



GLA Reverse Mentoring

Infrastructure & Construction Sectors Report

Commissioned by the Greater London Authority

July 2021



Greater London Authority

This report has been produced with the intent of exploring the benefits and effectiveness of Reverse Mentoring when implemented in the Construction & Infrastructure Sector. This report has been commissioned by the Greater London Authority's Infrastructure Team.

The Infrastructure Team at the Greater London Authority (GLA) work to facilitate safer and more efficient planning and delivery of infrastructure in London. The team's work programme is guided by the infrastructure sector, having a range of industry panels to input into their work programme including the Infrastructure Advisory Panel (IAP), the Young Professionals Panel (YPP) and the London Infrastructure Group (LIG). The LIG, which comprises 23 representatives at CEO-equivalent level from across London's Infrastructure sector, is convened by the Mayor of London biannually.

The Equal Group

The Equal Group was established to give organisations the tools and support needed to reap the advantages of embracing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Our passion comes from a deep-seated belief that diversity and inclusion not only benefit an individual, but organisations, sectors and society as a whole. Changing attitudes in the workplace can be a catalyst to how we interact with our colleagues in and outside the office or other environments.

We realise that embedding EDI is not always easy and our aim is to simplify this as much as possible. We find that a lot of organisations are quick to get involved in initiatives, without a clear and analytical assessment of the impact that these initiatives have on the organisation's overall EDI vision. Our approach ensures that companies leverage qualitative and quantitative data to achieve intersectional, measurable and sustainable EDI progress.



Executive Summary

Birthered in the 90s, Reverse Mentoring can be defined as an alternative approach to Traditional Mentoring. Traditional Mentoring sees a person of seniority paired with an individual in a junior position. During their time together the senior individual takes on the role of Mentor and helps guide and develop the junior participant in any area of their professional development.

Reverse Mentoring inverts this traditional approach and sees the role of Mentor given to a junior employee or an employee with the expertise or experience in a particular subject. Reverse Mentoring can be used to encourage personal development, career progression and development or it can be used to help organisations reach their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) goals.

This report explores the benefits and impact that Reverse Mentoring can have, not only on an organisation but on the individuals that participate in the programme as well as highlighting the challenges and drawbacks of Reverse Mentoring such as: the time it takes to build a programme; the availability of resources to manage the programme; the willingness of participants to volunteer their time to become Mentors and time commitment needed from both Mentor and Mentee.

This report also explores the use of Reverse Mentoring in various sectors, as well as first-hand examples from the Construction and Infrastructure sector, collated via desk-based research and one-on-one conversations with organisations such as Wates who established their programme in 2020 and members of the London Infrastructure Group (LIG) who have piloted or established Reverse Mentoring programmes within their organisations in the past few years. These members are:

- Balfour Beatty
- Ofwat
- Thames Water
- SGN
- Ofgem

Key Findings

The findings from research conducted have shown that Reverse Mentoring can be used in different contexts, whether that be personal development, career progression and development or when applied to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to aid organisations in reaching their EDI goals. However when Reverse Mentoring is established in the Construction and Infrastructure sector the report found that there are numerous challenges and constraints that can arise, such as the nuances of running a programme in a sector that has workers operating both on-site and in an office environment.

Alternative approaches to Reverse Mentoring such as Mentoring Circles, Co-Sponsorship Mentoring and Cross-Sector Mentoring and their benefits have been explored and compared to the use of traditional Reverse Mentoring especially when focused on EDI.

From conversations had with members of the LIG, this report found that these organisations piloted or established their Reverse Mentoring programme in Equality Diversity and Inclusion and, while building the foundations, they heavily focused on keeping the programme concentrated on certain characteristics (mainly race) and providing support and training to both Mentors and Mentees.

Recommendations

Our research has lead us to identify eight key elements that organisations within the Construction and Infrastructure sector should focus on to achieve a successful and effective Reverse Mentoring programme, especially when addressing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion topics:

- **Finding a Focus** – is Reverse Mentoring incorporated into the overall strategy of the organisation?
- **Characteristics** – what protected characteristic(s) will be focused on?
- **Name** – is 'Reverse Mentoring' the best name and if not, does the alternative reflect the organisation and purpose of the programme?
- **Matching** – understanding learning and personality types
- **Location** – onsite vs office environment
- **Training and Support** – how will this be made available to participants?
- **Sponsorship** – how will executives demonstrate their personal commitments?
- **Measuring Success & Effectiveness** – how will the impact be measured?



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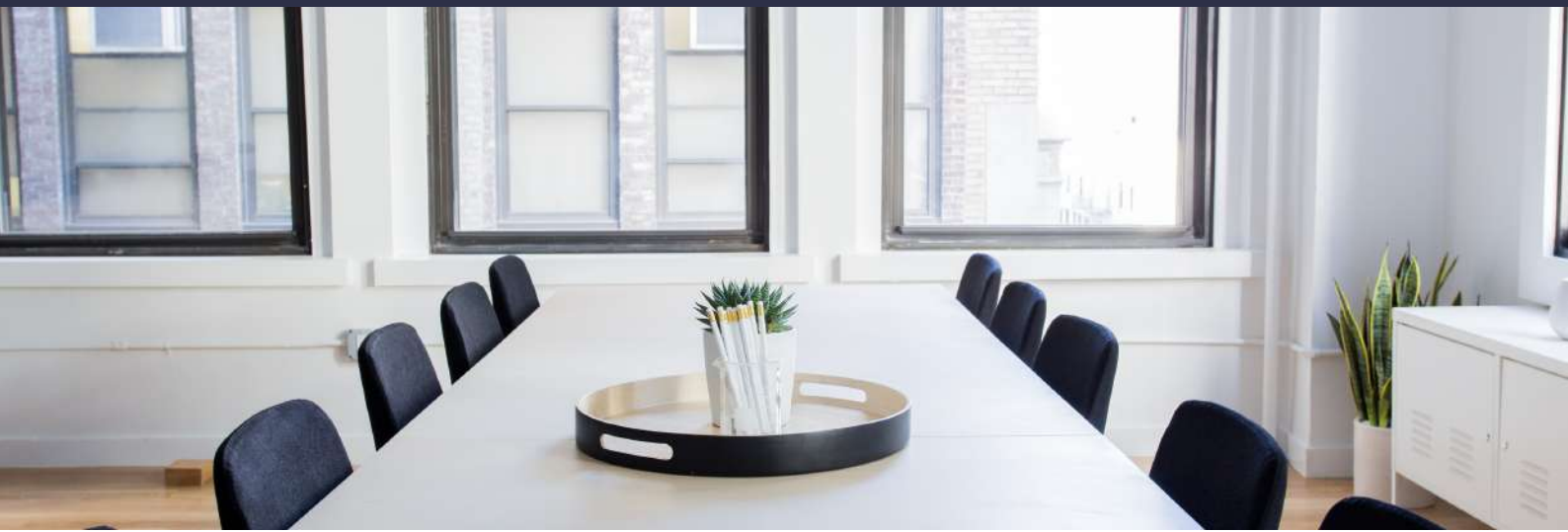
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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to explore, share and summarise the findings gathered by The Equal Group on Reverse Mentoring as requested by the Greater London Authority's Infrastructure Team.

Our specific focus in partnering with the Greater London Authority's Infrastructure Team is to consider the efficacy and structure of Reverse Mentoring programmes across Construction and Infrastructure organisations.

In this report, we will share our findings and recommendations which cover the definition of Reverse Mentoring, its benefits, effectiveness and impact, as well as exploring its impact when implemented in the Construction and Infrastructure sector.

We will dissect the current challenges within the Construction and Infrastructure sector and explore how the implementation of Reverse Mentoring can help to alleviate some of these issues.

Context

This report is a continuation of work currently being undertaken by the Mayor of London and the London Infrastructure Group in response to the results from the 'Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in the Infrastructure Sector' report. This research will be key in exploring the rationale for building the foundations to facilitate Reverse Mentoring between a diverse range of employees and senior leaders, as a means to create a more inclusive culture within organisations and across the sector.

With several initiatives currently happening across the Construction and Infrastructure sector, this research seeks to provide strategic support and guidance for organisations to allow them to consider whether Reverse Mentoring might be appropriate and if so, to optimise and successfully implement an effective programme that can form part of their wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

Our Approach

The Equal Group collaborated with the Greater London Authority's Infrastructure Team in order to undertake research into the possible effectiveness and impact of Reverse Mentoring within the Construction and Infrastructure sector.

Prior to conducting any in-depth research, we explored several definitions of Reverse Mentoring before reaching a final definition of what Reverse Mentoring is.

To build this report we engaged in several exploratory conversations with members of The London Infrastructure Group (LIG), to understand why and how they established Reverse Mentoring schemes in their organisations. We engaged in several exploratory conversations with a number of members of The LIG:

- Balfour Beatty
- Ofwat
- Thames Water
- SGN
- Ofgem

Conversations with these members were initially focused on understanding the purpose and characteristics that their programmes were based on, exploring how impact was measured and understanding how the matching/pairing of participants worked. Additional information was gathered such as the support these organisations provide to both Mentor and Mentee, as well as overall lessons learned from implementing their programmes.

As well as speaking with members of the London Infrastructure Group, we also collated case studies from external construction organisations such as Wates and the Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE). In addition to gathering insights from organisations in the construction sector, we also built case studies from various industries such as housing (Peabody Housing Association), health services (London Ambulance) and education (The Office of Students). Several of these case studies have been embedded throughout this report and in the appendix. This supports our approach of using both academic theory and real-life examples.

We took a multifaceted approach to deliver the research aspect of this report by conducting desk-based research to identify varying approaches and methods to Reverse Mentoring, identifying national and international examples of best practice, positive and negative impacts of Reverse Mentoring, as well as academic insight into the anticipated behavioural psychological impacts of Reverse Mentoring on both Mentors and Mentees.

We also explored the numerous variable factors and challenges in the Construction and Infrastructure sector that could impact the success of Reverse Mentoring when implemented.

Given the plethora of influencing factors (such as size, geographic location and the maturity of the organisation), it was important for us to firmly define the research context which led us to our research questions: “What is Reverse Mentoring?” and “Is it effective and beneficial to establish such an initiative within Construction and Infrastructure organisations?”

With the analysis gathered, we have challenged conventions and theory, whilst also identifying areas of improvement, especially within the Construction and Infrastructure sector, which will impact the overall outcome of implementing Reverse Mentoring.



What is Reverse Mentoring?



Originally birthed in the 1990s by Jack Welch (former CEO of General Electric), Reverse Mentoring can be defined as an alternative inverted approach to traditional Mentoring. (Allen, McManus, & Russell, 1999; Kram, 1996; Kram & Hall, 1996).

Traditional Mentoring is defined as the process in which one person, usually of seniority, guides the development of an individual in a more junior position (Marcinkus Murphy, W, 2012).

Reverse Mentoring flips this approach and gives the role of Mentor to the junior employee with expertise or experience in a particular subject. The more experienced employee (usually a manager) becomes the Mentee, seeking to improve their understanding of the relevant subject through engagement with an expert or experienced individual – in this case, the junior employee.

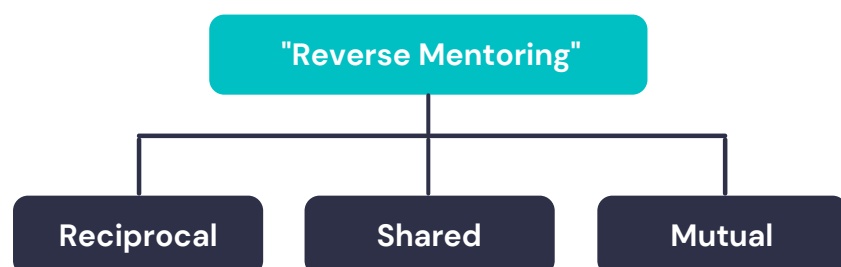
How often these two employees meet and for how long is decided by the organisation, and the topic or area of development is often one that the Mentee has highlighted a lack of knowledge in.

In order for Mentees to develop their knowledge in this area, Mentors with the right knowledge or skills are paired with the appropriate Mentees.

Until recently, Reverse Mentoring had typically been based on age and mainly used within the Technology sector; however, our research has revealed that Reverse Mentoring can be used in almost all sectors to better understand other protected characteristics, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and other areas of difference.

One of the key differences between traditional Mentoring and Reverse Mentoring is its ability to facilitate two-way development, which is why Reverse Mentoring is sometimes referred to as reciprocal Mentoring.

Depending on the organisation, Reverse Mentoring can be referred to or rebranded under several different names:





Organisations may decide to deviate from the typical 'Reverse Mentoring' terminology to ensure the programme name works with wider strategies or goals, or they may feel that certain words would foster a greater level of support or engagement amongst staff.

Unlike traditional Mentoring where the Mentor (usually the more experienced employee) passes down knowledge and skills, Reverse Mentoring creates an opportunity for the Mentor to develop their network and for the Mentee to gain the knowledge and skills they need.

When establishing Reverse Mentoring and pairing participants together, whether the end goal is to learn a new skill or to become more inclusive, Mentees have to commit to every session. Unlike traditional Mentoring where there may be no set number of sessions to attend or sessions can sometimes be missed, it is mandatory for both participants to complete the programme by attending every session. This is due to the fact that the topics raised in these sessions are often too large or sensitive to tackle in just a few conversations.

When measuring impact, participants may be asked at several points to assess their level of understanding. This can not be properly assessed if sessions are missed. Further insights on how impact is measured will be shared later in this report.

Benefits & Impacts of Reverse Mentoring

Reverse Mentoring holds a plethora of benefits not just for Mentors and Mentees, but, potentially, for the whole organisation. These benefits are not only skill-based but also Equality, Diversity and Inclusion-based (EDI).

Mentor	Mentee	Organisation
Skill-based: Leadership skill development	EDI based: Creates opportunity for uncomfortable questions to be asked	EDI based: Create a culture of career long learning and development
Skill-based: Networking opportunities	EDI based: Allows Mentee to understand challenges faced by their workforce, especially junior staff	EDI based: Fulfillment of organisation-wide EDI goals
Skill-based: Builds confidence	EDI based: Empathy & sensitivity	EDI based: Helps retain & attract more junior talent
Skill-based: Communication skills	EDI based: Active listening	
Skill-based: Develops Stakeholder Management skills	EDI based: Willingness to consider a range of perspectives	

For the Mentor, one of the primary benefits of participating in a Reverse Mentoring programme is the opportunity to develop leadership skills and gain additional experience in managing professional relationships. Through their interactions with senior leaders, Mentors can gain organisational knowledge and insights into leadership and learn how to navigate the working environment, (Hezlett & Gibson, 2005).

Reverse Mentoring also provides a great platform for Mentors to build their confidence by regularly being in conversation with senior leaders. Leading and steering conversations allows the Mentor to develop their communication skills and style, especially when speaking on difficult and sensitive topics.

Mentors will also have the opportunity to build their stakeholder management skills by setting the tone and purpose of their sessions. Being clear on what the Mentee should expect, always being ready to meet their needs and answer their questions are skills that will be beneficial outside of the Mentoring relationship. In addition, Reverse Mentoring gives the Mentor exposure to other senior leaders, offering them the opportunity to grow their network within the organisation.

For the Mentee, participating in Reverse Mentoring may potentially help in understanding challenges and barriers faced by underrepresented groups within the organisations. This will allow Mentees to consider a wide range of new perspectives and potentially help them grow in empathy and sensitivity towards underrepresented groups within the organisations.

As Mentees will not be leading conversations like they're used to, they will develop their active listening skills, helping them be present and active in conversations, rather than leading.

There are also a number of ways that Reverse Mentoring can have an impact on an organisation: from building and fostering a culture of learning; retaining, attracting and developing leadership skills in junior employees and sharing different perspectives when focused on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

In a world where employees want more from their organisations in regards to EDI, Reverse Mentoring is an effective way for an organisation to visibly show that they are committed to broadening their understanding of EDI topics, which in turn may improve morale within the organisation, especially amongst underrepresented groups.

When Reverse Mentoring is centred around EDI and is based on increasing the company's knowledge and understanding of their underrepresented stakeholders, it can be used as one of the mechanisms to aid a company in fulfilling its EDI goals.



Drawbacks & Issues with Reverse Mentoring

Although Reverse Mentoring comes with a wide range of benefits, there are potential challenges that can arise from both the poor design and/or implementation of a Reverse Mentoring programme.

Mentor	Mentee	Organisation
Time-consuming	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing training 	Time Consuming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating training materials • Matching process
Levels of understanding on topics	Effective listening skills	Unequal numbers when matching participants
Confidence to lead sessions		
Biases towards certain topics		

Unlike Traditional Mentoring, Reverse Mentoring requires consistent mandatory participation from both participants, especially the Mentee (a more experienced employee, usually a manager, seeking to improve their understanding of a particular subject through engagement with an expert or experienced individual). As the Mentee is most likely a manager/senior leader, there may be resistance and unwillingness to dedicate regular time in their already busy schedule.

From an organisational perspective, creating a Reverse Mentoring programme is also a time-consuming process and requires dedicated staff to ensure the smooth execution of the programme. Time is needed to match participants and to create training materials for both Mentors and Mentees.

If Reverse Mentoring is implemented without the right support and training being given to a Mentor, it can highlight the lack of knowledge and awareness of actions being taken within the organisation to solve issues or questions that may have been raised by the Mentee.



This can result in the Mentor advising something that goes against the plans or ethos of the organisation and extra work having to be done to fix the incorrect information given.

Also, if the same level of training and support is not provided to all Mentors beforehand, this potentially gives room to inconsistency in information shared with Mentees, creating a larger problem across the programme.

With Reverse Mentoring, there is a big risk that Mentors may not feel confident enough to lead or share their opinions, resulting in them being less willing to participate in the programme (Marcinkus Murphy, W, 2012).

This, in turn, puts the programme at risk of not having enough Mentors and resulting in some Mentors having to double up on Mentees.

There is also a risk of Mentees not effectively listening to what is being said or taking over by leading the session because that is what they are accustomed to doing.

In regards to both learning relationships, it can not be assumed that both participants will not come with their biases. If both Mentor and Mentee come in with a closed mind, then the relationship will struggle to make any progress.



Challenges & Constraints in the Construction & Infrastructure Sector



When looking at the Construction and Infrastructure sector specifically, there are a number of challenges that Reverse Mentoring can help mitigate, however, implementing a method such as this also comes with a few challenges.

The Construction and Infrastructure sector contributes an outstanding £117 billion to the UK economy, and accounts for approximately 3 million jobs (“UK construction industry”) ; however, there are various challenges and constraints which can have and have had a negative impact on the sector. These challenges and constraints can vary and cover everything from economic to human, sustainability and public perceptions of the sector.

Below we focus primarily on the human challenges faced by the sector – as we see these factors being most relevant when considering the impact and potential benefits of Reverse Mentoring.

From our initial analysis, we can see that the sector is going through a period of change, with significant implications on the sector’s requirements for skills and knowledge. With an ageing workforce, it is estimated that around 22% of the current UK workforce are between the ages of 50–60 and are likely to retire by the end of 2021, leaving an estimated 221,000 vacancies needing to be filled over the next decade in the energy and utility sector alone (“[Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in the Infrastructure Sector](#)”).

The current multigenerational working environment in the Construction and Infrastructure sector makes room for programmes like Reverse Mentoring to be used to help close the gaps in knowledge and skills between the increasing range of generations.

With 35% of the construction workforce being of the Baby Boomer Generation (born from 1946 to 1964) and in some cases, Generation X (born between 1965 and the early-1980s), coupled with the introduction of big data and disruptive technology, this presents an opportunity for the transferring of knowledge and skills between Millennials (born between 1981–1996) and Gen Z (born between 1997 –2015) to Baby Boomers and Generation X while they are still in employment (Iyer, 2017) (“Construction skills crisis threatens UK net zero goals”).

With Millennials and Gen Z both being 'Digital Native' (i.e. being born into the digital age) and therefore typically being more comfortable with using new technology, software and systems, they can help teach the older generation how to navigate these tools and new ways of working. The industry is increasingly making use of new tools such as Artificial Intelligence to automate repetitive tasks, drone cameras to give quick site views and identify hazards, and BIM (Building Information Modelling) Technology that allows Project Managers to review projects in real-time.



For Baby Boomers, it is highly likely that the work environment will look completely different to when they first started their careers, not just in the types of technology being used, but also in what a healthy and inclusive work environment looks like. Reverse Mentoring can ignite this conversation by showing older employees what is now expected from them and the organisation through conversation. However, older employees have to be willing to take part in these conversations and Reverse Mentoring can not be used as the only tool when aiming to transform the work environment.

Narrowing in on London, with a significant proportion of the capital's workforce being employed by the Infrastructure sector, "it is important that the workforce represents the Londoners it serves", ([Sadiq Khan](#)) - however, this is currently not the case.

Despite there being evidence that organisations with diverse teams have better financial returns, people from underrepresented groups still face barriers in not only obtaining leadership roles but simply getting into the industry.

Reverse Mentoring can be used as a tool for underrepresented groups with organisations to share their experiences and the importance of representation in the workplace.

Alternative Approaches to Reverse Mentoring



Reverse Mentoring is traditional Mentoring flipped on its head, but there are several alternative approaches/methods of mentoring that can be used instead of Reverse Mentoring.

Mentoring Circles

Mentoring Circles take the traditional approach of one-to-one Mentoring but adds extra participants. Instead of a Mentor working with one Mentee, there can be several participants (typically a maximum of six Mentees) being mentored at the same time. Mentoring Circles are usually internal (within one organisation) allowing for collaborative learning and can be used as a tool to inspire, coach and re-connect employees.

The number of sessions and participation in Mentoring Circles as either a Mentor or Mentee is decided by the organisation or those involved; however, the topic of discussion is something to be clearly defined at the outset.

Mentoring Circles can be used to teach new practical skills, whether this be in an office or an outside environment. However, depending on the topic, some participants may require extra attention or assistance. Further consideration is needed in order to ensure that Mentees are aligned in their requirement for assistance or guidance, as vast differences between participants would prove incompatible with the format of this approach.

Mentoring Circles can also be used in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion space to ignite the discussion of different characteristics or the sharing of different perspectives.

this method has its own drawbacks. For example, in a standard one-to-one Mentoring relationship, Mentors would be able to counterbalance and play devil's advocate in discussions however, in a group setting, some participants may want to keep the peace, resulting in them setting aside their own personal beliefs and conforming to the most popular opinions. This is known as 'groupthink'.

Mentoring Circles can also mean that quieter personalities may not feel comfortable in sharing their questions and beliefs when more dominant personalities are present.

When running Mentoring Circles, as part of best practice, it is important that rules and guidelines are set before sessions begin. Such rules and guidelines could help to provide all Mentees a chance to share their thoughts and ask questions, for example, guidance that prevents Mentees from speaking over one another.



It is also best practice that expectations are set before the sessions begin to remind participants why they are present, whether that be to learn a new skill or to discuss a new topic.

In comparison, Reverse Mentoring allows for one-on-one conversation to be had, avoiding issues like groupthink or quieter members feeling excluded from the conversation. However, Mentoring Circles are a handy approach to take when programmes have more Mentees than Mentors, encouraging collaboration and diversity of thought.

Mentoring Circles can also be flexed and roles can be swapped like in Reverse Mentoring. Senior leaders can take on the role of Mentee and a junior employee with expertise or experience in a particular subject can take on the role of Mentor allowing Reverse Mentoring to be had but in a large group.

Cross-Sector Mentoring

Originating from Mentoring, Cross-Sector Mentoring is an external approach that sees one area of expertise within one organisation speaking and building relationships with another area of expertise within another organisation.

Cross-Sector Mentoring is an approach popularly used in the Tech Industry. Whether a Tech company is running a full programme or just a one-off Mentoring night, platforms such as Meetup are sometimes used as the best way to advertise and attract participants.

As Meetup encourages face to face activity, programmes are usually kicked off by organisations hosting Mentoring Nights. These events are usually where guidelines for the programmes are set and sometimes where pairings are formed, with all conversations taking place at the event.

If the hosting company decides to run a longer programme that encourages sessions to take place outside of the event, then the company may encourage organic pairing or may opt for a more process-driven method.

When used in the Tech space, Cross-Sector Mentoring consists of just two people and conversations are usually less formal. Due to the nature of work, the target audience for Tech-focused Meetups are usually 'Techies' (a person who is very knowledgeable or enthusiastic about technology and especially high technology) and conversations are usually centred around the sharing of technical skills.

However, Cross-Sector Mentoring is also being used in industries outside of Tech such as Finance and Construction and Infrastructure.

Case Study

Women in Rail cross-industry mentoring programme

The Women in Rail cross-industry mentoring programme designed to help participants progress in their careers and to improve gender balance, Diversity and Inclusion in the UK railway industry. The programme has received endorsements from DfT, RDG, BEIS and key rail companies.

Area of focus

- Gender balance
- Diversity and Inclusion in the UK railway industry

Training and Support


- Mentors and mentees receive professional training and guidance on their mentoring journey via a mentoring pair guide and live events throughout the programme.
- Mentors, mentees and programme partners are also encouraged to attend all three learning/networking events where they have an opportunity to ask questions and receive additional guidance but also expand their network within the UK railway industry.

Matching

- Mentees are matched with a mentor from a different company, based on the requirements they have entered on their profile – including location, personal interests, technical skills and experience.
- Male mentees are matched with a female mentor (to the extent possible), to promote inclusion and diversity of thoughts. Female mentees are given priority in terms of their matching preferences (as entered on their profile) and matched with either a female or a male mentor.
- The matching is then carried out by an algorithm with each match being reviewed and approved by the Women in Rail mentoring team at Moving Ahead.

Sponsorship

- Each participating company nominates a Programme Partner whose task is to lead the programme internally for their organisation, put forward individuals for mentoring and review the matches proposed by the Women in Rail mentoring team.



As shown in the Women in Rail cross-industry programme case study, Cross-Sector Mentoring can be focused on the sharing of technical skills as well as being centred around conversations that deal with specific EDI knowledge in relation to different characteristics such as gender.

Depending on the area of focus (skills based or Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), the target audience for using a Cross-Sector Mentoring programme can highly differ and can be open to anyone.

Challenges may arise as two different organisations are coming together, issues of privacy may be presented, and organisations may not feel comfortable in sharing how they work or EDI issues they are experiencing within their organisations. Also finding willing organisations to participate in this approach could be an issue, and third parties may have to be used to source organisations. Cross-Sector Mentoring can be flexed and used in the same manner as Reverse Mentoring.

Keeping to the approach that conversations need to be had with other organisations, programmes can be built on participants (Mentors) teaching a more experienced person a new skill.

When looking at the area of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion being used with a Cross-Sector Mentoring approach, as mentioned, organisations may not feel comfortable in their workforce speaking to external organisations. Individuals may decide to build their own Cross-Sector Mentoring programme from their network of contacts and with other organisations they are comfortable working with. This allows for privacy and best practice to be agreed upon by all participants before embarking on sessions.

Peer to Peer Coaching/ Co-Coaching

Peer to Peer coaching, also known as 'co-coaching', is an internal approach (within one organisation) which brings two or more colleagues together in a structured manner allowing them to provide support or teach one another.

Peer to Peer coaching usually involves each individual taking turns to be a coach in 45 – 60 minute sessions, so taking a total of 1.5–2 hours for each to have a turn in each role (Co-Coaching practice 2018). During this time, participants will also have the opportunity to practice the skills or knowledge they have just learnt on the person they have been paired with.

The target audience for Peer to Peer coaching is aimed towards participants who identify as Coaches, Mentors or anyone in a teaching position.

During sessions, participants will usually have the opportunity to:

- Reflect upon and analyse teaching practices and their consequences
- Plan lessons, or mentoring sessions
- Expand, refine and build new skills
- Share ideas and resources
- An opportunity to for Coaches, Mentors and Teachers to practice their coaching skills



As this approach is solely focused on the development of skills and knowledge, as best practice, participants will usually adopt the TGROW model (Topic, Goal, Reality, Options and Way-Forward) to track and measure their progress. This model was originally developed in the 1980s by world renowned business coaches Graham Alexander, Alan Fine and Sir John Whitmore and is now used as a way to measure progress wherever corporate coaching or co-coaching is found (Hawkes).

Peer-to-peer coaching is currently mainly used as a tool to enable personal development and learning in the education and health sector. Due to the area of focus, Peer-to-peer Coaching / Co-Coaching is a great approach to use when wanting to share experiences or train Leaders, Mentors or Coaches. Using the TGROW model allows goals to be set and tracked.

There are some wider aspects to consider when using the TGROW / Co-Coaching model for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion purposes. The format relies on a common level of experience and also the ability to respond to what the other party is sharing during the session. If a participant is sharing a difficult experience they have faced, it would be expected that the other participant is able to respond appropriately, which may not always be possible due to the sensitivities around EDI subjects. Also due to the nature of discussions, goals may not always be easy to set KPIs against.

Co-Sponsorship Mentoring

Co-Sponsorship Mentoring is an internal (within one organisation) professional relationship that sees a Senior colleague taking on the role of Sponsor and being paired with a junior colleague. This is an ongoing relationship where the end date is agreed upon by both participants but is usually a long-lasting journey. Best practice and the cadence of when Mentor and Mentee meet is mutually decided by the pair.

Sponsors are directly invested in the career progression of the junior colleague and they use their influence and power within the organisation to gain more challenging projects, promotions, pay rises and networking opportunities for the junior colleague. ("Your guide to utilising sponsorship and mentoring for diversity"). One of the key differences between Co-Sponsorship relationships in comparison to traditional Mentorship is the ability of the sponsor to leverage their position of influence or authority. A person can only truly be a sponsor if they are able to create opportunities for the junior colleague that they may not be able to access on their own. "The defining and key difference of sponsorship is that your sponsor not only has more experience than you in a certain area but also has the ability to bring you up alongside them" (Brine 2020). The role of the Mentor in traditional Mentoring is to guide the Mentee, help them develop in their career, and help them navigate the workplace. The role of a Sponsor in Co-Sponsorship is to do all of these things with the added responsibility to speak and advocate on behalf of their Mentee.

The main target audiences for this method are junior colleagues and Senior colleagues such as Executives, Team Leaders and Managers (anyone in a position of power and authority). In comparison to Reverse Mentoring, Co-Sponsorship Mentoring provides two different results. Reverse Mentoring creates an environment for experiences to be shared and skills to be gained whereas, despite Co-Sponsorship creating an environment for skills to be learned, it is centred mainly around teaching and advocating for junior employees and experiences are not shared due to the power matrix that the partnership has created.

Reverse Mentoring Implemented in the Construction & Infrastructure Sector

When conducting desk-based research or having a one-to-one conversation with organisations within the LIG, we asked a range of questions which covered:

- Reasons behind wanting to establish a Reverse Mentoring programme
- Their chosen characteristics or area of focus
- How they matched participants
- Support and training they provided
- How they measured Success

From these conversations and research gathered we have built several case studies. Case studies can be found embedded throughout this report and in the appendix.

Here is a snapshot of some of the information they shared with us.

All Reverse Mentoring programmes were conducted primarily in an office environment.

Organisation	Date established/ duration	Cohort duration	Number of characteristics	Mentor, mentee ratio	How is it measured?
Thames Water	Over two years, Est. 2018	6-8 months	8 Characteristics All dependant on what network the participants come from (Appendix 1)	2018: 6 Participants 3 Mentors, 3 Mentees 2021: 100 Participants 10 Mentors paired to 10 Executives - 30 Mentors 30 Leaders. The remaining 20 were made up of participants across the organisation.	Qualitative Data collected. Data Collected via a survey at the start, midway and at the end of the programme. Quantitative data: Yearly employee survey (Appendix 1).
Ofwat	6 months	6 months	1 Characteristic - Race	Currently more Mentees than Mentors 7 Executives	Qualitative Data collected. Question to all participants on what they would like to gain and success criteria is created based on the answers. Data Collected via a survey midway through and at the end of the programme.

Organisation	Date established/ duration	Cohort duration	Number of characteristics	Mentor, mentee ratio	How is it measured?
Balfour Beatty	Approx 12 months	6-9 months	A number of factors including D&I topics	Pilot: 20 people Today: 100 participants	Qualitative data collected. Feedback from senior leaders A question on the programme is added to the employee engagement survey. Measured against wider Diversity and Inclusion strategy. Quantitative data assessing the number of new people who sign up.
SGN	In progress, yet to be launched	6 months	All Characteristics	2021: The programme is currently being communicated to the organisation. Two volunteers have since come forward	In progress
Wates	Yes - 12 months, Est. 2020	6 months	1 Characteristic - Race	2020: 24 participants , 12 pairs	Qualitative data is collected to understand the impact of the programme. Programme retention is also looked at
Ofgem	Pilot, Est. in 2019-2020	6-9 months	1 Characteristic - ethnicity/race	10 participants, 5 pairs	Qualitative data is collected from both Mentor and Mentee during (3 times) and at the end of the programme
Association for Consultancy and Engineering (Ace)	Pilot, Est. in 2017- 2018	9 months	1 Characteristic - Age. Bridging the technological gap between junior and senior employees (Appendix 7)	Information unavailable	No KPI's set or data collected

Why organisations chose Reverse Mentoring

When conducting research one theme stood out the most: every organisation had shared that their senior leaders had expressed a desire to better understand the everyday experiences of underrepresented employees within their organisation.

For some organisations like Ofwat and Wates, their desire was ignited directly off the back of the Black Lives Matter protests that took place in 2020 and their senior leaders wanting to know more to inform how they enable change.



SGN started their programme due to senior leaders also wanting to learn more about the views and experiences of underrepresented groups within their organisation as ethnic minorities currently only make 4% of their workforce. SGN wanted to show a visible action to the commitment they made to taking Diversity and Inclusion seriously.

Due to the two-way communication that Reverse Mentoring encourages, the approach was deemed as an appropriate method by all organisations which enabled them to meet the D&I pledges that were made as part of the LIG in 2020.

These D&I pledges are commitments that were made by all 23 members of the London Infrastructure group at the GLA (Greater London Authority) in order to improve the data collection on Diversity and Inclusion, and to understand the barriers underrepresented groups face when entering and processing in the sector.

Protected Characteristics

Despite Diversity and Inclusion being the reason for establishing/wanting to establish a programme, most organisations within the Construction and Infrastructure sector like Ofwat and Wates chose to focus in on certain characteristics and simply focus on race and ethnicity or just sexual orientation.

For organisations like Ofwat, to ensure that action was being taken against the main reason their programme was set up, they chose to solely focus on Race. Also, in order to guide conversations and not overload participants with an array of topics they decided to focus on one characteristic.

For other organisations that focused on one characteristic, this was due to timing and where they were in the overall strategy of the organisation. For some organisations, Diversity and Inclusion was a new topic and they wanted to take people on a journey ensuring they were not overwhelmed with new information.


Thames Water decided to widen its reach and cover all protected characteristics. The reasoning behind this is in wanting to represent and be inclusive of all areas of their organisation.

In comparison to the organisations who focused on one characteristic, the data shows that Thames Water's Reverse Mentoring programme has been running for much longer than all other organisations spoken that took part (over three years) and they have active participation of 100 members.

Support & Training

Regardless of which characteristic an organisation chose to base their programme on, they all invested heavily in providing training to both Mentor and Mentee throughout their journey.

For some organisations, before face-to-face sessions were set up, all participants were required to go through and complete training materials before they were eligible for face to face sessions.



For Mentees, some organisations required additional training. This was made up of having to complete a survey to help those pairing participants fully understand where Mentees wanted to increase their knowledge.

As well as providing targeted training for Mentees, some organisations also provide tailored training for Mentors.

As a prerequisite, Thames Water asked all Mentors to complete a survey and go through training. Part of the training was based on David Clutterbuck's (Co-founder of the European Mentoring & Coaching Council) methodology. These modules covered how to effectively listen, how to build rapport and how to ask the right questions. For some Mentors, building a relationship with someone in a senior position may be a daunting task.

Balfour Beatty provided training for Mentors on how to deliver and carry out effective sessions and how to comfortably speak to people in senior positions, while Ofwat provided reading materials that they ask all Mentors to go through before a session.

Measuring Success

The majority of programmes require Mentors and especially the Mentees to fill in a survey at the end of the overall programme which they later assess. With questions such as:

- How did you find your overall experience as a Mentor or Mentee?
- What would you like to change about the programme?
- Would you recommend your colleague to join the programme?

For most organisations, quantitative KPIs were not set before their programmes started. Organisations like Wates shared that "it was hard to set quantitative measures beyond basic measures as the programme is enabling long term attitudinal and behavioural changes and is one of the lever to support that transition". Most organisations collected high-level participation data such as the number of Mentors, Mentees and Executive members involved in the programme.

Thames Water is the only organisation that analysed data beyond participation rates. Thames Water not only tracked the number of active participants (including Executives), they also tracked any change to their yearly employee's survey by asking a question about the extent to which employees believe that Thames Water is an inclusive equal opportunity employer which is currently at 83%.

At Balfour Beatty, not only did they ask participants to fill in a survey but they also assessed how many people came forward to be mentored. Due to the success of their programme, they had noticed that word travelled through their organisation and more people came forward to be mentored. Balfour Beatty also ensured that the success of the programme was felt across the organisation by asking participants to write blogs that were shared internally.

At Ofwat, Mentees are asked to share their levels of understanding before speaking to their Mentors, and at the end of their cohort, they were asked to assess themselves again.

The above table shows that some organisations have chosen to focus solely on the impact felt by participants, while others have chosen to focus on the impact felt throughout their organisation.

Recommendations

Desk-based research and the gathering of insights to build case studies shows that Reverse Mentoring can be used across several sectors/industries as well as in the Construction and Infrastructure Sector.

Reverse Mentoring can be flexed to teach, train or transfer new skills or it can be used as a tool to help share experiences, especially when centred in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. It can help Mentors build their confidence, build their networks and also have their voices heard.

One of the key differences between the alternative approaches and Reverse Mentoring is in the ability for Reverse Mentoring to be flexed and moulded depending on an organisation's needs. Whether Reverse Mentoring is being used to teach a new skill or to share experiences centred in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, Reverse Mentoring can take on any or both forms.

As Reverse Mentoring is centred around teaching and sharing experiences while encouraging two-way communication, the difference in power dynamics in comparison to traditional or Co-Sponsorship Mentoring results in open conversations being had in a safe environment.

These differences suggest that this may be one of the reasons why more and more organisations within the Construction and Infrastructure sector are opting to use Reverse Mentoring, especially organisations that have chosen to focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion topics.



Senior leaders wanted to learn how to better relate to people within the organisation

- Balfour Beatty

Out of 23 members of the London Infrastructure Group (LIG), only five organisations already had a programme or were piloting a programme. Outside of the LIG, only two case studies from Construction and Infrastructure organisations were able to be collated.

The lack of case studies in the industry may be due in part to a lack of resources available to manage a Reverse Mentoring programme, a lack of buy-in from senior leaders or a lack of awareness on how Reverse Mentoring can be used – albeit further research is needed to fully assess and quantify the barriers to participation.

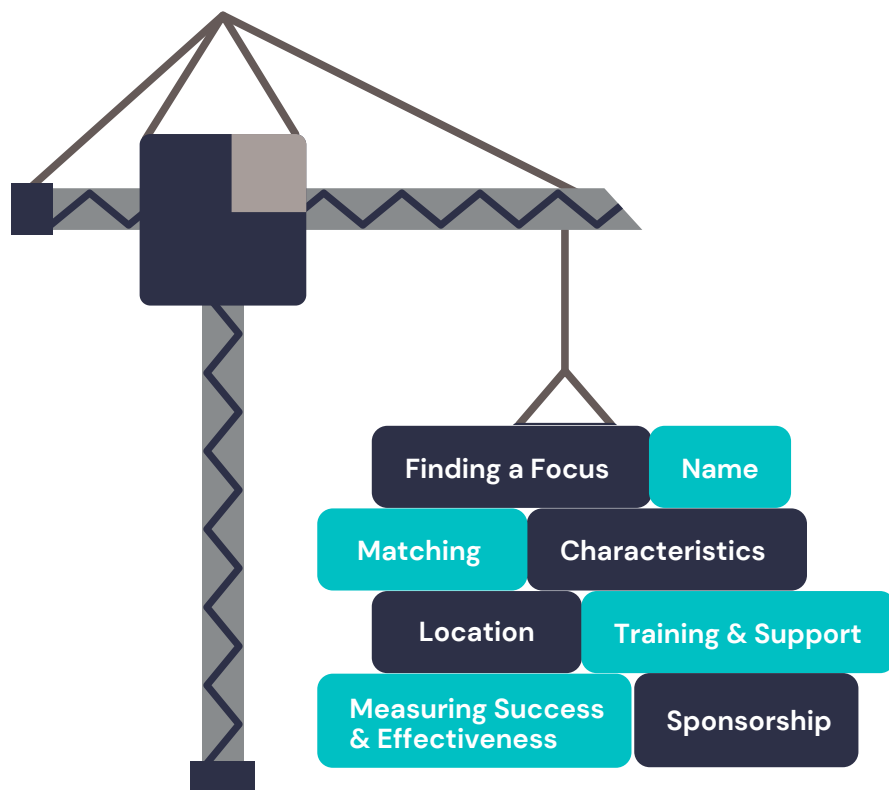
When speaking with members of the LIG who had already set up programmes, the majority of them were still in the early stages of their journey and had only been established for an average of 12 months (with 1 or 2 cohorts).



Amongst participating companies with emerging Reverse Mentoring, programmes areas such as finding a focus, the matching process and providing training and support were solidified, but areas such as sponsorship, location and measuring success and effectiveness were sometimes overlooked or not yet focused on. Therefore, our ability to collect information, especially on impact was limited.

Our research identified eight key elements that organisations within the Construction and Infrastructure sector should focus on to achieve a successful and effective Reverse Mentoring programme, especially when addressing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion topics:

- **Finding a Focus**
- **Characteristics**
- **Name of the programme**
- **Matching**
- **Location**
- **Training and Support**
- **Sponsorship**
- **Measuring Success & Effectiveness**



1. Finding a Focus

For organisations that want to implement Reverse Mentoring, the rationale is extremely important. Organisations must be absolutely clear as to why they want to establish such a programme and what they are trying to achieve or solve through the programme.



As we have seen, Reverse Mentoring can be used as a tool to help mitigate various issues organisations might be dealing with, such as addressing the lack of Tech skills and know-how, to career development and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. However, there is a need to be specific in terms of the underlying objective of the Reverse Mentoring programme, which will prevent spreading resources too thin.

Due to the Diversity and Inclusion pledges made, every member of the LIG we spoke with had a clear focus on improving their senior leadership's level of understanding of the lived experiences of their underrepresented employees.

As well as having a main area of focus, it is highly important that Reverse Mentoring is not carried out in isolation; it is of importance that it fits into a wider set of commitments that align with the organisation's overall strategy.

Reverse Mentoring requires much effort, whether that be finding a focus, pairing participants or creating training materials. As it does not produce an immediate tangible result, it is very easy for it to be the first thing that is cut when resources are low and time is limited. However, by building it into a wider company strategy as a commitment, it becomes harder to cut and easier to defend.

2. Characteristics

With the purpose of the programme now in place, it is important to clarify from the beginning, which characteristics the programme will be focused on.

Whether based on certain protected characteristics, specific intersectional identities or a broader scope, it is important that the parameters of the programme are set, not only to help guide conversations but also to bring clarity to the guidance and support that needs to be given to participants.

When building an EDI focused programme there is no right or wrong number of characteristics to start with. However, programmes should not be built with the aim of solely focusing on one characteristic for the entirety of the programme. Programmes need to have the ability to address all areas of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to avoid alienating other underrepresented groups within the workforce. This could be helpful in setting a roadmap for expanding the programme, with clear data driven prioritisation.

3. Naming the programme

Some organisations may decide to rename their programmes and step away from the title "Reverse Mentoring". Terms such as 'reciprocal', 'shared' and 'mutual' Mentoring are terms that are sometimes used to replace the word "reverse", and this may be due to an organisation wanting to create synergies across the board or believing that a different word would land better.

SGN have removed the word "Reverse" and have called their programme a "Mutual Mentoring programme". SGN believes that doing this removes pressure from both parties.

Case Study

SGN

We spoke with SGN's Head of Employee Experience about their Mutual Mentoring programme they plan to launch later this year.

SGN has plans to pilot the programme in the next few months and are looking to call it "Mutual Mentoring" as they believe it removes the pressure from both parties. Each cohort will last between 6 months, with meetings taking place every 4 weeks as a baseline cadence.

Areas of Focus

- Senior leaders at SGN want to learn more about the views of underrepresented groups within the organisation
- Senior leaders want to show a visible commitment to taking Diversity seriously
- The programme will run alongside several D&I activities
- The programme will be focused on all characteristics

Training & Support

- Rather than having training, the HR team will provide guides and supporting materials to help give structure to mentors when they are planning sessions
- HR are looking at what they can do in their role to support both Mentor and Mentee

Matching

- They also considering matching participants by personality types

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- They plan to measure success by looking at how many people come forward to be a part of the programme
- They also plan to measure success by producing a series of blogs highlighting their successes
- When the programme is successful they also plan to explore how they can develop the scheme even further

There is no right or wrong terminology that should be used when naming a Reverse Mentoring programme regardless of the organisation, its size or what sector it is in. However, it is recommended that the alternate name should still reflect the essence of what Reverse Mentoring is and what participants can expect by joining. Alternative words used should not stray too far away from participants understanding that some form of extended communication and learning will take place.

4. Matching

Research shows that the more data-driven the matching process, in terms of the information that program administrators gather about participants, the more successful the results (Marcinkus Murphy, W, 2012). It is important that participants feel that they have had input into the Mentor-Mentee matching process. One of the ways this can be accomplished is by asking participants, especially Mentees, to complete a survey where they provide information about themselves.



This survey could cover the Mentees desired outcomes, what they'd like to gain from this relationship, their current level of understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion generally or against certain protected characteristics, and their current location, department, grade, background etc. Being aware of personality types is a critical part of data collection, as pairing compatible personalities will help both participants get the most out of the experience.

Collecting this information results in better-informed decisions when it comes to matching, as well as the opportunity to learn what matching techniques work well for future cohorts of applications of the programme.

It is important that Mentees are matched with a Mentor with the right level of understanding to help them increase their awareness and knowledge, as well as being paired with someone in a compatible timezone, function and working pattern.

Being aware of a Mentee's line of command is also extremely important when matching participants. It is important that Mentors are not matched with a Mentee who is a part of their line management as this could create unease in both participants and they may feel unable to truly express themselves.

When looking at the practicalities of matching, there are two different methods that can be used.

One being manual matching, and the other being the use of matching software.

Participants can be matched manually by the team managing the process creating an excel document and conducting assessments with potential participants. If this method is being used, it is important that access to participant data is restricted and limited to only those who need access (such as the programme management team) to prevent there being a breach of data protection guidance (GDPR) and a subsequent breakdown in trust.

The drawback to using this method is that it requires a lot of management and can be very time consuming depending on the number of participants that have signed up. Also, matching candidates manually gives room for unconscious bias and favouritism.

To avoid this software such as [MentorLoop](#) or [Guider](#) can be used, which have been developed with the purpose of matching individuals. If budget permits, using tools such as Guider and MentorLoop minimises the workload of internal teams during the matching process and avoids issues such as favouritism and bias. Also, it creates a stronger feeling of trust in participants as a third party will be handling their answers, which could encourage a greater level of transparency and avoid participants feeling judged by the answers they provide.

5. Location

Another key area of focus to consider when building a Reverse Mentoring programme in the Construction and Infrastructure sector is the complexity that location brings.

Due to the nature and working environment of the Construction and Infrastructure sector employees may be required to not only be working in an office but also on-site depending on the role. On-site could be a construction site or a physical location, such as a transport or power station.



Reverse Mentoring sessions usually take place in a face to face environment however, sessions can be had through online video platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Webex and other video conferencing applications.

In situations where sessions are typically conducted face to face, if a situation arises which stops physical construction or puts limitations on physical interactions on-site, then there is a risk that Reverse Mentoring sessions will be stopped. If face to face interaction is imperative to the objectives of the programme, for example in the transference of technical / practical skills an online / video call may not be a suitable method to share these skills.

It is strongly recommended that both on-site and office environments are taken into consideration when matching participants. If someone who is usually based in an office environment is matched with someone who works on-site, this may present issues regarding how, and how often participants are able to meet. Online video conferencing platforms may be used to mitigate this potential problem, however, due to the nature of work, participants who work on-site may not always be able to access the internet or a suitable device, and due to not being in control of their shift patterns, may not be able to suggest ideal times apart from their lunch breaks for sessions to be had.

Where possible, it is recommended that on-site participants are matched with other on-site participants within the same working environment. Depending on how an organisation decides to encourage participants to engage with one another, the option of matching participants who work in an office environment but in different offices or countries is an option as video conferencing tools can be used to facilitate conversations.

Alternatively matching those who work in the same office in the same country is also an option. The Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) piloted their EDI focused programme across eight different organisations that are based in several countries; however, each organisation took charge of the pilot within their organisation and country.

Case Study


Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE)

The Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) champions infrastructure and the built environment to government and other stakeholders, representing the views of around 400 members.

A Reverse Mentoring pilot was suggested by ACE's Progress Network and ran between May 2017 - March 2018.

Unlike many other reverse mentoring schemes, this pilot did not focus specifically on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) explicitly. Instead, it focused on bridging the technological gap between junior and senior employees.

The pilot scheme targeted medium to larger ACE members as it was felt that they would have a larger talent pool of interested employees.



11 pairings across the following companies Arcadis, BWB, Peter Brett Associates, Max Fordham, Mott MacDonald, Tony Gee and Partners and WSP.

Reverse Mentoring sessions took place at participants' own convenience within their companies. There were no firm rules around the number of sessions held, it was suggested that the pairings aim for one every other month, with at least four sessions held during the nine-month pilot period, as well as ad-hoc catch-ups.

Area of Focus

- Bridging the technological gap between junior and senior employees
- Tackling unconscious bias

Training and Support

- Four sets of guidance notes were produced to help shape the mentoring sessions.
- A workshop involving all 22 participants established the ground rules for the scheme

Matching

- The announcement of the pilot was made through ACE member communication channels.
- Participant companies were responsible for finding the pairs, internal promotion of the pilot and review of the candidates
- Strikingly different personal characteristics were avoided
- if there was any sign that pairings were not working as intended, repairing or new candidate selections were considered

Sponsorship

- Championed by Progress Network vice-chair
- The vice-chair also secured the initial buy-in from ACE and its board

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- No KPI's or measurement tools for the pilot
- A few participants voice that tools to measure impact should be used for both Mentor & Mentee when the scheme is rolled out wider


Cross-Sector Reverse Mentoring

- There was discussion on the value of cross-industry pairings whereby pairings would be at different organisations or even in different industries
- It was discussed that Reverse Mentoring could be used as a tangible means to create greater understanding and unity across the wider supply chain.

6. Training & Support

Due to the nature of conversations that will be had during Reverse Mentoring sessions and the different levels of organisational hierarchy that are being brought together, training and support are needed.

It is vital that as a prerequisite to participating in the programme information on the knowledge, understanding, level of comfort and ability of Mentors is understood.



Conversations on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion topics can be very vast and intersectional so knowing a Mentor's level of understanding is important so that if upskilling is needed, it can be provided by the EDI team or programme management team. Where this is not possible, organisations may want to consider tapping into an external organisation that specialises in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to provide additional support.

For some Mentors, this may be the first time they will be building a relationship with a senior leader so they must be given the tools to succeed and be as comfortable as possible to deliver an effective session.

It is highly recommended that every Mentor receives the same level of support and training and that their levels of understanding of what that organisation is doing on the topic of focus are assessed before Mentoring begins. This is to ensure consistency in information being shared and to prevent further work from needing to be done by the team managing the programme to mitigate any issues caused.

As Reverse Mentoring programmes usually run over several months or over a year, regular guidance must be provided. It is equally as important that the programme lead or team regularly communicate with Mentors and they are not left to simply get on with things. It is critical that accessible resources are made available and promoted regularly amongst all Mentors. In Thames Water's Case study, we see how they have utilised Teams to update Mentors on guidance and resources available.

As senior leaders, Mentees will be used to leading meetings and taking charge where need be. As great as this skill is, their Reverse Mentoring sessions are in place for them to listen and learn. As a prerequisite, it is recommended that all Mentees take part in effective listening training.

To provide a solid foundation for a Reverse Mentoring Programme, it is best to establish it within or adjacent to an established Mentoring Programme. This will provide a level of support to Reverse Mentors – when a challenge arises, they can seek advice from experienced mentors outside of their pairing. As Reverse Mentoring is just the reverse of traditional mentoring, quite often problems that could arise have often been addressed within an established Mentoring Programme.

As well as training for participants, it is important that when Reverse Mentoring programmes are centred around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), those who are managing the programme are not only aware of the organisation's wider EDI goals but have a good understanding of the chosen characteristic(s) of focus.

The team managing the programme must have a basic level of understanding of the characteristic the programme is based on. If they do not it is recommended that time is taken out to upskill and learn or an external EDI agency is brought on to teach, train and equip programme managers with the right information they need to provide support for participants.

As part of the training and support, Ofwat provides a recommended reading list to both participants with books all centred around race and the pillars of conversation they have established. This curated list comes from books that the programme lead has read themselves to educate and further their understanding of certain topics.

Case Study

Ofwat

We spoke with Ofwat's Reverse Mentoring programme lead who shared some insights into the programme which has been running for six months.

Areas of focus

- The programme started off the back of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests
- The "Black Staff Network" wanted to establish something that allowed execs to understand institutional and systemic barriers faced by Black and Asian people from a personal point of view through reverse mentoring. This allowed SLT and Board to build up their confidence and ask questions about each topic in a safe environment.
- This programme supports the Diversity and Inclusion pledges made by being a part of the LIG
- The programme is currently just focused on Race

Training and Support

- All participants must attend a 90-minute training session before they are able to attend a session
- There are 1 hour sessions every 4 weeks, each topic comes with reading material, podcasts and/or videos to support different learning styles.
- A recommended list of books are shared with mentees, these are read at the mentees pace and generally relevant to each topic of discussion. The books are then discussed within each session for a set period of time, or sometimes longer, to debate topics and allow for questions.
- There are five pillars of conversation all centred around experiences within the Black & Asian community
- **Pillars of conversation are:**
 - Disparities within the healthcare service and understanding why
 - Educational attainment and outcome of Black children in state schools
 - Black economics relating to pension, housing, savings and salary, what are the facts and why are they so disproportionately low.
 - Colourism and the caste system
 - Understanding what white Privilege means in the context of travelling while Black

Matching

- Participants are currently matched by the programme
- The programme lead assesses match ability, taking into consideration not to place people with direct line managers or leads
- Each mentor expresses an interest in who they would like to be matched with
- There are currently more Mentees than there are Mentors, so some Mentors have to double up.



Sponsorship

- The programme has an Executive sponsor
- Executive sponsorship was gained through presenting at SLT and Full Board, getting the buy in from leadership was key to the success of the programme roll out
- The Executive sponsor has gone out to all Execs encouraging them to participate in the programme
- 7 out of 11 Executive have now signed up for the programme

Measuring Success and Effectiveness

- To measure success, all participants were asked what they'll like to gain from the programme, success criteria was then created from this per each individual
- A survey feedback questionnaire and feedback session takes place mid-point and at the end of each programme of learning

Cross-sector Reverse Mentoring

- Cross-sector Reverse Mentoring is something they would "definitely" be interested in.

7. Sponsorship


With every initiative, scheme or programme set up in an organisation, one of the best ways for it to land and be embedded over time is for it to be supported by the organisation's senior / executive leadership. Employees are more likely to care about an initiative if it is seen as important to senior leadership.

A study conducted by the Change Management institute Prosci (Professional Science) showed that 84% of change managers ranked senior management involvement in initiatives as "extremely important" to its success ("Manager/Supervisor's Role In Change Management", n.d.). This is due to the ability senior leadership have to create desire and awareness on a large scale, while reinforcing the importance of an initiative or programme to the organisation.

Almost all members of the LIG we spoke with had an assigned exec leader to their programme. They shared that this was especially helpful when encouraging Mentee's to sign up or when faced with budgetary concerns.

It is highly recommended that a minimum of one senior or executive leader is assigned to a Reverse Mentoring Programme as a sponsor, as well as active participation by other senior leaders. This will hold them accountable for the success of the programme, and ensure continuous movement when faced with blockers. Where resistance may be faced by members of the organisation, such as a lack of participation, senior leaders can directly encourage their peers (other senior leaders) and team members to sign up for the programme by reiterating its importance and sharing their experience of being a part of it.

Where possible (especially in large organisations), it is encouraged to have different levels of leadership assigned as sponsors to the programme. The influence of an array of different levels of leadership being advocates of and participants in the programme will help in reaching locations or teams who may not always respond to these types of opportunities.



Other issues such as negative comments raised by participants may only be relevant to certain departments or areas of the organisation so, having senior sponsors who are knowledgeable in these areas may help resolve the issue more effectively.

Thames Water used Senior Leadership across a number of different levels to progress their programme and to meet their D&I commitments and pledges made as part of the GLA National Infrastructure Commission.

Case Study

Thames Water

We spoke with Thames Water's Reverse Mentoring lead who has been managing the programme for over two years.

Thames Water embarked on this journey of growth and development in September 2018 to coincide with National Inclusion Week.

Areas of focus


- The programme is a part of their AMP7 (Asset Management Plan) 5-year inclusion plan 2020–25
- The programme isn't based on one characteristic as they want people from all networks to be able to take part.
- People from all networks within the company can put themselves forward to become Mentors
- The networks are, BAME and Allies, DisAbility, LGBT+ and Allies, Parents and Carers, Multi-faith (includes Buddhism, Christians in Thames, Hinduism, Judaism, Peace and Sikh networks), Military and Women's networks
- D&I champions from each of the networks are encouraged to join the programme

Training and Support

- 6–8 one to one sessions are had via Microsoft Teams throughout the programme
- Both Mentor and Mentee have training before they can have a face to face call via Microsoft Teams session.
- Both Mentor and Mentee are given training which is based on the principles of traditional Mentoring, such as how to ask the right questions, building rapport and effective listening. Based on David Clutterbuck methodology & teaching
- Support is provided via a Team Channel which can be accessed by both Mentor and Mentee

Matching

- The Reverse Mentoring management team currently match participants.
- At the start of the programme, Mentees are asked about their level of knowledge against all protected characteristics, and what characteristics they'd like to improve their understanding of and level of knowledge of STEM and other functions. Colleagues are then matched based on the Mentor's area of expertise and the Mentee's desired area for improvement.

- 
- The Tideway (Tideway is the company under Thames Water, delivering the Thames Tideway Tunnel) used the off the shelf Mentorloop to match participants

Sponsorship

- There are multiple levels to Executive sponsorship for all employee networks – each level listed has one dedicated Executive sponsor and one dedicated senior leader. There is also an overall Board D&I sponsor
- There is a quarterly leadership community inclusion workshop and a monthly D&I Council who meet and discuss progress against the AMP7 inclusion plan.
- There are quarterly senior sponsorship sessions to discuss the programme
- Monthly 121's with the chairs which the programme lead conducts

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- One of the ways they measure success is by the yearly employee survey Which includes a question about the extent to which employees believe Thames Water is an inclusive equal opportunity employer, current score is 83%
- Specifically for the Reverse Mentoring scheme Mentees are asked to complete a short survey regarding their level of understanding at the end of the scheme compared with at the start and midway through to understand if there have been any changes. It also includes qualitative comments on what Mentors and Mentees have learned and how they are using this learning in practice to ensure Thames Water is an inclusive great place to work

Cross-Sector Reverse Mentoring

- Thames Water co-collaborated on the EU Skills sector inclusion commitments and the GLA National Infrastructure Commission D&I forums. As part of these forums, commitments and pledges we are keen to explore cross-company Mentoring similar to what the 30% club provides but across all under-represented groups, not just one demographic.

Since starting their Reverse Mentoring scheme in 2018 with half a dozen Mentors and Mentees, Thames Water have had an influx of participants and the scheme has now grown into a three figures programme with 100 active participants. All 10 of their Executives have signed up and been matched with Mentors as well as approximately 30 mentees from their leadership community.

GLA WIN Design Labs: The WIN Design Lab supports ten large London based employers from the construction sector to build diverse and inclusive workplaces and specifically tackle the under-representation of young Black men in their workforce.

(See Appendix 1, 3-5, 12)

8. Measuring Success & Effectiveness

When Measuring the success of a programme, it is recommended that two aspects are taken into consideration:

- How to quantify the success
- How to contextualize feedback

One of the best ways to assess the success of a programme is by collecting both Qualitative and Quantitative Data, this can be done by asking Mentors and Mentees questions at the start, middle and end of the scheme.

Questions to Mentors at the start of the programme:

- Have you been a Mentor before?
- Why would you like to become a Mentor? (Things to think about: What do you hope to get out of the programme and/or how will it benefit the organisation?)
- Have you taken part in a Reverse Mentoring Programme before?
- What protected characteristics do you have lived experience of? (select one or more that are relevant)
- Please rate your knowledge of and comfort in discussing the following protected characteristics.
- On a scale of 1-10, what level would you rate your comfort in speaking to senior leaders?
- On a scale of 1-10, what level would you rate your comfort in challenging senior leaders?

Questions to Mentees at the start of the programme:

- Have you taken part in a Reverse Mentoring Programme before?
- Why would you like to take part in this programme as a Mentee? (Things to think about: What do you hope to get out of the programme and/or how will it benefit you / the organisation?)
- Please rate your knowledge of the following protected characteristics.
- What protected characteristic would you like to increase your knowledge about?
- What is your learning style? - (How do you like to receive information? Are you a visual, auditory, reading or learn by doing learner)
- A general question on how participants are finding the programme and what additional support they may need can be asked when at the halfway point.

Questions to Mentors & Mentees at the end of the programme:

- Are you enjoying your time as a Mentor/ Mentee so far?
- Is there any way the programme can support you further?



Questions to Mentors at the end of the programme:

- How did you find your overall experience as a Mentor?
- Are there any new skills you feel you have picked up as a result of being a Mentor?
- Did you find the resources and training useful, if so why?
- Did you feel supported through the programme?
- Are there any training topics that have not been covered that you'd like to see?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the programme?
- Would you recommend becoming a Mentor to your colleague?


Questions to Mentees at the end of the programme:

- How did you find your overall experience as a Mentee?
- Now rate your knowledge of the protected characteristics you chose at the start of the programme.
- Looking back at your "why would you like to join this programme as a Mentee" statement, would you say your expectations have been met?
- Has the programme changed your opinion or outlook of the particular characteristic you selected?
- Did you find the resources and training useful, if so why?
- Did you feel supported through the programme?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the programme?
- Would you recommend your colleague to join the programme?

These questions not only allow great achievements brought on by the programme to be highlighted, but it also highlights areas of improvement and progression for the next iteration of the programme. Results from Reverse Mentoring can not be expected to materialise overnight and may take several cohorts for significant impact to be seen across the organisation however by asking these questions over time, the data will show trends and it may help inform future KPIs.

If an organisation has an annual employee survey, in order to further progress and contextualise the data it is recommended that the "after" data filled in by Mentors & Mentees is cross-referenced and measured against applicable questions asked. This will help show any progress brought on by the programme.

If negative feedback is shared regarding a participant's experience with the programme or the person they were partnered with then it is highly recommended that this is looked into further. Programme organisers must seek to understand whether this is an isolated incident or a common occurrence; whether similar experiences are found amongst participants of a similar demographic background / department / location / level of seniority. Programme organisers must then seek to determine whether aspects of the programme should be changed to accommodate the new insights. Such an approach will help to inform any next steps taken and ensure the programme continues to improve.



When moving forward with any negative feedback it is important to consider the data sample (number of participants) as the nature of the comment could be sensitive and unwanted attention could be drawn to the participant who raised it.

Methods such as separate focus groups with Mentors and Mentees are a great way to learn about experiences had, and what could have been done differently, but consideration should be given to one to one conversations and assessments, as some people might not be comfortable sharing their experiences in a group setting. Tools such as risk logs will help keep a record of issues raised and inform next steps on how to handle the situation if it arises again in the future.

It is important that quantitative data is collected before each cohort begins. When speaking with members of the LIG who had set up Reverse Mentoring programmes, not many organisations could share the exact number of participants they had started with or the number of participants in their current cohort. This data is vital as it will allow programme leads and senior sponsors to understand if the programme is growing or not. If numbers are decreasing, the underlying reason(s) can be investigated and new strategies for growth can be created. If numbers are increasing, this will provide a tangible case for the programme to be kept and provide content to highlight and celebrate across senior leadership and within the organisation.

Final Remarks

Cross-Sector Reverse Mentoring in the Construction and Infrastructure Sector

When speaking with the five members of the LIG who had established or piloted Reverse Mentoring programmes, almost every single organisation was eager to learn if this was something that was in the process of being created.

With the very limited information currently available about Reverse Mentoring and its application in the UK Construction sector, some organisations we spoke with had spent a lot of time building business cases as well as understanding the dos and don'ts of setting up a programme.

With constraints on budgets and time, establishing a Cross-Sector programme within the LIG will allow for continuous conversation and changes as well as utilising the experiences of organisations that have already established a programme.

Ofwat saw an influx of Mentees however, not enough Mentors came forward, resulting in some Mentors having to take on two Mentees at a time.

Where some organisations may struggle to find Mentors or Mentees, Cross-Sector Reverse Mentoring can create a collaborative space for learning, development and possibly the collaboration of participants from other organisations can step in and fill gaps in resources.

Thames Water has explored the possibility and practicality of being a part of a Cross-Sector scheme, and have identified The 30% Club, who provide the service of bringing different companies together to take part in a Cross-Sector Mentoring scheme. However, as the programme solely focuses on gender it is not something they will be moving forward with.

With an already active network in place (LIG), it is with great emphasis that we recommend that a Cross-sector Reverse Mentoring programme is looked into.

Reverse Mentoring Guidance and Best Practices

Reverse Mentoring requires a lot of effort, whether that be finding a focus, pairing participants, or creating training materials. Once a solid understanding of the approach and time commitment required to build a programme is acquired, the organisation is responsible for allocating the necessary resources to make it work.

With any initiative, there will also be factors that could impact its success and in the case of Reverse Mentoring, this could be any one of the eight different areas.



Based on the eight key elements and our recommendations, we have identified questions, guidance and best practices that organisations should keep in mind when building a Reverse Mentoring programme:

- **What is the why?:**
 - What is the purpose of the programme?
 - Is it Equality, Diversity and Inclusion focused or skillshare focused?
 - If there is a focus on EDI, how many protected characteristics will be focused on?
- Does the programme fit into the organisation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion goals?
- Will the programme be the first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiative the organisation has seen?
- Does wider training sessions need to be held throughout the organisation so that everyone understands the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?
- It is recommended that those who are building the programme should gain a basic level of understanding of the characteristics the programme is based on
- Onsite and in-office participation should be taken into account when matching participants
- Serious focus and time needs to be given to creating and providing training and support for both Mentor & Mentee before one on one sessions begin
- Mentors and Mentees should always have access to accessible training materials throughout the duration of the programme – especially for those with disabilities or neurodiverse traits
- Programme leads should continuously check in with Mentors
- Senior / Executive sponsorship and participation is vital to the success of the programme
- Sponsorship at more than one level will help relieve pressure on one sponsor
- Quantitative data should be collected at the beginning of every cohort to help show progress
- Qualitative data should always be contextualised to help show the success of the programme
- Access to participant data should be limited to the programme lead or team to avoid a breach in data



Reverse Mentoring holds a plethora of benefits; from improving the interpersonal skills of Mentors to building an inclusive culture of learning. Due to its flexibility Reverse Mentoring can be used in different dimensions, whether that be personal development, career progression and development or when applied to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to aid organisations in reaching their EDI goals.

However, these benefits also come with drawbacks and sometimes challenges such as the complexity of location (especially in the Construction and Infrastructure sector), or the time commitment needed from both participants can arise.

With the variety of alternative Mentoring approaches available there are a number of options, an organisation can take to encourage learning. As Reverse Mentoring is centred around teaching and sharing experiences while encouraging two-way communication, the difference in power dynamics in this approach, in comparison to traditional or Co-Sponsorship Mentoring allow for conversations to be held in a free safe environment.

This difference suggests that this may be why more and more organisations within the Construction and Infrastructure sector are opting to use Reverse Mentoring, especially organisations that have chosen to focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion topics.



Senior leaders wanted to learn how to better relate to people within the organisation

- Balfour Beatty

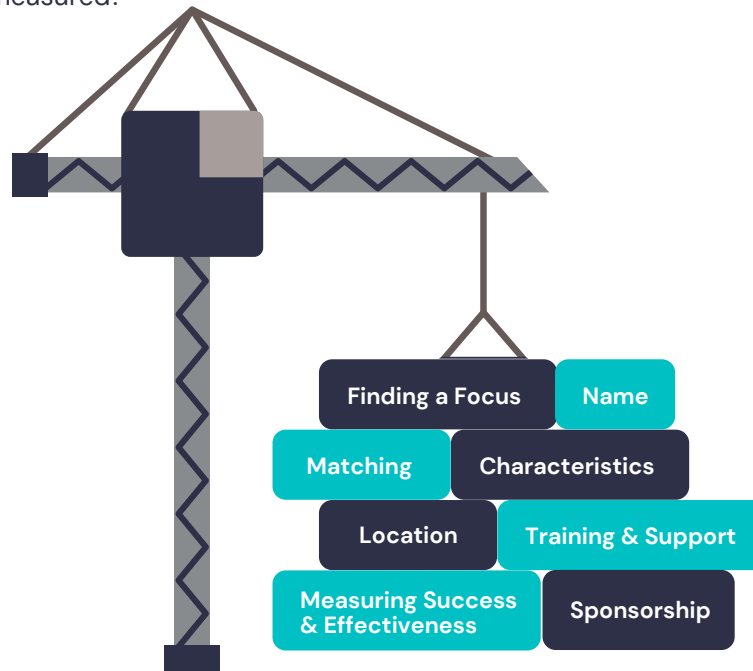
However, the success and effectiveness of a Reverse Mentoring programme is ultimately down to the commitment shown by participants, and most importantly, those who manage it. Regardless of size, sector or location, Reverse Mentoring programmes can be tailored to suit the needs of any organisation.

Despite research showing Reverse Mentoring typically being used in the Technology industry to help teach and transfer skills, effective results can be seen in any sector, including the Construction and Infrastructure as long as these key elements are kept in mind when building a programme:

- **Finding a Focus** – is Reverse Mentoring incorporated into the overall strategy of the organisation?



- **Characteristics** – what protected characteristic(s) will be focused on?
- **Name** – is Reverse Mentoring the best title and if not, does the alternative reflect the organisation and purpose of the programme?
- **Matching** – understanding learning and personality types
- **Location** – onsite vs office environment
- **Training and Support** – how will this be made available to participants?
- **Sponsorship** – how will executives demonstrate their personal commitments?
- **Measuring Success & Effectiveness** – how will the impact be measured?



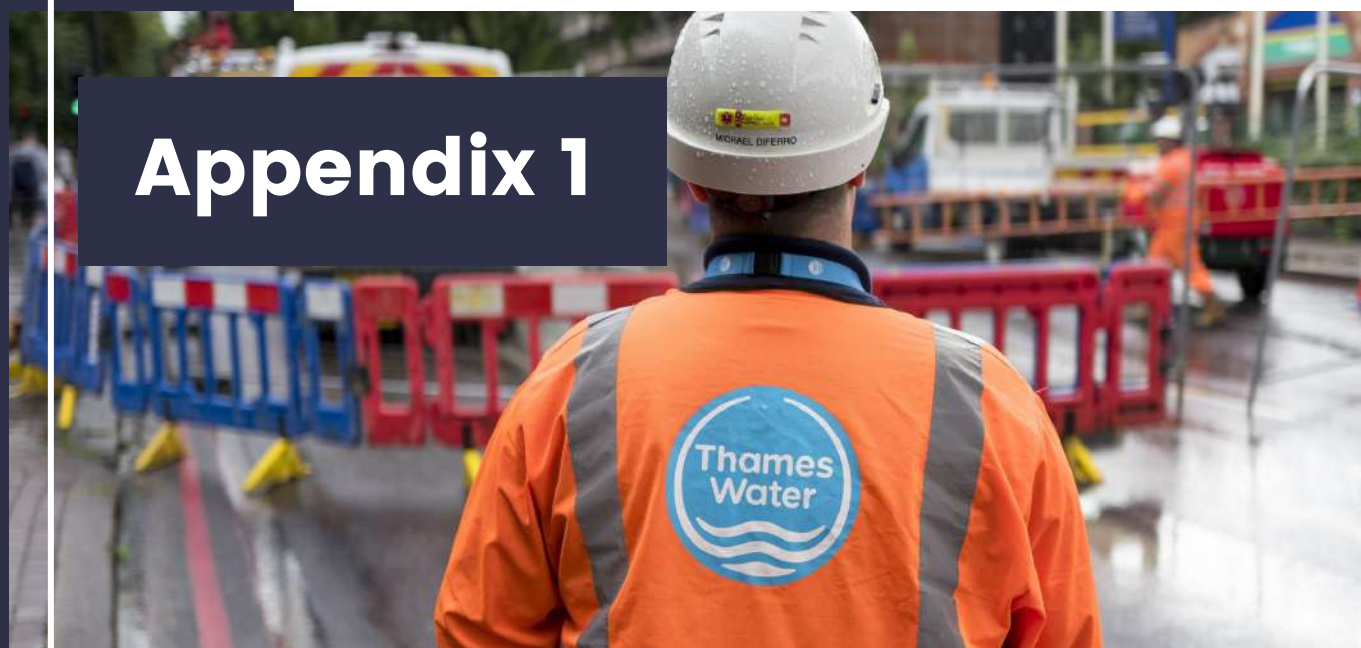
Reverse Mentoring requires a lot of effort, whether that be finding a focus, pairing participants, or creating training materials. As it does not produce an immediate tangible result, it can be the first initiative cut when resources are low and time is limited. However, by building it into a wider company strategy as a commitment, it becomes harder to cut and easier to defend.

Size, location and sector do not have an immediate effect on the success of a programme however, it is important that complexities such as programmes being run on-site and in an office are taken into consideration, as well as the time commitment required from both Mentor, Mentee and those who manage the programme.

All case studies collated show that organisations had piloted or established their programmes in an office environment. Due to the maturity of the approach in the sector and the lack of on-site case studies, there is insufficient data to definitively show that office-based programmes produce better results than on-site programmes.

The research and real-life examples we have provided on Reverse Mentoring in conjunction with our recommendations, guidance and best practice recommendations when building an EDI focused Reverse Mentoring programme in the Construction and Infrastructure industry should inform and guide organisations when deciding whether Reverse Mentoring is the best approach to take for their organisation.

Appendix 1



Thames Water Case Study

We spoke with Thames Water's Reverse Mentoring lead who has been managing the programme for over two years.

Thames Water embarked on this journey of growth and development in September 2018 to coincide with National Inclusion Week.

Areas of Focus & Protected Characteristics

- The programme is a part of their AMP7 (Asset Management Plan) 5-year inclusion plan 2020–25.
- The programme isn't based on one characteristic as they want people from all networks to be able to take part.
- People from all networks within the company can put themselves forward to become Mentors
- The networks are, BAME and Allies, DisAbility, LGBT+ and Allies, Parents and Carers, Multi-faith (includes Buddhism, Christians in Thames, Hinduism, Judaism, Peace and Sikh networks), Military and Women's networks
- D&I champions from each of the networks are encouraged to join the programme

Training & Support

- 6–8 one to one sessions are had via Microsoft Teams throughout the programme
- Both Mentor and Mentee have training before they can have a face to face call via Microsoft Teams session.

Matching

- The Reverse Mentoring management team currently match participants.
- At the start of the programme, Mentees are asked about their level of knowledge against all protected characteristics, and what characteristics they'd like to improve their understanding of and level of knowledge of STEM and other functions. Colleagues are then matched based on the Mentor's area of expertise and the Mentee's desired area for improvement.
- The Tideway (Tideway is the company under Thames Water, delivering the Thames Tideway Tunnel) used the off the shelf Mentorloop to match participants

Sponsorship

- There are multiple levels to Executive sponsorship for all employee networks – each level listed has one dedicated Executive sponsor and one dedicated senior leader. There is also an overall Board D&I sponsor
- There is a quarterly leadership community inclusion workshop and a monthly D&I Council who meet and discuss progress against the AMP7 inclusion plan.
- There are quarterly senior sponsorship sessions to discuss the programme
- Monthly 121's with the chairs which the programme lead conducts

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- One of the ways they measure success is by the yearly employee survey Which includes a question about the extent to which employees believe Thames Water is an inclusive equal opportunity employer, current score is 83%
- Specifically for the Reverse Mentoring scheme Mentees are asked to complete a short survey regarding their level of understanding at the end of the scheme compared with at the start and midway through to understand if there have been any changes. It also includes qualitative comments on what Mentors and Mentees have learned and how they are using this learning in practice to ensure Thames Water is an inclusive great place to work

Cross-Sector Reverse Mentoring

- Thames Water co-collaborated on the EU Skills sector inclusion commitments and the GLA National Infrastructure Commission D&I forums. As part of these forums, commitments and pledges we are keen to explore cross-company Mentoring similar to what the 30% club provides but across all under-represented groups, not just one demographic.

Since starting their Reverse Mentoring scheme in 2018 with half a dozen Mentors and Mentees, Thames Water have had an influx of participants and the scheme has now grown into a three figures programme with 100 active participants. All 10 of their Executives have signed up and been matched with Mentors as well as approximately 30 mentees from their leadership community.



Appendix 2

Ofwat Case study

We spoke with Ofwat's Reverse Mentoring programme lead who shared some insights into the programme which has been running for six months.

Areas of Focus & Protected Characteristics

- The programme started off the back of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests
- The "Black Staff Network" wanted to establish something that allowed execs to understand institutional and systemic barriers faced by Black and Asian people from a personal point of view through reverse mentoring. This allowed SLT and Board to build up their confidence and ask questions about each topic in a safe environment.
- This programme supports the Diversity and Inclusion pledges made by being a part of the LIG
- The programme is currently just focused on Race

Training & Support

- All participants must attend a 90-minute training session before they are able to attend a session
- There are 1 hour sessions every 4 weeks, each topic comes with reading material, podcasts and/or videos to support different learning styles.
- A recommended list of books are shared with mentees, these are read at the mentees pace and generally relevant to each topic of discussion. The books are then discussed within each session for a set period of time, or sometimes longer, to debate topics and allow for questions.

- There are five pillars of conversation all centred around experiences within the Black & Asian community
- Pillars of conversation are:
 - Disparities within the healthcare service and understanding why
 - Educational attainment and outcome of Black children in state schools
 - Black economics relating to pension, housing, savings and salary, what are the facts and why are they so disproportionately low.
 - Colourism and the caste system
 - Understanding what white Privilege means in the context of travelling while Black

Matching

- Participants are currently matched by the programme
- The programme lead assesses match ability, taking into consideration not to place people with direct line managers or leads
- Each mentor expresses an interest in who they would like to be matched with
- There are currently more Mentees than there are Mentors, so some Mentors have to double up

Sponsorship

- The programme has an Executive sponsor
- Executive sponsorship was gained through presenting at SLT and Full Board, getting the buy in from leadership was key to the success of the programme roll out
- The Executive sponsor has gone out to all Execs encouraging them to participate in the programme
- 7 out of 11 Executive have now signed up for the programme

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- To measure success, all participants were asked what they'll like to gain from the programme, success criteria was then created from this per each individual
- A survey feedback questionnaire and feedback session takes place mid-point and at the end of each programme of learning

Cross-Sector Reverse Mentoring

- Cross-sector Reverse Mentoring is something they would "definitely" be interested in

Appendix 3



Balfour Beatty Case study

We spoke with the Reverse Mentoring lead and the Diversity & Inclusion Partner at Balfour Beatty about their programme which has been piloted and running for approximately 3 years.

With two cohorts successfully going through the programme, they have successfully had approximately 60 participants go through the programme.

Area of Focus & Protected Characteristics

- The programme was established as senior leaders wanted to learn and do more to better relate to people within the organisation
- The programme is part of a wider Equality Diversity Inclusion initiative across the business
- The programme was piloted with one team first before it was rolled out to other teams across the organisation
- The programme tends to run between 6 – 9 months per cohort, with 6 months being the optimal time
- There is some localised activity on traditional mentoring but it's not something that is widespread or supported centrally
- Participants are matched based on a number of factors including D&I topics they've expressed an interest in, reporting lines, location and education/exposure to areas of D&I they have not explored or had much exposure to.

Training & Support

- Training and materials are available to both Mentor and Mentee

- The mentor is given training on how to deliver and carry out effective sessions and how to speak to senior people (what an effective mentoring relationship looks/sounds like, what barriers could get in the way, how to overcome these and effective contracting)
- Mentees are given two 30 minute training sessions on an array of topics which include effective listening- Mentees are also given development (1 hour virtual session) to prepare them effectively for their mentoring relationship

Matching

- Participants are matched by looking at personality traits and by working with HR who look at Capability
- Participants are matched on a number of different factors, including their preferences on areas of D&I they would like to explore, reporting lines/projects, geography and compatibility.
- Balfour Beatty's all inclusive programme addresses all under-represented groups and includes participants from the LGBTQ+ community and covers protected characteristics such as Race and Neurodiversity just to name a few.

Sponsorship

- Executive sponsorship has been established
- The Executive sponsor is the COO of Balfour Beatty

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- The programme is measured against the wider Diversity Inclusion strategy
- They are assessing the number of new people who approach the programme team asking to be involved in the next cohort
- A question about the programme is added to the employee engagement survey to monitor people's views on the programme
- Feedback from senior leaders are also collected

Cross-Sector Reverse Mentoring

- This is something they would be open to but would have to verify with senior leaders

Since starting their Reverse Mentoring programme Balfour Beatty have started to help other organisations kick start their programmes and are currently helping another org. Since launching the programme we have supported other organisations who we work with as part of our joint venture to develop their own Reverse Mentoring programme.

Appendix 4



SGN Case study

We spoke with SGN's Head of Employee Experience about their Mutual Mentoring programme they plan to launch later this year.

SGN has plans to pilot the programme in the next few months and are looking to call it "Mutual Mentoring" as they believe it removes the pressure from both parties. Each cohort will last between 6 months, with meetings taking place every 4 weeks as a baseline cadence.

Area of Focus & Protected Characteristics

- Senior leaders at SGN want to learn more about the views of underrepresented groups within the organisation
- Senior leaders want to show a visible commitment to taking Diversity seriously
- The programme will run alongside several D&I activities
- The programme will be focused on all characteristics

Training & Support

- Rather than having training, the HR team will provide guides and supporting materials to help give structure to mentors when they are planning sessions
- HR are looking at what they can do in their role to support both Mentor and Mentee

Matching

- They also considering matching participants by personality types

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- They plan to measure success by looking at how many people come forward to be a part of the programme
- They also plan to measure success by producing a series of blogs highlighting their successes
- When the programme is successful they also plan to explore how they can develop the scheme even further

Appendix 5



Wates Case study

We spoke with the Inclusion and Diversity Director at Wates about their Reverse Mentoring programme.

Wates started their Reverse Mentoring Programme in 2020 as one of the actions of their Anti-Racism plan in the wake of the social crisis that emerged from George Floyd's murder and the subsequent Black Lives matter movement.

Senior leaders were aware of the changes that needed to take place within the family-owned construction business.

With a workforce of about 90% White, Wates CEO acknowledged that all senior leaders (mainly White) needed to be aware of their White privilege and, as an organisation, they not only need to acknowledge racism but, be consistently anti-racist.

As the first steps of their Anti-Racism plan, Wates took three steps:

- **Ran Listening Groups:** In August 2020 internal listening groups were held to hear from colleagues of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups on their experiences
- **Set up a race and ethnicity focussed employee network:** Race and Allies. The network aims to :
 - Enable colleagues to make connections- with each other and with senior leaders in the organisation (including the family)
 - Help Wates celebrate differences by celebrating the different cultures we come from. Helping understand and acknowledge our history and learning from it
 - Support in the education of the organisation on race and ethnicity linked topics and in the general education on D&I and lead to change
 - Enable a safe place, especially for colleagues of colour, a community that offers belongingness and support
 - Support the ambition of Wates to be an employer of choice for diverse talent

Launched an ethnicity linked Reverse Mentoring programme. As this was the first-ever reverse mentoring programme being launched, Wates decided to take a pilot approach. The first cohort has 12 participating pairs.

Each cohort has a formal duration of 6 months.

Area of Focus & Protected Characteristics

- Race-focused
- Focused on experiences faced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues

Training and Support

- Orientation before participants were paired together
- A skills-building programme for both Mentor and Mentee was developed which was a 3-hour online workshop
- Tips on how to contract for the relationship and set up the first session were shared with the Mentees
- Mentors were given tools to help them through their first few sessions
- Check-in forum/sessions were available to both Mentors and Mentees
- Mentors were able to share ideas or ask for advice on how to handle difficult conversations
- Mentees were able to share what they had learnt and in some cases what they plan to do next

Programme Set up/ Matching

- An organisation-wide communication was sent inviting colleagues to sign up for the programme. Colleagues signed up to be mentors and mentees
- Participants were paired by the programme lead
- The programme lead takes the insights gathered from orientation and used them to match participants
- All participants were required to fill in a survey on 3-4 questions where they are asked about their skill set.

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- Qualitative data is collected to understand the impact of the programme
- Areas such as programme retention is looked at: if people are leaving the programme and if so why.

The first cohort of participants saw 12 participants partnered up and the second now has 14 participant pairs in total.

Appendix 6



Ofgem Case study

We spoke with two co-leads from Ogem's Embrace Network (Race, Equality Network) to learn about the SLT targeted Reverse Mentoring Pilot that ran from 2019 - 2020.

A qualified coach was brought on board who helped develop the structure and focus on the programme.

Area of Focus & Protected Characteristics

- The programme focused on ethnicity/race. It was recognised that progress was also needed in the area of disability however, given limited resources and not wanting to spread resources too thinly, the focus was on race/ethnicity.

Training and Support

- Ground rules were set before sessions took place
- Clear rules were given to both participants about confidentiality & time commitment
- On going support was provided to both Mentors and Mentees throughout the programme

Matching

- Five pairs in total
- Insights, knowledge and personality types were taken into consideration when matching participants
- The welfare of the Mentors were taken into consideration especially as stronger characters were a part of the programme.

Sponsorship

- Since the pilot in 2019 the organisation has been working towards formally incorporating reverse mentoring into its D&I programme. This year, a reverse mentoring programme for senior leaders within one of the directorates will be launched.



Appendix 7

Association for Consultancy and Engineering Case study

The Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE) champions infrastructure and the built environment to government and other stakeholders, representing the views of around 400 members.

A Reverse Mentoring pilot was suggested by ACE's Progress Network and ran between May 2017 – March 2018.

Unlike many other reverse mentoring schemes, this pilot did not focus specifically on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) explicitly. Instead, it focused on bridging the technological gap between junior and senior employees.

The pilot scheme targeted medium to larger ACE members as it was felt that they would have a larger talent pool of interested employees. 11 pairings across the following companies Arcadis, BWB, Peter Brett Associates, Max Fordham, Mott MacDonald, Tony Gee and Partners and WSP.

Reverse Mentoring sessions took place at participants' own convenience within their companies. There were no firm rules around the number of sessions held, it was suggested that the pairings aim for one every other month, with at least four sessions held during the nine-month pilot period, as well as ad-hoc catch-ups.

Area of Focus

- Bridging the technological gap between junior and senior employees
- Tackling unconscious bias

Training and Support

- Four sets of guidance notes were produced to help shape the mentoring sessions.
- A workshop involving all 22 participants established the ground rules for the scheme

Matching

- The announcement of the pilot was made through ACE member communication channels.
- Participant companies were responsible for finding the pairs, internal promotion of the pilot and review of the candidates
- Strikingly different personal characteristics were avoided
- If there was any sign that pairings were not working as intended, repairing or new candidate selections were considered

Sponsorship

- Championed by Progress Network vice-chair
- The vice-chair also secured the initial buy-in from ACE and its board

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- No KPI's or measurement tools for the pilot
- A few participants voice that tools to measure impact should be used for both Mentor & Mentee when the scheme is rolled out wider.

Cross-Sector Reverse Mentoring

- There was discussion on the value of cross-industry pairings whereby pairings would be at different organisations or even in different industries.
- It was discussed that Reverse Mentoring could be used as a tangible means to create greater understanding and unity across the wider supply chain.



Appendix 8

Peabody Housing Association

Housing association Peabody piloted a Reverse Mentoring programme in 2020.

Board members and individuals from the senior leadership team were paired with junior members to mentor them on Diversity and Inclusion.

A total of 9 pairs were formed and met a minimum of three times during the pilot.

Area of Focus & Protected Characteristics

- Diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- Learn more about the challenges faced by people who identify as a minority, or about lived experiences that are markedly different to their own.

Measuring Success & Effectiveness

- At the beginning of the pilot, both Mentors and Mentees shared their expectations of the programme.

The expected outcomes were:

- Expand Mentees' knowledge of specific Diversity and Inclusion areas to inform more effective and empathetic decision-making.
- Support Peabody senior leaders to be more visible role models in improving workplace Diversity and Inclusion.
- Build confidence in Mentors to share their experiences and to support others.
- Foster greater empathy between senior leaders and employees at all levels.
- Reinforce a culture of inclusion at Peabody.

Appendix 9



London Ambulance

Having identified a number of challenges which were broadly related to culture, and realising that the people they serve have dramatically changed since their inception in 1965, London Ambulance decided to pilot a Reverse Mentoring programme.

It was felt that a reverse mentoring programme would provide the senior staff, executives and board members with the knowledge of the lived experiences of the frontline/ground level staff giving them a better appreciation of their day to day reality and ensure their voice was being heard.

This programme took place over a year with a total of Ten Mentors and Ten Mentees.

Area of Focus

- For senior leaders to gain a real insight into the experiences of the frontline staff and those closest to serving the population and support them to:
- Understand the lived experience of staff
- Identify some of the challenges that staff experience
- Form connections and understand the determinants of staff engagement
- Gain experience to inform their leadership roles and support a culture of continuous improvement.

Training and Support

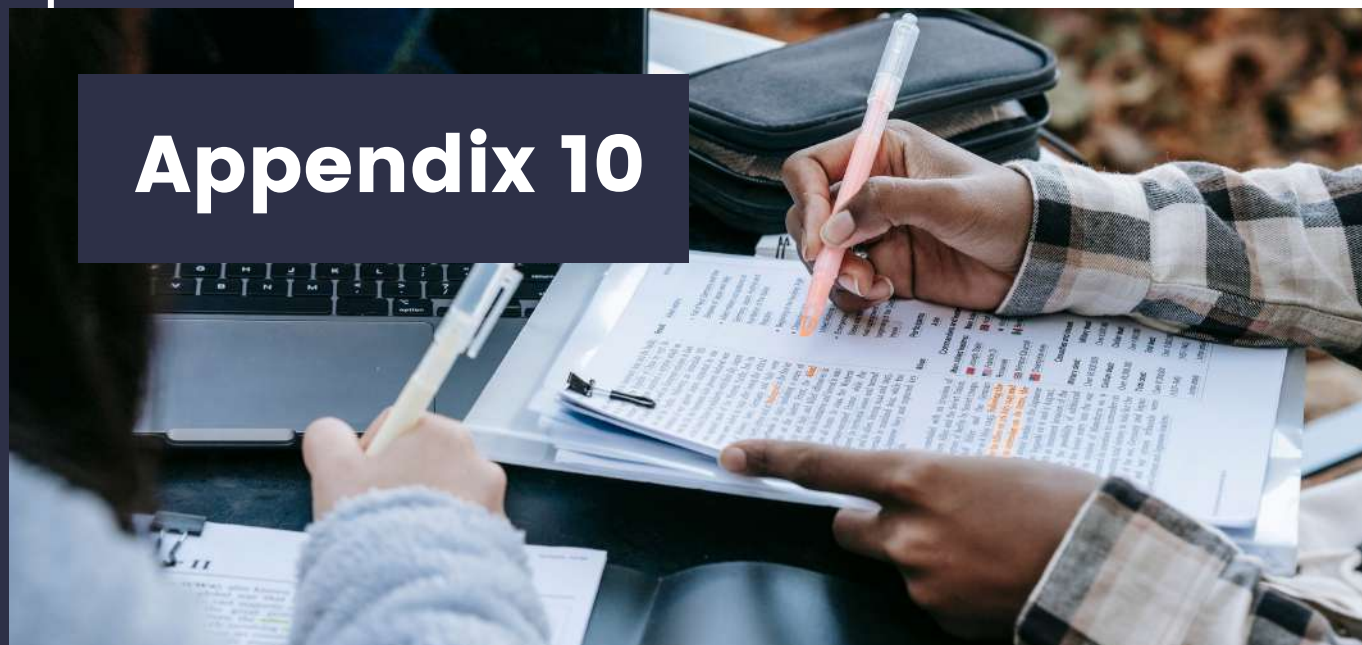
- Training for both the frontline/ground level staff on how to be Mentors and the senior staff were given training on how to be a Mentee.
- 2 days learning how to mentor and the mentees had a day focused on how to be a mentee.
- Mentors were trained in mentoring skills helping them understand what a mentoring conversation looks like using the TGROW coaching Model as a foundation.

Matching

- The programme kicked off with an engagement day with London Ambulance where the parameters and boundaries were established and importantly the key topics the mentees were most interested in learning about were identified e.g. inclusion, the 111 line.

The programme achieved many positive outcomes for London Ambulance as an organisation and also the individuals that took part both as mentors and mentees. As a result of the programme, the participants on both sides (mentors and mentees) reported a better communication flow and improved cultural cohesion. Involvement in the programme led to a change in their career thinking of many of the people involved and it also gave London Ambulance an opportunity to identify employees for development. London Ambulance have now extended the programme for a further two years.

Appendix 10



Office of Students

The Office of Students partnered with students from three West Midlands-based universities: University of Birmingham, Newman University and University College Birmingham to pilot a 1 year (2019-2020) Reverse Mentoring scheme.

The scheme was aimed at Black and minority ethnic groups as well as students and graduates with disabilities who may face wider challenges to securing graduate-level employment.

The aim was to use students' and graduates' experiences, backgrounds, perceptions and ideas to modify practice. They believed that this will help pave the way to a more inclusive and diverse workforce that represents the region.

Four organisations were involved as mentees during the pilot, including HSBC, Shoosmiths, Gowling WLG & BSN Associates. Each organisation was paired with a group of 2 to 4 students/graduates from across the three universities.

Area of Focus & Protected Characteristics

- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Graduates with disabilities who may face wider challenges to securing graduate-level employment.

Training and Support

- A training day was delivered to all employer participants and students and graduates.
- It focused on enabling effective relationships, exploring unconscious bias, influential conversations and how participants would like to implement positive change during the scheme.

Appendix 11



Women in Rail cross-industry mentoring programme

The Women in Rail cross-industry mentoring programme designed to help participants progress in their careers and to improve gender balance, Diversity and Inclusion in the UK railway industry. The programme has received endorsements from DfT, RDG, BEIS and key rail companies.

Area of Focus

- Gender balance
- Diversity and Inclusion in the UK railway industry

Training and Support

- Mentors and mentees receive professional training and guidance on their mentoring journey via a mentoring pair guide and live events throughout the programme.
- Mentors, mentees and programme partners are also encouraged to attend all three learning/networking events where they have an opportunity to ask questions and receive additional guidance but also expand their network within the UK railway industry.

Matching

- Mentees are matched with a mentor from a different company, based on the requirements they have entered on their profile – including location, personal interests, technical skills and experience.

- Male mentees are matched with a female mentor (to the extent possible), to promote inclusion and diversity of thoughts. Female mentees are given priority in terms of their matching preferences (as entered on their profile) and matched with either a female or a male mentor.
- The matching is then carried out by an algorithm with each match being reviewed and approved by the Women in Rail mentoring team at Moving Ahead.

Sponsorship

- Each participating company nominates a Programme Partner whose task is to lead the programme internally for their organisation, put forward individuals for mentoring and review the matches proposed by the Women in Rail mentoring team.

Appendix 12

GLA WIN DESIGN LABS

WHAT IS THE WIN DESIGN LAB?

The Workforce Integration Network (WIN) was established in 2018 as part of the Mayor's Strategy for Social Integration to improve pathways for under-represented groups in the workplace. The WIN programme is currently focused on supporting young Black men aged 16 to 24 years into significant and substantial employment in London.

The WIN Design Lab supports ten large London based employers from the construction sector to build diverse and inclusive workplaces and specifically tackle under-representation of young Black men in their workforce.

WHY YOUNG BLACK MEN?

Young Black men face some of the highest unemployment rates in London:

33% compared to **15%**
Black men White men

From under-representation to microaggressions and stereotyping, to racist 'banter', to overt discrimination – research shows that often dominant construction workplace cultures can leave young Black men feeling isolated and disillusioned.

Young Black Men make up:

4% of young men in construction
18% of young men in London overall

THE BENEFITS OF WIN DESIGN LAB

We understand that companies can often feel alone in working to tackle equality, diversity and inclusion challenges. The 10 employers who have taken part in the WIN Design Labs have had the opportunity to:

- Be a part of a supportive community.
- Learn from each other.
- Become an equality, diversity and inclusion leader in the construction and infrastructure sectors.
- Become an attractive supplier to organisations committed to diversity and inclusion, like the Greater London Authority.
- Receive bespoke one-to-one support to build an action plan to tackle the under-representation of young Black men in your organisation.
- Gain access to an exclusive showcase of leading diverse recruitment specialists.
- Network and engage with companies leading the charge in diversifying the construction sector.

THE PROGRAMME

Employers have been supported through a programme to design and test strategies to tackle the under-representation of young Black men in their workforces. The programme consisted of workshops, one-to-one sessions, and networking and recruitment opportunities.

	What was done?	What was achieved?
Background & Baseline	<p>Companies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learnt about structural racism on a national, sectoral and organisational level. • Understood the intersectional identities of young Black men and within-group differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies became equipped with the knowledge, language and confidence to discuss and challenge systemic racism and the under-representation of Black men in your organisation.
Learn & Leverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies learnt and developed practical solutions to tackle company-specific challenges relating to the under-representation of Black men. • EDI data from within each company was gathered and analysed in the context of wider demographic data. • The designing of an action plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A deep-dive into each company's EDI data to identify areas to focus on. • The embedding of practical solutions and strategies to address the under-representation of young Black men in each organisation taking part.
Act & Anticipate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in a recruitment drive with young Black men. • Networking amongst the cohort of participating companies. • Finalisation of action plan and beginning to test strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting young Black men interested in the construction and infrastructure industry. • Receiving bespoke support and a one-to-one action plan review session with an EDI consultant. • Testing strategies to tackle any issues identified.
Contract & Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in a showcase event with specially selected diverse recruitment partners. • Review of recruitment supply chain against EDI standards. • Learning how to communicate EDI action plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting and contracting with diverse recruiters. • Creating a more equal, diverse and inclusive supply chain. • Learning how to communicate action plan to internal and external stakeholders.
Key lessons & keep going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how to create sustainable cultural change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming a champion for EDI in the sector.



Glossary

Terminology	Meaning
LIG	The London Infrastructure Group
Mentor	A junior employee with expertise or experience in a particular subject
Mentee	A more experienced person, usually a manager, seeking to improve their understanding of a particular subject through engagement with an expert or experienced individual.
Baby Boomers	<u>Born from 1946 to 1964</u>
Generation X	<u>Born between 1965 and the early-1980s</u>
Millenials	<u>Born between the 1980s-1996</u>
Generation Z	<u>Born between 1996 -2015</u>
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Groupthink	Groupthink is a psychological phenomenon in which people strive for consensus within a group. In many cases, people will set aside their own personal beliefs or adopt the opinion of the rest of the group.

*Statistics taken from the UK Office for National Statistics

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- How reverse mentoring can benefit everyone (Iyer)
- <https://constructionmanagemagazine.com/how-reverse-mentoring-can-benefit-everyone/>
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Useful Reading on Reverse Mentoring

- [Mentorloop](#)
- [Centre for Creative Leadership](#)
- [Why Reverse Mentoring Works and How to Do It Right](#)
- [Guide to Reverse Mentoring](#)
- [Diversity Best Practices](#)
- [Reverse Mentoring at Work: Fostering Cross-Generational Learning and Developing Millennial Leaders](#)
- **Everyone Needs A Mentor** – by David Clutterbuck (Co-founder of the European Mentoring & Coaching Council)



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The Equal Group is a data-driven, equality, diversity and inclusion tech company, focused on providing forward thinking organisations with the tools and support that they need to optimise their equality, diversity and inclusion efforts.

The Equal Group implement a range of tech based products and strategic services to enable organisations to initiate a clear, concise and consistent approach to equality, diversity and inclusion – resulting in significant improvements in employee retention, candidate attraction and general workplace culture.