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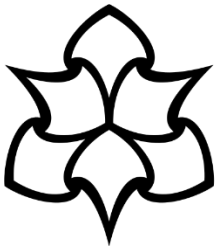
An Evaluation of the Reverse Mentoring Pilot Programme within Greater Manchester Police

A step-change in quantitative social science skills

Funded by the Nuffield Foundation, ESRC and HEFCE



Manchester Metropolitan University

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Executive Summary

This research used both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the Reverse Mentoring Pilot Project established within Greater Manchester Police. Reverse mentoring is a non-traditional approach to mentoring, in which the typical roles of mentor/mentee are reversed. Anonymised data for meetings between participants, collected by the project coordinator, was analysed to identify key trends in the data. 22 participants took part in the pilot, with 31 meetings over a 6-month period. The participants were 10 senior officers from the ranks of Chief Inspector to Chief Superintendent, along with 11 mentors of junior rank including police staff, police constable and sergeant. 8 semi-structured interviews were undertaken to harness participants' experiences of taking part in the Reverse Mentoring Pilot including members of the Project Coordination and Senior Management Team (PCSMT).

At the time of writing, the Reverse Mentoring pilot (RM hereafter) has come to a close. This evaluation aims to highlight some of the challenges experienced during the pilot and evidence any learning that will benefit any future force wide adoption of the scheme

Key findings from the pilot are:

- Participants who took part in the pilot had an opportunity to work with people in different ranks and move towards influencing change within the organisation. RM, with appropriate support, has offered opportunities to learn about front line policing and the decision-making processes in senior ranks.
- The challenges around working across an organisation with a rank structure remain. Participants suggested that for RM to work, rank should be 'left at the door' within the RM process.
- RM can create the opportunity for individuals to self-develop and can offer significant reward. It has provided the opportunity for participants to influence policy and go about making positive changes.
- Challenges exist with RM in terms of support from the organisation, particularly in allowing participants the time to take part and working with different ranks. For success, the organisation needs to commit to providing participants with support, structure and time to take part.
- This evaluation highlights that cultural changes need to be implemented to formalise RM within the force development provision. The wider promotion of the RM project and the benefits that can arise from it will help. Participants who wish to do so should be encouraged to take part and their participation be supported by an informed and understanding supervision structure.
- Under-representation and visible role models within the force is an area of note commented on by several participants in this research. It is worthy of continued attention from the force within the context of inclusion and diversity.
- For many of the participants in this evaluation, it was hoped RM would be adopted formally by the force.
- Overall, participants suggested that RM can add value to the force and is a positive step towards personal and cultural change.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered in support of any future development and application of reverse mentoring schemes within GMP. The report concludes that the RM project within the organisation should be rolled out force-wide to help enhance and develop occupational force culture. The pilot suggests the RM project has the potential to make a positive impact on the operational culture of the force and the experiences of participants. Adopting RM within the force should be considered as an opportunity for participants to develop new relationships, break down barriers and create networks with colleagues. Accordingly, allowing participants the time to take part with the appropriate resourcing and adoption of RM into the formal structures of the force remains important.

Our recommendations are:

- Proceed with a force-wide roll out of the RM project so that all of GMP may benefit from the scheme. This evaluation has found that positive experiences have emerged for some participants that go some way towards making cultural change within the organisation.
- The RM Pilot has demonstrated that colleagues, when appropriately encouraged, supported and led, have the appetite to work towards the best for GMP. This momentum should be embraced. The RM programme should be used as a standard within the wellbeing and cultural toolkit and considered as a routine practice, or 'business as usual' across the force.
- A formal force wide structure for RM is required. A balance of where the programme should belong needs to be developed. Fully centralising the programme poses the risk of losing the unique experience and the learning that can take place for individuals. RM works with a local approach. When pairing mentors and mentees, the commonality amongst colleagues should be embraced, including common areas of work, same district, or specialist unit. Use the force structure, namely districts or specialist units, to implement and locally manage the future RM programme. See Appendix 4 for a suggested force wide structure.
- The senior force leadership team should be involved in the RM process. The safeguarding of participants remains an important consideration. A representative from the forces senior leadership team should have oversight of RM. One or more officers at the rank of Chief Superintendent should be included to steer and support the RM participation for all mentor and mentees.
- To ensure that RM will benefit local teams, consider appointing several district coordinators at the rank of Inspector or equivalent to coordinate and support participants and processes.
- Consider offering the role of mentor to the ranks of Sergeant or equivalent. Individuals in this group tend to have notable experience of police culture, processes and operational challenges, and will offer a wider understanding of the daily challenges of delivering frontline services across the force and within communities.

- Use the expertise of the PCSMT to help inform future rollout. Individuals within this group are experts in this area and should be commended for their desire to influence change and make GMP more inclusive. To ensure RM remains effective consider the expertise of the PCSMT to coordinate overall rollout and the continual governance of the scheme. Although not fully evidenced in this evaluation, the PCSMT have invested countless hours of their own time to support the RM pilot for no personal gain.
- Allocate adequate time and resources to facilitate participation to all those that take part. This should include time for meetings, reflection and any associated development opportunities. The force should also support the respective supervision teams of participants through education and additional resourcing when asking them to release staff for participation.
- It is important to consider mentee participation. This should be on a voluntary rather than a mandatory basis. It remains important that RM is not perceived as nor is a requirement of any annual appraisal or promotion evidence processes. This is critical to the longevity and wider success of any wider scheme.
- Consider the use of ICT in any development of RM to allow for the successful collection, storage and management of data and for participants to access resources, arrange and record meetings or store information with ease.
- Explore further options of developing the forces representation across the ranks to ensure that any officer from any under-represented group feels valued and part of the organisation. By including colleagues who are of BAME heritage, the RM pilot has demonstrated that the force has established a structure and now has the ability to offer more opportunities for under-represented groups and its wider workforce.

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Section 1: Introduction

Reverse mentoring is a non-traditional approach to mentoring, in which the typical roles of mentor/mentee are reversed. Reverse mentoring offers an opportunity for junior colleagues to adopt the role of a mentor and to be matched with a more 'senior' colleague, the mentee. The purpose of reverse mentoring is to create opportunities for shared learning and experiences. Through this mentoring relationship, the mentor and the mentee have the opportunity to learn from each other, with the intention that reverse mentoring helps to challenge existing hierarchies, build confidence, and create opportunities for development for both parties (Business in the Community, 2018; Morris, 2017).

This report presents an evaluation of a pilot reverse mentoring programme within Greater Manchester Police (GMP hereafter). Reverse Mentoring currently operates within a number of organisations and institutions and is being considered as part of the learning and development framework within GMP. This pilot also specifically included staff and officers who identified as a having a Black or Minority Ethnic Background (BAME hereafter).

The overall aims of the GMP Reverse Mentoring Programme are:

- To encourage and support the NPCCs (National Police Chiefs' Council) initiative to ensure that the workplace is representative of the community it serves, in line with existing legislation
- To champion the development of inclusive cultures by utilising the relevant experiences of junior officers from diverse backgrounds
- To create an innovative legacy for enabling change

The Reverse Mentoring scheme is currently in its pilot phase. This evaluation will help to identify the potential benefits to GMP and highlight any areas for development to be considered for a wider rollout of a reverse mentoring scheme.

The following report provides the findings for the evaluation of the pilot scheme carried out between January 2020 and July 2020. The evaluation aims to contribute towards the following key research questions:

- Is there evidence that the Reverse Mentoring pilot scheme meets its stated aims and objectives?
- What are the areas of success and areas for development for the pilot scheme?
- What are the participants' experiences of the mentoring relationships, and of the Reverse Mentoring programme?
- What is the potential organisational benefit of the Reverse Mentoring programme?
- Is there evidence that Reverse Mentoring, and mentoring by BAME participants, can improve organisational culture and understanding?
- What organisational commitment is required to successfully implement the programme at a wider level?

This report is organised as follows: Section 2 focuses on the growing area of literature related to reverse mentoring. It provides a summary of reverse mentoring, the challenges and achievements experienced and its place within several occupational cultures. Section 3 provides the methodology for the pilot evaluation and details the processes undertaken in the evaluation. Section 4 details the analysis of the data collected from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. Several themes have been identified that help demonstrate how the scheme meets its aims and some of the challenges and suggestions for future development. Included in this section are several extracts from the narratives of participants. Section 5 of the report, titled 'Discussion' pulls together several themes from the evaluation with the aim of highlighting good practice and potential challenges. The final section details several recommendations that will contribute to any further roll out of the Reverse Mentoring Scheme within GMP.

Section 2: Context

Reverse mentoring is a relatively new and emerging concept and practice. By definition, reverse mentoring (RM hereafter) is suggested as the practice of mentoring by junior colleagues towards senior colleagues or younger towards older employees (Meister and Willyerd, 2010). Often associated with enhancing participants' career development, providing psychological support and offering opportunities for role modelling, RM is a practice adopted by organisations as a tool of developing staff and creating opportunity (Chen, 2013; Kram, 1983). Emerging research of RM and its practices suggests that the concept not only turns traditional mentoring practices on their head but also offers opportunities to build bridges and enhance employees' professional capacity (Chen, 2013; Murphy, 2012).

Traditional mentoring tends to operate using a hierarchical and unidimensional structure and commonly sees the mentor serving as the 'expert', holding power, knowledge and experience, towards the 'mentee' who commonly tends to be less senior and relatively novice in their experience and power within the organisation (Morris, 2017). The processes undertaken include the mentor guiding the mentee through organisational processes, knowledge acquisition and cultural challenges. Several examples of traditional mentoring are noted to exist which include cascading mentoring, group mentoring and virtual mentoring (Clarke *et al,* 2019).

For RM the significant difference remains in the challenge created by the concept towards the traditional mentoring structures in the reverse element of the process. Emerging research and literature propose that the role reversal from traditional approaches is a key function of the process and one that contributes to a definition of RM, namely the "reciprocal and temporal stable relationship between a less experienced mentor providing specific expert knowledge and a more experienced mentee who wants to gain this knowledge" (Ziegler, 2009:7-30). A unique characteristic of the process is the status of each participant and value that can be added by having a younger and often less experienced participant inform more experienced and older colleagues. For policing organisations, such as Greater Manchester Police, this may present a challenge as progression through the ranks is often associated with length of service within the organisation, ultimately creating a generational gap in the workforce.

Ragins and Cotton (1999) note that traditional mentoring often features working relationships between those who they see as similar to them, only younger, whilst Murphy's research (2012) highlights that mentors tend to choose mentees who are the same sex as themselves and have the same ethnic background. The formalisation of a RM project can offer enhanced opportunities to women and people from varying ethnic backgrounds (ibid), however as a word of caution, short-term mentor-mentee relationships can limit any opportunity for more long-term development. For social equality and diversity, the length of any programme should allow for meaningful relationships to form over time.

Several benefits to participating in a RM project exist for both mentors and mentees. For mentors, taking part offers the potential for increased job satisfaction, growth in individual learning and knowledge, access to a wider and new network of support and opportunity, the

chance to engage with senior colleagues in an open and honest forum, and the opportunity to access role models (Clarke *et al,* 2019). For mentees a significant benefit to the RM concept exists in the form of access and exposure to knowledge, experience and thinking that they may previously not have been able to directly access (Clarke *et al*, 2019; Morris, 2017). It also offers an opportunity to connect with others from a cross-generational perspective, importantly as the rise of multi-generational workforces tend to rely on networks, corporation and the increasing use of information communications and technology (Garg and Singh, 2019; Murphy, 2012).

Despite the benefits of RM, the practice has several limitations which, within the context of complex organisations such as the police, are worthy of consideration. Due to the reverse element of the process, the inexperience and contribution of the younger member, in this case the mentor, needs consideration. Despite the benefits already noted in terms of knowledge, learning and networking, problems may arise unless the imbalance of power is addressed. With role reversal it is argued that mentors may face challenges to establish equality and acceptable boundaries of behaviour when working with more senior colleagues, often a challenge when working across a rank structure such as the police (Clarke *et al,* 2019; Garg and Singh, 2019; Murphy, 2012). RM can, and has, naturally facilitated individual and organisational growth, however it is important to consider that support and a formal structure for RM is developed and maintained (Chen, 2013; Kram, 1983). The sharing of knowledge, the development of each participant and mutual support against potential power dynamics, must all be considered. For successful RM projects to exist the frequency of meetings, an environment where role reversal can flourish without consequence and the development of interpersonal comfort and trust, remain significant (Murphy, 2012).

Section 3: Methodology

Research Design

This study utilised a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the Reverse Mentoring Pilot Project within GMP. Mixed methods informed the research design as they create opportunity for a rich and diverse narrative that can emerge when using both types of data (Cresswell and Clark, 2017). The study offers authentic accounts of participants from the Reverse Mentoring Pilot.

The data consisted of:

- An exploration of the demographic profile of participants which included participant motivations
- An analysis of the Evaluation Scores recorded in participant meetings based pre-set questions provided by GMP
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews with:
    - Mentors and Mentees
    - Members of the Project coordination and Senior Management Team, referred to collectively as PCSMT in this evaluation.

Primary data collection took place between January and August 2020 during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Following this, all data was compared and contrasted with key themes being explored and reported.

Data

Data Collection

All quantitative data was collected from participants between January and June 2020. The GMP project coordinator held responsibility for collecting data from each participant to maintain anonymity. Any operational information, and information that would identify a participant, was removed by the GMP Project Coordinator before being passed to the researcher. This complies with the University's Ethical Agreement, Data Protection Legislation and the Force's request for participant and operational protection. Meeting summaries in the form of Mentoring Activity Logs (see Appendix 1), GMP Mentor Meeting Summaries (Appendix 2) and Reverse Mentoring Pilot Evaluation Questions (Appendix 3) were sent via email to a named member of the research team. An Excel spreadsheet was used to coordinate and store the data and was shared with the Project Coordinator on regular occasions during the data collection. A total of 31 meetings between mentors and mentees were achieved and have been included as part of this evaluation. Covid-19 presented challenges to the data collection stage of the pilot due to operational demands placed on participants, all of whom, at the time of the research were serving police officers or police staff.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Participants were asked to volunteer to take part in a semi-structured interview with the researcher, allowing them to share their experiences and opinions of the Reverse Mentoring

pilot. 8 interviews were conducted between July and August 2020; participants included 3 mentors, 2 mentees and members of the pilot organising and support team. All interviews were carried out online, using video conferencing software.

To protect anonymity, no personal details are provided:

- Mentor – includes police staff, police constable and police sergeants.
- Mentee – includes chief inspectors and chief superintendents
- PCSMT – includes members of GMP who supported or provided leadership and guidance for the project.

Microsoft Excel was used to collate and store quantitative data. A descriptive analysis was carried out on participant data, participant motivations, comments, and notes made in participant meetings. Total scores for 'Evaluation Questions' were recorded and for those completed meetings have been used to highlight participant views on GMP and its approach to inclusion and diversity.

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data uncovered several key themes, presented in the following section. Data gathered from the participants for the evaluation of the pilot project is presented with the aim of highlighting the challenges and achievements that can be considered as part of the development and roll out of the Reverse Mentoring programme.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was sought and gained from Manchester Metropolitan University prior to the beginning of the pilot evaluation. All participant details that could directly identify a person have been omitted from this report and any stored data. All data was password protected and stored in accordance with data collection legislation and the university's data storage and management policy on the university staff system. All participants consented to take part in this research and were made aware at the outset and throughout how their data would be used. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time up to the publication of the report without any consequence. Several measures have been implemented to project participants from any negative consequences of taking part in this research. A key part of the role of the project coordinator and the project advisor has been to ensure all participants are treated with respect and will not be unfairly disadvantaged within the organisation as a result of taking part in this pilot project. Accordingly, the project coordinator removed any operational information or information that could identify participants before the publication of this report.

Section 4: Data Analysis

Headline Figures

This section will begin by outlining the demographics of individuals who have participated in the Reverse Mentoring Pilot Project. The data is taken from analysis of the meeting reports completed by participants.

- 31 meetings took place between mentors and mentees over a 6-month period (January – June 2020)
- 21 participants took part in the research comprising of 8 female participants and 13 male participants
- The age range of participants is 24 – 53 years old
- Police staff and officers took part in the pilot ranging from police staff to Chief Superintendents. The project received support from a coordinator and members of the force senior staff
- 15 participants stated they had caring responsibilities that included children or elderly relatives
- 17 participants were White/White British, 3 participants were Asian/British Asian/British Indian, and one participant was of Mixed Heritage
- 20 participants identified their work pattern as full time with 1 participant stating they worked with flexible arrangements
- The most common motivations for taking part in the Reverse Mentoring pilot for mentees were to gain a better understanding of frontline policing, and to understand the current thinking and motivations of younger officers. For mentors the most common motivations for taking part were to have a new opportunity or experience, and to build bridges and develop relationship with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Table 1 – Participant demographics and information

	Mentors	Mentees
Gender	5 female, 6 male	3 female, 7 male
Age range	24-48	36-53
Ethnicity	White/White British: 7 Asian/British Asian: 2 British Indian: 1 Mixed Heritage: 1	10 White/White British
Service	34 weeks – 22 years	27 months to 25 years
Rank	PC: 7 PS: 3 Staff: 1	Chief Insp: 2 DCI: 1 Supt: 3 D Sup: 2 DC Sup: 2
Caring responsibilities	None: 6 Parental responsibilities: 1 Caring responsibilities (for family member): 4	None: 1 Parental responsibilities: 9
Working pattern	All full-time	9 full-time, 1 flexi

Mentor Motivations

During the initial meetings at the beginning of the pilot, mentors were asked to state three motivations for their participation in the RM pilot. The most common responses were to develop bridges/relationships with senior members of GMP and to identify issues and to make changes to improve the culture of GMP.

Table 2- Mentors: initial motivations for involvement in the RM pilot

Motivation	Frequency
Build bridges & relationships with the Senior Leadership Team	6
Identify issues and make changes	6
Create new opportunities and experiences	5
Improve the culture within GMP	5
Continuing Professional Development	3
Gain experience of mentoring / reverse mentoring	3
Interest in organisational culture	1
Networking opportunity	1
Highlight the reality of the job	1
Give something back / pay it forward	1

Mentee Motivations

Mentees were also asked to state three motivations for their participation in the RM pilot. The most common answers related to mentees wanting to feel more in touch with frontline

policing and the ways their decision could impact on the frontline/junior members of staff. Mentees also wanted to become more effective leaders, and to better understand the motivations of younger officers (to support recruitment and retention).

Table 3- Mentees: initial motivations for involvement in the RM pilot

Motivation	Frequency
Understanding of frontline policing	6
Become a more effective leader	5
Know the impact of decisions made on junior members of staff/frontline policing	4
Understanding of current thinking / motivations of younger officers (to support recruitment & retention)	3
Gain a different perspective of the role	2
Gain knowledge and understanding of diversity and inclusion	2
Reach a diverse workforce	1
Impact on morale/ give confidence in decisions made by SLT	1
Development of resilience and confidence in workplace	1
Improve communications and trust between SLT and staff	1

Self-Evaluation Questions

As part of the evaluation, participants were asked to complete a series of evaluation questions after each meeting connected to their feelings and thoughts on inclusion, diversity and the role of a Reverse Mentor scheme within GMP. Participants were asked to score their responses from 1-10 with 10 being completely agree (see Appendix 3). The questions are:

1. Do you think GMP is inclusive and embraces diversity?
2. Within your peer group how comfortable are you with sharing the knowledge of your mentoring relationship in this Pilot?
3. The Reverse Mentoring Pilot could act as an educating bridge / improving meaningful conversation between front line and SLT – how effective is this principle?
4. One aim of this Pilot is to explore a different approach to the established challenge that is Diversity & Inclusion within the wider public service to provide a consideration for recognition of some of the barriers, myths and stigma around under representation. How well do you think this Pilot has achieved its aim?
5. Based on your experience of this Pilot, how well do you feel a reverse mentoring scheme would benefit GMP when / if rolled out more widely?
6. Within your area of business how effectively does this Pilot complement your existing Diversity and Inclusion strategy.
7. How supportive to the aims of this Pilot is the current internal culture / attitude within your area of business?

Evaluation Scores

Summary

- Mentors' responses have a greater range, and they were less likely to provide the same response in their scoring
- Mentees are more likely to have higher starting points for their scoring for each question, indicating greater agreement with the statements than mentors.
- In answering question 5, mentors and mentees provided the same range of scores in their answers. Both mentors and mentees responded positively to the idea of the RM pilot being rolled out more widely.
- More responses were provided by mentees than mentors
- Question 4 and Question 5 have the biggest number of increased scores from participants, indicating that the RM project had had a positive impact on participants' responses.

Data Analysis

This section will provide an analysis of the responses to the questionnaire. It should be noted that with a limited number of responses, it is not possible to make generalisations, and this section solely reports on the responses provided.

1. Do you think GMP is inclusive and embraces diversity?

This question saw the biggest range of responses from mentees, with scores ranging from 1 to 10. In answering this question, the majority of mentees' scores remained the same each time they completed the questionnaire. However, a small number of mentees gave a lower score to answer this question as the RM project went on.

Mentors' scores in answering this question ranged from 3 to 9. As with mentees' responses, there was no change in the majority of mentors' scores for this question as the project continued, with just one participant's score for this question increasing as the project continued. Therefore, the project seems to have done little to positively influence participants' views of GMP and its approach to inclusivity and diversity.

2. Within your peer group how comfortable are you with sharing the knowledge of your mentoring relationship in this Pilot?

Mentees reported feeling comfortable about sharing the knowledge of their mentoring relationship, with scores for this question ranging from 6 to 10. One participant felt more comfortable as the project continued, whilst two mentees felt less comfortable. Mentors were less comfortable than mentees, with their scores ranging from 3 to 10. Whilst 1 participant became less comfortable as the project continued, where there were increases in scores, these increases were quite substantial, with one mentor changing their score from 3 at the beginning of the project to 10 at the end. These findings therefore indicate that mentors were less inclined to advertise their participation in the RM project to others.

3. The Reverse Mentoring Pilot could act as an educating bridge / improving meaningful conversation between front line and SLT – how effective is this principle?

Scores for this question ranged from 4 to 10 for mentees, and 7 to 10 for mentors, so there was a more positive response from mentors than from mentees. Mentees' scores either remained the same or increased, whereas for mentors, as well as remaining the same or increasing, there was a decrease in the score for this question as the project went on.

4. One aim of this Pilot is to explore a different approach to the established challenge that is Diversity & Inclusion within the wider public service to provide a consideration for recognition of some of the barriers, myths and stigma around under representation. How well do you think this Pilot has achieved its aim?

Scores for this question ranged from 3 to 9 for mentors, and 3 to 8 for mentees. Importantly, there was no decrease in scoring for this question, for both mentors and mentees, the score for this question increased, with one mentor increasing their score from this question from 3 to 9 as the project continued, and one mentee increasing their score from 4 to 8. This indicates a confidence in the ability of the project to meet its aim.

5. Based on your experience of this Pilot, how well do you feel a reverse mentoring scheme would benefit GMP when / if rolled out more widely?

Interestingly, the range of responses to this question ranged from 5 to 10 for both mentors and mentees, indicating that both groups feel positive about the RM project being rolled out. Most respondents increased their score for this question as the project continued.

6. Within your area of business how effectively does this Pilot complement your existing Diversity and Inclusion strategy?

Mentors and mentees scores were quite different in responding to this question, with mentors' responses ranging from 0 to 10, whilst mentees' responses ranged from 6 to 10. Whilst there were some higher scores for this question, there were a larger number of lower scores for this question from mentors, perhaps indicating a need for more to be done at lower ranks to highlight the links between the RM project and the existing Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

7. How supportive to the aims of this Pilot is the current internal culture / attitude within your area of business?

Scores ranged from 2 to 8 for mentors, with several participants providing scores of 2 in answering this question. Mentees were more positive in scoring this question; whilst responses ranged from 3 to 10, only one mentor gave the score of 3; the majority of responses from mentors gave higher scores for this question.

Qualitative Analysis

Several themes have emerged from the qualitative analysis of the participants interviews and are presented below. These include relationships, enabling change, sharing experiences and developing research mentoring.

Relationships: Access, Rank and Protection

All participants in this research agreed that the RM pilot has the potential to create opportunities for new relationships. Having a formal structure is considered helpful for communication and access to participants across the ranks. Several participants suggested that a form of RM already takes place informally between colleagues, but the introduction of the RM project provides structure and order to the process. Formalising the RM process offered several benefits to those that took part, a key benefit being creating opportunities for access:

> "*In the work environment, superintendents are like the 'top dog'. So, you are normally saying 'yes sir', 'please sir', that sort of thing. So, it's kind of strange because* [the RM pilot] *has brought it down to the casual level to try and create relationships where we can forget about ranks*" (Mentor)

Rank has a significant role in the formation and development of relationships. Participants suggested that within GMP, this is a barrier. A lower ranking officer or member of staff may have limited opportunity to access their seniors. For the project support and management team (PCSMT hereafter) barriers created by rank are a problem:

> "*To really break down the hierarchy that exists in policing is really quite hard… Junior officers find it really hard to speak to senior officers, because they just don't see them and have a myth about what they are like*" (PCSMT)

> "*So, you've got to try and strip that dominance away so that you can actually, on a face to face level, give them* [SLT] *guidance. Which, you know, for someone who's been in such a high position for such a long time, it's quite a difficult thing to do*" (Mentor)

> "*Well, the idea with reverse mentoring is you don't want that rank structure in place because I can't tell him* [mentee] *what to do if that rank structure is in place*" (Mentor)

For those in the lower ranks, namely police constables and police staff, there is a perception that senior ranking officers are 'out of reach':

> "*For a new police constable who is very new in service and maybe dazzled by pips and crowns, they probably think 'wow, look it's the boss', it will inhibit them*" (Mentor)

However, participants also suggested that taking part gave them access to those whom it would normally be hard to reach.

> "*I think for the majority of people, this would be the kind of major opportunity. The only other times I could ever get to speak to anybody about this of that rank is if I was working*

on a project, but it then it would be very project orientated and it wouldn't be more general" (Mentor)

"*It's the opportunity to be able to guide just one member of the senior leadership team…to actually show them the struggles that we are facing every day*" (Mentor)

"*Some of that core message gets lost by the time it gets to the top… gets filtered out because you have to go through the ranks*" (Mentor)

"[My mentee] *is facing the same things as me and it gives me a little bit of hope that if we put our heads together, we might get somewhere"* (Mentor)

Keeping things equal is highlighted by mentors and mentees who acknowledged it as problem when working within a rank structure:

"*It was intimidating sitting across the table from somebody who's got crowns and things and they are older*" (Mentor)

"*We need to try and create a causal relationship where you forget about rank*" (Mentor)

"*Our roles have to be equal, mentee and mentor*" (Mentee)

"*We were given advice to try and have it* [meetings] *out of uniform…don't be wearing a uniform*" (Mentor)

Several of the participants suggested that protection of all participants in the RM pilot, and any future projects, was a key consideration. For the PCSMT the involvement from members of the force is to protect all colleagues, particularly junior colleagues from any potential adverse effects of being in a professional relationship with senior staff:

"*Whatever goes on in that professional relationship stays in that professional relationship. Don't take it out of there and go into say a promotion board and say, 'well I didn't like this person', or 'I didn't like the advice they gave me', that is really unfair*" (PCSMT)

"*It is important to make sure that nobody comes out in a worse position than they went in*" (PCMST)

Enabling Change: Having a voice

GMP is a large organisation with close to 11,000 staff. The PCSMT suggest that senior leaders are often responsible for hundreds of colleagues who directly report to them, acknowledging the challenge of access. The RM pilot was considered by all, regardless of their level of involvement, as a positive step towards change. For several of the participants, taking part welcomed the opportunity of having a voice that could try to influence change. Motivations included:

"*Having the chance to influence what happens on the front-line*" (Mentor)

"*If they* [SLT] *can take something from this and understand our perspective, if they can understand what our point of view is, they're the ones that are in that seat to make that change at the moment*" (Mentor)

"*I thought, well, I wouldn't ever get the chance to have that sort of a conversation with somebody so senior*" (Mentor)

"*SLT* [senior leadership team] *are 'out of touch' and unaware of the realities we face, this can help change that*" (Mentor)

"*The benefit will be the conversations that take place… I'm nearly 16-17 years in policing now, I am becoming one of those Dinosaurs who is out of touch with modern society and the thinking and behaviours of some of the youth"* (PCSMT)

The RM pilot is regarded as a way in which those younger in service could be heard. The formal process of mentoring allows participants to talk and develop ideas. For some, influencing what happens on the front line is key:

"*To open eyes a little bit…to make them* [SLT] *think just a little bit more when it comes to putting policies and practices in place, when we're already quite heavily overloaded with work*" (Mentor)

"*From my experience, they* [SLT] *don't really understand what it is like; they have been away from the frontline for so long*" (Mentor)

"*It's also interesting to find out where their heads are at, because the conversations that I've had with him, where he's asked for guidance, that kind of thing, I thought this might have been sort of simple or common sense, but it's not necessary and I think that's just because they're just...we're just so far apart*" (Mentor)

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for doing this. To me, this is not only crucial but the origins for your involvement could not have come about in a more genuine way. You doing this, so that 500 plus officers can understand [X] *and* [X] *with an additional context around racism, police perceptions in minority communities and how our BAME staff and colleagues can feel… This means a great deal and I'm very grateful to you for volunteering."* (Internal email communication shared by PCSMT about a RM mentor's involvement with a project)

Positive change has come about through participation in the RM pilot from the perspectives of the mentors and mentees. Having time to spend discussing ideas has led to new information that is contributing to changes in policy and practice.

Sharing Experiences: Culture, Diversity and Lived Experience

A key component of this pilot was to allow BAME officers and staff an opportunity to take part. Accordingly, several key themes based on participants lived experiences have come to light. In the previous Quantitative Analysis section, the motivations of participants highlighted that making a difference within GMP, by sharing and offering their experiences, was key. Police

culture and feeling represented in the force is an important outcome of this evaluation and was commented on by all participants.

Many of the participants suggested that within the higher ranks of GMP, diversity seemed to lessen. Having the opportunity to be represented and work with others for change was key:

> "*You see that the under-representation gets greater and greater as you go through the ranks*" (Mentee)

> "*So, for diversity I think we were very quick to jump to BAME or LGBT, but I think there's so much more to it because it's diversity of thinking. It's that cognitive diversity, because people will be from so many different backgrounds and you will have so many different experiences. When you put all these people in the same situation, they all react differently. We* [GMP] *do not have that diversity. We have police officers who have all been trained one way. So, they are all from a sort of similar background who mostly think the same thing and react the same way*" (Mentor)

> "*As somebody who looks different, you sometimes, you're overlooked, or you're not heard. But if you've got an advocate who does fit in and who speaks up for you, they are more likely to be listened to and be able to affect that change on your behalf"* (Mentor)

> "*It is difficult because you don't see role models to even inspire you to think 'I could be there one day'*" (Mentor)

> "*You don't really see role models… because you don't see somebody who's like you. And that's not just by colour but by colour, gender, orientation or background*" (Mentor)

A lack of role models was suggested as challenging for the Mentors. Mentees and the PCSMT acknowledged that visible role models were less frequent in the senior ranks. Role models, or having somebody to look up to, was important for several participants. They suggested it would help them develop if they could see somebody who was like them having progressed.

The issue of lived experiences and being from a diverse community in the police raised bigger questions:

> *"It is still very much 'don't really mention that* [BAME] *in the police' because we know it's there and we know it's like an elephant in the room. Or if we just whisper about it then actually, we don't wake up the elephant"* (PCSMT)

> "*It's been far easier for the senior officer to ask, well, what's it like being a constable nowadays? You know, what is it like being 25 years old and in the police service? Rather than being a 25-year-old black officer*" (PCSMT)

Members of the SLT highlighted several possible justifications around the issue of under-representation and experiences of their BAME colleagues. Leaders suggested that there may be a worry, concern, or form of apprehension to talk about 'BAME':

> "*It's difficult for even senior officers to ask a question about BAME*" (PCSMT)

"As that white, middle-aged heterosexual male you can be scared of saying the wrong thing. Scared of referring to somebody by the wrong title, the wrong term by being clumsy" (PCSMT)

For mentees and members of under-represented communities, the challenge is evidenced in a different way when trying to affect change. Participants suggested that on some occasions, taking part in the RM pilot led to them experiencing a lack of understanding and support from direct supervision. It also highlighted that within the force culture there is some resistance to targeted activities based on encouraging inclusion and diversity:

"*I'm doing this* [RM Pilot] *and I am going to need time out to do it. They* [mentor's direct supervisor] *were like 'why would you want to 'reverse mentor a superintendent?' I said because I am hoping it's gonna be a positive thing for all of us down here. And they just kind of 'poo pooed' it"* (Mentor)

"*Police officers can be a bit cynical, totally different from police staff. They may be like 'this is just another flash in the pan', GMP trailing something, nothing will ever come of it"* (Mentor)

"*We know that if you do it like we are doing it* [RM Pilot Project], *say just for under-represented groups, what you get is 'well that's all right for you, you're in the under-represented group'*" (PCSMT)

Cultural issues exist within the force that can also present further challenges to participants who took part.

Developing Reverse Mentoring: Key Learning and Challenges

A key role of this evaluation is to highlight any operational, logistical challenges or learning that impacted the RM pilot. Despite the limited time available to carry out the pilot due to the global pandemic, several important points have emerged. These include resource related issues, the wider rollout of RM within GM and the positive experiences of this initial project. For several of the participants arranging to meet each other, in some cases via others, became an issue:

"*So, there's been a couple of challenges just in relation to when we can meet up*" (Mentee)

"*We could not set up a time or a date to actually meet in person. I don't know whether it's down to that individual's schedule* [mentee] *whether they are too busy or perhaps didn't put enough value into the actual project itself, I don't know*" (Mentor)

"*That's one of the challenges, resources. Resourcing is difficult, but my mentee does get protected time to be able to have the meetings to make sure that they can then update what they need to update*" (Mentee)

"*The logistics are really important because when you get up to that level, people don't manage their own diary, but they'll also have a PA. And then it might become a little bit tricky*" (Mentor)

"*I know there's been a whole heap of issues around availability, of primarily, no doubt, the senior party in relationship. Diary clashes or diary conflicts are always used as an excuse. I don't think I've used that as an excuse and I don't think I'm any less busy than anyone else. It is just about making time for reverse mentoring*" (Mentee)

"*All contact was through the assistant, so straightaway we weren't stripping that rank structure away. It was like 'if you want speak to me, speak to my assistant, and I'll deal with you later'...so that that doesn't work*" (Mentor)

Ensuring that the necessary value of the RM project is seen by all those who participate is a consideration. Several participants suggested that if either participant did not see the value in taking part, it was unlikely to work:

"*The problem will be on a number of issues, I guess the understanding of what reverse mentoring is about"* (Mentee)

"*I guess a level of importance would have to be really sort of drilled home and people would have to take that on board. The part of the problem with anything like mentoring and coaching, reverse mentoring, is if your heart's not in it, then it literally becomes a tick box exercise*" (Mentee)

"*Some will have seen this* [RM Pilot] *as an opportunity to be able to evidence as part of a package* [for promotion] *that they have been involved in diversity and inclusion within GMP"* (PCSMT)

Participants stressed that knowing what RM is about and being able to use the process for mutual development can be a positive factor and a challenge.

The majority of participants interviewed for this pilot, regardless of their experience, suggested that they would welcome GMP adopting the RM project more widely within the organisation:

"*I think that any member of SLT should be afforded the opportunity to do the reverse mentoring programme - it should be a consistent feature. And I think by doing that, it will ensure* [participation of] *those people that don't necessarily proactively go and look to get the impressions and the opinions from the staff who have the daily issues*" (Mentee)

"*So, for me, it's something that we should be actively encouraging and, as I said, everybody should have the opportunity. It should be encouraged because the insight that you get from it is huge*" (Mentee)

"*I see the benefits, it's the other ones who may not necessarily see the benefits, those who you would want to*" (Mentee)

> "*I'd like to see this scheme rolled out force-wide definitely, because my relationship with my mentee has been really positive and it's been an eye opener. I'd like to think that if we can continue that relationship, if we can spread it out force-wide, it is going to be an eye opener for a lot of senior leadership team members who just haven't thought about it in a different way other than from their own experiences*" (Mentor)

Several participants acknowledged how the scheme could benefit others. It was suggested that due to the formal opportunity for working with others, the force's learning and development structures could be a suitable place.

> "*I suppose in my head it would be force-wide through Workforce Development that was kind of where it would fit. We have within the Organisational Learning and Workforce Development a 'people hub', which I guess is very much focused on the development of individuals. Reverse mentoring could sit nicely within there*" (Mentor)

Importantly, despite several challenges that offer a chance for the RM project to develop, interview participants were keen to share the positives of taking part:

> "*From my perspective, I've built up a really strong relationship with a colleague who I might never ever work with, I might never be in charge of, but actually, we've managed to build a bond which is great, which I think can benefit both of us over time*" (Mentee)

> "*Because it has been fairly two-way but certainly, I've taken a huge amount away from the relationship, so it's been good*" (Mentee)

> "*She* [mentor] *looked, I've listened and it's helped change practice and it's helped us both to develop*" (Mentee)

The RM pilot project has begun to make small changes to those that participated in it. Participants suggest that there is opportunity amongst the challenges that the pilot has presented for future development within GMP.

Section 5: Discussion

The evidence collected as part of this evaluation into GMP's Reverse Mentoring Pilot Project indicates that the pilot has been successful on two fronts. Firstly, it has created opportunities for colleagues across the ranks to learn from each other. Secondly, it provides a framework that will support any future adoption or development of the scheme. The evaluation has shown that, whilst recognising that significant challenges exist, positive experiences have been identified. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected participants' level of involvement, changes have been noted in the views of participants taking part in the pilot. For the most part, participants are supportive of a wider rollout of the scheme and for mentors the pilot created opportunities to access and work with senior officers. Participants suggested that RM might have some benefit in tackling a wider force problem connected to culture, diversity and inclusion.

Relationships: Access, Rank and Protection

It is recognised that being able to access senior leaders in a meaningful and constructive manner is important to junior staff. Creating a formal way to achieve this within the organisation is key to its success. Participants in this research who were within the junior ranks suggested that their seniors can be distant, removed and at times out of touch. RM offers the opportunity for some to change this. For senior leaders this link is not as clear, however those participants who shared their views in this pilot all suggested that having the chance to learn what it is like to be a young officer in the organisation was worthwhile. Rank is suggested as a barrier to the experience of all participants and is something that requires a formalised system to enable access.

Safeguarding anyone who is involved with RM is a vital aspect of any future rollout. Participants suggested that the culture of the force was not always complimentary towards those younger in service who seek opportunity for professional development. Participants stated that there was a lack of support for releasing officers to take part in RM, which is further explored when looking at resourcing. The nature of the police being a rank-based organisation also impacted the participants of the scheme. Several comments were noted regarding protection for staff who took part in a scheme that spans across the rank structure, specifically to ensure no adverse treatment was received as a result. Mentors were not inclined to advertise their participation to others. Accordingly, an important point remains about the need to ensure that rank is disregarded when working within RM.

Enabling Change: Having a voice

RM creates an opportunity for all those involved to influence policy and to make changes. All participants who were interviewed suggested that the RM process facilitated this and for some, positive stories have emerged. The initial motivations of participants highlighted that building bridges, developing relationships, identifying issues, making changes, revisiting the frontline and developing personal practice were important reasons for taking part. For mentors and mentees, RM is a formal way of working together, enabling information exchange and the

swapping of ideas. It also enables participants to see the challenges that their counterpart faces and the roles that they undertake. For mentors, RM can offer a bridge between leaders and the frontline. For mentees, less so. Although traditional mentoring exists within the force and despite several participants alluding to already having people whom they seek advice from, participants suggested that the opportunity to participate in the RM pilot formalised the experience and offered structure.

Sharing Experiences: Culture, Diversity and Lived Experience

The RM pilot has highlighted several areas worthy of note connected to the lived experiences of the participants involved. There was little consensus around the RM project being able to directly complement existing diversity and inclusion strategies within the force, specific to individuals' area of business. Participants, however, did suggest that RM goes some way in improving the barriers that exist around under-representation. For those interviewed, under-representation and a lack of a visible role model was a key area of concern. Collectively participants highlighted that under-representation in terms of officers and staff from different backgrounds, for example BAME, gender, LGBT, are not visible with the force. As such, young officers lack visible role models to aspire to and to visualise themselves in a higher position. Senior staff within the project confirm that under-representation exists in the higher ranks but also that talking about being under-represented is a challenge to many.

A focus of this pilot involved participants from a BAME background and as such the pilot has highlighted that there is a need to consider the place of individuals from under-represented backgrounds within the organisation. Although RM can offer any participant a chance to access those from a different rank, being BAME comes with the added issue of not being heard or if heard, not being understood. Being BAME in the police is a challenge with participants suggesting that in addition to having little or no voice or influence as junior officer, being BAME also leads to less representation. This RM pilot evaluation suggests that the experiences of BAME officers and possibly other under-represented groups is a further challenge as the lived experiences of participants can be overlooked or not given full consideration. Tensions exist and were highlighted by participants around being treated differently due to being from an under-represented group. Participants suggest that having a voice, an outcome of the RM project, offers a starting point to effect and influence change.

Developing Reverse Mentoring: Key Learning and Challenges

A key aim of this evaluation is to offer evidence in support or against the RM project as a future feature within GMP. A key consideration stemming from the pilot evaluation is staff resourcing and value attached to RM. Participants suggested that in order for the scheme to work, they need time allocated to them to be able to take part. Several pairings between mentors and mentees did not fully achieve the required number of meetings necessary for the pilot. Seeing the value of the project and arranging meetings seem to be the issue. For junior officers it is a challenge as they tended to encounter resistance in being released from their day job along with having to deal with the complex diaries of senior leaders and their personal or executive assistants. Formalising RM within the organisations culture will require time to be allocated for those who wish to participate.

Placing value on RM is something that emerged in all the narratives within the evaluation. It is suggested that RM remains an optional activity and should not be mandatory, or perceived as such, for promotion or assessment processes within the force. Participants suggest that for RM to work so that all those involved may benefit from it, both the mentor and mentee must see the added value it can have to their working lives and the wider occupational culture. Commitment is noted as a key indicator in the success of RM with appropriate pairings required between mentor and mentee to ensure success. Several participants developed the value narrative and suggested that for RM to be a success it should be regarded as a chance for change rather than an opportunity for personal gain such as evidence for promotion.

A consensus amongst participants in this evaluation suggests that the RM project has a place within GMP and should be made widely available across the force. Participants in their evaluations of meetings initially remained level in their views but towards the end of the meeting cycle expressed that a wider roll out would be of benefit. It was suggested that despite several successes, a formal but localised force led approach is needed. Formal adoption and implementation would require RM to be situated within a suitable department within the force, which has the ability to provide suitable infrastructure. This pilot has benefited from the PCSMT maintaining overall governance and oversight of the project. However, due to the unique nature of RM, a localised framework of participation is needed. RM embraces colleagues who have things in common such as working in the same district or specialist area of policing. The nature of RM facilitates and encourages networking and the sharing of learning between colleagues.

Section 6: Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered in support of any future development and application of reverse mentoring schemes within GMP. The report concludes that the RM project within the organisation should be rolled out force-wide to help enhance and develop occupational force culture. The pilot suggests the RM project has the potential to make a positive impact on the operational culture of the force and the experiences of participants. Adopting RM within the force should be considered as an opportunity for participants to develop new relationships, break down barriers and create networks with colleagues. Accordingly, allowing participants the time to take part with the appropriate resourcing and adoption of RM into the formal structures of the force remains important.

Our recommendations are:

- Proceed with a force-wide roll out of the RM project so that all of GMP may benefit from the scheme. This evaluation has found that positive experiences have emerged for some participants that go some way towards making cultural change within the organisation.
- The RM Pilot has demonstrated that colleagues, when appropriately encouraged, supported and led, have the appetite to work towards the best for GMP. This momentum should be embraced. The RM programme should be used as a standard within the wellbeing and cultural toolkit and considered as a routine practice, or 'business as usual' across the force.
- A formal force wide structure for RM is required. A balance of where the programme should belong needs to be developed. Fully centralising the programme poses the risk of losing the unique experience and the learning that can take place for individuals. RM works with a local approach. When pairing mentors and mentees, the commonality amongst colleagues should be embraced, including common areas of work, same district or specialist unit. Use the force structure, namely districts or specialist units, to implement and locally manage the future RM programme. See Appendix 4 for a suggested force wide structure.
- The senior force leadership team should be involved in the RM process. The safeguarding of participants remains an important consideration. A representative from the forces senior leadership team should have oversight of RM. One or more officers at the rank of Chief Superintendent should be included to steer and support the RM participation for all mentor and mentees.
- To ensure that RM will benefit local teams, consider appointing several district coordinators at the rank of Inspector or equivalent to coordinate and support participants and processes.
- Consider offering the role of mentor to the ranks of Sergeant or equivalent. Individuals in this group tend to have notable experience of police culture, processes and operational challenges, and will offer a wider understanding of the daily challenges of delivering frontline services across the force and within communities.

- Use the expertise of the PCSMT to help inform future rollout. Individuals within this group are experts in this area and should be commended for their desire to influence change and make GMP more inclusive. To ensure RM remains effective consider the expertise of the PCSMT to coordinate overall rollout and the continual governance of the scheme. Although not fully evidenced in this evaluation, the PCSMT have invested countless hours of their own time to support the RM pilot for no personal gain.
- Allocate adequate time and resources to facilitate participation to all those that take part. This should include time for meetings, reflection and any associated development opportunities. The force should also support the respective supervision teams of participants through education and additional resourcing when asking them to release staff for participation.
- It is important to consider mentee participation. This should be on a voluntary rather than a mandatory basis. It remains important that RM is not perceived as nor is a requirement of any annual appraisal or promotion evidence processes. This is critical to the longevity and wider success of any wider scheme.
- Consider the use of ICT in any development of RM to allow for the successful collection, storage and management of data and for participants to access resources, arrange and record meetings or store information with ease.
- Explore further options of developing the forces representation across the ranks to ensure that any officer from any under-represented group feels valued and part of the organisation. By including colleagues who are of BAME heritage, the RM pilot has demonstrated that the force has established a structure and now has the ability to offer more opportunities for under-represented groups and its wider workforce.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Activity Log

Name of Mentee:

Name of Mentor:

Agreed Objectives:

Duration: Agreed initial period of 6 months (with option to review)

Date	Contact Type	Key Activity Areas	Actions	Follow Up
Contact date, time	*E.g. Face to Face, email, telephone, etc*	*E.g. Progress Objectives, discuss issues, focused development, recruitment advice, etc*	*Mentor, Mentee or for either to involve supervisor or Apprentice Coordinator, etc*	*E.g. date and type of next contact (& review specific actions)*

Appendix 2

GMP Mentor Meeting Summary

Mentee	
Mentor	**Meeting Date**
Reason for Mentoring Relationship	

Brief Summary of Meeting *(please advise of any training undertaken / change of role / progress to achieving objectives)*

Mentee Signature	**Date**
Mentor Signature	**Date**

Appendix 3

Reverse Mentoring Pilot - Evaluation Questions

On a scale of 1- 10 where 10 is 100%.....

1/ Do you think GMP is inclusive and embraces diversity?

2/ Within your peer group how comfortable are you with sharing the knowledge of your mentoring relationship in this Pilot?

3/ The reverse mentoring Pilot could act as an educating bridge / improving meaningful conversation between front line and SLT – how effective is this principle?

4/ One aim of this Pilot is to explore a different approach to the established challenge that is Diversity & Inclusion within the wider public service to provide a consideration for recognition of some of the barriers, myths and stigma around under representation. How well do you think this Pilot has achieved its aim?

5/ Based on your experience of this Pilot, how well do you feel a reverse mentoring scheme would benefit GMP when / if rolled out more widely?

6/ Within your area of business how effectively does this Pilot complement your existing Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

7/ How supportive to the aims of this Pilot is the current internal culture / attitude within your area of business.

Appendix 4

A Suggested force wide structure for Research Mentoring Programme- Greater Manchester Police

Role	Rank	Responsibility
PCSMT	Ch Supt, Sgt/Insp, PC / Pol Staff	Body of officers and staff to advise and steer the project.
Representative from the Force Senior Leadership Team	ACC or above	To ensure the integrity of the project and support participants. To promote RM at a force wide strategic level
Senior Officer	Ch Supt	In place to ensure safeguarding is maintained for all participants.
District Coordinator X 10	Inspector	To coordinate local activities between mentor and mentee.
Mentors	Sgt / Pol Staff	Participants in the project
Mentees	Ch Insp or above	Participants in the project
Force Learning & Development Department	N/A	To provide administrative support and IT infrastructure.