**Coaching questions to prevent or reduce conflict**

* What is your ideal outcome from our conversation/meeting/review?
* How can we best use this time to move things forward?
* If we were peeling the layers back to identify the core if this issue for you, what might we find?
* What matters most to you? Why?
* What does our agreed solution need to deliver – what is your bottom line?
* What might a ‘partial solution’ look like?
* If I could immediately change one thing, what would you like it to be?
* What is it useful for me to know, that I might not be aware of?
* What are the risks that we need to remain aware of?
* Who else might have useful information or ideas that we might benefit from, as we make this decision?
* If we had only two options to choose from, what would you want them to be?
* What makes those the two best options?
* Which of those options would you choose? Why?
* What would feel like a ‘win’ to you?
* What are you able to contribute to making a ‘win’ possible?
* What could I do that would mean you leave our conversation feeling lighter and more positive than you did at the start?
* What is at stake?
* What are you going away curious about?
* How will we know we got it right?

\*as with all our suggested questions, you can reword these, eg if ‘win’ doesn’t feel comfortable, this could be replaced with ‘good outcome’ or reworded in a way that feels right to you.

These questions are useful to ask – and to *answer*. Depending on the situation, you may suggest that all parties ‘listen and explore’ together and answer the same questions as a way of building understanding on all sides. That could be you and someone to whom you provide a service, members of a team or working group, or partners/collaborators. If you sense developing or active conflict, offering to hold space for a conversation like this at the earliest opportunity, in the spirit of getting the best outcomes for all involved, is surely useful.

These questions may also be useful self-reflection questions, when we are feeling conflicted about an issue or way forward. Thinking through some of them should help you ‘see the wood, for the trees’.