

Children's Services Strategic Senior Leadership

An East Midlands leadership development programme

Cohort 1: Autumn 2021 - Spring 2022



The CSSSL programme has been created in the East Midlands region to support the leadership development of those working in senior leadership roles with LA children's services.

It is ideal for established leaders who are currently heading-up significant areas of service and managing teams, and are considering their next likely career steps into an LA 2nd Tier Director role, just below DCS.

A limited number of places are also available for senior colleagues from other organisations who are developing their strategic system leadership in partnership with LA children's services.

Key features of the CSSSL programme

- A mixed cohort of up to 30 leaders from across children's services in the East Midlands region
- Focus upon the shift from senior management into strategic leadership
- Development of leadership qualities identified as crucial to the needs of the sector
- Direct inputs from great external contributors and Directors of Children's Services
- Four face-to-face days Oct-April and additional online seminars
- Group tutorials and personal mentoring
- Practical, interactive sessions



Further details and the Expression of Interest form are available at

www.sectorledimprovement.co.uk/CSSSL

About CSSSL

The CSSSL programme has been created to strengthen leadership capacity in the East Midlands and support the development pathway of some of the region's best leaders.

The CSSSL programme is not a technical management course. It focuses on the strategic leadership qualities we are looking to develop in the region for leaders who are well-placed to grow into the most senior roles over the next decades.

CSSSL provides a unique opportunity to learn and develop alongside other senior leaders from a variety of areas and backgrounds. The programme provides a rich blend of inspirational and practical experiences.



CSSSL Leadership Qualities

The CSSSL programme is built upon a set of qualities identified by the region's Directors of Children's Services to be most important for our current and future leaders.

These qualities relate to individual behaviours and characteristics, features of the leadership role and the working environment. They address a range of themes considered to be most important for colleagues stepping into strategic senior leadership roles in children's services.

Themes include:

- Personal resilience, confidence, humour, humility
- Understanding your moral base and having integrity
- System leadership and influence within partnerships
- Understanding and simplifying complexity
- Balancing needs and demand with resources
- Maintaining a focus on outcomes
- Creating and sustaining commitment
- Managing complex, ever-changing partnerships
- Nuanced communication skills, moving from the 'linear'
- Coping with imposter syndrome
- Operating successfully in a political environment

Participants will each undertake a personal evaluation of the qualities that will guide their development plan and priorities through the CSSSL programme.

Reflecting and applying learning

A key value of the programme comes from participants reflecting upon their learning and applying it to their future work. The final session of each CSSSL day is a small group tutorial that supports participants to consolidate and apply their learning and consider their personal development. Mentoring sessions will also enable participants to reflect on their learning and progress.

Requirements of participants

The award of a fully-funded place on the CSSSL programme brings with it a requirement for full engagement. All participants must attend all face-to-face events, participate in mentoring sessions and online seminars. There are no 'gap tasks' or assignments.

Accreditation: Participants who attend and engage fully with all elements of the CSSSL programme will receive ILM L7 certification (TBC).

If further Covid restrictions are imposed, then the programme will be delayed. The face-to-face element of the CSSSL programme is seen as a vital component that contributes to practical learning, strong networks and lasting relationships.

The CSSSL face-to face events

Four events will be held when the whole cohort physically comes together for high quality learning days.

Dates and venues are being finalised to be held in early October, December, February and early April.

Each extended day (9.00am – 7.30pm) will combine keynote sessions, interactive practical workshops and small group tutorials. There will also be opportunity to interact with serving strategic leaders.

Current Directors of Children's Services will address some of the current challenges and privileges of leadership; external keynote speakers will add leadership perspectives from different walks of life.

A highly interactive Project 2035 workshop strand will allow participants to consider future leadership roles and scenarios, working in mixed groups to apply their thinking and initiative to practical issues.

The days will provide great opportunities to mix and learn from others on the programme and build strong and supportive networks.

Online Seminar Series

A series of online seminars provides a key strand of the CSSSL programme to provide insights into the leadership challenges of some cross-cutting topics. These seminars support the journey from the management of specialist areas, in which participants might have considerable expertise, into more general roles where the leaders are no longer the 'expert'.

These seminars will be led by serving colleagues within the region.

- Understanding the political process
- Strategic commissioning
- Working with the school system
- Effective early intervention
- Supporting vulnerable children and families
- SEND and Inclusion



How to apply for a place

The regional group of DCSs is managing the allocation of places onto this CSSSL programme as they look to invest in the development of future leadership.

All applications should be made to them following the instructions provided and using the Expression of Interest form at www.sectorledimprovement.co.uk/CSSSL

Applicants should have either the necessary approval or sufficient autonomy to ensure they can manage their diaries to attend all required elements of the programme if awarded a place.

All applications for places on this 2021/22 programme should be submitted by the 2nd July deadline. Places will be allocated and awarded by the EM DCS group to create a mixed, balanced cohort of approx. 30 participants.

Places awarded to LA colleagues will be fully funded. Places awarded to colleagues from external partners carry a £750 fee.

Notification of places will be made by the end of July, along with full details of the programme (dates, venues, etc).

Participants will be required to complete a self and peer evaluation exercise well before the first event in October.

Enquiries

The CSSSL programme has been developed and is being delivered as a sector-led initiative as part of the East Midlands Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA) led by the DCSs.

Further information is available online at www.sectorledimprovement.co.uk/CSSSL

Any further enquiries about the CSSSL programme should be directed to csssl@sdsa.net. SDSA colleagues are co-ordinating and managing the CSSSL programme.

CSSSL Timeline

