



NHS FINANCE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

THE SPONSEE WORKBOOK



CONTENTS

3	Introduction to the workbook
4	Sponsee self assessment
5	Identifying a potential sponsor
6	Preparing for sponsorship
8	First meeting preparation
12	First meeting agenda and notes
13	Future meetings

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKBOOK

This workbook will help you establish your sponsorship relationship, identify what you would like to gain from the relationship, and offer a structure for the relationship in terms of meetings and progression.

Firstly, let's determine what you want to get out of the sponsorship programme by considering the following questions, there is space later in this workbook to go into detail about your answers.

- **WHAT ARE YOUR IMMEDIATE CAREER AMBITIONS?**
- **WHAT ARE YOUR LONG-TERM AMBITIONS?**
- **WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY STRUGGLING WITH THAT YOU HOPE THE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME WILL HELP YOU ADDRESS?**
- **WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR YOU AT THE END OF THE TWO YEARS?**

IDENTIFYING A POTENTIAL SPONSOR

A sponsorship relationship is reciprocal to both parties. To create a successful relationship, it is important that you find a sponsor who can have influence over your career, and you can seek to become familiar and comfortable with. If you do not already have someone in mind, the One NHS Finance central team or regional finance academy can help connect you to a sponsor using their database of available sponsors.

If you are seeking to identify your own sponsor, not using the One NHS Finance database, you may wish to reach out to someone who you have worked with in the past who already knows your skills, abilities, and ambitions. It is crucial that they have some influence over your career and meet the sponsor criteria outlined in the Sponsorship Programme Overview. This may mean looking outside of your current line management reporting structure and may lead to you looking within your local STP, depending on the type of opportunities you are looking for.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING YOUR OWN SPONSOR

Ideally the individual will be:

- Within your organisation or STP / ICS footprint
- Within the same professional field
- Senior to yourself
- Able to put you forward for opportunities that will help you to achieve your career aims
- A supporter of staff development and someone who actively develops talent

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED A POTENTIAL SPONSOR

Check through the sponsor self-assessment below to ensure they are the right fit.

- They work in a leadership position and have held this position for more than 12 months
- They have a strong network, positive working relationships, and a good reputation with senior colleagues in their current organisation
- They have a strong network of senior finance professionals in neighbouring organisations and within their local STP/ICS footprint
- They regularly attend senior meetings / meetings with colleagues at their level and can arrange access to them for their sponsee
- They encourage others to give them feedback throughout their career (an example of this would be partaking in 360-degree feedback)
- They are skilled at giving honest feedback
- They are prepared to make time to meet with their sponsee and prioritise this role as a sponsor, even during challenging periods

PREPARING FOR SPONSORSHIP

1. Take pride in your performance

Make sure you are performing to the best of your abilities in your current role. This will ensure that your reputation is viewed positively within your organisation. Showing that you can work to a satisfactory level will help you to gain your line manager's support when taking on other responsibilities, including engaging with the Sponsorship Programme.

2. Seek out individuals who actively develop talent

Consider their sphere of influence and whether that fits in with your future career plans.

3. Volunteer

Put yourself forward for opportunities outside of your day-to-day role. This will allow you to demonstrate and utilise your full skill set, including any skills that are not being utilised within your current role. Potential sponsors will be able to see your abilities through the extra-curricular work you do, especially if they are outside of your current line management structure.

4. Identify your career goals

Be clear about your career goals and make sure that your potential sponsor's sphere of influence can impact career path / next steps to reach these goals.

5. Share your career goals with others

Share your career goals with your line management structure (e.g. at your annual appraisal) or share your ambitions as part of the team succession planning. When others are aware of your goals, they can help you achieve them by giving you relevant opportunities. Telling others about your wish to engage with the sponsorship programme may help you connect with a Sponsor.



As the sponsee, it is your responsibility to deliver to a high standard and be trustworthy and to drive the relationship building by proactively organising meetings and shaping conversations in line with what you want to get out of the programme. In return the sponsor gives you advice, feedback, creates space for you to connect with other influential / more senior professionals, and advocates for you to have access to career enhancing opportunities.

So although you will lead the preparation for the meeting and the meeting itself, the sponsor will be giving up time in their diary for the meeting and then they will also be investing time and thought into you, seeking out opportunities for you and essentially putting their reputation on the line for you. You therefore need to be clear as to the potential benefits for the sponsor.



It is worth investing a little time before the meeting to plan what you want to discuss. This may include:

- Your career background
- Your career goals and ambitions - decide the milestones you want to achieve through the sponsorship programme
- Your main skills and abilities - including those that are currently underutilised
- Anything that is making you feel stuck and how you feel that sponsorship may help
- An outline of the NFA Sponsorship programme
- The mutual benefits of entering into the sponsorship programme together – this is a key area to think about and we have expanded on it in the next section
- What you aim to get out of the two-year programme

FIRST MEETING PREPARATION

Remember that as the sponsee it is your responsibility to arrange the dates and venues of the meetings and to pull together the outline of what will be covered in each one.

Your career goals and ambitions

Your main skills and abilities (including those that are currently underutilised)

Your work experience to date and your current role

Successes in your current team

Where you want to go within your career progression and what you see as your potential

Gaps in experience that you would like to fill with sponsorship

Anything that is making you feel stuck and how you feel that sponsorship may help



An outline of the Sponsorship programme (including the sponsor self-assessment)

The mutual benefits of entering the sponsorship programme together

What you aim to get out of the programme

In one statement, pull together why the individual should agree to become your sponsor

THE FIRST MEETING

There are also some practical elements that need to be agreed at the first meeting including:

- Agree how often you will meet over the 2 years
- Agree the format of the meeting i.e. face-to-face, telephone, MS Teams etc.
- Agree how you will best use this meeting time
- Agree what success looks like at the end of the 2-year programme for both

Meeting date and time:

Meeting venue:

Outline agenda and items that you want to cover:

Now you are ready to arrange the meeting to approach your sponsor.

Meeting date and time:

Meeting venue:

FUTURE MEETINGS

The content of future meetings will differ for each sponsee. However, you may wish to including the following:

- Feedback on any reflections from the previous meeting
- Updates regarding any successes since your last meeting
- Discuss any mistakes: it is always better to be honest with your sponsor about any mistakes and it may be worth exploring what you are doing to improve and share what you have learned from mistakes
- Continually ask for feedback
- Ask for advice in any areas you are feeling stuck
- Commitments/ actions to be completed by next meeting by both parties

We encourage you to take time to personally reflect on the relationship, the benefits to you personally and to the organisation. Perhaps consider the following:

- Record the benefits you have experienced so you can refer to them and share positive experiences
- Include your participation in your CPD log
- Create a learning log so you can reflect on your experiences and identify what you gained from them e.g. reflect on your behaviour when you attend senior meetings
- Create a reflection log where you can record any feedback you receive, detail how it made you feel and identify any actions you would like to make because of it
- Regularly review your initial aims and consider whether they are being met or if your goals have changed

We also suggest arranging a check-in meeting with your sponsor after about 3-6 months into the programme to reflect on whether the relationship is working. If you have appointed a guardian, it may be beneficial to invite your guardian to this meeting, and to keep them up to date with the progression of the relationship.

GOOD LUCK

Hopefully this gives you all that you need for your sponsorship journey.

Please visit www.onenhsfinance.nhs.uk for further information and share your experiences with the central team finance.academy@nhs.net

This will help us to shape the programme for future participants.