

TradMentor

Report 2019-20

A lot of what has come out of the process I will continue to use



I would definitely recommend TradMentor to others

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Traditional Music forum

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TradMentor Report 2019-20

TradMentor was launched in November 2019, following the piloting by the Traditional Music Forum of elements of mentoring and mentor training over several years.¹ This is the report on the first cycle of the programme which was funded by TRACS and Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative CPD Fund.

Aims

TradMentor aims to provide structured and confidential support to traditional music practitioners, particularly those working as tutors.

Outcomes

The programme sets out to encourage reflective practice, through which traditional musicians can better manage choices, challenges and changes in their careers. Mentors encourage mentees to identify goals and to take their plans forward. This may include developing new skills or identifying further training needs.



I started to identify threads of where I wanted to get to (mentee)

Outputs

- Managing the programme: The *TradMentor* coordinator recruits mentees, who are then matched with mentors.
- Induction to the programme: All mentors and mentees attend an induction day at which they learn how *TradMentor* works and meet their mentoring partners and other participants.
- Mentoring partnerships: Mentees and mentors are supported by the coordinator to meet 6 times over 6-8 months.
- Training: All mentors receive training from the Scottish Mentoring Network. Successful completion of relevant assessments leads to a *Professional Practice Award in Mentoring*.

Headline Achievements in 2019-20

- Launch of programme in November 2019.
- 6 mentors achieved the *Professional Practice Award in Mentoring* (PPAM) and the coordinator received the *Professional Certificate in Co-ordinating Mentoring Programmes* (PCCMP).

¹ See <https://tracscotland.org/resources/mentoring-for-the-traditional-arts/> and <https://scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk/resources/view/342/mentoring-for-traditional-arts-organisations-a-way-ahead/>

Facts and figures about our activities

- The programme coordinator (also a mentor) was appointed and 6 mentors recruited, 5 of whom had attended a TMF pilot mentor training event in 2017.
- Training and support were delivered via the Scottish Mentoring Network.
- 10 mentees were recruited, and 8 partnerships sustained contact for the full cycle of the programme.
- Improvements for **mentees** (see Appendix 1).



- Improvements for **mentors** (see Appendix 2).



What did we achieve?

Being part of a programme

A lot of work went into establishing the new programme. Bringing participants together at the induction day helped with motivation to stay engaged, and mentors and mentees felt that being part of a programme gave the activity more focus.

Just the togetherness of it with others (mentee)

It has helped with the discipline of the process (mentee)

Length of programme

Most participants felt that 6 meetings over 6-8 months was a good length of time in which to establish a working relationship and for the mentee to make some progress with their plans. Although some partnerships have decided to keep in touch informally beyond this, it was agreed that the period of the formal meetings was about right for focused work.

The coordinator's role

The coordinator kept in touch with mentees and mentors throughout, monitoring progress and providing supervision to the mentors, who also acted as a support group for each other. The coordinator liaised with SMN and gave regular updates to the TMF.

Meetings

Mentees found the discipline of meetings helpful, and the fact that they were formal arrangements outside of usual commitments. Meetings dealt with the mentee's agenda, and the role of mentors was to be non-judgemental active listeners, guiding the conversation.

Just sitting with someone else in your line of work (mentee)

There were so many aspects of my work I felt I could cover (mentee)

Setting aside the time to travel and meet in a different space helped me think more clearly and look at things in a different way (mentee)

Issues which regularly cropped up - and which the structure of meetings helped with - included organisational skills. Mentors were able to support mentees in making challenging choices, and in practical ways such as advice on funding.

Being more organised has been really useful! (mentee)

I've been able to help my mentee with a funding application. She was successful in that (mentor)

I let go of work that was having a negative impact on my wellbeing; speaking with my mentor helped give me the courage to do this (mentee)

Covid-19

Circumstances resulting from the coronavirus prevented face-to-face meetings and meant adjusting original plans. However, communication for later months was able to continue online or by phone, and there were also some positive outcomes.

It feels like a whole lot of stuff's been thrown up in the air (mentee)

The online thing has actually been really comfortable for my mentee - it's more focused (mentor)

My mentor really did help me get back on the horse (mentee)

The flexibility of the sessions has been very helpful during Covid-19 (mentee)

Mentors' learning

During the first year of *TradMentor* mentors developed new skills and gained experience. Their training was led by the Scottish Mentoring Network, first face-to-face and then online. This involved the study of theories and practical applications of mentoring. It also required mentors to review and reflect on their professional practice and development in mentoring. This will be an ongoing process.



Although we're very experienced in other things that we do, as mentors we're at the beginning of a journey (mentor)

The TradMentor team is a brilliant support network (mentor)

One of the strengths I found for myself is working in quite an intuitive way (mentor)

Matching

Matching mentors and mentees is the responsibility of the coordinator, in discussion with all participants. Relevant factors considered included shared interests and experience and geographical proximity (for meeting in person). Common interests and experience between mentor and mentee were seen by some participants as a real strength, and that it was also possible to have a mentoring relationship with someone who was already a friend and colleague. On the other hand, mentors felt there could also be benefits in matching them with mentees from other spheres (such as different art forms), to clearly distinguish roles in the partnership and bring new perspectives to the mentoring process.

What next? Learning for the future

Mentee recruitment – Encourage current mentees to spread the word. Publicity should make clear the purpose of *TradMentor* and target organisers and organisations.

Matching – Coordinator to consult mentors and mentees more in this process.

Induction – Make Handbook available in advance of the induction day. This event should also include more one-to-one time for mentors and mentees.

Mentor training - Continue membership of the Scottish Mentoring Network and access their support & resources. Training of mentors to be kept under review according to available funds. Encourage mentors to attend SMN's annual national event (if funding allows).

Funding - Seek funding to continue programme and recruit and train more mentors. Future cycles of the programme should pay mentors a meeting fee based on 6 meetings (face-to-face, online or by phone) of around 1hr. Suggested rate is £50 per meeting.

How evidence was collected

<i>Baseline information</i>	Current situation and expectations collected via start-of-programme questionnaire from mentees and mentors and 'hopes and concerns' post-its
<i>Evaluation of mentee recruitment</i>	statistics, feedback from mentees, discussions with TMF
<i>Evaluation of induction day</i>	questionnaire
<i>Monitoring of mentoring partnerships</i>	phone calls to mentees, feedback at mentor support meetings and informal conversations with both mentees and mentors
<i>End-of-programme</i>	questionnaire from mentees and mentors and phone conversations with mentees

Appendix 1

Summary of findings from mentee questionnaires

+ significant improvement **(+)** some improvement - little or no change

General self confidence	+
Ability to manage your work as a musician	(+)
Level of confidence when dealing with colleagues	+
Level of confidence when promoting or publicising your work	(+)
Confidence in your skills as a teacher/tutor	+
Level of satisfaction with your work at this stage in your career	-
Ability to make time to reflect on your work	+
Ability to talk about challenges and choices in your work	+
Ability to be proactive in making changes	+

Other information

What has been your experience of being a mentee?

- The process has been interrupted by the COVID lockdown, but other than that it has been very useful and very smooth.
- I have enjoyed the challenge and the help that has been provided by my mentor.
- It's been a great experience.
- The similar shared experiences of the mentor were useful... we might have reinforced current thinking rather than opening it up [but] in the end the risk was outweighed by the benefits.
- Being able to talk through ideas/challenges with someone without feeling like you're being self-centred is brilliant – just wonderful, really!
- My mentor's guidance has been integral to gaining more confidence in various areas of my work.
- [My mentor] has been great in helping me to... feel more comfortable in myself as a professional.
- As a participant in this scheme, this early stage of being a [professional] musician has been a little less daunting.
- Working with another who is operating in your field is a great motivator.
- I've found the sessions to be a much-needed chance for focused reflection and for planning what's to come. This has been especially helpful when faced with tricky decisions.

Tell us about one change you have made as a result of taking part in this programme.

- [My mentor] helped me form my own project and have the confidence to get other people involved and apply for funding.
- I have settled on a series of priorities for action and refined my goals.
- I have begun to make short-term and long-term goals and plan/monitor my progress.
- I have secured CPD funding to have theory lessons... an area of my teaching which I feel less confident with, and I now look forward to being able to teach in greater depth.
- Becoming aware of more teaching organisations, which hopefully I can network with.
- I let go of work that was having a negative impact on my wellbeing; speaking with my mentor helped give me the courage to do this.

Were there any unexpected outcomes? If so, what?

- My mentor helped me to see that I have a tendency to get ahead of myself... and guided me in finding a more methodical approach.

Is there anything which you feel would improve the *TradMentor* programme?

- The management of the process by TMF has been excellent and I have always felt that additional support was available if required.
- The central support and coordination were excellent. Being part of a cohort and getting us all together at the start was also very useful.
- The Handbook and Mentoring Agreement are excellent papers to support the process.
- The GROW template was useful, although it helped not to take [it] too literally or rigidly.
- It was a bit different moving to video calls halfway through but I felt they actually worked well. Maybe that can be an option for people in different locations.
- Our face to face sessions were curtailed and most likely that has had some impact on the overall outcome.
- A small-ish database which held the profiles of mentors, where mentees could choose who they wanted to work with... would be very attractive.

Any other comments?

- The face to face sessions were essential.
- I would be very interested in learning about the experiences others have had.
- Really well-run initiative, all organised with thought and care.
- Dealt with Covid19 challenges well to keep us all on track as much as possible!
- I was really pleased that the sessions could continue during Covid-19 and moving online made that possible.
- Setting aside the time to travel and meet in a different space was helpful... this helped me think more clearly and look at things in a different way.

Appendix 2

Summary of findings from mentor questionnaires

+ significant improvement (+) some improvement - little or no change

General self confidence	(+)
Confidence in your skills as an active listener	+
Confidence in your skills as a teacher/tutor	(+)
Planning skills	-
Ability to make time to reflect on your own work	(+)
Level of satisfaction with your work at this stage in your career	(+)
Extent to which you have benefited from being a mentor	-

Other information

How do you feel you have benefited from being in a mentoring partnership?

a) Personally

- Have enjoyed connecting with the mentees and... their ideas and plans, realising we share much in common.
- It has highlighted areas... in my own work... that I can benefit from.
- Open conversations held in a safe space and in confidence offer an opportunity for reflection for both parties and I have valued these opportunities.
- I have definitely gained confidence and realised that I am good at listening
- It was brilliant to gain new skills and do something for me again.
- I have found being in a mentor partnership a great opportunity to reflect on, and ask questions of, my own wellbeing.

b) Professionally

- It has increased my confidence in 'what I know'.
- Consolidated my self-worth as a middle-aged professional!
- I feel more able to multi-task.
- The active listening skills have been of use at many planning meetings.
- The skills I've developed have fed back into my teaching work incredibly well. I am giving students more time to guide their own development where appropriate, and goal setting has become a much more partnership orientated exercise.
- I have gained confidence in organising, reflecting and in general professional practice.
- *TradMentor* has given me new skills... In taking the time to consider somebody else's challenges... I've found it has encouraged me to do the same with any of my own.
- The *TradMentor* team is a brilliant support network.
- It gave me valuable insight in the way I teach.

Describe one thing which has changed for you as a result of mentoring.

- I have learnt to listen to others better.
- I listen actively and then consider my answer before speaking. It has slowed down my conversations and thoughts.
- I now have time set aside each month to review my diary and plan ahead.
- Recognising that one can have a mentoring relationship with a friend or colleague.
- I've gained a much greater understanding of the impact that having a mentor... can have.

Any other comments?

- I've really appreciated having this opportunity... in terms of my stage of life and work.
- [The mentor training] has been a powerful and meaningful journey for me.
- It has given me so much more confidence when speaking with people.
- I really enjoyed this whole experience.
- When reflecting on the project we must recognise the complexity offered by all that is/was Covid 19.
- It's really been great to see my mentee achieve lots of what they set out to do at our initial meetings.
- Both professionally and personally it has informed and changed how I interact with people.