OXFORD BROOKES BUSINESS SCHOOL

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

MAPPING MENTORING IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

A STUDY OF MENTORING SCHEMES IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Creative UK

Contents

Introduction

This report builds upon the 2019 report "Many Things to Many People: Formal Mentoring schemes and their management" (Gannon & Washington, 2019) but focuses specifically on mentoring in the Creative Industries (CIs). As a diverse and fragmented collection of sectors, success in the CIs is dependent upon the innovation and development of new businesses, and the entry and professional development of new and existing participants. Mentoring is often at the heart of these developments and innovations (Nesta, 2020; Paquette, 2012; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012). However, there is limited understanding of the breadth, depth, quality and availability of mentoring provision in the CIs. For example, we know little about mentoring at: different levels (school leavers, graduate entrants, business support, mid-career and executive); across different sectors (fine art, design, film, music) or the purpose of these schemes (widening participation, improving diversity, career development, business development).

The fragmented nature of the CIs indicates that where mentoring programmes exist there may be resource challenges (limited access to sustained economic resources, or social, human capital [Preston et al., 2018]), and a heavy reliance on volunteers and fundraising activities (Gannon & Washington, 2019). In addition, we know the CIs face particular challenges in terms of access and diversity of talent (Grugulis & Stoyanova 2012; Social Mobility Commission, 2021). As such it appears there are parts of the CIs where mentoring provision may be the critical support factor in business survival or new entrant access and ongoing career development.

There is also evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic disproportionately, but inconsistently affected the sectors in the CIs (Khlystova, Kalyuzhnova & Belitski, 2022) and this research is germane as we begin to understand the wider impact of the lockdowns (Douglas et al., 2020; Settersten et al., 2020) and limited resourcing of the CIs. Our interest in understanding, mapping and recognising good practice mentoring initiatives is important in sustaining the resilience of mentoring provision and limiting long-term scarring in the CIs.

In June 2021, an interdisciplinary team comprised of members from the Creative Industries Research & Innovation Network (CIRIN) and the International Centre for Coaching & Mentoring Studies (ICCAMS) in Oxford Brookes University, secured funding from the university's internal Research Excellence 2021 awards to pursue this investigation. The team partnered with Creative UK to extend the reach of engagement with the CIs. As an interdisciplinary, collaborative project with industry partners, this study offers a timely opportunity to identify and nurture existing mentoring provision and promote good practice.

Insights from the Literature

In the last two decades the mentoring literature has identified a shift in focus from informal mentoring, based on organic, naturally occurring relationships, to formal mentoring, which involves mentoring relationships organised by third parties (Gannon & Washington, 2019; Desimone et al., 2014). However the degree of formality within formal mentoring schemes also diverges depending upon the needs of mentors and mentees. Researchers (Cole, 2015; Starr, 2015) have identified that coordinators need to ensure trust and rapport are built in formal mentoring relationships and that issues of diversity and inclusiveness are tackled in supportive and sensitive ways within formal mentoring schemes. For example, from the relationship perspective, Starr (2015) identifies that coordinators must be able to plan for and spot where mentoring is turning into managing. Other researchers have also identified the dark side of mentoring where mentors and mentees may engage in dysfunctional activities

which render their relationships toxic (Barker, 2006; Washington & Cox, 2016). Such relationships can contaminate other mentor-mentee dyads in formal mentoring schemes and require tactful interventions and careful management (Barker, 2006). Coordinators are responsible for identifying toxic mentoring and remedying such situations at the relationship level and at the programme level by designing out this adverse aspect where possible (Washington and Cox, 2016).

The literature has also highlighted an increase in mentoring delivered through electronic formats; either generic technology (such as skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams) or bespoke platforms and applications (such as MentorNet, PushFar or Tiller) (Neely, Cotton & Neely, 2017; Sanyal & Rigby, 2017). These new formats of delivering mentoring interactions offer flexibility to participants and given the requirements for social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic they appear to be a useful way forward for mentoring in uncertain times.

We can also recognise a 'social turn' in mentoring where mentoring relationships are deployed to support social change and address wider issues of social justice, such as rights for particular groups and environmental causes (Gannon, 2021). Another dimension where mentoring is seen to have shifted focus beyond the mentoring dyad is evident in accounts of mentoring schemes offering network and community events and group meetings. Such innovations are seen to modify the traditional focus of mentoring and suggest some schemes are akin to communities of practice (Gannon, Clayton & Klenert, 2021; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Wenger, 1998). Recognising these developments in the mentoring literature help orientate our examination of the CIs and its provision of formal mentoring schemes and their pre, during and post Covid formats and lasting implications.

Methodology

We adopted a two stage data collection approach to our investigation of mentoring provision in the CIs. First, we built upon the initial secondary data collected for the Many Things to Many People: Formal Mentoring schemes and their management (Gannon & Washington, 2019). We used Google search to identify mentoring schemes across the sectors of the CIs, using the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Creative UK sector definition terms. This involved using specific terms such as 'mentoring', 'Film', 'Crafts' etc. This stage elicited 93 mentoring initiatives and we were able to identify contact details for 86 of these organisations. We downloaded and saved the website details of these mentoring initiatives including the name of the organisation, the name of the mentoring initiatives(s), the occupational group(s) linked to the organisation/initiative, the postcode, their address, the geographical coverage of the initiative, web links, social media accounts, main contact details and details of the mentoring initiative(s) themselves. This data provided an initial platform for the second stage of our data collection.

In the second stage we adapted the survey initially developed by Abbott and colleagues (2010) and later amended for the 2019 report (Gannon & Washington, 2019). We reduced the number of questions to focus on mentoring initiative details and included some items related to the Covid-19 response and post–lockdown pandemic practices. We sought Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics approval for this stage of the investigation. Once approval was granted we launched the survey via the online platform Survey Monkey. We emailed all those identified as contacts for the mentoring initiatives identified during stage 1, and then proceeded to tag these organisations through their social media profiles to support responses. The primary participants sought for this project were mentoring scheme coordinators/administrators/managers, or mentors and mentees who were familiar with mentoring schemes in the CIs.

We also used social media – LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter and specific networks, such as BAFTSS (British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies) and MECCSA (Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association). Our industry partners featured the invitation to participate in the research via their regular e-newsletters. The survey was open from early December 2021 to May 2022. Overall we received 104 responses with 34 full completions of all survey items. We also received over twenty emails regarding reasons for non-completion, partial completion or with requests to talk to the research team. Where this happened the PI responded to requests and answered questions or arranged calls. Typically, these exchanges included outlines of why it was difficult to respond to the online survey now; suspension of the mentoring initiative, change in initiative personnel, uncertainty over funding and changes in provision due to Covid-19.

Survey respondents often identified themselves as having more than one role in the mentoring schemes they identified. Over 70% of respondents indicated they were the scheme coordinator or manager, and 35% identified they were a mentor, however other roles included: community leader supporting the scheme, mentoring champion, mentoring consultant or trainer, funder or sponsor. In the 'other' section other roles such as: academic and workshop facilitator, programmes manager, business owner and CEO were identified.

Most of the respondents' mentoring schemes ran countrywide, covering most or all nations of the UK. While a significant portion of schemes remained national (for example, Scotland), regional (for example, North East of England) or local (for example, London), a substantial number of the cited schemes already became or were in the process of becoming international in their scope. This notion was also supported by the impact of the pandemic cited by the respondents, which saw a substantial move towards an online format of mentoring during the pandemic. This specifically helped break through the geographical boundaries and eliminate physical restrictions, offering an opportunity for many initiatives to enlarge their geographical coverage, tap into a wider pool of mentors and expand the mentee participation.

For access to our interactive map please see our website >>

Part 1: Purpose: the foundations of CIs Mentoring Schemes

This part of the report focuses upon the purpose or mentoring initiatives in the CIs, the ways mentoring is defined, the size and scale of mentoring initiatives, the characteristics of mentors and mentees as well as issues of how initiatives are funded. These aspects are the foundations of how mentoring initiatives operate and what drives them to succeed.

Rationale for Mentoring Schemes

Our initial engagement with the secondary website data on mentoring initiatives in CIs identified some interesting and distinctive features, not normally seen in mentoring scheme descriptions (Gannon & Washington, 2019). There was frequent use of evocative language in some outlines of mentoring initiatives. For example, there was reference to creating 'kick ass communities', another one describes the scheme as tackling the 'patriarchal battlefield' and another nurturing 'talent in places of deprivation'. There were also frequent descriptions of the CIs and entering or developing a career within these as challenging and lonely, with mentoring initiatives portrayed as offering plans to succeed or survive and thrive as a freelancer/creative/ woman/ethnic background. The secondary data also mentioned incentives to participate beyond mentoring relationships. These incentives included workshop participation, community building, access to networks, exhibition space and studio space. Mentoring in the CIs was also often referred to as a 'space' but this space was sometimes not just a physical space, but also a personal space to discuss careers, plan and build business and professional future.

In terms of the survey respondents were asked to indicate the original rationale for the mentoring schemes they were involved in. Rarely did they offer a singular issue as the starting point for mentoring. Instead respondents identified concerns for a particular diversity issues (for example, based on gender, neurodiversity, disability, ethnicity and socio-economic groups) and other concerns (such as access to industry networks, entry into a sector, opportunity for skills enhancement, professional development, entrepreneurship and as a response to Covid-19). Just under 40% of respondents stated a diversity issue first, and then an industry access or development concern, another 40% stated the entry or development concern first, followed by a diversity or other issue. Other rationale included the need to offer access to industry networks and/or community development. Several respondents were also keen to explain the evolution of focus of their mentoring initiative. For example, in some of the CIs mentoring may have started as focussing on the transition from education to workplace, but then had evolved into a more targeted transition mentoring initiative focused on social class or race and ethnicity, specifically.

By allowing respondents to select more than one option, the data highlights the complex nature of industry challenges which are addressed by mentoring initiatives. For some organisations this meant they had pursued a form of horizontal diversification by starting a mentoring initiative that was about transitions into a sector from college or university, but then identified related transition issues at a later career stage, and had introduced new mentoring initiatives to accommodate these issues. For others their initial mentoring scheme had identified specific groups who faced particular problems, (for example, women, disabled, neurodiversity) and they had diversified into mentoring support for different career stages. The recognised pre-existing inequalities in the CIs (including those with protected characteristics but also other marginalised groups) were often remarked upon in the open comment sections, emphasising a high level of awareness amongst respondents regardless of CI sector. The specific concerns were about how specific groups of people had difficulty in joining and building networks and connecting with communities of professionals, as well as developing and sustaining their own career profiles, seen as critical for success in the CIs.

The importance of Purpose in Mentoring schemes

In addition to asking about the original rationale for their mentoring initiative, respondents were asked about the current purpose of their scheme. Several options could be chosen and this resulted in respondents typically selecting three to four responses - as identified in Figure 1. Exactly half of the respondents identified 'supporting employability' as a prime purpose for their mentoring initiative. Just under one half of respondents also identified 'equality and diversity', followed by significant proportions of responses for 'supporting transitions between education/career stage or professional development' and 'leadership development' as other prime motives for mentoring initiatives.

Figure 1. The Purpose of CIs Mentoring Schemes
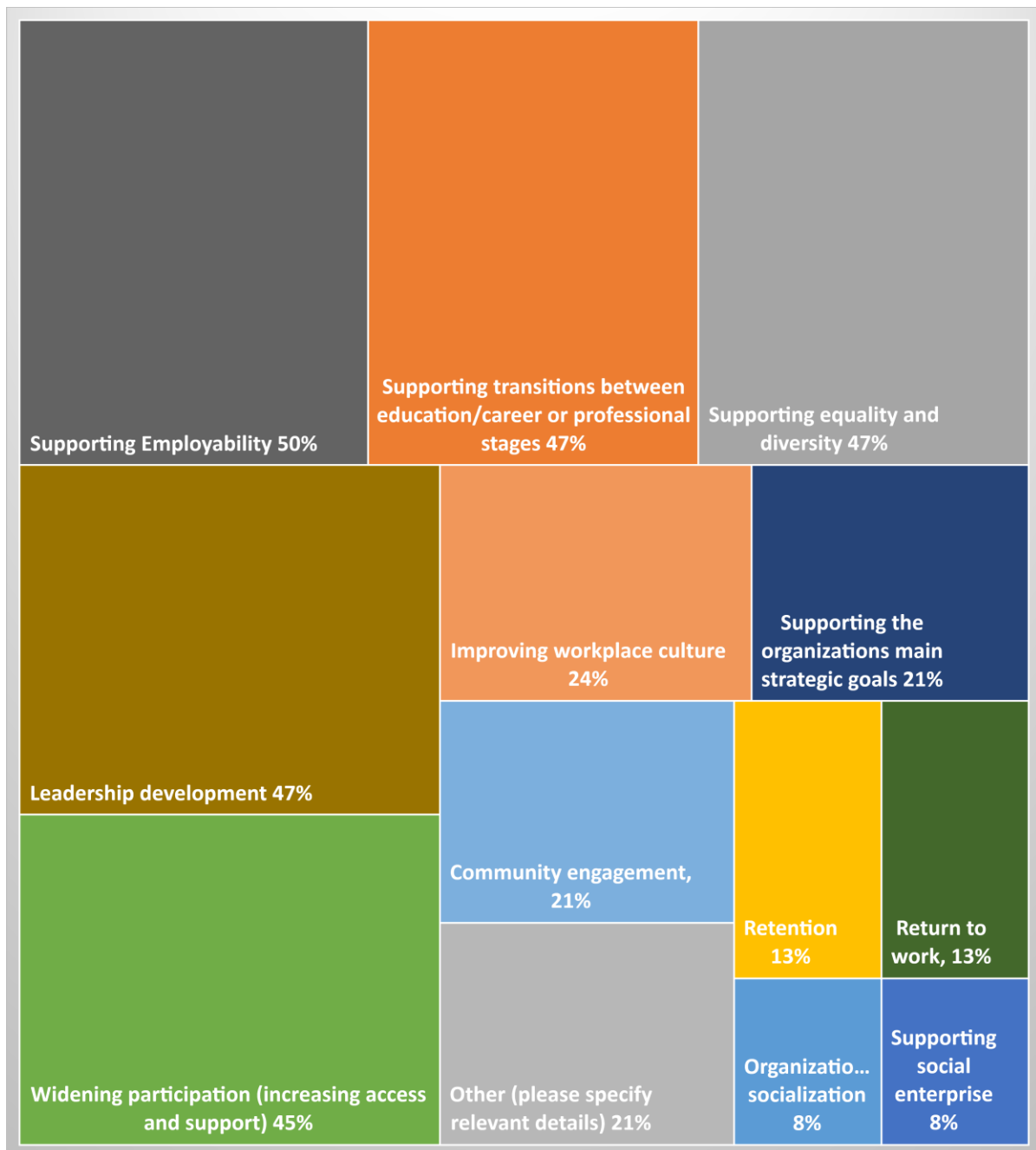
Around 45% of respondents identified widening participation as a key purpose of their mentoring initiatives too. Other purposes included mentoring to 'improving workplace culture', 'support organisational goals', 'community engagement', 'return to work' and 'retention'. In the 'other' category respondents specified the purpose of their initiatives with reference to concerns about skills gaps and development within the CIs, and other issues in specific sectors (games and VFX, publishing) or clusters of sectors (arts, creative makers, property (design, construction and architecture, museums, galleries and libraries). Within this other category there was also reference made to mentoring focused business and enterprise development.

Defining Mentoring

In an open response item on the survey we asked respondents to comment upon the working definition adopted by their mentoring initiative. The answers elicited indicate a strong focus on what the mentor does for the mentee, specifically in relation to helping, supporting, sharing experiences, listening, encouraging, promoting learning, enabling thinking and developing, as indicated in the word cloud below, Figure 2. For some respondents mentoring was summed up in simple terms 'a trust based relationship' or 'a powerful tool which makes connections and offers two-way learning'. Other respondents identified expansive definitions based upon scheme resources and handbooks detailing specific aspects of the mentoring process and the different partners' responsibilities. Several respondents offered definitions from key authors, such as Julie Starr and David Clutterbuck.

In line with the comments in the original rationale of CIs mentoring initiatives there was also mention as part of definitions of mentoring of support extending beyond the dyad. For example, there was reference made to connections, networks and communities being part of mentoring.

Figure 2. Word Cloud of Mentoring Definitions

Participants in CIs Mentoring Initiatives

We also asked the respondents to identify the main participants in their mentoring initiatives.

Mentees

Allowing respondents to choose more than one option in identifying the mentees targeted in their mentoring initiatives resulted in exactly one third of responses selecting existing

professionals and artists in the CIs. Just over one half of respondents attributed some aspect of diversity and inclusivity characteristic to their mentees (for example, young people, young people with specific characteristics; neurodiversity, minority backgrounds, women or non-binary, and disabled. Some further categorisation was identified within the broader set of responses on targeting artists and industry professionals, such as early or mid-career stages, or new entrants. While the remaining targeted mentees were identified as entrepreneurs, and new business owners.
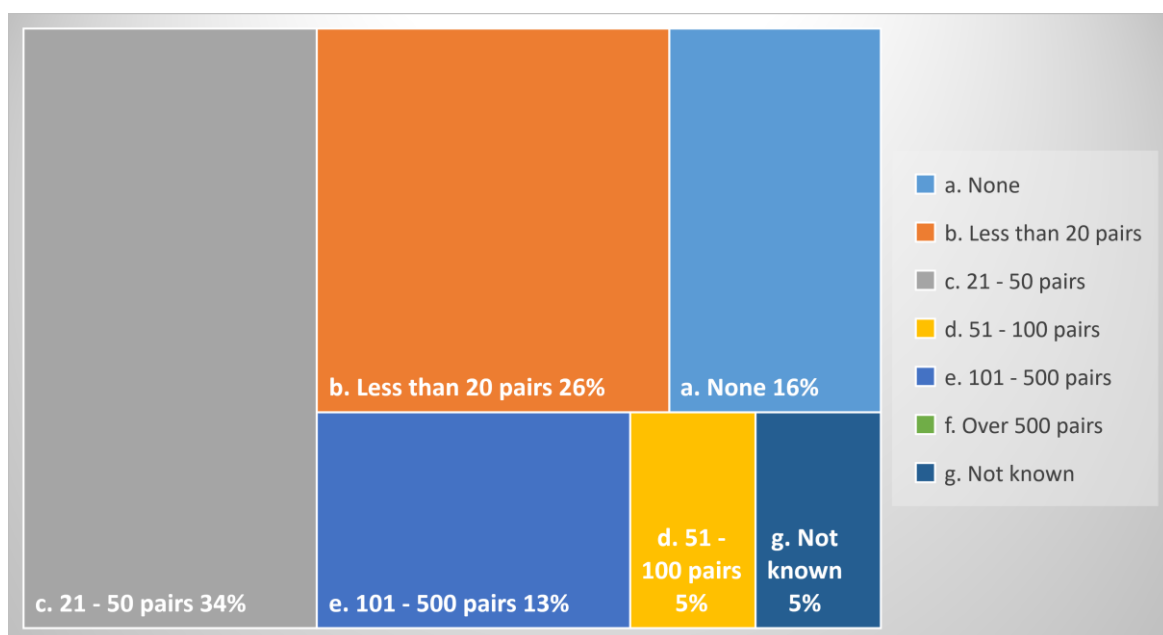
Mentors

Most mentoring schemes identified their mentors as professionals, executives, managers or creatives across sectors in the CIs. Many respondents identified minimum criteria for the role of mentor. For example, a minimum of three years of experience was mentioned as a qualifying criteria to be a mentor by some, while other respondents used terms such as senior or experienced without being specific about years of experience. There were more specific criteria applied by some schemes, including recruiting specifically; women, members of specific associations, or those with experience of entrepreneurship, as mentors. Around 10% of mentoring schemes acknowledged that mentors were recruited on the basis of mentee needs and therefore specific criteria were tailored in every mentee case. These schemes were often operating at the more senior levels - mid-career, returner or executive transitions within the CIs.

The Coverage of Mentoring Schemes

We were also interested in the size of mentoring initiatives and how many mentoring relationships they currently had working together. This information gives a sense of how big mentoring initiatives are and of the potential complexity of their management. Across the responses to the survey, Figure 3 shows the size of mentoring initiatives, in terms of numbers of pairs currently working together. While 5% of respondents did not know how many pairs of mentors and mentees were working together, we can also see that respondents were involved in several small schemes (with just 21-50 pairs or less than 20 pairs) working together.

Figure 3. No. of Pairs working together in CIs Mentoring initiatives at time of completing survey.

Mentoring Scheme Funding in the CIs

Our initial analysis of the mentoring initiatives website data indicated that schemes are funded in a variety of ways, as outlined by Figure 4. However, the picture is more complex than these funding options suggest, with respondents identifying that combinations of funding are often used.

The responses indicate that mentoring schemes consistently face challenges in securing funds to operate and therefore several options were used to spread the risk of funding from one source drying up. For example, some private (corporate sponsorship as part of corporate social responsibility commitments), some financial support from public organisations (such as the Arts Council) were identified and used in a variety of combinations by mentoring initiatives. Such arrangements of funding sources were sometimes used alongside social enterprise, charity or professional association sources of funding too. There was also significant reference made to the work of volunteers, either as mentors or project administrators or both.

Most mentors in the CIs mentoring schemes are not paid for their roles and participate as volunteers. However, just over a third of respondents indicated that their mentors were paid or at least had their costs covered, while another 10% indicated that their schemes used informal reward and recognition tools to thank mentors for their work.

Figure 4. Funding of Mentoring Schemes in the CIs
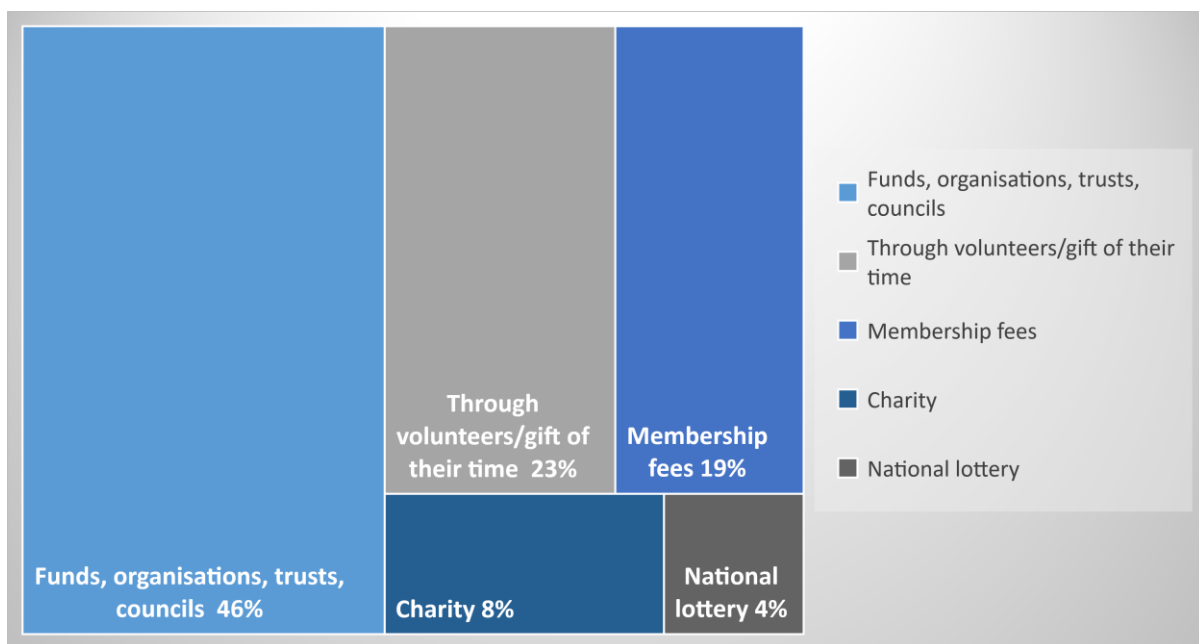
There were a range of different comments in the 'other' response box including examples of mentees paying mentors directly, the use of retainers by organisations to make sure mentors were available to support the scheme, payment being based upon mentors' income levels (the challenge of expecting freelancers to give their time was mentioned), and modest fees were also used to secure mentors' participation in training, CPD and monitoring activities, as well as the mentoring itself.

Part 2: The Practicalities of CIs Mentoring Schemes

This part of the report focuses upon the practicalities of mentoring initiatives in the CIs, the ways mentoring is delivered, as well as the format and structure of mentoring initiatives. These aspects are crucial for the successful implementation and sustainability of the CIs mentoring initiatives.

How mentoring is delivered in CIs mentoring schemes

Nearly 50% of all responses to the survey identified dyadic mentor-mentee relationships as the main way their scheme participants interact. Only one response was allowed and this resulted in just over 15% indicating e-mentoring (through a technological interface) was adopted, while group mentoring was pursued by just over 10%. Speed and peer mentoring were used by just under 10% of respondents. There were no responses indicating reciprocal or reverse mentoring as the primary focus for CIs mentoring relationships. In the 'other comment' box respondents highlighted how combinations of types of mentoring were used; specifically dyadic, e-mentoring and peer or reverse mentoring. Amongst some respondents there appeared to be a dislike of the term 'reverse mentoring' and some responses mentioned 'business coaching' where schemes had an entrepreneurial focus.

Respondents were asked to indicate how their mentoring interactions took place and unsurprisingly, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic video technology (Skype, Zoom etc.) was identified as the most widely used way for mentoring meetings to take place. Over 85% of respondents indicated this format was used always or sometimes. Other frequently used formats for mentoring meetings included emails (63% always or sometimes) and telephone calls (55% always or sometimes). Where mentoring assumed the face-to-face format, this was more likely to take place away from the organisation's office rather than in the corporate building. Few mentoring meetings appear to take place in chat rooms. Over 20% of respondents identified that they did not know how meetings took place, and that this aspect was left up to the discretion of the mentoring pair.

The open comments for this question emphasised the shift that the type of mentoring relationships had gone through during Covid-19, from pre-Covid-19 where face-to-face meetings had been the norm to a shift towards online meetings, which had typically remained post-Covid-19 lockdowns. However, other forms of interaction were identified such as group meetings, which existed online and face-to-face as well as studio or set visits.

## Duration of Mentoring Relationships

The duration of mentoring relationships offers useful insights into understanding how long mentees and mentors typically work together. As identified in Figure 5 just over 30% of respondents said the mentoring relationships in their schemes last less than six months, while the same amount also identified the mentoring relationships last between six months

and one year. Less than 10% of respondents indicated that their scheme's mentoring relationships lasting more than a year with nearly 14% of respondents suggesting that the duration of mentoring relationships was determined by mentors and mentees. In the 'other' comments, respondents submitted points about how the duration of mentoring relationships was linked to numbers of sessions rather than numbers of months. The number of sessions typical to mentoring schemes was either between 1-3 sessions or 6 sessions. There was also frequent acknowledgement that 'extensions to 6 months' duration were given when requested by participants.

Figure 5. The typical duration of CIs mentoring relationships
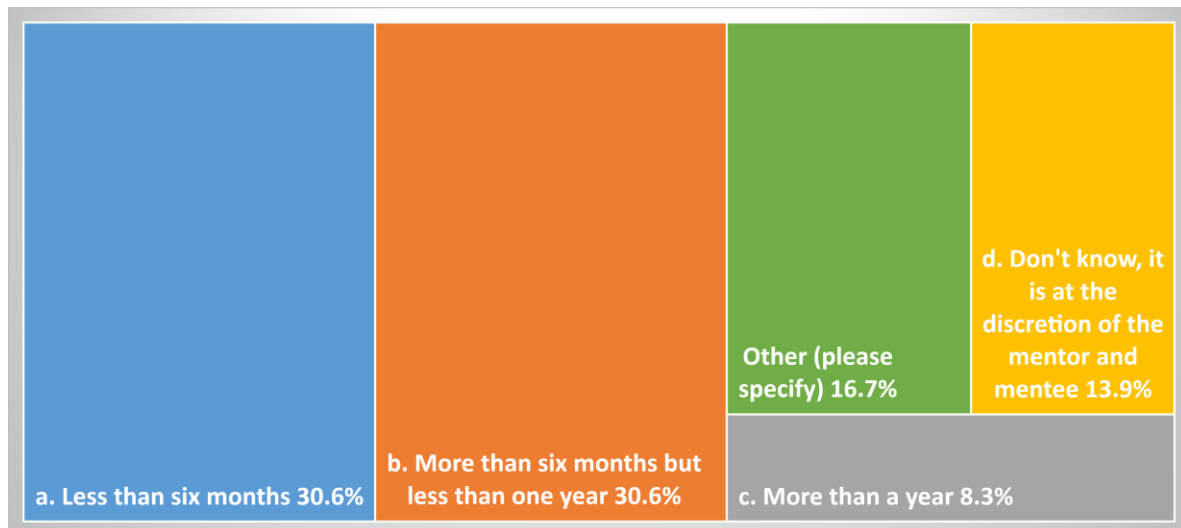
We also asked survey respondents to indicate how long their mentoring initiative had been running. Figure 6 summarises these responses with over 25% indicating they were set up between 6 months to 1 year ago (so initiated during the pandemic, up to a year before the survey launch in December 2021) and nearly 15% in the last 6 months. However less than 10% suggested their schemes had been launched between 1-2 years ago, in the pre-pandemic era.

Nearly 20% of schemes reported on were between 2-5 years old or more than 5 years old. The oldest scheme identified was 17 years old. In the open comments respondents indicated that their schemes had used smaller pilot schemes to test initiatives viability, worked on limited provision to secure quality of mentoring, changed their original focus following feedback from participants, selectively expanded geographically and paused their initiatives for a variety of reasons (Covid-19, changes in ownership and governance).

Figure 6. The length of time CIs Mentoring Schemes had been operating

d. Over 2 years, less than 5 years
18.4%

a. Under 6 months 13.2%

f. Over 10 years 13.2%

b. 6 months to 1 year
26.3%

e. Over 5 years 18.4%

c. Over 1 year, less than 2 years 7.9%

h. Not known 2.6%
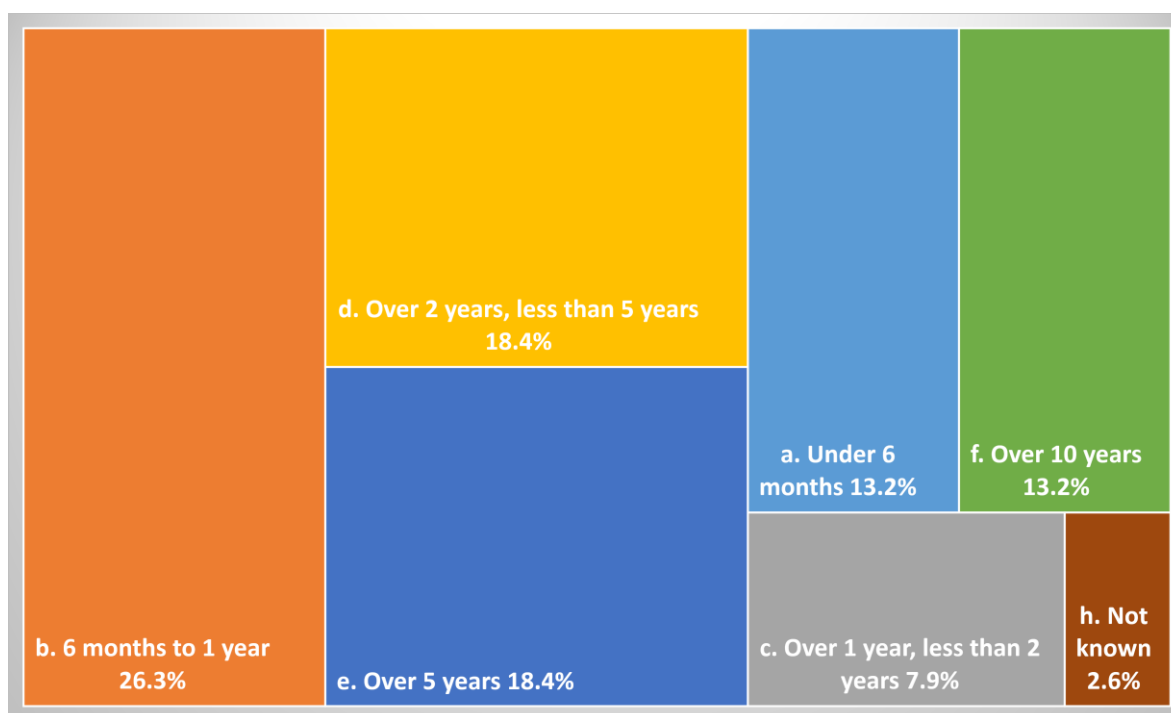
Formality and Structure in CIs Mentoring Schemes

We also asked respondents to comment on the degree of formality in the mentoring initiatives they were involved in. As mentoring is also regarded as an informal supportive relationship it is important to recognise that in formal mentoring schemes - there are still variations in the extent of formality and organisation available (Gannon & Washington, 2019; Desimone et al., 2014). Key indicators here can include formal deadlines, rules, controls and boundaries identified for participants in mentoring schemes, as well as operating procedures. For example, over 70% of respondents identified that the mentoring scheme had a management team or manager coordinating activities. Nearly 80% of respondents identified that mentoring matches last for prescribed periods of time, and that guidance and resources are available to support mentors and mentees. However, just over half identified that mentoring partners must agree and sign mentoring agreements. Just over 60% of respondents identified that their schemes were formally evaluated too.

The social side of mentoring, which goes 'beyond the dyad' was mentioned by respondents with nearly 75% suggesting that networking and celebration events are offered for mentoring scheme participants beyond the immediate mentoring relationship opportunities offered. Overall this highlights that most of the schemes in this survey have significant aspects of formality which are managed in support of promoting positive outcomes for mentors and mentees, with only 8% of respondents suggesting that beyond initial introduction of mentor and mentee, there is no further contact from the scheme coordination team. The likelihood of very structured mentoring initiatives and those that are more informal and facilitative, is largely dependent upon mentee needs. For example, schemes that involved young people or people from marginalised groups - were more likely to have formal structures and operating procedures such as training and briefing for participants, and check-in points. There was also a balance between those schemes which focus solely on the dyadic mentor-mentee relationship, and those that refer to opportunities to be part of a community and build a professional network. Respondents' comments appeared to suggest that communities and networks were particularly valuable to CIs mentoring initiatives.

Part 3: Challenges and Rewards of Creative Industries Mentoring schemes

This part of the report explores the challenges and rewards of mentoring schemes in the CIs. The aspects unveiled identify the operational problems as well as the issues of sustainability, alongside the positive aspects. Table B summarises the challenges and rewards as identified by respondents to the survey.

Table 1. Challenges and Rewards associated with Creative Industries Mentoring Schemes

Challenges	Rewards
• Concept of mentoring can be misunderstood • Recruitment of mentors and mentees • Sustaining engagement and commitment • Bespoke mentor and mentee match • Administrative and logistical difficulties • Sustaining continuity • Funding	• Personal development • Networks and communities • Increases in confidence and assertiveness • Improvement and development of various skills (Mentees) • Give something back to the industry and support the 'next generation' (Mentors) • New talent development and enhancing levels of diversity and inclusivity (Industry wide) • Building knowledge, skills and expertise, and providing a sense of togetherness, community and network building (Industry wide)

The Challenges

A number of challenges and difficult elements were cited by the respondents when it comes to running a successful mentoring scheme or initiative. At the outset, the fact that the **concept of mentoring can be misunderstood** was deemed problematic for some respondents. Examples included how some mentees see mentoring as free consultancy, or use their mentor as someone to write their business strategy for them, which does not fit with the ethos of the mentoring scheme. Respondents also suggested some mentees were not prepared to 'walk the talk': they were happy to have conversations with their mentor, but seemed reluctant to make a commitment to change as part of these conversations. In addition, several respondents felt that mentees need pre-scheme support with getting the timing right. For example, some mentees were seen to struggle with the 'right time' or 'right way' to enrol onto a mentoring scheme or to choose a mentor. As a consequence, respondents felt some mentees only realised the benefit of a mentoring relationship past the critical point, when it was almost too late to reap the rewards of the scheme.

Challenges around the **recruitment and attraction of mentors and mentees** to schemes was also another area of concern for respondents. Some schemes struggled to recruit sufficient numbers of mentors, where potential mentors either lacked the time to commit to the programme or simply did not believe in the value of their support. Respondents cited that some mentors felt uncomfortable volunteering their time if they themselves did not represent the target group that the scheme was launched for. This was particularly the case where a

diversity and inclusivity issue was the primary feature of the mentoring initiative. Some schemes, although open to all, found it difficult to engage specifically men in their programmes. Respondents also believed that their mentoring schemes would not be effective without efforts to ensure the consistent quality of support and engagement among mentors.

Some mentoring schemes experienced challenges more specifically around attracting mentees to their schemes. The challenges came in various forms: from difficulties with reaching out to those participants who have more complex needs, to dilemmas of selection criteria within underrepresented groups, in the case of limited-space programmes.

After overcoming the initial hurdle of attracting mentees, **sustaining engagement and commitment** to the mentoring scheme was identified as another challenge by respondents to the survey. Examples centred around mentees not following through with the mentoring offer or match made, failing to make contact with their allocated mentor, struggling to commit to regular time slots or finding it hard to manage the conflicting and changing priorities of their working and personal lives.

Among other mentoring schemes challenges, cited by the respondents, were the difficulties with finding **bespoke mentor and mentee matches**. Respondents expressed concerns about getting matches right so the relationships can have a positive start. It appeared to be a struggle to secure mentors from backgrounds that matched those of the mentees due to pre-existing social inequalities in the CIs. Many respondents felt that having a relatable role model made a significant difference for mentees. The time and effort involved in matching mentoring pairs was also cited as problematic by a number of respondents, and linked to the additional administrative and logistical difficulties faced when operating a mentoring scheme.

Respondents identified that **administrative and logistical difficulties** affected all stakeholders; the mentors, the mentees and the organisers of mentoring initiatives. All parties, and specifically the organisers of the schemes, seemed to lack time and resources, due to increased demand and the growth of certain schemes, making administration a specific challenge. Some mentors and mentees found it hard to balance their conflicting working and personal life priorities with following scheme activities across the various stages of recruitment, selection, training, mentoring and evaluation. Respondents also highlighted that mentors, and mentoring scheme coordinators had to be prepared to help mentees through mental health and personal issues as they arise, and that safeguarding could be a specific worry.

Respondents also commented upon the challenge of **sustaining the continuity** of mentoring relationships and more broadly, mentoring schemes. Many schemes found it hard to find ways to help the mentoring pair to maintain an ongoing connection and engagement where relationships had stalled. There were suggestions that some mentoring relationships struggle unless scheme coordinators actively maintain contact and encourage momentum. This was due to mentors and mentees busy schedules and was specifically referenced as a challenge during the pandemic. In addition, limited resources meant a number of mentoring schemes recognised that they adopted a 'hands-off' approach to supporting the mentoring sessions once they are in progress, and good endings or closing mentoring relationships were neglected.

The challenges of **funding** were cited by respondents as crucial to the long-term success of mentoring initiatives. Firstly, fundraising in a competitive market such as the Creative Industries remains a struggle that may put in jeopardy a number of developmental initiatives, including mentoring. During the pandemic, advertising, promotional and fundraising activities became especially challenging given the drastic decrease in networking events. Respondents also commented on the endurance of funding sources as a concern too.

Certain mentoring schemes may also be regarded as unaffordable for the mentees, for example if offered as part of a membership.

The Rewards

A good description of the many rewarding elements of a mentoring relationship was offered by one of the respondents:

> *"Seeing and hearing the positive growth and confidence building of our mentors and mentees. It's truly a mutually beneficial experience where we learn as much as the mentees as we discover together."*

The rewards or benefits of mentoring were not one-sided and were felt by a variety of stakeholders: the mentors, the mentees, and the sector at large.

Respondents identified that for both mentors and mentees **personal development** was a significant benefit from their involvement in mentoring schemes. Developing the ability to engage in relationships which deliver change and nurture **networks and communities** was also recognised. Both mentors and mentees were seen to benefit from **increases in confidence and assertiveness** and gain a mutual sense of achievement from their participation in mentoring schemes in the Creative Industries.

For mentees specifically, the respondents saw the benefits and rewards revolved around helping them set and achieve goals, supporting them to make significant changes in their lives and improving their employability to offer bigger and better job and career opportunities. Mentoring was also seen to help mentees establish sustainable businesses and grow these enterprises, make use of support systems and networks to realise their full potential. There was also seen to be value in mentoring where it offered help which otherwise would be impossible to obtain, and provided neutral feedback. Respondents also identified that their mentoring schemes supported the **improvement and development of various skills** (for example, communication skills, project planning, time management, prioritising deadlines, navigating change, PR, problem solving, developing new ideas, as well as building resilience and supporting general wellbeing during difficult times, specifically during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Respondents identified the specific rewards and benefits which accrue to mentors in CIs mentoring schemes as focused upon being able to **give something back to the industry and the 'next generation'** and enhancing their transferrable skills. More broadly for the CIs, the respondents identified the benefits of mentoring as focusing on **new talent development**, **building knowledge, skills and expertise**, supporting concerns about levels of **diversity and inclusivity** and **providing a sense of togetherness and community and network building.**

Part 4: Pandemic Responses and Recovery Routes

This part of the report focuses upon the ways CIs mentoring schemes responded to the Covid-19 pandemic and how they are delivering routes to recovery across the CIs.

Mentoring, just like most of our typical activities was severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, however, as research has shown not all individuals, organisations or sectors responded in the same way initially or as part of the recovery stages (Douglas et al., 2020; Khlystova, Kalyuzhnova & Belitski, 2022; Settersten et al., 2020). To this effect, we asked respondents to reflect on how the Covid-19 pandemic may have affected the mentoring schemes and initiatives run by their organisations. While a small portion of respondents (about 5 %) felt minimal to no impact from the pandemic on their mentoring schemes, the majority cited more significant impacts (both positive and negative).

Positive outcomes and implications for recovery

One of the major aftermaths of the pandemic was the transition towards a virtual mentoring format, becoming fully online. For some initiatives there was a pause while adjustments were made so that new instructions could be offered to participants. On a positive note, respondents felt this move to online provision helped to remove geographical boundaries, based on assumptions that mentors and mentees needed to be able to have face-to-face interaction. This move online allowed scheme coordinators to increase their participation base and expand their schemes more widely across the UK and even internationally. Respondents reported that the online format of mentoring became more accessible for mentees, as well as provided an opportunity to tap into a larger pool of mentors. For example, some respondents were now able to match mentor and mentee based more on skills and experience rather than on geographical proximity.

Where online mentoring became standard practice during the pandemic, remote mentoring became somewhat of a norm, describing which respondents used such words as: 'effective', 'inclusive', 'more convenient', and 'less time-consuming'. In addition, respondents identified that some of the mentees were able to take advantage of government backed Covid-19 recovery grants which boosted their engagement. For some schemes more partnerships were set up due to demand for support, and in some instances there was an increase in pro-bono mentoring as there was a sense of coming together for the collective good of the sector or the CIs.

Negative outcomes and implications for recovery

Not all respondents offered positive accounts and outcomes for mentoring schemes in relation to the pandemic. There were also a range of negative post-Covid lockdown consequences for mentoring initiatives. Respondents identified that while the shift to online

mentoring had primarily worked for individual partnerships, there were concerns regarding the demise of networking and in-person events which had stopped during lockdowns. However, even during the recovery phases attendance at the re-started in-person events was drastically reduced. For some professions within the CIs this was particularly damaging, for example schemes in the dance and visual arts sectors. No or fewer networking or community events also gave rise to additional funding challenges, especially for the mentoring schemes who sought to raise funds from sponsors as they were less able to showcase the impact of their mentoring work.

Respondents identified a paradox where some mentors and mentees miss the previous in-person, one-to-one contact; but were then reluctant to resume face-to-face meetings or join face-to-face networks or community events. There were also concerns that Covid-19 had meant some mentees had withdrawn from mentoring schemes they had signed up to because their personal priorities had changed. There was also disquiet raised about mental health issues amongst participants, specifically in mentoring schemes involving young people.

Some respondents also remarked upon their schemes facing greater demand for mentoring due to the pandemic, which then resulted in more pressure on the already limited time and resources available to deliver mentoring, and for some schemes voluntary mentors, in particular became much harder to recruit.

Conclusions and next steps

The main conclusions arising from this investigation of mentoring schemes across the CIs can be summarised in the following points:

- Many schemes are driven by a sense that they can help tackle some of the social justice issues associated with access to sustainable careers in the CIs. For the majority of schemes there was evidence of the importance of addressing diversity and inclusivity issues, and/or employability to remedy these broader systemic issues.

- As Khlystova and colleagues (2022) identified there are sectors of the CIs, whose mentoring schemes have been able to weather the challenges of Covid-19 more successfully than other sectors. Sectors which seemed to fair better included publishing, computing and gaming, while the performing and visual arts struggled more with the transition.

- The shift to online mentoring as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns created positive and negative outcomes for the management of mentoring schemes and their participants. An important positive aspect includes the way geographical boundaries to mentoring schemes have been reduced due to the use of and familiarisation with virtual technology.

- An important aspect of most mentoring schemes in the CIs is the value attributed to events where mentors, mentees and other stakeholders are brought together. These events take a variety of forms, such as professional network and community events, peer mentoring sessions, launch and celebration mentoring events, and other performance and exhibition opportunities. The Covid-19 lockdowns inhibited such occasions, however reviving these opportunities is seen to be important for the recovery and future strength of the CIs. They complement the findings suggesting an increase in pro-bono mentoring during the pandemic as industry professionals sought to come together and contribute to the collective good of the CIs.

These conclusions have specific implications for CIs mentoring schemes. They highlight that greater expectations have been placed upon mentoring scheme coordinators and the wider stakeholders of mentoring initiatives. Ways in which mentoring scheme coordinators can assemble to share their challenges and fixes appears to be important. Industry bodies may need to evaluate how they can act as hubs for such groups. There are also implications for resourcing and funding mentoring schemes in the CIs where some sectors have suffered disproportionately and face complex operational issues.

Our investigation also suggests interesting ways of moving forward with research on mentoring in the CIs and implies that different theoretical ideas will be useful to deploy as the nature of mentoring shifts from the dyadic to more social and community based formats

References

Abbott, P., Goosen, X., & Coetzee, J. (2010). Developing and supporting coordinators of structured mentoring schemes in South Africa. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 8(1), 10-pages.

Armitage, H., Heyes, K., O'Leary, C., Tarrega, M., & Taylor-Collins, E. (2020). What Makes for Effective Youth Mentoring Programmes: A rapid evidence summary, available at https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/what-makes-effective-youth-mentoring-programme/

Barker, E. R. (2006). Mentoring—a complex relationship. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, *18*(2), 56-61.

Burger, C., Easton, E., and Bakhshi, H. (2021) Creative Places: Growing the creative industries across the UK. Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, Available from: https://pec.ac.uk/policy-briefings/resilience-in-places-growing-the-creative-industries-across-the-uk

Cole, G. (2015). The value of mentoring: A mutually beneficial experience for mentor and mentee. *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, *29*(4), 22-24.

DCMS (2019) DCMS sector economic estimates methodology. London: Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/fle/829114/DCMS_Sectors_Economic_Estimates_-_Methodology.pdf

Desimone, L. M., Hochberg, E. D., Porter, A. C., Polikoff, M. S., Schwartz, R., & Johnson, L. J. (2014). Formal and informal mentoring: Complementary, compensatory, or consistent?. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 65(2), 88-110.

Douglas, M., Katikireddi, S. V., Taulbut, M., McKee, M., & McCartney, G. (2020). Mitigating the wider health effects of covid-19 pandemic response. *British Medical Journal*, 369. Available at https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/369/bmj.m1557.full.pdf

Gannon, J. M. (2021). Applying the Lens of Social Movements to Coaching and Mentoring. *Philosophy of Coaching: An International Journal*, *6*(1), 5-29.

Gannon, J., Clayton, D., & Klenert, A. (2021). Mentoring Initiatives as Talent Management Innovations. In *Talent Management Innovations in the International Hospitality Industry*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Gannon, J. M., & Washington, R. (2019). *Many things to Many People: Formal Mentoring Schemes and their Management: a report*. Retrieved from Oxford: https://www.brookes.ac.uk/uploadedfiles/faculty_of_business/iccams/site_assets/documents/stamina/heif_formal_mentoring_schemes_report.pdf

Gill, M. J., Roulet, T. J., & Kerridge, S. P. (2018). Mentoring for mental health: A mixed-method study of the benefits of formal mentoring programmes in the English police force. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *108*, 201-213.

Grugulis, I. and D. Stoyanova (2012). Social Capital and Networks in Film and TV: Jobs for the Boys? *Organization Studies* 33(10): 1311-1331.

Khlystova, O., Kalyuzhnova, Y., & Belitski, M. (2022). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the creative industries: A literature review and future research agenda. *Journal of business research*, *139*, 1192–1210. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.09.062

Mateos-Garcia, J. Bakhshi, H. (2016) The Geography of Creativity in the UK, available at https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/the-geography-of-creativity-in-the-uk/

McGlowan-Fellows, B. & Claudewell, T. S. (2004) Changing Roles: Corporate Mentoring of Black Women : A Review with Implications for Practitioners of Mental Health, International *Journal of Mental Health*, 33:4, 3-18, DOI: 10.1080/00207411.2004.11043387

Neely, A. R., Cotton, J., & Neely, A. D. (2017). E-mentoring: A model and review of the literature. *AIS Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction*, *9*(3), 220-242.

NESTA, (2014) Mentoring in the Creative Sector: Industry Insights, February, NESTA available at https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/mentoring-in-the-creative-sector-industry-insights/

NESTA and SQW (2009) A review of mentoring literature and best practice: Creative business mentor pilot, NESTA available at https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/creative-business-mentor-review.pdf

Paquette, J. (2012) Mentoring and Change in Cultural Organizations: The Experience of Directors in British National Museums, *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society,* 42:4, 205-216

Preston, J.M., Prieto-Flores, Ò., Rhodes, J.E., (2019). Mentoring in Context: A Comparative Study of Youth Mentoring Programs in the United States and Continental Europe. *Youth & Society* 51, 900–914.. doi:10.1177/0044118x18813700

Sanyal, C., & Rigby, C. (2017). E-mentoring as a HRD intervention: an exploratory action research study within an International Professional Mentoring Scheme. *Human Resource Development International*, *20*(1), 18-36.

Settersten Jr, R. A., Bernardi, L., Härkönen, J., Antonucci, T. C., Dykstra, P. A., Heckhausen, J., & Mulder, C. H. (2020). Understanding the effects of Covid-19 through a life course lens. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 45, September https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2020.100360

Social Mobility Commission (2021) Socio-Economic Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit: Creative Industries available via https://socialmobilityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SMC-Creative_Industries-Toolkit_Sept2021.pdf

Starr, J. (2015). When mentoring relationships fail to thrive–mentoring, managing and the organizational agenda. *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, *29*(4), 19-21.

Washington, R., & Cox, E. (2016). How an Evolution View of Workplace Mentoring Relationships Helps Avoid Negative Experiences: The Developmental Relationship Mentoring Model in Action. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 24(4) 1-23.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A., & Snyder, W. (2002). Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

For more information about the

International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies

tel: +44 (0)1865 48 58 58

Email: iccams@brookes.ac.uk

Twitter: @iccams

https://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/units/obbs/centres/

iccams/stamina