

Lay Mentor Guidelines

The idea behind Lay Mentorship is to support Rabbinic Staff. There are many ways a Lay Mentor might help Rabbinic Staff (see *The Role of the Lay Mentor*, below), from just listening; serving as a conduit to wider opinion in the community; and even providing active counselling and advice. Rabbinic Staff and Lay Mentors should agree between themselves the boundaries and function of their exchanges.

Defined Terms

- **Community** The staff and members of the United Synagogue member community which employs the Rabbinic Staff
- **BOM** The Board of Management elected or co-opted as relevant, to run a Community
- **Chair** The elected Chairman or Chairwoman of a Community
- **Executive** The Honorary Officers of a Community, specifically the Chair, Vice-Chair, Wardens, Women's Officer, the Financial Representative and any other Honorary Officers
- **Rabbinic Staff** The employed senior (or only) Rabbi and Rebbetzin of a Community, who are to be mentored by the Lay Mentor

The Role of the Lay Mentor

1. Lay mentoring in this context is 'to listen to and guide' Rabbinic Staff.
2. This will often entail serving as a 'sounding board,' but does not exclude providing impartial advice when requested to by Rabbinic Staff.
3. Lay Mentors should communicate with Rabbinic Staff as much and in a manner which both parties feel facilitates the provision of listening and guidance.
4. The Lay Mentor should seek to encourage and enhance relationships between Rabbinic Staff and stakeholders in the Community, including but not exclusive to, the Executive.
5. Lay Mentors should avoid argument, partisanship on behalf of any individual, and uncritical advocacy for any party, interest or view.
6. The Lay Mentor should ensure that they engage with Rabbinical Staff at points of difficulty in their work and work-related relationships, specifically but not exclusively:
 - a. During the first six months of the Rabbinic Staff's employment in the Community;
 - b. Whenever Rabbinic Staff request their assistance;
 - c. During a period of strain in the relationship between any member of the Executive, and Rabbinic Staff, with or without invitation to do so from any involved party;
 - d. Even if not involved before, then from the point of resignation by Rabbinic Staff until their departure.

Appointment

1. The Lay Mentor:
 - a. Is appointed, with their agreement, by the Chair, the prior and confidential agreement of the Rabbinic Staff having already been achieved;
 - b. Should agree to their appointment no later than two weeks after the offer of employment from the Community is accepted by the Rabbinic Staff;
 - c. May be appointed with respect to one or both of a couple making within the Rabbinic Staff, but should not be appointed to mentor any other Rabbi or Rebbetzin working in the Community;
 - d. Must be a member of the Community of at least one year's standing and should not have any *semichah* (Rabbinic ordination);
 - e. Must not be a member of the Executive, nor the spouse of a member of the Executive;

- f. May be, but not does have to be, a member of the Board of Management of the Community;
- g. Has no line-manager and need not report or answer to the Chair, the Executive or the BOM;
- h. Cannot be dismissed by the Chair without the agreement of the Rabbinic Staff.

Other Parameters

- 7. Unless expressly permitted by the Rabbinical Staff to disclose a conversation, the Lay Mentor must ordinarily maintain the confidentiality of the Rabbinic Staff.
- 8. A Lay Mentor may not be obliged to advocate, mediate or decide in disputes between Rabbinic Staff and anyone else.
- 9. The Lay Mentor is not intended to be a conduit for information between other parties, still less a mouthpiece for Rabbinic Staff.
- 10. The Lay Mentor may not be asked to, and cannot, discuss, instigate or handle disciplinary matters that are the proper domain of the Human Resources Department of the United Synagogue.