

Mentor Training Programme Evaluation 2021- 2022

Final report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The professional development programme for mentors in the Further Education and Training (FET) sector from the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) aimed to support the development, progression and retention of new teachers in the sector. The Skills for Jobs White Paper 2021¹ outlined the Department of Education's (DfE) commitment to continue to enable access to high-quality mentoring for FE teachers, in order to best support teacher's professional development and achieve teaching excellence across the sector. As part of an overall package of measures to improve the supply and quality of the FE workforce, the ETF received funding from DfE to develop a high-quality mentor training programme for the FE sector and beginning to address historic weaknesses associated with mentoring for FE practitioners. The ETF created a programme of four elements:

- A mentoring framework and guides with accompanying professional development sessions
- Three training courses aimed at developing mentors
- Grant funding for participants in two of these courses
- Development of courses on FutureLearn, an online learning platform, aimed at leaders, mentees and mentor coordinators.

The three courses for mentors are the focus of this evaluation, conducted by the Institute for Employment Studies. 'Getting ready to mentor' was a three week online self-directed course aimed at refreshing knowledge of mentoring or as a first step into mentoring. The 'Mentoring skills for new mentors' programme was a six-month blended learning course combining group sessions delivered online, peer learning through action learning sets, self-directed learning using FutureLearn, and a minimum of 40 hours mentoring practice. 'Advanced mentor skills for experienced mentors' was also a six month blended learning course with a similar format to the course for new mentors, with an additional focus on setting up or enhancing a mentor programme in their own organisation.

The evaluation included interviews with stakeholders at the ETF, DfE, and the delivery partner; surveys of participants of the three training courses; a survey of mentees who experienced mentoring from participants on the two blended learning courses; alongside interviews with mentors and senior leaders from their organisations who had responsibility for supporting their participation who were known as grant leads.

A revised logic model describes the programme rationale, its inputs and outputs and linked to the evaluation aims and research questions – to see whether the programme was making a difference

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth>

to mentoring practice in the FET sector.

Programme participants

The programmes in 2021-22 reached more participants than in the year before. In the current year 275 completed the courses for new and experienced mentors (154 new, 121 experienced mentors). In 2020-21 220 completed the courses for new and experienced mentors (113 new, 107 experienced mentors). Overall, there were 123 separate providers with participants taking part in the courses for new and experienced mentors with an average of two to three participants per provider.

Recruitment

The mentoring framework and guides developed in 2021-22 and made publicly available on the ETF website helped to raise awareness of the programme.² The mentors and their managers had good awareness of the ETF programmes and saw the mentor training programme promoted in ETF communications.

The ETF application asked for background information from candidates to ensure that they were matched to the right course. Survey data shows that typically the participants on the course for new mentors had less experience of teaching and mentoring than those on the course for experienced mentors.

Interviewees were motivated to attend the programme to develop their skills in mentoring. New mentors often wanted to develop their careers and saw mentoring skills and roles as a potential progression route. Twenty participants on the advanced skills course took part in the new mentors' course in the last academic year (Strand 1), and these wanted to continue to develop their skills at a higher level.

The programme was delivered online, an approach that was successful in 2020-21, and taken forward online again in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Online delivery appealed to mentors and grant leads as it made it easier for mentors to manage their time away from their roles.

The grant award facilitated participation on the programme. This could be used to support participation in self-directed and trainer-led learning sessions; and to access remission away from teaching roles to undertake the 40 hours of mentoring practice that was also a requirement of the courses for new and experienced mentors. Where it was used in these ways it supported participation in the programme. The ETF required grant leads to report back on how the grant was spent, which ensured that providers were accountable for the funding.

Barriers to participation

Interviewees reported that the Covid-19 pandemic created obstacles to mentors being able to consistently meet the self-guided learning hours and the mentoring practice hours. Sickness absence meant that mentors could not meet their mentees as planned or that mentors were covering other staff roles and so could no longer commit the time to the programme. Timetable clashes and the timing of the course were the biggest factors for those that withdrew from the programme. Mentors and grant leads suggested that programme recruitment should commence at the beginning of the summer term at Easter, while timetables for the following academic years were being drafted.

Strengths of the delivery format

All types of mentor survey respondents, from the 'Getting ready to mentor' course, new mentors and experienced mentors, reported that their courses had adequately covered many of the topics – with several indicators reported positively by over 90 per cent of respondents. These topics included

² <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/professional-development/mentoring/framework-and-guides/>

questioning, listening and feedback, reflection, mentoring practice, tools and models and communication skills. Particular strengths of the programme that were drawn out by the survey respondents and interviewees were:

- The FutureLearn platform
- Group sessions
- The online delivery
- Programme flexibility and delivery partner support
- Quality of resources.
- Mentor practice
- Peer support
- Employer support
- The grant award.

Outcomes

The design of the programme for new and experienced mentors ensured that learning was quickly contextualised to the mentors' own settings and therefore had the potential to make a more immediate impact and have greater longevity. All of the 'Getting ready to mentor' respondents, 98 per cent of new mentors and 97 per cent of experienced mentors agreed that they had understood the aims and objectives of their courses.

The longer duration of the new and advanced skills courses allowed for the topics to be covered in depth, with no requirement for participants to submit assignments, it was easier to fit in with participants' work and home lives.

An ETF and delivery partner administered poll near the end of the programme found that new and experienced mentors and those on the 'Getting ready to mentor' course were confident in their knowledge and understanding of mentoring. More specifically, 88 per cent of new mentors, 95 per cent of experienced mentors, and all of those on the 'Getting ready to mentor' course reported feeling confident. In the evaluation surveys, 97 per cent of new mentors and 93 per cent of experienced mentors agreed that they had improved their confidence in being an effective mentor.

Interviewees described how they had increased their knowledge of mentoring principles in line with the ETF's mentoring framework. Their learning combined the theoretical frameworks and models of coaching and mentoring, with practical understanding of mentoring principles. Improved listening and questioning techniques were most frequently described by interviewees (mentors and grant leads) as a result of participation on the programme.

A key aim for the programme was to develop whole-institution approaches to developmental mentoring and raise the status and recognition of the mentoring role. Positive evidence on more receptive organisational cultures and new structures for mentoring programme suggested progress in line with intermediate outcomes in the logic model has been made.

The statistical analysis of survey data shows where there are correlations between different aspects of the programme. For new mentors, improved confidence in being an effective mentor and mentors' ability to self-reflect on their practice is positively associated with the coverage of questioning skills on the course. New mentors' improvements in giving and receiving feedback is positively related to

giving and receiving feedback as part of the course. For experienced mentors, improved understanding of how to give and receive feedback was positively correlated with their course covering how to make use of peer observation and assessment. For those on the 'Getting ready to mentor' course, organisational support through supporting participation in the course, and being able to network with colleagues were also positively correlated with becoming more confident and more aware of different mentoring strategies.

The potential for mentoring to support staff retention was recognised by interviewees, whilst acknowledging that this was difficult to measure within a one-year programme cycle. Mentors shared feedback from their mentees who said that they would not have stayed in their roles without the mentorship. The evaluations they led of their own mentoring programme showed improvements to staff satisfaction scores.

Feedback from mentees

Mentees also provided feedback about the topics they covered with their mentors – most frequently strengths and weaknesses in the mentee's performance, observations, support with lesson planning and managing workloads. Many mentees (88 per cent) reported that that this focus on strengths and weaknesses had delivered positive benefits for their practice and wellbeing.

Mentees agreed (94 per cent) that mentorship contributed to their professional development and that their mentor asked helpful questions. Furthermore, 80 per cent of mentees had become more confident in their teaching abilities as a result of the mentoring they received from programme participants.

Conclusions

A large majority of mentors indicated that participating in the programme had made a difference to their mentoring. New mentors had separated the mentoring from performance reviews which meant they could focus on supporting mentees to develop competence and confidence. Their mentoring had become more structured. Experienced mentors reflected the language and models used on the programme to describe their mentoring.

The evidence from the surveys with mentors and mentees, and interviews with programme participants, showed that the mentor training programme for FET is embodying the ETF's 12 principles for continuing professional development (CPD). Throughout the report, there are positive examples of where and how the mentor training has been successful and where and how it is making a difference to mentoring practice in FET.

Recommendations

The report concludes with a series of recommendations to strengthen the programme from an already positive position:

- Support mentoring practice by establishing communities of practice/support groups at the outset of the courses;
- Keep the amount of reading/additional learning time consistent each week, emphasising the guidance for the time required for reading and indicating which material is necessary and which is optional;
- Ensure that the programme is accessible to all by promoting the ring-fenced places more strongly and ensuring FutureLearn is adaptive for screen readers;
- Provide more options for participation – timing and delivery (online and face-to-face);
- Support providers to account for the grant and provide guidance on expectations for its use

to ensure remission from teaching;

- Create conditions that are conducive to securing impact – long term funding for the training programme and follow-up with alumni; and
- Provide funding to ensure that mentoring can continue outside of the training programme.

1. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR MENTORS IN FE

1.1. Methodology

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to undertake an independent evaluation of the professional development programme for mentors in Further Education and Training (FET) in 2021-2022.

The evaluation combined large-scale census surveys of participants on the programmes which achieved good response rates³, with in-depth interviews with mentors and grant leads. This provides a picture of how the programme operated and was received by participants overall, as well as providing qualitative insights and context to the survey findings. This report presents the findings from the research based on:

- Interviews with stakeholders from ETF, the Department for Education (DfE), and the delivery partner organisation that supported the development of the programme and was responsible for delivery of the programme to participants. The delivery partner interviews comprised three paired interviews with trainers and an interview with the delivery manager;
- Surveys with participants of three programmes for mentors. The achieved response rates were 36 per cent for 'Getting ready to mentor', 79 per cent on the programme for new mentors, 75 per cent on the programme for experienced mentors;⁴
- Survey with mentees. This achieved 243 responses. The mentee survey link was distributed by grant leads and mentors and while the ETF holds an overall estimated figure of 2,291 mentees supported through the programme, an accurate response rate cannot be calculated as researchers do not know how many mentees received the survey link;
- Interviews with mentors and senior leaders from their organisations who had responsibility for supporting their participation (grant lead). This consisted of seven interviews with new mentors, and 11 with experienced mentors and nine interviews with grant leads. The qualitative strand of this evaluation aimed for a broad cross-section of participants, but is not representative. Instead the examples that the interviewees bring to the evaluation help to explain and contextualise the survey findings. Where grant leads and mentors from the same provider took part in interviews, these findings have been collated into mini case studies, included in Appendix D.

The report concludes with recommendations for programme improvements that take into account DfE policy objectives and programme improvement priorities highlighted by the stakeholders and research participants.

1.2. Development of the programme

The mentor training programme from ETF and funded by DfE forms part of a wider portfolio of work to improve the quality of mentoring for practitioners in the FET sector. The ETF and DfE support the long-term aim of improving the development, progression and retention of new teachers entering the

³ For comparison, the evaluation of the 2020/2021 programme with a similar approach achieved a response rate of 56 per cent of new and experienced mentors. See the evaluation report <https://www.etf-foundation.co.uk/professional-development/mentoring/research/>

⁴ There were 21 respondents from 'Getting ready to mentor', 121 on the programme for new mentors, and 92 on the programme for experienced mentors. More detail on the composition of the survey respondents is given in the appendix

sector. The DfE objectives for the programme were:

- Objective a: Deliver the Skills for Jobs White Paper objective to “provide effective support to new teachers moving into the sector by continuing to enable access to mentoring”.
- Objective b: Improve quality of mentoring for further education (FE) practitioners through the design and delivery of high-quality mentor training and education programmes for new and experienced mentors.
- Objective c: Improve CPD opportunities available to practitioners (mentees and mentors) to help enhance the skills, knowledge and competency of the FE workforce.
- Objective d: Support/improve the retention of teaching staff within FE.
- Objective e: Promote a shared understanding of what constitutes effective mentoring practices through the dissemination of high-quality mentoring resources.
- Objective f: Increase collaboration within the sector and support FE leaders to establish whole-institutional approaches to mentoring.⁵

The focus on mentoring stems from evidence which shows that effective mentoring can help retain early career teachers as well as improve teaching quality and learner outcomes.⁶ The ETF has created mentoring resources to promote a shared understanding of developmental mentoring and how it can be used across the sector.⁷ Alongside these materials, a programme of CPD has been created to disseminate high quality training for mentors, mentees, and leaders to support whole-institutional approaches to mentoring. Grant funding underpins the programme and supports participation in the programme by ensuring courses are free to access and costs of participation are covered for the employer.

In interviews, stakeholders (the ETF, and the delivery partner) described how the professional development programme for mentors and coaches of practitioners in FE had been designed in line with the ETF’s 12 principles for CPD:

1. Set clear expectations;
2. Be sound in its evidence base, informed by effective practice and research;
3. Use facilities, environments and materials that engage and motivate practitioners to learn and develop;
4. Be focused on learner outcomes;
5. Be sustained over time;
6. Secure management buy-in;
7. Model effective teaching practice;
8. Enable collaboration and sustainable learning relationships;
9. Refer to the Professional Standards or the Leadership Excellence Framework;
10. Enhance and extend specialist knowledge;

⁵ <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ETF-Further-Education-Workforce-Grant-Offer-Letter-21-22.pdf>

⁶ Hobson, A. J., Maxwell, B., Stevens, A., Doyle, K., & Malderez, A. (2015). Mentoring and coaching for teachers in the further education and skills sector in England: Full report. London: Gatsby Charitable Foundation. And Hobson, A.J., Maxwell, B., Káplár-Kodácsy, K., & Hotham, E. (2020). The nature and impact of effective mentoring training, education and development. London: The Education and Training Foundation

⁷ <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/professional-development/mentoring/framework-and-guides/>

11. Have opportunities for deliberate practice;
12. Support participants to measure their progress, reflect on their learning and plan next steps.

In 2020-21 the mentor training programme was delivered for the first time (Strand 1)⁸. In 2021-2022 DfE commissioned the programme again (Strand 2). Four elements make up the support package:

1. CPD sessions to raise awareness of mentoring framework and guides published by ETF;
2. three training courses for potential, new and experienced mentors (as described below)⁹;
3. management and allocation of grants for participants on two of the training programmes and on the Mentors Specialising in EdTech offer¹⁰;
4. the development and piloting of three new FutureLearn mentoring courses targeted at mentoring coordinators, mentees and leaders/managers.

The three training courses are the focus of this evaluation. These comprised:

Course	Short description	Minimum target participants
1. Getting ready to mentor (Strand 2)	3 weeks duration, 2 hours per week online self-directed learning on the FutureLearn Platform.	100
2. a. Mentor skills for new mentors (Programme B Strand 2)	6 months blended learning training course. Including learning via FutureLearn, Zoom, self-reflection and action learning sets. Includes the requirement of a minimum of 40 hours mentoring practice.	325
b. Advanced mentor skills for experienced mentors (Programme C Strand 2)	6 months blended learning training course. Including learning via FutureLearn, Zoom, self-reflection and action learning sets. Includes a project to undertake in the workplace and the requirement of a minimum of 40 hours mentoring practice.	

Source: IES and the ETF, 2022

The 'Getting ready to mentor' course was an online introductory course expected to run at the learners' pace over three weeks. The aim was to offer this as a first step to finding out more about mentoring in FET or as a refresher for people that had previously had mentor training.

To supplement the 40 guided learning hours on the new programmes for new and experienced mentors, participants also undertook a minimum of 40 hours of mentoring practice. The guidance on what this could include was different for new and experienced mentors given the different focus of the courses. For new mentors it included the mentoring sessions, preparing for a mentoring meeting and following up, observations and pre- and post-observation conversations. In addition, participants on the advanced skills course had a focus on setting up a mentoring programme in their own organisation and so activities related to this also counted towards the mentoring activity.

To support equality and diversity aims, DfE and the ETF ring-fenced 25 per cent of places on the courses for new and experienced mentors, for potential participants who met one of three criteria:

⁸ The published evaluation can be accessed here: https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FINAL-ETF-mentoring-report_220421.pdf [Accessed on 25 Feb 2022]

⁹ A programme for alumni from Strand 1 and 2 was originally planned but did not take place.

¹⁰ The EdTech offer was outside of the scope of this evaluation

- those working in one of the 12 national opportunity areas¹¹;
- people with a disability;
- those from black and minority ethnic communities.

The ETF gave priority to individuals and providers that had not participated in the Strand 1 programme in 2020-2021. However, once the new applicants to the advanced mentor skills course had been allocated, those who were returning after taking part in the new mentors training programme in 2020-2021 were accepted on to the course.

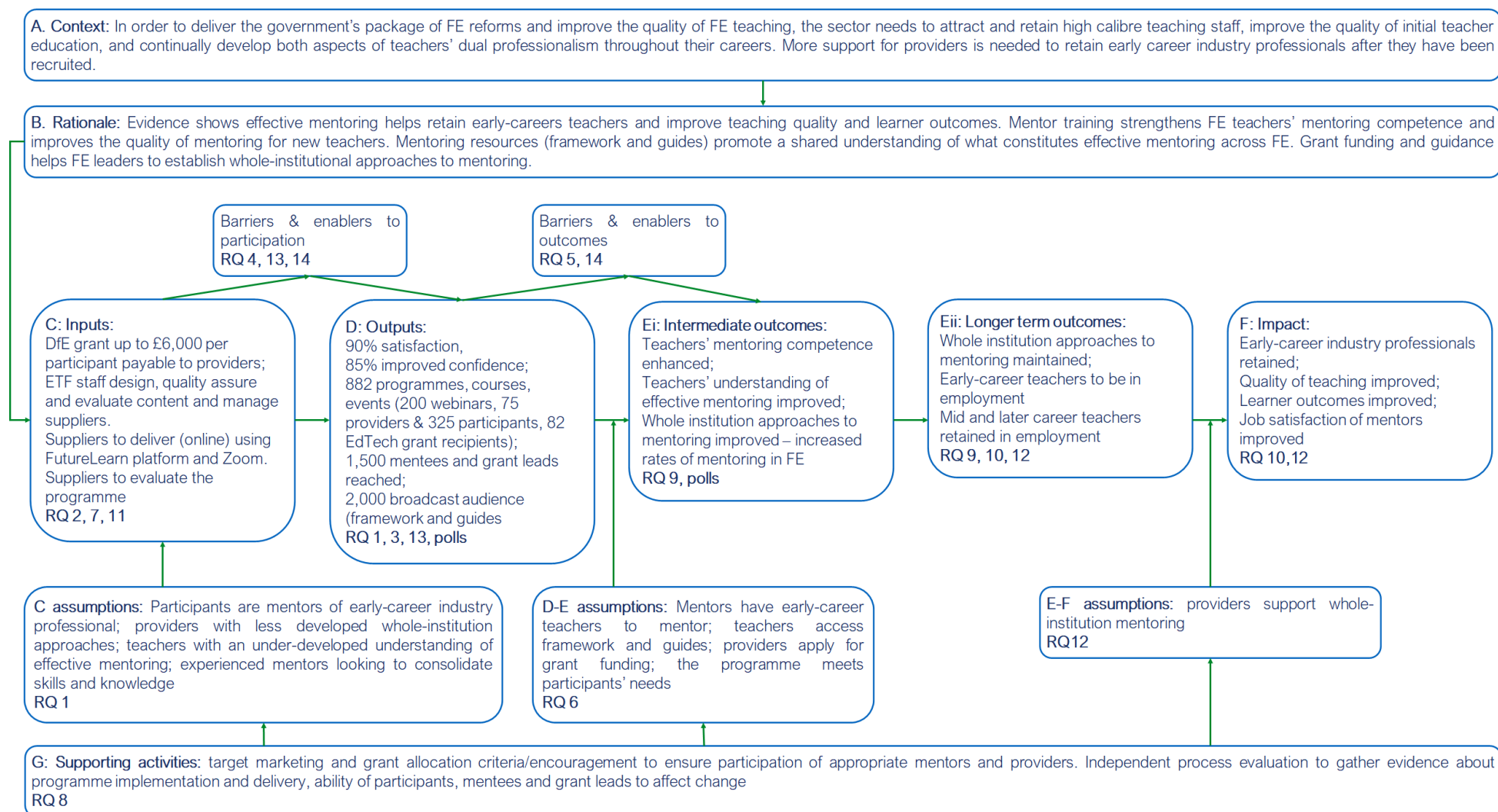
In addition to the targets for participation, DfE also set a key performance indicator for the programmes to achieve 90% participant satisfaction ratings, which was due to be collected at the end of the course by the ETF, through learner experience satisfaction surveys.

1.2.1. Logic model

The ETF drafted a logic model to describe the programme rationale, and its inputs and outputs. As part of the evaluation this was revised and used to frame the research (see the appendix for details on the evaluation framework and research questions).

¹¹ The 12 opportunity areas are Blackpool, Bradford, Derby, Doncaster, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, Hastings, Ipswich, Norwich, Oldham, North Yorkshire Coast, Stoke, and West Somerset

Revised logic model for the mentor training programme for FET



Source: IES and the ETF, 2022

1.3. Programme participants

Turning to recruitment, the 'Getting ready to mentor' accepted 137 people to the course. The ETF monitored progress to see how much of the course was completed. Of these 137 participants, 49 per cent completed 80 per cent or more of the course.¹²

For the more in-depth courses (for new and experienced mentors), recruitment was slower than predicted by the ETF (see chapter 2 for discussion) and did not hit the original target. Applications were received from 312 people in total resulting in 275 participants, compared to a target of 325 participants. Of these 275 participants, 154 entered the course for new mentors, and 121 entered the course for experienced mentors; and 21 per cent were eligible for a ring-fenced place. In addition, 20 of the participants on the advanced skills course had previously taken part in the new mentor course in Strand 1.¹³

To be eligible for staff to take part, providers had to be in England, in direct receipt of Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding and have a UKPRN (a UK Provider Reference Number, this is a unique number allocated to providers after successful registration with the UK Register of Learning Providers). Overall, 123 separate providers had participants engaged in the courses for new and experienced mentors with an average of between two to three participants per provider (although some had up to five participants on the experienced mentors course and up to seven on the new mentors course). Across the courses, participants from General FE and tertiary colleges were the largest group (69 per cent of all participants), followed by those from independent training providers (13 per cent), with the remainder coming from a range of specialist providers.

The recruitment and promotion of the programme was led by the ETF. Stakeholder interviewees reported that there were some challenges for the delivery partner in not being able to see real-time information about how recruitment was progressing. However, there were also positives from new partnerships with the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) who helped promote the programme.

The majority of providers with mentors taking part were general FE colleges although participants were also drawn from other parts of the sector including adult learning, private providers and local authority (LA) provision. The most recent data from the Staff Individualised Record (SIR, 2018-19) which gathered data on the FE workforce across the whole sector, finds 50 per cent of responding providers were general FE colleges (although they accounted for 83 per cent of the FE workforce). This indicates that the programme could reach further into the sector, but it has reached a broad range of providers as it under-recruited from general FE colleges.

Management information (MI) in the appendix shows the composition of the cohorts of new and experienced mentors, plus limited information about the participants on the 'Getting ready to mentor' online course.

1.4. Fidelity to design

Following some refinements to the programme after Strand 1 in 2020-21, the delivery partner interviewees described how they were successfully delivering the programme with fidelity to the design. In a change from Strand 1, the programme overall was reduced in length to fit within the financial year and ensure that grant payments were accounted for. To do this, one group session was removed, alongside one of the action learning sets in the advanced mentoring course.

¹² As of 16/03. The detailed table is in the appendix

¹³ The analysis tables are in the appendix

Trainers reported sticking closely to the schedule of learning making only small procedural tweaks, such as changes to the presentation and time for discussion depending on group size on the day. Materials were largely unchanged from Strand 1, and the delivery provider trainers were retained and so trainers were confident and knew the materials well.

Interviewees across roles were also confident in the quality of materials. At the request of the ETF, the delivery partner added new cross-cutting themes: wellbeing, equality and diversity, education for sustainable development and EdTech to reflect the broader topics that mentors were anticipated to cover with their mentees.

2. RECRUITMENT AND PARTICIPATION ON THE PROGRAMME

Summary

- The course, guides and mentoring framework available on the ETF website helped to raise awareness of the programme. The mentors and their managers had good awareness of the programmes and gained this often directly from ETF communications.
- Managers in providers took a lead on distributing information about the mentor training programme to staff and in some cases led applications and sifting to select potential candidates. The ETF application asked for background information from candidates to ensure that they were matched to the right course on the programme – namely the advanced skills course for experienced mentors. Survey data shows that typically the participants on the course for new mentors had less experience of teaching and mentoring than those on the course for experienced mentors.
- Application information also included an indication of whether the applicant was eligible for a ringfenced place, based on diversity characteristics. There was very little recall about this process from the interviewees.
- Participant interviewees were motivated to attend the course to develop their mentoring skills. New mentors often wanted to develop their careers and saw mentoring skills and roles as a potential progression route. A small number of participants on the advanced skills course had taken part in the new mentors course in the previous academic year (Strand 1), and these wanted to develop their skills at a higher level. The advanced skills course aimed for participants to develop mentoring programmes in their organisations and this was a primary appeal for new participants.
- The programme was delivered online due to the Covid-19 pandemic and because the online approach was successful in Strand 1. Online delivery appealed to mentors and grant leads as it led to less time away from their roles.
- Managers (grant leads) were required to support the programme applications and, as a requirement of the grant award, documented the mentoring practice hours undertaken by mentors and how the grant was spent. This was reported back to the ETF regularly and was time-consuming for managers who had multiple staff members taking part. However, requiring this involvement helped keep the providers accountable and the grant award made it possible for staff to participate who otherwise would not gain remission from their roles.
- The ETF survey information from participants who had withdrawn as well as interviewees who had faced barriers to meeting the course requirements showed that the Covid-19 pandemic played a big part. It stopped mentors from being able to meet the self-guided learning hours and the mentoring practice hours as quickly. Sickness absence meant they could not meet their mentees as planned or that mentors were covering other staff roles and could no longer commit the time to the programme. Timetable clashes and the timing of the course were the biggest factors for those who withdrew. Suggestions for improvements from mentors and grant leads included starting the programme recruitment earlier in the summer term for example, around Easter, while timetables for the following academic years are being drafted.
- Where barriers were temporary and mentors missed a group session, the delivery partner staff worked with them to find another session that they could join or offered 1-2-1 tutorials to help

the mentor cover the missed material.

This chapter sets out how potential participants found out and were recruited in to the mentoring courses. It reports on their motivations for taking part and barriers to participation that they faced throughout the courses,

2.1. Programme recruitment

Stakeholders reported that the quality of pre-programme information had improved from Strand 1 due to the lessons learned from the feedback and evaluation they received. It included information about the modules, differences between the courses, expected hours and requirements.

Many participant interviewees described how their line managers made them aware of the mentor training programme. In some cases, where the mentor was a part of a team who might traditionally take a mentoring role (Advanced Practitioners, quality teams), the whole team was told about the programme.

Some mentors described how they became aware of the training through regular communications they received from the ETF resulting from their previous participation in other ETF programmes.

Where multiple people from one organisation were interested in participating, and due to the limit on places per provider, some organisations sifted applications from prospective participants. One mentor was the only person put forward for the course as their organisation prioritised them for a ring-fenced place. Grant leads described how the mentors put forward from their organisations were experienced teachers who were performing well and looking to progress in their careers.

From the grant lead perspective, the application process helped them to identify candidates who had relevant experience, consider the subject area they came from and also how they might help address wider college needs and gaps. Delivery provider staff noted that generally participants were well-matched to the different courses as there was more scrutiny of applications to ensure levels of experience matched the requirements of the courses, for example being in a position to make a business case for a new mentoring programme as part of the advanced skills course.

Participants on the advanced course who had previously taken part in the course for new mentors in Strand 1, had been kept informed about other courses by the ETF. The advanced skills course taking place this academic year offered the opportunity to continue their learning. Some said the pre-programme information indicated that priority would be given to applicants who were new to the programme, and to those that were eligible for ring-fenced places.

2.2. Ring-fenced places

Awareness of ring-fencing appeared to be low. The mentor interviewees, where records indicated that they were eligible for ring-fenced places, were unable to say how much of a factor that this was in them securing a place on the training. They were either unaware that they were eligible or could not remember being eligible. They were however generally positive that ringfencing was being used to encourage diversity in the cohort. One participant described how their organisation had prioritised only those applicants who met the ring-fenced criteria.

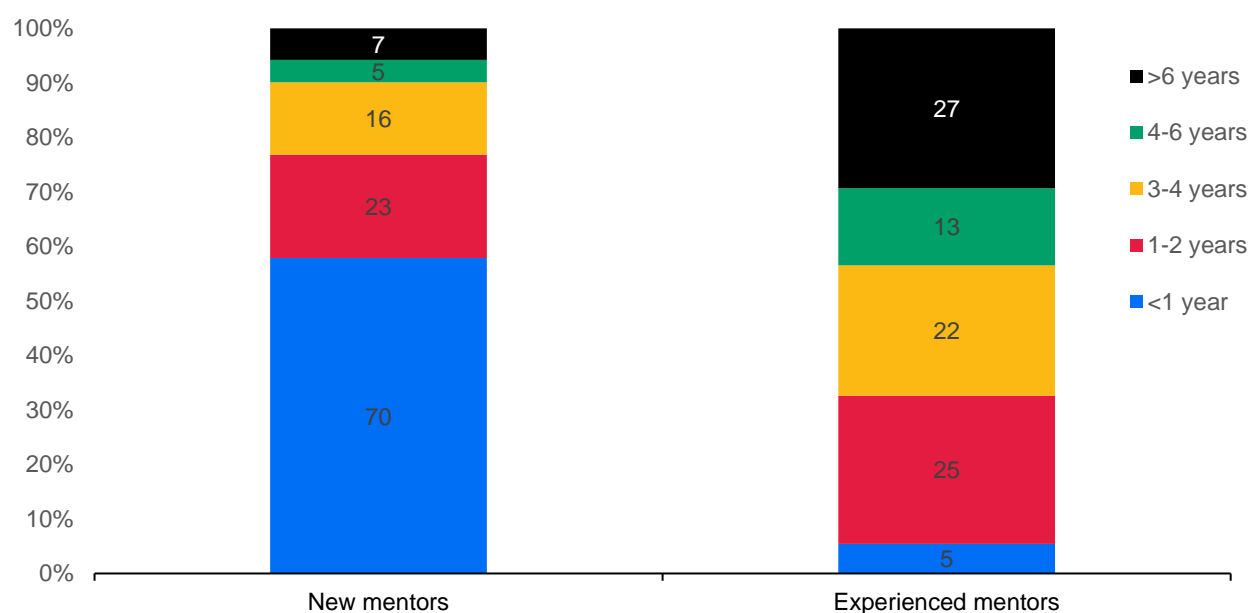
Similarly, grant lead interviewees had limited awareness and most had not used this mechanism. In some cases, the grant leads were unsure of whether they had applied under this criterion.

2.3. Previous experience and motivations for taking part

The survey confirmed that participants on the course for new mentors had less experience of mentoring than those on the course for experienced mentors, with evaluation evidence indicating this reflected the matching process during recruitment. The survey participants on the experienced

mentors' course were also more experienced teachers.

Years of mentoring experience - new and experienced mentors



Source: New and experienced participant surveys, IES and the ETF, 2022

On the 'Getting ready to mentor' course, the majority of survey respondents had no prior experience of mentoring.

Previous experience with mentoring (Getting ready to mentor) *

Experience with mentoring	%
Yes, as a mentor	29%
Yes, as a mentee	19%
No	62%
Total	21

*Multiple response so percentages add up to more than 100

Source: Getting ready to mentor participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Interviewees (both new and experienced) described how they had very little experience that (with the knowledge gained from their course) they would label as formal mentoring of others. They did have some experience of being mentored themselves, most often as part of their teacher training. Experienced mentors described being mentored by senior leaders and line managers. As more experienced mentors, the participants on the advanced skills course had been mentoring in their roles as heads of departments. Often, they were responsible for quality including staff upskilling, ensuring new staff passed probation periods, performance improvement plans, and as part of line management.

Several of the participants interviewed from the course for new mentors wanted to develop their skills in mentoring to help them progress in their careers. They thought that mentoring would be a useful skill to draw on as they became more senior. Some expressed this as wanting to 'formalise' their skills and said that they wanted show how their skills would be used in a mentoring context. There were also specific skills that they wanted to develop such as: questioning, listening and dealing with difficult conversations. New mentors spoke of inspiring mentorship they had received or

seen working well in other settings and how they wanted to offer this in their organisations.

Experienced mentors taking part in the programme for the first time, reported that they were attracted by the possibilities of peer learning. The development of a mentoring programme for their organisation held particular appeal for these participants.

Participants who returned to the mentor training programme having completed the 'new to mentoring' programme in strand 1 in 2020-2021, had undertaken a mentoring role which they were keen to continue. One interviewee noted how the course ignited a passion in him and so he wanted to continue to see what he could do next. For some participants, the programme coincided with ambitions to set up a new mentoring programme in their organisation, for example:

"We talked to the quality team and said to them it would be great if we could have mentors, but we were stuck at that point, because we didn't know how it would work, because, you know, people are at capacity. The quality team didn't want to take ownership for it. We didn't know what it would look like, because we've never seen anything like that done formally before."

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER

Motivators for grants leads were subtly different. This group felt that mentoring helps to promote and improve the quality and consistency of teaching and embeds new ways of working, thereby building consistency in the student experience.

"We're very keen to embed generative knowledge learning in the college rather than we used to probably be too reliant on adaptive...now on letting communities of teachers explore the issues that have been raised or that they raised and finding the solutions for themselves really."

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

The grant leads also focussed on the professional development of staff and their organisational culture of professional development in their ambitions for mentoring. This included improving staff retention rates and, less frequently, improving management of mental health and wellbeing. They felt that mentoring helped new starters get up to speed more quickly, reduced attrition and helped people to flourish and feel supported – important factors following experiences in the pandemic. They also felt that mentoring for existing staff helped with CPD, supporting individuals' development through a collaborative approach. One grant lead explained how the clear and realistic parameters on the time and resource needed for participation was crucial in the decision to put staff forward for the programme.

The online delivery mode was also appealing for grant leads as this was easy to manage in terms of staff time off the job, and the money for travel would otherwise have had to be drawn from the grant,

"Now teachers are already stretched, still dealing with COVID staff absences, students, absences...And online is really good because you don't have to travel or you can do it and then you can get on whereas that travel element and the stress of traveling would rethink us doing it."

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

2.4. Securing agreement to take part

As most participant interviewees had found out about the opportunity to take part through line managers or colleagues, they said that they were encouraged and supported in their applications.

Where they had to explain to their line managers why they were interested in participating, and/or state how their workload would be affected by joining the programme, they could use this content in their application to the ETF.

Several participants on the course for new mentors described how important the grant was to their organisations – providing finance to enable lessons to be covered thereby helping to make sure the mentoring hours requirement was met. Providers across the programme were able to use the grant flexibly to support programme participation. Examples given in the interviews included:

- Paying for additional hours for part time staff to enable participation, and abatements and remissions (ie reducing teaching hours for participants).
- Paying for cover staff where mentors had to be away from teaching or tutor roles.
- Building senior management support for participation as the provider was financially compensated for the staff resources and classroom cover the programme required. This was echoed in some of the grant lead interviews.

Grant leads also said that the guidance supporting the grant signalled that the remission was necessary to ensure that mentors could fully participate was important.

“It means that we can pay the cover for them to attend the course and do the mentoring, and there's just no spare cash in FE, you know to take somebody off to do that. So without the grant money, it would have been nice, but it would have been really hard to facilitate. So the grant money is incredibly important.”

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

2.5. Factors limiting participation

The participant interviewees in the evaluation all completed their programmes although some reported experiencing some difficulties in meeting the course requirements.

The reading element of the self-guided learning was often described as ‘too much’, however the mentors were reassured by delivery partner staff that they would not be expected to read all of the materials available online. They were also reassured by the resources remaining available for use after the course finished. Getting through the reading was difficult where mentors thought that they did not have enough hours allocated to the programme each week or when unexpected hurdles appeared such as Covid-19 sickness absence or Ofsted inspections.

There were some common challenges to meeting the requirement of 40 hours mentoring practice during the courses for new and experienced mentors. Predominately this concerned sickness absence due to Covid-19 or other health issues. For example, a mentor being absent then a mentee subsequently being absent too. Difficulties with finding suitable times when both mentor and mentee were available were another factor. The interviewees also appreciated that activities such as planning and meeting other mentors counted towards the requirement. Nonetheless, some new mentors who described difficulties with reaching the 40 hours of mentoring practice wanted to see the requirement reduced to around 30 hours to better fit within the course window.

Being able to find compatible time with mentees who had full timetables was challenging. In one case, a new mentor in a General FE college reported that staff timetables were typically very full of teaching commitments and they had insufficient spare time in their own timetable that coincided with their mentees’ spare time. They reported this to their grant lead who secured additional free time for them with each of their mentees on a fortnightly basis. Other new mentors described how the grant

was important in being able to pay for extra hours needed by the mentor and mentees.

2.6. Programme withdrawals

The mentoring programme overall saw 37 withdrawals following being accepted for a place. This comprised 22 from the new mentor course and 15 from the advanced skills course for experienced mentors, of which two were returners from Strand 1.

Programme	Returners from 2020/21 programme (Strand 1)	Ringfenced Priority	Provider type						
			General FE and Tertiary College	Local Authority Training Provider	National or Multi-Regional	Private Sector Public Funded (ITPs)	Sixth Form College	Specialist College	Other
Mentoring Skills for New Mentors	.	2	14	1	.	4	.	.	3
Mentoring Skills for Experienced Mentors	2	5	7	1	1	2	1	3	.

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Where participants indicated they were leaving the programme, the ETF sent them a short survey to understand reasons. Of the 19 participants who responded to this survey, 10 withdrew before the programme began, four within one week of it beginning, and five mid-way through.

Reason for withdrawal	N
Timing of the event	8
Timetable clashes	6
Changed role	5
Personal health issues	1
Missed too many sessions/elements	2
No longer of interest	1
Employer reasons (my employer withdrew me, employer went into liquidation, etc)	1
Other factors (absence from work, personal circumstances changed)	7
Total	19

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Respondents were asked for more detail, which typically indicated a combination of factors:

“I have taken on a new role within my organisation and currently do not have capacity to continue with the programme.”

RESPONDENT, WITHDRAWAL SURVEY

The ETF also gathered qualitative feedback from the providers that had mentors withdraw which elicited similar responses. In these cases, long term sickness absence was frequently cited, as well as time pressures on both the mentor and other members of staff that were required to facilitate the programme. As with Strand 1, timetable clashes continued to be a reason for withdrawal from the programme, suggesting that this is an ongoing pressure for potential participants.

3. APPROACH TO DELIVERING THE TRAINING

Summary

- All mentor survey respondents, from the 'Getting ready to mentor' course, new mentors and experienced mentors, said their courses had adequately covered many of the topics.
 - o 95 per cent of the 'Getting ready to mentor' survey respondents reported that the course had covered the value of mentoring and principles of mentoring adequately.
 - o Over 90 per cent of new mentors said their course adequately covered setting up a mentoring relationship, setting expectations with mentee(s), action planning and goal-setting, managing the mentor-mentee relationship, questioning and listening skills, modelling effective practice, introspection and reflective practice.
 - o Over 90 per cent of experienced mentors reported their course had adequately covered setting up a mentoring relationship, setting expectations with mentee(s), directing one's personal development as a mentor, making use of self-assessment, introspection and reflective practice.
- Participants experienced some difficulties with the required hours of courses. While the grant award enabled them to ring-fence time for groups sessions and self-guided learning some thought this was not enough given the amount of material on the FutureLearn platform. Interviewees said they still expected to meet the required 40 hours of mentoring practice; this was easier in larger providers where there were more potential mentees.
- Grant leads and mentors wanted more funding to allow for more remission from teaching for mentors and more remission for teachers who were being mentored.
- Strengths of the programme identified by survey respondents and interviewees were:
- **The FutureLearn platform** – easy to use with a good mix of reading, video and quiz resources.
- **Online delivery of group sessions** – easier for providers to manage time away without the need for travel; safe online spaces to share with participants from across the country.
- **Programme flexibility** – the delivery partner worked to accommodate participants where they missed sessions.
- **Quality resources** – practical and evidence-based resources in group sessions and on FutureLearn; 95 per cent of new mentors and 90 per cent of experienced mentors reported that the online resources were useful.
- **Mentor practice** – a key component to the programme was for new and experienced mentors to practice mentoring, applying their new learning and skills and reflecting and seeking feedback on this during the course.
- **Group sessions** – a chance to ask questions and deepen understanding of the materials and resources. Breakout groups, action learning sets, 1-2-1s with tutors and supervision (for experienced mentors) allowed mentors to share experiences and reflect on how their mentoring practice could improve.
- **Delivery partner support** – trainers and tutors brought skills and experience. According to the survey, almost all new (98 per cent) and experienced (99 per cent) mentors reported that their trainer brought relevant knowledge and experience.
- **Peer support** – offered insights from a wide network of mentors. Peer group sessions formed communities of practice, especially for new mentors. Action learning sets helped consolidate new listening and questioning skills.
- **Employer support** – was necessary for the mentors to be able to meet programme requirements and was positively reported across all three courses (see also chapter5.2).

Additional support needs related to private spaces to take part in online sessions and more remission to focus on mentoring.

- **The grant award** – allowed for remission for mentors and in some cases mentees to take part in the mentoring practice. It was also used to support the administration around recording the successful completion of the programme requirements.

This chapter describes the delivery of the mentor training courses with evidence from the surveys of participants as well as interview feedback from participants and delivery staff.

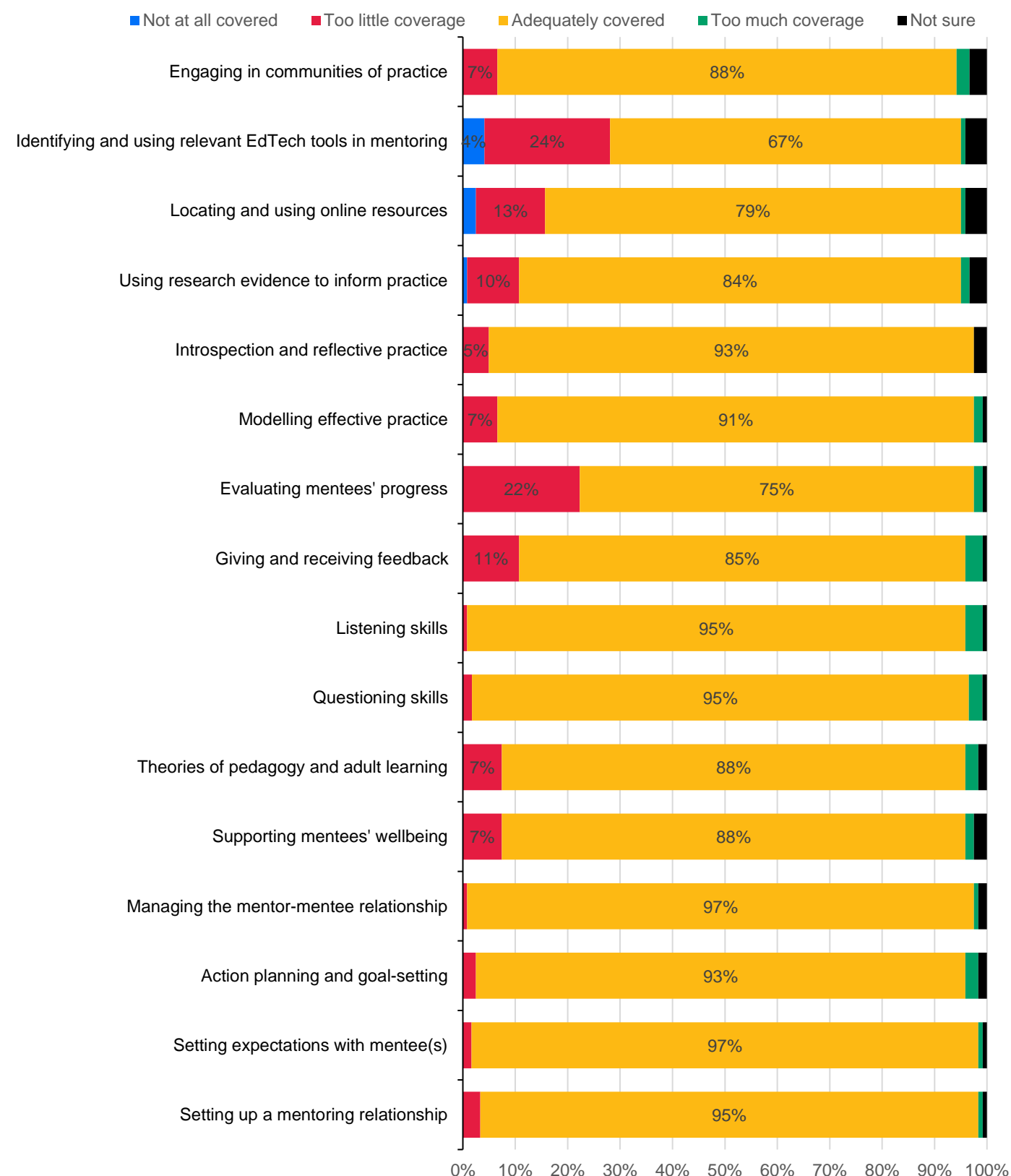
3.1. Programme coverage

The surveys asked respondents for feedback on how well their course had covered the topics set out by the ETF and the delivery partner (see chart below). Response categories covered whether topics were not at all covered, or covered too little, covered adequately or too much.

A large majority (95 per cent) of respondents to the 'Getting ready to mentor' course reported that the course had covered the value of mentoring and the principles of mentoring adequately (see appendix C). Between one and four respondents maximum said some topics were not adequately covered.

Respondents to the survey for new mentors indicated the course had adequately covered the topics. Half of the topics received this feedback from over 90 per cent of the respondents. They particularly highlighted setting expectations with mentee(s) (97 per cent), managing the mentor-mentee relationship (97 per cent), setting up a mentoring relationship (95 per cent), listening skills (95 per cent), questioning skills (95 per cent), introspection and reflective practice (93 per cent), action planning and goal-setting (93 per cent), and modelling effective practice (91 per cent) (see chart below).

Course coverage of topics – new mentors

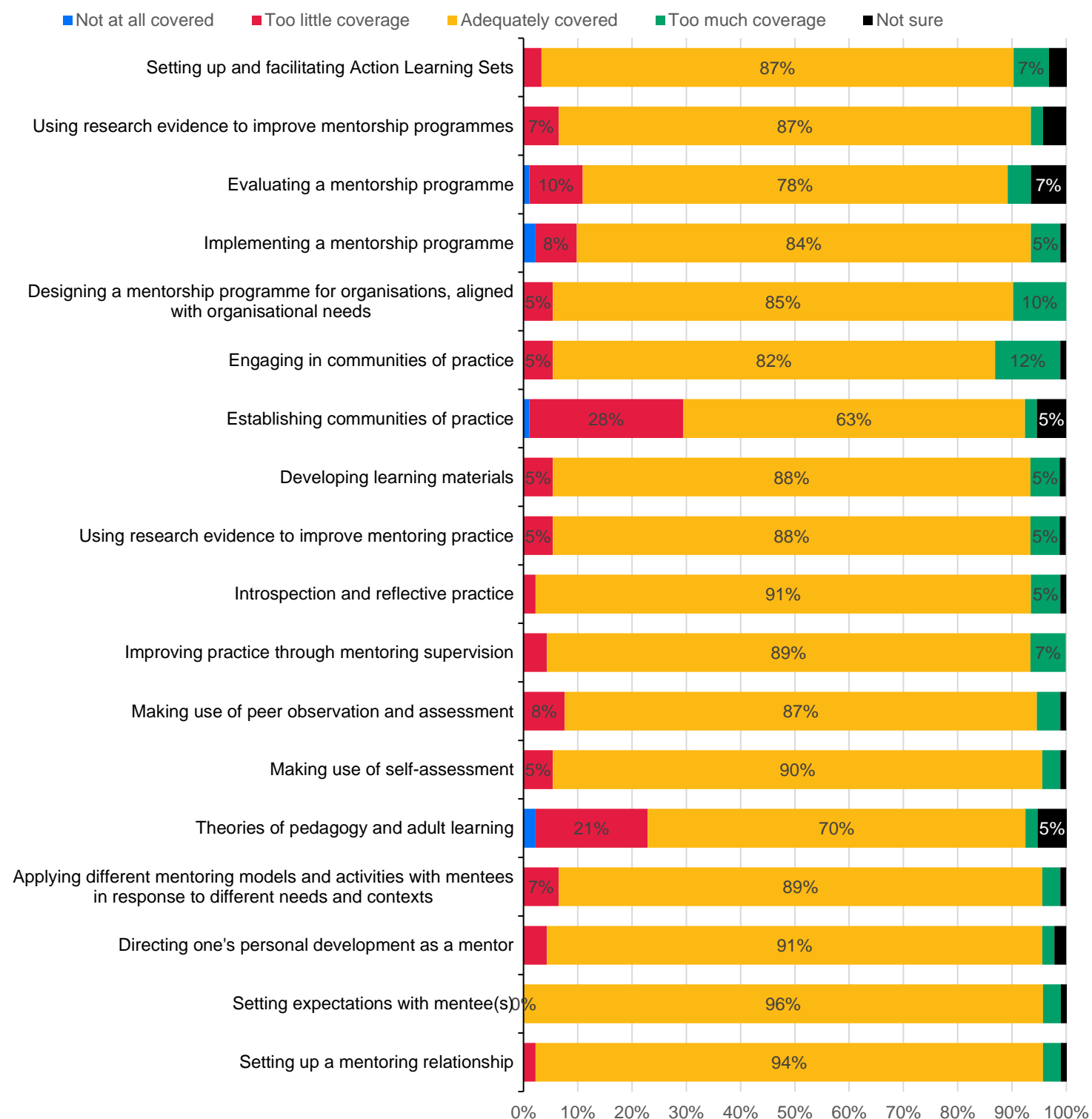


Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

There were five elements that over 90 per cent of respondents to the experienced mentors survey thought were adequately covered: setting expectations with mentee(s) (96 per cent), setting up a mentoring relationship (94 per cent), directing one's personal development as a mentor (91 per cent), introspection and reflective practice (91 per cent) and making use of self-assessment (90 per cent).

cent). For this cohort there was too little coverage on developing communities of practice (28 per cent), and around one-fifth reported too little coverage of theories of pedagogy and adult learning.

Course coverage of topics – experienced mentors



Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

3.2. Accessibility and feasibility of the course

Mentors typically were allocated between three and six hours per week for their mentoring activities. In interviews, new and experienced mentors with teaching roles (especially those teaching full-time)

described how difficult it was to find time for all of the required reading, group sessions, reflection and planning required by the course. Where mentors were middle-senior managers or part of Quality teams they already had non-timetabled time that they could block out for the programme.

Nevertheless, interviewees described how they were able to have protected or ringfenced time due to the grant award. This was often on the same day as their group session – typically they would have time first thing in the morning for the reading tasks then join the group session. However, for some mentors that this was not enough for all of the pre-session reading and tasks required each week. As reported in the Strand 1 evaluation, some participants also noted they lacked time to engage with the large amount of resources available to them on FutureLearn.

“We found that you'd come in first thing in the morning on Future Learn at 9:00 am, and you'd have the live session at 11. And we were struggling, so not every week but some weeks we were struggling to get all work done and in time for this session... We spoke to our tutor who said, 'yeah it's going to take you more than the time allocated so need to start outside the hours'. But we haven't got that time because you still have got lessons to prep for”

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

Mentors' suggestions to improve the accessibility of the programme included making use of audio or text to speech functionality to support participants with dyslexia or also those short of time; and recording group sessions to enable catch up if they missed one. Trainers explained that due to confidentiality within the group recording sessions was not possible.

Grant leads also reported there were not enough hours for the mentors to do all required activities but that meeting the 40 hours of mentoring practice was less tricky and they were monitoring this well. It appeared easier in larger providers where there were more potential mentees.

A small number of grant leads said they had not used the grant for timetable remission, to avoid impact on learner experiences. For example, an independent training provider with two experienced mentors participating was concerned that learners would be negatively affected by teacher absences. The grant lead worked with the mentors to find non-teaching hours that could be remitted although said that the mentors used their own time (outside of work hours) to complete self-guided learning. In a general FE college, a mentor withdrew as their line manager would not support teaching remission. This mentor taught a subject that had recently seen high staff turnover causing negative feedback from students; this led to reluctance to put classroom cover in place.

“The manager wouldn't allow any remission at all. They were teaching in an area that had seen some flux and some variation. There's been some slightly negative student feedback on the amount of staff turnover and change. And so, I think the decision was taken strategically to keep that department stable and not let that person at this time.”

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

Where mentors discussed these issues, they felt their organisation had not fully supported their participation in the programme. They wanted a stronger steer from the ETF about how the grant should be used and hoped that the importance of adjustments to timetables would be amplified

Grant leads wanted more funding to be able resource their own mentoring programmes. Some were able to fund remission for mentees who were new teachers but this was not possible in all organisations or for all types of potential mentees.

3.3. Comparison to other offers

One of the research questions for the evaluation was to look at how the programme offer met provider and participant needs and how it compared to other CPD offers. Most interviewees on the course for new mentors did not have comparative experience of other similar training to draw on. Nonetheless, they said the longer nature of the programme, learning from the available resources, the opportunity to practice skills and to gain expertise from skilled trainers, tutors and from peers were all reasons why the course stood apart from similar training.

“Because it's longer term it's more to support you and help you be more aware of what mentoring is, how mentoring should look, models you can use and just the whole process in general. This has more longevity.”

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

One mentor noted that they had previously looked for mentoring and coaching courses but had not found any relevant to working in education.

“I had actually been online and have a look at lots of different mentor and courses and qualifications and I did find that this course was more suited to me because it was about mentoring people in education. A lot of the courses that I found when I was looking online were about life skill mentoring, which was not really what I was looking for.”

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER

Others drew comparisons with Level 5 and Level 7 courses they had studied in terms of the level of content covered, but noted that as their mentoring course had no assessment requirements it made it an easier fit with their work and home lives.

3.4. Strengths of the programme

The interviews and surveys highlighted particular areas where the programme design helped to meet participants' and providers' learning aims and expectations for the courses.

3.4.1. The FutureLearn platform

For the delivery partner, the design decision to not include assignments meant that there was less pressure on participants. The new and advanced skills courses required self-directed reading and completion of reflective journals, with some quizzes included on FutureLearn.

Once mentors were comfortable with the FutureLearn platform they found it easy to navigate. They particularly appreciated

- clear instructions when first using it and reminders to 'tick' reading and activities once completed; and
- variety in resources – videos, articles and other types of reading. Mentors suggested more optional quizzes and potential recordings such as podcasts to cater to different tastes.

3.4.2. Online delivery

The group sessions conducted online over Zoom were the highlight of the programme for many interviewees. The delivery partner and participants alike welcomed the decision to continue the online delivery seen in Strand 1 in Strand 2. This followed Covid-19 guidance in place at the time. Mentors across courses reported that travel time would have impacted on the time they had available for the course. Many said it would not have been feasible to participate in the programme if it had been in-person. In agreement with the ETF, the delivery partner offered a face-to-face session

in January 2020, though none of the participant interviewees were able to attend due to distance, time, and/or heightened cautions given the discovery of the Omicron Covid-19 variant.

Online delivery meant that mentors could attend sessions around their work commitments when at the workplace or working from home. Some were able to join sessions when self-isolating, which would not have been possible with in-person training.

The trainers gained experience of delivering online from Strand 1 in 2020-2021 and liked the many benefits this brought. However, they also noted that they needed to provide additional support for the online mode to be successful, which increased the cognitive load for trainers.

The 'Getting in to mentoring' course was designed to be delivered solely online. The survey results showed that all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the online resources were helpful. To offer additional support, a trainer was available online to answer queries posed on the platform and offer feedback.

3.4.3. Course flexibility

Before the new and experienced courses started, the delivery partner worked with mentors to book them into regular sessions that accommodated their existing commitments and timetables. Interviewees welcomed this flexibility and commitment to enable their participation. Some reported that they had to miss some sessions due to unforeseen circumstances. They said the delivery partner had worked quickly and efficiently to get them booked onto alternative sessions, to avoid missing a week.

Staff from the delivery partner said pressures in participants' workplaces were more likely to cause withdrawals than problems with the programme. They worked with participants to minimise the effects of these external pressures and said flexibility in rearranging sessions and offering catch-up support was vital. Mentors who had experienced this reported how comfortable they had been either joining another session or welcoming others to their session.

3.4.4. Resources

The combined resources available to participants –through FutureLearn, tutors and peers were very well received, as

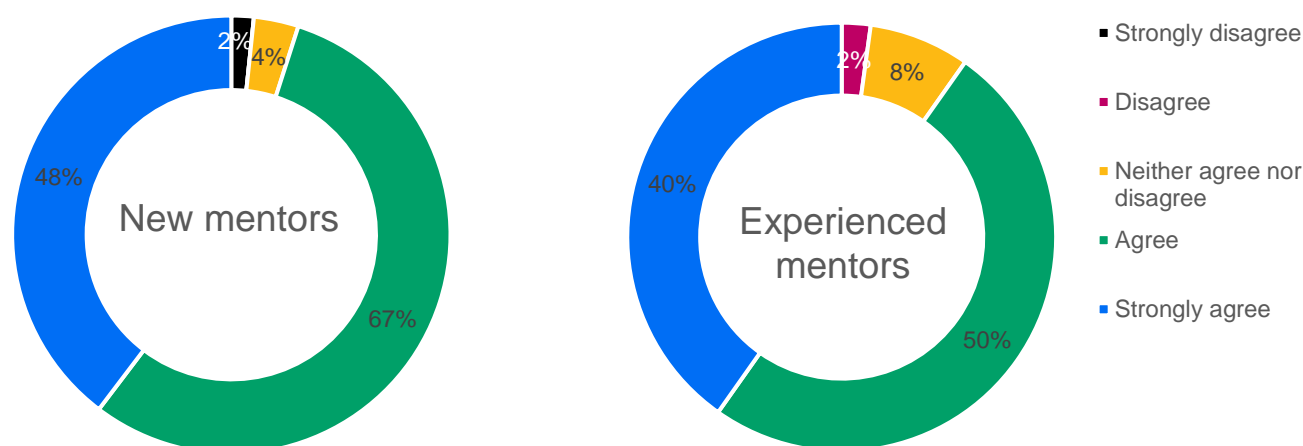
"incredibly useful, relevant and broad."

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

The practical resources were highlighted by both new and experience mentors, for example on how to draw up mentoring contracts, and business case templates for experienced mentors when proposing new programmes in their own organisations.

This point was demonstrated by responses to the survey - 95 per cent of the new mentors either agreed or strongly agreed that the online resources, including the framework and guides were helpful as did 90 per cent of experienced mentors.

Usefulness of online resources – new and experienced mentors



Source: New and experienced mentors participant surveys, IES and the ETF, 2022

Some participants on the new mentors' course found the materials early on challenging as they focused on theories that they had not previously encountered. For these, the follow up in the group session was welcomed as an aid to understanding the material.

Participants on the course for experience mentors thought materials were pitched at the right level. They were a stretch from the previous programme and for those that had not participated in the programme before, they built on their existing knowledge and experience.

New and experienced mentors welcomed the option to save the online resources – they recognised there was too much material to go through each week but that they could pick and choose the most relevant parts and save the rest for when they needed more information. Further guidance on 'essential' and 'optional' reading would be welcomed by new mentors. Some also said the theories of mentoring were better covered in group sessions than as part of preparatory reading.

3.4.5. Mentor practice

The requirement to mentor as part of the programme was welcomed by interviewees. They described establishing timetables and meetings in advance with mentees to ensure that they would meet the required hours.

A grant lead noted how this practice-based component led to the programming achieving greater impact.

"it [the mentoring activities] has certainly helped to support them really in their role and help make, I think, make it more of an established role that can continue."

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

The impact on mentor practice is reported in more detail in section 4.5.

3.4.6. Group sessions

Mentors welcomed the group sessions as a chance to ask questions and deepen their understanding of the materials and resources they accessed on FutureLearn. The group sessions were also used to practice the skills that were a key feature of the course.

"It was a very credible exercise that I went through, it wasn't just "here's a little bit about [mentoring]," it actually flowed, it had depth to it."

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER

For the new mentors, the action learning sets provided a space to talk about their mentoring practice and begin asking questions on how they could improve their mentoring drawing on advice from each other. These sessions also helped new mentors form a community of practice.

The experienced mentors on the advanced skills course used the action learning sets to practice asking questions without offering advice. This, along with the session focussed on supervision, was reported to set this course apart from other mentor training in general.

The trainers liked the opportunity to create instant access to breakout rooms in the online group sessions and noted how these created a safe space for mentors to share experiences. Confidentiality could be maximised by mixing participants from across the country. Trainers also noted that differences within breakout groups – of participants, their experience and their settings, helped bring different perspectives.

A mentor from a private training provider who was placed in a breakout session with a participant from another private training provider said this helped their thinking on setting up mentoring programmes as they operated in similar contexts.

3.4.7. Delivery partner support

Support from the training provider was reported to be excellent. Across the programme for new and experienced mentors, in order to run the sessions online there were two trainers – who each acted as a tutor for separate parts of that group, plus technical support from the delivery provider. The trainers drew on their own substantial knowledge and experiences of mentoring and allowed time for discussion and answering participants' questions. They were also available during and between sessions to answer questions online on FutureLearn or via email. In addition, participants had 1-2-1 sessions with their tutors where they could get individualised support. Positive feedback about the trainers included:

"Brought their whole selves"

NEW MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

"Really approachable, really engaging and really enthusiastic."

NEW MENTOR, SPECIALIST COLLEGE

Survey results (chapter 4.1) show that 98 per cent of new mentors and 99 per cent of experienced mentors reported that the trainers had relevant knowledge and experience. Participants on the course for experienced mentors described how they had a different tutor for their supervision session, and that this brought fresh perspective. The supervision session was highlighted by many as a highlight of the course.

"I enjoyed that, and I fed that back to [the tutor] that I am going to use the "seven-eyed" model of supervision and it was useful"

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

Additional support from the delivery provider included regular clear communication by email and where participants missed a session, support to source an alternative or catch up time with a tutor.

“The communication has been second to none. Information has always been clear. I was sent out reminders of the sessions, the emails that were sent were clear ...It was all just very clear and easy for us to use as well.”

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER

The support from all of the delivery provider staff ensured that the course ran smoothly according to participants of the programme.

3.4.8. Peer support

Group sessions offered chances to speak, share and reflect. Some participants would have liked more of this in slightly longer sessions. It enabled them to learn from others' experiences and share their own experiences, for example if they had set up a mentoring programme. Peer support was also available online, through the comments sections on FutureLearn. This was welcomed as a way to gain insights from a wider network. Tutors encouraged participants set up their own communities of practice using group messaging, which was taken up to varying degrees.

“We sent emails outside of the sessions, so they were sort of a wider community, and that I think was one of the main benefits of the of the course, to be honest. That was very interesting and helped you to reflect on your own work in your college and seek their ideas and share different ideas as well. So I think that was really useful.”

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

“This is perhaps the only area I felt wasn't as strong as the others and I can't say it was terrible. My tutor kept saying to us all in our tutor group ‘You should get a WhatsApp setup so you can send each other messages.’ But the onus was put on us and nobody ever did.”

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER

The delivery partner noted that some experienced mentors reported difficulties in setting up a community of practice compared to experiences in Strand 1 and the new mentor programmes. They attributed this to the way that the programme was delivered in Strand 2 with the group sessions and action learning sets not starting until later in the course in comparison to new mentors. Some of the interviewees on this course also reported the lack of formation of a community of practice within their cohort, apparent in the lack of a messaging group set up (despite encouragement from tutors) and from a reluctance of some participants to provide examples in action learning sets.

In interviews, new mentors described how welcome the support from peers had been in their action learning sets and messaging groups, to share experience and be able to continue to support each other once the course closed. Some also described how they would continue in the action learning sets. New mentors more commonly expressed this than experienced mentors.

A grant lead from an FE college which had new and experienced mentors participating reported that the community of practice that their mentors had established with their peers was beneficial to them.

“Well, I think the positive is that they've kind of got their contact with each other as mentors and or people who've done that that program together. And so there's the unofficial community there that they're working together.”

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

3.4.9. Employer support

Most participants indicated their organisation was supportive of their course. Some new and experienced mentors had colleagues also taking part in the mentor training programme and described having study sessions together, creating materials and documentation for their programmes or making their business plans together..

A new mentor who said support in their organisation was less strong said this was because not all staff were welcoming of the idea of introducing a mentor programme

One mentor would have liked to course documentation to expressly set out the need for a private space from which to log into the online sessions. They believed the lack of this meant that this need was not prioritised in their organisation. This had to sometimes take part from a staff room with other colleagues present, which constrained their ability to share problems and ask questions.

Some mentors described how their line managers suggested they take up the training, and their support continued as their line manager became the grant lead. They had regular meetings to check progress in line with the programme requirements. Where business cases were submitted as part of the course for experienced mentors, senior managers heard and responded to proposed plans.

Grant leads in interviews also described the support that mentors received within their own organisations. They highlighted regular meetings with the mentors to review the challenges they were facing and to deal with the administration around the programme such as logging hours and dealing with remission.

3.4.10. The grant award

As seen in Chapter 2 which explored securing agreement for taking part, the grant award was important in enabling providers to participate in the programme. One grant lead reported how the 'strings attached' to the grant award ensured that the mentoring activities were completed:

"Whenever you're involved in a project and the funding's attached, and you have to meet targets by specific deadlines, it focuses you as a college to actually do that."

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

A few grant leads explained that the grant had also been used for some of the administration costs of supporting participation on the programme such as allowing them to liaise with the mentors and put together progress reports. This was particularly complex where several mentors were taking part with remission to arrange plus liaising with their line managers and other staff.

4. OUTCOMES FOR MENTORS

Summary

- **Programme delivery:** The design of the courses for new and experienced mentors ensured that learning could be quickly contextualised to mentors' own settings, leading to more immediate impact with longer term benefits. Interviewees reported that the longer duration of the new and advanced skills courses allowed for topics to be covered in depth.
- With no requirement for assignments, interviewees found the course was easier to fit in with their work and home lives than other CPD. In the surveys, 83 per cent of new mentors and 57 percent of experienced mentors thought that the guided learning hours and self-directed learning hours expectations were realistic. These course features set the training apart from other CPD with no comparable provision known to mentors.
- All respondents on the 'Getting ready to mentor' course understood the aims and objectives of the course (29 per cent agreed and 71 per cent strongly agreed), and agreed that the modules had been useful (48 per cent agreed and 52 per cent strongly agreed) and the online resources helpful (43 per cent agreed and 57 per cent strongly agreed).
- 96 per cent of new mentors and 97 per cent of experienced mentors agreed that the modules that they had participated in were useful.
- 98 per cent of new mentors and 93 per cent of experienced mentors agreed that they had been given opportunities to apply the things they had learned in practice.
- Almost all new (98 per cent) and experienced (97 per cent) mentors agreed that they understood the aims and objectives of the mentor training programme.
- **Improved skills, confidence and knowledge:** In the surveys, 91 per cent of those on the 'Getting ready to mentor' course were more confident about becoming mentors, and 97 per cent of new mentors and 93 per cent of experienced mentors had improved their confidence in being an effective mentor. The delivery partner and ETF poll near the end of the programme also found that new and experienced mentors and those on the 'Getting ready to mentor' course were now confident in their knowledge and understanding of mentoring (88 per cent of new mentors, 95 per cent of experienced mentors and all of those on the 'Getting ready to mentor' course).
- Interviewees further demonstrated improvement with gains in confidence positively impacting work roles. For some, participation had been transformational and encouraged them to pursue more training and specialise in mentoring in the future.
- Interviewees also described how they had increased their knowledge of mentoring principles in line with the ETF's mentoring framework and learnt about the frameworks and models of coaching and mentoring. Improved listening and questioning techniques were most frequently described by interviewees (mentors and grant leads).
- Mentors were clear that participating in the programme had made a difference to their mentoring. New mentors had separated the mentoring from performance reviews and instead focussed on supporting mentees to develop competence and confidence. Their mentoring had become more structured.

As set out in section 1.2 the DfE set a number of objectives for the mentor training programme. Specifically related to mentors these included: improve the quality of mentoring through training, enhance the competencies of FE practitioners, promote a shared understanding of effective mentoring. This chapter reports on the outcomes of the training courses for mentors. These are reflected also in the logic model (section 1.2) as intermediate or short term outcomes. This evaluation can only focus on the shorter-term outcomes given the point at which it was undertaken.

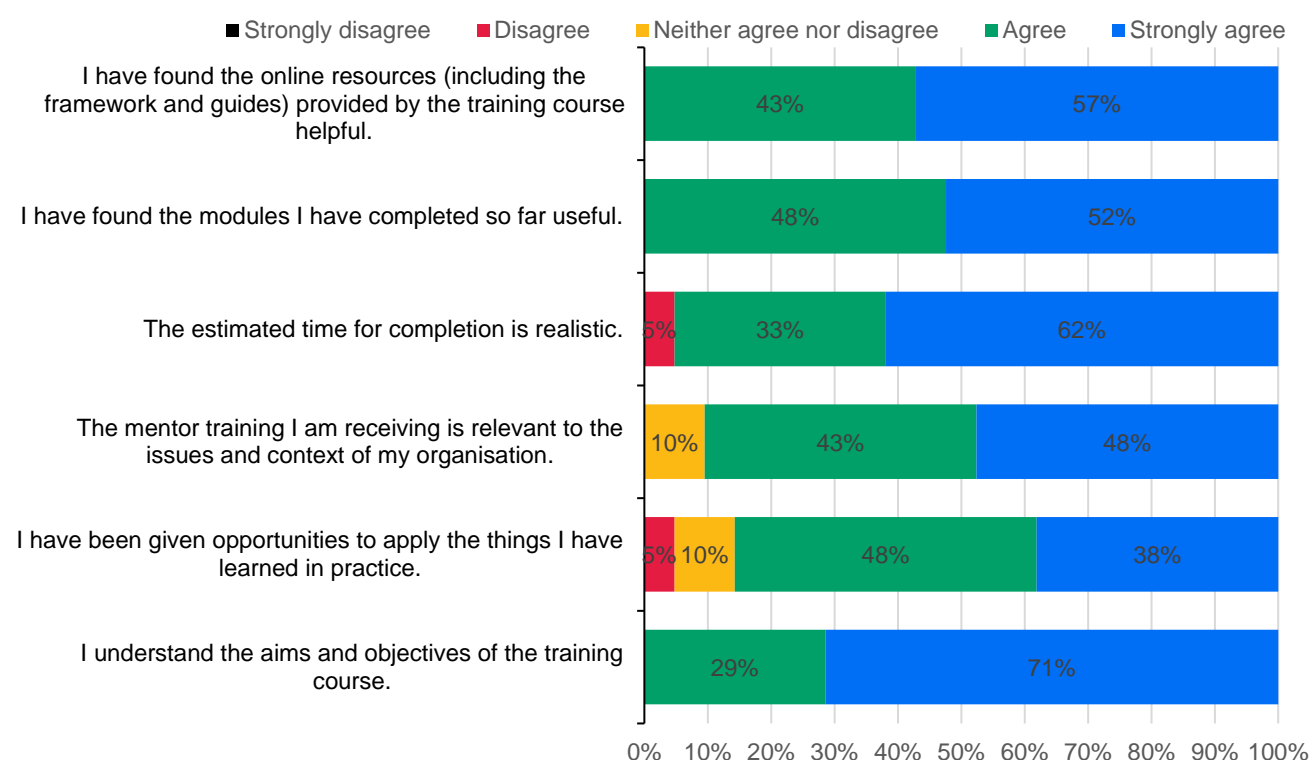
4.1. Programme delivery

Stakeholders reported that the design of the programme for new and experienced mentors ensured that learning was quickly contextualised to the mentors' own settings and therefore had the potential to make an immediate impact. The design of the course over several weeks gave mentors time to develop and practice their skills so that the learning could have more longevity. It also allowed time for multiple approaches to developmental coaching and mentoring to be covered, which mentors could then use in different mentoring relationships. An element that the advanced skills course included was supervision, which trainers believed differentiated it from other comparable CPD. It was also a key benefit for stakeholders that the programme had a sole focus on mentoring in FE. Other adjacent programmes had mentoring as one element or required mentoring with no training.

4.1.1. Overall course feedback

In the surveys, participants gave feedback on their experiences of the courses. Respondents to the 'Getting ready to mentor' survey were largely positive about their experience of the online provision, with **all respondents** either agreeing or strongly agreeing they understood the aims and objectives of the course, modules had been useful and online resources helpful (see chart below).

Course experience – Getting ready to mentor

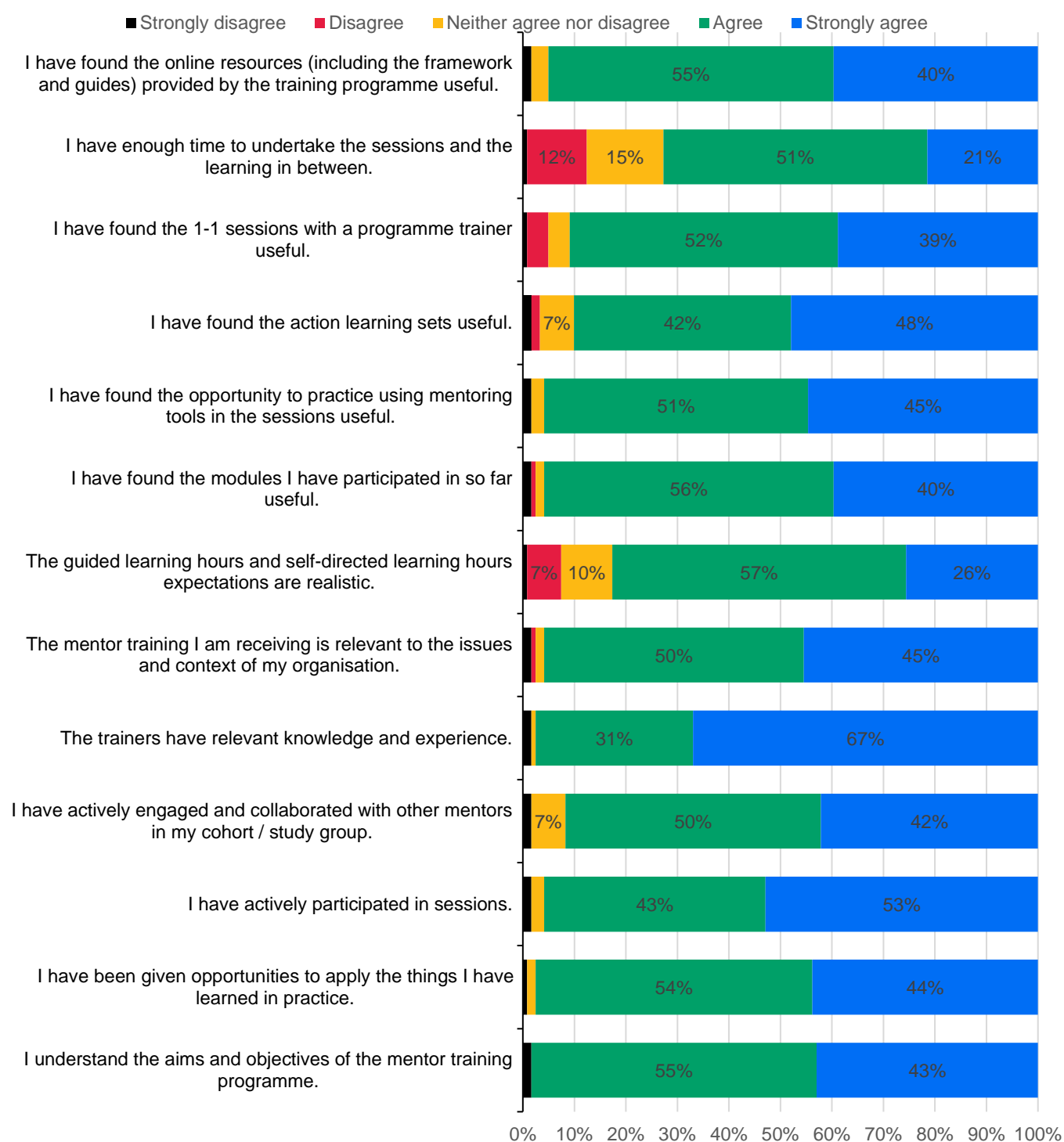


Source: Getting ready to mentor participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Respondents from the course for new mentors were very positive about the different elements of the course. Nearly all respondents (98 per cent) either agreed or strongly agreed they understood the aims and objectives of the mentor training programme, had been given opportunities to apply the things they had learned in practice, and that the trainers had relevant knowledge and experience. There were also high levels of agreements with statements about active participation in sessions, and modules being useful (responses of 96 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing).

For new mentors, there were a small number of elements where respondents were more ambivalent, namely, locating and using online resources, identifying and using relevant EdTech tools, and engaging in communities of practice.

Course experience – new mentors

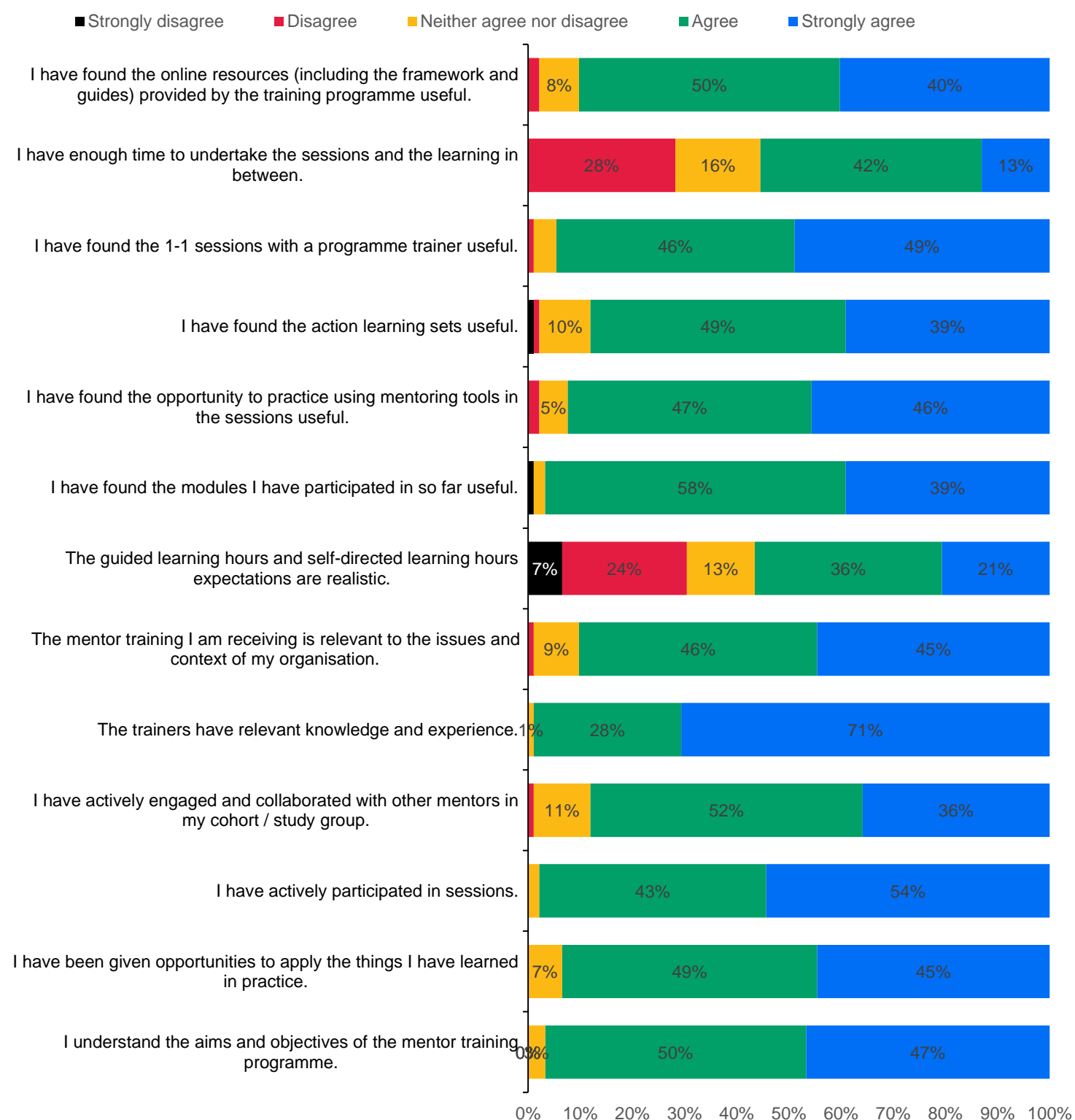


Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Experienced mentors were also very positive about most of the elements of the course. Almost all (99 per cent) either agreed or strongly agreed the trainers had relevant knowledge and experience, and 98 per cent had actively participated in sessions. Further, 97 per cent understood the aims and objectives of the training programme and found the modules they had participated in so far useful.

Similar to new mentors, the experienced mentors were also positive about actively engaging and collaborating with other mentors in their cohort, with 88 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Course experience – experienced mentors



Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

The feedback from new and experienced mentors, also included some respondents who found it more difficult to make time for the guided and self-directed learning hours and time in between sessions. As seen in Chapter 2, interviewees described challenges to meeting the 40 hours of

learning and practice with the predominant barriers caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, sickness absences and need to the learning and practice around existing timetables.

Some interviewees took some time to get comfortable with the FutureLearn online platform, and for some the amount of resources available was overwhelming.

During interviews, new mentors described the ways that the programme went beyond their expectations. One had thought the programme would be quite prescriptive about how to mentor, but instead found it helped to capture the 'essence' of how mentoring differs based on the concerns being approached. Another thought that it would just cover how to handle well-being, and instead found that it gave structure to their mentoring and was useful to implement in their practice.

Participants who took part in the course for new mentors in Strand 1 in 2020-2021 and returned for the advanced skills courses reported that this course built on the content of the previous course, without repetition. There were mixed views on how much of a 'step up' the course was in terms of further developing their mentoring skills. For some, it did not go far enough - these wanted to build further understanding of theory and practice to refine their skills. Others found that the practice of questioning skills and the change in focus of the action learning sets gave them new skills.

Those who had wanted to take part to help them set up their own mentoring programmes were satisfied that the programme had helped them with this. The course took them through the process chronologically and provided useful resources that they could adapt to their own contexts.

4.2. Knowledge and understanding of mentoring principles

As part of the online delivery of the three courses, the ETF and the delivery partner conducted polls at the beginning of the programme to measure participants' confidence, knowledge and understanding of mentoring. At the beginning of the course, the majority of new mentors were confident (77 per cent moderately to extremely confident) in their knowledge and understanding of mentoring. This improved by 11 percentage points by January 2022 (88 per cent moderately to extremely confident), one month before the programme was due to finish. The experienced mentors were also confident in their knowledge and understanding at the start of the course (92 per cent moderately to extremely confident) which increased to 95 per cent of respondents by January. For this group, the biggest increase was from those who were moderately confident to those that were very confident.

Confidence poll – new and experienced mentors

	New mentors			Experienced mentors		
	Oct '21 %	Jan '22 %	Percentage point difference	Oct '21 %	Jan '22 %	Percentage point difference
Not at all confident	2	0	-2ppt	0	0	no change
Slightly confident	20	12	-8ppt	8	4	-4ppt
Moderately confident	63	54	-9ppt	50	31	-19ppt
Very confident	13	34	+21ppt	41	62	+21ppt
Extremely confident	1	0	-1ppt*	1	2	+1ppt

* While ostensibly negative this might actually reflect increased understanding of mentoring and a reassessment of how confident they could feel

Source: ETF and delivery partner poll, IES and the ETF, 2022

The participants on the 'Getting ready to mentor' online course were polled only at the end of the course and on different dates dependent on when the participant completed the course.

Confidence poll – Getting ready to mentor

	%
Not at all confident	.
Slightly confident	.
Moderately confident	43
Very confident	50
Extremely confident	7

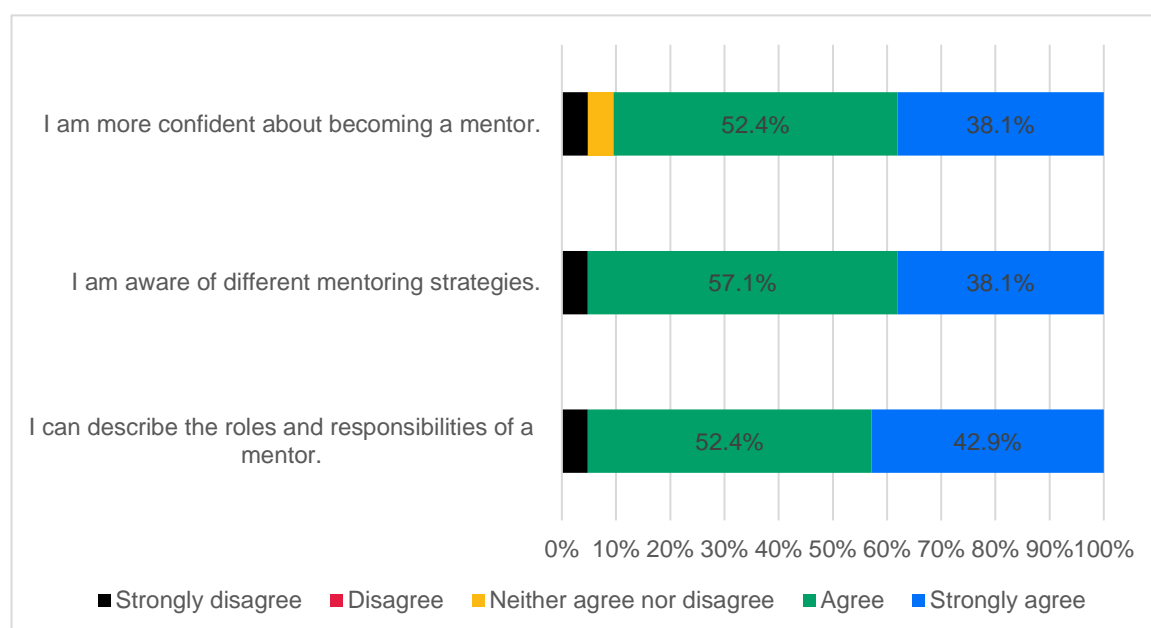
Source: ETF and delivery partner poll, IES and the ETF, 2022

The polls showed that over time the proportions who were 'very' or 'extremely' confident in their knowledge and understanding of mentoring increased by 10 percentage points for new mentors and 12 percentage points for experienced mentors. A third (34 per cent) of new mentors were 'very' or 'extremely' confident in their knowledge and understanding of mentoring as were close to two-thirds (64 per cent) of experienced mentors towards the end of their programmes.

4.2.1. Getting ready to mentor

In the survey of the 'Getting ready to mentor' course, 90 per cent of respondents reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they were more confident about becoming a mentor.

Knowledge of mentoring from the course – Getting ready to mentor



Source: Getting ready to mentor participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

The survey data was analysed for correlations between different factors - a statistical method that calculates the level of change in one variable due to the change in another. This showed a statistically significant correlation between respondents being able to provide feedback to senior leaders about their organisation's mentoring system and being able to describe the roles and responsibilities of a mentor as well as being aware of different mentoring strategies. There was also a statistically significant correlation between senior leadership supporting participation and becoming aware of different mentoring strategies. Becoming more confident about becoming a mentor was correlated with opportunities to network with other mentors in their organisation.¹⁴

¹⁴ The correlation between these variables is significant at the 0.05 level

4.2.2. New mentors

In the surveys the respondents on the course for new mentors were again positive about the skills and knowledge that they had gained. There were seven elements that 95 per cent or more agreed or strongly agreed that they had developed or improved. These were: understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a mentor (98 per cent agreed or strongly agreed), confidence in being an effective mentor and knowledge of different mentoring strategies (both 97 per cent), knowledge of questioning techniques and listening skills (96 per cent), knowledge of how to structure mentoring meetings, how to support mentees to set effective goals, and understanding of how I learn and develop the impact of this on my mentoring (all 95 per cent).

Where respondents were less positive – in improving their knowledge of how to provide support to improve their mentee's emotional resilience, 83 per cent of respondents still agreed this skill had been developed.

Statistical analysis of the correlations between the reported gains experienced by mentors in skills and knowledge and the course coverage, shows that there were statistically significant correlations between several factors. The coverage of questioning skills on the course for new mentors was statistically significantly correlated with improved confidence in being an effective mentor and mentors' ability to self-reflect on their practice. Giving and receiving feedback during the programme was positively correlated with improvement in new mentors own capabilities in giving and receiving feedback. This means that where incidences of giving and receiving feedback are higher there is also a higher reported improvement in giving feedback, as well as improved understanding of when it is helpful to challenge mentees, and improved knowledge of how to provide support to improve mentee's emotional resilience.

The inclusion of introspective and reflective practice on the course is positively correlated with mentors' improved knowledge of how to provide support to their mentee's emotional resilience, improved ability to self-reflect on their practice and improved understanding of how to give and receive feedback.

Engaging in communities of practice was positively correlated with improved knowledge of how to provide support to improve mentee's emotional resilience and improved ability to self-reflect on their practice.

Further correlations were seen between:

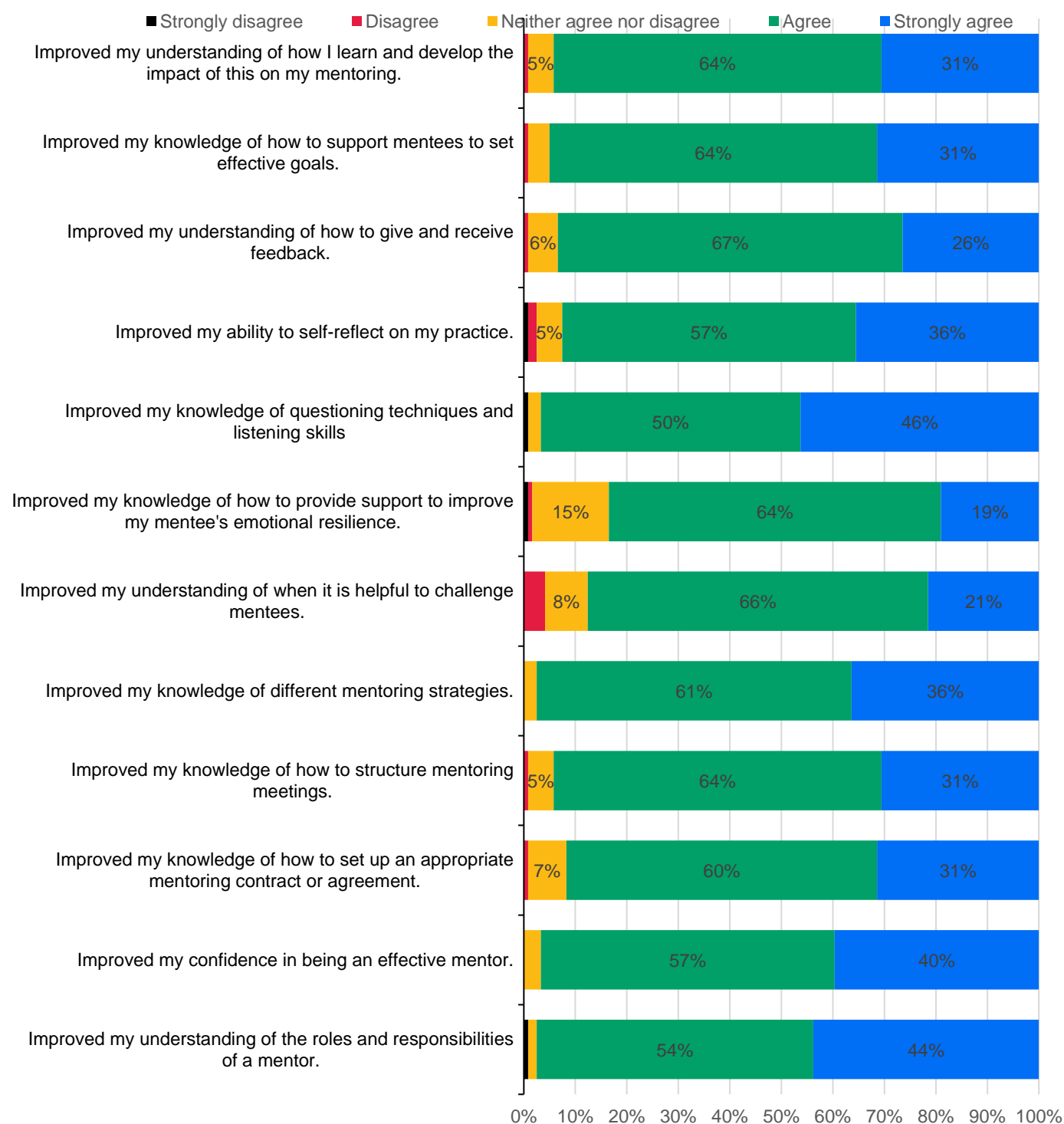
- Supporting mentees' wellbeing and improved understanding of how to give and receive feedback.
- Theories of pedagogy and adult learning and improved ability to self-reflect on practice.
- Modelling effective practice and improved understanding of how to give and receive feedback.
- Using research evidence to inform practice and improved knowledge of how to provide support to improve mentee's emotional resilience.

Further analysis showed improved understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a mentor was correlated with organisational support in a statistically significant way. The key factors were organisational support for participation in the programme, the organisation providing enough time to

participate and the organisation promoting a learning culture.¹⁵

Improved confidence amongst new mentors was also positively correlated with an organisation that promotes a learning culture. Knowledge of how to structure mentoring meetings and organisations that provided time for mentors and mentees to meet were also positively correlated.

Mentoring skills and knowledge – New mentors



Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

¹⁵ The correlation between these variables is significant at the 0.05 level

4.2.3. Experienced mentors

Survey respondents from the course for experienced mentors were also positive about the skills and knowledge that they had gained from the programme. There were three elements that 95 per cent or more agreed or strongly agreed that they had developed or improved. These were: improved understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a mentor (96 per cent), improved knowledge of how to support mentees to set effective goals, and improved understanding of the role of peer supervision (both 95 per cent). Also, 93 per cent of experienced mentors agreed that they had improved their confidence in being an effective mentor. All remaining items were scored positively by over 80 per cent of respondents.

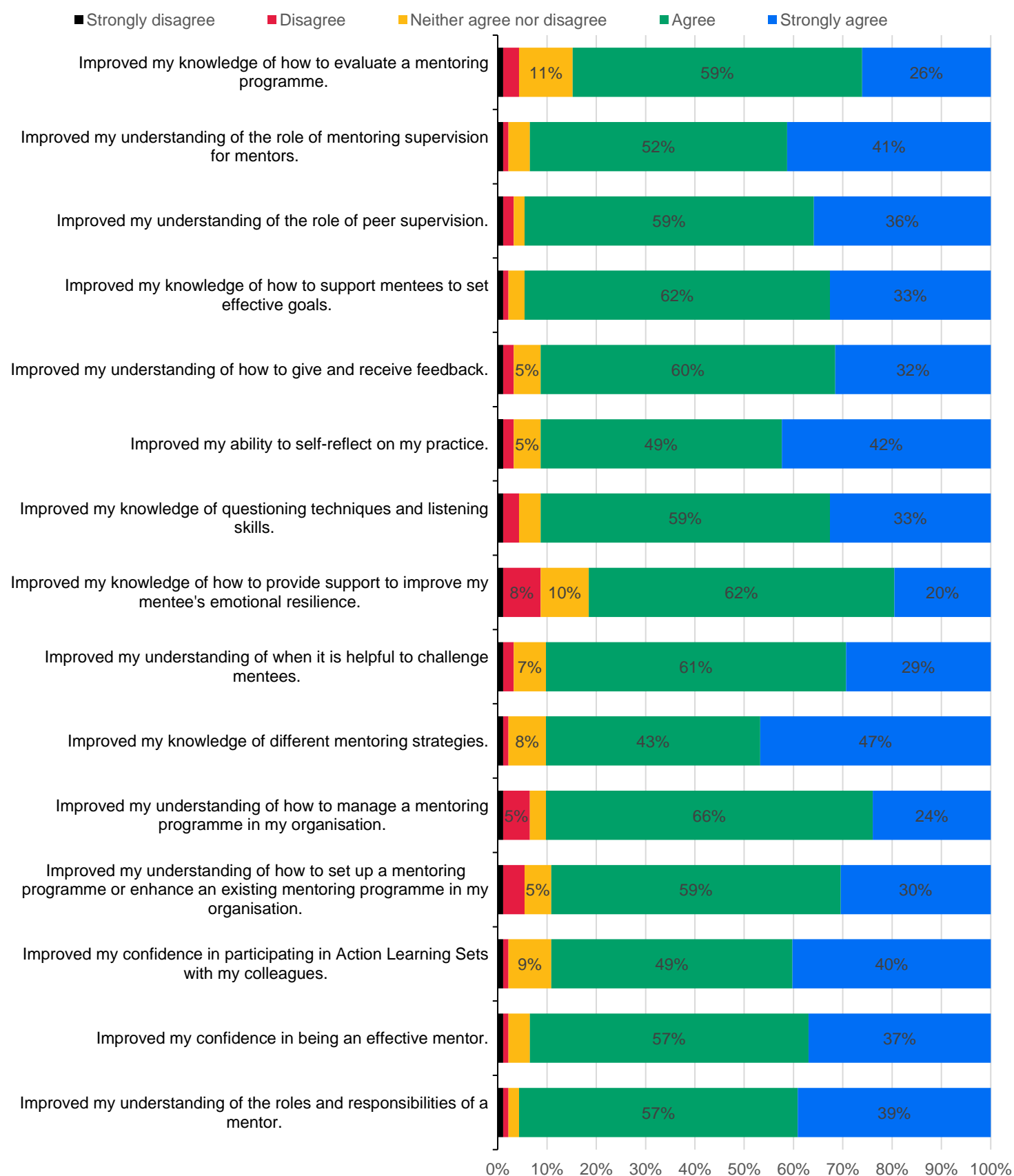
Positive correlations were found between:

- Improved understanding of when it is helpful to challenge mentees and directing one's personal development as a mentor;
- Improved understanding of how to give and receive feedback and making use of peer observation and assessment;
- Improved knowledge of how to evaluate a mentoring programme and designing a mentorship programme for organisations, aligned with organisational needs.

Where scores for these elements increased, so did the other factors associated with course coverage.

For the experienced mentors there were also negative correlations – where as one score increases the other sees decreases, and vice versa. These negative correlations tended to be associated with establishing and engaging in communities of practice, which evaluation evidence suggested had not taken root fully in this course. More specifically, engaging in communities of practice was negatively correlated with: improved understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a mentor; improved confidence in being an effective mentor; improved confidence in participating in action learning sets with colleagues; improved understanding of how to set up a mentoring programme or enhance an existing mentoring programme in their organisation; improved understanding of how to manage a mentoring programme in their organisation; improved knowledge of different mentoring strategies; improved knowledge of questioning techniques and listening skills; improved knowledge of how to support mentees to set effective goals; and improved understanding of the role of mentoring supervision for mentors. The timing of the qualitative interviews (happening before this analysis was completed) meant that they were not able to shed light on these negative correlations. The challenges in establishing communities of practice, or the take up of communities of practice by those less confident might be inferred to have an impact on this.

Mentoring skills and knowledge – experienced mentors



Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

4.2.4. Knowledge and experience – qualitative findings

In the interviews, the new and experienced mentors described the ways in which they had increased their knowledge of mentoring principles in line with the ETF's mentoring framework. Their reflections of previous mentoring that they had taken part in showed they had re-defined their definition of mentoring. New mentors learnt about the frameworks and models of coaching and mentoring, building from theory (the different models and approaches) to practical understanding of mentoring principles.

Both new and experience mentors gained knowledge of the mentoring cycle. New mentors described how they established a better structure and formalised the mentoring process, with clear start and end points and actionable targets.

Experienced mentors described how they were starting to develop their programmes and evaluating them to ensure they could improve them based on evidence which would build the case for their sustained role in the organisation.

The experienced mentors returning in Strand 2 from Strand 1 described how the course for new mentors had developed their initial understanding and the advanced skills course had extended the application of those principles.

4.3. Improved confidence in mentoring

Improved confidence was an outcome included in the logic model, which stated that 85 per cent of mentors should have improved their confidence in their mentoring. As seen in the section above, 97 per cent of new mentors and 93 per cent of experienced mentors agreed that they had improved their confidence in being an effective mentor.

Interviewees reported that the feedback that mentors had received as part of the programme and during their mentoring practice helped them to feel more confident in their mentoring skills. Both new and experienced mentors described how their questioning techniques had improved, how they listened better without interrupting and how they could more readily apply their skills in different mentoring situations.

"I feel like week-on-week I've become more confident in my mentoring ability and now I've finished I feel like I can definitely handle a range of mentoring situations."

NEW MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

For one new mentor this new confidence extended to other areas of their working life: they were now more confident in their general abilities and in providing support to others.

There were some experienced mentors who said they were already well-skilled yet the course had made them feel more confident in what they were doing and challenged them to be more ambitious for what mentoring could achieve in their organisation.

For a small but substantial number of mentors, the programme had been transformational. It had improved their skills and confidence to an extent that it would potentially change their career pathway with some mentors looking for additional mentor training and opportunities.

"To me, inspirational. The fact that it's inspired me to be more effective within my job role and it's inspired my mentees to progress within their own career."

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER

Grant leads observed that as the mentors got more skilled in their mentoring, they also became

more confident in their mentoring practice. A few grant leads also described how this new confidence in mentors meant they saw opportunity to offer mentoring beyond their own department.

4.4. Improved mentoring skills

Interviews with the mentors help to capture the ways in which the mentors thought they had improved their skills, knowledge and confidence. Referencing this to the logic model (Chapter 1), these are the intermediate outcomes that are expected to occur as a result of the programme. These are needed in order to lead to the longer term outcomes and objectives of the programme to establish whole-institution approaches to mentoring and support teacher retention.

Overall, mentors were positive about the skills they had developed from the programme. For example, one new mentor who wanted to improve their listening skills said the course had helped them to improve their skills, in their mentoring role and in their personal life. Experienced mentors too described their improved listening and questioning skills to develop 'real' listening skills.

Skills development was closely linked to confidence for some interviewees. One new mentor said that while they felt more confident, competence would come with more practice. Another new mentor also described this:

"A lot [more confident], but with a caveat. I have the tools, now I just need the practice."

NEW MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

The grant leads generally showed good awareness of the skills that the mentors were developing as part of the programme. One thought the mentors in the advanced skills course had not developed their skills as much as the participants on the course for new mentors. However, others gave examples of how they saw the mentors showing the increased skills.

Grant leads, in the majority, also observed wider skill development – outside of the private mentoring relationship. They had seen mentors make use of better questioning techniques in their different roles, and using their questioning and listening techniques in conversations with senior colleagues. They could see that mentors had developed understanding of the different models of mentoring and the applicability in different situations. Documenting the mentoring relationship in a reflective journal enabled the mentors to evidence how it was supporting mentees, and brought structure to the mentoring programmes. The grant lead saw improvements generally in the quality of mentors' work and the taking on of new opportunities and projects:

"I think it's tangible in the way their confidences improved, the quality of their report writing, their target writing in terms of identifying, we call it, even better 'ifs' within our reporting of learning walks. So they're able to phrase those even better 'ifs' in a way that starts a conversation with the teacher rather than sort of wags a finger and says, 'you didn't do this very well.'"

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

4.5. Changes to mentoring practice

One of the aims of the evaluation was to look for the potential of attributing early or indicative outcomes to programme participation. This section reports on the way that mentors described their mentoring practice prior to taking part on the courses – in both the surveys and interviews. It also then reports on the descriptions in the survey about the impact of the training on their mentoring practice.

4.5.1. Mentoring practice, prior to the programme

During interviews, the mentors discussed their experiences of mentoring in their organisations prior to their participation in the training programme. These were often described as ad-hoc and informal, depending on whether senior or experienced staff had availability to support more junior staff:

“We got chosen to be a mentor because we were a good example”

NEW MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

Mentors described informal support between peers and in teams that helped increase competence and confidence. From their descriptions, there was little training available to those who mentored.

More formal processes were linked to performance management and designed to focus on ‘issues’ with practice identified during probation periods, learning walks, observations or Ofsted inspections. Mentoring also focussed on new staff ‘on-boarding’ through buddying systems but with no formal expectations about what form this would take.

4.5.2. Descriptions of mentoring since participating in the programme

The mentors were asked to describe in the interviews, the mentoring they had undertaken since starting on the mentor training programme.

In respect of who they mentored, during interviews some new mentors described being assigned mentees from within the same department or new to their organisation, whilst other sought out mentees through their grant leads. In interviews, the new mentors also described how they had separated mentoring from performance reviews and instead focussed on supporting mentees to develop competence and confidence. Their mentoring had become more structured and one explicitly mentioned the contract they drew up with their mentees to delineate the mentoring from performance management and that could be used to set actionable goals.

Several of the new mentors described in interviews how they had taken a step back away from giving advice to mentees and relied more on the mentees devising their own solutions by asking questions and giving the mentee time to think. They described ‘guided conversations’, setting actions and reviewing, and a non-judgemental approach. One who mentored staff within the same department described the practical support and feedback they provided through using observations.

Commonly for the experienced mentors, mentoring practices reflected the models used in the training, which they discussed during interviews:

- ‘Non-judgemental and supportive’ (Experienced mentor, General FE college)
- ‘Supportive’ (Experienced mentor, Local Authority training provider)
- ‘Non-judgemental, empowering for sure’ (Experienced mentor, General FE college)
- ‘Developmental’ (Experienced mentor, General FE college)
- ‘Empowering’ (Experienced mentor, Sixth form college)
- ‘Transformational’ (Experienced mentor, Private training provider).

Experienced mentors during interviews described feeling confident that their approach with their mentees was tailored to the mentees’ needs and that the different theories and models covered in the programme had given them the tools to be able to adapt their style to the different contexts. However, where they retained responsibility for performance and development reviews as part of

probation or improvement plans, they were also 'judge mentoring' and had to be directive. In one case an experienced mentor said that while this was how the mentoring had to begin, they tried to bring in the features of ONSIDE¹⁶ mentoring although these were not captured in college systems.

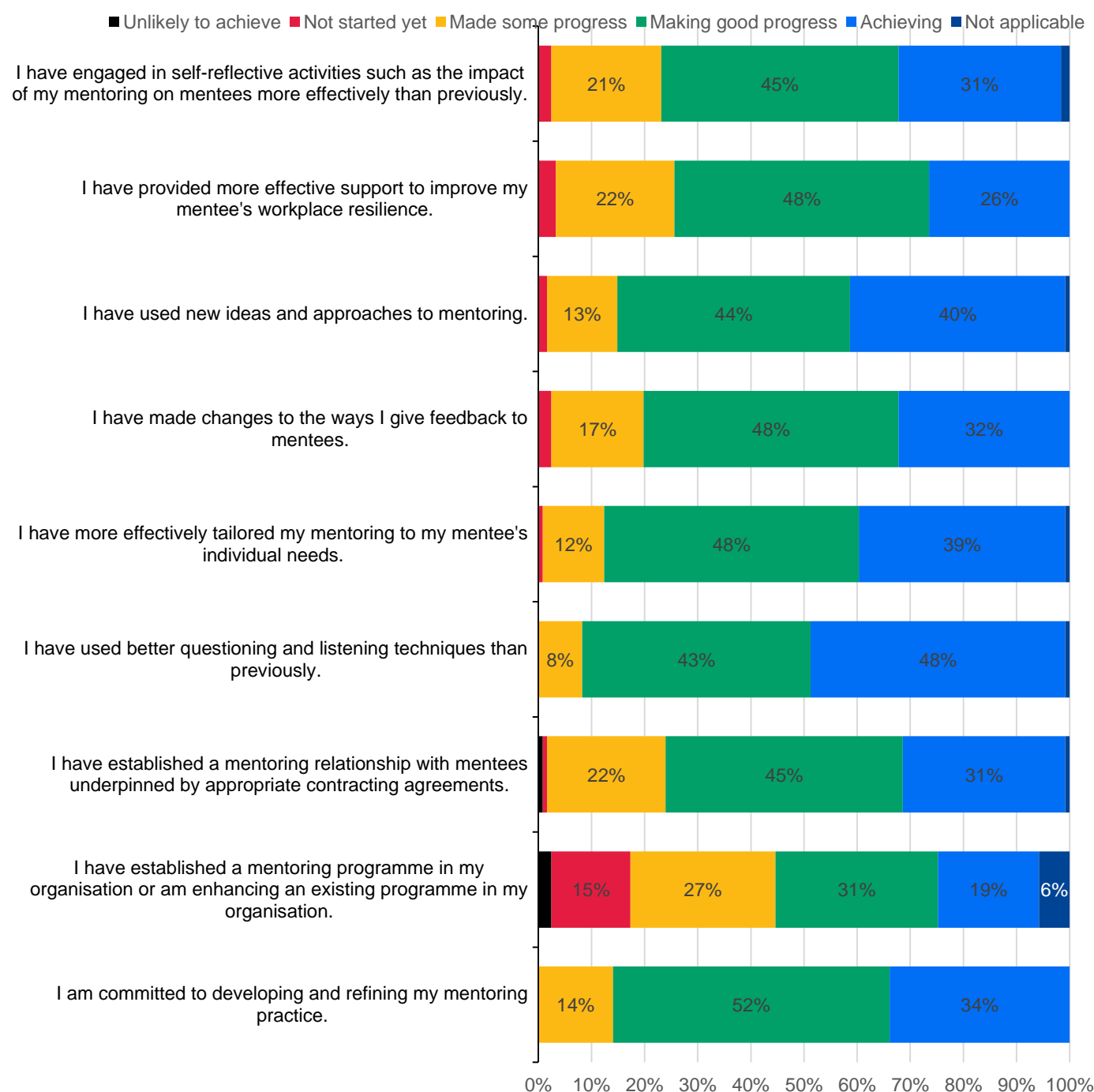
The chart below shows the survey responses for mentors, describing the changes in their mentoring practice. New mentors most frequently described making progress in using better questioning and listening techniques than previously – 91 per cent described making good progress or were achieving this. They also described making use of new ideas and approaches to mentoring (84 per cent either making good progress or achieving this).

The survey data showed a significant positive correlation between new mentors whose mentoring relationship with mentees was underpinned by appropriate contracting agreements and the mentors reporting that they could provide feedback to senior leaders about their mentoring system.¹⁷

¹⁶ A framework for developmental mentoring, as found in the ETF's Mentoring framework and for Practitioners in the FE sector and Hobson, A (2016). 'Judgementoring and how to avert it: introducing ONSIDE Mentoring for beginning teachers', International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education, 5(2), pp.87-110.

¹⁷ The correlation between these variables is significant at the 0.05 level

Mentoring practice – new mentors

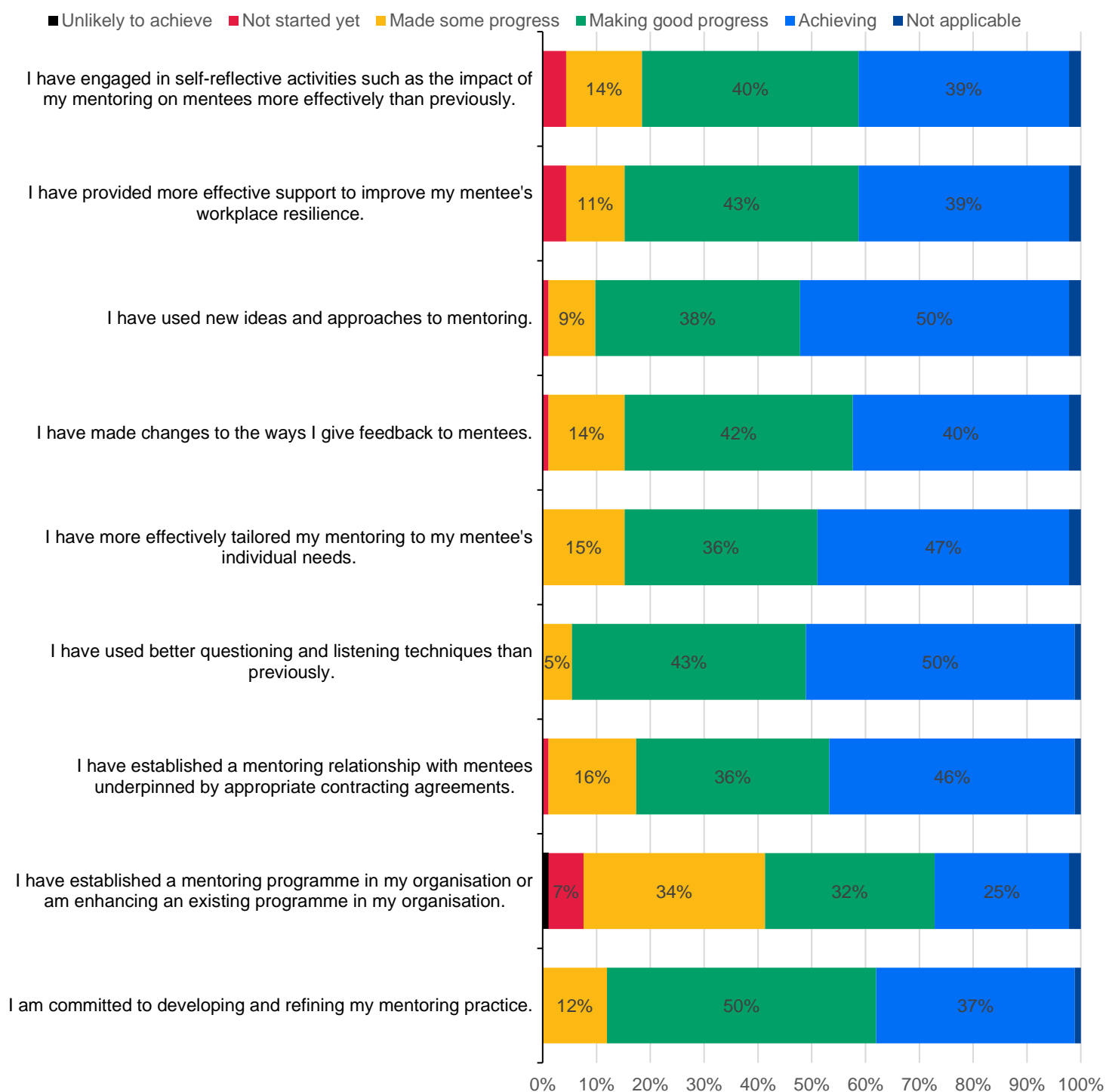


Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF. 2022

In the survey, experienced mentors were most likely to report that they were using better questioning and listening techniques than previously (43 per cent making good progress and 50 per cent achieving, 93 per cent combined). They were also making good progress or achieving using new ideas and approaches to mentoring (88 per cent) and being committed to developing and refining their mentoring practice (87 per cent).

As with new mentors, the experienced mentors were less likely to report that they had established or enhanced a mentoring programme in their organisation; 8 per cent reported that they had not started yet or were unlikely to achieve this with 57 per cent having achieved or making good progress towards this.

Mentoring practice – experienced mentors



Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

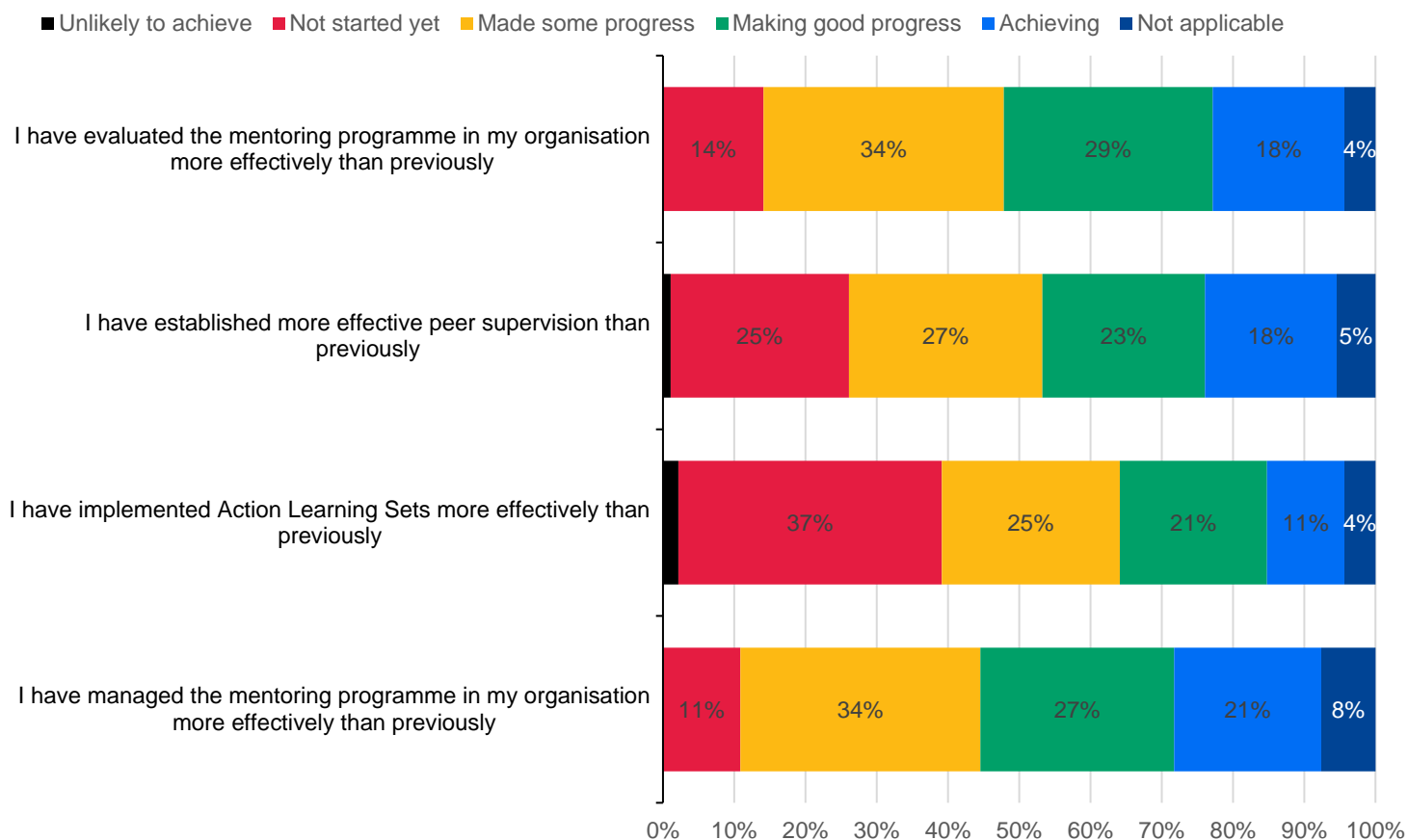
Further statistical analysis of the experienced mentor survey data shows there were positive correlations between:

- Establishing a mentoring programme or enhancing an existing programme in their organisation and the course covering the designing of a mentorship programme;
- Using better questioning and listening techniques than previously and the course covering how to apply different mentoring models and activities with mentees in response to different needs and contexts;

- Mentors making changes to the ways they give feedback to mentees and the course covering theories of pedagogy and adult learning as well as use of peer observation and assessment;
- Engaging in self-reflective activities more effectively than previously and the course covering how to apply different mentoring models and activities with mentees in response to different needs and contexts.¹⁸

The experienced mentors were also asked specifically about the impact on their practice related to the additional aims of the advanced skills programme. Just under half of respondents reported that they were achieving or making good progress in managing the mentoring programme in their organisation more effectively than previously and evaluating this mentoring programme more effectively than previously (both 48 per cent). In implementing action learning sets more effectively, one quarter (25 per cent) had made some progress while 37 per cent had not yet started. One quarter of the respondents were also yet to start establishing more effective supervision than previously, while 41 per cent were making good progress or achieving this.

Impact on practice – experienced mentors



Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

¹⁸ The correlation between these variables is significant at the 0.05 level

5. BENEFITS TO MENTEES AND PROVIDERS

Summary

- **Impact on mentees:** Mentees gave feedback about topic areas covered with their mentors – this most frequently included understanding the strengths and weaknesses in their performance, observations, lesson planning and managing workloads. 88 per cent said their mentor helped them understand their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Mentees agreed (94 per cent) that mentorship contributed to their professional development and their mentor asked helpful questions. 80 per cent agreed they had become more confident in their teaching abilities as a result of being mentored.
- **Staff retention:** The potential for mentoring to improve staff retention was recognised by interviewees, who acknowledged this was difficult to measure within a one-year programme cycle. Mentors gave examples of feedback they received from their mentees who said that they would not have stayed in their role without the mentoring they received. Their individual evaluations of the mentoring included increased staff satisfaction scores.
- **Institutional approaches to mentoring:** A key aim for the programme is to develop whole-institution approaches to developmental mentoring and raising the status and recognition of the mentoring role. Positive evidence about organisational support is an indicator that this is emerging. Interviewees described how their mentoring practice had changed from being ad hoc and tied in with performance reviews to structured and using development models. This was not universally the case; some mentors who remained in Quality roles they would still be expected to use mentoring in performance reviews as well as in supporting new teachers.
- **Key barriers:** The key barrier to implementation of new mentoring approaches was the lack of funding to continue to pay for remission from other roles, which would allow mentors and mentees time to meet. While the grant award for the programme covers mentoring during the programme, mentors were not confident that they would be enabled by their organisations to continue in the mentoring role after the programme finished.

The objectives for the mentoring training programme included outcomes relating to mentees and also the mentors' own organisations (providers). These objectives – to support new entrants to FET to access mentoring, support the retention of staff, and work towards whole-institution approaches to mentoring, are reported in this chapter.

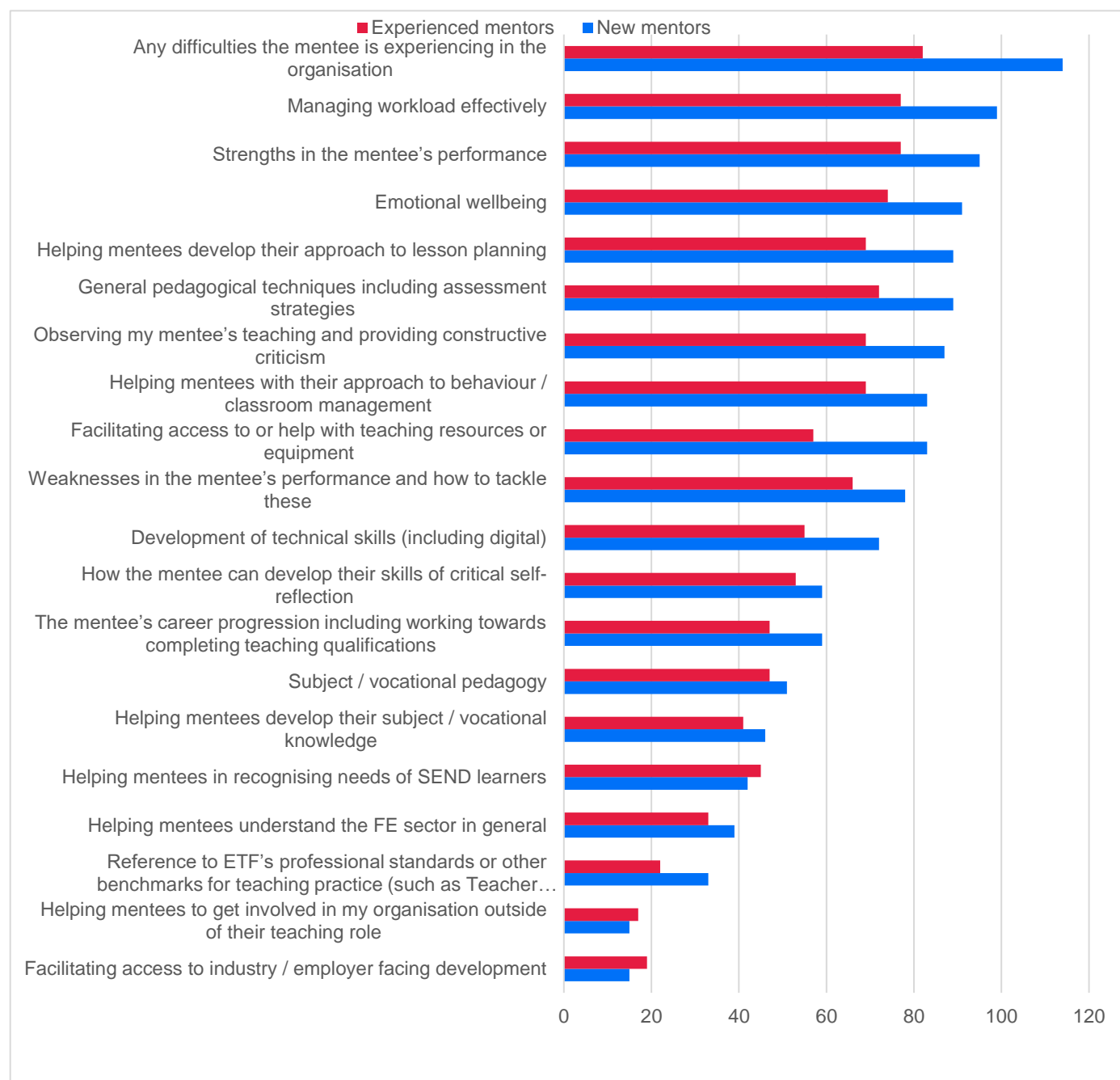
5.1. Benefits to mentees

The evaluation collected evidence on benefits to mentees through the mentor surveys and interviews, and a survey of mentees distributed by the grant leads and mentors.

5.1.1. Mentor reported benefits

In their surveys, the new and experienced mentors were asked to indicate the topic areas that they covered in their mentoring meetings with mentees. While the magnitude of their responses varied, the order of topics they reported to cover was very similar, as shown in the chart below. The most frequently covered topic was any difficulties the mentee was experiencing in the organisation, followed by managing workload, strengths in the mentee's performance and their emotional wellbeing.

Topics covered in mentoring meetings – new and experienced mentors *



*Multiple response question so percentage add up to more than 100

Source: New and experienced mentors participant surveys, IES and the ETF, 2022

In the interviews, the mentors also discussed what was covered in the mentoring meetings. Some described how observations were often used, however not routinely. Instead, the approach was only taken forward where both they and their mentee agreed it to be important to build understanding of any issue and be able to provide mentoring to address it.

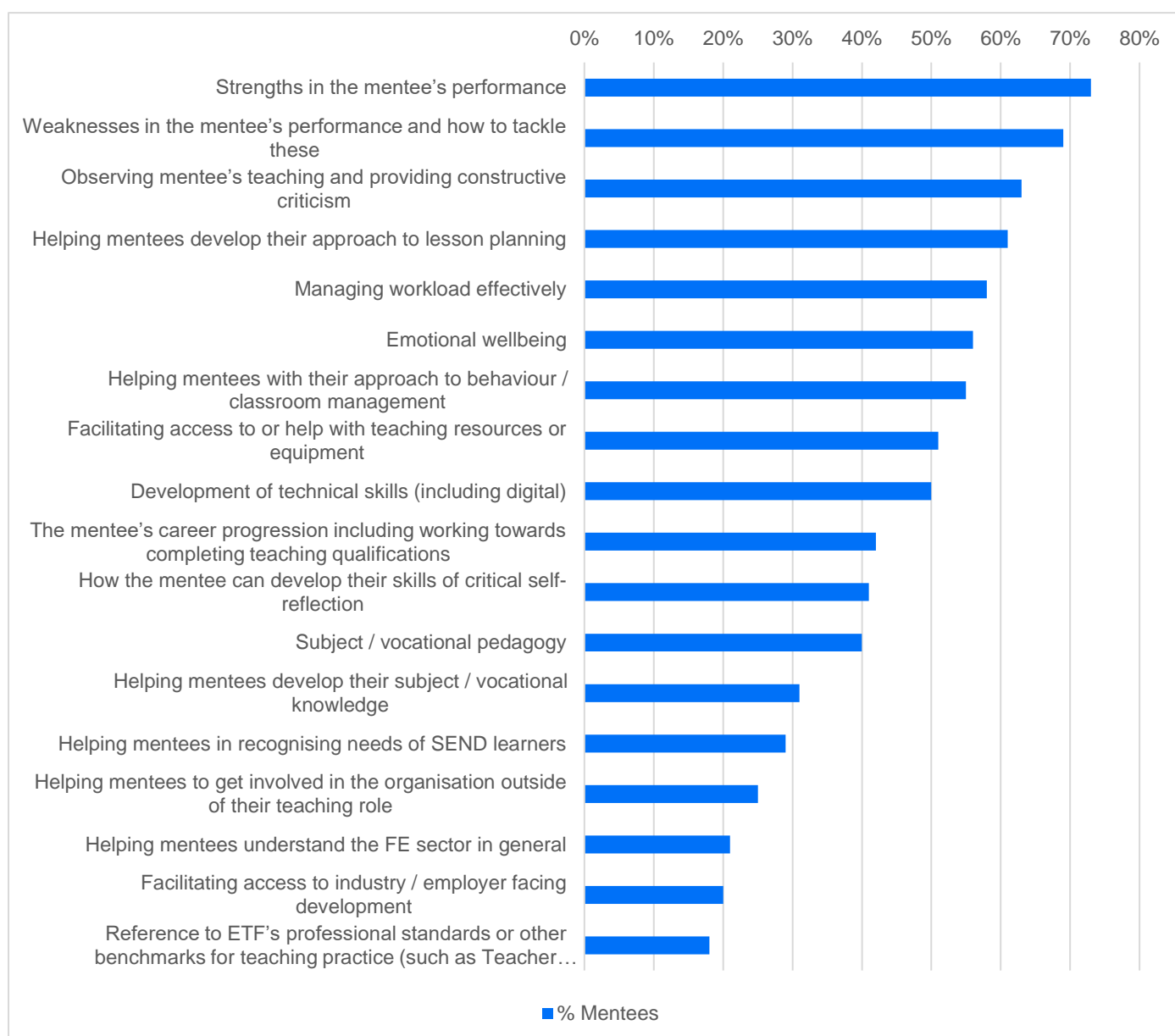
Mentors reported that they and their mentees agreed tasks for the mentee to complete during the mentorship. Some mentors used benchmarking and scoring to help the mentees see their progress during the course of the mentorship.

5.1.2. Mentee reported benefits

The mentees who responded to the survey most frequently reported that they spoke about the

strengths and weaknesses in their performance during mentoring meetings (see chart below).

Topics covered in mentoring meetings – mentees*



*Multiple response question so percentages add up to more than 100

Source: Mentee survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

A typical response from a mentee to the survey described:

"Ideas/ways in which I could improve my current practice. Also highlighting the qualities I have currently got and how I can further develop these."

MENTEE, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

For another mentee the focus on their practice centred on behaviour management for one disruptive student. The mentee was an experienced teacher and had tried already a number of strategies. They invited the mentor to observe a lesson, which meant the strengths of their teaching could be highlighted and allowed the mentor to provide constructive feedback on further approaches that could be tested.

“This has been extremely advantageous as she identified all the positives...She has given me some amazing strategies, which I am trailing [and] she is enabling me to slowly embed this, adding new tools to the teaching box on a weekly / fortnightly basis.”

MENTEE, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

In their survey, over half of the mentees reported that their mentoring covered emotional wellbeing. In the interviews, the mentees described how wellbeing discussions helped them to consider how personal difficulties could impact on their role, how to manage returns to work after periods of long term sickness and emotional support in times of stress. Most of the mentees selected and described multiple ways that they had received support from their mentor.

“I have received significant support from my mentor as this is my NQT year. She has provided me with a range of pedagogical approaches to trial with different groups of learners, a safe space to discuss any difficulties I am facing within the institution, time dedicated to lesson observations and feedback to facilitate my development, discussions and active help researching career progression and helping me to approach behaviour management with different groups of learners. I feel this support has been crucial in my journey so far.”

MENTEE, GENERAL FE AND TERTIARY

In addition to the multiple choice categories shown in the chart above, in open text responses, the respondents to the mentee survey described a focus on pedagogical techniques, general support, receiving constructive feedback and also digital support. Digital support included digital skills development for teaching online as well as general IT skills such as getting to know their organisations' systems.

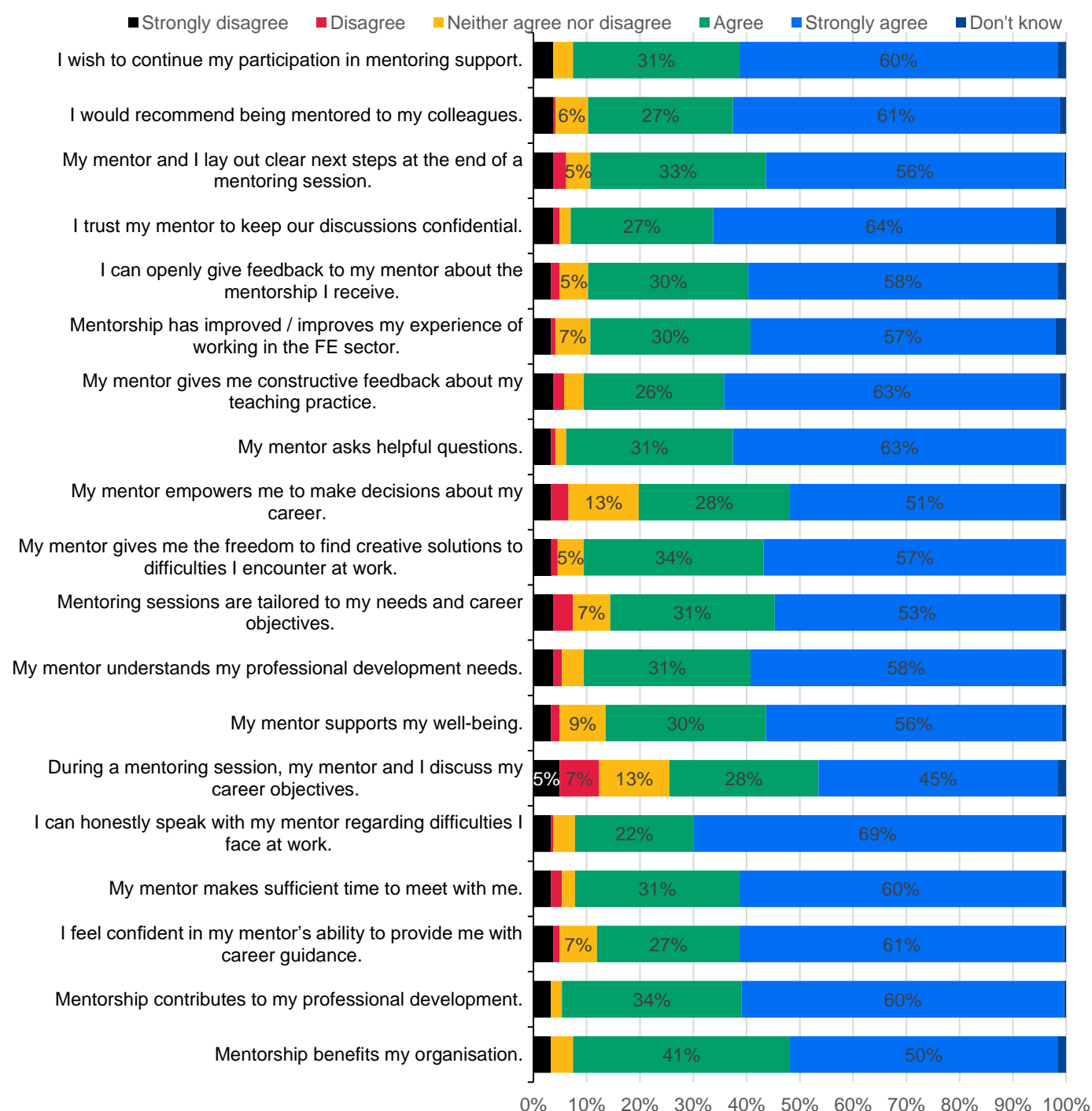
5.1.3. Perceptions of mentoring

The survey also asked mentees for their perceptions of mentoring. As with the feedback from mentors, these were positive. There were two features where 94 per cent of the mentee respondents agreed or strongly agreed: that mentorship contributes to their professional development and their mentor asked helpful questions.

There were another six features with which 91 per cent of mentees either agreed or strongly agreed: mentorship benefits their organisation; their mentor made sufficient time to meet with them; that they could honestly speak with their mentor regarding difficulties they faced at work; their mentor gives them the freedom to find creative solutions to difficulties they encounter at work; that they trust their mentor to keep their discussions confidential; and finally that they wish to continue their participation in mentoring support.

Least frequently reported was that mentees discussed their career objectives with their mentors – 73 per cent of mentees agreed or strongly agreed that this happened, while 12 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed (see chart below).

Perceptions and experiences of mentoring - mentees



Source: Mentee survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

5.1.4. Impact on mentees

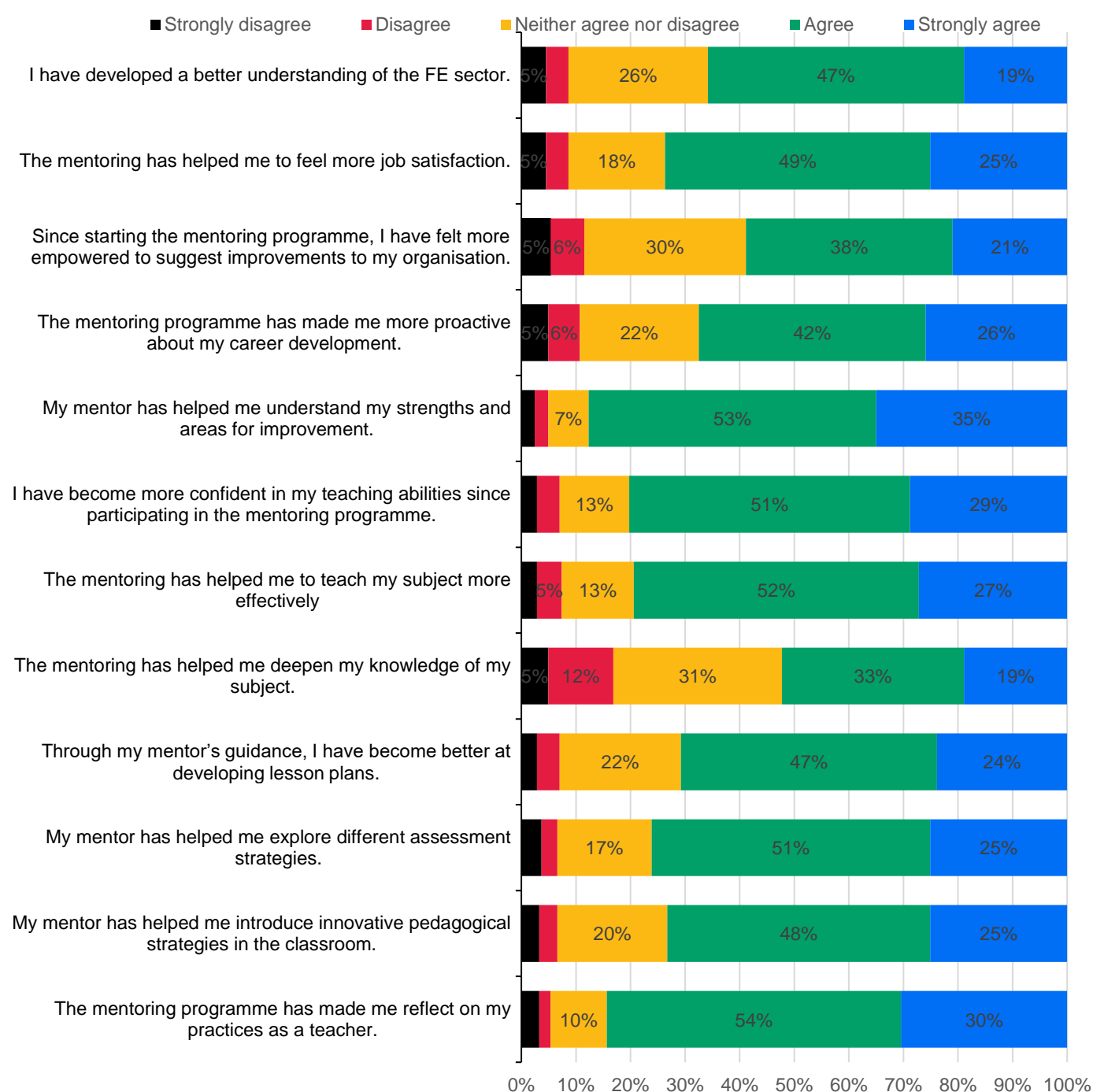
Mentees responding to the survey were asked about the impact that mentoring had. Reflecting the content of the mentoring meetings, the most frequently cited impact was the mentor helping them to understand their strengths and areas for improvement – 88 per cent of mentees agreed or strongly agreed that this had happened for them. Next, 84 per cent of mentees agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring had made them reflect on their practices as a teacher and 80 per cent had become more confident in their teaching abilities. The category with lowest agreement was that the mentoring had them deepen their subject knowledge (52 per cent agreed or strongly agreed). This may have reflected mentorships that crossed departmental boundaries.

In open text responses the mentees noted the most effective aspects of the mentoring they had received. Most commonly cited were feedback, support, lesson planning, being able to discuss issues of importance to them including the time to come up with solutions, and confidence building.

“The discussions that we have in meetings for me are the most effective as we can bat around ideas, thoughts and theories until we finally end up with a target, goal or challenge. Not only do we find an outcome but we’ve developed a ‘how to do the task’ and most importantly a ‘why’ behind it, the purpose of doing certain things and understanding the whole process, not just doing something for the sake of it.”

MENTEE, GENERAL FE AND TERTIARY

Impact, reported by mentees



Source: Mentee survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Further analysis of the mentee survey data found several elements of mentoring discussions that were positively correlated with the impact reported by mentees. The detailed table is contained in the appendix. In summary, topics that were positively correlated¹⁹ with impact were:

- **Any difficulties the mentee is experiencing in the organisation** was positively correlated with mentees reporting impact on being helped to explore different assessment strategies, becoming better at developing lesson plans, deepened subject knowledge, teaching their subject more effectively, and becoming more confident in their teaching abilities.
- **Weaknesses in the mentee's performance and how to tackle these** was positively correlated with mentees reporting impact on reflecting on their practices as a teacher, being helped to introduce innovative pedagogical strategies in the classroom, becoming better at developing lesson plans, teaching their subject more effectively, and becoming more confident in their teaching abilities.
- **Helping mentees understand the FE sector in general** was positively correlated with mentee reported impact on reflecting on their practices as a teacher, introducing innovative pedagogical strategies in the classroom, deepened subject knowledge, and becoming more confident in their teaching abilities.

Mentees in the survey also said that their organisations could support their participation in mentoring by providing more time to take part through regularly scheduled meetings and a formal mentoring programme. When asked to comment more generally about how the mentoring could be improved, mentees again highlighted the importance of the time to take part, with more time, regular meetings, and more contact. Their survey responses also included: raising awareness so more people have the opportunity to be mentored; remission from timetables so enable them to undertake mentoring activities; and appropriate spaces to meet their mentors.

The new and experienced mentors were asked in their surveys what they thought that mentees had gained from the mentoring activities. New mentors most frequently thought that mentees had improved their awareness of their strengths and areas for development (83 per cent). Around three quarters said that their mentees had improved their teaching practice and improved their confidence in their teaching skills (74 and 73 per cent). The experienced mentors most frequently reported that mentees had improved their teaching practices (83 per cent) (see table overleaf).

During interviews, mentors also reported that the feedback they received from their mentees showed there were benefits from the new mentoring approaches that they put in place. These included increased confidence in their teaching, increased support outside of line management chain and increased levels of cross-departmental communication.

The mentors also identified benefits depending on the characteristics of the mentee. For new teacher mentees, key benefits were finding out about different teaching approaches, classroom management, and workload management. Building a relationship of trust with their mentor meant that they could be honest about their worries or concerns and grow in confidence in their role. Where mentees already had experience of teaching but were new to the organisation, mentors discussed embedding mentoring in the on-boarding process and supporting induction into the organisation's policies and systems. For existing staff, mentors described how the mentoring centred on coping strategies related to the pandemic, dealing with team conflict or supporting mentees who thought their line managers were less supportive or available.

¹⁹ The correlation between these variables is significant at the 0.05 level

Impact on Mentees – reported by new and experienced mentors*

	New mentors	Experienced mentors
	% Participants	% Participants
Improved awareness of strengths and areas for improvement	83%	78%
Improved teaching practices	74%	83%
Improved confidence in teaching abilities	73%	77%
Improved workload management skills	63%	77%
Improved lesson planning	62%	70%
Improved ability to critically reflect on teaching practice	61%	63%
Improved resilience, well-being and work-life balance	60%	62%
Increased sense of autonomy and self-efficacy	57%	55%
Improved communication skills	53%	65%
Improved assessment strategies	51%	63%
Increased job satisfaction	50%	59%
Improved knowledge of subject-specific and general pedagogy	39%	50%
More empowered to suggest improvement to the organisation	36%	38%
Improved subject/vocational knowledge	31%	34%
Improved understanding of the FE sector	30%	37%
Base	121	92

*Multiple response question so percentages add up to more than 100

Source: New and experienced mentors participants surveys, IES and the ETF, 2022

One experienced mentor was supporting a very experienced member of staff who had recently lost confidence. Through the mentoring, they watched the mentee grow in confidence over time. Another mentor had supported a member of staff who had gone on to be promoted within their organisation. A grant lead described two mentees in their organisation being supported with their progression.

Mentors gave examples of the feedback that they had been collected from mentees as part of their internal evaluations of the mentor programmes in their organisations. Some had mentees who said they would have left teaching without the mentoring that they had received.

Some new and experienced mentors expected that the increased confidence gained by their mentees would transfer to their classroom and have a positive impact on learners. Grant leads also reported this wider benefit to learners:

“We can see the positive impact that it's had on staff, and obviously if it's had positive impact on staff and then teaching, it's definitely had an impact on the learners that they're teaching.”

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

Grant leads in some cases helped to match mentors and mentees. One described how other members of staff requested to be mentored when they saw colleagues' positive experiences. They also gathered feedback from mentees to use as case studies to further promote the benefits.

“I've seen a couple of people massively grow in confidence when it comes to their teaching and learning directly as a result of the mentoring”

GRANT LEAD, SPECIALIST COLLEGE

5.2. Implementing whole-institution approach

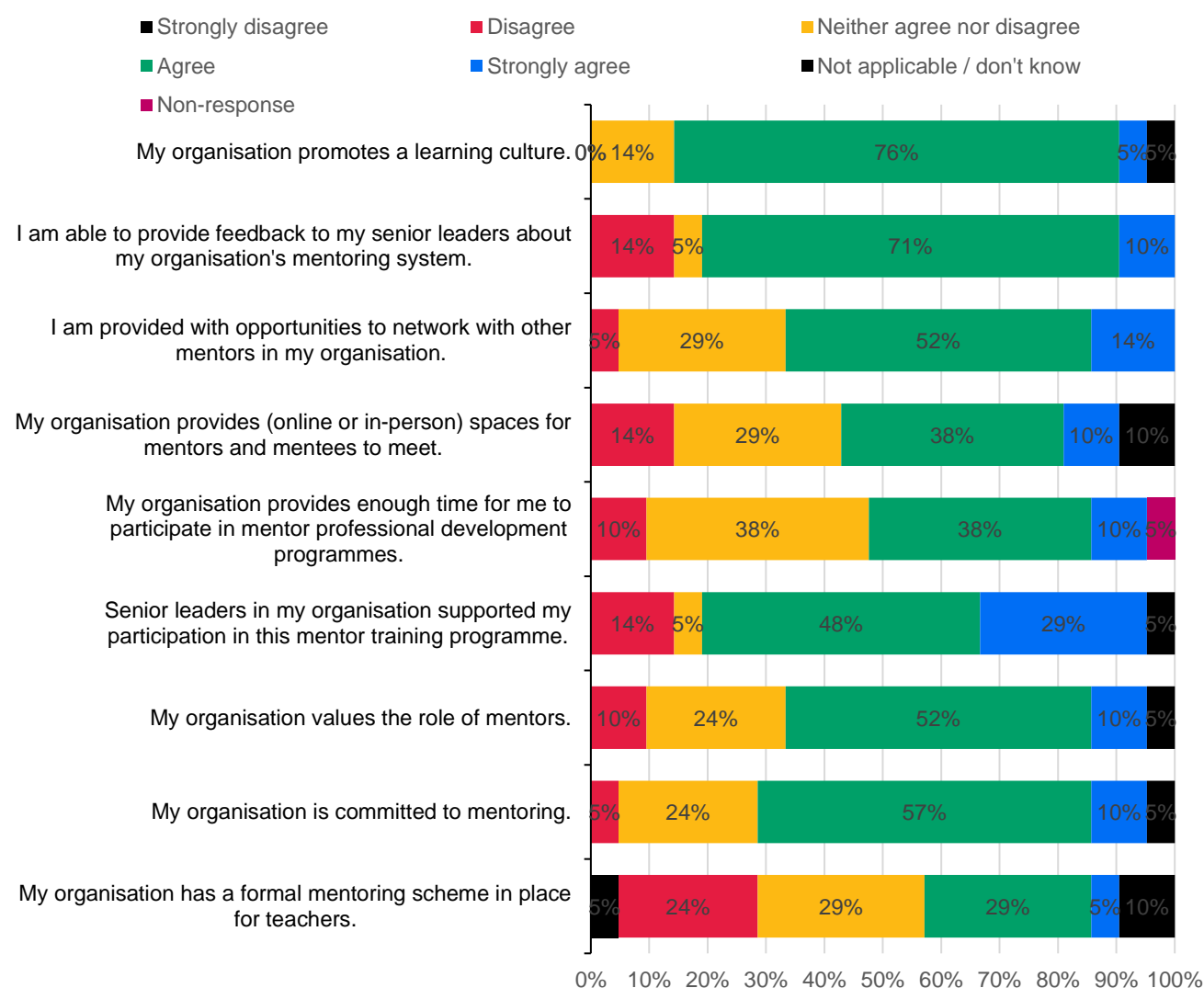
The ETF mentoring framework for practitioners in the FET sets out different ways in which a whole-institution approach would take shape and the mentoring programme is designed to support this. One of its core objectives is to support participants to create an organisational culture that is conducive to mentoring and professional learning and development. This includes induction, training, education, development and support for mentors, and training for mentees to develop a mindset for mentoring. It also covers establishing a wider learning culture across the organisation, promoting the benefits mentoring and could also be present in organisations' strategic priorities.

This whole-institution approach is an intermediate outcome in the logic model for the programme, where improvements to whole institution approaches are demonstrated by increased rates of mentoring in FE. Longer term outcome, whole-institution approaches to mentoring are maintained.

5.2.1. Organisation support

In the surveys, participants described the role that their organisations played in supporting mentoring. Respondents to the 'Getting ready to mentor' survey indicated organisational cultures that promoted learning (81 per cent agreement).

Organisational support – Getting ready to mentor

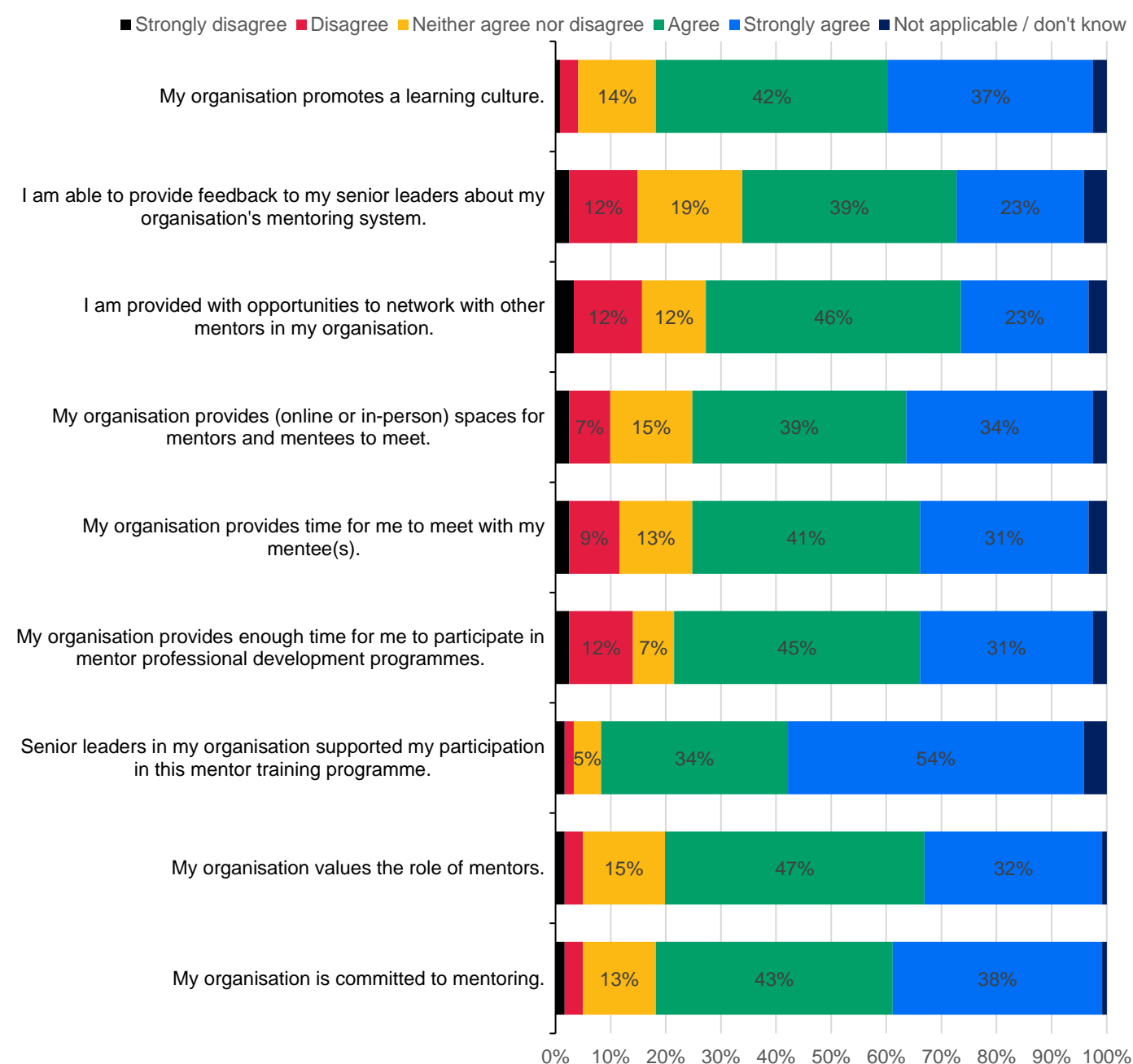


Source: Getting ready to mentor participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Respondents from the course for new mentors, showed strong agreement that they had received support from senior leaders to participate, 88 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case. The majority also said that their organisations were committed to mentoring (81 per cent).

Further analysis showed that there were statistically significant positive correlations between the individuals' commitment to developing and refining their mentoring practice and the organisations commitment to mentoring. Organisation commitment to mentoring is also positively correlated with new mentors having used new ideas and approaches to mentoring. Moreover, there are significant positive correlations between new mentors reporting that they had established or enhanced a mentoring programme in their organisation and whether they reported that their organisation provided enough time for them to participate in the programme and meet with their mentees.

Organisational support – new mentors

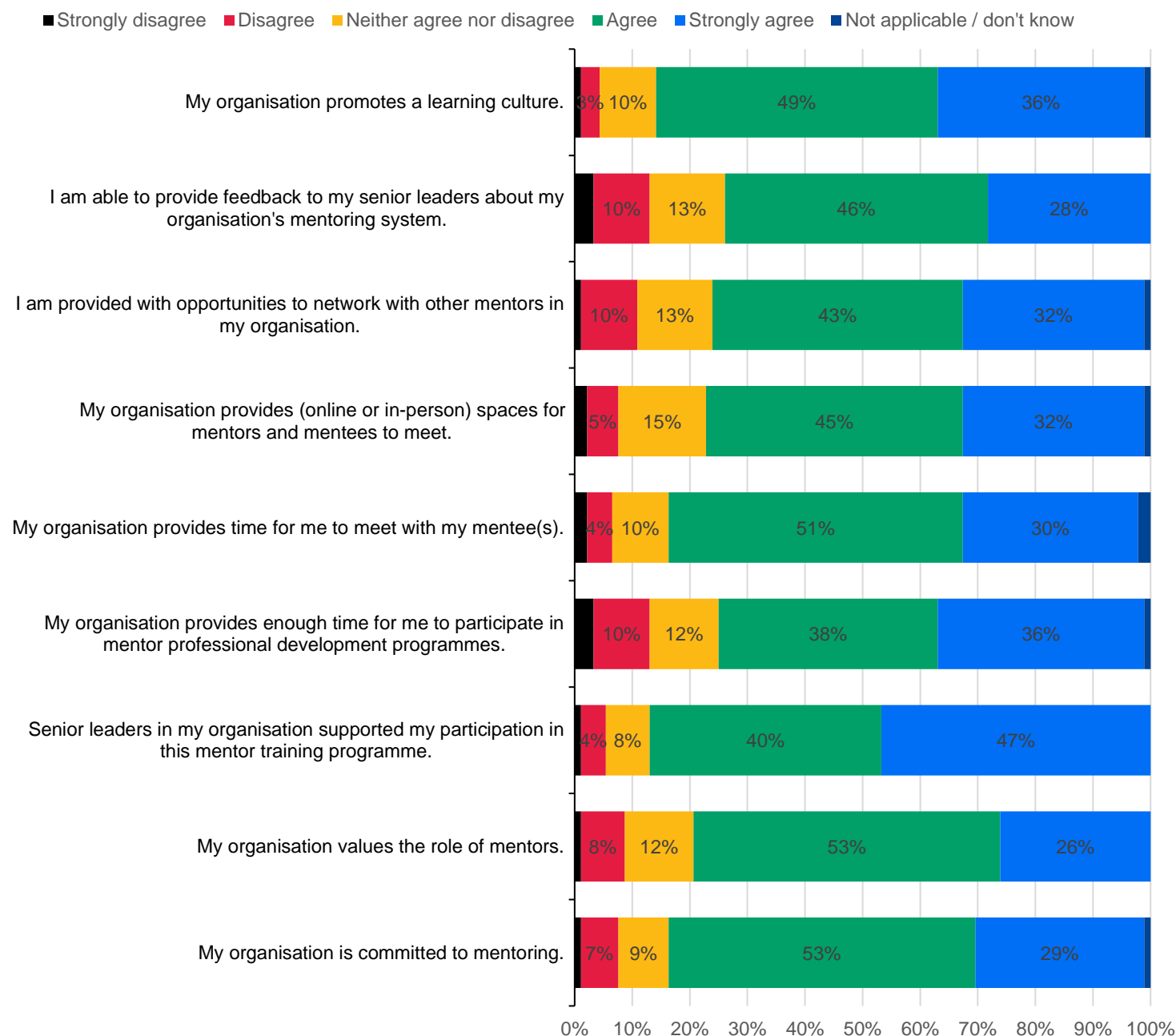


Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

For experienced mentors, organisational support was also positively reported in the survey: 87 per cent reported that their senior leaders had supported their participation in this mentor training programme, and 85 per cent described their organisation as promoting a learning culture.

Experienced mentors often described in the interviews how they combined teaching roles with a role on their Quality team. Some said mentoring would continue in their Quality role after the training programme as this gave them time away from teaching to focus on mentoring.

Organisational support – experienced mentors



Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

In interviews, new mentors described how they were increasingly using active listening as a tool in their mentoring sessions. A common theme for the new mentors was that their mentoring practice was now typified by probing and asking questions to allow the mentees to come up with their own solutions to try, rather than offering advice.

Both new and experienced mentors described a changed approach to mentoring. An experienced mentor for example, discussed how they were changing their mentor programme to seek volunteers and widening what the mentoring could cover. They hoped that volunteers to mentoring would be committed to the process.

Some experienced mentors spoke of the importance of peer mentoring and not being in a position of power over their mentees. Working with mentees from outside their own departments allowed for different perspectives as well as to understand how different approaches and strategies to teaching might be used in their own classrooms.

Interviewees also gave examples of increased structuring compared to the ad hoc mentoring that was in place before the training. For example, mentors described setting up contracts with their mentees building on the course content about the importance and practicalities of doing this. One mentor described making use of mentee self-benchmarking where mentees scored themselves at the beginning of the mentoring and then again after receiving mentorship.

Some mentors generally described how the mentoring programmes were changing the culture of their organisations – slowly shifting colleagues' attitudes. One described how changing the name of their mentor programme had indicated it was changing from the past, punitive focus. Another noted how positive mentoring was making a difference to their mentees and wider colleagues; the point echoed by a grant lead. Another grant lead said mentoring had brought about wider cultural changes, including a focus on CPD for all staff:

"There was nothing and now there is a cultural shift towards starting it. If we didn't do the course the staff would not have been mentored."

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

"Massively changed the organisation, [mentoring] makes people feel like they matter"

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

"We're moving away from that system of performance management of teachers through a one-off annual lesson observation to a process of continual drop in open door."

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

"The way that they are going about their jobs and they work really. I think it's sometimes some of those small shifts where you get learning from a programme like this where you think about the ways that you communicate with other people or the ways that you support other people. So I think there's probably lots and lots of small changes it together amounts to a more substantive cultural change."

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

In interviews, mentors reported positioning mentoring as a feature to help attract and retain new staff – a visible signal of the support available to new staff. Another mentor gave an example of a peer support network that they had set up for new teachers – using principles and models they had learnt from the mentor training to enable new teachers to support each other.

"We want great new staff and this will be a selling point."

EXPERIENCED MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

One grant lead thought as a result of the programme their organisation had strengthened processes

and support for staff - both for delivering mentoring but also developing policies and procedures.

“In introducing a teaching innovation groups- mentors have been really good at managing and facilitating those dialogic conversations.”

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

Mentors collected testimonials from their mentees to use within their institutions to promote their mentor programme. These positive stories were also important for making the business cases to senior management to release more time/staff to support mentor programmes.

The trainers on the advanced skills course identified the momentum that those returning from Strand 1 had built up for mentoring in their own organisations. They saw good progress in implementing whole-institution approaches that were embedded with the ethos of developmental mentoring.

While the range of interviewees gave positive examples of how mentoring had made a difference to the way that mentoring was operating in their organisations, the survey results were more mixed. Three-quarters of new mentors (74 per cent) and 82 per cent of experienced mentors said the profile of mentoring had been raised. Two-thirds also said that mentoring had supported the retention of new and existing teachers (61 per cent of new mentors and 65 per cent of experienced mentors). However, when explicitly asked whether the mentor training programme had contributed to the successful introduction of a whole-institution approach to mentoring, agreement was lower at 26 per cent of new mentors and 34 per cent of experienced mentors.

Organisational impact – new and experienced mentors*

	New mentors		Experienced mentors	
	%		%	
	Participants	Base	Participants	Base
Raised the profile of mentoring	74%	121	82%	92
Supported the retention of new and existing teachers	61%	121	65%	92
Raised the profile of CPD in general	39%	121	48%	92
Successful introduction of whole-institution approaches to mentoring	26%	121	34%	92

*Multiple response question so percentages add up to more than 100

Source: New and experienced mentors participant surveys, IES and the ETF, 2022

5.2.2. Staff Retention

It is not possible to independently verify effect of the programme on staff retention as the evaluation was undertaken in the same academic year as the mentoring programme. However, in interviews, in addition to the survey responses (above) some mentors and grant leads reported improved staff satisfaction and retention, particularly for new staff.

One new mentor for example described how staff satisfaction had increased since implementing the mentoring programme and hoped that this in turn would lead to increased staff retention. Another discussed increasing levels of collaborative working throughout the department.

One experienced mentor described how they now had set up communications with HR, so that they were informed when new staff were starting and could get in touch to offer mentoring, giving new staff a ‘safety net’ set up straight away without waiting for something to ‘go wrong’.

Several mentors said their mentees had told them they would not have stayed in their roles without

the mentorship they had received. One mentees was reported as saying their mentoring session enabled them to move away from thinking about they would be doing in the lessons, to instead thinking about what the learner would be doing, which helped reducing their workload and the stress they were experiencing.

Another mentor described how the mentoring had given new teachers coping strategies and supported them to develop resilience to stay in a teaching role. One said that all of their most recent new staff had passed their probation periods, which had not happened before. Mentors acknowledged that it was too early to say if the mentor training programme was making a difference, but felt signals were encouraging that the programme could make a difference to retention.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusions

Throughout the themes considered in the evaluation, there are multiple positive examples from the evidence of where the mentor training has been successful and where it is making a difference to mentoring practice in FET.

Revisiting the objectives and key performance indicators for the programme, shows that the mentoring training programme has provided effective support to develop mentoring in FE:

- Objective a: Provide effective support to new teachers moving into the sector by continuing to enable access to mentoring by delivering high quality mentor training to 325 mentors (with 90% satisfaction rate to be evidenced through the ETFs learner satisfaction surveys, and 85% of new and experienced mentors agreeing that they had improved their confidence with, and knowledge and understanding of, mentoring because of taking part in the programme).	✓
- Objective b: Improve quality of mentoring for FE practitioners through the design and delivery of high-quality mentor training and education programmes for new and experienced mentors.	✓
- Objective c: Improve the current continuing professional development opportunities available to practitioners (mentees and mentors) and help enhance the skills, knowledge and competency of the FE workforce.	✓
- Objective d: Support the retention of teaching staff within FE	✓
- Objective e: Promote a shared understanding of what constitutes effective mentoring practices through the dissemination of high-quality mentoring resources.	✓
- Objective f: Increase collaboration within the sector and Support FE leaders to establish whole-institutional approaches to mentoring	✓

Objective a is rated as amber in respect of progress. Looking first at the targets for participation, 137 took part in the 'Getting ready to mentor' course, more than the 100 minimum target set by the ETF. The courses for new and experienced mentors recruited 312 applicants however 37 withdrew after accepting their place so the training was delivered to 275 participants. This was short of the original target for 325. Nonetheless, evaluation evidence showed that those who took part wanted to develop their skills in mentoring. The reasons for withdrawing mainly related to time available for the courses – either the timing of the sessions or timetable clashes. The satisfaction rate collected by the ETF at the end of the course came too late for inclusion in this report, however the evaluation demonstrates that those who participated in the programme increased substantially their knowledge, skills and confidence.

The evidence suggests good progress on objectives b and c. For example, survey respondents reported how they had gained skills and knowledge from the programme. For new mentors, there were seven elements where 95 per cent or more of respondents agreed that they had developed or

improved. This included 98 per cent of new mentors improving their understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a mentor. Amongst experienced mentors there were three elements where 95 per cent or more agreed or strongly agreed that they had developed or improved. Almost all (99 per cent) believed that the trainers had relevant knowledge and experience, 98 per cent actively participated in sessions. Furthermore, 97 per cent reported that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the aims and objectives of the mentor training programme and found the modules they had participated in so far useful, and 96 per cent reported improved understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a mentor.

The analysis shows where there are correlations between different aspects of the programme. For example for new mentors, improved confidence in being an effective mentor and mentors' ability to self-reflect on their practice is positively associated with the coverage of questioning skills on the course. New mentors' improvements in giving and receiving feedback is positively related to giving and receiving feedback as part of the course. For experienced mentors, improved understanding of how to give and receive feedback was positively correlated with their course covering how to make use of peer observation and assessment. For those on the 'Getting ready to mentor' course, organisational support through supporting participation in the course, and being able to network with colleagues were also positively correlated with becoming more confident and more aware of different mentoring strategies.

The limited evidence available due to the time needed for this outcome to be observed means that objective d on retention is rated as amber. Secondary quantitative data of any effect was not available however, in the surveys of new and experienced mentors, 61 per cent of new mentors and 65 per cent of experienced mentors reported that participation in the mentor training programme had supported the retention of new and existing teachers. Furthermore, accounts in the interviews suggest that mentoring was increasing support and building confidence amongst new staff that meant they were more likely to sustain their roles. The positive effects on organisational culture were also making a contribution to the achievement of this objective.

The quality of programmes was high and consequently objective e is judged to be achieved. Participants particularly highlighted the strengths of the training and support staff, as well as the quality of materials and group and individual interactions. They could continue use these resources and evidence showed they were embedding the newly gained strategies within their practice thereby disseminating this within their institutions.

Finally on objective f, good progress has been made and examples were given of whole-institution approaches starting to embed. Given the intermediate outcomes focus and timing of the evaluation it could be judged to be achieved, however building more robust evidence will be important as will be reducing obstacles such as resistance from senior leadership to remit time to allow for mentoring.

6.1.1. Programme design

Reviewing the evidence in light of the ETF's 12 principles that it sets out for good quality CPD shows that the mentoring training programme for FE is embodying these principles.

	Principle
1	Set clear expectations
2	Be sound in its evidence base, informed by effective practice and research
3	Use facilities, environments and materials that engage and motivate practitioners to learn and develop
4	Be focused on learner outcomes

5	Be sustained over time
6	Secure management buy-in
7	Model effective teaching practice
8	Enable collaboration and sustainable learning relationships
9	Refer to the Professional Standards or the Leadership Excellence Framework
10	Enhance and extend specialist knowledge
11	Have opportunities for deliberate practice
12	Support participants to measure their progress, reflect on their learning and plan next steps

As seen in chapter 2.1, the interviewees describe clear information before the course and therefore their expectations about the programme were largely met. Stakeholders support the view that the programme is informed by effective practice and research. Mentors spoke about the wealth of material available on FutureLearn (as reported in chapter 3).

Mentors and the delivery partner positively describe the online delivery, with opportunities to contribute to discussions and have 'safe spaces' in which they could practice their skills and seek support from trainers and their peers. Interviews with the mentors described how engaging they had found the programme (as reported in chapters 2 and 3).

Learner outcomes fall outside of the remit of this programme due to the difficulties of measuring impact on this group. However, mentors and stakeholders were confident that the impact they were having on teachers – their mentees. The mentees themselves (as reported in chapter 5.1) reported positive impact on their teaching, which in turn will have a positive impact on learners.

In chapter 4, the mentors describe the benefits of the length of the course, with the embedded practice, which they thought would bring longevity to the learning, for it to be contextualised within their own setting and for the impacts to be sustained over time.

In section 5.2.1 the survey findings show the strength of organisational support that participants received during the programme, for participating in the training and promoting a learning culture. The grant leads interviewed for this research were well-engaged, through the responsibility that they had in the reporting mechanisms to the ETF and supporting the mentors to achieve the programme requirements.

Over 60 per cent of mentors believed that the mentees had Improved ability to critically reflect on teaching practice and 79 per cent of mentees reported that the mentoring had helped them to teach their subject more effectively (chapter 4 and 5). In chapter 3.1 the survey respondents described their high levels of satisfaction with the programme coverage.

The programme provides ongoing opportunities for participants to collaborate and learn from their peers. In the interviews, peer support was reported as a key feature of the programme. Communities of practice have been encouraged by the delivery partner, though with more success on the course for new mentors than for experienced mentors which was attributed to programme design features. This could be strengthened in future.

The programme of professional development for mentors and coaches of practitioners in FET, support the three core pillars of the Professional Standards by developing professional skills, values and attributes and knowledge and understanding, as seen in the survey results. This is less well-covered in the mentoring discussions that take place. Around one-fifth (18 per cent) of mentees reported that their mentoring sessions included reference to ETF's professional standards or other

benchmarks for teaching practice (such as Teacher Standards for sixth form staff). Similarly, one quarter of new and experienced mentors (27 and 24 per cent) reported that this was covered.

As reported in chapter 4.3, 95 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of the programme they could now describe the roles and responsibilities of a mentor, and that they were aware of different mentoring strategies. This increased to 98 per cent of new mentors and 96 per cent of experienced mentors.

The programme includes a requirement for new and experienced mentors to mentor for a minimum of 40 hours, this alongside the 1-2-1s and supervision with trainers has contributed to the opportunity for mentors to practice their new expertise and reflect.

In the confidence polls there was a 21 percentage point increase in new and experienced mentors reporting that they were very confident in their knowledge and understanding of mentoring.

Over 90 per cent of mentors reported in the survey that the courses adequately gave opportunities for introspection and reflective practice (93 and 91 per cent).

6.2. Actions for programme improvement

The survey findings and interviews also provide information about where improvements could be made and where further research would be beneficial. The following recommendations aim to strengthen the quality of the programme from an already positive position. The recommendations can help inform future programme investment and design decisions.

Support mentoring practice by establishing communities of practice/support groups at the outset of the courses.

The interviewees highlighted that communities of practice in the course for experienced mentors did not embed because of a reluctance of mentors to set these up themselves perhaps due to the fewer practice sessions built into the early stages of the advanced skills programme. Changes to course design and support could improve this and the ETF and future delivery partners should work with participants to understand what support they want from a community of practice. Under the current model, the survey analysis highlighted negative correlations between several important factors and the communities of practice for this group. It is unclear why, although the limitations to their use and use of communities of practice more by those who lack confidence could be factors. Monitoring the effects of communities of practice for experienced mentors in future research will be crucial.

Keep the amount of reading/additional learning time consistent each week, emphasising the guidance for the time required for reading

The high quality of the resources available online through FutureLearn was highlighted by interviewees. Some reported that they would like to see more variety in the type of resource available with more videos, podcasts to listen to during commutes or at other times, and quizzes to check understanding. Across both courses for new and experienced mentors, participants said that the amount of reading and resources available was unbalanced, with some weeks there being a lot more reading than could be fit in to the hours that they had remission for.

Further guidance on 'essential' and 'optional' reading would have been welcomed by some new mentors, or have reading that would be required for the group session and further in-depth reading for after the group session. More detailed guidance or notes on average allocations, on the number of mentoring hours, preparation time, self-guided learning and session time would also help mentors and grant leads ensure that the mentors were given adequate remission/ time to complete the tasks.

Ensure that the programme is accessible to all

While few interviewees were able to pinpoint their own use of the ring-fenced places, they generally welcomed this mechanism to encourage diversity and believed it should be promoted more to future cohorts.

A participant that has dyslexia noted the lack of text-to-speech functionality on FutureLearn which could be added.

Expand the programme to offer higher level mentoring skills training and courses for senior leaders

One mentor thought that the name 'Advanced mentor skills for experienced mentors' could be a misnomer as the course was geared around setting up a mentor programme. They acknowledge that this information was in the course description, but as a person continuing on from the course for new mentors, they had not really picked this up. Clear guidance on the type of role/level of influence required for the advanced skills course would help to ensure that the learning aims around setting up a mentoring programme can be met more fully.

Other suggestions that come from participants and stakeholders for additional courses as part of the programme were for senior leaders to help set the conditions for successful mentoring programmes in their organisations by providing time, space and resources, alumni and networking event to continue building a national community of mentors, and on-demand training and resources that could be used as a gateway into mentoring or refresher courses.

Provide more options for participation – timing and delivery (online and face-to-face)

There was varied feedback on the length and timing of the online sessions. Having more options for different times of day could support these different preferences. Some common feedback from experienced mentors was that the sessions were a little too short and an extra half an hour would have given more time for discussions after breakout sessions. However new mentors more frequently described the sessions as slightly too long and the sessions could have been made shorter to allow additional time for reading and reflection.

The length and start date of the programme is also an area where participants in the research thought that improvements could be made. When considering the start date of the programme and the recruitment window, a small number of mentors as well as the delivery partner highlighted that they would prefer the applications and recruitment to happen earlier – at Easter, so that timetables could be re-arranged in good time. The ETF could also consider how the number of mentoring hours fits within the delivery window of the programme as some new mentors thought that the number of mentoring practice hours should be reduced due to time pressures whereas many other participants.

There was appetite from new mentors to have face-to-face elements to support group cohesion and better create peer support systems. The delivery partner and the ETF will need to establish a new way of delivering in person that takes into account the much larger preference for the convenience of online delivery than there was pre-pandemic, with the desire to return to face-to-face learning as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. To establish whether outcomes for participants are affected by delivery mode, a comparative evaluation design could compare participant satisfaction and other measures over a delivery cycle that allocated some participants to online learning and some to face-to-face, taking into account preferences for mode.

Support providers to account for the grant

A number of mentors and grant leads in the interviews called for clear guidance and recommendations from the ETF about spending the grant. Mentors who were not given remission from teaching, said their organisation had not helped make their participation in the programme easier. These mentors would like a stronger steer from the ETF about how the grant should be used and hoped that the importance of adjustments to timetables would be amplified.

Grant leads commented on the reporting saying that they wanted more support with tracking the time of mentors, which they found tricky particularly when they had multiple mentors participating in the programme.

Create conditions that are conducive to collecting impact – long term funding for the training programme

The course has been funded on a yearly basis and despite initial plans, there has been no focus on retaining alumni. This means that within the yearly programme there is no scope to evaluate the longer term impact of the programme. Different options for being able to assess impact more robustly are:

- Fund longer programmes with evaluation that can track alumni (with consent) for follow up research;
- Explore how data can be collected about the impact on learners, for example longitudinal data collection looking at attainment for organisations that have taken part in the mentoring programme;
- Explore how FE staff population data, programme participant data and survey data can be linked to provide a comprehensive picture of participation and representativeness;
- Collect data to understand the size of the potential pool of mentors and future participants in the programme;
- Collect data on mentees to track differences in retention rates.

Provide funding to ensure that mentoring can continue outside of the training programme

Mentors commonly recognised the potential of mentoring to make a difference in the quality of teaching and the retention rates of those that are supported through mentoring. The mentor training programme for FE provides a grant which is invaluable to allow staff the time to mentor. Outside of this however, tight funding in FE means that some mentors will not be able to continue in their role. The risk is that a cohort of FE staff are trained and fired-up with a passion to continue to put into place all that they have learnt but without longer term investment this risks a lack of longevity. Mentoring is now provided for two years for new teachers in schools as part of the Early Career Framework, the offer for new teachers in FET should mirror this. While outside of the scope of this programme currently, a final recommendation from this research, as recommended by the mentors is for additional funding to be provided to ringfence time for mentoring in FE.

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION APPROACH

Approach to the evaluation

The following evaluation framework sets out the key research question as set out by the ETF in the invitation to tender. Each methodological approach has been mapped to these research questions to demonstrate where the data was collected. This also indicates where views can be triangulated across multiple data source to contribute to the robust understanding of the mentor training programme delivery and early impacts.

Evaluation framework

Research questions

Interviews

Surveys

	MI and programme information	Stakeholders	Delivery partner	Mentor	Grant leads	Getting ready	New mentors	Experienced mentors	Mentees
Number of participants per element.									
Representativeness of participants and providers.	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Programme returners									
Programme design embodying ETF's 12 principles.	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Fidelity of delivery to programme design.									
Offer meeting provider and participant needs.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Comparison to other offers.									
Factors limiting participation. Overcoming challenges.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Barriers to application/achieving outcomes.			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Overcoming barriers.									
Potential of attributing early/indicative outcomes to programme participation.				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Effectiveness of different programme elements		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Actions for programme improvement		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proximal outcomes achieved (skills, understanding, confidence)				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Benefits to mentees				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Usefulness of online resources (aiding understanding of effective mentoring)		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Successful introduction of whole-institution approaches to mentoring				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Programme recruitment and retention	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Specific barriers and enablers: mentoring ECTs, accessing/using materials, securing/utilising grant funding, ECT retention, developing whole-institution approaches		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Source: IES, 2022

Methodology

Stakeholder interviews

Stakeholder interviews have been completed with the delivery partner, the ETF and DfE. The interviews with the delivery partner included the project manager and six tutor/trainers. The interviews with the ETF and DfE were included to provide context of the policy landscape and mentoring with FE, as well as perceived success and limitation of the mentor training programme overall.

Management Information analysis

There are two elements to the secondary data analysis for this evaluation: management information and ETF delivered polls and satisfaction surveys.

The management information is participant data which provides an overview of participation: registration, attendance, retention. The IES research team has used this data in two ways:

- Provide an overview of the demographics of participants – including college/provider type, job role, programme of attendance, whether they are a returner from Wave 1.
- Support the development of quotas for mentor interviews.

Surveys

There were four surveys created for this evaluation: 'Getting ready to mentor' participants; 'Mentor skills for new mentors'; 'Advanced mentor skills for experienced mentors'; and a survey for mentees.

'Getting ready to mentor'

Key features:

Targeted invitations – sent to those initially that had completed more than 50 per cent of the course and then to those that had completed more than one-third of the course*

Short – under 10 minutes to complete

Tailored to the programme

Launch in January 2022

*To increase the response rate

Source: IES, 2022

'Mentor skills for new mentors'; 'Advanced mentor skills for experienced mentors'

Key features:

Census style – a invitation sent to all programme participants on the new and advanced experienced mentors programmes

Short – around 10 minutes to complete

Repeat key questions from strand 1.

Tailored to programmes – 'new mentors', and 'advanced mentoring'

Linked to MI via name to provide additional key break variables

Launch in January 2022

Source: IES, 2022

Mentee survey

Key features:

Open link distributed by grant leads to the mentees in their organisations

Short – around 10 minutes to complete

Linked to MI via organisation name to provide additional key break variables

Launch in January 2022

Source: IES, 2022

The surveys were programme into the ETF system at the beginning of January 2022, launched on the 10th January and closed on the 28th January. Targeted reminders were sent to the mentors to increase the responses rates.

The surveys for mentors included an option for participants to opt-into qualitative research interviews and gave an opportunity for mentors to share their contact details and preferences for contact.

Qualitative interviews

The evaluation included a number of interviews with mentors and grant leads. At the beginning of the evaluation, the ETF and research team agreed an overall target of nine mentors from the programme for new mentors and nine from the programme for experienced mentors. As this was reliant on opt-ins from the survey, a short fieldwork window and those that had opted-in replying to interview invitations, the final sample differed from the original targets.

Sampling criteria	Interview type	Planned	Achieved
Target	Mentoring Skills for New Mentors	9	7
	Mentoring Skills for Experienced Mentors	9	11
Ringfenced places	Mentoring Skills for New Mentors	2	3
	Mentoring Skills for Experienced Mentors	2	2
General FE	Mentoring Skills for New Mentors	6	4
	Mentoring Skills for Experienced Mentors	6	5
Other provider type	Mentoring Skills for New Mentors	3	3
	Mentoring Skills for Experienced Mentors	3	6
20-21 Strand 1 returners	Mentoring Skills for Experienced Mentors	2	4

Where possible, the interview with grant leads have been matched to the mentors in analysis and case studies of institutions have been produced giving an indication of institution-wide changes to mentor programmes (see Appendix D).

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management information

Course participants – Getting ready to mentor

Percentage completed	(N)	% Registered
100 complete	27	19.7
75 to 99 complete	42	30.7
50 to 74 complete	4	2.9
25 to 49 complete	11	8.0
1 to 24 complete	24	17.5
0 complete	29	21.2
Base	137	100
AVERAGE completed (all)	55%	

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Eligible applicants – new and experienced mentors

	All	Row %	New	Row %	Experienced	Row %
Participants	275	100	154	56	121	44
Withdrawn	37	100	21	59.5	15	40.5
Total (applicants)	312		176	56.4	136	43.6

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Ring fenced places

	Participants (n)	Eligible	Participants %
Mentoring Skills for Experienced Mentors	121	25	20.7
Mentoring Skills for New Mentors	154	32	20.8
Total	275	57	20.7

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Returning participants from Strand 1

	Participants (n)	Participants %	Withdrawn (n)	Applicants (n)
20-21 programme returners*	20	7.3	2	22

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Participants per provider

	All	Participants			Withdrawn		
	All	New	Experienced	All	New	Experienced	All
Institutions listed	123	78	66	111	18	13	29
Average (mean)	2.5	2	1.8	2.5	1.2	1.2	1.3
Mode	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Median	2	1	1	2	1	1	1
Min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Max	7	7	5	7	2	2	3

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Participants on course for new and experienced mentors, by provider type

	New (n)	New participants (%)	Experienced (n)	Experienced participants (%)	All (n)	All participants (%)
Adult (19+) Education Provider	4	2.6	7	5.8	11	4
General FE and Tertiary College	109	70.8	80	66.1	189	68.7
Local Authority Training Provider	7	4.5	2	1.7	9	3.3
National or Multi-Regional	0	0	1	0.8	1	0.4
Private Sector Public Funded (ITPs)	18	11.7	17	14	35	12.7
Sixth Form College	4	2.6	3	2.5	7	2.5
Specialist College	1	0.6	7	5.8	8	2.9
Third Sector / Charity Training Provider	2	1.3	1	0.8	3	1.1
Other Public Funded	3	1.9	0	0	3	1.1
Other	6	3.9	3	2.5	9	3.3
Grand Total	154		121		275	

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Withdrawn participants by provider type

	New (n)	Experienced (n)	All (n)
Adult (19+) Education Provider	-	-	-
General FE and Tertiary College*	14	7	21
Local Authority Training Provider	1	1	2
National or Multi-Regional	0	1	1
Private Sector Public Funded (ITPs)	4	2	6
Sixth Form College	0	1	1
Specialist College	0	3	3
Third Sector / Charity Training Provider	-	-	-
Other Public Funded	1	0	1
Other	2	0	2
Grand Total	22	15	37

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Region of provider - applicants

	New (n)	New participants (%)	Experienced (n)	Experienced participants (%)	All (n)	All participants (%)
East Midlands	3	1.9	11	9.1	14	5.1
East of England	13	8.4	12	9.9	25	9.1
London	20	13	14	11.6	34	12.4

North East	15	9.7	9	7.4	24	8.7
North West	29	18.8	33	27.3	62	22.5
South East	25	16.2	21	17.4	46	16.7
South West	17	11	6	5	23	8.4
West Midlands	10	6.5	9	7.4	19	6.9
Yorkshire and the Humber	22	14.3	6	5	28	10.2
Grand Total	154		121		275	

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

Region of provider – withdrawals

	New (n)	Experienced (n)	All (n)
East Midlands	-	-	-
East of England	2	0	2
London	0	2	2
North East	6	2	8
North West	1	3	4
South East	3	0	3
South West	5	4	9
West Midlands	4	2	6
Yorkshire and the Humber	1	2	3
Grand Total	22	15	37

Source: ETF management information, IES and the ETF, 2022

APPENDIX C: SURVEY ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Survey analysis plan

This document outlines the different statistical techniques that will be used to respond to the programme evaluation's research questions. Therefore, the table below presents the data source and corresponding analytical techniques as they relate to the research questions. Analysis will be undertaken using SPSS24. It must be emphasised that the evaluation takes a mixed-methods orientation: quantitative data analysis (including that gathered through the four surveys) is supplemented by qualitative data analysis (gathered via interviews) This gives a fuller picture of mentors' experiences with the training programme, as well as the programme's impact on both mentors and mentees.

Note that the data source column indicates survey items that will be used to perform the analysis. Items have been coded to indicate both the survey and item number. The first part of the code indicates the survey: A, referring to Programme A; B, to Programme B; C, to Programme C; and X, to Mentees. The second part of the code indicates the item number. Therefore, where the data source column indicates B10, the analysis will use data from Question #10 in the Programme B survey.

In addition to the analyses described in the table below, we will also be cross-tabulating certain variables against each other to inspect potential relationships. Afterwards, we will test those relationships for any statistically significant differences (tested at $p = 0.05$). These analyses will draw

on data from the Programme B and C datasets. For instance, using Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance (with post hoc tests), we could explore the relationship between the following variables:

- years of mentoring experience (B03, C03) and mentoring skills and knowledge (B21, C22);
- years of teaching experience (B30, C32) and mentoring skills and knowledge (B21, C22);
- years of mentoring experience (B03, C03) and mentoring practice (B23, C23, C24);
- years of teaching practice (B30, C32) and mentoring practice (B23, C23, C24);
- nature of employment (B32, C34) and organisational support (B12, C13); and
- provider type and organisational support (B12, C13).

	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCE	ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUE
1	Number of participants per element. Representativeness of participants and providers. Programme returners.	Programme A, B, & C datasets: years of mentoring experience (B03, C03); years of teaching experience (A14, B30, C32); highest teaching qualification (A17, B32, C35); main subject taught (A18, B34, C36); nature of employment (A16, B32, C34); provider type ²⁰ ; previous attendance in other mentor training (A3, B20, C21)	Descriptive statistics: median, mode, range, frequency distribution
2	Programme design embodying ETF's 12 principles. Fidelity of delivery to programme design. ²¹	Programme A, B, & C datasets: course coverage (A9, B17, C18)	Descriptive statistics: median, mode, frequency distribution
3	Offer meeting provider and participant needs. Comparison to other offers.	Programme A, B, & C datasets: programme relevance (A8, B14, B15, C15, C16); course coverage (A9, B17, C18) ²²	Descriptive statistics: median, mode, frequency distribution
4	Factors limiting participation. Overcoming challenges.	Programme A, B, & C datasets: organisational support (A10, B12, C13) ²³	Descriptive statistics: median, mode, frequency distribution
5	Barriers to application/achieving outcomes. Overcoming barriers.	Programme A, B, & C datasets: Determine the association between organisational support (A10, B12, C13) and the following variables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mentoring skills and knowledge (A13, B21, C22)²⁴ • mentoring practice (B23, C23, C24)²⁵ • sufficiency of mentorship meeting frequency (B26, C28)²⁶ 	Inferential statistics: Spearman's rank-order correlation (ρ), to be tested for significance at $p = 0.05$

²⁰ Provider type is not directly asked in the survey; this data point was extracted from the application dataset.

²¹ For the purposes of this analysis, implementation fidelity is taken to mean the extent to which targeted course content was covered. Future training programme evaluations would benefit from pre-defined 'fidelity' metrics against which to gauge the programme.

²² 'Course coverage' responses were recoded into a four-point scale.

²³ 'Organisational support' responses were recoded into a five-point scale.

²⁴ 'Mentoring skills and knowledge' responses were recoded into a five-point scale.

²⁵ 'Mentoring practices' responses were recoded into a five-point scale.

²⁶ 'Meeting frequency' responses were recoded into a three-point scale.

6	Potential of attributing early/indicative outcomes to programme participation. ²⁷	<p>Programme A, B, & C datasets: Determine the association between course coverage (A9, B17, C18) and the following variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mentoring skills and knowledge (A13, B21, C22) mentoring practice (B23, C23, C24) 	Inferential statistics: Spearman's rank-order correlation (ρ), to be tested for significance at $p = 0.05$
7	Effectiveness of different programme elements.	<p>Programme A, B, & C datasets: programme experience (A8, B14, B15, C15, C16); course coverage (A9, B17, C18); mentoring skills and knowledge (A13, B21, C22); mentoring practice (B23, C23, C24)</p>	Descriptive statistics: median, mode, frequency distribution
8	Actions for programme improvement.	The survey incorporates open-ended questions pertaining to actions for programme improvement. Whilst this methodological note pertains to quantitative analysis, we can potentially extract salient themes across responses to the open-ended questions. However, the qualitative interview data should remain the primary source of information regarding this research question.	
9	Proximal outcomes achieved (skills, understanding, confidence).	Programme A, B, & C datasets: mentoring skills and knowledge (A13, B21, C22); mentoring practice (B23, C23, C24)	Descriptive statistics: median, mode, frequency distribution
	Benefits to mentees.	<p>Mentees dataset: experience of mentoring (X13)²⁸; coverage of mentoring discussions (X18)²⁹; impact on teaching practice (X20)³⁰; mentorship meeting frequency (X16)</p> <p>In addition, determine the association between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coverage of mentoring discussions (X18) and impact on teaching practice (X20) sufficiency of mentorship meeting frequency (X17) and impact on teaching practice (X20) <p>Programme B & C datasets: coverage of mentoring discussions (B27, C29); impact on mentees (B28, C30)³¹</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics: median, mode, frequency distribution</p> <p>Inferential statistics: Spearman's rank-order correlation (ρ), to be tested for significance at $p = 0.05$</p>
10			<p>Descriptive statistics: median, mode, frequency distribution</p> <p>In addition, compare findings from mentor and mentee surveys. This will not be a statistical test, but a narrative comparison of any discrepancies in the</p>

²⁷ Since this is a non-experimental intervention design, we cannot draw causal links between programme participation and improvement in outcomes. We can only infer correlations between variables.

²⁸ 'Experience of mentoring responses' have been recoded into a five-point scale.

²⁹ 'Coverage of mentoring discussions' responses have been recoded into multiple dichotomous dummy variables

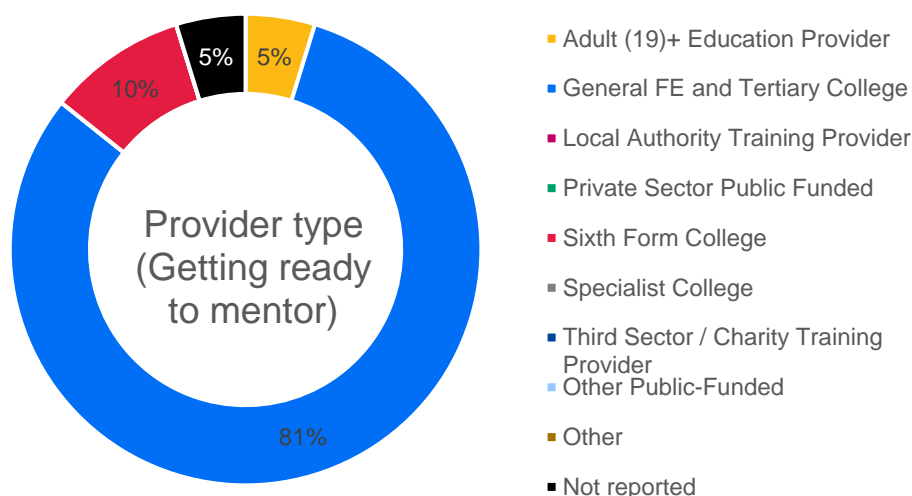
³⁰ 'Impact on teaching practice' responses have been recoded into a five-point scale.

³¹ 'Impact on mentees' responses have been recoded into multiple dichotomous dummy variables.

11	Usefulness of online resources (aiding understanding of effective mentoring).	Programme A, B, & C datasets: helpfulness of online resources (A8f, B15f, C16f)	survey responses of mentors and mentees. ³² Descriptive statistics: median, mode, frequency distribution
12	Successful introduction of whole-institution approaches to mentoring.	Programme B & C datasets: impact on organisation (B29, C30) ³³ ; organisation-level mentoring practices (C24) ³⁴	Descriptive statistics: median, mode, frequency distribution
13	Programme recruitment and retention.	Programme recruitment and retention is best analysed using administrative data. The survey data does not capture this information.	
14	Specific barriers and enablers: mentoring ECTs, assessing/using materials, securing/utilising grant funding, ECT retention, developing whole-institution approaches.	Since this is an exploratory research question that seeks to surface underlying inhibiting and enabling factors, this is best answered by qualitative interview data.	

Survey participants

Provider type (Getting ready to mentor)



:

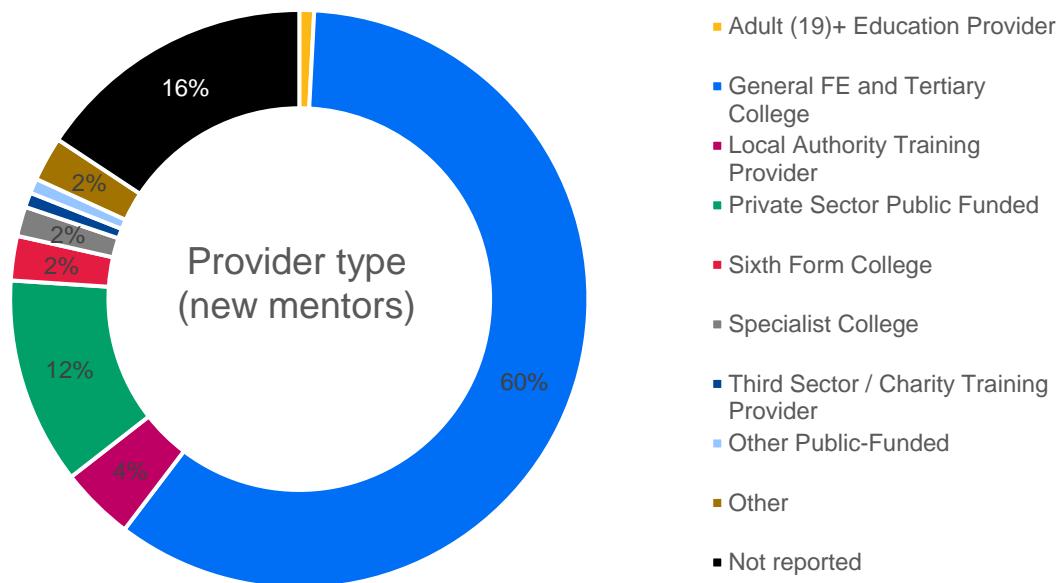
Source: Getting ready to mentor participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Provider type (new mentors)

³² Since the dataset does not include matching of mentors and mentees, we cannot quantify the indirect impact of the training programme on mentees.

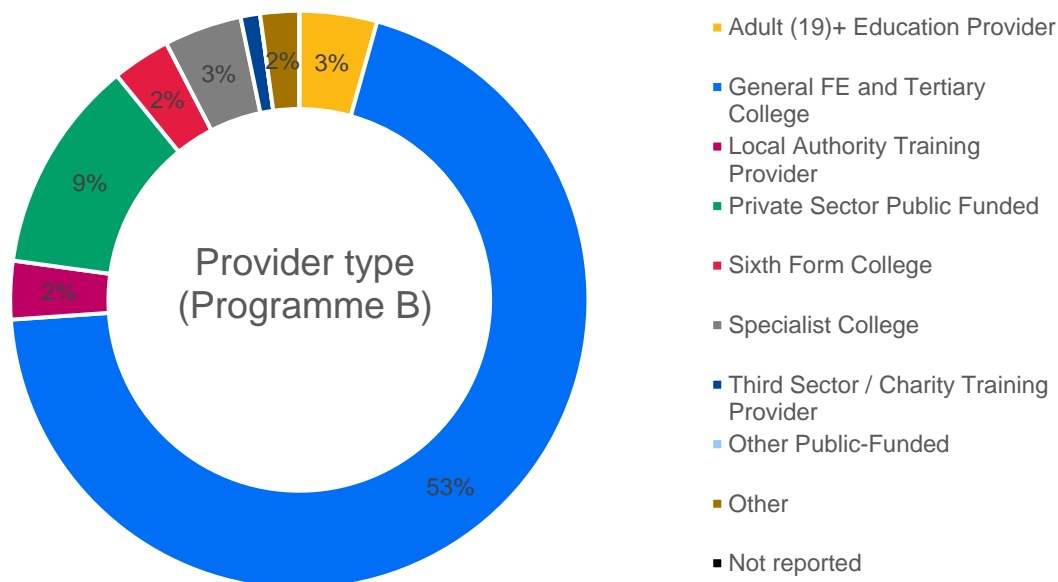
³³ 'Impact on organisation' responses have been recoded into multiple dichotomous dummy variables.

³⁴ 'Organisation-level mentoring practices' responses have been recoded into a five-point scale.



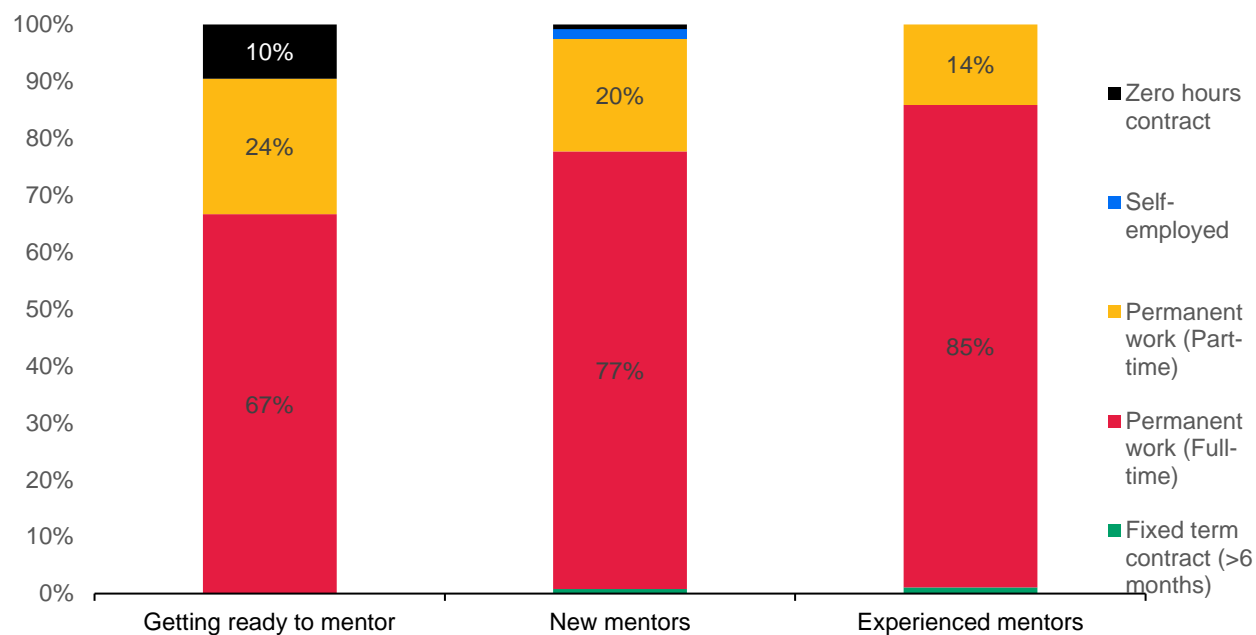
Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Provider type (experienced mentors)



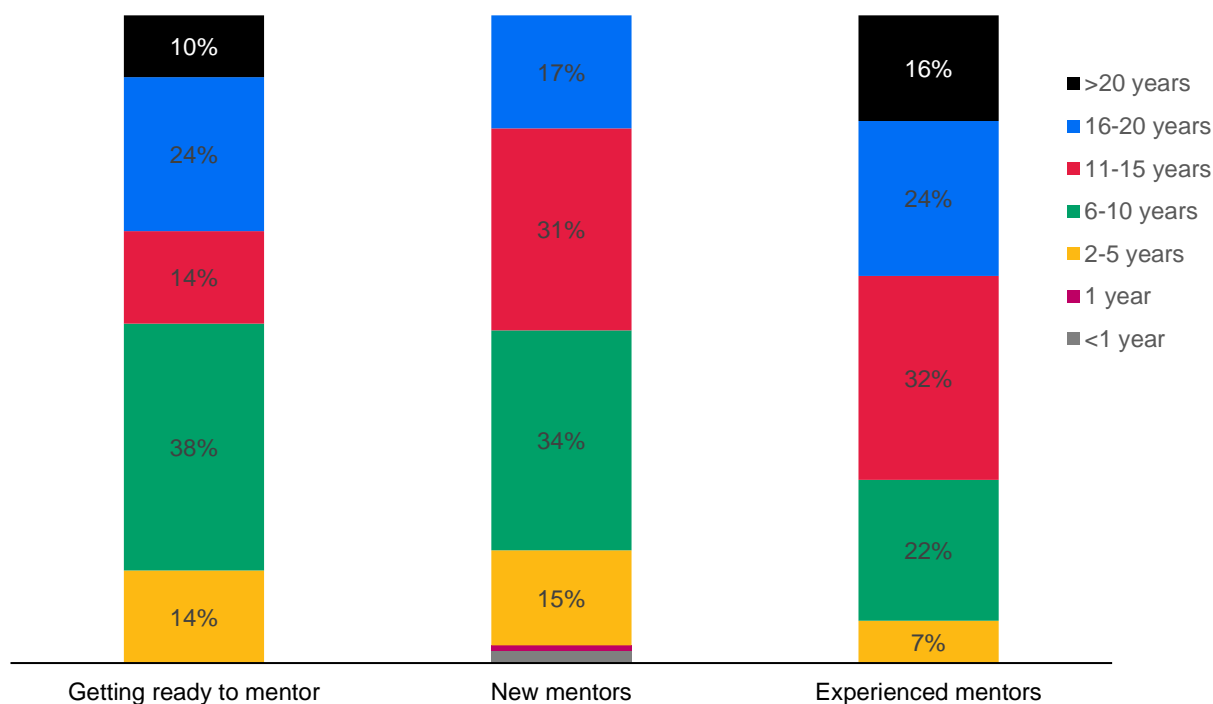
Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Type of employment contract



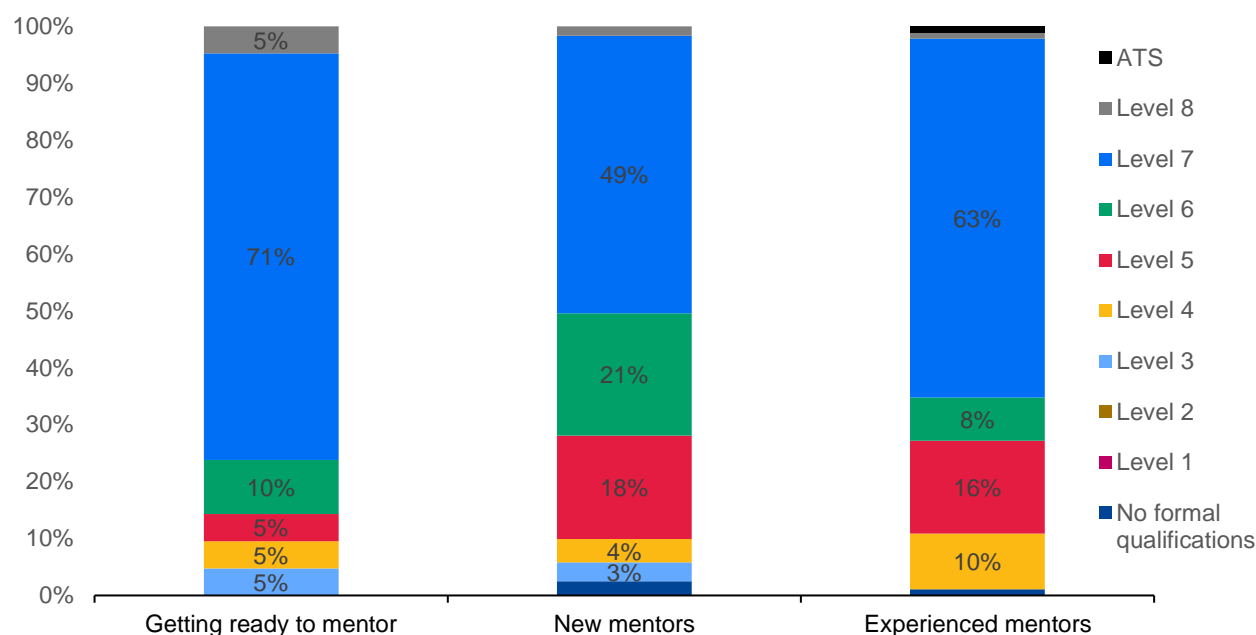
Source: Getting ready to mentor, new and experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Years of teaching experience - all



Source: Getting ready to mentor, new and experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Highest qualification - all



Source: Getting ready to mentor, new and experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

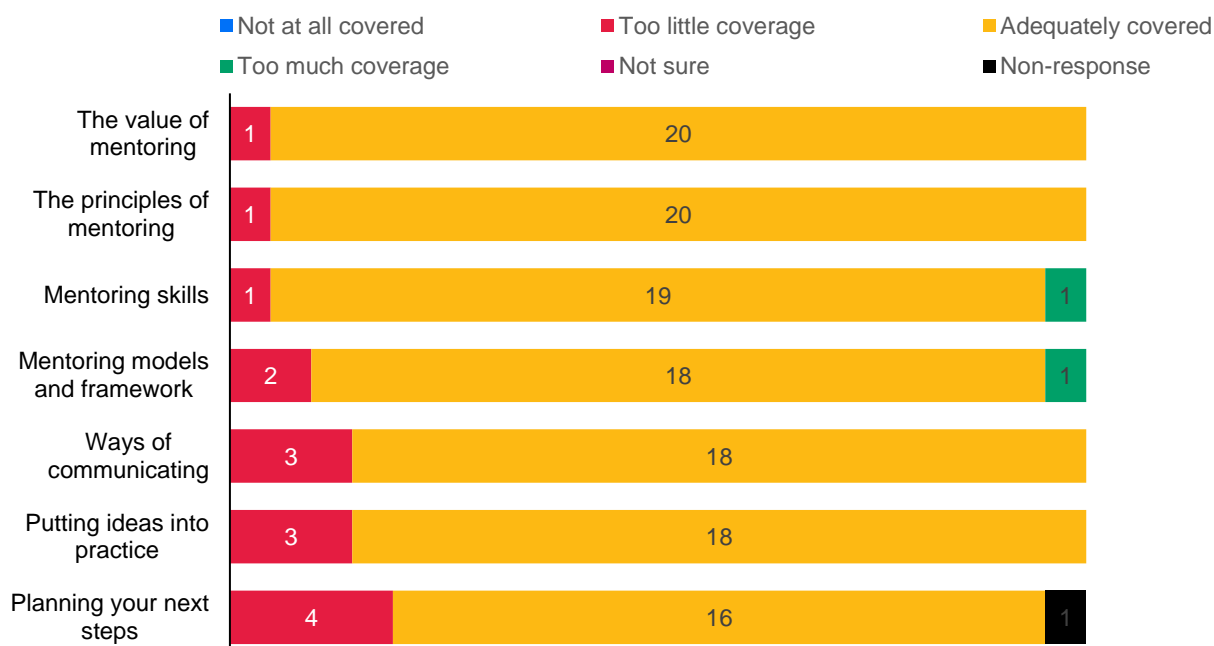
Outcomes

Programme coverage – Getting ready to mentor

	Not at all covered	Too little coverage	Adequately covered	Too much coverage	Not sure	Non-response	Base
The value of mentoring	0%	5%	95%	0%	0%	0%	21
The principles of mentoring	0%	5%	95%	0%	0%	0%	21
Mentoring skills	0%	5%	90%	5%	0%	0%	21
Mentoring models and framework	0%	10%	86%	5%	0%	0%	21
Ways of communicating	0%	14%	86%	0%	0%	0%	21
Putting ideas into practice	0%	14%	86%	0%	0%	0%	21
Planning your next steps	0%	19	76	0	0	5	21

Source: Getting ready to mentor participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Programme coverage – Getting ready to mentor



Source: Getting ready to mentor participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Programme coverage – new mentors

	Not at all covered	Too little coverage	Adequately covered	Too much coverage	Not sure	Base
Setting up a mentoring relationship	0%	3%	95%	1%	1%	121
Setting expectations with mentee(s)	0%	2%	97%	1%	1%	121
Action planning and goal-setting	0%	2%	93%	2%	2%	121
Managing the mentor-mentee relationship	0%	1%	97%	1%	2%	121
Supporting mentees' wellbeing	0%	7%	88%	2%	2%	121
Theories of pedagogy and adult learning	0%	7%	88%	2%	2%	121
Questioning skills	0%	2%	95%	3%	1%	121
Listening skills	0%	1%	95%	3%	1%	121
Giving and receiving feedback	0%	11%	85%	3%	1%	121
Evaluating mentees' progress	0%	22%	75%	2%	1%	121
Modelling effective practice	0%	7%	91%	2%	1%	121
Introspection and reflective practice	0%	5%	93%	0%	2%	121
Using research evidence to inform practice	1%	10%	84%	2%	3%	121
Locating and using online resources	2%	13%	79%	1%	4%	121
Identifying and using relevant EdTech tools in mentoring	4%	24%	67%	1%	4%	121
Engaging in communities of practice	0%	7%	88%	2%	3%	121

Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Programme coverage – experienced mentors

	Not at all covered	Too little coverage	Adequately covered	Too much coverage	Not sure	Base
Setting up a mentoring relationship	0%	2%	94%	3%	1%	92
Setting expectations with mentee(s)	0%	0%	96%	3%	1%	92
Directing one's personal development as a mentor	0%	4%	91%	2%	2%	92
Applying different mentoring models and activities with mentees in response to different needs and contexts	0%	7%	89%	3%	1%	92
Theories of pedagogy and adult learning	2%	21%	70%	2%	5%	92
Making use of self-assessment	0%	5%	90%	3%	1%	92
Making use of peer observation and assessment	0%	8%	87%	4%	1%	92
Improving practice through mentoring supervision	0%	4%	89%	7%	0%	92
Introspection and reflective practice	0%	2%	91%	5%	1%	92
Using research evidence to improve mentoring practice	0%	5%	88%	5%	1%	92
Developing learning materials	0%	5%	88%	5%	1%	92
Establishing communities of practice	1%	28%	63%	2%	5%	92
Engaging in communities of practice	0%	5%	82%	12%	1%	92
Designing a mentorship programme for organisations, aligned with organisational needs	0%	5%	85%	10%	0%	92
Implementing a mentorship programme	2%	8%	84%	5%	1%	92
Evaluating a mentorship programme	1%	10%	78%	4%	7%	92
Using research evidence to improve mentorship programmes	0%	7%	87%	2%	4%	92
Setting up and facilitating Action Learning Sets	0%	3%	87%	7%	3%	92

Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Programme experience – Getting ready to mentor

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Base
I understand the aims and objectives of the training course.	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%	21
I have been given	0%	5%	10%	48%	38%	21

opportunities to apply the things I have learned in practice.

The mentor training I am receiving is relevant to the issues and context of my organisation.

The estimated time for completion is realistic.

I have found the modules I have completed so far useful.

I have found the online resources (including the framework and guides) provided by the training course helpful.

0%	0%	10%	43%	48%	21
0%	5%	0%	33%	62%	21
0%	0%	0%	48%	52%	21
0%	0%	0%	43%	57%	21

Source: Getting ready to mentor participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Programme experience – new mentors

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Base
I understand the aims and objectives of the mentor training programme.	2%	0%	0%	55%	43%	121
I have been given opportunities to apply the things I have learned in practice.	1%	0%	2%	54%	44%	121
I have actively participated in sessions.	2%	0%	2%	43%	53%	121
I have actively engaged and collaborated with other mentors in my cohort / study group.	2%	0%	7%	50%	42%	121
The trainers have relevant knowledge and experience.	2%	0%	1%	31%	67%	121
The mentor training I am receiving is relevant to the issues and context of my organisation.	2%	1%	2%	50%	45%	121
The guided learning hours and self-directed learning hours expectations are realistic.	1%	7%	10%	57%	26%	121
I have found the modules I have participated in so far useful.	2%	1%	2%	56%	40%	121
I have found the opportunity to practice using mentoring tools in the sessions useful.	2%	0%	2%	51%	45%	121
I have found the action learning sets useful.	2%	2%	7%	42%	48%	121
I have found the 1-1 sessions with a programme trainer useful.	1%	4%	4%	52%	39%	121
I have enough time to	1%	12%	15%	51%	21%	121

undertake the sessions and the learning in between.

I have found the online resources (including the framework and guides) provided by the training programme useful.

2% 0% 3% 55% 40% 121

Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Programme experience – experienced mentors

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Base
I understand the aims and objectives of the mentor training programme.	0%	0%	3%	50%	47%	92
I have been given opportunities to apply the things I have learned in practice.	0%	0%	7%	49%	45%	92
I have actively participated in sessions.	0%	0%	2%	43%	54%	92
I have actively engaged and collaborated with other mentors in my cohort / study group.	0%	1%	11%	52%	36%	92
The trainers have relevant knowledge and experience.	0%	0%	1%	28%	71%	92
The mentor training I am receiving is relevant to the issues and context of my organisation.	0%	1%	9%	46%	45%	92
The guided learning hours and self-directed learning hours expectations are realistic.	7%	24%	13%	36%	21%	92
I have found the modules I have participated in so far useful.	1%	0%	2%	58%	39%	92
I have found the opportunity to practice using mentoring tools in the sessions useful.	0%	2%	5%	47%	46%	92
I have found the action learning sets useful.	1%	1%	10%	49%	39%	92
I have found the 1-1 sessions with a programme trainer useful.	0%	1%	4%	46%	49%	92
I have enough time to undertake the sessions and the learning in between.	0%	28%	16%	42%	13%	92
I have found the online resources (including the framework and guides) provided by the training programme useful.	0%	2%	8%	50%	40%	92

Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Mentoring skills and knowledge – new mentors

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Base
Improved my understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a mentor.	1%	0%	2%	54%	44%	121
Improved my confidence in being an effective mentor.	0%	0%	3%	57%	40%	121
Improved my knowledge of how to set up an appropriate mentoring contract or agreement.	0%	1%	7%	60%	31%	121
Improved my knowledge of how to structure mentoring meetings.	0%	1%	5%	64%	31%	121
Improved my knowledge of different mentoring strategies.	0%	0%	2%	61%	36%	121
Improved my understanding of when it is helpful to challenge mentees.	0%	4%	8%	66%	21%	121
Improved my knowledge of how to provide support to improve my mentee's emotional resilience.	1%	1%	15%	64%	19%	121
Improved my knowledge of questioning techniques and listening skills	1%	0%	2%	50%	46%	121
Improved my ability to self-reflect on my practice.	1%	2%	5%	57%	36%	121
Improved my understanding of how to give and receive feedback.	0%	1%	6%	67%	26%	121
Improved my knowledge of how to support mentees to set effective goals.	0%	1%	4%	64%	31%	121
Improved my understanding of how I learn and develop the impact of this on my mentoring.	0%	1%	5%	64%	31%	121

Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Organisational support – Getting ready to mentor

Row header	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable / don't know	Non-response	Base
My organisation has a formal mentoring scheme in place for teachers.	5%	24%	29%	29%	5%	10%	0%	21
My organisation is committed to mentoring.	0%	5%	24%	57%	10%	5%	0%	21
My organisation	0%	10%	24%	52%	10%	5%	0%	21

values the role of mentors. Senior leaders in my organisation supported my participation in this mentor training programme.	0%	14%	5%	48%	29%	5%	0%	21
My organisation provides enough time for me to participate in mentor professional development programmes.	0%	10%	38%	38%	10%	0%	5%	21
My organisation provides (online or in-person) spaces for mentors and mentees to meet.	0%	14%	29%	38%	10%	10%	0%	21
I am provided with opportunities to network with other mentors in my organisation.	0%	5%	29%	52%	14%	0%	0%	21
I am able to provide feedback to my senior leaders about my organisation's mentoring system.	0%	14%	5%	71%	10%	0%	0%	21
My organisation promotes a learning culture.	0%	0%	14%	76%	5%	5%	0%	21

Source: Getting ready to mentor participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Organisational support – new mentors

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable / don't know	Base
My organisation is committed to mentoring.	2%	3%	13%	43%	38%	1%	121
My organisation values the role of mentors.	2%	3%	15%	47%	32%	1%	121
Senior leaders in my organisation supported my participation in this mentor training programme.	2%	2%	5%	34%	54%	4%	121
My organisation provides enough time for me to participate in mentor professional development programmes.	2%	12%	7%	45%	31%	2%	121
My organisation provides time for me to meet with my mentee(s).	2%	9%	13%	41%	31%	3%	121
My organisation provides (online or in-person) spaces for mentors and mentees to meet.	2%	7%	15%	39%	34%	2%	121
I am provided with opportunities to network with other mentors in my organisation.	3%	12%	12%	46%	23%	3%	121
I am able to provide feedback to my senior leaders about my organisation's mentoring system.	2%	12%	19%	39%	23%	4%	121
My organisation promotes a learning culture.	1%	3%	14%	42%	37%	2%	121

Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Organisational support – experienced mentors

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable / don't know	Base
My organisation is committed to mentoring.	1%	7%	9%	53%	29%	1%	92
My organisation values	1%	8%	12%	53%	26%	0%	92

the role of mentors.

Senior leaders in my organisation supported my participation in this mentor training programme.

1%	4%	8%	40%	47%	0%	92
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My organisation provides enough time for me to participate in mentor professional development programmes.

3%	10%	12%	38%	36%	1%	92
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My organisation provides time for me to meet with my mentee(s).

2%	4%	10%	51%	30%	2%	92
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My organisation provides (online or in-person) spaces for mentors and mentees to meet.

2%	5%	15%	45%	32%	1%	92
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I am provided with opportunities to network with other mentors in my organisation.

1%	10%	13%	43%	32%	1%	92
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I am able to provide feedback to my senior leaders about my organisation's mentoring system.

3%	10%	13%	46%	28%	0%	92
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My organisation promotes a learning culture.

1%	3%	10%	49%	36%	1%	92
----	----	-----	-----	-----	----	----

Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Mentoring practice – new mentors

	Unlikely to achieve	Not started yet	Made some progress	Making good progress	Achieving	Not applicable	Base
I am committed to developing and refining my mentoring practice.	0%	0%	14%	52%	34%	0%	121
I have established a mentoring programme in my organisation or am enhancing an existing programme in my organisation.	2%	15%	27%	31%	19%	6%	121
I have established a mentoring relationship with mentees underpinned by appropriate	1%	1%	22%	45%	31%	1%	121

contracting agreements. I have used better questioning and listening techniques than previously.	0%	0%	8%	43%	48%	1%	121
I have more effectively tailored my mentoring to my mentee's individual needs.	0%	1%	12%	48%	39%	1%	121
I have made changes to the ways I give feedback to mentees.	0%	2%	17%	48%	32%	0%	121
I have used new ideas and approaches to mentoring.	0%	2%	13%	44%	40%	1%	121
I have provided more effective support to improve my mentee's workplace resilience.	0%	3%	22%	48%	26%	0%	121
I have engaged in self-reflective activities such as the impact of my mentoring on mentees more effectively than previously.	0%	2%	21%	45%	31%	2%	121

Source: New mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Mentoring practice – experienced mentors

	Unlikely to achieve	Not started yet	Made some progress	Making good progress	Achieving	Not applicable	Base
I am committed to developing and refining my mentoring practice.	0%	0%	12%	50%	37%	1%	92
I have established a mentoring programme in my organisation or am enhancing an existing programme in my organisation.	1%	7%	34%	32%	25%	2%	92
I have established a mentoring	0%	1%	16%	36%	46%	1%	92

relationship with mentees underpinned by appropriate contracting agreements.

I have used better questioning and listening techniques than previously.

0%	0%	5%	43%	50%	1%	92
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I have more effectively tailored my mentoring to my mentee's individual needs.

0%	0%	15%	36%	47%	2%	92
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I have made changes to the ways I give feedback to mentees.

0%	1%	14%	42%	40%	2%	92
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I have used new ideas and approaches to mentoring.

0%	1%	9%	38%	50%	2%	92
----	----	----	-----	-----	----	----

I have provided more effective support to improve my mentee's workplace resilience.

0%	4%	11%	43%	39%	2%	92
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I have engaged in self-reflective activities such as the impact of my mentoring on mentees more effectively than previously.

0%	4%	14%	40%	39%	2%	92
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Source: Experienced mentors participant survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Perceptions and experiences of mentoring - mentees

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Base
Mentorship benefits my organisation.	3%	0%	4%	41%	50%	2%	243
Mentorship contributes to my professional development.	3%	0%	2%	34%	60%	0%	243
I feel confident in my mentor's ability to provide me with career guidance.	4%	1%	7%	27%	61%	0%	243
My mentor makes sufficient	3%	2%	2%	31%	60%	1%	243

time to meet with me.

I can honestly speak with my mentor regarding difficulties I face at work.

During a mentoring session, my mentor and I discuss my career objectives.

My mentor supports my well-being.

My mentor understands my professional development needs.

Mentoring sessions are tailored to my needs and career objectives.

My mentor gives me the freedom to find creative solutions to difficulties I encounter at work.

My mentor empowers me to make decisions about my career.

My mentor asks helpful questions.

My mentor gives me constructive feedback about my teaching practice.

Mentorship has improved / improves my experience of working in the FE sector.

I can openly give feedback to my mentor about the mentorship I receive.

I trust my mentor to keep our discussions confidential.

My mentor and I lay out clear next steps at the end of a mentoring session.

I would recommend being mentored to my colleagues.

I wish to continue my participation in mentoring support.

3%	0%	4%	22%	69%	1%	243
5%	7%	13%	28%	45%	2%	243
3%	2%	9%	30%	56%	1%	243
4%	2%	4%	31%	58%	1%	243
4%	4%	7%	31%	53%	1%	243
3%	1%	5%	34%	57%	0%	243
3%	3%	13%	28%	51%	1%	243
3%	1%	2%	31%	63%	0%	243
4%	2%	4%	26%	63%	1%	243
3%	1%	7%	30%	57%	2%	243
3%	2%	5%	30%	58%	2%	243
4%	1%	2%	27%	64%	2%	243
4%	2%	5%	33%	56%	0%	243
4%	0%	6%	27%	61%	1%	243
4%	0%	4%	31%	60%	2%	243

Source: Mentee survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Impact - mentees

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Base
The mentoring programme has made me reflect on my practices as a teacher.	3%	2%	10%	54%	30%	243
My mentor has helped me introduce innovative pedagogical	3%	3%	20%	48%	25%	243

strategies in the classroom.

My mentor has helped me explore different assessment strategies.	4%	3%	17%	51%	25%	243
Through my mentor's guidance, I have become better at developing lesson plans.	3%	4%	22%	47%	24%	243
The mentoring has helped me deepen my knowledge of my subject.	5%	12%	31%	33%	19%	243
The mentoring has helped me to teach my subject more effectively	3%	5%	13%	52%	27%	243
I have become more confident in my teaching abilities since participating in the mentoring programme.	3%	4%	13%	51%	29%	243
My mentor has helped me understand my strengths and areas for improvement.	2%	2%	7%	53%	35%	243
The mentoring programme has made me more proactive about my career development.	5%	6%	22%	42%	26%	243
Since starting the mentoring programme, I have felt more empowered to suggest improvements to my organisation.	5%	6%	30%	38%	21%	243
The mentoring has helped me to feel more job satisfaction.	5%	4%	18%	49%	25%	243
I have developed a better understanding of the FE sector.	5%	4%	26%	47%	19%	243

Source: Mentee survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

Coverage of mentoring sessions and impact – correlation table

	General pedagogical techniques including assessment strategies	Any difficulties the mentee is experiencing in the organisation	Weaknesses in the mentee' s performance and how to tackle these	Managing workload effectively	Observing mentee' s teaching and providing constructive criticism	Strengths in the mentee' s performance	Subject / vocational pedagogy	The mentee' s career progression including working towards completing teaching qualifications	Facilitating access to industry / employer facing development	Helping mentees develop their approach to lesson planning	Helping mentees to get involved in the organisation outside of their teaching role	Reference to ETF' s professional standards or other benchmarks for teaching practice (such as Teacher Standards for sixth form staff)	Helping mentees understand the FE sector in general
The mentoring programme has made me reflect on my practices as a teacher. My mentor has helped me introduce innovative pedagogical strategies in the classroom. My mentor has helped me explore different assessment strategies. Through my mentor's guidance, I have become better at developing lesson plans. The mentoring has helped me deepen my knowledge of my subject.		*	*			*		*		*		*	
		*	*									*	*
	*					*							
	*	*			*							*	
	*			*									*

The mentoring has helped me to teach my subject more effectively
 I have become more confident in my teaching abilities since participating in the mentoring programme.
 My mentor has helped me understand my strengths and areas for improvement.
 The mentoring programme has made me more proactive about my career development.
 The mentoring has helped me to feel more job satisfaction.
 I have developed a better understanding of the FE sector.



* Indicates that the correlation between these variables is significant at the 0.05 level

Source: Mentee survey, IES and the ETF, 2022

APPENDIX D: CASE STUDIES

Specialist College: Mentoring skills for new mentors

Organisational context

Within this specialist college, four people from a large ESOL department attended mentoring training programmes. Prior to the training, the college did not have a formal mentoring programme. Often within departments colleagues would observe one another, provide feedback on, and ask questions about each other's delivery and technique as a way to learn from one another and develop each other's skills in a peer-to-peer style. The mentor interviewed reported that this peer-to-peer style learning only occurred within their ESOL department and was not organisation wide.

Reasons for taking part

The mentor interviewed from the specialist college discussed her introduction to teaching and her experience as a mentee in the earlier stages of her career. Their mentor was a real inspiration to them, and they felt that much of their passion for teaching stemmed from that early mentoring experience. The mentor wanted to pass this experience on to future early career teachers and subsequently wanted to have an informed understanding of mentoring and how to make the most of a mentoring relationship. In addition to this, they were soon to be beginning a new coordinator position within their organisation and felt that a formal understanding of mentoring would benefit them in their new role. The grant lead furthered this, discussing a desire for more developed mentoring skills within the organisation and ensuring this grows as both part of their teaching and learning and their organisational management.

Experiences of the training

The mentor thought the training was very accessible, including the range of times provided, the technology used and the reading materials. Adding to this, they reported that the programme was engaging, and tutors encouraged everyone on the course to make contributions. They did add that there could be more reading materials available for those who want to explore some topics further after the sessions, they suggested reading lists could be separated into essential and optional reading so not to present as overwhelming when beginning the course. In addition to this, they would have really enjoyed engaging in some face-to-face sessions.

Training outcomes

The mentor has found that since undertaking the mentor training for new mentors, they have been able to begin the implementation of a more formal mentoring programme within their department and provide a better structure to one-to-one mentoring sessions and observations. The mentor thought that the most useful skills learned and developed were those related to active listening. Being able to stop and listen to their mentees set the tone for a very constructive mentoring relationship whereby mentees were aware that the one-to-one sessions were an open space to which they can bring any issues or concerns they may have. By exercising active listening, the mentor thought they were able to guide the mentee to resolutions by encouraging them to speak further and look deeper into their concerns whilst also being able to provide suggestions and advice when needed.

The mentor believed they now had the tools needed to discuss a wider range of topics that arose in the new one-to-one mentoring sessions they had been able to organise. Previously conversations would focus primarily on teaching and delivery however since undertaking the training they have been able to provide advice on quality assurance and other internal process, recap the induction

process for teachers new to the organisation in addition to discussing teaching and delivery.

Both the grant lead and the mentor noted staff's increased awareness of having someone to talk to in a non-judgemental format through the formalising mentoring programme within the department. This, overall, is appearing to improve staff satisfaction within the ESOL department, reducing feelings of isolation and encouraging openness within teaching and eagerness to learn new skills.

Within this organisation, the grant lead received some concerns from staff around the recording of mentoring hours and admin time can be quite confusing and more guidance on this could be covered in the early stages of the programme. Despite this, mentors were happy with the programme and aimed to continue with the implementation of a formal mentoring programme within the organisation.

General FE College: Mentoring skills for new mentors

Organisational context

In this intake, this FE college enrolled five members of staff on the ETF's 'Getting ready to mentor' course and two on the course for new mentors. In a previous cohort, one member of staff enrolled on the course for experienced mentors. Prior to this, the organisation had no formal mentoring programme in place, rather there were three teaching and learning coaches that were present in the organisation to facilitate staff training and development and manage the observation process. The mentor interviewed had no experience of receiving mentorship or being a mentor throughout their career.

Reasons for taking part

The college has been eager to help further their strategy of building staff skills. When the first mentor completed the course for experienced mentors in a previous cohort, this desire to build staff skills had cascaded internally and encouraged the decision to enrol more staff on both the courses for new mentors and the online 'Getting ready to mentor' course, in order to build further expertise in mentoring and training. The grant lead also discussed the desire for a mentoring programme to support staff in making their own decisions, improve organisational culture and increase retention. The grant was an important factor in the decision to apply, without it the grant lead was unsure if attendance would have been possible.

The new mentor that was interviewed discussed wanting to increase the number of teaching and learning hours and the potential leg up into a more senior position within the organisation this programme could offer.

Experiences of the training

Overall, the training has been accessible and engaging. The number of time options available to mentors on the programme was well-received and the flexibility to change if and when a session could not be attended was positively noted by a new mentor. A mentor discussed that often the amount of reading required to prepare for a session extended past the recommended two hours and at times became quite tiring. They also mentioned that reading was not always relevant to the session they were preparing for. The grant lead at this organisation raised that this was experienced by almost all enrolled on the programme and subsequently the number of hours remission for preparation were extended to three hours. Additionally, the organisation had to facilitate an increased number of hours for mentoring sessions to work around timetable clashes and other working commitments. For the mentor interviewed, the number of hours remission for both the programme and mentoring increased from four hours a week to 10.

Training outcomes

The primary outcome of the mentor training programmes at this organisation was the mentors' increased confidence in their understanding of mentoring and ability to implement impartial, non-judgemental values into their wider work:

"It's given them some additional confidence in mentoring and confidence in the workplace really in terms of how they work themselves, and their career plans."

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

The mentor thought that whilst they did feel more confident in their understanding of mentoring, competence would come with practice. Additionally, the grant lead understood that mentors within the organisation were able to extract additional learning experiences from discussing the programme with one another and sharing their new experiences of mentoring.

The mentor remained conscious that as they were not in a management position, they could sometimes feel uncomfortable listening to people's concerns and responding to guidance on how to carry out their job differently. Their mentoring had covered a larger deal of wellbeing concerns than they were expecting, something they had been pleasantly surprised with. They had managed to intertwine their roles as a mentor and a mental health first aider to provide an open space for mentees to report concerns and ask for guidance on how to handle certain situations. The mentor had seen an increase in collaborative working throughout the department, which they thought had been very encouraging to see. The mentor believed that as a direct result of the mentoring programme, staff retention had increased. Prior to staff undertaking the programme the college would recruit new teaching staff every seven-eight weeks. At the time of interview, three months since beginning the programme, the department has not had to recruit any new staff.

General FE College: Advanced mentoring for experienced mentors

Organisational context

This FE college introduced a mentoring programme alongside its teaching and learning faculty in order to upskill staff. This mentoring programme had been expanding within the last few academic years. In its second year, the programme consisted of 10 mentors, in the most recent there were: 22 mentors, five heads of teaching and learning, 12 digital champions who specialise in digital skills mentoring and five world skills mentors who focussed on creative teaching methods. Mentoring in the organisation had included auditing, observations, assessing work and setting performance improvement plans and action plans.

Reasons for taking part

The FE college had been interested in formalising mentoring skills throughout the organisation in order to improve their expanding mentoring programme. This course offered the correct skills to facilitate this and provided mentors within the organisation to share experiences with and learn from mentors from different organisations, allowing an insight into how mentoring is working elsewhere. The organisation also believed the programme would have the potential to positively impact staff retention. The mentor discussed having actively engaging with CPD mailing lists and opportunities prior to the mentoring programme opportunity. They had a strong appetite for learning and expanding their knowledge within teaching, particularly to aid the mentoring programme in the organisation.

Experiences of the training

Having not completed the Skills for New Mentors programme, the mentor at this organisation was anxious that content covered in the course would be at a much higher level than they could comfortably pick up. They reported, however, that the course provided a really good outline and recapped some of the key lessons that had been covered in programme B. They thought that attending the course was feasible, due to the programme's online format and use of technology to access lesson materials. Despite this, they did have an appetite for attending face to face sessions, believing that this would encourage people to contribute more and influence more fluid conversation.

The mentor sometimes struggled to find time to complete the pre-session work and ended up finishing this outside of working hours. The grant lead mentioned that this was the case for another member of staff at the organisation who joined the programme late. That mentor ended up dropping out of the course as they could not keep up with the course demands alongside their other responsibilities.

Training outcomes

The programme has greatly increased the mentor's confidence at this FE college. They have been reassured that their stance on mentoring has been to the standard set by the ETF and they said

"It kind of reminded me of why I became a mentor and what I wanted to achieve from it."

MENTOR, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

They have been able to mould their existing mentoring practice around some of the models of supervision discussed throughout the course, providing a structure to the mentoring they provided.

In addition to this, the mentoring programme had provided them with a better understanding on how to deal with a wider range of topics that might come up in mentoring conversations. Since the programme, they had more confidently been able to induct staff into the college, guide better practice on lesson planning and learning objectives and assist new staff with safeguarding observation criteria.

This increased confidence was noted by the grant lead at this organisation who said the mentors who went on the programme displayed a higher level of competency when beginning professional conversations and when looking for innovation opportunities in their departments. Communication between experienced mentors and mentees had improved greatly and mentees reported positive feedback on the support they received. Both the grant lead and mentor said that whilst it was too early to observe any direct impact on retention, they believed there was an increased level of satisfaction with the induction process, and they were positive this would have an impact on retention. The grant lead commented further on the potential positive impact this could have on the student experience in the college.

General FE College: Advanced mentoring for experienced mentors

Organisational context

This FE college put forward one experienced mentor for the advanced mentoring course and two mentors for the new mentor course in this cohort. Last year they had three mentors participating in the course for new mentors, including the current 'Advanced mentoring' participant.

While no formal mentoring programme currently exists in this college it is something they are working towards. Currently they have informal buddying and line manager support, however the mentor reported that taking part in the mentor training served to highlight how different these arrangements were to mentoring.

The mentor that was interviewed described the mentoring that they delivered as part of the required mentoring activities for the training. This was supporting new staff to the college who volunteered for mentoring once they heard about the opportunity from their line managers. Most were from the same department. The mentoring was different dependent on what the mentee required, but was generally non-judgemental and empowering.

Reasons for taking part

The returning mentor who took part in the course for new mentors last year and experienced mentors this year described how they were inspired to continue the mentor training this year and develop a deeper understanding of mentoring.

The availability of the grant was a big part in the decision to put forward staff for the mentor programme. This covered abatement from the mentors' and mentees' roles to enable taking part in the training programme and the mentoring activities. For the experienced mentor this equated to three hours per week. This also covered the management and administration required to support mentors and mentees, liaising with the mentors and putting together progress reports. The grant lead said that with multiple mentors taking part in the different course that this reporting was a time consuming task.

The grant lead's hope for the training was that it would support the college's drive towards supporting teachers with structuring and planning their lessons as well as managing mental health and wellbeing.

Experiences of the training

For the grant lead, the online delivery of the mentor training programme worked well for their mentors who would not have been able to travel, especially with Covid-19 disrupting staff availability. Covid-19 also impacted one mentor's capacity to achieve the required mentoring activity hours, though the grant lead anticipated that this would be achieved by the end of the training.

The mentor described the skilled trainer that they had for their training, who had high levels of knowledge and great communication skills. This was supported by a huge volume of reading material available online which was 'broader and deeper' than the reading for new mentors.

Training outcomes

The mentor described the training to be valuable, providing a deeper understanding of the mentoring principles that were covered last year on the course for new mentors. However, this programme is also intended to support mentors to develop a mentoring programme in their own organisations – a position requiring a level of authority and influence that this mentor reported that they did not have in their teaching role. The grant lead was aware that the mentor had come up with

a plan and they would like to see this taken further by the college.

The mentor reported that within the mentoring sessions they covered handling team conflict and discussed strategies to resolve conflict, for another mentee they supported them during their teacher training.

The grant lead has been pleased with the knowledge developed by all of the mentors and their enthusiasm for continuing in a mentoring role. As grant lead they had gathered feedback from mentees about the support they had received from the mentors. One described how they would have had to take time off for the wellbeing if they had not received support from their mentor which helped them reduce their workload. Others also described support with their teaching practice and new technology. Overall, the grant lead could see that mentoring gave teachers more tools and strategies to be effective educators

General FE College: Advanced mentoring for experienced mentors

Organisational context

Prior to undertaking the ETF's mentor training programme, mentoring at this FE college was mostly ad hoc, organised for staff who openly expressed concerns or challenges to their line manager. In these situations, staff were assigned a buddy who was able to guide them through their specific need. The interviewees reported that the organisation supported the benefits of mentoring and provided new staff with a buddy for the duration of their induction process, however again this was noted to differ greatly from mentoring. The mentor enrolled in 'Advanced mentoring' discussed a time they received mentorship, commenting on its performance management style approach. Mentors would carry out observations on teaching and learning and grade their mentees according to the organisation's performance standards.

Reasons for taking part

The organisation was trying to develop and implement a more rigorous, less performance based mentoring programme prior to taking part in the ETF programme. The grant lead became aware of the programme at a time that the organisation was committed to changing mentoring practices and thought it could accelerate changes,

"it takes a while to change a culture and practices etc. And we're still, I think on that journey, and then we came across the ETF [programme]."

GRANT LEAD, GENERAL FE COLLEGE

In a previous cohort, four members of staff were enrolled on the 'Mentoring skills for new mentors' course. The college was eager to continue the development of these mentors' skills in order to widen and improve the mentoring programme in the organisation.

Experiences of the training

Mentors at this FE college found the course very engaging, commenting on the range of topics covered throughout and the usefulness of many of the resources available to them. The mentor interviewed mentioned that they, alongside the other people taking part in the programme, were eager to attend a face-to-face session however learned that this would be too far to travel for just one session and so were not able to attend. The organisation's grant lead furthered this by saying that if the course had been face-to-face, it would have been less feasible to support attendance.

Amongst those who took part in the course for new mentors, they mentioned that the materials and preparation required was less intense and was not so heavy. Despite this, a common area for

improvement that mentors discussed was the lack of time available to them to prepare for sessions. Mentors at this organisation were not able to complete session preparation in the suggested two hours and found themselves preparing outside of their working hours. In addition to this, some sessions ran over their 90-minute sessions, interrupting other teaching responsibilities.

Training outcomes

The mentor interviewed at this FE discussed the new set of mentors that had been organised to support new teachers and those who were not performing to the college's standards. Since the programme, mentees had been matched more carefully to mentors so that the mentoring relationship could provide maximum benefit to mentees. Additionally, mentors now reported being more equipped to tackle more challenging conversations such as creating action plans and discussing personal issues.

Both the mentor and the grant lead reported that mentoring at the organisation was now less judgemental and more developmental, but continued further to discuss the mentoring process. In their initial meeting, a mentor and mentee set a performance target in line with the college's standard and set a date for review. If the mentee's progress is not to the college's standard their performance will be observed further, causing the mentoring relationship to appear to directly be related to performance management.

Despite this, mentees had provided positive feedback about the new mentoring relationship and reported that it had helped them widen and better their skillsets. The grant lead had noticed an immediate impact on retention, honouring an improvement to college procedures, protocols and the induction process that had been highlighted within mentoring meetings.

Specialist College: Advanced mentoring for experienced mentors

Organisational context

This land-based FE college has five mentors participating the mentor training programme in the academic year 2021-22. They also had around the same number participate in the previous academic year.

The college had a programme of mentoring where new staff (new teachers and new to the college) were offered mentoring by an experienced member of staff who is performing well in their own role. The mentoring role was seen by the grant lead to be for staff looking to progress their careers. The aim of the mentoring programme was to provide a constancy of approach to teaching despite staff turnover. They also saw that mentoring supports new staff joining the college to 'get up to speed' and the extra support for new staff had been particularly important during the past two years of the Covid-19 pandemic

Reasons for taking part

The experienced mentor described how the second cohort from the college had been able to talk to the previous participants and knew that they wanted to make use of the training programme to support the development of a mentoring programme at the college. At an individual level, the mentor wanted to build on their existing mentoring experience and make use of the peer learning from other FE staff from across the country, which they thought was a benefit to the courses run by the ETF.

The availability of the grant helped the grant lead to make a case to put staff forward for the training. The grant ensured that mentors had time available for mentoring activities that they would not otherwise have had. They believed that online training was easier to facilitate than face-to-face as the lack of travel costs left more of the grant available for mentoring activities. One of their mentors

had expressed a preference for face-to-face training.

Experiences of the training

The mentor had no issues during the training programme – the technology worked well and they thought that their trainers were very approachable and knowledgeable. They commented on the wealth of material available to read on the online platform and had downloaded the reading material to be able to pick it up again later. The mentor had found it challenging to make the time available for the mentoring activities and group sessions due to the busy and unpredictable nature of their many roles – lecturer, examiner and subject lead. As they already had a mentoring role, they did not have a problem with achieving the required hours of mentoring practice.

For the mentor, the action learning sets were most useful as a place to learn from peers and practice their listening and questioning techniques. Within their small group was another mentor from a land-based college and they could share their experiences of working in similar settings. As an experienced mentor she could also provide insights and experiences from their previous mentoring. Overall this mentor's tutor group formed a good relationship and kept in touch outside of the group sessions.

Training outcomes

The mentor described 'lightbulb' moments during the training where particular themes and techniques struck a chord and helped them reflect on their own mentoring practice. They reported that they were well supported with their mentoring during the training by the college but that they were not sure how this would be able to continue without the grant award to pay for their time away from their other roles. They believed that the investment in supporting new staff through mentoring would be beneficial for the college and reduce turnover and support retention which in turn would support their students more.

The grant lead could see that the mentors that had taken part in the training were supporting their mentees well. They had seen the mentees as well as mentors gain confidence. Their view that the mentoring role was a progression route was supported by two mentors having gained promotion into more senior roles. This was because they had become more systematic, targeted, and focused in their mentoring as well as having become more confident in their abilities and increased their networking across the college due to the requirements of the mentoring programme.

The grant lead said that as a result of the ETF mentor training programme the college has now established better processes for training and supporting new teachers, which helped reduce staff attrition. They would like to see more staff undertake the mentor training and for the college's mentor training programme to expand, if funding were available to support this.

Thank you

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