

Welcome to the West Midlands **Coaching & Mentoring** Pool

Find out about being coached or mentored and how to get started with our guide...

This guide will tell you more about what coaching and mentoring are, and about the West Midlands Coaching & Mentoring Pool (WMCMP), helping you decide if you would benefit from working with a coach or a mentor from the Pool, and ensuring you know how to go about this.



Contents

We're delighted that you're interested in finding out more

This guide is designed so that you can go straight to the section that is of most use to you. Click on a title below to explore:



The basics of coaching and mentoring



Section 1: What is available for you? - About The West Midlands Coaching & Mentoring Pool



Section 2: What's involved - for further information and answers to frequently asked questions



Section 3: How to sign up to access a coach or mentor from the Pool and find helpful planning and preparation tips



Additional Coaching and Mentoring Services from West Midlands Employers

To help you navigate around this information pack use these symbols to bring you back to the menus



Main menu



Section menu



How do coaching and mentoring compare?



They both focus on...

Creating time to review current and future work, giving the opportunity to assess focus, influences, challenges and aspirations



How they are the same...



Offer you time to think, discuss and reflect on challenges and opportunities

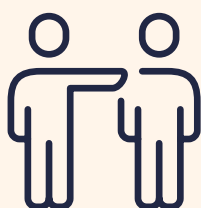


An opportunity to identify your goals and areas for improvement, as well as strengths to capitalise on



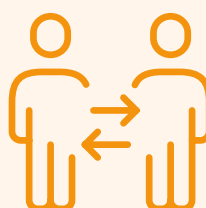
Support you to explore new ideas and action plan for positive change

How they differ...



A coach

Will help you do this through skilled questioning and facilitation



A mentor ...

Does this through sharing their experience and expertise

A coaching or mentoring environment is...



A safe place to share honestly what is going on for you



Supportive, non-judgemental and impartial



Positive and future focused

Example topics you could discuss...



You are new to your role / team / organisation / project and would benefit from some time to consider the challenges and opportunities ahead



You want support to break through organisational barriers and build your confidence around your protected characteristics



You feel you could be more productive managing your time and priorities or more effective by improving working relationships



You need support returning to work after a period of long-term sick, maternity or paternity leave



You recognise the need to create a better life / work balance



You want to maximise your work in a multi-partnership role or to collaborate better across teams and systems



Section 1

The West Midlands Coaching & Mentoring Pool (WMCMP)

Click on a title below to take you to that section



Welcome From Our CEO



What Is The West Midlands Coaching & Mentoring Pool (WMCMP)?



Our Coaches and Mentors



What Difference Does The WMCMP Make?



Welcome from our Chief Executive

West Midlands Employers is the Employers Organisation for the Region. 33 Local Authorities, through a constitution, own, oversee and govern the organisation through a Regional Elected Members Management Board.

As an organisation, our sole purpose is to create a strong public sector workforce and our aim is to support service improvement at both an individual and organisational level.

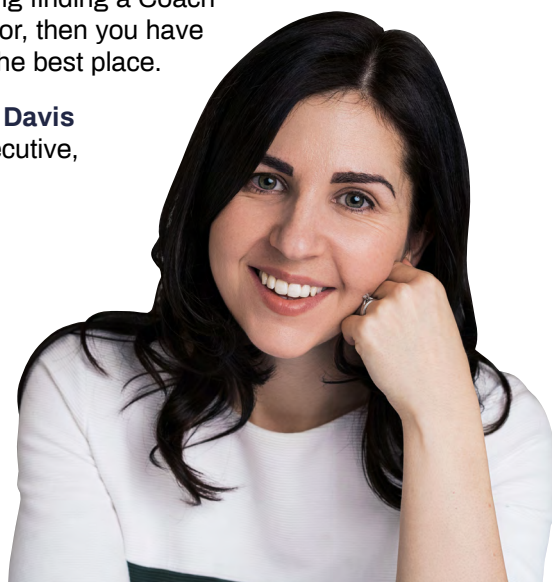
WME's mission statement is that everything we do should support a strong public sector workforce. Nowhere is this more evident than in WMCMP.

The WMCMP does not just help recipients of coaching and mentoring services. There are personal and organisational benefits to those who provide it, as well as a strong sense of community. Feedback has taught us that one of the significant and often unexpected benefits of being a coach and mentor is the increased understanding it can give the individual of different parts of an organisation, and for coaches and mentors in the WMCMP, this translates to the wider public sector.

Our coaching and mentoring clients feel the benefit of this wider perspective and understanding of issues and challenges across the public sector, helping them think about their own local issues from different viewpoints. With increased partnership and cross sector working in the sector, this knowledge and perspective is invaluable.

I am immensely proud of the work of the WMCMP and the impact it, and all the coaches and mentors within in, have across our Region. If you are considering finding a Coach or a Mentor, then you have come to the best place.

Rebecca Davis
Chief Executive,
WME



Our vision & values

At WM Employers, we advocate for our members, building a resilient public sector workforce and championing the West Midlands. We are a close-knit team and a not-for-profit organisation, bringing our membership together as a family of organisations. We collaborate to create solutions that no single organisation could deliver. Our services are used across the region, in all employment matters.



Influencing Change

We innovate within our services and create change in the public sector.



Honesty

We are transparent about our interests and communicate with our members.



Excellence

We strive to deliver a quality service to our members every day.



Ambition

We aim high, making a positive difference through spectacular work.



Respect

We accept everyone as an individual, supporting all our members with understanding and inclusion.



Trust

We consider ourselves your colleagues, so you know you can depend on us.



What is the West Midlands Coaching & Mentoring Pool (WMCMP)?

An innovative, large-scale, practitioner-led project that is part of an ongoing drive to **improve public sector performance**.

Our Vision

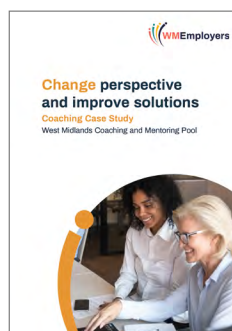
‘Enabling people to become the best they can be, whatever the work environment’

Find out [here](#) how different organisations use the pool

Take a look at how well we are achieving this vision through our case studies:



Different time, Different Focus Case Study



Change Perspective Case Study



Stepping into a New Role Case Study



Over 25 organisations subscribe to the pool, collaborating to provide cost-effective internal and external coaching and mentoring across the West Midlands.



Walsall Council



Warwickshire
County Council

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE



West Midlands
Combined Authority



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL



GAMBLING
COMMISSION



CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL



Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding

Walsall Healthcare **NHS**
NHS Trust



North Warwickshire
Borough Council



Nuneaton
&
Bedworth



Warwickshire
POLICE



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
at Cheltenham and Gloucester



Coventry City Council

Our coaches and mentors

Background and Qualifications

The WMCMP is made up of qualified external coaches and mentors who have varying backgrounds and expertise and are required to take part in supervision and continuing professional development. All external coaches and mentors are or have been employed in the public sector. They have been trained in coaching and mentoring to support up to executive management level.

All coaches and mentors who contribute to the pool adhere to the WMCMP Code of Ethics.

The External Pool

The external pool is generally focussed on supporting leaders and managers and those leading transformation and change. External coaches and mentors can be particularly helpful to provide an alternative viewpoint and perspective.

Internal Pools

Many member organisations also host an internal pool of coaches and mentors via the WMCMP online matching hub to broaden the support available and to provide targeted provision for initiatives specific to their organisation's needs. Internal coaches and mentors will have shared organisational understanding, which can be a useful feature of internal coaching.

Who can I work with?

Based on your needs and how your organisation opts to utilise the WMCMP, you may have access to choose to work with someone internally or externally, or this will be specified for you following registration.

You can see how the different member organisations use the Pool [here](#).

Key Question

Are all coaches and mentors qualified to the same level?

All coaches in the WMCMP external pool are qualified to an agreed minimum level or above. This is a Level 5 work based Coaching and Mentoring Certificate.

Most Mentors in the external pool are also qualified to this level, although some are accepted on the basis of previous experience alongside their passion and aptitude for enabling others.

All coaches and mentors in the external pool undertake regular Continued Professional Development and Supervision in order to remain with the Pool.

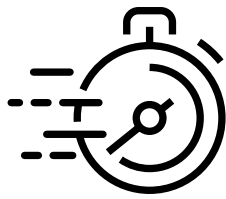
Many of our member organisations have their own Internal Pools. They agree their own standards for these coaches and mentors. You can find out more about how each organisation uses the pool [here](#).



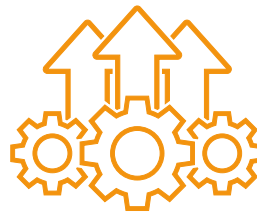
What difference does the WMCMP make to those who access it?



93% created more effective working relationships



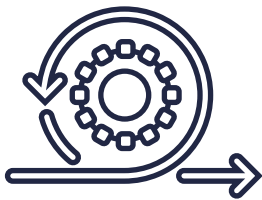
73% improved delegation and time management to create capacity



44% improved productivity and/or income generation to get more for their service area



48% created savings or transformed services to do more with less



86% improved their resilience to changing work environment



88% became more effective in their communication and engagement with internal/external stakeholders

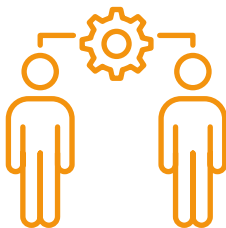


86% were better able to manage difficult situations

Colleagues who have had a coach or mentor report:



Improved confidence to lead and manage difficult situations



Improved productivity through identifying and making changes to managing their teams



Improved resilience to manage situations more effectively



Improved delegation and time management giving themselves greater capacity



Significant improvement in relationships with colleagues



Better communication across all levels



Enabled to see the value in their own skills

Coachees say...



"Very helpful! Great opportunity which anyone who is given the chance should take! I have recommended it to other managers. This is the only time in all my years of doing this job when I have had the opportunity to sit down with someone for an extended period of time and think through what the issues are in a reflective, considered, unrushed way. It has helped me become more positive and motivated about my role as I realise how many things are going well and as I learn to focus my energies on the things I can change and try not to worry too much about things over which I have no influence. The coaching has helped me to see things I had not seen before, has challenged me to consider different ways of doing things and has also helped me come up with solutions myself to things."

Fostering Team Manager, County Council



"An unintended consequence/ success of the coaching was the realisation that I have the ability to take control and influence my own aspirations and for situations and circumstances that may be out of my control it's how I choose to respond to them that can make a difference to the outcome."

County Council Performance Manager



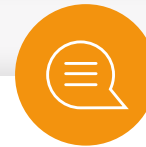
"Coaching is a very efficient process of self-discovery around our own thinking patterns and how certain beliefs and behaviours can limit the way we act at work. It has improved how I feel about my current role and what I can achieve in it and given me a clearer sense of where I want to go next in terms of career direction."

Research Development Officer, University of Gloucestershire



"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

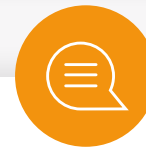


"A really positive experience with tangible benefits. Coaching has prompted me to consider different perspectives and approaches - in particular to managing difficult team members."

Chief Inspector, West Midlands Police



"Discussions at coaching sessions have made me approach issues in a different way and more positively"



"Coaching has enabled me to learn new things about myself and others enhancing my role as both a line manager and as a self-leader which puts me in a better place to adopt the values of the force and encourage my team to do the same."



"I appreciated my coach's openness to address any issues that I brought to the session, and to allow the sessions to include issues that are not specifically work issues but they impact on the role in order for this to be a more holistic approach."

Mentees say...



"Mentoring has helped to shape the role I am playing on my current programme and to provide me with the ability to take time out of the day job to consider how I can influence and improve my ability to work more strategically and delegate more effectively"

Programme Manager, Coventry City Council



"With the mentoring sessions, I have obtained a new role within my organisation, where I feel motivated, have a growth mindset, undertaking further studying, upskill through training and conferences, greater reach to all colleagues, working in a high-performing team where we all support each other and have no hidden agendas"

Professional Services Officer, Birmingham City Council



Mentoring has provided a..."fantastic experience that has helped both myself and my manager come up with a plan for progression and professional development"

Contract Officer, Telford and Wrekin Council



"An extremely worthwhile experience. Having had a difficult period in my working life, it has helped me to cut through this and remind myself that I am an extremely resilient person and I can move past the hurdles I faced. This has culminated in me getting a couple of recent promotion opportunities and I do feel this is a reflection my mentors influence in keeping me focused on what was within my control. The opportunity to discuss in detail particular issues or knotty problems at work has been extremely helpful and thought provoking."

Strategic Commissioning Manager, Birmingham City Council



[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



"Enabled me to think about progressions in different ways and how I can change my outlook on things and consider the bigger picture"



Section 2

What's involved

Click on a title below to take you to that section



How does coaching and mentoring work?



What happens in a typical coaching or mentoring meeting?



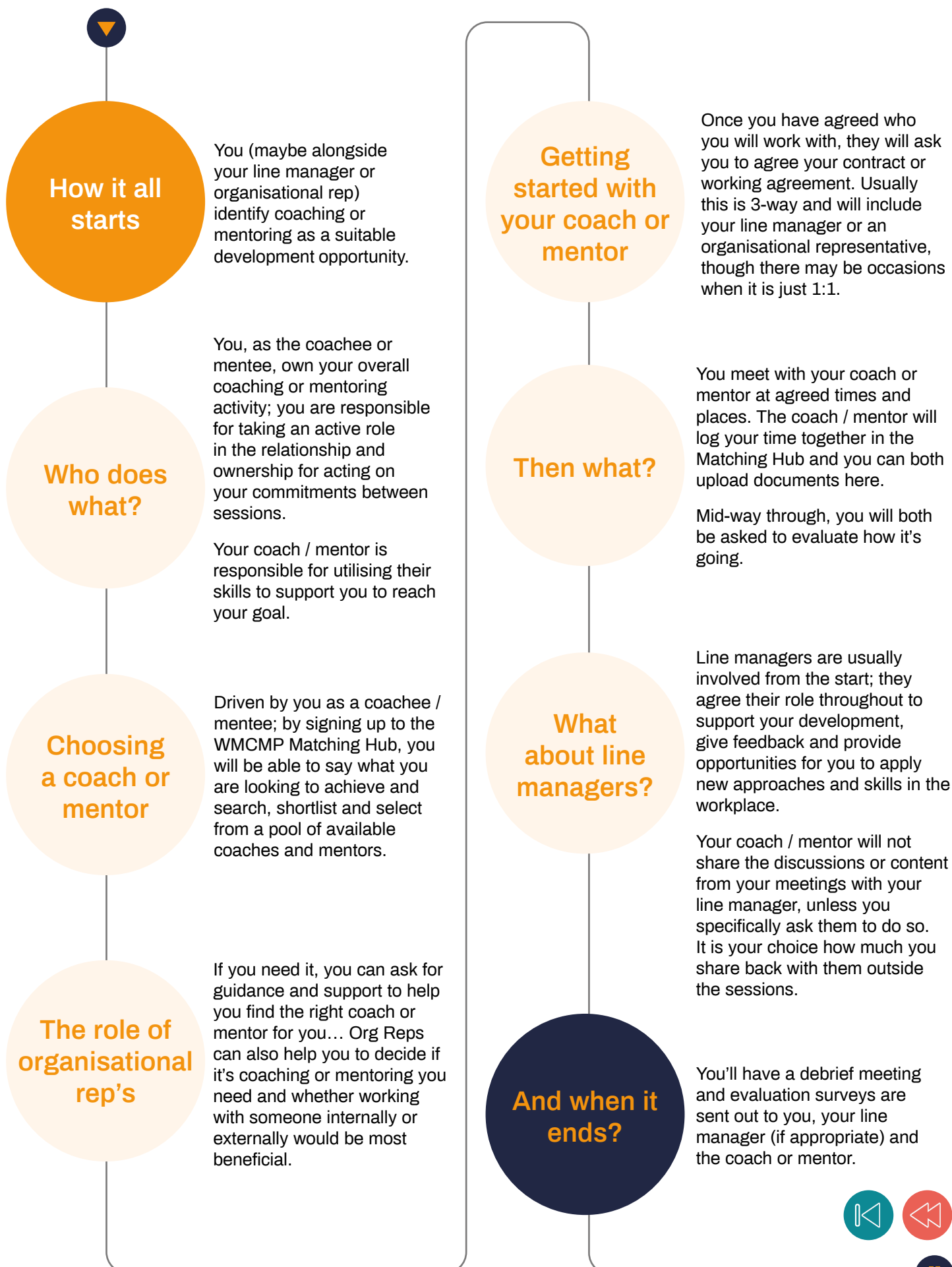
Techniques and approaches



FAQ's and Myth's



How does Coaching and Mentoring work?



What happens in a typical coaching or mentoring meeting?

Your initial meeting may be something like this:



Getting to know each other:

- Personal introductions and share a little about yourselves – remember the focus is on you, so you will share the most
- Possibly share a little about your career history / CV
- If you have chosen a mentor, you can find out more about their experience or, if working with a coach, you may want to find out more about their ethos and ways of working
- Gain an understanding about what perspectives or experience your coach or mentor can bring to support you



Contracting:

Areas to discuss and agree:

- The initial goals, which may include the development of long-term goals for the relationship
- How long you will work together and when you will review this
- The practical arrangements such as how often you will meet, where you will meet, as well as whether cancelling meetings is acceptable and, if so, under what circumstances
- This may include, for example, completing an optional diary sheet, discussing the process, sharing your learning from the session, and periodic reviews of progress towards goals



Individual plan:

Your Coach or Mentor may explain the GROW model to you and start to work through it– it stands for:

- Goals** What you want to achieve
Reality This is where you discuss your current situation / context
Options The point of coaching and mentoring is to open up more choices for you
Will What you will do as a result of the session

Agree where to start – a focus or topic to start working towards achieving your Goal(s)



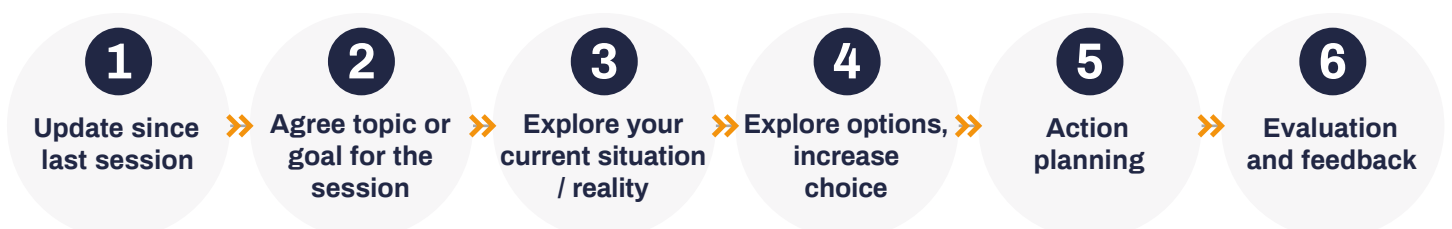
Evaluation:

Review what you discussed, assess what worked well or could be better from your initial discussion and plan for the next time you meet. This may be completed via a session [diary sheet](#), or alternative method.



Subsequent meetings:

These may be very similar, though with less focus on the contracting (you will most likely review to check it is still valid) – the diagram below may help to show a typical flow for a coaching conversation. Mentoring will follow a similar flow, though your Mentor will additionally take some of the time to share their own knowledge, experience and ideas.



Techniques and approaches

Every Coach and Mentor is unique, so although they may use some of the same approaches, they may also have different ways of working to other coaches and mentors. Ultimately, it is your choice as to how you want to work. You may be open to more creative techniques, or you may prefer to keep it to more conversational approaches.

The main approach, the backbone to both coaching and mentoring, is really good questioning and listening. Using silence, summarising, playing back what they have heard, gentle challenge and checking out assumptions, language and interpretations, are all techniques you are likely to experience as your coach or mentor works with you to understand your reality, your motivations, your habits and patterns and helps you to gain more clarity and options on your next steps.

Sometimes your coach or mentor will refer to a tool or theory, sharing the main aspects of it and asking you if it is helpful in your situation. If it is, you can continue to work with it and apply it for yourself, and if not, then you can move on in the session and find something more useful.

You may be open to more creativity, and this can come in different ways. Your coach or mentor may suggest drawing, free-flow writing, working with objects or pictures and even changing positions and looking at things from different perspectives with; all designed to help you gain the clarity you are looking for or build the capabilities you aim to develop.

Even if working remotely, you may find it beneficial to go for a walk during your session, maybe using your phone instead of a computer to stay connected. Different environments, movement and being in nature all work for some people in helping them think and work differently.

Key Question

How do I decide whether to find a coach or mentor ... or not?

If, after you have digested the contents of this guide, you still aren't sure about whether or not to find a coach or mentor, then maybe try one or more of the following:

- Register on the site and contact a coach or mentor – have a conversation with them to decide if this is the right development opportunity for you AND if now is the right time for you. It may be that, during or after your conversation, one or both of you feel that this isn't the best match. That's ok, it's better to know this now, and you can always go back to the matching hub and select someone else. You may find the conversation helps you clarify what you do need.
- Speak to your manager and ask them to help you decide
- Speak with your Organisation Representative – you can find the contact details [here](#): – they may also be able to put you in touch with someone who has been coached or mentored before and is willing to share their experiences with you
- Speak to one or more of the coaches and mentors in your organisation – again, your Organisation Representative can advise who they are and help put you in touch
- Take a look at the case studies (you'll find the links on [Page 6](#)) to get some ideas on how it has helped others



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and Myths

Whilst we've answered some key questions throughout this guide, you'll find here our responses to the questions we're most frequently asked around coaching and mentoring, as well as quite a few Myths that we've busted!

Key Questions

Which is best, coaching or mentoring?

So long as you are ready to commit to doing the work, both are really effective and enable people to get great results. It all depends what you are looking for. If you are more focused on working things through for yourself, choose a Coach. If you want to benefit from someone else's knowledge and experience, try a Mentor.

Can I have coaching whilst also accessing counselling?

Most of the time, yes. So long as you are clear with your counsellor / therapist and your coach, and have agreed clear boundaries around what you will use each type of support for, then it can be really helpful and effective to access both simultaneously. You do need to be open with your therapist and coach to ensure they are aware that you are accessing both.

There may be times when you are accessing coaching and it becomes apparent to you and / or your coach that you would benefit from counselling. They will have this conversation with you and if need be, and possible, will help you access the support you need.

However there may be times when it's best to spend more time focusing on the topics you take to counselling. At these times, it may be confusing, disruptive or even unhealthy for you to engage in coaching at the same time. Ask your therapist or counsellor for advice on when the right time would be for you to engage a coach.

Will a mentor tell me how to do my job?

Mentors are not there to tell you how to do your job and they do not wish to do so. A mentor can help you overcome obstacles and achieve your goals by offering different perspectives and new insights to stimulate your own thinking. They will bring the benefit of their experience, learning and ideas and can be a sounding board and a mirror to enable you to see yourself and your options in different ways. But you're still in charge of you and your work.

Aren't coaching and mentoring very expensive?

There is no cost to you or your department to work with someone from the WMCMP, other than covering your travel expenses if you travel to meet your coach or mentor; your coaching or mentoring is free for you to access if your organisation has invested in membership of the Coaching and Mentoring Pool.

To find out if your organisation is involved and how to access the pool visit:

www.wmemployers.org.uk/what-we-do/coaching/west-midlands-coaching-and-mentoring-pool/

Is it true that everyone is capable of being coached or mentored?

Most people are able to be coached or mentored some of the time, but not everyone is ready all of the time. An important factor in coaching and in mentoring is the readiness of the client (the coachee or mentee.) If you really don't want to be coached or mentored, and aren't engaged in the process, then neither are for you right now. Perhaps later, but not now.

Isn't it risky to open up and talk frankly to a coach or mentor? Are the sessions confidential?

The nature of the coaching / mentoring relationship is characterised by mutual trust, mutual respect and freedom of expression. Trust implies sincerity and authenticity and requires confidentiality on the part of the coach or mentor. Respect is about accepting another person for who they are and who they present themselves to be. In order to have trust, respect and freedom of expression, we need to be comfortable with a coach or mentor and believe that they can help us achieve our goals.

Confidentiality is one of the hallmarks of coaching and mentoring. All of the internal and external coaches and mentors in the pool have been well trained and abide by our code of ethics which states that they will:

- Maintain throughout the level of confidentiality which is appropriate and is agreed at the start of the relationship.
- Disclose information only where explicitly agreed with the client and sponsor (where one exists), unless the coach or mentor believes that there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the client or others if the information is withheld;
- Act within applicable law and not encourage, assist or collude with others engaged in conduct which is dishonest, unlawful, unprofessional or discriminatory.

Can I be coached / mentored during work hours?

Yes absolutely. You agree with your coach or mentor the best time to suit you both. It is an enabler to help you perform at your best and is an important way to develop, learn and grow at work.

Can I be referred by my manager?

The majority of people who access the pool do so based on a recommendation and encouragement from their manager. Research suggests that coaching and mentoring would be most successful for you when you have an element of choice about who you work with and what you want to focus on. Therefore you have to take responsibility to sign up to the Matching Hub to select someone to work with; your manager cannot and shouldn't do this for you. Your manager may be able to support you by looking through profiles with you to help identify someone suitable.

Myth-buster

Isn't coaching the same as mentoring?

A mentor is the “sage on the stage,” while the coach is the “guide on the side.” Mentoring is usually intended to provide advice and answers to questions about the profession, skill or role. Coaches don't give you answers or tell you what to do; coaches help you discover answers for yourself.

To be able to help me, shouldn't the coach have a similar background?

While helpful, having a similar background doesn't guarantee that the coach will be effective. It's more important for the coach to have the skills and abilities to help you transform yourself and acquire the skills and mindsets you need. The most helpful coach is one who listens to you and helps you reflect on your choices, behaviours, interpretations and judgements.

Aren't coaching and mentoring just for people who have problems, not for successful people?

Coaching and mentoring help the good and the great get even better. They work best for motivated performers who want to achieve even more or who may feel “stuck” in certain areas of performance or behaviour. Some of the top leaders in the FTSE 100 and the Fortune 100 have their own coaches and mentors. Coaching and mentoring are often used to support good performers who are facing difficult challenges.

Leaders moving into new roles with greater responsibility are avid users of coaching and mentoring. They are less successful as last-ditch efforts to “save” someone.

Poor performers tend not to take coaching or mentoring seriously and may even resist being supported in this way. They rarely deliver a good return on the investment. Coaching and mentoring are not substitutes for managing. It is the manager's responsibility to help their team members perform at their best, so if someone is underperforming because they do not have direction, support or appropriate development from their manager, coaching or mentoring would be ineffective and so are unsuitable.

Isn't coaching or mentoring only for senior managers and leaders?

We believe both approaches can benefit a wide variety of people. However, they are indeed often used to support the development of high potential managers and colleagues, and as a follow-up to management and leadership training. Both coaching and mentoring to assist new managers and leaders get up to speed is also becoming a common practice. Colleagues in all roles, and with a wide range of backgrounds, can benefit. Some example topics are shown on page 3 of this guide.

Won't I lose face with my team members and peers if I have a coach or mentor?

Most colleagues know that personal development is a life-long process and see their colleague/manager receiving coaching or mentoring as a positive step. They recognise that coaching and mentoring demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the person, and they also give credit to the individual who has the courage to accept and act on feedback. You become an even better role model to your colleagues and you demonstrate your commitment to learning when you let them know that you're being coached or mentored. If anyone doesn't understand this, it says more about them than it does about you!

And remember, it's up to you whether or not you share that you are accessing a coach or mentor, so if you prefer, no-one apart from your organisational sponsor and representative needs to know.

Don't coaching and mentoring take a lot of time?

Anything worthwhile takes an investment of time, and time spent with a coach or mentor is an investment in yourself. If you are coming to coaching or mentoring to gain support to progress a project or introduce change more effectively, for example, this is the work you need to be doing anyway. Evidence suggests that you can make progress quicker through coaching and mentoring than if you go it alone, so you are likely to find that taking time out for sessions actually saves you time in the long run.

Doesn't it take a long time to see the results of coaching and mentoring?

While they are not intended to be a quick fix, many coachees / mentees experience tangible results after one or two sessions. Although human beings tend to change slowly under normal circumstances, coaching and mentoring for engaged and motivated people who seize the opportunity can lead to some remarkable and rapid changes in thinking and behaviour.



Section 3

Signing up, planning and preparing

Click on a title below to take you to that section



Taking the plunge! Signing-up to the pool



How to choose a coach or mentor



What is contracting and how do I prepare?



How do I prepare for coaching or mentoring?



Your essential checklist



Taking the plunge! Signing up for the pool

You've decided to access a coach or mentor ... so what's next?

- 1** Register at the matching hub – as a **coachee** if you would like a coach, or a **mentee** if you are seeking a mentor.

www.coachmentormatchingwme.org/.

Already registered on the matching hub?

If you have previously registered as a coach, mentor, coachee or mentee you will already have login details for the matching hub, and can benefit from using these details to now access a coach or mentor..... after all no-one wants to remember additional passwords!

First log into the **matching hub**, (if you can't remember your password you can get a reminder from the log in screen) then visit your 'My profile' tab and scroll down to see 'Your current registrations'. From here you can register for different user types e.g. to be a coachee or mentee.

To navigate to your different user types click 'Switch view' at the top right hand side of the site. Once registered and approved as a coachee or mentee this option will appear in the 'Switch view' list to select so you can search for a coach or mentor as detailed below.

- 2** On registering, the hub will ask you **what you are looking to achieve** to give you the best match of coaches and mentors that can support you.

Remember:

A coach doesn't need to be in a similar job role to you to be able to coach effectively, but they will be able to bring their skill set of areas that they can coach you on, so **having an idea of what you want to achieve helps get a good match**.

A mentor will need experience and expertise in an area you want to develop yourself in, so **having an idea of what you want to build on helps get a good match**.

Defining your Goals - Access ideas from over 150 Pool clients to help you decide what is most important to focus on: [Goals in Coaching & Mentoring](#)

- 3** You should receive your login details straight away after registration, unless your request needs to be authorised by a member of your organisation's coaching and mentoring team (once authorised login details will be issued. A message should appear on screen if this is the case for your organisation – you can find out who will be involved in authorising your registration from your organisations information page [here](#)).

You are able to **update your details** at any time by going to the 'My profile' tab once logged in

- 4** By logging in to the matching hub you will have the option to **search for a coach or mentor**.
- 5** You will be presented with a list of **suitable matches** and will be able to see how much each individual meets your requirements, those most suitable will be listed at the top. To read their full profile click '**View full details**'.
- 6** **Selection** - If you find someone you think you would like to work with then **submit a request** to them (you can do this from the bottom of their profile) – **this will send the coach/ mentor an email** and they will get in touch with you to discuss working together.

Shortlisting You can also **create a shortlist** of profiles if there are a few people you are interested in and want to **look at their profiles in more detail at a later date**, please note, **putting people into a shortlist will not contact them**, you have to make a request for a coach/mentor to know you are interested in working with them.

You are able to **view your requests or shortlist** at any time by logging in to the [Matching hub](#)

Key Question

Do I need permission?

Each of our member organisations manages access to the Pool in their own way. Take a look [here](#) to find out more about how your organisation uses the pool and for the contact details of your Organisation Representative.



How to choose a coach or mentor

Before you look for a coach or mentor it's helpful to start by understanding what you are looking to accomplish through coaching / mentoring.

Asking these questions may help you

- Q. **What do I most want to achieve through the coaching / mentoring?**
- Q. **Why is this important to me?**
- Q. **What difference would it make if I achieve this?**

Once you have established what you are trying to achieve you then need to think about who would be best suited to help you get there.

If you're looking for a Coach

Remember there is no exact science to selecting the right coach for you. When considering coach profiles, it is helpful to remember a coaching relationship is about personal insight, behaviours and competencies and not professional or technical expertise or knowledge.

If you're looking for a mentor

You are likely to look for someone with the professional background, experience, knowledge or technical expertise that you yourself are focused on learning more about and developing your skills and knowledge in. They may have developed their experience in the same, or a completely different industry, and if it's a skill set you are looking to learn more about, they may be in a completely different profession to you also.

Have a think about:



The relationship that you are looking for with your coach or mentor:



What areas of your behaviour, skill or knowledge you want to work on: and



What you want out of the coaching / mentoring relationship in terms of outcomes.

Choosing someone similar to you

You may want to choose **someone who is similar to you**. This can be a strong partnering as there is a good possibility that you will have a lot in common in terms of how you both approach the world and an understanding of the environment you are working in. Your coach or mentor may instinctively understand your point of view and be able to empathise with you. This can create a coaching / mentoring journey where you feel comfortable and understood in terms of the challenges you face therefore allowing you to explore your working environment with a like-minded individual and build effective and stronger techniques for working.

Choosing someone different to you

Alternatively, others like to have a **coach or mentor who is quite different to themselves**. This can create a challenging relationship where you will need to explain your responsibilities, your behaviour or your approach so the coach or mentor is able to make an external observation. This can be powerful in that helps you look at things in a different way and explore how others may see you and the environment in which you work. This can create a coaching or mentoring journey where you feel challenged, giving you a different perspective of your working environment so as to build effective and new techniques for working.

Choosing someone with similarities & differences

Finally, you may want **someone who may have similar work background but a different style to you or vice versa**. This can create a mixed environment where the relationship is both understanding and challenging. The mix can help you find some common ground where you can steady your feet in the relationship whilst then challenging your working approach. As long as both parties understand the push, pull nature of this relationship this can create a coaching or mentoring journey where new thinking can be created within a common understanding therefore developing effective and varied techniques for working.

Key Question

What do I do if I can't find someone suitable on the Matching Hub?

In the first instance, try refining your search. It may be you have specified too many criteria and it's a challenge to find someone with such a specific range of skills, experience or areas of focus.

If that still doesn't work, try speaking to your Organisation Representative – you can find their contact details [here](#)

You may be looking for some very specific support. If this is the case, and your Organisation Representative can't help you, then please contact West Midlands Employers at info@wmemployers.org.uk



What is contracting and how do I prepare?

An environment that allows for openness and honesty to build a trusting relationship and explore issues is created from people feeling they are in a safe space. Contracting provides the basis for this through establishing the conversation and expectations.

The word contract may feel a bit formal. Really, it is an agreement that gets the relationship off to a good start and ensures everyone is clear on what the work is, roles, responsibilities and how you will work together.

How do I prepare for contracting?

The WMCMP [Template contracts](#) provide a best practice approach to contracting and reminder of valuable points to be discussed and agreed at the beginning of a relationship to create an effective environment. Covering all aspects of the contract sets the foundation of how the coach / mentor and you will work together and provides permission to review things if anything goes awry during the relationship.

Several things may vary relationship to relationship, and below are a few top tips for things to discuss to create a contract suitable for you and the coach or mentor you choose to work with.

Practicalities

Discuss the duration, frequency, timing and venue of coaching / mentoring sessions. Including agreeing what makes a suitable venue for meetings (e.g. quiet, undisturbed and private). If you are proposing to also host virtual / remote coaching or mentoring sessions, discuss the practicalities of what you will use and how contact will be made. It is common for coaches / mentors to commit to an initial 3-4 sessions at the start of a relationship and review if more are needed as you progress.

Involving your line manager/sponsor

As well as improving individual effectiveness through the achievement of goals, our coaching and mentoring is also designed to improve organisational effectiveness. It is therefore best to have an Organisational Sponsor present at the initial meeting and review at the end, to share their view of, and shape some of the goals for the intervention.

The coach/mentor, client (you!) and sponsor should agree the involvement of the sponsor from the outset. The sponsor may be your:

- Direct line manager
- Remote line manager
- Matrix line manager
- Project Manager
- HR representative
- Or whoever will be reviewing progress with you whilst you are receiving coaching or mentoring.

The sponsor is the link back to your organisation and is responsible for representing the organisations expectations of you and the purpose of the coaching / mentoring work. You can ask your coach or mentor to brief the sponsor sufficiently before the meetings, so they know what to expect when they join the sessions. Or they may find that this [useful guide](#) for line managers is enough to help them come prepared.



How you will work together

This is one of the most important parts of the contract, where the coach / mentor and client (you) will agree how you will work together and the expectations you have of each other e.g. the use of exercises and techniques in the session, the setting of homework, the level and style of challenge and support offered, what you do and don't want to happen in the relationship etc.

Some good things to consider and share with your coach or mentor to establish this include:

Q. What is your previous experience of coaching or mentoring?

Q. What worked well?

Q. What was less effective?

Q. How do you learn best?

Q. What is your learning style?

Q. How ready and committed are you to making changes?

Q. What made you select them as your coach or mentor?

Q. How will you know that you are getting what you want from coaching / mentoring?

Q. How will your coach / mentor know that this coaching / mentoring is helpful to you?

Q. What suggestions do you have to help them coach or mentor you?

Q. How open are you to trying different techniques?

Q. If you were to sabotage coaching / mentoring, how might you do it?

Q. How do you want your coach / mentor to hold you to account if they feel you are making excuses for not delivering agreed actions?

Q. How would you like them to challenge you if they think you are avoiding some tough questions?

To **clarify expectations**, the coach / mentor needs to make sure you are clear about what coaching / mentoring is and isn't and in what ways they can help you achieve your goals. Remember, you both have the right to end the relationship at any time if either party no longer thinks that they can work together, or that there is no need for any further sessions, or that there is recognition that coaching / mentoring is not appropriate.

Confidentiality

This is key to building a trusting relationship and encouraging honesty from both of you. Discussing all the key points highlighted in the template contract will clarify any concerns you may have about what will happen with the information you share. It also protects your coach / mentor if there is a disclosure that may need to be shared.

Monitoring Progress

Another essential of the relationship is to know you are on the right track. Talk about how this will be carried out at the end of each session.

In addition, automatic online evaluation is issued from the Matching hub. Coaches / mentors record your sessions, which triggers evaluations at different stages of the relationship.

Please do complete all evaluation requests throughout the relationship. It provides crucial quality assurance, monitoring and return on investment information to the Pool and our members and ensures we continue to provide a quality service for you during your relationship and for your colleagues in the months and years to come.

Amendments to Contract

During the relationship there may be several things that arise such as expectations not being met, ethical dilemmas or disclosures. The contract provides a start point to review how to address these. You may need to adjust or re-contract certain aspects of how you agreed to work together if needed. Changes should be discussed and confirmed by mutual agreement between the coach / mentor and yourself (where there is a significant shift in focus of the goals, this should also be reviewed in agreement with the sponsor).

Conflict or Complaints

If you find yourself in the position where there are disagreements, disputes or conflict between the coach / mentor and yourself, which cannot be resolved, this must be reported to WME or your Organisational Rep within 10 working days of the session/incident. Issues will be dealt with in line with the WMCMP complaints procedure and evidence of your contracting will play a part in reviewing the incident.





How do I prepare for a coaching or mentoring session?

These hints and tips may help you prepare...

1 First be clear, if it's Coaching or Mentoring...

If it's Coaching, it's helpful to focus on what the coach can help me understand to move forward.

If it's Mentoring, it's helpful to focus on how or what I want to develop myself in and consider what the mentor may have knowledge, experience or examples they can share – what questions do I want to ask them?

2 Identify your outcome, goal or area of focus

The most important thing is to have a focus area or set goals to work toward with your coach or mentor. You will have agreed these for the overall work you are doing together, so for each session, consider what is most important right now to help you work towards this.

In the words of business management writer Patrick Lencioni: "If everything is important, then nothing is." Get specific on what it is that you want to work on.

There are no strict rules about what you can discuss, as long as it's not illegal or unsafe. Ultimately if you're stuck on something, whether at work or at home it's probably going to affect your work. You can bring this to your sessions and your coach or mentor can support you get unstuck again. That said, the focus is work – the Pool isn't here to address non-work issues; however if its impacting you in the workplace your coach or mentor is able to take

these into account if they feel they have the competence to do so. If you're unsure about this, have a chat with your coach or mentor.

It's worth remembering that you can only usefully talk about the person in the room – you! So if you come with an outcome that relates to another person, your coach or mentor will have you explore what your outcome is in relation to that. As an example, if you say 'I want my project manager to have a word with Mary about X' then you'll need to explore how you can best communicate that with your project manager. The difference is subtle, but the key thing is that it recognises that the person who's able to change their behaviour or approach is you, not the other person.

3 Keep a journal

Many people find it helpful keep some sort of journal to take notes on what is happening between coaching / mentoring sessions. This will not only help you reflect, it will also help you bring real-life situations into the session.

Sharing specific situations takes the discussion to deeper levels. Review your notes before the session to help you focus. When you have specific details to share, your coach or mentor can ask more meaningful questions to get to the root of the problem and help you move forwards towards your outcome or goal.

4 Be open

It is critical for you to be open and honest with your coach or mentor. Connection and trust between you both are crucial. Your coach or mentor will ask you thought-provoking, inspiring, challenging, supportive and powerful questions to help you identify the root of the problem, other possibilities and/or what is next. When you provide honest and transparent answers, you will have more meaningful results. If your coach or mentor has to spend time peeling back layers to get to what is “real,” the process will often take longer and may not be as effective. It is helpful to prepare yourself to be vulnerable in your conversations.

5 Be prepared to be challenged

Your coach or mentor should ask you powerful questions to help challenge your thinking and help you see other possibilities. You will be taking an inward look and thinking critically. As you work on achieving your goals together, you will be challenged to get out of your comfort zone.

Remember that your coach or mentor is there to support, encourage, challenge you and, ultimately, create a space of accountability for what you have identified as your goals.

6 Expect change

I’m sure you have heard, “what got you here won’t get you there.” To accomplish your goals, there needs to be a change in your behaviour, mindset or beliefs. This takes intentional effort. Your coach or mentor are there to support you through this process.

There are several things a coach or mentor can do to help you get the most out of your session, like creating a safe environment for you to be open/vulnerable, listen intently without judgment, ask meaningful and thought-provoking questions, ensure next steps are in place and much more.

In summary, remember you get the most out of your sessions by being prepared and focused. It will help you use your time with your coach or mentor more efficiently and effectively. Both work best when you are fully invested in the engagement. You don’t want to waste your time (or your organisation’s investment) – instead using it as a time to set and achieve goals, create self-awareness, critically think, gain new perspectives, be supported, challenged, inspired, encouraged and ready to change and reach new levels.





Your essential checklist

This handy checklist will help you prepare for your first and subsequent coaching or mentoring sessions. Everyone is different, therefore space is available in each section for you to add your own preparation notes.

Click on the download button to access the checklist.



Wider Coaching and Mentoring Development available through WME

In addition to coordinating the WMCMP, WME have a broad suite of coaching and mentoring offers to support individuals and organisations work towards a coaching and mentoring culture:



Executive Leadership Coaching



Group coaching



Introduction to coaching

for individuals in non-managerial roles or who are completely new to coaching



Manager as Coach programme



Internal Coach Programme and coaching qualification



Online introductions

to coaching and self-coaching modules



Online matching

for internal coaching and mentoring schemes



Mentor Briefing Sessions



Continued Professional Development and Supervision

for coaches and mentors



Please get in touch to find out how we can meet your needs.

Contact us

For more information visit: www.wmemployers.org.uk/what-we-do/coaching/
or email the WME team info@wmemployers.org.uk

