HOW CAN WE BUILD CAPACITY FOR COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR SCOTLAND?
The Challenge We Face

With the development of the National Performance Framework and outcome-based approach in 2007, there was a clear recognition of shared aspirations across public services and a growing understanding of the need for us to work in different ways to achieve these.

The Christie report in 2011, reinforced by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act in 2015, and potentially also through the upcoming review of local governance and local democracy, placed further emphasis on the need for much greater collaboration across public services.

Whilst there are some areas where good progress has been made, there is also growing appreciation of the complex and intractable nature of many issues that we are trying to address. There is recognition that no single organisation or agency will be able to tackle these alone, and that effective collaboration in support of transformed outcomes is difficult to achieve. This work is often complex, messy and unpredictable.

What can we do together to help us to achieve the level of innovation and change that we need to deliver transformed outcomes?
Can Collective Leadership Help?

There is a growing national and international recognition of the opportunity created by Collective Leadership to help us in our efforts towards transforming outcomes.

- We know that we can’t solve complex problems with only what we each know now, and that we need to find ways for answers to emerge, drawing on every relevant perspective.
- We can’t make this kind of change by telling people to do it - the commitment to act and innovate comes from a collective and sustained visioning or imagining of a different future.
- We are often drawn together as partnership teams around complex issues but it is not always obvious what we need to do differently to enable us to genuinely come up with a new approach.
- We need a clear appreciation of the power and importance of relationships to enable our work.
- Collective leadership isn’t everything, but it is a facilitative mechanism to help us to unleash the power of policy, evidence, design and transformation.

What are the Core Elements?

Building from the Scottish Leaders Forum Workforce Scotland work, and related programmes in other sectors, we have learned that the following elements are core to support this work.

- We work with real teams on real issues in real places. This leads to system learning and wider development of facilitative leadership skills.
- Highly skilled facilitation is critical to the work, creating an integral emphasis on learning as the work progresses.
- Expert coaching for individuals and teams working with challenging and complex change makes a real difference.
- Building in learning and evaluation from the start and sharing learning widely as we go develops our practice and builds capacity.
- Creating structured and regular opportunities for shared learning around the theories, models and practices which best support Collective Leadership helps participant teams to see the bigger picture and prepare well for the work.
- Doing the Collective Leadership work in the systems we want to change is key. We know that leadership development often fails because it is not part of the system.
- We should offer relevant support for leadership at all levels of our system, including those who use services and civic society.

“Transforming systems is ultimately about transforming relationships among people who shape those systems”

Peter Senge
What is our Collective Leadership Offer?

The Collective Leadership offer is a structured three-year programme of activity to build capacity for Collective Leadership for Scotland. This will include:

• An opportunity for direct work with six to eight new multi-partner participant teams each year.
• Taster sessions for individuals and potential participant teams to understand and experience the theory and practice of Collective Leadership, and the commitment it will require, in advance of applying to be a participant team. These will take the form of generic tasters which are offered to any individuals or groups of individuals, and bespoke tasters which are offered to potential participant teams. The first taster sessions are scheduled for:
  - 22nd February 2018
  - 28th March 2018
  - 25th April 2018
• A four-day facilitation development programme, to further develop the specific skills and capacity to work on complex issues with multi-partner teams. This will first run on 22 to 25 March 2018, and will be offered every six months thereafter.
• A collective, in-depth learning core running through the programme, drawing participant teams to learn and develop together.
• Explicit steps to draw together relevant work under the broad umbrella of Collective Leadership, making connections with other relevant programmes and sectors where we can.
• Ongoing and embedded opportunities for peer learning and engagement, including an annual conference on Collective Leadership.
• Structured learning opportunities in each year of the programme to develop coaching capacity to make coaching support available to all programme participants. The first Coaching Development Programme will be offered in April 2018.
• Embedded learning and evaluation, including working with academic partners and funded research studentships.
Core Characteristics
The following Core Characteristics of Whole-Systems Leadership (University of Minnesota and Life Science Foundation 2010) will underpin the programme.

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<th>Core Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deep listening</td>
<td>Listening to learn and temporarily suspending judgment</td>
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<td>Awareness of systems</td>
<td>Understanding communities, organisations, and groups as adaptive, changing systems to gain a fuller perspective of the situation, and expand and refine your options for action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness of self</td>
<td>Being aware of your motivations, feelings, and beliefs to help you to make effective decisions about how to behave</td>
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<td>Seeking diverse perspectives</td>
<td>The respectful inclusion of all voices so that, rather than presenting a problem, conflicting opinions become a potential resource, helping to sharpen thinking and generate innovative options for action</td>
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<td>Suspending certainty, embracing uncertainty</td>
<td>Seeing beyond your habitual frame to get a broader and potentially more accurate view of what is going on</td>
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<td>Taking adaptive action</td>
<td>Learning from everything you do, taking time to recognise patterns and reflect on their meaning before jumping to a solution, balancing an inclusive, deep listening approach with a bias towards action</td>
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What Does it Feel Like to be a Participant Team?

The offer on Collective Leadership is to provide skilled facilitation to a group of leaders from across public service partners who are working together to tackle a real, intractable, adaptive or wicked issue. The programme makes a distinction between this kind of societal issue which requires collaboration because no single service or organisation has the answer. Each has a stake in the issue and a different view about the nature of the problem and how it should be tackled. Collective Leadership is not an offer of facilitation to tackle crisis-type interventions needing command and control responses or managerial issues which require process and procedure.

Learning and inquiry are placed at the heart of real work, explicitly drawing on, and being informed by models and theories appropriate to transformation. The approach is deliberative and developmental for leaders who participate - there needs to be an openness to working in this way and a willingness from individuals to learn.

The programme works with groups who are seeking to increase the value which can be gained by collaboration. It is not for partners coming together to join up individual service or organisational responses.

The offer is focussed upon the real, complex work that teams are doing. We recognise that there will not be one model that works for all teams. As a guide, however, participation in the Collective Leadership programme may involve a team working for around 6 to 12 months with facilitators on the complex issue they are trying to address. This could be a pattern of monthly meetings of the partnership team with the facilitators, where the real work is done, but where some time is set aside to focus on what is being learned about Collective
Leadership. Participant teams will also be expected to allocate two days over this time for the learning core and to be part of shared learning events twice each year.

Action Inquiry is used as a method of examining and reflecting on individual leadership contribution, which puts action at the heart of the work being undertaken. Individual and collective leadership is viewed from the point of view of the impact it is having on the wider system and the issue being addressed.

We want to work with leadership groups seeking to be “out there where the learning happens”, which may require giving up power and control, allowing things to be different and inviting change and disruption, in order to bring about positive transformation.

Why is Facilitation so Crucial?

Working with this level of complexity is challenging and the pressure to revert to the ways of doing things that we are familiar and comfortable with runs extraordinarily high. The facilitators keep a focus on the higher purpose of bringing about transformation and support the group to persevere in working differently, bringing challenge and creating a buffer zone for reflection and learning.

What is Our Ask of our Partners and Colleagues as we Progress the Development of Collective Leadership?

- Does this resonate with your own experience of working to achieve transformed outcomes?
- Are you aware of other strands of emerging leadership development work where there would be a benefit in drawing it together in the Collective Leadership umbrella?
- Is there an area of complex work where you are either already working with partners or see the need to work with partners where you can see that Collective Leadership would make a difference?
- Are you aware of experience, skills or capacity from your own sector or organisation that could contribute to this work, e.g. on complex facilitation or coaching? How best can we make sure that time can then be released for these colleagues to undertake the Collective Leadership work?
- Is there anyone you would like to nominate to apply for the Facilitation Development Programme, first being offered on 22 to 25 March 2018, with further opportunities at six-monthly intervals after that? There may be people who are skilled in this kind of work doing all sorts of roles in the organisation.
- Does the offer, as currently expressed, look like it could make a difference? What else would you like to see?
For further information on this development, please contact Janet.Whitley@gov.scot or 07557 007 925.

For further information on the work of Workforce Scotland, please see
www.workforcescotland.com