

Starting Up a Buddy Programme

What exactly does a buddy do?

- Contact the employee
- Establish a rapport with the employee
- Ensure an open line of communication with always respecting confidentiality
- Answer any enquires
- Help in the process of adjusting to the workplace and work culture
- Help the employee get used to guidelines and policies
- Encourage interaction between the employee and colleagues
- Follow up with the employee on a weekly basis or as needed

How easy is it to set up a buddy programme?

Simple! Follow these five easy steps.

STEP 1: Selecting and pairing a buddy

- Select as buddies people who volunteer for the role and feel comfortable with the responsibilities outlined above.
- Where possible assign a buddy from the same department/team – but remember there are sometimes advantages to having support from somewhere else in the company or externally.
- Consider the interpersonal skills of the buddy and their commitment to the vision and values of your organisation.
- Get agreement from relevant line managers and HR
- Discuss the needs with the relevant employees before finalising arrangements.
- A buddy should be assigned to a new and returning employee before their first day.

STEP 2: Getting financial help for a buddy programme

If you are bringing in a buddy from an external organisation, the government programme [Access to Work](#), may be able to provide financial support for a buddy . Your local Jobcentre Plus will be able to provide you with more details and guidelines.

STEP 3: Arranging buddy meetings

- The buddy and employee should meet within work hours.
- As a guide meetings between employee and buddy should be up to 30 minutes once a week during the first month and at least once a month after that.

STEP 4: Ending a buddy programme

- The formal buddy relationship should be ended after six months (although 3 months is normally sufficient) or when either party requests it.
- The buddy relationship can end at any time that either the employee or the buddy wishes it to.
- Many buddies form lasting bonds and remain friends after the end of the formal programme this is at their discretion, but you should be aware of it.

STEP 5: Reviewing the success of the programme

The programme should have a formal review process at the end, this could be in the form of a questionnaire or an appraisal, offering both parties the opportunity to say what worked for them and what improvements could be made to any buddy programme in the future.