

# TradMentor

## Report 2020-21

*My confidence  
has grown a lot*



*The process was  
everything that I  
hoped it would be*

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***for the Traditional Music Forum***

*Traditional Music forum*

## Contents

Aims, outcomes and outputs	3
Headline Achievements in 2020-21	3
Facts and figures	4
What did we achieve?	5
What next?	6
How evidence was collected	7
Appendix 1 – Map of mentoring matches	7
Appendix 2 – Summary of findings from mentee questionnaires	8-10
Appendix 3 – Summary of findings from mentor questionnaires	10-11

## ***TradMentor* Report 2020-21**

***TradMentor*** was launched in November 2019 by the Traditional Music Forum. This is the report on the second cycle of the programme during 2020-21. Funding was provided 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.



*It's got me on my feet again*

### **Outputs**

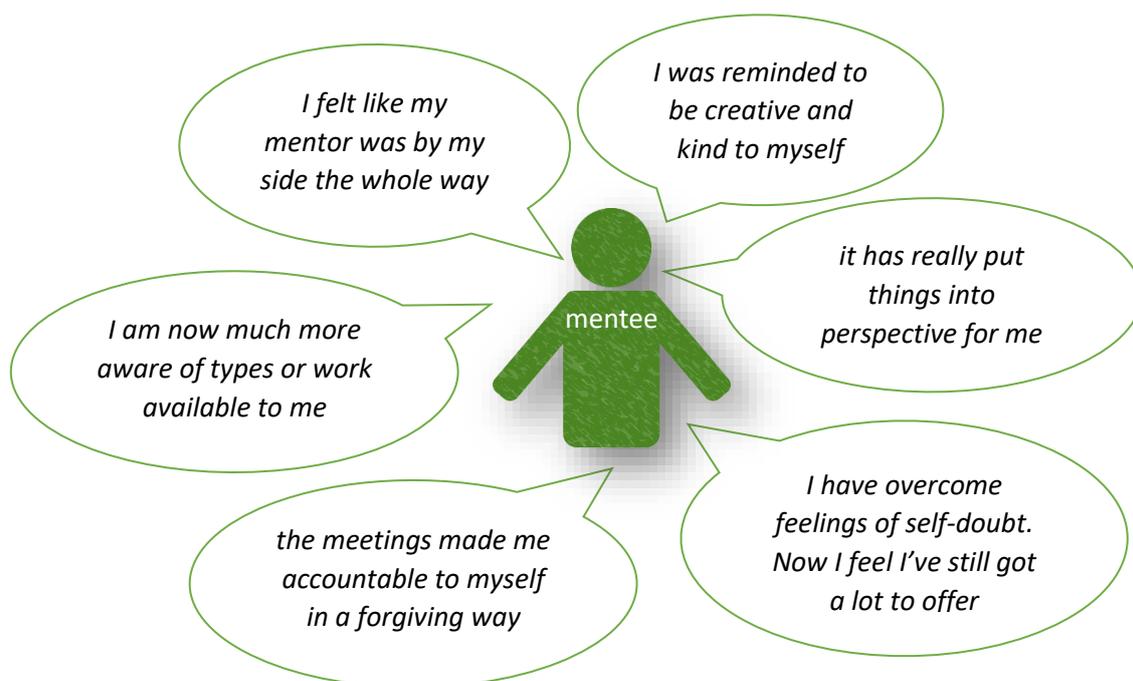
- Managing the programme: The *TradMentor* coordinator recruits mentees, who are then matched with mentors.
- Induction to the programme: All mentors and mentees attend an induction day at which they learn how *TradMentor* works and meet their mentoring partners and other participants.
- Mentoring partnerships: 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 (SMN). Successful completion of relevant assessments leads to a *Professional Practice Award in Mentoring*.
- End-of-programme gathering: Mentees and mentors attend an informal event to gather feedback and celebrate achievements.

### **Headline Achievements in 2020-21**

- Maintaining the mentoring programme during Covid.
- Developing the programme in line with findings from 2019-20.
- Key benefits for mentees included flexibility, openness, confidentiality and structured support.

## Facts and figures about our activities

- TradMentor received ongoing support from the Scottish Mentoring Network and TRACS.
- 11 mentees were recruited, and 9 partnerships sustained contact for the full cycle of the programme.
- Improvements for **mentees** (see Appendix 2).



- Improvements for **mentors** (see Appendix 3).



## What did we achieve?

### *Covid-19*

Circumstances resulting from the coronavirus prevented face-to-face meetings. However, meetings on Zoom were felt to be effective. There were positive outcomes from this. One was being able to pair mentees with mentors in different parts of the country (see Appendix 1). Another benefit of online contact was that meetings were more focused, with fewer outside distractions and better use of time. We felt it crucial to recognise the importance of building and maintaining traditional arts networks to nurture support for practitioners.

### *Mutual support for mentees*

A mentees-only meeting halfway through the cycle (attendance optional) was useful for sharing experiences.

*I really enjoyed the fact that the programme was so flexible*

### *The coordinator's role*

The coordinator liaised with SMN and gave regular updates to the TMF, and was also consulted about the pilot for TRACS 'Traditional Arts Mentoring'. In a wider context, she was invited to give presentations on *TradMentor* at the SMN National Event in November 2020 and Oxford Brookes University's Creative Industries Festival in May 2021.

### *Themes from mentoring meetings*

*the process has led to exciting new projects*

*[It was] someone to speak with, especially during this isolated time*

*TradMentor gave me the chance to speak openly about problems and complicated issues I was facing*

### *Mentors' learning*

During this second year of *TradMentor*, mentors consolidated and developed their skills and gained experience.

*These conversations did make me look at my own individual progress and what plans I had for my future*

*I feel I have gained more confidence in meetings and between meetings, to trust my training*

*I notice myself making use of some of the mentoring strategies in my daily life*

## 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. Coordinator will create short video of former mentees to circulate on social media with the goal of increasing the number of applicants.

*Matching* – Mentors and mentees to be consulted before finalising matches, as before. Matches should be reviewed at the first mentor-mentee meeting to check expectations and adjust if necessary. It is worth noting that some feedback also recognised that unexpected pairings could work very well. To help resolve issues during the mentoring cycle there could be a 3-way meeting attended by the coordinator.

*Induction* – Allow more time during (online) induction session for: icebreaker activity; one-to-one time for mentoring partners to meet (suggest 15 mins each); and for participants to get to know each other.

*Mentor support and training* - Continue membership of the Scottish Mentoring Network and access their support and resources. Training of new mentors to be considered, if funding is available. Encourage mentors to attend SMN's annual national event (if funding allows). Future CPD for mentors may include: mentors to act as 'buddy' to another mentor during the cycle; the option for mentors themselves to receive mentoring within the framework of *TradMentor*; further training skills to help mentees achieve next steps; and the opportunity to work with others outside of one's own area of expertise.

*Mentee support* – coordinator to arrange (optional) mentee get together halfway through the programme cycle. Mentees also could communicate with each other outside formal sessions. This would mean sharing mentees' contact details so this would need to be agreed by all.

*Contact beyond the programme* – It was suggested that *TradMentor* contact former mentees a year after their participation, to follow up on the longer-term impact of the programme.

*Evaluation* – align future evaluations of *TradMentor* with that of SMN, to feed into Scotland-wide data.

*Funding* - Seek funding to continue programme and recruit and train 2 more mentors with SMN in 2021-22. The budget should include a fee for mentors based on 6 meetings (face-to-face, online or by phone) of around 1hr, plus a meeting fee for attending start and end-of-programme meetings and a mentor support meeting at halfway point. Suggested rate is £75 per meeting.

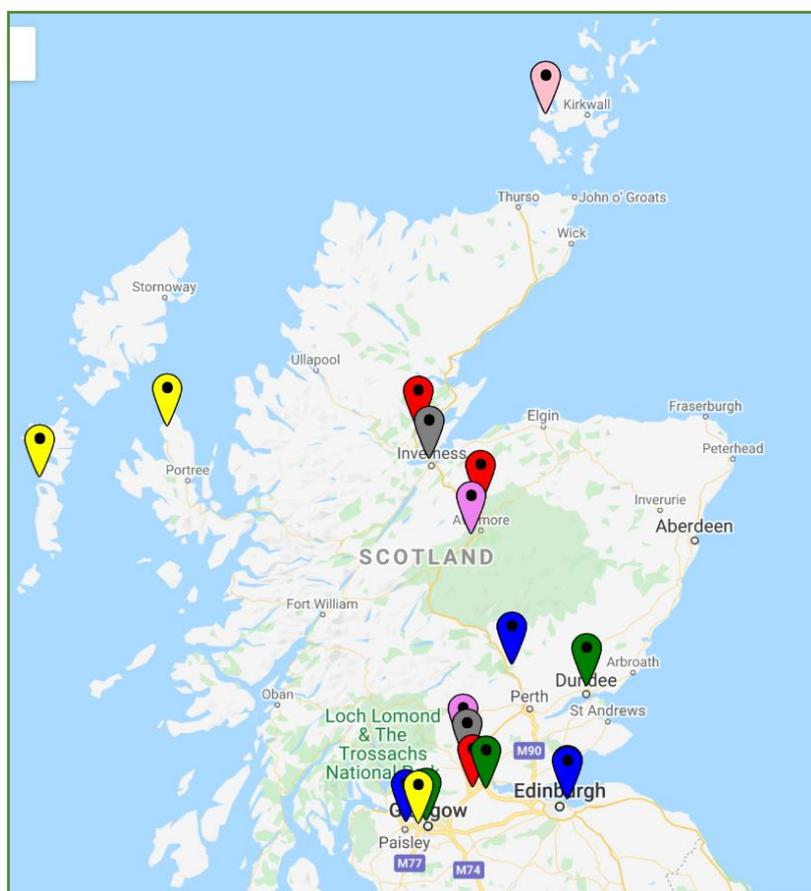
## How evidence was collected

<i>Baseline information</i>	Current situation and expectations collected via induction event and start-of-programme questionnaire from mentees and mentors
<i>Evaluation of mentee recruitment</i>	feedback from mentees and mentors, discussions with TMF
<i>Evaluation of induction event</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>	online meeting and questionnaire from mentees and mentors

## Appendix 1

### Map of *TradMentor* mentoring partnerships in 2020-21

(same colour marker indicates mentor-mentee pair)



## Appendix 2

### Summary of findings from mentee questionnaires

Changes from start of programme.

Your general self confidence	no change
Your ability to manage your work as a musician	+
Your level of confidence when dealing with colleagues	+
Your level of confidence when promoting or publicising your work	+
Your confidence in your skills as a teacher/tutor	+
Your level of satisfaction with your work at this stage in your career	no change
Your ability to make time to reflect on your work	+
Your ability to talk about challenges and choices in your work	++
Your ability to be proactive in making changes	++

#### What has been your experience of being a mentee?

- The thing that sticks out most was the comment in the induction that 'a mentor is someone who helps you listen to yourself'.
- The mentorship has provided time to start one particular new project and give the chance to discuss it on a regular basis.
- I'm grateful [to] the programme for giving me this opportunity to have someone to speak with, especially during this isolated time.
- I was reminded to be creative and kind to myself and that I was encouraged to take steps at a pace that suited my lifestyle.
- I felt like my mentor was by my side the whole way, supporting me and trusting in me.
- I have valued the opportunity to speak openly and to receive guidance on gaps in my knowledge and on my next steps.
- I am definitely feeling much more self-assured and confident following the experience
- [TradMentor] gave me the chance to speak openly about problems and complicated issues I was facing.
- Making significant steps in professional development with a plan in place to apply for Creative Scotland CPD fund.
- The process was everything that I hoped it would be.
- I have been able to discuss my difficulties without fear of criticism or judgement.
- My mentor helped me to identify realistic and achievable short and long-term goals.
- The monthly meetings made me accountable to myself in a forgiving way.
- I am now much more aware of types of work available to me.
- I got loads out of the mentorship, both in terms of music but also life advice in general and putting things in perspective.
- It's got me on my feet again.
- I have overcome feelings of self-doubt and thinking that I could no longer function in my creative profession.
- I don't think I'd have been able to work through these difficulties with anybody else.

**Tell us about the most significant change you have made as a result of taking part in this project.**

- making small steps through the GROW template and achieving them.
- I am well on the way to creating and releasing my debut album.
- My confidence has grown a lot through this experience, and it has really put things into perspective for me.
- the process has led to exciting new projects and initiatives being developed alongside an improved practical structure.
- I have started teaching privately for the first time which has been good. Beforehand I was unsure how to go about doing that.
- When we first started this, I thought I was done [with work]. Now I still feel I've got a lot in me to offer.
- I have regained my confidence.

**Were there any unexpected outcomes? If so, what?**

- I didn't expect my mentor to encourage me to take time off... I needed to be told that!
- Each time I met with my mentor I have realised that I progressed a significant amount from the last time we met.
- It has been liberating in many ways. I didn't anticipate that I needed to let go of some legacy ideas and personal clutter in order to develop things as I wished.
- A lot of things we discussed was to do with my personal projects, many which I hadn't started or even thought of before the mentorship.
- I was made aware that I am hindered by the thinking of what others expect or what I deem I SHOULD be doing rather than what I really want to achieve.

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

- more precise and detailed feedback from the mentor on areas once they have been worked on would be appreciated.
- Some of the topics I was looking for guidance with would require very direct and exact input to move forward.
- I often felt like I had so much more to discuss, but I guess that will always be the case!
- 6 months has been enough to set the wheels in motion... I could see a benefit of a 9-month and 12-month check-in.
- more opportunities for people in the creative arts to easily access mentoring schemes.

**Any other comments?**

- a very positive and worthwhile experience.
- It has worked very well online. It's meant that I can fit in meetings in the evenings after work, since no travel is necessary.
- Thank you very much for this opportunity. It has hugely benefited my career.

- I think it worked really well [as an online project] for those who are tied with various other commitments, it also helps reach out to and attract people who wouldn't likely attend if it was a face-to-face programme (people living in remote areas).
- I really enjoyed the fact that the programme was so flexible, it allowed me to work around my busy schedule.
- it felt like just the right amount of commitment and effort.
- This has been an experience that I have needed for a few years and it's great that the community is able to support and bring others on in this way. So many of us work in isolation and the chance to have someone to listen and not judge is a simple and powerful idea that was skilfully handled.

### Appendix 3

#### Summary of findings from mentor questionnaires

##### **How do you feel you have benefited from being involved in *TradMentor* this year, both personally and professionally?**

- I notice myself making use of some of the mentoring strategies in my daily life, and have absorbed better ways of listening to friends and family, so I know that being part of this project is a good thing for me
- Being involved as a mentor has been hugely rewarding and has allowed me to 'give back' to the sector and help support mentees during a hugely challenging period
- It was a privilege to work closely with both mentees who brought a positive, enthusiastic and mature approach to the relationship.
- Taking the time to work with the mentees has also given me the opportunity to take a step back from my own array of projects / work.
- My second year of *TradMentor* has allowed me to further develop the necessary skills to be an effective mentor.
- The online nature of the project this year has allowed me to build a better understanding of projects being delivered in other areas of Scotland - ones that I didn't know about before meeting my mentees - [and] the challenges being faced by artists in other parts of the country.
- the more TradMentoring I do, the more self-confidence I gain and the more I learn
- I found myself looking forward to the monthly meetings with my Mentees and enjoyed spending that hour with them
- These conversations did make me look at my own individual progress and what plans I had for my future – it is definitely a two-way process
- I feel part of a team, I feel supported, challenged, and respected

##### **Describe one significant change which has happened for you through mentoring.**

- Better listening skills.
- I have been surprised by how well the process has worked on zoom and find it adds focus and professionalism with regards to time keeping, clarity of conversation etc.

- I worked with two mentees who were older than me for this session of Tradmentor. Initially, I felt some anxiety around this... However, working with my mentees has been hugely positive... It has given me a personal boost in terms of valuing my own input and knowledge and being able to share that with others, regardless of age.
- I am more in control of my own responses in meetings because I am digging deeper and getting more information from the mentee, allowing me time to listen and prepare my questioning.
- I feel that I have... started to listen more carefully and actively... [and] learned the importance of silence in a conversation and learnt not to fill it!!

**Is there anything which you feel would improve your skills as a mentor?**

- Being able to coherently draw out the sometimes confusing threads of information, desires, conflicts, etc that are expressed by the mentee, and... be able to develop objectives/ aims for next meeting. I sometimes feel I am good at being a sounding board, but in recent experience haven't been able to help with achieving small goals / next steps.
- I am always interested in gaining more knowledge and skill and were there any further opportunities for training would be interested.
- I might also benefit from mentoring and wonder if this were a possibility within the programme.
- The opportunity to work with others outside of my own area of expertise would also help broaden my 'toolkit.'
- I feel I have gained more confidence in meetings and between meetings, to trust my training.
- A refresher course is always good...

**Any other comments?**

- Really appreciate being part of this project.
- Although it is tempting at times to predict and give answers, my training and reflection reminds me to stand back.
- [Mentoring] gives me confidence and self-belief that I can help others.