



CHIEF  
EXECUTIVES'  
FORUM



Grant Thornton

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# Leadership Exchange

## Cross-sectoral action learning groups

**Patrick Gallen and Anne Phillipson**

October 2020



# Introduction to Action Learning Groups



CO3, Chief Executives' Forum and Grant Thornton are delighted to announce the second year of their extremely successful cross-sectoral leadership exchange programme.

The initiative will bring together a range of Third Sector Chief Executives and Public Sector Leaders to learn from one another, through a series of Action Learning Groups. This programme is aimed specifically at Third Sector Chief Executives, Local Government Chief Executives, NI Senior Civil Service and Public Sector Leaders.

The highly immersive learning experience will provide a platform to access a wider range of views and expertise outside of the leader's respective areas of work.

A large body of evidence suggests that a necessary part of effective partnership working involves building and sustaining effective personal relationships. Leaders work with and through others.

*“Northern Ireland is facing significant challenges, and no single sector can deal with these in isolation: we must work together to deliver the best possible outcomes for our people. Public and third sector collaborations have delivered excellent outcomes in the past, thanks to leaders working across boundaries, and there is potential to achieve so much more. Building relationships and establishing trust with other leaders form the foundation of successful collaboration. This programme provides an excellent opportunity for leaders across both sectors to build and develop those relationships gaining real insights into the potential of increased collaboration.”*

**David Sterling, Chair  
Chief Executives Forum**



The Action Learning Groups will be facilitated by **Patrick Gallen** and **Anne Phillipson** from Grant Thornton, who are experienced Management and Learning Consultants and will help the participants create a reflective and safe space for leaders 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 their skills of listening, coaching, giving feedback and facilitating.

## Participant feedback

*"I came into the process feeling cynical, but it proved to be very beneficial. Colleagues wanted to help and I looked forward to coming to each session."*

*"It was nice to not feel alone regarding problems. There was reassurance that others are having the same problems."*

*"There was a sense of being among people who could challenge, help and who cared."*

*"Being part of a cross-sectoral leadership action learning group has strengthened my understanding of the challenges and opportunities leaders experience in each sector. Collaborative leadership is underpinned by developing respectful relationships in a safe shared space, being open to others' perspectives and getting comfortable with being uncomfortable. 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 give it a go."*

**Heather Weir, CEO, NI Hospice**



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# How does it all work?



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## 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 Chatham House Rules.

In every 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 thereby making leaders accountable for their progress.

We will also organise a range of inspiring leaders to 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 **26 October 2020**
2. Deadline for expressions of interest to close on **18 November 2020**
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.



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# How do I apply?

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## Selection process/eligibility

Up to 20 leaders (10 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 chief executives from Third Sector, Local Government, Arms Length Bodies and members of the NI Senior Civil Service.

We anticipate a high volume of interest in the programme. The application submission deadline is **Wednesday 18 November 2020**.

| Session                   | Date             | Time        |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Virtual Information Event | 12 November 2020 | 10:00-12:00 |
| Session 1                 | 25 November 2020 | 10:00-12:00 |
| Session 2                 | 16 December 2020 | 10:00-12:00 |
| Session 3                 | 13 January 2021  | 10:00-12:00 |
| Session 4                 | 20 January 2021  | 10:00-12:00 |

## Cost and how to register your interest

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

If you are interested in participating in the programme please contact the relevant person below:

Public sector [mail@ceforum.org](mailto:mail@ceforum.org)

Third sector [nora@co3.bz](mailto:nora@co3.bz)

**Please ensure that in applying to this programme you can attend the four Action Learning Groups.**

Until public health guidelines allow otherwise, the Action Learning Groups will be held virtually via Zoom.



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