

Council

Meeting Date	04 December 2025
Title	Council Apprentice mentoring arrangements
Author(s)	Rebekah Eglinton, Council member Patricia Morrissey, Head of Governance
Executive Sponsor	Claire Amor, Executive Director of Corporate Affairs
Executive Summary The Council Apprentice programme has been in operation since 2021 and the appointment process for our sixth cohort of apprentices is underway. The next cohort of apprentices will take up their appointment in January 2026 and will be supported throughout the duration of their appointment by a Council member mentor. While the apprentice role has evolved over the past few years, including the Council's recent agreement to extend the appointment term to 15 months, the arrangements for mentoring are based on our existing guidance for Council Apprentices and mentors attached at Annex 1. This guidance has been minimally updated in 2025 to reflect personnel changes and the core induction days that have been proactively planned for our new apprentices starting in 2026. The relationship between mentor and mentee is critical to the mentee's overall experience and is underpinned by the mentoring agreement which clearly sets out roles and responsibilities of mentor and mentee. Over the summer we surveyed current and past Council Apprentices, Council members and the Executive Leadership Team to review the learnings from the last five years of the scheme and evaluate its impact on the careers of our previous Council Apprentices. Feedback from current and former Council Apprentices in relation to the support provided by their mentor, other members of Council and the Governance team indicated that 100% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they felt supported. As part of the survey, we also asked mentors if they agreed that the time commitment had been manageable. There were only two respondents, but both indicated that they agreed with this statement. The only other feedback received as part of the survey relating to the mentor/mentee relationship was to recommend setting the buddy briefing and de-brief meetings either side of the Council meetings (these meetings are set by the apprentice and mentor, not by the HCPC) and a number of comments referring to the opportunity to act as a mentor as a highlight of the scheme.	

Mentors are currently directly invited to take on the role and there is no formal selection process. Setting out a formal transparent process for the selection of mentors will ensure that all members are able to express an interest in mentoring a Council Apprentice and ensure that the process of selection is fair and that all Council members are able to develop as mentors, should they wish to do so.

Recommendations

The Council is asked to:

- consider the experience of mentees and mentors and evaluate what does and doesn't make for an effective mentor-mentee relationship;
- consider whether a single mentor remains appropriate or whether thought should be given to alternative models, including having multiple mentors for each mentee;
- consider how best to support the active participation of Council Apprentices and the role of mentors and other Council members in this;
- consider what drives growth and development for the Council Apprentice and how this can be best evaluated, and whether the existing arrangements for regular check-ins with the mentor, governance team and Chair of the Council require a more formal approach to monitoring progress;.
- consider how mentors can be held to account for the effectiveness of what they offer and how their impact can be measured, and whether this is best incorporated within the existing Council member annual review process;
- consider what, if any, changes should be made to how mentors are selected and supported, including training requirements, and whether a formal process inviting expressions of interest should be instigated moving away from the current informal process; and.
- agree what, if any changes, should be made to the Council Apprentice guidance, including to the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the mentor and mentee, the models of reflection highlighted and the arrangements for support.

Action required	The Council is asked to provide input and feedback to develop the proposal.
Previous consideration	The Council approved the sixth cycle of our Council Apprentice initiative on circulation in September 2025.
Next steps	Update the guidance for the Council Apprentice and mentor, as agreed. Confirm the mentoring arrangements for the 2026 Council Apprentices.
Financial and resource implications	None
Associated strategic priority/priorities	Build a resilient, healthy, capable and sustainable organisation Be visible, engage and informed

Associated strategic risk(s)	4. We are unable to effectively build trust, engage with and influence our stakeholders, reducing our ability to understand their perspectives and regulate effectively
Risk appetite	People - open
Communication and engagement	Any updates to the guidance for Council Apprentices and mentors will be shared with Council Apprentices and mentors.
Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) impact and Welsh language standards	The HCPC's Council Apprentice initiative was launched to increase the diversity of experience and perspectives around the Council table whilst providing a great opportunity for candidates to gain the experience they need to go on to build a non-executive career. As an internal-facing document, we do not consider this engages the Welsh language scheme.
Other impact assessments	Not applicable
Reason for consideration in the private session of the meeting (if applicable)	Not applicable



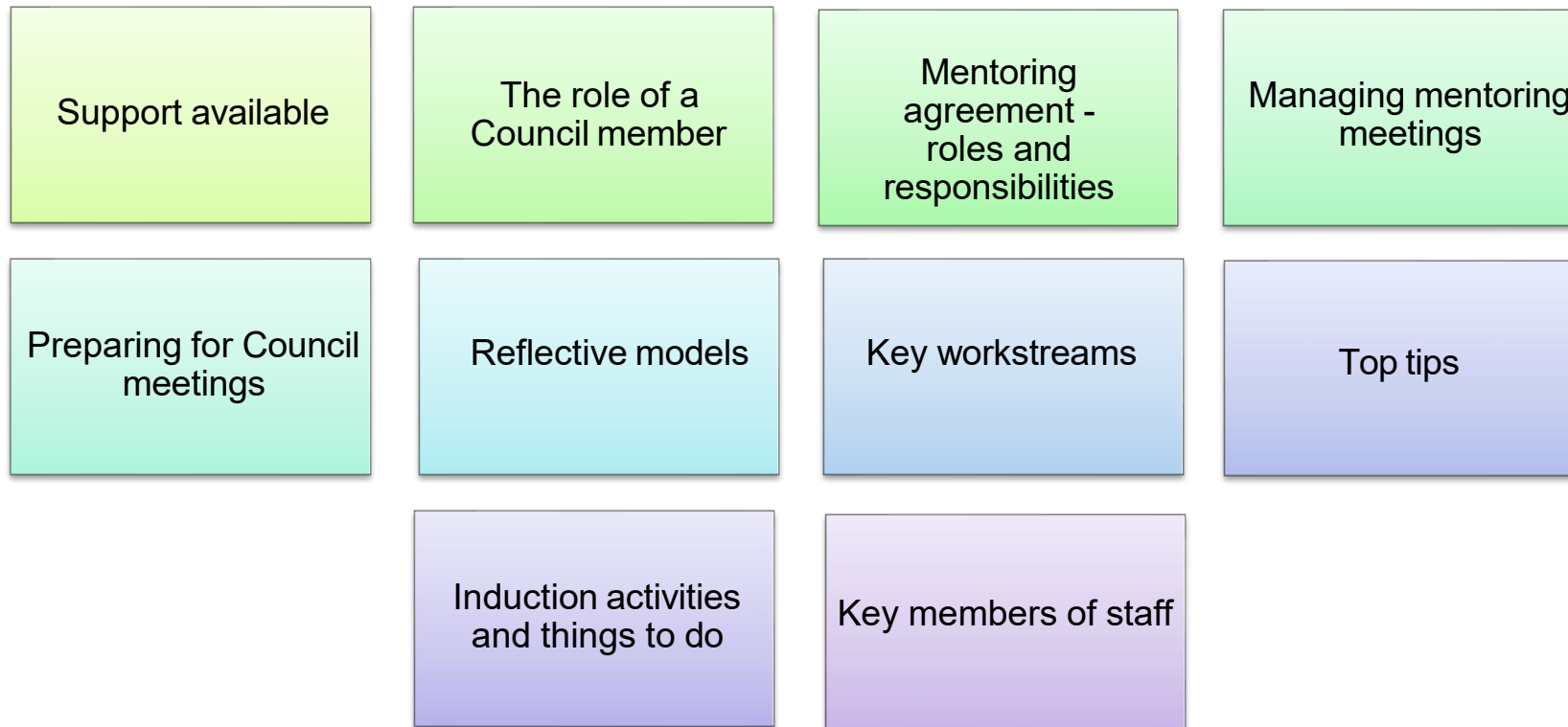
HCPC Council Apprenticeship

Guidance for the Council

Apprentice and

mentor

What does this guidance cover?



What support is in place for you as a Council Apprentice?

- **Your mentor**, an existing Council member, is there to give you advice and guidance. You will meet with them on a monthly basis, or more often if desired.
- The **Governance team** (Patsy, Fran and Noah) will check in with you on a monthly basis and can be contacted via phone, Microsoft Teams or email.
- **Christine (Council Chair)** will check in with you quarterly following Council meetings and will also conduct your end-of-year evaluation discussion.

The role of a Council member

- To contribute knowledge and skills to the Council, aiding effective decision-making and strategy setting.
- To support the Council's objectives, acting as a 'critical friend'.
- To provide external perspective and horizon scanning.
- To keep up to date with the HCPC's work.
- To carry out their role in accordance with the HCPC Code of Conduct.
- To act as an ambassador, representing the Council.

The role of a Council member may be an area for discussion with your mentor.

The role of the Council Apprentice

- To take part in Council meetings and seminars, contributing their knowledge, skills and perspective to the Council discussions, supporting effective decision-making and strategy setting.
- To participate in an assigned Council committee.
- To develop the experience and skills needed to take part in governance groups elsewhere.
- To learn more about the HCPC's work.
- To carry out their role in accordance with the HCPC's code of conduct and the seven principles of public life.
- To act as an ambassador, representing the Council and the HCPC.

Mentoring Agreement: Roles and Responsibilities



Mentor

- Develops own skills as a mentor and seeks feedback from the mentee
- Listens more than talks and asks questions
- Acts as a sounding board
- Supports
- Respect confidentiality
- Provides constructive feedback
- Provides information
- Provide introductions to others
- Helps to identify goals



Mentee (Council Apprentice)

- Prepares their thoughts about what they want from the relationship and each meeting
- Undertakes development actions agreed with the mentor
- Is open to and willing to listen to mentor's insights and acting on feedback
- Is not afraid to ask for more feedback



Both

- Attend all arranged meetings
- Clarify logistics/arrangements for future meetings
- Avoid last minute cancellations
- Take the relationship seriously
- Keep on track and stick to time
- Keep notes for development
- Show mutual respect
- Invested in mentee's success
- Define expectations

Managing Mentoring Meetings

Aims

- To provide guidance and support
- To discuss upcoming meetings and specific papers/issues
- To reflect on previous meetings
- To identify areas for development and additional support required
- To identify development goals for governance roles and plan for the next steps beyond the Council Apprenticeship

Progress

- What's happened since the last mentoring meeting?
- Which induction activities have been completed?
- Which meetings have you attended and how were these?

Activities

- How have any objectives and plans from the last meeting been taken forward?
- What development activity has taken place?

Issues

- Current concerns and challenges
- Specific papers and issues for discussion
- Reflection and discussion of next steps

Wellbeing

- How is the mentee feeling?
- Significant changes and events for the mentee since the previous meeting or about to occur

Preparing for Council and committee meetings with the support of your mentor

Schedule in your mentor meetings in advance, ideally before/after Council or committee meetings.

Discuss the Council and committee agendas and explore what you both think of each item.

Your mentor can help you to reflect on how to contribute constructively to the Council/committee discussions and add real value in terms of your unique perspective, knowledge and skills.

Your mentor can help explain how Council/committee meetings are run and what to expect in public/private sessions.

Discuss the **remit of Council members** and the balance between strategic and operational decision-making.

Identify any areas you would like some **further support** with.

Your mentor can explore these with you and/or introduce you to other colleagues who can help.

Familiarise yourself with Council/committee cover sheet and papers with the help of your mentor.

A cover sheet will outline the key points and guide you through the paper, including why the paper is coming to Council/committee and any actions/decisions that are required, as well as highlighting impacts (equality, risk, resource and cost).

The Governance team and Chair of the Council will also support you to prepare for Council and committee meetings.

Driscoll's Model of Reflection

You may wish to draw on a reflective model to guide your mentoring meetings and reflections, we have provided two but there are many more models available. [This page](#) provides a good oversight.



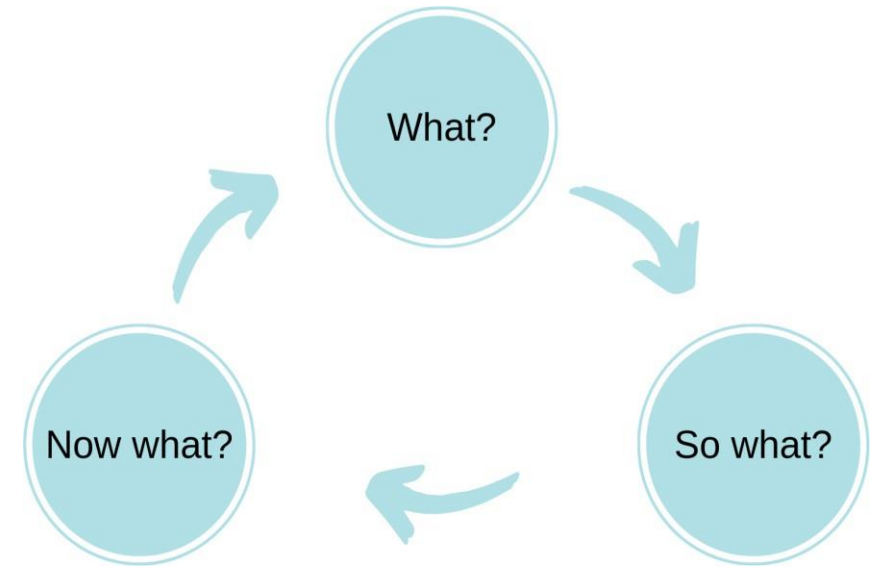
Firstly, we should describe what the situation or experience was to set it in context. This gives us a clear idea of what we are dealing with



We should then reflect on the experience by asking 'so what?' What did we learn as a result of the experience?



The final stage asks us to think about the action we will take as a result of this reflection. It is important to remember that there may be no changes as the result of reflection and that we feel that we are doing everything as we should. This is equally valid as an outcome and you should not worry if you can't think of something to change.



Gibbs' Reflective Cycle



As with other models, Gibb's begins with an **outline of the experience** being reflected on



It then encourages us to **focus on our feelings** about the experience, both during it and after



The next step involves **evaluating the experience**. What was good or bad about it from our point of view? We can then use this evaluation to analyse the situation and try to make sense of it. This analysis will result in a conclusion about what other actions (if any) we could have taken to reach a different outcome.



The final stage involves building an **action plan** of steps which we can take the next time we find ourselves in a similar situation.



Key workstreams and strategies

[Corporate strategy](#)

Financial strategy and annual plans and budgets

[People strategy](#)

[Equality, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\) Strategy](#)

[Regulatory reform](#)

[Insights and analytics framework](#)

[Registrant wellbeing strategy](#)

[Digital transformation strategy](#)

[Environmental sustainability statement](#)

Your mentor can help to brief you on these areas, refer you to past papers/online publications as well as introduce you to key members of staff leading on the work

Top tips from previous Council Apprentices

- 'The first Council meeting required the most prep as over time you learn better how to read them. You also see the papers work their way up through the committees or they are revisited and discussed from Council meeting to Council meeting so the content isn't new.'
- 'The apprenticeship scheme has gone above my expectations; it has been very well-organised and apprentices have been considered at every stage, rather than an afterthought. Whilst I expected to attend Council meetings, it has been very helpful to attend committees and seminars which really have helped to understand topics in more breadth. I have really valued having a mentor who I have been able to be open and honest with, who allowed me the space to share and commit to my own development.'
- 'Plan your time ahead of Council/committee meetings to read the papers.'
- 'The imposter syndrome does not last! I was made to feel so welcome and valued and I could see my confidence developing.'

Reflections from previous mentors

- 'You need to dedicate quite a bit of time to make things work. Building the relationship at the outset is key.'
- 'For me one of the biggest challenges was time – so get some dates in the diary ASAP before and after the council meetings or any other meeting that the apprentice is observing.'
- 'As a mentor it was good to think about my coaching approach and listening to hear rather than respond.'
- 'I always like to attend mentor meetings prepared – what do you need to talk about? What are you hoping to get from the conversation?'
- 'Make the process two-way once the relationship has matured so that you get some reverse mentoring too.'
- 'We also looked at where the apprentice could add real value to the organisation due to their speciality, which all Council members do. The emphasis though was on going outside your speciality and looking at seeking assurance across the board.'
- 'Supporting the apprentice with papers they weren't used to seeing, such as budgets'.
- 'Discussing how to get into non-executive director roles, where to look, when is the right time etc.'

Induction programme

- Your comprehensive induction programme will begin with two days of introductory meetings on **13 January 2025 (in person at HCPC Offices Kennington)** and **20 January 2025 (virtual meetings)** with:
 - the Executive Leadership Team (ELT);
 - the Governance team; and
 - heads of department across the HCPC.
- You will also complete several e-learning modules (the Governance team can support you with this).
- There are a range of additional induction activities that the Governance team can arrange (see next page for more details).

Additional induction activities and 'things to do' as a Council Apprentice

Regular catch-ups with
the Secretariat team

Read previous papers on
our website

Attend all employee
away day (in person)

Regular meetings with
the Council Chair

Observe Committee
meetings

Observe an FTP hearing

Attend an EDI Forum
meeting

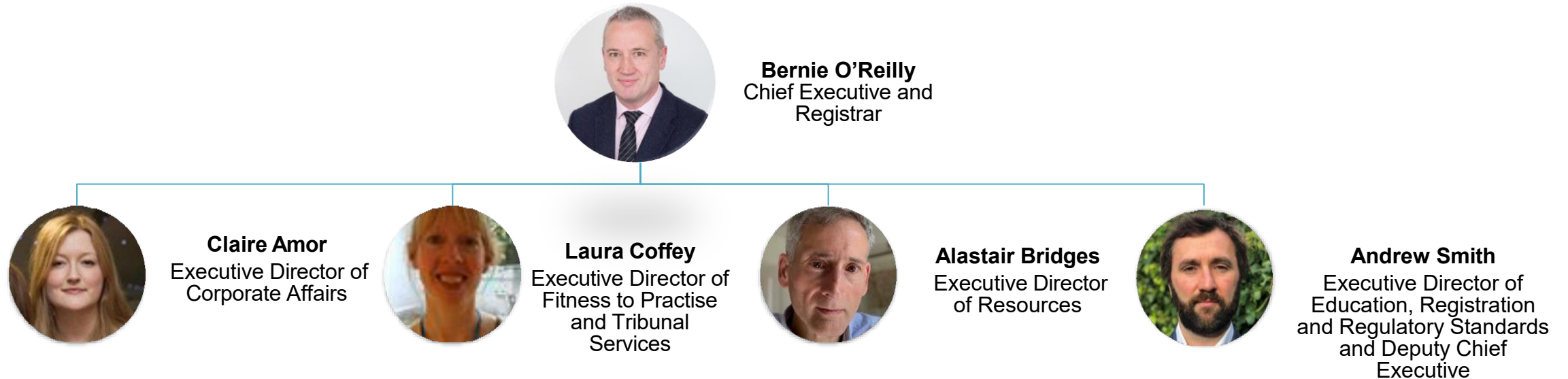
Attend a Professional
Liaison webinar

Attend Council
Apprentice Alumni
network meetings

Departmental
introduction session
(‘meet the team’)

- *Fran and Noah will support you with arranging all the above*
- *You may wish to discuss the above and reflect on these sessions with your mentor*
- *We are always looking to improve so please let us know if there is anything else you want to do*

The HCPC's Executive Leadership Team (ELT)



You will have a welcome session with our ELT and will get to know them during your year with us.

Key contacts – Governance team

Patricia Morrissey
Head of Governance



patricia.morrissey@hcpc-uk.org

Fran Bramley
Governance Manager



francesca.bramley@hcpc-uk.org

Noah Linley-Adams
Governance Officer



noah.linley-adams@hcpc-uk.org

Team email: secretariat@hcpc-uk.org