

# Mentoring for return to training in Wessex: Mentee Information

## What is mentoring?

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There are many different definitions of mentoring, from 'a learning relationship', to 'helping someone become better at helping themselves'.

In truth, mentors have several roles, including a sounding board, listener, critical friend, facilitator, networker, coach, and even a role model. Each mentoring relationship is different. Some are intense and last over time; others are brief and related to a specific situation.

Mentoring is not about offering advice and sharing experiences. It's about helping someone else become effective at developing their opportunities and resources, empowering the individuals to find their own solutions, manage their problems and helping them to become better at helping themselves.



## Why use a mentor?

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Mentoring is particularly useful at times of change, for example returning back into training and settling into a new role. It provides an informal and confidential environment where opportunities, dilemmas and problems can be addressed and discussed.

Typical topics discussed during mentoring include:

- Organising work / life
- Influencing
- Working with challenging colleagues
- Handling a difficult situation
- Making a career decision
- Future personal and professional development

***"Mentoring was invaluable for my return to work. It helped to clarify what I wanted to achieve over the next few years whilst taking into account how I need to work differently due to a change in life circumstances".***

## What does a mentor do?

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A mentor supports the mentee in reviewing the problem or opportunity they are facing and in deciding on how to handle it.

The mentor provides a 'map', or framework which the mentor and mentee use to guide their discussions. The mentor facilitates the mentee in exploring the situation, gathering information gaining insight into a situation, reaching a decision and taking action.

Amongst other skills the mentor will:

- Listen carefully to what the mentee says
- Empathically challenge blind spots
- Help the mentee to develop a wider perspective about the matter in question.
- Help to set goals
- Develop strategies to achieve these goals
- Help design a plan of action



The mentee might just want to talk through a dilemma to understand it better and decide whether anything needs to be done or not. Alternatively, they may want to think about what solutions would make sense and what they want from the situation.

Then again the mentee may want to think about different ways in which they might deal with a situation, to decide which would be most likely to be successful and to make a plan.



## How do I decide if mentoring is right for me?

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The only real way is to give it a go. Use a 'taster' session to discuss a dilemma or opportunity you are currently considering, and see whether you find the experience valuable. Remember that the GMC now advise us to use mentoring conversations at times of change in our careers. Have a go and find out what it's about.

## How do I access mentoring?

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Mentoring is available to all doctors returning to a training post. You can request to start a mentoring from 6 months pre to 1 year post return to training although we may consider requests outside of this period in certain circumstances.

To access mentoring, please send an e-mail to the address below to express your interest:

[Supportt.wx@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:Supportt.wx@hee.nhs.uk)

You will be sent a list of profiles of all the mentors on our database along with our mentee handbook. The mentor profiles will include the locations in which they are based to help planning mentoring sessions easier.

When selecting a mentor please consider the following:

- Mentoring is often most powerful when the mentor is from a different background to yourself.
- Mentors should be outside of your educational and managerial structure.

Please take time to read the handbook to help make the most out of your mentoring sessions.

Once you have selected a mentor, please contact them on the e-mail address provided.



## What next?

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Occasionally you may find that a mentor is at full capacity. We will endeavor to keep this information updated on our profile document. If you have any difficulties contacting a mentor or indeed if you have any other mentoring-related questions please contact us on the e-mail address included on this page.

Studies suggest that the success of mentoring is dependent on the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship. We acknowledge that sometimes people just don't click! You are free to end the mentoring relationship at any time (please just let the mentor know) and find another mentor.

It may become clear during the mentoring process that a different type of support is needed (for example coaching), either instead of or alongside mentoring. If this is the case you mentor should be able to direct you to the appropriate people in order to better meet your needs.



**For further information please contact:**

[suppoRTT.wx@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:suppoRTT.wx@hee.nhs.uk)



## **A message from us!**

We appreciate that returning back into training following a period of time out can be daunting and at times overwhelming. You are not alone, at any one time in Wessex over 10% of the trainee population are taking approved time out of programme many of whom may be facing similar challenges. The demands and culture of the medical work place environment often add to the challenge of returning to practice.

Mentoring is for everyone and can be a valuable tool to help navigate your way back into training, make the most out of the opportunities available to you and support you to fulfill your potential.

From the SuppoRTT Wessex Mentoring Team.