



CHIEF
EXECUTIVES'
FORUM



Leadership Exchange

Senior Leaders Sharing Learning

Across Sectors

Patrick Gallen and Anne Phillipson

January – April 2022



Introduction to Action Learning Groups



CO3, the Chief Executives' Forum and Grant Thornton are delighted to open once again the extremely successful Cross-Sectoral Leadership Exchange programme.

The four-month initiative brings together a range of senior leaders from the third sector and the public sector to learn from one another, through a series of Action Learning Groups. It is aimed specifically at Third Sector Chief Executives, Local Government Chief Executives, NI Senior Civil Service and Public Sector Leaders, acknowledging that these leaders must work in partnership to deliver for Northern Ireland.

A vital element of effective partnership working involves building and sustaining effective personal relationships - leaders working with and through others to deliver. This highly immersive learning experience will provide a platform to access a wider range of views and expertise outside of each leader's respective areas of work.

No single sector can deal with the challenges NI is facing in isolation: we must work together, across boundaries, to deliver the best possible outcomes.

Successful collaboration is founded on creating understanding, establishing trust and building relationships. This programme is an excellent opportunity for leaders across the public and third sectors to develop relationships and gain real insights.

**David Sterling,
Chair,
Chief Executives
Forum**

The Action Learning Groups will run as **four 2-hour virtual sessions**, facilitated by **Patrick Gallen** and **Anne Phillipson** from Grant Thornton, experienced Management and Learning Consultants. They will create a reflective and safe space for participants to share, learn, and stretch their leadership perspective beyond their normal confines.



What will I gain?



The difference the programme will make to your leadership:

- Strengthening links between sectors, which will in turn encourage and develop opportunities for collaboration.
- Improving your knowledge and awareness of working in the different sectors (the processes, the benefits and the challenges).
- Providing an opportunity to share corporate learning, leadership skills and bring a fresh perspective to work practices.
- Offering an exclusive opportunity for robust interactions and the opportunity to walk 'a mile in my shoes' of leaders outside of your sector.
- Reflecting and learning from each other's attempts to change things and the experience of coaching each other hones skills of listening, coaching, giving feedback and facilitating.

Participant feedback:

"Being part of a cross-sectoral leadership action learning group has strengthened my understanding of the challenges and opportunities leaders experience in each sector. Entering into this experimental leadership development opportunity has benefited the expansion of my professional network and supported my resilience. I would recommend leaders from all sectors to give it a go."

Heather Weir, CEO, NI Hospice

"The time together was so precious, to have some white space, away from the noise that was happening around us and be able to see things from different perspectives. Being able to relay our challenges to our statutory sector colleagues and being able to work through those challenges as a group was really powerful."

Janet Schofield, CEO, CAN (Compass Advocacy Network)

"You get the opportunity to have conversations and build relationships in a very safe space. There was a fantastic mix of people across different sectors."

**Gerard Murray, Director of Regional Development,
Department for Communities**



How does it all work?



How the programme works:

Four Action Learning Groups will be independently facilitated by a Grant Thornton coach who will be committed to the success of the group members and each session will operate under the Chatham House Rule.

In each meeting, no topic is off-limits. Individuals must be willing to talk candidly about the tough decisions they face. Fellow members will listen, ask tough questions and bring their skills to help individuals grow as a leader and therefore improve the workings of their organisation.

Leaders will gain perspective, good advice and develop a definitive action plan at each meeting and in follow up meetings other members will ask how their plans are developing, making leaders accountable for their progress.

Additionally, a range of inspiring leaders will share their leadership journey to date at the start of the Action Learning Sets.

The programme process:

1. Expressions of interest open for submission on **29 November 2021**
2. Deadline for expressions of interest to close on **6 January 2022**
3. Leaders will be selected from a diverse range of complementary organisations, whilst ensuring a balance of status, responsibility and experience.
4. Participation in four Action Learning Groups over a four month period.
5. Evaluation - each participant's outcomes and experiences will be evaluated by a mixture of online surveys, face-to-face interviews and case studies. All feedback will be anonymised.



How do I apply?



Selection process/eligibility

Up to 20 leaders (ten from each sector) will be selected through a brief expression of interest process, creating the Cross-Sectorial Action Learning Groups.

Leaders will be selected from a diverse range of complementary organisations, whilst ensuring a balance of status, responsibility and experience.

This programme is aimed specifically at Third Sector Chief Executives, Local Government and ALB Chief Executives, members of the NI Senior Civil Service.

We anticipate a high volume of interest in the programme.

The application submission deadline is **Thursday 6 January 2022**.

Please ensure that in applying to this programme you can attend the four Action Learning Groups and Debrief Session:

- Session 1 **26 January 2022**
- Session 2 **25 February 2022**
- Session 3 **25 March 2022**
- Session 4 **27 April 2022**
- Debrief session – **date to be confirmed**.

In light of public health advice, the sessions will be held virtually via Zoom.

Cost and how to register your interest (public sector):

The cost to participate in this programme is **£495 + VAT** per person.

If you would like further information on the programme, please contact anne.dickson@ceforum.org.

To register your interest, please supply your name, position, organisation, and a brief outline of your role and why you are interested in this programme (max 70 words) to: mail@ceforum.org.



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