

# **THE ROLE OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME COORDINATOR: A RAPID EVIDENCE REVIEW**

**Report of research conducted by the University of Brighton  
and Sheffield Hallam University**

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH AIMS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

## Rationale and Research Aims

Several research studies have suggested that the role of the Mentoring Programme Coordinator (MPC) – sometimes known as Mentoring Coordinator, Mentoring Lead or Lead Mentor – is an important contributory factor in effective mentoring programmes (e.g. Kochan, Searby, George and Edge, 2015; Hobson, Castanheira, Doyle, Csigás, and Clutterbuck, 2016). However, as Koczka (2017) noted, “*there is very little... empirical research, examining the role and responsibilities of the mentoring programme coordinator*” (p.246).

Given the importance of the MPC role, the current authors recently recommended that, in order to maximise the impact of teacher mentoring in the Further Education (FE) sector, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) consider the provision of research-informed training, education and development programmes for MPCs as well as for mentors and mentees (Hobson, Maxwell, Káplár-Kodácsy and Hotham, 2020). With this in mind, the ETF commissioned this *rapid evidence review* in order to:

- Identify and distil what the research tells us about the key roles MPCs should play, and how such roles are best performed; with a view to
- Informing the development of a training and development programme for organisational MPCs, to support them to successfully structure and manage mentoring provision within their organisations.

## Research Design

The study comprised three components.

- 1) A *systematic review of the international literature* on the MPC role. Following searches and selection of the most relevant literature, fifteen sources were reviewed in detail. These were supplemented by a light touch review of five MPC handbooks, or mentoring programme handbooks which included substantial content on the MPC role.
- 2) A *secondary analysis of existing datasets*. For this strand of the research, the research team reviewed published and unpublished research findings and re-analysed data relating to eight studies of mentoring carried out at the University of Brighton (UoB) and by members of the current research team between 2014 and 2020, in order to distil research findings on the MPC role.
- 3) A *thematic analysis* of critical summaries produced for components 1 and 2 (above), to inform the development of a synthesis of findings relating to the MPC role.

Details of the Research Design, including the sources selected for review and UoB studies 1-8, are provided in the Appendix. The research was granted a favourable ethical opinion by the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee of the University of Brighton, and conducted in accordance with the Ethical Guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018).

In Chapter 2 we provide a definition of the MPC role, before presenting the main findings of our review in Chapters 3-6. In the final Chapter (7), we offer some conclusions and recommendations. The findings presented in Chapters 3-6 are primarily based on our thematic analysis of research findings relating to the MPC role. We occasionally include reference to other literature where this resonates with our research-based findings or where there are gaps in the research evidence base.

## CHAPTER 2: THE MENTORING PROGRAMME COORDINATOR: TOWARDS A DEFINITION

Citing earlier work by Clutterbuck (2001) and Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002), Koczka (2017) stated that

*“The role of the [mentoring] programme co-ordinator is to manage the entire [mentoring] scheme including the development of support mechanisms, to act as the main point of contact for all stakeholders within and associated with the scheme, to be the link between the programme and top management and to troubleshoot relationships” (p.248).*

Murray (2001) described MPCs as *“relationship managers who see that the needs of the mentor, protégé and organisation are met” (p.151).*

It is important to note that the requirements of the MPC role vary to some extent between mentoring schemes or programmes, depending on the specific nature, aims and contexts of the programme / scheme they are overseeing.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, MPCs manage mentoring programmes across multiple organisations; in other cases, within a specific organisation. Hence, sometimes organisational MPCs are required to carry out the broad range of roles and responsibilities, while some such roles and responsibilities are sometimes carried out by an overall coordinator.

In some cases, the MPC role is part of a wider role within particular organisations, such as that of ‘Initial Teacher Training Coordinator’, (new teacher) ‘Induction Coordinator’ or ‘Professional Experience Coordinator’ in schools and colleges. In some such cases, it is difficult to establish, in the research literature, whether some specific tasks carried out by such role-holders are undertaken as part of the MPC or their wider role.

It should also be noted that not all mentoring programmes have a single MPC; some (especially larger ones) have a coordination team, which sometimes includes an external consultant (Koczka, 2017). We might add that not all organisations have a formally designated MPC, especially where mentoring only occurs on an informal basis. However, where a formal mentoring programme exists, one or more individuals will usually undertake at least some aspects of the MPC role, regardless of whether or not this is formally recognised or reflected in their broader role profile(s).

Our evidence review suggests that:

- It is not always clear, to mentors, mentees or to MPCs themselves, what the MPC role, or effective mentoring programme coordination, entails; while

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<sup>1</sup> We use the terms ‘mentoring programme’ and ‘mentoring scheme’ interchangeably within this report, in line with the literature on mentoring and Mentoring Programme Coordinators.

- The MPC role is often carried out less effectively than it might be, to the detriment of the mentoring programmes and relationships that are being overseen.

In Chapter 3, we outline important, core features of the organizational MPC role that have been identified in our evidence review.

# CHAPTER 3: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

## An overview of MPC roles and responsibilities

The MPC of one of the successful mentoring programmes profiled in the *Mentoring across Professions* research (The Virgin StartUp scheme) described the role as:

*“To look at are we bringing the right people on board [as mentors and mentees], are we giving them adequate training, are we doing the matching process right, how are we helping people to maintain those relationships, are we ending those relationships well.”* (UoB Study 4; Hobson *et al.*, 2016, p.23)

Common responsibilities and functions of MPCs which the research suggests are important features of the role, include:

1. Overall management of the mentoring programme, including the production of resources for mentors and mentees;
2. Recruiting, selecting and maintaining a register of mentors;
3. Recruiting and selecting mentees (where appropriate);
4. Providing or facilitating training and development opportunities for mentors;
5. Providing or facilitating training and development opportunities for mentees;
6. Matching / pairing mentors and mentees;
7. Monitoring mentoring relationships, contexts and outcomes;
8. Encouraging and supporting mentoring relationships;
9. Ensuring mentoring relationships are brought to a successful close; and
10. Undertaking or facilitating periodic evaluations of the mentoring programme, and updating the programme accordingly.

Consistent with Murray’s (2001) description of MPCs as ‘*relationship managers*’, to carry out this wide range of responsibilities and tasks effectively, MPCs need to:

- Engage in regular and effective communication with mentors (Kramer-Simpson, 2018), mentees, and other stakeholders (e.g. organisational leadership teams, partner organisations) (MacCallum, Beltman, Coffey and Cooper, 2017);
- Be readily available and accessible to mentors or mentees who require their assistance or support (Le Cornu, 2012, 2010; Mozdzanowski, 2016; MacCallum *et al.*, 2017).

Other roles MPCs may fruitfully adopt include modelling, to mentors and mentees, skills and behaviours relevant to the context in which the mentoring is taking place. In relation to teaching, for example, this would include modelling critically reflective practice

(Peters, 2011; Le Cornu 2012 and 2010; Kramer-Simpson, 2018; Rodriguez, McKinney, Powell, Walker and Vince Garland, 2020).

Further information, gleaned from our evidence review, relating to the various responsibilities and functions of the MPC is provided below. We should stress, however, that the research evidence in this area – and on the MPC role in general – is limited.

## Overall management of programme, and producing and maintaining resources for mentors and mentees

Regarding the overall leadership and management of a mentoring programme, MPCs should seek to ensure, as far as possible, the creation and maintenance of a supportive organisational architecture for mentoring (Cunningham, 2007; Hobson and Maxwell, 2020 / UoB Study 1). This requires the support of organisational leadership teams. Given this, and the need to reconcile needs of individual mentees with those of their organisations, the MPC role has been described as a complex middle leader role: *“highly situated work [which] requires skilful mediation of national policies and local sense-making”* (Willis, Churchward, Beutel, Spooner-Lane, Crosswell and Curtis, 2019, p.4).

Regarding the production of resources for mentors and mentees, research (e.g. Mozdzanowski, 2016; Beltman and Schaeben, 2012) suggests that helpful material – insofar as it is educative and regularly updated, saves mentors and mentees valuable time, and enhances their commitment to the programme – may include:

- A Mentoring Handbook (or separate Handbooks for mentors and mentees);
- Email templates for mentors to contact mentees;
- A Mentoring Agreement or Contract;
- Mentoring Record Forms.

## Recruitment and selection of mentors and mentees

Research suggests that an effective recruitment campaign which attracts a healthy number of applicants helps to increase selectivity and maximise selected participants' commitment to mentoring programmes and relationships (Morales, Ambrose-Roman and Perez-Maldonado, 2016). Some programmes usefully use testimonials from existing or previous satisfied mentors and / or mentees to increase interest. It is important, in recruiting, to be as clear as possible about what participation would entail, including time commitments required. Some prospective participants did not initially put themselves forward to participate as mentors or mentees because they did not feel they would be able to find sufficient time.

*“If I knew what [the mentoring programme] was about when I read that initial email invitation [from the MPC] I would have said yes, but because I translated that according to my own expectations, experiences and so on it seemed to me like ‘Alright, that will take up my time and I’m in a new environment and I need that time to establish myself and to get to know the ropes.’”* (Mentee, UoB Study 5)

Research suggests that a key variable influencing the quality of mentoring programmes is the extent to which rigorous processes of mentor selection are employed (Hobson, Maxwell, Stevens, Doyle and Malderez, 2015; Hobson and Maxwell, 2020 / UoB Study 1). Generally, such criteria include mentors' possession of relevant knowledge and experience (Peters, 2011). With respect to mentors of trainee or more experienced teachers, this might include, for example, the ability to scaffold professional tasks (Kramer-Simpson, 2018). To give an example of the kind of selection criteria used by successful mentoring programmes in other contexts, and how selection takes place, the Arçelik Mentoring Programme in Turkey (one of the case studies in UoB Study 4) specified that potential mentors should:

- Have at least one year of experience at Arçelik;
- Have at least three years of managerial experience;
- Have preferably undertaken different duties within Arçelik;
- Have strong communication skills;
- Be good at providing feedback;
- Be flexible;
- Have strong managerial skills, able to work with different people;
- Be able to spare time;
- Give emphasis to personal development;
- Want to improve themselves in coaching;
- Volunteer to be mentors.

In this case, applicants who considered that they met the criteria voluntarily joined a mentor pool, before checks were undertaken to establish whether or not this was the case and they could become programme mentors (Hobson *et al.*, 2016).

The MPC of the successful Virgin StartUp mentoring scheme outlined the ideal characteristics of a Virgin StartUp mentor:

*"[W]e're looking for role models, people that are inspirational ... who've been successful ... genuinely focus on their own personal development ... have the credibility to carry the relationship off... we're looking for someone that has a good nature, so actually cares and is supportive... So it's very much looking for the signs that people genuinely care about what they're doing and why they're doing it ... they're very good at listening and then providing good advice based on the listening... they are committed and patient... that's what everybody that interviews is asked to look out for [in prospective mentors]." (Hobson *et al.*, 2016, p.24; UoB Study 4)*

Following provisional selection for the Virgin StartUp mentoring scheme, prospective mentors are invited to attend an induction mentor training session, at which their suitability for the role is usually but not always confirmed (Hobson *et al.*, 2016). MPCs on some mentoring schemes take up references (Beltman and Schaeben, 2012) and / or interview applicants for the mentor role (Morales *et al.*, 2016).

For many mentoring programmes (e.g. those forming part of initial teacher education / training programmes), being a *mentee* is a compulsory part of a wider programme (e.g. Kramer-Simpson, 2018) For some programmes mentees opt in, and for others still they

have to apply and be selected, in which the MPC has a fuller role and may employ selection criteria and methods such as interviews (Michael, Court, and Petal, 2009).

## Mentor-mentee matching

Research suggests that the effective matching or pairing of mentors and mentees is another important task for the MPC and success factor for mentoring programmes (Hobson *et al.*, 2016 / UoB Study 4). Mentors and mentees are often matched based on information mentors provide about their knowledge, skills and experience, and mentees provide about their professional development and support needs, and career aspirations (Morales *et al.*, 2016). Varied approaches were taken to capturing the information required for matching in the research reviewed, spanning application and profile forms, interviews, a demographic survey, and a 'speed-dating' activity.

In the case of FE teachers, research has found that mentees tend to value the support of mentors more highly where they shared the same subject or vocational specialism as themselves (Hobson and Maxwell, 2020 / UoB Study 1), while other factors associated with effective matching include:

- Ensuring mentors have credibility with mentees and are seen to have relevant knowledge and experience (Hobson *et al.*, 2016 / UoB Study 4 [Police Mentoring Leadership Programme, Norway]; Hobson, Clements and Káplár-Kodácsy, 2019a / UoB Study 5; Hobson and Maxwell, 2020 / UoB Study 1);
- Avoiding too great a power distance and pairing mentees with their line managers (Hobson *et al.*, 2016 / UoB Study 4 [K&H Bank Mentoring Scheme, Hungary]; Hobson and Maxwell, 2020 / UoB Study 1); and
- Providing mentees with an element of choice in the selection of their mentor (Hobson and Maxwell, 2020 / UoB Study 1).

It should be noted that some organisations use matching software, but research suggests that successful mentoring programmes do not exclude human judgement in the matching process. As the MPC of the Virgin StartUp mentoring scheme explained,

*“One of us will go in and will look at the profiles and then use a bit of human nature, human instinct, just to formalise which one of the shortlist we think is most appropriate. I don't want it to be always picking the one off the top [of the list]. It needs to be a considered selection as part of that.”* (Mentoring Lead) (Hobson *et al.*, 2016, pp.24-25; / UoB Study 4)

In the above scheme, mentors are sent some information about their prospective mentee and asked whether they wish to potentially work with them, and if so, asked to arrange a conversation in which both parties seek to establish whether they are able to work together.

It is important to acknowledge that, however carefully mentors and mentees are matched, this is not a fail-safe for ensuring good interpersonal matches, and it is inevitable that, in some cases, 'connections' will not occur or relationships will break down and need to be disbanded (MacCallum *et al.*, 2017).

## Providing or facilitating training and development opportunities for mentors

Some MPCs carry out mentor training and development activities themselves, while others arrange for third parties to provide these. Details of the nature and content of effective mentoring education, training and development (MTED) is provided in our earlier report for the ETF (Hobson *et al.*, 2020). The research reviewed for the present study concurs with our earlier findings that it is beneficial where initial mentoring preparation and training is followed up by subsequent development opportunities including mentor networking activities (Beltman and Schaeben, 2012; Butcher and Mutton, 2008; Le Cornu, 2012, 2010; Michael, Court and Petal, 2009; Mozdzanowski, 2016). Some studies suggest the added value of the MPC providing ongoing support and individualized on-the-job training for mentors (Beltman and Schaeben, 2012; MacCallum *et al.*, 2017).

As we noted in our earlier report on MTED (Hobson *et al.*, 2020), the education, training and development of *mentees* is less common, and there is less research evidence on this, but it has been found to be an important success factor for mentoring programmes.

## Monitoring mentoring relationships and outcomes

Whilst MPCs may and should encourage mentees and mentors to inform them if their mentoring relationships are unproductive or problematical, mentees and mentors do not always report such issues (MacCallum *et al.*, 2017). It is therefore important for MPCs to monitor mentoring relationships and outcomes, to seek to ensure mentees are being appropriately supported by mentors (Kramer-Simpson, 2018), and to monitor the wider context in which the mentoring takes place, to seek to ensure, for example, that mentors have sufficient time to provide the level of support mentees require (Butcher and Mutton, 2008).

Such monitoring is often undertaken through regular communication (e.g. monthly or quarterly meetings) with mentors and mentees, usually separately. MacCallum *et al.* (2017) suggest that MPCs need to look for signs of problematic relationships and, if possible, detect these early in the relationship. One way of doing so is by looking for inconsistencies, which may indicate that there is a relationship problem, “*such as differing accounts of mentor–mentee meetings, missing meetings or cancelling at the last minute, not responding to messages, or no variety in the activities undertaken*” (MacCallum *et al.*, 2017, p.11). Effective monitoring of mentoring relationships resulting in the early detection of relationship difficulties can enable MPCs to:

- Minimise potential risks of harm from these; and
- Support and advise mentors and/or mentees appropriately, with a view to potentially repairing the relationship (MacCallum *et al.*, 2017, p.17).

Where damaged or unproductive mentoring relationships are beyond repair, however, MPCs should bring these to a respectful resolution, disbanding the relationships on a no-blame basis, and (where possible) finding the mentee an alternative mentor (MacCallum *et al.*, 2017).

## Encouraging and supporting mentoring relationships

Effective MPCs act as permanent advocates for the mentoring programme, and encourage and support mentoring relationships in several ways. One of the initial ways of doing so is through the organisation of an orientation or ‘meet and greet’ event, attended by both mentors and mentees, to kick-start mentoring relationships. Such events can serve to facilitate initial meetings between mentors and mentees previously unknown to each other, “*to lay out expectations for both mentors and mentees [and] answer any questions or concerns*” (Morales *et al.*, 2016, p.128). Ongoing encouragement can also come in the form, for example, of writing mentors “*appreciative notes about their work in the program*” (Peters, 2011, p.21).

Another means by which MPCs support mentoring relationships, mentors and mentees is, as noted earlier, through an ‘open door policy’ of being available and accessible to mentors or mentees who require their assistance or support, thus being ready to talk through any issues or concerns (Le Cornu, 2012, 2010; Mozdzanowski, 2016). It needs to be recognised, however, that some participants are not necessarily comfortable approaching MPCs or other colleagues for support. It is therefore important for MPCs to:

- 1) Seek to create an open culture and create conditions in which mentees and mentors feel safe and are encouraged to go to them where it is beneficial to do so (MacCallum *et al.*, 2017); and
- 2) Arrange regular meetings with mentors and mentees, to ensure those who remain reticent have an opportunity to obtain the MPC’s direct support (Mozdzanowski, 2016).

MPCs may thus provide mentees with direct support and strategies to resolve any early issues that may arise in a mentoring relationship, or may encourage them to access additional sources of support (e.g. counselling or training and development), where appropriate (Mozdzanowski, 2016; Hobson *et al.*, 2016 / UoB Study 4 [Next Generation HR Management Mentoring Programme, Romania]).

In relation to support for mentors, effective MPCs:

- Help mentors find potential solutions to any difficulties they may be having with particular mentoring relationships, including alternative strategies for handling identified difficulties;
- Provide opportunities for critical reflection on their mentoring, thus supporting their ongoing professional learning and development;
- Provide opportunities for mentors to let off steam – “*Sometimes [mentors] have frustrations that they need to share, and they need this debrief time*” (MacCallum *et al.*, 2017, p.14).

The latter form of support in particular is associated with *mentor supervision*, which has received minimal attention in the research literature but is said to involve or provide: (1) feedback on and formative evaluation of mentors’ enactment of mentoring, to enhance mentors’ skill development; and (2) support for mentors’ wellbeing through the provision of a “*safe haven for the mentor to... deal with stressors and... obtain needed emotional support*” (Goodyear, Rousmaniere and Zimmerman, 2017, p.266).

## Bringing mentoring relationships to a successful close

The research literature suggests the MPC plays an important role in bringing mentoring relationships to a successful close, though there is little evidence of more or less effective ways of doing so. Bringing relationships to a close at the end of the specified mentoring term is sometimes combined with an evaluation of the mentoring relationships or the programme more generally, as is apparent in the following account of the successful Arçelik mentoring programme in Turkey:

*“The mentoring relationship is brought to a mutual close once the agreed period of time is over (normally not more than eight months). At this point the relationship is evaluated along with the programme objectives. An evaluation form for each participant is then completed. The mentee interviewed added that contact with the mentor continued on an informal basis, providing a continuing source of support and guidance” (Hobson et al., 2016, p.66 / UoB Study 4).*

Means of closing and evaluating mentoring relationships can, at the same time, provide opportunities for participants’ ongoing development. The MPC of the successful Next Generation HR Management Mentoring Programme in Romania pointed out that:

*“We ... provide a discussion checklist to evaluate the relationship at the end of the year, so [mentors and mentees] give feedback to each other about what worked well, what I liked, what I would have liked even if that was not provided, how I evaluate my contribution to the co-operation, and there is the possibility to continue the co-operation formally or informally. (Hobson et al., 2016, p.84 / UoB Study 4)*

## Evaluation of the mentoring programme

Finally, another important responsibility of the MPC, which research has identified as a ‘success factor’ for mentoring programmes (Hobson et al., 2016 / UoB Study 4), is to undertake or arrange for a third party to undertake periodic evaluation of the programme, in order to inform its ongoing development and improvement. Again, research provides little evidence about more or less effective ways of doing so, or of how the evaluation informs subsequent development of the programmes. Evaluations frequently employ mentor and mentee surveys (Beltman and Schaeben, 2012), and sometimes draw on performance outcome data relating to mentees (Rodriguez et al., 2020).

On the other hand, the mentoring programme handbooks provide a relatively comprehensive array of tools for the evaluation of mentor training, relationships and programmes. For example, Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter and Tai (2015) provide guidance on designing an effective evaluation, and CGIAR (2006) provide a comprehensive range of evaluation forms tailored separately to mentors and mentees to evaluate at key stages in the mentoring programme.

## CHAPTER 4: FACTORS ENHANCING AND IMPEDING EFFECTIVE MENTORING PROGRAMME COORDINATION

The existing evidence base suggests that the work of the MPC is enhanced where:

- They are part of or have a strong and transparent link to an organisational senior leadership team which values and supports the role, the role-holder and the mentoring programme more widely (Le Cornu, 2012; Beutel, Crosswell, Willis, Spooner-Lane, Curtis and Churchward, 2017);
- They are provided by their participating organisations *with dedicated time* in which to carry out the role (Michael *et al.*, 2009; Peters, 2011; Hobson *et al.*, 2019a / UoB Study 5);
- They are afforded *autonomy*, by their senior leadership team, with respect to the design and organisation of the mentoring programme, which enhances their confidence and engagement with the programme, and enables them to make decisions on the most effective approaches to MPC work (Morales *et al.*, 2016; Beutel *et al.*, 2017; Willis *et al.*, 2019; Butcher and Mutton, 2008; Peters, 2011);
- They are appreciated, valued and rewarded for their efforts (Michael *et al.*, 2009);
- There is regular and *effective communication* with and support for organisational MPCs *from leaders of broader programmes* of which their scheme is a part (Peters, 2011; Beltman and Schaeben, 2012; Le Cornu, 2012; MacCallum *et al.*, 2017; Kramer-Simpson, 2018);
- They participate in *networking meetings* and engage in reflective dialogue with fellow MPCs, to share strategies and discuss problematical issues within their respective organisations (Le Cornu, 2012).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, research suggests that the work of the MPC is impeded where some of the above factors are not realised, notably where:

- They have insufficient workload time to undertake the role (Butcher and Mutton, 2008; Le Cornu, 2010, 2012; Michael *et al.*, 2009, Mozdzanowski, 2016); and
- There is a lack of clarity from the leadership of wider programmes about what is expected of MPCs or what the role entails (Peters, 2011).

In addition, the work of MPCs has been found to be restricted where:

- The role has been conceived or become overly bureaucratic or managerial, which leaves relatively little time for MPCs' engagement with potentially more worthwhile and productive – e.g. pedagogical and pastoral – aspects of the role (Butcher and Mutton, 2008);
- MPCs do not receive appropriate training for the role (Willis *et al.*, 2019).

More generally, the work of the MPC will be impeded where there is an absence of:

- An organisational commitment to mentoring and / or of understanding of mentoring or the espoused mentoring model, framework or approach (Beutel *et al.*, 2017; Willis *et al.*, 2019); and
- Senior leadership support for a wider organizational architecture (Cunningham, 2007) or mentoring substructure (Hobson and Maxwell, 2020 / UoB Study 1), reflected, for example, in a failure to provide mentors and mentees with sufficient time and space to meaningfully participate in the programme (Butcher and Mutton, 2008, Le Cornu, 2012, Peters, 2011), or the MPC being expected to manage too many mentors and mentees (Peters, 2011).

## CHAPTER 5: THE SELECTION OF MENTORING PROGRAMME COORDINATORS

There is very little research literature dealing with the effective selection of MPCs, or with the selection of MPCs in any shape or form. As previously noted, the MPC role is sometimes a part of a wider role, whether it be a senior leadership role (Le Cornu, 2010, 2012) or a broader professional experience programme role (Le Cornu 2010, 2012; Peters, 2011). Hence, the MPC may in some cases be appointed essentially by default, while in other cases, perceptions of candidates' ability to coordinate the organisation's mentoring programme might have been a key selection criterion. In one instance potential MPCs undertook a series of tests to measure their commitment to the role (Michael *et al.*, 2009). In some cases, MPCs of teacher mentoring programmes are "*enthusiastic classroom teachers who [have] volunteered*" to take on the role (Peters, 2011, p.19). MPCs in schools and colleges tend to be experienced and generally high performing teachers (Butcher and Mutton, 2008; Peters, 2011; Beltman and Schaeben, 2012) who have well-developed interpersonal skills and prior experience of being a mentor (Beutel *et al.*, 2017).

Butcher and Mutton (2008) suggest that MPCs require "*all the characteristics of effective mentors, yet much more*" (p.225). Relevant characteristics – and knowledge, skills and experience – informing their selection or appointment may include:

- Managerial skills, to facilitate the design and implementation of the programme (Butcher and Mutton, 2008);
- Good communication skills, enabling effective liaison with mentors, mentees, members of the school's senior management team, and other stakeholders (Butcher and Mutton, 2008; Peters, 2011; Kramer-Simpson, 2018);
- The ability to engage with adult learners in appropriate ways (Butcher and Mutton, 2008);
- Experience as a mentor, and familiarity with the particular mentoring programme (Peters, 2011);
- Experience of coordinating similar kinds of programme (Peters, 2011); and
- Commitment to the role (Michael *et al.*, 2009) and 'professional generosity' (Butcher and Mutton, 2008).

MPCs also need to be able to build positive relationships with mentees, which tends to require that they are (or are able to present as) friendly, approachable, supportive and understanding (Le Cornu, 2012).

Whilst the research literature is severely restricted on this topic, some of the MPC Handbooks reviewed provide more detailed information on:

- The processes and selection criteria which might be deployed for the selection of MPCs (e.g. Griffith University, 2019); and

- The knowledge, skills and experience MPCs might ideally possess, which are said to include: effective coordination skills, time management skills, conflict resolution skills, verbal and written communication skills, assertiveness, trustworthiness, sensitivity to organizational politics, and ability to develop good rapport with others (e.g. CGIAR, 2006).

## CHAPTER 6: THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF MENTORING PROGRAMME COORDINATORS

Our review of research on the MPC role uncovered little evidence of effective (or, in many cases, any) preparation, training or development for carrying out the role. Butcher and Mutton (2008) noted that MPCs in teacher education and training were rarely trained. There is some evidence that the absence of such preparation or training contributed to difficulties some MPCs found in establishing and maintaining successful mentoring programmes in their organisations (Beutel *et al.*, 2017; Willis *et al.*, 2019).

The limited available research on this topic suggests that preparation, training and development of MPCs is needed and should include a focus on:

- What the MPC role entails, including (for teacher mentoring programmes) managerial, pastoral and pedagogical functions (Butcher and Mutton, 2008);
- How to carry out specific tasks associated with the role, including mentoring programme design and development, mentor / mentee training, and evaluation (Morales *et al.*, 2016; Beutel *et al.*, 2017; Willis *et al.*, 2019; Rodriguez *et al.*, 2020);
- Advanced communication skills, empathy and good social competence (Morales *et al.*, 2016);
- Understanding how to recognise the warning signs of potential mentoring relationship breakdown, and learning how to support reparations of problematical relationships, and when and how to bring relationships to a respectful conclusion (MacCallum *et al.*, 2017).
- Effective mentoring practices (Beutel *et al.*, 2017; Willis *et al.*, 2019);
- The wider programme of which the organisational mentoring programme is a part, where this is the case (Butcher and Mutton, 2008).

Beutel *et al.* (2017) suggest that, given the complex nature of the MPC role, preparation and training should include an emphasis on navigating and effectively undertaking an organizational middle leader role, including:

- How to work with organizational cultures and leaders, and understanding the local community;
- How to implement new plans and changes in the organization, and 'managing up and down'.

When the MPC role is part of a wider professional experience role, it is suggested that preparation and support should be more broad-ranging. For example, Le Cornu (2010, 2012) argued that it should include:

- Building effective learning communities and whole organization learning cultures;
- Complementing the role of the mentor in supporting the learning, development and wellbeing of mentees; and
- Building positive relationships with mentees.

As noted in Chapter 4, research also shows that MPCs benefit from subsequent opportunities for professional networking (Butcher and Mutton, 2008; Le Cornu, 2012), which facilitates critical reflection on their enactment of the role, and mutual support, sharing of effective practice, and collaborative problem-solving.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mentoring Programme Coordinator (MPC) role is a key ingredient of successful mentoring programmes, and it is important to the success of such programmes that MPCs have the appropriate knowledge and skills to effectively carry out key specific aspects of the role, such as mentor selection and mentor-mentee pairing, in ways which are appropriate to the contexts in which the mentoring programmes they are coordinating are situated. Given this, it is important that FE providers and other organisations which have mentoring programmes:

- Employ rigorous and effective processes for the appointment of MPCs who are likely to be effective in the role;
- Ensure MPCs are appropriately trained to undertake the role, and have subsequent opportunities for continuing professional development; and
- Ensure MPCs are effectively supported in carrying out the role, which would include, for example:
  - Providing them with sufficient time and resource to enable them to undertake different aspects of the role effectively;
  - Ensuring the roles, responsibilities and potentially valuable tasks of MPCs are clearly identified and communicated to mentors, mentees and senior leaders within the organization as well as to MPCs;
  - Ensuring the MPC's role is recognized within the organisation, and how the valuable tasks they undertake support organisational aims and objectives;
  - Providing mentors and mentees with sufficient time and space to engage in productive mentoring relationships, and to access the support of the MPC, as appropriate;
  - Providing time, space and resource to enable mentors and mentees to be trained in undertaking and making the most of mentoring, respectively.

Whilst not addressed in the research we reviewed, other means of maximising the impact of the MPC role and contributing to the success of organisational mentoring programmes might include:

- Ensuring mentor and mentee training include reference to the role of the MPC, and how and when MPCs may be able to support them; and
- Ensuring effective MPC succession planning.

In terms of recommendations for the content of MPC training and development, we summarised in the previous Chapter (6) what the current evidence base suggests to be the most fruitful foci of initial MPC preparation and training, and stressed the importance of opportunities for MPC networking. Further research which identifies and examines

effective and successful MPC training and development would helpfully inform more widespread effective practice in this important area.

### Recommendations to ETF and DfE

In supporting FE providers (and, potentially, schools and academies) to seek to ensure the MPC role is carried out effectively, the ETF (and DfE) might seek to provide or make available evidence-based resources including:

- Criteria for appointing MPCs;
- Guidelines on effective MPC training and development; and
- Means by which Senior Leadership Teams can support the MPC role, and mentoring programmes more broadly.

The ETF and DfE might also consider funding the training and development of MPCs, and / or offering grants to FE providers to enable effective mentoring programme coordination (e.g. by enabling designated time to undertake the MPC role).

Furthermore, ETF and / or DfE might consider commissioning empirical research into the MPC role, which addresses current gaps in the evidence base, with a view to informing enhanced training, development and support for MPCs. Research could usefully explore, for example:

- Benefits and challenges of undertaking the MPC role;
- What obstacles and impediments successful MPCs have encountered, and how they have overcome these;
- What training and development MPCs have found valuable – or would have liked – in carrying out the role;
- What kinds of support from MPCs, mentors and mentees have found most valuable and why;
- Effective MPC succession planning; and a definitive account of
- The impact of the MPC role, in general; and
- The nature and added value of MPCs incorporating mentor supervision into their role.

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# APPENDIX: REVIEW METHODOLOGY

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Systematic review of international research literature*

The systematic review was undertaken in three stages:

#### **1. Keyword searching and creation of longlist**

The British Education Index (BEI), Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Australian Education Index (AEI), and *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* (which is not referenced in these databases) were searched using the terms (mentor\* OR mentee\* OR coach\* OR coachee\*) AND (coordinator\* OR promoter\* OR consultant\* OR manager\*). This was followed by a Google Scholar search to ensure that no key sources had been omitted.

The first set of screening criteria applied to the title, and where available a skim of the abstract, of the retrieved sources were:

- a) UK and international literature and materials published in English only;
- b) Relevance to the first research aim – ‘Identify and distil what the research tells us about the key roles MPCs should play’ and;
- c) Published since 2000.

This search resulted in a long list of 735 sources once duplicates were removed (211 published between 01.01.2000 and 31.12.2009, and 524 published between 01.01.2010 and 07.02.2021).

#### **2. Creation of a shortlist**

Abstracts of the 735 sources were reviewed using the following inclusion / exclusion criteria:

- a) Relevance to the first research aim – only sources that were focused directly on the MPC role were included. Sources that focused on general education programme coordination, rather than mentoring programme coordination, and sources that explored the coordination role embedded in other roles (e.g. coach as a coordinator), were excluded.
- b) Research findings about the MPC role; and
- c) Conclusions on how the MPC role should be conducted.

This resulted in a list of 31 sources (27 published from 01.01.2010 onwards, 4 prior to 01.01.2010). The full text of each of the 31 sources was read and key information summarised in an Excel spreadsheet. A reconsideration of the inclusion / exclusion criteria used at the abstract review stage above resulted in a shortlist of 21 sources.

### 3. Selection and creation of critical summaries

The 21 shortlisted sources were reduced to 11 for critical review during a research team meeting by considering the:

- a) Relevance and sufficiency of the data in relation to the first research aim; and
- b) Robustness of the evidence presented.

A further four sources were added to the list for critical review at this stage. Two of these were research-based sources (Beutel *et al.*, 2017; Willis *et al.*, 2019) previously included in the ETF Review of Effective Mentoring Training, Education and Development (Hobson *et al.*, 2020), which also included relevant findings on the MPC role. In addition, two sources were included that were not directly based on research but known to the research team to provide substantive information on the MPC role (Goodyear *et al.*, 2017; Koczka, 2017).

Where sources related to the same mentoring programme, they were grouped for the purpose of creating a critical summary. In total 13 critical summaries were completed based on 15 sources (Table 1). Critical summaries were recorded using a standardised template populated with detail to capture:

- Contextual information on the research study and mentoring programme;
- Approaches to MPC recruitment, selection and training;
- Findings on the nature and effectiveness of the MPC role overall and of the main components of the role;
- Findings on factors enhancing or impeding mentoring programme coordination;
- Other potentially relevant findings;
- Author's recommendations for the MPC role;
- Researcher's summary of key points and assessment of implications for MPC training and development.

**Table 1: List of critical summaries**

Critical Summary	RL / OL*	Source
1	RL	Beltman, S., and Schaeben, M. (2012). Institution-wide peer mentoring: Benefits for mentors. <i>The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education</i> , 3(2). <a href="https://doi.org/10.5204/intifyhe.v3i2.124">https://doi.org/10.5204/intifyhe.v3i2.124</a>
2	RL	Butcher, J. and Mutton, T. (2008). "Towards Professional Multilingualism?" Reconceptualising the School Coordinator Role in Initial Teacher Training. <i>Curriculum Journal</i> , 19(3), pp.215–226. <a href="http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ812367&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site">http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ812367&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site</a>
3	OL	Goodyear, R.K., Rousmaniere, T. and Zimmerman, J. (2017). Supervision of Mentoring. In D.A. Clutterbuck, F.K. Kochan, L.G. Lunsford, N. Dominguez and J. Haddock-Millar (Eds.), <i>The SAGE Handbook of Mentoring</i> , pp. 261-273. London: SAGE Publications.

4	OL	Koczka, T. (2017). The Role of the Mentoring Programme Co-ordinator. In D.A. Clutterbuck, F.K. Kochan, L.G. Lunsford, N. Dominguez and J. Haddock-Millar (Eds.), <i>The SAGE Handbook of Mentoring</i> , pp.246-260. London: SAGE Publications.
5	RL	Kramer-Simpson, E. (2018). Moving from Student to Professional: Industry Mentors and Academic Internship Coordinators Supporting Intern Learning in the Workplace. <i>Journal of Technical Writing and Communication</i> , 48(1), pp.81–103. <a href="http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ1162338&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site">http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ1162338&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site</a>
6	RL	Le Cornu, R.J. (2012). School Co-Ordinators: Leaders of Learning in Professional Experience. <i>Australian Journal of Teacher Education</i> , 37(3), pp.18–33. <a href="http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ969523&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site">http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ969523&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site</a>
	RL	Le Cornu, R.J. (2010). Changing roles, relationships and responsibilities in changing times. <i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education</i> , 38(3), pp.195-206. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2010.493298">http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2010.493298</a>
7	RL	Morales, E.E., Ambrose-Roman, S., and Perez-Maldonado, R. (2016). Transmitting Success: Comprehensive Peer Mentoring for At-Risk Students in Developmental Math. <i>Innovative Higher Education</i> , 41(2), pp.121–135. <a href="http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ1092610&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site">http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ1092610&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site</a>
8	RL	MacCallum, J., Beltman, S., Coffey, A., and Cooper, T. (2017). Taking care of youth mentoring relationships: red flags, repair, and respectful resolution. <i>Mentoring &amp; Tutoring: Partnership in Learning</i> , 25(3), pp.250–271. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2017.1364799">https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2017.1364799</a>
9	RL	Michael, O., Court, D., and Petal, P. (2009). Job Stress and Organizational Commitment among Mentoring Coordinators. <i>International Journal of Educational Management</i> , 23(3), pp.266–288. <a href="http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ834824&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site">http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ834824&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site</a>
10	RL	Mozdzanowski, S. K. (2016). <i>Impact of mentoring on K-12 beginning teachers' efficacy and commitment: A comparative phenomenological study</i> . ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, pp.113–116.
11	RL	Peters, J. (2011). Sustaining School Colleagues' Commitment to a Long-Term Professional Experience Partnership. <i>Australian Journal of Teacher Education</i> , 36(5), pp.1–15. <a href="http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ926803&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site">http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ926803&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site</a>
12	RL	Rodriguez, J., McKinney, T., Powell, S., Walker, Z., and Vince Garland, K. (2020). Was This Feedback Useful? Examining the Observation and Feedback Process for Pre-Service Teachers. <i>Teaching Education</i> , 31(2), pp.144–161. <a href="http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ1254112&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site">http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=eric&amp;AN=EJ1254112&amp;site=ehost-live&amp;scope=site</a>
13	RL	Willis, J., Churchward, P., Beutel, D., Spooner-Lane, R., Crosswell, L., and Curtis, E. (2019). Mentors for Beginning Teachers as Middle Leaders: The Messy Work of Recontextualising. <i>School Leadership &amp; Management</i> 39, pp.334–351.

	RL	Beutel, D., Crosswell, L., Willis, J., Spooner-Lane, R., Curtis, E., and Churchward, P. (2017). Preparing teachers to mentor beginning teachers: an Australian case study. <i>International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education</i> , 6(3). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE-04-2017-0030">https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE-04-2017-0030</a>
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**Note:** RL = Literature presenting research findings on MPC role; OL = Other academic literature

## Sourcing of Mentoring Programme Coordination Handbooks

In addition to the systematic review outlined above, a Google search was undertaken to identify any mentoring programme coordination handbooks or mentoring programme handbooks that included a substantive component focused on the MPC role and responsibilities. A light touch review identified five handbooks that were judged to have the potential to provide useful resources for the development of training and guidance for MPCs. These are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2: List of handbooks**

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) (2013). <i>Guidelines for Coordinators. Future Harvest Centres Mentoring Programme. Mentoring Program Coordinator Guidelines (cgiar.org)</i>
Garringer, M., Kupersmidt, J., Rhodes, J., Stelter, R., and Tai, T. (2015). <i>Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring</i> (4th Edition). Boston, MA: MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership. <a href="https://www.mentoring.org/new-site/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Final_Elements_Publication_Fourth.pdf">https://www.mentoring.org/new-site/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Final_Elements_Publication_Fourth.pdf</a>
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Texas Education Agency GEAR UP (2009). <i>Mentors, Mindsets and Role Models. Community Mentoring</i> . Texas. <a href="http://www.texasgearup.com">www.texasgearup.com</a>
Vacaretu, A-S., Kovacs, M. (Eds. 2013). <i>Guidelines for Mentors and Mentoring Programme Coordinators, LEGME Project</i> . Grundtvig Learnership Partnership. <a href="http://www.cesie.org/guidelines-for-mentors-and-mentoring-programme-coordinators">Guidelines for mentors and mentoring programme coordinators (cesie.org)</a>

## SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DATASETS

For this strand of the research, the research team undertook a secondary analysis of evidence from eight original studies of mentoring and mentor development that were undertaken at the UoB and by members of the current research team between 2014 and 2020, in order to identify research findings relating to the MPC role. These were the same studies reviewed for the earlier MTED research (Hobson *et al.*, 2020). The eight studies are listed below, together with published and / or unpublished accounts of each project, which were also reviewed.

**UoB Study 1: *Mentoring and Coaching Teachers in the Further Education and Skills Sector (2014-15)***

- Hobson, A.J., Maxwell, B., Stevens, A., Doyle, K. and Malderez, A. (2015) [Mentoring and Coaching for Teachers in the Further Education and Skills Sector in England: Full Report](#). London: Gatsby Charitable Foundation.
- Hobson, A.J. and Maxwell, B. (2020) [Mentoring substructures and superstructures: an extension and reconceptualisation of the architecture for teacher mentoring](#). *Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy*, 46(2), pp.184-206.

**UoB Study 2: *Judgemental and Developmental approaches to mentoring in Post-Compulsory Initial Teacher Training: An exploration into mentors' and mentees' perceptions of their relationship (2014-15)***

- Manning, C. (2015) *Judgemental and Developmental approaches to mentoring in Post-Compulsory Initial Teacher Training: An exploration into mentors' and mentees' perceptions of their relationship*. University of Brighton. MA Thesis.
- Manning, C. and Hobson, A.J. (2017) [Judgemental and developmental mentoring in Further Education Initial Teacher Education in England: Mentor and mentee perspectives](#). *Research in Post-compulsory Education*, 22(4), pp.574-595.

**UoB Study 3: *Teacher Mentoring in Further Education Initial Teacher Education in England: the availability, take up and impact of mentor accreditation (2016)***

- Robinson, C. and Hobson, A.J. (2017) *Mentor Education and Development in the Further Education sector in England*. (Research report for Gatsby Charitable Foundation.) University of Brighton: Education Research Centre.

**UoB Study 4: *Teacher Mentoring: What can the education system learn from mentoring practice in other sectors? (2015-16)***

- Hobson, A.J., Castanheira, P., Doyle, K., Csigás, Z. and Clutterbuck, D. (2016) [The Mentoring across Professions \(MaP\) Project: What can teacher mentoring learn from international good practice in employee mentoring and coaching?](#) London: Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

**UoB Study 5: *Introducing, Evaluating and Embedding ONSIDE Mentoring at Bede's School (2018-19)***

- Hobson, A.J., Clements, K. and Káplár-Kodácsy, K. (2019a) *Introducing, Evaluating and Embedding ONSIDE Mentoring at Bede's School: A Research and Development Project*. School of Education, University of Brighton.

### **UoB Study 6: *Introducing, Embedding and Evaluating ONSIDE Mentoring at Sharnbrook Academy Federation (2018-19)***

- Hobson, A.J., Clements, K. and Káplár-Kodácsy, K. (2019b) *Sharnbrook Academy Federation Mentoring for Professional Growth: Research and Development Project. Final Report.* School of Education, University of Brighton.

### **UoB Study 7: *Brighton and Hove Head Teacher ONSIDE Peer Mentoring Pilot (2018-19)***

- Hobson, A.J., Clements, K. and Káplár-Kodácsy, K. (2019c) *Brighton and Hove City Council ONSIDE Head Teacher Peer Mentoring Pilot: Research and Development Project. Final Report.* School of Education, University of Brighton.

### **UoB Study 8: *Further Forces (Troop resettlement to education and training careers) Mentoring Programme (2017-21)***

- Hobson, A.J. and Clements, K. (2020) *Further Forces External Mentoring Programme. Interim Report.* School of Education, University of Brighton.

Most of the above studies involved mixed method research designs that included: a survey of and / or interviews or focus groups with mentors and mentees; and interviews with MPCs. For each study, the secondary analysis process (including the review of published and / or unpublished accounts of each project) sought to identify findings relating to the MPC role, which were then distilled in critical summaries. Most relevant data, from which the findings of the secondary analysis provided in this report were gleaned, came from UoB Studies 1, 4 and 5.

## **THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

All the critical summaries of literature and secondary data analysis were read by each team member, who subsequently undertook an independent thematic analysis of the emergent findings relating to:

- 1) The definition of the MPC role;
- 2) The roles and responsibilities of MPCs, and evidence of effectiveness;
- 3) Factors enhancing or impeding the effectiveness of mentoring programme coordination; and
- 4) The selection and training and development of MPCs.

Drawing on written individual analysis notes and team discussion in a set of two analysis meetings, an outline list of the main findings in relation to points 1-4 above was constructed and cross-referenced to the supporting evidence from the critical summaries. This formed the basis for an initial draft of the report. Accuracy of representation of key themes and the link to supporting evidence was checked by all team members, who drew on their in-depth knowledge of the sources that they had reviewed and their analysis notes. Where necessary, the original literature sources and data relating to the UoB studies were revisited to confirm accuracy and interpretation.