Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to outline what coaching and mentoring are, the benefits of each, and why a coaching culture can prove valuable to both a person and the wider organisation. In addition, the paper also outlines the merits of reverse mentoring, and how to set up a reverse mentoring scheme.

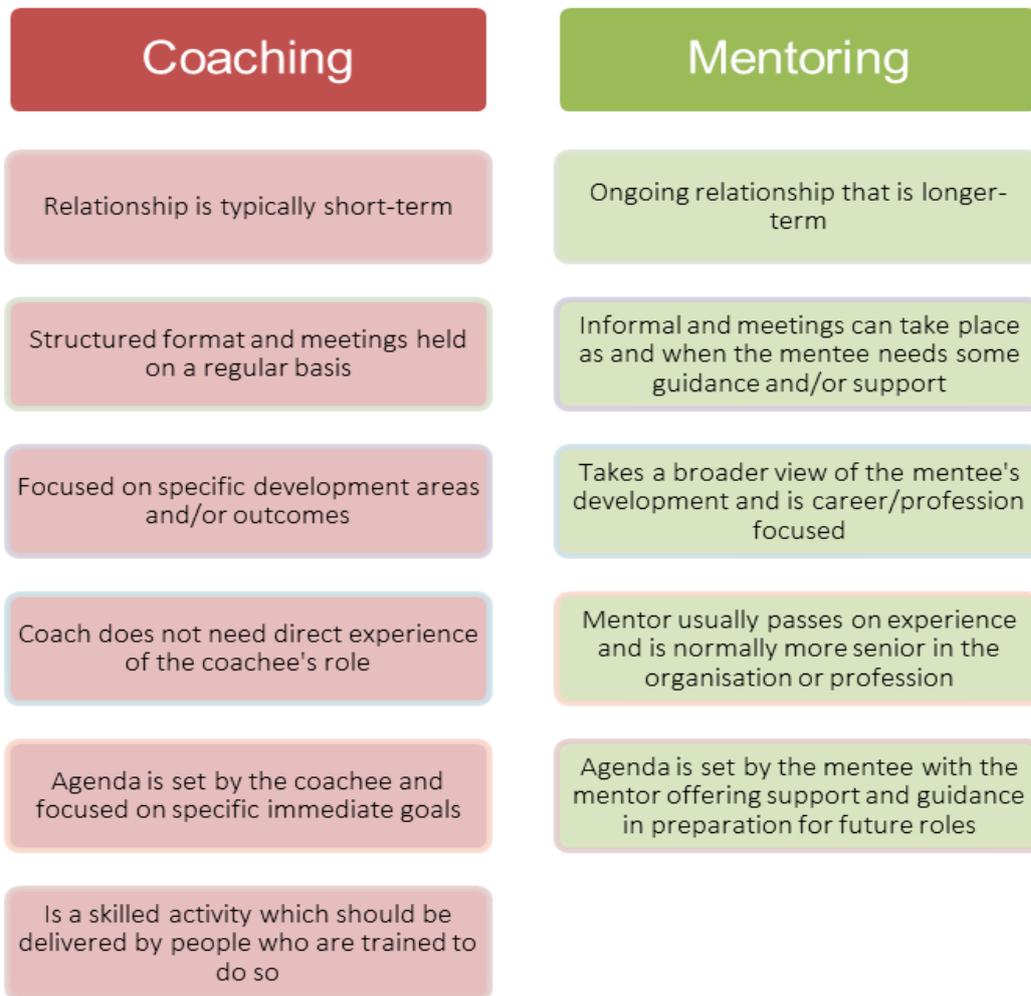**What are Coaching and Mentoring?**

Coaching and mentoring are development approaches based on the use of one-to-one conversations to enhance an individual's skills, knowledge, and performance.[1] In some contexts, coaching and mentoring are used as almost interchangeable terms.

Coaching is about unlocking an individual's potential to maximise their own performance through a facilitated, structured, confidential conversation. An experienced coach can use their skills without needing to understand the area in which the coachee works. They do so by using their experience and knowledge to facilitate a coaching conversation to assist the coachee to reach their own solutions and conclusions.

Mentoring is about imparting knowledge, advice, and guidance from a place of experience to enable individuals to become competent in their roles. Therefore, coaching is different from mentoring in that the solutions and decisions are being made by the coachee and discussions are focused on the outcomes the coachee wants to achieve.

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[1] CIPD (2019) Coaching & Mentoring Factsheet

In summary:

Coaching	Mentoring
Relationship is typically short-term	Ongoing relationship that is longer-term
Structured format and meetings held on a regular basis	Informal and meetings can take place as and when the mentee needs some guidance and/or support
Focused on specific development areas and/or outcomes	Takes a broader view of the mentee's development and is career/profession focused
Coach does not need direct experience of the coachee's role	Mentor usually passes on experience and is normally more senior in the organisation or profession
Agenda is set by the coachee and focused on specific immediate goals	Agenda is set by the mentee with the mentor offering support and guidance in preparation for future roles
Is a skilled activity which should be delivered by people who are trained to do so	

Coaching

Coaching can be defined as training or development in which a person called a "coach" supports a learner in achieving a specific personal or professional goal. The learner is sometimes called a "coachee". Coaching differs from mentoring in focusing on competence specifics, as opposed to general overall development.

Some coaches use a style in which they ask questions and offer opportunities to challenge the learner to find his or her own answers. This helps the learner find answers and new ways of being, based on their own values, preferences, and perspectives.

Coaching involves helping people access what they already know by using techniques such as listening, offering observational feedback, and reflecting. Coaching is usually short term and focused on a specific area of development or a specific issue.

Coaching is generally more structured, and the meetings are scheduled on a regular basis. A coach does not need to be an expert in the area the coachee wants to discuss; a coach will provide support by asking relevant questions, summarising, and observing to help enable the coachee's thinking.

The coachee owns the goal in coaching, the coach owns the process. The agenda in coaching is focused on achieving specific, immediate goals.

Mentoring

Mentoring can be defined as a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less – the mentee.

Mentoring in the workplace involves mentors giving advice and offering direction, and the relationship is usually based on someone more senior or with more experience offering this support as they are recognised as an expert in their field.

The mentoring relationship can last for a long period of time, and the structure of meetings can be informal and scheduled by the mentee when they feel they need support on a particular issue.

The agenda is usually set by the mentee, and they own their goals and the process. The mentor provides support and guidance, and the mentor can act in a variety of roles from role model and adviser to sounding board – depending on the requirements of the mentee.

Shared Similarities:

Coaching and Mentoring share many similarities, including:

- Motivating and empowering individuals to identify their own issues and goals and helping them to find ways of resolving or reaching them - not by the coach or mentor doing it for them or expecting them to 'do it the way I did it', but by understanding and respecting different ways of working

- Helping individuals think through aspects of their work and helping them to find a way forward

- Providing the time to review their current and future work, giving the opportunity to assess their focus, influence, direction, challenges, and aspirations

- A helpful relationship based upon mutual trust and respect

- Encouraging commitment to action and development

- Engaging in active listening and questioning to explore and understand the individual's situation, using techniques to help the individual to work through their thought processes and challenge their thinking

- Continually evaluating the outcomes of the process to ensure the relationship is helping to achieve the agreed goals

What is a coaching culture and why is it of benefit?

"A coaching culture is one where coaching behaviours are instinctive to the way people think and behave. It is closely associated with high performance amongst leadership teams, with retention of talent, effective decision-making, employee engagement and organisational agility".[2]

David Clutterbuck, a coaching guru, says a coaching culture is where:

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[2] Clutterbuck, D. & Megginson, D. (2016) Building & Sustaining a Coaching Culture.

- Learning is valued and people are supported in learning from experience
- A problem-solving approach is taken to learning from mistakes
- People welcome feedback (even at the top) and actively seek it
- There is a good understanding at all levels of what coaching is and what it can achieve
- Coaching is seen as an opportunity rather than remedial
- Time for reflection is valued
- There are effective mechanisms for identifying and addressing barriers to learning
- People look first inside the organisation for their next job
- People are able to engage in constructive and positive confrontation
- There are strong role models for good coaching practice

We have a coaching mind-set if we believe:

*"Coaching is **unlocking a person's potential** to maximise their own performance; rather than teaching them, it is helping them to learn"[3]*
(John Whitmore 2002)

*"Coaching is not telling people what to do; **it's giving them the chance to examine what they are doing** in light of their intentions"[4]*
(James Flaherty 2005)

*"Coaching is a process that **enables learning and development** to occur, and thus performance to improve"[5]*
(Eric Parsloe & Monika Wray 2000)

Coaching can bring a number of benefits to both an individual and to the organisation: [6]

- Identify talent and potential leaders and support their growth as part of a retention strategy
- Improve communication
- Solve problems and improve decision-making
- Support culture change
- Develop Leaders
- Improve management style
- Support individuals to raise their performance to the next level (e.g., about to or having promoted them)
- Improve individuals' performance in certain skills
- Support team development and cohesion
- Support career change and transitions
- Support exit from the organisation

Research shows significant performance and organisational benefits of using more coaching and less directing. By creating a culture where coaching is the predominant style of leading, managing and working together, there is a commitment to grow the organisation and the people within it.[7]

The National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Leadership Framework and Core Learning Pathways places a focus on tailoring leadership development to the individual. Fire and Rescue Services should offer a wide variety of learning and development which is not limited to courses and qualifications, but could include 360° developmental feedback, guided research, participation in an action learning set, placements within a different organisation, coaching and mentoring (either giving or receiving) and project or assignment work.

Reverse Mentoring

What is reverse mentoring?

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[3] Whitmore, John (2002) Coaching for Performance
[4] Flaherty, James (2005) Coaching: Evoking Excellence in Others.
[5] Parsloe, E & Wray, M (2000) Coaching and Mentoring.
[6] Association for Coaching (2004) Guidelines for Coaching in organisations.
[7] Riddle, D. & Hoole, E (2015) The Intricacies of Creating a 'Coaching Culture'.

Generally, mentoring within the workplace is conducted by an experienced member of the organisation, supporting someone new in a role as they can pass on their knowledge and support relevant to work, career, or professional development. Reverse Mentoring turns this normal approach on its head, by teaming a newer member of the team to support someone more senior and experienced within the workplace.

The story goes that reverse mentoring was born when Jack Welch, the retired CEO of General Electric (1999), came up with the original concept and asked his top leaders to find a junior-level mentor to teach them computer skills. In contrast to conventional mentoring schemes, reverse mentoring ensures mutual benefit to both the mentor and mentee. The mentee gains new skills and perspectives; the mentor gains valuable insights into service strategy.

In addition, reverse mentoring gives more-experienced employees the opportunity to hone and refine their established leadership practices, based on feedback, discussion and open dialogue with their less-experienced colleagues. Some companies, for example Virgin[8], have completed reverse mentoring around age, with millennials helping older colleagues to understand issues around new tech and ways of thinking. Others have focused on bringing together colleagues from BAME backgrounds with the aim of creating a more informed and inclusive organisation.

What are the benefits?

There are a number, and examples that can be sought from front line policing professionals[9] who are trained as mentors and are matched with senior leaders who are the mentees. Reverse mentoring schemes are set-up by individual police services or on a collaborative/regional basis to address a specific organisation development need, for example:

- Increased senior leader visibility and engagement

- A better appreciation of the issues affecting under-represented groups within the sector

- Opportunity to connect with the workforce

- Empowered to share the value of their experience and promote innovation through sharing that experience and their ideas

- Can provide a new perspective to leaders on how their decisions affect service delivery

- Able to make a tangible contribution to the creation of a diverse and inclusive service

A reverse mentoring program establishes and encourages two-way communication and could make newer employees feel more valued and involved, giving them the chance to apply their knowledge and expertise directly.

How to set up a Reverse Mentoring Scheme

Before launching a reverse mentoring program, consider whether it will be informal or formal. Will your employees be more receptive to a chat over coffee, or scheduled meetings with established goals?

How will you select and establish mentors and mentees? Similar backgrounds and same gender, or looser guidelines? Determine your expectations for the relationship, whether it is creating a safe space to share ideas or outlining specific, measurable outcomes.

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[8] https://www.virgin.com/about-virgin/latest/how-reverse-mentoring-helping-improve-diversity-businesses

[9] https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/leadership-development-choices/Pages/Reverse-mentoring.aspx

During your first meeting. Some things you may want to think about, include:
- Agree frequency of meetings
- Discuss objectives
- Build rapport
- Reflect, question, challenge
- Feedback
- Confidentiality

The service will also need to be mindful of the potential risks that could be encountered, for example.
- Mentor feeling patronised
- Rank or grading of mentee impacting on openness and rapport
- Worries about language and causing offence
- Differences of opinion

This may be remedied by:
Making it voluntary
Providing training
Positive action, not an intervention

Tie it to a service need.

Both formal and informal reverse mentorships will be more successful when they focus on a broader service need, rather than one specific task or project.

Meet Regularly

Meetings need to be frequent enough so that the mentor and mentee have routine opportunities for exchanging meaningful dialogue – listening to each other and engaging in motivational conversation. It should not be just an activity they check off once a month.

Reverse mentoring challenges *all* employees to step outside their usual working arena, and look at how they think, work and learn. Increasingly, companies are using this strategy to bridge the generation gap and fuel innovation and growth.

Review and Evaluation

As with key projects it is mindful to include a review and measure success, for example:

- Are the 'ground rules' working?
- Are the meetings well balanced?
- Has confidentiality been respected?
- Is there a rapport?
- Are the areas that are not being discussed?
- Is progress being made?
- Do we both want to continue?