

Guide

Mentoring and tutoring

Information and support for forensic science organisations which provide mentoring for their apprentices, placement students, and new and existing staff. Inside we give guidance on what support to offer and how to implement it.



Guide for Mentoring and Tutoring

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1 Overview

1.1 Purpose

This guidance document has been created to provide information and support for organisations who are providing mentoring for apprentices, placement students, new and existing staff. It is designed to provide guidance about what support can be provided and how it can be implemented.

1.2 Acknowledgements

This document has been prepared by a task and finish group as part of the FCN Workforce Strategy Education and Training workstream.

1.3 Definitions and Abbreviations

Abbr.	Meaning
CoP	College of Policing
CSI	Crime Scene Investigator
DFU	Digital Forensic Unit
FCN	Forensic Capability Network
SFP	Staffordshire Forensic Partnership
Shall	indicates a requirement
Should	indicates a recommendation
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely
May	indicates a permission
Can	indicates a possibility or a capability

2 Guidance

Mentoring is a relationship between two people with the objective of professional or personal development. The mentor is usually a more experienced individual who shares their skills, knowledge and experience, providing advice and guidance to a less experienced mentee.

It is important to understand the difference between a mentor and a coach. A coach is usually appointed to help an individual map out their career or work on a specific issue and may not be from an individual's area of work, whereas a mentor is usually a more skilled or experienced person in the workplace/field. Mentoring does not include formal line management or supervision.

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A mentor can help:

- Career development
- Develop leadership skills
- Learn new ideas, skills and knowledge
- Improve communication skills
- Meet personal goals
- Develop a network
- Personal development
- Support learning and development

A mentoring relationship should be mutually beneficial with the mentee developing new skills, knowledge and experiences and the mentor may learn from their mentees as well as gaining personal satisfaction from seeing their mentees development.

Both the mentor and the mentee can benefit from this valuable development activity. Experiences in the initial stages for new staff, apprentices and placement students can have an influence on their wellbeing, retention and career prospects. Every mentee has different experiences, backgrounds, abilities and requirements but providing tailored support which is underpinned by the values of the organisation can be beneficial to this. A good mentoring programme will motivate, shape and influence both the mentor and the mentee being positive employees (College of Policing, 2022). Being mentored can have a positive and long-lasting impact on the mentee and so it is important that it is implemented successfully. Being a mentor enables staff to develop their leadership, communicational and interpersonal skills and can provide an opportunity to reflect upon their own skills, experience and knowledge.

2.1 How can we be sure that our mentor schemes work?

To ensure that mentor schemes are successful they need to be adequately promoted within the workplace. This promotion can be in-person, online or via mentoring events but it is important that the entire workforce understand the purpose, the methods used and the benefits to them and to the organisation. This promotion should not be a one-time event and needs to be continually promoted and included within recruitment and retention programmes.

There should be clear guidance provided to all parties (including mentors, mentees and line managers) involved with the roles, responsibilities and expectations included.

2.2 How to encourage colleagues to become mentors?

Some mentors may only choose to take on this role for their own benefit, such as personal development or promotion. Often those who have previous experience of acting as a mentor, value the opportunity to support the development of others or have been mentored themselves and had a positive experience will put themselves forward for the role. They did not put much emphasis on formal training and rarely worked with other mentors (Tyler and McKenzie, 2011). It is important to recognise that mentoring is not a line management role.

Mentors should:

- be well supported and
- be provided with training
- be provided with guidance documents and
- be given support from their line managers.

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- have time and resources so that they can conduct their role effectively
- understand how to deal with any difficulties that arise.

Good practice has found that mentoring has better outcomes when the staff member is motivated properly to get the good outcomes, this may be done through recognition of good work, investment in the research project of a placement mentee, and similar. Career progression could be a method through which people are motivated to mentor well, but it is not the only option available.

2.3 How should mentors be ‘chosen’?

Mentor selection processes vary from force to force, and may involve volunteers, appointees or selection processes. (Experience from the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship programme indicates that those who volunteer for the roles such as tutor are generally much better at it (College of Policing, 2022)). Mentors may be selected because of competencies that they possess, their training experience, because of their personality, or because of their rank or role. These may include:

- Leadership
- Communication skills
- Empathy
- Values
- Integrity

This matching process will be dependent upon the purpose of the mentoring. If it is for pastoral support then personal interests and types of personality may be most important, however if the mentor is intended to support career development then experience and role may be more integral to the process.

The ‘matching’ process can use profiles of staff to match them, which can be done through the completion of a questionnaire or a discussion. One force in England does this prior to a recruit starting. A supervisor calls the new member of staff before they start and has an informal discussion about their likes and interests which enables them to assign the most appropriate mentor.

In one Forensic Services department, they do require that the mentor has effective communication skills, that they have leadership skills in line with the force values, the ability to give and receive feedback, and an understanding of their role as the mentor and what is required of the mentee. In the Staffordshire Forensic Partnership (SFP), the mentor is sometimes selected as an individual who is already invested on the placement student’s success, and this has created better mentoring outcomes because the mentor is better motivated.

It would be beneficial to the organisation if they evaluate the impact of mentors in each role (with apprentices, placement students, new and existing staff) and the method of recruitment of mentor (e.g., are mentors who apply for the role more effective than those who do not choose the role?)

It is important to ensure that relationships are based on professional relationships where any balance of power is considered, and mentors should have a good knowledge of the vision, values and ethics of their organisation.

2.4 Creating a contract between the mentor and mentee

In a mentoring relationship each party has a responsibility and so it is important that these expectations are established, and boundaries set as soon as possible. It is important to

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remember that discussions are confidential and that relationships are based on trust and honesty.

Mentors may be responsible for:

- motivating and encouraging the mentee in relation to learning and career development activities
- helping the mentee to identify learning and networking opportunities
- providing constructive feedback and act as a sounding board for ideas
- challenging the mentee to take a broad perspective
- listening to their mentee and helping them to acknowledge and work on their strengths and weaknesses
- maintaining confidentiality in their relationship with their mentee
- building self-confidence
- providing advice
- improving and developing effectiveness in their role

Mentees should:

- take responsibility for managing their own development
- communicate clearly and honestly with their mentor
- set clear, realistic objectives and initiate learning and career development activities
- be responsible for scheduling meetings and rescheduling them if needed
- be open to feedback from mentor and receptive to new ideas
- show consideration for their mentor's time
- adhere to confidentiality of mentoring partnership
- maintain the commitment to the mentoring partnership – the frequency, structure and length of the partnership will be discussed and agreed with the mentor, with learning and development activities between meetings.

It is important to include an 'onboarding process.' Consider why you are providing a mentor, what is the purpose or desired outcome?

Agreement should be made between both parties in relation to how long meetings should be, how often they should occur, the purpose of the meetings, what will be discussed, if and how it will be recorded and what will happen between meetings.

Good practice feedback has shown that mentorship outcomes are better when mentors are supported through formal documentation around the expectations of mentorship and there is a method through which to assess and feedback the success of the mentorship. For example, CSIs at Sussex have a complete document of who is responsible for what in pre-employment, in the initial phases of induction and in the ongoing coaching (involves management input, specific training inputs, and coaching inputs from mentors/coaches). This is reviewed in regular progress updates and has been shown to improve outcomes. Other successful examples include the work of West Yorkshire Police DFU, who recently started implementing weekly meetings with mentors, mentees, and the mentee's manager to assess progress and offer additional support.

2.5 What should mentoring include?

A guidance document with clear outcomes and methods is needed. The expectations for both the mentor and the mentee should be clear. Many of the mentors and mentees in your organisation may have no experience of the process and so they should be provided with

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the resources that they need, including timescales, checklists and agreements. These documents should form a part of the onboarding process already discussed.

Mentoring can include any of these factors depending upon the purpose:

- Wellbeing
- Career development
- Timescales to achieve competencies, skills, knowledge
- Leadership
- Learning and development
- Pastoral care
- Workplace support
- Project/Research support

Feedback from forces has identified that mentoring generally focuses on the specifics of the role someone is undertaking (usually as they enter a new role or workplace to get to grips with the specifics of their role and any SOPs as part of that role). The case study (included in section 4) from West Yorkshire Police highlights the benefits of embedding wellbeing.

At the Staffordshire Forensic Partnership, mentoring for placement students has focussed on the employability skills of the mentee and an overall appreciation of the work the unit undertakes. This has had positive outcomes for the students involved in the partnership as they have moved forward in their careers. This approach may not be relevant for all roles and may be limited to its use in placements and apprenticeships. This partnership also includes wellbeing, and this contributes to good practice.

2.6 Mentoring for different purposes

A Police Forensic Services Department have reported using multiple mentors for different processes. This has positive and negative consequences as a mentorship tool. It means that staff can continue their personal development even when their main mentor is unavailable and that they are able to have mentoring in a wider-ranging variety of competencies. However, it means they may feel less like they have a single point of contact and there is a reduced opportunity of the mentor noticing the early signs of wellbeing issues in the role as there is not as much shared time together.

Apprentices and some placement students are not guaranteed a job at the end of the process and are likely to be at an earlier stage of their career development. Therefore, it makes more sense to include employability in mentorship of people from these groups than it does for other staff.

Mentoring is an important part of an apprenticeship programme, and the mentor will support the apprentice with the knowledge, skills and behaviours included in the apprenticeship. It is the responsibility of employers to provide ongoing support, pastoral care and mentoring for the apprentice. This support will help the apprentice as they settle into the workplace and the policing environment.

The apprentice will have support from the learning and development organisation but will also have a workplace mentor.

The workplace mentor may:

- Provide workplace support
- Provide pastoral support
- Be involved in the induction process
- Help develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours

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- Help with networking and communication skills

All staff should have a focus on wellbeing in their mentorship. The demands of learning new skills, in a law enforcement environment when the content of the work can be distressing, means staff need to be adequately supported to learn. Learning is better when wellbeing is better, as memory and learning skills are affected by one's emotions.

Mentors need to be supported to deliver good mentorship outcomes and motivated to deliver good mentorship outcomes. The support and motivation may be different depending on which group the mentee comes from. Where a mentee is on placement and their placement is mutually beneficial, this can be used to motivate the mentor. However, recognition of some form may be necessary to motivate the mentors of apprentices, new employees, and existing staff.

2.7 How should we support our mentors?

The selection of mentors needs to be more considered. The consideration should be made of the staff member's skills and willingness to be a mentor, to determine their suitability for such a role. It is important that mentors are provided with the support, training and guidance that they need to be effective mentors.

Consideration should also be given to the following factors;

- How many people can they mentor at one time?
- Should a mentor have some pressures of operational work removed during mentoring?
- Will time be set aside for mentoring?

Evidence from other sectors has demonstrated that mentoring is a worthwhile investment in relation to retention of the workforce, and the skills gained by staff who act as mentors aid them in career progression. Raising the profile of mentoring across the organisation and providing recognition to those in the role reinforces its importance.

2.8 How do we evaluate the success of mentorship programmes?

It is important that we evaluate mentorship programmes. This may include analysing the opinions of those who have been involved through survey or interview. It may also include analysing the success of apprentices, placement students and employees who have been mentored in relation to their success during and after the mentoring through longitudinal study.

2.9 What do we do if things go wrong?

Sometimes a relationship does not work. There may be issues with communication, the mentor and the mentee not getting on or continual cancellation of meetings. Each force should have a process in place to address this which may include:

- Assigning a new mentor
- Involving the force employee assistance programme (or similar)
- Working with line managers
- Working with any training unit/HR/Occupational health/wellbeing unit who may be appropriate.

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3 A model of mentoring

The mentor or mentee can lead on this process depending upon the purpose of the mentoring programme. However, for new staff, apprentices or placement students it may be best if the mentor initiates the contact, at least at the start.

Example 1:

Step 1: Introduce yourself (face to face or virtually) and set up an initial meeting. A mentor should establish what they can add, and the mentee should establish what they want/or are required to achieve.

Step 2: At the first meeting agree expectations and boundaries. Introduce any guidance documents or resources that you will be using. Set goals within a timeline. Agree how often you will meet and what will be discussed at these meetings. The mentor should make it clear what they can offer and how they are able to assist. A mentor can reflect upon their own career and consider what would have helped them.

Step 3: This will depend upon the purpose of the mentoring. If it is part of a new starter probationary period or an apprenticeship then this may include a review of objectives and agreed timelines. The mentee should be able to evidence what they have achieved since the previous meeting and be able to ask for clarification or help where needed. The mentor should provide support where required and advise the mentee on any further development necessary. Assess progress and agree any new goals and discuss any obstacles.

If the mentoring is for support, then there may not be objectives to review but could be a discussion to support career development requirements. The mentee should make notes to assist with their personal reflections. If the process is more formal then these discussions should be documented and signed by both parties to endorse as an accurate summary of the conversation.

Step 4: It is important that feedback is included in the process. All parties should be asked to reflect on how effective the mentoring has been. Has the mentor provided the support, guidance or reassurance required, where they adequately supported throughout the process, and did they received the training and guidance that they needed to complete the process? Did the mentee engage with the process, did they feel supported throughout and were the objectives met?

This analysis is essential to ensure that the mentoring process is meeting the objectives set and that it is adapted and updated to meet changing requirements or expectations.

At all stages, the mentor and mentee should assess whether the relationship is working for them, and the organisation should have procedures in place if any party feel it is unsatisfactory or not meeting their expectations.

Step 5: Is there a concluding date for the mentoring? Who will decide this? The duration of the mentoring should have been part of the initial discussion. For many mentees they may move on to a new mentor as they progress in their career and in their professional lives. It is important that the mentoring process closes on a positive note. A previous mentor may often remain a person that you will turn to throughout your career as a sounding board.

Example 2:

Stage 1: Introduction and the purpose of mentoring. This is the opportunity to build a rapport, set goals, share details and set the ground rules.

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Stage 2: Setting goals and objectives. What would the mentee like to get from the sessions? What are they hoping to achieve in their career? What methods will be used? Are goals SMART?

Stage 3: Skills, Strengths and Weaknesses. What particular areas need work?

Stage 4: Review of Progress and issues so far

Stage 5: Evaluation of mentoring and next steps. Have goals been met? What else needs to be done? How will the relationship continue? Have all goals been achieved and is mentoring complete? This stage should include celebrating success and considering what success will look like in the future.

It could include:

- Listening to what the mentee wants to achieve and what their problems and issues are
- Asking questions
- Reflection – on experiences in the workplace and if on an apprenticeship on the programme
- Identifying areas for development and future needs
- Long- and short-term goals
- Support, advice and guidance
- Networking
- Access to resources
- Providing feedback
- Helping with professional development

4 Case study

West Yorkshire Police DFU Case Study

WYP DFU have implemented new guidance for training and mentoring which has considerably improved outcomes of mentorship. Concerns were raised around mentorship following a significant increase in department size, resulting in a ‘watering down’ of knowledge when staff were expected to mentor without the pre-requisite skills or motivation to be a mentor when they had not long been in the role themselves. As a result, a guidance document was created to implement positive change around the mentorship process. The selection of mentors was more considered, contacting staff before they start a new role and getting a sense of who they are so that they can be ‘personality matched’ with their mentor. In some instances, the supervisor has contacted the new member of staff and found an interesting fact about them, this has then been shared with the mentor as a talking point for the first day to build an early rapport. The building of this relationship has improved new starter’s engagement with their mentor and has also allowed them to rely more on the mentor in relation to wellbeing which has in turn also improved mentorship outcomes.

Consideration has now been made of mentors’ workloads to ensure that they are not assessed on their own work process during the initial mentoring phase, this is to ensure they do not feel the pressure of their own workload and can focus on the needs of the mentee. Supervisors are ensuring minimal abstractions of the mentor during the initial mentorship phase so that they have the time available to mentor effectively. This has also been found to create an improvement in the overall quality of mentorship.

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Mentors and mentees have been provided with formal training materials to work with to improve consistency in the mentorship process and ensure that all staff are trained to the same standard with the same knowledge imparted. This has improved training outcomes considerably. The success of mentorship has been assessed based on staff's competence in their new role/processes and how quickly they are able to work in the role.

Further consideration is to be made of assessing ongoing progress and support.

5 Mentoring for apprentices

Mentoring is an important part of the planning and delivery of apprenticeships. Having a mentor provides the apprentice with the support they need to understand their role and to acclimatise to their new workplace.

The mentor should ideally not be the line manager. Their role is to share experiences, share skills, knowledges and ideas, and to support the mentee. The mentee will benefit from the insights of their mentor and having a number of mentors can increase this. The on-the-job learning that the apprentice experiences with their mentor will help support their off-the-job training and provide a scaffold as they approach the end point assessment.

It is important that the mentor appointed has the skills to be able to develop the apprentice, providing constructive feedback, breaking down tasks into manageable parts so that the mentee can learn, and providing the opportunity for discussion and reflection.

6 Appendices

Table 1: Attributes of a mentor, student officer support guidance (College of Policing, 2022)

Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good listener • maintains confidentiality • ability to build rapport and trust with the tutee
Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patient and empathetic • honest approach
Coaching/ mentoring skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands the difference between the two skills and when to use them • encourages the student to develop their own abilities • encourages reflection and provides effective learning opportunities
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • able to ask open questions • able to explain in multiple ways • able to give constructive verbal and written feedback • active listener
Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of deadlines and quantity of work –

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of the student officer's position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an outline of which should be included in tutor learning programme or briefing • knows personal commitments of student officer • non-judgmental of student officer's position • takes time to understand cultural differences/personal circumstances
Relevant Operational competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • able to demonstrate and recognise skills and knowledge according to the requirements of the role • offers good advice and motivates the student officer
Be a role model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintains professional manner in all aspects, in line with the competency and values framework, Code of Ethics, standards of professional behaviour
A progressive attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • towards the learning programme undertaken by the student officer • linking the learning outcomes to the initial entry routes • an understanding of the programme of learning, including the learning outcomes
A willingness to challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the norm, including their own behaviour and approach to the job, to balance their experience with the potential of different approaches

7 Supporting Documentation

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[The mentor and mentee guide - GCS \(civilservice.gov.uk\)](#)

Documents held in the Police National Library

Student officer: force support guidance Quick reference guide for coaches, mentors, tutors and assessors. College of Policing 2022

<https://www.college.police.uk/support-forces/health-safety-welfare/wellbeing>

[Leadership Learning \(college.police.uk\)](#)

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