

The 2019/20

SEND Leadership Programme

This paper gives outline detail of the content¹ of the SEND Leadership Programme that DfE has commissioned from NDTi as part of the Delivering Better Outcomes Together (DBOT) delivery support programme. This is the fifth year that the programme has run – having been re-commissioned by DfE because of the highly positive response from participants and their managers to the two previous programmes.

The Benefit of The Programme

The [evaluation of the 2018/19 programme](#) identified a range of positive outcomes including; development of skill and knowledge, understanding leadership, greater person confidence, increased capacity to deliver what's expected in SEND and changed behaviour and practice.

Participants themselves described particular benefits from the opportunity to have the time and space to learn, reflect, renew aspirations, share ideas with others across the country and apply theory to delivering change in their authority. Typical comments from previous participants include:~

“Probably the best investment of 10 days of my working life with far reaching benefits for myself, the services and staff that I manage and ultimately the children and families that we work with.”

“It makes you really aspirational to see what you can achieve for your local area. It gets you fired up to think about how you can change it locally.”

“All of the NDTi staff are all very credible individuals, they know what they're talking about in relation to SEND. They're receptive and sensitive to the audiences. You got a sense of them understanding the pressures that we're under, empathising with us, and making suggestions to us from their lengthy experience in the sector.”

“The thing I wanted to learn was to influence others and change management. I've used those tools every day since, in the way I prepare for meetings, when I'm preparing to speak to someone, with groups, with individuals. In every context I use that and I'm still learning.”

“It has been a huge commitment, but I absolutely feel on reflection that it's been an investment that we couldn't afford not to take part in.”

¹ Whilst the core structure will remain as outlined, the detail of content may vary slightly during the programme – both to respond to participant wishes, and to reflect and changing policy and delivery context.

Participant's managers similarly saw the value and benefit their organisation was deriving from their staff's involvement. Comments from managers of previous participants include:

"For one team member in particular, I think the programme has resulted in a real confidence around planning for change in services as the staff member has used theoretical frameworks to inform their work."

"The learning and subsequent reflection on practice is enabling [name] to demonstrate a greater breadth of leadership skills, delivered with greater confidence."

"[Name] has been able to take a step back and reflect on strategic matters as opposed to operational actions. He has let managers manage."

"I see a noticeable difference in [name]'s confidence as a SEND Manager. In turn I believe she has a staff group that feel 'safe' with her as a leader because she is more confident and this instills confidence in others"

Who Can Apply?

Applications are invited from senior strategic SEND managers in local authorities who have a strategic responsibility for delivering support and services within SEND and the power to make funding decisions.

We recommend this is as part of a pair with another manager from a different part of the 'system' who also has responsibility for delivering change – for example Head of Children's Social Care or Post 16, or partner from the NHS. This pairing increases the potential for participants to use the learning back in the workplace and also helps to build links between different parts of the local SEND system. Applications will also be welcomed from individual SEND managers not applying as part of a pair where a suitable partner cannot be identified. NHS applications that are not part of a pair with an LA SEND leader cannot be accepted. All applicants must have a major leadership role in delivering support and services in SEND being responsible either for the overall delivery of the SEND services within the authority, or else reporting to that person with a responsibility for delivering a significant element of support and services in SEND. Applications from a pair where a direct line management relationship exists between the two people are not appropriate.

The programme is appropriate both for experienced SEND managers wishing to develop their personal leadership knowledge and skills and for recently appointed SEND senior managers who, as well as leadership development, also wish to build their knowledge of SEND.

Applications close on [August 9th](#). Subject to the appropriateness of applications, a degree of priority will be given to local authorities/areas who have not had people previously accepted onto the programme, as well as those areas who have a written statement of action following a SEND LA inspection. We also aim to ensure that every region is represented on it.

Overview of Content

There are two main content elements to the programme:

1. **Leadership, Change and Personal Skills**, that focus on issues of organisation change, leadership, team-working and personal leadership style. Whilst these modules will be the more ‘theoretical’ part of the programme, they will be firmly rooted in the realities of life as a leader delivering SEND across the education, health and social care sectors. There will also be specific sessions at the outset about the current policy framework and the history of special educational needs as a concept and policy from a human rights perspective. The aim and purpose will be to share ideas, evidence and strategies to help equip participants with the tools they need to understand how to (i) operate effectively within an organisation (ii) lead significant change (iii) develop their personal style and grow their potential to demonstrate real leadership, and (iv) specifically relate and apply this to the SEND agenda.

These modules will also be where the personal project is explored and developed. Each (pair of) participant(s) will be required as part of the application process to bring a significant aspect of local change arising from the reform agenda. They will use this in between sessions as a ‘testing bed’ for their learning on the programme.

2. **Leading Edge Practice**, that focus on the leadership actions and attributes that arise from some of the key policy and practice changes that are expected within SEND.

The modules have been designed to support participants to develop into the leaders they wish to be as well as having SEND specific content including best practice.

This will include:

- Understanding the importance of working in partnership with families, children and young people. The aim will be to bring best practice and practical strategies into play that will help ensure participants can get beyond the usual rhetoric of what should happen, to ensure that these relationships are successful and provide real added value to their work and the outcomes achieved. We will explore the different behavioural requirements of leading through co-production.
- Understanding the importance of joint commissioning and integration. This essential building block of SEND policy requires leaders to work in new, collaborative ways, which take them beyond traditional organisational silos. The current evidence from the SEND local area inspections show that local areas are still struggling with joint commissioning and integration. The evidence base on how this can be achieved will be explored, with participants being able to consider the leadership actions they need to take to make partnership working a reality.

Each session will have clear learning outcomes that will inform the detailed content. The programme has a core team of leaders/facilitators who will support the running of the programme.

External speakers from a range of perspectives will be invited – based upon their particular knowledge and expertise.

In addition to formal sessions, the Programme will also create the opportunity for:

- **Coaching/Personal advice/mentoring with the programme leaders.** Time has been allowed in the costings for telephone contact and support between facilitators and participants (everyone will be allocated a link facilitator), and the opportunity to access coaching from one of our trained and experienced coaching team.
- **Access to best practice materials and innovative ideas** in relevant areas
- **Mutual learning** through the development of networks with participants in similar roles across the country
- **Access to an online resource** to share ideas and ask questions of fellow participants and the facilitators

Additionally, at the end of the programme, there is the chance to join participants from the two previous years in a growing 'alumni' network that continue to meet both in person and virtually to engage in shared problem solving,

Modules will occur at roughly eight weekly intervals – frequent enough to maintain momentum, but at a sufficient gap not to impact too much on presence in the workplace. There are eight formal participant days in total. Attendance at all modules is expected – a commitment to this effect from both the applicant and their manager is a pre-requisite of selection to the programme. (Last year, there were over 80% more applicants than there were places).

The dates for the modules are:

- 17th and 18th September 2019
- 12th and 13th November 2019
- 20th and 21st January 2020
- 16th and 17th March 2020

The following provides further detail of the intended content.

Outline Framework for the 2019/20

SEND Leadership Programme

Module 1 – Two day residential module

(Overall theme – introduction to the programme, background to SEND from a human rights perspective, leadership values and inspiration)

- The history of special educational needs and disability to contextualise the society and services within which we operate.
- The policy context – the Children and Families Act 2014 and related policies. The challenges this brings for SEND Managers and colleagues.
- On the nature of leadership – what is a leader, what are the key characteristics of effective leadership, how to build those into a personal operating style.
- How to be a brilliant leader!
- Development of the personal, work-based ‘project’
- An introduction to coaching
- A senior member of the DfE team to present (to be confirmed)

Module 2 – Two day residential module

(Overall theme – you as a leader, – personal resilience and leadership in difficult times. Personalisation – beyond personal budgets)

- Understanding yourself as a leader, thinking about resilience and brave leadership
- How can we support children and young people with the most complex needs in a person centred way that leads to them achieving a good life – facilitated by an expert by experience

Module 3 – Two day residential module

(Overall theme – Leadership within teams and systems, coproduction and expert sessions)

- Coproduction – presentations from young people and parent carers
- Large group interventions: How to work with multiple stakeholders and large groups of people to develop plans, strategies and action
- Team coaching techniques
- Leading without management authority to influence change
- **Expert sessions – pathways to employment and community inclusion**

Module 4 – Two day residential module

(Joint commissioning and integration, reflection, key learning, personal projects and next steps)

- Joint commissioning and integration. Understanding the different leadership styles and behavioural traits that are important to working across organisational boundaries, including though a focus on:
- Understanding the breadth of commissioning, at both strategic and individual levels
- Definitions of joint commissioning and integration and what it might look like
- The evidence base for joint working – what needs to be in place
- Understanding the role of health within SEND
- Leading with time to think
- Presentation of personal projects
- **Expert sessions – social and education inclusion, quality in systems**