

NCF Leading Learning Programme Evaluation

Quotations from the second year of the programme, 2009/10

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SELECT QUOTATIONS

QUALITY

360° AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

“Through my 360, I have begun to address weaknesses in my leadership style, particularly in communicating strategic direction. In order to do this I have sought clarification of issues before going into management or team meetings, and made greater use of our service delivery plan as a point of reference.”

(Endline survey respondent)

MENTORING PROGRAMME

“This has been a very positive experience for me and I really appreciate the support and guidance that [mentor’s name] has so generously given me. I have met many of the objectives set and feel confident that as a result of the mentoring I am better equipped to continue to improve on not only these objectives but new challenges as they arise in the future. Thank you for the opportunity.”

(Mentee final report comment)

“It has been a privilege to be part of the Mentoring programme. The organisation was friendly and relaxed. My mentor was thoughtful, intelligent, helpful and generous with his time.”

(Mentee final report comment)

“I found my mentor to be a fantastic asset and have found [mentor’s name] to be supportive, challenging, interesting and extremely knowledgeable in a range of fields. Having this opportunity has been invaluable to me as this year has been a challenging one for my service and having this relationship has helped me navigate some really difficult issues. I found this to be the best element of the NCF leading learning course in respect of my learning needs and I am pleased [mentor’s name] is keen to meet beyond the closure of the first phase.”

(Mentee final report comment)

ACTION LEARNING

“The action learning coupled with the mentoring has been a huge success for me.”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

“I have found it beneficial in my 360 improvements[.]”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

In response to the quality of the facilitation:

“I found the facilitator extremely professional and experienced. She was a great guide that left us a lot of space to reflect and learn but also excellent on putting things back on track if we were going astray.”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

“The facilitator was helpful, considerate and sensitive to the dynamics of the group and how this changed over the course of the sessions.”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

“The facilitator was excellent. With a light touch she offered guidance on asking open question, alternative formats such as laser sets, questioned negative language and failure to use the first person voice and ensure that there were clear parameters for difficult subjects so that the presented did not feel threatened. Most importantly her management of the sessions meant that despite addressing some challenging issues I always left them feeling positive and energised by the thinking that had taken place.”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

LEARNING ACHIEVED

ACTION LEARNING

“... While I still need to achieve a better balance between management and leadership I can now distinguish the two and I have worked hard to delegate more effectively to concentrate on leadership.”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

“... The practice of open questions also helps you become more open yourself to different solutions and letting them present themselves through managed thought rather than seeking a chosen solution. I feel it has helped me in helping making others feel valued and motivated as I have been able to present questions that help them decide things for themselves more. Both my direct reports have commented that I am more focussed.”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

“Enabled me to use open questions in some situations which has generally led to a better outcome.”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS

CHANGES TO LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR

“It has allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of what is meant by leadership and stimulated a more imaginative and mature approach to tackling strategic and operational problems in the workplace.”

(Endline survey respondent)

“The course has boosted my confidence, restored faith in my own abilities, given me new skills/tactics for approaching challenges and key relationships at work and broadened my understanding of local government. As a result my team is stronger, my senior team are more responsive to me and productive and I also feel now that I can handle difficult staff and political issues with equal confidence.”

(Endline survey respondent)

“I have a deeper understanding of the way leadership works in a local authority, in particular how political decisions are influenced and how this impacts on day to day working.”

(Endline survey respondent)

“Has enabled me to understand more fully my drivers and use them to good benefit. Also to be more confident about my strengths. Action learning has given me a new tool to use in staff management. Mentoring in particular has given focus on specific issues, such as motivating my staff team, and has helped me to delegate more effectively.”

(Endline survey respondent)

“Action Learning helped me plan an interview for a new role which I achieved. Mentoring has helped me successfully establish myself in this new role. 360 helped me reflect on my leadership behaviour and improve areas identified for development. Residential and action learning helped establish new networks.”

(Endline survey respondent)

Do you feel better equipped to work with key politicians within your authority?

“This was one of the most revelatory aspects of the course.”

(Endline survey respondent)

“[The] political skills residential was excellent and will stand me in good stead to get a very radical service review past potential political obstacles.”

(Endline survey respondent)

ACTION LEARNING

“I have taken back the learning and techniques from the ALS and shared this with direct reports and my line manager. The benefit to the organisation has also been through my personal professional development which I hope will contribute to me becoming a more effective leader.”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

“... as one of the key components in the leading learning course, it has provided for significant and measurable improvements in sections derived from my 5 lowest scoring 360 elements and in actions derived from things that were identified as things to do and things that I should stop doing.”

(Action learning set evaluation comment)

IMPACT ON YR1 PARTICIPANTS

“With so much uncertainty over the last six months, the programme has helped me to prepare for change and keep my staff motivated and focused. I have understood much better the change management process and how people react at each stage; the need for a strategic approach to ensure we are not slashing and burning and that there will be some kind of service once the cuts have been implemented; and the need to remain positive for the sake of my team. The programme increased my confidence in my leadership abilities and empowered me to be a leader working across more areas of the Council. I am preparing to take on more areas of responsibility.”

(Yr1 participant response to 12 month on survey)

“It has helped me understand the political environment better which in turn has helped with my own decision making and the way I approach change management.”

(Yr1 participant response to 12 month on survey)

“Restructuring has used scenario planning and zero budgeting techniques first introduced to me on the LLP programme.”

(Yr1 participant response to 12 month on survey)

“I think I’m better for my team as I am a better analyst and planner. They have been given more confidence through greater adopting of a more coaching style of leadership. And I’m easier on myself because if I get it wrong then I look for the lessons learned rather than exist in a dark funk of self recrimination.”

(Yr1 participant response to 12 month on survey)

“I had a 360 recently and scored over 90 out of 100 for overall leadership. I know that Leading Learning helped my to identify and tackle my weaknesses and build on my strengths to be a better leader.”

(Yr1 participant response to 12 month on survey)

IMPACT ON CAREER PATHS

“The programme has provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my leadership style and future career prospects and has provided me with the confidence to seek a role as a corporate director, rather than as a head of culture & sport services.”

(Interim survey respondent)

Programme’s impact:

“The programme has also reinforced to me that local government may not be the place I stay longer term. I am keen to take my management skills into other sectors and broaden my horizons.”

(Endline survey respondent)

“The programme has been brilliant but in the current jobs market it is difficult to accredit it with directly associated career movement. My role at work has developed though as one of my major projects has come to fruition and the course has helped me shape a new JD.”
(Endline survey respondent)

ACTION LEARNING

“I believe I have gained a better sense of pace. I used to rush headlong into everything and my energy levels and enthusiasm used to go before me. I feel I am now able to temper these more appropriately to different situations. I feel this was potentially the thing that was ‘holding me back’ in my career progression.”
(Action learning set evaluation comment)

IMPACT ON YR1 PARTICIPANTS

“I have looked at other jobs but my own is too exciting and having moved directorate - again - I now feel much more supported and can see a real future emerging.”
(Yr1 participant response to 12 month on survey)

Impact on professional networks:

“A year on from Leading Learning, I can clearly see how it has helped me develop my skills, confidence and experience as well provided a useful network of peers to bounce ideas off and collaborate with - thanks for that opportunity!”
(Yr1 participant response to 12 month on survey)