**INSPIRE Mentoring – Briefing Document – Children and Young People’s Services Committees**

Innovate Communities a Ballymun based NFP ([www.innovatecommunities.ie](http://www.innovatecommunities.ie)) launched INSPIREMentoring in partnership with LinkedIn Ireland. INSPIRE Mentoring supports marginalised young people aged 18-25 through educational transitions such as moving from education to employment. INSPIRE Mentoring is a holistic intervention that provides academic, social and community support via powerful formal online mentoring. Since launching in 2020 we have seen mentees improve their confidence and self-belief and access employment and skills opportunities. INSPIRE Mentoring facilitates weekly 1:2:1 mentoring support with an experienced professional with a similar background.

INSPIRE Mentoring is a transformative digital innovation that supports marginalised young people. It empowers the young person to take responsibility for their future and participate fully in community, environment, and society. To, in time achieve economic security and opportunities and to themselves act as role model for the generation behind them.

**What problem does INSPIRE Mentoring address?**

INSPIRE Mentoring exists to address a significant gap. That young people from specific socioeconomic backgrounds have less access to role models, job opportunities and networks that are necessary to ensure they reach their full potential in education and employment.

INSPIRE Mentoring aims to reduce this gap for this generation and future generations. It has a quite simple concept. To use the power of skilled mentoring to support young people reach their full potential. It is a customised research based online mentoring programme using mentors that are relatable and motivating with direct relevant workplace experience.

**How does INSPIRE Mentoring Work?**

INSPIRE Mentoring is a formal mentoring programme of one-year duration. Initially meetings occur weekly and can then move to bi-weekly depending on mentees’ needs.

Mentors are onboarded and invited to build a profile on the platform. Mentees are onboarded and get access to the platform. Mentees are empowered to select the mentor who they feel is the best fit for them.

The mentor uses their skills and knowledge to support the mentee to identify and pursue their own interests and goals. They both support and challenge their mentee. In time the mentor can facilitate connections to their professional network, helping their mentee get critical industry insights. Our INSPIRE Mentoring platform manages and tracks the mentoring with support from the INSPIRE team.

**Our Beneficiaries**

We work with young people aged 18-25 from marginalised communities, who self-refer onto the programme.

It is that smart and bright young person, lacking confidence, trying to get on with their life. They aspire to get into further education. When they get there, they quickly realise they cannot compete with their peers. Peers who have professional connections, who can secure internships and insights into sectors and organisations.

INSPIRE Mentoring targets existing HEAR students and young people in Further Education who aspire to go onto Third Level. We also work with young people that are referred in via our partnerships with youth organisations.

67% of INSPIRE participants are the first generation to go on to further education/third level.

**IMPACT of INSPIRE Mentoring**

We know from engaging with young people that they do not currently get the 1:2:1 support that INSPIRE offers from existing services. INSPIRE Mentoring facilitates a young person to get individual mentoring support on a frequent basis. It empowers them and open doors that they quite simply would not have previously had access to.

INSPIRE empowers mentees to understand the connection between education and their future attainments. Seeing is believing and INSIPRE achieves this by matching them with a successful professional with a similar background.

Pilot Programme Evaluation September 2020 – Sept 2021. The formative evaluation collected data and information during the pilot. We were able to analysis this data to assess if our project measures and outcomes have been achieved. Our analysis showed.

* Career and employment were the main area of support mentees looked for
* Followed by personal development (self-confidence) and Education supports
* An increase in self-confidence and belief after mentoring
* The frequency of the mentoring is important
* Young people like the relatability element of matching
* Mentees were able to make connections via their mentors

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