





# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1 Introduction

*"Access to quality mentoring is particularly valued by women starting and growing an enterprise. Mentoring helps them to build belief in a positive vision for the development and growth of their business and provides a conduit to business support and information. A national mentoring network for women in business will be coordinated to recognise and support the distinctive nature of women's business start-up and growth".* Government Enterprise Strategy 'Enterprise Unlocking the UK's talent' March 2008.

Following publication of the Enterprise Strategy, The Department of Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) established a steering group to champion a National Women's Enterprise Mentoring Network (NWEMN) and to develop proposals for how it could integrate and add value to existing mentoring provision across the English regions. The steering group consists of RBS, Prowess, Everywoman, and the British Chamber of Commerce. As a first step Prowess was tasked with conducting a mapping exercise to identify national and international good practice, levels of potential stakeholder support for NWEMN and to survey existing provision at a national and regional level in England. This report presents the findings of that exercise.

### **What is mentoring?**

Definitions abound for the meaning of 'mentoring' and how it can be distinguished from other activity such as coaching. For the purposes of this report a mentor was defined as:

*"A mentor is someone to share ideas with, someone who will listen to your problems and issues, help wherever possible and be a friend to your business. Mentors tend to have direct experience of the field in which help is required. While mentors often use elements of coaching, coaching tends to be focused on more specific and immediate goals".*

By definition, mentoring is particularly attractive to women. Research and experience suggests gender differences in take-up of business support services. The female preference is for more 'transformational' support which is relational and holistic. It incorporates an understanding of the impact of the business on other responsibilities and provides longer term support, which fits with the more tentative way many women choose to start and grow their businesses.

### **Women's enterprise in the UK**

More than one million women in the UK work for themselves, representing 27% of the self-employed and an increase of 17% since 2002. However the growth in new businesses owned by women is not being sustained. There is strong evidence that women's businesses are not surviving as long as those of their male counterparts and not making it through to the next level.

Nevertheless, women's businesses exhibit some particular strengths. They are more innovative, more focused on business improvement and more likely to incorporate long-term social, ethical and environmental considerations in their businesses.

Women remain half as likely as men to start a business; this figure has barely changed over the last five years. There are also four times as many male as female

'high-expectation' entrepreneurs in the UK according to the Global Report on High-Growth Entrepreneurship'. Men dominate all stages of entrepreneurship activity. Yet it is amongst 'high-expectation' entrepreneurs (start-up firms expecting to employ at least 20 people in five years time) where the gender gap is particularly pronounced. Female entrepreneurs expecting high-growth account for just 20% of Britain's high-growth start-ups.

### **The Government's Enterprise Strategy**

The Government's enterprise strategy 'Enterprise: unlocking the UK's talent' (2008) identifies women as "the largest under-represented group in the UK in terms of participation in enterprise, offering a wealth of untapped talent and economic opportunity". Other relevant points in the strategy include:

- The US has 20% more businesses per head than the UK. A significant proportion of this gap is explained by the much lower rates of women's entrepreneurial activity in the UK.
- The Government believes that, while general business support should be available on a universal basis, the needs of women entrepreneurs can be met more effectively. More focused provision for women can bring benefits.
- The proposed national women's business mentoring network is part of a range of measures for women entrepreneurs including:
  - piloting women's business centres
  - access to finance measures
  - enterprise support focused on women through RDAs and Business Link
  - enterprise advice through the Children's Centres network

## **1.2 Key findings**

### **Survey of mentoring initiatives**

- The survey identified 79 mentoring schemes currently operating in England, together providing mentoring to 39,693 individuals of whom 49% (19,423) are female. The survey includes almost all significant programmes identified by national and regional experts.
- Twenty-five of the programmes target women, either entirely or as part of a broader programme. If those targeted programmes were not available, the remaining mainstream initiatives would have a client base of 35% women.
- Mentoring provision varies across the English regions with each region presenting different levels of service. There is a lack of stability in many of the organisations which are providing mentoring services, with a high degree of programme closure and new programme launch. Mentoring provision regionally is shown to be less well resourced with just 32% of programmes run by a 'team of people' compared with 66% of the national programmes.
- Public sector providers are supporting the lowest proportion of female clients, 35%. The 'third' sector achieves a good balance of 51% female clients. And despite evidence that the private sector market is saturated with inadequate demand, it achieves a very impressive 64% female clients.

## **Good practice and lessons learned**

Some important principles can be drawn from a review of UK and international good practice, including lessons learned from mentoring programmes no longer in operation:

### **Programme delivery**

- E-mentoring works best when complemented by face2face support
- 'Peer group mentoring is particularly valued by women
- The recruitment of experienced and well-connected mentors alongside careful mentor-matching and training for mentors is critical for the success of mentoring interventions
- Mentoring programmes are more likely to succeed where there is a formal commitment from both parties and a statement of purpose
  
- **Stakeholder engagement/Sustainability**
- Programmes which are dependent on just one source of funding are vulnerable
- The Corporate sector can be an important delivery partner, in addition to providing sponsorship
- Programmes should charge fees where possible for higher value services
- Buy-in from all stakeholder groups is critical
- Monitoring Return on Investment (ROI) and Social Return on Investment (SROI) will demonstrate economic and social value.
  
- **Co-ordination, monitoring and management**
- Strong central coordination and ongoing review is important.
- High-quality guidance and marketing materials which are professional and effectively targeted are important to attract mentors and clients and to provide them with guidance at key stages of the relationship.
- Flexibility should be built in to the design of the mentoring initiative to allow it to respond to changing needs.
- Accreditation provides an independent quality check and reassurance to customers that services are high quality.
  
- **Delivery framework for NWEMN**
- The research tested the proposed framework for NWEMN, consisting of a female targeted national online facility providing awareness, information and access to mentoring services. The umbrella facility could be opted into at national, regional and local levels and could include:
  - Marketing and sign-posting
  - E-mentoring and internet platform
  - Recruitment of mentors and mentees
  - Training and Accreditation
  - Data collection and management
  - Ongoing mapping of mentoring provision
  - External endorsement and being part of a national network
  
- There is a good level of provider demand for all of the added value services proposed by NWEMN. The most popular services are 'marketing and signposting', 'external endorsement' and 'being part of a national network'.

## Stakeholder support for NWEMN

- There is a good level of support for NWEMN from all stakeholder groups, however it is important to stakeholders that NWEMN is:
  - sustainable, with a diversified income base.
  - user led.
  - not for profit.
  - added value and does not duplicate existing provision.
- NWEMN presents a reasonably good fit regarding potential financial backing from stakeholders in Banks, RDAs and Trusts and additionally Banks and RDAs may be interested in opportunities to support the initiative creatively and in-kind.
- All of the nine English RDAs are supportive in principle of NWEMN and they generally feel that NWEMN will assist them to deliver their strategic women's enterprise plans.
- Practical linkages with Business Link services are a particularly important issue for the three northern RDAs. In particular a national mentoring network would enhance and keep up-to-date the Business Link knowledge bank. Our research suggests that this would be a particularly important function for NWEMN as most Business Link brokerage services do not yet provide effective sign-posting to mentoring information. Despite the plethora of mentoring schemes this research has found in every Region, only two Regional Business Links were able to provide relevant referrals.

## 1.3 Recommendations

### Mentoring provision

- As a transformational approach to business support, mentoring is particularly appealing to women, however they are paradoxically less likely to be participating in public sector programmes. **Public sector funders should review the mentoring programmes they support and ensure that programme criteria or marketing is not unintentionally excluding women.**
- The gender gap is widest amongst 'high-expectation' entrepreneurs (start-up firms expecting to employ at least 20 people in five years time). Female-focussed mentoring programmes in the United States have had particular success in supporting women to develop and sustain high-growth companies. Programmes such as *ATHENA*PowerLink® and Make Mine a Million \$ Business (M3) have provided the right support and contacts to enable women to take their businesses to the next level. **BERR should work with relevant providers to pilot similar approaches in the UK.**
- Mentoring features prominently in national and regional enterprise strategies and there is a reasonably good level of mentoring provision in most regions. However this is undermined by a lack of continuity, with a high degree of programme closure and new programmes launched. RDAs have a strategic role in encouraging strong mentoring infrastructure, although it is recognised that they may not in all cases be able to ensure the continuity of a given programme. **Regional Development Agencies should use their strategic**

**leadership to, where possible, encourage the development of high quality and sustainable regional and local mentoring services.**

### **A National Women's Enterprise Mentoring Network**

- While mentoring services remain patchy across England, there is a good mix of female-targeted provision and this is directly linked to the overall equitable balance of participation in mentoring programmes between men and women. **There is clear demand for a national enterprise mentoring network and it should reflect good practice in delivery by effectively incorporating or working alongside a female-targeted NWEMN portal.**
- NWEMN should not be considered as a substitute for existing 'on the ground', local face2face or peer group mentoring. NWEMN should add value to existing mentoring provision not replace it. **NWEMN should provide top level marketing, sign-posting and advice, combined with training, development and a best practice forum for those delivering mentoring services.**
- Despite the plethora of mentoring initiatives in England, Business Link brokers are, on the whole, not providing adequate information or signposting. **NWEMN should link to and inform the Business Link knowledgebase.**
- Both lessons learned and stakeholders' views support the need for a sustainable non-profit making network, with a diversified income base, including membership fees, Trust funding, Corporate Support and Public funding. **It is important that diversified income and a long-term business model is in place before the Network is launched and seed funding should be provided for a development period of 6-9 months.**

## **Section Two**

# **Existing Mentoring Provision for Women's Enterprise in the UK**

## 2.1 Introduction

As a step towards developing a national Women's Enterprise Mentoring Network (NWE MN) Prowess undertook a mapping exercise of existing mentoring opportunities for people, especially women, looking to start and grow businesses in England. The exercise was conducted via an online questionnaire using the survey tool 'Survey Monkey'. Key findings from the mapping exercise show:

- There are 79 current mentoring schemes operating in England
- 21 of these programmes operate across England and 58 are regionally specific
- Of the 21 national programmes, 8 currently provide some women-only provision
- Of the 58 regional programmes, 17 currently provide some women-only provision
- All the programmes are together providing mentoring to 39,693 individuals of whom 49% (19,423) are female

## 2.2 Methodology

Prior to conducting the survey it was necessary to compile a database of existing mentoring programmes and organisations likely to be offering mentoring as part of their services. A database of 600 organisations was populated through the following methods:

- Memberships and associates of steering group members, especially British Chambers of Commerce, Prowess and Enterprise Insight.
- 'Snowballing' via phone interviews with a number of significant stakeholders including; The Princes Trust, Business Link brokerage in the nine English regions, RDA women's enterprise leads, Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) officers, Prowess Flagship organisations, the National Federation of Enterprise Agencies (NFEA), National Council of Graduate Entrepreneurs (NCGE) PRIME, the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, The Coaching and Mentoring Network and Mentfor.

The online questionnaire (See Appendix I) was developed in consultation with the project steering group. The questionnaire was distributed to all contacts on the database and was open for three weeks, completing the questionnaire took approximately 7 minutes. All contacts were also asked to forward the survey link to relevant contacts.

The survey was open to organisations providing both mainstream and female specific mentoring services in the public and private sector. To complete the survey organisations had to verify that:

- they provided mentoring to people over the age of 18
- they provided mentoring to people starting or growing a business
- that they co-ordinated at least ten mentors

The survey was open to existing, recently ended and soon to begin mentoring programmes so that the experience of those that had recently ended was not lost and an accurate picture was presented of plans for future mentoring in each region. In the results analysis below it is clearly indicated when just the results of 'currently existing' mentoring programmes are being taken into consideration.

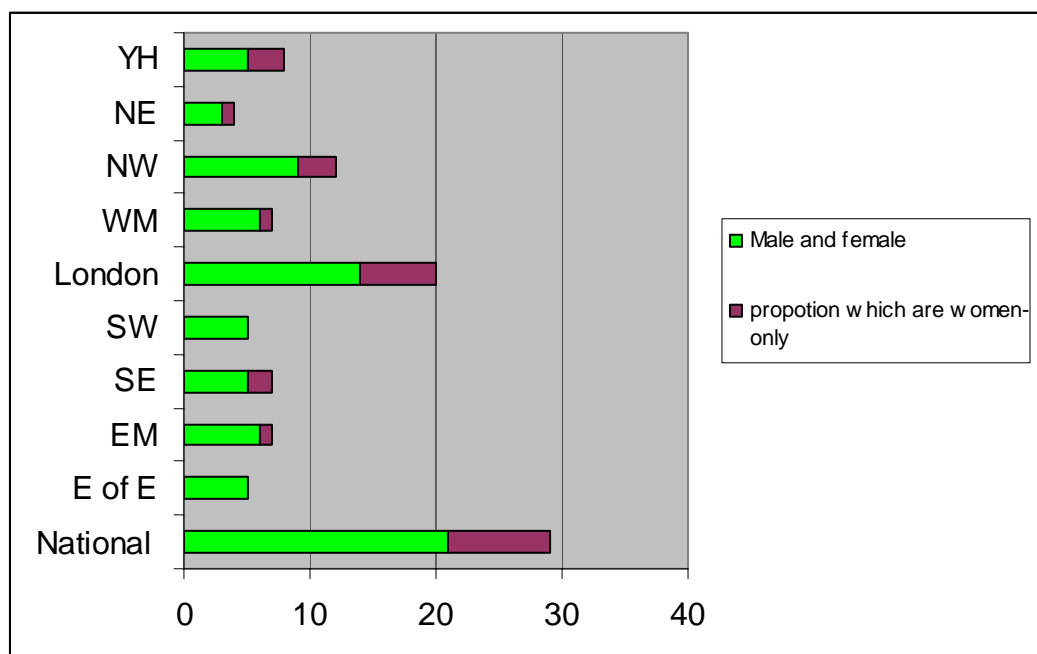
### 2.3 Results

The survey was completed by 119 mentoring organisations of which 79 are currently operating. The national and regional breakdown of currently operating mentoring programmes showing the proportion that are women-only is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1:

**Table 1**

	Currently operating	
	Men and Women	Of which how many women only
National	21	8
East of England	5	0
East Midlands	6	1
South East England	5	2
South West England	5	0
London	14	6
West Midlands	6	1
North West of England	9	3
North East of England	3	1
Yorkshire and Humber	5	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>25</b>

**Figure 1:** National and regional breakdown of currently operating mentoring programmes showing the proportion that are women-only



### 2.4 An Overview of National Mentoring Programmes

The survey demonstrates that there are 21 mentoring programmes currently operating across the whole of England. Thirty-eight per cent of the national programmes have some women-only mentoring provision. Eight organisations operate at a national level and provide some level of women-only mentoring.

## **Quality**

It is important to establish the quality and breadth of the national mentoring currently available. One way of assessing this is to look at what each organisation provides as part of its mentoring service. All respondents were asked to tick the elements below which are available as part of their mentoring programme:

- Mentor matching
- Structured mentor support programme
- Training for clients/mentees
- Accreditation/qualifications for mentors
- Monitoring and training of mentor relationships
- Programme Evaluation
- Information, advice and resources

Taking at least five of the above elements as a proxy for a 'high-quality and well established programme', then of the 21 mentoring programmes currently operating at the national level 9 can be classified as 'quality programmes'. Of the eight women only programmes currently operating at national level five can be classified as 'quality programmes', therefore women targeted programmes are more likely to be 'quality'. The five identified programmes are:

- Designated Associates
- PPBA Ltd Training and Development – Inspired Females
- The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC)
- Training for results
- YTKO

## **Gender balance**

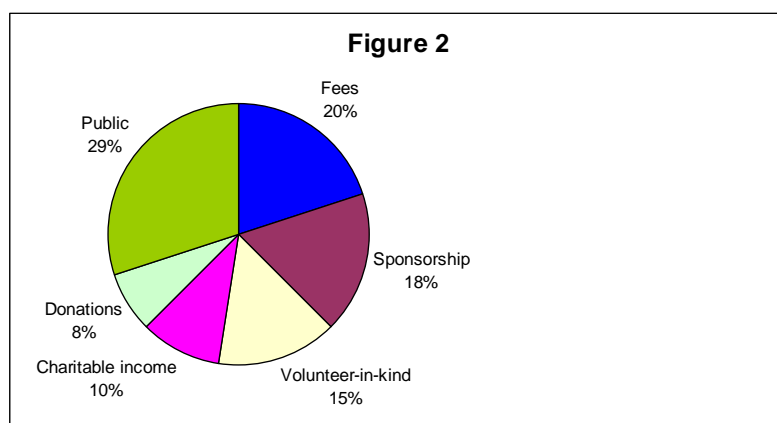
In total the national organisations are providing mentoring to 21,375 individuals of whom 49% (10,513) are female. If the women-only programmes are taken out of the picture then just 22% of the national programmes total client base is shown to be female.

## **Sustainability**

The sustainability of an organisation is being assessed on the basis of: staffing levels, no. of years established, expectations for future delivery and diversity of income streams. The indication is that the national organisations are mostly sustainable and well established. Sixty-six percent operate with a team of people and 61% have been operating for over 3 years. Just two of the programmes are expected to close in the next two years the remainder have no expectation that they will close.

The national mentoring programmes have a diverse range of income sources with public sector funding representing just 29% of all income.

**Figure 2:** The income sources for all national mentoring programmes.



### High-Growth

The survey shows that there are seven national mentoring organisations who have self-selected that they provide mentoring services to 'high-growth businesses' and there are five national women-only programmes who say they support this client group (23% of the total number of mentoring organisations). They are:

- Everywoman
- Women in Rural Enterprise
- Designated Associates
- YTKO
- UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC)

### Target Client Groups

The respondents were asked which client/mentee groups they specifically target (i.e. not just in general terms but with specific programmes or as stated in promotional materials). The table below indicates the percentage of organisations targeting each client group.

**Table 2**

Client Group	Percentage of organisations who target this group
BAME	38%
Young	33%
Other	33%
Lone parents	28%
Social Enterprise	28%
Graduates	23%
Disabled	23%
SET	23%
Corporate Executives	23%
50+	19%
Rural	19%
Returners	19%
Ex-offenders	19%
Company Directors	14%
Welfare Benefit Recipients	9.5%

NEET	9.5%
Refugees	4.8%

BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities are the most targeted client group with 38% of organisations providing specific programmes. This survey was not able to go into depth about provision for particular communities within 'BAME' but this would benefit from further investigation.

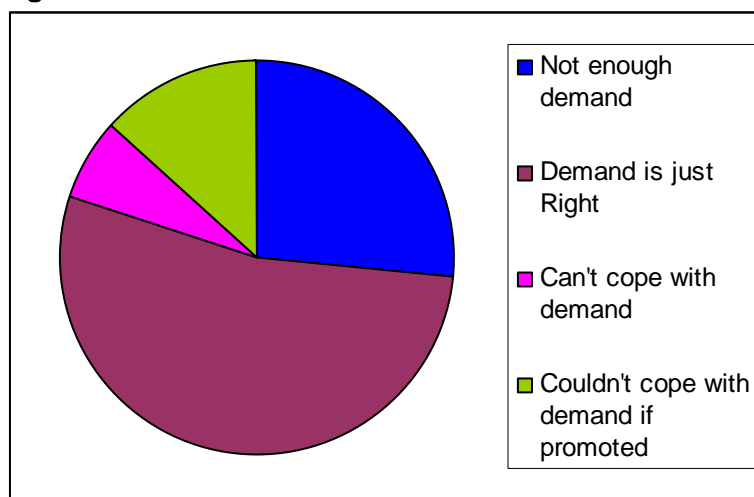
Thirty-three percent of organisations provide mentoring to 'Other' client groups. These tend to cover specific sectors and industries such as 'musicians' or 'creative entrepreneurs'.

### Demand

Figure 3 demonstrates that the largest proportion of mentoring organisations say that demand for their services is 'just right'. A small number, 4.7% are struggling to meet demand and a further 9.5% would be unable to meet demand if there was increased promotion of their services.

Nineteen per cent of organisations report that 'there is not enough demand'. Significantly all of the organisations who say this operate in the private sector and 75% of them charge for services (albeit many of them at low subsidised rates). Of those reporting demand is 'just right' the majority work in the voluntary/community/charitable sector and 75% provide mentoring services free of charge. Interestingly these two groups don't seem to be targeting different communities for instance the 'voluntary/community/charitable organisations' are actually slightly more likely to be targeting company directors and corporate executives. This has implications regarding appropriate targeting of services and what people are prepared to pay for in terms of mentoring support.

**Figure 3**

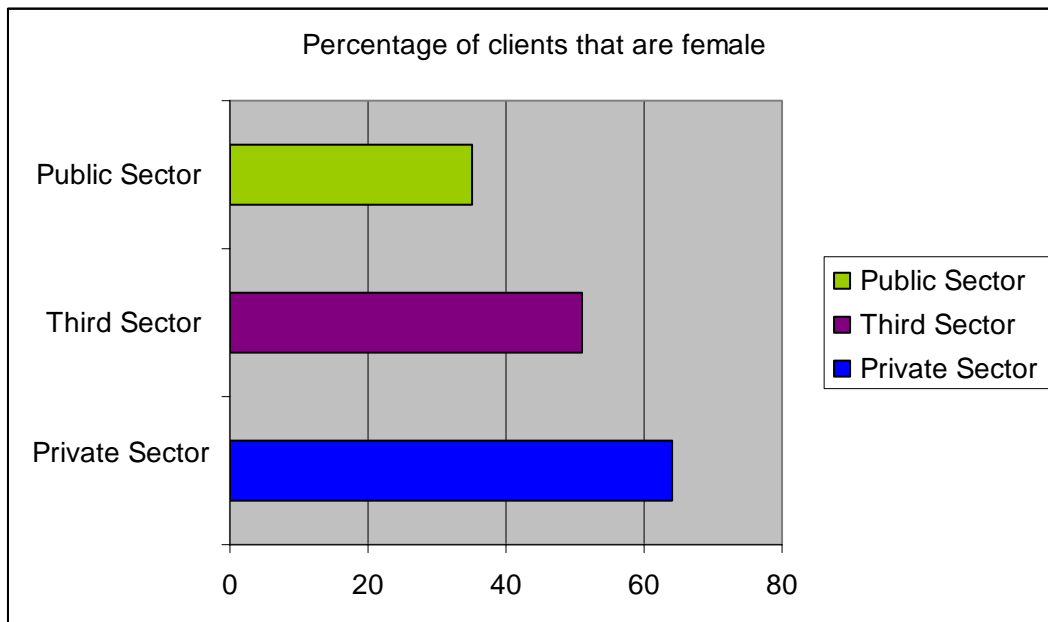


In the comment box for this question a number of people reported that they had difficulty in recruiting enough or appropriate mentors. This suggests a way in which the NWEMN could add value - by providing a 'bank' of mentors highlighting their specialist areas.

### Sector and gender balance

Figure 4 demonstrates that public sector providers are supporting the lowest proportion of female clients, 35%. The 'third' sector achieves a good balance of 51% female clients. The private sector market has a 64% female client base.

**Figure 4**

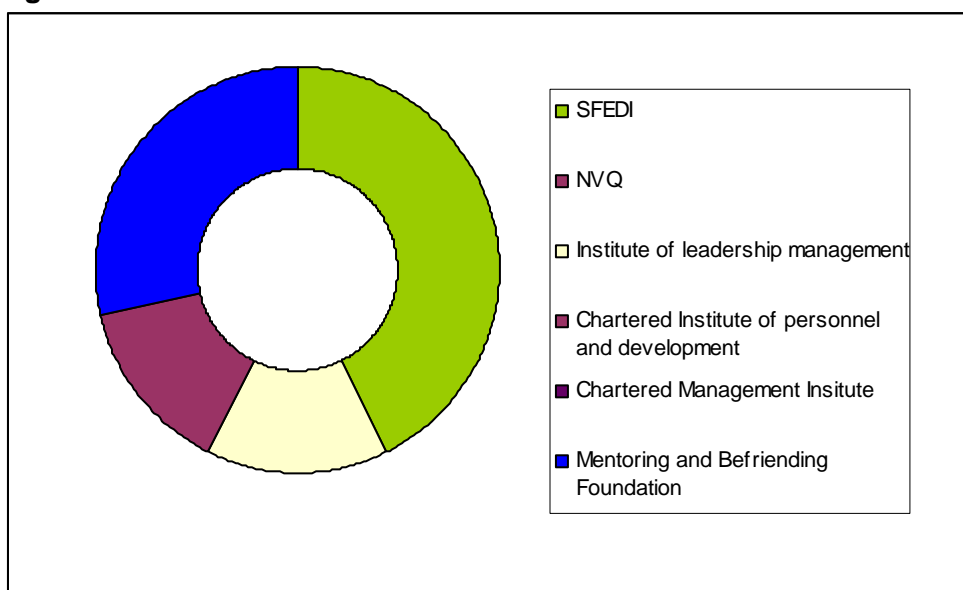


**Accreditation**

Thirty-eight per cent of the currently operating national mentoring programmes are externally accredited. Of the national women-only programmes currently operating 60% are externally accredited.

Figure 5 illustrates the type of accreditation the accredited organisations have:

**Figure 5**



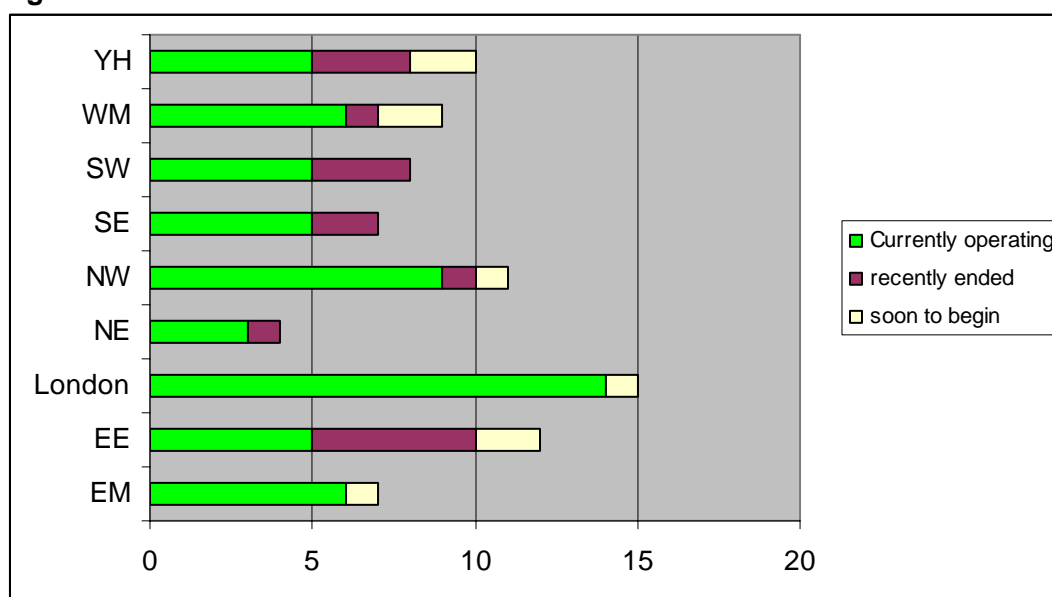
**2.5 Regional Overview**

The survey identified 58 mentoring programmes currently operating in specific English regions. Table 3 and Figure 6 shows the number of current programmes in each region as well as the number of programmes which have recently ended and the number soon to begin

**Table 3**

Region	Current	Recently ended	Soon to begin
East Midlands	6	0	1
East of England	5	5	2
London	14	0	1
North East of England	3	1	0
North West of England	9	1	1
South East of England	5	2	0
South West of England	5	3	0
West Midlands	6	1	2
Yorkshire & Humber	5	3	2

**Figure 6**



As would be expected London has the highest number of mentoring programmes. The North West also stands out as above average (however it is one of the largest regions with a number of big cities). The remainder of the regions have similar numbers. The North East has significantly fewer than other regions and has just one new programme due to start (although it is one of the smallest regions).

### Quality

In establishing the quality of the mentoring programmes in each region the same proxy has been used as above. An organisation providing at least five of the elements below is classified as a 'quality' programme:

- mentor matching
- Structured mentor support programme

- Training for clients/mentees
- Accreditation/qualifications for mentors
- Monitoring and training of mentor relationships
- Programme Evaluation
- Information, advice and resources

Table 4 indicates the number of quality programmes that are operating in each region.

**Table 4**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Current Programmes</b>	<b>Of which how many 'Quality' programmes</b>
East Midlands	6	5
East of England	5	5
London	14	10
North East of England	3	3
North West of England	9	8
South East of England	5	5
South West of England	5	3
West Midlands	6	5
Yorkshire & Humber	5	3

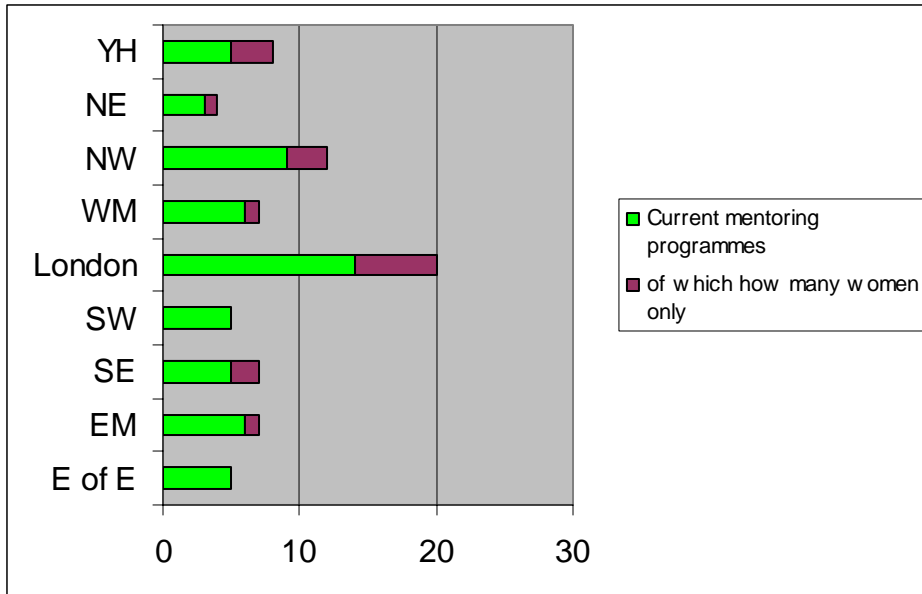
In all regions there are a number of programmes identified as offering 'quality' services. In most regions all of the currently operating programmes fit into this category. This is a good indication that this mentoring survey has captured the views and experience of high quality, established mentoring programmes and has managed to filter out private consultants and life coaches – who may certainly be providing high quality services but are not the comprehensive, established programmes this survey intends to map.

### **Gender balance**

Table 5 and Figure 7 below show the number of mentoring programmes currently operating in each region and how many of these are women-only or have a women-only element to them.

**Table 5**

<b>English Region</b>	<b>No. current mentoring programmes</b>	<b>Of which how many women-only</b>
East of England	5	0
East Midlands	6	1
South East England	5	2
South West England	5	0
London	14	6
West Midlands	6	1
North West of England	9	3
North East of England	3	1
Yorkshire and Humber	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>17</b>

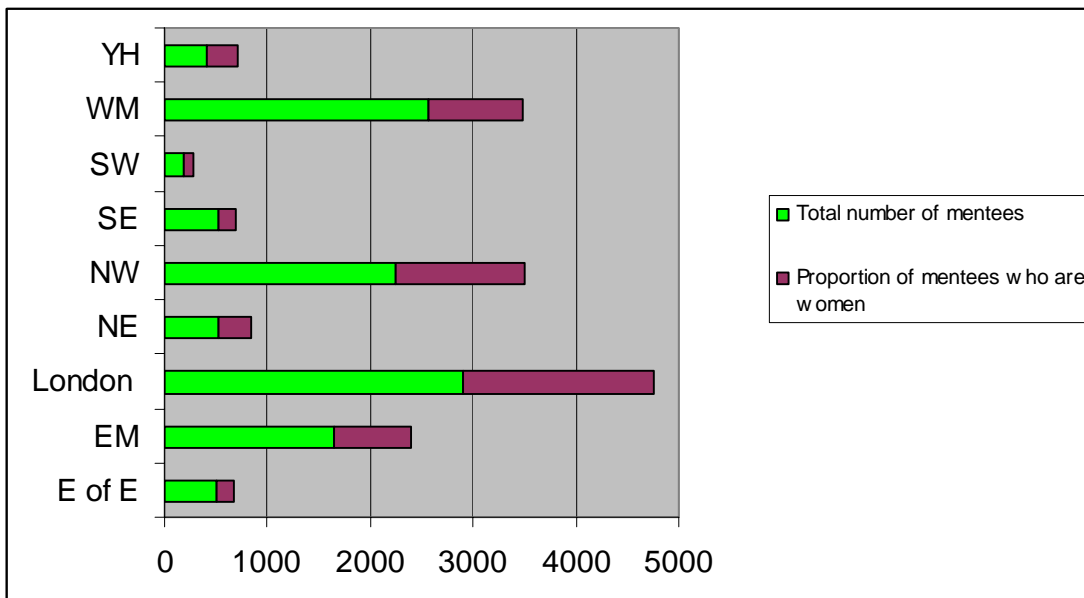


**Figure 7**

Two regions have no current women-only provision – the East of England and the South West of England. However as the regional summary section below shows new women-only programmes are due to start in the East of England and the South West.

Across all the regions 12,946 individuals are receiving mentoring of these 7,059 are female, which represents 54%. If women-only programmes are taken out of the picture then the female client base for regional programmes drops to 44%. Figure 8 shows the total number of individuals receiving mentoring in each region and the proportion of which are female.

**Figure 8**

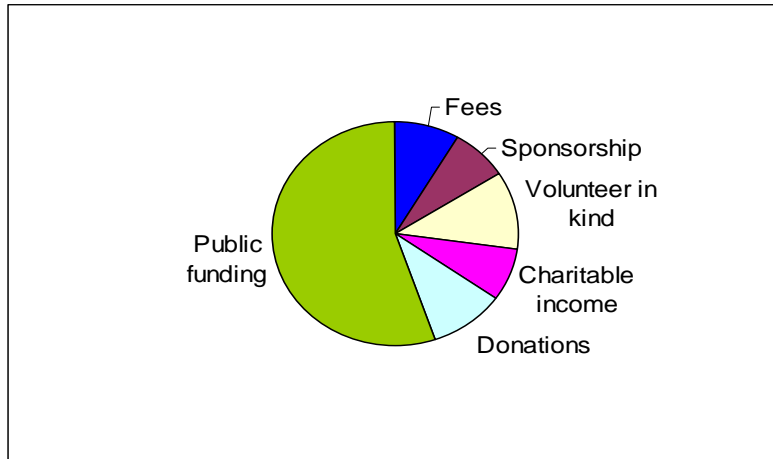


### Sustainability

Again the broad proxy for establishing the sustainability of an organisation is; staffing levels, no. of years established, expectations for future delivery and diversity of income streams. On this basis the survey indicates that the regional programmes are less well resourced than the national programmes. Just 32% of regional mentoring

initiatives operate with a 'team of people' compared to 66% of the national programmes. Thirty-seven per cent of the regional programmes are operated by 'less than one person' suggesting they are very under resourced.

The survey also shows that the regional mentoring programmes are far more reliant on public sector income streams than the national programmes. Just 29% of all national programmes have public sector funding, whereas 83% of the regional mentoring programmes have some degree of public sector income. (Figure 9)



**Figure 9**

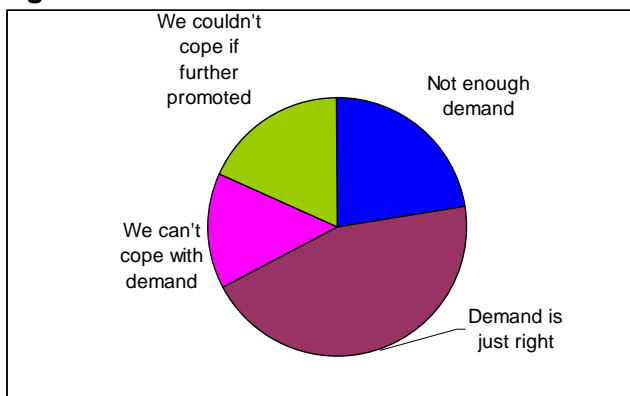
### High-Growth

The survey shows that there are 37 regional mentoring organisations who have self-selected that they provide mentoring services to 'high-growth businesses', this represents 64% of all currently operating regional programmes. Of the 17 women-only programmes 52% have self-selected that they provide mentoring to 'high-growth' businesses.

### Demand

Figure 10 indicates that the largest proportion of regional mentoring initiatives feel demand for their services is 'just right'. Fifty-four percent of the organisations who report there is 'not enough demand' operate in the private sector and 54% charge for services. In comparison 28% of the organisations who report 'We can't cope with demand' are based in the private sector and just 14% charge for services.

**Figure 10**



## Accreditation

Fifty-one per cent of the currently operating regional mentoring programmes are externally accredited. Of the women-only regional programmes currently operating 52% are externally accredited.

Figure 11 illustrates the type of accreditation the accredited organisations have:

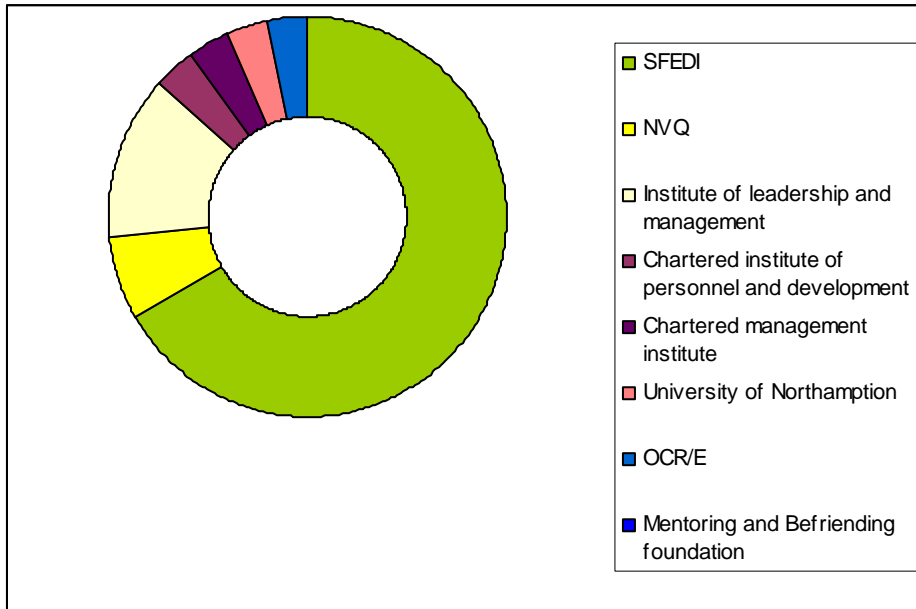


Figure 11

## 2.6 Regional Summaries

### 2.6.1 East of England

- No. of currently operating programmes in region: 5
- Total no. of mentees served by these organisations: 502
- Percentage of female mentees served by these organisations: 36%

Five currently operating mentoring programmes responded to the survey for the East of England this is comparable with the other regions. In total 502 clients are receiving mentoring from these organisations. Women represent 36% of this figure. There is a broad mix of mentoring provision aimed at pre-starts, start-ups, established businesses and high-growth companies. The majority of programmes in the East of England are run alongside other business support services and are run by 'less than one person'. All programmes are either free to access or are offered at low subsidised fees. The survey indicates there is high demand for mentoring services in the East of England with 50% of respondents saying they would struggle to cope with demand if there was further promotion of their services.

### Programmes due to start

There are a number of mentoring programmes due to start shortly in the East of England. Two of these will specifically focus on female entrepreneurs which seems necessary as the region has a lower percentage of women participating in mentoring compared with other regions. The successful region wide Enterprising Women initiative (funded by EEDA) will shortly begin a mentoring programme, which is expected to reach up to 2000 women. EEDA is also funding the Inspiring Women programme which aims to mentor 600 women over the next three years. A mentoring

programme aimed at established and high growth companies is expected to launch in January 2009. This 'Investment Readiness' initiative is also supported by EEDA.

### **2.6.2 East Midlands**

- No. of currently operating programmes in region: 6
- Total no. of mentees served by these organisations: 1,647
- Percentage of female mentees served by these organisations: 45%

The survey shows that six mentoring organisations are currently operating in the East Midlands. These organisations provide mentoring services to 1,647 individuals of who 45% are female. The East Midlands Development Agency (emda) coordinates a large scale region wide programme, however just 20% of mentees on this are female. The gender balance is significantly enhanced by the existence of a large scale women-only programme. However this is only available in the sub-regions of Lincolnshire & Rutland and Leicester. The majority of programmes are free or offered at low subsidised rates. Two organisations in the region report that there are not enough clients/mentees whereas one organisation says it is struggling to meet demand. Just three mentoring programmes in the region receive public funding, the joint lowest of all regions together with the South East.

#### **Programmes due to start/Recently ended**

There are no significant mentoring programmes in the East Midlands region which have recently finished or are due to start soon.

### **2.6.3 London**

- No. of currently operating programmes in region: 14
- Total no. of mentees served by these organisations: 2,910
- Percentage of female mentees served by these organisations: 63%

As would be expected London has more mentoring programmes than the other English regions, however many of these are fairly small scale and are only open to residents of specific London boroughs or postcodes. All programmes are offered free or at low subsidised rates. There are a few larger scale programmes offered across London; the London Innovation Centre, OGUNTE (open to businesses with social potential) and the Women's Business Centre. East London is well served by the East London Small Business Centre, which is established, well resourced and currently mentoring 500 people, 50% of who are female.

Across the whole of London 63% of the 2,910 people receiving mentoring are female. Eleven organisations in London are in receipt of some degree of public funding. There are three organisations in the region who report that there are not enough clients/mentees however another two organisations are struggling to meet demand.

#### **Programmes due to start/recently ended**

No significant programmes are due to start soon in London, nor have any recently finished.

### **2.6.4 North East of England**

- No. of currently operating programmes in region: 3
- Total no. of mentees served by these organisations: 530
- Percentage of female mentees served by these organisations: 58%

The North East shows a below average number of currently operating mentoring programmes compared with other regions however it is worth noting it is one of the smallest regions. Of the programmes that are running it shows a good gender balance with women representing 58% of mentees in the region. In terms of demand, it is the only region where no organisations report that 'there are not enough clients' suggesting there is potential in the region for more mentoring provision. Furthermore of the currently existing programmes all are restricted to or aimed at specific groups and are not open access. Of the programmes available all are offered free of charge and all operate with volunteer mentors.

#### **Recently ended/soon to begin**

One women-only mentoring programme has recently finished, which was a programme only available in the Northumberland region. When they were operating they found that 'demand was just right'.

#### **2.6.5 North West of England**

- No. of currently operating programmes in region: 9
- Total no. of mentees served by these organisations: 2,253
- Percentage of female mentees served by these organisations: 55%

The North West of England has an above average number of mentoring programmes, as may be expected as it is one of the largest regions with a number of large cities. As indicated above 55% of mentees in the region are female. It has a good number of large scale and well established mentoring programmes that have been operating for over five years. The region has just one woman-only mentoring programme; however it is well established and free to access. Nine organisations in the region receive public funding and six operate in the private sector. In terms of demand the region demonstrates a mixed picture with three organisations saying there aren't enough clients/mentees and two saying they are struggling to meet demand.

#### **Recently ended/soon to begin**

Manchester Business School have recently closed an e-coaching programme for female entrepreneurs, out of which emerged some excellent good practice materials. The programme was successful and popular so they are now seeking funding for further activity. A women-only programme is due to open later in 2008 in Cheshire and Merseyside. However this will be a private consultancy charging full market rates.

#### **2.6.6 South East of England**

No. of currently operating programmes in region: 5

- Total no. of mentees served by these organisations: 525
- Percentage of female mentees served by these organisations: 32%

The South East has an average number of mentoring programmes and a good regional spread. It has no solely women-focussed programme and this is perhaps reflected in the fact that just 32% of mentees across the region are female. There is also an indication that some of the existing programmes are under-resourced with most operating on less than one member of staff. Just three organisations in the region receive some degree of public funding. There are three organisations in the region who report that there are not enough clients/mentees and no organisations are struggling to meet demand this suggests that demand is low or that there is need for better promotion of mentoring and perhaps more targeted services.

### **Recently ended or soon to begin**

A mentoring programme which was attracting 200 female mentees has recently closed in the South East with the organisation reporting that it was difficult to find enough clients. Another fairly significant pan-regional programme finished in May 2008 was a women-only initiative, they reported that demand had been just right during their time of operation. There are no significant mentoring programmes due to start soon in the South East.

### **2.6.7 South West of England**

No. of currently operating programmes in region: 5

- Total no. of mentees served by these organisations: 194
- Percentage of female mentees served by these organisations: 45%

The South West has a limited number of currently operating mentoring programmes compared with other regions. It has no women-only mentoring provision and no region-wide large scale programme. Interestingly three organisations in the region report that there is not enough demand and no organisations are struggling to meet demand. This suggests there is either a lack of demand in the region or there is a need for more effective promotion or targeted mentoring. Of the 194 mentees in the region 45% are female.

### **Recently ended/soon to begin**

Three mentoring programmes have recently closed in the South West. All were sub-regional specific programmes i.e. only open to residents/business owners in specific areas. A new women-only mentoring programme is due to launch in January 2009, which will be available in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset.

### **2.6.8 The West Midlands**

- No. of currently operating programmes in region: 6
- Total no. of mentees served by these organisations: 2,559
- Percentage of female mentees served by these organisations: 36%

The West Midlands has an average number of mentoring programmes in comparison with other regions. There is good coverage across the region. There is particularly good provision in Coventry with an active Chamber of Commerce and a large scale LEGI (Local Enterprise Growth Initiative) programme. Provision in the West Midlands also seems less vulnerable than other regions with a number of programmes being run by a team of people. All the organisations are providing mentoring support as a free service. Just one organisation in the region reports that 'there are not enough clients' and two say they are struggling to cope with demand. Of the 2,559 mentees in the region just 36% are female. Eight organisations in the region receive some degree of public funding which is slightly above average compared with other regions.

### **Recently ended/Soon to begin**

A women-only business mentoring programme based in the Moorlands area finished last year. This had been funded under the Leader+ programme and was dissolved when funding ended. The Chamber of Commerce for Herefordshire and Worcestershire is looking to launch a mentoring programme (not women specific) in 2009 which will be open to business owners in Herefordshire. The Black Country Chamber of Commerce is also looking to launch a mentoring programme (not women specific) in Autumn 2008. They report that they have lots of mentors available, willing

to give time for free but they are seeking funding to help with Professional Indemnity Insurance.

### 2.6.9 Yorkshire and Humber

- No. of currently operating programmes in region: 5
- Total no. of mentees served by these organisations 420
- Percentage of female mentees served by these organisations: 70%

The Yorkshire and Humber region has an average number of mentoring programmes compared with other regions and an above average number of women-only programmes. This is reflected in the fact that 70% of the 420 mentees in the region are female. However the women-only programmes are mostly offered on a sub-regional basis and only available to people in specific postcodes. The region also shows good sustainability with three of the five programmes operated by a team of people and four of the five programmes having been established over three years ago. All programmes in the region are offered free of charge. The region shows the highest number of private sector organisations; however, it still has an above average number of publicly funded schemes. In terms of demand the region presents a mixed picture with two organisations saying there aren't enough clients and three saying they can't cope with the demand.

#### **Recently ended/Soon to begin**

Two popular women-only mentoring programmes offered by specialist women's enterprise support providers have recently closed in the Yorkshire and Humber region. One of these reports that demand was more than they could cope with and one that demand was just right. There is an indication that both programmes folded due to lack of funding. A new women-only programme is also due to start in Autumn 2008, this will be available across the whole of the region, and the regional Business Link will be starting a mentoring programme later in 2008.

## 2.7 Conclusions

**Targeted initiatives are an important factor in the equitable reach of those mentoring programmes.** Twenty-five of the programmes target women, either entirely or as part of a broader programme. If those targeted programmes were not available, the remaining mainstream initiatives would have a client base of 35% women.

**There is evidence of market failure in the supply of mentoring.** The largest proportion of mentoring organisations say that demand for their services is 'just right', however all of the 19 organisations who report that 'there is not enough demand' operate in the private sector and 75% of them charge for services. Of those reporting demand is 'just right' the majority work in the 'voluntary/community/charitable' sector and 75% provide mentoring services free of charge. Interestingly these two groups are not targeting different communities for instance the 'voluntary/community/charitable' organisations are actually slightly more likely to be targeting company directors and corporate executives. This has implications regarding appropriate targeting of services and what people are prepared to pay for in terms of mentoring support.

**Mentoring provision is shown to be patchy across the English regions** with each region presenting a different picture of supply and demand. There is a lack of stability in the organisations which are providing mentoring services, with a high

degree of programme closure and new programme launch. Mentoring provision regionally is shown to be less well resourced with just 32% of programmes run by a 'team of people' compared with 66% of the national programmes. There are a few regions with below average mentoring provision. This must be addressed, particularly in the regions where there is evidence of untapped demand and where there are no plans for new mentoring programmes to open in the near future.

There are also frequent changes in which organisation is providing the mentoring. Mentoring provision is also shown to be less well resourced with just 32% of programmes run by a 'team of people' compared with 66% of the national programmes. There is a clear need for a cohesive sustainable portal.

## **Section Three**

### **Stakeholder support and engagement**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This section provides an overview of the potential for support and engagement of the following key stakeholder groups:

- Corporate sector/ Banks
- Regional Development Agencies
- Business Links
- Providers of mentoring services
- Trusts and Foundations

### **Key findings**

To secure effective stakeholder support, NWEMN needs to:

- Be sustainable, with a diversified income base.
- Be user led
- Be not for profit
- Add value and not duplicate existing provision.

### **3.2. Methodology**

Key stakeholder groups were identified by the NWEMN steering group.

Providers of mentoring services' views were sought via the online survey. For other groups, semi-structured 1-1 interviews were sought and undertaken by an independent consultant. For Business Links the interviewer was a member of the research team.

The methodology for selection of interviewees was as follows:

- Corporate sector/ Banks – a shortlist of 20 organisations which had a track record of supporting women in business initiatives was drawn up and interviews sought with contacts known to steering group members or in a relevant position within the organisations. Interviews secured were all existing known contacts.
- RDAs – all interviewees were women's enterprise lead officers.
- Business links – interviewees were all the 'first point of contact' via the Regional brokerage phone number.
- Trusts and Foundations – relevant senior staff were identified.

It was decided at an early stage that a survey of recipients of mentoring schemes was outwith the scope of this research and that the 'demand' side views of stakeholders would be incorporated via the good practice review of studies and evaluations and via information about survey information regarding 'demand' for mentoring services.

### 3.3. Stakeholder views

#### Corporate sector/ Banks

Banks and Corporate partners who support SMEs share a marketplace with NWEMN and their active engagement has the potential to add immense value to the network. Four out of five banks contacted were able to participate in the research. Corporates were more reticent to participate at the research stage and observations have been drawn from existing best practice in corporate mentoring of SMEs.

Three banks who actively support women's enterprise were interviewed – RBS, HSBC and Lloyds TSB - and in general they were all very supportive of the concept of the NWEMN. In addition, while they were not at the time available for interview, HBOS followed up to reiterate that they were also generally supportive of the concept.

The views of the Banks included the following additional points:

- An offer to 'host' NWEMN within one of the Banks' branded small business communities – linked eventually to local F2F group sessions hosted by branches.
- An offer to consider including contact details for NWEMN in every Bank start up pack to new customers.
- All interested in further follow-up when there is an 'actual proposal'.
- 'Very important' principles re engagement are that NWEMN is 'sustainable' and 'user led'.

Companies active in the SME market may well be interested in sponsoring and supporting NWEMN if an appropriate package is developed. Several companies are known to extend the expertise and structures they have developed for internal mentoring programmes to external SMEs, for example Citigroup and IBM. KPMG operate a scheme where they proactively target businesses with potential and offer them free 'mentoring' – enlightened self interest but evidence of the private sector willing to 'fund' the higher end of mentoring as it is in their interests.

#### Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

RDAs are critical partners, and all of the 9 English RDAs were able to participate fully in stakeholder interviews. They are all supportive in principal of NWEMN and the majority feel that NWEMN has the potential to add significant value to existing services which assist women to start and grow businesses in their region.

RDAs were able to provide extensive and considered insights regarding NWEMN and their responses to some important questions are summarised below:

#### **Q: What do you think is the greatest contribution NWEMN can make to supporting women entrepreneurs throughout the country?**

- Sign posting function - not create anything new / duplicate (EMDA).
- Most useful if: Single point of contact on info for those seeking mentors. Must be able to: Add value; not duplicate; be clear on how NWEMN will enter the market and not compete. BL can use the service to access mentors for their clients (YF)
- Be careful it is set up with ability to deliver. If it is - could improve success and growth rate of WEs. (LDA)

- To provide co-ordination and central point to go to to obtain different aspects of mentoring support. Become a 'brokerage' where people can approach and be directed to the right support. Effectively manage the 'matching' process – this is critical and the most intensive part of the process (SEEDA)
- Business Link – Knowledge Bank = place to source mentors.....create a web link to this page to gain that wider access NWEMN. Look at issues of Quality Assurance and Liability insurance. (NWDA)
- The development of professional coordination function = the MOST important function. If this can be achieved on a national basis it will be an excellent achievement (EEDA)
- Raising the profile & levels of aspiration. (AWM)
- Concept is good but must look at how it crosses over with BL / other programmes. If NWEMN is offering a coordination role and gap filling this is really good. (ONE)

**Q. If you were to engage with National WE Mentoring Network, how important would it be that the Network was:**

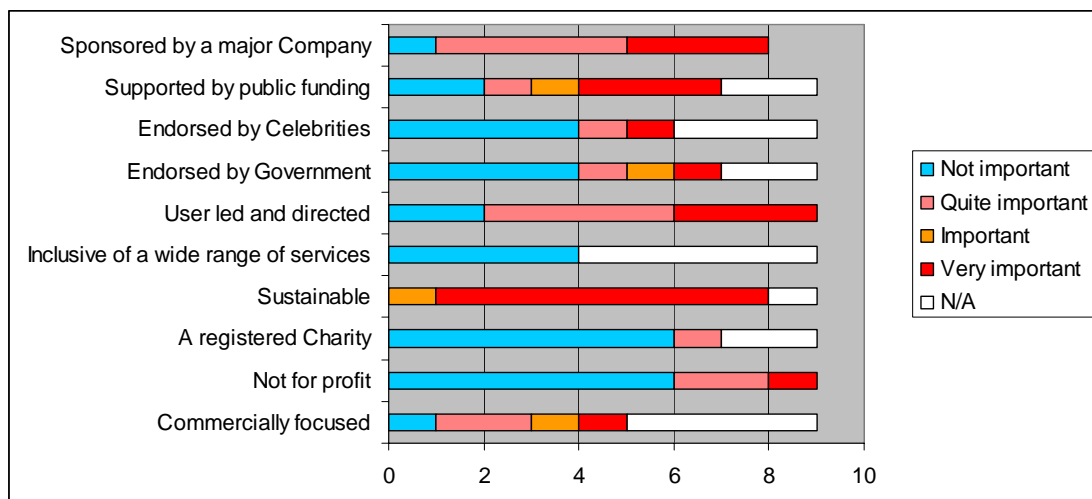


Figure1 1

Figure 1 illustrates on a hot-cold colour indicator the areas which RDAs consider most important for their engagement with NWEMN. For RDAs it is most important that NWEMN is sustainable, sponsored by a major Company and user led and directed.

There is reasonably strong support for 'public funding', with a minority feeling that it is not important or applicable. This may reflect the findings in Figure 2, with five RDAs expecting to be able to provide some level of financial sponsorship or support, if the NWEMN proposal is appropriate.

RDAs do not appear to have a clear view on whether NWEMN should be not for profit, charitable or commercially focused and this may reflect the RDAs general outcomes focus and support of a wide range of types of organisation to achieve those outcomes.

**Q. In what practical ways could your RDA support NWEMN? For example:**

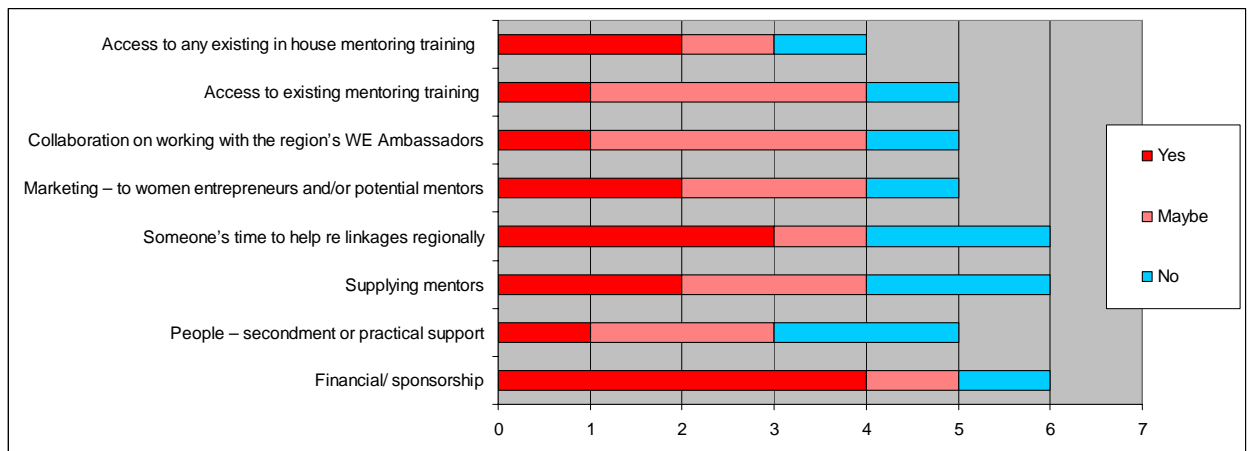


Figure 2

Many of the RDAs were not able to comment on practical levels of support, until a more concrete proposal for NWEMN is available. There were encouraging offers of support from others, though it should be noted that all were subject to the usual caveats.

**Business Link**

Practical linkages with Business Link services are a particularly important issue for the three northern RDAs (ONE, YF, NWDA). In particular a national mentoring network would enhance and keep up-to-date the Business Link knowledge bank. Our research suggests that this would be a particularly important function for NWEMN as most Business Link brokerage services do not yet provide effective sign-posting to mentoring information. Our researcher called each of the Regional Business Link information numbers and asked for details of business mentoring schemes for women starting or growing businesses in the Region. Despite the plethora of schemes our research has found in every Region, only 2 Regional Business Links were able to provide relevant referrals.

**Providers of mentoring services**

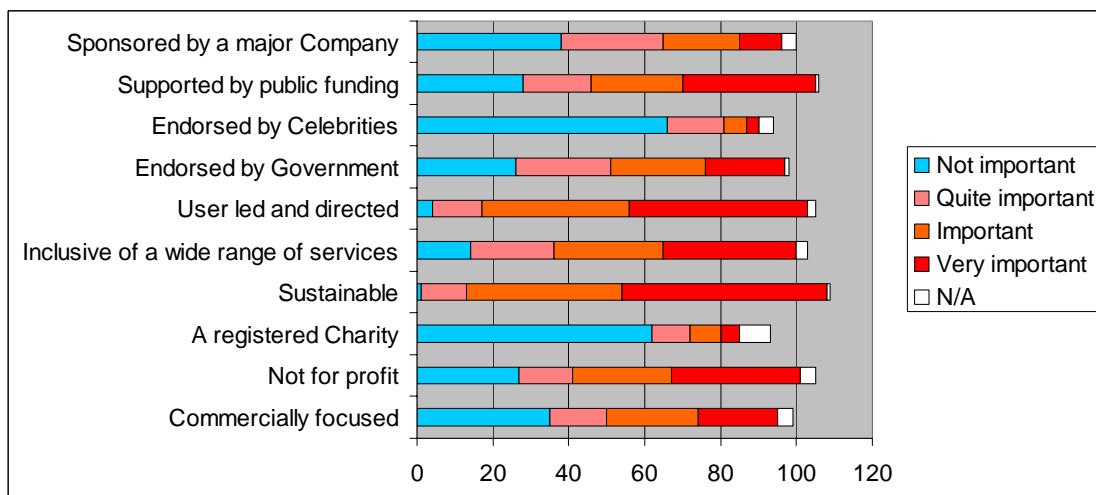


Figure 3

Delivery organisations share RDA's strong view that NWEMN must be sustainable and user led and directed. They also view 'inclusive of a wide range of services' as very important (whereas RDAs did not see this as important at all). Other particularly important areas which will be necessary to secure the engagement of the majority of delivery organisations are that NWEMN is not for profit and supported by public funding.

### **Trusts and Foundations**

Interviews and research with 6 relevant Trusts and Foundations (Esme Fairbairn Trust, Tudor Trust, BT Foundation, LloydsTSB Foundation, Northern Rock Foundation, Big Lottery Foundation) suggest that NWEMN is a programme that could be considered favourably for support. Charitable status would be essential for some Trusts such as the BT and LloydsTSB Foundations, however other significant funders in the area including Esme Fairbairn Foundation, Tudor Trust and the Big Lottery Foundation would consider organisations which are not charities but which are 'not for profit' and/or have 'charitable purposes'. In that sense commercially focused activity would not attract support. Other important points for this type of Foundation include:

- Sustainability
- Will not support activities which *should* be wholly Government funded.
- Co-sponsorship is viewed favourably.

### **3.4. Conclusions**

1. To secure engagement of critical stakeholders NWEMN must be regarded as 'sustainable'. It therefore cannot and should not be wholly dependent on a single source of Government funding. NWEMN needs to develop a 'mixed economy' business model. The following sources of revenue should be further explored:

- Corporate or bank sponsorship
- National/ Regional public funding
- Business Link support re. development and maintenance of 'knowledge bank'.
- Income generation – fees/membership
- Trusts & Foundation grants.

3. NWEMN must be user led and directed. This is important for all stakeholder groups. Stakeholders are generally very supportive and welcoming of the concept of NWEMN and 1-1 interviews provided a rich source of creative ideas for added value, partnership and cost saving. User and stakeholder consultation at the next stage of development is likely to provide further useful insights.

4. NWEMN should be set-up on a not-for-profit basis. This is important for the engagement of providers of mentoring services and to enable NWEMN to more easily access Trust and Foundation funding.

5. NWEMN must add value to and not duplicate existing provision. This is particularly important to secure the support and critical advocacy and promotion of RDAs.

6. Business Link Knowledge bank

7. Corporate engagement does not have to focus solely on securing funding, there are good practice examples of mutually beneficial relationships.

**Section Four**  
**Good Practice and Lessons Learnt**

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights a number of good practice indicators based on the experience of existing national and international mentoring programmes. It also draws on the experience of mentoring programmes no longer in operation, to ensure lessons are learnt from projects which were less sustainable.

The first section of chapter outlines key good practice indicators and lessons learnt the second section provides a summary of a number of important mentoring projects looking at factors such as funding structure, scale, focus and timeline.

## 4.2 Good Practice Indicators and lessons learnt

The good practice indicators identified come under three areas of mentoring provision;

- Programme delivery
- Stakeholder engagement/sustainability
- Co-ordination, monitoring and management

### 4.21 Programme delivery

#### **E-mentoring works best when complimented by face2face support**

The experience of the majority of programmes looked at is that e-mentoring works best when it is supplemented by additional forms of communication such face2face, telephone or peer mentoring groups.

One programme found that,

*“Many participants felt that e-mentoring is not for everyone and that it should be supplemented with face2face communication, particularly at the start of the relationship”.*

The ‘E-mentoring for Female Entrepreneurs’ evaluation report by Manchester Business School found that;

*“The majority of coaching pairs supplemented online coaching with telephone or face2face sessions. This finding suggests a blended approach is more suitable for female entrepreneurs”.*

However when technology is utilised effectively, e-mentoring can provide some useful benefits as the not-for-profit social networking site Horseshmouth reports;

*“A time and response online management feature allows mentors to manage the number of messages they receive and the amount of time they spend on the site. This is a useful tool for companies who partner with Horseshmouth as it allows them to manage, measure and monitor time spent on Horseshmouth as a volunteering or CSR activity. There is a rating system called the M Factor – which allows users of the site to rate their interactions with mentors which in turn allows people who are highly active and highly rated to become more visible”*

E-mentoring is then useful as a complimentary tool and is being successfully implemented by innovative social networking sites. It is also useful for people in more isolated rural communities or others who may not be able to easily participate in face2face mentoring.

### **Careful mentor-matching is critical for ensuring the success of mentoring interventions**

*Matching of coaches and coachees was a critical stage of the project. Forms were used to ask mentees about their coaching needs and coaches about their strengths and expertise. – E-mentoring for female entrepreneurs, Manchester Business School*

*A strong emphasis was placed on ensuring the chemistry between the mentee and mentor was right and that the system was flexible enough to allow for change where this wasn't the case. – ATHENA PowerLink®*

*It is essential mentors can be chosen and changed to suit. A flexible and client focused matching process is paramount – UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC)*

### **Commitment from both parties and statement of purpose**

The 'who, what, where, how and why' of mentoring relationships is critical and is best dealt with formally at the start of the mentoring relationship and reviewed at regular intervals throughout the project.

*There is a need for formal commitments from both sides - The Princes Trust: Business Mentoring Scheme*

*It [statement of purpose] is key and should be discussed at the first meeting so that the relationship is started on a sound footing and both parties are clear about boundaries - TiE*

*Each professional advisory panel commits to working with the business owner for one year. Panel members are matched to the business according to the business needs. The panel and business owner work together to meet the specific objectives of the business owner - ATHENA PowerLink®*

*Organisations surveyed stressed the importance of addressing participant expectations – goals, time commitment and communication processes - Mentoring in the Business Environment – US Research.*

When these factors are not agreed at the outset and a formal commitment made the programme can run into difficulties, as one project that has now closed found;

*The programme suffered from high levels of non-completion. There were a number of cases in which participants did not receive contact from their partner after they had been matched.*

### **The need to recruit experienced and well-connected mentors**

It is critical to the success of the relationship that the mentor is an experienced individual with valuable knowledge to share with the mentee. Yet securing high-calibre individuals can be difficult given the time limitations such individuals may have. Successful programmes are those that have found ways of ensuring mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship.

The Merlin Project, co-funded by SEEDA and the European Social Fund reports that:

*“The innovative and unusual feature of the Merlin Project is that the mentors work for free their quid pro quo for the intensive training and supervision received and this gives them a unique position from which to provide guidance to companies. Combine this with the strict profile against which they were recruited and you get highly motivated individuals with a passion to challenge and support growing companies”*

Through providing added benefits to the mentors themselves, such as valuable training, The Merlin Project found that:

*“The calibre of mentors exceeded the expectations of the project with an array of talent that encompasses most industry sectors and area specialisms with over 90% of mentors having some high- technology experience. There are 5 female mentors, 2 Asian mentors and 1 disabled mentor”*

The US based ATHENA PowerLink® programme helps women expand profitably through the use of professional advisory panels. Advisory panel members are leaders and professionals in their fields and within their local community. They bring expertise to the businesses selected based on the specific needs of the business owner. For the first year panel members serve on voluntary basis, following this they can convert to a paid group of advisors. Such a programme ensures the mentees not only receive mentoring but also access to capital and a strong network of local business leaders. The incentive here for mentors is the networking opportunities being part of the advisory panel gives them and the possibility to serving on a fee based panel after one year.

The UK based Business Volunteer Mentoring (BVM) programme found that retired business professionals provided an excellent pool of mentors. They had the experience and knowledge necessary often combined with the desire to ‘give back’ and to stay active in the business community following retirement.

### **Training important for Mentors**

Several of the mentoring programmes reported that training of the mentors (and sometimes of the mentees) resulted in higher success rates for the mentoring partnerships.

The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC) found that *“Mentoring relationships are three times more likely to succeed where there is training of mentors”*.

According to mentoring expert, David Clutterbuck *“3/10 relationships survive with no training this rises to 6/10 if the mentor is trained and 9/10 if both the mentor and the mentee are trained”*.

### **For business at a certain stage ‘Peer2Peer’ support is particularly valued**

Peer mentoring groups provide women entrepreneurs with personal contact with others in the community who are facing similar challenges. It has been highlighted by a number of projects as being particularly valued and important to women business owners. The Women’s Enterprise Centre in Canada found that *“88% of women who participated in the focus groups expressed an interest in peer mentoring as their preferred format”*.

Research based on a number of US mentoring programmes found that: *“If businesses are second-stage or established, women business owners would appear*

*to benefit most from a structured form of peer-to-peer networking that plans participant composition, develops meeting agendas and monitors goal achievement”.*

#### **4.22 Stakeholder engagement/Sustainability**

**Programmes which are dependent on just one source of funding are vulnerable**  
Sustainability and diversity of income streams will be critical to the development of NWEMN from the outset. A large number of the UK mentoring programmes looked at as part of this study closed due to cessation of a funding stream.

Business Volunteer Mentor (BVM) was a large scale national programme working with 1200 volunteer mentors and providing mentoring support to 33,000 clients. It closed in March 2006 following the cessation of Phoenix Fund funding. The National Federation of Enterprise Agencies (NFEA) who coordinated the programme report that they took several steps to try and secure funding when Phoenix became uncertain, including; formal representation to the Treasury, negotiations with a major high street bank, contact with the LSC, exploration of EU funding opportunities and consultation with all RDAs. These routes failed to secure any funding. The lesson seems to be that sustainability and diversity of income streams must be factored into the programme from the outset.

A number of America models provide examples of how sustainability is built into their operating structure:

*“ATHENA international offers the ATHENAPowerLink® programme for a license fee of \$10,000. There is also a charge of \$350 to each new business linked with an Advisory Panel and a \$250 fee for every woman business owner accepted to the programme. On occasion sponsors are sought from the community to cover costs and this is usually a combination of financial institutions and economic development agencies. This may result in the programme being free to the woman business owner.*

*Very large scale corporate sponsorship is secured to fund both this and the Make Mine a Million programme - Count me in, Micro to Millions*

*The M3 model is financed through major corporate sponsorship primarily through companies in the finance sector – Count me in, Make Mine a Million (M3)*

#### **Corporate engagement**

Corporate engagement does not have to focus solely on securing funding, there are other good practice examples of mutually beneficial relationships with corporates, including Citi, Pfizer, Ford Motor Company and IBM.

*FreshIdeas Events have organised, The Mentor Competition backed by organisations including HSBC, BT and Business Link. Ten women will be selected from those who apply and matched to a high profile and successful businesswoman mentor. They will work together for six months. The results of the competition will be announced on 7 November 2008 – FreshIdeas Events, The Mentor Competition*

*Some corporates may find it easier to provide mentors than to directly fund a scheme. – Make your Mark – Mentoring Matters report 2008.*

*The Australian Women’s Mentoring Network (AWMN) provides an online facility by which companies and organisations can introduce or expand upon their own*

women's mentoring programme; and therefore aims to increase the awareness and occurrence of mentoring for women in the workplace, through the adoption of this facility – Australian Women's Mentoring Network (AWMN)

#### **Fees for added value services**

*The AWMN provides an online search facility where you can find a mentor matching your specific criteria. There is an option of having an appropriate mentor found for you by an AWMN consultant, fees apply for this option. – Australian Women's Mentoring Network (AWMN)*

*The AWMN site also allows you to find resources about career development and personal and career coaching and other personal development products.*

#### **Buy-in from stakeholders critical**

If NWEMN is to be taken forward in a coherent and strategic way it will be necessary to have buy-in from key stakeholders and a sense of shared purpose. The UKRC recognised this as an important early action when starting their programme;

*Setting up and running any mentoring programme begins by influencing and gaining key stakeholder buy-in to the programme. – UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC)*

Make Your Mark have called for a 'mentoring and enterprise coalition' to take mentoring and enterprise forward in a strategic manner and to seek finance for new activity.

#### **Monitor Return on Investment (ROI) and Social Return on Investment (SROI)**

Being able to demonstrate the ROI and SROI of a mentoring initiative should assist with securing funding and sponsorship and checking that the mentoring is genuinely meeting needs and learning from experience.

*For every pound invested in the BVM programme the NFEA and contractors attracted approximately £5 in-kind value from volunteer business skills – worth more than £30M in total. Over half of BVM clients were unemployed prior to starting their own business, supporting this individuals into employment/enterprise saves in welfare costs - BVM (Business Volunteer Mentoring).*

### **4.23 Co-ordination, monitoring and management**

#### **Strong central coordination**

Successful projects are those with strong central co-ordination. As the UKRC highlight in their good practice guide:

*“Every mentoring programme needs a key individual to take responsibility for the day to day running and operation, whether or not they were responsible for its initial design and implementation. The role of the mentoring coordinator is to:*

- *Support the mentoring relationships once they are established*
- *Handle difficulties between pairs should they arise*
- *Rematch and refocus relationships when required*
- *Ensure appropriate evaluation is completed at the appropriate phase of relationships*
- *Communicate and publicise results and feedback”*

The Canadian Women's Enterprise Centre also found coordination and monitoring to be critical;

*“Three months into the relationship, the Women's Enterprise centre will ask both the mentor and the mentee to complete a 'mid-way review'. Every effort is made to ensure that the match is working, from exploring whether the pair has clicked to whether they are staying focused and meeting objectives. A similar review will take place at the end of the 6-month commitment and the participants can either stop or carry on for another 6 months”.*

Without this central coordination programmes can run into difficulties:

*“The programme suffered from high levels of non-completion with nearly ¾ of participants saying that their mentoring programme finished prematurely. A number of respondents felt that they would like more pro-active support from the organisational team, in terms of prompting participants or providing regular updates/success stories.*

### **High-quality materials**

The use of high-quality professional materials to facilitate the smooth running of the programme is critical. BVM developed a number of resources to facilitate the mentoring relationship including;

- *Mentor selection/application form*
- *Checklist: choosing and training volunteer business mentors*
- *Code of ethics*
- *Basic mentoring skills and training content*
- *Advanced mentoring training workbook*
- *Web mentoring guide*
- *Client feedback form*

### **Engagement in a mentoring programme as a condition of receiving loans**

The Princes Trust stipulate that a mentee must meet with their mentor and agree specific goals and objectives as a condition of receiving their enterprise development loan. Similarly, the Women's Employment Enterprise and Training Unit's (WEETU) 'Full Circle Fund' requires potential borrowers to be part of a peer mentoring circle before they can access the loan fund. NWEMN could offer a similar type of service for a range of women focussed CDFIs and potentially the Women's Investment Fund.

### **Flexible delivery**

As Chapter 2 highlighted different regions face different levels of supply and demand. It is important that the NWEMN is structured flexibly so as to be able to respond to the specific needs of each region/locality.

In order to operate a coherent mentoring programme that can be used to enhance existing projects or help extend services a flexible structure was found to be important. BVM report:

*“The approach adopted has been to offer contractors flexibility to respond to local priorities... The programme has been extremely successful in this respect as is evidence by the vastly differing ways in which the scheme was delivered from region to region. Although there were clear parameters to work in the scheme allowed for a great deal of flexibility within those parameters in order to enable individual contractors to be allowed to fill gaps in existing provision and to build a mentoring programme that met specific local needs”*

## **Accreditation**

External accreditation provides reassurance to the customer that the services they are accessing are of a high-quality. The accreditation process can also be used by the mentoring organisation as a development tool to benchmark, monitor and improve their services. The following accreditations programmes and quality marks have been identified as being of particular value to organisations providing business mentoring (and mentoring within organisations):

### **a. Institute of leadership management (ILM)**

ILM is able to provide qualifications aimed at developing the coaching/mentoring ability of managers and training professionals, with the opportunity to progress to a professional qualification in coaching and mentoring if desired. ILM offers training towards a number of Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) including; a Level 5 Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring in Management and a Level 7 Certificate in Executive Coaching and Leadership Mentoring

### **b. Chartered Institute of personnel development (CIPD)**

CIPD is the professional body for those involved in the management and development of people. It provides a 'Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring' in collaboration with The OCM (formerly the Oxford School of Coaching and Mentoring-OSCM).

### **c. Mentoring and Befriending Foundation: Approved Provider Standards (APS)**

The Approved Provider Standard (APS) is a national benchmark for organisations providing one-to-one volunteer mentoring or befriending. It is a national award supported by the Cabinet Office and the Department for Children, Schools and Families and aims to provide programmes with a badge of competence and safe practice in mentoring or befriending.

**d. Mentorg** - offers a wide range of accredited and non-accredited courses set at different levels. You may select a short day course, which offers the Introduction to Mentoring qualification or prefer to enrol upon a more in-depth course which requires a greater time commitment, such as a full Mentor Award.

### **e. SFEDI – Business Mentor standard**

(Intended to complement main SFEDI Business Support standards.) Organisations must demonstrate that their practice meets a number of requirements which focus on areas such as; the principles of mentoring, Mentoring relationships, Supporting clients' development and Personal behaviours.

## **4.3 Summary of key mentoring projects (UK and International)**

### **4.31 The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC)**

The UKRC offers employers, including Professional Institutes, a comprehensive consultancy service in mentoring women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET). The mentoring consultancy service also includes the training of individuals to perform the role of Mentoring Co-ordinator for UKRC developed programmes or the coaching of key individuals to implement an employer's own organisational programme.

The UKRC also funds **MentorSET** which is a national programme for women in SET, matching them with female mentors who are external to their organisations.

It also coordinates **Peer Mentoring Circles**, which support women who have taken a career break and are looking to return to work in SET. The groups of women returners meet informally for a couple of hours every month or so, and many stay in touch via email throughout the month. At the sessions, the women discuss and work through the actions they all agree on, such as bringing in completed CVs or lists of employers to contact. Learning actions are agreed by the group members and may include a visit to industry, a guest speaker, or job search tips. The UKRC facilitate and reimburse travel and childcare costs for the first four meetings of a new group. So far, peer mentoring circles have been set up in: Leeds, Sheffield, Cardiff, Oxford, Newcastle, London, Reading, Glasgow, York, Bristol, Nottingham and Cambridge.  
<http://www.ukrc4setwomen.org/html/women-and-girls/mentoring/>

#### **4.32 Horsesmouth**

Conceived in 2006 and launched in January 2008, Horsesmouth is a not-for-profit social networking site that enables people from all backgrounds to connect with mentors. The site is purpose built for e-mentoring with a range of relevant features. It is free to use and is for anyone over 16. The content is professionally moderated and all profiles are approved before posting, as are all web links.

A time and response management feature allows mentors to manage the number of messages they receive and the amount of time they spend on the site. This is a useful tool for companies who partner with Horsesmouth as it allows them to manage, measure and monitor time spent on Horsesmouth as a volunteering or CSR activity.

There is a rating system called the M Factor – which allows users of the site to rate their interactions with mentors which in turn allows people who are highly active and highly rated to become more visible.

One of the main areas covered by the site is entrepreneurship. People with experience of launching and running companies (both successful and unsuccessful) are encouraged to volunteer as mentors to other people starting and growing businesses.

Horsesmouth can create customised versions of the site as private intranets for organisations and companies. By developing their own sites companies will be able to create unique, moderated environments in which staff will be able to mentor each other and supply chain members can be brought closer within the company's community.

All mentors can:

- Create, update and manage their own profile
- Publish their 'pearls of wisdom'
- Manage and count their mentoring time
- Reply to calls for help
- Publish useful book references and web links
- Receive mentoring from others

[www.horsesmouth.co.uk](http://www.horsesmouth.co.uk)

#### **4.33 Business Volunteer Mentor (BVM)**

It is paramount that lessons are learnt from mentoring organisations/programmes that have previously operated in the UK and have for one reason or another closed. One particularly important programme is the Business Volunteer Mentor (BVM) project which ran from 1999 to 2006.

BVM worked with 1200 volunteer mentors and provided mentoring support to 33,000 clients. It received funding from the Small Business Service (SBS) Phoenix Fund. It was a Business Link branded service managed nationally by the National Federation of Enterprise Agencies (NFEA). The programme was delivered locally by Enterprise Agencies and other business support organisations, and provided free of charge mentoring to pre-start, start-up and micro businesses. Its key objective and operational structure were summarised in the Project Review as:

*“To provide a service that can be used to enhance existing support or extend coverage. The approach adopted has been to offer contractors flexibility in delivery to respond to local priorities in terms of sectors or parts of the community supported, whilst maintaining strict central standards over recruitment, induction, training and assessment. The programme has been extremely successful in this respect as is evidenced by the vastly differing ways in which the scheme was delivered from region to region. Although there were clear parameters in which to work, the scheme allowed for a great deal of flexibility within those parameters in order to enable individual contractors to be allowed to fill gaps in existing provision and to build a mentoring programme that met specific local needs.”*

A mentoring website was also developed as part of BVM which included;

- A public area which allowed prospective clients to make contact directly with a BVM contractor
- A private intranet area aimed at both mentors and contractors which contained forums, allowing both mentors and contractors to interact outside of the formally arranged networking events

BVM closed in March 2006 following cessation of Phoenix Fund funding. The Project Review concluded that “There is no question that a national programme adds enormous value in terms of branding, PR and mentor development”.

BVM developed an enormous amount of good practice and valuable mentoring resources including;

- Mentor Selection/Application form
- Checklist: choosing & training volunteer business mentors
- Code of ethics
- Basic mentoring skills and training content
- Advanced mentoring training workbook
- Web mentoring guide
- Client feedback form
- The infrastructure for an online mentoring service

#### **4.34 E-mentoring for Female Entrepreneurs, Manchester Business School**

This involved designing, developing, implementing and evaluating an e-coaching programme for approximately 100 women business owners across North West England. The programme was designed during 04/05 and operated during 06/07. The programme closed due to cessation of funding. Key findings were:

- Matching of coaches and coachees was a critical stage of project. Forms were used to ask mentees about their coaching needs and coaches about their strengths.
- Hand matching provided excellent results, particularly when a team of people were available to discuss and evaluate forms.
- The online discussion forum was not used to full potential. Recommend future programmes hold facilitated workshops to show participants how the forums could be useful.
- The majority of coaching pairs supplemented online coaching with telephone or face2face sessions. This finding suggests that a blended approach is more suitable for female entrepreneurs.
- Benefits of online coaching included, convenience, time to reflect, record of discussion and time to clarify objectives.
- Problems of online coaching included lack of spontaneity and IT difficulties.

#### **4.34 Women's Enterprise Centre, Canada**

Provides a three part mentoring programme:

##### **Peer Mentoring Groups:**

- 88% of the women who participated in the Women's Enterprise Centre focus groups, expressed an interest in peer mentoring as their preferred format.
- Peer Mentoring Groups provide women entrepreneurs the personal contact with others in the community who are facing the same challenges.
- A group of up to eight women will meet under the supervision of a facilitator, an experienced entrepreneur who acts as overall supervisor and mentor for the group. The group will meet for six, two hour sessions to: discuss the issues that challenge them in their transition to self-employment, learn from the experience of others, provide emotional support to each other
- At the conclusion of the round of six Peer Mentoring Group sessions, there may be an option to continue if the mentees would like to do so.

##### **One-to-one Mentoring**

- Women's Enterprise Centre review the goals and objectives of the mentees, and select a mentor with the matching skills and experience. Ideally the pair will be from the same geographical area, but in cases where this is impossible, mentoring will take place via telephone or email.
- Materials will be supplied by the Women's Enterprise Centre to help both the mentee and mentor understand the role and purpose of their relationship. Both the mentee and mentor will review the Code of Conduct and agree upon it.
- Once a match is made, the mentor and mentee will decide how and how often to meet. Topics for discussion are determined by the mentee and mentor.
- Three months into the relationship, the Women's Enterprise Centre will ask both the mentor and mentee to complete a 'mid-way review'. Every effort is made to ensure that the match is working, from exploring whether the pair has 'clicked' to whether they are staying focused and meeting objectives. This review will also help identify common topics which could be addressed in the Mentor Advisory Forums.
- A similar review will take place at the end of the 6-month commitment, and the participants can elect to either stop or carry on for another 6 months.

##### **Mentor Advisory Forums**

- Are organised such that two or three mentors participate in a 1.5-hour forum by telephone via a teleconference line provided by Women's Enterprise

Centre. A Women's Enterprise Centre staff member MCs the forum. Any number of mentees can pre-register to participate and call in on the conference telephone line.

- Each forum will have a pre-selected business topic. The mentors share their experiences and take questions from mentees, providing inspiration and encouragement. The format allows input from all participants so that, as with peer mentoring groups, new entrepreneurs benefit from hearing different viewpoints and shared concerns

<http://www.womensenterprise.ca/mentor/other-mentoring-programs.php>

#### **4.35 Australian Women's Enterprise Mentoring Network**

The vision of the AWMN is two-fold. Firstly, it is to facilitate mentoring for women who don't otherwise have access to suitable mentors. Secondly, the AWMN provides an online facility by which companies and organisations can introduce or expand upon their own women's mentoring program; and therefore aims to increase the awareness and occurrence of mentoring for women in the workplace, through the adoption of this facility.

The network is aimed at women from all backgrounds including those running small and micro enterprises.

Once you register yourself online as a mentor or mentee you are able to:

- create and update your own password-protected mentor or mentee profile
- indicate on your mentor profile if you are or aren't accepting mentees
- conduct an online search for a mentor matching your specific criteria
- contact mentors by email immediately, sending them a link to your profile, with a message about yourself and what you want to achieve by being mentored
- have the option of having a mentor found for you by an AWMN consultant (fee applies)
- find resources about mentoring, career development and work/life balance
- arrange life/personal or career coaching, and have access to other personal development products

<http://www.womensmentoring.com.au/>

#### **4.36 ATHENAPowerLink®**

Established in 1999, the *ATHENAPowerLink*® Programme has been helping women-owned businesses to expand profitably through the use of professional advisory panels. Volunteer Panel Members are leaders and professionals in their fields within the local community. They bring expertise to the business and are selected based on the specific needs of the business owner. Each panel commits to working with the business owner for one year. Panel Members can serve more than one time. Panel members are only paid if they serve more than a year and this is at local discretion and not within the auspices of the Athena programme. Besides receiving mentoring via this panel structure, business owners learn to network, access capital and implement best practices led by their volunteer advisors.

Panel members are matched to the business according to the businesses needs. The panel and business owner work together for one year to meet the specific objectives of the business owner.

ATHENA International offers the ATHENAPowerLink® Program for a license fee of \$10,000. There is also a charge of \$350 to each new business linked with an Advisory Panel and a \$250 fee for every woman business owner accepted into the programme.

Sponsors are sought from the community to cover these costs and this is usually a combination of financial institutions and economic development agencies – this may result in the programme being free to the women business owner.

The Governing Body is part of an established local entity, such as a chamber of commerce, a college or university, or an economic development organization in conjunction with local businesspeople. Members of the governing body are encouraged to serve of advisory panels.

[http://www.athenafoundation.org/pages/athenapowerlink\\_/19.php](http://www.athenafoundation.org/pages/athenapowerlink_/19.php)

#### **4.37 Count me in for Women's Economic Independence**

'Count me in' operates two programmes across the USA, i. Micro to Millions and ii. Make Mine a Million \$ Business.

##### **i. Micro to Millions**

The Micro to Millions program is a new programme that supports businesses that aren't large enough yet to apply to the Make Mine a Million \$ Business program. The intention is to support micro businesses to scale to a level of growth where they can apply to the Make Mine a Million \$ Business program within 18-24 months ie. to reach \$250,000 turnover in that timeframe.

##### **ii. Make Mine a Million \$ Business (M3)**

The M3 on line community is accessible for any woman to join on line. Membership has more than doubled in the past 12 months to over 52,000 members across the US and major events are now being held in many major US cities. On line, women can access a range of support, including access to business coaches and other women entrepreneurs as mentors. Businesses targeted are those more than two years old with current revenues of \$250,000 or more can apply to the Make Mine a Million \$ Business programme. Volunteer mentors and professional coaches are used. The coaches are paid and clients accessing them (non winners) pay modest fees. Winners get this support free. The volunteer mentors are all accomplished business people and entrepreneurs. The community of mentors is continually growing as new award winners also become mentors. Award winners receive training via the development they access post winning their award and the 'boot camps' they can access. As part of this approach, peer-to-peer mentoring is encouraged and winners are coached in how best to do this.

The M3 model is financed through major corporate sponsorship, primarily through companies in the finance sector. The business programme is competitive and women seeking to compete, once registered on the M3 community, will be solicited to make an application in any one of the major events across the US.

The top 20 competitors will be invited to give a 3 minute pitch at their nearest event in front of an audience of c. 500 business women. Judges select the top 10 winners who receive major corporate sponsored prizes and access to individual mentoring, coaching and high level business and personal development.

<http://www.makemineamillion.org/site/home.php>

#### **4.38 Business Mentoring Scotland (A partnership between Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Chamber of Commerce)**

Business Mentoring Scotland is delivered across Scotland by the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and co-funded via Scottish Enterprise and European funding. This funding enables this to be a free service for businesses themselves. The scheme is primarily targeted at businesses with growth potential. Start-up businesses would be referred to other organisations in their area. Hundreds of mentors are engaged with the programme and recruitment is via word of mouth and targeted activity.

The scheme has attractive marketing materials that would appeal to both a male and female business audience. They have a pool of experienced, successful business people from a wide range of different business sectors, who are willing to invest their time. Different types of mentoring are available aimed at different types of business owner:

##### **High Growth Mentoring**

This one-to-one mentoring service is for the owners of growing businesses who think their business would benefit from a mentor's involvement. You will be matched with a suitable mentor according to the type of experience, skills and knowledge you need.

For a period of up to 12 months, you will meet with your mentor at least once a month to identify, discuss and explore issues within your business which require improvement or support.

##### **Group Mentoring**

Group Mentoring sessions are offered in a variety of locations across Scotland. Led by an experienced mentor, these group sessions give you the opportunity to meet other business owners in a supportive learning environment.

These sessions are themed around relevant topics and group activities and generally last for about two to three hours. They also allow time for discussion with the mentor and for networking with other business owners.

##### **Online Mentoring**

The Online Mentoring service provides web-based support and information to the business community and allows you to access mentoring information through the Internet.

[www.businessmentoringScotland.org/](http://www.businessmentoringScotland.org/)

**Section Five**  
**Proposed Delivery Framework for NWEMN**

## 5.1. Introduction

The proposed framework for the NWEMN consists of a Centrally Co-ordinated National online facility that will provide awareness, information and facilitate access to mentoring services specifically aimed at supporting women to start, develop and grow an enterprise or business.

The umbrella facility could deliver a flexible range of value added provisions that can be opted into at national, regional and local levels. Those value added services could include:

- Marketing and sign-posting
- e-mentoring and internet platform
- Recruitment of mentors
- Recruitment of mentees
- Mentor matching
- Training
- Accreditation
- Data collection and management
- External endorsement
- Ongoing mapping of mentoring provision
- Being part of a national network

This chapter reviews the potential demand for those services from the existing delivery network and outlines in further detail how each element of the service framework could work.

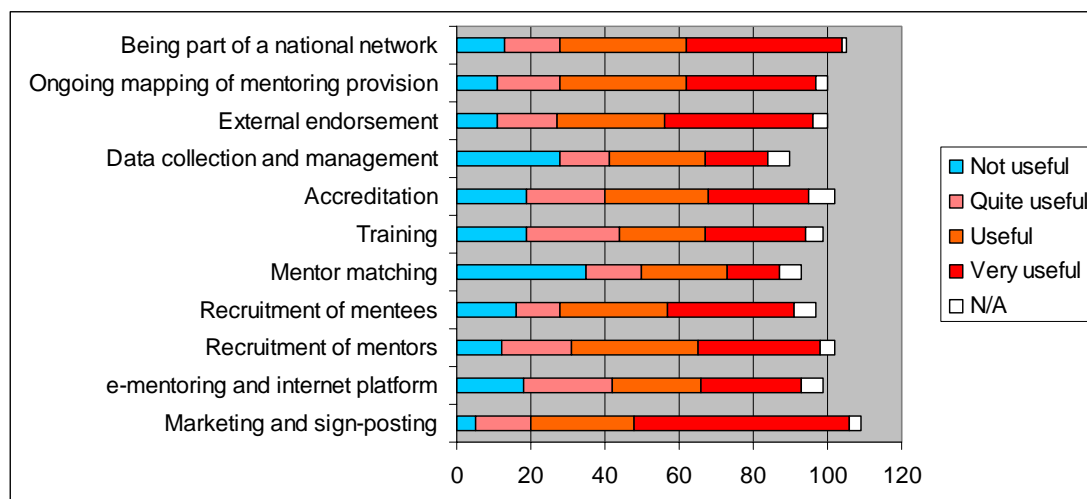
### **Key findings:**

There is a reasonable level of provider demand for all of the services proposed by NWEMN. The most popular services are 'marketing and signposting', 'external endorsement' and 'being part of a national network'.

Demand suggests that there may be scope for NWEMN to develop incorporating either all of the proposed services, or primarily as a marketing portal for existing services. It may also of course be possible to develop in those stages.

## 5.2 Provider demand for NWEMN

119 providers were surveyed on their views on how NWEMN could add value to their services. Figure 1 illustrates the response:



**Figure 1**

The graph shows that there is a good level of demand for almost all of the potential services. The highest level of demand is for 'marketing and signposting', 'external endorsement' and 'being part of a national network'. 'Mentor matching' and 'data collection and management' are the least popular options, however even those options have a reasonable number of organisations which consider them 'useful' and 'very useful'.

## 5.3 NWEMN services

The services which NWEMN can deliver are outlined in more detail in this section.

### Marketing and Signposting

Members of the NWEMN will benefit from an ongoing co-ordinated marketing and signposting campaign, the key objective of which will be to stimulate supply and demand. The campaign will raise awareness of women's enterprise mentoring services and support the recruitment of mentors and mentees for local services. It will also support the growth of the network by promoting opportunities for new service providers.

Activities are likely to include web based facilities, electronic programme leaflets and fact sheets and PR, all materials will be made available for use regionally and locally to support and add value to local activity and initiatives. The activity will co-ordinate success stories from across the network develop user profiles, case studies and stories for dissemination to regional and local media. The key focus will be on encouraging women to consider opportunities to become a mentor and signposting new users to local services.

The campaign will work closely with partners and stakeholders to engage their membership and to help increase the take up and reach of mentoring services. The activity will also provide a platform that can be used to raise awareness and provide

access to Regional Women's Ambassadors and signpost to other key regional business support services such as Business Link.

Communications will also support regional and local service providers with customised e-zines that can be used to keep their stakeholders, mentors and mentees informed and updated, they will feature regional news articles and information about events and activities.

### **E-Mentoring and Internet Platform**

The network will provide members with access to a range of flexible resources, tools and support functions designed to enhance and add value to providers in the delivery of their mentoring services.

Tools and resources are built into an internet platform and can be accessed flexibly, based on the needs and requirements of each region and or service provider. The combination of features will enable regional partners to integrate the service with their own local provision, enhancing their delivered value and maintaining their own branding.

Online delivery provides a number of added value benefits to both service providers and users; improved access, greater choice, flexibility, and freeing up precious time and resources for providers, mentors and clients.

The Service is able to be deployed in flexible configurations to suit regional/local requirements. The key features are as follows: -

- Access to an e-mentoring platform that will enable each region and individual service provider to deliver a range of mentoring services to meet their specific requirements.
- Easy to use online service functions, providing an economical way to provide business mentoring, advice and support at whatever time and place is most convenient to the client.
  - The e-mentoring delivery facilities allow for 'asynchronous' exchanges so that support can also be offered independent of time and space (both parties can respond to messages at a time to suit them), while the Internet allows for time-independent access from any location.
  - The platform also provides advanced features such as concurrent, sound and vision, allowing mentoring to be delivered online, real time and face to face, enhancing the effect that traditional telephone mentoring can achieve and dispensing with the cost of calls.

### **Recruiting Mentors**

Network members will be able to benefit from the national programme of activities that aims to increase the number of mentors available to the programme. The network will deliver a national marketing and communications campaign (*see above*) as a means of attracting and recruiting volunteer mentors for the network and will enable local service providers to benefit from that recruitment process for their services.

RDAs and service providers will be able to leverage the support of an application and registration process for mentors that can either be managed locally or centrally

helping providers to reduce the administrative burden and cost of this process. In addition the network will provide a mentor handling and enquiry service via a dedicated support line and online application, approval and accreditation process, answering general enquiries and developing a national mentor database. The database will give service providers greater access to a resource pool that will support programmes across the network.

### **Recruiting Mentees**

The network will deliver a national marketing and communications campaign (see *above*) as a means of attracting and recruiting mentees for members' programmes.

It can support RDAs and service providers with an application and registration process for mentees, that can either be managed locally or centrally helping providers to reduce the administrative burden and cost of this process. In addition the network will provide a client handling and enquiry service, through a dedicated support line and online registration process answering general enquiries, supporting the recruitment process and signposting clients to the most relevant local service.

RDAs and generic business support organisations can also access and utilise the support of the network members by referring clients into the services available.

### **Mentor/Mentee Matching**

The network will provide an online tool for RDAs and local service providers to help manage and support the matching process. This robust tool can either be used and managed locally or can be supported through a centralised function, either way, it significantly reduces the management, administrative and time burdens this process places on service providers. The system enables very detailed criteria to be used for the matching process and therefore provides greater accuracy and ability to meet the differing needs of clients and as a result enhances client's experience of the programme.

Mentors will be classified, providing greater choice and access for their clients and a greater ability for mentees to be matched to mentors according to a number of variables such as:

- locality served
- sector and industry specialism
- specialist topics and themes
- client profile

Access to a wider pool of mentors will also provide an added value, additional resource for service providers to enhance their ability to match the needs of the client more closely with an appropriate mentor.

### **Training**

One of the benefits of the NWEMN is to raise awareness, quality and standards of mentoring. The network will provide members with access to valuable resources in the form of a range of flexible training interventions. The programmes will support the skills and development of both service providers and individual mentors and include:

- Mentor and Mentee Training Programmes
- Train the trainer programme for co-ordinators and programme managers

The range of training and support materials will be available to members in both on and offline formats and be accessible through the web interface.

The aim of the training services will be to both provide access for would be mentors who have no experience and for those who want to refresh their knowledge and develop their skills.

Mentee training will provide information and advice on how mentoring works and how to effectively chose and use a mentor.

Additional benefits and added value will be delivered to network members and their mentors through a dedicated Online Mentor Network and Forums (accessed through the NWEMN interface), so that mentors from within programmes or across the country can support and encourage each other, share best practice, ideas and solutions.

Mentors and programme managers will also have access to a CPD programme operated through the NWEMN, so that they can network together and continue to develop their skills. Providing the network and service providers with an impetuous for continued enhancement and raising the quality of mentoring delivery across the network, the cost of such support is rarely a resource that can be afforded within any one provider.

### **Accreditation**

The NWEMN will manage and deliver a programme of accreditation providing benefits at two levels

1. A programme of accreditation will be provided for service providers to support mentors signing up to the network. This service will include processing and approval of applications and provision of a national training programme (see *above*). Providing service providers and users with a guaranteed service level and quality expectation, resulting in raising standards and value of mentoring.
2. Additional quality assurance is provided to members through the training provided which is accredited to national standards and certified by recognised awarding bodies (currently ILM, CIPD, SFEDI) to suit the needs and aspirations of individual mentors. This provision will also be externally assessed and verified to ensure continued development and improvement.

### **Data Collection and Management**

The NWEMN platform hosts a data collection and management system that provides service providers with simple and easy to use, added value facilities that will reduce management, co-ordination and administration time, regardless of how their service is delivered - face-to-face, telephone or online.

Utilising these services through the network will enable service providers to gain significant economies of scale, from the streamlining of management and administration processes, the ability to track mentor and mentee activity, to the effective management and monitoring of relationships, these activities can either be managed centrally through the network or managed at a local level.

The features include a number of core administrative functions as follows: -

- Management Information generation
  - Service Level reporting
  - Regular management information and reports, including statistics, aggregated from local and regional data
- A robust 'back end' management and administrative function with facilities to provide
  - programme administration and reporting
  - programme co-ordination
- Mentor matching functions - Allowing for clients to have their very specific needs matched to a specialist mentor anywhere in the UK
- Mentoring Application Management Service
- 24/7 Support and help desk
- System security - data streaming, storage and back up
- Continuous software service development, upgrades and enhancements – automatically provided to all users

The network will also provide members with a quality assurance function, helping to raise awareness and standards in mentoring, it will do this through maintaining a regular programme of service evaluation and feedback, regularly reporting findings and best practice to the network and stakeholders. This will enable the network to continually improve and stay up to date.

A programme of monitoring and feedback amongst the mentors in the network will also be established to ensure issues that arise can be shared and dealt with and that best practice can be disseminated across the network.

### **External Endorsement**

A coordinated network providing national coverage will provide greater opportunities for external endorsements, supporting the network and its members to grow. External endorsement will provide additional awareness and drive users to members' services.

Raising standards and quality would also serve as an external benchmark and provide additional reassurance to members and clients and will help to gain external endorsement, for example accreditation of training will provide increased levels of credibility and will build trust in the quality and integrity of members' services.

The network will provide a range of added value relationship management support that will include liaison with the Strategic Partnership, BERR, Regional and local network members, this will ensure government level endorsements which will also help to leverage funding and sponsorship support.

### **Ongoing Mapping of Mentoring Provision**

The National Network will work with Regional Development Agencies and mentoring service providers to ensure services are mapped and updated on a regular basis and integrated into the network.

Individual services will be positioned through a national map of women's enterprise mentoring services. Each region will be provided with a tailored micro site within the

network that will provide information and access to the mentoring programmes available in each region.

Being part of this national map and will ensure that members will benefit from related marketing and communications campaigns to create awareness, access and take up of that provision.

### **Being part of a National Network**

Being part of a national network will provide a range of added value benefits to both RDAs and service providers by providing integration of national, regional and local services.

The NWEMN will enable regions and local service providers to take advantage of a nationally branded and centrally supported and co-ordinated platform that will promote information, advice and guidance about mentoring, how to become a mentor and how to access mentoring support.

The aim of the network will be to provide awareness and access to mentoring support for women in business and to drive awareness and take up of local services.

Providers will be supported with resources designed to save time, money and create economies of scale, providing customers with consistency of service and quality assurance.

The network can provide RDAs and service providers with regular reporting, management information, statistics, monitoring and evaluation support. Other benefits will include access to a national resource of mentors who can deliver across regional boundaries and have specialist knowledge, experience or expertise within sectors or topics.

A key feature of NWEMN platform and its delivery methodology will be the ability to open up awareness and access to support services. This allows women to readily provide or receive mentoring advice and support whilst sitting at home, from their Blackberries/PDAs or through any facility with WIFI or public Internet access, when out on business or at work.

It also provides opportunity and to widen access to a greater audience of women who may have difficulty accessing mainstream, traditional, group or face-to-face provision. This makes online mentoring an ideal option for the many busy women trying to start, sustain or enhance an enterprise whilst, possibly juggling a job, working full time, unsocial hours, with care responsibilities and a family life.

NWEMN can also open up opportunities for mentors who may otherwise have found the time investment of traditional face-to-face support prohibitive.

The programme will also represent regions and service providers in engaging strategic partners, public and private finance and sponsorship to enhance and sustain the service and provide a National Single policy PI Insurance for registered mentors with the network.

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# 1. Introduction - APPENDIX I: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

The development of a national mentoring network for women starting and growing businesses forms part of a range of measures on women's enterprise within the Government's new enterprise strategy. This survey aims to find out what mentoring is already available across England, where there is scope to add value and complement that provision and where there are gaps in provision.

The survey has been commissioned by the Department of Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR) and is being led by a Strategic Partnership, including Prowess, Everywoman, the British Chambers of Commerce and The Royal Bank of Scotland. Survey results should help inform future Government strategy in this area.

What is mentoring?

A Mentor is someone to share ideas with, someone who will listen to your problems and issues, help wherever possible and be a friend to your business. Mentors tend to have direct experience of the field in which help is required. While mentors often use elements of coaching, coaching tends to be focused on more specific and immediate goals.

## \* 1. About you

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

## 2. Organisation

## 3. Name of mentoring project (if applicable)

\* 4. We would like you to complete the survey if you have an appropriate mentoring programme or recent or planned experience of running one. Please then complete the survey as if your programme is current. First, indicate if your mentoring programme is:

Currently operating

Recently ended

Soon to begin

If due to start - please say when

\* 5. Is this survey for you? If you agree with ALL the following statements it is and please proceed. If not, please exit now.

Our programme provides mentoring to people aged over 18.

We provide mentoring to people starting and growing businesses.

We co-ordinate at least 10 mentors.

6. Is your mentoring programme National i.e. available across the whole of England?

Yes

No

## 2. Regional and sub-regional delivery

Please complete both stages of this page:

1) Select all the REGIONS where you provide mentoring services.

2) Select ALL of the SUB-REGIONS within that Region where your mentoring service is available.

\* 1. In which English Regions is your mentoring service available?

- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire & Humber
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- London
- South East (excl. London)
- South West

2. South West - sub-regions

- Cornwall
- Devon
- Somerset
- Gloucestershire
- Wiltshire
- Dorset
- Bristol

3. North East sub-regions

- Northumberland
- Tyne & Wear
- County Durham
- Tees Valley

4. Yorkshire & Humber sub-regions

- North Yorkshire
- South Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- Humberside
- North Lincolnshire

5. North West sub-regions

- Cheshire
- Cumbria
- Greater Manchester
- Lancashire
- Merseyside

## 6. East Midlands sub-regions

- € Derbyshire
- € Nottinghamshire
- € Lincolnshire & Rutland
- € Leicestershire
- € Northamptonshire

## 7. West Midlands sub-regions

- € Staffordshire (incl. Stoke-on-Trent)
- € Telford & Shropshire
- € Herefordshire
- € Worcestershire
- € Warwickshire
- € Coventry
- € Birmingham & Solihull
- € Black Country (Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton, Walsall)

## 8. Eastern Region - sub-regions

- € Norfolk
- € Suffolk
- € Cambridgeshire
- € Bedfordshire
- € Hertfordshire
- € Essex

## 9. London - sub-regions

- € Central London
- € North London
- € East London
- € South London
- € West London

## 10. South East (excl London)- sub-regions

- € Oxfordshire
- € Buckinghamshire
- € Berkshire
- € Hampshire & IoW
- € Surrey
- € Kent & Medway
- € Sussex

### 3. Your mentoring service

\* 1. Which of the following types of mentoring do you offer?

- Face to face individual mentoring     Telephone mentoring     E-mentoring     Peer group mentoring

Other (please specify)

2. Business stage. Which of the following groups is your programme available to?

	Available to this group	Actively target this group
pre-start up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
start-up and early stage businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
established businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
high-growth businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* 3. Is the mentoring service for female clients only?

- Yes  
 No  
 Some parts/programmes

Comments if applicable

4. Which of the following elements are included in your mentoring programme?

- Mentor matching     Training for mentors  
 structured mentor support programme     Monitoring and tracking of mentor relationships  
 Training for clients/ mentees     Programme evaluation  
 Accreditation/ qualification for mentors     Information and advice resources

Other (please specify)

5. If your programme is accredited or provides accreditation to mentors, please identify the awarding body.

- Sfedl     CIPD  
 NVQ     CMI  
 ILM     Newcastle College

Other (please specify)

6. If your mentoring service is available as part of a broader range of services offered by your organisation, please identify those services below:

	We offer this service	This is a priority/core service for us
Business/skills training	€	€
Networking	€	€
Business advice/counselling	€	€
Coaching	€	€
Access to finance/grants	€	€
Premises/incubation	€	€
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>	

7. Recruitment of mentors - please select as appropriate

- We actively target new mentors
- We actively target new female mentors

8. Please select the categories of mentors you target and accept for your enterprise focused programme.

	Target	Accept
Corporate executives	€	€
SME owner/managers	€	€
Sole traders	€	€
Retired executives	€	€
Coaches	€	€

Comments about recruitment of mentors

\* 9. Do you use volunteer mentors?

Yes

No

10. If you use volunteer mentors, are they:

	Yes	No
Trained	€	€
Accredited	€	€
Provided with ongoing support and back-up	€	€

Other (please specify)

11. Target groups - which of the following client/mentee groups does your mentoring programme specifically target? (i.e. with specific programmes or as stated in your materials - not just in general terms).

- Young people
- Graduates
- 50+ entrepreneurs
- Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic groups
- Disabled people
- Lone parents
- Rural
- Returners
- Welfare benefit recipients
- Economically inactive/NEET
- Refugees
- Ex-offenders
- Company directors
- SET (science, engineering & technology) businesses
- Social enterprises
- Corporate Executives

Other, including other industry sectors (please specify)

## 4. The National Women's Enterprise Mentoring Network

The proposed National Network aims to link up existing mentoring services, fill gaps and add value. This section seeks your views on how the National Network can achieve that.

### 1. Where could a National Women's Enterprise Mentoring Network add value to and reinforce your mentoring service?

	Not useful	Quite useful	Useful	Very useful	N/A
Marketing and sign-posting	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
e-mentoring and internet platform	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Recruitment of mentors	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Recruitment of mentees	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Mentor matching	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Training	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Accreditation	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Data collection and management	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
External endorsement	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Ongoing mapping of mentoring provision	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Being part of a national network	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

Other (please specify)

### 2. Would you be prepared to pay for any of those added value services?

### 3. If you would be prepared to pay a reasonable amount for some of those services please say which ones and on what basis.

### 4. If you were to engage with National WE Mentoring Network, how important would it be that the Network was:

	Not important	Quite important	Important	Very important	N/A
Commercially focused	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Not for profit	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
A registered Charity	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Sustainable	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Inclusive of a wide range of services	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
User led and directed	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Endorsed by Government	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Endorsed by Celebrities	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Supported by public funding	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Sponsored by a major Company	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

Other (please specify)









