



Skills for Care 2018/2019 Leadership Programmes

Outcomes report

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Skills for Care 2018/19 leadership programmes – outcomes report

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Skills for Care is the employer-led strategic body for workforce development in social care for adults in England. It is part of the sector skills council, Skills for Care and Development.

Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings of an outcomes evaluation of five Skills for Care's Leadership and Management programmes which ran between 2018 and 2019. The programmes examined were:

- New Directors
- Top Leaders
- Moving Up
- Well-led
- Well-led Advanced.

Both commissioned and open-access programmes were examined.

The evaluation builds on a similar evaluation which examined outcomes for participants on programmes that ran between 2017 and 2018. The same methodology was employed which has allowed comparison with the previous year's results.

A series of outcomes were examined which focused on leadership skills and competencies. A pre-post methodology was employed which allowed comparison between participants' self-assessed ratings prior to participation and their self-assessed ratings on completion (136 matched pairs were achieved). Qualitative data was gathered through a series of open-ended questions asking about how participants felt they grown in skills, abilities and confidence, changes they had made since being on the programme and elements of the programme they believed had been the most effective. Colleagues of those that participated in the evaluation were also asked to provide ratings to triangulate results although not for all programmes.

Because of the relatively high completion rates for surveys, we can be confident that the sample of respondents is reflective of the population of Skills for Care leadership programme participants.

Key findings

Participants were asked to rate how strongly they agreed with a series of statements in order to measure their competency levels. Responses were on a Likert scale where 7 = strongly agree, 6 = agree, 5 = slightly agree, 4 = neutral/not sure, 3 = slightly disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

Overall, participants had a reasonably high assessment of their skills and competencies before coming onto the Leadership Programmes.

Although there were similarities between the relative rating of skills and competencies in 18/19 and 17/18, most skills and competencies were rated more highly at baseline in 18/19 compared to the previous year.

The aspects of leadership on which participants rated themselves most highly:	Mean score	The aspects on which they rated themselves least highly	Mean score
I understand the impact of my leadership behaviour on others	6.14	I have the confidence to recognise and respond to challenging issues in my role	4.64
I understand my leadership responsibilities and the opportunities associated with my role	6.02	I am clear about the difference between being a leader and a manager	4.76
I feel confident that I am supporting my team to develop	5.86	I am motivated to progress my career	5.03

At baseline, less than half of all respondents reported a high frequency of working with staff from different disciplines outside of their own organisation or across the traditional boundaries of health and social care.

Almost 80% of respondents reported a high frequency of working with staff from different disciplines within their own organisation, but less than half (44.1%) reported doing so with high frequency outside of their own organisation. Less than a third (32.2%) reported working with high frequency with staff from different disciplines across the traditional boundaries of health and social care.

Programme type, CQC rating and gender accounted for some of the variance in baseline ratings¹.

Key findings here were that:

- Participants on Well-led programmes rated themselves higher than those in the other programmes in relation to their confidence in increasing networks and application of systems leadership
- Participants on other programmes rated themselves more highly than Well-led participants in relation to clarity about the difference between being a leader and a manager
- Participants from other programmes (i.e. not Well-led) rated themselves higher in relation to all aspects of cross-disciplinary working
- Male participants rated themselves more highly than female participants in relation to resilience and belief in their ability to effectively influence
- Female participants rated themselves more highly in terms of regular reflection²
- Organisations rated as Outstanding/Good scored higher on the survey item related to confidence in introducing or suggesting innovative ways of working³
- Organisations rated Requires Improvement/Inadequate actually rated themselves higher at baseline in terms of undertaking activity with staff from

¹ The Mann Whitney U-test was used to test for significant differences between these groups

² Just when data from the Well-led programmes was examined

³ Just when data from the Well-led programmes was examined

different disciplines outside their organisation than those rated Outstanding/Good.⁴

By the end of the programmes, participants made positive change in every aspect of leadership measured although the average magnitude of change was less than in 17/18.

The areas with the lowest self-assessed scores at baseline, tended to be those where the greatest change occurred, (e.g. understanding the difference between leadership and management; confidence to address challenging issues; knowing how to reduce stress levels; and application of systems leadership).

The magnitude of change was generally smaller in 18/19 compared to 17/18, but this is likely explained by the fact that this year's population were starting from a higher baseline and so had less scope for change.

Aspects of leadership which underwent the greatest change	Magnitude of change ⁵
I am clear about the difference between being a leader and a manager	1.09
I know how to reduce stress levels, build my own resilience and support my own well-being whilst meeting the responsibilities of my role	1.04
I have the confidence to recognise and respond to challenging issues in my role	1.01
I know how to apply systems leadership to improve outcomes for people who need care and support	1.01

Progress was significant in all skills measured in the Well-led Advanced programme; although numbers were small⁶.

We measured the distanced travelled in relation to Well-led Advanced specific skills. The direction and magnitude of change was positive for all the skills measured. Use of peer coaching was the skill which saw the greatest change, followed by use of networks and then use of coaching skills.

There was a significant increase in the frequency of cross disciplinary working over the course of the programmes.

Around a quarter of participants changed from working at a low frequency to a high frequency outside of their own organisations (24.4%) and across the traditional boundaries of health and social care (25.2%). A McNemar chi-squared test was performed which showed there were significant differences between the proportions of participants with high frequency cross disciplinary working pre and post programme in the following:

- Outside of your own organisation
- Across the traditional boundaries of health and social care.

⁴ Just when data from the Well-led programmes was examined

⁵ A change of 1.00 represents a change for example from slightly agree to agree

⁶ Numbers of matched pairs = 17.

In most cases the differences that existed at baseline were not observed at follow-up.

There was no difference at follow up in relation to:

- Organisations with different ratings
- Gender
- Programme type – these baseline differences were no longer observed:
 - Well-led participants rating themselves lower than other programme participants in cross disciplinary working in own organisation and outside of own organisation
 - Well-led participants rating themselves higher than other programme participants in increasing networks and application of systems leadership.

Participants reported changes in their skills, abilities and confidence at the levels of changes to self and changes to their team.

The main themes across all programmes in relation to improvements to **self** were:

- Increased confidence in self and own abilities
- Increased self-awareness and reflection.

The main themes across all programmes in relation to **teams** were:

- Increased confidence in managing a team
- Increased confidence in managing difficult situations.

Participants had begun to make changes to themselves, to the management of their teams and at a systems level.

At the level of the self, participants gave examples of spending more time on their own wellbeing and development and working towards promotions and new qualifications. Participants also reported changes they had made to processes and activities for developing staff, such as delegating; devising clearer team goals; using team building exercises; working on vision and values; and scheduling regular development days.

At the systems level, participants across all programmes reported examples of improved networking skills and exploiting resources within the community for people who need care and support. Participants on the New Directors programme in particular, reported more collaboration with partners and more integrated working at the systems level. They had used their new-found skills in systems leadership and networking to improve visibility and influence with partners and with the integration agenda.

The combination of programme activities was seen as being effective at generating change, but specific elements which were highlighted were working with peers and sharing learning.

Evidence gathered from individuals who worked with the leadership programme participants is also suggestive of positive change.

Surveys were completed by participants' colleagues at the end of the respective programmes. Unfortunately, a low number of total responses from participants' colleagues was received (n = 23).

We compared colleagues' ratings with participants' self-assessed scores at baseline. Colleagues' ratings were higher for every possible leadership skill or behaviour (providing an additional piece of evidence that positive change had occurred for participants).

These respondents also described how their colleagues that had been on the leadership programmes had changed. They described them as more confident and motivated, more innovative and helping their team and peers to develop more.

Conclusions and recommendations

There is strong evidence that the programmes examined through this evaluation are effective at improving participants' leadership skills and competencies and the frequency with which they work in a cross disciplinary way. For all skills and competencies measured, significant positive change was detected and the areas with the lowest self-assessed scores at baseline were those where the greatest progress was observed. Participants were already beginning to implement changes at the levels of self, team and systems.

The magnitude of change for participants this year was not as great as for the previous year for which we collected data. However, participants this year were beginning from a higher starting point (having higher levels of baseline self-assessed skills and competencies).

Programme type, gender and CQC rating were all found to exert some influence on how participants self-assessed their skills and competencies. On the whole the differences observed between these programme types at baseline were not observed at follow up. This was the case for all the differences in relation to gender and CQC rating.

It is recommended that a different methodology is now employed to answer different evaluation questions (as we now have a solid base of evidence which demonstrates the effectiveness of these programmes). This will take account of the focus on the concept testing, designing and development of new leadership programmes which focus on meeting the current and future needs of leaders and managers across the care sector, namely:

- growing a talent pipeline of leaders
- building capacity for continuing improvement
- embedding systems leadership.

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