



Provincial Grand Lodge of Shropshire

R.W.Bro. Peter Allan Taylor, Provincial Grand Master

THE LODGE MENTOR – A QUICK-START GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Masonic mentoring programmes are starting to mature, but the process is still not well understood and programmes often lack consistency, with different Lodges providing their newer members with different levels of support. It is hoped that this guide will bring some consistency of approach as it defines ten simple points that a newly-appointed Lodge Mentor should consider before starting work.

This guide has been written to assist all Lodge Mentors and in particular those who are new to office. They may be new to office because their Lodge has recently appointed a Mentor for the first time, or because they are replacing a brother who has previously served in that capacity. However he came to hold the office, a new Lodge Mentor is likely to require some early assistance if he is to feel confident in his role.

The information in this guide will provide the Lodge Mentor with an overview of the tasks he will be expected to perform. It will also direct him towards important documents that he is encouraged to read and understand, thereby allowing him to get started with the minimum of effort and thus reducing any sense of panic that might have followed his appointment!

It can be reassuring to learn that mentoring is a very simple concept and that the role comes easily to those with the right qualities. However, it can also be time consuming and demanding. A Lodge Mentor must be a knowledgeable, enthusiastic and personable brother who isn't afraid of hard work. He must be able to create a sense of belonging, develop the understanding of his brethren and encourage active participation in his Lodge. He must be ready to challenge unwanted behaviours and create an environment in which his brothers can thrive. Approached in the right way, the office of Lodge Mentor can be hugely rewarding, and the results obtained will benefit the fraternity for many years to come.

As with all Provincial mentoring initiatives, this guide makes recommendations and is generic in nature. Although it represents current best practice, nothing should be regarded as mandatory and it is the duty of every individual Lodge Mentor to determine the approach that should be applied in his own Lodge. I hope you will find it useful.

Chris Jones
Provincial Grand Mentor

1. REVIEW

Having taken office, the first task of the Lodge Mentor is to review the existing mentoring programme currently in use within his Lodge (if applicable). It may be that his Lodge already has a mature mentoring programme with Personal Mentors assigned to every mentee, and a lively programme of social and educational activities. However, it may also be the case that there is no formal structure and that mentoring has been performed on an ad-hoc basis, if at all. Whatever is found, it is important that the Lodge Mentor understands what he has inherited and uses this information to influence his future approach.

It may also be useful for him to consult other Lodge Mentors in order to find out what their Lodges are doing with respect to the mentoring of their newer members. This can be done through direct contact or by liaising with the Provincial Grand Mentor who has an understanding of the various mentoring programmes in use throughout the Province.

2. THE PROVINCIAL MENTORING POLICY

Having reviewed his own Lodge's mentoring programme, the Lodge Mentor should read the Provincial Mentoring Policy. This document describes the basics of mentoring and how it should be implemented by Lodges in the Province. It can be found in the [Mentoring section of the Shropshire PGL website](#)

The Provincial Mentoring Policy has been approved by the Provincial Grand Master and contains information that will be of use to every Lodge and Personal Mentor. The following content is of particular relevance.

- The objectives of the Provincial Mentoring Policy, including the reasons why mentoring is so important and what we all hope to achieve by actively supporting our newer members.
- The approach to mentoring including the three stages of the mentoring process: belonging; understanding; participating.
- Details of exactly who should be mentored and for how long.
- Mentoring in the Lodge including how a mentoring structure should be implemented.
- The roles and responsibilities of Lodge and Personal Mentors, describing how they can work together to deliver a successful mentoring programme.
- The role of the Provincial Grand Mentor, how he can be contacted and how he is able to support Lodge Mentors in their work.
- Resources and recommendations for further reading.

The Provincial Mentoring Policy is a concise document and should be regarded as essential introductory reading. It will provide all the necessary background information and inform a newly-appointed Lodge Mentor of exactly what he will be expected to achieve. Lodge Mentors are encouraged to use the Provincial Mentoring Policy as their basis of their own Lodge Mentoring programmes, which may be formally or informally defined.

3. ASSIGNMENT OF PERSONAL MENTORS TO MENTEES

As stated in the Provincial Mentoring Policy, it is recommended that the Lodge Mentor acts as a coordinator within his Lodge, with Personal Mentors being assigned to mentor their respective Mentees.

Having started work, the Lodge Mentor may discover that every Mentee already has an assigned Personal Mentor. In such a case, he will want to understand these relationships and may choose to review the arrangements, making changes where required. However, he may discover that his predecessor attempted to mentor every Mentee himself, or that there was no formal assignment of Personal Mentors to Mentees. In such cases, the Lodge Mentor should assign a Personal Mentor to every Mentee at the very earliest opportunity and document the relationships in his records. One-to-one relationships are often the most fruitful, but there are no hard and fast rules in this respect.

Some Lodge Mentors will choose to informally assign a Personal Mentor to a Mentee, whilst others will do so with greater formality, for example by writing to each individual concerned. However he chooses to proceed, it is important that both the Personal Mentor and his Mentee understand their relationship, and that the Personal Mentor understands his responsibilities and the duties he will be expected to perform.

4. THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE AND MASONIC FOUNDATIONS

When a Personal Mentor has been assigned to his Mentee, the Lodge Mentor should issue the Personal Mentor with a copy of the Personal Development Guide, which can be found in the [Mentoring section of the Shropshire PGL website](#).

The Personal Mentor should retain this guide and aim to cover every topic with his Mentee, progressing at a gentle pace as time and circumstances allow, which may take several years (perhaps up to five). Steady progress is the key and this need not be achieved at the Lodge. Informal social gatherings are an important part of Freemasonry and the building of friendships outside the formalities of our meetings should be regarded as essential.

The Personal Development Guide should form the basis of any Lodge mentoring programme, as it contains all the topics required to educate and support a new Freemason. Indeed, it is in itself a simple Lodge mentoring programme and may be used in this way. Use of the guide will allow the Personal Mentor to track his progress and prevent important subjects from being overlooked.

The Lodge Mentor is encouraged to consult the guides held by every Personal Mentor on a regular basis. This will allow him to assess progress within his Lodge and help him to plan future activities.

The Personal Development Guide can be used as published, or customised to meet the requirements of individual Lodges. Lodge Mentors should contact the Provincial Grand Mentor if they require the document in an editable Microsoft Word format. They are encouraged to customise the document, adding their own Lodge's details to the front cover and including topics that meet their own particular requirements.

Every Mentee should be issued with a copy of Masonic Foundations shortly after his initiation. This document can also be found in the [Mentoring section of the Shropshire PGL website](#). Masonic

Foundations defines a series of activities that encourage a new member to discover more about Freemasonry, and in doing so allow him to identify those aspects of the Craft that appeal to him the most. Used in conjunction with the Personal Development Guide, these activities will be completed by the new member with the support of his Lodge and Personal Mentors.

Whilst the Personal Development Guide is to be held and maintained by the Personal Mentor, Masonic Foundations is to be managed and completed by his Mentee. These programmes of study complement each other, and should be run in parallel.

Personal Mentors are also encouraged to provide their Mentees with a copy of the Frequently Asked Questions, which can be found in the [Mentoring Section of the Shropshire PGL website](#). These questions and answers will help a new member to discuss Freemasonry with his family and friends, enabling him to become an 'Ambassador for Freemasonry' and giving him the confidence to talk openly about the fraternity he has recently joined. They also form useful discussion points that can be covered by both Lodge and Personal Mentor during the course of their duties.

5. THE LODGE MENTOR'S REPORT

Lodge Mentors are encouraged to raise their profiles by giving a Lodge Mentor's Report at their regular Lodge meetings. These reports should be planned early and arranged throughout the year.

The Provincial Mentoring Policy contains suggestions of topics that should be covered during these reports, and it is recommended that they are given regularly and in manageable bite-sized chunks. For example, a Lodge Mentor may choose to inform the brethren of the assignment of Personal Mentors to Mentees in one report, and to advertise an event that is relevant to the newer members of his Lodge in another.

This report will clearly demonstrate the Lodge's commitment to its newer members, and ensure all its members understand the work being undertaken by the Lodge Mentor and his team of Personal Mentors.

6. THE LODGE MENTOR'S ANNUAL RETURN

All Lodge Mentors are now asked to submit a Lodge Mentor's Annual Return. The templates for this return can be found in the [Mentoring section of the Shropshire PGL website](#) and are available in both PDF and Microsoft Word formats.

This return should be regarded as an opportunity for a Lodge Mentor to demonstrate how he is succeeding in his office, rather than an administrative burden, and some early thought should be given to its contents. It is hoped that the production of the return will focus the Lodge's attention on its membership and cause its mentoring programme to be evaluated on an annual basis. Lodge Mentors are therefore encouraged to discuss the contents of their annual return with their Lodge Committee before it is returned to the Provincial Office.

The information contained in this return is of great importance to the Provincial Grand Mentor and provides a chance for the Lodge Mentor to submit necessary feedback. Comments will eventually make

their way to the Provincial Grand Master and all Lodge Mentors are therefore asked to give the return the attention it deserves!

Please note that there is no requirement for a Lodge Mentor to submit an annual return until he is asked to do so; the paperwork will be forwarded to every Lodge Secretary as part of the Provincial Annual Return process. The completed Lodge Mentor's Annual Return can be submitted with his Lodge's Provincial Annual Return, or emailed to the Provincial Grand Mentor.

7. RITUAL

There are two pieces of ritual associated with mentoring. The first involves the assignment of a Personal Mentor to his Mentee; the second involves the appointment of a Lodge Mentor. The ritual can be viewed on the relevant section of the Provincial website: www.shropshiremasons.org.uk/what-is-freemasonry/mentoring/

The first of these two pieces of ritual is given by the Worshipful Master to his newly-made brother immediately after he has received the Charge to the Initiate. It is a particularly suitable way to conclude the Ceremony of Initiation and provides the perfect opportunity for the Worshipful Master to introduce the Lodge's newest member to his Personal Mentor. With slight modification, the ritual can instead be given by the Lodge Mentor, which would further serve to raise the profile of this important brother.

The second piece of ritual is given by the newly-installed Worshipful Master when he invests the Lodge Mentor on the day of Installation. A Past Master returning to the Chair may embrace the challenge of learning an additional paragraph and such a brother is particularly encouraged to deliver this piece of ritual, as is a brother taking the Chair for the first time. Once again, this ritual will serve to raise the profile of the Lodge Mentor and give him a status equal to that enjoyed by his fellow office holders.

It is clearly worth the Lodge Mentor planning ahead, so he can provide an early warning to those who will be called upon to deliver these two pieces of ritual.

8. INFORMATION SHARING

A Lodge Mentor will receive information from the Provincial Grand Mentor. However, this can only be achieved if the Provincial Grand Mentor has accurate contact details for the brother concerned! Therefore, every Lodge Mentor is asked to contact the Provincial Grand Mentor immediately after his appointment, providing his name, the name and number of his Lodge, and his email address (or telephone number, should the brother not have access to email).

The Provincial Grand Mentor's contact details can be found at the end of this document and in the Provincial Year Book.

When his details have been recorded by the Provincial Grand Mentor, the Lodge Mentor will receive information that is relevant to mentoring in his Lodge. It is important that Lodge Mentors distribute and act upon the information they receive. Most Lodge Mentors have an established communications network within their Lodges, with information being passed from the Lodge Mentor to his team of Personal Mentors, who in turn forward it to their respective mentees. Experience suggests that this is

the best way for the Provincial Grand Mentor to communicate with individual Mentees, thus ensuring that everyone involved in the mentoring process remains informed and up-to-date.

All relevant information pertaining to mentoring is published on the Provincial website. This is updated on a regular basis www.shropshiremasons.org.uk/what-is-freemasonry/mentoring/

9. PROVINCIAL EVENTS

The Provincial Grand Mentor may organise various events that are relevant to Lodge Mentors, Personal Mentors and their Mentees. These may include Lodge meetings, training and education seminars, and informal social gatherings. They can only be successful if they are well attended, and the Provincial Grand Mentor is reliant on Lodge Mentors to support these events and encourage their teams of Personal Mentors to do the same.

The details of all Provincial mentoring events will be published on the Provincial website. Lodge Mentors are strongly encouraged to check this website on a regular basis, sharing any relevant information within their Lodges (i.e. through direct communications with Personal Mentors and during the Lodge Mentor's Report): www.shropshiremasons.org.uk/what-is-freemasonry/mentoring/

It is very important that we are able to create a sense of belonging that stretches beyond individual Lodges and demonstrates a community of Freemasons active within the wider Province of Shropshire.

10. SEEK ASSISTANCE

The Provincial Grand Mentor will provide advice, guidance and support to every Lodge Mentor on request. It may be that a newly-appointed Lodge Mentor simply won't know where to start, is having problems in his Lodge, or wants to report a success that he believes would benefit others. Whatever the situation, the Provincial Grand Mentor is available to listen and help.

It is important to note that Lodge Mentors are not expected to perform miracles, or to even fully understand their roles until they have been in office for several years! Support is freely available and many experienced Lodge Mentors have made their mentoring programmes, documentation and templates available to others in the Province. These can be obtained from the Provincial Grand Mentor on request.

Additional useful sources of information can be found in the Mentoring section of the Provincial website: www.shropshiremasons.org.uk/what-is-freemasonry/mentoring/ and the Grand Lodge website: www.masonicmentoring.org.uk

SUMMARY

Freemasonry is a wonderful pursuit and membership of a Lodge should be a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Mentoring is best achieved with a healthy sense of humour, together with a generous dose of hard work, and all Lodge Mentors are encouraged to make their mentoring programmes both interesting and engaging.

It is vitally important that Lodge Mentors do everything they can to ensure their Lodges are encouraging, supportive and enjoyable places to be. Membership is not necessarily for life and the Lodge must work hard to ensure it remains relevant. If a brother enjoys himself, he will return; if he doesn't, he won't. It really is as simple as that. Have fun!

CONTACT INFORMATION

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All correspondence is most welcome and will be treated in the strictest confidence.