



# Mentoring Programme Handbook



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## Introduction

Havering Council's Education Strategy (2014) sets out an ambitious vision for the borough's educational community, with clear expectations for aspirational outcomes and provision in Havering's educational establishments:

*"The Council's vision is that the London Borough of Havering will have a world-class education and training offer to support those living in the area, and to attract families considering building their lives here. This provision will build and develop the knowledge, skills and qualities in our children and young people, needed to support the local economy and wider economy in the future and ensure that the London Borough of Havering is dynamic, ambitious, prosperous - the very best place to grow up, live and work."* **Ensuring Excellence for All – An Education and Skills Delivery Strategy**, London Borough of Havering 2014.

The quality of leadership is widely accepted to be the key determiner of the effectiveness or otherwise in schools. Inspirational leadership forges raised aspirations amongst the whole school community, leading to higher expectations, increased motivation and improved outcomes for students. This is true throughout the whole school system, at all levels. Schools need good leaders – governors, heads, deputies, senior and middle leaders, business and support staff. But this doesn't just happen; it needs to be nurtured, promoted and developed. This principle of developing, supporting and challenging leadership, is also referenced in the education strategy:

*"We will support the best education providers and the best leaders to lead the system and drive improvement across all schools, settings, education and training providers, supporting and challenging each other in how we achieve our goals, so that we are able to transform outcomes for all of our children and young people."* **Ensuring Excellence for All – An Education and Skills Delivery Strategy**, LB Havering 2014.

Integral to the Local Authority's Leadership Strategy (2015) and the new **Havering Academy of Leadership** is the support, training and development that is provided by the LA, the two Havering Teaching Schools and other partners offering complementary national programmes and guidance. Our **HAL Mentoring Programme** plays a significant part in supporting the induction of new leaders, at all levels, and pairing them with an experienced colleague who will themselves have been successful in similar roles within their own school.

The programme formally lasts for a year, but informal relationships often continue beyond this period. We are grateful to the Team of Mentors who generously give of their time and experience to support newly appointed colleagues.

This document provides a summary overview of the aims and purpose of the scheme, and sets out some of the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and the mentee.

## **Rationale for the Programme:**

The scheme recognises that colleagues who are new to Havering, new to leadership or in an acting leadership role, may not have established a network of contacts within Havering that will enable them to know who to turn to as situations arise that are new to them. There will obviously be support from within a colleague's own organisation, but there is also lots of evidence now to suggest that having a more experienced colleague as a mentor, who is from outside one's own school and not the line manager, can be an invaluable support for guidance and career development



The aim of the HAL Mentoring Programme is therefore to ensure that newly appointed and less experienced leaders receive support from an experienced and accomplished colleague early on in their new role, so that they can learn, share and flourish.

## **Purposes of the Programme:**

- 1) To enable the new leader to access experience, expertise and guidance from a successful peer
- 2) To provide the new leader with a confidential sounding board
- 3) To help induct the new leader in to the ways and culture of Havering LA
- 4) To encourage the new leader to network with other colleagues within the locality, cluster, the borough and beyond
- 5) To support the new leader to access a wide range of support services from the LA, the Teaching Schools, local and regional networks
- 6) To support the new leader in the practicalities of their role by offering advice, guidance and reflection – but encouraging ownership of decisions
- 7) To help the new leader manage the pressures of leadership and management and achieve a healthy work/life balance
- 8) To help meet any other emerging needs identified by the new leader
- 9) To signpost the new leader to professional development opportunities available to their specific tier of leadership

## Guiding Principles:

The following principles are taken from Hawkins and Smith, 2006, who write about the principles behind the mentor, coach or guide:

- the learning is always interpersonal;
- it requires both parties to be fully engaged and able to stand back and reflect;
- it is an inquiry in search of greater possibilities, not a search for 'the truth';
- that new ways forward are co-created;
- any new understanding that emerges is always partial and requires further engagement to test the limits of its usefulness.

## The Nature of the Programme:

- Between the mentor and the mentee, regular opportunities should be found to communicate and discuss issues. These might be via:
  - *phone calls, e-mails, texts, skype!*
  - *meetings*
  - *arranged visits to mentor's school*
  - *arranged visits to mentee's school*
  - *arranged visit to another colleague's school with a specific purpose (eg their assessment system) – with their agreement, of course!*
  - *discussions before or after a course / meeting / conference, etc*
- Where meetings are arranged, they will usually follow an agreed agenda set in advance with the mentee. This will provide an opportunity for the colleague to reflect on their learning and development needs, thus informing a more structured personal/professional discussion.
- The exact nature of the support will vary and it might suit some to be 'light touch'; however, be adventurous! Support might include, depending on the role:
  - *professional discussions (eg advice, guidance, support on all areas)*
  - *achieving work/life balance*
  - *sharing resources (eg reports to governors; assessment plans; planning formats; monitoring cycles; action planning; difficult discussions, etc)*
  - *finance, staffing issues, curriculum plans, etc*
  - *managing staff, parents, governors, LA, community*
  - *modelling (eg observing staff meetings, running CPD, etc)*
  - *preparing for inspection (eg self-evaluation, documentation, experiences)*
  - *raising standards, improving teaching*
  - *media profile and publicity*
  - *joint reviews or learning walks*
  - *signposting for courses, visits, professional advice, etc*

# The Role of the Mentor

- Although support will be dependent on the needs of the new leader, you should ensure that there is some form of either formal or informal contact at least monthly – even if just to check that all is well.
- Mentors should perform their role, not as ‘line managers’ or ‘inspectors’, but as sympathetic, supportive ‘critical friends,’ offering unbiased and confidential support in an honest, generous and professional manner.
- A mentor should always encourage the mentee to take ‘ownership’ of all decisions made. You should aim to use coaching and mentoring skills to unlock potential, give confidence and maximise performance to help the mentee ‘find their feet.’
- Whilst there is no expectation on the mentor to be a ‘one-stop-shop’ and to have the answers to everything, you may well signpost the mentee towards appropriate CPD or support - eg effective practice in the locality; training courses from the LA or Teaching Schools; conferences; a member of their own school’s staff who may be able to provide/broker further advice and/or support. You are not expected to know everything and have answers and solutions to every situation!
- Remember that you are not alone. If you as mentor want support or advice, feel free to contact the Havering Academy of Leadership at any time (without breaking any confidentiality protocols). Call 01708 433813 or email your query to [leadershipacademy@haverling.gov.uk](mailto:leadershipacademy@haverling.gov.uk)
- All parties should treat the details of discussions in the strictest confidence, unless agreement has been reached to share information more widely.



## Benefits for the Mentors:

- Experience in the skills of coaching and mentoring
- Opportunity to play a part in the development of another school and new colleague
- Opportunity to share experience and skills and influence practice
- Professional development as a ‘system leader’ and therefore an enhanced CV



## The Role of the Mentee:

- You should embrace this unique opportunity positively – and it's free! You should therefore seek regular opportunities to communicate and discuss issues via phone calls, e-mails, texts or meetings.
- The exact nature of the support will vary; however, be adventurous! If you don't ask you don't get! Therefore consider some of the wide-ranging opportunities highlighted in the section, 'The Nature of the Programme.'
- It is strongly recommended you and your mentor ensure that there is some form of either formal or informal contact at least monthly – even if just to confirm with your mentor that all is well.
- You should be as open and honest as you feel comfortable with. Mentors will try to act as sympathetic, supportive 'critical friends,' offering unbiased and confidential support in an honest, generous and professional manner. You should receive advice and guidance in the same spirit.
- Always remember that professional dialogue should make you think and consider issues from a 360 degree perspective. 'Challenge' or playing 'devil's advocate' is not a criticism so try not to be defensive. That said, it is still your job and you should always therefore take 'ownership' of all decisions made.
- Your mentor will not have (and cannot possibly have) the answer to everything. They may well, therefore, signpost the you towards appropriate CPD - eg effective practice in the locality, training courses, conferences, etc, or direct you to a colleague in your own schools who may be able to provide/broker further advice and/or support.
- Remember always that your mentor already has their own job as a leader in another school and therefore try to always give sufficient time for them to respond to your communications.
- All parties should treat the details of discussions in the strictest confidence, unless agreement has been reached to share information more widely.



## Benefits for the Mentee:

- Has a named experienced person to refer to during the early phase of a new role or when aspiring to the next level
- Has someone at the end of the phone/e-mail to answer even the most basic of queries or to check procedures
- Opportunities for individual discussions to raise concerns and issues that are specific to the mentee's role
- Support from an experienced practitioner who is able to offer practical advice and support
- Opportunities to observe and learn from another colleague from another school and school context
- Opportunities to visit each other's schools and learn from different practices, challenges and contexts
- Personalised, confidential support – provided free at source!



*“The greatest gift we can give to others is not just to share our riches with them, but to reveal their riches to themselves.”*

Swahili proverb