

Introduction to The Kent Foundation

We are The Kent Foundation, a charity established in 1985 in response to the issue of young people, under the age of 30 having relatively little support in starting their own businesses. Since then the charity has flourished and created many success stories.

We are firm believers in “The Fourth Option”

Young people of Kent go through their ‘learner journey’ with a view to having three optional outcomes:

1. Furthering their education
2. Employment, or
3. Unemployment

The Kent Foundation appreciates and promotes the importance of the “**The Fourth Option**”

4. Employing yourself, becoming a business person... **Being an entrepreneur**

The business support services we provide have all been researched and tailored to fit with the needs of young business people. Our services are unique and we offer a personal approach in order to support and guide young people through their journey in business.

Business Mentoring Service

The Kent Foundation Director has overall responsibility to co-ordinate the recruitment, training, matching and continued support of all Mentors. However, when practical other Kent Foundation staff will engage with mentors as appropriate.

Mentors are asked to complete a 1.5 day induction before working with young business people. Details of the training programme will be distributed soon after application.

Practical details of being a Mentor will be covered on the training programme and within the Mentors’ Handbook which can also be downloaded from the website.

Expenses

Travel and out of pocket expenses can be reclaimed from the The Kent Foundation.

Role Description

1. Attend the Mentor Induction (one half day and one full day).
2. Attend Mentor review/support meetings as appropriate (i.r.o. two per year).
3. Support individual young people with aspirations to start their own businesses and/or develop young entrepreneurs with potential to grow/develop future initiatives.
4. Provide Kent Foundation with appropriate monitoring and information about the progress of the person being mentored.
5. Mentors will occasionally be invited to Kent Foundation or associated functions. If involved, Mentors will be ambassadors for the Foundation.
6. If working with people under the age of 18 years, Mentors will be required to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (or subsequent check as appropriate).

Person Specification

The role of a Kent Foundation Mentor is one of enabling young people to achieve for themselves. An understanding and personal experience of business is not always essential to encourage a young person to reach their potential.

The skills, knowledge and interests of a Mentor will be considered when matching a Mentor with a young person.

Skills

1. Ability to listen to and understand the developmental needs of the person being mentored.
2. Ability to be discerning about the personal and professional needs of the person being mentored, and remain objective with support and guidance being offered.
3. Ability to encourage young people to take responsibility and make their own decisions about the futures.
4. Give effective feedback to The Kent Foundation about the development of the person being mentored.

Knowledge

1. A basic understanding of practical life issues is essential to a successful Mentor. These issues are not always apparent to a young person but could well impact upon a business e.g. time and costs associated with travelling around Kent, try not to overstretch yourself, the importance of insurance and knowing how much you spend on essentials such as food, rent and running a car.
2. Business issues are usually not dissimilar from some general issues e.g. keeping overheads as low as possible, don't over-promise and building a sound relationship with a business colleague may be better than getting a quick sale.
3. An understanding of business and associated areas e.g. marketing, business planning, cash flow etc. can be an advantage and would be considered where a young person needs specific support.

Attitude

1. Be non-judgemental with young people.
2. Show empathy with inexperienced and/or frustrated young entrepreneurs or those with potential
3. Encourage colleagues or others associated with young businesses to be understanding and sympathetic to the needs of young people embarking on a career in business.
4. Be a role model for young people e.g. punctual, reliable, resourceful, resilient and appropriately dressed.