



**Ethnic Minorities
& Youth Support
Team Wales**

**Tîm Cymorth
Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig
& Ieuenctid Cymru**

EYST All Wales Engagement Programme

BAME Routes to Public Life Mentoring Programme

Rounds One and Two: Evaluation Report



October 2020

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1. Executive Summary

EYST Wales is an award-winning, beneficiary-led organisation, established since 2005, which aims to support ethnic minority people in Wales to participate, integrate and be a valued part of Wales.

Since 2017, EYST Wales has been funded by the Welsh Government to deliver the All Wales Engagement Programme, engaging broadly with ethnic minority individuals and organisations across Wales, gathering evidence of need, and influencing public bodies to better meet the needs of BAME people in Wales. Part of this Programme is to deliver a Mentoring Scheme to help increase diversity and representation in Public and Political life in Wales

To date EYST Wales have successfully delivered two rounds of the EYST Wales Routes into Public Life Mentoring Scheme matching 53 mentees with influential mentors in Welsh Public Life. Alongside the mentoring program a series of training sessions was delivered for the mentee cohorts on topics including Boards and Public Appointments, Politics in Wales, Campaigning and Influencing and Media and Communication. These sessions offered participants engagement with high profile individuals and organisations in Wales furthering their knowledge and awareness of the spectrum of Public and Political Life in Wales.

This report offers insight into the outcomes and impact of the first two rounds of the scheme. Broadly the headline findings are as follows:

- 68% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their confidence.
- 76% of Mentees agreed the programme had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their aspirations.
- 42% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their Contacts and Networks; while 42% stated it had had 'Some' impact
- 70% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their Understanding of Public and Political Life in Wales
- 62% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their Skills for Public and Political Life in Wales; whilst 35% said it had 'Some' impact.
- 61% of mentees stated that after the programme, they are 'Very Motivated' or 'Extremely Motivated' to continue their journeys in public or political life. Another 26% reported being 'Fairly Motivated.'

This evaluation suggests several recommendations to be implemented into further iterations of the Mentoring Programme. Considering these recommendations could enable enhanced outcomes for beneficiaries and wider impacts on Welsh Public and Political Life.

- a) Consider access and inclusivity issues across the programme from application process to delivery of sessions taking into consideration disability and learning styles, childcare responsibilities and working patterns.
- b) Ensure mentors are fully briefed on expectations of being a mentor by holding induction sessions, providing briefings and offering check-ins throughout the process to ensure the relationship is developing effectively
- c) Encourage greater participation from outside the urban areas of South Wales.
- d) Develop the Peer network and support element of the programme by investing in mentee spaces outside of the formal learning sessions.
- e) Strengthen the coordination resources behind the scheme to streamline and digitalise where possible the administration of the programme.
- f) Consider developing a best practice guide to matching mentees and mentors.

2. Introduction

The BAME Routes to Public Life Mentoring Programme has been devised and delivered by EYST Wales as part of the ALL Wales BAME Engagement Programme, funded by Welsh Government via its Equality and Inclusion Programme 2017-21.

A key objective of the Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plan is to increase diversity in Public Life, including increasing the representation of ethnic minority men and women in Political and Civic life.

The aim of the EYST Wales BAME Mentoring Programme is therefore to help move men and women from minority ethnic backgrounds closer to and into such positions of power and influence, through matching them with a mentor who can help them to increase their confidence and aspirations, increase their skills and understanding, and build their contacts and networks to enable this to happen.

This evaluation report presents the impact of Round One (February 2019 - July 2019) and round two (October 2019 – March 2020) of this mentoring programme. It is intended to inform and shape Welsh Government and Welsh Senedd planning of their continuing Diversity in Democracy work programme, as well as the Third Round of the mentoring programme which will run from September 2020 to March 2021. It is also informing the development of a multi-agency partnership between EYST, WEN Wales, Stonewall Cymru and Disability Wales to realise an intersectional public life mentoring programme.

The Second Round of the Mentoring Programme was disrupted by the Covid-19 Pandemic with the final events moved online and planned trips to UK Parliament postponed.



Fig 1. Launch event of Mentoring Programme Round One at the Norwegian Church, Cardiff Bay, Feb 2019

“The aim of this mentoring scheme is to get more of us in public life. The scheme is part of giving you the tools to do this. We want more people from BAME communities to put themselves forward for political elections and stand for public office – such as applying to be

a trustee or a governor of a local school or an NHS Board. More importantly we want to see more of us succeed and be recognised”

Vaughan Gething, Minister for Health and Social Services

“The Welsh Government is proud to fund the BAME routes to public life mentoring scheme as part of our Equality and Inclusion Programme. The scheme has delivered excellent results over the past few years; creating empowering relationships which provide Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals crucial opportunities to learn, influence and build networks. There is more work to do to achieve the representation of BAME people that we need in public life but this scheme provides a crucial foundation for that work”.

Jane Hutt, Deputy Minister and Chief Whip

2.1 About EYST Wales

EYST Wales is an award-winning, beneficiary-led organisation, established since 2005, which aims to support ethnic minority people in Wales to participate, integrate and be a valued part of Wales. We do this through delivering services which are targeted and culturally sensitive, addressing a broad range of areas including BME young people, Families, Refugee & Asylum Seekers, BME community groups, and challenging racism in the wider community. We also seek to challenge negative racial stereotypes and promote better understanding and appreciation of ethnic minorities and their contribution to Wales.

Since 2017, EYST Wales has been funded by the Welsh Government to deliver the All Wales Engagement Programme, engaging broadly with ethnic minority individuals and organisations across Wales, gathering evidence of need, and influencing public bodies to better meet the needs of BAME people in Wales. It is one of 7 organisations funded through the Equality and Inclusion Programme to help Welsh Government achieve the objectives in their Strategic Equality Plan.

3 Background/context

Wales is becoming an increasingly ethnically diverse nation and the percentage of population who do not describe themselves as White British doubled from the 2001 to 2011 census. Though BAME people are concentrated in Cardiff, Newport and Swansea, they live in each of Wales' 22 local authorities and are becoming more widely diffused geographically. As such, Wales is a 'super-diverse' society with many ethnic groups and no one particularly dominant minority ethnic group, furthermore, there is much differentiation both within and between various ethnic groups in Wales.

Despite this growing diversity, there is a notable lack of diversity in our political and public life. Currently only 10% of MPs in the House of Commons and around 6% of Members of the House of Lords are from an ethnic minority background, whilst 15% of the UK population is non-white¹. Since devolution began, there have been only three members of the Welsh

¹ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7483/>

Assembly who have ethnic minority heritage, and in its 20 years of existence no ethnic minority woman has been elected to the Senedd. Likewise, in a survey of 9,352 candidates standing for local authority councillor positions, 98% were White British and 1.8% had ethnic minority heritage².

There are also massive disparities in BAME representation in the public sector UK wide and in Wales. Across 43 UK Police forces, 6.3% of employees are BAME individuals, with 3.6% ranked as chief inspector or above. Likewise, across the UK 7% of judges are from an ethnic minority background, as are 8% of teachers. In Wales, BAME representation in the civil service is as low as 2%. In Wales, 4.5% of public appointments and re-appointments went to BAME individuals and there is not a single BAME chair of a publicly appointed governing body in Wales.

In 2020 Welsh Government launched Reflecting Wales in Running Wales, a diversity and inclusion strategy for Public Appointments³ including an action plan to deliver on the strategy. The aim is to see a more diverse public and political life in Wales.

4 Applicants

There was a total of 88 applicants across Round One and Round Two of the Mentoring scheme. Of this total number,

- 66% were Female, 30% were Male (3% Prefer not to say)
- 17% were aged 18-24, 78.4% were aged between 25 and 64 and 2% aged 65+ (2 % prefer not to say)
- 32% were Muslim, 33% Christian, 7% Hindu and 18% No Religion
- 28% described themselves as Black, 34% as Asian, 5 % as Gypsy or Irish Traveller

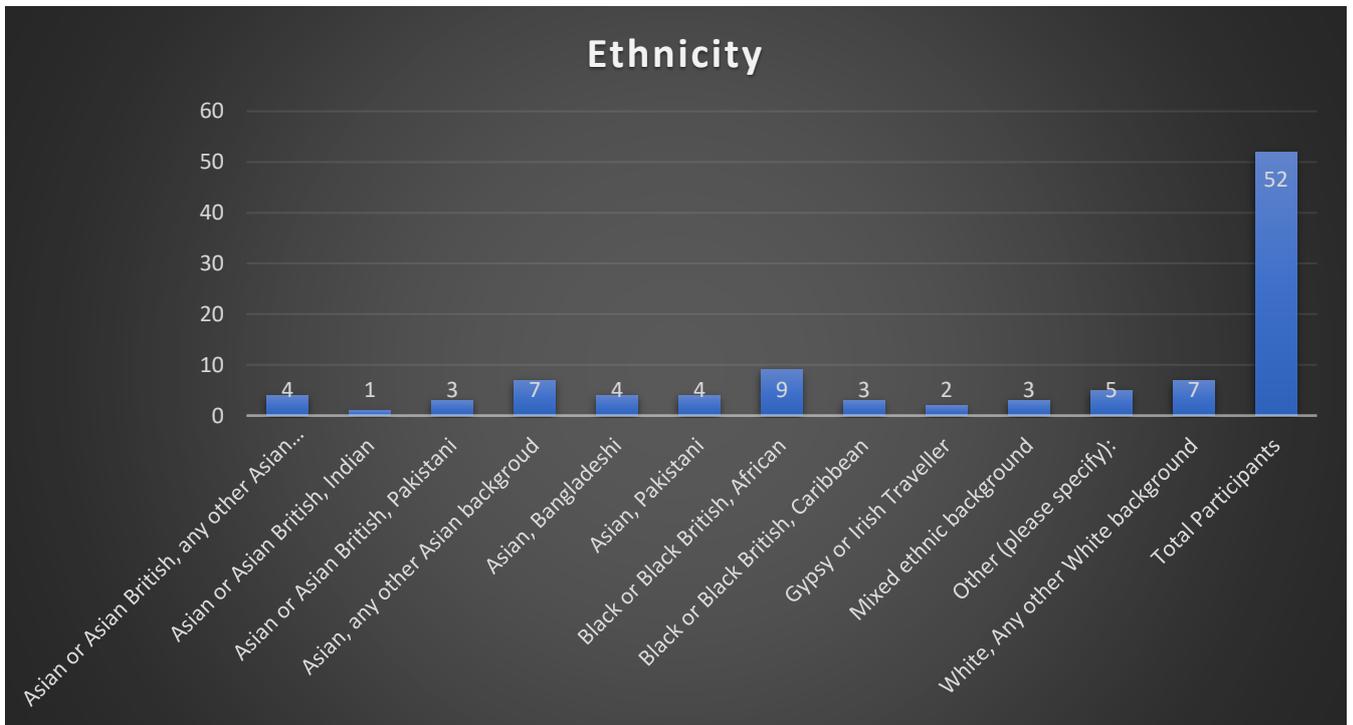
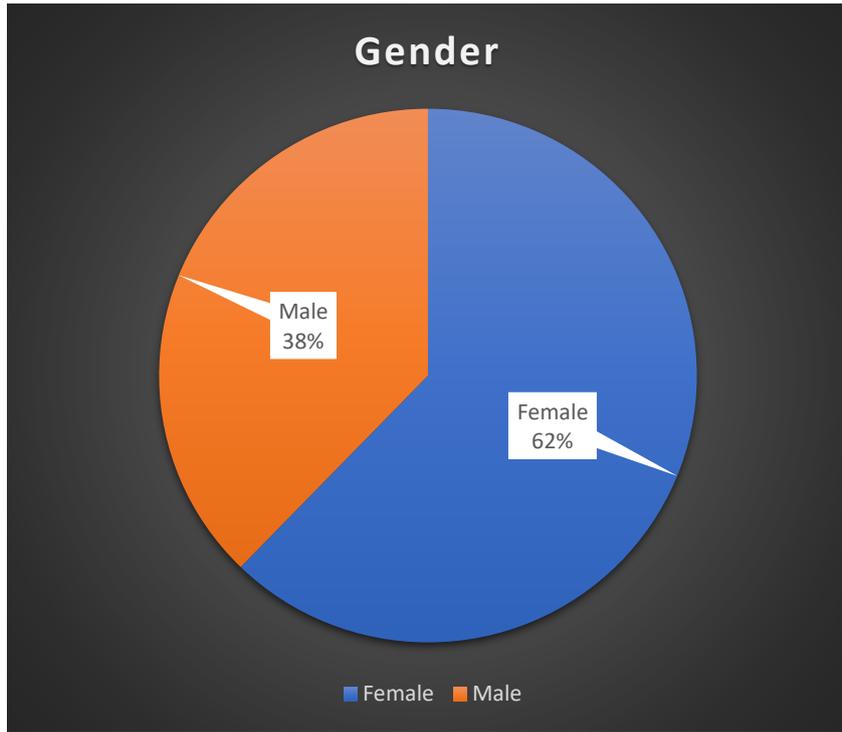
5 Participants

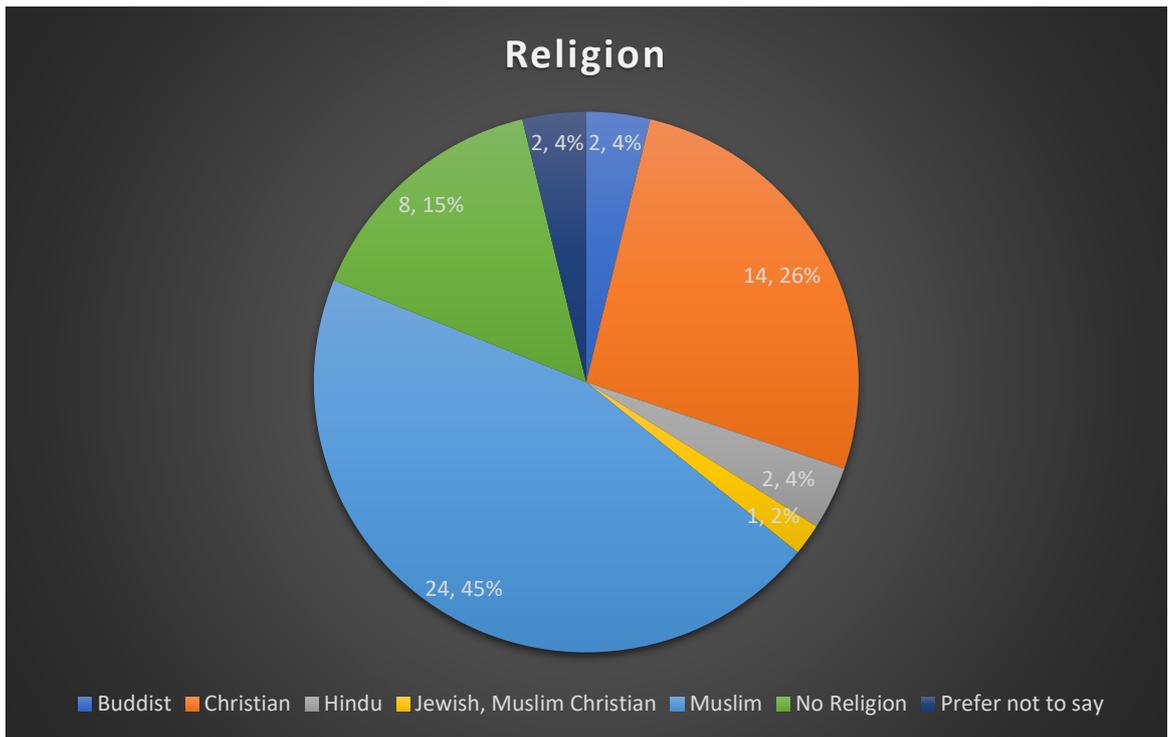
Across Rounds One and Two of the programme 53 mentees were selected and successfully matched with mentors. The demographic breakdown of both cohorts combined is detailed below. Largely we see a demographic picture matching that of Wales with a superdiverse range of ethnic backgrounds represented. There was also broad representation amongst religions, with Muslim being the largest group represented at 45% followed by Christian at 26% and no religion at 15%.

Within the combined cohort 13% had a disability, 87% described themselves as heterosexual, 4% gay or lesbian and 2% bisexual. There were 13% of the participants who spoke basic Welsh and 2% describing themselves as fluent in Welsh. Unfortunately, due to an administration error ages were not captured at this stage; however there was a broad spread of age ranges from aged 18 years to 65+ in both the round 1 and 2 cohorts.

² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/is-britain-fairer-2018-is-wales-fairer.pdf>

³ https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-for-public-appointments-action-plan-year1-2020-21_0.pdf





6 Mentors

The call out to potential mentors across a range of sectors resulted in a wide pool of mentors including 15 Members of Senedd, several senior civil servants including departmental directors and leaders from academia and the voluntary sector.

Sheila Hendrickson Brown, CEO, C3SC
 Amanda Carr, CEO, SCVS
 Anne Marie Rogan, CEO, Swansea YMCA
 Cllr. Bablin Molik, Cardiff Council
 Bethan Sayed AM
 Cllr Ramesh Patel, Cardiff Council
 Cllr. Alison Pugh, Swansea Council
 Suzy Davies AM
 David Melding AM
 Cllr Dhanisha Patel, Bridgend Council
 Elin Jones AM (Llwydd)
 Faith Walker, FW Consultancy
 Florence Ayisi, University of South Wales
 Gareth Hughes, Gwent PCC Office
 Helen Mary Jones AM
 Hilary Brown, CEO, Virgo Consultancy
 Humie Webb, NTFW

Huw Irranca Davies AM
 Huw Morris, Director SHELL, Welsh Government
 Cardiff Council Leader Huw Thomas
 Jane Bryant AM
 Jane Hutt AM
 Jeremy Miles AM
 Jessica Rees, Victim Support
 John Gallanders, CEO, AVOW
 John Griffiths AM
 Judith Stone, WCVA
 Lady Monjulee Webb
 Leanne Wood AM
 Cllr. Louise Gibbard , Swansea Council
 Cllr Margaret Griffiths
 Mark Isherwood AM
 Martha Musonza Holman, Love Zimbabwe
 Meena Upadhyaya, EMWWA

Mutale Merrill, CEO, BAWSO
Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna
Rebecca Evans AM
Rhun Ap Iorwerth AM
Rocio Cifuentes, CEO, EYST
Sarah Williams

Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Uzo Iwobi, CEO, RCC
Vaughan Gething AM,
Wanjiku Mbugua, BAWSO
Naomi Alleyne, WLGA

7 Impact of the project

Headline Findings from the Evaluation of the First and Second Rounds:

- 76% of Mentees agreed the programme had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their aspirations.
- 68% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their confidence.
- 70% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their Understanding of Public and Political Life in Wales
- 62% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their Skills for Public and Political Life in Wales; whilst 35% said it had 'Some' impact.
- 61% of mentees stated that after the programme, they are 'Very Motivated' or 'Extremely Motivated' to continue their journeys in public or political life. Another 26% reported being 'Fairly Motivated.'
- 42% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their Contacts and Networks; while 42% stated it had had 'Some' impact

Mentee feedback has included:

"The scheme has made me more ambitious and more confident. I now realise that I can use my voice to help others and be a voice for the voiceless." Round One Mentee

"My mentor has given me the confidence to speak up. I am now looking to become a Trustee on a board, somewhere I can make a difference." Round One Mentee

"I feel that the scheme has been very beneficial in raising my levels of confidence in my own ability. Social justice, particularly in areas of equality, housing, social care etc., is something that I am deeply passionate about however prior to my involvement in the scheme. I was

sceptical in my own capabilities. However, having sessions around influencing, campaigning and direct meetings with AMs and Councillors, I am confident that my voice is a valid voice and with support and resources, I can make a change. I also am grateful for the sessions from the Institute for Welsh Affairs and discussions around building an argument.” Round One Mentee

“I am a woman of faith and colour who wears the Niqab (face veil). I was never interested in party politics and never thought it can be accessible for a woman like me. I was afraid of people’s reactions, seeing me entering and exiting the Senedd. I was worried about the racism and discrimination I might face as there has not been a BME woman elected member before since the Senedd was established. But at the same time, I wanted to have a voice and be part of the solution. I wanted to know how Welsh politics works from the inside. I applied for EYST mentoring scheme in 2019 and I was mentored by the Conservative Member of the Senedd (MS), David Melding. The experience was a revelation. David Melding was a brilliant mentor. He was technocratic and works beyond identity politics. He identified himself as a Christian and I was able to connect with him as a Muslim from a faith perspective. My experience taught me many things. Indeed, politics by nature is tribal which is something I dislike but politics is vital and if you don’t do politics, politics do you. I also learnt that there are politicians who are genuine and principled and that politics doesn’t have to be toxic. I know there is a myriad of barriers that prevent BME from participating in public life and politics and the level of scrutiny is much higher for them. I also know that the political system was created by and for white men. However, the system can be changed and EYST mentoring scheme can be the first step towards this change. I am now running for Plaid Cymru regional list of South Wales Central, in a bid to be the first BME woman member of the Senedd”. (Sahar Al-Faifi. Round Two Mentee)

I am so grateful this project which gave me access to mentoring that I would never have received otherwise. I was matched up with a very high-profile public figure and Assembly Member who was very open to ensuring the project was successful by making himself very much available to me, having open dialogue with me as his mentee and showing me the inner workings of the Senedd, which I really wanted.

He also made introductions for me which opened up further doors. Following on from the mentoring scheme, I put myself forward and was successfully elected Director of Equalities at Plaid Cymru. I recommend the BAME Routes into Public Life Mentoring Project to anyone and am forever grateful to EYST for their support – Mo Alamgir, Round One Mentee, elected as Director of Equalities for Plaid Cymru

“The insight into public life made the sector more accessible to me and seriously made me re-consider my role in local government. It also gave me the confidence to apply to a parliamentary role - which I was successful in and begin on 1st June 2020!” Round Two Mentee

“My Mentor has helped me realise what skills I have to offer and boosted my confidence in what my potential could be” Round Two Mentee

“Doors have been opened that I thought would never be opened. I have made fast friends too, diverse and across the political spectrum. I am so much closer to achieving my goals, and am now blessed with a wonderful network of friends.” Round Two Mentee

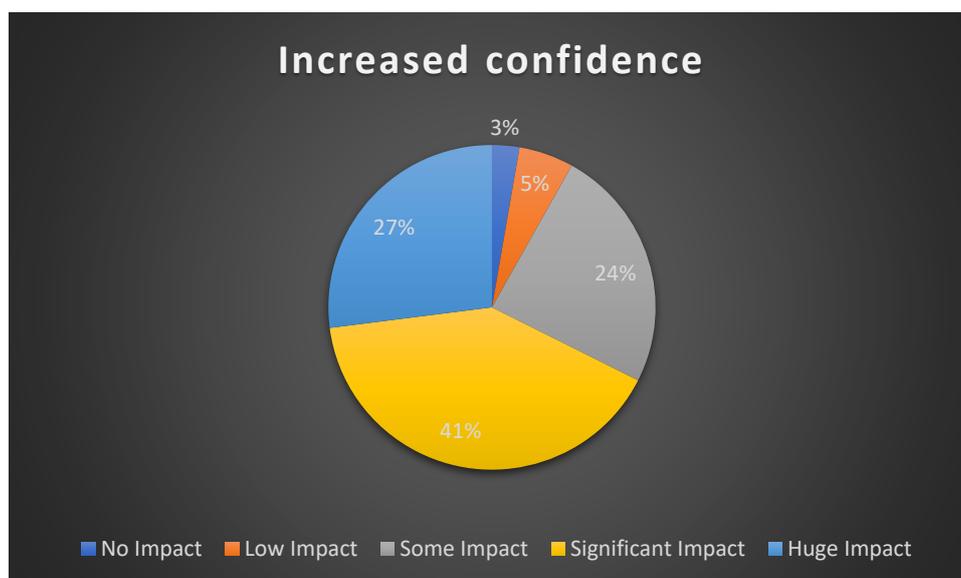
7.1 Mentee achievements thus far:

- Elected Director of Equalities for Plaid Cymru
- Nominated Gower Youth Officer for local party
- Selected to stand as Senedd candidate for Central South Wales
- Public Appointment to Careers Wales board
- Presented evidence on doctoral research at invitation of John Griffiths AM with Deputy Minister for audience
- Established a BME Student Leadership Network at Swansea University School of Engineering
- Winner “Achievement in Stem,” Chwarae Teg Womenspire Awards
- A number of mentees have become school governors
- A number of mentees have become trustees for charities

8 Full Evaluation Results

8.1 INCREASED CONFIDENCE: To what extent has taking part in the Mentoring Scheme increased your confidence?

68% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a ‘Significant’ or ‘Huge’ impact on their confidence, with another 29% agreeing the programme had some or a little positive impact on their confidence.



Participants detailed how the programme had developed their confidence in terms of self-advocacy, decision making, building networks, knowledge and understanding of the processes and culture of Public life in Wales. Several participants stated improvements in their confidence around public speaking, challenging others, and positioning arguments, and more generally in finding their voice, believing in their voice and making their voice heard. Several participants also spoke of the benefits of hearing first-hand the stories of how Mentors came to be in Public Life and how these stories enabled a sense of confidence in them that they too could have these opportunities.

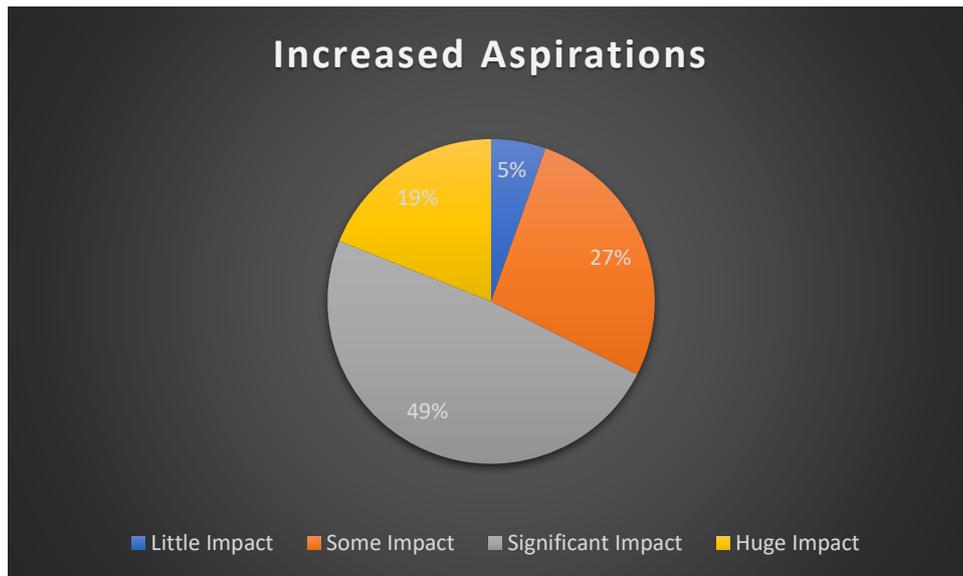
*'Prior to joining the BAME Public Life Mentoring programme, I was not sure how and if I could make a difference within my community largely due to a lack of faith in what a few like-minded people could achieve. However, with a lot more interaction with my colleagues on the programme, with every case study from the trainings attended and with the discussion I had with my Mentor, it became clear that everyone making a difference today experienced the same fears and they achieved successes despite those fears and other difficulties. It is empowering to know you are not alone on this journey'.
Round One Mentee*

'I feel that the scheme has been very beneficial in raising my levels of confidence in my own ability. Social justice, particularly in areas of equality, housing, social care etc., is something that I am deeply passionate about however prior to my involvement in the scheme, I was sceptical in my own capabilities. However, having sessions around influencing, campaigning and direct meetings with AMs and Cllrs, I am confident that my voice is a valid voice and with support and resources, I can make a change. I also am grateful for the sessions from IWA and discussions around building an argument'. Round One Mentee

'Doors have been opened that I thought would never be opened. I have made fast friends too, diverse and across the political spectrum. I am so much closer to achieving my goals, and now blessed with a wonderful network of friends' Round Two Mentee

8.2 INCREASED ASPIRATIONS: To what extent has taking part in the Mentoring Scheme increased your aspirations?

70% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their confidence, with another 29% agreeing the programme had some or a little positive impact on their confidence. In Round One, 63% of mentees stated the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their aspirations. In Round Two, 82% of mentees stated the programme had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their aspirations.



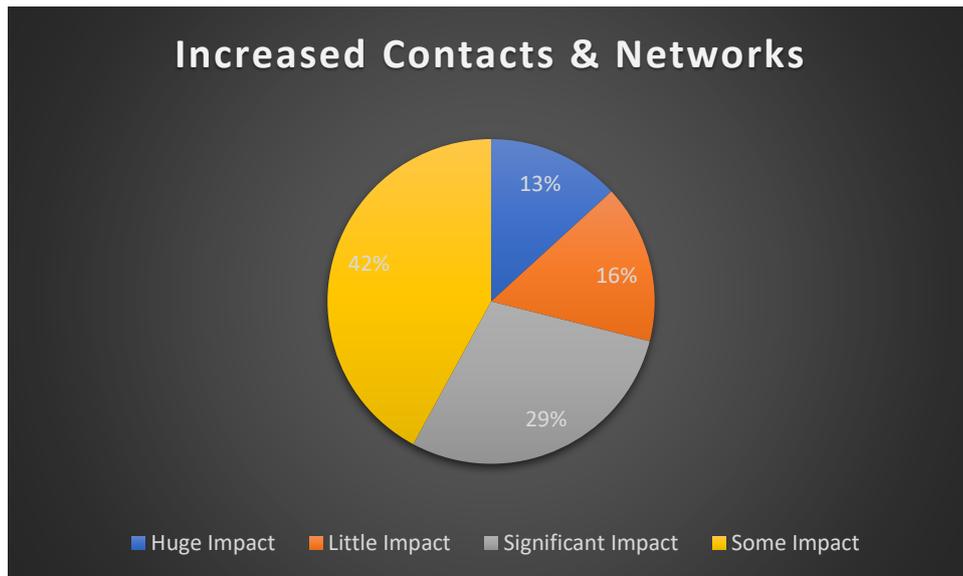
The majority of participants felt the scheme had increased their aspirations. Testimony from the participants detailed how being on the programme had helped shape and make their future paths clearer and how their motivation and belief that they could achieve these positions had been increased. Others spoke of the drive and desire to be at decision-making tables and how the scheme had honed these aspirations.

'My dreams are beginning to become a reality. I am about to run educational seminars for the first time as part of my own business, and am about to mobilise a team to change the nature of dialogue between the general public and public services such as Welsh Parliament'. Round Two Mentee

'I have 3 goals. In the short term, I hope to become a board member/trustee for a public institution/charity. In the midterm, I am considering joining a party to become a councillor. In the long term, depending on my career path, I am planning to become an MP'. Round Two Mentee

8.3 INCREASED CONTACTS/NETWORKS: To what extent has taking part in the Mentoring Scheme increased your contacts and networks?

42% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their Contacts and Networks; while another 42% stated it had had 'Some' impact.



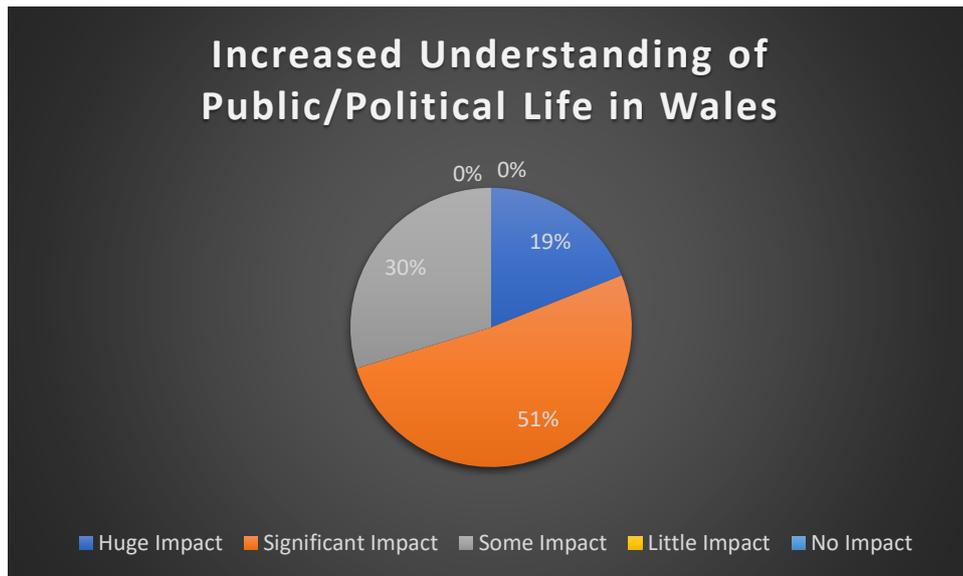
In most cases mentees felt that there had been some or a significant impact on increasing their contacts and networks by participating in the scheme. The qualitative feedback pointed largely to the exposure to networks and developing relationships that the programme enabled and the speculative impact this would have on career paths going forward. While some mentee’s did not feel that their networks had significantly increased because either they already had good networks or because their mentor had not opened as many doors perhaps as other mentors had, there was a significant emphasis on the positive peer network that was established and all the ongoing benefits which would arise from that. Several participants from cohort 2 noted the impact of Covid-19 on their opportunities to complete the programme and fully develop the contacts and networks they had hoped to.

‘Aside establishing a very useful contact in my Mentor, my colleagues on the program are a brilliant set of people to know. I like that we all have varied backgrounds and experiences and the ideas we have, make for a rich mix of creative problem solving, particularly when talking about social and cultural challenges. These are people I would not have gone out of my way to connect with and the programme has successfully brought us together’. (Round One Mentee)

‘I have been able to access spaces and people that otherwise would be a no-go for people like myself. ’Round One Mentee

8.4 INCREASED UNDERSTANDING: To what extent has taking part in the Mentoring Scheme increased your understanding of Public and Political Life in Wales?

70% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a ‘Significant’ or ‘Huge’ impact on their understanding of public and political life in Wales; an additional 30% of Mentees stated the programme had ‘Some’ impact on their understanding of public and political Life in Wales.



All of the participants on the scheme identified as having increased their understanding of Public and Political Life in Wales. Specifically, mentees noted the various roles and duties, legislative and operational aspects which they had not previously been aware of. Some mentees noted the limitations of the scheme in terms of how much information could be absorbed in such a short space of time but that the programme had gone some way to developing their knowledge base as a jumping off point into Public Life.

'Having gained a peek inside the workings behind the scenes through this programme, I can now say my commentary on Public and Political Life going forward will now be from the point of view of someone with a better understanding. I am now able to connect the dots and draw different conclusions on stories I see, hear and read about on the news. I am now able to decide if it is worth supporting or standing against a campaign. The future local and national culture is being shaped by my silence or decision to engage today, and with this understanding I cannot afford to be spectator.'

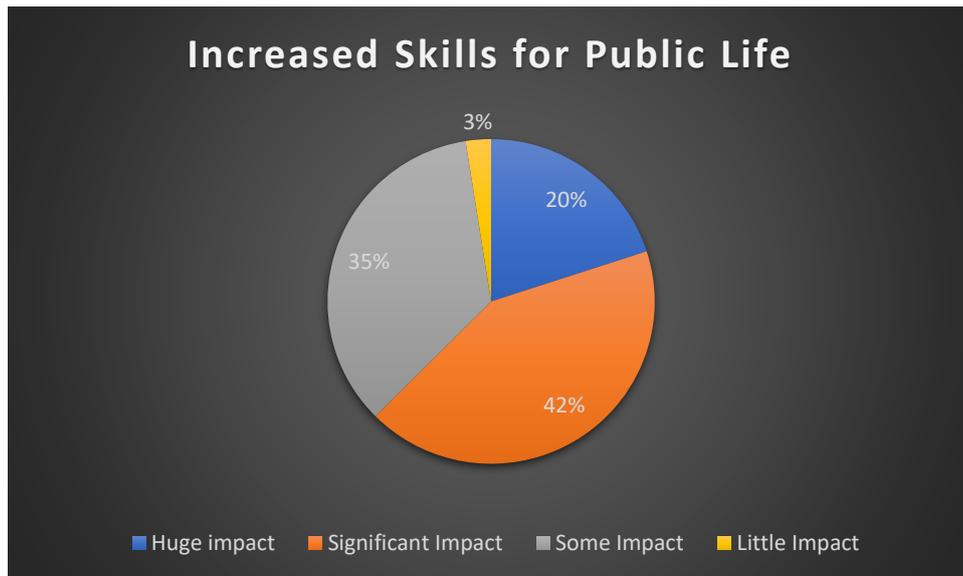
Round Two Mentee

'Prior to this program, the WG's processes seemed so complicated and intimidating. After completing the program, I can honestly say that I have a deep understanding of the how the WG operates.' Round One Mentee

'I know more now about local, national and international panels/boards than I ever did before, thanks to this scheme I can say I have visited the Senedd, understand a lot more about what goes on and the processes involved. I appreciate more that politics and public life are very important to everyone and hold my own opinions of people involved in a different, more positive light.' Round One Mentee

8.5 INCREASED SKILLS: To what extent has taking part in the Mentoring Scheme increased your skills for Public and Political Life in Wales?

62% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'Significant' or 'Huge' impact on their Skills for Public and Political Life in Wales; whilst 35% said it had 'Some' impact.



Mentees identified a range of increased skills resulting from the programme including building relationships, more effective inter-personal skills, public speaking and communications and campaign building. Some mentees spoke about how powerful it was to have discussion with senior level figures and then to see them chair meetings or hold others to account. Several participants noted skills such as efficacy in preparing for meetings with key stakeholders or social media and TV skills.

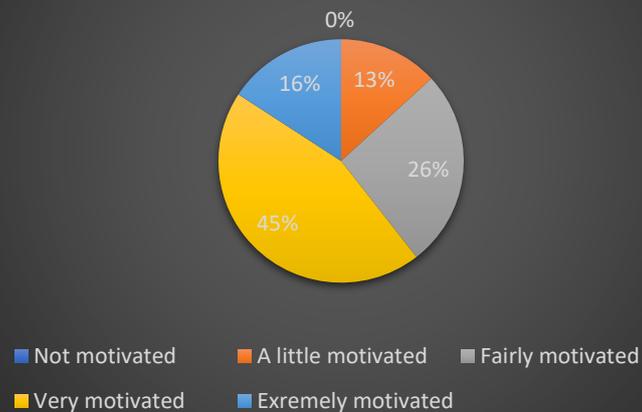
‘I have picked up some great tips and skills during the programme especially from the trainings. Some relevant and practical ones are with delivering effective speeches and improving your communication skills as well as how to run effective campaigns, the importance of having a core team and how to get a response (not necessarily a reaction) from your target’. Round Two Mentee

‘The training provided throughout was very beneficial. Especially, speaking with senior ranking professionals and the discussions I was a part of. Learning how to carry oneself, engage with one another or even challenge others is a huge experience to have. I was very impressed with Sheila Hendrickson-Brown, who I watched question another senior ranking professional on a level that I admired massively! I was ‘starstruck’ speaking to her at a subsequent event. I really felt privileged and empowered by seeing strength in her especially!’ Mentee Round One

8.6 How motivated do you feel to continue your journey towards public or political life in Wales?

61% of mentees stated that after the programme, they are ‘Very Motivated’ or ‘Extremely Motivated’ to continue their journeys in public or political life. Another 26% reported being ‘Fairly Motivated.’

Motivation to continue journey in public/polical life



Motivation levels varied at the end of the two programmes from those who had clear intention and mapped-out paths, to those who wanted to take more time to reflect and consider their options. Several noted that board appointments were more appealing than political office and others spoke about not wanting to take risks in light of the Covid19 pandemic (in terms of moving sectors/careers).

'I am very cynical about political parties' ability to respond to BAME communities specific political concern if they feel it does not 'play' to the wider community interests. My feeling is that individuals who have positive intentions can be swallowed up by the party as a whole. Many fine words are spoken with no-limited action'.

'Although my application to become a trustee for the [a prominent public affairs charity] was not successful, I am now even more motivated to participate in Welsh public life. I am currently on the lookout for another opportunity actively. Participating in public life in Wales is one of my top priorities'. Mentee Round Two

'I'm still worried about the balance between work / life and the resilience needed to work in public life. This is definitely something I will keep exploring at a local level if not at a national level in the future though'. Mentee Round Two

8.7 Additional Impacts

Participants were asked to detail any other impacts of participating in the programme. A number of mentees observed how their general aspiration and skills had been augmented by the programme and that although they did not necessarily want to go into Politics, they were applying or had applied to be trustees of Voluntary Sector organisations or to Public bodies. Other mentees commented on the impact of having a new network of peers with which they could share their successes and challenges and of the benefits of this professional support network in developing their passion and self-awareness.

'I have made lovely friends within the BME community, and I like to think I have made friends at EYST too, who are genuine and supportive. This shared camaraderie provides a foundation for support and personal growth'. Round Two Mentee

'It added to my knowledge and confidence around parliamentary and public life. I have applied for a professional Parliament role and I was successful in securing a job with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and start my new job in June' Round Two Mentee

9 Quality of the project

9.1 What were the most positive aspects of the programme?

There was significant positive feedback overall for the programme including favourable reviews of the training sessions. In particular, the opportunity to hear from high profile people including people of colour in public and political life and hearing about theirs' and others' journeys into public life. The sessions particularly welcomed by the mentees were Communications and Media trainings and the Welsh Government Lobbying and Senedd day. Further positive feedback noted the mentor relationship, the opportunity to shadow and benefit from all of the informal learning moments during the programme.

The programme was also praised for the open, trusting and warm spaces it created and how all participants felt comfortable to voice their experiences and share together.

Below some examples from the evaluation surveys in the mentees' own words.

'My mentor and the training provided; they kind of went together. I knew what I needed to learn from my mentor after the training sessions and having shadowed my mentor, I understood what some of the training aspects was about, so they went quite nicely hand in hand' Round One Mentee

'The trainings and the group of people involved in the programme. The trainings were relevant and impactful while I found my colleagues to be courageous people who you can bounce ideas off and expect to leave the room motivated'. Round One Mentee

'The inspiration passed by counterparts and influential others! Massive shout out to Ginger (project lead) who I know has been working tirelessly arranging this brilliant scheme. In hearing the coverage on national news and really feeling like part of a bigger movement towards equality has given me new strength and resilience'. Mentee Round One

'The opportunity to speak to so many individuals in different public positions. I could think more clearly about where I could position myself in society to have the most impact... I may even be running for local councillor elections next local election time!' Round Two Mentee

'The solidarity amongst mentees; the friendly mentors; the interesting sessions, which introduced us to very many impressive people and refreshing ideas' Mentee Round Two

9.2 What were the most challenging or negative aspects of the programme?

Several participants raised challenges with logistics and travel, especially for those based more rurally or in regions where the events were not held. Access issues were also noted such as cost of travel, accessibility of the information for those with visual impairments and overload of written handouts during the sessions.

There was recognition of the impact of the Election and Covid-19 and the disruptions these placed on mentors' availability and the cancellation of some training sessions.

Some participants noted how jam packed the training sessions were and how the 6-month timeframe for the programme could be extended to enable a deeper learning curve. Finally, there were several comments alluding to a lack of commitment from or connection with some mentors.

One mentee recognised the need for cross-party involvement but found it challenging to have photo opportunities with political figures whose party policies marginalise equalities agendas.

One mentee described feeling alienated due to a mentor's response to a political gaffe widely reported in the press. The mentee reported being extremely disappointed that his mentor supported those remarks despite them being criticised by many in the press. This mentee said, "I was reminded of how easy it is to marginalise an alternative perspective and be in the 'out-group.'"

9.3 Suggestions for improving the programme

Mentees from both cohorts offered a range of suggestions including access suggestions (consider online sessions/alternate venues in different regions/consider evenings and weekends to increase attendance) and also content based suggestions such as opportunities to practice skills via workshops and better utilisation of the peer support space.

Other suggestions included more in-depth briefings for both mentee and mentor cohorts via separate induction/team building sessions and more networking opportunities.

'There were some useful links shared with mentees and I really appreciated finding a bit out about other mentees' journeys and undertakings. I appreciated finding out what others like myself were doing as a result of being a part for the scheme. so, perhaps a team building day for mentees beforehand where expectations and ideas could be shared and questions could be asked to prepare (the ones that need it - like me)'. Round One Mentee

9.4 A selection of final comments from the participants

'It's a great scheme and I hope in the future that as a result there will be more diversity in Public Life'. Mentee Round One

' I think overall I really enjoyed being part of the process and will take a lot away from other people's experiences and also the training we received. I think I would have liked to get a sense of what my mentor's expectations of what they could provide whether that was timewise or contacts, what they felt they could bring to the process'. Mentee Round One

'Thank you for believing in BAME talent and giving us the tools and the chance to show to everyone what we can achieve'. Mentee Round One

'THANK YOU!!! The impacts of this scheme is and will have far reaching impact beyond the 6 months. so well done for the whole experience and opportunity. the people involved with running it are passionate and really are the reason behind its successes! Well Done!' Mentee Round One

'I'm not that far into career, still studying and mothering. Could have used more help with topics to talk about [with mentor]'. Mentee Round Two

'This was a great initiative but given the election and Xmas break, many things came to a halt abruptly. So, I feel like I have not fully benefited from this programme. If there is a more structured/higher level mentee programme in the future, I think I would consider going for it'. Mentee Round Two

10 Conclusion

This evaluation report demonstrates some of the far-reaching impact of EYST Wales Routes into Public Life Mentoring scheme including the impact on a personal level for the participants, both mentors and mentees, and the wider societal impact that ripples out from such a programme in taking steps to diversify and enhance Public and Political Life in Wales.

Overall, the scheme has been found to have benefited participants by achieving the intended programme outcomes. These outcomes include self-reported increases in confidence,

aspirations, contacts and networks, understanding of public and political life and how to navigate a journey into public or political life.

It should be noted that this project has also impacted those political and public figures in Wales who have donated their in-kind support. Deputy Minister Jane Hutt and Minister for Health Vaughan Gething as well as other Members of Senedd have invested time and energy in engaging with mentee cohorts via training and events and by being mentors in the programme. This buy-in and support has been crucial in the success of the programme.

Finally, the success stories of mentees moving into Public Life, even at this early juncture, demonstrates the vital nature of this work and the effectiveness of the programme model.

11 Recommendations

The data reported above, both the outcomes data and the more qualitative commentary, demonstrates the success of the programme in meeting outcomes and improving participants aspirations, understanding and confidence in Public Life in Wales.

There are a number of areas for improvement both highlighted by the participants on the programme and the project team. These have been summarised into recommendations which can be integrated into subsequent programmes to see more enhanced impact.

- a) Consider access and inclusivity issues across the programme from application process to delivery of sessions taking into consideration disability and learning styles, childcare responsibilities and working patterns.**
- b) Ensure Mentors are fully briefed on expectations of being a mentor by holding induction sessions, providing briefings and offering check-ins throughout the process to ensure the relationship is developing effectively**
- c) Encourage greater participation from outside the urban areas of South Wales.**
- d) Develop the Peer network and support element of the program by investing in mentee spaces outside of the formal learning sessions.**
- e) Strengthen the coordination resources behind the scheme to streamline and digitalise where possible the administration of the programme.**
- f) Consider developing a best practice guide to matching mentee's and mentors.**

Emily Robertson, Ginger Wiegand, Rocio Cifuentes
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