

## Buddying Vs Mentoring

Although both buddying and mentoring offer support to employees, they play a different role within the workplace. Below we outline the difference between the two and how they can be applied.

Buddying	Mentoring
An informal role provided by a peer, usually of a similar role or level of responsibility.	A more formal, structured process with the mentor often being at a higher level in the organisation or has previous experience.
No specialised training is generally required to be a buddy.	A partnership agreement is established at the beginning of the mentoring experience to define structure, boundaries and desired outcomes.
A buddy can assist new employees for a short period of time as they enter a new role, this is in addition to formal training opportunities.	This is a longer-term process and the mentor will generally have had some form of mentoring training.
Buddying may also be used to provide shadowing experiences for aspiring workers looking to reach the next level.	There's a focus on achieving short and longer-term career goals of the mentee but the process also offers the mentor a level of personal and professional development.
It's a flexible relationship which allows for social discussions.	All discussions between the mentor and mentee are on a confidential level and a mentor may provide coaching, advice or act as a facilitator in their role.
A buddy is available to provide advice and support to ensure a smooth transition.	The aim is to form partnership between the mentor and mentee, working together to ensure the success and development of the mentee.

**“Wellbeing is at the centre of what we do, and this includes our staff. Staff are given an opportunity to request a buddy within the organisation and senior staff are encouraged to seek out a formal Mentor.”**

Manor Community, Accolade Award winner 2019

The following page provides a quick guide on what to consider when starting either a buddying or mentoring programme.

## Buddying

1. What attributes make a good Buddy?
  - is patient and a good listener
  - has knowledge to share on how things work both in the role and across the organisation
  - the ability to use questions to encourage new starters to think for themselves
  - strongly reflects the culture and values of the organisation.
2. A buddy is not there to replace training but offer a supportive, friendly face. Responsibilities could include:
  - showing new starters how to find their way around including aspects such as areas designated for breaks
  - introductions to the rest of the team
  - answering any questions the new starter may have in general or about the role.
3. The first day for any new starter can be daunting, so setting up the initial Buddy meeting is often best carried out in an informal environment such as over coffee. The Buddy can take this opportunity to outline their own role and why they are acting as the new starters Buddy. Other useful topics to cover include how long the Buddy arrangement will be in place; any organisational events to understand such as birthday collections; and to encourage any questions.

## Mentoring

1. What attributes make a good mentor?
  - interested in helping others to grow and succeed
  - ability to actively listen and pick up on important cues in a conversation
  - able to pass on own knowledge and expertise in a clear and encouraging way
2. There are several roles a mentor may take on throughout the process which will be developed through mentor training. Common roles include:
  - **learning consultant:** helping the mentee to identify their learning styles, reflect on previous experience and draw out learnings for future
  - **coach:** guiding the mentee to find new ways to approach problems and adopt new ways of thinking for themselves
  - **critical friend:** challenge assumptions and provide feedback to aid development.
3. Benefits of mentoring:
  - **for the mentee:** improved self-confidence; provides supportive impartial advice; offers professional development; assists with problem solving
  - **for the mentor:** develops professional relationships; allows for self-reflection; widens understanding of other roles in the organisation; increase job satisfaction
  - **for the organisation:** improves communication; staff feel invested in; can increase role performance; staff feel more committed to the organisation.