



The Island Mentoring Policy

Over the past 20 years, mentoring projects have been developed as a distinct approach to working with children and young people, where a more experienced and probably older person offers advice, support and encouragement to a younger, less-experienced person, facilitating learning and growth.

The Aim of Mentoring

The overall aim of The Island's volunteer mentors is to support, encourage and give space to both:

- children and young people aged 8 – 18 years

Island mentors:

- provide committed listening and support regarding the child/young person's issues and goals
- develop a positive and supportive relationship with a child/young person that encourages them to try a variety of different activities.
- encourage appropriate levels of independence.

The Role of the Mentor

- The relationship between the child/young person and the mentor is based on equality, respect and understanding.
- Mentors will help and support children/young people on a one-to-one basis to explore and develop new leisure time activities and access local facilities. The mentor may, if appropriate, participate in the activity with the child/young person. This will allow the relationship between the child/young person and mentor to develop. In addition to the one-to-one work, they may also take part in occasional group activities and events, such as day excursions.

The Mentoring and Referral Processes

Becoming a Mentor

- Mentors must undergo police and reference checks before being linked with a child/young person. Although we would be unable to use volunteers who are convicted of certain offences, having a police record does not necessarily prevent you from becoming a mentor (see DBS Policy for more details).
- Mentors must complete our initial training programme and undergo a post-course interview before being linked with a child/young person.
- All mentors will be selected through an application process. Successful applicants will then attend a series of training sessions, which will provide the opportunity to discuss the work of The Island and the role of the mentor and equip mentors with the skills and confidence to work with children/young people.
- All mentors must comply with The Islands Guidance and Policies and the particulars set out in them, all of our updated policies can be viewed on our website www.theislandyork.org or available on request.

The Referral Process

- Once a referral has been accepted, there is an initial assessment which takes place at the child/young person's home. This involves the child/young person, their parents/guardians and the appropriate allocated Island Staff Member namely the Mentor Supervisor or Mentor Liaison Officer. The nature of The Island's service and the commitment involved is outlined, and some paperwork is completed.
- If the child/young person wants to access our service, they are then matched with a mentor. All of our support is offered voluntarily to the young people and there is no statutory requirement for them to engage in the mentoring process.

The Mentoring Relationship

- The Mentor Liaison Officer retains responsibility for all children/young people supported by The Island. Good communication between mentors and Mentor Liaison Officer and supervisors is therefore paramount.
- Mentors will be given information about the child/young person to enable them to have a sufficient understanding of why and how they are to be involved.
- A first meeting is set up at the child/young person's home where the mentor, accompanied by the Mentor Liaison Officer or Mentor Supervisor meets the child/young person and

their parents/guardians, and arranges the first mentoring meeting.

- Mentors will meet the child/young person they support once a week for a session of between 1 and 3 hours. It is important that they are able to commit this time regularly. Arrangements other than this should be agreed with the Mentor Supervisor
- Mentoring sessions should be child and young person focused around the needs and wishes of a young person, with an informal monthly review.
- Mentors are expected to complete sessional recording sheets after each meeting with a young person and review them with their supervisor. This will contribute to the individual evaluation of the young person and the wider evaluation of the scheme.
- Mentors commit for a minimum of 6 or 12 months. In some circumstances this may be extended by mutual agreement.
- Any activities that the mentor undertakes with a child/young person MUST NOT be illegal or be anything that places the safety of the mentor or child/young person in jeopardy. The mentor should not undertake an activity that they are uncomfortable with
- The mentor should not do anything that will undermine the authority or wishes of parents or guardians.

Activities Outside the Normal Mentoring Relationship

The normal mentoring relationship involves meeting on a weekly basis for between 1 - 3 hours in York. For any other activities, the mentor will need to discuss this with their supervisor.

Activities outside the normal mentoring relationship include:

- Anything that takes longer than the usual 3-hour block of time.
- Anything which occurs outside the normal hours of operation for the project (activities occurring outside of these times are not covered by insurance without prior arrangement)
- More than one meeting per week.
- Anything that involves leaving York.
- Anything that involves representing the child/young person or The Island to any other agency or individual.
- Anything that exceeds the weekly activity allowance (£10).
- Anything that involves a third person attending the meeting (other than the Mentoring Co-ordinator or supervisor).
- Group activities organised by the project.

Ending a Mentoring Relationship

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Review Required: July 2026

- If a mentor wishes to end a mentoring relationship, they must inform the Mentor Supervisor as soon as possible. It must be remembered that the child/young person may feel rejected by the loss of their mentor and time should be given to link them with a new mentor and make this transition as easy as possible.
- If the mentor wishes to leave the project all together, they should give one month notice to the Mentor Supervisor this should be done in writing where possible
- If information is received indicating that a volunteer is acting against the best interests of a child/young person or there are any difficulties that cannot be resolved, then the Mentor Supervisor can bring the mentoring relationship to an end.
- If a child/young person expresses a wish to end the relationship the mentor should inform the Mentor Supervisor the Mentor Supervisor should explore whether the child/young person wishes to be matched with a different mentor, wishes to leave the scheme or find alternative activities.

Training, Support and Supervision

- 12 Weekly supervisions will take place with an allocated Mentor Supervisor See Supervision Policy for further details
- Mentors access an initial training programme with opportunities for further training offered.
- Personal Development and Growth of all Island service supporters is supported and the Island will encourage individual growth and development where appropriate and in the best interests of the Mentoring relationship.
- Support for mentors is essential and is available through volunteer support meetings with other mentors, individual supervision sessions with the Mentor Supervisor and frequent informal contact. Close co-operation between mentors and supervisors or the Manager of Mentoring Services is vital for the scheme to be effective.
- Mentors receive basic travel costs and activity related expenses. These must be recorded and receipts retained.