



Draft NFCC Coaching & Mentoring Ethical Code

Introduction

The National Fire Chiefs Council is providing this ethical framework to provide clarity and understanding for all. This code identifies the ethical framework against which all coaching and mentoring activities must be delivered. This document also provides information on what to expect for people undertaking coaching and mentoring, and is designed to enable coachees and mentees to understand what they can expect of their coach or mentor; this document also outlines the professional standards which must be in place whilst undertaking coaching and / or mentoring.

This ethical framework is adapted from the 2nd version of the Global Code (issued 1 May 2018), bringing together the contributions of five leading coaching and mentoring membership bodies from within the UK, EU and beyond.

The Ethical Guidelines contained in this document help clarify the high standards essential to successful and professional relationships involved in coaching, mentoring and supervision. It is important that there are clear standards and professional assurance in place for all parties, including coachees (those being coached). The document summarises the professional standards, ethical framework and supervision requirements for a professional coaching or mentoring relationship. The framework also outlines what one should do if the ethical framework is not upheld at any time.

Nature of the Guidelines

These Guidelines set out the principles, standards and ethics that guide the coaching and mentoring relationships. NFCC members accept these as part of any coaching or mentoring agreement and would be expected to inform the NFCC if there was any part or parts of the Guidelines with which they could not agree and which they could not practice. Failure to uphold these standards may be reported for investigation under the Complaints Procedure.

Communication of this Ethical Code and Conduct

Whatever the arrangements are with a coachee (individual) or sponsoring organisation, this code and the Ethical Guidelines must be brought to their attention to ensure everyone is aware and signed up to the principles within.

Definitions

Coach - refers to the person who carries out Coaching, using a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires people to maximise their personal and professional potential

Sponsoring Organisation or **Sponsor** - refers to the organisation supporting and/or funding the coaching.

Professional Coaching Relationship - A professional coaching relationship exists once an agreement is in place to coach and receive coaching. It is best practice to establish a contract that defines the responsibilities of each party.

Coaching - refers to a one-to-one developmental relationship with clearly focused aims designed to facilitate an increase in effectiveness and/or development opportunity

Supervision or **Supervisor** - refers to the relationship between a coach and an appropriately trained and qualified person who is outside of the normal coach/coachee relationship. It is best practice for the person fulfilling this role to not be in a managerial relationship with the coach. The role of supervisor is to support the coach to maintain confidentiality, develop their practice, enhance the quality of the coaching work, and client safety.

Coachee – sometimes also known as the client. This is the individual who receives coaching from an appropriately trained and qualified coach.

Conflict of Interest - A situation in which a coach has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to influence the objective of his or her official duties as a coach and a professional. Where such a situation arises, it is best practice for the coach to discuss the matter with the sponsor and to seek an alternative coach.

Values and Behaviours

Everyone shall demonstrate the values and behaviours outlined by the NFCC Leadership Framework, and any aligned professional standards within individual fire and rescue organisations. Coaches and supervisors are expected to uphold the following:

Personal Impact

- Value, respect and promote equality and diversity.
- Being a positive presence on others
- Having personal integrity
- Ability to self-manage.
- Use leadership to create a positive, open-working environment
- Demonstrates ethics and supports wellbeing.

Outstanding Leadership

- Support people to develop to their full potential.
- Communicating with integrity
- Being open and honest
- Fostering trust
- Displaying leadership.
- Enabling high levels of performance

Organisational Effectiveness

- Development of individuals to enable delivery of organisational plans
- Ensuring decisions and actions are beneficial to the customer
- Continuously improve and innovate
- Support personal change

Service Delivery

- Delivering high quality services.
- Enabling intelligent problem solving
- Deploying an outcome focused approach,
- Supporting and enabling continuous improvement
- Focusing on value for money.

The [NFCC Leadership framework](#) is available to download.

In addition to the leadership framework there are additional requirements, which are:

- 1) To maintain **competence** as a coach, regularly updating skills, knowledge, and practice to ensure they remain so
- 2) To seek to understand **context** and the environment in which the coachee is working
- 3) To ensure appropriate **professional boundaries** are always in place
- 4) To demonstrate **integrity**, ensuring the coach always does the right thing
- 5) To demonstrate **professionalism** always, ensuring the coach/coachee relationship is professional and delivers on the outcomes agreed.

Competence: The coach/mentor will:

- i. Ensure their experience and knowledge is appropriate and sufficient to meet the needs of the coachee.
- ii. Ensure their capability enables them to operate in line with this Ethical Code and any associated standards.
- iii. Develop and enhance competence by participating in relevant training, supervision and continuing professional development.
- iv. Maintain a relationship with a suitably qualified supervisor, who will regularly assess competence and support development.

Context: The coach/mentor will:

- i. Understand and ensure the coach/mentoring relationship reflects the context within which the coach/mentoring is taking place.
- ii. Ensure expectations of the client and sponsor are understood and that they themselves understand how those expectations are to be met.
- iii. Create an environment in which coachee, coach/mentor and sponsor are focused on development and learning.

Boundary management: The coach/mentor will:

- i. Operate within the limits of their competence at all times, recognise where their competence may be exceeded and where necessary refer to a more experienced coach/mentor, or support them in seeking the help of another professional, such as a counsellor, psychotherapist or other professional. We would recommend the individual seek support through their GP, Occupational Health department, etc.
- ii. Be aware of the potential for conflicts of interest; either professional, commercial or of an emotional nature. Deal with them quickly and effectively to ensure there is no detriment to the coachee or sponsor.

Integrity: The coach/mentor will:

- i. Maintain confidentiality which is appropriate and is agreed at the start of the relationship.
- ii. Disclose only information explicitly agreed with the coachee and sponsor (where one exists), unless the coach/mentor believes there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the individual, organisation, or others if the information is withheld.
- iii. Act within the law at all times and do not ignore, encourage, assist, or collude with others engaged in conduct, which is dishonest, unlawful, unprofessional, or discriminatory.

Professionalism: The coach/mentor will:

- i. Respond to the individual's learning and development needs as defined by the agenda brought to the coach/mentoring relationship.
- ii. Never exploit a coachee/client in any manner, including, but not limited to, financial, sexual or those which matters within the professional relationship. The coach/mentor must ensure the duration of coach / mentoring contract is only as long as is necessary.
- iii. Engage in self-care: that is, to look after oneself physically, emotionally, mentally, and motivationally so everyone receives a great service.
- iv. Understand professional responsibilities continue beyond the termination of any coach/mentoring relationship. These include the following:
 - *Maintenance of confidentiality*
 - *Avoidance of exploitation of former relationship*
 - *Provision of follow-up which has been agreed to*
 - *Safe and secure maintenance of all related records and data*

Conclusion

The Ethical Guidelines contained in this document are indicators of professionalism and the high standards required to enable a successful coaching and/or mentoring relationship. The NFCC want the safest and most effective conditions for those being coached, the clearest and most transparent understanding with fire and rescue organisations who commission Coaching and/or Supervision, and the highest professional standards for all coaches and supervisors.

Breaches of the Ethical Code

The NFCC expects everyone - whether as a coachee, coach, mentor, supervisor or organisation - to behave in a way which models exemplary professionalism and which will reflect well on the Fire and Rescue and Coaching professions.

Should a situation arise where it appears that a Coach has behaved in a way which is in breach of these Ethical Guidelines, and if the matter cannot be resolved directly or is of sufficient concern, matter needs to be dealt with by the Service with the Service that the coach comes from.