



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Members' Mentoring Framework 2022 - 2027



*Blaenau Gwent – a place that is fair, open and welcoming to all by working
with and for our communities*

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Introduction

The work of an Elected Member is complex and challenging and the political, legislative and local landscape in which they work is changing constantly. Members need to balance the expectations of local constituents against the challenges of effectively running a local authority in maintaining and delivering services effectively, and within budget.

Both new and experienced Members need appropriate support, information and professional development to undertake their complex and evolving roles.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has a duty to and is committed to supporting the development of its members. The Council recognises that the provision of effective training and development is critical to its success. Members play a pivotal role in decision making and delivering better outcomes for citizens.

The role of an elected member is a complex and challenging. All members, whether newly elected or returning, can benefit from support and development in reacting to new or personally challenging situations. All Members are provided with a range of essential support and development activities, but these cannot always cater for some of the individual and immediate needs of Member. Mentoring is an approach to support the development needs of Members.

What is Mentoring?

‘Mentoring is a confidential relationship where a mentee works with a mentor to explore issues or situations where they feel they need support or development’

Mentoring is a voluntary, confidential, one to one relationship in which an individual uses a more experienced or more senior person as a sounding board for guidance. It enables the mentee to “grow” in their role in skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviour. It can be a medium, long term or ongoing relationship. It is not a prescriptive or directive relationship but rather one which allows the mentee to find their own way, assisted by the mentor and allows the mentee to apply skills, knowledge and experience to new situations to unlock future capability.

How does Mentoring work?

Although mentoring and coaching are not completely discrete from each other the approach differs in some ways. Some specific characteristics of mentoring include:

- The mentoring relationship is recognised as being self-selecting, with the mentee identifying their mentor.
- The mentees set the agenda in the main and takes responsibility for their learning within the relationship.
- Mentoring usually takes place over a longer time period, the agenda is more open, and evolves over time.
- The mentor helps the mentee learn through asking questions and sharing their experience without being too directive.
- The mentor supports the mentee's learning and helps them discover their own solutions to situations they may be finding challenging.

What does a mentor do and when can mentoring be used?

As a mentor you will form a voluntary, confidential, one to one relationship with someone who is less experienced than yourself. This person will seek to use you, your skills, knowledge and experience as a guide and support for their personal and professional development and a sounding board for their ideas and approaches.

The agenda for your discussions will be primarily set by your mentee although you may need to guide them in clarifying their goals for what they hope to achieve from the relationship. Typically, you might discuss:

- Working within the organisation: I'm new to the authority how does it all work here?
- A new role: I'm a new Scrutiny Chair, can you help me understand the role?
- Career development: Where do I go from here? How do I get there?
- Political challenges: How do I get my voice heard in the Group?

The role of mentor brings with it significant responsibilities. You have a responsibility to:

- Work within a code of practice. Before undertaking work with a mentee, the mentor will agree to act within a code of practice (attached).
- Use a mentoring contract (attached). The issues outlined in the mentoring contract should be discussed at the beginning of the relationship and both parties should agree to abide by the resulting decisions.
- Develop your mentoring skills through training.

What can a mentee expect?

As a mentee, you will form a voluntary, confidential, one to one relationship with a person who is more senior/experienced than yourself. You can use this person, their skills, knowledge and experience as a guide and support for your own personal and professional development and as a sounding board for your own ideas and approaches.

You will set the agenda for your discussions. The relationship can last for as long as both parties agree that it is helpful. Either party has the ability to dissolve the relationship when it has run its natural course or if the pairs are not compatible or productive. We encourage you to arrange to review the usefulness of the relationship with your mentor regularly.

Training and guidance

All Members acting as mentors will be provided with some basic training in the techniques and personal style required to be a mentor. This basic training will be facilitated by the Welsh Local Government Association [WLGA]. The guidance includes:

- Responsibilities of mentors.
- Techniques for mentoring.
- Protocols for the mentoring relationship.
- Tips on how to get the most out of being a mentee.

The Authority will use the WLGA's "Guidance for Member Mentors"

The Authority's Approach to Mentoring

The Authority will provide support for any member wishing to act as a mentor or be mentored by colleagues by:

- arranging for training to be provided to potential mentors.
- providing basic written guidance on mentoring techniques to mentors.
- providing information on how to make the most of mentoring opportunities to mentees.
- finding suitable mentors from within or if necessary outside the authority for members as available.
- providing mentors with ongoing support and training as required.

The Mentoring Contract

The following issues should be discussed at the beginning of the relationship and both parties should agree to abide by the resulting decisions.

Time & Place

- Both parties agree how much time they are able to give including work between meetings if necessary.
- Frequency of meetings.
- Duration of relationship (how long before a review).
- Mode of meeting – physical or virtual.
- Venues - away from the usual working environment, private, out of reach of phones and colleagues.

Scope & Context

- What will be covered?
- What might some of the learning goals, short and long term be?
- The mentee sets the agenda.

Relationships and Responsibilities

- The Mentor has a responsibility to act within a code of practice.
- The meetings are a priority - once set they should not be altered if avoidable.
- The mentee is responsible for their learning and actions.
- There is a responsibility on both sides for honesty and trust.
- Both parties need to take responsibility for suggesting the ending of the relationship when appropriate.

Confidentiality

- Agreement on confidentiality or where any information goes.
- Should notes be made? What happens to any notes during and after the arrangement?
- Will there be any discussions with the mentors' mentor/sponsors/peers.

Mentoring Contract

I (Mentee) and I(Mentor)

Agree to follow the guidance of this document in developing our mentoring partnership.

- All areas of discussion will be totally confidential and will not be discussed outside the partnership.
- The process will operate within a framework of equal opportunities and unacceptable behaviour on the part of either party should be challenged and dealt with.
- A minimum of one meeting per month will be agreed over the first six-month period.
- The Mentee will take responsibility for arranging mutually convenient meeting times.
- It is recognised that the Mentee takes responsibility for setting the agenda for the meeting, although this is likely to be informal.
- Expectations of the partnership will be agreed at the first meeting.
- Both parties will operate within the role set in this contract.
- All unwanted contact will be agreed, and any unwanted intrusion will be discussed.
- Any difficulties initially will be discussed between the partnerships, then with the scheme co-ordinator as appropriate.
- If the contract and partnership breaks down both parties will follow an agreed process of "letting go". No fault or blame will be applied to either party.

Signature (Mentee).....

Signature (Mentor).....

Code of Practice for Member Mentors

Before undertaking work with a mentee, the mentor will agree to act within this code of practice.

Throughout the relationship and after it has been concluded, the Mentor will:

Competence

- Undertake training in mentoring.
- Agree to work only within their level of competence.
- Understand and agree to work within this code.
- Seek personal support when necessary, from an appropriate mentor's mentor.

Context

- Agree to understand and operate within the political/organisational context where the relationship is taking place.
- Seek to meet the learning and development needs of the mentee.

Boundaries

- Agree to work within the boundaries of the mentoring relationship i.e. work/professional development/performance not straying into areas where they are not qualified/experienced such as counselling or psychotherapy or into an inappropriate personal relationship.
- Be prepared to refer the mentee to other sources of information/expertise or professional assistance as appropriate.

Confidentiality

- Maintain a level of confidentiality agreed with the mentee both during and after the relationship has ended.
- Disclose information only when agreed with the mentee unless the mentor believes that there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the mentee or others if the information is withheld.

Integrity and professionalism

- Act within appropriate law/policy/values of the authority e.g. equalities and HR policies.
- Consider the learning and development needs of the mentee as brought to the relationship as paramount.
- Seek to understand the needs and point of view of the mentee maintaining respect for the mentee throughout the relationship.
- Not exploit the mentee in any way or put their own interests before that of the mentee.

I the undersigned agree to work with my mentee in accordance with the above Code of Practice

Mentor's

Signature: _____