

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET.

Developing and piloting a Peer Mentoring intervention for looked after young women . MENTEES.

We would like to invite you to take part in a study being conducted by St George's, University of London and with other partners (listed at the end of this leaflet). This information leaflet describes the study and what it will involve if you agree to take part. You may wish to discuss the study with other people before you decide what to do and we would be happy to discuss any aspect of the study, or to provide more information if that would be helpful. Our names and contact details are provided at the end of this leaflet.

What is the purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out whether providing extra support to a young woman, who is in care, has some benefits. In this study, the extra support will be offered by someone who has been through the care system herself.

These supporters, who we call Peer Mentors – will be there to offer you advice, support and guidance, organise social activities for the two of you and attend appointments with you, where you agree this.

These Peer Mentors - are young women aged 19-25 who have been chosen on the advice of the Local Authority and will be trained by us. The peer mentors will be linked into other members of your care team and will be in regular contact with us during the study.

We are trying to find out what young women like you think about having extra support and input from a peer mentor – who has been through the care system and understands many of the issues you may be facing. Many young women in care become teenage parents and although this may be a positive thing for them, it can also create health and social problems for them and their

babies. In this study, we would like to look at the effects of giving young women like you extra support on your general wellbeing, social life, relationships, attitudes to sex and thoughts about early pregnancy.

In this study, we are hoping to recruit 48 young women in care who are between the ages of 14-18 to be potential mentees. Sixteen of the young women will be recruited from your local authority. Half the young women who consent to take part in the study will be provided with a peer mentor, whilst the other half will continue to receive their usual care. The reason we are doing the research in this way is because we must be able to compare the experiences of young women who have mentors with those who do not. We won't be able to tell you before you start whether you will receive a mentor or not because once you agree to take part, this will be decided at random.

However, even if you are not allocated to a peer mentor, your input to this research will be equally important to us. All young women who consent to take part in the study will be asked about their general wellbeing, social life, relationships, attitudes to sex and thoughts about early pregnancy at the beginning and the end of the study. As a thank you, you will receive a £15 voucher plus your travel expenses for each of these interviews. If you are allocated a peer mentor, you may also be asked some questions about the mentoring experience and will receive an additional £5 voucher.

Is it essential that I take part in the study?

No. You are free to choose whether to take part or not. Your decision will not affect the care that you usually receive. If you choose to take part now, but then change your mind, you can withdraw from the study at any time. This will also not affect your care in any way.

What can I expect if I take part?

If you are keen to take part in the study, our research workers (Deborah or Fiona) will arrange to meet with you to answer any questions you have and to gain consent from you to take part. At this point, the researchers will interview you. This will take between one to two hours.

If you are allocated to a peer mentor, they will remain in contact with you for one year. You will meet up with your mentor at least once a week. You can contact them if you want to talk, or if you want help or advice from them, or they may contact you. Your mentor will keep a diary of your contacts so that the research team know how your relationship with your mentor is going and if you or your mentor needs any extra support.

As part of the research, we would like to compare the wellbeing between young women who are allocated to a peer mentor and those who are not. To help us with this, we are asking you to agree to us gaining information from your GP records so we can look at your attendance and health care. We would also like to ask your social worker about how you have been coping with your experience of care and for them to provide us with general information about you i.e. your placement history, reasons for going into care, physical and mental health and any involvement with the police and youth justice system. We will look at this information at the beginning and the end of the year.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will be making a great contribution to improving the life chances of young people who, like you, are going through the care system.

If you are allocated to a peer mentor, as well being offered advice, support and guidance, a small amount of money has been set aside so that the two of you can do some enjoyable activities such as occasional trips to the cinema, a café, or a leisure centre. The activities you do will be decided between the two of you. In addition you may find it interesting to participate in research interviews and helpful to reflect on aspects of your life.

Whether or not you are allocated a peer mentor, your input will be valued. By taking part in the research you will show us whether additional support from a peer mentor, has any effect on the attitudes and experiences of young women in care, particularly in relation to relationships and pregnancy. To thank you for giving up your time we are offering a small voucher payment for each interview.

Are there any disadvantages of taking part?

Apart from having to give up some of your time, there are no other disadvantages to taking part. You will continue to receive the same care and services, whether or not you are allocated to a peer mentor.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any difficulties, at any stage of the project, you can raise these with your project coordinator, who will try and resolve any difficulties. You can also contact your social worker who will raise any issues with your project coordinator. If you are unhappy with your mentor or wish to change, this can be arranged.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All the information you provide will remain confidential to the peer mentors, the project coordinator, the research team and our research partners. The only time we may need to pass information to other members of your care team will be if you say something that makes researchers worry about your safety or the safety of another young person.

You will not be able to be identified individually in any reports or publications and any details that could allow anyone to identify you individually will be changed. The research data will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). This means any personal details we hold about you will be stored confidentially for six months after the project ends, and then destroyed.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

A report will be written for the organisation that is funding this study. We shall also be publishing our research findings in scientific journals and may be presenting the findings at national and international conferences.

What do I do now?

If you are at all interested in taking part in this study, please speak to your project coordinator, whose details are below. After speaking with you, the project coordinator will inform your social worker that you are interested in taking part. Then, the project coordinator will help us to arrange a meeting

with you where we can discuss the project with you, and if you agree, gain your consent to take part.

Contacts for further information

(details removed to preserve anonymity of PCs)

The study is being conducted by St George's University of London, in collaboration with Bristol University and Royal Holloway University of London, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Institute of Education and the Department of Health. The study has been approved by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Ethics Committee.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET.

Developing and piloting a Peer Mentoring intervention for looked after young women – MENTORS

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study being conducted by St George's University of London, in collaboration with other partners (listed at the end of this leaflet). The aim of this information leaflet is to describe the study and what it will involve if you agree to take part. You may wish to discuss the study with other people before you decide what to do and we would be happy to discuss any aspect of the study, or to provide more information if that would be helpful. Our names and contact details are provided at the end of this leaflet.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to look at whether giving a young woman in care, extra support from another young woman has themselves been through the care system, and has had similar experiences, is helpful. We are recruiting twenty four young women, aged 19 to 25, who have themselves been through the care system, to act as peer mentors to young women (aged 14 to 18) who are currently in care.

The role of the peer mentor will be to offer advice, support and guidance to a young woman, organise social activities for the two of you and accompany her to appointments and interviews where you agree this. As a peer mentor, you will be supported in this role by being linked with other members of the mentees' care team, and will be in regular contact with your Local Authority project coordinator.

We want to see if providing a young woman with a peer mentor they can trust and receive care and respect from, can help them to increase their confidence and make positive choices particularly around sex, relationships, and delaying pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy is common in young women who have been through care and, although this can be a positive thing for some young

women, there can also be quite serious health and social consequences for teenage mothers and their babies.

As well as becoming a peer mentor, your role would involve acting as a research participant. With your help, we would like to look at the effects of providing a peer mentor on looked after young women, in terms of their general wellbeing, education, work, social life, relationships, and attitudes to sex and pregnancy.

Do I have to take part?

No. You are free to choose to take part or not.

What will happen to me if I express an interest now?

If you express further interest at this stage, your project coordinator will answer any further questions you may have about the study.

You will then be invited to take part in a three and a half day training course developed by us at St George's, in collaboration with the National Children's Bureau (NCB). This training will cover key issues related to the expectations and requirements of your role, the reasoning behind this study and dealing with difficulties if they arise. Food and refreshments will be provided. On the last day of the training, the researchers will conduct a group discussion to get your views on the training and how it could be improved. This discussion will be recorded. As a thank you for attending every day of training, after the discussion with researchers you will receive a total of £30 in vouchers.

After the training, the research workers (Deborah or Fiona) will arrange to meet with you and, if you would like to become a peer mentor, they will ask you to sign the consent form, included in this leaflet.

What can I expect if I consent to take part?

You will be allocated to a looked after young woman in your Local Authority and you will be asked to mentor her, with at least one face to face meeting a week, for one year. After that:

- You will begin the mentoring with a three way meeting between you, your mentee and your project coordinator. At this meeting you will meet your mentee, begin to get to know each other and discuss the mentoring relationship going forward.
- You will attend monthly support meetings with your project coordinator, who will be available throughout the project to deal with any problems should they arise.
- You will also receive two follow up support training sessions with the NCB after four months and at the end of the mentoring.
- You will be given a mobile phone with a diary function, to enable you to keep a record of your contacts with your mentee and to record your thoughts about how the contacts are going. This information will be analysed by members of the research team at the end of the study.
- You will receive £40.00 a month in vouchers in recognition of your work and contribution to the project. You will also receive an additional £40.00 a month for travel and the activities that you and your mentee will decide to engage in (e.g. going to the cinema, a cafe or swimming).
- You will be asked to complete a questionnaire and interview with the researchers prior to commencing your peer mentoring work. You will receive a £10.00 voucher plus your travel expenses as a thank you.
- At the end of the mentoring year period, you will be asked to complete a similar questionnaire and interview again, with the same voucher payment.
- A sample of mentors will also be asked a few extra questions about the peer mentoring experience and will receive a £5 additional voucher payment.

As part of the mentoring experience, you can choose to gain an ASDAN qualification (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). If you agree to participate in this study, we shall need to carry out CRB checks, which will be paid for by us.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We hope that you will see this as an opportunity to make a valuable contribution to research and improving the life chances of a young woman who is going through the care system. We hope you will develop a positive relationship with them, share your knowledge and experience of the care system and have some fun!

Mentoring will provide you with new skills, knowledge and experience. If you choose, your training and experience as a mentor will be accredited through

the ASDAN system. You will receive a small voucher payment for your contribution to the project, as well as additional money to support you to do additional leisure or social activities with your mentee. You will receive vouchers for interviews and questionnaires you complete.

Are there any disadvantages of taking part?

You should expect to encounter demands on your time and being a peer mentor may also be emotionally demanding. You will be offered plenty of support to deal with this.

What if there is a problem?

If you are experiencing any problems, at any stage of the project, you can raise this with your project coordinator, who will try and resolve any difficulties.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All the information you provide about yourself during interviews will be confidential to members of the research team. However, if you say something that makes researcher's worry about your safety or the safety of another young person we will need to pass this information on to your project coordinator. During supervision, you will take part in discussion with the project coordinator and other peer mentors.

You will not be identified individually in any reports or publications, your name will not be disclosed and any personal details that could identify you individually will be changed. The research data will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). This means any personal details we hold about you will be stored confidentially for six months after the project ends, and then destroyed.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

A report will be written for the organisation that is funding this study. We shall also be publishing our research findings in scientific journals and may be presenting the findings at national and international conferences.

What do I do now?

If you are interested in taking part in this study, please speak to your project coordinator whose details are below. After speaking with you, the project coordinator will inform us of your details and you will be invited to attend a training course in your local authority.

Contacts for further information

(details removed to preserve anonymity of PCs)

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