



PROVINCE OF EAST KENT

Support and Development Group

Mentoring... Frequently Asked Questions.

Why has the Province established a mentoring programme?

The Province of East Kent's objective in setting up the Mentoring Scheme is to ensure that every member receives the right level of support, advice, information and encouragement to help them enjoy and benefit from their Freemasonry.

Initially efforts are being focussed on new members, but the process of ongoing personal development enshrined in the scheme will ensure that Brethren who are about to take office or assume other responsibilities, whether at Lodge, Provincial or Grand Lodge level, can do so with confidence.

What has been done so far?

A Provincial Support & Development Group was appointed to research the subject of Mentoring and to develop a scheme suitable for East Kent. This scheme was subsequently trialled in the Deal and Rochester centres before being rolled out to the rest of the Province.

Lodges have been grouped into clusters based on one or more Centres and a Co-ordinator appointed to oversee delivery of the scheme at local level.

Lodges have been asked to select a Lodge Mentor who will be responsible for implementing the scheme within each Lodge.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a structured relationship between a new mason and one who is more experienced, in which clearly defined levels of personal development are achieved at a speed and in a manner with which the Mentee is comfortable.

By providing guidance support and encouragement the Mentor will seek to develop the competence, confidence and consequently the character of his charge.

What exactly does a Lodge Mentor do?

The Lodge Mentor's primary role is to champion a spirit of personal development in his Lodge. He will select and assign a suitable personal mentor for all new members and will monitor and record the progress of each individual.

He will also provide feedback to the Provincial Support & Development Group to ensure that the mentoring process continues to provide the support that our members need.

As the "Mentors' Mentor" it is unlikely that he will take on the role of a personal mentor himself.

What is the difference between a Lodge Mentor and a Personal Mentor?

The Lodge Mentor's role is essentially to manage the mentoring process in his Lodge.

The Personal Mentor is the person charged with forming a one-to-one relationship with his Mentee. As the new Mason progresses through the 3 degrees his Personal Mentor will guide and reassure him, answering any questions which may arise along the way. These may include questions about the workings of the Lodge, the organisation of the Province and Grand Lodge, or the principles and charitable aims of Freemasonry.

What makes a good Lodge Mentor?

First and foremost, a Lodge Mentor must be enthusiastic about the process of Mentoring and able to communicate its aims and principles in a clear and concise manner.

He needs to be sensitive to the needs of other people, discrete, encouraging and non-judgmental. As the person supporting the efforts of Personal Mentors he will be experienced and knowledgeable about all aspects of Freemasonry.

The Lodge Mentor will also be able to monitor progress and keep the mentoring programme moving forward.

How do you select a Personal Mentor?

A Personal Mentor will be someone to whom the Mentee can easily relate. It may be a friend or family member who is already a member of the Lodge, or someone of a similar age or outlook.

The Personal Mentor must be a good listener. He needs to be able to put his own ego to one side and to concentrate on the needs of his Mentee.

Mentoring is not a "one size fits all" process. If the aims of the programme are to be achieved, individually tailored programmes of personal development need to be established.

What about the Proposer and Secunder?

Once someone has expressed their desire to become a Freemason, their Proposer and Secunder have vital roles to play in ensuring their suitability and in explaining aims and principles of Freemasonry.

If one or the other of them is suitably qualified, then of course they are the ideal person to act as a Personal Mentor.

However it may be that they are new to Freemasonry themselves, or that their career, family commitments or masonic office mean that they are unable to devote the necessary time to mentoring.

In this case it is better that someone else assumes the mentoring role.

What can the Mentor expect from the process?

Over time the relationship between a Mentor and his Mentee becomes a meaningful one, which affords the Mentor powerful personal insights into the character, aptitudes and attitudes of his charge.

The need to think about Freemasonry and to seek knowledge on behalf of another will expand the Mentor's own perspectives.

The opportunity to share knowledge and wisdom, together with the simple satisfaction of helping others, brings rewards beyond compare.

What will the Mentee get from the Mentoring Process?

Mentoring provides a safety net designed to provide support when needed, which in turn reduces stress and thereby accelerates the learning process. Individually tailored programmes ensure that progress is at a rate that the Mentee is comfortable with.

In order to evaluate the efficacy of the scheme and to drive its future development; feedback is encouraged at all levels.

What resources are available to support Mentors?

It is intended that the Mentoring section of the Provincial Website (www.eastkentfreemasons.org) will over time become the primary resource for news, information, and teaching materials for those involved in Mentoring.

In addition the United Grand Lodge of England have established an on-line library (www.3rlibrary.org.uk) containing an extensive collection of mentoring related information and resources.

The Kent Museum of Freemasonry in Canterbury contains an extensive library and collection of Masonic artefacts which can be used as part of the mentoring process.

Who can a Lodge Mentor turn to if a problem arises?

The East Kent Provincial Mentoring scheme has a defined management structure and clear lines of communication.

If a Lodge Mentor encounters a problem he cannot resolve, his cluster co-ordinator can call on the resources of the Provincial Support & Development Group, the Provincial Executive and even if necessary Grand Lodge!

How do I know that the process is working?

As time goes by the dynamics of the mentoring relationship start to change, and the Mentor who started out as an authority figure directing the learning process, assumes the role of a facilitator.

The Mentee on the other hand who began as a passive receiver of knowledge begins to direct his own progress and become an active learner.

The whole focus of the mentoring process changes from being one concerned with knowledge transfer and acquisition to one which encourages critical reflection and application of the lessons learnt.

How do I record progress for each Mentee?

The Province of East Kent has published a Personal Development Programme which sets out the various steps each Mentee needs to achieve in the three main areas of Establishing Relationships, Personal Development and Acquisition of Knowledge.

As each stage is completed this is recorded in the Programme booklet providing the Mentee with confirmation of his progress and recognition of his achievement.