

# Developing Senior Systems Leadership

A new programme for senior leaders  
in Social care, Social work and  
Health in Scotland

## Introducing the Programme

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Scottish Social  
Services Council



HULT  
ASHRIDGE  
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## The Programme

NHS Education for Scotland (NES), in collaboration with SSSC and HULT Ashridge Executive Education are delighted to share news of the forthcoming launch of a new specialist leadership development offer for senior leaders working within Social Care, Social Work and Health in May 2022.

This trailblazing programme aims to bring forward and prepare the next generation of senior leaders in Social Care, Social Work and Health to provide excellent individual and collective leadership in their organisations and the system.

Applications will open in May 2022. The first cohort will commence in September 2022 and complete in May 2023.

## Who's the programme for?

We believe this programme could be for you if you are already a senior leader who is committed to delivering excellent systems leadership in Social Care, Social Work and Health and you aspire to an executive director or equivalent senior role whether that be within an integrated care organisation or partnership, commissioning or delivery organisation.

You will also be interested in working in the spaces in between organisations in Social Care, Social Work and Health to improve collaboration and outcomes for people who use services.

The key thing is the difference you want to make rather than the specific organisation you want to work in.

## Informed by extensive inquiry in Social Care, Social Work and Health

We are proud that this new programme is informed by interviews and focus groups with over 100 senior leaders from Social Care, Social Work and Health. We are grateful to all those who have taken part and engaged with us in this process. The programme philosophy, structure and content has also been tested in all three sectors.

This extensive inquiry is recognised as a significant and welcome contribution to the critical challenge of developing a senior leadership talent pipeline. Consistent messages have emerged across all stakeholder groups, endorsing it's potential value:

- 1 Bringing together a cohort drawn from Social Care, Social Work and Health is a strength. It supports the development of collaborative leadership which is critical to post COVID Recovery and the ongoing transformation of experiences and outcomes for patients and people who use services.
- 2 The emphasis within the proposed design on understanding, and being able to work within, the dynamic context for Social Care, Social Work and Health is an asset and a distinctive feature of the programme.
- 3 Stakeholders value the emphasis on building a leadership community. They are keen to be an integral part of this learning community and a resource to participants throughout.
- 4 It will be important to be sensitive to structural and cultural differences between Social Care, Social Work and Health that may be reflected in differences in how participants see their purpose as well as power dynamics and practical issues such as grading and pay differentials.
- 5 Sensitivity to seasonal pressures and the timing of learning events is important.
- 6 The emphasis on real work as the focus for learning is a core strength. This will maximise the value to participants and to the system.

We have also drawn upon current research and evidence on what makes great leadership development at this level as well as integrating the learning from an independent evaluation from Project Lift's most recent senior leadership development offer, leadership cubed.

This programme is part of the Scottish Government's new and ambitious national plan, the National Leadership Development Programme (NLDP), to build high levels of systems leadership capability across Social Care, Social Work and Health.

## Key Programme Features

The themes from the inquiry have informed the following key programme features:

- 1** Enabling participants to work in parallel on developing their purpose, confidence and impact as leaders, whilst also learning from the real challenges of engaging with, and effecting change across, the Social Care, Social Work and Health environment.
- 2** Bringing together senior leaders from Social Care, Social Work and Health, creating a purposeful and inclusive whole system learning environment for leaders to learn with, and from, one another and address real work challenges and priorities.
- 3** Contributing to the development of a shared leadership culture within Social Care, Social Work and Health.
- 4** Providing participants with connection to a leadership community that extends beyond the formal programme - with sponsors, programme speakers, programme alumni and alumni from other leadership development programmes across Social Care, Social Work and Health.
- 5** Supporting participants to transition to senior leadership roles, enabling them to learn about the realities of roles at this level from other leaders and develop the critical skills associated with success.
- 6** Embracing participants from Social Care, Social Work and Health and aiming to create a balanced cohort composition.



**The critical role of sponsors** in leadership development was also emphasised during our extensive inquiries. Active sponsorship of individual participants, and the cohort as whole, is therefore intended to be a core element of the programme. Sponsors will be an invaluable resource for participants from their programme application through to mentorship and guidance as they apply learning from the programme in their current role and undertake their live collaborative work.

## Developing Senior Systems Leadership – the learning experience

Participants will have a learning experience tailored both to their own individual needs and the collective learning needs of the cohort. Once confirmed on the programme, participants will each start work with a coach to prepare for and onboard to the programme. This combined with their application content will inform the creation of a tailored and personalised learning contract and development plan for their time on the programme.

Participants will also have the opportunity to develop:

- Whole system understanding and capability to lead in an integrated environment.
- Higher levels of insight, purpose, impact and overall leadership confidence.
- Strong decision making and executive judgement skills (to be able to hold complex challenges in conditions of crisis).
- An understanding of the importance of working effectively within a political context including that with Scottish Government.
- A grasp of the critical importance of psychological safety for learning, equality and the relational leadership capabilities of curiosity and respect about difference.

The approach across the programme will be diverse and engaging and will include:

- Dialogue and inquiry with key speakers and leaders from inside and outside the system,
- Live collaborative work based on real system challenges,
- One to one coaching,
- Experiential learning activities,
- Networking opportunities,
- Space for personal reflection.

Both virtual and face to face learning will be experienced throughout the programme.





## Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Currently operating at a senior level within a Social Care, Social Work or Health setting.
- Aspiring to move into a senior system, executive or director level role in the social care, social work and health environment in the next 18-24 months.
- Motivated to lead at this level and across the Social Care, Social Work and Health system.
- Aligned with the programme philosophy and approach. Interested in being part of a purposeful and inclusive whole Social Care, Social Work and Health learning environment for senior leaders.
- Keen to deepen their capacity to work in complex, adaptive systems and prepared to challenge and be challenged; open to seeing systems differently and refining their personal leadership purpose and practice.
- Motivated by the opportunity to apply their new systems leadership capabilities directly to their organisations and to the wider system.
- Sponsored to apply for a place by a Director, Chief Officer, Chief Executive, or equivalent level senior leader.



### Find out more

If you are interested in finding out more about Developing Senior Systems Leadership and the application process, you can join us at one of the forthcoming 'drop in' information sessions in March and April 2022.

You can attend as:

- a potential participant,
- a participant sponsor,
- someone generally interested in the programme.

Click on **[this link](#)** to book your place on any of the sessions listed below. *Please note that the link will take you to the required GDPR page before selecting a session. This is a requirement for us to hold your details to invite you to these events. Thank you.*



- **Wednesday 30th March, 9am-10am**
- **Tuesday 5th April, 3pm-4pm**
- **Wednesday 13th April, 2pm-3pm**
- **Tuesday 19th April, 4pm-5pm**
- **Wednesday 20th April, 12pm-1pm**
- **Wednesday 27th April, 12pm-1pm**
- **Thursday 5th May, 9am-10am**

If you would like to talk to someone informally about the programme please click to email:

- **Jenni.Jones@nhs.scot** or **Joanne.Rafferty@nhs.scot** (NHS Education for Scotland)
- **Jess.Alexander@sssc.uk.com** or **Julie.Gracie@sssc.uk.com** (Scottish Social Services Council)

