Guide to coaching and mentoring

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What are coaching and mentoring?

Coaching and mentoring are development techniques based on the use of one-to-one discussions to enhance an individual's skills, knowledge or work performance. There are similarities between coaching and mentoring and in practice the two terms are often used interchangeably. This is how we define each term at Luton.

Coaching

The role of a coach is 'to keep someone company while they think'. It aims to improve a person's performance by supporting them to take ownership of their own goals and gain insights that help them to resolve or manage challenges better.

The coach does not need to have direct experience of the thinker's area of work. Their area of expertise is in keeping the thinker focused so they can gain insights or clarity on their desired outcomes. It is not their role to advise but to assist the thinker in uncovering their own knowledge and putting together their own solutions.

Mentoring

Mentoring uses many of the same skills associated with coaching. Traditionally, however, mentoring in the workplace has tended to describe a relationship in which a more experienced colleague uses their greater knowledge and understanding of the work or workplace to support the development of a less experienced member of staff.

We offer a separate mentoring for the care leavers programme, details of which can be found in the Q&As at the end.

Counselling

Many of the theoretical underpinnings of coaching are drawn from counselling models, but counselling requires the involvement of a trained professional. Our coaching and mentoring scheme cannot support individuals who require counselling.

Those individuals should seek specialist advice and guidance through our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Buddying

In Luton, mentoring support is offered in a variety of informal ways. This:

- includes time-limited 'buddy' schemes to support new starters
- existing employees changing job roles
- young people completing work experience activities

When applied effectively, it can help a new employee adjust to the organisation's culture and environment and speed up the transition from new starter to fully productive employee. In these circumstances mentors will typically be a manager or an experienced employee within the new starter's team and it is good practice to identify a buddy before the employee starts.

Creating a coaching and mentoring culture at Luton

A coaching culture is the fastest and most effective way to embed our council values, improve employee engagement and productivity, build authentic relationships and retain top talent.

To make coaching and mentoring part of our culture at Luton, we'll:

- encourage mentoring as a helpful tool for anyone in any position who wants to achieve key tasks
- develop skills or tap into unused potential
- develop managers to be coaches in their day-to-day practice and within one-to-one check-ins with staff
- harness the talent of our internal coaching pool to create champions for coaching

Benefits of coaching and mentoring

Benefits for the individual (thinker):

- focus on own learning, motivation and performance from a one-to-one relationship
- input over what and how they develop and improve
- development of skills and knowledge for present as well as future roles
- better self-awareness and self-reflection
- better insight within challenges
- higher motivation and commitment

Benefits for the coach/mentor:

- opportunity to learn new and transferable skills
- support for individuals and the organisation
- enhancement of own communication practice

Benefits for the organisation:

- utilises employee talent and potential
- higher organisational performance, motivation and productivity
- facilitates a coaching culture and management style

Roles within coaching/mentoring

Role of line manager

As part of Luton's check-in process, the individuals staff member's line manager has a role in:

- agreeing work-related objectives with individual staff, aligned to service and team plans
- identifying individual development needs, and the most appropriate learning methods, one of which may be coaching or mentoring
- monitoring outcomes from coaching and/or mentoring support, ensuring that this approach is effective in meeting the needs of the individual.

Coaching by a third party will not be used as a substitute for a line manager's responsibility to support employees with their performance and productivity. The content of coaching sessions is confidential between the coach and the thinker.

Role of the Workforce and Organisational Development team (W&ODt)

- Develop and maintain a pool of coaches within the organisation and support the administration associated with matching coaches to thinkers
- Develop and maintain the list of mentors within the organisation and support staff in finding themselves an appropriate mentor

- Develop managers with the necessary skills required to undertake coaching and mentoring within their own teams

Role of the individual (thinker)

An individual who has identified a learning need, ideally with their line manager, which will be best met by coaching and/or mentoring, should contact the W&ODt to be matched to a suitable coach/mentor. Once a coaching/mentoring relationship has been established they will work with their coach/mentor to develop and achieve their objectives.

Role of coach/mentor

Coaches and mentors are trained to support the development of other people within the workplace to enhance their performance and to enable them to reach their potential.

Role of coach/mentor's line manager

The coach/mentor's line manager will benefit from the coaching/mentoring support provided as the process helps to increase the skills of the coach/mentor and provide them with a development opportunity, so increasing motivation.

Line managers will be required to provide support to the coach/mentor, allowing allocated time for coaching and mentoring without increasing pressure on the individual, and managing workload within the team.

For all this to be achieved, coaching/mentoring needs to be supported at all levels of the organisation. Coaching is not limited to senior managers.

The process – how it works

Coaching

- Coaching is centred around a formal coaching pool
- Luton's coaches will undertake an enhanced
- Training course and an ongoing programme of CPD
- Trained coaches will join a centrally managed pool and will be matched with individuals/thinkers to provide coaching support where needed across the organisation

Mentors

- We recognise that many people are already acting as informal mentors and would not want to get in the way of this. Training will be available for those who want to develop their mentoring skills but any member of staff can become a mentor.
- Anyone completing our mentoring course or eLearning module will be added to the Viva Engage mentoring community and a mailing list managed by the W&ODt. This is used to request support each time there is a formal request for a mentor.
- Anyone looking for a mentor can either email LBC Coaching and Mentoring for one of these trained mentors or can use the Viva Engage community to source one for themselves.

Finding a coach or mentor

Start

1. Do you already know if you need a coach or if you need a mentor?

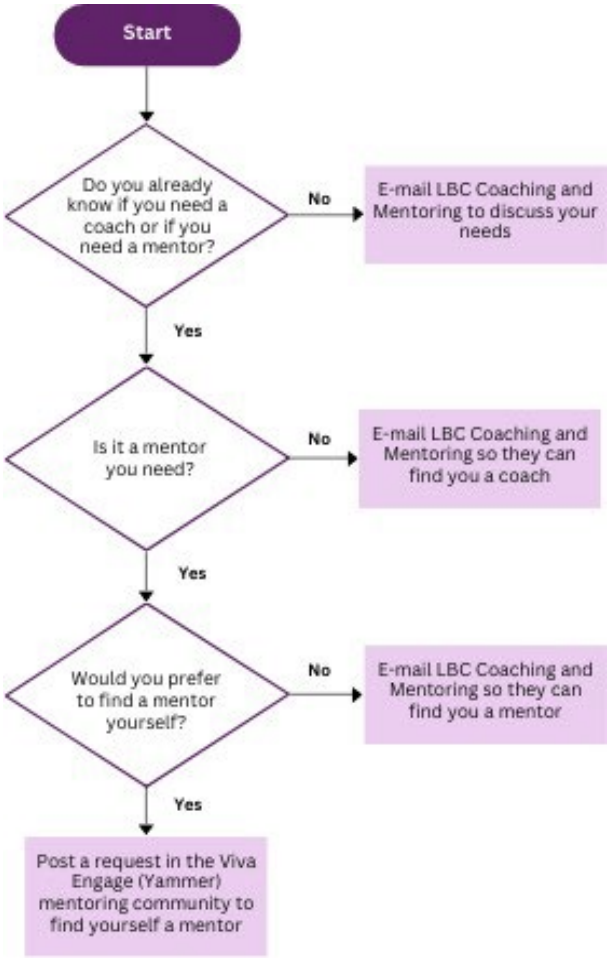
No: email LBC Coaching and Mentoring to discuss your needs.
Yes: Go to Q2.

2. Is it a mentor you need?

No: email LBC Coaching and Mentoring to so they can find you a coach.
Yes: Go to Q3.

3. Would you prefer to find a mentor yourself?

No: email LBC Coaching and Mentoring to so they can find you a mentor.
Yes: Post a request in the Viva Engage community to find yourself a mentor.



Becoming a coach

If you are interested in becoming a coach in our coaching pool, you will need to complete our enhanced training course. To express an interest, email LBC Coaching and Mentoring.

By becoming a coach/mentor, you'll be committing to offering a minimum of 12 hours per year for a minimum of two years to the Luton Council coaching pool.

Becoming a mentor

Anyone can mentor another colleague at any point but if you would like to be recognised as a trained mentor and be offered opportunities to mentor by the W&ODt, you'll need to complete either the face-to-face Mastering Mentoring course or the Mastering Mentoring e-learning module.

Support for coaches

All coaches in the council's coaching pool will be fully supported by the following methods.

Coaching Viva Engage community

An online coaching community is available for members of the coaching pool to participate in-group discussions, ask questions of each other and share tools and materials.

Ongoing development

Relevant continuing professional development opportunities will be made available for coaches, including regular drop in STOKeRS practise sessions

Questions and answers

What time commitment is expected from coaches/mentors?

To ensure that the organisation gets return on its investment, all coaches who undertake Luton's enhanced coaching course are asked to commit to a minimum of 12 hours per annum for a minimum of two years.

Each coach/mentor is responsible for managing their time and commitments with the agreement of their line manager.

There's no explicit time commitment expected from anyone who has undertaken mentoring training.

Are there any financial implications?

There are no direct costs for the coaching or mentoring training.

Will the coaching/mentoring take place in work time?

It is expected the coaching/mentoring will take place in work time; coaches, mentors and 'thinkers' should agree time with their line manager.

What if the relationship is not working?

It is important that the coach/mentor and the thinker are both happy in the relationship. If it is not working as expected, the relationship should be concluded, and a different partnership formed. Workforce and Organisational Development can assist with this if needed.

I already coach/mentor someone; can I join the coaching pool?

Anyone can be a mentor at Luton. In terms of joining the coaching pool, that will need to be decided on a case-by-case basis. Anyone with a recent coaching qualification and/or experience should e-mail LBC Coaching and Mentoring to start that discussion.

How long do coaching and mentoring relationships last?

There is no simple answer to this. Sometimes a thinker will seek a coach or mentor to help them

address one issue where they are stuck in their thinking. Sometimes they will seek a longer-term relationship. This is often the case when someone is transitioning role e.g. stepping up to a management position.

Is this the same thing as mentoring for care leavers?

No, this programme is dedicated to offering coaching and mentoring support to council staff. If you would like more details about the care leavers mentoring scheme, you can contact matthew.sims@luton.gov.uk.

Appendices

Luton Council code of practice for coaching and mentoring

Throughout the relationship and after it has been concluded the coach/mentor will:

1. Competence
    - undertake any necessary training in coaching and mentoring
    - agree to work within their level of competence
    - understand and agree to work within this code of practice

2. Boundaries
    - agree to work within the boundaries of the coaching relationship. i.e. not straying into areas where you are not qualified/experienced such as counselling or psychotherapy, or entering an inappropriate personal relationship
    - be prepared to refer the thinker to other sources of information/expertise or professional assistance as appropriate

3. Confidentiality
    - maintain the level of confidentiality agreed with the thinker both during and after the relationship has ended
    - disclose information only when agreed with the thinker unless the coach believes that there is convincing evidence of serious risk to the thinker or others if information is withheld

4. Integrity and professionalism
    - act within appropriate law/policy/values of the council, for example equal opportunities, HR policies, employee code of conduct
    - consider the learning and development needs the thinker brings to the relationship of the utmost importance and seek to help the thinker meet those needs
    - maintain respect throughout the relationship
    - to not exploit or put their own interests before that of their thinker

Think STOKeRS

The coaching model we utilise in Luton is:

Subject: What do we need to think about today?
Time: Given that we have xx minutes, what about that do we need to focus on?
Outcome: What would you like to be different by the end of our time?
Knowledge: How will you know you've got what you need?
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Role: How are we going to do this?
Start: Where shall we start?