

## 7 STEP SEVEN – Administration

Establish administrative and support procedures - the structure of this will depend on the type of organisation managing the programme. For example, often under-estimated, but vital to retaining mentors or befrienders and the overall success of the programme is good communications. It is sensible to have an agreed contact point for all the parties involved where information and support are available including a system for cancellation and rearrangement of meetings.

## 8 STEP EIGHT – Ongoing Support

Mentors or befrienders need appropriate and positive feedback from the project co-ordinator. This should be structured to provide guidance and reassurance to enable mentors or befrienders to develop confidently in their role. Often just to be told they are doing a good job and that their influence is having a beneficial effect is reassuring. Opportunities to meet and network with other mentors and befrienders are also useful ways of sharing practice and offering support.

## 9 STEP NINE – Monitoring Progress

It is important that relationships and overall progress are monitored by the programme co-ordinator - this can be useful in providing information and can be useful in resolving problems or conflicts at an early stage. This can be achieved at different stages by simply asking those involved how the relationship is going and what they are getting out of it.

## 10 STEP TEN – Evaluation

Everyone knows that mentoring and befriending are effective forms of support - but we need to prove it! Evaluation is important for the programme and a good way of promoting success. Evaluation should provide evidence of outcomes measured against the original aims and objectives of the programme. Information gathered can be used to make the programme more effective in the future.

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# Setting up a Mentoring or Befriending Programme

# Introduction

While mentoring and befriending programmes may sometimes differ in their aims and practices, the steps involved in setting up and running a programme are similar. This guide provides a 10 step framework common to all successful programmes. Once these steps have been considered and you have made the decision to set up a mentoring or befriending programme, further free support and guidance is available from the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation to help you meet the Approved Provider Standard, the benchmark for good practice in this area of work.



## 1 STEP ONE – Aims and Objectives

Establish the aims and objectives of the programme - it is important that objectives are established from the outset. What does the organisation seek to gain by the use of mentoring or befriending? What resources, funding and time will be allocated to the programme and will it be enough? How do you think this form of support can help individuals? How will you measure the success for the individuals involved? How will you measure success from an organisational perspective?

## 2 STEP TWO – Identifying the Client Group

Who are your chosen client group - how is it anticipated mentoring or befriending will help? What outcomes do the client group organisation require? How will potential mentees/befriendees be identified/referred? It is important to remember that neither mentoring or befriending are panaceas to resolve all problems. For mentoring or befriending to be effective clients need to be willing participants.

## 3 STEP THREE – Recruitment of Volunteers

You will need to consider a range of recruitment strategies, for example, personal recommendations, briefings to local companies, recruitment fairs, press releases (which are often free), advertisements in appropriate media, etc. Quotes or feedback from experienced participants are useful in promoting a programme and the benefits to be achieved. Mentors and befrienders should be assessed for their suitability via interviews, taking up of references etc. A CRB Disclosure check will be required if they are to be working with children and other vulnerable groups. You will need to establish a strategy for dealing with those applicants who are found to be unsuitable to work with the programme. You will also need to design an application form for mentors or befrienders to complete that enables the best possible match between them and the client group. Also think about who will do the matching and the criteria for this.

## 4 STEP FOUR – Preparation of Volunteers

Train your mentors and befrienders so that they are prepared adequately for the role they will undertake. Ensure that this preparation is reviewed from time to time to ensure it covers specific issues applicable to your programme. As these may only become apparent once mentoring or befriending relationships have started,

close monitoring of the programme is therefore essential. As a minimum, initial training/induction should include the aims of the programme, information on the organisation and the client group, review of roles and skills, the boundaries of relationships and any relevant procedures and information relating to the specific client group whose needs may be quite complex. It is also important to outline the subsequent support available from the programme co-ordinator, including refresher/update training and opportunities to meet with other mentors and befrienders to share good practice and experience.

## 5 STEP FIVE – Preparation of Clients

Prepare the client group. Potential clients (mentees or befriendees) will need to understand what the role of the mentor or befriender will be, what the relationship can and cannot do for them and what help they might want from them. They also need to be provided with the opportunity to decide whether they want to have a mentor or befriender in the first place. Briefings should include the aims of the programme, the anticipated benefits, what is expected of them and where they can turn to for support if they have any concerns. You will need to create a form for clients to complete seeking a range of information that will enable you to find the most appropriate mentor or befriender for each client from those you have available.

## 6 STEP SIX – Measuring Success

How will success be measured? Some projects have set targets, standards or goals depending on the aims and objectives of the programme. In mentoring programmes this process may be more structured whereas in befriending programmes this process may be more informal. However, there are no hard and fast rules. The important thing is that in order to evaluate the programme, it is necessary to know what will need to be measured and develop ways in which this is to be done. If programmes are to attract future funding and survive in the longer term, it is important that the overall impact of the programme can be demonstrated. For individual relationships, an action plan, with small achievable goals or just 'things we want to do', created and reviewed regularly between mentors and befrienders and their clients is recommended. This is one way of developing mutual understanding, enabling the necessary rapport to develop, and providing something to talk about and plan for. An action plan for the overall programme with target dates etc is also helpful in keeping things on track.