



Women in  
Flood and  
Coastal Erosion  
Risk Management



# **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

## Contents

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>HOW IS THE WIFCERM MENTORING PROGRAMME DIFFERENT?</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| What is mentoring?  | 3        |
| What are the benefits of group-based mentoring?   | 3        |
| Are there any other benefits of being part of WIFCERM Mentoring Programme?                                  | 3        |
| What topics do the mentoring group cover?   | 3        |
| Why is the mentoring programme for women only?  | 4        |
| <b>WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE WIFCERM MENTORING PROGRAMME</b>  | <b>4</b> |
| How does group mentoring work?  | 4        |
| How long will the programme last?   | 5        |
| How much time should mentors and mentees commit to the programme?   | 5        |
| How big are the mentoring groups?   | 5        |
| Do the groups meet face to face or virtually?   | 5        |
| Am I guaranteed a place on the mentoring programme if I apply?  | 6        |
| What is the role of the mentors?  | 6        |
| Expected behaviour of mentors   | 6        |
| What is the role of the mentees?  | 7        |
| Expected behaviour of mentees   | 7        |
| <b>HOW TO PREPARE FOR MENTORING</b>   | <b>8</b> |
| What do you want to achieve as a mentee?  | 8        |
| Do I need any experience of being a mentor to join the programme?   | 8        |
| What happens if my circumstances change, and I need to leave the mentoring programme before the agreed end? | 8        |



# 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 and professional 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. Group-based mentoring 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.

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

We run additional training sessions throughout the year for our mentees and mentors. Previous topics include interview techniques; productivity; #iamremarkable; parenthood and careers; CIWEM chartership; career development and networking. These are free to join and the recordings are made available after the event.

In 2025/26, we will also be awarding a ‘Certificate of Achievement’ to those mentees who demonstrate excellent participation and commitment to the programme. Being part of the mentoring programme, regularly attending the group meetings, and joining any additional learning and development opportunities contributes towards your Continuing Professional Development.

## What topics do the mentoring group cover?

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. The list of mentoring topics for the 2025/26 programme are on our website <https://womeninfcerm.org/mentoring/>

### Why is the mentoring programme for women only?

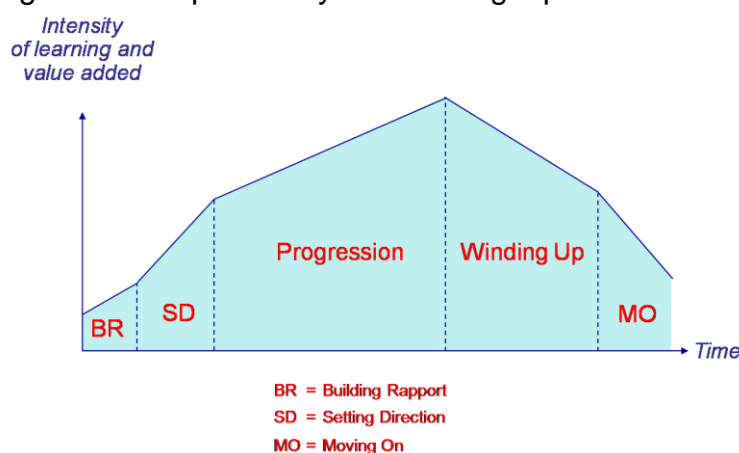
Our mentoring groups help women develop personally and professionally through topics that women have told us they want support and mentoring on. We provide women with a psychologically safe space to share experiences and issues and get collective support through our group mentoring programme. **However, we recognise and value the contribution and support of male allies and so the mentoring programme is open to both male and female mentors.**

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE WIFCERM MENTORING PROGRAMME

### How does group mentoring work?

- After applications have closed, we review your completed application and will assign you a group according to the information you have provided us.

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 mentor will arrange to meet their group for the first time and start to **build rapport** and relationships. 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 future meeting and share thoughts and objectives. The first mentoring group meeting should last a minimum of 1 hour and be held within the first month after groups are assigned.
- After the first meeting - groups should meet at least every 4-6 weeks to discuss issues and experiences, **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's time to start **winding up** the relationship and learn how to move on without the mentor – mentee relationship in place. There is no set process for this. You can discuss this as a group.

### How long will the programme last?

Mentees and mentors should commit between 9-12 months for the mentoring programme. A minimum of 9 months allows for the relationships within the group to grow and develop, and for personal and professional objectives to be met. We do not recommend that the mentoring relationship last longer than 12 months.

### How much time should mentors and mentees commit to the programme?

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. You should discuss the regularity and length of your meetings 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 to these time commitments. Please ensure you tick the relevant box on the application form.**

### How big are the mentoring groups?

Each group is made up of around 5/6 individuals – 1 mentor and between 4-5 mentees. This size group allows enough time for mentees and mentors to have in-depth discussions and get to know each other.

### Do the groups meet face to face or virtually?

We offer both face to face to virtual mentoring groups. Some groups also choose to do a mix of face to face and virtual meetings. Please state your preference in your application form as we use this information to help us assign you a mentoring group. When choosing face to face mentoring, please ensure you are permitted and able to travel. WiFCERM are not able to reimburse travel expenses.

### 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 criteria 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, face to face or a hybrid meeting format. 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.

### What is the role of the mentors?

Mentors will

1. discuss and agree the length, frequency, and format (in person / virtual) of the group meetings with mentees.
2. arrange mentoring group meetings several months in advance. This helps mentees and mentors prioritise attendance and ensures their commitment to the programme.
3. consider how to structure each meeting and what could be discussed. We have a resources pack that can help with some ideas
4. host and facilitate group discussions, actively encouraging mentee contributions and sharing of experiences.
5. respond to, and act on, outcomes from the meetings.
6. Log attendance of sessions and engagement level of mentees in order to confirm requirements for an end of programme certificate of achievement. We will provide a template.
7. Contact mentoring programme leads if there are any issues or concerns via [WiFCERMMENToring@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto: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** – 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.
- **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

1. Commit to, and prioritise, attendance to the mentoring group meetings set up by the mentor. The mentor’s time and energy are precious and offered voluntarily. The more time you commit to the mentoring experience, the more you will get out of it. Please discuss and agree your participation in the mentoring group with your line manager.
2. Prepare for meetings and complete actions or tasks after the meeting. Think about how to make use of the learning opportunity
3. Actively contribute to, or lead, group discussions, share experiences, ideas and resources they have found, and suggestions for discussion topics.
4. Inform the mentor and mentoring leads asap if there are any changes in your circumstances which means you can no longer participate in the programme.

### Expected behaviour of mentees

Mentees should:

1. **Question** - to make use of the experience and wisdom of their mentors (and mentees)
2. **Challenge** - be prepared to challenge the mentor constructively – mentees shouldn’t take everything mentors say for granted.
3. **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.
4. **Respect confidentiality** – mentees should not share details of private personal matters that are ‘off limits’ unless invited to do so.
5. **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 if 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.**

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR MENTORING

### 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. **You can use these questions to complete the application form.**

- 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?

### 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?

Sometimes circumstances change, and a mentor or mentee may 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](mailto:WiFCERMMENToring@environment-agency.gov.uk) and we will work with you and your group to find a solution.

If you have any further questions, please contact us at [wifcermmmentoring@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:wifcermmmentoring@environment-agency.gov.uk)

We look forward to receiving your application.