

# Mentoring Women in Business programme

## Participation Guidelines

Updated: March 2024

This document serves to outline, in detail, the participation requirements for both mentees and mentors taking part in the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women's Mentoring Women in Business programme. It also provides guidance on when support will be offered by the Mentoring team, how concerns will be resolved and how mentoring relationships could be terminated.

### Programme Requirements and Graduation Criteria

In order to successfully participate in and graduate from the Programme, **mentees and mentors must:**

- Adhere to the [Non-Staff Code of Conduct](#) and [Programme Code of Conduct](#).
- Respond in a timely manner to communications from the Mentoring Team in which a reply is requested.

**Mentees** are also expected to:

- Meet with their mentor for at least two hours each month.
- Reach out to their mentor to schedule the first meeting and be proactive in scheduling subsequent meetings.
- Drive the relationship by setting agendas for each meeting and detailing what they want to work on during Mentoring programme.
- Submit SMART goals<sup>1</sup> to be worked on with their mentor, by the end of Phase 2.
- Complete Progression and Revision exercise to reflect on SMART goals by the end of Phase 3.
- Submit a reflection on the SMART goals by the end of the Mentoring Programme<sup>2</sup>.
- Complete feedback surveys, which will be shared at several points during the programme, by the stated deadline.
- Complete the end-of-programme survey by the stated deadline.
- Optional: submit meeting notes to reflect on topics discussed and tasks agreed.

**Mentors** are also expected to:

- Meet with their mentee for at least two hours each month.
- Provide feedback to their mentee's SMART goals by the end of Phase 2.
- Provide feedback to their mentee's reflection on SMART goals by the end of the Mentoring Programme.

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<sup>1</sup> We expect mentees to develop and submit a set of goals that are "Specific", "Measurable", "Attainable", "Relevant", and "Time-bound", which they will work on with their mentor during their relationship. You will receive guidance and resources at the start of phase 2 with information on how to develop such goals.

<sup>2</sup> It is not a graduation requirement to achieve all the goals set out at the beginning of the mentoring journey.

- Complete feedback surveys, which will be shared at several points during the programme, before the stated deadline.
- Complete the end of programme survey by the stated deadline.
- Optional: provide feedback on their mentee's Progression and Revision exercise to reflect on SMART goals.
- Optional: submit meeting notes to reflect on topics discussed and tasks agreed.

Unless they are applying as part of a partner company's workforce, or are a Cherie Blair Foundation for Women alumna who is applying through our scholarship fund, mentors are also expected to make a donation of £1,100 to cover the cost of their participation and that of their mentee. This covers:

- Dedicated one-to-one relationship support from our team.
- Development of training resources and learning content.
- Running our sector-leading online mentoring platform.

Participants that fulfil these requirements throughout the Mentoring Programme will graduate and receive a graduation certificate. Participants that are unable to meet these commitments will be contacted by the Mentoring Team. The Mentoring Team will endeavour to support individuals and pairs to progress through the programme where possible. However, unfortunately, if individuals are not meeting the requirements of the programme, they will be unmatched and withdrawn.

## Supporting Pairs

The Mentoring Team is available to provide participants with any assistance needed to have an effective, successful and beneficial mentoring relationship. You are encouraged to contact the Mentoring Team for support if you have questions, concerns or doubts. This may include, but is not limited to:

- You have not heard back from your mentoring partner
- You are unsure of how best to support your mentoring partner
- You do not feel your mentoring partner is a good fit
- You are concerned about the wellbeing of your mentoring partner
- Any concerns around behaviour, conduct or safety
- Any other questions or concerns you may have

You can contact the team by sending a direct message on the mentoring platform or, if you have issues accessing the platform, by emailing [mentoring@cherieblairfoundation.org](mailto:mentoring@cherieblairfoundation.org)

If participants are not able to adhere to the above Programme Requirements, they will initially be notified via an automated reminder on the Mentoring site. If problems continue or more serious issues are flagged, the Mentoring Team will get in touch via the mentoring platform, email or phone. There are several ways in which the Mentoring Team will be alerted to participants needing this support; for each of these situations there is a certain process that will be followed:

1. The Team will send out reminders to participants to schedule and have meetings, to complete surveys or submit mandatory assignments.
  - The Mentoring Team will track and get in contact with those receiving reminders to understand why it is they're not meeting the programme requirements. The Mentoring Team will offer support on issues that are preventing pairs from meeting and help them to submit their survey or complete mandatory assignments.
2. A participant reports in their feedback that there is a problem in the mentoring relationship.
  - After feedback is submitted, the Mentoring Team will start to try to resolve the issue by contacting the participant to support and/or give suggestions. If necessary, the Mentoring Team will also get in touch with the mentoring partner to understand the situation in full or reach out via phone. They can choose to copy both mentee and mentor into a message with suggestions.
3. When a participant flags a problem by sending a message to the Mentoring Team.
  - The Mentoring Team will be in contact with both mentor and mentee to try and resolve the issue via written messages through the mentoring software. If needed, the Mentoring Team will also try calling the pair.

In each of these cases, after each communication participants will be given a deadline for responding (generally a week). The Mentoring Team will check in later to see if the pair has resolved their issue, is back to meeting or has submitted their survey.

The Mentoring Team will support committed pairs that are not fulfilling the programme requirements or needing further support by:

- Pointing participants to useful resources
- Helping pairs to (re-)connect
- Providing tips, advice, and guidance
- Providing conflict resolution support
- Giving case by case, tailored advice

The Mentoring Team understands that life can throw up unexpected circumstances and that entrepreneurship can be a complex and challenging journey. The Team will take personal circumstances into consideration and will endeavour to find positive solutions where possible. However, the Mentoring Team do expect that those who participate in the programme do so fully understanding of and committed to the programme requirements.

Mentees and mentors are requested to inform the Mentoring Team of any significant reasons why they won't be able to fully participate in the programme as early as they possibly can.

## Unmatching Pairs and Ending Individual Participation

We facilitate a mentoring relationship for individuals that are committed to the programme and their mentoring journeys. This mean that sometimes, despite our best efforts,

participants may need to be withdrawn from the programme. There are a few criteria/situations when this can happen:

- If the pair has not started their mentoring relationship within two weeks of matching.
- If the participant has not completed a feedback survey.
- If a participant has been unresponsive to their mentoring partner and the Mentoring Team for one month, despite continued outreach by the Mentoring Team and receipt of automated reminders.
- If a participant has breached the guidelines determined within our Code of Conduct.
- If a participant wants to withdraw from the programme.

You will receive ample warning if your participation is at risk, in the form of general reminders and personal messages from the Mentoring Team. The Mentoring Team will aim to call each participant before they are withdrawn from the Programme but will only attempt to do so after messages and emails have been unsuccessful. Once you have been unmatched and withdrawal from the programme has been formalised, you will receive a message to inform you of this, including the reason for our decision.

## Rematches

If a participant's mentoring partner is withdrawn from the Programme, they may be offered a new mentee or mentor, if they are eligible, according to the following criteria:

- If their mentoring relationship came to an end due to no fault of their own (i.e. their mentoring partner was not committed or had to drop out of the programme for personal reasons).
- If they show continued commitment to the programme (it will be at the Mentoring Team's discretion to determine the level of commitment, based on previous communication and actions).
- Depending on capacity, sometimes we can only offer a rematch to mentors nominated by one of our corporate partners and if they participate in a specific cohort.

## Continuing in the programme after graduation

Mentees that have successfully completed one mentoring cycle, **will not** be able to do another term on the programme as a mentee. You may wish to stay in contact with your mentor informally, outside of the programme, if they are happy to do so.

Mentors that have successfully completed one mentoring cycle, **may be** eligible to continue for another term on the programme. This will depend on whether they are self-funded or were nominated by one of our corporate partners and if that corporate partner is participating in a specific intake.

## Ending a mentoring relationship

The Mentoring Team matches based on a range of criteria, such as skills, the areas a mentee needs help and a mentor can offer support in skills, age, time difference, and the stage of business. This means that your mentoring partner may initially not be who you anticipated,

but the match has been carefully considered. We strongly encourage all participants to make every effort to get to know their mentoring partner and build a relationship. We carefully match all pairs and are confident all matches have the potential to have a successful relationship.

However, we do understand that in some cases, a mentoring relationship may simply not work. Participants can always get in contact with the Mentoring Team via the mentoring software if they wish to end their relationship. There are two time periods for this:

1. During the first four weeks of the mentoring cycle, we offer a 'rematch' period during which participants can request a new partner. Please note: we may not have someone available for you immediately, meaning you may have to wait until the next cohort to be matched again.
2. You can inform us at any point if your mentoring relationship is not working well. The Mentoring Team will first help you to see if there is a way to resolve the issues but if not, may offer you a new mentoring partner. Please note: you will have to wait until the next cohort to be matched.

In both cases, we expect you to give a written statement as to why you believe the relationship did not work out and outline the effort you made to connect. Being offered a new partner will depend on the participant showing continued commitment to the Programme and capacity within a specific intake.

## Keeping you safe

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women believes everyone has the right to be safe, respected and valued regardless of who they are or their circumstances. The Foundation has a zero tolerance for harassment, abuse and exploitation.

We take our responsibility to keep you safe and protect you from hard, abuse, bullying, harassment and exploitation in any form, including online, very seriously.

This means doing what we can to:

1. Prevent hard from occurring,
2. Encourage everyone to report concerns
3. Respond sympathetically but strongly when harm or allegations of harm occur; and
4. Learn from every concern reported.

[Please see our guide on keeping you safe on our programmes.](#)

If you have any feedback for us, or would like to report something that made you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, there are a few options available to you. All of these are confidential and anything you tell us will only be share with those who need to know:

- You can speak to a member of the Mentoring Team via the messaging function
- You can speak to someone from your nominating partner organisation
- You can contact our dedicated WhatsApp channel:
- You can email us on: [enquiries@cherieblairfoundation.org](mailto:enquiries@cherieblairfoundation.org)

Whatever you decided to do, we guarantee:

- We will respond to you within 48 hours to confirm receipt, ask for any further details and let you know next steps.
- We will ensure that your feedback or concern is appropriately investigated and dealt with and will communicate with you throughout.
- We will maintain confidentiality and will not tell anyone who does not need to know in order to review, investigate and progress the matter.
- We will ensure you are supported and protected throughout the process.

## Complaints

The Mentoring Team will have final authority on decisions made regarding participation, unless a mentor or mentee decides to leave on their own accord. However, if a participant has any concerns with any element of the Mentoring Programme, they can file a complaint according to our Complaints Procedure. You can find our Complaints Procedure [here](#).

Our Complaints Procedure comprises three stages:

1. **Informal Resolution:** You can send a direct message via the mentoring software and explain the issue you're experiencing. You will start receiving support from the Mentoring Team within three UK working days to solve the issue.
2. **Formal Complaint:** If you're unsatisfied with the support provided, you can file a formal complaint by submitting our Stage 2 complaint form and emailing it to [enquiries@cherieblairfoundation.org](mailto:enquiries@cherieblairfoundation.org), where it will be forwarded to the Programme Manager. A written response will be issued within 20 UK working days.
3. **Escalation:** The complaint can be escalated to the Head of Mentoring, by submitting a written statement to [enquiries@cherieblairfoundation.org](mailto:enquiries@cherieblairfoundation.org) as to why solutions provided so far have been unsatisfactory. A written response will be issued within 20 UK working days.

Your complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality and permission will be obtained before sharing with others inside or outside of the Mentoring Team. Filing a complaint will not affect your treatment on the programme.

Please note that the aforementioned complaints policy relates specifically to the Mentoring Women in Business programme. The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women has developed a centralised reporting concerns policy that provides individuals with guidance on how to raise any concerns in relation to Foundation supported activities, such as:

- Someone is asked to do something or is aware of the actions of others which they consider to be a breach of the Staff or Non-Staff Code of Conduct or any of the Foundation's policies;
- Someone witnesses behaviour they consider to be wrong, dangerous or illegal;
- There is any incident of fraud, theft, bribery, corruption, or terrorist financing;
- Someone is concerned about the standard of service you should expect from the Foundation or its implementing partners;
- Someone is concerned about the behaviour of a Foundation staff member (including Trustees) or representative;
- Someone is concerned about a failure to comply with legal obligations; and/or

- Any safeguarding issue arises.

This list is not exhaustive.

## About the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women works with women entrepreneurs in low and middle income countries. We work together to enable women entrepreneurs to reach their potential. We are committed to eliminating the global gender gap in entrepreneurship and creating a future where women entrepreneurs thrive.

Since our inception in 2008, we have supported more than 230,000 women to start and grow successful micro, small and medium-sized businesses in over 100 countries.

Training, mentoring, networking, and collaboration are at the heart of our work, deploying technology innovatively to reach and connect with more women worldwide. Our approach opens doors for women entrepreneurs to networks, finance, new markets, investments and opportunities.

As a result, women create a future for themselves, their families, and their communities. In turn, they contribute to more robust economies, global gender equality and a thriving entrepreneurial sector.

[www.cherieblairfoundation.org](http://www.cherieblairfoundation.org)