## Being a great buddy

**So……………. You have the wonderful opportunity to be a buddy! What does this mean though?**

**What’s a buddy?**

The most important aspect of being a buddy is to be a friendly face that your new colleague can turn to if they have any questions to ask.  You’ll make all the difference to somebody during their first few weeks.

**This also means that you will benefit by:**

Acting as a buddy provides a good developmental opportunity for existing members of staff, giving you a chance to develop your communication skills and share your knowledge and experience.

**Who makes a good buddy?**

A good buddy is someone who is prepared to be:

* A contact
* A friendly face
* An informal source of information on the team and department
* Someone who knows how things work across the organisation and is prepared to share that experience

**Your skills, knowledge and behaviours include:**

* The ability to listen
* Openness and commitment to being a buddy – it can be a learning experience for both parties
* Good time management and self management skills
* Relevant knowledge and experience to be able to provide the right level of support
* An honest and considerate approach to giving feedback and asking challenging questions including the ability to give constructive feedback
* Ability to identify learning opportunities
* Ability to use questions to encourage new starters to think for themselves
* A willingness to learn

**Roles and responsibilities of a buddy**

As a buddy you are not line managing that individual but are a supportive colleague and friendly face. Your role as a buddy will vary depending on the person you are working with but could involve some or all of the following:

* Helping your new colleague to navigate their way around the department and the SP Showing them how to do aspects of their role
* Answering questions – often more than once. Buddies need to be patient as new starters take in a lot of information, often in a short time, and may need to re-ask questions in the future as events occur
* Provide information, signpost information and provide informal support
* Introduce them to other colleagues who are important to their role
* Helping them to understand the formal and informal culture and structures
* Encourage them to ask questions if unsure about any aspects of their role
* Arrange to go for coffee or lunch sometime so they can enjoy the social side of working and feel part of the team.

**A buddy is not:**

The following are examples of what your role is not, if you find this happening, make sure you re-explain this to your buddy and chat through with your manager how you might have this conversation.

* An advisor or counsellor
* A new best friend
* A confidante

**Before becoming a buddy you should:**

* Attend my coaching and mentoring fundamentals = parts 1 and 2
* Identify your objectives for becoming a buddy and agree with your line manager/ put in your L&D plan

**Some key questions you might want to consider before meeting them:**

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| * Who will you be working with and when do they start? |
| * What will they be doing and where they will be working? |
| * Where did they work before and were they there a long time? * When would be a good time to meet them during their first week. |

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| Day 1 | **Your reflections** |
| Meet your allocated ‘Buddy’   * Outline your role, experience and why you are their buddy * Find out about their professional background and experience and identify their understanding of the “buddy” relationship and how it will work * Explain any office events such as book club, shared birthday collections etc and make sure they are added to informal contact lists * Make sure they know they can ask you anything in regards to work and you will be happy to help |  |
| Week 1 |  |
| * Show them around the building, useful places and other offices they might need to work with * Outline what is colleagues tend to where to work * Exlpain what catering options there are and arrange to meet them for lunch one day or for a break * Answer any questions they have, share useful resources and help them understand any jargon and terminology |  |
| **Month 1** |  |
| Agree how often you will meet and check:   * how they are getting on * how they are adjusting to their role/ settling in * any pointers that might be needed or contacts that could be helpful |  |