

Becoming a Director of Adult Social Services programme



This programme includes an online welcome session in March, and four immersive face-to-face workshops, held over two sets of consecutive days in April and in June.



Online welcome session

Thursday 26 March 2026

A brief introduction to the programme, including an overview of the course structure and an opportunity to begin shaping your personal development plan. This session will also explore key sector principles and share reflections from the pre-reading materials.

Delivered by Bill Love, Executive Director, NDTi

Bill has worked in development and leadership roles in the public and voluntary sectors for about 25 years where most of his focus has been on the provision of supports for people to live in their community. He is passionate about genuine involvement and co-production that influences change.



Face-to-face workshops

Day one – Wednesday 29 April 2026

Welcome and introductions

An opening session to meet fellow participants review the course structure and begin shaping your personal development plan.

Designing the alliance

This session focuses on building a shared understanding of how participants will work together throughout the programme. It explores expectations, learning styles, and the principles that support a productive and collaborative learning environment. This session will consider how to create a supportive alliance that encourages openness, reflection, and constructive challenge.

Delivered by Bill Love, Executive Director, NDTi

What you will get out of this session

A clear sense of how to collaborate effectively, contribute to a positive learning environment, and make the most of the programme through shared commitment and mutual support.

Leading with values and courage

This session will explore what it means to lead with authenticity, clarity, and moral purpose. The content focuses on understanding personal values, navigating uncertainty, and making confident decisions in complex or high-pressure situations. This session will reflect on real-world leadership challenges and consider how courageous leadership can influence culture, outcomes, and relationships.

Delivered by Jenny Pitts, Programme Director, NDTi

Jenny has over 35 years' experience of working in adult social care, in provider, and local government development, commissioning and senior operational roles. For the last ten years she has led a programme of transformational cultural, and system change and during that time has also contributed to NDTi leadership programmes nationally and internationally.

The director role and working with elected members

This session provides an overview of the strategic responsibilities associated with senior leadership roles. It explores the relationship between officers and elected members, including how to build trust, communicate effectively, and navigate political environments. This session will consider the balance between professional advice, organisational priorities, and democratic accountability.

Delivered by Cath Roff MBE

Cath has 35 years' experience in social care, 21 of which were as a Director, beginning her career in Newham and then becoming Director in LB of Ealing. She undertook subsequent Director roles in Sheffield, Derby and most recently in Leeds as Director of Adults and Health prior to retiring. Cath was a Trustee of ADASS and now works as an Associate for NDTi.

What you will get out of this session

Insight into the expectations of senior leadership roles, improved awareness of political and organisational dynamics, and strategies for developing constructive, professional relationships with elected members.

Managing the narrative and media communications

This session introduces key principles of effective communication, including shaping organisational messages, responding to media enquiries, and managing public narratives. This session will explore how to communicate with clarity and confidence, particularly during challenging or high-profile situations. The session also covers approaches to maintaining credibility and consistency across different communication channels.

Delivered by David Brindle

David is a leading social policy journalist and former public services and society editor for the Guardian newspaper. He is chair of Ambient Support, a not-for-profit provider of care and support for people with learning disability or mental ill health and older people. He is a former vice-chair of mental health charity Richmond Fellowship, and its wider Recovery Focus group, and a former board member of Housing 21, a housing and care provider for older people.

What you will get out of this session

Greater confidence in managing public messaging, a stronger understanding of media expectations, and practical tools for communicating clearly and effectively under pressure.

Face-to-face workshops

Day two - Thursday 30 April 2026

Reflections from day one and overview of day two

A guided space to reflect on key learning from day one, share insights with peers, and identify areas participants want to explore further.

Delivered by Bill Love, Executive Director, NDTi

System leadership and integrating with health

This session explores the principles of system leadership and the importance of working across organisational boundaries. This session will consider how health, social care, and wider public services can collaborate to improve outcomes, reduce duplication, and create more seamless experiences for communities. The session highlights the behaviours, relationships, and shared purpose required to lead effectively in a complex system.

Delivered by Lindsey Dawson, Programme Head for Engagement, Skills for Care

What you will get out of this session

A clearer understanding of system leadership, practical insights into partnership working with health, and tools to support more integrated and collaborative approaches.

Leading place-based, preventative change and ensuring holistic integrated working

This session focuses on leading change that is rooted in place, prevention, and long-term impact. This session will explore how to design and deliver approaches that bring together local partners, communities, and services to address root causes rather than symptoms. The session emphasises whole-system thinking, shared accountability, and the importance of aligning resources and priorities to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Delivered by Jenny Pitts, Programme Director, NDTi

What you will get out of this session

A deeper appreciation of place-based leadership, greater confidence in leading preventative and integrated approaches, and practical strategies for working holistically across systems.

Presentation of self

This reflective session encourages participants to consider how they show up as leaders, including communication style, presence, personal values, and the impact they have on others. Through guided activities and discussion, this session will explore how to strengthen authenticity, build trust, and project confidence in a range of professional settings.

Delivered by Amanda Wilsher Associates

With a unique approach and powerful delivery, Amanda and her associates provide tailored communications and leadership workshops for government departments, NHS, NGOs and multinational corporations.

What you will get out of this session

A clearer understanding of your leadership presence, increased self-awareness, and practical ways to enhance how you present yourself in complex or high-stakes environments.

Face-to-face workshops

Day three – Tuesday 16 June 2026

Arrival and registration

A welcoming start to the day, giving you time to arrive, settle in, and connect with colleagues over refreshments.

Reconnecting, updates, welcome back and overview

A short session to share any updates and outline the focus, and flow of the day.

Delivered by NDTi.

NDTi is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working alongside people, communities, policy makers, support organisations and services across the UK and beyond.

Workforce planning and development

This session explores the principles of effective workforce planning, including forecasting future needs, developing skills, and ensuring the workforce is equipped to meet changing demands. This session will consider strategic approaches to building capacity, supporting professional growth, and creating sustainable workforce models.

Delivered by Shirley Way, Head of Region (Midlands), Skills for Care.

Established in 2001, Skills for Care is the strategic workforce development and planning body for adult social care in England. We work with employers, Government and partners to ensure social care has the right people, skills and support required to deliver the highest quality care and support now and in the future.

What you will get out of this session

A stronger grasp of workforce planning concepts, practical tools for shaping workforce strategies, and insights into developing a resilient and future-ready workforce.

Leading inclusive workforce cultures and nurturing talent

A session focused on creating inclusive, supportive, and high-performing workplace cultures. This session will explore how to nurture talent, promote diversity, and build environments where people feel valued, motivated, and able to thrive. The session highlights leadership behaviours that foster belonging and encourage continuous development.

Delivered by Symone Stuart, National Leadership and Management Lead, Skills for Care.

What you will get out of this session

Greater confidence in leading inclusive teams, practical approaches for nurturing talent, and strategies for building cultures where people can do their best work.

Action learning sets – workforce challenges

This session will work in small groups to explore your real workforce challenges through a structured action learning approach. This method encourages reflective questioning, peer support, and collaborative problem-solving. Each participant has the opportunity to share a challenge and receive constructive input from the group.

Delivered by NDTi.

What you will get out of this session

Fresh perspectives on your issues, improved problem-solving skills, and supportive peer insights that can be applied directly to real-world challenges.

Reflective session: the changing face of care and support

A reflective space to consider how care and support are evolving, including shifts in expectations, workforce roles, community needs, and service models. This session will explore how these changes influence leadership, strategy, and the future of the sector.

Delivered by Bill Love, Executive Director, NDTi

Bill has worked in development and leadership roles in the public and voluntary sectors for about 25 years where most of his focus has been on the provision of supports for people to live in their community. He is passionate about genuine involvement and co-production that influences change.

What you will get out of this session

A broader understanding of sector trends, deeper reflection on the implications for leadership, and renewed clarity about the direction of change.



Face-to-face workshops

Day four – Wednesday 17 June 2026

Reflections from day three and overview of day four

A guided opportunity to reflect on the key themes, insights, and learning from day three. This session will share observations, revisit important concepts, and identify areas they want to build on. The session also provides a clear outline of the focus for day four, helping everyone reconnect with the programme's aims and prepare for the day ahead.

Delivered by NDTi.

Strengths based commissioning

This session explores commissioning approaches that focus on strengths, assets, and community capacity rather than deficits or service gaps. This session will consider how to design commissioning strategies that empower individuals, build on local strengths, and create more sustainable, person-centred outcomes. The session highlights practical tools, principles, and examples of strengths-based practice in action.

Delivered by NDTi.

What you will get out of this session

A deeper understanding of strengths-based commissioning, practical ideas for applying these principles, and greater confidence in designing approaches that support independence and community resilience.



Innovative provider models (with break-out discussions)

This session will explore a range of emerging and innovative provider models that respond to changing needs, workforce pressures, and expectations around personalisation. The session includes break-out discussions to examine real examples, share experiences, and consider how innovation can be supported and scaled within their own contexts.

Delivered by Bill Love, NDTI and Cath Roff MBE.

Cath has 35 years' experience in social care, 21 of which were as a Director, beginning her career in Newham and then becoming Director in LB of Ealing. She undertook subsequent Director roles in Sheffield, Derby and most recently in Leeds as Director of Adults and Health prior to retiring. Cath was a Trustee of ADASS and now works as an Associate for NDTi.

What you will get out of this session

Insight into new and creative provider models, opportunities to learn from peers, and practical ideas for fostering innovation in local markets.

Demystifying the DASS recruitment process

This session outlines the key stages of the selection process, from crafting supporting statements to preparing for technical interviews, stakeholder panels, and elected member interviews.

The session will also include practical insights on what assessors look for, how to anticipate questions, and how to understand the perspectives of different stakeholder groups.

Delivered by Frazer Thouard from Gatenby Sanderson

Frazer has spent over 17 years helping public sector organisations recruit outstanding leaders across UK local authorities. He is committed to improving diversity in public service leadership and actively supports talent programmes for underrepresented groups, partnering with organisations such as the Upon Programme, UNIFY, Leadership Now!, ADEPT, and the BAME Planners Association.

What you will get out of this session

A clearer understanding of the DASS recruitment process, increased confidence in navigating senior-level applications, and practical guidance on positioning yourself for future opportunities.

Data leadership, demonstrating impact – sharing tools and approaches

A practical session focused on using data to inform decisions, demonstrate impact, and drive improvement. This session will explore tools, techniques, and approaches for interpreting data, telling compelling stories, and using evidence to influence strategy and outcomes. The session emphasises the role of data-driven leadership in shaping effective services.

Delivered by Mike Richardson, Development and Impact Lead (NDTi)

Mike has worked in a range of data, analytical and leadership roles in local government most recently as Head of Transformation prior to joining NDTi. Mike specialises in change management and the use of data and measurement to understand impact and to drive change.

What you will get out of this session

Greater confidence in using data to support leadership decisions, practical tools for demonstrating impact, and improved understanding of how to communicate insights effectively.

Working real examples – practical masterclass

A hands-on masterclass where this session applies learning to real-world scenarios. Working through practical examples, this session will test ideas, explore solutions, and receive feedback in a supportive environment. This session is designed to deepen understanding through application and to strengthen problem-solving skills.

Delivered by Mike Richardson, Development and Impact Lead (NDTi)

What you will get out of this session

Practical experience applying new concepts, enhanced problem-solving skills, and greater confidence in tackling complex challenges in your own context.

Breaks, lunch and dinner are scheduled throughout the day to support reflection, networking and rest.