates to risk (discussed below), whereby if a mentor fears the consequences of revealing their full names, addresses or even make of car they will refuse to give this information. In contrast is the philosophy that one reveals one's whole narrative:

> *A mentor is someone who is centred on themselves, at peace with themselves and is able to therefore not be in an ego situation, able to be honest about themselves and their doubts and their difficulties and their vulnerabilities…. Creating a story place, a safe place where I can develop my own story…, for vulnerable individuals their story has been stolen from them.*

Even those who are wary of revealing practical information would of course maintain credibility by directly or indirectly alluding to their background so that the client knows they share similar experiences. There would be no disagreement on that. For one mentor (Participant F), who acknowledged that he looked very young, it was particularly important to disclose his credentials and his considerable professional experience: '*You build your cv in front of them as it were'.* Yet the particular type of project has led to some reconsideration for at least one mentor who had previously had a more pastoral role in the community. Participant D had always given people his phone number after a discussion, but thinks it is not easy now. The intervention has to be done through the formal project. Beforehand, people would ring him at any time of day or night, but now

> *You can't be seen to be flexible. They will arrange the meeting. And it feels a bit not real.* [The client might ask] *Why won't he give me his number then?*

There are dilemmas in building the trust which all respondents would see as important.

4.5   Planning and recording

The notion of flexibility relates to an interesting question of how much forward planning a mentor should do before an intervention. There was the view that one should find out as much as possible about the client before the first interview, or, similarly, there was the assumption that much information would be provided for the mentor.

> *And I suppose hopefully they'll probably teach you the techniques to draw up a picture and perhaps a way to tackle that individual client and his problems.*

In contrast were the mentors who did not believe you should or could professionally plan objectively for an intervention.

> *We don't take any paperwork or anything, we don't take powerpoints.   The first session is feeling your way, finding out what they need and they're checking you out. ….They ask us more questions usually.*(Participant J)

And of course it may not be possible to plan to provide what clients 'need'. A client may have had years and years of involvement with an organisation or movement, and a mentor cannot promise them anything, '*cannot pull the wool over their eyes*'.   The decision for another mentor could even be to accept their version of events when presented:

> *And I think there's a level of showing your powerlessness, where you actually say to the individual, 'Yeah, that is an injustice'.* (Participant A)

Whether or not to 'go in with paperwork' links to the question of whether or how to take notes during an interview.   More than one respondent was doubtful about this, in terms of whether it would decrease trust.

> *They would ask why are you recording this conversation? If you start jotting down words and they'll be, like, what are you doing? What are you doing that for? No doubt there's a risk of actually affecting the whole trust dynamic.*

There was the similar view that it would seem authoritarian, like a police interview, giving a feeling of being spied on. It was better to write things down immediately afterwards, and discuss if it was a paired interview. However, for another, this may militate against continuity:

> *For me I'd have to do it* [make notes] *in the interview because I would walk away and forget half of what was said.   And I think it's really important that the next interview you have moves the discussion on, it doesn't necessarily repeat what you said, and if you haven't got the notes of what that was , it would be quite difficult to know where you left it.* (Participant E)

A final aspect of planning links to the exit strategy and the problem that this is a funded project with some sort of finite parameters.

> *They'll want to know how many interventions you think you'll need, and it's difficult to say.* (Participant D)

This question of cost-effectiveness relates to measures of success which will be discussed in Section 7. The Steering Group had discussed at their meetings the question of exit, in

terms of this being possibly defined between mentor and client at their initial session, but it depends on the purpose of the mentoring and the needs of the specific referring agency. Data protection issues had also been discussed with regard to storage of notes taken and who they might be shared with. This, together with the concerns, issues of planning and recording will need to be part of the mentor training package. Recording will be a crucial part of overall learning from the project, another indicator of its effectiveness.

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Summary of 4.3 - 4.5

After debates on whether to try to change goals and beliefs or simply the means to achieve or protect them come the more technical issues of the mentoring session itself. These emerge as whether to be 'hard' or 'soft' with clients; whether to disclose much about oneself as a mentor or whether this is dangerous; whether the relationship should be billed as one of 'equals' or whether this is hypocritical; how to plan and record sessions; and how, when and by whom exit is planned. It is important that these debates are acknowledged in the various products emerging from the project – particularly the training sessions, the training manual and even the accreditation. The complexity of the mentoring process for violent extremism is another support for the need for a structured and constantly evaluated scheme.

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5 The managerial oversight of the West Midlands 1-2-1 mentoring scheme

The WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme has a tripartite structure that consists of a Project Board, a Steering Group and a Mentor Selection Panel.   The Project Board was established to provide strategic direction to the Project Manager and the Steering Group. It was to be composed of designated senior officers from the key public service agencies and stakeholders aligned to this project. It has approximately nine members and consists of senior police officers from West Midlands Police, senior members of Birmingham City Council, Sandwell and Coventry local authorities, MAPPA, the Youth Justice Board and could include other stakeholders in the future. The Board is chaired by a senior member of West Midlands Police, and meets every six weeks. Actual attendance fluctuates between 6 people to over 10 people. The four funding organisations are mostly always present as well as colleagues from other regional authorities and partner agencies .

The Steering Group was to be composed of designated key PVE practitioner officers nominated by the key stakeholders and members of the Project Board from the key public service agencies aligned to this project. It includes potential and existing mentors, probation service, Channel and local authority representatives.   There are approximately fifteen members with the Project Manager chairing this group.   Members are drawn from Birmingham, Leeds, London and Leicester which shows the diversity and geographical spread of those participating. Attendance ranges from 6 people attending to over 12 people.

The Mentor Selection Panel was established in April 2010 on the advice of and with a mandate from the Project Board. Its remit was to draw up criteria for assessing the quality of mentors; to establish quality benchmarks; to assess the mentor selection route in order to recognise the high risk nature of how mentors will be recruited; and to examine details such as vetting and CRB clearance. The membership comprises Chair of the Project Board, representatives from Birmingham City Council, the probation service, the police and a CAF specialist. To date two meetings have taken place. The group is considering the use of local artists (familiar with Prevent) as part of the role play exercises which will be utilised in the selection process as well as the formal interview selection. The detail of this is currently being explored by the Project Manager.

The Chair of the Project Board and the Project Manager sit in all three structures, with the aim to remain familiar with each of the strands and discussions taking place at all times, and help to maintain consistency. Project controls were established from the outset, with the Project Manager required to report to the Project Board and submit a highlight report on each occasion as per Prince 2 methodology.

5.1 Project Board

Participants were asked about whether they knew what the aims of the Project Board are. Most participants indicated that they considered the Project Board to consist of senior members so as to enable effective strategic decision-making to take place, to have buy-in at a senior level in terms of any decisions that are made, and also so as to share risks across all partners involved in the Project Board. For example, according to Participant B:

> *And I think part of that (Project Board) was sharing that risk, sharing our concerns and worries, try to identify the right people and then being able to influence some safety, for want of a better expression, around what that looks like...I think it was about getting senior people around the table to oversee and manage the Channel Mentoring Project which obviously had an individual officer doing the different bits of work on it but giving her some sort of senior sounding board and group of people that could buy into or not the approach and the way forward.*

And according to Participant H:

> *The Project Board has responsibility for making sure that the reputation of the project itself and indirectly therefore the agencies who are contributing to it is probably safeguarded and it has responsibility for making sure that the funding is adequate, that the project management is competent and sufficient and that they use their influence and competence to ensure that the right expertise, the right contacts, links and opportunities are made available for the Steering Group to progress the substantive business of establishing a one to one management scheme.*

For Participant C, the Project Board is described as follows:

> *We've got here the needs of a lot of direct stakeholders, partners, all coming together to ultimately probably serve the needs of this kind of PVE delivery for this region... I think what it set out to do in regard of perhaps delivering that objective, providing governance and perhaps quality assurance, certainly.*

For Participant N, the Project Board is there to give strategic thinking and direction:

> *... from my understanding, a Project Board should function in terms of providing the direction ... and actually, based on the intelligence that they'll have because they are quite senior individuals, where do they see the gaps currently, in terms of, you know, based on local information and where we need to go in the next kind of year, year and a half, that's the strategic thinking.*

And Participant M said:

> *I think it's clearing the actions of the project. My view is that it's seen as quite sensitive area and needs people from organisations around the table who are from a level that can make decisions from their organisation.*

One theme that featured in interviews is that the Project Board can at times be indecisive. For example, according to Participant B:

> I have some real personal concerns and worries. I was shocked and not a little embarrassed at the last meeting to find that...this is a project now that we've talked about and worked on for several months and we're four weeks away, on my calculation, from delivering. And actually we didn't seem to have moved any further forward than my original briefing, which was before Christmas.

And according to Participant G:

> I think progress is very slow. ..I've actually been quite disappointed, I suppose, really with the pace.

One reason that was put forward for the perceived slow progress of the Project Board was disagreement between the Project Board members themselves:

> There seems to be a lot of noise, I think, within the group… that's creating … it's slowing it all down really. (Participant G)

This was a theme that also featured in participants' accounts in relation to the Steering Group:

> I have felt that there are one or two individuals on the Steering Group who just...not deliberately but they've ended up dominating the meeting because they've come in with preconceived ideas about what this whole agenda is about and we've ended up almost fire fighting them without sometimes getting into the knotty issues that we want to get into. And I can think of one individual in particular, and he just seems to take up incredible amounts of the meeting and it's incredibly frustrating because you just want to get on with it. And we don't have all day and getting people together is not easy because they come from far and wide for this, so it has been frustrating actually. (Participant I)

Another reason was the lack of urgency and lack of having key milestones that need to be reached:

> Yeah, because I think maybe local authorities take a more relaxed approach to delivering on projects. I don't know. But a policing environment, you normally have them running for 12 months. There's normally a whole host of milestones set and people held to account. I don't sense that that was happening at the last meeting. Time's gone on. It was a very short period of time anyway. And I think some of the consequences of that is that we are where we are. (Participant B)

Also, that members of the Project Board have found it difficult to regularly attend board meetings:

> We then had a number of meetings and it strikes me, looking at the minutes, that actually there is people are finding it difficult to get along to all the meetings. (Participant B)

It is important to note the wider, sensitive context to the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme, which may induce disagreement between participants on both the Project Board and Steering Group:

Well, I think the biggest issue with this and it's not specifically about this project, it's more about Prevent at large, which is that people have read reports by the likes of Kundnani[10] and seen front page spreads in the Guardian and taken at face value what people for a long time have been saying in the media which is completely untrue which is that Channel and Prevent and things like that are about 'spying' when it patently isn't. However it sometimes...obviously you can talk to different people when you speak to them but the fact is that you can't necessarily convince everybody of that if they've had no other counter point to that. So when somebody comes into this sort of environment fresh they inevitably have, if they've taken on board those issues, those preconceived ideas. And the difficulty sometimes is that it can just become a distraction because you don't actually get to the point. And sometimes you felt that you've answered a question and they persist in repeating themselves and it's like well, people don't come in a listening mode, they just come in with a chip on their shoulder sometimes. And it's frustrating because you've explained it and you've explained it and you've explained it and yet you still find yourself still saying the same thing over and over again. I'm not saying that you shouldn't explain yourself, you should, because there is one mentor that I've gone through all this process with, had a completely logical discussion about it, I've assured him and reassured him and explained everything and we have a fantastic relationship now, he is one of our mentors. But sometimes you scratch your head with other people and you think are you even interested in this work or are you just purely sort of...you're just the type of person that wants to have a good old chat and you're just going to labour it to the nth degree. You sometimes wonder whether there's any point to convincing an individual. (Participant I)

This reference to Kundnani is to the critics of PVE who identify growing concerns both from Muslim community organisations and from public sector professionals that involvement in PVE requires them to pass information on to the police. Professional norms of confidentiality would be undermined through this emphasis on reporting (Kundnani 2009).   Such discussions on whether the project is about surveillance were seen as time-consuming and a distraction.

For Participant M on the other hand, the Project Board is working well:

I don't think I have any concerns, I think having been to a number of meetings the people around the table are sufficiently knowledgeable and interested which is helpful for the board, to oversee the project. I don't have any difficulties with the membership of the project.

One issue which did emerge related to the change in the mentor training proposal. Initially permission had been given to proceed with a regional organisation specialising in mediation to progress training, but they were then unable to take this up. The project manager then provided a written proposal for an alternative group of people to provide a strategy document, design a 3-5 day generic training programme for future mentors and lastly to ensure the full package is accredited from the outset. This would lead to the accreditation of the pack and registration with the Open College Network. There was then a debate within the Project Board (then under a new Chair) about whether this organisation could simply be approached, or whether the work should go out to tender to a broad range of groups and individual experts, with applications invited and this latter course was agreed. In a new project, the question is the balance between concerns about full transparency and accountability arrangements and the need to take risks and exercise leadership. The emphasis on the former has led to delays. At the time of writing, the situation remains

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[10] See Arun Kundnani, *Spooked*

unresolved, but there will have been procedural lessons learned from this episode for the Project Board to consider as it considers the next steps to mainstreaming the project.

5.2 Steering Group

The Steering Group is the operational arm of the structure, the implementing agency. Participants were asked about whether they knew what the aims of the Steering Group are. Participants spoke about how the Steering Group aims are to ensure that the necessary steps are undertaken in order to deliver the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme. For example, Participant F said:

> *Well I suppose reshape how it (Steering Group) works… because I think this is the first time it's being done. So we are setting up the whole … we are deciding how it's going to be … how it's going to work. We define what the mentor is and all these kind of things. It's quite significant in its role, within this thing. Because obviously we're setting a precedent...Well obviously what happens is we're given kind of like tasks. And those who attend are split into groups and we tackle that task. So, for example, the importance of case studies, for example. And then we sit down and we say 'do we need … within our kind of like training programme or training pack, to have case studies in there? So that we can use these as models to deal with individual type of clients or if we're having like a Muslim revert and he becomes kind of extremist or whatever and then there's a good model of some guy called ... if we have that in the model can we use that as a precedent to deal with a client who is a Muslim revert and has been kind of brought into this path. Can we use that as a model?' So we do have … we can steer, I suppose, therefore the programme.*

Participant I said:

> *The Steering Group is really there to discuss the more knottier issues about...it's really about the detail, so it's about working through individual issues and problems such as what do we want to look for when we're interviewing a person? What do we understand by processes that might be undertaken by a counsellor versus say a mentor? So it's about people who are more subject matter experts contributing their knowledge and their understanding to the project through X and for her to then probe back to say well, if we did x what works? So this is kind of the working group really, the Steering Group is where you can get involved in the knottier issues with people which the Project Board wouldn't get involved in because it's not their day to day job to be dealing with operational matters, they're strategic decision makers, they're not necessarily operational day to day staff.*

According to Participant A, the Steering Group is there to:

> *For us, when I've attended, certainly it's been around actually identifying what the mentoring will look like, what the different referral routes are going to be, what it's going to look like once the actual project's up and running, when the funding ends, the commissioning behind it, who's going to actually look after the call. Then right down to simple basic things like how much paperwork are we going to have, what are the time limits, the cost of the service.*

Participant A thought that the Steering Group has been very useful:

> *I think the Steering Group's been really, really good actually... {X} has managed them quite well because we've got prepared questions that everybody looks at and then we'll get together in groups with people from different backgrounds. I think that's the*

thing that's really benefited it because you get different perspectives from different people like they wouldn't necessarily have had a clinical perspective until I came on there and actually pointed out 'well are you doing counselling or are you doing mentoring, what's happening with supervision?' I feel we're going to be getting the support in place. So that's been really useful and I think it's been useful for her to get the feedback within the different areas and actually identify the process and look at the referral process and what the mentors are actually going to be doing, clarifying some of the key issues that are coming up from potential mentors because some of the potential mentors sit on the Steering Group.

For Participant D, the Steering Group is about providing the opportunity for discussions to take place between mentors and the police and other statutory organisations:

The way I've always understood it is that whenever I've gone to the Steering Group meetings I think from the people that are there from the police and different organisations I think they really want to see when the discussion takes place between mentors, what kind of responses and what kind of examples that they can give, really. And that's the way I've always understood the Steering Group meetings. I think it's important for me to go because if there's anything in there which obviously I don't agree with, that's the place to say something really.

As with the Project Board, some participants spoke about the indecisiveness of the Steering Group, reasons for this being that there may potentially be too many members:

I think when you have too many people on that Steering Group there are too many agendas and that's why you don't have clear decision making. Everyone wants to throw something in. And then you add into that mix people who turn up who are labelled as experts. And actually I think the strategic decision making of that group is relatively simple. It's about we want to identify a group of people who can provide this service for us. I don't think we need to know the difficulties, the hurdles, the barriers to all of that specifically at that level. I think then the, what I would refer to as the silver level, is that bit that does the donkey work around trying to look around the country and see if there's anything similar, look at other organisations, recognise some of those bits and pieces. Even have something like a risk register that talks about certain things needed by certain times. And then that reports back to the strategic group. And the strategic group is just about checking that actually the strategic direction is still the right one to go. (Participant B)

Or the lack of a structure, particularly for the first few meetings:

I think sometimes they're a bit airy fairy with regards to what they're trying to actually to get out of the actual meeting. But over the last maybe two or three meetings that we've been to, they have been a bit more structured.(Participant D)

Generally, however, there seemed satisfaction with the way the Board worked and was managed, and the splitting into groups to tackle different tasks and 'knottier' issues was appreciated. The groups produced detailed notes on questions of referral, the key skills and requirements for a mentor, and the nature of and composition of the mentor selection panel. While the range of individuals was seen as a positive point, there were questions raised about the large size and therefore the number of different agendas at play during the meetings.

5.3 The Mentor Selection Panel

This comprised approximately 6 members, with the aims to ensure high quality mentors and the development of quality benchmarks, as well as to assess the mentor selection route. Its establishment was part of risk mitigation. The meetings discussed issues such as how to search for mentors, how to tell qualities from an application form, and whether the panel just sets up criteria or is actually engaged in recruiting and interviewing prospective mentors. The panel also discussed the qualities of a mentor, the need for credibility, whether they should always be local and the need for security clearance. There was agreement that for AQ mentoring, mentors should be doing this not because they want to promote Islam but to make people safe. The panel also discussed the mentoring process, for example whether this could or should be done in pairs rather than a single mentor.

5.4 Managerial structure

When asked whether the managerial structure of the mentoring scheme works, the following participants thought that the structure works well:

> *I think that works. Yes I do, I think it does work. We won't know 100% until obviously we have, you know, like the finalised product and we know whether it's been a success or not. Because at the moment we're still, like I said, in the formative stages … well we're not in the formative, but we're trying to finalise a lot of things. But we haven't put the mentoring into practice, well personally anyway. I know there are people on the Steering Committee who are mentors so they again … and they've got their experience to kind of shed light on to it. Which is always positive and always needed. So I think, you know, the right voices are being heard within the steering Committee and that can only bode well hopefully for strategy in the programme. (Participant F)*

> *I think it has a normal organisational feel to it, for me. That's probably how local authorities work. Certainly it's reflective of how police forces work. With a... we'd call them gold, silver and bronze...a gold strategy setting type panel, and then a silver delivery mechanism underneath it and bronze being the tactical bits of what that looks like. So it doesn't look unusual to me and it has a feel that it seems to be the right sort of business. I know it's how local authorities work so I wasn't surprised by it. (Participant B)*

> *It's functioning well but it's functioning in the sense of what it needed to do from the beginning, which was set up an overview group, a kind of delivery group and I think where it needs to now go, it will need to kind of adjust in terms of how we want to have a business model, what the role is post July. (Participant N)*

> *I don't think, you know, the current structure … well we haven't got the mentors yet properly, have we? So, I think the current structure probably has provided us with what we needed to get to where we are, which is a governance framework and the Steering Group with people around the table with knowledge that can help X in developing that, you know, the skills and skill sets and stuff around mentors. But I do think, once we've got contracts with mentors, it needs to be another group that actually has more of a role, and it could be senior people at a Board level, but there would need to be some practitioners on it. Because I think there needs to be some practitioners on it because I think there needs to be a group that has more of a role in sustainability of mentors and the evaluation of how the individual mentors are working and the success or not of the outcomes. (Participant E)*

We have different people on the governance group and the steering panel. And that's always healthy because there's an exchange of ideas up and down and I think that's really helpful. So on the Steering Group for instance we have a probation officer who works in the field. So we have a field experience coming through and that would be reported back to the governing group and I think that's really helpful. It's okay to manage but you need to know what you're managing sometimes.... It's actually a very good relationship between people. It's a very businesslike meeting which my experience is that things are not always like that. (Participant M)

The 'tripartite' system therefore was seen as useful, with different skills and remits on the three groups, and useful communication between them.

5.5   A sustainable business model

As well as current working, participants were also asked to comment upon the structure of the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme in relation to the future and having an achievable sustainable business model.   One participant suggested that the structure of the scheme might consist of a hybrid of the Project Board and Steering Group, as this might allow for strategic level decision-making to continue but at the same time to have a mechanism through which aims can be delivered:

*I'm not sure you need a Project Board. I would think you may need something that is a hybrid between a Steering Group and a Project Board. It depends now, particularly now, where we're going with this. And I think it needs to be different in the future … it's basically the governance that sits around the programme, that's what the Project Board is. Now, you know, how much if there is a need for that governance? I know obviously Channel and Mentoring and the whole … well the whole Channel process is particularly controversial, so it does need a buy-in at a senior level in case we do get any negativity towards it. We do need to think between us very carefully how we play things or how we're going to communicate things and how we're going to deliver things. However, I'm not sure we need … I think it might be overkill, having a Project Board and a Steering Group. (*Participant E)

The same participant also suggested that in the future there should be more direct links between the governance of the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme and the Channel project. This would enable there to be a more direct exchange between those governing the mentoring scheme and those governing the Channel project, in order to ensure that the appropriateness and effectiveness of mentors is constantly reviewed, and to ensure an appropriate exit strategy for mentors:

And one of those options, it may be a mentor, so, for somebody like X to have that central-regional with other Channel Coordinators' overview, and ownership and understanding of actually which mentors are being used for what and to be able to say to somebody 'actually the mentors that we've got don't quite fit with what we need can we change it slightly'...I think there needs to be, definitely be an interface between whatever group there is with the Channel Coordinators...So I'm not sure what the exit strategy is for managing the contract with the Mediators. But you would need that, because actually what could be happening is we could pay a Mediator (mentor) and the outcomes could be rubbish. And the young person's actually going more into extremism than they were before. So, unless we're monitoring that we just wouldn't know. (Participant E)

A proposed model for the future management structure is given in the conclusion, which shows the possible reciprocal links to Channel. However, there is not a single, Channel

project that is coterminous with the 1-2-1 scheme, and relationships will need to be reviewed in the future – particularly in the light of funding for Channel. According to Participant H a sustainable business model might be thought of as consisting of an accredited, credible, ongoing public service that provides vulnerable individuals deemed at risk of violent extremism with suitable and appropriate mentors. At the same time, the sustainability is about ensuring that contributing agencies understand their financial and other commitments. Safeguarding in the delivery of public services is key:

> *We effectively had a concept for a service, we recognised that this was an intervention which a number of agencies were seeking to access but needed reassurance that it was a credible, accredited and to some extent, a vetted public service because the vulnerability of the people who would be accessing the services, in the same way that we safeguard all other aspects of delivering public services to vulnerable people, we needed the same public sector safeguards. So the project was about establishing good working practices that would help us to identify, select ... along with some practical operating guidance for the individuals who would be given the opportunity to provide these services. But to ensure that those services would be sustainable, there needed to be a very clear business model which would allow contributing agencies to understand their commitments in terms of finances and resources and what the implications would be to sustain the interest of qualified, accredited and vetted mentors. So what we needed to identify was an acceptable set of arrangements, very similar to perhaps arrangements that you would see in the public sector around employing interpreters. If you use an academic, want to interpret somebody who speaks a language you don't understand, you will go to a list of registered interpreters who have been checked on their qualifications, they're ability to provide the service. You will know when you employ them how much it's going to cost, how much does it cost in terms of ... their travelling expenses, their hotel accommodation so that you will be able to confidently predict what the implications of using that service are. It is all the more important in a multi agency where we have to look a service and say is this a service which has got to offer value for money, is going to be efficient, economic, effective in all senses and therefore, we can be reassured that we will be able to sustain this service for the medium to long term at least and that this won't be a flash in the pan project, which whilst being a good idea, having a good manual of guidance in the world of business and sustainability in the public sector was unsustainable. That's, if you like, one of the big risks for the project, that you create something which can't justify itself in business terms ultimately.*

Participants were asked about what needs to be between June and July in order to ensure that a sustainable business model for the mentoring scheme is achieved. One theme that arose is that the accreditation of the scheme needs to begin.

> *The most important piece of work is commissioning a consultant who understands the process of developing standards for accreditation in the form of operational guidance.* (Participant H)

> *We need the accreditation to start. (Participant F)*

Related concerns were around evaluation and monitoring:

> *I mean the only bit that's left around it is evaluating that scheme and keeping an eye on it. It's not a full time job…if you set it up in a sustainable way in that the mechanisms for accessing mentors is enough that it doesn't require somebody full time to sit there to be the gateway into it…. And actually it's about that evaluation and scrutiny of how it's working. So I don't think about outsourcing or commissioning*

anybody else.. I think the guy from Birmingham, actually, at the last Steering Group, I can't remember his name, but I think he sort of says 'oh, you know, we can take on some of this after'. So I wouldn't have a problem with any of that. As long as I was confident that the Mentoring Scheme was being evaluated based on the criteria that was set by the Steering Group and the Boards, you know, and being communicated back to a multi-agency/multi-geography group, if you like, that have an understanding of where it was going, how it was working or not. Then I wouldn't have a problem with that at all. (Participant E)

… so our main aim now is just to kind of … to finalise this programme… . And we're going to have to stop it sometime. Once we've kind of set on something we're just going to have to go with it. No doubt we'll probably have to review a few things because it's the first time we're doing this. And if that is the case then perhaps we'll need to call the Steering Committee again. (Participants J/ K).

While the above quotations imply a finite set of tasks that would not require massive managerial inputs, a different view was that there was still a long way to go, specifically in the creation of the viable pool of mentors:

I think there's an awful lot of work that still needs to be done to be in a position where … particularly if, you know, if our point of this setting up phase is actually to have that pool of mentors and to then be ready for when the first vulnerable individual is referred, to be able to actually send somebody to that, you know, to work with that person. I think we're still a long way from that.. I think we have a number of mentors that are … have shown an interest, a small number. I think less than 20 I think is the last I saw. But actually to get to a point where we have all the support networks in place that we have gone through process with the mentor in terms of establishing what the mentoring process itself is and what the expectations of them are, I still think we're quite a way from that. Whether we can do that in the next 8-10 weeks I guess, for me, would seem like a mountain to climb really. Well I think we do need to have that pool. Now that pool can be a small pool to start with. It doesn't have to be a particular size. We can run with what we've got. If the diversity is right. But, you know, we've got to have the support network. We need to know who it is that they would report to, how they can control a situation, manage a situation, what to do to get out of a situation. I don't think we have that in place yet. And I certainly don't think that we … if we were to send a mentor off to go and do some mentoring now, to actually be in a position where we could honestly say that that mentoring episode was going well. (Participant G)

The need for a support network for mentors is strongly stressed here. A different question is the future structures related to regional or national frameworks:

I think there's two things: one is you've got a regional structure which will be, I guess it sits side by side with Channel and it just kind of becomes enmeshed within that. The second aspect would be what happens if it becomes bigger than just a region and should it differ from that structure? It probably shouldn't in the sense of it's a regionally led programme. (Participant N)

For the mentoring scheme to become a sustainable business model, one participant highlighted the importance of raising awareness that such a scheme operates amongst key stakeholders who are encountering individuals deemed at risk from violent extremism:

I think if we have a stage two in terms of where does it go after July or even after December, one of the things that we touched on was the actual project is only as good as the referrals that we're going to get and if there's no need for it, why are we

actually setting something up. I think the need will come probably from your individuals who are doing your referral work back in all these areas. So again, if the senior individuals haven't translated this down into their organisations, it's no use just having the Channel leads being aware of it. For example, I met someone from Sandwell who's doing a lot of right wing intervention so they come across the real cases. I think if these individuals are made aware of something that's being set up, how it's kind of user led, it kind of breaks a lot of the ice that they've got locally. She was just like, this is brilliant, the concept of it and how we could kind of...it reassures them that if things are going wrong, we've got something that we can actually refer onto as well. So I think there's that element, I need to plan that in somewhere.... For example, the conversation I'm having with Home Office and with CLG, I would call that the softer PR in the sense of well if we're moving beyond July, we've got to have these conversations now. (Participant N)

Summary of 5.1 - 5.5

This study's findings highlight that achieving a sustainable business model for the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme is essential if the scheme is to have an effective future. A sustainable business model might be thought of as consisting of an accredited, credible, ongoing public service that provides vulnerable individuals deemed at risk of violent extremism with suitable and appropriate mentors. In the future, the managerial structure of the scheme may need to be rationalised so that the new structure consists of a hybrid between the Project Board and Steering Group, which might allow for strategic level decision-making to continue but at the same time to have a mechanism through which aims can be delivered and risks assessed. More direct links between the Channel project and the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme are emerging, particularly important in an era of austerity. Nonetheless, with the disestablishment of the regional Channel project post, this will present particular challenges for the WM1-2-1 mentoring scheme if seeking to develop closer links with Channel. Moreover, whichever managerial structure is in place, it will be important to develop the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme and provide or apply for funding to maintain training costs, development and so on. If the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme grows and even develops into a national scheme then there will be a need to look at a sustainable model through top-slicing for each intervention to provide funding for management and development. Initially, funding might come from the OSCT for a full time national manager. If the mentoring scheme remains specific to the West Midlands then there will be the need for a manager, part-time or to fall under the responsibility of the existing role. Funding will have to be found locally here.

5.6   Outsourcing

When asked about whether the management of the mentoring scheme should be outsourced so that it is no longer managed by the Project Board and Steering Group, it seems that those participants who responded to this question argued that whilst mentoring itself could be outsourced, the actual managerial oversight should be kept within the local authority. Participant A argued that outsourcing of the managerial structure is not the issue, rather that what matters is that the actual mentoring draws upon the skills and experiences of individuals locally who are already mentoring:

I think there's often a habit of big local authorities to sort of buy in to various national consultants and things and actually not looking at your local skills. Birmingham has a lot of that local skill because it's been doing it for a very, very long time. ,[But] they're not necessarily going around and got nice brochures and marketing it. I think what happens is a lot of the big consultancy organisations see the agendas coming on and then they market specifically those things. Actually, what often happens is they end

up not being able to do it and they actually end up then subcontracting or going to local ones who can do it, what actually means you're not making that local direct kind of link. So it's a bit like cutting out the middle person for doing that and also, the importance of that is that is important in the long term because that builds up the infrastructure.

Similarly, Participant C argued that:

The argument suggests therefore that perhaps if specialisms in and around some of these areas exist in a third sector capacity or whatever, I don't see that as a problem for the authority, for the overall governance and I think that that's something they could consider. Ownership, we know where ownership rests, delivery is a different issue all together so yeah, I think they should. I doubt, in what I've seen so far, that specialist knowledge, expertise, understanding, the sensitivities, the nuances, I'm not sure currently, in the set up we've got here, that that's well catered for. So outsourcing could be a realistic way to perhaps bring that in.

Participant M cautioned that any outsourcing that is done should not only be able to cut costs:

But I just think that we need to be cautious that we have the right people doing it and I think sometimes outsourcing is about saving money and I think complex problems are not always saved on that basis, that's my personal view.

5.7 Professionalisation

Part of a business model would be the remuneration for mentors and their accreditation. Participant H alluded to this above when he talked of a model that was precise on how much services were going to cost.

Participant B talked of impressive individuals he had met who had offered to do the work for nothing because they saw the danger posed to their communities, to their religion or to their relatives. Also, they could get higher standing in their communities from doing the work. Yet people had very specific skills and B recognized that '*we may have to pay for that*'.

And I don't think people would desperately disagree with paying people for that, especially when you think of what you might be preventing for the sake of a few pounds.

Participant N thought people would need to be paid '*because we're asking people to do something very, very difficult. People can't pay their wages because of conviction*'. It was also about valuing people, and paying them as a transaction, with expectation of gaining back something from it. Similarly, I thought '*if you're being paid professionally there's a professional responsibility*'. For Participant F, pay and accreditation were linked to the question of credibility, as well as making the mentor take it seriously and '*stick to the call*'.

Participant D on the other hand was uneasy about payment, having always done mentoring on a voluntary basis. That '*brings out the sincerity in people*'. He was concerned that when there was money involved, '*you've got people that are pushing you for exit*'.

If I had to explain to a client that I'm being paid to sit here, that would be a difficult concept to explain. …We believe that in the Koran that all the prophets, whenever they came and they advised people…the prophets used to come and say we don't

want any physical wealth from you. All we've come is to deliver a message from God. And generally, for a Muslim that should be the way.

He acknowledged however, for some people it would be a job and they would need payment.

There was agreement from all that the payment should not be excessive, especially with the history of money being made out of Prevent funding.

Accreditation was also agreed on, for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was the need for 'nurturing' people over a number of years and '*to give them a reason to want to work with us other than just money'* (Participant I) This linked for Participant L to providing transferable skills and the need for evidence of training, which mentors could use in another aspect of their career if they wanted to.

And to make it worthwhile and effectively give us some robustness back so that we know that the people we work with are good. But accreditation and training shouldn't be a substitute for good selection.

Summary of 5.6-5.7
With regard to outsourcing, there was some caution expressed. Local expertise and experience should be acknowledged and valued, in contrast to the marketing skills of big consultancy firms who would wish to undertake the work. Management should also be locally owned. The implication is that outsourcing would occur only in delivery, and then only when a particular expertise needed to be bought in. There was mainly agreement among participants however on the appropriateness of modest payment to mentors, and agreement too on the requirement for an accreditation process for them. This linked to recognition of the need for mentoring to be seen as a fully professional activity, with professional responsibilities. However, in this mix of existing expertise and experience among mentors, the question of who is training whom will need to be resolved.

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6   Risk

A key part of any new initiative or intervention is a risk assessment, but this mentoring project throws up very specific and difficult issues around risk, tackled here under four headings - although they all overlap and come together in any final assessment. The particular question of whether a risk to society has been mitigated as a result of the project is also tackled in the next section under 'Measures of Success'. A Risk Log or register had been drawn up by the Project Manager which highlighted delays on the work packages, delays on the accreditation package, risks to project reputation through adverse media attention and risks relating to the quality of mentors selected. This section outlines four types of risk identified by the participants: to the project, to the mentors, to the clients and to organisations.

6.1   Risk to the project

The risk to the project and its delivery is seen to hang mostly around getting the right mentors in order to ensure at worst that no further harm is done and at best the risk to society is lessened. For this, the various boards and Steering Group 'fall back' on safety procedures, in the sense of maximising familiarity with the potential mentor. This means the

use by the Mentor Selection Panel of extensive application forms, interviews and other formal and informal means to ensure suitable people are recruited. In a sense, the whole project and its complicated management structure has been initiated in order to mitigate risk around what could otherwise be more random or fragmented attempts to engage with those deemed vulnerable to violent radicalisation.

The project is actually about mitigating risk, the quality aspect that sits into the mentor selection panel. Participant (N)

Questions of responsibility are keenly felt: As Participant H said,

We've got to take some responsibility because if we don't and that person goes on to do something terrible we are going to be bitten very, very badly.

A wide acknowledgement of risk is therefore seen to be required:

There's a risk log, but it's more around production of the workstreams or completion of the workstreams rather than those sort of reputational type risks if we were to get it wrong (Participant G)

Hence there was felt to be the need for information coming back to the project, not overstepping the mark in terms of confidentiality uses, but making sure that the directions taken by a mentor are appropriate:

I also think that there is a risk that what you will inevitably end up having, because the threat is ideological, if the mentor isn't the right individual the discussion they're going to have won't be about football, it won't be about where they are going on holiday, will it? It will be a conversation about ideology. …And my fear is unless the mentor has got the skills to be able to handle confrontation ...

If mentor is not succeeding there has to be a point where a decision can be taken to actually put a stop to that particular episode of mentoring. Mentors need to know how to extricate themselves from a situation, from a flashpoint really (Participant G).

This important question of exit strategies is returned to in the discussion of supervision of mentors below.

6.2   Risk to the mentor

Personal and physical risks to the mentor had been outlined in the manual being prepared by Zubeda Limbada and discussed in the Steering Group. They were recognised by all participants. Physical risk might occur during the interview process:

There are physical risks in relation to the actual points of the 121 relationship, where they're meeting, what the access to items that could be used as weapons are etc, what's the current state of mind of the individual they're being asked to speak to (Participant H).

There was mention of the use of video or panic buttons as well as basic rules such as not putting the client between yourself and the door. All these techniques will need to be outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures.

This related to discussions of whether pairs of mentors would provide greater safety. As E said,

We'd never put somebody on their own in a room with somebody else that could potentially be violent.

Participants J and K thought it

vital that you're always in pairs. Because of the nature of extremism. Some of these people are violent. And they can turn, they might get upset with whatever you're saying or in a way you might be dissing them because of their beliefs. …if there's two of us at least one of us is always watching the body language. And we take it in turns.

They drew attention to the convention of having two people in family interventions, and Participant J also drew parallels with

Social workers as well. You don't go in on your own. Not in certain...if they're going to remove children or whatever. They don't go on their own, never. They go in twos, often a police officer attends.

Participant H recalled times when a mentor and client organised supervised meetings because the risks were such that the mentor was concerned about the individual, and therefore a police officer sat in the corner doing paperwork. It might be felt that this would hinder the confidentiality, or the relationship that was built up, but Participant H thought not. '*It did work, it was not an issue. We don't understand fully what works and what doesn't work and we need to capture our understanding*'.

However, the physical risk did not necessarily end at the termination of the interview. There was awareness that the client could be part of a much larger set of networks:

Potentially you could get yourself out-foxed by the client. And you come across loads of issues yourself that you didn't enter the room with. You could potentially put yourself in harm's way if this person is high rank within a group and ..your cover gets blown……If it's just a case of having some kind of emotional issue, you can probably distance yourself from it and then that's it, it's gone. But if the threat is 'listen, I know where you live' and all this kind of stuff, then that's obviously a bigger problem. (Participant F)

There was also an interesting disparity among respondents in terms of the possible psychological risk for a mentor, and whether mentors themselves would need support. (A mentor support group was to be one of the aspects of the new structure for the future) Participant E interestingly did not think a mentor might need emotional/psychological support, on the grounds that they were professional people who were being paid to cope:

I would doubt that. Not when we're paying them to do the job. I don't think it's our responsibility to be totally honest. If we've commissioned an organisation…I think it's down to that organisation to provide that for their workers. And if they're independent, they're independent, aren't they?

But far more respondents felt there would be a need for supervision and support. Participants J and K put their finger on the difference between this and other forms of mentoring or counselling:

It's a 100% more risky than being a probation officer. Because again probation, you're doing a job. But you're not necessarily challenging everything that that

offender or whoever he is, you're not necessarily challenging them to the point where they might want to do something. But we do.

The challenge then becomes intense for both sides of the mentoring relationships. As Participant H explained:

> *There are also psychological risks for the mentor so they will have to be debriefed on a personal level, perhaps counselled, just to make sure that they remain rational and unaffected by the confrontations and the ideological issues that they're having to unpick in very great details. …The weight of the world sometimes passes from the client to the mentor and that can have a huge impact, that can be very stressful for the mentor because at that point the client has decided to put their trust in the mentor.*

Participant L was aware that if a mentor were doing this for the first time, they would at least need
> *to know there's someone you can contact if you're feeling unsure or uneasy or uncomfortable – and using different strategies if one strategy is not working.*

But it is not just those doing the task for the first time. Two very experienced mentors recounted how they felt '*physically and mentally drained'* after dealing with real racists or Holocaust deniers. They said they did not have anybody they could really go to, but if they felt down they would go out and play pool, go and have a pint, watch football or have a laugh.

> '*But you never switch off, you think about what you should have said'.*

Participants A and E were very clear that there was a need for supervision, for 'offloading', but also in relation to reporting back and discussion of the client and the risks they posed:

> I*f you have things like supervision and you have people involved and group discussions and that, you'll pick up on the oddness very, very quickly (Participant A).*

> *There's probably a potential to be challenged by the client. So you have to be on your guard, your have to be able to understand what's going on and be able to manoeuvre yourself out of any kind of tricky situation. Because potentially they could play mind games with you and that could backfire really (Participant E)*

The final danger was the more 'extreme' one of a complete reversal:

> *But ..there's a danger that actually who's got the strongest will and the strongest mind? And you can end up with a mentor actually being converted to the client rather than, what's meant to be the other way round really in crude terms.* (Participant G)

It was felt therefore that there was a need for checks and balances about how the relationship with the client was developing, '*what that mean in terms of their own thoughts, their own life choices*'.

It would seem that the importance of the whole mentoring project would be to ensure appropriate backup for mentors, in terms of their physical safety during and after the interview, their psychological wellbeing, their needs in terms of establishing future strategies for dealing with a client, and the possible reciprocal influences on their own worldview.

6.3 Risk to the client

The risk to the client was not seen as so great as to the mentor, except perhaps when an 'old clique' returned and was threatening to them. The major risk to the client (and hence to the project and its associated organisations) was seen to be of (re) radicalisation. Participant E explained

> *What we were worried about is that individual might give this young person more knowledge than they've got now which would make them more dangerous. More ammunition than they need.*

Clients could even deliberately be utilising the mentoring for their own ends:

> *....they could be playing bluff with you. So they could just play ball and you're thinking this guy, he's actually progressing then two years down the line all you've done is kind of just equipped him with the counter-narrative so that he's more kind of intent in his own beliefs* (Participant F).

This is where the risk arises because the specialist nature of mentoring AQ susceptible people, and the risk that the people dealing with them do not have the requisite experience or knowledge. Participant H worries:

> *The risks in that respect are much higher therefore as well; the risks of misjudging an issue, making the wrong recommendations, which might adversely impact on the individual, and any mistake which could contribute to their radicalisation or their hatred or their violence. It is a risk of a much higher magnitude than you would find in other areas. So some efforts to understand what the particular understandings are that are needed to help somebody work through some of these influences I think are very new and have not been considered before. Whilst I know of some of these workers who profess to have an understanding of the processes of radicalisation and the narratives which go with all types of violent extremism, I've not always been convinced that they would know how to manage those risks or be able to work with the police or be able to work with other agencies.*

This last point is a very important one, which has implications for both training and for systematic feedback on mentoring sessions. It points up new issues not always considered before in mentoring, and highlights the need for such a scheme. There is new learning around the boundaries of what mentors can do.

6.4 Risk to the organisation

Some of the stakeholders in the project represent particular organisations, and they were aware of the risk to their own organisation if things went wrong. Participant G set the reputation of his organisation within the wider community he worked in and how mentoring was then perceived:

> *I think reputational really. Not only with the individual but with the whole community. If people are talking within that Muslim community and it's seen to be another way of the statutory sector imposing its will or the western will on a Muslim community, than I think there's a real concern that we will actually turn people away from statutory agencies, local authority, police etc.*

The suspicion and critiques of Channel and Prevent as targeting and stigmatising particular communities are very near to the surface.

As Participant B pointed out

> *I think there's a big reputational risk in all of this to all of the organisations because if all of a sudden one of these individuals does unfortunately get on a Tube with a rucksack, then it won't be long before 'They were in a mentoring process in Birmingham for six months. What were you doing? Why didn't you pick up the signs?'*

For at least three other respondents the reputation linked to the use of their materials or expertise. Two were concerned that their work had previously been 'nicked' – and for this project '*if they have the wrong people delivering, then it could do more harm than good*' - particularly if people were just interested in the money. Two would have reservations therefore about training other people to do it. These are valid points. Discussions about copyright, ownership and recognition would need to be part of the manual being designed, highlighting the risks that mentors and their organisations are taking on behalf of the project.

Summary of Section 6
It can be seen how the risk to the project, to the mentor, to the client and to associated organisations are integrally connected. However, no participant would be of the view that they are insuperable, and the future of the project will draw on participants' experience in mitigating risk at different levels in order to create suitable structures and mechanisms for this. Risks to the project will need to be monitored and mitigated through continuous and effective feedback loops; risks to mentors will need to be mitigated through appropriate backup structures to ensure psychological and physical safety; risks to organisations will need to be recognised in terms of their reputations and ownership; and the risk to clients or re-radicalisation underscores yet again the uniqueness of this type of mentoring which the scheme is designed to address.

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7 Measures of success

In contrast to, or parallel with looking at risk are identifying what constitutes the 'success' of a project such as this. Difficulties and challenges in this regard were acknowledged by all participants, but equally the need to establish some indicators. These roughly could be divided into two: the 'metrics' or quantifiable, visible outputs and the more qualitative outcomes.

7.1 Outputs or products

The first obvious measure was whether certain 'products' had been achieved. These included a manual, a strategy document, a training structure, a training package, and a process of accreditation for mentors. All these would represent an original and innovative contribution to the field of mentoring for violent extremism.

Visible indicators clearly related to the creation of a viable and diverse 'bank' of mentors who between them could tackle all forms of extremism.

> *To have a pool bank of mentors covering all aspects of extremism that would be accessible, that would be well vetted, well supported, an appropriate network in place to do so. Everything up to the point of whether the actual mentoring episodes are successful I think is quantifiable…. And is measurable through the development of numbers of mentors that we have on the books. As to their diversity across the different aspects.* (Participant G)

Success would then relate to how such products and the process they represent were used in the future. For Participant H, success would be

> *To have a trusted, repeatable process that can find and to a limited extent develop potential mentors that we can use for our cases, not just here but around the country.*

This would be measured by how many people are produced by the system, how they were vetted and accredited and then how many are used. '*So it's about output and usage*' *(Participant L).* L mentioned the indicator of the project being adopted across more councils or more LEAs or more wards, or even nationally.

The question of a 'trusted' process came up more than once, whether the people referring clients are happy enough and see it as trustworthy. In contrast is the question of whether the people who are being referred for mentoring are actually the key people, with this being something that only very experienced mentors already working in the area of violent extremism or with knowledge of a community might know. Future work and analysis would need to tackle this important area of expertise.

7.2 Qualitative measures

Far more people talked of the less tangible but crucial question of whether the mentoring process had made a difference to individuals. The key phrases were 'reducing vulnerability', or 'disengaging' an individual.

> *We're not trying to create perfect people, we're trying to deal with someone's vulnerability and reduce the vulnerability.*

Participant I gave the example of a '*sort of convert*' who actually did not know how to pray, and had to be taught basic behaviour as a Muslim.

> *If doing that reduces somebody's vulnerability, then it's done its job.*

He repeated they were not trying to create the perfect person '*that isn't what we're about, that's social engineering*' .

The possibility of drawing up or using a Channel type risk assessment was mentioned, seeing how many of the factors had been reduced. '*I don't think we should go beyond that*' (Participant I*).* It was acknowledged that it was more difficult than 'reoffending' under probation, but that activities and behaviours could be logged. For example a compilation of indicators drawn from a number of respondents would include:
- No longer sending money and equipment abroad to help a fight
- No longer donating money to (extremist) people who collect this at the door
- Not being part of 'grooming' processes such as trips to the Lake District
- Reduction or change in the sorts of things they were saying and doing.

A more specific outcome, albeit perhaps longer term, is renouncing membership:

But ultimately when you know that that person is part of HuT and he's actually officially left, that's…outright.(Participant D)

For Participant B, success and risk were closely linked. There was a need for an initial risk assessment in terms of risk to society, and then using this as a measure of progress.

To use the Palestinian example again, what he's saying, what he's doing, where he's going, what he's viewing. Clear intentions to do all that. All of which pose a risk.. If we then do a set of actions, maybe including a mentor, and then an assessment is made of him that say actually , he's now not looking at the internet as much. His foster parents say he's much easier to cope with. He's still saying he wants to go to Pakistan. He's still saying that if he had the chance he'd fight Allied Forces.. Bit actually you can see that there's some effect, isn't there?

Participant B had looked for suitable tools but had been unable to find any. 'Success was not just measuring activity'.

'And I think we won't be doing ourselves any favours if our measurement of success is 52 successful encounters this year.

In contrast to or in parallel with the reduction in negative behaviours were the indicators of more positive behaviours, becoming active members of the society. This means looking for the positive steps that an individual would be taking around improving their prospects. This would include entering education and training, gaining work or community involvement:

You would look for positive life decisions where they're starting to engage perhaps with a community group or a project or they're seeking work or they're reinvesting in their family, not a group of friend who've led them astray….somebody taking responsibility for themselves and for the people and things they're responsible for, and those are becoming more important than perhaps a slightly selfish politically led or extremist agenda (Participant H).

For one mentor, it was just the process of discussion which would be an indicator of success. Participant D contrasted the client who remained silent, switched off – '*that feels a bad indicator*'- with

the person that keeps coming back and is actually arguing with you as well, so that means that he's actually taking out from his thoughts, his arguments and the doubts and putting them out on the table and saying 'Give me the answers to these'.

For Participant F, success would be a two stage process:

Success is identifying…firstly being able to build a rapport with the client and build that level of trust and confidence. It's a two way thing. And secondly managing to focus on the issues of the client and addressing them positively so that you can see a real change within the individual. And then for them to have rejected any kind of extremist views and become active members of society. …Over a long period of time you'll gauge their responses, from how they interact with you…..they confirm 'my beliefs were wrong, I just had problems, I had issues, I want to set my life on track again'. If they confess to it…

As for many participants, in these instances of confession or dialogue, it would be the mentor who would be the real arbiter of whether change had occurred.

An interesting (and probably contested) view was expressed of who takes responsibility for change:

> *We're always told this, it's not a numbers game. Guidance isn't in our hands, it's in the hand of God. So if that person's sincere enough to want to change, and he's asking God sincerely, then he will see the light.(Participant D)*

Nonetheless, the commitment of the mentor was mentioned as an aspect of evaluation:

> P*eople have a very strong conviction in terms of what they want to do, 'which you can't measure' (Participant N). How do you measure trust?*

As in the mention above of not creating the 'perfect person', there was agreement however that there was no goal of changing a person completely, and success should not be couched in these transformational terms.

> *Don't have to change somebody's mindset entirely… They don't have to go to Disney World in Florida, but could reconcile the animosity they feel towards the West and look for some rationality* (Participant H)

It was more about 'distance travelled', how far a client had moved on.

> *The client has to be in a position where they can stand on their own two feet. Not develop that emotional crutch.* (Participant L)

> *I suppose the indicator is the self-reporting of the individual feeling happier about their life.(Participant A)*

> *..it's people who have visible changes in their lifestyle, how they're behaving (G).*

> *People come to the mosque and want to be helped to change. Then two years down the line doing the same job as you, out there challenging. Very positive indicator that a person's changed.(Participant D)*

Participant M had an interesting experience:

> *I spoke to a Muslim who had been radicalised, he was a member of a group associated with AQ and he said the reason he stopped was he just getting bored really, he didn't want to go to meetings any more, he'd rather go to the cinema.*

He acknowledged there were a number of ways a person could be de-radicalised as well as different ways to assess impact. This would be direct - individuals who have been involved and are no longer, but also in the general reduction of activity around the town and country. Evaluating progress would depend on the starting point:

> *How far are people in when you start mentoring them? If you start mentoring someone who is just about to buy his cub uniform or just about to put the bomb on his back? What's the process? How long does that take to get them out? How far will they come out? Will it be easy for them to go back in? There's a whole host of measures really and I think that's quite a difficult area to measure.*

The mention of 'wider reduction of activity' relates to the aim of community resilience which is part of the Prevent agenda. As Participant C pointed out, we need to know what this means in terms of Muslim communities:

> *I sit within the Prevent agenda saying 'you want more resilient Muslim communities. OK, what do you want then, more British or more Muslim'?*

This would not be a question directly answerable by the mentoring project, but it would relate to deeper questions of the individual within the community and how the longer term resilience of both is built.

> *Where we need to be challenging violent extremist ideology are in the communities in which those ideologies reside, not in a probation office.*

For Participant C. '*My barometer for success in an intervention would be somebody says somebody rejects the notion of a physical jihad'.* Yet C then makes a distinction between such short-term prevention or rejection and the longer term acceptance of real alternatives in action. '*For me, a viable alternative to physical jihad is not "okay I won't do it today"'.* Rather than such a postponement, success in mentoring would be this real emotional and community based resilience which would continuously mitigate the threat of terrorism.

From the variety of examples of success that were given by participants, it would certainly be possible for the project to build up a register or list of possible indicators, mostly for the individual but possibly more widely if influences were reported. As Participant D pointed out, success would be 'case studies', the real examples of how the mentoring process had seemed to move someone on, what the triggers for change were and what that person was now engaged in. Systematic research on mentoring effects generally is seen as thin (Dubois et al 2006), let alone for building resilience to extremism, and still less for building community resilience. Indeed, community-based approaches to counter-terrorism are under-researched and therefore little is publicly known about what the key indicators of success are and how these might be measured, and also whether these indicators of success are present in all successful interventions (Spalek, 2010).

7.3 Greater understanding of violent extremism

One success element (although not measurable) would be whether as a result of the mentoring scheme, there would be a greater understanding of violent extremism. Most participants thought that there was already a wealth of knowledge out there about various factors that led to propensity to engage in violent extremism or be drawn into such groups. They also acknowledged the complexity of this, that each individual was different and that there were no blueprints.

Participant G thought

> *..it will help us to look at some of the factors that lead people to take that path. But because each will be an individual there would need to be a study*

Similarly, Participant E gave cautious support:

> *I just think it may help us to understand some of the triggers. It may validate some that we already know. I'm not sure it's going to come up with anything massively…*

Participant F was not even sure that was what the project should be about:

> *There's a mass of research so far, all the factors and issues. But I don't think this is about research, I think this is about genuinely trying to help the individual…that should be the ultimate goal.*

Participant I thought that the process and the reports coming back would improve his own knowledge,

> *because you're dealing with people that are real people. And when you look at their cases they're inevitably complicated……I'm not sure how much of our cases yet might be entirely representative of different kinds of cases that might be out there. So we might only be getting a snapshot of the bigger picture*

But mostly participants saw the benefits in terms of pathways to exit from extremism, linked to the awareness that these are 'real people', not theories or stereotypes:.

> *Yes, because you're giving raw case studies. These are true people. This is someone who…you start up a conversation 'yeah I have these beliefs' and obviously you box them therefore in a violent extremism box. And then if they do successfully complete the programme and they're taken out of that box, then there you go, you have a pathway...you have best practice I suppose you can share. But again each case is [different].*

> *If as a result of an individual and then a collective view on how those individuals have been brought out of their particular life choices to something else, some other path, then that would be invaluable really.*

These views that the greatest learning will come from how people have been deradicalised fit with the current literature – that we know far more about people's cognitive biases than we do about 'debiasing' (Lilienfeld et al 2009) or about deradicalisation (Ashour 2009). 'Critical thinking' apparently does not transfer across domains nor tackle selective perceptions of 'evidence'. Shermer (2002) has conjectured that highly intelligent people possess especially effective 'ideological immune systems' because they are adept at generating plausible counter-arguments against competing claims. This will be of significance for the skills of mentors. This point links into wider debates around desistance. Thus, is the mentoring scheme aiming to reduce the propensity of individuals to commit acts of violence, or is it about helping individuals to undergo personal transformations? Whilst desistance from acts of violence is measurable, changes in identity may not be, or may need the specialist skills of mentors to assess. Whilst primary desistance is a temporary state, secondary desistance is more long-lasting, and may be possible to measure in terms of changes at the level of personal identity (Farrall & Maruna, 2004). This aspect to the mentoring scheme requires future research – referred to in the research section ofthis report below

For Participant L, there would be insights into thought processes, pinpointing '*the little triggers that are going to set people apart'*. But she also said every individual was different. Exit was the key benefit '*because once you can highlight the way a person is thinking or how they feel you can then take steps to counteract that'.*

Finally, Participant M gave a splendid example of how the mentoring process gives such insights into the way peoples' minds work. He was talking with an animal rights extremist, who was mounting the case that Halal meat was cruel. Participant M asked, Would they start burning down Halal butchers?

> *And she said, no, no....And I said why not? And she said, well that's racist, isn't it?*

Summary of Section 7
Measures of success will lie in three areas: quantitative tracking of numbers of mentors, encounters and usages of the scheme and its products by various agencies; qualitative assessments of reduced vulnerability or the 'distance travelled' by clients; and the amount of

learning about violent extremism that could arise from the project. While there is agreement that the scheme is not about completely changing people, the mentoring scheme should lead to a much more sophisticated view of people's logics in action, as well as ways in which the various techniques of encouraging people to acknowledge alternative views can start to 'de-bias' clients. There is still a lack of empirical grounding on mentoring initiatives – both in terms of systematic theorising on what works and in cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analysis of particular programmes (Dubois et al 2006). This then is another argument for a combined business and learning model.

8 Conclusions and Implications

8.1 Findings

In terms of the three **key objectives** of the scheme, which formed the specification for the research, it can be concluded that:

1. The project is on stream to have a pool of accredited and vetted mentors. There is extensive awareness of the importance of the background of the mentor, and expertise in the work of mentoring which will be invaluable to the work of a Mentor Selection Panel, as well as subsequent training, supervision and accreditation.

2. In order to ensure a sustainable business model for the mentoring scheme, it is important for the profile of the mentoring scheme to be raised amongst key stakeholders regionally and nationally. Also, it is important for the accreditation of the scheme to be undertaken as soon as possible. A structure to oversee the financial model, including payment of mentors, costs of training and costs of mentor support, would clearly be needed, as well as a body to ensure continued evaluation. The risks to sustainability clearly lie in the whole sphere of financial support, in turn linked to three interrelated areas: firstly, the credibility of the scheme in terms of identification and communication of success; secondly, efficient management, high accountability and value for money; and thirdly, expertise and continuity in the Project Board and Mentor Selection Panel. These cannot be prioritised at this stage, but would emerge in future research (see next section).

3. In terms of the addressing of three types of extremism, it was very clear that different mentors would be needed for different types of extremism, in order to have credibility and gain trust, even if there were a number of basic features and skills which were common to the mentoring process regardless of the type of extremism. It would be possible to draw up a training manual and training process to cover the basic elements. However, there were a number of unresolved variances both across respondents and in relation to the different types of clients who were envisaged, and a sophisticated set of training materials would be needed in this new and complex area.

The more detailed questions which emerged from these three initial specifications and from the concerns emerging from the respondents can be summarised and analysed as follows:

o There is clear agreement for **the need for a mentoring scheme** in the area of violent extremism, relating to the distinctiveness of the roots of extremism in ideology rather than in other motivations for criminal acts. New expertise and learning is involved. Its value is in an additional resource for agencies in assessing risk in relation to an individual as well in the intervention itself.

o The **role of the Project Board** was well understood, relating to strategic direction, safeguarding and quality assurance. Most saw the Project Board as working well, with a good range of participants and appropriate expertise. Others were frustrated by the pace of progress, feeling there were insufficient milestones and too much rehearsing of old ground. This might be caused partly by people not always being able to attend meetings, but also the sensitive nature of the project which inevitably led to intensive discussion. There was a large number of people involved, often with different agendas. The **work of the Steering Group** was nonetheless seen as valuable, and clearly the establishment of the Mentor Selection Panel has been of great significance. Whether in the future both boards would be needed was not quite agreed, but there was consensus that there would need to be tight management of a range of issues, particularly finance and the support mechanisms for the mentors. Contributing agencies would need to be clear on the financial implications. Formal and sustained links to Channel would be important, albeit reviewed in the light of the future of Channel.

o It is important for the project to continue having **senior management oversight** of, and buy-in to the mentoring scheme, whilst also having a delivery arm for the project's aims and objectives. The current mix of statutory partners appears appropriate, although the existing number of people involved in management can probably now be reduced. The key management functions remain, but evaluation and monitoring are key activities for the future, as well as actually building up the pool of mentors. Whilst outsourcing might be desirable from the view of mentors providing their services, it may be problematic in terms of providing the managerial oversight to the scheme. A sustainable business model will have to consider the high cost element of the project and the difficulties of estimating how long a mentoring process will take. The decision on when to exit, for example, may be on advice of a mentor, but with the final responsibility lying with the project manager.

o The project would need to demonstrate **professionalisation,** meaning that mentors would need to be paid for their work, albeit at relatively modest rates. This would enable professional responsibility to the project. (Whether the current rate is viable is a question for the future). Accreditation would also aid professionalism and provide career possibilities for mentors. The notion of a 'reflective practitioner' would need to be covered in the training in terms of note-taking and reflection on each mentoring session. The responsibility to give feedback to the project is part of the professional role, and is also part of risk mitigation for the project.

o There was agreement on a number of issues around the **mentoring process**
  ▪ That a diverse pool of mentors would be needed, to reflect the range of clients
  ▪ That mentors would be using both befriending and interventionist dynamics
  ▪ That empathy would be very important, both for building relationships and for assessing the client
  ▪ That trust and two way trust building was crucial
  ▪ That the mentoring process should be ethically informed, with issues of confidentiality resolved
  ▪ That mentoring should represent a safe space to discuss issues
  ▪ That the aim should be some sort of empowerment for the client
  ▪ That mentors should ideally be local, albeit not exclusively

o However, there were issues on which the participants had **varying views**, and which the project will need to address in future phases or in training.
  ▪ Whether the overall aim was to support vulnerable individuals or to change them in some way
  ▪ Whether, with AQ extremists, this was a purely theological concern which could be solved with theological arguments

- Whether mentoring styles should be hard and confrontational or soft and empathetic, and when which was appropriate, and for whom
- Whether mentors should disclose personal information about themselves
- How far sessions can be planned and how recording should be done
- The extent of supervision and support of mentors that would be needed.

It should be stressed however that these are positive dynamics, and not all issues that have to be finally 'resolved'. Such positive tensions should be retained, in order to continue the learning from the project.

o The **risks** were well recognised, and could be put into in four categories:
- Risks to the project (that the right mentors would not be selected)
- Risk to the mentor (physical or emotional harm, or even the risk of being radicalised by the client), so the need for support and supervision, as well as consideration of whether mentoring should be conducted in pairs)
- Risk to the client (the risk of (re) radicalisation as a result of the mentoring process)
- Risk to an organisation involved (of loss of reputation if a client committed an extremist act, or the project was not generally successful)

o The **measures of success** of the project could be grouped under three headings:
- Quantitative measures of output and usage, the number of mentors and mentoring sessions, how much the project and its products were adopted for use by other agencies
- Qualitative assessments of reduced vulnerability of clients, the types of changes seen and the 'distance travelled' by the client
- Evaluation of whether there was greater understanding of violent extremism (and exit from it) as a result of the mentoring process and feedback. The shared understandings of clients' logics as well as strategies for change will be of great value.

8.2 Future implications

This study has indicated that Objective 3 of the Prevent work (to support individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism) would be well addressed by the project. The project is innovative and will be of great value not just in the West Midlands but beyond. Future work would be suggested as follows:

Training: This evaluation has identified throughout and in the summary above a range of issues which will need to be picked up in the training sessions and the manual, and which need not be repeated here. It should be stressed that these training areas are not just about technical concerns of data protection or health and safety, but will relate to deeper issues of the complexity of mentoring in the area of violent extremism. The tensions in aims, the risks and the measures of success will need not just to be outlined in the training, but be part of continuous discussion among mentors and between mentors, the future management structure and the referral agencies.

Communication: The communication strategy used by the project will need to consider the risk of how it is perceived by the public and various stakeholders. Raising awareness that such a scheme operates among stakeholders who are encountering individuals at risk is a first task. Equally importantly, the strategy will also need to give general information about how the project aims to be a community-led resource as opposed to a police-led form of social control through 'informants'. This had been picked up in the ReCora report (Meah and Mellis 2009), that these should be seen as 'care-based interventions', with a clear difference

between activity designed to prevent radicalisation or violent extremism and activity related to pursuing terrorists.

Management structure and future ownership: The new structure for the management of the project could be envisaged as the following. This maintains the Project Board (incorporating the Steering Group) for oversight and accountability, with a Project Coordinator implementing the various work packages and products of the project. The Mentor Selection Panel would be retained, but together with a new Mentor Support Network who would share experiences, provide psychological support and also provide feedback to the project. The sustainability and value for money should be a central feature for future partners to examine in closer detail, and this may involve examining the number of clients who will be referred to the project and its success. Ownership of the mentoring project is an issue that needs to be addressed. It is recommended that a neutral medium should act as the base in which the project resides, but with there being strong linkages with the current roll out of the project.
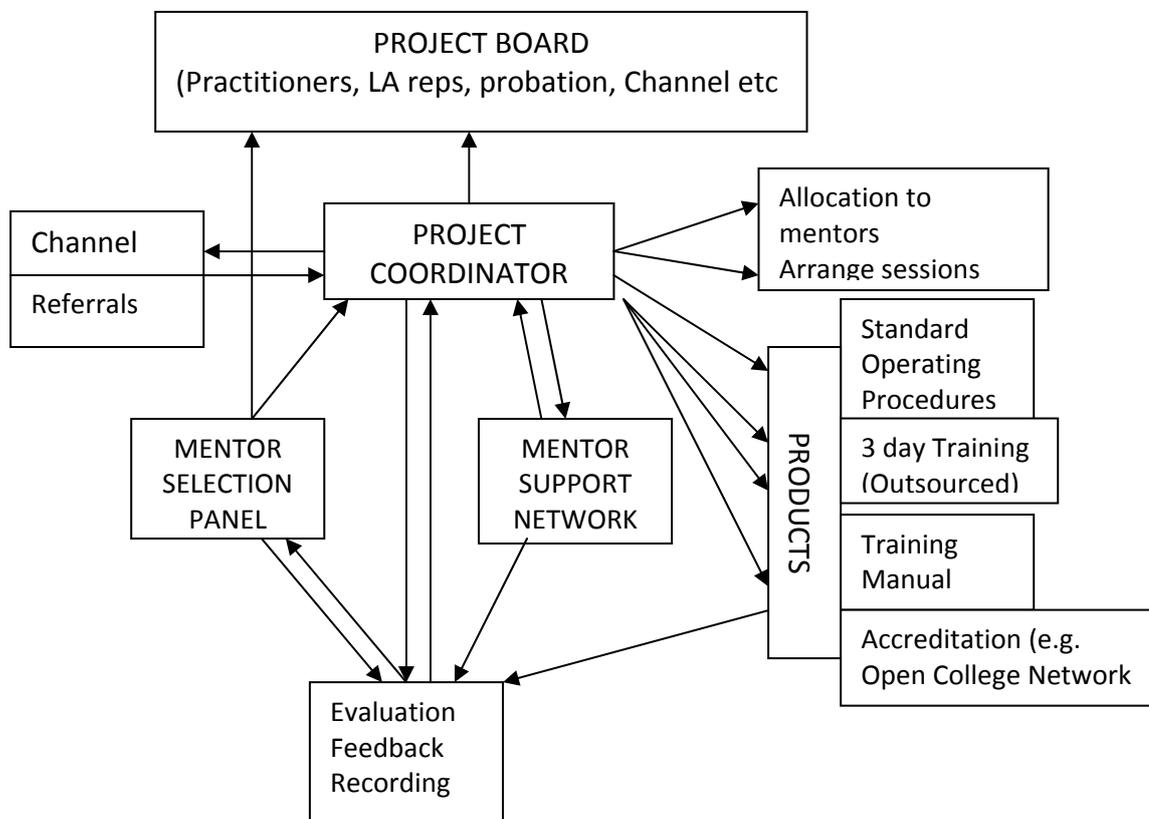
It would be crucial to continue sustained evaluation and monitoring of the project to assess its management efficacy as well as the types and degree of its success   Such evaluation will enable credible dissemination of this groundbreaking scheme. Hence this report concludes with future research needs.

8.3 Future Research

Future research should aim to establish an evidence base of the process of intervention, how different types of, and aspects to, intervention can have different outcomes and impacts, what might constitute success and how this is to be measured, alongside

examining broader questions in relation to the management and governance structures of the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme.

With the above in mind, it is suggested that there needs to be a trial run period of between 6-12 months for the scheme and for this to be further evaluated throughout this period. It is suggested that base lines at the beginning of the project roll out should be established and at the start of each mentoring relationship. It is suggested that any future evaluation should look at the following three sets of questions:

Managerial aspects to the WM 1-2-1 mentoring scheme
- what is the demand locally and nationally for this service?
- to what extent is a sustainable business model being achieved?
- how can the financial aspects to the scheme be most effectively addressed so as to ensure future local, regional and national sustainability if there is a demand for the scheme's services?
- how might sustainability and value for money be a central feature for future partners to examine in closer detail ?
- how are ownership issues being addressed and what are the impacts upon the project ?

The Mentoring Process
- what is the role of the mentor? are there aspects of the mentor's role that go beyond a befriending and interventionist role and if so what might these be and how do they relate to the mentoring scheme?
- how is risk being conceptualised, assessed and managed?
- what is the role of trust between the mentor and client and how is this to be measured?
- how are exit strategies being drawn up and utilised and what are the positive and negative aspects to these?
- what are the experiences of clients undergoing the mentoring process?
- what is the role of identity in relation to mentoring? what are the different identities of the mentor and the client and how are these drawn upon and utilised in the mentoring process? how might identity changes be mapped and evaluated? what are the behavioural changes in a client that can be examined to help shed light upon processes of change? how might a client's experiences of the mentoring scheme impact upon the relationships they have with family members, peers and community members?
- to what extent is it possible to map the process of change any particular client is experiencing? what is the process of change in relation to the client's multiple identities? whose voice matters here – the client's, the mentor's, the mentoring scheme's project manager's voice ? other key stakeholders?
- how is success being conceptualised – for example, in a reduction in the propensity for an individual to undertake violence, and over what period of time, is it personal transformation ? is it the extent to which individuals are leading positive and fulfilling lives? is it the extent to which individuals are no longer engaged in subversive activities? are we measuring primary or secondary desistance? is it the extent to which clients have been empowered in terms of them being able to cope constructively with negative processes in society?
- how is information being gathered, by whom, for what purposes and how is this being shared?

The Mentoring Scheme as a Community-Focussed Approach
- to what extent is the mentoring scheme consisting of equal partnerships between community members and state officials in terms of information sharing and gathering, measures of success?

- what is meant by mentor independence and how can this be ensured?
- to what extent is the scheme characterised by community consent and participation
- to what extent is there community involvement in the governance of the scheme?
- to what extent is there community trust in the scheme ? how might the notion of trust be conceptualised here and measured? For example, how is the independence of the scheme to be conceptualised and measured?
- what discernible impacts might there be of a client experiencing change upon wider familial, community, networks and movements, and how might these be examined?

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