



# Aspirant Directors of Children's Services

A single national programme for those aspiring to a director-level role in the provision of children's services in England. The Aspirant Directors of Children's Services Programme is a leadership development programme for senior leaders who are ambitious both for themselves and for the people that they serve.

## About the Programme

The Aspirant Directors of Children's Services Programme is a collaboration between the Staff College and NHS Horizons. Both organisations work at the cutting edge to develop and promote transformational leadership across the public sector. Our partnership gives participants the opportunity to benefit from some of the most innovative approaches and tools available to support learning, innovation and change.

The Programme will draw from other senior leadership programmes offered to aspiring directors across the public sector in England, Wales and Scotland and NHS Horizon's experience and expertise in supporting and delivering large scale change to provide an opportunity for senior public sector leaders to learn from each other and, together, prepare for the next phase of their careers.

## Objectives of the Programme

The step up to a director level role requires a willingness and ability to embrace the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity which now characterise senior leadership in the public sector. It will test your ability to manage dilemmas, in which

there may be no single "best way" in which to proceed and where progress can only be achieved by holding in creative tension apparently polar opposite perspectives or approaches.

By the end of the programme, you will be better able to exert influence and call others to action, gain consent for pragmatic solutions based on a strong sense of public value, determined by inclusive dialogue and deliberation and informed by evidence and democratic values.

The programme is designed to help you prepare for the challenge of operating at director level as a member of an executive team, and as a key player in the wider system. Its specific objectives are to:

- Introduce some 'core concepts' about leadership in the public sector, including 'adaptive' leadership, public value and systems thinking
- Share tools and approaches that you can use to manage the dilemmas and paradoxes that characterise many of the challenges that you will face
- Share thinking about the contribution and value of citizen and community capital in delivering improved public welfare outcomes

- Help you explore your potential for leadership at the most senior level and develop the resilience needed to cope with increasing demands
- Provide a safe learning environment within which to review your practice and work alongside your peers on an individual “leadership challenge”.

## Eligibility Criteria

This programme is designed for senior leaders across children’s services who:

- Are interested and able to step up to a director level role within the next 12 – 36 months
- Are committed to continued professional development and the ongoing review of their professional skills and competencies
- Are committed to deepening personal learning about leadership and making behavioural changes that impact positively on those around them
- Will actively share learning from the programme with colleagues through their leadership approach
- Can demonstrate significant experience and expertise in public sector leadership.

To get the most from the programme you will need to be highly committed and able to dedicate the time to complete the programme in full. You will also need to have the support and endorsement of your Director, line manager or other appropriate senior colleague.

For further information please contact:  
[Jessica.drummond@thestaffcollege.uk](mailto:Jessica.drummond@thestaffcollege.uk)

Applications for Cohort 1 will open on **Monday 8th January** and close at **midnight on Sunday 21st January**.



**HORIZONS**

## How to apply

The programme is limited to 30 participants. You will need to demonstrate how you meet the eligibility criteria by completing an online application process. You will also need the support of your sponsor.

The application and assessment process comprises a number of steps. These are:

- Completion and submission of the application process and sponsor nomination
- Independent review and benchmarking of application forms
- Ranking of eligible candidates to comprise the cohort.

## Duration

Programme duration is 6 months. You will be expected to commit to attending each of the face-to-face elements of the programme.

## Cost

**£2,000 + vat.**

## Timeline

January	Applications open Online platform opens to successful cohort
February	<b>Initiation day</b> <b>School for Change Agents:</b> 5-week virtual learning programme
April	<b>Residential 1:</b> 2 day residential
June	<b>Residential 2:</b> 2 day residential
July	<b>End of programme seminar</b>