

FE Leadership Programme (Pilot)

Mid programme evaluation – summary report

Background

1. A survey was undertaken in November 2015 to gather feedback from participants and their respective Principals/Line Managers on Leading Wales, the pilot of the Further Education Leadership Programme. The survey took place after three of the five programme modules had been completed. Consideration will be given to undertaking a further survey to measure the longer term impact on the individuals' and their respective institutions' who participated in the pilot.
2. Responses were received from the majority of the pilot participants and their respective Principals/Line Managers. Participants have also had the opportunity to provide feedback after each of the three modules.

Impact of the pilot programme

Impact on the participants

3. Overall the responses included very positive feedback on the impact the programme has had to date on the participants (for example on skills, behaviours or attitudes). Feedback from Principals/Line Managers included the following about the impact on their respective participants:
 - *Has a better understanding of the strategic issues that effect colleges and is more able to see the bigger picture... Is more open to change and has greater confidence to contribute to the strategic direction of the organisation. ...is able to provide strong leadership for (his/her) team in difficult times.*
 - *There has been a distinct change in behaviour and increase in confidence levelwith a distinct shift toward more strategic activity over operational activity. Improved awareness of employer engagement benefit.*
 - *Has displayed a fuller appreciation of the importance of leadership, different leadership styles, and how to apply. Has also acquired a more rounded understanding of the issues and challenges facing the public sector and how we might approach them.*
 - *It is early on in the programme to be able to assess fully the impact of the programme. What is evident however, is the enthusiasm for learning, and the ideas that are being generated, having been involved in external debate, exposed to new techniques and networking with others.*
4. Comments from the participants showed that the programme has so far had a positive impact on them as individuals, comments included:
 - *Gain a better understanding of what a FE Institution needs to do to be successful and sustainable in the near future.*

- *Visiting other colleges in England has been a tremendous eye opener. I have met recently with a major employer and have the Chief Executive coming to view the college to see how we can help his organisation.*
- *Has led to me having a broader view of the issues facing Further Education and having a range of different tools to deal with these.*
- *It has provided me with some excellent tools and techniques to enhance my skills as a leader enabling me to fulfil my leadership role more effectively.*
- *Had a huge impact on me and focused me on my personal development, particularly in preparation for future Principal jobs within the sector.*

Impact on the institutions

5. Overall the majority of responses from Principals/Line Managers thought it too early to assess the impact the programme has had on the participants' respective institutions, however, some had seen some change. The following are some of the comments made:

- *The participant has shared some of their experiences with us and encouraged us to try new leadership styles and practices.*
- *Participant contribution to strategic activity much improved and contribution to the Executive Team improved. Has assisted greatly in identifying how college strategy contributes to and conforms with national priorities and emerging needs and pressures.*
- *Limited so far. However, I believe that this will develop, as individuals become more confident in their own skills, and ability to try new things. Having said that, there are 'small step' changes, which are starting to come through.*
- *Our participant has brought new ideas and approaches to leadership, learning and teaching, management and to strategic development. It is proving to be immensely valuable to the college.*

6. The responses from the participants were very detailed with specific examples given on how they have implemented changes which has had a beneficial impact on their institution (as identified in the responses from Principals/Line Managers the longer term impact will need to be assessed). Some examples given of the impact included:

- *Has enabled me to think more globally for the good of the total organisation as well as a clearer focus on the Welsh Government strategy and the impact to my role and college. Two projects I have applied have made an impact, the first was a tool that resulted in financial savings for the college, I also shared with peers in other colleges in case they wanted to consider using this idea, monetary savings was around £40k+ for my own organisation.*
- *I have taken on the management of theand the team have successfully implemented a new scheme of work for the curriculum that is saving £100,000 per year.*
- *Through my increased understanding of the needs of employers and the colleges need to be centre placed in addressing these, I have been able to help in influencing the Institution's new Employer Engagement Strategy. In addition I have formed relationships with new employers and providers and*

captured potential opportunities to deliver commercial training across a range of vocational sectors.

Continuation of the programme

7. In response to the question **‘Has this programme, to date, been beneficial and would you value this programme or a similar programme continuing in the future?’** All participants and the majority of Principals/Line Managers responded that they thought the programme should continue. Of the other respondents one felt that at this stage it was difficult to assess the impact, and therefore the value of the programme, and another thought that as the programme was only for institutions within Wales that it was too insular. The survey also highlighted that there was demand for another programme aimed specifically for individuals at a senior level within institutions. Feedback from Principals/Line Managers included:

- *This programme is beneficial and has yielded benefits superior to previous programmes targeted at this level.*
- *I believe that it is vitally important that we continue to participate in programmes such as this...*
- *I feel the programme has been very beneficial and I'm keen for it to continue as we have a number of other managers who could benefit from it.*

8. Participant feedback included:

- *I think this has been one of the best ongoing CPD I have had whilst working in FE over the last twenty years as it builds on using models or skills in a real FE context shared with colleagues.*
- *I consider the programme to be a very effective method of improving and developing future leaders in FE.*
- *This is the best development programme I've attended.*

Suggestions for improving the programme

9. Respondents to the survey were asked if there were any changes that could be made to future programmes, some suggestions were as follows:

- review the programme on an annual basis to pick up on current issues;
- increase the element of commercial provision development;
- a module on IVET/CVET and curriculum offer;
- include motivating staff in times of hardship through funding cuts, loss of jobs, decrease in resources etc;
- introduce an element of Principal work shadowing for specific elements of the programme where known good practice exists;
- exposure to other sectors and/or FE in other countries;
- have guest lectures from some Chief Executives of non-educational organisations could provide their experiences and expertise of leadership; and

- focus on New Produce Development (NPD) and consider new products/drivers in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and application to Wales.