

UK Business Mentoring The State of the Nation



A report from the
National Business Mentoring Council



About this Report

This report presents an initial review of the UK Business Mentoring Landscape as of 2026. It has sought to map as far as possible the mentoring landscape to gain an understanding of how accessible and impactful mentoring is for businesses, and where key gaps in provision exist.

The report is based on desktop research, qualitative analysis, and AI scanning of the landscape, with prompts centred around types of programmes (sector, geography, demographic groups, etc).

It has sought to ascertain mentoring options in every area of the UK but we recognise given the diverse landscape there are possible omissions and so please do get in touch to engage with the Council on any insights / feedback you have at info@mentoringcouncil.org.uk.

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With thanks to the below organisation in supporting the production of this report:



Foreword



Georgina Waite
CEO
Association of Business
Mentors (ABM)



Irene Graham OBE
CEO
ScaleUp Institute

We are delighted to publish this inaugural National Business Mentoring Council (NBMC) report “UK Business Mentoring: State of the Nation” on National Mentoring Day (27th October 2026).

With the impact of business mentoring recognised by Government as a vital part of the business support landscape, in July 2025, the Government announced the launch of this private sector led Council in its “Backing your Business: Our Plan for Small and Medium Sized Businesses”.

The Council harnesses the collective expertise and experience of the nation’s leading mentoring and business organisations. Its main aims are to raise awareness of, and improve accessibility to, good quality business mentoring, bringing together organisations to reduce fragmentation within the mentoring landscape and provide a more coherent business mentoring offer.

In just over a year since the Council has been established, we are delighted to have seen a number of initiatives launched or evolved including: the launch of MentorsMe, the promotion of mentoring through the Government’s *Business Growth Service*, and the continuation of its flagship national business support programme Help to Grow: Management Course.

We are very positive and optimistic for the future of the sector and profession as we launch this report today. A sector and profession which is driving growth of businesses of all shapes and sizes right across the UK.

A huge thanks to every single business mentor and organisation that are providing business mentoring services and making such a positive impact. And thanks to the Council members who volunteer their time to share their experiences, insights and recommendations for the future of business mentoring, working together to help raise awareness and accessibility to good quality business mentoring across the country.

“Having built and run my own business, I know that having someone experienced to turn to can make all the difference during a challenging time.”

“The council’s work in this community is brilliant and this report highlights the range of mentoring support available across the UK.”

“Every business deserves access to it, and we will work with the council and the wider community to address these barriers, helping more businesses feel the benefits of mentoring.”

Lord Leong CBE, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
(Minister for Small Business and Enterprise)



What Business Mentoring is

Business Mentoring is a purposeful relationship between an experienced business person and a business leader whether a founder, entrepreneur, executive, established CEO, aspiring entrepreneur for the provision of guidance and support in dealing with the challenges and opportunities of running a business.

Business Mentoring is typically used for:

Sounding Board

Providing access to an independent person outside of the day to day business who can act as a sounding board / provide a different perspective

Constructive Feedback

Providing challenge and constructive feedback with accountability

Motivational Support

Providing confidence building and motivational support

Strategic Guidance

Giving strategic guidance and support in dealing with specific business issues, challenges and opportunities and opening up networks

Experience & Expertise

Sharing practical experiences and expertise

Safe Space

Providing a safe space for the business leader to bounce off another the day to day issues of running a business

The impact of business mentoring

72%

stated mentoring improved mental health & confidence

65%

of leaders felt mentoring directly boosted their revenues

64%

reported a direct positive boost to their profits

63%

experienced notable growth in their headcount

Owners with a mentor have higher growth expectations vs those without

53% vs 36%
expect to take on staff in the year ahead

47% vs 43%
expect to expand their business

Executive Summary

Mentoring matters to business and can “open doors”:

- More than two in five small business owners (43%) and circa 5 in 10 scaling firms have worked with a mentor at some point in their lifetime.
- Businesses who use a mentor consistently cite the impact in providing confidence, better decisions, navigating hard moments and access to networks/opportunities they wouldn't otherwise reach.
- However, 4 in 10 who do not have a mentor - and want one - cite it is difficult to source one as they do not know how/where to find one with relevant expertise; and/or that matches their specific needs.

Mentoring matters in Policy:

- In response to this demand and need as part of the Government's Backing your Business: Our Plan for Small and Medium Sized Businesses, the private sector led National Business Mentoring Council (NBMC) was established to bring more cohesion to the mentoring landscape and its accessibility and to provide better insight into the current landscape and opportunities.
- In the first year of the National Business Mentoring Council we have seen the launch of MentorsMe; engagement and focus on mentoring through the Business Growth Service, the continuation of Help to Grow: Management Course programme and established initiatives flourish, and evolve, including greater collaboration amongst council members.

This inaugural report on National Mentoring Day (27th October 2026) seeks to celebrate and highlight the breadth of UK business mentoring and the opportunities ahead.

Key takeaways are:

The UK formal business mentoring landscape is Vibrant, Diverse, Nationwide and enabling Growth:

- This report is focussed on mapping the identifiable formal network of mentoring that exists for UK businesses and shines a light on the circa 227 entities offering 241 mentoring initiatives spanning provision by commercial, university, charity, industry association, corporate and public entities at local, regional, and devolved level providing mentoring support to established business owners, founders and aspiring entrepreneurs;
- principally offered on a dedicated one to one basis over a sustained period of time;
- with varying forms of mentoring options available to business from those that are paid for; membership based, or in the main, as this report highlights, offered free of charge at 'point of use' having been subsidised (80%) / backed by private and public funding;

- with some very specialist mentoring groups available for women, disabled; neurodiverse; ethnic minority and young entrepreneurs;
- and evolving digital models seeking to make mentoring even more accessible to all;
- with a priority focus on helping start ups, and established business owners to tackle issues and grow.

BUT uptake is a fraction of UK business and it's still a challenging market to navigate, connect to and measure/ assess:

- around 840,000 businesses, over the past 5 to 10 years, have been mentored through known programmes - a fraction of the ~5.5m UK SMEs;
- it is clear that it is still a difficult and fragmented landscape to navigate given its many disparate players;
- and the mentoring community and profession still needs to ever more articulate, evidence, accredit and promote its offering to business and keep assessing and evolving its model of operation to fit business evolving needs and models.

The Opportunities Ahead:

- Build on this excellent infrastructure and momentum to ensure mentoring is accessible in every post code and businesses know where to seek mentoring services and know where to find a good quality mentor;
- Enhance partnerships; coordination and knowledge - help scale current programmes rather than create new ones and ensure there is true public / private sector partnerships with triage, signposting and referral;
- Create greater consistency and transparency amongst the mentoring ecosystem and embed standards; accreditation; and routes to professionalisation that are impactful and cost effective;
- Ensure ongoing flexible; relevant delivery, fitting the needs of the evolving business workplace;
- Continue to leverage mentoring as a force for good in pathways to entrepreneurship for youth and starting, scaling and staying ahead in today's dynamic business world.

Next steps

The Council will be directly using this insight to inform its next stage of work and to embrace the opportunities ahead across the UK in our youth, diverse founders and established business communities. Our focus in 2027 will be to ensure we further raise the knowledge of mentoring options for business and raise the bar on standards, collaboration and pathways to mentoring, addressing gaps and opportunities identified.



Get involved

We know today's inaugural report is a snapshot of business mentoring in the UK. We want many to join us on the mission to embed mentoring everywhere and ensure it is a sustaining staple of business support. If areas in this report have sparked interest and you have interest in working with the council then please get in touch by contacting us at: info@mentoringcouncil.org.uk.

MentorsMe - The UK's online gateway to business mentoring



<https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/mentors-me>

Mentoring in every postcode

The UK benefits from an expansive and vibrant business mentoring landscape. This diverse coverage spans every corner of the UK, delivering tailored local guidance alongside nationwide schemes. Public and private sector investment enables most support to be offered free to business owners at the point of delivery.

241

Active Programmes

88

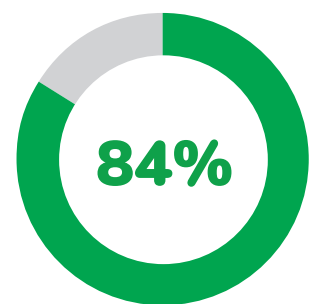
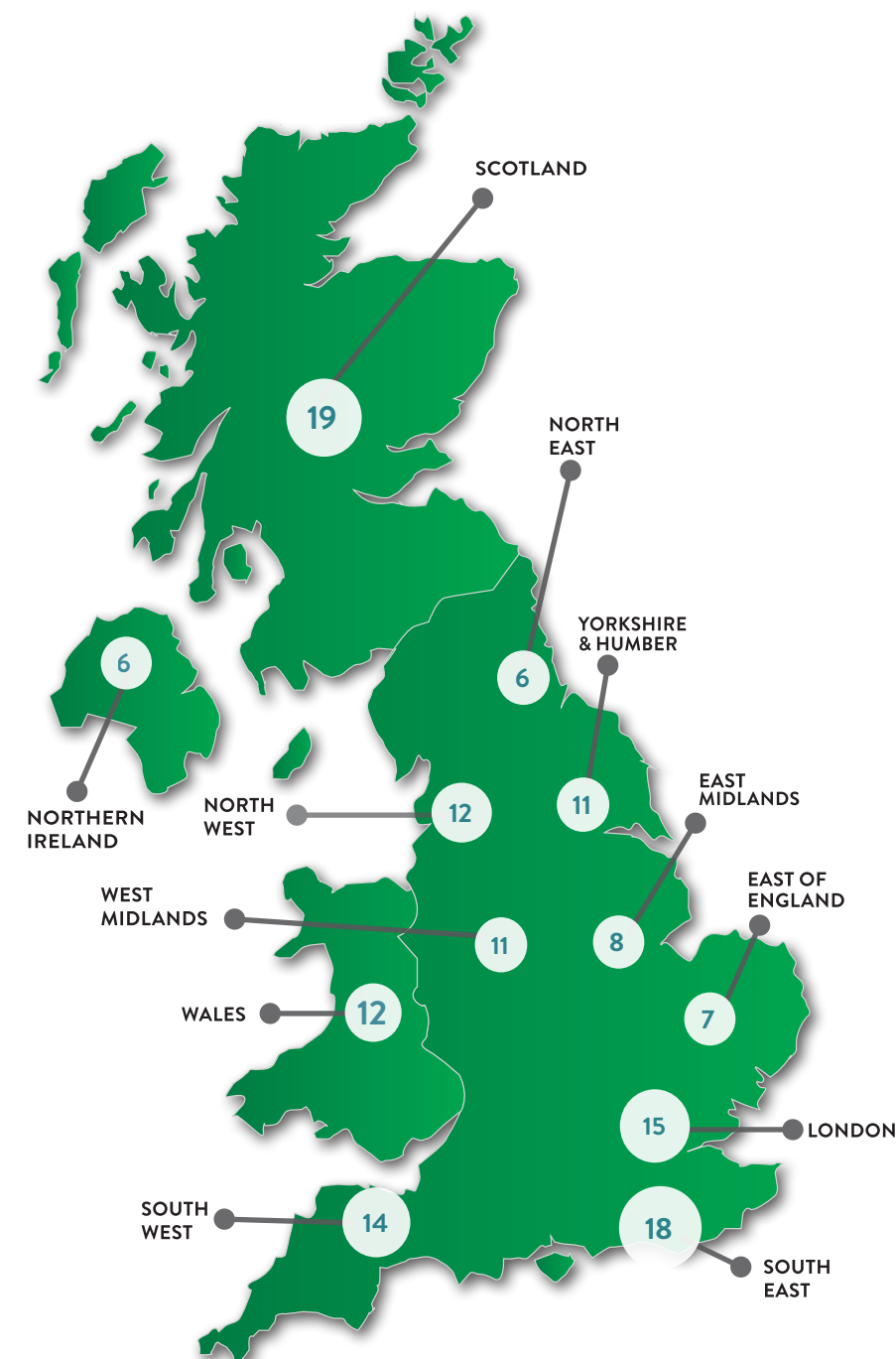
Programmes offering UK-wide access

30,310

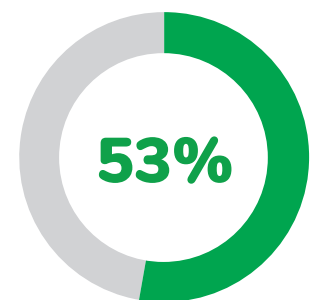
Active Mentors

843,653

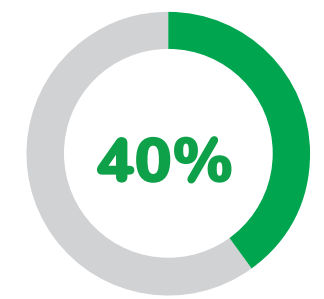
Businesses Mentored



Free to the business user



of programmes offer standalone dedicated mentoring



offer mentoring as part of a leadership programme

CASE STUDY: Mentoring in Wales



BBC Great British Sewing Bee star, Debra Drake, on taking risks after 50.

Debra Drake has loved sewing and fashion since she was a child. She fondly remembers making her own clothes from recycled materials and in the 80s studied fashion and design.

Business challenge or opportunity

In her early 50s, Debra decided to leave her corporate career behind and start taking sewing seriously and launched her own business **Sewing With Style**.

Alongside this, Debra has been busy collaborating with universities, charities and local councils, who all recognise the benefits of sewing for wellbeing and sustainability.

Debra wants to inspire others and firmly believes it's never too late to start a new business.

Debra said: "Going from employed to self-employed was scary and it requires a very different mindset, but it was time for me to do something that I really wanted to do."



Nick Bradley

PRIME Cymru's Volunteer Mentor



Founded by HM King Charles III

The Role of the Mentor

PRIME Cymru's Volunteer Mentor, Nick Bradley, supported Debra

- ✓ as she built her business up. Utilising his vast business background,
- ✓ Nick offered Debra encouragement and guidance.

CASE STUDY: Mentoring in Dorset



Passenger, a Dorset-based transport technology business with 33 employees, 1.58 million monthly active app users and more than £11.2 million in ticket sales processed in 2025. Following six years of strategic mentoring support, the business was successfully sold in 2026.

Business challenge or opportunity

When Tom Quay, Founder and CEO of Passenger, began working with a mentor in 2019, the business was already growing successfully. His ambition was to continue scaling the company, strengthen his leadership skills and prepare for a future exit, while ensuring family priorities remained at the heart of his decision-making.

Role of business mentoring

Passenger: From Growth to Exit

- Six-year mentoring relationship with regular one-to-one meetings.
- Provided independent challenge, accountability and strategic support during periods of growth and change.
- Supported leadership development and major business decision-making.
- Acted as a trusted sounding board throughout the company's growth journey.
- Helped prepare for and navigate the successful sale of the business in 2026.



Derek Hawley

Volunteer Business Mentor



"As a self-starter, Nick's support has been invaluable to me. He's given me clarity and makes me look at the bigger picture. His neutral guidance has been a massive help, and rather than giving me the answers, he mentors me to find the answers myself."

Debra Drake, Founder, Sewing With Style



"Success was not just measured in revenue, but in my ability to remain present for my family and kids."

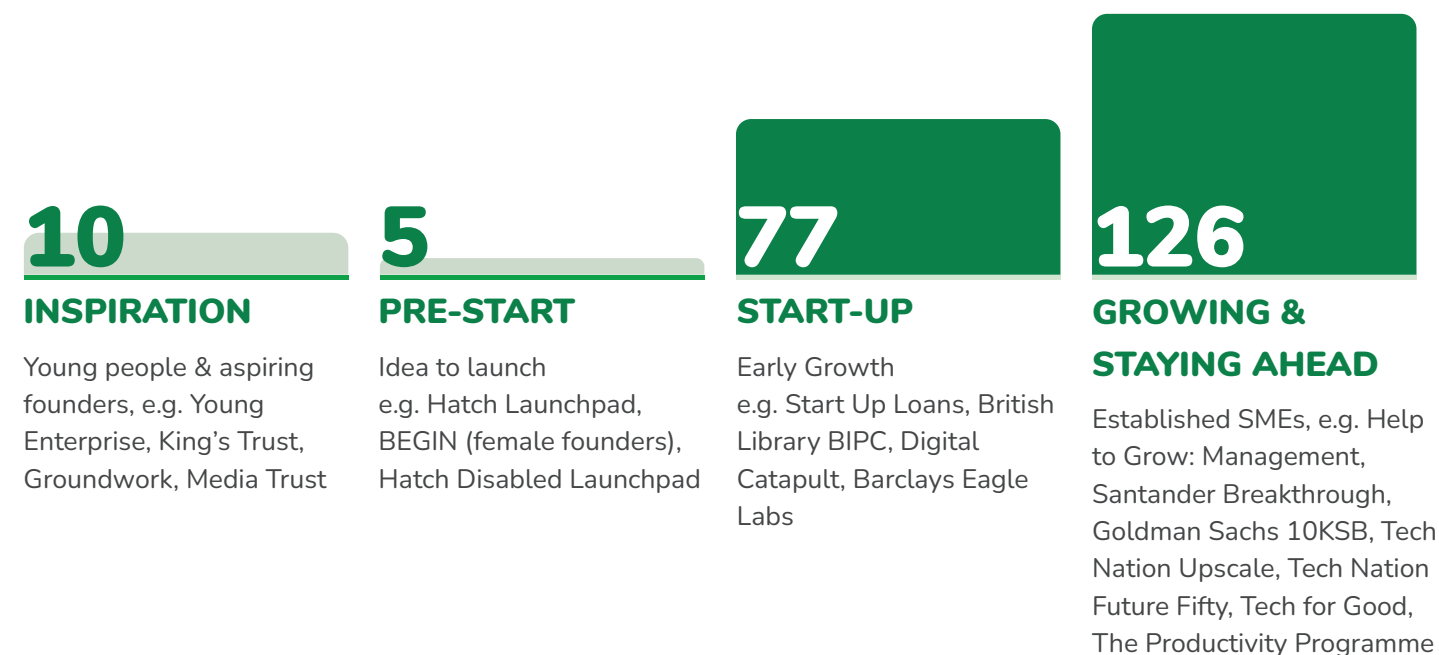
Tom Quay

Mentoring support through the business lifecycle

Supporting entrepreneurs and established CEOs through the Journey

The business mentor community has mentors in all corners of business life – from start up, scaleup and executive experience through to specialists in specific areas of business, be it finance, HR, marketing, strategy, export, technology. Every walk of business life has a mentor to support the journey.

MENTORING SERVICES AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF BUSINESS GROWTH



Solo founders are the least likely to have worked with a mentor



Overall, 43% of small business owners have worked with a mentor at some point.*

~660,000

more small businesses would have an owner who has worked with a mentor if the 15-point gap closed*

*National Mentoring Council analysis; Enterprise Nation Small Business Barometer, 2023-2026.
UK Business Mentoring: The State of the Nation

CASE STUDIES: Help to Grow Management Course



HELP TO GROW
MANAGEMENT COURSE

SULIMAN RAZAQ - MENTEE

Suliman Razaq leads revenue growth at Esteiro Business Solutions, a Midlands CRM software company founded in 2001 with around 30 staff. He joined Help to Grow: Management at Cranfield School of Management and was matched with Mala Morris. She is a board adviser and mentor with more than 40 years' experience across technology, retail and consumer businesses in the UK and India.

He met his sales targets well ahead of the year end. He now plans to use AI to identify the accounts with the greatest growth potential, and to build that into the product his company sells. "Mala challenged my thinking and encouraged reflection on my leadership approach, helping me build confidence in making strategic decisions and managing competing priorities."

"Mala helped me to adopt a different account management approach by interpreting my client data in the CRM through a different lens, enabling more effective prioritisation and strategic focus. This led to clearer decision making and faster achievement of KPIs."

Suliman Razaq, Esteiro Business Solutions

CATHERINE ROYLANCE - MENTEE

Catherine Roylance is co-owner and artistic director of Genesis Publications, the Guildford limited-edition publisher her father founded in 1974, now run with her brother Nick. Two decades of running a successful business had left little room for strategic thinking. She enrolled on Help to Grow: Management at Kingston Business School and was matched with Simon Duffy, a music industry veteran turned consultant.

"Really the [mentoring] is a massive bonus. You're able to go into things more in detail, share a bit more honestly, maybe about some issues than you would in a tutorial environment".

Ten hours of mentoring changed how she works. She now protects her Fridays, and she and Nick give Monday mornings to strategy.

"Just to have someone to talk to, that is amazing. And to not feel so alone with it. I'm now wondering why I didn't do this years ago!"

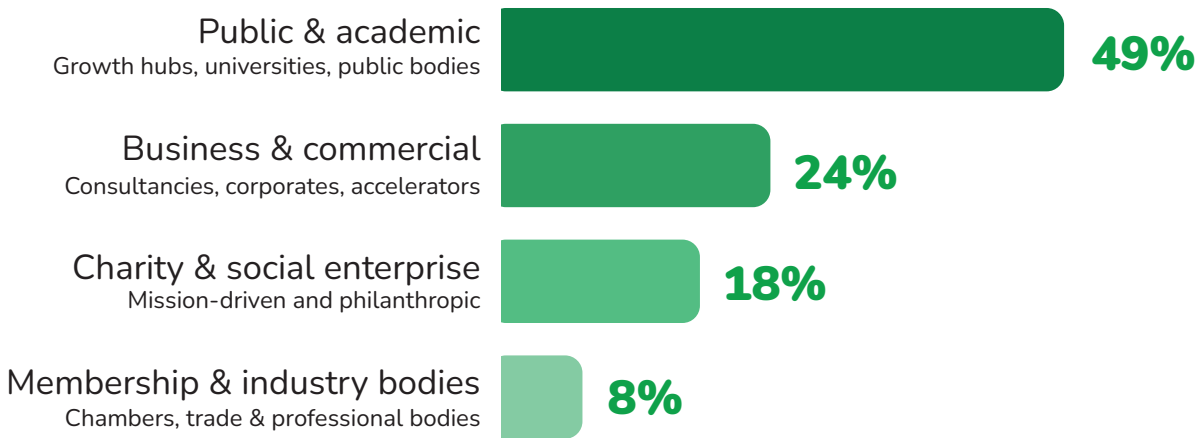
"I wanted someone who understood the industry and that was Simon's background. Simon showed me how we could look at book creation for our authors, and the events we create alongside those projects, as something we could develop into a menu of services alongside the core publishing."

Catherine Roylance, Co-owner, Genesis Publications

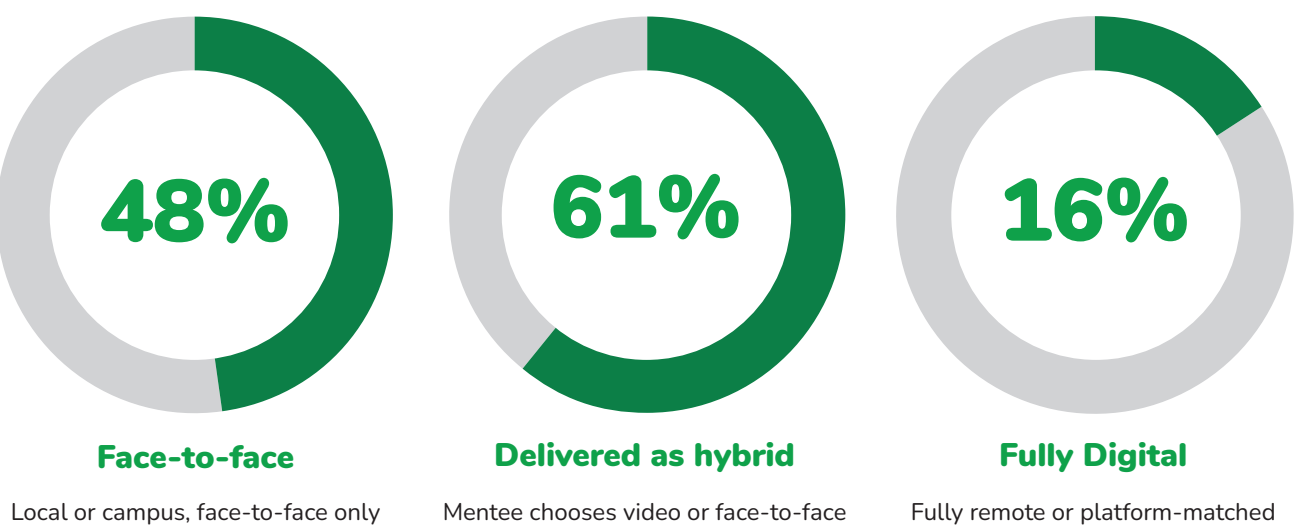
Mentoring is offered by a range of organisations

Business Mentoring is relational and place-based with a diverse range of organisations offering mentoring services to businesses across various platforms, providing business leaders wanting serious hands-on support with a substantial layer of expertise to tap into in a variety of ways, including digital delivery.

Organisations offering mentoring services are varied across the public private and social enterprise sectors.



A business can choose various options to engage with mentoring from online to face-to-face or a combination of both.



CASE STUDY: Not Just Numbers



Not Just Numbers is a Leeds accountancy practice with £750k turnover, now in its 15th year. Its founder, Debbie Whitaker, has been mentored by Gary King, an ABM member for more than 10 years, through regular conversation, accountability and support.



Gary King Professional Business Mentor & ABM Fellow (member)



Business challenge or opportunity

Debbie's biggest problem wasn't winning clients. It was pricing. She was undercharging, over-servicing and working 80-90 hours a week without paying herself.

Role of business mentoring

- Commercial Professional Business Mentoring relationship over 10 years.
- Challenged Debbie's assumptions on pricing, client relationships and growth.
- Through regular conversations, accountability and support, Debbie gained the confidence to articulate and charge appropriately and have difficult conversations with clients when necessary.
- Improving work-life balance by evolving a 80-90 hour working week to a focused Monday – Friday schedule.

The Results

- ✓ 20% year on year turnover growth;
- ✓ over 95% client retention despite increasing fees;
- ✓ employee growth from 2-3 part time staff to 7 full time with further plans to hire.



"A great mentor will challenge your thinking, hold you accountable and give you the confidence to make the decisions that grow your business."

Debbie Whitaker, Director, Not Just Numbers

Specialist mentoring for sectors and diversity

36
organisations
offering mentoring in
specific sectors

Some mentoring services focus uniquely on diversity and specialist sector areas, alongside generalist mentoring providers that service a cross-section of sectors and business leaders. In 2026, this report has identified:

Those offering specialist sector services

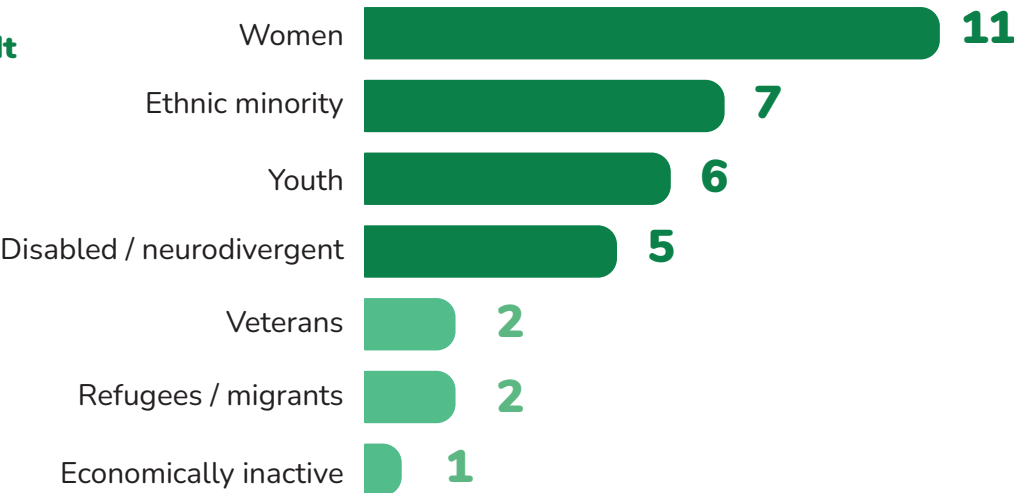
Health NHS Clinical Entrepreneur	Finance ICAEW, Innovate Finance / FinTech	Manufacturing Made Smarter (UKRI)
Tech & Digital Barclays Eagle Labs, TechScaler, LawTech UK	Engineering RAEng Enterprise Hub, IMechE	Exporters IOE&IT (The Chartered Institute of Export & International Trade)
Food & Agriculture AHDB AgriFood, Foodbuy	Social Enterprise School for Social Entrepreneurs, UnLtd, Co-operatives UK	CleanTech Sustainable Ventures, Tech Nation Climate
Screen & Creative ScreenSkills, Media Trust, British Fashion Council	Craft and Maker Craft Council Hothouse	Construction CIOB Construction Mentoring

With 1 in 6 programmes built for under served business leaders

34
programmes built
for a particular
group

Dedicated programmes for diverse entrepreneurs represent just 14% of all UK mentoring provision, and targeted support plays a vital role for specific communities. The imperative is ensuring that all mentoring is inherently inclusive, accessible, and equipped to serve founders from all backgrounds.

Programmes built for each group



Building a Mentoring Ecosystem That Works for Every Founder

By Karen Licurse, Managing Director (Digital Boost), Professor Monder Ram CBE DL FAcSS, (Aston Business School)

Mentoring is one of the most powerful tools we have to level the economic playing field, but access remains uneven across the UK. While dedicated programmes exist for women, ethnic minorities, disabled, and neurodiverse entrepreneurs, provision remains fragmented and concentrated in specific regions. Underrepresented founders often face compounding barriers, from systemic funding gaps to isolated networks.

Targeted programmes play a critical role in providing trusted, culturally resonant support. However, standalone schemes alone cannot bear the full weight of demand.

Our ambition for the Council is twofold: to champion and learn from these specialised initiatives, while ensuring that equity, accessibility, and lived experience are embedded across all business mentoring provision. When inclusive practices are woven into the fabric of every programme, we move closer to a landscape where any founder, from any background or postcode, can access mentorship that genuinely works for them.

CASE STUDY: The Pathfinder Organisation CIC



The Pathfinder Organisation CIC is a social enterprise supporting international students and the organisations around them. Its founder was mentored through the Aston Centre for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship at Aston University.



Aston Centre for
Enterprise and
Entrepreneurship

Challenge

The organisation relied on grants and one-off activity, had no clear repeatable commercial offer, struggled to turn university interest into commitment, and its founder was overextended.

Mentoring role

- One-to-one mentoring gave the founder structure, focus and accountability.
- It helped turn a broad ambition into a clearer commercial pathway.

Key outcomes

- ✓ A clearer commercial proposition and revenue pathway.
- ✓ A defined university pilot model ready for execution.
- ✓ Improved founder focus, prioritisation and confidence.
- ✓ Stronger confidence in communicating value, impact and pricing.

“The mentoring created structure, focus, and accountability, helping me to translate broad ambition into a clearer commercial pathway.”

Corporate led business mentoring

16 programmes are run by corporates who provide mentoring options to their business community, supply chains and clients, with banks being a key supporter of such offerings.

9

Banking & Finance

NatWest Accelerator · Lloyds Bank Enterprise Mentoring · Barclays Eagle Labs · Santander · Goldman Sachs 10KSB · Visa Pioneer

5

Property, Food & Industrials

Grosvenor · Sodexo Partners with Purpose · Foodbuy Group · Siemens / LAIN supply-chain · Be the Business

2

Professional Services

KPMG Emerging Giants · Addleshaw Goddard Ethnic Business Growth

7

of 16

Open to any growing business

NatWest
Lloyds
Barclays M&C
Santander
Goldman Sachs 10KSB
KPMG

4

of 16

Mentor their own suppliers

Grosvenor
Sodexo
Foodbuy
Siemens / LAIN

4

of 16

Target under-represented founders

Barclays (women)
Santander Breakthrough
Addleshaw (ethnic)
Visa (refugees)

CASE STUDY: M5tec

(with Lloyds Banking Group, IOEE, Chadsgrove & Veriom)



Engineering technical services business supporting the nuclear, subsea, marine, mining and oil and gas sectors, grown from two founders to 11 full-time staff plus an apprentice.

Business challenge or opportunity

Founders Carl Jones and Craig Chalder had the technical expertise but not the commercial footing. Cashflow was tight, they weren't confident on overheads, margins or pricing, and they found it hard to present and sell themselves. They also faced a big strategic question: specialise, or stay general.

Role of business mentoring

- Year-long mentoring relationship through the IOEE Meet a Mentor programme, with Gary Newton, Business Mentor, Lloyds Banking Group, meeting every few weeks.
- Financial guidance on overheads, margins and pricing to put the business on a sounder commercial footing.
- A structured look at the pros and cons of specialising versus generalising, so the founders could make the call with confidence.

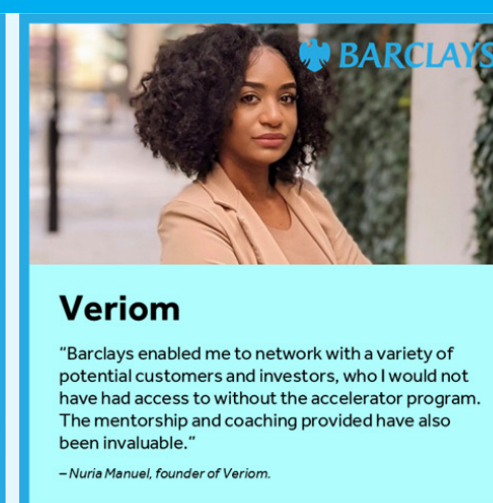
The Results

- ✓ Reworked the website bios and networking pitch together, with coaching on networking and marketing driven by challenging questions rather than instructions.
- ✓ Growth from 2 founders to 11 full-time staff plus an apprentice in around a year.
- ✓ Move to larger premises.
- ✓ Exhibitor slot at the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority supply chain event.



"It's been so useful having a mentor, having someone to run ideas past and get another point of view."

Carl Jones, Operations Director, M5tec



Innovation In Mentoring

AI and the business mentoring landscape

The sector is innovating in how mentoring is delivered and there is room to back promising new models and scale what works. Mentoring delivery is evolving, not static. As AI rapidly evolves, so will how business mentoring is delivered. From AI driven mentoring platforms and technology, to mentors providing guidance and support to mentees on how AI can and should be embedded within businesses to help make them grow and become more productive.

Upskilling business mentors in how to most effectively embed AI within the businesses they mentor, is critical to help businesses grow and stay ahead. We've seen more focus and investment into upskilling business mentors on programmes with AI skills, including through accredited training on the Government's Help to Grow: Management Course. In addition, over the last few years an increasing number of tech start-ups have begun to emerge within mentoring. It is very early days and there is work to be done to see how these firms will impact the business mentoring landscape in the long term, but one of their key drivers is to make mentoring as accessible as possible to all businesses, in every area of the UK, with often problem, or skill specific mentoring.

WHAT WE SEE

14 organisations are matching platforms rather than fixed programmes, and established players like Digital Boost and new players such as Mentro are fully tech-enabled models.

14

Matching Platforms

3

New-to-Market entrants



CASE STUDY: Digital Boost

Digital Boost connects any small organisation with volunteer mentors, on demand

Digital Boost is a social enterprise, owned by the charity F4S, that gives small businesses free access to skilled volunteer mentors. Its platform matches each organisation with the right mentor for what it needs, with local matching. All support is free thanks to partnerships with corporates.

40,000+

small organisations supported



adopted new digital tools and techniques

28,000

one-to-one mentoring connections



learned new skills to grow their business

5,000+

skilled volunteer mentors



had no support before

"I've had the same mentor now for two years. He's helped so much. Before, I was doing 0-1 sales a month and now I'm doing almost 1,000. Huge!"

Gary, Eastnole

"Coming to Digital Boost, it feels like I now have access to the world's knowledge. I'm so grateful. Without it, I probably would be stuck in the same place, but now, there's growth because of Digital Boost."

Natalie, Creative Banter

"My mentor helped me think about the entire process. I came away with a much better understanding of the possibilities and what steps I needed to do. It probably saved me thousands of pounds!"

Sue, National Forest E-Bike Holidays

Commercial Business Mentoring

Commercial business mentoring has become an increasingly important part of the business mentoring landscape over the last decade. These mentors are professionals who have experience within a range of different business contexts and have now moved into a portfolio career, with business mentoring being a core part of their service offering. Business mentoring is becoming a portfolio service of choice.

The Council estimates that there are approximately 2,000 – 5,000 commercial business mentors in the UK. It is an estimate however and significant further research needs to be undertaken to obtain a clearer understanding of the numbers of commercial business mentors, what type of professionals are turning to commercial mentoring as a career choice, what accreditations and standards they are adhering to, and what impact they are having on the businesses they support.

2-5k

Number of Commercial Business Mentors

Impact of Commercial Business Mentoring through ABM Mentors

"Mentoring is unlike anything you can find anywhere else... The amount of value I got from day one really surprised me."

Brandon Shiels, Managing Director, Compassion First Homecare.

"Having that sounding board for when things get really tricky when I can't see a solution is very good for my personal mental health. It means I've got somebody who knows my business who I can talk to."

Charlie Stockbridge, Managing Director, Manuscript Pen Company

Emerging Themes & Implications

1. There is an excellent mentoring infrastructure across the UK that can be built upon, but it is fragmented and needs to be more ‘joined up’ and sustainable

There appears to be a good number of programmes and mentoring services however that does not mean there is sufficient capacity within them and not all are dedicated mentoring programmes. The landscape is fragmented and we need to ensure the depth and reach and quality of access is consistent and sustainable, with better connection across the mentoring marketplace and easier navigation, referrals, and tracking.

2. ‘Quality Standards are evolving but there is opportunity to significantly step this up and roll out further within programmes and services

Standards - Vetting, training (CPD and accreditation), frameworks and codes of conduct are important in building trust and confidence within the business mentoring ecosystem. There are emerging training and qualifications standards for business mentors and over the last circa 15 years various programmes have sought to build in standards such as Let’s Get Mentoring and Help to Grow: Management Course. This is an area of opportunity to step up progress to further gain the trust and engagement from the broadest business community in good quality business mentoring.

3. There is lack of consistent impact measurement, and the sector cannot yet fully measure itself to drive investment

Very little comparable data exists across organisations — reach, mentors and outcomes are rarely reported the same way (or at all). Fewer than one in seven organisations reports how many businesses it helps in a year. Active-mentor and hours data are missing on more than nine in ten. Impact claims currently rest on a handful of providers. A shared, light-touch reporting template would transform the evidence base overnight and help build the investment base and sustainability of the business mentoring support sector.

4. Public / private partnership and funding is vital to provide ‘free to the user’ business mentoring

It is clear that business mentoring exists given the demands and value businesses place on having that independent sounding board and the focus both the private and public sector have placed on it to help evolve services and options. These partnerships need to be sustained and evolve further, particularly as we transition into devolved solutions UKSPF-to-LGF transition mechanisms and ensure every postcode is served. How we funnel private/public sector resource to existing provision and build scale, rather than increasing fragmentation, is important. The rapidly growing commercial mentoring profession also has a critical role to play and more must be done to raise awareness of its impact and role within the mentoring landscape.

5. Accessibility

There is good geographic coverage and place based services with also specialist mentoring groups for diverse communities, however, we need to ensure no gaps emerge and that mentoring becomes a mainstream staple of every day business support, readily available to all, in a cost effective manner and business reach continues to grow.

Next steps: Council 2027 priorities

01



Impact & Standards

Champion impact reporting and standards, ensuring routes to professionalisation that are cost effective, relevant and impactful; promote good practices.

02



Access everywhere

Ensure mentoring is accessible in every postcode and businesses know where to seek good quality mentoring: through workshops with Business Growth Service; continued improvement to signposting platforms; regional roundtables; case studies; National Mentoring Day.

03



Partnerships & referrals

Enhance partnerships; coordination and knowledge. Support cross-referral requirements for programmes and wider service providers of good quality business mentoring.

04



Inclusion & opportunity

Continue to leverage mentoring as a force for good in diverse businesses and pathways to entrepreneurship for youth.

05



Resources & reach

Direct private sector resource, including social value spend, to mentoring programmes: Consider how we can further enable all Universities, business schools, corporates to embed mentoring into their alumni networks/ supply chains.

How to get Involved

Our Next Steps

The Council will be directly using this insight to inform its next stage of work and to embrace the opportunities ahead across the UK and in our youth, diverse founders and established business communities.

Our focus in 2027 will be to ensure we further raise the knowledge of mentoring options for business and raise the bar on standards, collaboration and pathways to mentoring, addressing gaps and opportunities identified.

Get involved

We know today’s inaugural report is a snapshot of business mentoring in the UK. We want many to join us on the mission to embed mentoring everywhere and ensure it is a sustaining staple of business support.

If areas in this report have sparked interest and you have interest in working with the council then please get in touch by contacting us at:

CONTACT INFORMATION

info@mentoringcouncil.org.uk

Acknowledgements & Council Structure

Acknowledgements

We express our sincere gratitude to all the organisations, business mentors, and partners across the UK. Your invaluable insights, data contributions, and shared experiences made this inaugural report possible. In particular thanks go to Council Members: Karen Licurse; Monder Ram; Flora Hamilton; Leigh Sears and data analyst William Kreskowski from Strathclyde University working with ScaleUp Institute.

Council Members

Our Council brings together key leaders from the private, public, and education sectors. Together, we steer national business mentoring strategy, championing high standards and working to unlock pathways to growth for all businesses.

Subgroups & Join Us

To deliver on our 2027 priorities, we maintain active subgroups focused on standards, accessibility, awareness raising and ecosystem partnerships. We invite passionate ecosystem builders and leaders to join our subgroups. Get in touch to collaborate on our next stages of work.

COUNCIL MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

- ABM
- Aston University
- Be the Business
- Chartered Association of Business Schools
- Digital Boost
- Dorset Business Mentors
- Enterprise Nation
- ICAEW
- IOEE
- National Mentoring Day
- Newable
- Prime Cymru
- ScaleUp Institute
- Scottish Chambers of Commerce
- SFEDI
- The Growth Company
- UK Finance

