

Mentoring Policy

We will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, on tape or in another non-written format.

Mentoring

Mentoring is the process of giving “general advice or guidance regarding life or career” (Thorpe and Clifford 2003, An Action Kit for Trainers and Managers, Kogan Page Ltd).

Mentoring comes from the Greek myth where Odysseus entrusts the education of his son to his friend Mentor and became the name for people who help us move towards our goals and reach our potential.

It’s also a form of apprenticeship, whereby an inexperienced learner learns established methods of work within an industry from an experienced colleague, backed-up as in modern apprenticeship by offsite training.

Traditionally, mentoring is the long-term passing on of support, guidance, and advice. In the workplace it has tended to describe a relationship in which a more experienced colleague who is senior to the learner, either within an organisation or within their specialist field uses their greater knowledge and understanding of the work or workplace to support the development of a more junior or inexperienced member of staff.

This can involve offering help or advice on how the organisation / industry works and giving support to the learner, sharing their experiences, encouraging professional behavior, supporting the learner to explore options to assist with the learner’s career.

Mentorship is not

- Another layer of line management
- A suggestion that an individual is incompetent
- An opportunity for the mentor to display their knowledge and skills
- A counseling relationship
- A substitute for self learning
- A substitute for rigorous line management
- The same as supervision or a replacement for formal supervision

It is useful for

- Individuals who have a specialist knowledge, who need to gain a bigger picture of the organisation and/or extend their understanding of the organisation or another field.
- New people entering the organisation who will benefit from having advice on “how things work” operationally.
- A person who is transferring from one service or department to another.

- Staff who are seen as part of the succession plans / acting up programmes.
- Supporting our professional Continual Professional Development scheme and can link to Scottish Social Services Council registration (where applicable).

How mentoring differs from coaching

Mentoring is different from coaching. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) defines coaching as ‘developing a person’s skills and knowledge so that their job performance improves, hopefully leading to the achievement of organisational objectives. It targets high performance and improvement at work, although it may also have an impact on an individual’s private life. It usually lasts for a short period and focuses on specific skills and goals.’

The following table highlights the differences between mentoring and coaching. Mentoring is separate and distinct from coaching covering a range of issues and therefore is more general than coaching but coaching and mentoring can often overlap.

Both will be used to promote best practice within the organisation.

Mentoring	Coaching
Ongoing relationship that can last for a long time	Relationship generally has a short duration
Can be more informal and meetings can take place as and when the mentored individual needs some guidance and or support	Generally, more structured in nature and meetings scheduled on a regular basis
More long term and takes a broader view of the person. Often known as the 'mentee' but the term mentored person can be used	Short-term (sometimes time bounded) and focused on specific development areas/issues
Mentor usually passes on experience and is normally more senior in organisation	Not generally performed on basis that coach needs direct experience of the individual’s formal occupational role
The focus is on career and personal development	Focus generally on development/issues at work
Agenda is set by the mentored person with the mentor providing support and guidance to prepare them for future roles	Agenda focused on achieving specific, immediate goals

Revolves more around developing the mentored person professionally	Revolves more around specific development areas/issues
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Characteristics of the Mentor

In order to carry out the Mentor role effectively, a mentor will need to be able to:

- Listen effectively
- Confront positively and challenge appropriately
- Envisage outcomes
- Support with setting targets
- Make observations
- Explain how to get things done, in, or through the organisation
- Set parameters and boundaries for the relationship
- Identify feelings and issues
- Communicate information
- Encourage and motivate
- Give feedback
- Be reliable
- Be discrete
- Ask appropriate questions

Types of Mentor Assistance

There are seven types of mentor assistance:

- Helping a person to shift her or his mental context
- Listening when the mentored person has a problem
- Identifying mentored person's feelings and verifying them (feedback)
- Effectively confronting negative intentions or behaviour
- Delegating authority or giving permission and validation

- Providing appropriate information when needed
- Encouraging exploration of options

Mentorship in Practice

The revised 2016 S.S.S.C. Codes of Practice state under Section 3 that;

‘As a social service employer, you must provide learning and development opportunities to enable social service workers to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge’

In Loretto Housing, all staff will have an allocated mentor, this may be your supervisor, but this is not always the case, it could be a more experienced staff member. Mentorship will be integral to daily work practice and is not a stand alone process.

Mentorship will provide a role model for the learner; someone from whom they can gain examples of appropriate behaviour in different situations or who can advise them on what to do or not do in various scenarios.

The learner has an objective person in whom they can confide and with whom they can share their hopes and fears. This may be to ask that “silly question” that they don’t feel able to ask their manager or colleague or to explore “what ifs” in order to hone their thinking and make their own decisions.

In turn experience and standards can be passed down to a new person which provides consistency and congruence and having somebody to speak with regarding practice issues can help promote reflection

It is not resource intensive which makes it cost-effective.

Making it work

- Your mentor will have considerable experience or specialist knowledge and will already be effective in their role.
- Time to meet needs to be prioritised by both the mentor and the mentored person as mentorship will fail if meetings are rushed or there are long gaps between meetings.
- Responsibility for agenda setting should rest with the learner so that they can address or discuss areas that are important and relevant to them as well as well as enabling them to take ownership of their learning.
- Roles and responsibilities should be made explicit from the start of the process. This includes defining the boundaries between the mentor and the mentored person’s line manager. Outcomes from mentorship meetings should be recorded within reflective logs and staff development plans.