APSE Support through Coaching and Mentoring.

Emma Taylor, Executive Consultant

APSE Solutions Trading under APSE Synergy

Boost II

Mentoring Programme

Launched January 2025

What the programme involves

- Defining Mentoring
- Mentoring Themes
- The Relationship
- The Practical Details
- How It Will Work
- Mentee and Mentor Packs
- Pairing Up

Potential mentoring themes

- Career development
- Building networks
- Profile and Visibility
- Personal Objectives
- Increasing career confidence
- Presentation/public speaking
- Public Sector knowledge and Insights

The Mentor-Mentee Relationship

- Partnership
- Sharing
- Process
- Relationship
- Supporting someone
- Not always ‘easy’

How it works…

Matching Process

- All Mentee’s are matched based on the information provided in the application form.

Our Expectation

- Each person is coming into this open minded and willing to commit to the role of Mentor or Mentee.
- Each person has a clear understanding of what they aim to achieve through this partnership, and it is in line with the programme objectives.
- Openness to learn and develop.
- This is a two-way relationship, both parties committing and given it the appropriate attention and it is expected that both parties benefit from participating.

Mentoring with APSE Solutions

Lucia Gervis, Client Coordination Officer, outlines APSE's executive mentorship programme and the benefits it has brought to mentees.

APSE Solutions is currently halfway through delivering a year-long senior-level mentoring programme for newly appointed Assistant Directors and Directors across Northern Ireland's 11 councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). The initiative, commissioned by the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC), is designed to strengthen leadership capacity by pairing rising senior managers with experienced mentors from a network of former Directors and Chief Executives.

NI Mentoring Programme

The core objective of the mentoring programme is to support personal and professional development for new senior managers as they transition into demanding roles. Over 12 months, each mentee receives six confidential mentoring sessions.

APSE Solution's key deliverables for the programme include:

- Matching mentors and mentees based on need, experience, and expertise.
- Providing the initial training (delivered by APSE Training) and ongoing support from mentors.
- Facilitating programme logistics, such as introductory meetings and final debriefs.

APSE Solutions hosted a half-day launch event, which brought together mentors and mentees for an initial introduction to the programme, expectations setting, and peer networking.

With an established track record of working with public sector organisations, APSE Solutions was able to draw from a strong pool of associates who are seasoned professionals with deep knowledge in leadership, resilience, organisational culture, and strategic development.

Richard Baker's story

While the NI mentoring programme is still ongoing and formal feedback is yet to be collected, the value of mentoring in local government leadership is already well recognised by senior figures such as Richard Baker, Chief Executive of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Richard was mentored by John Mundell and Helen Newman, both experienced APSE associates, as he stepped into his role as chief executive.

"John is a brilliant mentor – he established a strong relationship with group leaders," Richard said. "He was a crucial second voice in applying a number of change processes and key changes in how the council operates."

Richard also spoke highly of Helen Newman's approach. "Helen is an incredibly supportive coach, helping me to dig into the challenges of the chief executive position – she wants you to identify the challenges yourself and figure out the solution."

Speaking on his leadership style, Richard explained: "If I'm not challenging others to question what we are doing, why we do this, or why we spend money as we do, for example– then I'm not doing my job. I always want to ask 'why,' and I want everyone throughout the organisation also to be asking why."

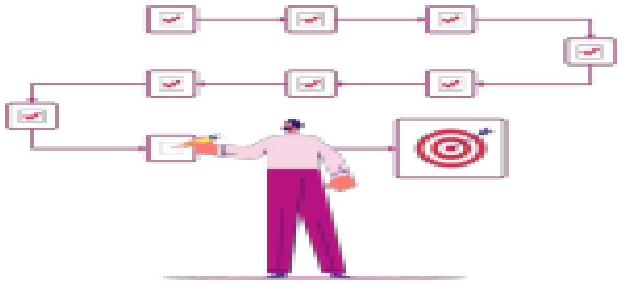
He follows what he terms "post-heroic leadership," describing it as "being completely collaborative in your approach, staying humble and curious. It's a 90/10 split – 90% listening and 10% talking." His main aim is: "To be best in class in everything we do, and to build trust throughout the organisation."

Speaking about local government mentoring itself, Richard said: "What people need to ask themselves is this: why wouldn't you want a mentor, particularly in the role of Chief Executive? It can be a stressful and anxiety-inducing role. Having trusted people who can help you take a minute, work through your thinking, and come to a decision is invaluable."

He continued, "I've never had formal mentoring or coaching in previous roles in the public or private sector, and I think that was to my loss. You have to find your own path."

Richard noted, "If you look at Silicon Valley and the billion-dollar companies that inhabit it, executive coaching is very common. If the CEO of Apple or Google has executive coaches and mentors, why wouldn't a local government Chief Executive?".

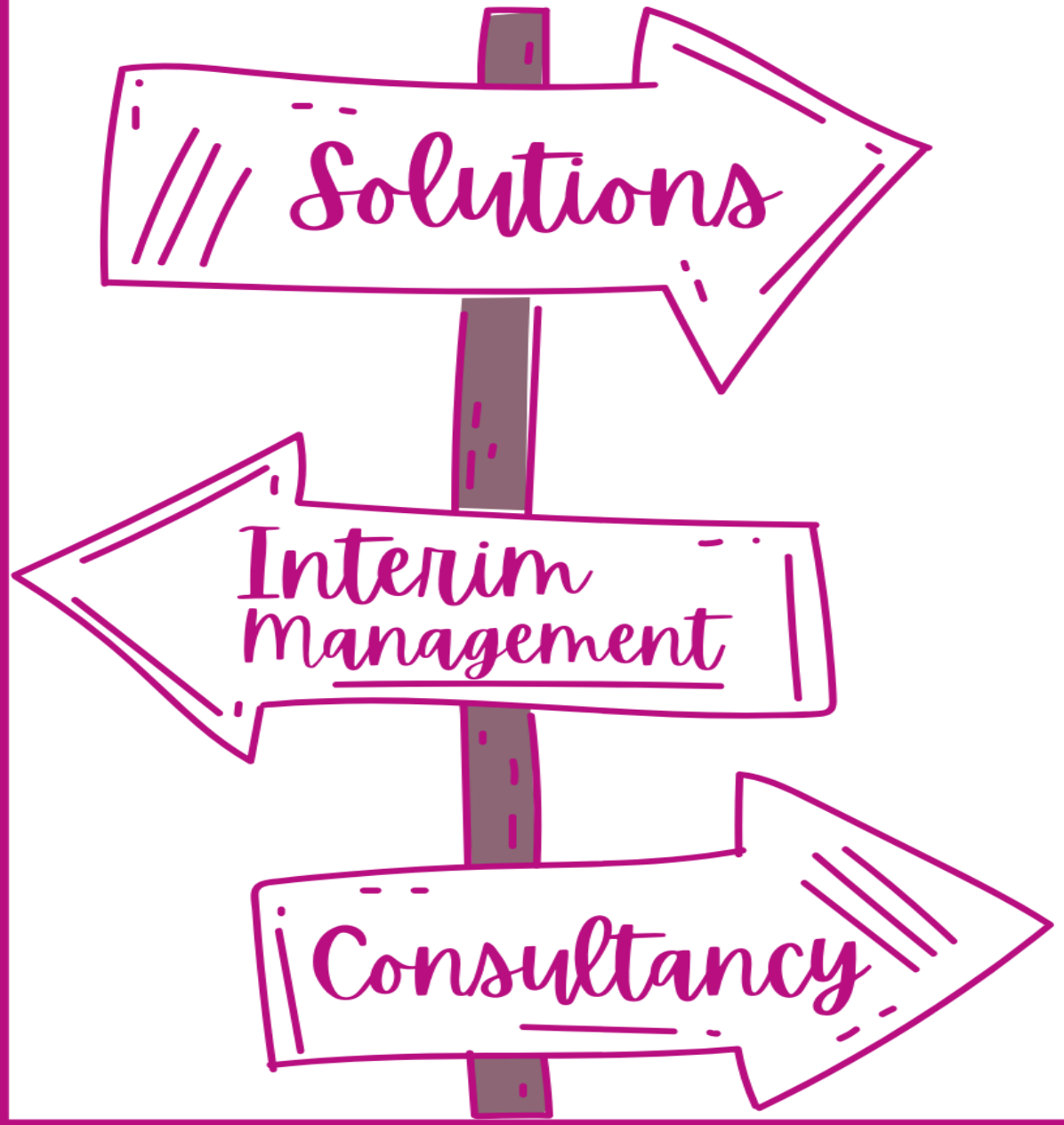
A significant benefit, he says, is in times of crisis. "You often go into 'fast thinking' – which is panicked and emotion-driven. Being able to pick up the phone to someone, talk through the situation, and slow your thinking down is incredibly helpful."



Richard's final thoughts on the mentoring experience: "Overall, Helen and John helped me focus on what's important in my role and remove distractions, giving me core goals to concentrate my efforts on. They have helped me come to my own conclusions about what priorities the authority should be focusing on – it has been an absolute game changer for me personally".

APSE Solutions

If you feel you could benefit from the mentoring offered or if you want more information, then please contact APSE Solutions on solutions@apse.org.uk or call us on 0161 772 1810



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Coaching and Mentoring Skills

Wednesday 29 October 10:00 – 16:00

Psychometric Testing – Discover your Traits and Behaviours

Tuesday 28 October 09:30 – 12:30 – Workshop
& Wednesday 29 October – Feedback Session

Scan the QR code to view our upcoming courses and book your place today!

For more information on our in-house offer, please email training@apse.org.uk.
The team is ready to help!

Any Questions?

Contact Information
etaylor@apse.org.uk
Tele: 0161 772 1810
07442 907 478

Emma Taylor,
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