

SOLACE Scotland Chief Executive and Senior Executive Leadership Development Programme

Leadership Development Programme 2017



Overview

SOLACE Scotland has updated its Chief Executive and Senior Executive Leadership Development Programme to ensure that it continues to be flexible and responsive to the challenges and opportunities facing local government over the next few years.

Working with the Improvement Service, we have designed a menu of development opportunities that:

- focus on key transformational/contextual skills that will be necessary to underpin the delivery of the public service reform agenda.
- use informal mechanisms for the actual delivery of learning.
- create opportunities for collaborative learning between members and with the rest of the public sector.
- ensure your time will be used as efficiently as possible when undertaking learning.
- build on national cross-sector leadership development initiatives that are underway.

The programme has been deliberately designed to enable you to pick the development opportunities that you would like to participate in, based on your own individual development needs, interests and preferred approach to learning.

We are committed to continuing to refine the range of development opportunities available to our members and your feedback will be critical in helping us to review and shape the programme going forward.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of our Gold partners – BT and Zurich Municipal – and our Silver partners – Sopra Steria and Oracle – and look forward to involving and engaging colleagues from our partner organisations in the programme.

We hope that you find the development opportunities useful and look forward to receiving your feedback on the programme.

Angela Leitch, SOLACE Scotland

Menu of Development Opportunities

Opportunities for personal leadership development

Coaching

Coaching is a solution focussed development intervention that supports those being coached to achieve improved personal contribution, performance and effectiveness.

The **Scottish Coaching Collaborative** is delivered through Workforce Scotland, which provides coaching opportunities at work for leaders at all levels, from Chief Executive and Senior Executive level to first line supervisors.

The Scottish Coaching Collaborative has developed an Executive Coaching Service for Chief Executives and Executive Leaders which provides access to a quality assured register of approximately 40 highly qualified and accredited independent executive coaches at competitive rates. The Collaborative has also established a process to facilitate internally trained coaches from different public service organisations to work across those organisations through a no fee, flexible time banking coaching framework.

Coaching, sponsored by the Scottish Coaching Collaborative, is for development and performance in the organisational context – it is not ‘life’ coaching. Coaching promoted by and accessed through the Collaborative is also quality assured, fit for purpose and in line with ethical and quality standards as described by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), International Coaching Federation (ICF) and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

How do I get involved?

If you would like further information about the Scottish Coaching Collaborative or are interested in accessing an executive coach through the Collaborative, please contact David Barr, OD Project Manager, IS, on 01506 283778 or david.barr@improvementservice.org.uk.

Evening Seminars

Quarterly Thursday evening seminars, including dinner, are open to all branch members – Chief Executives, Senior Executives, past service members and SOLACENet members. The dates are available on the SOLACE Scotland website: www.solace.org.uk/branches/branch_scotland/

How do I get involved?

To book a place on an evening seminar contact Lesley Stevenson, SOLACE Scotland Executive

Officer, at lesley.stevenson@dumgal.gov.uk. Whilst there is no charge for attending the seminar there is a £25 charge for attending the dinner.

Leadership Exchange

The Leadership Exchange programme is delivered through Workforce Scotland (<https://workforcescotland.com/>) that aims to develop and support leaders across all public service organisations in Scotland. The Improvement Service is coordinating the delivery of this programme within local government.

The primary purpose of the programme is to provide a platform for collaborative cross-sector leadership development and knowledge sharing. Participation in a Leadership Exchange enables leaders from different parts of public service to gain an insight into the cultures, languages, constraints and opportunities their counterparts work with. An exchange will allow leaders to gain a different perspective on their leadership style and make essential connections in another sector.

The exchange programme involves two leaders spending approximately five days in each other's organisations, usually spread over a period of six months. There is a matching process in place to ensure a good "fit" between participants in terms of the knowledge and experience they offer and their desired outcomes from the exchange.

What benefits will a Leadership Exchange provide?

For leaders:

- The space to take time out from busy schedules to reflect on strategic objectives and their leadership style.
- A chance to enhance their awareness of another organisation and develop understanding of their challenges around specific issues.
- An independent and confidential 'sounding board' to exchange and challenge ideas and explore innovative ways of working.
- An opportunity to meet a wider network and gain a greater understanding of who does what.

For your organisation:

- Stronger links built between organisations - providing an environment to exchange expertise and ideas across the different sectors within public service.
- Goodwill created through a greater understanding of the complexities and challenges involved in each other's work.
- Development in a proactive way through the broadening of experience and exposure to real life challenges and new ideas.
- Cost effective sharing of skills and knowledge.

How do I get involved?

If you are interested in participating in the Leadership Exchange you can [apply here](#). For further information about the Leadership Exchange programme please contact David Barr, OD Project Manager, IS, on 01506 283778 or david.barr@improvementservice.org.uk.

Learning Sets

Learning sets provide space for a group of around six to nine people to reflect critically on how and what they are doing, supporting them to address personal leadership issues and challenges they are facing. These are generally complex, wicked or adaptive issues where there is no right or wrong answer. Each learning set is facilitated by an independent facilitator.

The essence of a learning set is that members will become more effective by continually seeking, as consciously as possible, to take actions and then to reflect upon the impact of those actions. Skills that will be developed during a learning set include hearing those voices which are seldom heard, listening, gathering information and perspectives, noticing assumptions, deliberate reflection and awareness of self.

How do I get involved?

SOLACE Enterprises have an established programme of action learning sets in place and further information is available at www.solace.org.uk/development/individual/

Masterclasses

The IS has worked with SOLACE Scotland to develop a programme of masterclasses on topical and skills based issues that will support you to address some of the key issues and challenges that you face as a Chief Executive or Senior Executive within local government. Each masterclass will be highly discursive and interactive, with delegates playing a full and active role.

Some masterclasses may be opened up to Chief Executives and Senior Executives from other public services, to enable cross-sector discussion and the identification of cross-sector improvements.

How do I get involved?

The Masterclass programme is available on the SOLACE Scotland website at www.solace.org.uk/branches/branch_scotland/ along with details of how to book a place.

Personal Resilience Coaching Sessions

The IS offers one-to-one personal resilience coaching sessions for local authority Chief Executives and Senior Executives, to support you to assess and understand current resilience, to

build personal resilience through exploring the use of some practical exercises and to develop a personal action plan to strengthen resilience.

Positive feedback has been received from Chief Executives and Senior Executives who have participated in a personal resilience session:

"I found my session with you very helpful. Partly the opportunity to talk openly about personal resilience and partly the tools and techniques to help me understand and develop strategies for improving resilience. It made me realise that I was more resilient than I had thought I was!" (Chief Executive)

"I found the session really helpful. I think when you have come through a particularly challenging experience, which I had, you absolutely get it. It provided really helpful insight and perspective around navigating, coping and emerging stronger and in a positive way from the various challenges that we face from time to time." (Senior Executive)

How do I get involved?

If you are interested in participating in a personal resilience coaching session, please contact Dot McLaughlin, OD Programme Manager, IS, on 01506 283807 or dot.mclaughlin@improvementservice.org.uk.

Senior Executive Forums

These forums are specifically targeted at local authority Senior Executives (Depute Chief Executives, Directors and Heads of Service). They provide a safe space for Senior Executives to discuss topical issues and they are very often facilitated by external experts.

How do I get involved?

The dates for the Senior Executive Forums are on the SOLACE Scotland website at www.solace.org.uk/branches/branch_scotland/ and details will be circulated by the branch in advance of each forum.

Opportunities for collaborative leadership development

Action Inquiry Groups

Working with experienced facilitators from across public services, the IS could work with SOLACE Scotland strategic theme leads to deliver a programme of action inquiry groups. This would involve strategic theme leads identifying a topic they would like to form an action inquiry group around, to help them progress issues of critical importance to their theme. The IS would work with the strategic theme lead to identify and invite experts in the field to participate in the inquiry, as well as open up the group to the wider SOLACE Scotland membership to participate in.

Why an Action Inquiry approach?

We are dealing with greater uncertainty and complexity in public services and some of the issues we are facing can be defined as “wicked”. These issues will be unbounded in scope, the site of persistent policy failures, complex and unpredictable etc.

Wicked issues need collective approaches as no one organisation/team/individual has the “answer”. Leadership in this territory is about collaborative inquiry and collaborative leadership – it requires leaders to operate from “negative capability”, which is holding uncertainty lightly, being comfortable with ambiguity and “not knowing”. The specific leadership response to wicked issues is not to close down by moving to solutions and action too quickly. It requires collaboration, asking questions, staying in inquiry, building space to allow the inquiry to unfold and self-consciously trying action with the deliberate and explicit aim of learning from it.

How do the Action Inquiry Groups work?

Each action inquiry group would meet bi-monthly over a one-year period. At the initial meeting, we would introduce the action inquiry methodology and explore the inquiry question identified by the strategic theme lead.

Following this, the group would begin an iterative cycle of inquiry, planning actions to help them understand more about the issue they are inquiring into, with group members taking responsibility for implementing these actions and observing what happens and reflecting on what this might mean for further action. The facilitators would capture key knowledge and learning arising from the inquiry groups and the group would report back to the SOLACE Scotland branch.

How do I get involved?

If you are a SOLACE strategic theme lead and would like to initiate an action inquiry group to help you progress issues of critical importance related to the theme, please contact Dot McLaughlin, OD Programme Manager, IS on 01506 283807 or dot.mclaughlin@improvementservice.org.uk

If you are interested in applying the action inquiry group approach within your organisation, please also contact [Dot McLaughlin](#).

National Enabling Collaborative Leadership Pioneer Programme

The Enabling Collaborative Leadership Programme is a collaborative leadership development opportunity offered by Workforce Scotland that has been designed and is being delivered in the specific policy context of public service reform in Scotland. The Christie Commission report, published in 2011, sets much of the context for this reform – a central message of Christie is that public services need to get much better at delivering outcomes, enabling prevention and tackling inequalities. The complex and interrelated nature of these issues require them to be addressed through collaboration across public service organisations to achieve better outcomes for less money. The Commission report identified that the scope of collaboration should increasingly involve citizens in co-designing and co-producing services.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 strengthens this expectation of public services working together and with communities to tackle inequalities and reinforces the need for collaborative leadership.

The central elements of Enabling Collaborative Leadership are:

- on-going facilitated Action Inquiry (AI) as an integral part of the approach to learning
- facilitators 'going to' and 'working in' the sites and locations of collaborative challenge experienced by participants
- a peer learning network providing opportunities for Pioneer participants from different sites and locations to meet and learn from one another.

Action Inquiry is used as a central methodology to encourage the capture and sharing of individual and collective reflections/insights to help make sense of what is happening in a collaborative process, as it happens, in order to improve it. It offers an opportunity for people to have conversations about the extent to which they are 'walking the talk', the difference they think they are making, and what evidence they have which gives them confidence the changes they see are an improvement.

The learning from the programme is co-created in real time with collaborative leadership groups engaged in delivering real change.

How do I get involved?

If you are interested in participating in the National Enabling Collaborative Leadership Pioneer Programme, please contact Dot McLaughlin, OD Programme Manager, IS, on 01506 283807 or dot.mclaughlin@improvementservice.org.uk

Scottish Women in Public Service Leadership Network (WiPSL)

WiPSL is a unique partnership between Scotland's public services, supporting women in leadership positions at all levels from across public services to 'discover mutual opportunities and expand their knowledge and influence'.

The WiPSL network was formally launched on International Women's day on 8 March 2016. As well as hosting networking events, network members can also connect with each other online through the WiPSL Knowledge Hub group. This collaborative platform enables members to access and share details of networks that are designed to support those in leadership roles, development opportunities and events. They can also connect with colleagues, access or provide buddying / shadowing opportunities and peer support/challenge, access useful resources, share practice and seek/provide advice.

Whilst the primary audience of WiPSL is women, men working in leadership positions in Scottish public services are also encouraged to join the network, recognising the critical role that they can play in creating environments where women and men have equal opportunities to make contributions and advance to leadership roles, boosting diversity and inclusion.

Being part of WiPSL will enable you to:

- make more connections/network with women at a similar level
- connect with males at a similar level who are part of the solution to advancing gender equality
- access and offer support around the often 'unspoken' challenges women face in leadership positions
- address gender specific issues and improve the position of women leaders in multiple sectors
- access advice and learn from more senior women across public services
- identify opportunities for development and learning
- access and offer peer support, advice, mentoring, shadowing, buddying etc.
- seek advice on career progression
- generate new ideas and viewpoints that are facilitated by multi-agency working
- access a safe space to share, grow and give back
- be part of something that is integral and influential across public services
- be part of a unique concept that is locally accessible.

How do I get involved?

If you are interested in participating in WiPSL sign up to the WiPSL Knowledge Hub group at <https://khub.net/web/women-in-public-service-leadership-wipsl-> and follow [@WiPSL](#).

Potential Future Developments

Shadowing Opportunities Between Scottish and English Local Authority Chief Executives

Through work the IS has been involved in to establish better linkages between collaborative leadership development programmes in place in public services in Scotland and England, we have been exploring opportunities to establish a shadowing scheme between Chief Executives of Scottish and English local authorities. This is now with SOLACE UK for consideration and discussion and further details will be shared once available.

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