



WOMEN IN FCERM GROUP MENTORING PROGRAMME

INFORMATION PACK

This pack contains important information about the Women in Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (WiFCERM) group mentoring programme.

Please ensure you read all the information before completing your application.

If you have any other questions, please contact us at
 WiFCERMmentoring@environment-agency.gov.uk

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HOW IS THE WIFCERM MENTORING PROGRAMME DIFFERENT?

What is mentoring?

Within this programme, we define mentoring as:

“A reciprocal, collaborative relationship developed to share and discuss information for the purpose of the mentees’ growth, learning and career development. The mentor shares their knowledge and experiences with others to support the development of the mentee.”

Effective mentoring benefits both the mentor and the mentee, the mentees’ line manager, and the organisation as a whole.

For the mentee, mentoring provides a safe haven to explore personal, work and career issues. The mentor provides a sounding board for difficult decisions, an independent view to put things into perspective and someone to encourage and support you when things aren’t going so well. Mentees can progress faster and develop a wider skill sets than un-mentored colleagues.

For the mentor, mentoring is a great opportunity to develop others, away from their own team. It provides a time for the mentor to reflect during the working day. Working with mentees can provide valuable insights about the mentor’s own experiences and team.

What are the benefits of group-based mentoring?

The WiFCERM mentoring programme is group-based. We believe that group-based mentoring approach gives mentees an opportunity to gain insight and support from a larger group of people. It also assists the development of a support network of people all working towards similar goals.

In 2019, we piloted the first WiFCERM group mentoring programme. Since then, the mentoring programme has supported over 500 women to grow personally and professionally. Feedback from our groups showed there are significant benefits for both mentors and mentees.

Are there any other benefits of being part of WIFCERM Mentoring Programme?

As members of the WiFCERM group mentoring programme, you are offered unique access to a series of training sessions throughout the course of the year. Since 2022 we have ran additional training sessions on: interview techniques; productivity; #iamremarkable; parenthood and careers; CIWEM chartership; career development and networking.

Being part of the WiFCERM mentoring programme, regularly attending the group meetings, and joining any additional learning and development opportunities can contribute towards your Continuing Professional Development.

Mentees and mentors are fully supported throughout the programme with bi-monthly check in calls for the first 6 months of the programme and a 6 monthly review call.

What are the topics for the mentoring groups?

The group mentoring programme is topic-based. The mentoring groups cover specific issues and topics that women have told us they want support and mentoring on. The aim is to bring people together who want to develop personally and professionally on the same specific topics. Group conversations may vary over the mentoring period and discuss a wide range of other issues or concerns outside of the topic. Below are the topics we are offering for the 2024/ 25 mentoring programme.

Personal skills: Personal Presence and Confidence	
Aim	Building, creating, and sustaining your personal presence and confidence so you can go out there and do what you need to do brilliantly.
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is personal presence? • Saying “no” • Presenting yourself confidently in a virtual workplace • Dealing with imposter syndrome • Managing challenging situations and holding difficult conversations • Being assertive • Dealing with failure/setbacks • Sharing and building on your success • Networking and how to develop your network group • Building your “personal brand” • Personal resilience and wellbeing • What are my strengths and how do I use them?
Personal skills: Speaking in public	
Aim	Learning new skills and developing your confidence in public speaking, presenting, and networking.
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes an effective presentation? • What makes an engaging public speaker? • Presenting virtually - dealing with IT failures • Managing confidence and nerves when presenting • Building trust and engaging with an audience • Understanding the audience – presenter relationship? • Ways to structure oral presentations • Networking and how to develop your network group • Chairing meetings and facilitating workshops/training
Personal skills: Personal Resilience	
Aim	Understanding and developing new skills to maintain and improve your personal resilience.
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is personal resilience and how can you build it? • Emotional intelligence • Managing challenging situations and holding difficult conversations • Dealing with failure /setbacks • Celebrating, sharing, and learning from success • Speaking with authority, assertiveness, presenting yourself with confidence • Organisational skills • Personal Resilience Toolkit • Learning about ourselves; values, strengths and motivations

Career Progression: How to get ahead in your career (separate groups for new starters / entry grades, and for those looking for promotion / progression)	
Aim	Sharing advice and experience on looking for, and taking forward, opportunities to progress your career.
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building confidence and personal presence and resilience • Making the most of your current role • Goal setting, promotions and next steps in your career • Interview techniques and demonstrating you are the best candidate • Networking and how to develop your network group • Building your “personal brand” • Chartership advice • Understanding how others view you • Developing your own mentoring skills • What is my career road map and how do I achieve it? • Identifying current skills, knowledge and motivation
Career Progression: Developing as a line manager (separate groups for aspiring / new line managers and for existing line managers)	
Aim	Developing confidence and skills to become an effective, supportive and trusted line manager.
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing challenging situations and holding difficult conversations • Using the GROWTH model for coaching conversations • Providing and receiving feedback – the good and the not so good • Managing appraisals and how to prepare • Setting goals/priorities for staff and how these are measured • Managing your time (and your teams’ time) effectively • Career progression and managing upwards • Motivating teams • Management versus technical development • Meeting tips and tricks - different formats, engaging a quiet audience etc.
Career Progression: Becoming an effective leader (separate groups for new leaders / those working in or towards a senior leadership role)	
Aim	Understanding and learning what makes an effective and confident leader (note - this is different from becoming a good line manager).
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes an effective leader? • Overcoming the challenges in a male dominated environment. • Understanding different leadership styles and perspectives. • Building personal confidence • An introvert or extravert in leadership? Does it matter? • How to think strategically • How to influence and persuade and bring people along with you • Managing challenging situations and holding difficult conversations • Conflict resolution • Personal Presence and how to engage with an audience. • Assertive and confident challenge • Management Skills: Effective delegation, prioritisation, resource planning and managing expectations

Career Progression: Women in Field Operations - Developing our outdoor skilled workforce	
Aim	Building and sustaining your personal presence and confidence so you can overcome the challenges of a male dominated workforce
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building personal presence and confidence • Managing challenging situations and holding difficult conversations • Being assertive • Dealing with failure/setbacks • Personal resilience and wellbeing • What is my career road map and how do I achieve it? • How to influence and persuade and bring people along with you • Sharing and building on your success • Networking and how to develop your network group
Work-Life Balance: Being an older woman in the workplace	
Aim	Building confidence to continue your career development and face challenges of being an older woman in the workplace
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the challenges faced by older women in the workplace? including personal health, managing caring responsibilities for older family members, career development opportunities • Support available and carers rights • Buddy, Coaching and Mentoring opportunities • Learning from younger colleagues
Work-Life Balance: Work-Life balance	
Aim	Sharing advice, support and guidance on how to make the work-life balance work for you
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible working and what opportunities this presents • Sharing of resources available to help create and establish a good balance, • Knowing your rights • Managing expectations of others • Managing challenging situations and holding difficult conversations • Career progression • What are the challenges of balancing home life and work life?
Work-Life Balance: Part-time working and career progression	
Aim	Sharing advice, support and guidance on how to progress your career whilst working part-time.
Discussions may include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your drivers for working part time and how can they impact your work routine? • What flexible working opportunities exist? • How to manage working routine when part-time • How to develop skills without changing jobs • What barriers might exist - self-imposed or real • Job sharing; how to make it work for you and your team • How to be a working mum and progress your career?

Why is the mentoring programme for women only?

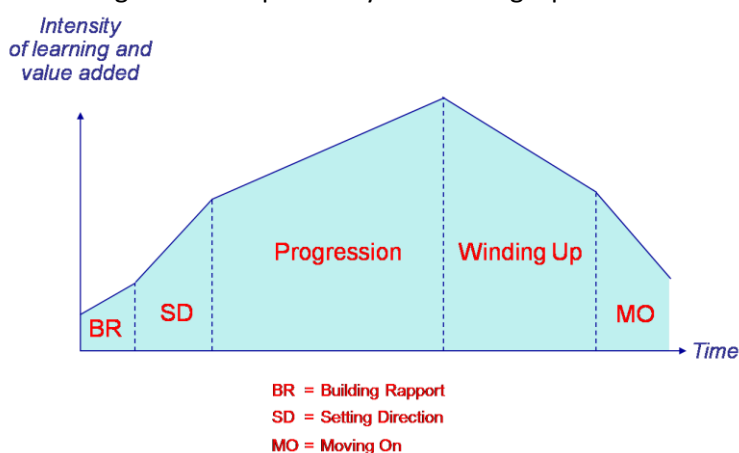
Women in FCERM is a networking group of professionals set up to support and connect women working across the flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) sector. We are focussed on women and those who line-manage them. However, this is within a broader context of striving for gender equality for everyone, so our membership is open to all. Our mentoring groups help women's personal and professional development through topics that women have told us they want support and mentoring on. We want to provide women with an opportunity to have a safe space to share experience and get collective support through a different format of mentoring. **However, the programme is open to both male and female mentors.**

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE WIFCERM MENTORING PROGRAMME?

How does group mentoring work?

After you have submitted your applications, we will assign you a group depending on the mentoring topics you've selected, your location, and your preference for virtual or hybrid meetings.

Mentoring relationships usually move along a pattern as shown in the diagram below:



Source: Clutterbuck Associates Training Material. Copyright 2002.

After you've been assigned a group, the initial emphasis is to **build rapport** and relationships between mentors and mentees. This will help everyone in the group feel comfortable, safe, supported, and confident in sharing issues and concerns.

At the first mentoring meeting, mentees and mentors will **set the direction** of discussions, and share thoughts and objectives. The first mentoring group meeting should last a minimum of 1 hour.

After the first mentoring meeting, groups should aim to meet at least every 4-6 weeks. These meetings are an opportunity for you all to discuss any further issues, **share progress** on specific actions, and discuss other tools and techniques you have tried. Previous mentoring groups have also successfully kept in touch through WhatsApp and MS Teams chat in between group meetings.

After 9-12 months, it will be important to **wind up** the relationship and learn how to move on without the mentor – mentee relationships in place. There is no set process for this: share responsibility for the smooth winding down of the relationship at the agreed and appropriate time.

How long will the programme last?

Mentees and mentors should commit between 9-12 months for the mentoring programme.

We recommend that the programme runs for a minimum of 9 months. This allows for the relationships within the group to grow and develop, and for personal and professional objectives to be met. The mentoring groups can last longer if both mentors and mentees agree. However, we do not recommend that the mentoring relationship last longer than 12 months.

What are the time commitments for the mentors and mentees?

Mentors and mentees should commit regular time to the mentoring programme over 9-12 months and should have the full support from their line manager and / or organisation for this time commitment.

- The first mentoring group meeting should last a minimum of 1 hour. Groups should then meet every 4-6 weeks. The regularity and length of your meetings can be discussed as a group at the start of the programme.
- **Mentees** are expected to prepare for meetings and complete actions or tasks after the meeting. We recommend this is between 1- 2 hrs for each meeting.
- **Mentors** are expected to respond to, and act on, outcomes from the meetings as well as plan for the next meeting. Mentors should also book several months of meetings well in advance. This ensures mentees and mentors prioritise attendance and commitment to the programme.
- WiFCERM will also hold several webinars over the course of the programme. These include an introductory webinar at the start of the programme, a mid-point check in webinar, and an end of programme webinar to share successes and feedback. These will be an hour each.

By applying to be a mentor or mentee in this programme you are agreeing that will be able to make these time commitments. Please ensure you tick the relevant box on the application form.

How big are the mentoring groups?

You will be part of a small group of around 5 (1 mentor and 4 mentees) for your mentoring sessions. This size group allows enough time for mentees and mentors to have in depth discussions and get to know each other.

Am I guaranteed a place on the mentoring programme if I apply?

We aim to provide all applicants a place in the mentoring programme. However, the number of mentees that we can accept onto the programme is dependent on the number of mentors we have. The more mentors that apply, the more mentees and mentoring groups we can have as part of the programme. If lots of mentees apply for the programme, but we have a limited number of mentors, we will use the following to assess your place on the programme.

- Whether you have been a mentee on the programme before
- Your completed application form
- Your choice of mentoring topics (we may be able to offer you a place, but it may not be for your first or second choice topics)
- Your location and whether you choose virtual or a combination of meeting formats (we may be able to offer you a place, but it may be for all virtual meetings if there are no other mentees or mentors near to where you are based).

If we can't offer you a place, we will add you to the waiting list.

HOW CAN YOU PREPARE FOR MENTORING?

It is important that both mentors and mentees take some time to prepare for the start of the programme. This will help ensure that the mentoring starts positively and constructively. This will also help ensure you focus on the personal or professional goals you want to achieve.

What do you want to achieve as a mentee?

Mentees should consider their personal and professional objectives and discuss the programme with their line manager. We encourage you to consider the following questions before your first meeting:

- What current issues, concerns do you have around your particular mentoring topic?

- What do you want to be different by the end of the mentoring programme?
- How will you know when you have made progress or achieved your goal?
- What specific help do you want from your mentor and mentees?

Please use these questions to complete the application form.

Do I need any experience of being a mentor to join the programme?

No previous experience of mentoring is required to be part of the programme as a mentor. We can provide mentors with useful resources on mentoring and provide additional support and training at the start of the programme.

What happens if my circumstances change, and I need to leave the mentoring programme before the agreed end?

We ask that all mentors and mentees commit appropriate time to the mentoring programme for 9-12 months. However, we know that sometimes circumstances change, and a mentor or mentee will need to leave the mentoring programme. If something changes, or you have any concerns about your mentor or mentee, please contact us immediately at WiFCERMMentoring@environment-agency.gov.uk and we will work with you to find a solution.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF MENTORS AND MENTEES?

What is the role of the mentors?

Mentors will

- arrange mentoring group meetings several months in advance. This helps mentees and mentors prioritise attendance and ensures their commitment to the programme.
- discuss and agree the length, frequency, and format (in person or virtual) of the group meetings with their mentees.
- plan and consider how they structure each meeting and what they could cover as part of their mentoring topic. We have a resources pack that can help with some ideas.
- host and facilitate group discussions, actively encouraging mentee contributions and sharing of experiences.
- respond to, and act on, outcomes from the meetings.
- let the mentoring programme leads know if there are any issues or concerns as soon as possible via WiFCERMMentoring@environment-agency.gov.uk. Mentors and mentees may dissolve the relationship if they feel it is not working for them. However, they have a responsibility for discussing the matter together, as part of mutual learning and update the mentoring programme leads of any concerns and decisions.

Expected behaviour of mentors

Mentors should:

- *Show empathy* – mentors may not have experienced exactly the issues that a mentee faces. However, mentors should demonstrate an interest in them, their development, and a willingness to understand things from the mentees point of view
- *Constructively challenge/ stretching* – mentors will, when appropriate, push mentees to think deeper, address uncomfortable issues and set higher personal ambitions.
- *Share experience* – mentors should use his or her own experience to provide guidance and advice. Mentors should be conscious that what was right for them, may not be the best solution for the mentees. The important outcome is that the mentee finds a route forward that they feel comfortable with
- *Respect confidentiality* – what is said between mentor and mentees is fully confidential, except in very special circumstances that may be defined by the programme or by law. Mentors will not intrude into areas the mentees wish to keep “off limits” unless invited to do so. However, discussing these off-limit areas may help the mentee recognise how other issues relate to them.
- *Be friendly* – mentors and mentees should offer each other respect, trust, and a degree of liking. It’s hard to be fully open with someone you don’t feel comfortable with.

- *Help in building networks* – mentors can be an important gateway to help mentees get on the career ladder, move up it, or simply be more effective where they are. Making introductions or helping them identify and contact people will be helpful to them.
- *Be a sounding board* – mentors can help think through whenever the mentee needs to make a difficult decision, or rehearse a difficult conversation
- *Listen* – sometimes mentors help just by being there, when the mentee needs someone to talk to, who isn't directly involved in the issue.

What is the role of the mentees?

Mentees will

- commit to and prioritise attendance to the mentoring group meetings set up by the mentor.
- prepare for meetings and complete actions or tasks after the meeting.
- actively contribute to, or lead, group discussions, share experiences, ideas, and resources they have found, and suggestions for discussion topics.
- provide additional support, advice, and guidance from their own personal experiences to share with the rest of the group. This will help mentees develop a network of contacts, dealing with similar issues.
- let the mentor and mentoring leads know asap if there are any changes in their circumstances which means you can no longer participate in the programme.

Expected behaviour of mentees

Mentees should:

- *Prioritise* - recognise that the mentor's time and energy are precious and offered voluntarily. Prioritise the mentoring group meetings and ensure you can commit to the time that is required. Please discuss and agree your involvement in the mentoring group with your line manager.
- *Question* - to make use of the experience and wisdom of their mentors (and mentees)
- *Prepare* - think through how to make use of the learning opportunity. Prepare thoroughly for each mentoring each session.
- *Challenge* - be prepared to challenge the mentor constructively – mentees shouldn't take everything mentors say for granted.
- *Listen* - listen to a mentor's views and consider the advice given. However, mentees are not obligated to follow the mentor's advice and have a responsibility to make their own mind up about what to do.
- *Respect confidentiality* – mentees should not share details of private personal matters that are 'off limits' unless invited to do so.
- *Provide feedback* - Offer honest feedback about the nature and quality of the help they are receiving from the mentors. This is especially important if the relationship is not working and needs to be changed.

Mentors should NOT / mentees should not expect:

- *Sponsorship* – mentors should not put a mentee forward for assignments, take their part in discussions about a mentees career, and so on
- *Protection* – mentors should not shield mentees from learning from their mistakes. Mentors should not intervene in the relationship between the mentee and their line manager or other authority figure
- *Hands-on coaching* – mentors should not do the job of the mentee's line manager's
- *Therapy* – mentors should not dig deeply into psychological and personality issues
- *Social work* – mentors should not sort out personal problems for mentees*
- *A guru to follow* – mentors should be human, too!

*Even where the mentor has the skills to provide professional counselling on, say, financial or marital problems, to do so would change the role and the nature of the relationship. In this circumstance, mentors should put the mentee in contact with other relevant professional resources.

By applying to be a mentor or mentee in this programme you are agreeing that you understand and will meet the expected behaviours. Please tick the relevant box on the application form.

FEEDBACK

We will regularly seek feedback from mentors and mentees on their experience of the mentoring programme with surveys issued at mid year and the end of programme. Open and honest feedback helps us improve the programme for future mentors and mentees.