

---

# *A Future of Coaching Collaboration Guidance Document*

*Framework for  
professional  
executive coaching  
in organisational  
settings*

*March 2017*



## Purpose of document

The purpose of this document is to provide a baseline of principles and practices for professional coaching in organisations. It is not intended as a replacement of what exists already within the accrediting coaching bodies by way of ethical guidelines and codes of conduct. Rather it seeks to define the boundaries of professional coaching in organisational settings vs. all other types of coaching.

## Definition of professional executive coaching

For the purpose of our work here, it is important to describe and bound the work.

Professional executive coaching is a purposeful partnering relationship between three parties, the client (individual coachee, group or team), an experienced coach, and the organisation – **where the expectations between the three parties are explicitly understood and collectively communicated**. This three-way component is a key differentiator of professional executive coaching.

- The **client** may be an individual, a dyad, a group or a team.
- The **experienced coach** may be:
  - a dedicated internal coach employed in the organisation (where coaching is a defining part of their role),
  - an external coach (whose coaching services are purchased as needed) or
  - an internal job plus coach (where the person is also employed by the organisation and practises as a coach but has a different core role),and
  - who works in a business, psychologically and systemically<sup>1</sup> informed way, and
  - who is professionally trained, qualified and/or accredited and dedicated to his/her own continuing professional development including supervision.
- The **organisation** may be represented by a number of roles:
  - coaching sponsor (someone who leads the coaching services/function and who is responsible for coaching standards, quality assurance and measuring effectiveness as well as collating organisational themes).
  - programme director (with responsibility for a specific programme of coaching or development).
  - line manager/individual sponsor for a specific coaching assignment.
  - HR/HC/L&D (may create the framework for connecting the coach and the client if this isn't done by the coaching sponsor).
  - coaching champion (who may promote the benefits of coaching to the organisation and the individual).
  - assessor to filter the capability, quality, suitability and fitness of coaches for the organisation and matching the client and coach for the engagement (either or both may be conducted internally or by third party).
- The **purpose** is agreed between the parties and articulates how the coaching will deliver results/outcomes and/or benefits for both the individual and the organisation, and any other agreed stakeholders.

---

<sup>1</sup> Working in a systemically informed way implies awareness and consideration of the wider organisational, societal and cultural context in which the coaching is taking place.

## *Definition of organisational setting*

It is equally important to describe and bound the system in which the work occurs. The organisational setting may be a commercial enterprise, a public sector organisation a third sector or a start-up. In any setting a coach should be sensitive to and have some insight into:

- **Context** – comprises the nature of the sector or industry and the typical current and emerging business challenges that executives face; Context also references the wider system in which that organisation operates (e.g. regulatory controls, ethics, parent organisations, government policies).
- **Structure** – understanding how the organisation is governed, set up, how resources are managed.
- **Culture** – understanding what values the organisation holds and how they shape the culture and notions of acceptable practice.

## *Principles*

A professional executive coach working in an organisational setting is aware of and acts with, the following in mind:<sup>2</sup>

### *Care and respect*

- Interacting with individuals in a way that does not cause them injury or harm, but promotes their wellbeing and development.
- Clarity on the accountabilities of all parties.
- Recognising the autonomy and self-determination of the client.
- Privacy and confidentiality.
- Fairness and justice.

### *Competence and conduct*

- Being aware of and working within the limits of one's capability.
- Ability to demonstrate self-awareness and self-management and to articulate their own personal development journey.
- Use of professional judgement to boundary the work in ways that are respectful of all parties in the relationship.
- Having a defined agreement about the purpose and boundaries of the work and work towards sustainable practices/change/outputs for the client.

### *Honesty and Integrity in professional relationships*

- Accurate presentation of professional credentials.
- Recognition of multiple relationships, agendas and conflict of interests.
- Responsible financial transactions.
- Maintenance of public trust by self-monitoring, peer-monitoring and supervision.
- Contribution to profession and knowledge of the discipline.

---

<sup>2</sup> NB the principles outlined here further build on principles found in the Codes of Ethics of various accrediting coaching bodies as well as coaching related literature, professionals working in the field and other sources.

# Appendix I – Responsibilities, expectations and outcomes

*The aim of the Appendix content is:*

To enable all coaching stakeholders to be clear about expectations of their contributions to organisational outcomes of coaching.

*For clarity:*

Where organisational responsibilities are discussed it is expected that these will be carried out by an appropriate organisational representative as outlined in the main text above.

Similarly coach and client are used in the same context as outlined in the main text above.

Dimension	Organisations' responsibilities	Expectations of Coach	Expectations of Client	Organisational outcomes
<b>Strategy/Investment /Sustainability/ Prioritisation</b>	<p>Develop and secure commitment to the business case for coaching.</p> <p>Develop and continuously evolve the strategy for coaching that is aligned to business strategy, objectives and needs and describe how it fits with other development.</p> <p>Ensure effective planning of coaching services and resources over time.</p> <p>Identify prioritisation principles and target groups.</p> <p>Set criteria for assessing the benefits and outcome of coaching for the organisation.</p>	<p>To be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aware of the strategy and positioning of coaching and adhere to the principles of it.</li> <li>Aware of the business needs driving the provision of coaching and how this impacts their work.</li> </ul>	<p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciate the organisational rationale for the investment in coaching.</li> <li>Understand the purpose of coaching.</li> </ul>	<p>Transparent and focused use of coaching to meet business strategies, objectives and needs.</p> <p>Return on expectations over time.</p>
<b>Business Context</b>	<p>Create clear sense of coaching priorities in discussion with key business leaders.</p> <p>Ensure alignment of coaching with demands of the organisation by sharing organisational contexts and priorities with the coaches.</p>	<p>To have insight into the context in which the organisation and its leaders are operating.</p> <p>To use insights to inform their coaching approach.</p>	<p>To have access to a coach who understands their context, and who can help them be effective within that context.</p>	<p>Alignment of coaching assignments to organisational context and objectives.</p>

Dimension	Organisations' responsibilities	Expectations of Coach	Expectations of Client	Organisational outcomes
<b>Sourcing, selection and on-boarding of coaches</b>	<p>Source and select appropriate coaches by filtering the capability, quality, suitability and fitness of coaches.</p> <p>Create a clear services contract with the coach/coaching provider – where external.</p> <p>Create clear expectations of the roles and responsibilities of internal coaches.</p>	<p>To have clear and fair services contract which outlines appropriate responsibilities, ways of working and expectations.</p>	<p>To be assured of high quality and standards.</p> <p>To have confidence the coach is fit for the job.</p>	<p>Consistency of coaching service standards and quality.</p> <p>Value for money (in organisations view).</p>
<b>Education</b>	<p>Prepare and educate coaching stakeholders including clients so that they understand the processes of coaching, where it can be most beneficial and how to get the most out of the coaching experience.</p>	<p>To have coaching clients who are appropriately briefed and ready and able to engage productively with coaching.</p>	<p>To have a good understand of benefits of coaching.</p> <p>To take advantage of guidance on how to make the most of the coaching opportunity.</p>	<p>The basis for creating, building on, supporting or enhancing the organisations coaching culture.</p>
<b>Boundaries</b>	<p>Define the boundaries of coaching roles and transparency required re other roles and work-e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private work if internal.</li> <li>• Client exclusivity/ competitor organisations.</li> <li>• Consulting work alongside coaching.</li> <li>• Clarify expectations re on-selling and requests for support from business leaders.</li> </ul>	<p>To be clear on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boundaries for the coaching work.</li> <li>• How extensions to work with clients is agreed.</li> </ul>	<p>To have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added assurance around risk and confidentiality.</li> <li>• A clear mechanism for extending work with coach.</li> <li>• Clarity on how the coaching role differs to other roles (e.g. performance manager).</li> </ul>	<p>Effective highlighting and management of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boundary issues.</li> <li>• Potential conflicts of interest.</li> <li>• Potential reputational risk (for any of the coaching stakeholders).</li> </ul>

Dimension	Organisations' responsibilities	Expectations of Coach	Expectations of Client	Organisational outcomes
<b>Coaching Process: Matching</b>	Provide appropriate method and process for getting the right coach in front of the client, to provide the best chance of a successful outcome for the client and the organisation.	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlight the type of clients they can work with.</li> <li>Raise any potential issues after initial meeting.</li> </ul>	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take responsibility for the relationship with the coach.</li> <li>To highlight any potential issues with the match after the initial meeting.</li> </ul>	Focused coaching assignments. Ability to flex use of coaches to meet changing business needs. Effective use of varied coaching resources (especially niche coaches).
<b>Coaching Process: Contracting</b>	Provide clear contracting framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between coach and organisation; to enable a mutually acceptable fee and other contractual arrangements, including a key named contact.</li> <li>Between the coach, client and organisational representative; to be clear about individual and systemic outcomes, processes, boundaries and timescales.</li> <li>Between the coach and client; to be clear about individual outcomes, processes and boundaries, including mechanisms for escalation.</li> </ul>	To have clear: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working terms and a key contact person for any enquiries.</li> <li>Understanding of the wider organisational expectations re their contribution.</li> <li>And mutually agreed expectations for the assignment and what to do if any major concerns or red flags are raised.</li> </ul>	To have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity on purpose of coaching as seen by them, their bosses and the organisation.</li> <li>An understanding of how to escalate any concerns.</li> <li>And understanding of the limits to confidentiality.</li> <li>Safety through transparency.</li> <li>An opportunity to influence line management in the constructive dialogue about coaching goals.</li> </ul>	Alignment of organisational objectives with those of the individual client. Clear contract and expectations of coach. Appreciation of benefits and limits of confidentiality.
<b>Coaching Process: Evaluation</b>	Ensure effective evaluation of the coaching assignment and coaching contribution more widely – providing a feedback loop for coaches and the organisation.	Feedback data at individual and collective levels; providing insight into own practice and what works across the organisation.	Opportunity to feed back. Opportunity to reflect on the impact of coaching.	Impact measures and data. ROE for coaching

Dimension	Organisations' responsibilities	Expectations of Coach	Expectations of Client	Organisational outcomes
<b>Monitoring</b>	<p>Ensure effective monitoring of coaching activity and the systems that support it.</p> <p>Provide management information to leadership.</p>	<p>Support effective use of coaching resources and ability to accurately scope costs and demands which results in allocation of coaching budgets.</p>	<p>Record of own coaching activity for future reference.</p>	<p>Accountability for coaching is clear.</p> <p>Management information on coaching activity to inform investment decisions.</p>
<b>Insights</b>	<p>Gather insights (in a way that maintains individual client confidentiality) from coaches and identify patterns across the organisation.</p> <p>Feed into relevant parts of the system; coaching practitioners, L&amp;D, OD, leadership etc. to help shape policy and strategy/</p>	<p>To put their work in context of wider community of coaches and coaching in the organisation/</p> <p>Contribute additional added value by sharing insights/</p>	<p>Coach who is aware of broader pattern of behaviours, feeling and concerns across the business/</p>	<p>Valuable information about experiences and concerns of executive population.</p> <p>Insightful challenge and questions to consider.</p> <p>Insights that are connected to current business context and drive further insights/ understanding/dialogue in an iterative manner.</p>
<b>Supervision</b>	<p>Ensure all coaches are accessing supervision appropriate to the volume, level and type of work that they are doing.</p> <p>This should involve providing supervision for internal coaches and may involve providing supervision for external coaches.</p> <p>Where providing supervision for internal coaches recommend a supervisor who understands the internal role challenges.</p>	<p>Participate in supervision and ongoing reflection and learning.</p> <p>To explore tensions in relationship between individual, sponsor, line manager, coach, client and organisation.</p> <p>To articulate the value attached to the investment the external coach is making in their supervision and development.</p>	<p>Knowledge that the coach is appropriately supported and they do not have to worry about them.</p> <p>To hold confidence in the coaches' efforts in improving their service to you as client.</p>	<p>Safe to practice coaches working with their people.</p> <p>Greater confidence in quality of coaches.</p>
<b>Ethics and Accreditation</b>	<p>Agree a standard ethical code for coaches to work within.</p> <p>Identify appropriate levels of accreditation/ professional membership to be regarded as fit to practice in the organisation.</p>	<p>To be clear on expectations.</p> <p>To abide by an independent code and refer to it for guidance in challenging circumstances.</p>	<p>Fit to practice coaches.</p> <p>Confidence in ethical practice of coach.</p>	<p>Point of reference for ethical concerns.</p> <p>Due diligence on coaches competence.</p>

Dimension	Organisations' responsibilities	Expectations of Coach	Expectations of Client	Organisational outcomes
<b>Wellbeing and duty of care</b>	Ensure all steps are taken to ensure safety and well-being of client and coach as individuals, employees or contractors.	<p>To access organisational support if facing challenging circumstances.</p> <p>To refer client to other helping services as indicated by the organisation</p> <p>To say when they are not able to coach for personal wellbeing reasons.</p> <p>To have a physically safe environment in which to work.</p>	<p>Confidence that the organisation as well as the individual coach recognises their individuality.</p> <p>Referral to other services beyond the scope of the coach (within organization policy) if required.</p>	<p>Confidence that support is being provided to the individual.</p> <p>Defence against litigation re duty of care as employer and commissioner of services.</p>



## Appendix II – About the FCC

The Future of Coaching Collaboration (FCC) (<http://www.futureofcoaching.org>) is a multi-stakeholder group launched in April 2015 with the aim of collaborating, innovating and professionalising coaching. The group emerged from the *Coaching at Work*-led Accreditation Forum, which gathered professional body representatives with coaching sponsors to increase collaboration. Work done by members of the Forum led to a number of initiatives including a set of comparison tables, comparing professional bodies' ethos, rationales and philosophies. These can be viewed here: <http://www.coaching-at-work.com/category/accreditation-hub/>

The FCC seeks to be wider in scope and communities represented. For example, it now includes representatives from academia and has expanded its focus to include developing guidance on best practice; continued alignment across accrediting bodies on standards and quality control, and ethics, including a common code of conduct.

**Coaching at Work** continues to facilitate the group and is to provide an online independent 'home' for the group.

## *Appendix III – Organisations involved*

This document is the result of the work of a number of volunteers including from the following organisations:

- Association for Coaching
- Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS)
- Association of Coaching Supervisors
- Association of Integrative Coach-Therapist Professionals
- British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy Coaching
- British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology
- Civil Service Learning
- Coaching at Work
- European Mentoring & Coaching Council (EMCC)
- EMCC UK
- GSK
- International Centre for Coaching & Mentoring Studies, Oxford Brookes University
- International Coach Federation (UK ICF)
- International Society for Coaching Psychology
- John Lewis
- Kent County Council
- KPMG
- News UK
- Oxford Brookes University
- PwC
- Ridler & co

