

# BOOST

Mentoring  
Programme

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT



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**TELL ME AND I FORGET.  
TEACH ME AND I MAY  
REMEMBER. INVOLVE  
ME AND I LEARN.”**

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**



# INTRODUCTION

**Mentoring is a process in which one person, the mentor, supports the personal / career development of another person, the mentee, outside the normal superior/subordinate relationship. It is essentially a relationship based on the needs and aspirations of the person being mentored and on the abilities and resources of the mentor.**

The concept of mentoring and the influence of mentors in helping to build successful lives is well documented. Essentially, it is a sheltered relationship that encourages learning and experimentation to take place in a way which allows personal potential and new skills to flourish. It encourages the mentee to maximise their performance by putting their own, and their mentor's experience to good use. The key element is clearly the one to one relationship which must develop to the point where there is mutual trust and respect for each others abilities. For this reason mentoring can take place both formally and informally.

Informal mentoring occurs when an individual periodically seeks the advice and support of another individual regarding matters of judgement, or personal development. In this instance it is normally the case that both parties have a well established relationship, where occasional interaction of this nature can take place with some ease. However, the more normal style of mentoring is within a formal relationship. The remainder of this document will concentrate on the latter.

The aim of this handbook is to provide both mentors and mentees with some suggestions for getting the most from their mentoring relationship.

## Mentoring Theory

This handbook is designed to offer practical guidance, rather than to consider the theoretical concepts of mentoring, however it may be useful to summarise the key points.

*"Someone who provides an enabling relationship that facilitates another's personal growth and development."* Morton-Cooper & Palmer 1993

*"Mentoring involves going above and beyond. It is a relationship in which a person with greater expertise and wisdom counsels, teaches, guides and helps another person to develop both personally and professionally."* Gordon Shea

*"A confidential, one to one relationship in which an individual uses a more experienced, usually more senior person as a sounding board and for guidance. It is a protected, non-judgemental relationship which facilitates a wide range of learning, experimentation and development"* Industrial Society



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**SPOON FEEDING  
IN THE LONG RUN  
TEACHES US NOTHING  
BUT THE SHAPE  
OF THE SPOON.”**

**E.M FORSTER**



## Benefits of Mentoring

### Benefits to the Mentor

A mentoring relationship can provide benefits not only to the mentee but also to the mentor. Initially the mentor may get a sense of achievement through assisting the development of a less experienced member of staff while simultaneously being challenged themselves by the learner and the experience of helping them develop. It can also be an opportunity to learn more about themselves, the way the organisation works and the impact of new policy and initiatives from another perspective. Essentially, by supporting and advising the mentee, mentors have the opportunity to reflect on and improve their own working practice. Additionally, they have the opportunity to develop and apply their supporting and advisory skills.

### Benefits to the Mentee

The mentee, in this situation, is a learner who has the opportunity to gain from the greater experience and insight of a more senior officer. This in itself can assist the individual in developing confidence in establishing relationships and working with more senior staff. Furthermore, mentoring programmes can encourage the mentee to set themselves career goals and to pursue these goals consistently. The mentor is often their “role model” who can not only help them to develop their career through the sharing of experience, but can provide a “real life” example of someone who has met their aspirations.

Whilst the mentee will be learning from the experiences of the mentor, it is not suggested that the mentee will simply imitate the behaviour and strategies of their mentor. Rather they should be able to develop a situation in which they can find their own way based on their own personal skills.

### Benefits to the Organisation

Mentoring is a much more efficient method for developing staff when compared to a training course or conference. What the mentee learns is 100% relevant to their needs and at a time and pace to suit them. Mentoring is an ongoing developmental process whereby the mentee can talk through different options, return to work and try them out, then discuss the results with the mentor at the next meeting (a learning cycle). The mentor can help the mentee to overcome obstacles which would have otherwise held them, and therefore the organisation back. This, in turn, can increase motivation leading to improved job satisfaction, morale and performance.

Effective mentoring can provide a cost effective method of development which avoids long periods away from work and has the potential to have very powerful long term effects.

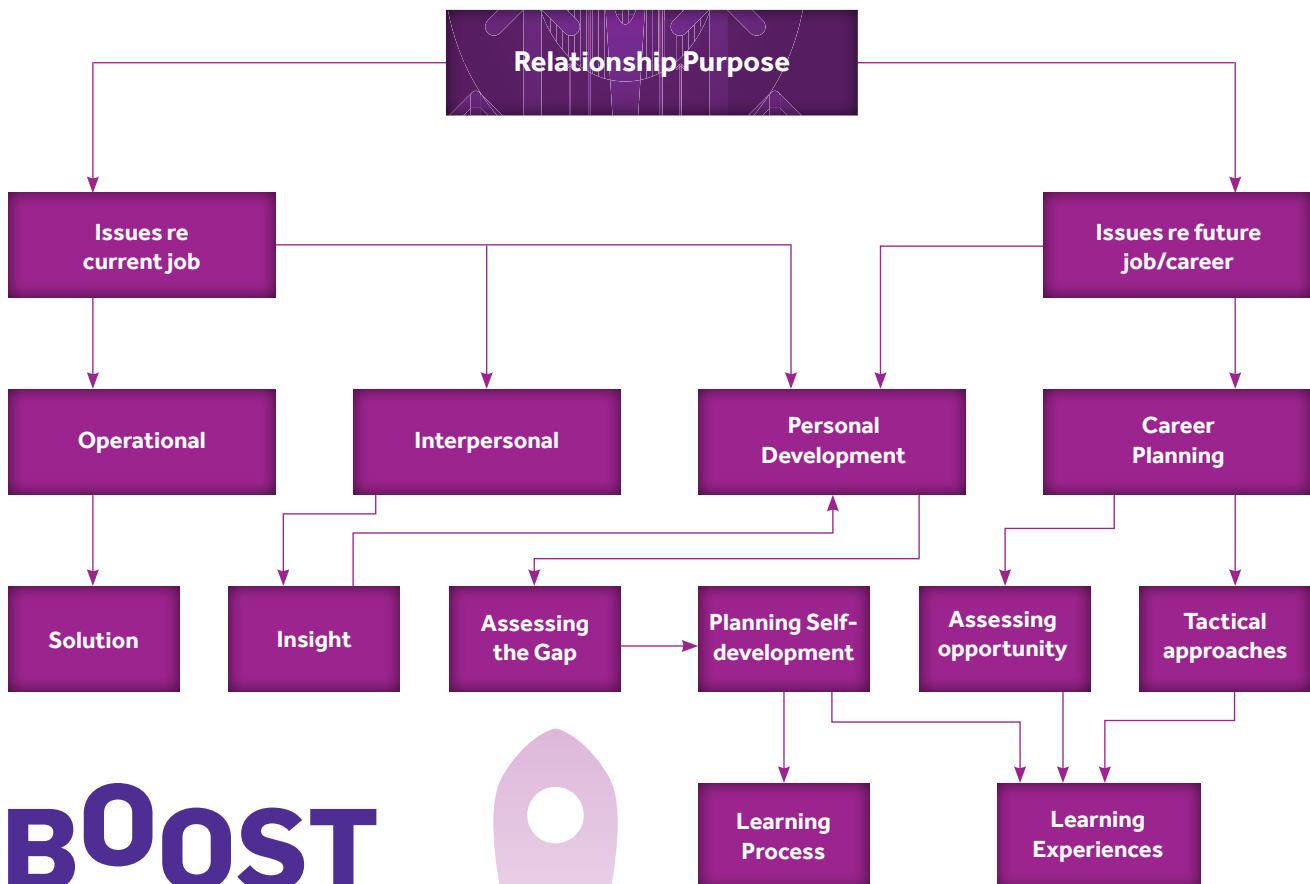


## Potential Problems

Mentoring relationships, like other relationships, can run into problems. Not everyone is suited to being a mentor for a variety of reasons. Organisational politics and other work responsibilities, personality clashes, under-estimation of demands on the time commitment needed and power-play problems, the working environment of the mentee and the feelings and views of their immediate line manager etc may all impact on the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. Even effective mentoring relationships may have their ups and downs, however the mentor and the mentee can usually work things through as they develop an open and effective relationship. Establishing expectations and goals for the mentoring relationship at the outset can help to avoid problems and prevent unrealistic expectations of the relationship on both sides.

## The Mentoring Journey

In their book “Mentoring Executives and Directors”, Clutterbuck and Megginson provide a useful diagram to demonstrate the issues which may be discussed during the mentoring relationship.



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THE DELICATE  
BALANCE OF  
MENTORING  
SOMEONE IS NOT  
CREATING THEM  
IN YOUR OWN IMAGE,  
BUT GIVING THEM  
THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO CREATE  
THEMSELVES.”

STEVEN SPIELBERG





# BECOMING A MENTOR

## Introduction

The most effective mentoring relationships occur when careful attention is paid to matching learners and mentors. This means making sure both mentor and mentee are clear about what is involved in mentoring, are willing to get involved and have discussed what they will and won't work on within the mentoring relationship. The mentor in particular must actively enjoy sharing information and giving others insight into management practices. They should be interested in the personal development of others to the benefit of both the individual and the organisation.

## What is a Mentor

A mentor is someone who guides another individual through important career / personal development opportunities encouraging and supporting them. They will be well equipped to take on this role because he or she will possess greater experience, knowledge and skills than the mentee.

Mentors are valued specifically for their achievements but even more crucially because they have already trodden the path ahead, thus making them invaluable as guides. They are primarily there to act as role models, provide advice and support and generally to share their own management experience.

Mentors can be a critical factor in success, in that they may be useful in assisting with issues such as:

1. *Making decisions on when and how to apply ideas at work.*
2. *Advising on what would be productive to do regarding projects and developments.*
3. *Helping to obtain access to information and people within the organisation.*

## What Mentees might expect from you as a Mentor

There are many possible roles a mentor might fulfil. These might include:

- *a source of advice;*
- *a sounding board;*
- *a coach;*
- *a confidant - someone with whom to talk through problems on a confidential basis;*
- *a role model - someone who has trodden the path already or faced certain challenges successfully;*
- *a champion - someone to encourage and support them;*
- *a tutor in the sense of offering insight into management practice;*
- *someone to give constructive and considered feedback.*

At the outset establish what the learner is looking for and consider together what can be successfully achieved.



## What can you offer?

As a mentor it is important that you are clear about what you can offer the mentee. In thinking about what you can offer you might consider:

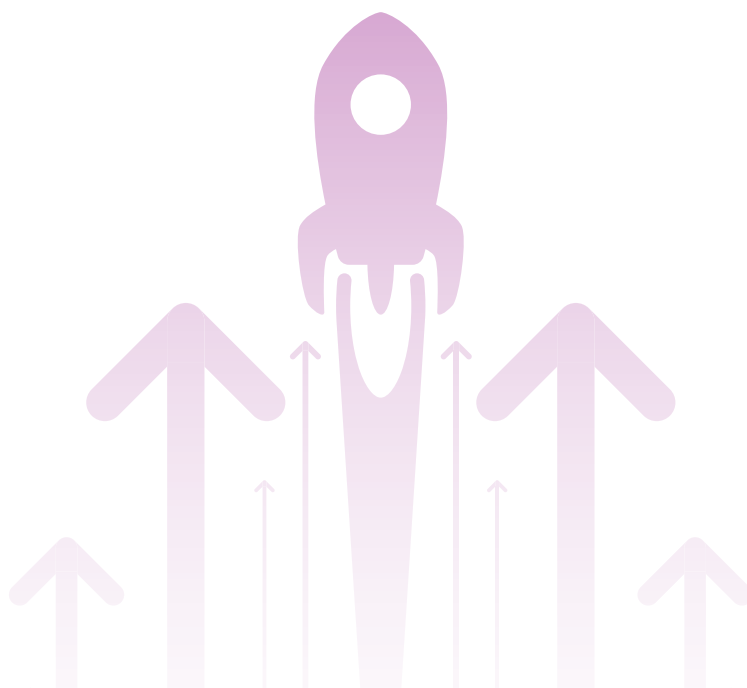
- *your experience of developing others;*
- *your ability to understand and relate to the problems or issues of others;*
- *the skills and knowledge which you have that you could pass on;*
- *your knowledge and understanding of the organisation, how it works and what it is trying to do;*
- *your own interpersonal skills;*
- *any experiences you have of working in similar types of less formally structured learning programmes;*
- *your abilities in listening to and understanding others;*
- *your ability to devote sufficient time to developing and maintaining the relationship;*
- *your ability to gain and offer respect to others;*
- *your network of contacts and influence/willingness to share these;*
- *your ability and willingness to challenge the learner.*

Many of the skills involved in mentoring are everyday managerial skills put to work with a focus on helping someone with their personal development. Many mentoring relationships succeed with mentors who are simply good at listening to, working with and developing others together with an ability and a network which allows them to seek out other people who can assist with specific issues.

## Commitment

It should be realised at the outset that mentoring requires commitment from both the mentor and the mentee in terms of time, emotional resources and a sustained effort. Both the mentee and the mentor need to be prepared to make this commitment to ensure the relationship works and the goals are achieved.

You also need to consider the mentee's immediate line manager in respect of the mentoring relationship. It may be worthwhile to establish how the line manager views the relationship to ensure they do not feel threatened or left out. Above all, it is prudent to deal with any concerns they may have.



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DO FOR ANOTHER  
IS NOT JUST TO  
SHARE YOUR  
RICHES BUT  
TO REVEAL TO  
HIM HIS OWN.”**

**BENJAMIN DISRAELI**



# PHASES OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

The mentoring relationship will usually pass through four stages. If the two parties have not met before, the relationship will be quite formal at the beginning. However as they get to know one another and build trust, the relationship should develop and become more open. After the timescale has completed the two should normally have built up a strong rapport. If the mentoring relationship continues, it is important to make sure that clear goals are agreed, otherwise it may be more of a friendship. If the parties become too close, the mentor may become more of a friend and one of the main benefits of mentoring - objectivity of the mentor may be lost.

## Phase 1: Laying the Foundations

Make agreements to ensure the relationship is successful and set some ground rules on how you will work together. Some guidelines can be found in the Appendix One:

1. *Mentoring Ground Rules - Questions to Ask*
2. *European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) Code of Ethics*
3. *A Checklist for the First Meeting*
4. *Sample Mentoring Agreement*

During this stage, the mentor will seek to clarify the aims and objectives of their role in the relationship. Create rapport, show commitment, be patient and allow the mentee to arrive at their own decisions, rather than directing the mentee as to what to do.

## Phase 2: Beginning to understand

The mentee analyses their present position in terms of job, skills and experience, and works through where they would like to progress or any particular issues they would like to resolve with the help of the mentor. A recent appraisal, or psychometric test may provide a useful starting point. The two can then set some objectives for the relationship and work out a provisional action plan. By providing constructive feedback, the mentor can coach and even demonstrate new skills to the mentee. This process will enable the mentor to facilitate new understanding within the mentee.

## Phase 3: Learning and Incorporating Change

Both the mentor and the mentee work through the action plan, and meetings will be used for problem-solving. For the process to be effective, the mentee must own any solutions which are generated. The mentee will get more from these meetings by preparing beforehand. It may also be useful to keep a record of each meeting and a diary during the relationship.



#### Phase 4: Winding Down

It is important to review progress together towards the end of the agreed timescale. A suggested format will be provided to help with this. If the parties decide to continue beyond the agreed timescale, it is useful to agree new objectives to help the relationship maintain focus.

#### What to do if you are approached

When first approached to become a mentor it is worth spending some time with the mentee in establishing what they are looking for and what you might be able to offer them. Clearly the most successful mentoring relationships happen when mentor and mentee are clear about how the relationship will work and what they are hoping to achieve.

If, having assessed this situation, you believe you do not have the skills, time or resources to meet the needs of the mentee, it is advisable to be up-front from the outset. It may be that you need to help the mentee find a more suitable mentor. In any event, ensure you explain the reasons for your decision clearly and do not leave the mentee feeling that it is a personal reflection on them.



## STYLES OF MENTORING

There are many ways in which you can help people to learn in a mentoring relationship. At different times you might find yourself offering information; suggesting and discussing options; rehearsing ways of dealing with a situation; counselling; giving feedback and coaching in a particular skill. The style and type of help you offer will obviously depend on the type of problem or issue you are dealing with; the level of knowledge and experience of the person you are helping and your skills as a mentor. Within a mentoring relationship the focus of the relationship is on helping the mentee to learn. Whilst direct advice and instruction can be helpful, it is important to ensure that your discussion focus on encouraging the learner to think for themselves and not, either intentionally or unintentionally, creating a dependence upon you where they blindly follow your instructions.

A coaching style of helping can be very useful to encourage the learner to think for themselves. In coaching the responsibility for learning rests with the learner. The coach's role is to help raise the learner's awareness of their skills and knowledge and to help them develop skills, knowledge and solutions to their specific problems or issue.

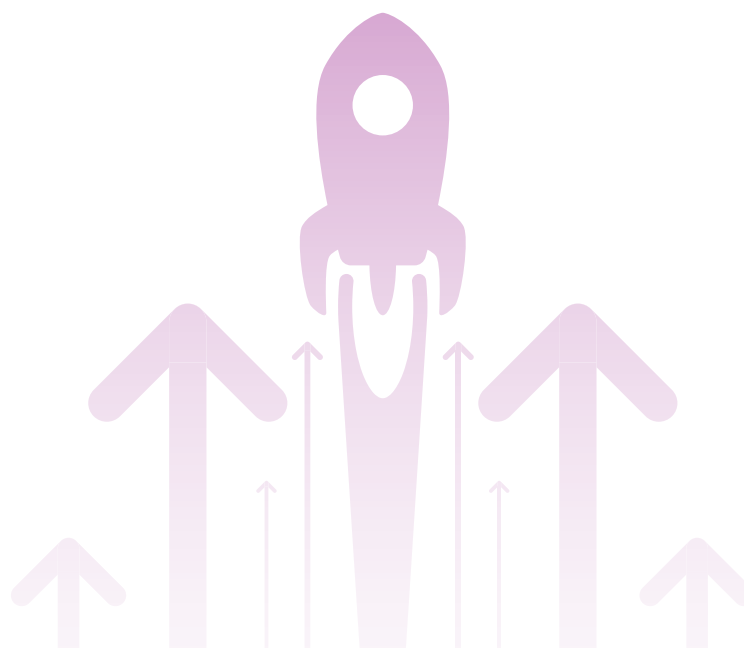
The coach helps raise the individual's awareness of their performance, both good and bad points, through the use of self-analysis, observation, feedback, questioning and discussion.

The coach helps the individual develop their skills, knowledge and understanding by helping them to set goals through use of questioning skills and to get them to think through problems by:

1. *working with them to identify possible solutions to problems*
2. *encouraging them to select an appropriate solution and to put it into action and;*
3. *reviewing the results of the actions.*

Direct advice on what to do is offered only as a means of supporting the process.

The effective coach therefore tends to be patient, detached, supportive, interested, a good listener, perceptive, aware, self-aware, attentive, **BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE EXPERT.**



The process of questioning and exploration the coach uses can often help the individual reach a conclusion for themselves.

Skilful questioning and listening skills, together with a clear structure to the coaching conversation, lie at the heart of effective coaching, in the mentoring relationship.

Active listening skills are very helpful in focusing attention on the learner; demonstrating your understanding of the issue and focusing the conversation. Techniques such as paraphrasing, reflecting and summarising can all be helpful alongside the non-verbal listening and encouragement.

Questions are used to seek information from the mentee and encourage them to think the issues through for themselves; taking responsibility for the final solution and action plan. Open and probing questions tend to be most useful in getting information, seeking specifics rather than generalisations and keeping a focus to the discussion.

“

**WE ALL NEED  
SOMEONE WHO  
INSPIRES US TO  
DO BETTER THAN  
WE KNOW.”**

**ANONYMOUS**



One useful sequence when questioning and coaching is:

### **So What Do you Want? (about the goal)**

- *what is the goal of this specific discussion?*
- *overall, what is it that you want to achieve?*
- *what are your specific end goals, short and long-term?*
- *how will you know when you have achieved them?*
- *what will be different and what will be your evidence of achievement?*
- *when do you want to achieve these things by?*
- *is it realistic?*

### **What is Happening? (about the situation)**

- *what is happening now?*
- *who is involved?*
- *what is contributing to this?*
- *what is your contribution?*
- *what have you tried already - what was the result?*
- *what are the major constraints you face?*
- *what is reality here?*

### **What Could You Do? (about the options)**

- *what options do you have?*
- *what else could you do?*
- *what if's?*
- *would you like another suggestion?*
- *what are the pros or cons of each option?*

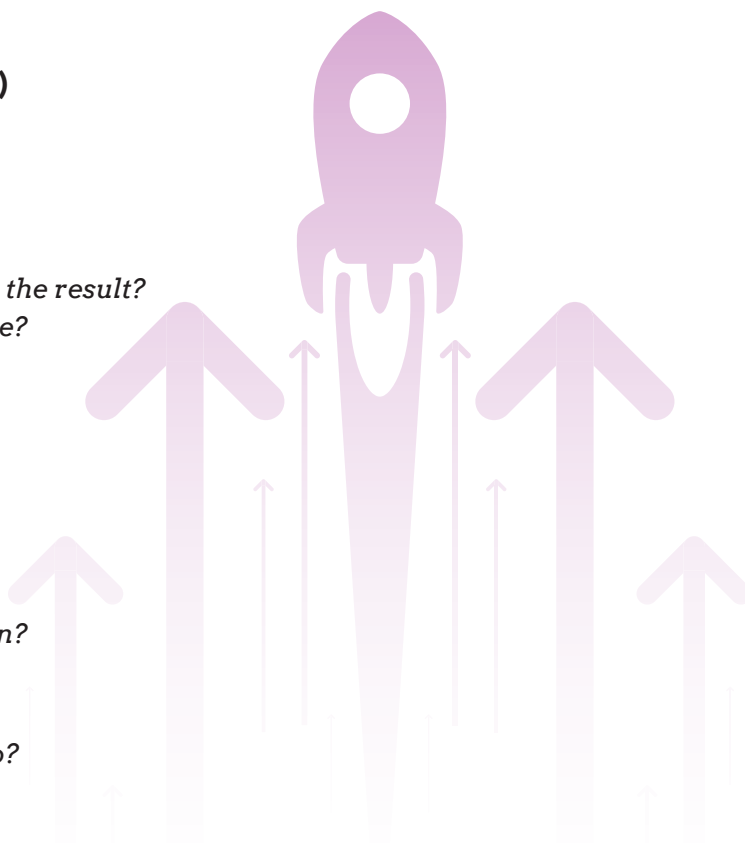
### **So What Will You Do? (about the future)**

- *action points - what are you going to do?*
- *when, where and who with?*
- *will this meet your goal?*
- *what barriers might there be?*
- *how can you overcome them?*
- *who else needs to know or be involved?*
- *what support do you need - how will you get it?*
- *how likely are you to do this on a scale of 1 to 10 (a reality check)?*

This “drawing out” coaching style won’t be appropriate for every issue raised but elements of it can be useful in all sorts of situations where you want to encourage the individual to draw on their own experience rather than just looking for an answer from you.

Long-term this increases the learning; builds self-confidence; and encourages learner autonomy, all of which are worthy aims in a personal development programme.

Over a period of time, mentors and mentees develop their own ways of working together. You may decide to continue the relationship in years to come if it works well. For mentees it can be the most significant step in their career.





# MENTORING USING A PROBLEM SOLVING MODEL

Some organisations adopt a structured problem solving approach to the mentoring process. The following example is an approach used by BT.

Issues are divided up into five sections, and worked through step by step:

- *Challenges*
- *Choices*
- *Consequences*
- *Creative Solutions*
- *Conclusions*

## Challenges

Mentor and mentee define the problem that they wish to discuss. Specific challenges related to the mentee's work are highlighted before a prioritisation of their importance is undertaken. It is at this stage that the mentee, in conjunction with the mentor, sets objectives for what they hope to achieve within the session and also within the relationship as a whole.

## Choices

Once the challenges have been set, the mentee sets out the choices they have in response to the challenges. They state all the possible and viable resolutions to the challenge posed. Examples of possible choices range from nothing in the situation and continuing the same behaviour, to attempting to make a significant change in your behaviour or trying to influence someone else's behaviour.

## Consequences

Determine what the consequences are likely to be if any of the stated choices are implemented. The mentee can achieve this by listing what they perceive to be the main advantages and disadvantages of each of the possible choices. Once this has been completed, the mentee rates each choice on a scale of one to ten, depending on the attractiveness of each possibility.

## Creative Solutions

Once the mentee has established the possible options available, and their respective attractiveness ratings, other solutions can be generated for the stated choices and consequences and then attempts to formulate new possible solutions by combining the most attractive aspects of the stated choices and consequences. At this stage, the mentor might suggest alternative ideas to the mentee in order to encourage new ways of understanding the challenge. The mentor should aim to stimulate the mentee's imagination into thinking of new ways to find solutions.



# BECOMING A MENTEE

## Introduction

There are many things you may wish to consider in looking for a mentor, realising that the most effective mentoring relationships occur when careful attention is paid to matching the mentee and the mentor.

Initially, you will need to be clear about; what issues or areas of work you want to develop, what you are looking for in your mentor, their track record in developing others, their availability and commitment to mentoring and, of course, the logistical factors.

## What is required of a Mentee?

As a mentee, you will need to fulfil certain requirements, to ensure the mentoring relationship is a success from both sides. The mentoring relationship should be driven by you. Be clear what you want to achieve, and take time to develop a clear structure in your mind before you start. The Mentoring Agreement can be used as a framework for the relationship and will ensure clarity for both parties.

Mentoring requires the development of a confidential relationship where both parties can be open and share their thoughts and ideas. It will be important that you have the ability to talk frankly about your ideas, fears and weaknesses, alongside accepting constructive feedback from your mentor. The mentor is not there to solve problems but to act as a sounding board and share their experiences with you. The decision on which course of action to take lie solely with you, as the mentee.

As a mentee you must be prepared to play an active role in the relationship. The purpose of mentoring will be to assist in development of your skills, knowledge and attitude to enable you to fulfil your potential. You will need to have an idea about your goals and be prepared to experiment, take risks and above all show commitment to the organisation and your job in general.

Prepare for each meeting. A sample preparation form will be provided. By being focused, the time with the mentor will be much more productive. A vague chat may make you feel better at the time by getting things off your chest, but it will not necessarily be the best approach to work out a way forward.



## What do you want from a Mentor?

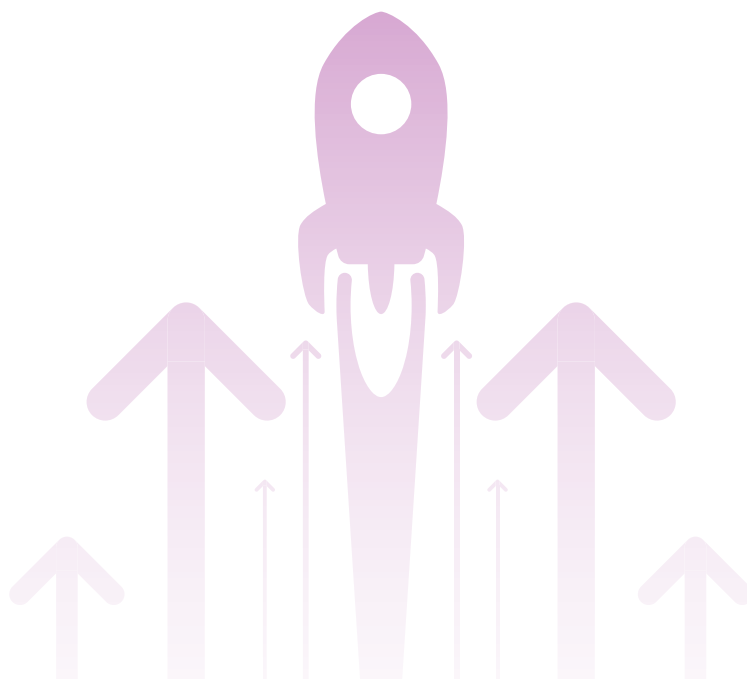
As indicated, the first step in finding a mentor is to think carefully about what you are hoping to achieve through the mentoring relationship. Unless you are clear about this, you will not know what kind of person will be able to help you, particularly in relation to their background and discipline. Ideas around these issues are captured on the mentee application form.

At the outset as the mentee, you must be able to clearly formulate defined goals and negotiate these with your mentor. The mentor is there to provide you with advice, guidance, coaching, to give you an insight into management etc. However as the mentee, you must be prepared to take on tasks that the mentor proposes for your own development, as well as putting forward your own ideas. With the help of your mentor, you must learn to identify your own skills, personal qualities, your weaknesses and learn to exploit (or improve) these further.

## Thinking it through

In considering the most appropriate person with regard to mentoring it is perhaps helpful if you consider areas such as:

- *do you want them to have a similar or contrasting work experience to you or a mixture - what is their work experience - at what stage is their career?*
- *what kind of background and experience do they have?*
- *is it important that they are familiar with the politics within the Council and other developments outside the Council?*
- *are there any specific skills you want to work on which they need to have?*
- *do you want a mentor with a contrasting management style - do you want to experience a particular style?*
- *do you particularly want to work with someone of the same gender?*
- *do you want someone with a wide knowledge of the Council or with a deeper knowledge in a specialist area?*
- *do you need someone based at the same building or site or could you reasonably travel to other sites - if so which ones?*
- *do you need to avoid a mentoring relationship involving people in your line management chain? - mentors are not usually your immediate line manager.*



### Important characteristics to look for in a Mentor

When considering the appropriate person for you, you may wish to consider someone who already has a good record for developing other people. You will also want to be sure they have a genuine interest in seeing less experienced people advance and can relate to the problems of others. They will need to have a wide range of current skills to pass on and have a good understanding of the organisation, how it works and what it is trying to do.

Ultimately, they will need to be able to combine their interpersonal skills with their ability for the work to assist you through a particular course or programme.

### Expectations

It is important as the mentee, that you do not become too dependent on your mentor, or on the other hand, enter into negative competition against him/her.

It should be recognised that not all mentoring relationships will be successful, and you must have the ability to recognise when a relationship is not being helpful to you.

The support of your line manager is all important. The need for time away from the workplace, other support etc should be discussed in an open fashion and agreed in advance to ensure difficulties do not arise during the mentoring programme.

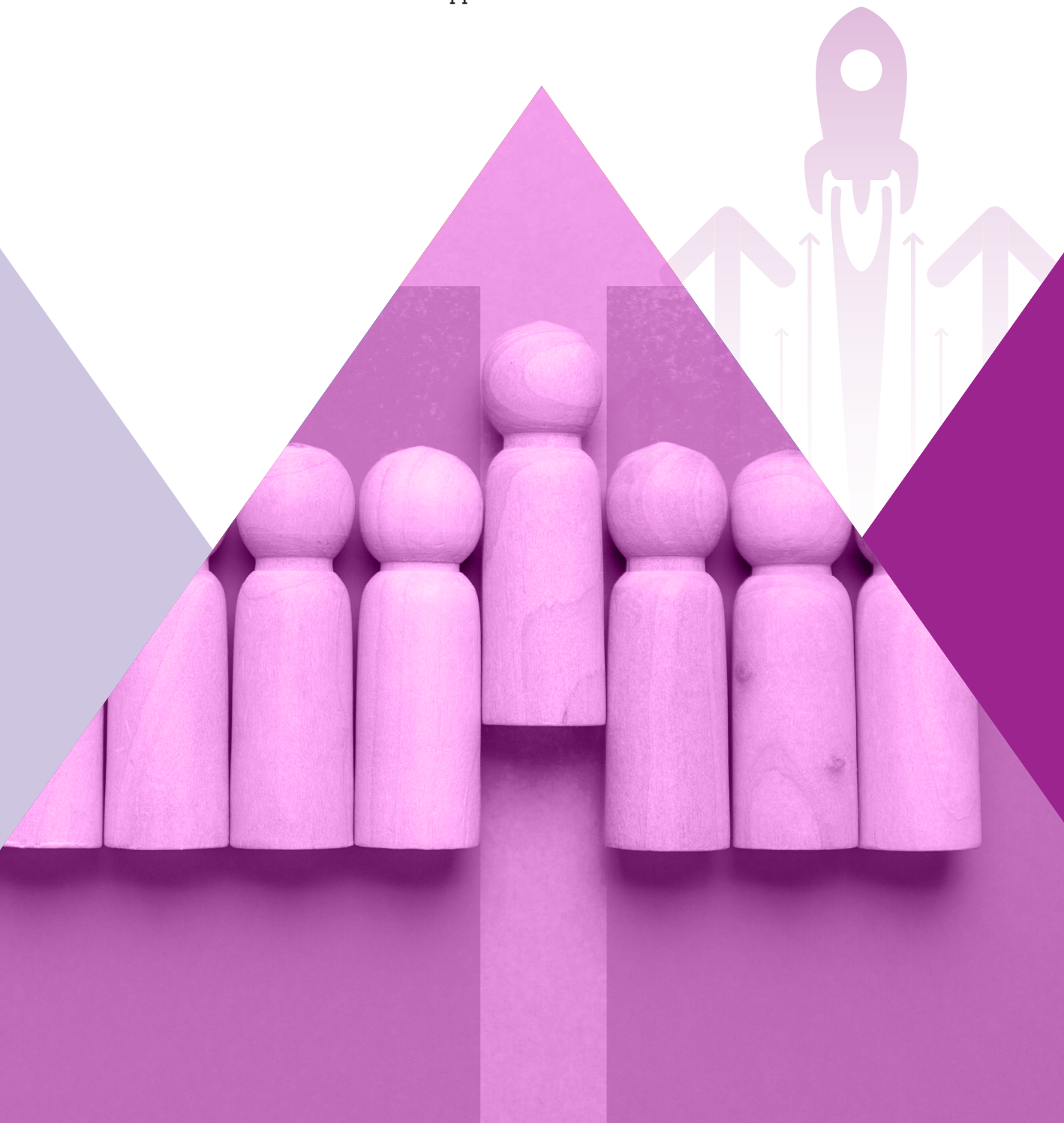


## ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Clearly the success of a mentoring relationship is strongly dependent on whether the mentor and mentee have confidence in and respect for each other and the extent to which they are prepared to communicate openly with each other.

Mentees and mentors will be asked to complete brief application forms outlining their experience, seniority and expectations from the process to help inform the matching process.

Mentoring co-ordinators will then match mentors/mentees based on the information available in the written applications.



# GUIDANCE FOR CONDUCTING MENTORING MEETINGS

## The first meeting

The first meeting between mentor and the mentee is an opportunity to discuss and establish some ground rules for the relationship.

It is important for both of you to know what to expect and how you will operate so that neither are disappointed and both of you are sure what is expected. You may wish to consider, for example:

### What Are Our Expectations Of This Relationship?

- *are we clear about each other's expectations of each other and the mentoring relationship?*
- *how closely do both parties expectations match?*
- *what are the core topics we are prepared to talk about and work on together?*
- *what do we want or need to know about each other? For example:*
  - **career history:** what you enjoy / dislike about your job; strengths and areas for development; where would you like to be in five year's time.
  - **development goals:** the main purpose for the relationship; any other benefits e.g. increasing visibility, expanding networks; how will you measure success?
  - **social:** interests outside work; family life
- *what kind of areas and issues are out of bounds?*
- *how will we deal with confidentiality?*
- *agreement that openness and trust are essential? How to ensure this happens.*
- *to what extent is the mentor prepared to allow the mentee:*
  - *use his/her authority*
  - *use his/her networks*
  - *take up time between meetings*
- *what will each of you give to the relationship e.g. honest and timely feedback?*
- *what kind of support will be offered?*
- *how will you keep in contact?*

### How Do We Want To Manage Our Meetings?

- *how frequent should they be?*
- *how long should each meeting be?*
- *over what period should the mentoring relationship occur?*
- *the venue?*
- *the structure to the meetings?*



## How Does This Relationship Affect The Relationship Between The Mentee And Their Line Management?

- *how should this be managed?*

It is recommended that some time is spent discussing these issues early in the relationship to avoid any confusion, ambiguity or problems later on. The first meeting can often be taken up exclusively with this “contracting” or agreeing how you will work together. This clear working contract will lay a solid foundation for a successful and focused mentoring relationship.

### Duration of meetings

There are no set rules as to how frequently mentor and mentee should meet though a rule of thumb is one hour every month for the next twelve months. Ultimately however this is something to be negotiated by the mentee and mentor early in the relationship.

### Getting the best out of your regular meetings

Getting the best out of any meeting involves some planning and preparation. Mentoring meetings are no different, with planning and preparation being particularly important for the mentee. Mentees are recommended to arrange their meetings at least three months in advance, to allow both the manager and the mentee time to prepare.

The meetings can be used to explore problems; give and receive feedback; develop action plans; review progress or anything else which seems relevant to your agreed objectives. Whatever the purpose, it is important that the mentee is encouraged to prepare for each meeting to get the most out of it.

During the meeting it can be useful to:

- *Decide and agree what you want to get out of the meeting. Be clear about the agenda and the amount of time that you have.*
- *Review progress since the last meeting, discuss what has been done and what has been achieved. Explore whether or not the plan from the previous meeting has been achieved and if not why. Establish what has been learnt.*
- *Focus on making progress on a specific issue during the meeting. Establish what the issue is; explore what is causing it; consider it and discuss possible ways forward; seeking suggestions and, if needed, offer the advice; agree a way forward and some specific actions.*
- *Summarise conclusions and actions.*
- *Agree an appropriate and convenient time and place to meet again. The first meeting is best held on ‘neutral ground’ - informal environments are good for encouraging openness and helping the mentee relax. Once the relationship has established, meetings can alternate between offices if acceptable to both parties.*



Finding time for mentoring meetings can be one of the most difficult problems in keeping mentoring relationships going in busy organisations. It is important, having found the time, not to waste it so planning, preparation and keeping meetings focused is vital.

Both the mentor and the mentee are responsible for the development of the relationship and your preparation for the meetings, your contribution and your participation is important to ensure that it develops into a valuable learning experience.

### **Ending the Mentoring Relationship**

The mentoring process will usually continue for a twelve month period, this allows a clear focus for the mentoring process to be maintained. Once this time period has passed, the relationship should end, or be re-negotiated. It is important that mentoring does not become an unstructured meeting with work as a loose focus. To be a worthwhile investment of time for both parties it needs to be purposeful and goal orientated.





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**THE BARRIERS ARE  
NOT ERECTED WHICH  
CAN SAY TO (ASPIRING)  
TALENT AND INDUSTRY,  
“THUS FAR AND NO  
FARTHER.”**

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

