SYSTEM LEADERSHIP

COLLABORATIVE CO-CREATION TO EXPLORE SYSTEM LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR
EXPLORING A DIFFERENT WAY OF WORKING...

The shift towards a system wide approach to addressing population health will require leaders who are able to work in a different way. To ensure that the NHS North West Leadership Academy (NHS NWLA) is providing leadership development that meets the needs of the evolving health and care landscape, it was essential to first work with the system to gain a deeper understanding of what those needs are. For us, this question was about identifying the kinds of behaviours that are needed to enable effective system leadership across the public sector, in the North West. To answer this question we would need to reach out and harness the wisdom of people working across the length and breadth of the system to support population health.

Our work began in earnest in the summer of 2017, working with a consortia of development providers to explore what this different kind of leadership might look like and the implications of this different way of working for our system leaders. The project kick-started with a cross-sector stakeholder event, at which over 60 participants from across the system came together to begin a collective exploration of these key questions.

THERE IS A GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT OUR HEALTHCARE LEADERS WILL NEED TO WORK DIFFERENTLY IN THE FUTURE, TAKING ON A MULTITUDE OF NOVEL ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS THAT TRAVERSE AND RECONFIGURE TRADITIONAL ORGANISATION AND SERVICE BOUNDARIES

King’s Fund, 2014

WORKING TOGETHER...

Representatives from the NHS, local authorities, Police, Fire, Higher Education, Third Sector and beyond worked together to share experiences from different sectors, learn from each other and identify the key behaviours needed for effective system leadership across the North West.

The day began with the task of creating ‘rich pictures’ of the kind of health and care systems we desire to see in the future. These large illustrations mapped out the different components of the system (e.g. organisations, community groups etc.) and the inter-relations between them (e.g. processes, social networks, resources etc.). These visual ‘definitions’ of the system became the blueprints for identifying the leadership behaviours needed to pioneer, shape, navigate and deliver our shared ambition of improving population health and wellbeing.

Participants discussed potential opportunities and barriers to nurturing effective system leadership, probing the strengths and weaknesses of current leadership models and frameworks to begin exploring the kind of development and support that would be needed to achieve our collective ambition.

The diverse array of viewpoints at the stakeholder event pointed us in the direction of thirteen key behavioural themes that were identified as being especially pertinent to system leadership including ‘building trust’, ‘collaboration and co-creation’, ‘relationships’, ‘bravery’ and ‘doing things together’.
Acknowledging the scale, diversity and complexity of the system, and the importance of ‘collaboration and co-creation’ in working as system leaders, we took the behavioural themes identified at the stakeholder event to a much wider group of participants using an online ‘crowdsourcing’ platform. This phase of the project involved inviting feedback (‘sourcing’) on the behavioural themes from a broad array of stakeholders (‘the crowd’). By inviting people to comment on, vote for, and add to the key themes using an online forum, we were able to extend our reach, multiplying and diversifying the voices contributing to this conversation. Over 730 responses were received during this phase of the project, with people adding and building on ideas as well as engaging in online debate and discussions.

With such a rich collection of ideas and comments, the consortia of development providers were able to analyse and refine a list of key system leadership behaviours that were then explored in more depth through discussions with a group of senior system leaders. These conversations allowed us to explore and further refine the emerging leadership behaviours to reflect contemporary and future challenges of the system leader’s role.

**STAKEHOLDER EVENT INSIGHTS**

- **PERSONAL LEADERSHIP**
- **MIND-SET**
- **OWNERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY**
- **LEADING OTHERS / ENABLE OTHERS**
- **VISIONARY & SHARED DIRECTION**
- **TRUST**
- **BRAVE / COURAGEOUS**
- **COLLABORATION / CO-CREATION**
- **SYSTEM INFLUENCE**
- **COMMUNITY / HOLISTIC THINKING**
- **RELATIONSHIPS & ADVOCACY**
- **DELIVERY**
- **DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY / TRYING SOMETHING NEW**
**BEHAVIOURS FOR SYSTEM LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE PUBLIC SECTOR...**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHENTICITY:</th>
<th>MINDSET:</th>
<th>RESILIENCE, BRAVERY &amp; COURAGE:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honest and genuine, true to self and own values, clarity about what they are there for, what they are aspiring to and why, sense of purpose</td>
<td>Open-minded, curious, encourages learning and a lack of defensiveness in self and others, insight and affiliation with others</td>
<td>Boldness, bravery and courage to take calculated risks, reflects and learns from failure and success</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS &amp; ADVOCACY:</th>
<th>COLLABORATION &amp; CO-CREATION:</th>
<th>TRUST:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engages and builds relationships at all levels and across organisations, enables citizens to take charge of their own health (with the right support)</td>
<td>Involves communities, embraces diversity and works across differences and agencies to establish what collectively needs to be achieved for quality, cost-effective service provision</td>
<td>Builds trust to promote empathy, care and open communication (e.g. around why decisions are made)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starts with place in mind, understands wider area structures and associated challenges, clarifies alignment, has a community focus for the greater good</td>
<td>Has consistent and clear vision which involves common goals and shared direction for quality, effective service provision</td>
<td>Leads from place, makes gateways and breaks down divides to enable system outcome beyond their own service, to serve communities. Plays an active role in shaping policy nationally</td>
<td>Provides opportunity for others to develop around them, gives opportunities to others to solve problems, make decisions, take ownership; supportive and agile</td>
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<td>Holds self and others (across the system) to account for quality, effective service provision, recognises how to work with shared accountability for the benefit of the population</td>
<td>Has clear structure and steps for delivery, knows where to invest energies and takes action making best use of available resources</td>
<td>Doing things differently to facilitate delivery. Trying new ideas and enabling self and others to explore creative approaches</td>
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This project has allowed us to identify four, central overarching themes, each underpinned by a series of supporting behaviours, which are in turn brought to life by a set of ‘indicators’ demonstrating the kinds of behaviours that enable, and obstruct, effective system leadership.

**NEXT STEPS...**

The NHS NWLA are now working to explore how these findings can best inform and shape our current and future development offers. These behaviours will become part of the fabric of our strategic priorities to support North West organisations to develop the future-focused, inclusive system leadership that will deliver our collective ambition of an integrated health and social care system. To do this, we will need to model and practice the behaviours identified through this work. In this way, we will continue to engage, connect and work with our partners from across the health and social care landscape to provide the leadership development that will enable us all to become effective system leaders.

**CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION WITH US ON TWITTER**

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#TRANSFORMTALENT