Accelerating Emerging Healthcare Leader Development (Band 7 Coaching)
“I think this is essential for all leaders in the NHS.”
— Leading Better Care Facilitator & Programme Participant 2015-16

2015-16 Highlights

An integrated element of the centralised approach to Leading Better Care was the provision of coaching-based development. To support the ongoing focus on excellence in care in NHS Scotland, coaching was introduced for emerging leaders across health boards in Autumn 2016.

The approach and development partnership built on the successful delivery of leadership coaching to emerging leaders in Midwifery (Best Start Leadership Programme, delivered by Firefly 2012-2016).

This paper provides highlights of the participant experience, learning and impact, with suggestions for potential improvements raised in feedback.
Programme Design
As part of the NHS Education for Scotland centralised offering for emerging leaders (Band 7), Firefly’s programme design comprised integrated elements to accelerate healthcare leader development.

The Participant Learning
Through the combination of individual coaching, the launch development day, peer supported learning and the learning resource materials, participants stated that they learned the core, inter-related elements of leadership. The focus of the development interventions was on developing leaders themselves, starting from a premise that any change starts with a change in mindset and beliefs; and then ripples out to behaviours and in turn to teams and wider service.
“I think because I have got so much out of it, I feel that everyone deserves this, or at least a form of it.”

Focussing on leaders developing themselves, created tangible, resulting impacts for individual leaders, teams and service.

The Participant Experience
- 122 Band 7 participants
- 9 Health Board co-ordinators
- In-person launch day (Edinburgh, Inverness and Glasgow)
- Cross-Health Board coaching families met each other and their coach at the launch day
- 3.5 hours one-to-one telephone-based coaching and interim support
- 2 hours peer learning sessions (group coaching calls)

The vast majority of participants welcomed and recognised all elements of the programme. The learning and impact highlighted has been significant, with appetite to continue the learning and application beyond the five months, and to share with their teams and other colleagues.
89.4% stated that coaching has positively impacted their overall effectiveness in their role.

Coaching Impact

“At the beginning I wasn’t sure what to expect, or what I could possibly get from this experience.

However, after each coaching session I could see a change in myself. I seemed to be more focused, less stressed, stopped over thinking things so much. I allowed myself to ‘take a breath’.

I believe my day to day practice improved, work didn’t feel as if it was piling up around me. I was completing tasks more effectively.

I became more confident sharing my opinions and ideas with management and was less afraid of sharing concerns.

I have 4 teams of staff that cover a very large rural area … all very different … and a total of 50 staff. I now feel I fit into all these teams … I now feel able to lead my teams and have them moving forward beside me, rather than feeling I am walking through mud and trying to drag others with me.”

— Senior Charge Nurse, new to role, undergoing significant organisational change

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<th>Impact</th>
<th>Pre Rating (out of 5)</th>
<th>Post Rating (out of 5)</th>
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<td>My confidence in managing change</td>
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A significant number of participants were unable to participate in the group calls due to demands of their day jobs.

Source: 86 Participant Evaluation Questionnaires (scores 1-5, 4 & 5 counted above)
Some Experience Comments

“Having a confidential platform to speak openly about how you are feeling and the kind of challenges you come up against.”

“Talking to [my coach] helped me peel it all back … making me see that I could do it. That I was able to do it. She didn’t tell me that I could but she made me feel that I could. She made me work it out for myself.”

“The role of SCN can be a lonely isolated role, I think management are aware of that … we got quite a lot out of the group sessions … it is good to have somebody who is going through the same role as you and some of the same challenges and you can support each other.”

“I would very much recommend this. It has been great for building my confidence, making me view things from a different standpoint and mostly for showing me that I already have the skills to be a great leader. I just needed to take a step back and view this with fresh eyes.”

Source: 86 Participant Evaluation Questionnaires

The Way Forward

Almost half of all participants stated that there was nothing they wanted to be different, or that was ‘least helpful.’ From those who made suggestions, the following themes emerged:

1:1 Coaching Sessions

“I feel I am only just grazing the surface of what coaching could do to enable me to feel more effective in my role… more sessions with my coach would be beneficial.”

- Participants highlighted both the desire for an ongoing opportunity to continue coaching beyond the five months and, in more than half the participants, a desire to continue the coaching beyond the five months received to date.

Closure

“I would have liked to have had closure with the whole group to see how we have all benefitted and learned from each other.”

- There was desire for face to face completion as a group; to share learning, insight and development. Some coaching ‘families’ have arranged their own face to face follow up; and some participants have had their experience recognised at Health Board events.

Group Coaching Sessions

- Many participants wanted to have more group coaching sessions;
- Participants wanted to have had full participation from their peers
- Some participants found the lack of visual contact impacted on their engagement.
About Firefly

Firefly is a dynamic and innovative leadership development business, based in Edinburgh, with a global team of leadership coaches operating across the UK and beyond.

We create a more powerful future for organisations and communities by touching their leaders through leadership development. The focus is on creating intimate client partnerships. We never let people play small or learn for learning’s sake. It’s a rigorous, outcome-orientated approach. And it’s the opposite of anything passive, prescriptive or one-dimensional: this is why Firefly will never do training.

Firefly, Igniting better futures, today.