

MENTORING IN MINUTES

***SUPPORT YOUR LEARNER TO ACHIEVE THEIR
APPRENTICESHIP***

Welcome to your Mentoring in Minutes Guide

Our Mission

At Impact Futures Group, we are committed to delivering high-quality education that makes a real difference. We create learning experiences that are inclusive, purposeful, and engaging — helping individuals build skills, confidence, and pathways to meaningful futures.

Our Intention

This Mentoring in Minutes guide is designed to support you in your role as a workplace mentor.

It provides simple, practical guidance to help you offer effective support, guidance, and encouragement to your apprentice - whether through regular conversations, goal setting, feedback, or helping them navigate challenges.

Mentoring is about building a positive relationship built on trust, communication, and shared experience.

This guide focuses on making mentoring feel manageable and impactful, helping you support your apprentice's development, confidence, and overall success throughout their apprenticeship.

Contents

We support mentors, apprentices, and employers to create meaningful learning experiences that lead to real progress and positive outcomes in the workplace.

Through practical guidance and everyday conversations, mentoring helps individuals build confidence, develop skills, and take ownership of their growth — while supporting organisations to strengthen performance and develop future talent.

This guide brings mentoring to life - making it simple, accessible, and impactful, so every interaction supports success.

This guide will cover:

01	Mentoring Journey
03	What Is Mentoring in an Apprenticeship?
05	What Are the Benefits of Mentoring?
07	Mentoring Skills and Behaviours
09	Setting Effective Goals
11	Supporting and Monitoring Progress
13	Empowering Through Questions
15	Giving Effective Feedback
17	Motivating Your Apprentice
21	Stretching to Potential
23	Growth Mindset and Resilience
25	Supporting Apprentice Wellbeing

Welcome to Your Mentoring Journey

What Is Mentoring?

Supporting growth through guidance, experience, and meaningful conversations.

Unlocking Barriers

Support apprentices to work through challenges and build confidence.

Giving Effective Feedback

Feedback helps build awareness, confidence, and continuous improvement.

Mentoring Skills and Behaviours

How you listen, ask, and respond shapes your apprentice's development.

Supporting and Monitoring Progress

Regular check-ins keep development on track and build momentum.

Empowering Through Questions

Asking the right questions builds thinking, ownership, and independence.

Setting Effective Goals

Clear goals give direction, focus, and motivation for progress.

Motivating mentees

Connect learning to purpose to maintain motivation and engagement.

Encouraging Reflective Practice

Reflection turns everyday experience into meaningful learning.

Stretching to Potential

Challenge and support help apprentices grow beyond their comfort zone.

Growth Mindset and Resilience

Encourage a "not yet" mindset to build resilience and confidence.

Supporting Apprentice Wellbeing

A supportive environment helps apprentices feel safe, focused, and valued.



Use each video to build your skills, try new approaches, and strengthen the impact of your mentoring over time.

Key:



Watch the video

Short, practical guidance you can apply straight away



Information

Key tips, guidance, and useful information

What is Mentoring in an Apprenticeship?



Mentoring in an apprenticeship is about supporting your apprentice to succeed in their role, develop their skills, and grow in confidence within the workplace.

It is more than supervision or task-setting. Mentoring is a working relationship where you share your experience, provide guidance, and help your apprentice make sense of what they are learning day to day.

As a mentor, you help your apprentice connect their learning to real work - supporting them to understand not just what to do, but why it **matters**.

What Mentoring Looks Like in Practice

Mentoring happens through simple, consistent interactions, such as:

- Having regular, focused conversations
- Setting and reviewing clear goals
- Offering guidance, feedback, and encouragement
- Asking questions that build confidence and thinking
- Supporting your apprentice through challenges
- Recognising progress and celebrating success

These everyday moments build trust and help your apprentice stay motivated and on track.

Mentor Checklist - Are You Doing This?

Use this quick checklist to reflect on your mentoring approach:



- I meet regularly with my apprentice and make time for meaningful conversations
- I set clear goals and review progress consistently
- I listen actively and create a supportive, safe environment
- I share my experience to support real workplace learning
- I ask questions that encourage thinking and independence
- I provide clear, constructive feedback
- I recognise progress and build confidence

03.

Your Role as a Mentor

Your role is not to have all the answers or do the work for your apprentice.

Instead, you are there to:

- **Guide** - share your knowledge and experience
- **Support** - create a safe space to learn and grow
- **Challenge** - stretch thinking and encourage development
- **Encourage** - build confidence and resilience

Great mentoring helps apprentices become more independent, capable, and confident over time.

Why Mentoring Matters

Mentoring has a powerful impact on an apprentice's success.

It helps them to:

- Build skills, knowledge, and confidence
- Apply learning in real workplace situations
- Stay motivated and focused
- Overcome challenges and develop resilience
- Progress in their role and future career

When apprentices feel supported, heard, and guided, they are far more likely to succeed and reach their full potential.



04.

What Are the **Benefits** of Mentoring?

Mentoring has a positive impact on both the apprentice and the workplace. It supports learning, builds confidence, and helps apprentices develop the skills they need to succeed in their role and beyond.

When mentoring is consistent and meaningful, it strengthens performance, improves engagement, and supports long-term development.

Activity – Recognising the Impact

Think about your apprentice:

- What positive changes have you seen since mentoring began?
- What has improved in their confidence, skills, or motivation?

In your next conversation, share one example and explore how to build on it further.



Mentoring leads to...

- Apprentices who are more confident and capable
- Teams who perform better and stay engaged
- Workplaces that grow stronger and more productive

“When mentoring is done well, apprentices grow – and organisations thrive.”

05.

How Mentoring **Supports** Your Apprenticeship

Mentoring helps apprentices grow in confidence, capability, and independence through everyday workplace experience.

Through effective mentoring, apprentices:

- Build skills, knowledge, and behaviours in real work situations
- Grow in confidence and belief
- Stay motivated and focused
- Learn through reflection and feedback
- Develop resilience through challenges
- Take ownership of their learning and progress

This also benefits your organisation

- Improves team performance and productivity
- Increases engagement and retention
- Helps close skills gaps faster
- Builds a stronger learning culture

Pause and Reflect

How can the way you support and guide your apprentice create meaningful benefits for both their development and the success of your organisation?



Mentoring Impact Checklist

Use this to quickly sense-check your impact:



- My apprentice is growing in confidence
- They are progressing in their role
- They are becoming more independent
- They consistently apply learning in the workplace
- They stay engaged and motivated
- Team performance is improving
- There is a positive impact on productivity or engagement

06.

Mentoring Skills and Behaviours

Great mentoring is not just about what you know – it’s about how you support others.

The way you listen, communicate, and guide your apprentice shapes their experience and their progress.

What Makes an Effective Mentor?

Effective mentors are:

- Good listeners – they take time to understand, not just respond
- Supportive – they create a safe space to ask questions and learn
- Clear communicators – they explain ideas in a simple, practical way
- Consistent – they show up regularly and follow through
- Curious – they ask questions and encourage thinking
- Positive role models – they demonstrate good practice and behaviours

Pause and Reflect

How can the way you support and guide your apprentice create meaningful benefits for both their development and the success of your organisation?



In Practice

This might look like:

- Pausing to let your apprentice think before stepping in
- Asking “What do you think?” instead of giving the answer
- Sharing a similar experience from your own role
- Encouraging them to try, even if they’re unsure
- Recognising effort, not just results

Shift Your Approach

Instead of this:

- ✗ Giving answers quickly
- ✗ Taking over when things get difficult
- ✗ Focusing only on tasks

Try this:

- ✓ Ask first, then guide
- ✓ Support them to work through challenges
- ✓ Focus on learning, not just completion

Mentoring Skills in Action

These examples show how key mentoring behaviours can be applied through everyday conversations.

Theme (Behaviour)	Tip (What this looks like in practice)
Active Listening	Give your apprentice time to speak and show you are listening before responding
Asking Questions	Ask open questions like “What do you think?” to encourage thinking
Building Trust	Be consistent, reliable, and create a safe space for honest conversations
Sharing Experience	Use real examples from your own work to guide learning and understanding
Encouraging Independence	Support your apprentice to find their own solutions rather than giving answers
Providing Feedback	Give clear, supportive feedback that helps them improve and move forward
Being Supportive	Recognise effort and progress to build confidence and motivation

Setting Effective Goals

Mentoring in an apprenticeship is about supporting your apprentice to succeed in their role, develop their skills, and grow in confidence within the workplace.

It is more than supervision or task-setting. Mentoring is a working relationship where you share your experience, provide guidance, and help your apprentice make sense of what they are learning day to day.

As a mentor, you help your apprentice connect their learning to real work - supporting them to understand not just what to do, but why it matters.

i Without clear goals, it's easy for apprentices to lose direction or feel unsure about their progress.

What Good Goals Look Like

Effective goals should be:

- **Clear** - easy to understand, with a specific outcome or task
- **Realistic** - achievable with the right level of support and time
- **Relevant** - linked to their role, responsibilities, and development
- **Time-bound** - have a clear timeframe or deadline to work towards

i Well-structured goals give your apprentice a clear sense of direction and make progress easier to measure.

Mentor Checklist



- Goals are agreed together, not set alone — giving your apprentice ownership and commitment
- Goals are specific and clearly understood, so there is no uncertainty about what success looks like
- Goals link to real workplace tasks, making learning practical and relevant
- Progress is reviewed regularly to maintain focus and momentum
- Feedback is used to guide improvements and adjust goals where needed
- Next steps are clear after each conversation, so your apprentice knows what to do next

09.

Setting Goals Together

- Use these simple questions to guide the conversation:
- What do you want to achieve?
- Why is this important to you?
- What is the first step you will take?



Effective goal setting is a shared conversation that builds ownership and motivation.

Focusing on Development

- Link goals to real tasks, responsibilities, or learning opportunities
- Ensure the goal supports both learning and workplace performance

Reinforcing Strengths

- Build on what your apprentice already does well
- Use strengths to increase confidence and success

Pause and Reflect

- How clear and specific are the goals you are setting with your apprentice?
- How involved is your apprentice in agreeing their own goals?
- How effectively do your goals link to real workplace tasks and development?
- How often do you review progress and adjust goals where needed?
- What impact are your current goals having on motivation and progress?



Break bigger goals into smaller steps.

This helps your apprentice stay focused, build confidence, and see progress more clearly.

10.

Supporting and Monitoring Progress

Setting a goal is only the beginning – progress happens through regular support, guidance, and check-ins.

Consistent mentoring helps your apprentice stay focused, overcome challenges, and keep moving forward.

Keeping Conversations on Track

Use simple questions to guide progress:

- What progress have you made since last time?
- What has gone well?
- What is getting in the way?
- What will you do next?



Regular conversations help maintain momentum and keep development on track.

Making Progress Visible

Progress becomes more meaningful when your apprentice can clearly see how far they've come.

- Break goals into small, trackable steps
- Use simple ways to show progress (notes, milestones, checklists)
- Highlight improvements during conversations

Use this to quickly check if progress is being supported effectively

Monitoring Progress Checklist



- We have regular check-ins to review progress
- My apprentice can clearly explain what they've achieved
- Progress is visible through actions, not just discussion
- Barriers are identified early and explored together
- Small improvements are recognised and discussed
- Clear next steps are agreed after each conversation

11.

Did You Know?

Mentoring and regular development conversations are linked to higher engagement, improved performance, and stronger skill development in the workplace (CIPD, 2023).

Research also shows that mentoring supports increased confidence, career progression, and professional development (Institute of Leadership, 2024; EMCC Global, 2023).

In Practice - Supporting Progress

- Scheduling regular check-ins, not just formal reviews
- Asking focused questions to understand progress
- Encouraging your apprentice to reflect on what's working
- Adjusting support when priorities or challenges change
- Recognising improvements to build confidence



Effective mentoring keeps development active, not just discussed.

What You Should Start to See

- Increased confidence in everyday tasks
- Greater ownership of work and learning
- More consistent and steady progress
- Clear understanding of next steps



Simple, structured conversations keep progress focused and moving forward.

12.

Empowering Through Questions

Great mentoring isn't about always having the answers — it's about helping your apprentice find their own.

By asking the right questions, you encourage thinking, build confidence, and support your apprentice to take ownership of their development.

i The goal is not to direct — it's to develop independent thinking.

Why Questions Matter

- Give your apprentice time to think before responding
- Help them break down situations and think more clearly
- Encourage them to explore different approaches
- Support better decision-making without taking over



Questions create space for thinking, rather than filling it with answers.

In the Moment

When you're about to give an answer, pause and ask:

- What do you think is the best way to approach this?
- What options have you already considered?
- What would you try next?

i A simple question can turn guidance into learning.

Quick Check - Are You Asking or Telling?



- I pause before giving an answer
- I ask at least one question before offering advice
- I give my apprentice time to think
- I build on their response with a follow-up question
- I guide the conversation without taking over

Using Questions in Practice

Asking questions is just the starting point — using them effectively is what makes the difference. The way you guide conversations can help your apprentice think more clearly, explore different options, and take meaningful next steps.

Did You Know?

Using questioning techniques in mentoring supports stronger problem-solving, independent thinking, and more effective learning (CIPD, 2023; EMCC Global, 2023).



In the Moment: Killer Questions

Use questions that challenge thinking and move the conversation forward:

- What's really going on here?
- What is the most important part of this situation?
- What might you be overlooking?
- What could you do differently?
- What would success look like here?
- What will you do next?



i "Killer questions" prompt insight, challenge thinking, and lead to action.

What Makes a Great Question

Strong questions don't happen by accident — they are intentional, focused, and designed to move thinking forward.

Great questions typically:



- **Focus on thinking, not just answers** - they encourage your apprentice to explore ideas, rather than respond quickly
- **Create clarity** - they help break down situations and make complex issues easier to understand
- **Build self-awareness** - they help your apprentice reflect on their actions, decisions, and thinking → "What did you notice about how you handled that?"
- **Challenge in a supportive way** - they gently stretch thinking without leading or overwhelming
- **Encourage honest reflection** - they invite thoughtful, real responses - not just quick or expected answers
- **Lead towards action** - they help turn thinking into clear next steps

Giving Effective Feedback



Feedback is one of the most powerful ways to support development - when it's delivered in the right way.

Done well, it helps your apprentice understand what they are doing well, where they can improve, and what they should do next.



Effective feedback supports progress, not just performance.

A Simple Feedback Approach

Effective feedback isn't about pointing out mistakes — it's about helping your apprentice understand their actions, reflect on their impact, and take clear next steps.

Using a simple structure can help keep feedback focused, supportive, and easy to apply in everyday conversations.

Step	How to apply it
Describe	Clearly explain what happened using specific examples
Explain	Highlight the impact of the action or behaviour
Explore	Ask questions to encourage reflection
Move Forward	Agree clear next steps and actions

In the Moment - Giving Feedback

When giving feedback, aim to keep the conversation open and supportive:

- Start with what worked well
- Be clear and specific about what could improve
- Ask for their perspective before moving on
- Agree one clear next step

15.

Effective feedback is a conversation — not a one-way message.

How Feedback Is Received



The way feedback is delivered shapes how it is received.

Clear, respectful feedback helps your apprentice stay open and engaged, while unclear or overly critical feedback can lead to confusion or defensiveness.

How feedback feels is just as important as what is said.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid



Even well-intended feedback can lose impact if it's not delivered carefully:

- Being too vague ("just improve this")
- Giving too much at once
- Focusing only on what went wrong
- Not allowing time for response
- Moving on without agreeing a next step



Avoiding these helps feedback stay clear, useful, and actionable.

Keep It Development Focused

Feedback should always point forward, not just look back.

- Focus on what can improve next time
- Link feedback to development and goals
- Keep the conversation focused on progress



Did You Know?

The way feedback is delivered has a direct impact on how it is received. Clear, respectful feedback helps your apprentice stay open and engaged, while unclear or overly critical feedback can lead to confusion or resistance (CIPD, 2023).



16.

Motivating Your Apprentice

Motivation plays a key role in how your apprentice engages, learns, and progresses.

As a mentor, you can influence motivation through the way you support, challenge, and recognise progress over time.

i Motivation isn't just about enthusiasm — it's about helping your apprentice stay focused and committed.

Pause and Reflect

- What helps your apprentice stay motivated right now?
- When have you seen their motivation increase or drop?
- How do you currently recognise progress and effort?
- What small change could you make to better support motivation?



In Practice - Supporting Motivation

Small, consistent actions can make a big difference to motivation:

- Check in regularly to maintain focus
- Recognise effort as well as outcomes
- Keep goals visible and achievable
- Adjust your approach when motivation changes

Motivation is strengthened through everyday support, not one-off actions.

Use this to quickly sense-check how you are supporting motivation:

Motivation Support Checklist



- My apprentice understands what they are working towards
- Progress is recognised regularly (not just at the end)
- Goals are broken into manageable steps
- I adapt my support when motivation drops
- Conversations stay positive and focused on progress

17.

Motivating Your Apprentice

Motivation doesn't stay constant — it needs to be supported and maintained over time.

The way you recognise progress, respond to challenges, and guide conversations will influence how your apprentice stays engaged and moves forward.

i Motivation grows through consistent support, not one-off moments.

What Motivated Apprentices Do

- More engagement in tasks and conversations
- Willingness to take on responsibility
- Greater confidence in day-to-day work
- Consistent effort and progress

What Can Affect Motivation

- Goals feel unclear or too large
- Progress isn't recognised
- Feedback is inconsistent or unclear
- Challenges feel overwhelming



18.

Encouraging Reflective Practice

Reflection is a key part of learning and development.

It helps your apprentice understand their experiences, recognise what is working, and identify what they can improve.

Learning doesn't just come from doing — it comes from thinking about what's been done.

Pause and Reflect

- How often do you encourage your apprentice to reflect?
- What questions do you ask to support reflection?
- How confident is your apprentice in talking about their learning?



Reflection takes practice — your support helps build this skill over time.

Why Reflection Matters



- Helps make sense of experiences
- Builds self-awareness
- Identifies strengths and areas to improve
- Encourages continuous learning

In Practice



- Ask questions that encourage thinking
- Give space for your apprentice to respond
- Focus on learning, not just outcomes
- Revisit experiences and build on them



Turning Reflection into Learning

Reflection becomes powerful when it leads to action.

It helps your apprentice understand what has happened, learn from it, and make better decisions moving forward.

The goal is not just to reflect — it's to improve what happens next.



Putting Reflection into Practice

Using a simple reflective structure helps your apprentice move beyond describing what happened, to understanding why it happened and what to do next.

As a mentor, your role is to guide this process through conversation, helping your apprentice think more deeply, make sense of their experience, and apply their learning moving forward. **Try the approaches below:** Experience, learning, action.



TRY THIS

Help your apprentice talk through what happened:

- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?



TRY THIS

Support them to reflect and build understanding:

- What worked well?
- What didn't go as expected?
- What have you learned from this?



TRY THIS

Guide the conversation towards next steps:

- What would you do differently next time?
- What is your next step?



Stretching to Potential

Stretching your apprentice helps them grow beyond their current level of confidence and capability.

As a mentor, your role is not just to support — but to gently challenge, encouraging your apprentice to try new things, take responsibility, and develop new skills.

Growth happens just outside of comfort zones.

What Stretching Looks Like

Stretching your apprentice means:

- Encouraging them to take on new or unfamiliar tasks
- Giving opportunities to lead or take responsibility
- Supporting them to try, even when they are unsure
- Challenging thinking in a supportive way



Stretching is about growth, not pressure.

In Practice

- Ask them to take on a task slightly outside their comfort zone
- Encourage them to make decisions independently
- Support them to reflect on what they've learned
- Recognise effort as well as success

i Confidence builds when people try — not just when they succeed.

POTENTIAL

“Support and challenge should go hand in hand, too much of one without the other limits growth.”

Stretching to Potential

Stretching your apprentice is most effective when it is balanced with the right level of support.

Too much challenge can feel overwhelming, while too little can limit development.

The right balance creates confidence, capability, and progress.

The stretch balance

TOO LITTLE STRETCH

- Comfort zone
- Limited development
- Reduced engagement



RIGHT LEVEL OF STRETCH

- Builds confidence
- Encourages learning
- Develops new skills



TOO MUCH STRETCH

- Overwhelm
- Loss of confidence
- Reduced motivation



What You Can Do

- Gradually increase responsibility over time
- Offer support when challenges feel difficult
- Encourage reflection after new experiences
- Adjust your approach based on confidence levels

Stretch should feel achievable — not overwhelming.

i Stretching your apprentice helps them realise what they are capable of — often before they recognise it themselves.

Stretch and Support Checklist

- I provide opportunities for my apprentice to step outside their comfort zone
- I balance challenge with the right level of support
- I recognise progress and build confidence through feedback

Growth Mindset and Resilience

A growth mindset helps your apprentice see challenges as opportunities to learn and improve.

Instead of focusing on what they can't do yet, they begin to focus on what they can develop over time.

Mindset shapes how your apprentice responds to challenge and feedback.

Pause and Reflect

- How does your apprentice currently respond to challenges or mistakes?
- Do they see setbacks as barriers or opportunities to learn?
- How do you respond when things don't go as planned?



Your approach as a mentor influences how your apprentice thinks and responds.

What a Growth Mindset Looks Like

- Willingness to try new or difficult tasks
- Openness to feedback and learning
- Seeing effort as part of improvement
- Persistence when things are challenging

A growth mindset builds confidence through learning, not just success.

In Practice

- Encourage effort, not just outcomes
- Reframe mistakes as learning opportunities
- Normalise challenge as part of development
- Recognise progress over time

Small shifts in language can change how your apprentice thinks.

Building Confidence Through Resilience

Resilience helps your apprentice stay focused and keep moving forward, even when things are difficult.

It allows them to learn from setbacks, adapt their approach, and continue developing over time.

Resilience is built through experience, support, and reflection.

Understanding & Responding

- Mistakes and setbacks are part of learning
- Encourage reflection rather than frustration
- Focus on what can be learned and controlled

Moving Forward

- Focus on clear next steps and improvement
- Recognise effort and persistence
- Build confidence through small successes

Bringing It Together

- Building resilience is not about avoiding challenges — it's about helping your apprentice respond to them in the right way.
- By supporting them to understand setbacks, reflect on what they've learned, and take clear next steps, you help turn difficult experiences into opportunities for growth.

Your guidance helps move them from challenge to confidence.

Supporting Resilience

- I normalise mistakes as part of learning
- I encourage reflection when challenges arise
- I help my apprentice focus on what they can control
- I recognise effort and persistence
- I support clear next steps after setbacks



Supporting Apprenticeship Wellbeing

Supporting wellbeing is an important part of mentoring. When your apprentice feels supported, valued, and able to talk openly, they are more likely to stay engaged, motivated, and able to progress.

Wellbeing isn't about solving every problem — it's about creating an environment where your apprentice feels safe, supported, and able to succeed.

Pause and Reflect

- How confident do you feel in supporting your apprentice's wellbeing?
- What signs might indicate your apprentice needs support?
- How do you currently create a safe space for conversations?



As a mentor, your role is to support and listen - not to manage every situation. If you have concerns about your apprentice's wellbeing, it's important to follow your organisation's processes and seek support from the appropriate teams or individuals.

Use this as a simple guide when supporting your apprentice:

Wellbeing Check



- I create a safe space for open and honest conversations
- I notice changes in behaviour, engagement, or communication
- I listen without judgement and take concerns seriously
- I check in regularly, not just when issues arise
- I know when to offer support or signpost further help

Being Aware and Supportive



- **Notice changes in behaviour, mood, or engagement**
- **Create a safe space for open and honest conversations**
- **Listen without judgement and take concerns seriously**
- **Know when to offer support — and when to signpost further help**

You don't need to have all the answers — being present and supportive makes a difference.

Impact Futures Group