

The 2019/20

# SEND Reforms Regional Leadership Programme for aspiring leaders

This paper gives outline detail of the content<sup>1</sup> of the regional SEND Leadership Programme that DfE has commissioned from NDTi as part of the Delivering Better Outcomes Together (DBOT) delivery support programme. This is the second regional course, commissioned by DfE because of the highly positive response from participants and their managers to the previous SEND Leadership Programmes.

## The Benefit of The Programme

The [evaluation of the SEND Leadership course](#), identified a range of positive outcomes including; development of skill and knowledge, understanding leadership, greater person confidence, increased capacity to deliver the reforms 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.”*

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

*“It gives people the headspace and people haven’t really got that at the moment in Local Authorities, if we’re going to bring about change then we need that.”*

*“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.”*

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 SEND managers in local authorities and emerging leaders who have a strategic or operational responsibility for delivering the reforms.** Applications are welcomed from individual SEND managers, social care and NHS applicants with responsibility for SEND . All applicants must have a leadership role in delivering the SEND reforms being responsible either for the overall delivery of the reforms and SEND services within the authority, or else reporting to that person with a responsibility for delivering a significant element of the reforms.

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.

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. We also aim to ensure for a balance of applicants from the two regions involved in each cohort.

## Overview of Content

Previous participants commented:

*“My main motivator was to extend my understanding of leadership, to gain skills and strategies to use in my work. But this programme was not generic, it was rooted in SEND.”*  
*“It’s the only specific leadership course that I’ve ever seen that was specific to SEND.”*

There are two main content elements to the programme:

1. **Leadership, Change and Personal Skills.** Two two-day residential modules that focus on issues of organisation change, leadership, team-working and personal management 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 the SEND Reforms 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. 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 reform agenda.
2. **Leading Edge Practice.** Modules are interspersed with a focus on the leadership actions and attributes that arise from some of the key policy and practice changes that are expected by the SEND reforms.

External speakers from a range of perspectives will be invited – based upon their particular knowledge and expertise- for example, parent leaders for coproduction activities; and local or regional leaders in inclusive practice.

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

- **Personal advice/mentoring with the programme leaders.**
- **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

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:

**South West region:**

- 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019 – Exeter (residential)
- 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – Taunton (residential)

**North East and Yorkshire & Humber regions:**

- 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 – Darlington (residential)
- 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – York (residential)

The following provides further detail of the intended content.

## Outline Framework for the 2019/20

# SEND Reforms Leadership Regional Programme

### Module 1 – Two-day residential module

(Overall theme – leadership and change)

- 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.
- Understanding how organisations work – the theory and practice of organisational life. Why do our organisations function in the ways that they do, what are the implications of that for how we operate as leaders?
- Change management strategies – the theory and practice of how to make effective change happen in ways that produce the desired outcomes.
- Development of the personal, work-based ‘project’

### Module 2 – Two-day residential module

(Leading Edge Practice and personal leadership style/personal resilience)

- A specific focus on leadership in difficult financial times and at periods of major organisational change.
- Personal learning styles – what is your preferred way of operating, what type of leader are you? How do your values and beliefs impact upon your leadership style?
- Self-leadership – how to develop resilience, adaptability and take appropriate risks whilst setting challenging objectives.
- Definitions of joint commissioning and integration and what it might look like
- Relationship management and emotional intelligence – including approaches to inspiring others, networking and managing conflict
- Understanding organisational culture and how it can be used to help make sustainable change happen
- The leadership challenges for the future – reflecting on the whole programme – what does this mean for successful delivery of the SEND reforms?