Pushing the Boundaries

Aspirant Talent Programme

Information Pack

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The Pushing the Boundaries - Aspirant Talent Programme is an exciting programme which supports senior leaders in their development to be ‘job-ready’ for Board and Governing Body level roles in the new health and care landscape. The programme is designed to assess and support the development of the ‘Essential Ingredients’, the leadership qualities needed to lead across the newly evolving health and social care system.

Background – Why This Programme?
Engaging with our member organisations has provided the NHS North West Leadership Academy (NHS NWLA) with a wealth of information about talent management and succession planning. A key theme which continues to appear is a concern that applicants for Board and Governing Body roles are not always ‘job ready’ to progress into these posts. The evidence demonstrates that, although talented, applicants sometimes lack the key requirements needed in the changing environment of health and care. Feedback tells us that members are conscious of the impact of this on the resilience of their organisations’ succession plans.

There is no doubt that the evolution of our health and care system is ambiguous, presenting challenges and opportunities which require a new type of leader. Aspiring Board or Governing Body leaders require support to realise their potential in order to meet these challenges and opportunities, to progress to Board and Governing Body roles, and to contribute fully to the objectives of their organisation.

To harness aspiring talent and support individuals to develop and become ‘job ready’, leadership development needs to focus upon the Essential Ingredients, the future-focussed leadership attributes that are necessary for the future leadership of the health and care system. The NHS NWLA developed the Essential Ingredients with input from our members, using current research and leadership development expertise, and they are aligned to the Healthcare Leadership Model. The Aspirant Talent Programme was designed around these core skills and behaviours. They include; resilience, innovation, creativity, strategic focus, moral purpose, entrepreneurship, authentic leadership and collaboration.

A Programme with Impact – Beyond the 10%
Research tells us that only 10% of leadership learning is attributable to formal leadership programmes. 70% arises from workplace challenges and experience, and 20% from relationships with others (to include coaches, mentors and peers). In order for leadership development programmes to have maximum impact, they must be designed with this in mind and consider;

- Context; A critical component of successful leadership. A brilliant leader in one situation does not necessarily perform well in another.
- Mixed methods; Classroom style programmes alone do not achieve the best impact. Work-based development is crucial, “adults typically retain just 10 percent of what they hear in classroom lectures, versus nearly two-thirds when they learn by doing.”
- Behaviour and mindset; an effective leader often not only requires changing behaviour but also a change of mindset.
• Measures; Development programme success can only be declared if there is a robust measurement of results.


The impact of leadership development programmes is significantly enhanced by good mentorship, on-the-job learning and exposure to corporate experience, both within and external to the participant’s organisation. This strengthens the participant’s preparation to work within the system as a whole. The Aspirant Talent Programme design is built on this knowledge, offering a variety of learning methods and interventions to support development.

Access to the Programme - The Nomination Process

The programme is aimed at those individuals working at sub-board/governing body level whose potential to step up into a more senior role has been identified by their organisation.

Participants are nominated by the sponsoring organisation utilising talent identification tools. (Links to the Talent Management Conversation Tool, National Leadership Model and Guidance for using the Healthcare Leadership Model for reference). We encourage organisations to use their talent management processes and to utilise tools available to support the process.

Within the North West region we are working hard to ensure our service models and service delivery meet the needs of our diverse local populations. One way in which we might achieve this goal is by ensuring that the workforce within our organisations is representative of the communities it serves, and is diverse at team, work stream, Board and Governing Body level. Prior to identifying potential nominations, please consider the diversity of the pool from which you are nominating.

During the nomination process a mentor should be identified; this needs to be someone within the nominee’s organisation who will support them throughout their leadership development journey on the programme.

Once the closing date for nominations has passed, we will assess nominations received. Please note that a nomination does not guarantee that a place will be offered. Demand for places is high and, in assigning places, we aim to have participants from a mix of organisations, backgrounds, disciplines and areas of interest. Participants who are offered a place will be asked to complete a joint programme registration form with their mentor.

The Programme – What Does It Involve?

The programme begins with a one-day assessment and development centre, designed to assess and give feedback on the Essential Ingredients. Each individual will receive personal feedback on the day and a full written report within 12 working days, as well as a prospectus of NHS NWLA offers and a learning log.

After the assessment and development centre, participants will explore and agree development opportunities with their mentor. This will be followed by a tripartite development meeting between the participant, their mentor and a leadership expert from the NHS NWLA to confirm their bespoke development programme.
Participants will then have access to the range of NHS NWLA offers as identified in their development meeting, and will continue their development on the programme across approximately nine months from their assessment centre date.

**What Participants Can Expect:**
- A bespoke approach to their own development, accessing interventions that are specifically relevant to their leadership development.
- An initial talent conversation with their organisational mentor, as well as ongoing support throughout the programme.
- An assessment process to identify strengths and development needs in relation to the Essential Ingredients, with immediate verbal feedback and support.
- Formal written feedback from the assessment and development centre in the form of a developmental report.
- A personalised development plan.
- A tripartite development session with their organisational mentor and a leadership development expert from the NHS NWLA.
- Access to relevant, internal corporate experiences with the support of their mentor.
- Support to identify, as needed, an external contact who will act as a support mechanism in accessing external corporate experiences.
- An opportunity to access appropriate development from a suite of NHS NWLA leadership offers (to include workshops aligned to the Essential Ingredients, coaching and mentoring).

**What Do Our Participants Say?**

“...I found the NWLA Pushing the Boundaries programme assessment day to be one of the most useful events I have ever attended. It has really allowed me to think and focus on areas of development for me in my career and I wanted you to know how appreciative I was of the day in setting me on the right path equipped appropriately.”

“...I wanted to let you and the team know just how impressed I was with the event. It was a genuine pleasure to be there and I honestly felt inspired throughout the day. It certainly helped clarify some issues and beliefs I hold about myself personally and where I want to be and how to get there. I thought the sessions that made up the day were challenging and provocative, but most of all, they were inspirational and fun! I actually went home and said it was the best day I had had in the NHS since I started...”

“I went home and clearly explained, to anyone prepared to listen, that it was the best day I had had in the NHS in 6 years!”

“...What a superb day it was yesterday. Really, really enjoyed it, and a superb experience! This is how all training days need to be delivered! The team facilitating and the actors involved were all excellent. I cannot praise it highly enough!”
Responsibilities
The programme requires support from an organisational mentor and the below sets out the expectations of the role of the mentor, as well as the participants on the programme.

Organisational Mentors
- Identify suitable candidates for the programme using talent identification tools.
- Support candidates to identify and access development opportunities, which may consist of:
  - corporate experiences provided by the employing organisation;
  - corporate experiences provided by an external organisation participating in the programme;
  - opportunities from suite of NHS NWLA offers.
- Make members of the executive team available for shadowing and knowledge transfer opportunities for candidates both internal and external to the organisation.
- Provide corporate experiences (for example, but not limited to: secondments, work shadowing, mentoring, coaching) to candidates internal and external to the organisation.
- Transfer and embed the learning and good practice from the Aspirant Talent Programme.
- Give regular feedback on individual’s leadership behaviour, enabling new behaviours to become embedded into individual’s everyday practice.
- Ensure that regular meetings between the participant and mentor are convened to review and evaluate candidate’s progress against their individual learning agreement.
- Transfer and embed the learning and good practice from the Aspirant Talent Programme into their organisation.
- Consider the diversity of the pool from which the organisation is nominating and remain mindful of the need for a future workforce representative of the communities it serves.
- Contribute to the evaluation of the Aspirant Talent Programme.

Participants
- Proactively manage and progress with their individual development plan.
- Work with their organisational mentor and the NHS NWLA to identify appropriate opportunities to meet their learning needs, linking general learning outcomes to specific experiences within the workplace.
- Work with external contacts or mentors to identify appropriate cross-organisational corporate experiences and learning.
- Use time effectively, creating opportunities to enable the application of theory to practice and vice versa.
- Embed and transfer their learning into their own day-to-day work.
- Actively seek feedback from a range of sources when practising new leadership behaviours.
- Meet regularly with their mentor to review and evaluate their progress.
- Reflect upon their learning and provide honest effective feedback to support the evaluation of the Aspirant Talent Programme and the development of future delivery.
- Contribute to the evaluation of the Aspirant Talent Programme by completing case studies at the end of the programme.

Further Information
If you have any queries or would like more information please contact the NHS NWLA on NWLA.aspirant@nhs.net or 0161 625 7348 and a member of our team will be able to discuss further with you.