Mentoring Programmes

1. **What is Mentoring?**
   Mentoring is a development activity, which is firmly rooted in self management enabling the mentee to:
   - Foster self reliance, self confidence and a belief in their own potential
   - Identify their own development needs and goals
   - Write their own development plans
   - Solve problems by analysing, reflecting and enhancing their self awareness

   Consequently, the mentor acts as a conduit to self discovery and reflection and gives the mentee space and time to make their own decisions. This may mean taking the role of:
   - Facilitator-helping to set and achieve goals and identify opportunities to develop
   - Sounding board-offering the opportunity to try out new ideas in safety
   - Listener-giving time and space and helping to problem solve
   - Coach-giving encouragement and feedback
   - Networker-helping to develop connections
   - Role model-examples to learn from
   - Critical friend-telling the truth, even if it hurts
   - Change agent-challenging the status quo
   - Visionary-being inspirational

   **Some Mentoring Definitions**

   'The purpose of mentoring is always to help the mentee change something-to improve their performance, to develop leadership qualities, to realise their vision. This movement from where they are, to where they want to be' Mike Turner

   'Mentoring involves primarily listening with empathy, sharing experience, professional friendship, developing insight through reflection, being a sounding board, encouraging' David Clutterbuck

2. **Characteristics of effective mentors**
   An ideal mentor will be:
   - Able to build and maintain relationships
   - Open, honest and trustworthy
   - A clear communicator
   - Empathetic and self aware
   - Flexible in their approach
   - Able to give and receive constructive feedback
   - Able to offer support and guidance
• Willing to draw on own experiences but not be directive in approach

A mentor is not expected to be able to meet all the development needs of their mentee and would advise their mentee of alternative resources when appropriate.

3. Characteristics of effective mentees
An ideal mentee will be:
• Enthusiastic
• Good follow-through
• Honest with self / open with mentor
• Humble / receives constructive feedback well
• Knows what they want
• Prepared / proactive
• Recognizes that they bring value, too
• Reflective
• Willingness to step outside comfort zone

4. Approaches to Mentoring
There may be times when it is appropriate for the mentor to be more directive in approach by giving the mentee instruction and guidance in the light of experience. At other times it may be more appropriate to use a non-directive approach in which the mentor asks questions, listens and trusts that the mentee knows the answers.

Mentors have to tread carefully as their experience is unique to them. If a directive approach is overused, a mentee may not learn anything and it could lead to dependency, in which the mentee always asks for help when making decisions. To be successful a mentee has to identify their own approach to any problems they may have. The aim of mentoring is to encourage autonomy, so the more non-directive a mentor can be, the more the mentee can develop and grow in confidence.

5. Models and tools for use in mentoring sessions
a) GROW

One helpful model which can be used in a mentoring session is the ‘GROW’ model.

Goal- What short and long-term goals does the mentee want to achieve?
Reality- Where is the mentee in relation to these goals?
Options- What courses of action are open to the mentee?
Will- What needs to happen? When does it need to happen by?
Who will be taking action? How committed is the mentee to these actions?

Using the model-questions to try
Goal

- What do you want to get out of this mentoring session?
- What do you want to achieve long-term?
- When do you want to achieve it by?
- What does success look like?
- What will that goal give you?

Reality

- What is happening now?
- How are things going at the moment?
- What have you tried so far?
- What is going well for you at the moment?
- What isn’t going as well as you would like?
- What is getting in the way for you at the moment?
- What is holding you back?

Options

- What could you do to change the situation?
- What have you thought of so far?
- What else could you do?
- What if all the constraints were removed?
- What are the pros and cons of each option?
- What is important to you about this?
- What if you had all the resources you needed?
- What would a wise friend advise you to do?
- Who might be able to help you with this?
- Would you like suggestions from me?

Will

- So what will you do now?
- When will you do it?
- What might get in the way?
- How will you overcome it?
- On a scale of 1-10 how willing are you to take the action?
- How will you make sure it happens?
- What will you have achieved by our next mentoring session?
b) **Active Listening**

Active listening can help a mentor to build rapport with their mentee.

Active listening can seem a very passive activity, though it actually requires a lot of hard work, because it involves not only hearing the words but also accepting, understanding, checking and clarifying them.

A mentor can show that they are listening by:

- Focusing on the speaker
- Maintaining appropriate eye contact
- Looking relaxed but not to the extent that they seem disinterested
- Being attentive to body language as well as what is spoken
- Listening to how words are spoken
- Acknowledging and encouraging the speaker through verbal and non-verbal gestures and nods
- Keeping an open mind
- Not interrupting

There are several techniques which can help in exploration and good listening:

- Paraphrasing—restating what the speaker has said but in the listener’s words
- Clarifying—checking out understanding
- Echoing—picking up a key word and repeating it back with a slight questioning tone
- Asking for examples
- Summarising—showing an understanding by drawing together what has been heard
- Silence—giving space and time to the speaker

c) **Questioning Skills**

Asking questions in an open, positive, thought-provoking and non-threatening manner is an essential mentoring skill. Questions can have a variety of functions such as:

- Gaining information
- Assessing issues
- Highlighting important points
- Deepening understanding
- Directing the dialogue and moving it forward
- Raising awareness
- Reframing
- Clarifying
- Expressing an interest in the subject matter
Asking too many questions can result in the mentee feeling as though they are being interrogated, so a mentor has to be clear on the purpose and impact of their questions.

Open questions can put people at ease; they demonstrate an interest in them and positively encourage people to talk. These questions begin with, how, why and what. Other useful questions which can encourage the mentee to elaborate and explore issues are:

- ‘Can you say a little more about that?’
- ‘In what way?’
- ‘What are you thinking of, specifically?’
- ‘Can you give me an example?’
- ‘What impact did that have on you?’
- ‘How do you feel about that?’
- ‘How would you implement that?’
- ‘What are the costs and benefits to that approach?’
- ‘Describe how you might deal with this challenge?’
- ‘Can you explain the thinking behind the idea?’

6. **The process**

Once a mentor has been matched with a potential mentee an exploratory meeting will be arranged. This meeting will be an opportunity for both mentee and mentor to decide whether the relationship has the potential to meet the career development needs of the mentee, prior to any commitment being made by either party. In preparation for this meeting, mentors are advised to identify what they can contribute in terms of knowledge, skills and experience to the mentoring relationship. Mentees are asked to identify what they are looking for in a mentoring relationship, specifically what are their goals from mentoring.

It is standard practice that the mentee should be the driver behind the mentoring relationship, therefore it is usually the mentees responsibility to make initial contact with their mentor.

**1st Meeting**

At the first meeting it is important to clarify mutual expectations of the mentoring relationship. The mentor and mentee may wish to agree a ‘contract’ or ‘agreement’ between them. The following issues may be considered during this meeting:

- Agreeing ground-rules on issues to be discussed, level of confidentiality, contact between meetings and any boundaries
- What level of commitment is expected in terms of number, length and venue of meetings
• How the meetings be structured, will an agenda be agreed in advance or will the approach be more flexible
• Will meetings/actions be recorded
• How will the mentoring process be reviewed
• A mutual exploration of current skills, knowledge and experience
• Explore any objectives that the mentee has been set
• Explore any development activities that the mentee is currently undertaking
• The career successes of the mentee
• What career goals/aspirations does the mentee have? What knowledge, skills, experience, motivation and commitment will be needed to achieve these along with more immediate objectives
• How can mentoring help the mentee to achieve their objectives and longer term aspirations
• Any concerns regarding the mentoring relationship and how these might be addressed

This list is not exhaustive.

**Subsequent meetings - issues to be decided**

• Will the mentee provide an agenda before each meeting
• Has the previous meeting and any actions/outcomes been reviewed
• Identify what information will be needed in order to get the best out of the meeting
• Are there clear objectives for the meeting
• Have any goals changed

7. **Ending the Mentoring Relationship**
   Take some time to review the progress that has been made over the mentoring relationship. What goals were set by the mentee? Have these goals been met? Did any goals change during the relationship? What issues have been explored and how have they been dealt with? What has worked well and what have been the benefits?

8. **Professional and Ethical Considerations of the Programme**
   In recognition of the professional status of the relationship and to ensure that mentoring is effective and conducive to personal and professional development the following guidelines must be followed:

• Meeting agendas are driven by the mentee
• It is not the role of the mentor to ‘tell’ their mentee what to do
• The fundamental principles of the programme are to be agreed at the start of the relationship
• The mentor must ensure that any limits to confidentiality are agreed at the start of the relationship and that (outside these limits) confidentiality is not broken unless agreed with their mentee
• The mentor must recognise when the requirements of their mentee are outside their level of expertise and be prepared to guide their mentee to alternative appropriate resources
• Neither party are to act in a discriminatory, harassing or bullying way
• Neither party are to collude in any dishonest, unlawful or unprofessional behaviour
• The mentor must ensure that any records or notes that they take are shared with their mentee and kept confidential
• The mentor must express any conflict of interest between their role as a mentor and any other role