

GOOD PRACTICE SERIES

Mentoring for Work-based Training

April 1999

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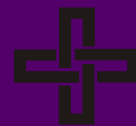
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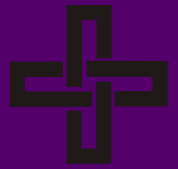
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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| About this guide | 1 |
| Introduction | 2 |
| Setting up a mentoring development programme | 5 |
| Step 1: Establishing objectives | 6 |
| Step 2: Planning..... | 8 |
| Step 3: Making contact with companies | 10 |
| Step 4: Recruiting mentors | 12 |
| Step 5: Helping mentors gain organisational support..... | 14 |
| Step 6: Defining the role | 16 |
| Step 7: Training the mentors | 18 |
| Step 8: Meeting the apprentices | 22 |
| Step 9: Supporting the mentors..... | 24 |
| Step 10: Monitoring and evaluation | 26 |
| Useful publications, websites and addresses | 28 |
| QPID Publications | 29 |
| Summary of additional resources supplied on the attached disk | 32 |



About this guide

Successful Training and Enterprise Councils/Chambers of Commerce Training and Enterprises (TEC/CCTEs) are, in a large part, founded on the achievements of the young people they support within work-based training. Anything that can help them to ensure more young people are appropriately recruited and developed to successful outcomes must be welcome. This guide¹ explains how mentoring for Work-based trainees can help TEC/CCTEs achieve this crucial business objective. The ideas and suggestions within it have been developed over the last few years while working with groups of mentors and apprentices in three different TECs: Leeds, Somerset and South & East Cheshire. It also draws on the innovative work of some employers and providers who are already committed to providing mentors for their trainees.

Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships represent an important and significant step forward for work-based training. These sophisticated and often complex programmes offer exciting opportunities for young people to grow and progress within the work-based route. Over the last few years TEC/CCTEs have responded well to the challenge, but all acknowledge that there is more to be done. Many young people leave before completing the programme, citing lack of employer support, the ability to get a job without the qualification, or difficulties with some aspect of the programme itself as major reasons for leaving. Providing a mentor for such young people could make all the difference. This guide provides TEC/CCTEs with the basic information they need to set up a Mentor Development Programme.

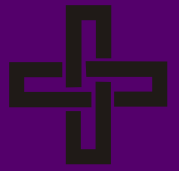
Although the original work was with Modern Apprentices, some of the projects have extended to include National Trainees and graduate trainees. Some employers will also have New Deal trainees, for whom this support is equally valuable. The issues and the messages are generally the same, and most employers will welcome the opportunity to treat all trainees equally.

This guide is based on a study conducted by Stacey Cooper and Julie Farmer, Training and Development Matters. The study, **Mentoring for Work-based Training**, will be published as a QPID Study Report.

Using this Guide

This guide tells you more about the experiences of people involved in mentoring projects around the country and gives practical advice about setting up a Mentoring Development Programme. Each section explains one step in the process, with comments and examples from people who have done it. There are also signposts to the relevant resources sheets. These can be found on the floppy disk attached to the inside back cover of this guide, which will enable you to produce copies as required.

1. This guide was prepared before the Secretary of State's announcement on 10 March 1999 about the results of the TEC Review and the future of lifelong learning arrangements. There are issues raised in the guide which may require further consideration in the light of announcements on future national and local arrangements.



Introduction

What is mentoring?

For what is essentially a simple idea, mentoring is receiving a lot of attention at the moment. Perhaps the pressures over the last decade for work-based training to be more efficient and effective has driven attention away from the basic human need to feel valued and supported. The concept of mentoring is very old (going back to the Greeks) and deceptively simple. For most people it means a relationship between a young learner and a more mature experienced individual who will seek to help the mentee learn more effectively, and guide them as they find their way forward in their chosen vocation.

In the most successful examples of mentoring, the mentor is someone within the employing organisation who has no other formal responsibility for the trainee. In this situation, a mentor can offer a work-based trainee support which complements that which is already available from line managers, assessors and tutors.

Successful mentoring relationships

The characteristics of the most successful mentoring relationships are:

- a mentor who has no other formal role with the mentee;
- commitment and structure;
- confidentiality;
- privacy;
- dedicated time;
- one to one meeting;
- focussed on the needs of the trainee;
- non-judgemental; and
- organisational fit (an appropriate style and level of formality for the culture of the organisation).

A mentor offers:

- a relationship which is not compromised by the need to make judgements or impose discipline;
- a longer term and more personal perspective within which to help the trainee make decisions; and
- someone within the organisation who can help the trainee understand its norms and culture, both formal and informal.

How trainees can benefit from mentoring

Apprentices who have a mentor have a number of advantages. A mentor provides opportunities for a trainee to:

- settle in to the job more quickly;
- understand the culture of the organisation;
- benefit from a more mature perspective on issues and events;
- learn to work effectively with adults;
- maximise the work-relevance of their training and assessment programme; and
- take responsibility for their personal development.

Fundamentally the mentoring relationship is about the mentor advising and guiding the mentee to do things for themselves. It is not about doing it for them.

- Guiding without directing.
- Bringing about change without disruption.
- Helping the trainee free him/herself from internal obstacles and difficulties.
- Encouraging the trainee to discover new approaches and solutions to problems.

Retention

“This is the first time that I have been given a mentor and I changed jobs a few months ago but managed to continue my Apprenticeship. I do feel that had I had a mentor with my previous job it might have made a difference to my decision to leave.”

Administration apprentice, Leeds

Settling in at work

“My Mentor has been brilliant! When I started here I didn’t know anyone. There was a problem straight away when my overalls didn’t turn up. I didn’t want to whinge about it to my boss, so I had a word with my mentor. He was great, he knew who to talk to and got it sorted straight away.”

Engineering apprentice, Somerset

Motivation

“I know I need a bit of a push to keep up with my studies. Knowing my mentor will ask me how I’m doing and help me if I’m stuck makes me get on with it. If I were left to my own devices I’d probably fall behind.”

Care apprentice, Somerset

Mentoring is different

Good managers will often feel that they offer considerable personal support to trainees, and that mentoring offers nothing additional. Equally, a committed tutor or assessor will have regular meetings with a trainee, and may in their own view already be “mentoring” them. A number of mentors on the pilot development programmes have expressed these views, but when encouraged to pursue a more discrete model of mentoring have discovered that subtle changes in behaviour can bring about unexpected changes in the relationship with the trainee and in the trainee’s willingness to communicate.

Sometimes line managers or assessors have attempted to be mentors. Some who have tried to wear both hats feel they have done so successfully, where others have decided, during the course of the programme, that although mentoring is beneficial, it would be better if someone else took the role of mentor. Trainees can find this difficult too: they often refer to a reluctance to be entirely open and frank in their discussions, and are less likely to report additional benefits from the mentoring, as opposed to trainees who have a line manager *and* a mentor. And the bottom line, of course, is that there are times when the actual source of a trainee’s difficulty *is* his or her line manager or assessor. A mentor can help the trainee think through a constructive and positive way of dealing with this situation.

Settling in at work

“This was my first job from school and when I started here I was a bit scared. I was nervous about talking to people and worried about making mistakes. My Mentor has helped me through things. She introduced me to people, told me who I can ask for help, how things work around here and encouraged me.”

Care apprentice, Somerset

Motivation

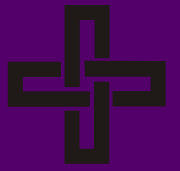
“My Mentor has done NVQs herself, so she knows what it’s like. When I feel a bit down about the amount of work to do I can tell her and she understands. She can give me hints and tips and it keeps me going.”

Business administration apprentice, Leeds

Role conflict

“When I first undertook the role of the Mentor, I felt that as the Line Manager I could manage any potential role-conflict. However it became apparent as the apprentice and I had more meetings that whilst I could handle wearing ‘different hats’ my apprentice couldn’t. We have now identified someone outside of the line who is going to take over being her Mentor.”

Care mentor, South & East Cheshire



Setting up a mentoring development programme

| | |
|---------|---|
| Step 1 | Establishing objectives |
| Step 2 | Planning |
| Step 3 | Making contact with companies |
| Step 4 | Recruiting mentors |
| Step 5 | Helping mentors gain organisational support |
| Step 6 | Defining the role |
| Step 7 | Training mentors |
| Step 8 | Meeting the apprentices |
| Step 9 | Supporting the mentors |
| Step 10 | Monitoring and evaluation |

Step 1: Establishing objectives

TEC/CCTEs must be clear what their own objectives are in setting up a Mentor Development Programme. Possible objectives could be:

- to encourage the provision of a wider range of support mechanisms for trainees;
- through providing support, to assist the retention and achievement of trainees;
- to create additional points of contact with organisations employing work-based trainees; and
- to help employers develop a greater understanding of the benefits and demands of work-based training programmes.

The TEC/CCTEs in the development project now feel that establishing and encouraging mentoring has to become part of their mainstream relationship with employers and providers, available on an ongoing basis. One way of approaching this which is under consideration is to establish a network or mentor support group to allow sufficient flexibility for new mentors to join at any time, and for existing mentors to get the support they need when they need it.

Committing TEC/CCTE resources – who, how much time?

Experience indicates that setting up a Mentor Development Programme involves only modest amounts of time and effort. The most time consuming aspect is generally the initial recruitment of mentors. This can prove to be more difficult than expected, and needs careful planning.

An efficient use of resources

- Planning the programme, and developing appropriate literature (2/3 days).
- Recruiting mentors (2/3 days).
- Preparing for and running training sessions and network/support group meetings (about 2 days every 3 months).
- Preparing brief updates/newsletters (1 day per quarter).

The time commitment required will obviously vary depending on whether the TEC/CCTE contracts out some of this work or does it itself. The numbers of mentors recruited will also have a bearing on this.

The benefits to TEC/CCTEs

Encouraging employers to provide mentors for their trainees will help TEC/CCTEs in a number of ways, beyond the primary purpose of improving retention and achievement.

- Increasing direct support and contact with organisations employing trainees.
- Encouraging employers to think more strategically about and make a greater commitment to their involvement in work-based training.
- Having, through the mentor, an opportunity to improve understanding within employing organisations of the content and purpose of work-based programmes such as Modern Apprenticeship and National Traineeship.
- Providing additional evidence of TEC/CCTEs' support for employers to meet the requirements of the quality and inspection framework.

"I think mentoring is going to play an important part in future DfEE training programmes as the TSC inspectorate evaluate the quality of training and the obvious weaknesses such as:

- initial and ongoing assessment of trainees;
- lack of effective induction into companies and NVQ awareness;
- low full MA outcome ratios (i.e. low key skill achievement rates); and
- high leaver rates.

Having said this, we must ensure a balanced approach to mentoring, which emphasises the need without disrupting the day to day work of the individuals. Employers benefit too, as this enables them to have more of a "feel" for the training and development of staff, so they could make informed judgements on quality and reduce the supplier ownership."

Terry Fennel, MA Co-ordinator, Leeds TEC

"Somerset TEC feels there is a real benefit of incorporating mentoring into our work-based training programmes. We are aware that the Mentor Development Programme could assist in terms of retention of early leavers and completion of training within work based programmes."

Suzanne Paskell, MA Co-ordinator, Somerset TEC

"South & East Cheshire TEC has always attached great value to establishing close links with employers, and were very keen to be involved in the Mentor Development Programme, as we wanted to do all that we could to establish more support for our trainees.

Once we'd got the project off the ground we decided to support it more actively, and have run a number of briefing sessions and training days ourselves. We have regular contact with our employers through our Human Resource Advisers, so we can continue to spread the word and gradually increase our numbers."

Janice Woolley, MA Co-ordinator, South & East Cheshire TEC

Step 2: Planning

It goes without saying that adequate planning is as important for this project as for any other. Effective work-based training is built on a partnership between key players: the trainee, the employer, the training provider and the TEC/CCTE. The needs of all of these partners must be anticipated and provided for in setting up the programme.

Involving training providers

The dominant contracting model being used by a TEC/CCTE can have a bearing on how it recruits mentors. TEC/CCTEs with mainly direct employer contracts are in a good position to promote the programme. Those who still rely mainly on a network of training providers may well need to work through those providers, or at least alongside them, to make contact with employers. Providers who have built positive relationships with employers have everything to gain from the extra support and understanding that companies will develop as a result of becoming involved in mentoring.

In these competitive times however some providers may have reservations about encouraging mentoring, particularly if the Mentor Development Programme is structured in such a way as to bring together employers who are working with different providers. They may also feel that establishing mentors for trainees within a company detracts from the support they give, or may be concerned that it will make extra demands on their time. One way forward for TEC/CCTEs who feel this may be a problem is to encourage training providers to develop mentoring support for their own employers, on an individual basis.

Whichever course a TEC/CCTE adopts, it should do what it can to gain the commitment of training providers, and explain to them what the TEC/CCTE's objectives are in setting up the programme.

Timing

Most TEC/CCTE programmes are provided on a roll-on roll-off basis, and even though the bulk of the recruitment happens in the autumn, trainees and their employers could well come on board at any time. A Mentor Development Programme needs to be set up in such a way that it can work alongside this pattern of activity. This is most easily done by creating an ongoing network, with a calendar of events decided well in advance. This can include training sessions and network meetings, where active mentors can meet each other and take advantage of extra briefing and information sharing. The great advantage of this structure is that it allows any TEC/CCTE to initiate a Mentor Development Programme at any time, as resources and other priorities permit.

Benefits to training providers

Good training providers are always concerned to develop supportive relationships with their trainees. But however much time a training provider can give to this (and most will say there isn't enough time these days) the additional support of a mentor in the workplace, who can be there as often as the trainee needs them at the beginning, can only add value. Training providers also gain because a workplace mentor can:

- provide support and encouragement at any time;
- increase company understanding of the requirements of the programme and the needs of the trainee; and
- provide additional evidence of providers support for employers and trainees to meet the requirements of the quality and inspection framework

Mentoring in the care sector – a training provider led development.

CLDT¹ is a training provider which has recruited 50 mentors to support MAs and NTs in their own workplace. The mentors are mature care workers at the same site as the trainees, who because of their vast experience of working in care can help the trainees, and provide a constant focus of support in the workplace. The mentors are offered the opportunity, at no additional cost, to undertake the NVQ2 or NVQ3 themselves, as a way of helping them to understand what their MAs and NTs are having to do, and of developing a greater understanding of the benefit of using standards.

The support is very much two-way. The Apprentices appreciate it as the mentor is a person, usually a peer, who is not in a line management capacity, but can assist with the day-to-day work practice aspects that may cause an apprentice problems. The apprentice helps the mentor to deal with anxieties regarding portfolio building and the language of the standards as they usually get to grips with this more quickly than the mature candidate.

There is evidence that where the relationship is working the Modern Apprentices do achieve more quickly and are more likely to attend training courses.

Because the mentors are supported by a training provider, as well as their employers, their main point of contact at the moment is the six-weekly visits of the Education and Training Adviser (who is also the Internal Verifier). We are currently looking at the university's Faculty of Health Mentoring Programme, and thinking about creating a more formal structure for training and support, as it clearly has benefits for all concerned.

The organisations benefit in a number of ways – successful apprentices, a mature member of staff trained for free, and a more positive learning culture within which all workers are more prepared to accept the need for, and the advantages of, the achievement of national qualifications.

Jan Wood, Programme Development Director, Care Forum Wales & Centre for Learning Development, University of Wales, Bangor.

1. A combined Centre made up of The University of Wales and Care Forum Wales which is the 'Trade Association' that represents the independent sector providers in Wales.

Step 3: Making contact with companies

Having decided to implement a Mentor Development Programme, and considered the resources and commitment needed, the next critical step is to raise awareness of this new service amongst companies that employ work-based trainees. The TEC/CCTEs in the pilot now intend to promote mentoring as part of a wider strategy to encourage employer commitment to work-based training, through:

- promotional articles in the TEC/CCTE's own journal or magazine;
- sending information to local branches of the Institute of Personnel Development, other professional associations and local business clubs;
- writing directly to employers known to the TEC/CCTE through its own database;
- building awareness of mentoring into the contracting process with employers who hold direct contracts with the TEC/CCTE;
- holding awareness raising events or briefings, perhaps as part of a wider event about work-based programmes; and
- where a TEC/CCTE manages a significant part of its work-based programmes through a provider network, it can provide training providers with leaflets and information to distribute as trainees are signed up, or to pass on to employers with trainees already in place.

In doing this, TEC/CCTEs as always need to promote the benefits of the programme for everyone concerned. Employers always need encouragement to commit resources to work-based training, and the business case can and must be made for asking employers to provide this additional support for trainees. Other pages in this guide provide information about the benefits to employers, the mentor and the trainee. Ideally, once some local companies have become involved, case studies and testimonies from them will be persuasive.

Working in the real world

The difficulties of making contact with employers are well known to TEC/CCTEs. However clearly a meeting is promoted, you never quite get the people you wanted. If the manager/employer turns up, he will have to consult the training manager. If the training manager turns up, he or she may need to speak to the owner. They will all need to speak to the individual who is best placed to be the mentor. And if that's the person who turns up, it may be because his company knows little about this at the moment, and he will need help to gain their support!

Be prepared for any eventuality with the right resources, perhaps together in a pack, so that all the information that needs to be passed back to a company can be routed through the person who attends.

The benefits for employers

Encouraging and supporting a member of staff to provide mentoring support for a trainee brings a number of benefits to an organisation. It:

- can protect the company's investment in training, by encouraging trainees to stay to the successful completion of their programme;
- fits well with the Investors in People approach to inducting and developing staff;
- provides an opportunity for the organisation to develop its understanding of work-based programmes and the needs of the trainee or apprentice;
- improves the company's general understanding of training and develops champions for training; and
- provides a motivating and challenging development opportunity for mentors, by widening their job role.

The TECs took different approaches

Leeds TEC held a one hour briefing session at breakfast time as they felt from experience that employers favoured meetings that did not intrude too much into their working day. A range of organisations attended, including a leisure services department representative, an awarding body, a large telecoms company, a number of motor vehicle employers and a hotel.

Somerset TEC circulated information to companies through providers and to their own direct contract companies. Briefings were provided over the phone, backed up by materials for mentors to look through before making a decision to go any further. A number of training sessions were then held, to enable companies to get on board when they were ready.

South & East Cheshire TEC employs a large number of Human Resource Advisers to co-ordinate the contacts with employers whose trainees are supported by the TEC's direct delivery provision. Initial information about the Mentor Development Programme was channelled through these advisers, in the course of their regular meetings with employers. The TEC continues to recruit new mentors.

Resource sheet 1 - General Introductory Leaflet.

Step 4: Recruiting mentors

Potential mentors need to know:

- what the programme is about;
- who it is for;
- what sort of person can be a mentor;
- what the benefits are;
- when the training and meetings will be; and
- how much time they will have to give to the role.

The amount of time needed is likely to be:

- attending training – between 3 hrs and 1 day;
- meetings with trainee – a minimum of 1 hour every six weeks, more if needed; and
- attending network meetings/support group – 2 to 3 hours every three months, but not mandatory.

Benefits to mentors

Not everyone is cut out to be a good mentor. For those with the right combination of skills and attitude however, the opportunity to support the development of a younger colleague can bring a fulfilling new dimension to their job role. Individuals who become mentors report that it has helped them to:

- develop their interpersonal and communication skills;
- improve their understanding of work-based training programmes and NVQs;
- give them information about the national training scene;
- provide them with the opportunity to contribute to their company's strategy for recruiting and training new staff;
- made valuable progress with their Continuing Professional Development; and
- broaden their experience and provided new areas of interest within their job role.

What's the motivation for mentors?

The view of Wakefield Borough Council:

- good for the CV;
- pragmatism – it's in everyone's interests for new staff to be effective;
- may already be assessors, and have a natural tendency to be supportive of young learners; and
- may have been supported by the department for their own development, and now feel they can give something back.

Personal development

"The biggest challenge for me has been meeting the needs of my group of trainees who have such varied levels of ability. Taking on the qualities of the mentoring role has:

- helped me get to know myself better;
- helped my NT feel more valued; and
- helped me deal with and motivate an MA who was not getting on with her work, but now is."

Care mentor, Somerset

Resource sheet 2 - Mentor Development Programme Leaflet.

Step 5: Helping mentors gain organisational support

Any attempt to intervene in the way an organisation behaves needs to be introduced with care, and supported by management. If possible a TEC/CCTE will gain commitment from a company before an individual decides to become a mentor, but in reality this can be difficult to do. It is therefore important to focus on providing the mentors with the information, resources and support that they need to secure the commitment and understanding of their organisation and colleagues.

Employer commitment

- Making sure other people in the organisation know about it – its purpose, how much time is being given to it, etc.
- Making time for the meetings.
- Ensuring privacy for the meetings.
- Making it clear that mentoring is an official aspect of the mentor's job role.
- Ensuring the confidentiality of the relationship.
- Clarifying the relationship between the mentor and others involved with the trainee – the assessor, the line manager, and the tutor.
- Appraising the usefulness of the relationship with both mentor and trainee at regular intervals.

Employers will only make even this modest commitment of time if they attach priority to training, and to supporting their staff more generally. Gaining organisational commitment is therefore an important aspect of setting up the programme.

“Being involved in the Mentor Development Programme has made us much more aware of the need to communicate openly with all of our trainees. For example, we now produce information every month about who's having what training, so everyone can see they're all getting attention.”

Matron, care sector

“We started a large Housing MA programme with 15 MAs in September 1997. They're all out in area offices, and don't actually see much of each other, so we decided right at the beginning to give them mentors. So far only one MA has left, but only to another post in the authority, and everyone is making good progress.”

Training manager, Wakefield Borough Council Housing Department

Resource sheet 3 - Leaflet for Employers.

Sterling Fluid Systems, in Gloucestershire, decided to formalise the Mentor's Terms of Reference within the company.

"An impartial advisor who can oversee the training regime and pick up potential problems before they get out of hand." **(Manufacturing manager)**

Typical responsibilities and duties:

- help the apprentices to settle into their new environment and understand the organisation through the induction process;
- to act as an impartial advisor providing guidance and support;
- to oversee and review the training plan;
- identify problems including strengths and weaknesses;
- coach apprentices through development, change, maturity, encouraging the taking of responsibility;
- liaise with support groups i.e. college or training groups, providing academic support, other departments; and
- assist in the recruitment of apprentices and management reviews.

Supporting mentoring at Smiths Industries

In 1995, Chris Fletcher, the Training Officer at Smiths Industries Aerospace (Display and Control Systems) in Cheltenham, was aware that the new Modern Apprenticeship was going to make considerable demands on their apprentices, and was keen therefore that they should have a mentor to help them. Their first mentor was Rob, a graduate engineer who embraced his new responsibility with enthusiasm. That was three years ago, when Rob started with four apprentices. He is now working with first and second year apprentices. As the number of apprentices grew, a second mentor, John Russell, was appointed. John now "looks after" four third year apprentices.

Smiths has a well organised work-based training plan and monitoring structure in place for their apprentices, and the mentors are seen as very much "outside the box" – people who are there for the apprentices, who neither manage them nor assess them, but help them more generally. The role is officially supported by the company. It's a relationship which is driven by the needs of the apprentices, but which has benefits for the mentors too. For Rob it has brought about a new interest and a widening of his job role, as well as an opportunity to meet young people from outside his own department. John, who only started in September, has found benefits too – it only takes half an hour a week of his time, yet he takes pleasure from using his knowledge and skills gained over years of working in the industry to help his third year apprentices develop a deeper and broader understanding of their work, and their industry. It's also encouraged him to buy a few text books, and brush up on some of his theory – just in case it's needed!

Nearly all the Smith's apprentices (there are now 21) are making good progress through their programme, and have opportunities to stay with the company. Chris is hoping now that this year's successful completers might soon be prepared to offer mentoring support for the new first years, creating an ongoing chain of mentors and apprentices for years to come.

Step 6: Defining the role

Who should the mentor be?

Many Modern Apprenticeship frameworks suggest that an apprentice should be provided with a mentor, but there is no agreed definition within these documents of who that person should be. It is variously suggested that the trainee's assessor, tutor, line manager or training adviser could take the role. The most successful relationships however, appear to be where the mentor is none of these, but is a member of staff of the trainee's employing organisation who is also:

- interested in helping others learn and develop;
- someone who can empathise with the trainee, and vice versa;
- mature enough to bring an adult perspective to the trainee's thinking about their experiences;
- able to understand the world view of the trainee;
- senior and experienced enough in the organisation to be able to explain its culture and ways to the trainee, and represent the interests of the trainee where necessary; and
- not so senior as to be daunting and remote.

How can line managers, assessors and mentors work together?

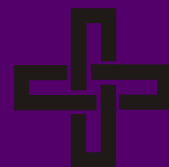
A large number of different types of support need to be available to any trainee. How this is currently organised will depend to some extent on the delivery model being used. For example, the experience for a trainee with an in-house assessor is quite different from that of a trainee whose main contact with tutors and assessor is in a college or training centre. One way of defining what the mentor does, and how that relates to the contributions of others, is shown on the grid (opposite). This itemises all of the types of support that young people undergoing work-based training need. Our completed grid allocates the responsibilities in the way that appears to be most effective, although you might make different decisions about some of them, depending on the relationships and structures already in place.

Lines of communication

Organisations differ in the extent to which mentors become a part of the formal relationship with the training provider and the TEC/CCTE. Where a company has perhaps not been as involved in the training as they might be, it is tempting to expect mentors to attend review meetings and report back their views on the trainees' progress. There are dangers in this course, which can seriously undermine the confidentiality of the mentoring relationship. A preferable way forward would be for the mentor to help and encourage the trainee to contribute more effectively to review and assessment meetings, without the mentor becoming directly involved.

Supporting the work-based trainee: a guide to who does what

| Task/aspect | Mentor | Line Manager | Assessor | Training Advisor |
|---|--------|--------------|----------|------------------|
| Advice about dealing with people | X | X | | |
| Advice about managing time | X | X | | |
| Advice about suitable assessment opportunities in the job | | | X | |
| Advice about the NVQ assessment process | | | X | |
| Advice about the suitability of evidence | | | X | |
| Celebrating success | X | X | X | X |
| Help with formulating career goals | X | | | |
| Help with negotiating future opportunities | X | X | | |
| Helping apprentice deal successfully with times of change and transition | X | | | |
| Helping apprentice find the discipline to achieve | X | X | | |
| Helping apprentice find the personal motivation to achieve | X | | | |
| Helping apprentice link off-the-job and on-the job learning | | | X | |
| Helping apprentice overcome isolation or stereotyping | X | | | |
| Helping apprentice to access the complaints procedure | X | | X | |
| Helping apprentice to contribute effectively to programme review and quality assurance activity | | | X | X |
| Helping apprentice take a longer term view when considering options or how to deal with a current issue | X | | | |
| Helping apprentice learn how to work within the cultural norms and expectations of the organisation | X | | | |
| Helping apprentice maintain an effective balance between their private lives and work life | X | | | |
| Helping apprentice understand how the organisation works | X | X | | |
| Imposing sanctions related to non-attendance at training or insufficient progress | | X | | X |
| Imposing sanctions to non-attendance or poor performance in job | | X | | |
| Induction to the job | X | X | | |
| Induction to the programme | | | X | X |
| Providing constructive support for slow progress/failure | X | | X | |
| Provision of suitable development opportunities in the job | | X | | |
| Reviewing progress within job role | X | X | | |
| Reviewing progress within specific qualification or NVQ | | | X | X |
| Reviewing progress within training programme | | X | X | |



Step 7: Training the mentors

Potential mentors need to spend some time thinking about the mentoring role, reviewing their interpersonal skills, and planning how to start and structure the mentoring relationship. This can be approached in a number of ways.

- a full day's training is desirable, but may be regarded as too much time for employers to give up if they are yet to be convinced of the value of supporting a mentor; or
- a compromise model is to provide a shorter session – half a day, or three hours – and then build short additional training opportunities into the general meetings of the network or support group.

The content of the training is very similar to that proposed by other mentoring projects, such as schools mentoring, with which many TEC/CCTEs are familiar. However, all the mentors who attended the training sessions during the development project were quite clear that they needed to be able to help and advise about the details of Modern Apprenticeship and National Traineeship frameworks, NVQ and Key Skills content and delivery, and how the work-based training system works and is funded. It was therefore important to include information and support about these topics within the training, and during the progress meetings.

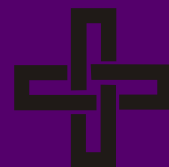
Who should do the training?

Some of the TEC/CCTEs in the pilot work have trainers on their staff, who themselves carried out the training after the initial training sessions had been run by consultants. Most training providers with experience of running management development programmes would probably be able to provide the sort of training needed for mentors. There are also some open-learning resources which can support the training programme.

Personal development

“I have found the mentoring workshop very useful and have been able to use the training to give me confidence to talk about people and problems at work.”

Engineering mentor, Somerset



How the training helped

Mentors were asked what they had valued about the training:

- presentation of a formalised approach to mentoring as an effective method within the management of training for employees;
- the need for a more formal structure – I shall start a formalised meeting format and timetable;
- how to return a question back to make the questioner think first;
- thinking again about how it feels to be 16 or 17, and all the pressures on them;
- acknowledgement of some of my current practices, and areas where I can improve what I am doing ;
- hearing the view of delegates, who have a variety of backgrounds, but share the same issues;
- it was a lot to take in, but has helped me focus on the role, and understand more what I should be doing;
- provided stimulus to start mentoring programme; and
- learning more about the MA and how it all works.

The benefits of the training for mentors

It enables them to:

- understand what is expected of them;
- think about what *they* want from the role;
- decide *who* they will mentor;
- consider how to position the role within their own organisation;
- give thought to explaining their role as a mentor to the trainee;
- develop some ideas as to how to start the first meeting;
- think about how they will communicate with and relate to the other people supporting the trainee – perhaps their line manager, or training adviser;
- review their communication skills;
- clarify their understanding, as necessary, of the work-based programmes (Modern Apprenticeship and National Traineeship) and of the NVQ process; and
- be aware of the natural life cycle of a mentoring relationship, and how to support the different stages, including how to end the relationship.

When should the training happen?

With roll-on roll-off recruitment, at least for some trainees, it is important that opportunities for mentors to attend a training session should be available at a number of times during the year. A model that is being explored in one TEC/CCTE is to “piggy-back” training sessions with some of the review/network meetings, publicising this in advance so that potential mentors can be given information about dates and venues as they are recruited.

Where should the training take place?

Although this may seem obvious, some TEC/CCTE boundaries cover distinctly different towns and districts. Sometimes travel within the TEC/CCTE’s area can be difficult, and not all mentors have cars! In Leeds for example, the training was held in central Leeds, but meetings were held in different venues. Each TEC/CCTE will know its own patch, but offering a variety of venues around the TEC/CCTE area can help make it possible for mentors to attend.

A mentoring group consisting of only engineering companies decided they would like to visit each other’s place of work, and were willing to host meetings in return.

Resources and information

Simple resources can help mentors make a good start in their new role. A resource pack could include:

- a checklist used by some mentors to help provide a focus for the first meeting, and to identify areas where the trainee feels in need of support. (Mentors were often surprised to discover that trainees who had been on a programme for some time still admitted to confusion about the NVQ process, or expressed anxiety about the significance of changes to their programme.);
- sample review sheets;
- information about the Modern Apprenticeship or National Traineeship framework documents, summaries, factsheets, etc;
- information about NVQs, Key Skills, etc;
- information about how the “system” works – (it’s surprising how many people are still confused about who contracts with whom, who report to whom ...);
- a factsheet/leaflet for the senior managers of the organisation, to help the mentor gain organisational support if necessary; and
- a factsheet/leaflet for the mentee/trainee, to help the mentor explain what a mentor is!

“I entered the process unsure if it would work and, well to be honest, I believed that it probably wouldn’t work. At our first meeting I went through the checklist we were given during the training day. All the areas on the checklist were OK until we got to the bottom where I found that my apprentice wasn’t completely sure of exactly where he was in his apprenticeship. It’s made me revise my initial thoughts on the process and we have agreed to carry on with the meetings.”

Engineering mentor, Somerset

At the beginning of the project Leeds TEC had some copies of the DfEE/NEC’s pack, “Supporting Modern Apprentices” which they made available to any of the mentors who wanted one.

Resource sheets 6a and 6b: MA & NT Factsheet and Admin MA Framework.

Step 8: Meeting the apprentices

The TEC/CCTE

As part of the pilot work the TEC/CCTEs set up meetings with the apprentices. This was an opportunity to find out from them what their current concerns were, and what they hoped for in the mentoring relationships. Both the TEC/CCTEs and the apprentices thought that these meetings were useful, and brought out both the enthusiasm of many of the apprentices, but also some of the concerns that they had which no-one had yet picked up. This information was reported back anonymously to the mentor review meetings, and provided useful topics for discussion, as well as some unexpected insights for mentors.

The first meeting with the mentor

Many of the mentors reported that their first meeting with their trainees was the most difficult, even though they had discussed how to manage this meeting during their training. One of the mentors had devised a checklist which she had used as a prompt for discussion at her first meeting with apprentices. She allowed this to be circulated to other groups, who also found it useful. Whatever else happens at that first meeting, it is essential that the mentor and mentee:

- establish ground rules;
- clarify the purpose of the relationship;
- document the outcomes and agreed actions (briefly, as a record and memory jogger); and
- confirm confidentiality.

Further meetings

Work-based trainees have a number of meetings which can be termed “reviews”. As a result there was some concern about calling further mentoring meetings “review meetings” and most of the mentors preferred not to call them anything specific at all! However, it was generally accepted that the concept of active action planning was important in this context, and that both the mentor and mentee needed to be able to trace the development of the relationship, agree actions to be taken and write them down as a reminder at the next meeting.

How often these meetings can happen depends very much on the context. Some of the mentors met their apprentices or trainees daily any way, others would probably only see them occasionally around the organisation. Agreed meeting times were therefore important to help both parties differentiate between their interaction within the mentoring relationship and other contacts that they had.

Apprentices in the pilot areas were invited to meetings at the beginning of the project, and were asked to participate in a “Worries in a Hat” session, by completing a statement which said “My biggest worry about being a Modern Apprentice is ...”. These statements were folded and placed in a hat, and then each apprentice took and read one out, for the group to discuss. Some felt they had no major concerns, but for those that did, their most commonly stated worries were:

- “That the course we are doing will not be very recognised in years to come.”;
- “Don’t know whether this is the job for me.”;
- “Will the company have a job for me when I’ve finished my Modern Apprenticeship?”;
- “When things get busy, everyone forgets I’m training.”;
- “Is it as good as the old apprenticeships? Are NVQs recognised?”; and
- “Everything keeps changing – my friend started this year, and he’s supposed to be doing this apprenticeship, but he’s not doing the same as me. Is mine as good as his?”.

What mentors and mentees talk about

- “I can discuss any questions I feel a bit timid about or feel I won’t get the right reaction from my boss.”
- “She (mentor) makes me think about what I can do to help myself, she makes me think and assess the situation and plan my action.”
- “What’s going on in the office, how I’m finding things and office gossip.”
- “My key skills and how to keep on top, how to sort out action plans and how to use the Mechanical Engineering training programme.”
- “When I had a problem with a colleague who took liberties with me as a junior. She moved in and took over my desk space My mentor helped me see I had an opportunity to be assertive and direct. I tackled the person and got respect from other colleagues for the way I handled it.”
- “She encouraged me to talk to others and get different views and advice, not just one person’s.”
- “He (mentor) makes me talk to other people and makes suggestions on whom to talk to. I had a design project recently given to me, I didn’t know where to start, he helped me think through the research and who to contact.”

Modern Apprentices whose mentor was not their line manager discussed a wider range of topics, especially those regarding relationships with line manager and colleagues and conflict with work colleagues.

Resource sheets 7a, 7b, 7c and 7d - First Meeting Checklist, Review Sheets (2) and Apprentice Leaflet.

Step 9: Supporting the mentors

Mentors in the pilot projects have valued having the opportunity to meet up with each other on a regular, but not too frequent, basis. They value most:

- hearing each other's experiences and discussing ways to solve problems or difficulties; and
- having the opportunity to learn something new and further develop their mentoring skills and understanding.

For some the opportunity to meet mentors from other types of organisations and vocational areas was an added bonus, although others felt that they would prefer to focus on the experiences of people in the same industry. How a TEC/CCTE organises this will depend on the number of mentors they have active at any one time, and on the make-up of that group. Rather than trying to second-guess the needs of the mentors, it would be best to start with general meetings, and get participants' views of the best ways to organise further meetings.

Groups were asked to suggest topics that they would like more information about. These included:

- the Modern Apprenticeship;
- how work-based training is organised (i.e. where the players fit, how the money is organised);
- NVQs (particularly linking standards to job roles);
- key skills;
- developing personal objectives and goals;
- discovering more about their own listening and responding styles;
- managing the meetings;
- managing the relationship with other players (e.g. line managers, assessors); and
- deciding when to coach.

Offering accreditation

For some mentors the opportunity to accredit their achievements as mentors is attractive. At present the only available units that are in any way suitable are the TDLB units C25 and C26, which focus on supporting and coaching individual learners. Aspects of the work undertaken for the Mentor Development Programme can generate evidence which is suitable for these units, but the full range of mentoring skills is not covered by them.

Researchers at the University of North London have recently identified this lack in provision, and have now developed and are piloting standards designed specifically to accredit mentoring. South and East Cheshire TEC will be part of the pilot from May of 1999, with 10 Human Resource Advisers (each of whom has sector as well as training and assessment expertise) and 10 employer representatives. It is hoped that these standards will become a level 3 NVQ during the year 2000.

The South & East Cheshire TEC work on mentoring started as a discrete project, with a beginning and an end. It soon became clear that the way forward was to build support for mentoring into the ongoing relationship with employers and the development of the work-based programmes, so that new mentors could join whenever they wanted to. Meetings are now held on a regular basis for mentors to attend as they can, with additional training sessions running periodically for new mentors.

At Wakefield Metropolitan Borough Council, they are planning to offer more advice and guidance for new mentors. One way they think they can do this is to establish more contact with their new M.A. co-ordinator, who should be able to give the mentors more of a central reference point and focus.

Wakefield Metropolitan Borough Council

Personal development

One mentor was quite outspoken in her views!

“At the beginning I thought it was total rubbish, but having tried it I have seen how it has improved how I work with my trainees, and now I think it is really good. I have also found that a lot of the material is useful for my C25 portfolio. For example, the checklist I was given at the training I have developed so that it fits with the requirements of C25 and I have developed my own review form.”

Care mentor, Somerset

Motivation

“I was given an apprentice to support, who is nearing the completion of his apprenticeship with only 3 months left. My role with him has been to provide motivation so that he finishes his apprenticeship. I am pleased because my involvement seems to have given the apprentice a definite boost in his performance. I have also personally found it very satisfying.”

Plumbing mentor, South & East Cheshire

Step 10: Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are integral to any effective implementation or quality process and have an important role to play at a number of different levels and stages within the Mentoring Development Programme.

The mentoring relationship

The relationship between mentor and mentee will go through a normal cycle of change and development. Mentors need to monitor and notice the points at which their relationship makes these transitions. And as part of this they need to be monitoring the extent to which the relationship is proving beneficial to their mentees.

| | |
|--|--|
| Stage 1: First Meeting | Explaining purpose, clarifying ground rules, drawing up an agreement or contract |
| Stage 2: Beginning to Understand | Getting to know each other, recognising and valuing differences, supporting |
| Stage 3: Learning and Incorporating Change | Making changes, commitment, reconciling differences, answering questions, providing mutual support |
| Stage 4: Completing | Transition from mentor to friend, preparing to say goodbye, planning the new direction |

The mentoring development programme

The mentors who are supported by a Mentor Development Programme are equally likely to progress through similar stages in their relationship with the programme. To begin with they may need support and guidance, but as they become more confident their needs will change, possibly to the point where they are happy to continue with only occasional reference back to other mentors or the network. This might be when their circumstances change such as taking on new trainees or new qualifications, or encountering a new problem to deal with.

TEC/CCTEs supporting a Mentor Development Programme need therefore to:

- monitor in an ongoing way the value of the support to mentors – by evaluating the training and asking for feedback about the content and value of the meetings and resources;
- on a regular basis (probably annually) asking the trainees involved for their judgements about the usefulness to them of having a mentor – perhaps through a postal questionnaire or through telephone interviews to a random sample (if the numbers are large); and
- making their own judgements about the balance for the TEC/CCTE between the effort being put into supporting the programme and the benefits being accrued – in terms of student retention and achievement, closer relationships with employers, and improved TSC ratings.

A mentor and mentee reflect on their experience

Mentor

“I have found it useful to build and use my own skills in guiding, advising and listening to my apprentice. We have both found completing learning resources together as part of our meetings has been very useful. I have previously completed a Modern Apprenticeship in Administration myself, and have found that being a mentor works very well for me. I can relate to the circumstances of the workplace and I understand the concerns that my mentee sometimes has about training supplier support. More importantly I understand what she has to achieve.”

“I do feel strongly though that to be a mentor you must not be directly linked to the apprentice in the work context i.e. not a line manager, supervisor or even assessor. Being distanced from the apprentice’s department has made our meetings relaxed and informal but still with a common purpose.”

Mentee

“My mentor and I have built a good relationship - We are able to meet as often and for as long as I need. We have discussed anything from work relationships, the Framework, NVQ, Key Skills, the training supplier and what I want to do after the apprenticeship. As my mentor has completed a Modern Apprenticeship I find it easier to talk to her as she understands what I am doing..”

“I will continue to ask for assistance and advice from my mentor if necessary, as I complete my apprenticeship, and hopefully about any further qualifications or learning opportunities that I encounter after that”.

Administration mentor and mentee, Somerset

What the TECs thought

Somerset

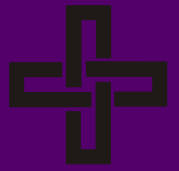
“We have found that employers and mentees have benefited greatly, with enthused relationships, and that trainees have progressed with their MA/NT portfolios, in terms of output, quality and understanding.”

Leeds

“I am very keen on introducing a mentor element into the existing and all new direct contracts. I am proposing to make it a mandatory stipulation in the contract that employers have or take part in group mentoring activity, so ensuring the trainees have the support they require.”

South & East Cheshire TEC

“The experience of the last year has confirmed for us the value of mentoring in helping young people stay on the programmes and have a positive attitude towards them - which of course has always been important, but is very much a priority now. We have definite plans to carry on, and have put a bid in for European Social Fund money to help us resource our continuing efforts.”



Useful publications, websites and addresses

Publications

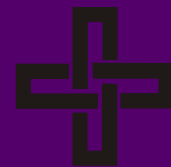
- **The Manager as Coach and Mentor** - Eric Parsloe. Institute of Personnel and Development, 1995.
- **Everyone needs a Mentor (fostering talent at work)** - David Clutterbuck. Institute of Personnel and Development, 1991
- **Mentoring in Action** - David Megginson and David Clutterbuck. Kogan Page Ltd, 1995
- **Key Skills Catalogue (a range of resources to help with Key Skills)** - DfEE. Copies available from Prolog, Telephone: 0845 602 2260.
- **Mentoring for Work-based Training.** DfEE. QPID Study Report, forthcoming

Websites

- DfEE <http://www.open.gov.uk>
- Tec National Council <http://www.tec.co.uk>
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) <http://www.qca.org.uk>
- Institute of Personnel and Development <http://www.ipd.co.uk>
- Foresight Publications <http://www.foresight.gov.uk>
- TECtranet <http://www.tectranet.co.uk>

Addresses

- National Mentoring Network
1st Floor,
Charles House,
Albert Street,
Eccles,
Manchester M30 0PD
- Mentor Standards Pilot
Ann Reynard,
University of North London,
The Learning Centre,
236-250 Holloway Road,
London N7 6PP



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| 73 | Training for Jobs - Job Outcomes from TfW | April 1999 |
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email: DfEE@prologistics.co.uk

NB. There are limited stocks available of older Studies and Guides.

Summary of additional resources supplied on the attached disk

| Resource | Page/Section Ref. | Description |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Resource Sheet | | |
| 1 | Page 11, Making contact with companies | General Introductory Leaflet |
| 2 | Page 13, Recruiting mentors | Mentor Development Programme Leaflet |
| 3 | Page 14, Helping mentors gain organisational support | Leaflet for Employers |
| 4 | Page 17, Defining the role | Who does what grid |
| 5 | Page 19, Training the mentors | Programme for the workshop |
| 6a, 6b | Page 21, Training the mentors | MA & NT Factsheet, Business Administration MA Framework Summary |
| 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d | Page 23, Meeting the apprentices | First Meeting Checklist Review Sheets (2) Apprentice Leaflet |