

Aspiring Chief Executive programme – Cohort 4

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply for this programme?

The programme is for people who are on the verge of becoming chief executives or equivalent in organisations providing healthcare. It prepares people to become effective leaders of organisations and effective partners in health systems.

Participants will have significant experience of operating at board level as an executive director, or demonstrable experience in equivalent organisations. Many will already be deputy chief executives.

Applications are welcomed from exceptional candidates from different backgrounds who can demonstrate that they will be credible candidates for a chief executive or equivalent role in organisations with significant responsibility for healthcare provision and collaborating in the shaping of services across a system.

Please note that the programme does not offer the opportunity of gaining direct experience in a provider leadership role.

Do I have to be in the NHS already to apply?

Ideally, but not necessarily. If you have experience of leading the provision of healthcare that would make you a credible candidate for a chief executive we invite you to apply.

The programme is likely to appeal to and be made up of existing NHS executive directors in provider organisations together with exceptional candidates from broader health and care backgrounds.

I want to be a Chief Executive, but not for a few years yet - can I still apply?

No. This programme is for individuals who aspire to lead in a chief executive or equivalent in healthcare in the next 12-24 months and who are likely to be able to demonstrate their readiness for such a role *by the end* of the programme.

Why the focus on provider organisations? Isn't that quite silo'd mentality?

No. The programme places a strong emphasis on leading within and across health systems and on helping to create and embed new models of care. Although our wider health system is evolving, the programme recognises that chief executives are still needed in provider organisations which have particular challenges, hence its provider focus.

What's the time commitment on the programme?

About a day a week spread across the year. Some is done whilst at work (and you'll need your own chief executive's support for this). There is a combination of online, workplace and applied activity, residential workshops/praxis groups and on release to consult to a board/executive team in another organisation.

We measured the online content as we built the material on the virtual campus – there's three hours a week worth of online material for participants to engage with – plus time to apply and reflect on your learning, produce evidence of development and review the work of your peers in the praxis group.

The residential and other key dates are available below and also available on the following link: <https://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/programmes/aspiring-chief-executive-programme/>

100% attendance at all elements is a condition of accepting a place on the programme.

What are the programme dates?

Recruitment and selection:

- Applications window: 2 to 30 September 2019
- A half-day assessment centre consisting of a panel interview, a patient engagement exercise and group exercise for shortlisted candidates on the 19 and 20 November 2019 in London.

Programme dates:

Residential workshops

- Orientation workshop (3 days): 29 – 31 January 2020
- Workshop A (3 days): 1 – 3 April 2020
- Workshop B (3 days): W/C 15 June 2020
- Workshop C (3 days): 15 - 17 September 2020
- Workshop D (2.5 days): 2 - 4 December 2020

Praxis Group Meetings

- Praxis Group 1: 31 January 2020 in Leeds (i.e. final day of orientation workshop)
- Praxis Group 2: Tuesday 31 March 2020
- Praxis Group 3: Wednesday 20 May 2020
- Praxis Group 4: Thursday 23 July 2020
- Praxis Group 5: Thursday 3 September 2020
- Praxis Group 6: Tuesday 27 October 2020
- Praxis Group 6.5: Friday 4 December 2020 in Leeds
- Praxis Group 7: 4 Thursday 14 January 2021
- Praxis Group 8: Tuesday 23 February 2021

What support will I receive in finding a role?

This programme does not guarantee you a chief executive position. However, you will be offered the following talent management support:

- Link to a 'buddy' from the Supporting Senior Leaders (SSL) Steering Group
- Career transition support from NHS Executive Search and link to Regional Talent Boards
- Profile raising through SSL and NHS Providers networks
- Link to chairs and executive search agencies
- Link to the NHS Leadership Academy Chief Executive Development Network

What's the learning style of the programme?

- Content and knowledge is delivered online through a virtual campus, through a mix of video material including interviews, articles and reports. You have the flexibility to access this at a time that suits you.
- Each section of online content ends with a 'call to action' - you'll be asked to apply your learning either in your organisation or a fellow participant's organisation or during the residential workshops.
- At the residential workshops you'll work with facilitators, guests and fellow participants to share perspectives and apply your individual study.
- You will be asked to identify areas for development which are particularly relevant to you and demonstrate the progress you need to make to be an effective and transformational chief executive.
- We'll ask you to identify and work closely with a patient partner and a frontline staff mentor throughout the programme year. These are key to your development and will work in a reverse-mentoring role, connecting your development to the frontline and patient care.
- Development throughout the programme is assessed by peer participants and programme faculty. Participants who are assessed as ready now by the end of the programme to take up a chief executive or equivalent role in an organisation appropriate to their skills and experience will achieve the NHS Leadership Academy Chief Executive Award.

Where do I come together with other participants?

You will work closely with your cohort at residential workshops.

The cohort splits into smaller praxis groups where you set your personal curriculum and assess your own and your fellow participants' progress.

Your praxis group will work much like an action learning set - with three clear differences:

1. Dual facilitation - two people will co-facilitate the praxis group - a member of Academy faculty and a serving chief executive.
2. The content of your discussions is driven by your development and progress
3. Peer assessment - it's the praxis group - including the participants and the two facilitators - that assess your submissions, and ultimately your readiness for the chief executive role.

Is it an assessed programme? Does that mean I could 'fail'?

Yes. This is a professional leadership programme that delivers both exceptional development and an assessment of readiness to lead at a chief executive level. Not all those who undertake the programme may be successful at the end.

Your readiness to be an effective and transformational chief executive will be assessed by your colleagues in the praxis group, drawing on their experience of you during the programme, your progress in the calls to action, some written work, feedback from cohort directors and your response to feedback from a mock chief executive interview and a viva panel of patients and staff.

What happens if I am assessed as not ready at the end of the programme?

If you are assessed as 'ready now', this means that you have demonstrated to your praxis group that you are ready to take up a role as chief executive or equivalent in an organisation relevant to your background and experience.

If you are assessed as 'ready soon', this means that there are some areas that you have not adequately demonstrated to your praxis group. They will specify the development needed and you will be reassessed within a given time period.

If you are assessed as 'not ready', this means that you may have decided that the chief executive role is not for you, you may have decided to withdraw from assessment or your praxis group do not consider that you are ready or suitable for a chief executive role in the foreseeable future. Clear feedback will be offered with a suggested development and career plan.

Will I secure a chief executive position at the end this programme?

Whilst it's true to say that the aim of this programme is to ready aspiring chief executives for the role and to assess their readiness for it - there's no guarantee of a chief executive appointment at the end of the programme.

How do I get on to the programme?

All the application information can be found on the following link:

<http://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/programmes/aspiring-chief-executive-programme/apply/>

Before applying, we strongly encourage prospective applicants to have an initial conversation with your NHS England and NHS Improvement Regional Director to get

their view of your suitability for a chief executive level role in the next two years. Please bear in mind that you need to demonstrate your readiness for such a role by the end of the programme.

If you have questions or wish to find out more about the content of the programme or the application/recruitment process please contact us on aspce@leadershipacademy.nhs.uk.

- The selection process reflects the rigour of the programme design and the expectation that participants will be already be operating at Executive Director or equivalent level.
- Experienced chief executives, chairs, system leaders and the NHS Leadership Academy's executive search team will be involved in the process, led by the resourcing team.
- Selection criteria will include experience, impact track record, readiness, values, attitudes, capability and competence:
 - Step 1: personal application combined with nomination by sponsoring chair/chief executive/accountable officer.
 - Step 2: long listed through executive search.
 - Step 3: short listed applicants will attend an assessment centre where they will undergo a panel interview, an interview with patients and group exercise.
 - Step 4: cohort make up – balance and diversity in the cohort will be important – a cohort of 14 'almost ready' participants will be selected.