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Diversity in Democracy Mentoring Programme

2015 – 2016

Mentoring Handbook for Councillors in Wales



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The Diversity in Democracy Mentoring Programme

The Diversity in Democracy Mentoring Programme has been established in Wales with a view to increasing the representation of people from all walks of life in our council chambers.

The programme provides an opportunity for people from groups currently under-represented in local government to become more involved in local democracy. Mentees will shadow councillors and council officers, with the aim of gaining the knowledge and confidence they need to stand for local government election.

Mentoring Handbook

The aim of this handbook is to provide support and training to councillors in Wales, who are taking on the role of mentoring individuals interested in standing for local government election.

Role of the Diversity Champion

The role of the Diversity Champion is to oversee mentoring programme set up within their local authority, by supporting mentors and mentees in building a meaningful relationship for the benefit of both parties. The Diversity Champion will promote the recruitment of fellow councillors to undertake the role of mentor, manage the matching process and resolve any issues that may arise.

Preparing for the role of Mentor

As a local government councillor in Wales, you have agreed to take on the role of mentoring individuals interested in becoming elected members.

You may have questions and concerns regarding your role and we hope that this handbook, along with the provision of professional mentoring training, will provide you with the answers and confidence to carry out your role successfully.

Your responsibilities as a Mentor

As a mentor you will provide mentoring and shadowing opportunities for individuals interested in becoming councillors and where possible recruit fellow councillors to undertake the role of mentor. You will establish a meaningful relationship with your mentee by taking time to understand the knowledge, experience and skills they bring to the programme, along with their motivation for becoming a local government councillor.

Mentors are expected to take ownership of the mentor mentee relationship, manage meetings, ensuring each meeting is productive and worthwhile for both the mentee and the mentor.

As a mentor you may be concerned about the following:

- Will we get on?
- Will there be enough time for meetings?
- What am I supposed to do?
- Will I be able to do this?
- Confidentiality?
- What if things go wrong?

Many of these concerns will be shared by your mentee.

In order to prepare for the initial meeting with your mentee you may wish to consider the above issues, review past experiences and look at the expectations of the mentoring programme.

By completing **Worksheet 1 (appendix 1)** prior to your initial meeting, it will allow you to prepare and formulate questions, which can be raised and answered both before and during the meeting.

The worksheet will give you the opportunity to reflect on your experiences as a councillor and how these experiences may support you in your role as mentor.

Taking time for reflection will also encourage you to consider issues that may be important for your mentee.

What is Mentoring?

- A one-to-one relationship, usually over a set period of time, in which an established person (mentor) provides consistent support, guidance and practical help for a person willing to become a councillor who may not have had experience standing for election (mentee).
- A two-way process in which the mentor shares their personal skills, knowledge and experience with the mentee to enable him or her to explore their personal and professional situation and in which the mentor and mentee can agree to work together to achieve predetermined goals and objectives.
- A way of enabling the mentee to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform their duties at a higher level, giving them access to impartial, non-judgemental guidance and support.
- A voluntary relationship, which the mentee or the mentor can by agreement end at any time, whether due a natural ending or the relationship no longer being viable.

What should the Mentor do?

The mentor is someone who acts as a trusted confidante to the mentee over a period of time, in which they share their personal knowledge and experiences promoting a self-discovery approach.

The mentor needs to keep focussed on the agreed objectives; otherwise a lot of time can be wasted on activities that aren't strictly part of the mentoring brief. The style of the process for example, how formal or informal it is, is very much up to the mentor and mentee.

The Mentor should:

- Provide insight and perspective of what it is like to be a councillor.
- Help by sharing their own experiences of successes and failures.
- Give friendly, unbiased support and guidance.
- Provide honest and constructive feedback to the mentee.
- Be a sounding board for ideas, listening and advice where appropriate.
- Facilitate decision-making by suggesting alternatives based on personal experience.
- Provide ongoing support and encouragement.
- Listen in confidence to things that are worrying the mentee about the role of a councillor and discuss solutions to the concerns raised.
- Question to clarify and make sure they've understood correctly.
- Question to explore additional options and consequences.
- Be prepared to act on what has been agreed with their mentee.

The Mentor is not expected to:

- Sort out the mentee's problems.
- Be a best friend.
- Dispense discipline.
- Provide a training/coaching service.
- Provide therapeutic interventions.
- Make decisions for the mentee.
- Take responsibility for the mentee's election campaign.

The mentor will provide unbiased guidance and support to the mentee.

Establishing a successful relationship with your Mentee

Once you have agreed to mentor a mentee you should:

- Draw up a timetable of regularly spaced meetings in advance.
- Ensure that meetings are in a mutually convenient location.
- Establish a set of simple ground rules to which you and your mentee will adhere.
- Keep notes of your meetings and use these as the basis for your ongoing discussions.

- Work towards developing a trusting relationship and establishing a good rapport with your mentee.
- Use your questioning and listening skills to establish your mentee's individual needs based on background and experiences.
- Arrange for the mentee to shadow you on agreed occasions, whilst going about your day to day activities as a councillor.
- Keep an unbiased attitude, whatever your mentee's political affiliation.
- Explore opportunities for your mentee to shadow councillors from other political parties.
- Arrange for your mentee to meet and shadow council officers in order for them to develop an understanding of how the council works.
- Aim at maintaining the relationship for the full 12 month period of the Diversity in Democracy Mentoring Programme.

Effective mentoring meetings provide a sense of purpose and achievement.

The first meeting with your Mentee

The relationship that evolves between you and your mentee over a period of time is crucial to the success of the mentoring journey and the overarching goal of increasing diversity in local government in Wales.

As mentor, you are the guardian of the relationship because of your experience and knowledge of being a councillor. Your first meeting is vital and will often set the tone of the relationship.

You may feel a bit nervous about your first meeting and you might be thinking 'how will we start' or 'what are we going to talk about?' Don't worry, these are normal reactions, by being prepared for the meeting you can alleviate any concerns or worries you or your mentee may have.

Prepare thoroughly for your first meeting, in order to get off to a good start.

Getting started:

- Meet at a mutually agreed location and time.
- Tell your mentee something about yourself: this could include information about your personal life as well as your professional life – whatever feels right for you.
- Explain why you decided to become a councillor and why you became involved in the mentoring programme; for example, talk about what you think you might do together and what you both might get out of it.

- Remember, if you don't hit it off straight away, don't panic. It takes time to build any relationship and it will get easier the more you meet, as you build up trust, understand and get used to each other.
- If you are worried about anything significant after the first meeting, get in touch with the Project Lead.
- The first meeting is all about getting your relationship off to a good start, establishing ground rules and acknowledging that the relationship is two way.
- This is also the best time to agree about what you hope to achieve, and share your expectations with one another.

Discuss your mentee's ambitions and goals in relation to:

- Particular issues they face.
- Their understanding of the role of councillor.
- Realistic expectations.
- Areas in which they have a particular interest, for example housing, children's services, etc.

Cover a few basic essentials:

- When you would like to meet – how often and for how long.
- Mutually convenient venue for follow-up meetings.
- How you will keep in touch (email/ telephone/Skype) and how you will remind each other of future meetings.
- Discuss and agree how you will work together.
- Confidentiality.
- Responsibility.
- How you will record progress and issues/targets for future development.

See appendix two for record and review template.

Key Principles in Building Trust

1. **Get to know your mentee.** Talk about their work/education and interests. Try to understand what they think and why. Value their viewpoint, hopes, fears and aspirations.
2. **Do what you say you are going to do.** Agree what you are aiming to achieve through your mentoring sessions, be reliable and always try to do what you say you are going to do.
3. **Communicate openly and honestly.** Discuss issues as soon as they arise, ask for and give feedback on whether you think things are going well and if not how they can be improved.
4. **Don't be afraid to challenge.** An open, honest relationship will allow you to have the opportunity to challenge your mentee constructively and to explore a wider viewpoint.

Communicating with your Mentee

If you are meeting your mentee face to face, it helps to be aware of the dynamic of body language. This is an excellent indication of how people really feel and makes up a large proportion of the message they send. If someone is being less than honest, their body language will usually give them away.

A lot of the features associated with body language are universal, but some gestures can differ between different cultures so try to be careful your actions do not unintentionally offend your mentor.

Take great care to recognise how cultural diversity influences all aspects of verbal and non verbal behaviours.

10 questions

Here are some questions you may find useful to ask your mentee.

1. What are you hoping will give you the most value from today's session?
2. What do you want to focus on today?
3. What do you already know about the role of councillor?
4. What area/s of local government are you most interested in?
5. What do you feel you need to know to help you run an election campaign?
6. Why do you want to become a councillor?
7. What do you see are some of the challenges/barriers for you to become a councillor and which of the ones listed are the biggest barrier?
8. What strengths and resources do you bring to this?
9. What are your aspirations and goals?
10. Where would you like to be 2 years from now?

Building Rapport with your Mentee

- Taking time to build rapport with your mentee will help you to get the most from the mentoring relationship.
- Rapport comes from shared values or experiences and sometimes from a 'chemistry' that can be hard to define.
- One sign that there is comfort or rapport established between two people is that they have similar tone of voice, body language and movements.

Ask yourself:

- Are their body postures similar?
- Do they use similar hand movements?
- What do their faces tell you – especially their expressions?
- Do their moods seem similar?
- How similar are their voices in tone and volume?

Barriers

Most barriers to effective mentoring stem from:

- Personality issues.
- Inadequate training for the mentor.
- Misunderstanding of the role of the mentor.
- Mentor or mentee dissatisfaction about the mentoring relationship.
- Unrealistic expectations.
- A lack of boundaries in the mentor/mentee relationship.
- Time management issues.

Challenges

Challenges facing your mentee may include:

- Personal development.
- Work life balance.
- Communicating with others effectively.
- Internet/social media.
- Managing stress.
- Accessing finance.
- Managing challenging relationships.

It is really important that you respect each others confidentiality. Remember that anything you talk about when you meet up is between the two of you so you shouldn't talk about it to someone else. However, legally, you should report any criminal conduct or possible harassment or bullying.

Four things to think about are:

1. **Concerns.** If you have any, chat to the Project Lead.
2. **Secrets.** Don't promise to keep any secrets. Make that clear from the beginning and remember to ask your mentee if they mind you sharing confidential information with anyone else?

3. **Information.** Keep information about your mentee (like their phone number) somewhere secure.
4. **You.** Confidentiality works both ways. Be aware of personal areas of your life that you are happy to share with your mentee and those you are not.

Goal Setting and Action Planning

A great way to start is by setting goals and making an action plan. This will keep you on track and help you to:

- Find out where your mentee needs support.
- Agree goals to work towards.
- Gauge how you are doing and learn to adapt if required.

Use the action plan in appendix three to support you in setting goals.

G-STAR Model

This is a useful technique in mentoring and can help you develop an action plan. Use it to ask your mentee about a particular issue – it can often be a fast track to the real answers your mentee is looking for.

G What are your mentee's GOALS?

- What are your goals for today's discussion?
- What will give you the most value from today's session?
- Do you have control over this issue?
- When do you need to achieve this goal by?

S What SITUATION is your mentee facing?

- How do you feel about the situation?
- How can you describe the situation?
- What do you know about the current situation?
- What do you not know about the current situation?

T What is their THINKING at this time?

- What options have you considered about the situation?
- What underlying assumptions are you making?
- Think how others would solve this problem?
- Think about how you will measure your success?

A What ACTIONS are they considering?

- What do you need to do first?
- By when do you need to have this done?
- In what sequence will you do these tasks?
- Can you think of anything that may disrupt your actions?

R What RESULTS are they expecting?

- Are the results realistic?
- Have you considered other outcomes?
- What contingencies can you put in place?
- What are the consequences of not achieving these results?

Ending the Mentoring Relationship

Here are some tips to help you end your mentoring relationship successfully:

1. **Fix a date for your final meeting.** Decide on a date with your mentee. Remind each other of this in your penultimate meeting so that you can prepare for it.
2. **Find other ways to support your mentee.** For instance, look at ways you can continue to support your mentees learning.
3. **Celebrate your success.** Have a look at the goals you set when you first met. Consider what you have both achieved during the process and reflect on what you can take to your next mentoring relationship.
4. **Say goodbye.** End the session on a positive note so it's not awkward. You could talk about what you most enjoyed, what you'll remember most or the most important things you've both learned.

The Diversity in Democracy Mentoring Programme will run for 12 months until September 2016. At the end of the 12 months you will need to arrange a final meeting with your mentee in order to bring the mentoring relationship to a satisfactory end.

At this time, if you and your mentee feel there is more to be gained from continuing the mentoring relationship, set yourselves a time limit of, for example, six months, with a review halfway through to ensure the relationship will not continue indefinitely to avoid eventually 'fizzling' out without a satisfactory conclusion.

It is important to know when to 'let go' so that your mentee can maintain their independence and be ready to run their own election campaign. It will become the mentee's responsibility to put what they have learned into practice. Although the two of you will probably continue to have some form of interaction, it should be on a more casual, more equal basis.

Appendix One

Worksheet 1 – Mentor Preparation Sheet

The questions below will allow you to reflect on your past experiences and the future success of the partnership in your role as a mentor.

1. What within your past or present experience has given you preparation for your role as a mentor? (e.g. experience as a councillor, chairing meetings, staff and personal development, management, have been mentored yourself, etc.)
2. What have you learned from the experiences above that will prepare you for the role of mentor?
3. How do you see yourself supporting the development of your mentee?
4. What types of personal support do you think you will be able to provide?
5. What support do you feel you require, which will allow you to perform as a mentor? How can this be supplied?
6. What do you feel makes a successful mentoring relationship?
7. What do you think the mentee will gain from the relationship?
8. What do you think you will learn from the relationship?
9. What difficulties and constraints do you feel there will be on the mentoring relationship? How can these be resolved?
10. How much time do you feel will be required for the relationship? How will this time be found?
11. What other thoughts and questions do you feel surround the mentoring scheme?

Asking questions that allow you to reflect and look at issues that may affect the mentoring relationship are important. They allow the mentor and mentee to engage in dialogue within the initial contracting stage, setting guidelines and parameters, keeping the relationship focussed.

Worksheet 2 – Review Meeting – recording sheet

This recording sheet will help you look at the mentoring relationship and any areas of interest that the mentee wishes to explore. It provides an easy way to record what you are hoping to achieve, the actions needed, outcomes and support required.

Date:

Mentor

Mentee

Within the review it is helpful to look at the relationship as the partnership develops.

As the demands change the relationship will change.

Issues you may wish to bear in mind while conducting the review are:

- How is the partnership working?
- What is working well?
- What if anything is not working well? How can this be resolved?
- What additional support if any, is needed for mentor/mentee?
- What are both parties getting from the partnership/relationship?
- What constraints or difficulties are affecting the relationship?
- How can these be overcome?

1. Discuss and record any progress made since the last meeting.

2. Discuss and record any challenges/issues experienced by the mentee and the mentor.

3. What next – discuss additional support and areas of interest?

4. Agreed actions between now and the next meeting.

Appendix Three

Action Plan

Goal	How will the goal be accomplished? What actions will you take?	Who will help in reaching this goal?	What resources will you need? (time, money, agreement)	What are the milestones?	When will you reach this goal (specific date)	How will you know you've achieved the goal?