

“This is not a training
programme”

#LGE2019

“The longest lever we have at our disposal is leadership: leadership at all levels, leaders who leave behind a legacy of leaders that can go even further, leaders who step out to make wider contributions and a pipeline of leaders developing their dispositions and skills...It is impossible to get a system perspective if we only stay at home. We need cross-connected leadership experiences in order to transform the system...”

Michael Fullan

**LEADING
GREATER
ESSEX**

CREATING OUR
FUTURE TOGETHER

**FUTURE
OF ESSEX**

ThePublicOffice

What is this thing?

What is it for?

What is it not?

The Leading Greater Essex Programme (#LGE2019) is an opportunity for aspiring and senior leaders to develop their capabilities and confidence as system leaders. We live in a world of increasing complexity and expectation; many of the problems that we need to solve do not belong to one organisation or one sector and will require leadership that crosses traditional boundaries and silos, and that reflects behaviours of collaboration, shared purpose and enquiry.

The aim of #LGE2019 is to take a cohort of leaders from across Essex, expose them to new thinking and methods for leading in complexity and across systems, help them to apply this learning to priority challenges, and for the wider system to be able to learn with and from their deepening experience and understanding of systems change in Essex. So #LGE2019 is a mixture of learning to think differently and learning to do differently in order to better serve citizens and taxpayers and reflecting on that learning with each other and with senior leaders and sponsors of the programme.

It is not a merely intellectual exercise – although there will be plenty to think about. It is not a purely personal development programme – because in addition to growing your learning, the opportunity is to help further shape the whole system's understanding of change: how do we need to be and how we need to be together in order to be high impact practitioners in the Essex system?

Why is it designed like it is?

A Theory of Learning

This is not a traditional 'training programme' that you might attend away from the office, playing the role of passive recipient. We have designed #LGE2019 using an evidence-based theory of learning as we believe professional learning that leads to sustained change in people's behaviour and practice is:

Integrated & embedded

Learning is not something that you go away and do 'over there' and then come back to the real world. Learning needs to be a priority of you and your organisation: a feature of your work, related to your performance development and embedded within organisational culture and practice.

Active & immersive

Learning is a verb: it is not something that can be done or delivered TO people. You need to be active in your own learning. Evidence tells us that learning experiences such as action-research, collaborative enquiry, simulations, project-based learning and experimentation are powerful and have been shown to shift practice. We learn best from the things we do – supported by great scaffolding.

Open & collaborative

The best environments for sustained learning are dynamic and multi-disciplinary by design. They create the conditions for ideas and experiences to be shared freely and honestly, so that new insights and perspectives, breakthroughs in thinking and shared commitments to doing differently are possible. #LGE2019 will deliberately harness new perspectives, mixed media and new methods in ways that disrupt traditional modes of thinking and doing, and which open up new conversations. Top-class facilitation will make the disruptive space feel safe.

Purposeful & relevant

We all learn best when the purpose and the need for new understanding, new knowledge and insight, new ways of doing things or solving problems are clear and compelling. Your learning must therefore be rooted in the need to take action, on something that you care about, something that is a priority for Essex.

So our programme that will run from May 2019 to March 2020 (see page 9) mixes methods:

- you will experience some direct teaching of frameworks and intellectual constructs to understand the systems we work in and leadership of change;
- you will have a go at taking action using practical tools and methods;
- you will learn together as a community as you further develop your capabilities and learning: both in your day job, and on a '100 Day Challenge' you will choose to work on with some colleagues; and
- you will reflect together – with your cohort colleagues and with senior sponsors of the programme – on what you see happening, deepening the shared understanding about how systems work and how to lead effectively in the Essex system.

There will be 10 days of contact time as a cohort, including a 2 day overnight residential, plus an expectation that you will be able to carve out some additional time (we expect this to be 3-4 days) to work with colleagues experimenting and applying your skills and growing your confidence.

#LGE2019 Curriculum

Through participation in #LGE2019 participants will:

- grow consciousness of their own frames and perspectives (ways of thinking);
- build a collaborative awareness of their context and the culture and behaviours that characterise it (ways of being and doing);
- understand some basic features of the theoretical underpinning around systems thinking, complexity, and implications for leadership;
- reflect and learn, with a focus on action: become aware of their own agency in the system as leaders, as shapers of the context and leaders of change;
- develop, apply and reflect iteratively on more active forms of leadership, becoming (with colleagues) a community of practitioners who are keyed into the new challenges of leadership and are readying themselves to respond;
- understand learning as a critical leadership discipline, and how to create environments in which other colleagues can learn;
- identify their own learning needs, and those of their organisations.

Who is it for?

“Sometimes I feel a bit defeated. I’m doing what really feels like the right thing to do, but every other signal and pressure I’m getting points in the other direction.”

Participant in #LGE2018

This opportunity is designed for people who wish to take their skills in managing and leading change to the next level, who wish to really explore the nature of leadership required to bring about change in the Essex public services system. It is for people who realise that they need to learn how to think differently and do differently in order to lead effectively in the 21st Century. It is definitely for people who are open, curious, and thirsty for challenge and disruption.

We expect participants to be in senior and/or strategic positions across the whole range of public and voluntary service organisations serving Essex. You will be someone passionate about improving outcomes for the people that you serve, and keen to play a bigger role in working with colleagues across the County to meet head-on the complex challenges Essex faces today. Perhaps you feel blocked by the traditional mechanisms that are used to try to achieve change across complex systems. You might be frustrated by rules, priorities, practices and people that appear not to be lined up with what you feel is really important for Essex and its citizens. You are trying to do what you feel matters, but often feel stuck, or slowed down. It’s frustrating. Does this sound familiar?

Is this programme for me?

- Are you the sort of self-motivated person who wants to learn, lead, contribute, act, and would like to learn to thrive in ‘messy’ system-wide work?
- Do you want to further develop your leadership skills, tools and approaches in challenging and supported real work situations, especially in contexts where you hold no formal or hierarchical authority?
- Are you curious? Are you interested to explore ideas, provocations and perspectives beyond your own; to test and develop your ability to see and step beyond your own mental traps?
- Are you willing – with support – to step forward and step up: to decide how to take action without someone telling you precisely what to do?
- Are you committed enough to manage the diary challenge? **Can you commit to attending the 10 published days with the cohort, plus carving out 3-4 additional days of time to deepen your learning and work together with colleagues to make a real difference to Essex citizens?**

What should I expect?

Practically? How will it feel?

We will have 10 days of contact time as a cohort during the year, and in addition we expect you to put in up to another 3-4 days to reflect on your learning and to work together with colleagues on real world issues that you choose.

ThePublicOffice will make the theories of learning and change explicit in the design of our time – both together and apart – during the #LGE2019 journey. This means we will set high expectations for your active participation in the learning, but you will understand why you are being asked to do what you are being asked to do, and our aim is that you will feel supported at all times.

- There will be input of theoretical context, approaches and methodologies, through to tools and technologies that are helpful in embedding practices of leading in complexity. We will be offering you a range of connected ideas and methods with which to experiment and play: some things will work more for some people than others.
- There will be some reading you will be expected to do – but not too much.
- You will be given opportunity to reflect upon yourself and your own context, and what you experience as a leader in the Essex system. Sometimes you will do this on your own, sometimes in small or larger groups.
- We do not expect learning to happen in a neat, linear way. It often takes time to percolate or solidify, and we do not expect everyone to move at the same pace or to find breakthroughs at the same moment. Honest, iterative reflection will enable you to keep track on what's happening for you.
- You will need to be prepared to move beyond where you feel comfortable, and to practice things that you don't yet feel confident doing.
- There will be an emphasis on taking action: using your learning to try new ways of mobilising change. And then to reflect on what happened, and what new insights have been revealed.
- There will be fun.

To provide focus and intent to your learning, we will expect you to actively participate in a 'real work' challenge. You will engage in a system-wide enquiry working alongside other #LGE2019 participants, to 'consult' to the system in relation to bringing about change on a problem that extends beyond simple organisational boundaries. You will not be expected to find the time to solve everything! We call this the 100 Day Challenge: a period of about 3 months during which you will probably spend 2 or 3 days creating new insights with a small group of colleagues. We will support you to explore your chosen problem through different ways of working, noticing, diagnosing and intervening, so that together you will bring a new contribution to addressing a complex and priority issue in Essex.

You will also have in mind some 'within role' work from your own organisational portfolio – an adaptive leadership challenge where success requires leading, to some degree, beyond formal or hierarchical control over the process and outcomes. There will be opportunities to apply your learning to this challenge, reflecting on what you are learning and experimenting with strategies for taking action and making change.

Reflections from #LGE2018 participants:

“Every time I’ve come to an #LGE2018 session I’ve come away really energised, feeling I can really make a difference.”

“[#LGE2018] has given me a theoretical underpinning that will help me think, plan and deliver. Most importantly I think LGE2018 has reinvigorated my commitment to listen, engage and work with citizens to enable them to drive change for themselves.”

“I realise now that I need to create and then defend the space to think differently and work differently, and I’m wondering how exhausting this is going to be?”

The architecture of our work

The shared ambitions for this work will be achieved through:

- Learning in real work: individually and together; and
- Being connected to the architecture of Essex public services and leaders in service of that learning; and
- Bringing that learning to the real work of Essex

Expectations of participants:

1. Your commitment to attending, and engaging with the elements of the learning within this programme opportunity, even when it's difficult to find the time, headspace etc., and even when it makes you feel far outside your comfort zone
2. Committing to your relationships with your fellow participants, to work and learn together
3. Reflecting on your learning, and your experience of applying that learning to your work as a leader in Essex, and being prepared to share your reflections with each other, and with the wider system

Expectations of sponsoring leaders / organisations:

1. Support their organisational participants to fulfil their commitment to the programme, by checking in, and supporting the removal of perceived barriers to engaging with the work
2. Draw in #LGE2019 participants to engage them in dialogue about what they are learning and how we collectively might do complex change differently across Essex for the benefit of citizens
3. Engage in regular conversations with each other as a #LGE2019 **leadership collective** throughout the life of the programme to ensure we achieve our shared purpose. This will take the form of four working sessions, facilitated by ThePublicOffice, over the course of the 19/20 programme

Key dates & locations

Tues 7 May Half day – PM Central Baptist Church, Chelmsford	The Launch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half day launch event • Meeting each other • Understanding what learning really means • Outline of what to expect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to theory of learning (how do we need to be in order to learn and shift our leadership practice sustainably? How this programme is designed to make that learning happen) • Intro to systems
Tues 14 - Wed 15 May Full days Five Lakes Resort, Colchester	The Residential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 day residential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does our work matter? • Values and purpose: from choice, to commitment to, step up • Citizens at the heart of everything • Systems Leadership basics
Wed 12 June Whole day Chelmsford Library Hub	Core Learning – Action 1 Starting differently set-up session, followed by self-managed ‘different conversations’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple perspectives • Enquiry as the starting point for taking action • Design thinking approaches • Tools and approaches for deep listening conversations
June - July Half day of your time	Fieldwork	Take the learning out of the office and into the real world: have a go at radical listening
Tues 9 July Whole day Venue tbc	Core Learning – Action 2 Collaborative sensemaking and ideation workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the fieldwork • Disturbance in living systems • Sensemaking
Tues 17 Sept Whole day Chelmsford City Racecourse	Core Learning – Action 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heifetz: Adaptive leadership • How to notice your own system • Working with the system as it is + ESSEX ASSEMBLY
Thurs 26 Sept Whole day Venue tbc	Community of Practice 1	Exploring and setting out the 100-day challenge journey and identifying our learning needs
Oct – Dec	100 Day Challenge	Apply the learning in real work
Tues 15 Oct Whole day Venue tbc	Community of Practice 2	Tools and approaches (prototyping: theory of change; multiple cause analysis; heat mapping etc.), challenge and support
Fri 29 Nov Whole day Venue tbc	Community of Practice 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why should anyone follow your leadership? • Public Narrative • Meeting emerging needs and challenges using resources within the cohort and the programme
Thurs 30 Jan ‘20 Whole day The Studio, Zinc Arts, Ongar	Whole System Learning Event	Resilience. How to press on and up when the system isn’t asking you to? A ‘coming together’ event, with participants and the programme leadership collaborative, to reflect together on the learning and the work
Mon 16 Mar ‘20 Half day – PM Venue tbc	Celebration Event	Reflect and celebrate, and gear up for moving forward

Recruitment Process

You can apply directly to be part of the 2019 cohort, or you can be nominated by a senior leader, but everyone who applies will need to have the confirmed support of a senior leader in their organisation. The programme is designed to be 'stretchy' (i.e. deliberately take you beyond your comfort zone), so we want everyone to be sure that they are ready and up for the level of challenge involved. To apply, you need to answer 4 short questions that help us know a bit more about you and who is supporting your application.

There will be 50 places available in 2019-20. We want the cohort to involve people who have real appetite for learning in collaboration with others, and who between them provide a good balance of participation across agencies in the Essex system. If there is an over-subscription, selection will be made on this basis.

As a reminder, you will be a leader or emerging leader who:

1. Is driven by a moral purpose to serve the communities of Essex
2. Is able to step back and make connections to the wider picture
3. Is able/willing to operate in ambiguity
4. Is comfortable not knowing, and who has a high appetite for learning
5. Is able/keen to influence beyond your authority
6. Demonstrates openness (in thinking, in learning, in doing)
7. Has personal qualities of patience, tenacity, resilience, reflexivity, humility.

Ask the alumni

If you'd like to contact a member of the #LGE2018 cohort, to discuss their experience or find out more about what you can expect, the following are very happy for you to get in touch:

Basildon Borough Council — Stuart Young
Braintree DC — James Sinclair
Braintree DC — Daniel Mellini
Essex County Council — Katherine Burns
Essex County Council — Tomi Platts
Essex County Council — Sharon Harrington
County Fire & Rescue — Danny Bruin
Essex Police — Steve Powell
Essex Police — John Stonestreet
Essex Police — Tracey Harman
Harlow Council — Michael Pitt
MIND in West Essex (VCS) — Alison Wilson
Southend Borough Council — Sarah Baker
University of Essex — Monica Illsley

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Timetable

April 4	Applications open
April 24	Applications close
April 26	Participants announced
May 7	Launch Event

Application Questions

1. Are you able to commit the 10 days of cohort time and up to 2-4 additional days-worth of time that #LGE2019 requires? (yes or no)
2. Does a senior leader in your organisation agree that you would enjoy and benefit from participating in #LGE2019? (if yes, who?)
3. Are you up for the disruptive stretch of this programme? How do you think you will respond to being out of your comfort zone?
4. To help us understand more about you, what is the question you are asking, or the thing/s you are wondering about that you believe this programme might help you find answers for?

Please complete the [online application form](#)

Applications must be received by **17:00 on April 24th**

If you have any questions, get in touch with essexpartners@essex.gov.uk