Communities of Practice Leadership Development Programme

Communities of Practice (CoPs) are groups of people who share a passion or a concern for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Whether established organically or deliberately, CoPs tend to thrive on voluntarism, a passion for action and the ability to respond to local need. They are based on commitment and trust between peers.

Over the past two decades, CoPs have been associated with initiatives to achieve multi-professional learning and access knowledge that cuts across established hierarchical, professional and organisational boundaries. They provide a new approach, which focuses on people and social structures that enable them to learn with and from each other.

This idea resonates with health and care professionals as it promises to foster mutual learning and knowledge sharing, building on the affinities that stem from sharing the same work. CoPs have achieved widespread currency internationally, both as tools for understanding how learning unfolds in healthcare settings and as a tool for promoting knowledge transfer and sharing.

While CoPs can be highly effective, there are challenges including over-management, and poor communication with and between members. Leading CoPs in collaborative, non-hierarchical ways can help to overcome these problems.

Community leaders should be good at both nurturing relationships, and comfortable with conflict and difference. Modelling transparency, commitment and mutual respect is at the heart of leadership in CoP development.

The Health Innovation Network, South London (HIN)

The HIN is the Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) for South London, one of 15 AHSN’s across England. Our organisation connects academics, NHS commissioners and providers, local authorities, patient groups and industry, in order to accelerate the spread and adoption of innovation and best practice, using evidence based research across large populations.

The Health Foundation

The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and healthcare for people in the UK. Our aim is a healthier population, supported by high quality healthcare that can be equitably accessed. The Health Foundation learn what works to make people’s lives healthier and improve the healthcare system. From giving grants to
those working at the front line to carrying out research and policy analysis, we shine a light on how to make successful change happen.

We believe good health and healthcare are key to a flourishing society. Through sharing what we learn, collaborating with others and building people’s skills and knowledge, we aim to make a difference and contribute to a healthier population.

**The HIN and the Health Foundation working in partnership**

The HIN and the Health Foundation recognise the important role that CoPs can play in delivering new care models, sustainable change and improvement in health and care services. Both organisations are working in partnership, to design and deliver an experiential learning programme to provide all the building blocks for successful Community of Practice leadership.

We are also working closely together to develop and make this programme available for a range of participants. These include quality improvement leads, patient safety leads and other key leaders of clinical and professional networks as well as Communities of Practice.

**About the Programme**

This programme is designed for health and care professionals who have an ambition to develop their collective leadership capability, and have a ‘live’ CoP to apply the learning from this programme. Participants will be in a position in the health and care system, to provide leadership through the community to support improvements in outcomes for the residents/patients/service users.

**The Experiential Learning Approach**

The approach is designed on experiential learning principles, supporting participants to focus their learning on current complex and challenging issues facing the CoP and applying and reflecting on their learning in ‘real time’ in their own Community of Practice.

The programme will play a vital role in helping to:

- Determine where CoP leadership effort needs to be focused and developed.
- Maximise the engagement of members.
- Reinforce connections between members.
- Strengthen the impact and value of the Community.

The programme has a strong “lived experience” base and builds on the successful CoPs currently hosted by the HIN and Q members, recognising the CoP convener role as an essential and key skill set for 21st century health and care professionals.
**Who is the programme for?**

Whether you are leading an established CoP or are in the process of building new connections, this programme can support you in your work.

To apply you must either be:

- a member of the Health Foundations Q initiative or
- leading or planning to lead an AHSN supported CoP.

To gain the most benefit from this programme for both yourself and your community, you will be:

- Open to new ideas and leadership practices.
- Keen to work with a potentially diverse group of colleagues around this topic.
- Willing to share your experiences honestly throughout the programme.

Specifically, you will:

- Have a real context in which to apply your learning i.e. be in a position to provide leadership to a community in the health and care system, which is focused on making a significant contribution to improving outcomes for residents, patients, carers and service users.
- Aspire to develop your own collective leadership capability and support your community to be the best it can be.
- Have energy and passion to lead improvement and transformation in health and care services.

During the application process we will ask you to identify any particular areas of interest or motivation for applying and expertise, so that we can understand how best to support your learning expectations and needs.

Priority will be given to applicants who are leading or aspire to lead a Community of Practice that spans across traditional professional and organisational boundaries.

You **must** have the support and commitment of your employing organisation and your line manager to release you for module attendance and CoP meetings. This will be a minimum of 10 days.

**What will participants gain?**

Research into adult learning shows that leaders learn best when they work on real issues, and where they learn through experience – putting ideas into practice in their workplace. Participants on the Leadership Programme will be able to place the experience of their own
CoPs at the centre of every module and will be able to contribute to the workshop content, based on their needs and questions.

By the end of the programme participants will:

- Recognise the varying forms and functions that CoPs take.
- Have developed the personal skill set and confidence to effectively provide leadership to their community.
- Understand the concept and reality of CoP leadership in practice.
- Have developed strategies and approaches to develop their community.
- Have considered the issue of sustaining the community and how this might be achieved.
- Have developed skills in presenting value and impact of the community.

What will healthcare organisations gain?

- Communities of Practice enable members to take collective responsibility for managing the knowledge they need, recognising that, given the proper structure, they are in the best position to do this.
- There is increasing recognition that the challenge of transforming health and social care services is as much a ‘knowledge’ as a financial challenge. A number of people believe that a communities-of-practice-approach can provide a new paradigm for development work.
- Members can address the tacit and dynamic aspects of knowledge creation and sharing, as well as the more explicit aspects supporting true learning in organisations.

Communities are not limited by formal structures - they create connections among people across organisational and geographic boundaries.

How will the programme run?

Structure and commitment required

The programme will run over one year between Jan 2019 and Jan 2020.

The programme will consist of approximately:

- 5 one day modules, 9-10 weeks apart followed by a one-hour reflective webinar
- Experiential Learning: commitment to convene approximately five face-to-face community meetings during the course of the programme
- Individual leadership work with your community as required between modules to develop and grow the community
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme element</th>
<th>Covering</th>
<th>Link to the NHS Healthcare Leadership Model</th>
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| Module 1: Planning and Launching Communities of Practice | • Distributed leadership  
• Collective purpose  
• Membership  
• Behaviours | • Inspiring shared purpose  
• Sharing the vision  
• Engaging the team  
| **LONDON** | **Module:** Thurs 18 Jan 2019  
**Webinar:** Thurs 28 Feb 2019 - 4pm |
| Module 2: Building Integrity and Maintaining Vitality | • Diversity  
• Building trusting relationships  
• Values  
• Overcoming challenges | • Inspiring shared purpose  
• Sharing the vision  
• Leading with care  
• Engaging the team  
| **LONDON** | **Module:** Thurs 29 Mar 2019  
**Webinar:** Thurs 2 May 2019 - 4pm |
| Module 3: Strategies for Community Development | • Ways of working and tools  
• Resources  
• Stages of community development | • Inspiring shared purpose  
• Sharing the vision  
• Leading with care  
• Engaging the team  
| **LONDON** | **Module:** Thurs 7 June 2019  
**Webinar:** Thurs 4 July 2019 - 4pm |
| Module 4: Measuring and Managing Value Creation | • Creating multiple types of value  
• Managing the knowledge system  
• Making value visible | • Influencing for results  
• Developing capability  
• Evaluating information  
| **LONDON** | **Module:** Thurs 20 Sept 2019  
**Webinar:** Thurs 17 Oct 2019 - 4pm |
| Module 5: Growing and Sustaining Communities of Practice | • Creating rhythm  
• Sustainability  
• Renewal  
• Impact | • Inspiring shared purpose  
• Leading with care  
• Developing capability  
| **LONDON** | **Module:** Thurs 22 Nov 2019  
**Webinar:** Thurs 19 Dec 2019 - 4pm |
| Celebration Event | |  
|  | | **Fri 17 Jan 2020** |

If you would like to discuss the programme in further detail please contact Cleo Butterworth (cleo.butterworth@nhs.net) or Jamie Hunt (james.hunt1@nhs.net).