

Welcome to the

Public Sector Coaching & Mentoring Pool

Your Guide to Coaching and Mentoring



A space to think. A chance to grow.

Public service roles are busy.

Most days involve juggling priorities, responding to new demands and trying to do the best you can for the people and communities you serve.

Sometimes what people need most isn't another training course. **It's time to think.**

Time to step back from the day-to-day.

Time to reflect on what's really going on.

Time to explore ideas or challenges with someone who understands the realities of public service.

That's where coaching and mentoring can help.

Through the Public Sector Coaching & Mentoring Pool, employees from subscribing public sector organisations can connect with experienced coaches and mentors who provide independent, confidential support.

Whether you're:

- stepping into a new role
- developing as a leader
- navigating change or uncertainty
- working through a difficult challenge
- exploring your career direction

Coaching or mentoring can help you gain clarity, confidence and perspective.

This guide explains how it works and how to get started.



Wherever you see this icon, click the image to play the video and hear from those we've already helped.

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[Mentoring was a] Positive experience. Really helpful. Not too formal and did not increase/affect my work load. It has presented new/options and paths and boosted my confidence.

Professional Services Officer, West Midlands Police



When might coaching and mentoring help?

You don't need to be in crisis to benefit from coaching and mentoring.

Many people access it when they simply want space to think more clearly about their work, their leadership or their future.

Coaching and mentoring may be particularly helpful if you find yourself thinking:

“ I'm facing a situation and need to think it through.”

“ I've stepped into a new role and want to succeed.”

“ I want to build confidence in my leadership.”

“ There's a lot of change happening and I need perspective.”

“ I feel stuck and want to explore different options.”

“ I want to improve how I communicate and work with others.”

“ I want to develop my career but I'm not sure what the next step is.”

Often the real value of coaching and mentoring is simply having protected thinking time with someone who can listen, challenge and help you reflect.

What are coaching and mentoring?

Both coaching and mentoring provide protected time to think and reflect about your work, challenges and goals.

They create a supportive environment where you can explore ideas, test new thinking and consider your next steps.



Coaching



Coaching helps you think through challenges and find your own solutions.

A coach supports you by asking thoughtful questions, challenging assumptions and helping you explore different perspectives.

At its heart, coaching creates time to think out loud with someone who is focused entirely on helping you reflect and move forward.

Coaching is often used for:

- leadership and management development
- decision making
- building confidence
- navigating change
- managing complex situations

Mentoring



Mentoring is usually more experience-based.

A mentor shares insight from their own professional journey and offers guidance, perspective and encouragement.

Mentoring can be helpful when you would value insight from someone who has relevant experience.

For example:

- stepping into a new role where understanding the context or culture would help
- exploring career progression in a particular profession or sector
- developing specialist expertise
- learning from someone who has faced similar challenges

Mentoring conversations also provide valuable space to reflect on experience and learn from others who have walked similar paths.

Not sure which one you need?

You don't need to decide perfectly - many people simply start with a conversation. But this guide may help.

Coaching may be right for you if:

- you want help thinking through challenges
- you want to develop your leadership style
- you want someone to ask questions and challenge your thinking
- you want to find your own solutions

Mentoring may be right for you if:

- you want guidance from someone with relevant experience
- you want to learn from someone who has done a similar role
- you want career advice or perspective

Both approaches provide confidential, supportive space for reflection and development.

What's available to you?

The Public Sector Coaching & Mentoring Pool is a shared network of professional coaches and mentors working across public sector organisations.

It brings together experienced practitioners from areas such as:

- local government
- health services
- police services
- fire and rescue
- education, and
- regulatory organisations

Our Vision

'Enabling people to become the best they can be, whatever the work environment'

The Pool offers the opportunity to work with someone outside your organisation, offering independence while still understanding the realities of public service.

In some organisations, internal coaching and mentoring is also coordinated through the Pool, enabling colleagues to access both internal and external support through the same system.

Internal coaches and mentors can offer valuable insight into the organisation's culture and context.

All coaches and mentors in the Pool are appropriately trained and experienced in professional coaching or mentoring practice. They also participate in ongoing professional development and supervision to maintain high standards of practice.

The Pool works because participating organisations contribute coaching and mentoring capacity, creating a shared resource that benefits everyone involved.

Depending on your organisation's arrangements, you may be able to access:

- internal coaching or mentoring
- external coaching or mentoring
- or a combination of both.

Your HR or organisational development team can confirm how coaching and mentoring are accessed within your organisation.

"I felt my coach genuinely wanted to help me succeed, and it felt good to have someone believe in me, and be a cheerleader when I needed one."

County Council Performance
Manager

Getting started

Your initial meeting may be something like this:

1 Access the matching hub

Access the Pool through our **online matching platform** where you can explore available coaches and mentors.



2 Browse profiles

You can read profiles to learn about each coach or mentor's background, experience and areas of interest.

»» People often look for someone who:

- provides support relevant to their needs
- offers a different perspective
- feels approachable and credible



3 Arrange your first conversation

Once you have selected a coach or mentor, an initial conversation will be arranged.

Together you will discuss:

- what you would like to explore
- what outcomes you hope to achieve
- what will enable you to work well together
- how many sessions may be helpful

Many coaching and mentoring relationships involve around four to six sessions, although arrangements vary between organisations.

Often coaching and mentoring relationships start with a three-way conversation between you, your coach or mentor, and your line manager or sponsor.

Many people find this conversation adds real value. It helps connect your coaching or mentoring to your wider work and ensures expectations are clear from the start.

In some circumstances this may not be needed. You can discuss what will work best with your coach or mentor when you first meet.

How to find your coach or mentor on the matching hub.



Watch to find out what helped people chose the right coach or mentor for them

What to expect from coaching and mentoring

Coaching and mentoring conversations are designed to be:



Confidential

Your discussions are private between you and your coach or mentor unless you agree otherwise.



Focused on you

You decide what topics to bring and what you want to explore.



Supportive and constructive

Your coach or mentor will help you reflect, challenge your thinking and explore options.

Many people say the most valuable part of coaching and mentoring is having dedicated time to think out loud with someone outside their day-to-day environment.

“I feel more able to step into a leadership role now. I’ve built confidence and learned how to influence others better.”

Watch to see how the pool has benefitted others

THE PUBLIC SECTOR
Coaching & Mentoring Pool HUB
Led by West Midlands Employers

Kiera Todd
Digital Channels Officer

And, my coach was really great at being understanding,

Making the most of the opportunity

Coaching and mentoring work best when you treat the time as protected thinking space for your own development and reflection.

At the same time, many people find it helpful to involve a line manager or sponsor at key points in the process, mainly at the beginning, and again towards the end.

This type of three-way conversation can help to:

- clarify what you want to achieve
- connect the coaching or mentoring to your role or development goals
- ensure expectations are understood
- reflect on progress and outcomes.

Your coach or mentor can help explain how this works and whether it would be useful in your situation.

Coaching and mentoring conversations themselves remain confidential, and you and your coach or mentor will agree what, if anything, is shared more widely.

This handy checklist can help you prepare for your first and subsequent coaching or mentoring sessions

Accessing the Public Sector Coaching and Mentoring Pool



Your essential checklist

This handy checklist will help you know what to do to access the pool and prepare for your first and subsequent coaching or mentoring sessions. Everyone is different, therefore you may want to add your own preparation notes.

Registering to access a coach or mentor

Tick when complete	My actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have an idea about what I want to achieve
<input type="checkbox"/>	I know whether I want coaching or mentoring to support me
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have registered on the matching hub
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have received my login details via email. NOTE: If you don't receive login details straight away, your registration may be waiting approval from your organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

Finding my coach or mentor

Tick when complete	My actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have logged into the matching hub
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have specified my search criteria to help narrow down who would be best placed to support me
<input type="checkbox"/>	Optional: I have created a shortlist of a few profiles I am going to review
<input type="checkbox"/>	Optional: I have sought help from my organisational representative (or West Midlands Employers) if I have any difficulty finding someone to meet my needs
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have made a request to work with someone
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

Preparing for an initial conversation – before we agree to work together

Tick when complete	My actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	I know and can share what I am looking to achieve
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have explained the reason I chose the coach or mentor I selected and my initial instincts about how I might benefit from the experience
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have made a request to work with someone



Hear experiences of others on how you can make the most of the opportunity

FAQs

Is it confidential?

Yes. Coaching and mentoring conversations are confidential unless you agree otherwise.

If a line manager or sponsor is involved in a three-way conversation, you and your coach or mentor will agree what, if anything, is shared more widely. The focus is usually on goals and progress rather than the detail of your conversations.

Is coaching the same as counselling or mediation?

No. Coaching focuses on professional reflection, development and forward thinking. It is not counselling, therapy or a formal workplace process.

How many sessions will I have?

This varies depending on your organisation's arrangements and the goals you want to work on. Many relationships involve around four to six sessions.

Can I change coach or mentor?

Yes. If the match doesn't feel right, you can explore alternative coaches or mentors.

Is it only for senior leaders?

No. The Public Sector Coaching and Mentoring Pool supports colleagues across a wide range of roles and career stages, helping people develop, build confidence, navigate challenges and think about their next steps.

It is not typically used for executive or most senior strategic leadership roles. Organisations often provide separate coaching support for these roles, including through the West Midlands Employers Executive Coaching service, to meet the specific demands and context.

What does it cost?

Your organisation has invested in the pool, giving you free access to our coaches and mentors.



Why organisations invest in coaching and mentoring

Public sector organisations are under increasing pressure to deliver more with fewer resources.

Coaching and mentoring help organisations support their workforce in practical ways by creating space for reflection, learning and better thinking.

Across the Public Sector Coaching & Mentoring Pool:

MORE THAN **550**

people accessed coaching or mentoring in one year

1,850

hours of coaching were delivered

96%

of participants reported improved confidence, performance and leadership capability



Organisations value the Pool because it provides a scalable, cost-effective way to support people across the workforce, from emerging leaders to senior executives.

A growing public sector community

The Public Sector Coaching & Mentoring Pool brings together organisations across local government, health, policing, fire services and other public bodies who share a belief that investing in people strengthens services for citizens.

By accessing coaching or mentoring, you are part of a wider community committed to learning, collaboration and development across the public sector.





Ready to start?

If your organisation subscribes to the Public Sector Coaching & Mentoring Pool, you can explore available coaches and mentors through the [matching hub](#) or speak to your HR or development team.

Sometimes all it takes is one conversation and the time to think that comes with it to unlock new insight, perspective and possibilities.

Your potential is already there.

Coaching and mentoring simply helps you unlock it.

For further support

E: info@wmemployers.org.uk **T:** 0121 281 3558 **W:** www.wmemployers.org.uk

