



An employers' guide to apprentice mentoring

Introduction

This guide is designed to help employers to support their apprentices through mentoring. In employing an apprentice you have made investment and a commitment to help them gain the skills and experience necessary to become a real asset to your business and help them develop their career and their confidence.

What is mentoring?

A mentor may be seen as someone who supports, listens to and encourages an apprentice to get the most from their training. The mentor's role is to give help in a non-threatening way that the apprentice finds useful and empowers them to move on with confidence to achieve their aims.

Benefits to employers of mentoring

Mentoring can be extremely effective in supporting the individual and improving performance. Research has shown that using mentors can reduce dropout rates, improve academic performance and help develop confidence in young people.

Benefits include:

- Retention of quality staff
- Greater individual productivity and performance
- Increased learning in the workplace reducing off-the-job training time and costs
- Improved communication and motivation
- Enhanced transfer of skills
- Provides support and advice from someone outside the apprenticeship scheme

Roles and responsibilities:

- the 'mentor' should be a named person but must not be the learner's line manager
- the 'mentor' role is a good professional development opportunity – experience has shown that when people are trained to understand the role, they enjoy it and perform better
- the structure of the programme and its assessment methods makes it easier for colleagues to understand how apprentices are progressing and support them in the workplace.

Guidelines – some essentials

- Take time to develop a good rapport with your apprentice
- Be encouraging and positive
- Express interest and remember what your apprentice has said and done – it's a great way of developing trust
- A mentor and apprentice should arrange to meet at least once a month
- Any information, advice or guidance given by mentors will be based on personal experience and should not replace professional advice where appropriate. The mentor and apprentice should not meet at each other's home
- Try to keep a brief written record of meetings and tasks