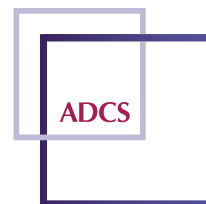


# THE STAFF COLLEGE PROSPECTUS

# 2016



**THE  
STAFF  
COLLEGE**

PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES





# Foreword

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**This prospectus marks the beginning of a new era for the Virtual Staff College which, from 1st April 2016 will become the Staff College.**

Since its inception in 1999, the College has developed a proud track record of being at the forefront of leadership development in the field of Education and Children's Services. In serving as the professional development arm of the Association of Directors of Children's Services, it remains uniquely placed to support leaders in children's services to achieve the best outcomes for children and families in an increasingly complex, turbulent and ambiguous world. Public services, and people involved in their provision, are facing unprecedented challenges. Roles are becoming more wide-ranging and there is increasing fluidity between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, as integrated delivery becomes more established and new alliances take shape. Increasingly, the College is collaborating with other public sector agencies such as; the Leadership Centre, Public Health England, NHS Leadership Academy and the National Skills Academy for Social Care to offer leadership development for leaders from across the public sector. This commitment is reflected in its new name which highlights the Staff College's offer of Public Sector Leadership for Children's Services.

The Staff College works on behalf of public sector leaders, helping to influence policy, contributing to the knowledge base through research and providing high quality development opportunities to develop systemic leadership capacity. The College's deep understanding of the children's services sector and its close working relationship with ADCS, enables it to be at the leading edge of strategic thinking and highly responsive to the shifts and changes in the direction of national policy and local delivery of services for children, young people and families. More broadly, by working across organisational, professional and national boundaries, the

College offers a unique perspective on public sector leadership in challenging times; times when investment in leaders' capacity is arguably more important than ever before.

In this prospectus the College sets out its offer which draws on the best empirical evidence available and presents it in a way which invites participants to engage as part of a learning community either through a local authority subscription or the 'pay as you use' arrangements.

The Staff College is our College. It is a values based organisation, rooted in the notion of there being 'a single public pound' and committed to helping public sector leaders succeed in a difficult, unpredictable and often lonely environment where they can't operate in isolation and need the courage to take risks to improve the wellbeing of the communities they serve. It provides the intellectual and professional space where we develop our individual and collective leadership; a space where we transmit our knowledge, wisdom and values to the next generation of leaders; and a learning community where we support and inspire each other to do better for children, young people and families.

## Martin Pratt

Director of Children, Schools & Families,  
London Borough of Camden  
Chair: The Staff College Board



## Public Sector Leadership for Children's Services

*"Public services face unprecedented challenges. Rising demand, changing demographics and increasingly stretched finances mean that the choice for local authorities and public service providers is stark: change the way they work, or face the possibility of service retrenchment, increasing irrelevance and perpetual crisis management."*

RSA (2015)

In the years following the general election of 2010, UK public services have undergone accelerated change, as cost and reform initiatives have redefined what is 'business as usual'. Creating a sustainable asset-based public service model that builds capacity and resilience within citizens, families and communities has become the primary concern of the whole children's services system. Achieving this will take brave, collective and sustained acts of leadership across systems and throughout organisational structures which are responding to new locality arrangements for the provision of public services.

The Staff College, first established in 1999, has a singular commitment to developing leadership across public services, with a particular expertise in supporting leadership in the delivery of services for children, young people and families. Its role is to support, provoke, challenge and reflect with those charged with delivering services for individuals and communities, in the belief that exceptional leadership is a critical ingredient in transforming how public services are planned and delivered.

It is becoming clear that in the rapidly changing context of public services in the UK, an individual organisation's capacity to innovate is increasingly dependent on its network of partnerships and alliances. The evolving relationship between a local authority

and its community of schools, the transfer of public health into local Councils and the ongoing developments in child protection and safeguarding are all examples of changes which will require a more systemic approach if they are to succeed.

In response to this, the Staff College recognises that changing systems requires alliances of partners working together as co-innovators and this is reflected in its design and delivery of leadership development. Consequently, the College draws heavily on its own alliances and networks, particularly the leadership agencies for Adults Social Care, the NHS, Public Health, Chief Executives and Elected Members, in order to work credibly with leaders from across the widest spectrum of the children's services system to deliver timely and informed programmes of support for meaningful and sustainable systemic change.

*"I will use the learning from this day to challenge the thinking of my colleagues."*

*"It will form the basis of discussions with our Senior Leadership Team."*

*"Cascade to managers and peers, management meeting."*

Leadership Academy participants. 2016



## The offer from the Staff College

Complementing its direct provision, a core aim of the Staff College is to make a significant contribution towards the collective intelligence of the children's services community and the wider public sector. The College does this in a number of ways:

- Participation in national and international reference groups and sector networks, acting as an advocate for children's services leadership
- Liaison with central government departments regarding children's services leadership issues
- Working in partnership with the Department on the management of the DfE Induction Seminar for newly appointed DCSs
- Working in partnership with the ADCS on national workforce development and leadership related issues
- Working in partnerships and alliances with other major public sector agencies with a stake in improving the outcomes for children, young people and families
- Liaising with Ofsted
- Acting as a champion for children's services leaders across the public sector
- Maintaining authoritative and regular source intelligence about the labour market at a senior level in children's services and the workforce development needs of principal, senior and middle leaders
- Publication of thoughtful think pieces which are topic-based and explore the wicked issues and most significant challenges facing leaders across public services
- Publication of a range of factsheets and technical briefing packs, supporting recent policy and legislation, as well as providing support to those without a background in a specific area, deepening their technical understanding, particularly where they have taken up new or extended roles
- Offering occasional Strategic Seminars for Directors and Assistant Directors to consider the most significant and impactful issues of the moment leading to think pieces and related publications
- Offering an annual Summer and Winter Think Tank for senior leaders to come together with peers to consider collectively the major issues facing them and then sharing the outcomes of these through bespoke publications for the sector.

The more direct or visible work of the College consists of three distinct elements:

<b>A</b>	Core provision
<b>B</b>	Leadership and management seminars and workshops
<b>C</b>	Bespoke support for organisational development

The provision in each of these elements is outlined in the following sections of the prospectus.

# A.

## Core provision

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This element of the Staff College's work is aimed at providing professional and practical support to the public sector in general and the children's services community in particular through the design and delivery of national cross-sector programmes, national initiatives and liaison with local and central government. This core work on behalf of the children's services community of practice sits at the centre of the College's activities and, although often less visible than other elements of its provision, does reflect the fundamental commitment of the College to supporting the development of leadership capacity in local authority provision for improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

Over the past four years the College's commitment to cross-sector leadership provision has meant that new and often innovative opportunities for leadership development have become more readily available to the children's services community at both Director and Assistant Director level. Furthermore, as integrated working across health and social care becomes more prevalent, there will be an increased need for those in senior leadership roles to embrace and nurture a more outward facing style of working.

*"Transforming services is hard. Organisations across the public, voluntary and private sectors are coming together to find new solutions to seemingly intractable problems by radically transforming their approach to services in their area. But whether they are tackling alcohol abuse or supporting people with dementia, their success is being determined by people and culture."*

(from ["The Revolution will be Improvised - stories and insights about transforming systems, Leadership for Change"](#))

## Systems Leadership

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*"In this world of rapid, complex change, no one can really know the future and lead others there. An individual leader can't neatly choose the right outcome and chart a course alone, because there are too many unpredictable variables in the mix. We need a new model of leadership, which we call Whole Systems Leadership."*

University of Minnesota and Life Science Foundation. (2010)

Building upon this seminal thinking in 2010, the Staff College has been at the forefront of developing an integrated approach to public sector leadership in the UK which it has termed systems leadership. This commitment to systems leadership was strengthened by the international research project which the College commissioned in 2012 and led to the publication of ["Systems Leadership: Exceptional leadership for exceptional times"](#) in 2013.

This report defined systems leadership as "leadership that extends beyond the confines of single agencies or organisations, stretching the remit and skills of leaders into places where their usual authority, derived from organisational position, may not be recognised."

This concept of leadership now underpins all of the Staff College's programme design and delivery and, as a result, the College is a consistent and strong advocate for systems leadership both at local, national and international level and, through its membership on the National Steering Group for Systems Leadership, advocates for children's services at the only national forum for public sector systems leadership in England.

## Leadership for Change Programme

*“Your capacity to innovate will depend on who is part of your alliance. Creating new products relies on creative teams. Changing entire systems, however, requires alliances of partners who will be co-innovators working alongside you and distributors who will take the product to market. Successful systems innovators create constellations of other actors aligned around them”*

Charles Leadbeater (2013)

Building upon this notion of working alliances suggested by Leadbeater, the Staff College is collaborating in an alliance with Skills for Care, NHS leadership Academy, Public Health England and The Leadership Centre for Local Government on **Leadership for Change** - a single national programme for Directors and Assistant Directors (or equivalent) from Children’s Services, Adult Social Care, Public Health and the NHS. The first of its kind in the UK, Leadership for Change, is underpinned by the construct of Systems Leadership and, referencing recent international research commissioned by the College, offers new approaches to leadership relevant to the challenges of complexity and ambiguity faced by today’s public sector leaders.

This unique programme is a place-based leadership programme which requires small place teams of senior professionals to work together on significant locality issues which require collaborative approaches to developing solutions to long standing systemic challenges.

*“An incredibly useful space to think, learn and test.”*

*“The experience has been an amazing opportunity. I feel privileged to be amongst the cohort and I have learnt huge amounts. Been on a personal journey which will help me immensely over the next 12 months and for the rest of my career.”*

Cohort 2 Participants

## Future Directors Programme

The Future Directors Programme, part of the ‘Leadership for Change’ suite of programmes, is an ongoing collaboration between the Staff College and Public Health England. The programme provides an opportunity for senior officers, who specifically aspire to director level roles in children’s services and public health, to jointly prepare for the next phase of their careers and learn from each other as senior leaders who are ambitious both for themselves and for the localities that they serve. Underpinned by the principals of systems leadership the programme introduces participants to a way of thinking about leadership that will equip participants better to exert influence, and gain consent for pragmatic solutions based on a shared commitment to a strong sense of public value.

*“Has really lifted my thinking. I am determined to build on the learning. Outstanding contributors and facilitators”*

*“So well-constructed, thought provoking and challenging, but ultimately beneficial for me personally and my organisation.”*

Programme participants

This programme is designed to provide the next generation of directors of children’s services and public health with an enhanced appreciation for each others professional and contextual challenges and create a greater systemic leadership capacity for future integrated and collaborative working across professional boundaries.

For more information on the Leadership for Change and Future Directors

Programmes please contact: [tony.watton@virtualstaffcollege.co.uk](mailto:tony.watton@virtualstaffcollege.co.uk) or call: 0115 7484124.

## Mentor Plus

### Bespoke support for newly appointed Directors of Children's Services

As part of its commitment to supporting leadership in children's services, ADCS has, with effect from 1st April 2016, commissioned the Staff College to continue to provide Mentor Plus – the existing mentoring scheme for newly appointed DCSs. The ADCS commission means there will be no charge to the employing local authority of a newly appointed DCS for this core mentoring support offer.

“The scheme is a very helpful one in providing new DCSs with confidence in their decision making, via a confidential and objective ear.”

“This has been invaluable enabling us to share ideas and reflections around my DCS role leading an authority out of intervention.”

Mentee

Mentoring is particularly suited to new appointments. The Mentor Plus scheme offers all new DCSs the support of an experienced serving DCS who, through advice and guidance based on their own experience, can provide examples of dealing with similar situations, issues and challenges whilst supporting the mentee in analysis, reflection and determining appropriate action.

Complimenting the support of a mentor, the scheme also provides new DCSs with the opportunity to attend an induction seminar at the DfE. For 2016/17 the dates of the seminars are 6th September 2016 and 7th February 2017.

Beyond the core mentoring scheme for new DCSs commissioned by ADCS, the Staff College can also offer enhanced or further mentoring support particularly where an authority has gone into intervention or there has been a significant shift in roles. Through a highly bespoke approach and aiming to complement any specific post-inspection improvement arrangements, the College will

work to provide suitable mentors to both DCSs and ADs drawing upon its extensive associates network and following a scoping conversation between the mentee and the College Mentor Co-ordinator to establish the most appropriate match.

For further information regarding the Mentor Plus scheme, please contact: [ruth.loyd@thestaffcollege.uk](mailto:ruth.loyd@thestaffcollege.uk) or call: 0115 7484120

## Research and publications

Since its inception, and particularly over the past 5 years, the College has commissioned national and international research as part of its contribution to building the intellectual capital of the public sector in general and the children's services sector in particular. A number of these research reports combined with the College Think Pieces and Fact Sheets have become seminal documents in the field of public sector leadership and are viewed as critical and original research on issues particularly related to the leadership challenges faced by those charged with planning and delivering services for children, young people and families. Recent examples are:

- [“Changing the narrative”: a new conversation between the citizen and the State. \(In partnership with the RSA.\)](#)
- [‘Systems Leadership’ Exceptional Leadership for Exceptional Times’](#)
- [‘Systems Leadership for Effective Services’](#)
- [‘Resourceful leadership: how directors of children’s services improve outcomes for children’](#)
- [Leadership in a contested space: international review of literature’](#)
- [Leading in a self-improving system](#)
- [Are we in danger of shedding the middle tier?](#)
- [The role of Serious Case Reviews in improving the child protection system](#)
- [Child Sexual Exploitation: a study of international comparisons](#)



This research has increasingly had a practical impact, e.g. in helping to shape the public sector's understanding of, and response to a rapidly changing financial and policy context, providing a robust evidence base from which to design the Staff College's core leadership programmes.

*"I found 'Leadership in a Contested Space' really valuable. It painted a picture I recognised of the environment in which I work. I was reassured to find that there are ways to survive and even thrive in this complexity. The concept of being 'aggressively patient' will stick with me for a long time. I appreciated the CSE international study for different reasons. Shining a light onto the ways in which this complex social problem is defined and tackled around the world helped me to think more flexibly about how to address CSE in my own district."*

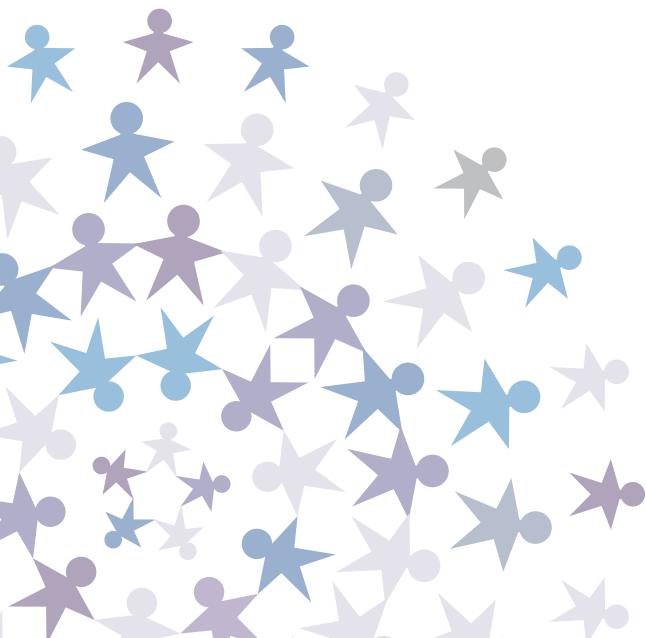
DCS

## Strategic sector support

Since 1999, the College has developed and maintained a positive working relationship with the respective government departments and agencies responsible for setting and inspecting the national policy context for the delivery of public services to children, young people and families. Over this period of time the College has represented the sector in a number of seminal national initiatives such as:

- The National Steering Group: DfEE SEN Regional Pilot Projects
- DfES Advisory Group for the School Improvement Recognition Scheme (SIRS)
- National Standards for School Improvement Professionals (NSSIPs)
- National CPD strategy for Children's Services Professionals
- Reference group for Championing Children
- Children's Workforce Network
- Leading and Managing Children's Services in England: a National Professional Development Framework
- National Leadership Qualities Framework for Directors of Children's Services

We are proud of this heritage and our contribution to the development of policy into practice for children's services. Given the rapidly changing policy context for education and children's social care in particular, we look forward to our continuing relationship with both the Department for Education and Ofsted acting as an advocate for, and champion of, the role of exceptional leadership in achieving improved life outcomes for children, young people and families.



# B.

## Leadership and management seminars and workshops

### Supporting Directors of Children's Services

The Staff College support for serving Directors of Children's Services consists of two elements of provision: basic and extended.

**Basic provision** is available to all DCSs either through an LA subscription or through 'pay as you use' options whereas **extended provision** is only available to DCSs and their teams from LAs who have taken out an annual subscription with the College.

The College support for Assistant Directors of Children's services, Heads of Service, senior members of DCS management teams and others in locality senior leadership roles such as LSCB Chairs, is mainly delivered through the annual series of Leadership Academy seminars.

## Basic provision

### A - Annual Think Tanks

The 24 hour reflective Think Tank is not a conventional conference, seminar or workshop. It aims to bring together a group of colleagues to exchange practice and, through lightly facilitated working sessions and experiential 'swap shops', reflect upon and seek solutions to the challenges they face.

*"It was fantastic to have time away with people who are leading the field."*

*"My colleagues are a wonderful resource, providing a rich mix of support and challenge. I really valued these 24 hours."*

Participants from 2014 Summer Think Tank

*"Yes - high level intellectual debate, much to reflect on for future planning in my own context"*

*"Great opportunity to understand perspectives and view work through different lenses"*

Participants from 2015 Summer Think Tank

Typically the Think Tank is open to DCSs, their direct reports and others in equivalent senior leadership positions across the public sector with a particular interest in improving outcomes for children, young people and families. It is an opportunity for senior leaders to come together with peers to consider collectively how to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead and what new models of public service provision might be needed to withstand likely future shifts and changes.

For 2016/17 the College is offering two Think Tanks:

**23rd - 24th August 2016** - Towards excellence and equity for all: educational innovation in changing times.

**27th - 28th March 2017** - Improving health and wellbeing outcomes: the systems leadership approach.



## B – Technical web-based workshops

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These short technical webinar sessions led by experienced practitioners from the sector aim to provide an in-depth or detailed view of particular elements of children's services provision for DCSs and members of their SMTs in order to extend or enhance their technical understanding of areas such as SEND, school place planning, the role of the middle tier in relation to schools, children's social care, public health provision.

Each workshop will be no longer than 2 hours duration and will be augmented with appropriate dedicated audio visual materials which will serve to provide participants with a personal record of the topics covered on the webinar. If requested, particular workshops may be followed up by additional virtual or regional focus groups and/or network meetings in order to continue the discussion or create locality based topical task and finish working groups.

**These workshops will be free to subscribing LAs and chargeable to non-subscribers.**

## C – Mentoring and coaching support

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The College has always been a keen advocate for mentoring support for those new to the role of a DCS and executive coaching support for those who are more experienced. As previously outlined, the College has been commissioned by the ADCS to manage the sector mentoring scheme for those new to the DCS role. However, once this support has ceased the College is able to source experienced mentoring support should an ongoing need for this become apparent.

In addition to this, the College also manages an Executive Coaching Scheme for both DCSs and Assistant Directors which is outlined later in this prospectus.

## D – Access to the Staff College website

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The final element of the basic provision to DCSs is access to the open elements of the Staff College website including publications, factsheets, think pieces and linked strategic material from other public sector organisations.

## Extended provision

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In addition to the basic provision outlined above, DCSs (and nominated members of their direct management teams) from subscribing LAs have access to **The Learning Portal**, the closed section of the Staff College website which is designed specifically to support DCSs in growing their personal and organisational strategic intelligence.

The College's digital learning portal will provide DCSs and their nominees with opportunities to engage in short web-based discussion forums, contribute to the development of think pieces and factsheets and participate in a digital community where giving and receiving ideas and practice enhances the individual and collective wisdom of the sector.

The portal will become the College's prime means of sharing innovative national and international practice through occasional virtual master class style conversations with leading thinkers, blogs, social media feeds, regular digital newsletters, significant document synopses, additional think pieces and policy thinking from across the public and private sector.

Through its participation in a number of international networks and forums the College will also use the Learning Portal to offer occasional digital common rooms where DCSs can join peers from other countries in discussing and thinking about the challenging and wicked issues facing them and, through this, collectively learn from each other thus creating the potential for a learning community of practice which extends well beyond the UK.

Access to the College's bespoke 360 leadership audit tool for children's services personnel will also be through the portal.

## 360 tool

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The Staff College has a bespoke 360 feedback tool, based upon its Systems Leadership research, that LAs can access and use to support effective performance management.

Licences to access the tool can be purchased directly from the College. However, should you prefer to design your own version of the tool, using a range of indicators or set of behaviours that you feel are more applicable to your needs, the College can work in collaboration with you and the software developers to deliver a bespoke tool. **This tool is only available to subscribing LAs.**

## Supporting Senior Leaders

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### Leadership Academy Programme

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The annual **Leadership Academy Programme**, which is now in its 10th year, provides senior leaders and managers working in the delivery of children's and adults' services and public health with the opportunity to meet, share practice and reflect on the most pressing issues currently facing them. Through this interaction the aim is to establish a personal support network which will, over time, provide opportunities for Assistant Directors/senior leaders to meet regularly, exchange practice and grow professionally.

The Academy brings together a small group of colleagues to exchange practice and, through facilitated working sessions, reflect upon and seek solutions to the challenges currently facing them. This process is augmented by both formal and interactive contributions from leading professionals working across the public sector but particularly in the fields of Education, Health, Wellbeing and children's Social Care.

*"Really good to be able to listen to other approaches from other people - and was good to be able to do some thinking."*

*"Exceeded - I was going to stay back and clear some work but am delighted I did come."*

*"Thought provoking, informative, got renewed energy for moving forward with change programmes."*

*"Inspirational and visionary leadership stimulating conversation and space to reflect."*

Leadership Academy participants 2016



Leadership Academy seminars are characterised by all participants coming prepared to contribute as well as listen and, through this collaborative practice, enhance and extend the collective intelligence of our community.

Building upon past experience, the Leadership Academy Programme offers 4 annual seminars, each focusing on a principal leadership challenge within children's services.

For 2016/17 the programme dates and themes are:

**6th December 2016 in London**

Leadership Academy - Safeguarding

**25th January 2017 in Nottingham**

Leadership Academy - Education

**2nd March 2017 in Birmingham**

Leadership Academy - Wellbeing

**5th April 2017 in Leeds**

Leadership Academy - New Models

For further information regarding the 2016/17 Leadership Academy Programme please contact: [tony.watton@thestaffcollege.uk](mailto:tony.watton@thestaffcollege.uk) or call: 0115 7484120.

## Broader Public Sector Support

Complementing its core focus on supporting DCSs and their teams, the College remains committed to contributing to the development of leadership capacity more broadly across public services through provision which aims to provide development opportunities to all those who have a stake in improving outcomes for citizens in general and children, young people and families in particular.

The individual elements vary from discrete workshops, practical materials and leadership approaches which are relevant to individual, team, corporate and organisational learning and are delivered following a bespoke design and planning process which is co-produced with the commissioning agency.

The following sections outline a number of current broader sector support options.

## Scenario planning: public services for the future

*"The problem with the future is that it is different. If you are unable to think differently, the future will always arrive as a surprise."*

Professor Gary Hamel (1994)

Scenarios are envisions of possible, thinkable futures and can be used effectively to ask better questions in a strategic planning context: ...not whether, but WHAT IF...? Scenario thinking or scenario planning can be particularly effective during times of accelerated change, greater complexity and genuine uncertainty, all characteristics of working across public services today.

Scenario thinking can help shape, influence and check strategies, but perhaps more importantly, can be used as a means of dealing with and facing calmly the turbulence in the system. By using the conceptual future as a safe space to explore and better understand a 'messy' and complex situation, it is possible to find means of framing it with a shared language and in a way that a group can take strategic action together.

How does it work? Scenario thinking is a group activity which encourages knowledge exchange and development of mutual deeper understanding of central issues important to the future of your organisation and specifically in our case, the public sector; using experienced facilitators from the Staff College, the goal is to produce scenarios that are not only different from 'business as usual' and, therefore, thought-provoking, but highly relevant to strategic thinking.

Over the past few years, the College has developed significant experience in designing and delivering scenario planning seminars and workshops for corporate, directorate and service groups including Elected Members. For further information, please [click on this](#) to download the information leaflet.

*"Will make me question how and what we commission particularly in terms of trying to have focus on making population more self-reliant."*

Chief Executive

## Growing citizen capital & supporting resilient communities

*“Creative leaders recognise that public agencies are not machines, but collections of people in relationships. Public services rely on the energy and commitment of those people who are actively negotiating the relationship between the state and civil society. Much of that interface depends, not on white papers or policy – but on the actions of individual members of staff.”*

Danny Chesterman & Mathew Hall. (2006). DEMOS

The relationship between the State and the citizen is inherently complex and successful community development and engagement requires more than professionals choosing when and how citizens engage in service planning and design. Effective community development requires professionals and organisations to devolve the power to communities, supporting them in their ambitions and goals, in a way that delivers change for the better.

The Staff College has invested in the design and production of a suite of materials which provide LAs with the means of exploring practical ways in which community capacity might be identified mobilised, focusing on a community’s assets rather than its needs and, as a result, explore the potential for professional behaviour change.

These materials are due to be published in 2016 and will be available through [www.thestaffcollege.uk](http://www.thestaffcollege.uk)

## Interpersonal leadership

*“Ethical leadership demands authenticity and the willingness to tell it the way it is, to create “islands of sanity” as part of the foundation from which to work out together a way forward.”*

VSC (2015)

Much value is placed on the authenticity of leadership and yet too often as we work with the demands of the job, leadership becomes more readily judged by public accountability, quantitative measures and the role behaviours associated with positional authority. The Staff College can work with you to explore how authenticity is defined within your organisation and the extent to which your organisational and individual value base, language and capacity to act are underpinned by trustworthiness, credibility and ethical considerations.

*“Very effective: clear sense of moral purpose defined and established; very interesting analysis of leadership and models in other parts of the country / world.”*

*“This event exceeded expectations. I was gripped throughout and no moment felt fallow. I’ll take away many notions about leadership and the moral purpose/contract/ membership dilemma. Thank you.”*

Programme participants 2015

Often the teams that have the most difficulty in working together are characterised by a lack of authenticity, where the voice of the child, adult or family is secondary to that of the professional and the notion of a learning organisation is tolerated at best. The Staff College can also bring a level of external challenge and foresight that may be difficult to elucidate internally, working with teams to help them realise a collective ambition rather than simply defining a set of individual goals.

## Action learning & peer-consultation

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The Staff College can facilitate Action Learning and Peer Consultation sets within your organisation to explore new interpretations and areas of activity that would not be realised through traditional dialogue. Working in small, safe peer groups, an individual will bring a specific issue or case to be discussed, with the emphasis on being able to brainstorm and explore new approaches to making progress on the challenge they wish to work on.

Learning in sets of this nature is underpinned by:

- The purpose and desire to make a positive difference
- Ongoing learning
- Action which is informed by learning and there is learning from the action itself
- Support and challenge
- Participants becoming authors of their own learning

The College can provide skilled and experienced facilitators to support your organisational professional development.

*"The VSC has led on the effective design of the programme and will deliver the main parts of the programme. Activities include a leadership programme for senior managers, a talent management programme, an aspirant leaders programme, bespoke workshops, action learning sets, coaching skills, placements and projects. We have found VSC staff to be extremely professional."*

Former Executive Director for Children's Services

## Building capacity & skills

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Having run successful mentoring and coaching schemes for many years, the Staff College can assist with the brokerage of either an experienced mentor or executive coach (accredited at ILM Level 7), as well as providing bespoke mentor and coach training.

Executive Coaching can provide a uniquely challenging and yet supportive working partnership that can provide significant benefits to the individual and the organisation in which they work. Ultimately it's about improving performance – through developing skills, confidence and focus, and supporting those in leadership roles to address some of the complex challenges they face.

Requests for Executive Coaching may be made for a number of reasons, including but not limited to helping the person supported to work through a particular professional dilemma, gaining clarity on an unclear situation, or to resolve a career related issue.

Any coaches or mentors provided by the College will be trained to ensure that participants receive consistent and coherent support. Brokerage will be provided by the College so that the participant has access to relevant knowledge and experience, from an experienced colleague, with feedback demonstrating that the process can be equally rewarding for both the supported and supporting parties. Such schemes run by the College have become a vital element of peer support within the sector and wider children's services community.

[Click here](#) to download the Executive Coaching information leaflet.

For further information on any of the elements of the broader public sector support, please contact [rachel.clayton@thestaffcollege.uk](mailto:rachel.clayton@thestaffcollege.uk) or call: 0115 7484119.

## C.

## Bespoke support for organisational development

Public services are constantly under pressure to develop new and innovative responses to increasing demands. For example, preparing young people for jobs that don't yet exist, using technologies that have not been invented, in order to solve problems that we don't yet know about. Restructuring and efficiencies alone will not be sufficient in themselves to deliver robust and sustainable future provision. What is required is significant transformation and culture change both within individual organisations and across systems if the public sector is to be fit for purpose in the coming years. This requirement is not unique or confined to children's services and requires organisational intelligence which stems from mature leadership and a clearly articulated sense of purpose.

The Staff College works extensively with individual local authorities and across regional partnerships in response to a range of diverse commissions, including social care, safeguarding, school improvement and health and wellbeing. It undertakes bespoke design of programmes and events, as well as taking responsibility for their delivery and facilitation. Its work is rooted in the principles of participant co-construction, self-direction, peer supported learning and the principles of adult learning. Programmes and events are delivered in a highly interactive format and involve a combination of sector expertise, leadership provocation, research and, drawing on national and international examples, the sharing of good and innovative practice.

*"Inspiring and knowledgeable. Exceptionally well organised, pitched and plotted."*

*"Surpassed all expectations. Challenging!! Inspiring but realistic and measured. Thank you."*

*"I was not sure what to expect, however I think we have made much progress towards forming a cohesive group learning to be honest, open and challenging."*

Programme participants 2015

Much of what the College does is aimed specifically at senior and middle tier leadership and, it believes that, through these programmes, it has made a genuine contribution to the transformation which many local authorities have undergone in order to achieve an organisational culture fit for the complex and challenging context within which they operate.

However, each authority and locality is unique and the College's approach is always to develop bespoke solutions, which are locally determined, working with teams and individuals to co-construct learning which builds capacity and produces sustainable frameworks for development. By working with the Staff College, you will gain access to the latest leadership development approaches and principle thinkers from across the public sector in the UK and beyond.

All bespoke work is delivered through the College's trading arm, VSC Plus Ltd, which is ISO9001 accredited.



## The funding model for the Staff College

As the accountable body for the Department for Education grant-funded Directors of Children's Services Leadership Provision in England from 2011-2015, the College has been at the forefront of work to strengthen the understanding of the changing nature of children's services, systems leadership and sector-led improvement. In supporting a regional approach to talent management and succession planning for the leadership of children's services, the College has also demonstrated the potential of a local solutions approach to improvement. Its approach is always to develop bespoke solutions which are locally determined, working with teams and individuals to co-construct self-directed, peer supported learning to build capacity and produce sustainable frameworks for development.

During the grant period outlined above, all provision which related to the DfE grant was free at the point of delivery for DCSs and their teams and the costs for broader support to the sector were covered by the grant agreement with the Department. This now has to change following the cessation of the grant in 2015 and, consequently, all Staff College provision will need to become self-financing or be underpinned by a broader commitment to the College's work through subscription support from within the sector.

## Direct local authority subscriptions

Now that the Department is no longer funding the national leadership programmes which have been at the centre of the College's overall provision over the past 5 years the College is having to adjust its underlying business plan and revert to the previous model of local authority subscriptions in order to maintain its capacity to deliver its core commitments to the sector outlined in this prospectus.

The subscription model which is available to all local authorities will contribute to providing a sound financial footing for the College core activities whilst offering significant reductions to the cost of attending Staff College events for subscribing LA's employees.

Local authority subscription fees are based on a 3 band model, which reflects the population size. The fee levels for 2016 are:

Band	Population	Subscription
1	Up to 200,000	£1,500
2	200,001 - 300,000	£2,150
3	More than 300,000	£2,950

Note: it is possible for LAs to aggregate the annual payments for up to three years and by doing this secure the annual subscriptions at the fixed rate of year 1 for the period chosen.

The benefits for subscribing local authorities are:

- One free place on the summer or winter Think Tank for the DCS or nominee
- Free access to the Staff College bespoke 360 assessment tool for organisational development
- Free access to the Learning Portal section of the Staff College website resources
- 20% reduction in the cost of places on any Staff College programme, seminar or workshop
- 10% reduction in the cost of any bespoke leadership development which is directly commissioned by a subscribing Council
- A tangible commitment to the children's services community of practice and the Staff College's core work on behalf of the sector

## Direct payment for provision

For the 2016/17 programme year the planned provision costs on a 'pay as you use' basis are:

Staff College one day seminars / workshops	£325 + VAT
Leadership Academy seminars	£325 + VAT
Annual Think Tanks	£425 + VAT
Strategic DCS seminars	£325 + VAT
Online webinars	£125 + VAT



PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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Sir Colin Campbell Building,  
Triumph Road,  
Nottingham, NG7 2TU

[www.thestaffcollege.uk](http://www.thestaffcollege.uk)