

Unlocked

INFORMATION

PACK

Mentoring Prison Officer

February 2025

unlockedgrads.org.uk

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Charity No: 1187552 | Company No: 11448853

Reports to	Regional Manager/Head of Region
Location	North and South regions
Contract	Fixed term – 12 months
Start date	Monday 4th August 2025
End date	October 2026
Closing date for applications	14th March 2025
Grade	Band 5 role in Learning and Development (HMPPS will remain your employer)

ABOUT UNLOCKED

Thank you for your interest in Unlocked Graduates, and the role of Mentoring Prison Officer.

Unlocked Graduates exists to break cycles of reoffending. Currently, prison is not able to do this, and over 50% of prisoners released from short-term sentences reoffend within a year. This reoffending costs the UK taxpayer over £18bn every year. We believe the transformative relationships between prison officers and prisoners are key to creating a rehabilitative environment in prisons.

Since 2016, Unlocked has been inspiring ambitious graduates to become outstanding prison officers and high-performing leaders, breaking cycles of reoffending in prisons and throughout society. Our award-winning, two-year graduate leadership development programme is creating a generation of leaders who believe that rehabilitation is possible. In 2024, we launched Unlocked ChangeMakers, a leadership development programme for custodial managers that aims to transform the quality of middle leaders in prisons.

Unlocked's leadership development programmes have put the prison officer role on the map as a career where people can develop extraordinary leadership skills whilst making a real difference. We have raised the status of the role, and Unlocked's graduate programme features in the Times Top 100 Graduate Employers list.

To find out more, please visit our website: unlockedgrads.org.uk/

If this sounds like a challenge you are keen to meet, then please do apply.

THE ROLE

Mentoring Prison Officers (MPOs) are one of the most important aspects of the Unlocked Graduates' programme. You'll typically work with 20-25 new officers in two or three prisons, spending one or two days a week in each establishment. You will support groups of participants from day one of their training until the end of their two years, coaching them on everything from prison procedures to career opportunities. You remain an operational member of staff, but you will not carry out operational duties as part of the MPO role.

During a typical week, you will run regular bespoke training, fortnightly group supervisions and fortnightly 1-to-1 coaching/mentoring sessions with the participants. These take place within their establishments, helping to develop them into exceptional prison officers and leaders. You'll record and monitor their progress, working with

managers and Governors in the prisons to get a full picture of your graduates' performance. Other MPOs and your line manager will support your decision making and planning.

We prioritise your professional development. One day a week is spent with your line manager and MPO team receiving training which includes working towards a coaching qualification (Level 5 equivalent); adult facilitation training; group supervision; updates from Head Office staff on the programme and its developments and external training opportunities.

You will not be required to work nights or weekends as part of the MPO role. You will be paid as a Band 5 and continue to receive any unsociable hours allowances.

LOCATION

The North Region consists of 4 sub regions which are: North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, North-East of Wales and West Midlands.

The South Region consists of 4 sub regions which are; Greater London, South Central, East of England and Kent and Sussex.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Meet with participants fortnightly to provide 1-to-1 coaching and mentoring sessions
- Facilitate group supervisions with your prison groups.
- Deliver bespoke training, developing participants' practice as prison officers and leaders.
- Track and record participants' progress including any concerns and achievements.
- Co-ordinate additional support for participants who are struggling.
- Effectively communicate information about your allocated prisons and participants to the wider programme team.
- Use professional judgement to escalate issues appropriately.
- Challenge and support participants as appropriate to accelerate their development.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with prisons.
- Contribute to the wider Unlocked Graduates' organisation by supporting at events or with prison visits for external guests.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

MISSION ALIGNMENT

- Care intensely about what Unlocked is trying to achieve.
- Be excited to relentlessly maximise our impact, making difficult decisions where necessary and taking the right decision above what is popular.
- Embody an organisation-wide culture of using data to improve insights and performance.
- Believe every problem can be solved, bounce back quickly from setbacks and use them as opportunities to learn.
- Hold yourself and others to account, always remaining open to learn from others

EXPERIENCE

- Qualified and current prison officer with a minimum of 2 years operational experience.
- A strong understanding of the prison environment and the experiences encountered in frontline roles.
- Experience of developing and improving staff, formally or informally.
- Able to use computer systems to monitor participant performance.

CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS

- Passionate about the mission of reducing reoffending, and the Unlocked Graduates model.
- Exceptional at relationship building and creating a trusting environment.
- Positive and patient disposition, with a sense of possibility.
- Reflective self-improver who is keen to use feedback and training to develop.
- Able to have difficult conversations, give feedback and find solutions.
- Sound observation skills and judgement of other's strengths and areas of improvement.
- Confident in the delivery of training and own abilities to pass on knowledge to others (desirable)
- Able to develop relationships across the spectrum of HMPPS – from new starters, to experienced staff; from Detail departments within People Hubs, to Governing Governors.
- Ability to give and receive constructive feedback to enable the development of the participants; yourself; the programme; and the prison service.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- You must be a current HMPPS employee with permission from the Governing Governor (or equivalent) to go on secondment. Unlocked Graduates can support with this process. Please get in touch if you have any concerns or questions about this.
- You must be able to attend Returners Week in Leeds for one week commencing Monday 25th August. All travel, accommodation and subsistence will be provided.
- The ability to drive, although not necessary, is desirable - as the prisons we place in are located across the length and breadth of our current regions.
- The role will require travel to your placement prisons four days a week. We will endeavour to match MPOs with geographically suitable prisons.
- The role includes one day of professional development each week. This will usually take place in your region, although to bring all MPOs together, once a month we come together in either London, Birmingham or Manchester. Travel costs will be covered.
- The role will require attendance at whole organisation training and events.
- Detached duty or relocation funding is not available for this position.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Unlocked is working to build a fairer prison system. A diverse and inclusive workforce is essential to doing this.

The communities that we exist to serve are diverse, and we know in order to thrive in our work towards our mission, we must be too. We believe that diversity makes for a

stronger team. We therefore aim to create a workplace that is welcoming for all, from age to race and sexual orientation.

Recognising the disproportionate representation between prison officers and prisoners, we actively encourage individuals from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds to apply for this role.

To remove bias where possible, we blind assess candidates for interview based on their relevant skills, qualifications, or experience.

WHY WORK FOR UNLOCKED?

First and foremost, Unlocked Graduates offers the satisfaction of working for a high-performing and exciting organisation which is actively making an impact on one of the most challenging social justice issues which exists in our society today.

We want Unlocked to be a great place to work. What we are doing is difficult. We have high levels of challenge, and to make sure we achieve what we need to, we need excellent people who will welcome the opportunity to become brilliant at what they can offer the organisation as well as come up with great ideas to make us better.

These demands also mean we want to offer higher levels of support. With that in mind, all employees (including those on secondment) at Unlocked are offered the following core package of benefits.

Wellbeing	<p>Access to our Employee Assistance Programme: Health Assured.</p> <p>Monthly employee coaching from Sanctus, and a team of Mental Health First Aiders on our staff group.</p>
Development	<p>We want all of our team to understand our mission and the challenges facing prison officers. You will have opportunities to attend study days with our participants to further this understanding.</p> <p>We believe in supporting people to develop the skills they need to be excellent – whether this means funding external training, finding a mentor to support them or giving them the time to learn from others in the organisations through our regular CPD sessions.</p> <p>MPOs will work towards a coaching qualification in their first year, have opportunities to attend external training, regular group supervision and adult facilitation training.</p>
Volunteering	<p>Want to volunteer as a trustee or in some other capacity for a mission-aligned organisation? We support our team to take on these commitments without taking annual leave.</p>
Our staff also tell us they like	<p>Modern and professional centrally located offices in London and Manchester including perks like free coffee and fruit deliveries.</p>

Regular opportunities to **get together as a whole staff** and in your team, including away days, social events and other **development events**.

HOW TO APPLY

The deadline for applications for this role is **Friday 14th March 2025** at 9am. Round 1 interviews will take place week commencing **Monday 24th March**. Assessment Centres will take place week commencing **Monday 14th April 2025**.

You must seek permission from your Governing Governor when applying for this post. Unlocked will inform Governing Governors at the shortlisting stage. Successful candidates will receive a conditional offer until final sign-off from their Governor.

For more information about the role, please email Tessa.Jennett@unlockedgrads.org.uk (Head of Region, North) or Danielle.Dodd@unlockedgrads.org.uk (Head of Region, South)