

Mentoring Rules and Procedures

1 Introduction

It is widely recognised that all professionals, wherever they are in their career, can benefit from having a mentor. However, there are particular benefits for new entrants to receive mentoring support during their first few years after qualification, having taken on land or a tenancy or when receiving grant support. The Farm Advisory Service will fund up to four days of peer mentoring support, based on 7.4 hours per day.

PLEASE TAKE TIME TO READ THIS DOCUMENT BEFORE REACHING A DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SCHEME.

2 Scheme rules and conditions

Eligibility

Mentoring support is available to those who have set up or become head of a farming business within the last five years. You will need to be registered in Scotland with the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) and hold a Business Reference Number (BRN).

The role of the mentor

In this context, the term 'mentoring' describes a relationship in which a person is supported, receiving encouragement and learning from an experienced individual. The essential feature is 'a focus on a one to one relationship between the mentor and learner (mentee) which ensures individual attention and support. It is a process involving effective communication and is based on good relationships.

What makes a good mentor?

- Possess effective communication and listening skills
- Willingness to make time
- Good practical experience and a willingness to share
- Enthusiasm, ability to influence and inspire individuals
- Caring, interested in helping people grow.

The mentor's services will consist of meetings and/or phone calls and/or email or other written communications between the Mentor and the Mentee from time to time, the exact content, frequency and duration of which will be as agreed between the Mentor and the Mentee

Following an initial meeting on the farm, the mentor and mentee will agree how best to work together but, to get the most out of the service, it is essential that both are fully involved in the process. The mentor will ask a lot of questions and the mentee must provide all the information needed to give a full picture of the business. This will allow the mentor to understand how best help guide and support the mentee to achieve their objectives.

All parties will keep in strict confidence all and any information of a confidential nature which it obtains about either of the other parties as a result of the mentoring agreement.

3 The application process

An application form can be downloaded from the website (www.fas.scot/new-entrants/). To request a hard copy please telephone 0300 323 0161 or send an email (advice@fas.scot). Application forms may be completed electronically or by hand (we can accept electronic signatures). Please complete the application form and email advice@fas.scot or send it to Scottish Farm Advisory Service, WSP, 110 Queen Street, Glasgow, G1 3BX. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within 15 working days from posting the application form, you should inform the service by telephone: 0300 323 0161 or email advice@fas.scot.

If your application is successful, you will receive a formal offer letter and a Mentoring Acceptance of Offer form. If you have already identified your mentor, please provide their details on the form. However, if you require assistance with finding a suitable mentor, please let us know on the form so we can help to find an appropriate peer. The Mentoring Acceptance of Offer form should also be signed and one copy returned to the Farm Advisory Service. This must be done within 28 days of the date of the offer letter, otherwise the offer may be withdrawn.

If your application is unsuccessful, you will be notified by letter.

Identifying a mentor

A requirement of the scheme is that the mentor must have relevant experience working in the farming industry and managing their own farming business. The mentor must have no direct connections or involvement in the business under review.

It is possible that you have already identified your own mentor, we are happy for you to do so, but must check that they have suitable experience. To evidence this, a completed Mentor Profile must be sent to the Farm Advisory Service along with your Mentoring Acceptance of Offer form.

If you require assistance selecting your mentor, please declare this on your Mentoring Acceptance of Offer form and we will help to match you with a suitable peer.

4 The funding process

It is a requirement of the funding that:

- The mentoring support must be provided no later than 12 months from the date of the offer letter.
- The instructions in this document and in the offer letter are followed;
- You complete the Feedback and Declaration form and return it to the Farm Advisory Service (see address details in Section 3) as soon as the mentoring support has been completed (this form will be sent with your offer letter).

An honorarium payment will be paid by the Farm Advisory Service direct to your mentor on evidence that the work has been completed (receipt of the Feedback and Declaration form).

5 Funding rates

The Farm Advisory Service will pay the mentor an honorarium of £300 per day of mentoring support, up to a maximum of four days (based on 7.4 hours per day).

6 Required action by the scheme participant

Once you have received your offer letter and returned your acceptance of offer, a mentor will be assigned to you. If you have already identified your own mentor, return the mentor profile document. The Farm Advisory Service will then contact you by email (or post if no email address is provided) to approve the mentor you suggested or to provide you with the contact details of your mentor. At this stage, it is up to you to get in contact with the mentor to arrange to meet, at a suitable time, at your farm business.

Following this initial meeting the format by which the mentoring takes place is to be agreed between yourself and your mentor depending on the needs of the business, this could be on-farm, off-farm, or even telephone support. It is important to note that the Farm Advisory Service can only pay an honorarium for up to 4 days' support, so ensure you and your mentor are agreed on how you will use this time.

To make the process a success, it is important that you spend the necessary time, (up to four days), and involve others in the business as appropriate.

We encourage you to give some thought, before and between mentoring sessions, to the main areas of concern or issues you wish to consider. The more you put into the mentoring process the greater the benefits will be.

7 Mentoring: ensuring the relationship is a success

It is important to establish a good relationship early, this will take time. At its heart, mentoring is about effective communication, as a mentor:

- Ask questions to check understanding
- Spending time with the mentee to showing them how you would do things
- Have a regular review of progress. Ask them how things are going and what are the things which are worrying them.
- Provide encouragement and let the mentee know what they are doing well.
- Try and anticipate potential problems and talk through how you would approach problem solving.

Where to go for help? Remember, you are never alone. If you're encountering problems, if things are not working it is best to tackle them early. Just pick up the phone and speak to Eleanor Peters at FAS on 0300 323 0161

8 Liability

The Mentee shall not at any time be obliged to act on any information, suggestion, advice or guidance given by the Mentor as part of the services, but if and to the extent that it does so, it shall do so at its own risk. The Mentee hereby unconditionally and irrevocably waives any rights of action it may have as against the Mentor in relation to any such information, suggestions, advice or guidance.

The Mentee is advised to take independent financial, legal or other appropriate professional advice before acting on any information, suggestion, advice or guidance given by the Mentor.

The Farm Advisory Service is not liable for the services provided by the Mentor or for any acts or omissions of the Mentor.

Information handling

The Farm Advisory Service will always respect your personal privacy and the requirements of the law, in particular the Data Protection Act (DPA), and be in agreement with the Scottish Government's privacy policy.

Further information on how information is managed can be found at <https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/privacy-policy/> or a hard copy can be obtained from your local Scottish Government Area Office.

8.1 Complaints and Appeals Procedure

If you have a complaint, please contact the Farm Advisory Service and your complaint will be referred to Caroline Wood, the Programme Manager for the One-to-One Service.

Address: Scottish Farm Advisory Service, WSP, 110 Queen Street, Glasgow, G1 3BX.

Telephone: 0300 323 0161 or

Email: advice@fas.scot.

The Farm Advisory Service will make every effort to resolve a complaint quickly and will make at least an initial response within 5 working days. It may be necessary that other relevant parties are contacted to give an account of the matters that are subject to the complaint.

An issues log is maintained to ensure that all complaints and action taken to resolve an issue is tracked this will be reviewed by the Service Director at monthly meetings to identify if additional action should be taken.

If you feel that the Farm Advisory Service did not reach the correct decision in your case, or you do not fully understand the decision, you should contact the Farm Advisory Service for a fuller explanation. If you are not satisfied with the explanation given and wish the decision to be reviewed, you should ask for a review of the decision. A review of the decision will be carried out by a Scottish Government official not involved in the original decision. A request for such a review must be received within 30 calendar days from the date of the original decision letter