

## **Kent Mentor Scheme for New Headteachers**

Formal mentoring schemes for new headteachers were introduced nationally in 1992. Since 2001, Kent has supported headteachers through a Headteacher Induction Programme, which includes a mentor during the first year of headship.

Kent's new headteacher mentors have been recruited on an ad-hoc basis and have been allocated by governing bodies, diocese, local authority officers, out-going headteachers and unions. New headteacher mentors have volunteered and been delighted to support a new headteacher. Although several New Headteacher Mentors have had excellent general mentor training many others have had no training at all.

The Kent Mentor Scheme for New Headteachers sets out a more formal set of procedures that will bring consistency to the recruitment, training and allocation of mentors for new headteachers. It will provide high quality support for new headteachers complementing Kent's highly successful Headteacher Induction Programmes and the National College for School Leadership Early Headship Programme.

### **Vision and Aim**

The Kent Mentor Scheme for New Headteachers will be a high quality provision that compliments the Headteacher Induction Programme. The scheme will ensure that new headteachers are regularly supported by experienced and well trained headteacher colleagues. The scheme will also provide personal support that will enable the new headteacher to meet the demands of the role. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that new headteachers are able to become highly functional leaders of their communities within the first year by feeling valued and supported by experienced headteacher colleagues.

### **Objectives**

- to create a database of mentors that have a proven track record of high quality leadership
- to provide training for mentors that will enable them to advise and support new headteachers to become confident, independent and innovative leaders
- to set up an evaluation process of the scheme that helps the mentors to develop their skills for the benefit of new headteachers
- to set out a clear set of expectations for both the mentor and new headteacher
- to provide guidelines for Governing Bodies and Local Authority Officers for the allocation of mentors prior to new headteachers taking up an appointment
- to establish the funding mechanisms to support the scheme

### **Qualities and attributes of Mentors**

Mentors should:

- be experienced, knowledgeable, supportive reliable and flexible (NCSL).
- possess good social and emotional intelligence with the ability to 'enable' rather than 'tell'
- be open to new ideas and innovations
- be fully aware of current Kent strategies
- be able to build trust in the relationship by providing total confidentiality

### **Recruitment to the Kent Mentor Scheme for New Headteachers database**

Recruitment of mentors will be open and transparent through Kent TrustWeb and other promotional sources.

### **Criteria for recruiting Mentors**

- mentors must have received formal training provided by the Local Authority
- mentors must be serving or recently retired headteachers
- the mentor's school must have received an 'outstanding' or 'good' Ofsted judgement for leadership and management
- the mentor must have been recommended to the Leadership Strategy Group by a Local Authority Officer

### **Allocation of Mentors to a new headteacher**

The allocation of a mentor is the responsibility of the governing body supported by the lead officer and professional adviser.

### **Process of allocation**

- it is strongly advised that the allocation should be made immediately following appointment, so that the new headteacher can seek support from the mentor prior to taking up the appointment
- the lead officer will advise the governing body of the support for a new headteacher, provided by the local authority, through the Headteacher Induction programme and Mentor Scheme
- the appointment of a mentor should be from the database of new headteacher mentors
- the lead officer / professional adviser should prepare a shortlist of several possible mentors from the Kent Mentor Scheme database
- if it is not possible to allocate a mentor immediately following appointment, then this should be completed as soon as possible thereafter

### **Guidelines for allocation**

There may be exceptional circumstances but we strongly advise that the allocation of a mentor for a new headteacher should:

- always be from the Mentor Scheme database
- be someone from outside the LCSP and local network of schools
- not have any previous working relationship with new headteacher (e.g. ex-headteacher / deputy headteacher relationship)

Further consideration should be given to matching a mentor with the needs of the new headteacher and needs of his/her school based on the following:

- challenging circumstances
- faith schools
- grammar schools
- specific issues related to finance, personnel, BSF etc.

Lead officers and professional advisers should not recommend a mentor who does not have the capacity in their leadership team at their current school or if they have major issues to address such as financial resource issues, OFSTED category or reorganisation.

### **Training Programmes**

The initial training for those who have had no mentor training will be in the form of a two day training programme, day one will cover mentoring in general and day two will cover mentoring specifically for new headteachers. For those who have undertaken recognised mentor training (e.g. London Leadership College), a one day programme will be offered, that covers mentoring specifically for new headteachers.

## **Expectations of Mentors and New Headteachers**

Mentors should agree to:

- meet the new headteacher at least once per term
- arrange the first meeting in the new headteacher's school
- be proactive in arranging all meetings by ensuring they have clear diary dates for next meeting
- be available by telephone or e-mail to respond to urgent requests from the new headteacher

New Headteachers:

- although mentors will be proactive in arranging meetings, new headteachers should contact the mentor if meetings have not been arranged or there is an urgent need
- should expect to resolve their own issues after receiving advice from the mentor
- should not expect mentors to solve problems
- use the meetings to test out ideas, initiatives and developments

## **Annual meetings for Mentors and Evaluation of the scheme**

An annual meeting, to be held in summer terms, will be provided to evaluate the Kent Mentor Scheme for New Headteachers, particularly in relation to recruitment and allocation of mentors. This will also be an opportunity to share experiences and discuss the needs of the current year's new headteachers and the implication this will have for the forthcoming cohort. In addition this meeting will be an opportunity for sharing updates on NCSL developments, consider the fixed agendas of the current year and agree agendas for following year. A report will also be presented on the New Headteacher Induction Programme for the current year and plans for the next year.

## **Funding for the Kent Mentor Scheme for New Headteachers**

The Kent Mentor Scheme will be appropriately funded and not reliant on the goodwill of headteachers and their schools. Travel and cover costs will be provided by the new headteacher's school and through the Early Headship Programme grant, whilst this is available. The funding for training mentors and for annual evaluation will be provided through Advisory Service Kent and TDA funding.