



MENTORING AND CAREER PATHWAYS



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WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A mentor is someone who draws upon their personal and professional experiences in order to support and advise another person. They work with their mentee towards a chosen goal, guiding them to overcome the challenges faced along the way. The experience has proven beneficial for both parties, with long lasting positive effects reported by those involved in mentoring programmes.

Those we have trained go on to deliver mentoring in a wide variety of settings and situations, using their skills to make a genuine difference to people's lives. Our learners have helped with community outreach projects, professional skill development, and nurtured upcoming talent, consistently helping their mentees confidently navigate their difficulties for sustained progress.

However, it is not a case of mentees being told what they should do. Rather, guidance is provided for mentees to explore options and make informed choices about their chosen course of action.

Having the right training makes a massive difference to mentoring practice, being a key part of ensuring that all involved can feel confident and safe. Through training mentors are able to recognise, understand, and adapt to their mentee's background and mindset to form a meaningful connection, with a foundation of trust and safety. It is important that mentors can draw on their personal experiences to provide guidance whilst maintaining healthy boundaries, as well as understanding aspects such as safeguarding.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A MENTOR?

Mentors regularly relate that their practice has improved their sense of engagement in their work and communities. Being able to share their experience to positively impact another in turn inspires a sense of satisfaction and achievement. As a result, many who begin mentoring motivated by wanting to 'give back' describe discovering new passion for their work and improved personal wellbeing.

Whether through a formal or informal arrangement, part of a voluntary or assigned role, mentoring is also readily recognised as a career asset. From developing active listening and empathetic understanding of another's circumstances, to best practice for offering effective advice and support, mentor training is known to enhance transferable and soft skills in a way which is easily evidenced.

Mentoring programmes are becoming increasingly widespread across a multitude of sectors. Being able to demonstrate associated skills and values is rapidly becoming a point of consideration for recruitment and promotion prospects. In short, whether mentee or mentor, there has never been a better time for exploring the impact of mentoring on your career pathway.

WHAT CAREER PATHWAYS ARE THERE FOR MENTORS?

There are a number of different career pathways available for mentors. In this section we outline the most common.

Volunteer mentors:

A large proportion of mentors work on a voluntary basis with community groups and charities. Whether to provide support for a particular cause which they have personal experience with, or simply wanting to give back to their community, their contributions are invaluable.

Whilst this type of mentoring is often undertaken on an ad-hoc 1:1 basis, volunteers should still be trained on at least the basic principles of mentoring. These include maintaining boundaries, the responsibilities and limits of their role, self-awareness, conversation structure, and the need for trust and safety.

School or preschool based mentors:

Between 1997-2010 the government in England funded Learning Mentor training as part of a push for improving children's mental health in schools. As a result, 'Learning Mentor' became an umbrella title which you will commonly encounter. However, the role has in fact evolved and differentiated over time. Today education settings often have a Children's Mentor, who specialise in providing support for social and emotional difficulties, whilst Learning Mentors focus on learning support.

Children's Mentors are trained to identify social and emotional difficulties, assessing their mentee's skill gaps and planning interventions to help address these. This can be on an individual basis or as part of a group depending on the setting and specific situation. They should hold at least a level 3 Children's Mentor qualification and may have further experience with Nurture of Emotional Literacy training.

Meanwhile, Learning Mentors are trained to support educational learning. They help their mentees develop learning skills and techniques in order to fully engage with their curriculum for academic improvement. This is more often on a 1:1 basis to work through their learning barriers or as part of disability support. Learning Mentors should hold at least a level 3 qualification in mentoring young people and again may have further relevant training.

Attendance Mentors are trained to support young people and their families around issues of attending school due to emotional or mental health reasons. They focus on supporting the mentees to understand and address their difficulties in order to engage with education and reduce absences. Again they tend to work on a 1:1 basis, although they do involve the mentee's family and support networks. Attendance Mentors should hold at least a level 3 qualification in mentoring young people along with any further relevant training which they have undertaken.

Sports Mentors:

This type of mentoring is centred around using sport settings, such as clubs, teams, coaching sessions etc as a foundation for a mentoring relationship. Many athletes have sport and their team as a central part of their lives, making support through these channels invaluable. Whether as 1:1 player support or for a whole team, Sport Mentors are trained to help their mentees open up about their goals and guide them through challenges.

It is important that Sport Mentors are trained to recognise potential conflicts of interest, as well as being explicitly clear on the difference between technical and pastoral mentoring in order to ensure best practice is followed. They should ideally hold a level 3 qualification in sports mentoring along with any other training that they wish to undertake.

Apprentice Mentors:

With apprenticeships being such a key part of many people's career journeys, providing sufficient support during their programmes makes a pivotal difference to their professional futures. Apprentice Mentors are specially trained to address the pastoral and practical needs of apprentices throughout their programmes. Often a senior or more experienced colleague, who is not the mentee's actual line manager, they meet regularly throughout the cycle of their course to review and refine their support plan.

Anyone intending to act as an Apprentice Mentor should be trained with at least an introductory course in mentoring principles and practice. However those fulfilling the role in a formal, professional capacity should hold a level 3 qualification in mentoring apprentices.

Life Mentors:

This type of mentor may be working in a paid or unpaid capacity to help those who are going through a similar life experience to the mentor. They use their experience and mentor training to make decisions about the approach to use that will best help their mentee to navigate the journey that they are on. Training is vital for this role and should ideally be a level 3 qualification in life mentoring.

Youth Mentors:

Whilst there can be some overlap in age group with the previously mentioned school-based mentors, Youth Mentors work within a community or in a mobile capacity. Typically, their mentees are aged between 10 and 25 years and can be involved on an individual basis or as part of a wider group initiative. Their work can often be as part of outreach programmes for tackling issues such as homelessness, addiction, and violence.

Youth Mentors provide a safe space for young people to open up about their goals and ambitions, as well as the challenges that they are facing in their lives. Through support and guidance, they enable their mentees to face and tackle their barriers, building confidence and longer-term coping strategies.

Any employed Youth Mentors should hold at least a level 3 qualification in mentoring young people, alongside their previous training and experience.

Business Mentors:

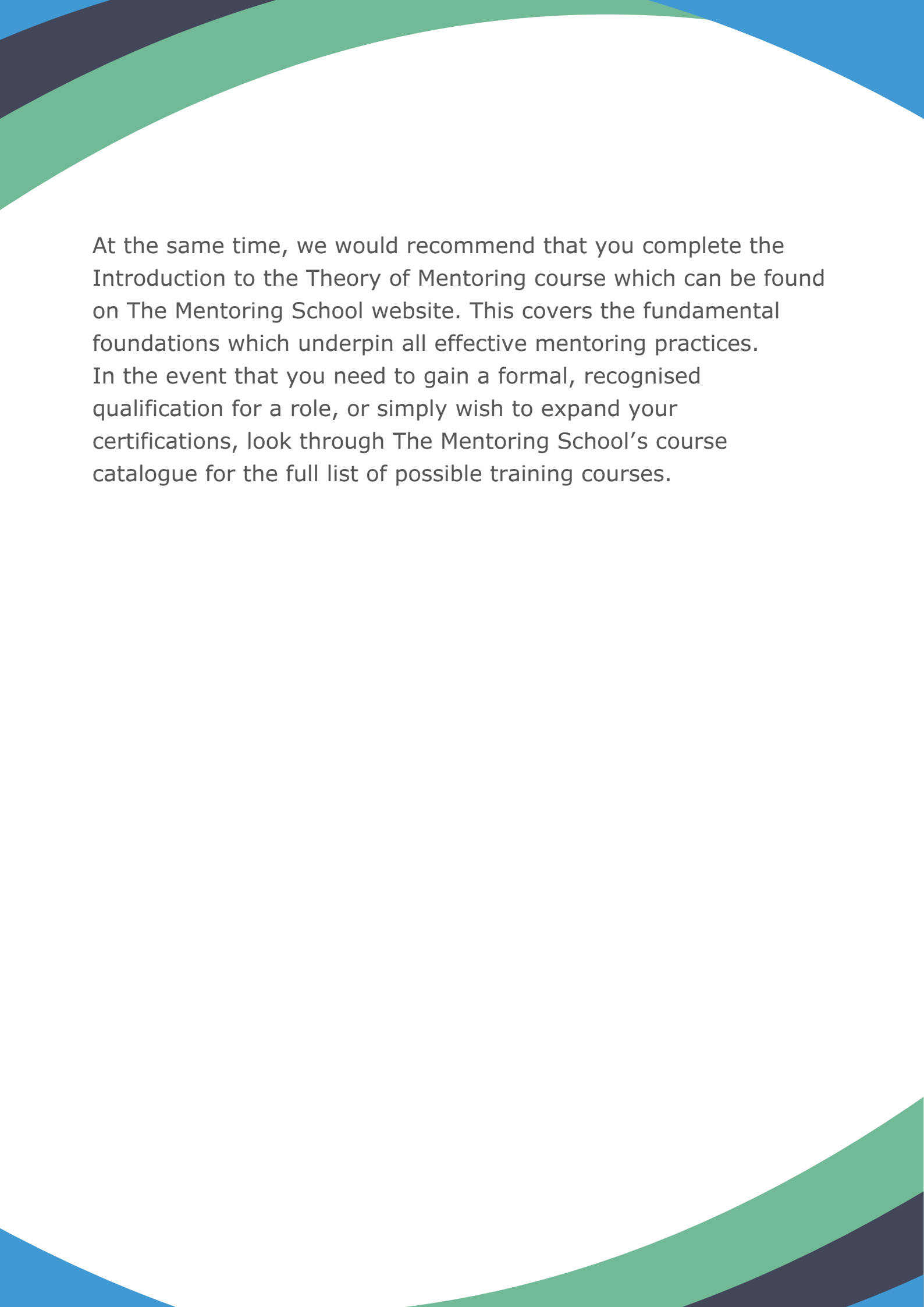
Unlike Business Coaches, Business Mentors have experience of successfully running businesses. They use their experience to make decisions that help entrepreneurs, start ups and business leaders less experienced than themselves to set and meet goals and overcome barriers to growth or success. Business mentors do not tell business owners what to do, their role is to select the right approach that helps their mentee make progress.

Whilst not a requirement, it is good practice that a Business Mentor has at least a formal level 3 business mentoring qualification.

FIRST STEPS TO BECOMING A MENTOR

Many people may feel drawn to mentoring from a desire to give back and draw upon their own experiences to support others. That being said, it can be difficult to know where to begin. Therefore, we have put together this outline of the first steps you can take on your journey towards becoming a mentor.

1. Identify the type of mentoring you want to offer (see previous role descriptions for an idea of what types are more widely used).
2. Consider whether you want to mentor on a volunteer basis or pursue it as a career. One can of course lead to the other, in which case it is worth thinking about how that journey could unfold.
3. Investigate the training you would need for your desired role. Will it be provided as part of a successful application or if will you need to complete it independently?
4. Identify potential roles or vacancies, such as by contacting local charities, community groups, apprenticeship programmes, or job search boards and websites.



At the same time, we would recommend that you complete the Introduction to the Theory of Mentoring course which can be found on The Mentoring School website. This covers the fundamental foundations which underpin all effective mentoring practices. In the event that you need to gain a formal, recognised qualification for a role, or simply wish to expand your certifications, look through The Mentoring School's course catalogue for the full list of possible training courses.

AVAILABLE TRAINING

Having the right training is vital for you to feel comfortable and confident in your ability to effectively support your eventual mentees. At The Mentoring School we have developed a range of courses, divided into levels which progressively build upon each other throughout your training journey.

Awareness: courses at this level instil a foundational understanding of mentoring principles and practices. They can lead to level 1 qualifications.

Principles: courses at this level teach you how to draw on your personal knowledge and experience to apply mentoring concepts in a real setting. They can lead to level 2 qualifications.

Practitioner: these courses train you in sector specific mentoring, delivering principles in a way which is tailored to the context of your role. They can lead to level 3 qualifications.

Advanced: these courses develop a comprehensive understanding of the theory behind mentoring principles and practices. This training enables in depth analysis of potential progression plans for significant and lasting impact. This can lead to a level 4 qualification.

CPD

Continual professional development is an important part of being a mentor. From short courses to higher level qualifications, ongoing training is highly beneficial for effective mentoring practice.

The tiered structure of The Mentoring School's full training journey allows for long term CPD planning. Being able to progress through these intentional steps ensures your continued access to relevant learning which is evidenced and recognised.

The Mentoring School is also partnered with other organisations who provide additional training opportunities for a varied developmental portfolio.



**International
specialists in high
quality mentor training**

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