

Case Study – Mentor Connect

Mentee – Ashanti Fearon-Kerr – Senior Family Support Worker – Early Help

'Asking for support doesn't mean I'm not good at what I do - it simply means I value clarity and reassurance. Mentor Connect gave me exactly what I needed. It became an important part of my wellbeing, and I would wholeheartedly recommend it to others'

The Challenge

How did you come across the resource?

I simply went onto the staff intranet and searched 'mentoring' in the search bar and MentorConnect came up!

What was the specific professional challenge or goal that first led you to seek out 'Mentor Connect'?

I had just started my role as a Senior Family Support Worker in Early Help, which was a new position within the service at the time. I felt I needed additional confidence and guidance in how best to approach the role, and I believed it would be valuable to receive mentoring from someone outside the service who could offer a fresh perspective

Before using this resource, how were you approaching your career development or specific hurdles?

I would usually speak with my manager to explore any relevant training opportunities, but I still felt I needed dedicated one-to-one support. I was also mindful of my manager's many commitments, so seeking guidance from someone else felt like a helpful way to get the additional support I needed.

The Experience

How did the matching process feel for you? Was it easy to find a mentor who aligned with your needs?

The platform was easy to use, and finding a suitable mentor felt straightforward. After registering, the system suggested potential mentors based on the information I had provided. Several matches came up for me, and after reading through their profiles, I chose the mentor who felt like the best fit and messaged them. Once we both agreed to move forward, we set up regular sessions. The first two meetings took place weekly, and after that we moved to monthly sessions, each lasting an hour.

We mainly communicated through our work email addresses at the beginning, which made the process simple and convenient.

What was the most valuable insight or 'lightbulb moment' you've had during your sessions?

There was quite a few! You know when someone is outside the box looking in, they can see things from a different perspective and advise you how to navigate certain scenarios. They also shared additional resources, including helpful websites and links that I could explore in my own time.

One of the key things I took away from my mentoring experience was the value of pausing before responding. You don't have to reply straight away! Taking a moment to reflect can help you feel less pressured. I also realised that when faced with difficult or challenging situations, it isn't always about me. Sometimes the other person may be dealing with something themselves, and their reaction can reflect that - not anything I've done. Understanding this has helped me approach situations with more perspective.

In what ways did your mentor support you that you didn't initially expect?

Overall, I received the support I was expecting, but I was pleasantly surprised by how much additional information and how many useful links my mentor provided - I had assumed the sessions would be purely conversational. But I definitely feel that I came out of this with more confidence, and the resources they shared were really helpful because I can continue to revisit these whenever I need them.

The Impact

Can you share a measurable success or specific milestone you achieved as a direct result of this mentorship?

Aside from gaining confidence, I now feel much more capable of navigating difficult situations. I've learned that things won't always go perfectly, and that's completely okay. It's also perfectly fine to ask for support, even in a senior role. Previously, I often questioned whether I should be seeking help at my level, wondering if I was expected to already know everything. Now I recognise that it's normal not to have all the answers, and that we continue learning as we go. This realisation has really strengthened my confidence in my role. Asking for help doesn't mean I'm not good at what I do, it simply means I want clarity and confirmation at times.

A lot of the pressure I felt came from expectations I had placed on myself, which is why mentoring became so valuable. When I first started the role, I had to have surgery and was off work for three months. By the time I returned, the team had already begun to find their rhythm, while I felt like I was only just getting started. It was overwhelming at times, and having mentoring support helped me navigate that period and rebuild my confidence.

If someone is on the fence about signing up for 'Mentor Connect', what would you say to them?

Just do it!

Take some time to look through the website and watch the video. I'm dyslexic, so the videos were incredibly helpful for me. It's so important to make space for yourself, especially when you spend a lot of time in meetings; having that protected time is crucial and can help prevent burnout.

One thing I really appreciated was that if my mentor hadn't heard from me, they would gently reach out to remind me to book in our next session. The mentee arranges the meeting times, and the mentor works around whatever availability you have, which made the process really flexible.

Overall, I would definitely encourage anyone to give it a try. Your mentor doesn't have to be from the same organisation and there are mentors from a wide range of backgrounds and sectors, which brings a variety of perspectives and experiences you can learn from.