

## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

This example of good practice relates to criteria 4.6 of the National Leaving Care Standards contributing to Every Child Matters outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

**Name(s) of the organisation in which this piece of work was developed**  
**The Brightside Trust, based in North Lincolnshire**

**Target group(s)**

- Disabled young people
- Young people with mental health needs
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Young people from black & minority ethnic groups
- Boys only
- Girls only
- Children in care
- Young people leaving care
- Young people not in education, training and employment (NEET)
- Young people in custody
- Young parents

- Young people involved in participation work
  - Young people involved as researchers
  - Researchers/evaluators
  - Service managers
  - Executive and lead members/councillors
  - Lead professionals (social workers/personal advisors)
  - Foster carers
  - Parents
  - Youth workers
  - Residential care workers
  - Other support/care workers
  - Others (please specify)
-

**Purpose and intended outcomes of this work**

**E-mentoring to improve self-confidence, Confident Futures**

**How did you achieve these outcomes? What did you do?**

The Brightside Trust had been matching students at university with less advantaged school children using the internet for around 7 years, before it began a programme targeted at young people in and leaving care. Now running in two pilots in North Lincolnshire and Norfolk, the main benefits for mentees are: higher self-esteem; better engagement with school; and an outlet for their concerns about all aspects of their lives, such as choosing a course. Mentors are often recruited through word of mouth from previous users of the scheme.

For more information on the Brightside Trust please see the below article from the Keynotes May 2009 issue.

**Type of agency/organisation in which this work was developed**

- Local authority department - unitary
- Local authority department - metropolitan
- Local authority department - borough council
- Local authority department - county (shire) council
- Local authority department - city council
- Local authority department - London borough
- Voluntary organisation
- Multi-agency (please specify agencies involved)
- Health agency (e.g. PCT, NHS Trust)
- Education agency
- Youth justice agency
- Youth service
- Other (please specify)

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**Region where work was developed**

- National (please specify UK nation i.e. England, Scotland, Wales, Northern. Ireland)

England

*English regions:*

- North West
- North East

	<input type="checkbox"/> South West <input type="checkbox"/> South East <input type="checkbox"/> East of England <input type="checkbox"/> London <input type="checkbox"/> East Midlands <input type="checkbox"/> West Midlands <input type="checkbox"/> Yorkshire and Humber
<b>Name(s) of tools/resources developed as part of this work (include web links)</b>	

<b>In what sense is this 'good practice'? The evidence</b>	
<b>Outline the evidence base used to develop this piece of work</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> None - new exploratory/developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Not known <input type="checkbox"/> Practitioner knowledge/experience only <input type="checkbox"/> Published research evidence: please attach <input type="checkbox"/> Local research / evaluation : please attach
<b>Source of evidence available to show the impact of the interventions used in this work</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Internal / self-evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Anecdotal / impressions <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Not known
<b>Based on the evidence the resource has had</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive impact (if any) Comments: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact (if any) Comments: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not known
<b>Feedback/evaluation report available?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (if yes, please attach) <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Contact details for further information about this piece of work and the</b>	Name: Tracy Sacks Job title:

**evidence of its  
impact**

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## Confident Futures

The Brightside Trust is a charity dedicated to supporting disadvantaged individuals to achieve their potential, and has been running successful e-mentoring projects for over five years.

Here, Tracy Sacks, project manager, outlines Confident Futures, an innovative project which helps young people from care backgrounds to build confidence and esteem.

Confident Futures is an e-mentoring programme which encourages young people in care and care leavers to fully engage with society, through education, employment and training. This helps ensure a smooth transition from care placement to adulthood. The specific aims of the project are:

- To increase the use of IT within this group.
- To inform mentees of their options after the age of 16.
- To reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training.
- To enable mentees to develop their self-confidence.

### The project

Confident Futures has been designed around user feedback. Mentees (young people in care and care leavers between the ages of 14 and 18) are matched with mentors from business or education backgrounds who have been interviewed, police checked and trained prior to matching.

### The website

The Confident Futures e-mentoring service is made up of three elements:

#### 1 Secure online conversations

Mentees have access to secure online conversations with their mentors via usernames and passwords.

#### 2 Modular curriculum of tasks

Mentors guide their mentees through a programme of online activities, including building confidence and self-esteem, and goal-setting.

#### 3 Library and news

Online communication is supported by an online resource library, packed with information about education, training and employment, as well as information on life skills and homework tips.

### Benefits

Research from Mentoring Plus (2004) shows that mentoring can have a positive effect on vulnerable young people in the areas of confidence-building, goal-setting and decision-making.

Because e-mentoring is designed to be flexible across time and distance it makes the Confident Futures programme particularly appropriate for looked after children whose lives are often characterised by transition and instability.

### Mentors

Mentors can come from any background, and have any range of skills. All mentors receive support and guidance from Brightside. Mentors are clearly advised that they are there for their mentees as a means of support for educational, training or skills capacity.

### Mentees

Mentees receive support from someone who has volunteered because they want to, not because they are being paid. The mentee will be given full training and will be aware that their mentor is there to provide support on soft skills, educational opportunities and general life advice. The mentee should not rely on the mentor for extensive emotional support, as well as tips on life skills and homework.

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