

Skills Hub: Creative Community Mentoring Programme – Mentor FAQ

What is the purpose of the mentoring programme?

Our mentoring programme brings together creative and cultural professionals from across County Durham to support people who are developing their creative practice or career.

Through one-to-one mentoring, shared events and opportunities to connect with peers, the programme aims to build confidence, strengthen networks and create space for learning, reflection and growth for mentors and mentees alike.

As a mentor, you'll play an important role in supporting someone to explore their goals, overcome challenges and take positive steps in their creative journey, while becoming part of a wider community of mentors and mentees.

Why become a mentor?

Mentoring is an opportunity to share your experience, support someone else's development and contribute to the creative and cultural sector in County Durham.

Many mentors also find the experience rewarding for their own development, reflecting on their own journey, learning from different perspectives, sharing best practice, making new connections and contributing to a supportive creative community.

What makes a good mentor?

You don't need to have all the answers to be a great mentor. We are looking for people who are willing to listen, ask thoughtful questions, share their experiences, and support someone else's development. Good mentors provide encouragement, help mentees reflect on their goals and challenges, and create a positive space for honest conversations. Previous mentoring experience is welcome, but not essential.

What's involved?

- Attendance at a half-day mentor training session before the programme begins
- Be matched with a mentee based on their interests, goals and development needs
- Provide up to 12 hours of mentoring across the programme
- Agree a mentoring approach and schedule with your mentee
- Attend key programme events where possible, including informal drop ins and launch/midpoint/celebration events
- Share feedback to help us evaluate and improve the programme

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply to be a mentor?

We're looking for people with experience working within the creative and cultural sector who are willing to share their knowledge, insights and encouragement with someone earlier in their journey.

Do I need previous mentoring experience?

No. While previous mentoring experience is welcome, it's not essential. Training and ongoing support will be provided throughout the programme.

How are mentors matched with mentees?

We will carefully match mentors and mentees based on the information shared during the application process, including interests, goals and areas where support is sought.

What is expected of mentors?

We ask mentors to be reliable, respectful and committed to making the most of the mentoring relationship.

What is not expected of mentors?

You don't need to have all the answers. Mentors are not expected to act as counsellors, provide employment opportunities, solve problems on behalf of their mentee or be available outside agreed mentoring arrangements.

How much time will I need to commit?

Mentors will provide up to 12 hours of mentoring throughout the programme, alongside attendance at a half-day training session and programme events.

What support will I receive?

All mentors will take part in a half-day training session covering programme expectations, mentor and mentee roles, common challenges and practical activities led by experienced mentors. Ongoing support will also be available from the programme team and mentors will have opportunities to meet and discuss any challenges with the mentor cohort.

Will I be paid?

Yes. Mentors will receive a fee in recognition of their time, expertise and contribution to the programme. Mentors will be paid £50 per hour of mentorship, with an additional £250 for attending the training session.

What if the mentoring relationship isn't working?

If you have any concerns, you can contact the programme team at any time, and there will be regular opportunities to provide feedback and discuss any issues. We will work with both mentor and mentee to find ways to adapt or move forward in the most positive way possible.

What happens after I apply?

Once applications have closed, we'll review submissions and contact successful applicants with information about training, programme dates and next steps.