



# Bespoke Team and Board Development

Prospectus 2019-20

The Staff College: Leadership in Healthcare

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There's something about the personalities of team members, the ethos and the overt openness and honesty that runs through Staff College and the focus on awareness raising that really makes it different to anyone else. Their focus on process and behaviours, and how behaviours can have a positive or negative impact on how we work together forms the basis of development.

When we're stuck in the discussion it's hard to see the bird's eye view. I loved the provocation and the way Staff College helped pull us back to think about what was really at the heart of what we're trying to achieve.

People began to feel more confident to be honest about how they felt and what they thought. We paid more attention to what was going on in the room for people. Meetings became more focussed and open with greater trust between members.

*Clinical Chair, Sustainability and Transformation Partnership and Clinical Commissioning Group*

The aspect of the programme that participants universally found compelling was the opportunity to reflect on their group dynamics and own behaviours. Observing how the groups moved from wary, closed or sometimes defensive stances to ones where people spend up about their organisational struggles and sometimes personal vulnerabilities and sought and received the support of the group was powerful. As were the examples of where this new-found collaboration then continued after the sessions, with colleagues supporting each other with difficult decisions across organisations.

*Programme Director, Sustainability and Transformation Partnership*

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## Who we are and what we do

The Staff College: Leadership in Healthcare (Staff College) is a national charity dedicated to developing leaders and helping them to deliver better outcomes. Our faculty of experienced leaders have led large, complex organisations in the NHS, Defence, Business and Education. Together they have a rich, collective wisdom on developing leaders.

We offer a range of programmes from our flagship Senior Leadership Development Programme, that individuals can access, to bespoke programmes for teams and boards. We regularly develop programmes for organisations to meet a particular development need or staff group. We also enjoy collaborating with other organisations to co-develop programmes. Since we started back in 2010, over 3450 members have attended our programmes.

We deliver three key forms of leadership development programmes:

- 1) Senior Leadership Development:** our open modules aimed at those from across the health and care community.
- 2) Commissioned programmes:** where an organisation commissions us to deliver a particular type of programme for a specific audience.
- 3) Bespoke programmes:** designed around the specific needs of a team or Executive Board. Programmes build on each team's diverse skills and experiences to generate a mutually supportive framework that produces a team ethos, whilst enabling them to work on the real issues they face.



Barts Health and East of London Colorectal Clinical Network

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## Working with Senior Leadership Teams and Boards

We work with senior leadership teams and our initial engagement is often due to a team wishing to 'improve' in some way. This includes elements that are:

### Generative

A new team wishing to get off to a good start by developing good practices in both the content and process of their work.

### Developmental

An existing team that wishes to go from 'good to great' or feels it needs to 'shift into a higher gear' to meet new/increased demands.

### Reparative

A team that is not functioning the way it wants or needs to due to one or more historical/current issues.

Senior leaders are often engaged in wicked problems. We define these as highly complex problems to which there is no obvious or neat solution. Therefore, our focus is on the processes of leadership and how people find a way through persistent, and often stubborn, areas of concern.

We believe that the 'process' or 'the way that people go about doing a task' needs to be understood and led so that the actual task itself can be accomplished to the best of a group's ability.

Please describe the impact the programme has had on the way you work together as a team?

- Helped us see common goals. Opened up areas for further discussion - clarified some grey areas.
- Shared goals and struggles - highlighted existing strengths.
- Understand how different people's leadership styles and impact on working together.
- Established ways of joint working and overcoming obstructive elements.
- Well facilitated, able to reflect on communication style when working in a group. Better understanding of priorities, system working and appreciation of roles.
- Issues/white elephant in the room were discussed with open and honest reflections on the whole team and the make-up/roles within the team.

*Post bespoke programme for the Integrated Discharge Team, Surrey and Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust, Sussex Community Foundation Trust and First Community Health Care*

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## **Bespoke team leadership and development programmes**

### **Aim**

To develop team leadership and team cohesiveness

### **In order to improve**

Team performance/delivery of mission/purpose  
Team resilience and capability to manage change

### **Format**

We deliver bespoke leadership interventions for teams. While the length and nature of these events will vary, dependent on the needs of the team, all events will have three distinct phases, a 'diagnostic phase, a 'development phase' and a 'support phase.' Each of these phases is vital to the success of a programme in bringing about longer term sustainable change.

A key element of the course is that the team works on real issues and not case study material. However, unlike management consultancies, we are not here to provide the solutions to the challenges the team faces. Our role is to provide the environment, support and challenge necessary for the team to be able to decide and agree their own processes and work towards solutions to their problems. The team are the subject matter experts, and for there to be longer term change, they must own their solutions.

The work will involve a series of exercises and challenges with 'straight talking' feedback that develops self-awareness, an appreciation of the impact on others and the ability to differentiate helpful and unhelpful patterns of behaviour.

It is worth noting that this way of working can involve high levels of self-disclosure and emotionally stirring material so if this could be an issue for members of the team it is important to discuss this at the diagnostic phase.

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## **Diagnostic Phase**

### **Aim**

To understand the nature of the team and their challenges.

### **In order to**

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Ensure we tailor the development programme to the needs of the team and have an awareness of some of the key view-points within the team.

### **Indicative Duration**

2-3 meetings or phone calls with: the sponsor, the team leader and other key individuals if deemed necessary.

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## **Development Phase**

### **Aim**

To develop individual self-awareness and team cohesion.

### **In order to**

Build understanding, trust and resilience within the team and improve workplace performance.

### **Indicative Duration**

2-3 days

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Understand your own leadership context and the challenges within the team and healthcare system.
  - Understand roles: self, leader, deputies and followers.
  - Gain a deeper awareness of presence - how personal traits impact or fail to impact on the performance of self and team.
  - Notice the nature of key inter-team relationships.
  - Understand the dynamic demands of task, team and individual priorities.
  - Begin to develop your personal leadership strategy.
  - Identify the team's current reality, the desired future, and begin to identify the necessary steps to move from one to the other.
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## **Support Phase**

### **Aim**

To provide ongoing support to the team and individuals.

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### **In order to**

To ensure that they are able to successfully embed their collective learning in everyday practice.

### **Indicative Duration**

The needs of each team will vary for the support phase. This could include a facilitator's attendance at team meetings for an agreed period following the intervention; individual or further team coaching; follow up phone calls and advice for the team.

Please describe the impact the programme has had on the way you work together as a team?

- We have moved forward in some areas and seen what wasn't working in others.
- Very positive - open discussions - reached a conclusion which although not radical - certainly a step forward
- enough to make positive change.
- Helpful.
- It will improve the way we communicate with each other enabling all of us to develop.
- Agreed model going forward. Joint ways of working. Better shared responsibility and pressure.
- Has started to move the team forward in a new direction.

*Post bespoke programme for the Integrated Discharge Team, Surrey and Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust, Sussex Community Foundation Trust and First Community Health Care*

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## Our approach

### We raise awareness of group dynamic issues and group structural issues, including but not exclusively:

- patterns of contribution
- who gets listened to/ignored
- how decisions get made or avoided
- how people prioritise their attention i.e. sticking to the primary task vs. drifting into other areas
- how conflict is dealt with or suppressed
- the structure of the agenda – does 'form follow function'?
- the nature of different roles in the group
- the use of time and space

### Programmes normally consist of a mixture of:

- Process observations (as above)
- Process interventions (commenting on the groups work in the 'here and now')
- Taught material (useful ideas and techniques to improve group functioning).
- Generative sessions:
  - group members getting to know each other better
  - working on mission/purpose
  - working on strategy and planning
- Reparative sessions (where necessary):
  - resolving conflict
  - learning from difficult experiences
  - improving poor behaviour patterns

By helping a group gain better insight into how they currently work together, we can then provide the necessary support and challenge to help them work better together.

We value straight-talking and have a great deal of respect for the difficult work people are engaged in. This way of working often leads to highly energised discussions sometimes bordering on the uncomfortable but nearly always engaging and productive.

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The people who attend our programmes often mention that they like the fact that 'we do things differently'. It is often difficult to pin down the 'difference that makes a difference' but includes:

**Members discover the truth about themselves as leaders and followers by:**

- Extensively giving and receiving feedback often using video playback, which not only connects at an emotional level, but prevents them denying behaviours. People believe their own data.
- Being encouraged to challenge each other, as a way of assisting in learning and also giving support.
- Receiving feedback from faculty, their group peers and their own senses, the power of which combination ensures the learning occurs at an experiential level.

**Programmes are highly engaging, through:**

- Low power-point per hour ratio. Experiencing and engaging in dialogue is encouraged over lecturing.
- Involving real tasks, with no case studies or role play.
- Keeping members in the here and now.
- Creating a challenging as well as supportive learning environment.

**Faculty are unusual, in that they:**

- Initiate and sustain a generous relationship.
- Lead by example during the course and bring extensive leadership experience to it.
- Come from diverse careers and organisations - the healthcare community, the military and the commercial sector.
- Are mutually rigorous in their testing of material for inclusion and examination of all approaches.
- Are committed learners, who are full participants in the unfolding of the courses.
- Are always open to change.
- Do not pathologise cynicism and resistance but work with it, understanding that this is what leaders are contending with daily.
- Are immune to much of the 'fashion and gimmick' nature prevalent in the field of leadership development. The test is 'usefulness' not 'newness'

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