

Taking the Temperature of Internal Coaching '25

Exploring the landscape of
executive coaching through the
lens of experienced internal coaches

October 2025



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Our Headlines

At Catalyst14 we are privileged to partner with organisations across the UK to build and enhance their internal coaching capability.

Having developed deep, trusted relationships, we have sought honest reflections from those who have worked with us to gauge the landscape of internal coaching in the UK, and specifically understand:

A. Focus

B. Enablers

C. Barriers

D. Opportunities for Sponsors and internal coaches to further support organisational development through their internal coaching offer.

We believe the key insights and conclusions below are thought-provoking and relevant for both Sponsors and internal coaches:

- *There is still confusion around what coaching is (and isn't) and how it complements other offers designed to support talent, learning and development. One risk is that it is used as a substitute for effective performance management, which becomes a lose: lose. Another is that misunderstanding leads to disengagement.*
- *Having clear purpose to the coaching provision, aligned to organisational strategy and people priorities, allows the business to truly leverage the offer. Without this, and strong senior business sponsorship, both internal coaches and the organisation are inhibited by engagement and trust.*

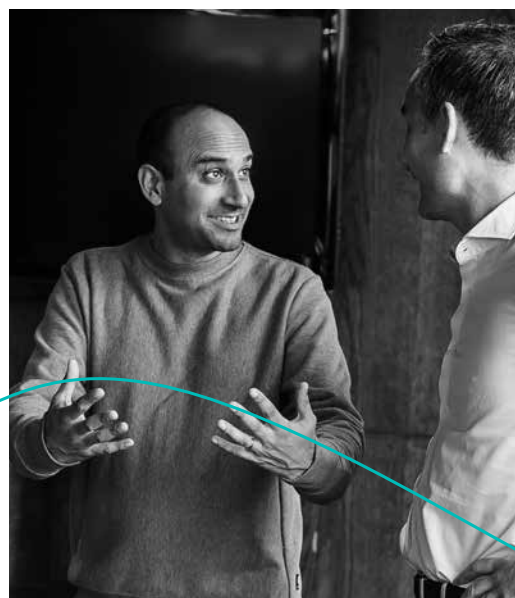
Our headlines

- *There needs to be greater support and recognition for internal coaches from within the line. Securing line manager involvement, from recruitment through to offboarding, can benefit the organisation practically (managing time), emotionally (valuing the role) and strategically (leveraging the coaching skillset and mindset more broadly).*

"Coaching is one of the most satisfying things that I have done during my career. It has enormous utility as a discipline... I feel it has given me much more back than I have had to put into it."

- *Internal coaches regularly engage with social and emotional dynamics, and have the capacity to effectively support the wellbeing of an organisation. Regular CPD (including supervision) is needed to ensure that internal coaches feel competent and confident enough to navigate these complex and psychological dimensions to work and hold necessary boundaries around their role.*

- *Internal coaches have the benefit of understanding the organisational system: its culture, values, politics and processes. They also have the challenge of (a) engaging objectively with this for their coachees and (b) carrying confidential information in different contexts. Both the structure of the offer and supervision can be used to greater effect to manage risks around this.*
- *Internal coaches obtain a deep sense of purpose and meaning through the role. Despite pressures on time and competing priorities, they are willing to invest in the offer, and others, and contribute to a virtuous cycle around discretionary effort at an organisational level.*



A Picture in Numbers The Data

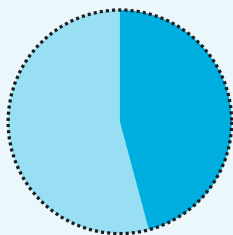
A Picture in Numbers

We have aggregated responses from 69 internal coaches across the private and public sectors.

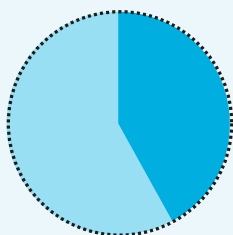
These internal coaches were exceptionally experienced, with:

65%	5 years
having over	coaching experience.

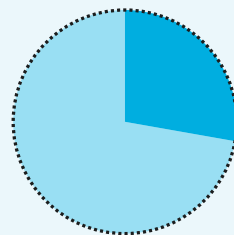
A few headline numbers stand out and paint a picture:



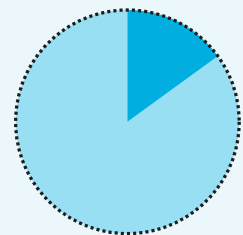
46%
of internal coaching is offered in support of **wellbeing** and **emotional mastery**;



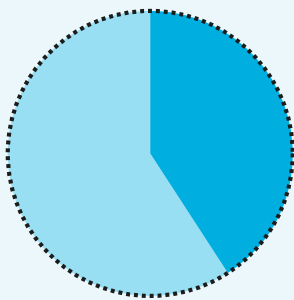
42%
is directed towards **performance, career development and transition**; **12%** of internal coaching is focused on **leadership development**.



28%
of internal coaches felt challenged to effectively support their coachees around their **confidence and mental health**.



15%
felt that their coachees were **not committed** to the process.

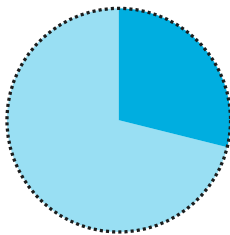


41%

of coaches saw **organisational engagement** (or lack thereof) as their main challenge. **Perception, education, recognition and**

infrastructure were all cited in this context. This increased to **46%** as coaches thought about the challenges they see ahead.

NB: Almost half of internal coaches referenced the importance of organisational infrastructure and support in driving or undermining the effectiveness of the offer.

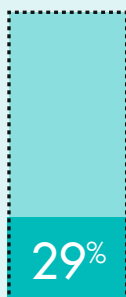


29%

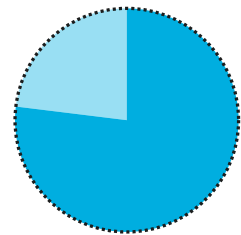
spoke about **time/capacity constraints**, and the perceived (vs. actual) value of the role, relative to their primary responsibilities. Looking forward, more (**39%**) felt that this would challenge them further over time.



of internal coaches said that their role **enhanced their connection to the organisation**, whether through knowledge, broader networks, greater influence, or other practical benefits.



found **maintaining objectivity** challenging, struggling to hold knowledge of the individual/team/context without interference.



77%

reinforced the **importance of supervision, peer groups and other CPD**; the need for on-going support and learning around the role. **45%** felt that they would benefit from more supervision and other CPD than they currently receive.

We hope that these prompt further thought and discussion for Sponsors and internal coaches, as organisations seek to enhance the effectiveness of their internal coaching offer and return on both investment and expectations.

In their own words

Quotes from Internal Coaches

Some things are hard to capture in numbers. The below is intended to add colour and feeling to the data, and bring the perspective of internal coaches to life.

01. Experience:

"I really appreciate the opportunity to connect with people from various parts of the organisation. It is fascinating to learn about their unique roles, responsibilities and professional journeys."



"Trust (through contracting etc.) sits at the heart of successful coaching."

"Coaching, mentoring and leadership development are often a blurry mix of options being presented as pathways... time, socialisation, testimonies, word of mouth, are all helping to demystify these programmes."

"Supervision and shared learning with others in similar roles is so useful."

02. Challenges:

"Being asked to coach as an alternative to performance management"

"Where coaching sits in the organisation... not being prioritised."

"People who have had coaching suggested to them... who either don't want it or don't understand it."

"Perception of capability... internal coaches perceived as less capable than external coaches."

"How do I work with mental health challenges?"

"Coachees are expecting the coach to change things for them. [They] Want you to give the answers."

In their own words

03. What internal coaches need from the organisation:

"Senior sponsors who understand, value and promote coaching and its place in the business."

"...a clear offer and goals, focused on leadership (ripples) and aligned to broader organisational goals and strategy."

"Be clear... this is about good to great and not performance management."

"Organisational recognition and commitment to time for my role..."

"...structures around learning, CPD and Supervision."

"I would love a library of tools, techniques and/or ways of thinking about issues... we have this sort of resource for all our professional 'day job' work..."

"A community of practice to rely on... to maintain humility, clarity and mindfulness."

04. Advice for new internal coaches:

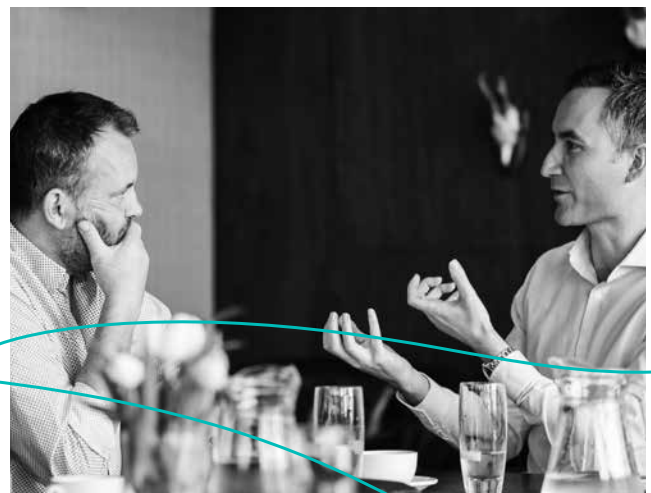
"Understand the key themes that the organisation is trying to address to be able to support the business as well..."

"Be clear... name interactions with line managers, and the difference between coaching and mentoring."



"Self-care is a huge issue. The role can be isolating, and you need to look after yourself."

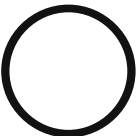
"Protect the time... Tell the team about what you are doing and manage their expectations..."



Reflection Questions for Organisational Sponsors

Reflection Questions for Organisational Sponsors

Whilst complex, internal coaching is increasingly seen as a worthwhile investment, either standalone or in complement to an external coaching provision.

 Our data suggests that there is ground for Sponsors to think more and differently about how to structure and support the offer, and scope to enhance the benefits for both the organisation and their individual coaches.

The below questions are intended to prompt further thinking:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. How do you define coaching within your organisation? How do you differentiate this from other personal, learning and development opportunities? | 3. What needs would go unmet in the absence of a coaching provision? What is the cost to the business – tangible and intangible? |
| 2. How does coaching align to your strategic objectives and people priorities? How is this communicated? | 4. How do you see the difference between internal and external coaching, and how do you articulate this to key stakeholders? What can you achieve through an internal coaching offer that you couldn't otherwise? |
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5. Who sponsors coaching within your organisation? Who resists? Who champions/advocates?

 6. What boundaries have you established around your coaching offer? What, if any, criteria do you have in place for access? What processes will support employee engagement and commitment to being coached?

 7. What support is in place for performance and line managers to ensure that coaching is not used as a substitute for effective performance management?

 8. What do you expect from your internal coaches? How do you create accountability around the role, with individuals and the organisation?

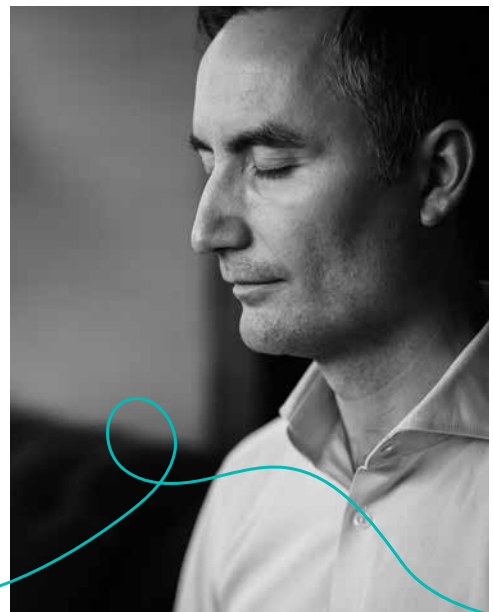
 9. How do you support internal coaches to dedicate the necessary time to the role? What is the contract around their role, both at an organisational and local level?

 10. How do you recognise and reward the contributions of internal coaches?

 11. How do you assess and respond to the learning and development needs of your internal coaches? How do you ensure that your internal coaches remain 'fit for practice'?

 12. How do you evaluate the impact of your coaching programme? How do you keep the offer focused, relevant and on the radar of key stakeholders?

 13. What might your coaching pool know that the wider system would benefit from hearing? How do you play back themes into your organisation and use them to inform strategy?



Reflection Questions For Internal Coaches

Demanding and rewarding,
the internal coach role is often
a source of pride and meaning.

Our data suggests that, despite challenges, internal coaches are willing to give deeply to the role and organisation, and feel the benefits, both personally and professionally.

It also raises questions around what more or different can be done to manage some of the challenges and allow for a more rounded experience in partnership with the organisation.

The below questions are intended to prompt further thinking in the realm of influence and control:



- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. What unique lens and energy do you bring to the role and coaching culture with your organisation?</p> <hr/> | <p>3. Where do you feel most and least comfortable as an internal coach? What is the edge for you?</p> <hr/> |
| <p>2. What do you love most about coaching? How do you structure your role to maximise opportunities for this?</p> <hr/> | <p>4. What would you like to learn over the next 12 months? What are your personal development goals?</p> <hr/> |
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Reflection Questions for Internal Coaches

5. Who supports your development and challenges your blind spots as a coach?

6. What are your personal measures of impact and success? What organisational measures have you agreed?

7. Where do you see the opportunity to bring more to the organisation through your coach role?

8. Where do you apply your coaching skills and mindset outside of your 121 interactions? How do these benefit you and the organisation more broadly? Who is aware of this?

9. Who sponsors you in your coach role? What is their understanding of what you do and how it supports the organisation? What is their ask of you? And yours of them?

10. What goals have you set around your coach role? How do these align with your broader organisational goals?

11. How have you contracted with your team and local management around your coach role? What, if anything, would you like to change or challenge to this agreement?

12. How do you define coaching and your role with your coachees? What could you add to your narrative to support greater engagement, commitment and trust?

13. What are you learning about your organisational system through your coaching? Where, how and with whom do you share themes/insights from your coaching (within the bounds of confidentiality)?

14. How do you take care of yourself in the role?





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