

[front page](#)

[news](#)

[back issues](#)

[comment](#)

[letters](#)

[advertise](#)

[subscribe](#)

[about us](#)

[contact us](#)

[back page](#)

Leading Learning: a new century of achievement

Having reached a century of successful participants, the Leading Learning Programme is now recruiting for 2014. Sue Isherwood explains how the programme has helped to expand horizons, change attitudes and transform careers.

Since 2008 100 middle and senior managers from across the culture and sport sector have completed the Leading Learning Programme. This is the only leadership programme tailored to the specific needs of public sector managers working across culture, leisure and sport. The National Leisure and Culture Forum, the programme's key sponsor, is now actively looking for the next cohort of future leaders.

Austerity may be limiting training and development opportunities across the sector but the need to invest in the creation of new leaders to steer the sector out of current challenges is being recognised as critical to the sector's future. Better leadership will be key to survival and re-growing the sector over the next five years. Most employers are now recognising they must prioritise leadership investment.

The Leading Learning Programme began five years ago in response to the need to create new leadership capacity. Five successful annual programmes have seen many participants develop their careers and achieve senior positions in councils and partner organisations, such as trusts and social enterprises. In a new publication, launched recently by the Leading Learning Programme, eight of these individuals explain what they got from the programme and how it helped them develop as individuals.

They all are keen to recommend the programme to their peers. For example, George Candler, now director of commissioning at Shropshire County Council, says, "The learning has since enabled me to develop my relationship management and political skills. Since undertaking the Leading Learning Programme I have had two promotions... I have nothing but praise for the Leading Learning Programme. It was a wonderful experience and has had a significant impact on accelerating my career in the public sector."

Carol Stump, newly appointed chief librarian at Kirklees MDC when she came on the Programme, noted how the experiences she gained on the programme "have all helped me lead my service through change and I have received positive feedback from my line manager about my new confidence in my own abilities and about my leadership skills... I would strongly advise others to take the opportunity it offers."

Directors of trusts have also found the programme transformative. Mike Lyons, now director of leisure facilities at BH Live, Bournemouth, says, "I would highly recommend the programme to any leisure and cultural professional looking to develop their career. It allows an individual to gain new perspectives on organisations and how they develop strategically." Vicky Martin, now chief executive of Heartlands Trust, Cornwall, adds, "The programme helped broaden my knowledge and understanding of leadership theory and best practice... It helped fast-track my career in the cultural sector."

All agree that the programme is challenging, brilliant for networking, develops strategic thinking and is confidence-boosting. Above all it www.theleisurereview.co.uk

"I would urge heads of service and trust chairs to think positively about this opportunity and about the long-term financial and community benefits of sustaining successful organisations.b"

The Leisure Review is supported by:



The Leisure Review is written, designed and published by:

tlr.comms
TLR Communications Limited

allows every one that takes it to fulfill their potential. The quality of the experience is corroborated in the document by current chief executives, many of whom have mentored these individuals. As Derrick Anderson, chief executive of Lambeth Council, explains, "Drawing on the wisdom of those who have 'been there and done that' is a great way to bring the theory and academic positioning in relationship to leisure management to life. The programme has done this very well indeed."

The programme provides a year's activity, including 360-degree appraisal, three residentials, action learning sets, mentoring and access to high-quality learning material focused on leadership, change management, political management all from a strategic rather than operational perspective. The residential sessions are led by leading facilitators from the CASS Business School and INLOGOV. In addition the programme is supported by Martyn Allison, former national adviser with the IDEA, and external speakers from across the sector. It challenges individuals to think and behave differently.

The programme benefits from attracting individuals from both the cultural and sport sectors, enabling the cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiences, and has created long-standing relationships and networks for most of the participants.

Martyn adds, "I would urge heads of service and trust chairs to think positively about this opportunity and about the long-term financial and community benefits of sustaining successful organisations. These considerations should weigh strongly against the problem of short-term costs."

The next programme will begin in January 2014 with the first residential taking place from 4 to 7 February. Costs will be £4,000 per head with a discount of £500 for applications received by 18 November. Costs can, however, be spread over two financial years and in some cases bursaries may be available. Applications need to be made to by 9 December.

Sue Isherwood is director of the Leading Learning Programme

Sue Isherwood can be contacted at leadership@cloa.org.uk or by phone on 01749 871110 or 07919 540803.

Recruitment information and full details of the programme is also available at www.ncfleadinglearning.co.uk where you will also find the new Leading Learning brochure.

The Leisure Review, October 2013

© Copyright of all material on this site is retained by *The Leisure Review* or the individual contributors where stated. Contact *The Leisure Review* for details.