

Releasing Leadership Potential in R&D Managers.

Programme Evaluation Report

May 2013



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Executive Summary

The Releasing Potential programme was commissioned by the NHS North West Research and Development Team to further develop the leadership skills of R&D managers across the North West region. A cohort of 25 individuals from 16 NHS organisations participated in the programme which comprised a series of one day workshops, two network learning groups and an organizational placement.

All participants in the programme were asked to take part in the evaluation, which utilised qualitative and quantitative methods to ascertain the participant's experiences of the programme. Of the original 25 participants, 17 participants completed a questionnaire and 6 individuals took part in interviews. Feedback was sought also from the managers of participants with 6 managers providing feedback.

Participants rated all elements of the programme positively, with face to face workshops and placements receiving the highest ratings. A clear positive impact of the programme was reported at an individual level on participants' ability to manage change, their confidence to lead and ability to manage their current role. Managers of participants also reported an impact at individual level, with slightly lower ratings for the impact at team and organisational levels.

Participants were asked to rate 40 leadership items on pre and post programme questionnaires. Comparison of results indicated marked differences in a number of items including sharing information and resources across networks and the ability to analyse information from a range of sources about performance.

Insights from interviews reflected that participants: felt increased confidence to lead; were working collaboratively with the network of individuals they had met during the programme; noted a positive impact on their practice with practical tools and techniques transferred to the workplace; had a positive experience undertaking placements and valued the networking opportunity that the programme had given to them.

Whilst many of aspects of the programme were evaluated positively participants highlighted a number of changes they would make. In the main these related to better communication and clearer information prior to the course to explain the content, time commitment and structure as well as the purpose of certain activities.

The evaluation of the Releasing Potential Programme has highlighted the positive impact it has had on developing the leadership skills of R&D managers and its impact on developing a community of practice amongst the R&D community across the North West. Areas for improvement were identified to inform further iterations of the programme.

A sustainability model, comprising two further workshops, is in the process of being implemented to develop skills within the cohort to enable it to become a self-sustaining community of practice to strengthen further the network and individual's leadership skills.



Context

The Releasing Potential Programme was commissioned in 2012 and was designed to develop the leadership potential of Research and Development (R&D) managers within NHS organisations across the North West.

The programme was designed and delivered by Pace Consulting and Associates following consultation with key stakeholders. This collaborative working continued during the development of the programme and a steering group met regularly throughout the programme as a formative process to design and delivery.

The Programme

The full programme outline can be seen in Appendix 1, and a brief overview is detailed below:

- Launch Event (1 day) – the impact of effective team leadership on patient outcomes
- 4 Workshops (each a full day):
 - Leading Change: Perspectives on change, human dimensions, tools for change.
 - Leading Self: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and leadership, communication, impact of different styles and preferences, followership.
 - Leading Peers: Influencing and negotiation, emotional intelligence, impact and presence, motivational theory.
 - Leading Collaboration: Adaptive leadership, collaborative networks, building business relationships, business planning tools (business acumen model/business canvas)
- 2 Network Learning Groups (NLGs)
- An Organisational Placement (2 days)
- Closing Event (1 day)

Workshops involved facilitation, activities and a guest speaker for each topic. Evidence based approaches were used for all sessions, with tools and tips for practical application. The launch and closing events were structured in a similar way. NLGs involved smaller, facilitated groups of participants with each participant attending both sessions for their NLG. An organisational placement was encouraged to facilitate learning across organisations. Participants were encouraged to complete a reflective log, and undertake a case study and/or a project to apply their learning in practice.

Participants were also asked to identify a clinical partner to bring to the programme, and an organisational mentor to support them.

Recruitment

Promotional material was sent to NHS Trusts and NIHR Research Networks across the North West inviting expressions of interest. Potential applicants were asked to complete an application form comprising a short statement (500 words) of their perceived benefits of attending the programme and three objectives agreed with their line manager to support their application.

Applicants were assessed against a selection criteria matrix and 25 participants were recruited to the programme.



Evaluation Methods and Data Collection

Data were gathered from a range of sources comprising:

- Pre and post programme questionnaires
- Workshop, launch and closing event feedback forms
- Launch and closing event qualitative data captured by R&D writers at the events
- Post programme interviews with a purposive sample of attendees
- Post-programme questionnaire to managers of attendees
- Qualitative feedback from commissioners and providers of the programme.

The pre-programme questionnaire measured participants' expectations of the programme by asking them to rate 40 statements relating to different leadership elements in order to obtain an overview of self-assessed leadership capabilities. The post-programme questionnaire measured participants' experiences of the programme and then re-measured the leadership items to look for any measurable differences pre and post programme.

More detailed insights were captured from telephone interviews with 6 participants from different healthcare settings. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Questions covered comprised:

- Expectations of the programme
- Thoughts on content/structure/individual elements
- Thoughts on the impact of the programme on the participant
- What further development needs the participant may have
- Further support of the cohort going forward.

Qualitative data were analysed thematically to look for trends across responses. Each data source was analysed and results are reported separately in the following section of the report. All sources were then triangulated to obtain common themes regarding the programme's impact and any operational issues or areas for development.

Results and Analysis

Feedback from face to face events

Data collected from the launch and closing event and all workshops (except for the Leading as Self event) comprised:

- 18 responses from the launch event
- 22 responses from Leading Change
- 23 (incomplete) responses from Leading as Peers
- 9 responses from Leading Collaboration an
- 13 responses from the closing event.

No data of this type was collected from the Network Learning Groups (NLGs).

As part of the evaluation of each day, participants were asked to circle three words describing their experience of the event. Diagram 1 shows the most popular words chosen across all events.



Participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1-5, their levels of agreement on each events:

- content,
- design,
- facilitation,
- guest speaker
- relevance of learning to practice.

Diagram 1 - Participants Views on Workshops



An average was taken for each items (Chart 1).

Although there was little difference across events, data indicates that the Leading Collaboration workshop was the least well received. Qualitative data collected on the feedback forms noted that participants found it difficult to engage with the activities and that the day had felt “rushed”. It is important to note however, that there less feedback forms were received for this workshop which may have had an impact on the overall results.

Across events, participants were asked what they had found most valuable and what might be improved. The chance to network, time out for reflection, guest speakers and the practical tools which could be transferred into practice were valued most highly.

Specific aspects of the programme identified as valuable were the tools from the Leading Change workshop, the role play from the closing event, the MBTI for improved team-working and information on emotional intelligence. Illustrative quotes from the data are reproduced below;

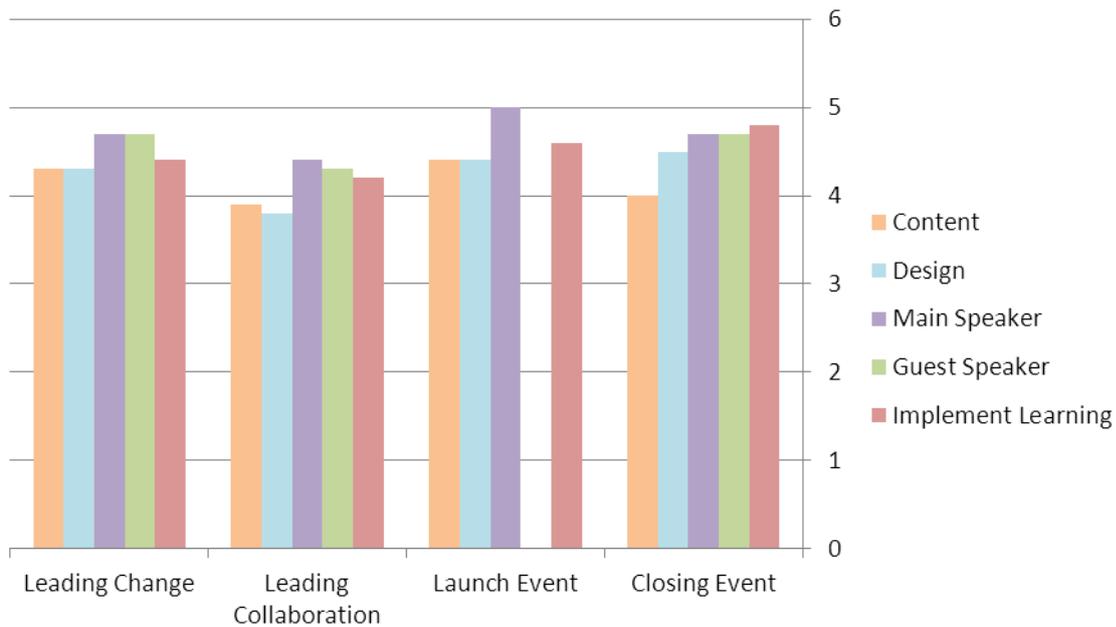
I have a particularly tricky change situation at the moment and this gave me some really good tips on what I have done right/wrong and what I need to do next. This workshop will empower and enable me to table this issue in a much more confident manner. The topic content is really interesting...Speakers are really good!
(Participant 5)

Prof West was a fantastic choice of speaker...made me reflect on the culture of the NHS and how I can change my behaviour to get the most of the team I work with. A fab event - 10/10!
(What was most valuable was) Developing self-awareness using the MBTI to look at my motivations and reactions. Using what I have learned to look at how I can use the techniques and materials to better manage

Participants fed back on improvements and what they had found least valuable. A theme across sessions was the amount of content and that more time for specific activities would have been useful.



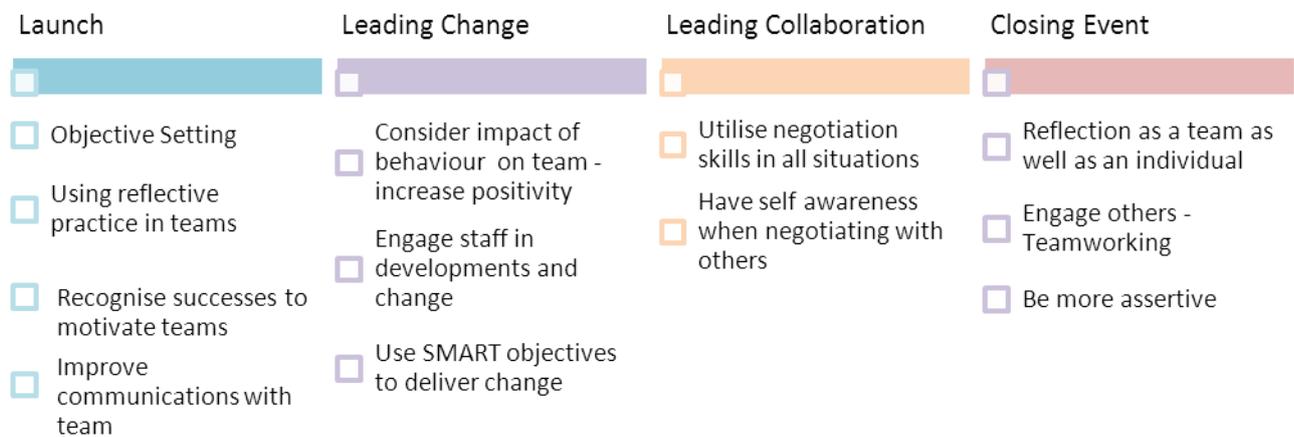
Chart 1 – Average Participant Ratings for Individual



Nb: Data was not collected regarding the main speaker for the launch event. No data were collected for the Leading Self workshop. Data for Leading Peers was incomplete are not reported.

Participants were also asked to give comments concerning any changes they planned to make following the events. There were many items reported but themes from the different events (Diagram 2)

Diagram 2 – Themes of reported changes participants plan to make (categorised by Workshop)



Questionnaire Data

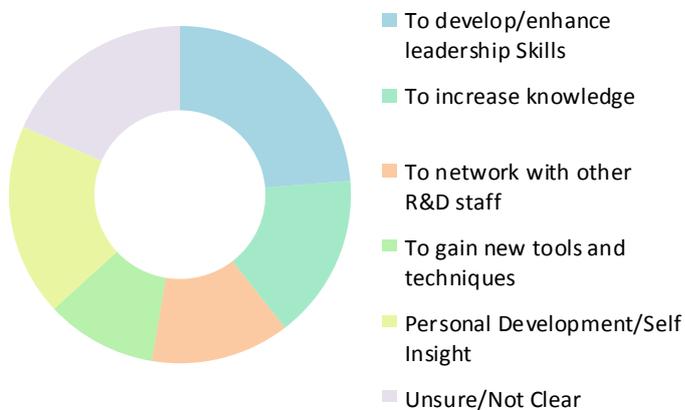
Twenty-two participants completed the pre-programme questionnaire and 17 completed the post-programme questionnaire.

Participants were asked about their expectations of the programme in the pre and post programme questionnaire. Responses have been grouped into categories (Chart 2). Although the most common response related to enhancing and developing leadership skills, and individual development, there was an indication that participants were unsure what to expect from the programme. When asked how far the programme had met their original expectations, the average rating was 4.1 after adjusting for those that



were unsure (1 equated to not at all and 5 equated to very much).

Chart 2 - Participant Expectations



Participants were asked to rate the usefulness of different elements of the programme. Table 1 displays the average response across the activities. All elements were rated positively especially workshops and the launch event. There were subtle differences with NLGs, case studies, the reflective log and books and reports.

In terms of what was most useful, the opportunity to network and meet like-minded people was

reported by 35% of respondents. Other responses included the workshop content, with specifics being the MBTI activity, activities regarding dealing with difficult people, and the guest speakers.

It was all useful in different ways whether it be time out to gather thoughts or generate new ideas or listen to others' experiences. Even to have acknowledged that your own 'issues' are identified by your peers when previously you had felt isolated.

Questionnaire response 05

Exploring MBTI allowed me to understand myself and others better and thus enabled me to adapt my behaviour and leadership style accordingly...the variety of different concepts/tools that were on offer were all very interesting and, probably most importantly, could be put to practical use.

Questionnaire Response 011

20% of respondents mentioned finding NLGs the least useful. This was also reflected in the ratings of usefulness as NLGs (along with reflective logs and case studies) received the widest range of ratings (1-5 compared to 3-5 for other elements). Participants mentioned that they could see the usefulness of the NLGs for others but personally did not find them useful. Other comments highlighted personal preferences for specific activities for example, not feeling comfortable with role play, or not finding reflective logs or self-assessment useful.

Participants were asked about the organisation of the individual elements of the programme, content, relevance of topics, facilitators and external speakers' style and delivery. All elements were rated highly (on a scale where 1 equated to poor and 5, excellent) with an average rating of 4.2.

Over two thirds of participants did not secure an organisational mentor. The main reasons for not doing so were due to being unaware that this was an option or requirement of the programme, or due to time



constraints or organisational challenges making this difficult. A number of those without a mentor indicated that they were looking into the NW mentorship scheme as a potential route for identifying a mentor. Of those who had established a mentoring relationship, there were varied responses as to how useful this was. The mean score being 3 (on a scale where 1 equates to not at all useful, and 5 equates to extremely useful).

Table 1 – Usefulness of different elements of the Programme

How useful were the different elements of the programme?	Average Rating (1=Not at all – 5=Very)	Responses*
Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire	3.2	15
Launch Event	4.4	12
Workshop 1 – Leading Change	4.5	15
Workshop 2 – Leading Self	4.7	16
Workshop 3 – Leading as Peers	4.4	17
Workshop 4 – Leading Collaboration	4.4	16
Network Learning Groups	3.7	17
Placements	4.3	9
Reflective Diary	3.1	15
Case Studies	3.3	13
Books and Reports	3.9	16

***Where a response was not given, this was due to the participant not attending or undertaking that particular Activity**

Participants reported that identifying a clinical partner to attend the programme alongside them was difficult with only 3 participants being able to arrange this. For those that did not identify a clinical partner, reasons given were mainly around the time commitment needed and the difficulty in identifying someone suitable. Several participants also reported that they were not aware that this was an option or requirement of the programme.

Table 2 displays data relating to the impact of the programme at an individual and team/organisational level. Average ratings for nearly all items is above 4, indicating that participants felt that the programme had positively impacted their networking opportunities, ability to manage their current role, confidence to lead and to implement change. Slightly lower were the ratings for the impact upon the participants' team and organisation, with an average rating of 3.2. Managers of participants were also asked questions relating to the impact of the programme on the individual, team and organisation and responses were very similar (Table 3).



Table 2 – Impact at an Individual and Team/Organisational Level

In your opinion, to what extent has the programme:	Average Rating (1=Not at all – 5=Very much)
Enabled you to learn from other R&D Managers	4.2
Supported you in building networks in your area/discipline	4.2
Been valuable in improving your ability to manage your current role	4.1
Increased your confidence to lead	4.1
Increased your confidence to implement change	4
Had a positive impact on the way that you work	4.2
Had a positive impact on your team	3.2
Had a positive impact on your wider organisation	3.2

30% of participants reported undertaking a project alongside the programme. Of these, 80% reported that this increased their confidence and ability to implement further change within their organisation. The remaining participants reported that the time commitment was something that affected their ability to carry this out, with 2 participants reporting that they were unaware of the requirement or option to undertake a project.

From the very start I would put more emphasis on the requirements of the programme in terms of time and energy. In order to get the most out of it I think, not only, did you need the time-out from daily work commitments to attend the workshops, but you needed to take additional time to reflect and complete other pieces of work...If I was made more aware of this at the beginning I could have planned my time more effectively.
Questionnaire response 011

65% of participants reported that they would make changes to the programme in terms of more specific aims and objectives and better communication prior to the programme to ensure a better understanding of what the programme would entail. Amongst these participants there was a consensus that the time commitment required was not clear initially and that this was difficult to manage in terms of being fully involved in the programme.

When asked about continuing to support the network, all participants indicated that further face to face meetings would be the most preferred method. 29% also reported that an online forum would be useful. Practical ideas for further meetings included continuing with the NLGs, and further workshop days or half days to allow the group to continue sharing and learning from

each other.

When asked about further development needs to continue enhancing their leadership skills, assertiveness, people management skills and conflict resolution were the most popular answers with a number of participants referencing the practical implementation of the skills and tools learnt (such as using role playing at the closing event).



Participants were asked to rate 40 leadership items on a three point scale (very little/none of the time, some of the time and all/most of the time) in both the pre and post programme questionnaire. Responses were calculated for each item and changed to percentages so that data could be compared, as there were fewer responses to the post-programme questionnaire (17 as opposed to 22 for the pre-programme questionnaire). Many items demonstrated slight changes from the pre to the post questionnaire, Table 4 shows the items where there was a shift of 20% or more. Items highlighted in yellow demonstrate shifts of greater than 30%, specifically a 37% difference in those reporting spending “a lot of the time” sharing information and resources across networks and a 44% difference in those reporting spending “a lot of the time” analysing information from a range of sources about performance. The items were grouped into different categories of leadership capability, for example managing services, applying knowledge and evidence, managing people etc. (see Appendix 1 for a breakdown of all areas covered within the questionnaire). Table 4 shows the areas where more than one item had increased for a specific category. Those highlighted in red measured the category ‘Working with Others’ and those highlighted in blue measured the category ‘Managing People’.

Managers Feedback

Feedback was received from 6 managers. Although this may limit the validity of the data in terms of being representative, it does give an indicative picture of managers’ support of the programme. Table 3 shows the average rating for the questions posed to managers. Managers reported a positive impact at the individual level, however, although the scores for impact at a team and organisational level are fairly positive also, qualitative data reported by some managers indicated that it was too soon to comment on this at this time. All of the managers reported that they would be supportive of their staff attending further workshops to continue development.

Table 3 – Managers Responses concerning the Impact of the Programme

To what extent has the programme:	Average Rating (1=Not at all – 5=Very much)
Had a positive impact on the way the individual works	4
Had a positive impact on the team in which they work	3.2
Had a positive impact on the wider organisation	3.4



Table 4: Changes in Responses to Leadership Items from Pre to Post Programme

Item	PRE PROGRAMME RESPONSE (%)			POST PROGRAMME RESPONSE (%)		
	Very Little	Some	A Lot	Very Little	Some	A Lot
I identify opportunities where working collaboratively with others will bring added value*	4	41	55	6	18	76
I share information and resources across networks*	18	36	45	6	12	82
I am comfortable managing conflicts of interest or differences of opinion	9	77	14	6	59	35
I assess the available options in terms of benefits and risks	4	32	64		12	88
I take action when resources are not being used efficiently and effectively	14	36	50		24	76
I support team members in developing their roles and responsibilities*	14	32	54	6	17	76
I provide others with clear purpose and direction*	18	36	45		35	65
I analyse information from a range of sources about performance *	23	45	32		24	76
I use feedback from patients, carers and service users to contribute to improvements in service	36	45	18	24	24	40
I put forward ideas to improve the quality of services		55	45		30	70
I focus myself and motivate others to ensure change happens	14	54	32		41	59
I influence others to use knowledge and evidence to achieve best practice *		59	41		29	71
I evaluate the impact of changes on patients (where appropriate) and service delivery *	18	68	14	24	24	53

* Those highlighted in yellow show the most marked differences, of greater than 30%. Those items highlighted in red are items measuring the 'Working With Others' category and those highlighted in blue are items measuring the 'Managing People' category.



Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 6 participants from the programme, recorded and analysed thematically. Themes are presented below with reference to sub-themes where appropriate.

Increased confidence in leading

This over-arching theme was characterised by consistent evidence that referenced increased confidence to lead. Participants reported feeling more confident in working collaboratively, in stating their opinions and in handling situations they had previously found difficult. This was especially the case in those new to the leadership role or facing uncertain times. The following quotes from participants illustrate this theme:

“I think it has helped me be a little bit more proactive and a little bit more confident in a leadership role...and I feel more of a leader ... confident at saying “ok I think we should be doing it this way” rather than just letting things go...” Participant 04

“I would say it’s had an impact on me personally and given me confidence to lead within that collaborative context, appreciating what everybody else is bringing to the R&D agenda, and the fact that you’ve got to work to what’s in it for other people and other organisations to get them to work together.” Participant 03

Participants also reported that the programme had an impact on their confidence as it had taken them outside of their “comfort zone”. Participants found that undertaking these activities within a “safe” environment was useful in developing confidence in their skills and capabilities. The fact that the group were from a similar occupational background had helped them to feel supported and more cohesive. This appeared to impact individual participants’ confidence both within the programme and outside of it:

“I think there was a range of opportunities to do things that you might come across fairly infrequently within my role, such as things like standing up and speaking and probably being more forthright and opinionated about things which really helped... it just generally built your confidence” Participant 02

“... the last session where they had those actors, and I thought ‘oh my god, this is my worst nightmare!’ But you know, at the end of the day when we stood up before lunch and did our little 2 minutes on the mic being filmed, I know I can do that now ... so, you know, it got me out of my comfort zone and I appreciate that really.” Participant 05

Facilitating Collaborative Working

A strong theme from the interview data was the impact of the programme on creating a stronger and more connected network across the region. Evidence from all participants demonstrated how this had continued to have an impact following the programme enabling sharing of good practice, knowledge and information:

“...it has been a very, very good way of getting to know other people that work in the same area as you...and because of the NLGs I think we actually got to know each other so I have established quite good rapport with a couple of the other people, and we have stayed in contact...if we can share best practice, we can literally learn from each other, and we’re not going to reinvent the wheel if someone has a great process in place...we are sharing much more than we did before” Participant 06



Some comments reflected that the networking aspect of the programme had a wider impact on the organisation indirectly, as individuals had access to more resources when considering new projects or areas of work:

“...we have helped each other and are continuing to help each other...this week I’ve been in contact with two of the R&D managers, we are hoping to meet again and just look at some ideas that we talked about while we were on the course about monitoring and cross-monitoring sites, which has always been mentioned but has never actually really taken off...so the organisation will benefit from that.” Participant 01

Positive Impact on Practice

This theme was categorised by the many references to the way the practical techniques and knowledge gained from the programme had been transferred and put into practice in the workplace. Participants consistently referenced the usefulness of the different techniques they had learnt:

“So if I get a task, I look at that task and try to use the methods and strategies that we used on the course... something I got, I think from Professor West, he said make your goals make a difference, don’t do it just for the sake of doing it...so when I’m setting goals, I’m not just thinking ‘oh I’m just doing this because I want to have it done by a certain day’ I want to make them make a difference.” Participant 01

Comments demonstrated that the changes to practice were not only improving the performance of the individual but also the wider team and organisation indirectly. Mainly this was due to the impact this change in practice was having on an individual’s team, or the way in which certain tasks would be approached. A number of participants highlighted that these changes had been noticed by colleagues such as their managers:

“It’s having an impact on my understanding of how to get a project off the ground and how to get the research off the ground...So the impact on the organisation is I suppose, indirect through giving me the skills to pull all of those things together” Participant 03

“The people that I manage are helping other teams with their work, so if I can give them more direction that has an impact on the hospital they work at...I think if you’re working better and as a team you’re being more effective, and you’re getting more things done and coming up with better ideas or more specific plans, then that is always going to have an impact on the organisation” Participant 04

Emotional Intelligence (EI) and MBTI aided Self-awareness

Participants noted how useful the programme had been as a whole, however, different elements of the programme were referenced as being particularly useful. EI and MBTI were mentioned most commonly as increasing their awareness of their own behaviour and reinforcing the need to be mindful of other people’s perspectives:

“...if someone had said that to me before I had gone on this course, I would have thought oh, it’s (EI) just another trendy thing that managers use and it doesn’t actually mean anything, but I think it was delivered in such a way that I could see, yeah it does mean something...you become more aware of your behaviour...” Participant 05



NLGs facilitated Problem Solving

A number of participants mentioned the usefulness of NLGs in learning from each other and sharing ideas to help individuals with challenges they were facing. Participants valued peer learning in this setting and described that even when the items discussed weren't specifically relevant to their circumstances, they could still take something from the advice given to other members of the group.

"...in particular one of our NLG members had a problem with trying to get GPs on board with a project she was doing. But by the time we had all had a discussion and asked all these questions, it kind of unravelled...and she hadn't thought of some of the things that we had thought of, and it was really great to see that she was successful at the end of that." Participant 01

"The NLGs was I think, probably the thing I found most enjoyable and most useful, because that was peers helping peers...although we're all working on different things and had different priorities, there were similarities and I think it was also quite reassuring...we were able to build on each other's experience" Participant 04

Whilst all participants noted what a useful forum the NLGs were, they also highlighted the negative impact when individuals were unable to commit to the sessions. In addition, the importance of good facilitation was referenced. Going forward however, NLGs were mentioned as a good way of continuing the groups' development:

"Although the NLGs were very useful I think some members of the groups perhaps didn't get as much out of it that they might have done had there been more close and formal facilitation within those groups ...perhaps quieter members of the team weren't brought to the front in those NLGs...a more structured approach might have been helpful until we had got into the swing of how the NLG worked...I don't think it was embraced by all the members" Participant 02

"NLGs were good...we tried to reproduce them in our group without the facilitator but you do really need that facilitator and you do need someone who knows what they're doing, to guide you...to make the most of them..." Participant 06

Placements allowed a different Perspective

This theme reflected the perceived usefulness of placements in gaining a different perspective and insight into how other organisations work, both within and outside of the NHS. Participants had valued the opportunity to undertake a "fact-finding mission" in different environments and learn about the practical ways in which those organisations carry out their work.

"I would definitely recommend doing a placement because it gives you a different perspective altogether...I would have liked longer as it was more or less a fact finding day the first day, however, I have been asked to go back so that is something I will be looking to do...that's something additional that I wasn't expecting, they were very accommodating and very willing to work collaboratively..." Participant 01

"The placement...was absolutely great. It was a true experience. Being in the NHS everything is a particular way... Suddenly you are placed, 2 days in a major multinational with a big, big impact worldwide...when you start talking to people, and (find out) how they deliver their strategies, and how they manage, and the HR aspects, so it actually was a very, very useful 2 days." Participant 06



Whilst participants had enjoyed placements, comments indicated some uncertainty regarding the purpose of this activity and what they had taken from them in terms of developing leadership skills. A general theme around the structure of placements reflected that practically there were often a lot of people to talk to and a number of people talking “at” you rather than doing anything collaboratively. However, the overall experience appeared to be positive. The quotes below demonstrate some of these issues;

“I don’t think many people were really sure what the placement was meant to be about...you know it was a bit late on when we discovered we would be expected to do this, we didn’t know at the start...I really enjoyed the placement I did, but I’m not entirely sure what I’ve taken from it yet” Participant 04

“if anything it was a really useful fact-finding day...and to see how the bones of what I deliver, how it works in other organisations as well...even though it was quite hard going because it was just one person after another, I feel that I have a greater understanding...” Participant 05

Lack of Clarity about Commitment

All participants referenced welcomed the variety offered by the programme, particularly the combination of lecture style, guest speakers, activities and reflective tasks. However, participants reported being unsure what to expect from the programme overall:

“...I wasn’t sure from the outline what the format of the programme was, there was very little information given in the first instance, so I was expecting more a session, then I realised at the first session that it was going to be a much longer commitment than that” Participant 02

There was general agreement that the amount of content necessitated the timescales allocated, however, responses indicated that days were sometimes quite long which had impacted the individuals’ experience. Participants commented on how this could be improved and in the main the suggestion was having an additional workshop day to spread the content.

A number of comments also reflected that participants had encountered some of the content previously, which also suggests that they may not have been aware of content pre-attending. However, participants indicated that recapping on this information had been useful:

“Some of it was stuff I had kind of touched on before and some of it was new. But it was good, even the stuff that you knew, it brought it to the forefront of your mind. “ Participant 04

Continued Face to Face contact

The importance of continued face to face contact was referenced by all participants. Specifically participants felt that further development of the cohort could be aided by regular meetings where there was chance to share information and also hear from a guest speaker:

“...maybe 6 monthly rather than yearly to feedback on, you know, how things are going, how we can help the next group...but just for us all to have updates and keep that contact going and anything new that comes out, just be updated...” Participant 01



A common theme was the wish to continue with the NLGs, and that future days might be accommodated to include a workshop of some sort, and then a facilitated NLG.

“I think the NLGs were a really good idea and I think that’s something that I’d like to continue anyway and I think, from the people in the group, we’ve mentioned it although we haven’t committed to it yet...” Participant 04

Other ideas related to having speakers from leadership positions within R&D, and a chance to discuss current topics to allow thinking about R&D at a more strategic rather than “coal-face” level.

Reflections from Commissioner and Provider

Interviews were also conducted with the commission and provider of the programme. A summary of the key points from these interviews can be seen below.

- Importance of developing this was programme highlighted as there was very little aimed specifically at R&D specialists.
- Confidence in provider experience, working relationship was positive and collaborative working benefitted the development of the programme.
- Steering Group was very useful in designing content. Having experts from R&D manager side to feed in regarding what was needed was crucial to successful implementation.
- Pace of programme was sometimes difficult, but constrained by time and resource. Another session may have been helpful to account for the amount of content and to allow further group learning (e.g. NLGs).
- Evaluation was embedded from the beginning although some of the threads were lost over time.
- Clearer management was required at R&D team level, possibly with a dedicated project manager.
- Consideration needs to be given to “who” the next cohort are. Possible scoping exercise due to reconfiguration across the NHS.
- Some elements of the programme were affected because there wasn’t clear communication initially on why/how those elements were included; e.g. clinical partners. Highlighting the need for clear communication and framing of the programme at time of advert.
- Placements would need further support from within the R&D team and possibly some sort of reciprocal arrangements to continue provision of this.
- Continued development of the initial cohort is being developed with consideration being given to the possible involvement with further cohorts.

Common Themes and Conclusion

Positive feedback for programme content: The programme received consistently positive feedback with qualitative data reflecting that participants found the programme inspiring, valuable and empowering. All elements were evaluated well, with some differentiation across topics and styles of approach in each session. Speakers, practical tools and specific topics such as MBTI and EI were received well and evidence from the workshop feedback forms, questionnaire data and interviews indicate that this learning has been transferred to the workplace.

Confidence to lead: A strong theme was the impact of the programme on increasing confidence to lead, and the positive effect of being ‘pushed’ outside of individual comfort zones. Questionnaire data highlighted participants’ confidence in leading, managing change, and managing their current role supported by notable changes in frequency data for questionnaire items measuring leadership (such as putting forward of ideas and influencing others).



Impact on individual practice and beyond: Participants reported a clear impact at an individual level and some at team and organisational level. For example, in interviews participants reflected on how understanding more about others agendas and perspectives, and implementing techniques and tools learnt during the programme, had improved their performance in a leadership role. They reported that they had a positive impact on the wider team and managers' feedback also supports this. Feedback from workshops indicated that changes individuals wanted to make were focused on better team communication and engaging team members. The positive changes reported by individuals are supported by changes between pre and post programme ratings on leadership items. Changes were most evident for items relating to "Working with others" and "Managing People".

Collaborative working and networking: The opportunity to network was reported as one of the most valuable aspects of the programme enabling participants to learn from other R&D managers. Networks are continuing to strengthen outside of the programme and participants are utilising this resource to share good practice, ideas and solutions. Shifts in pre and post programme leadership items relating to "Working with Others" support this finding.

NLGs affected by participation: Whilst 20% of questionnaire participants reported the NLGs as the least useful element of the programme data from interviews and other questionnaire responses, suggested that the NLGs were an extremely positive experience, allowing peer learning for most individuals. People's experiences differed due to individual members not being able to commit to the NLG dates and instances where facilitation was less directive. It was noted that facilitation is an important aspect of the effectiveness of the NLGs and that some individuals had a more positive experience than others. As a method of learning, most people were agreed that this was useful and individuals suggested this as an activity that could continue to further develop the network.

Clear information regarding the programme content and structure: Participants were not always clear about what was expected from them highlighting the need for more specific aims and objectives and better communication. The lack of clarity had, in some cases, impacted on participants' experiences of the programme. For example, some reported not knowing about some of the opportunities such as undertaking a project, having a clinical partner or mentor.

The time commitment required was also referenced suggesting that better communication would have enabled individuals to plan their time more effectively to ensure they could participate fully. In addition, individuals felt that more time across the whole programme would have had a positive impact on the experience.

Further meetings of the cohort: Going forward, comments across data sources reflected support for further face to face days for the initial cohort in order to continue developing. Specific ideas for included workshops with different speakers and further NLGs. Approximately 30% of questionnaire respondents reported having online resources would also be useful. When asked for topics for any further events, the common responses both in interview and questionnaire data were conflict resolution, people management skills and assertiveness.



Recommendations

Continuation of current content of the programme: Feedback was positive regarding the content of the programme. Participants reported how practically useful different elements had been and that they had been able to transfer learning to the workplace which had a positive impact on their teams and also the wider organisation. Although there were some issues concerning NLGs, participants could see the value in these elements of the programme and had generally benefitted from taking part in these. Continuation of the programme would benefit from similar content, and some further thought to structure (particularly in terms of length of face to face days) would also aid participant experience.

Continued support for the alumni of the programme: Participants were supportive of having the opportunity to meet on further occasions, to strengthen the relationships formed during the programme. Further development of the programme may involve further NLGs, or annual or six monthly group meetings.

Ensure consistent and thorough pre-course information for delegates: Across the feedback collected, participants reported that they were not always aware of particular requirements of the programme and this had an impact on their overall experience. This was particularly the case with respect to securing organisational mentors and identifying clinical partners. Going forward, it would be useful for any new cohort to have a structured pre-programme information pack to ensure that all participants are aware of exactly what is expected and to help contextualise the purpose of different elements of the programme. In addition it would be important to consider required project management and administration resource to effectively support the programme.

Ensure consistent evaluation: Full evaluative material was not available for all elements of the programme. Going forward it will be important to ensure that feedback is collected from all face to face events, workshops, NLGs and launch and closing events so that fair comparison can be made across each of the individual elements of the programme.

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The evaluation and the report were completed by Gill Phazey, an independent consultant.



Appendix 1 – Programme Design

This document provides an overview of the high-level shape and indicative content for the 'Releasing Potential' Programme.

Date	Element	Title	Indicative content
27th June	Launch	Releasing Potential Launch Professor Michael West	Impact of effective team leadership on patient outcomes
11th July	WS 1	Leading change Professor Bernard Burnes	Strategic context Perspectives on change – behaviour and the process of change Human dimensions of change - ego states, psychological contract, coping cycle Tools – force field analysis, PEST analysis, reflection
3rd Sept	WS 2	Leading self Dr Liz Mear	MBTI – Leadership, communication, impact of different styles and preferences Leadership postures, models – leadership theory through the years Followership Tools - MBTI
4th Sept	WS 3	Leading as peers	Influencing and negotiation Emotional intelligence Impact and presence, signature strengths Motivational theory Power and politics
	NWLG		Self directed by participants
18th October	WS 4	Leading collaboration David Dolton	Adaptive leadership – review of theory and model Collaborative networks Building business relationships – influencing and negotiation Entrepreneurial behaviours
13th Nov	NWLG		Self directed by participants
TBC	Closing event	January 2013	Prof Mike West

Approach

Each of the sessions will use evidenced based approaches and tools for practical applications. Participants will be encouraged to reflect and the connection with the evaluation process will be made explicit



Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Categories

The pre and post programme questionnaire had 40 items measuring self-report data on leadership capabilities. Two items were used to measure each category and the categories are as follows:

- Developing self-awareness
- Managing self
- Continuing personal development
- Acting with integrity
- Working with others
- Building and maintaining relationships
- Encouraging contribution
- Working within teams
- Planning
- Managing resources
- Managing people
- Managing performance
- Ensuring patient safety
- Critically evaluating
- Encouraging improvement and innovation
- Facilitating transformation
- Identifying the contexts for change
- Applying knowledge and evidence
- Making Decisions
- Evaluating Impact



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