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Future Directors' Programme: A single National Programme for those who aspire to director-level roles in the provision of public services

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Future Directors' Programme: A single National Programme for those who aspire to director-level roles in the provision of public services.

One of a suite of programmes for Leadership for Change in the Public Sector

"Public services are no longer provided by simple organisations that can deliver at the press of a button, and service improvement can no longer be achieved by compliance with a set of rules, however skilfully devised. What we need is a much more sophisticated approach which recognises the complex times we are living in where demand for services is up and tolerance of failure is down. Increasingly, there are multiple sources of authority for the delivery of public services and those in leadership positions are increasingly working in a context of ever growing complexity and ambiguity.

To become an effective systems leader is not something that can be achieved by following a rulebook for leadership, but is rather an approach through shared values and intentions, that the research suggests is a mindset or a way of thinking about and approaching the leadership role, rather than a set of technical skills and competencies"

The objective of the Future Directors' Programme is to develop a programme for future leaders across the public sector to learn and develop together. It is underpinned by the principles of systems leadership for public services identified in a study undertaken by the Colebrooke Centre in collaboration with the Cass Business School. It brings together people at Assistant Director or equivalent level from across the broadest range of services, to develop their knowledge, skills and experience so that they can step up to Director level roles with confidence in their leadership abilities, regardless of their particular area of professional expertise

The methods involved 5 organisations collaborating in the development of the programme. It is designed for those already experienced at senior operational level, now looking to progress to a strategic director level role across public services. Applications are invited from individuals working in:

Healthcare

Public health

Local Authority services such as child and adult social care, housing, community services

Housing Associations (providers of social housing in the UK)

Voluntary and independent sector employees involved in the provision of public services were included

Following a competitive assessment process, applicants are offered a variety of learning methods including residential activity, small group work, peer support and challenge, online content and work-based experiences, plus the opportunity to be part of a learning community.

Findings are emerging now there have been 2 cohorts on the programme. By the time of the conference in May, preliminary evaluation of the first phase of each cohort will be available. A discussion of the potential methods for evaluating the longer term impact, drawing on material from previous similar programmes, will be described on the poster.

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