

# **Evaluation of the national graduate management programme for adult social care**

Cohort 7

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## Acknowledgements

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### **Evaluation of the national graduate management programme for adult social care: Cohort 7**

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This work was researched and compiled by Jenny Swift of Skills for Care.

# Executive summary

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## Background

The adult social care sector in England requires an effective talent pipeline to deliver quality, safe and compassionate care. The seventh cohort of the national Graduate Management Programme for adult social care commenced in January 2018 and completed in January 2019. It comprised 13 learners and was the first cohort following an integrated programme, involving a six-to-eight-week placement at a health employer within the one-year social care programme.<sup>1</sup>

The programme aimed to:

- develop and support a cohort of the next generation of aspiring leaders
- provide integrated health and social care leadership development
- contribute to the growth of a skilled and capable management workforce
- create a sustainable, financially secure and integrated programme suitable for expansion in future cohorts.

This evaluation aimed to:

- assess the effectiveness of programme design
- assess to what extent the programme has met its aims, objectives and targets
- assess placement host and graduate learner satisfaction
- explore value for money
- report on challenges encountered and lessons learned
- assess the short- to medium-term outcomes and additionality.

## Findings

The evaluation found that:

- All three targets set by the Department of Health and Social Care were met:
  - Up to 15 high-calibre graduates to be recruited into social care who would otherwise not have entered (or been retained and progressed in) the sector.
  - At least 80% to complete the programme.
  - A sustainable, financially secure and integrated programme suitable for scaling up in future cohorts.
- Placement hosts were satisfied with the process of recruitment and matching and felt that their graduate learners had the right passion, values, conduct and attitude to excel in social care.
- Placement supervisors were also generally satisfied with the performance management process and the support they received from Skills for Care.

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<sup>1</sup> Cohort 8 commenced in October 2018 and will run to October 2019.

- Graduates valued the on-the-job learning and experience most, of the programme elements; placement hosts valued the graduates themselves most highly.
- Graduates demonstrated improved knowledge, skills, confidence and behaviours across all eight measures selected by the evaluation. The area of highest impact was in relation to applied knowledge of systems leadership.
- Placement hosts felt their graduate had the potential to succeed as a senior manager in social care.
- Ten out of the twelve graduates (83%) were offered a job either at their host or placement organisation.
- A high proportion of graduates and hosts would recommend the programme to others.

### **Suggestions for improvement**

The most common suggestions for improvements made by graduates were:

- more information and communication at matching stage, to help find the right position for graduates; and
- more activities with other graduates, including for example social networking, group learning and opportunities to visit each other on placement.

Some suggestions for improvements by placement hosts included exploring:

- the relevance of the Mary Seacole programme
- the structure, timing and relevance of the secondment and how the secondment should dovetail with the placement.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The evaluation has identified that the graduate programme is working effectively, and no major changes are required. Some adaptations have already been made to the design of Cohort 8 (which commenced October 2018) following interim findings from this evaluation. For example, the timing of the Mary Seacole programme has been changed to ensure the learning is more applicable.

Programme managers may want to review the learning programme and outcomes and consider whether to target more intervention at the areas where distance travelled is shorter. They will also want to review the suggestions for improvement made by placement hosts and graduate learners.

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