



LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

LEARN. LEAD. TRANSFORM.

SUPPORTING YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER

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RISE & RENEW PROGRAMME

Click on any offer to find out more.

A WELCOME

I'm delighted to share this year's Solace learning and development offers with you. They are designed to support you, your teams, and the places you serve.

Across everything we do, a common thread runs through our work. We believe that modern public service leadership requires new skills, new mindsets, and confidence in working with complexity. That is why all our programmes are underpinned by the [The 21st Century Public Servant framework](#), recently refreshed in partnership with the University of Birmingham. The updated research highlights what many of us see every day: public servants meeting tough conditions with resilience, creativity, whole-system thinking and a deep commitment to relationships and communities.

These characteristics sit at the heart of our approach to leadership development. This offer also reflects [Solace's wider strategy](#) for the next five years. We are strengthening professional pathways, championing diversity and inclusion, building a connected community of leaders, and amplifying the voice of local government. Our aim is simple. We want to empower you to make an even greater impact where it matters most.

Whether you are beginning a new chapter in your leadership journey or deepening your practice, I hope you find something here that inspires, stretches, and supports you.



Trudy

Trudy Birtwell

Executive Director of Learning, Solace



NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

ASPIRING FUTURE SECTOR LEADERS

The Aspiring Future Sector Leaders programme supports public sector managers ready to step into more senior leadership roles. Accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management, it offers a focused blend of challenge, practical tools, and reflective learning. Delivered by experienced development specialists and senior public sector leaders, it helps participants strengthen their strategic thinking, increase their influence, and lead confidently in a complex environment.

WHO IT'S FOR

Managers in the public sector who are ready to move beyond operational leadership into greater responsibility, and are seeking structured development.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Four focused modules on leadership, strategic thinking, collaborative working and performance development
- Practical application through exercises, strategic tools, reflective learning diaries, and opportunities to work on real issues from your role
- Supportive development with expert facilitators, peer learning, and space to build confidence and resilience
- Mentoring and a meeting with your Chief Executive, to help link your learning to organisational priorities and career aspirations



AMPLify

Transforming the leadership landscape, AMPlify is an award-winning development programme by Solace and E-Quality, recognised as the Public Services People Managers Association Best Talent Programme 2025. This ground-breaking initiative is designed to nurture and empower diverse talent across local government. AMPlify works across three levels: developing emerging talent, equipping line managers to lead inclusively, and engaging senior leaders as advocates to champion diverse talent. AMPlify is proudly sponsored by the LGA's Sector Led Improvement programme for the local government sector.

WHO IT'S FOR

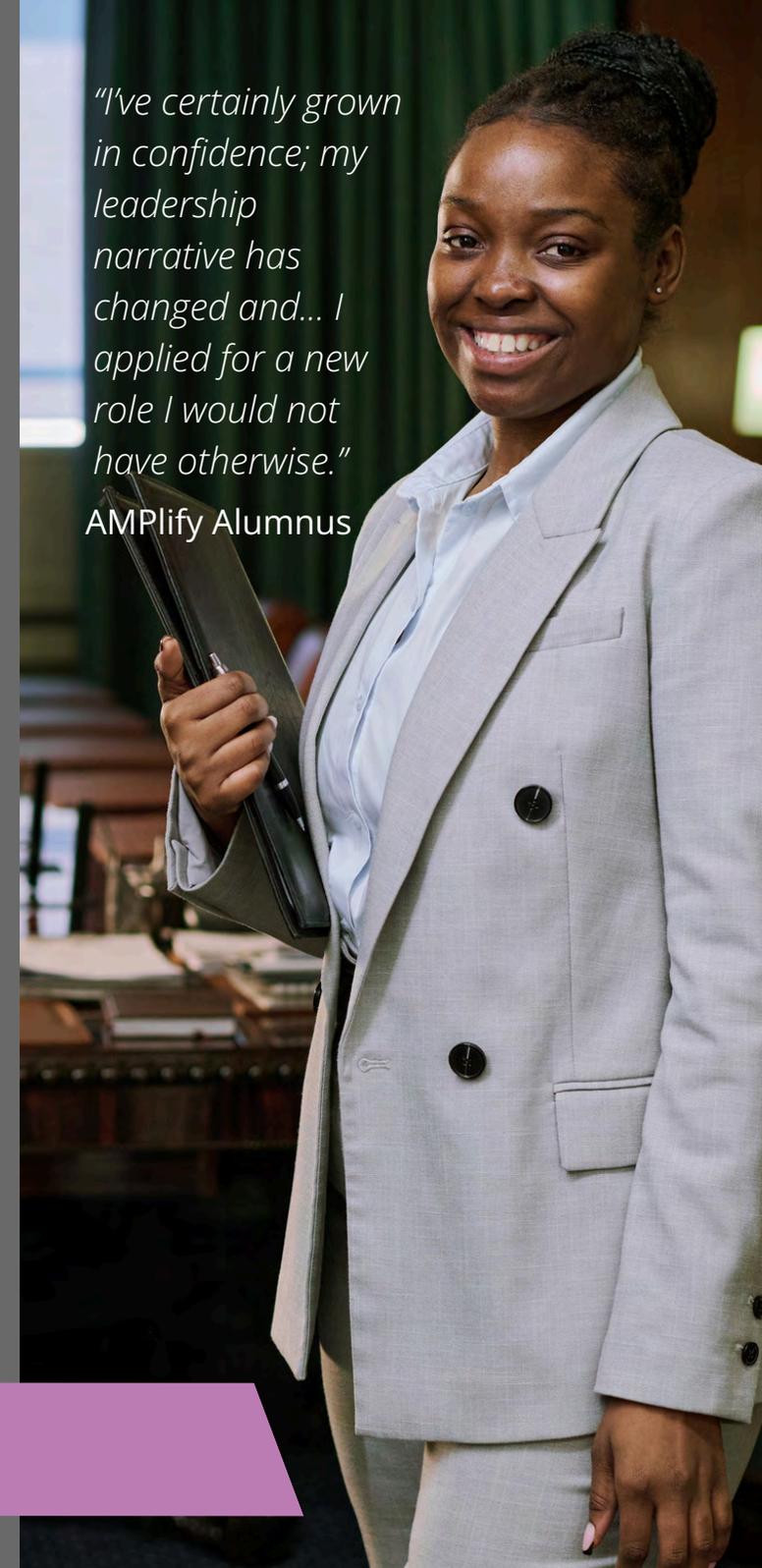
AMPlify is for emerging leaders from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, and their line-managers who are committed to championing talent and inclusivity across their organisation.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Immersive learning through virtual and face-to-face sessions
- Mentoring, reverse mentoring, and collaborative action learning sets
- Modules on inclusive leadership, organisational community building and recruitment insights
- Knowledge-building on equality, diversity, inclusion, and navigating bias
- Exposure to sector leaders to drive personal growth and organisational impact

"I've certainly grown in confidence; my leadership narrative has changed and... I applied for a new role I would not have otherwise."

AMPlify Alumnus



[READ MORE ABOUT AMPlify.](#)

EMCC COACHING PROGRAMME

Step into the world of professional coaching with our EMCC Accredited Programmes. Start with the Practitioner Programme (ILM Level 5) – nine days of experiential learning, real client coaching, and advanced techniques like Gestalt and Transactional Analysis. Build your confidence, your skills, and your signature coaching style.

Take it further with the Senior Practitioner Programme (ILM Level 7) – 15 days of advanced coaching, 90 client hours, and transformational approaches to coaching leaders and organisational systems. The Practitioner workshops form the first part of Senior Practitioner, making progression seamless and straightforward.

WHO IT'S FOR

This pathway is for aspiring and experienced coaches, as well as organisational leaders, who want to develop professional coaching skills, gain recognised accreditation, and make a real impact in their work with others.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Real-life coaching practice with live clients – no roleplay
- Advanced coaching methods and psychological approaches
- Personal development: presence, awareness, and your signature style
- Supervision, ethics, and professional practice built in
- A supportive network of like-minded coaches
- EMCC accreditation recognised worldwide

[READ MORE ABOUT LEVEL 5](#)

[READ MORE ABOUT LEVEL 7](#)

Accreditation Levels

5&7



SPRINGBOARD

Springboard is a flagship leadership programme designed to develop the next generation of leaders - with tailored separate programmes for Scotland and Wales. Developed in collaboration with the LGA, the programme stretches heads of service and equivalent leaders to operate confidently across complex, cross-boundary public sector environments. The programme has a track record of developing leaders who go on to make tangible improvements in public services, with alumni progressing to senior roles including Chief Executive. Combining challenge, reflection, mentoring, and networking, Springboard equips participants to extend their influence across their organisation and sector.

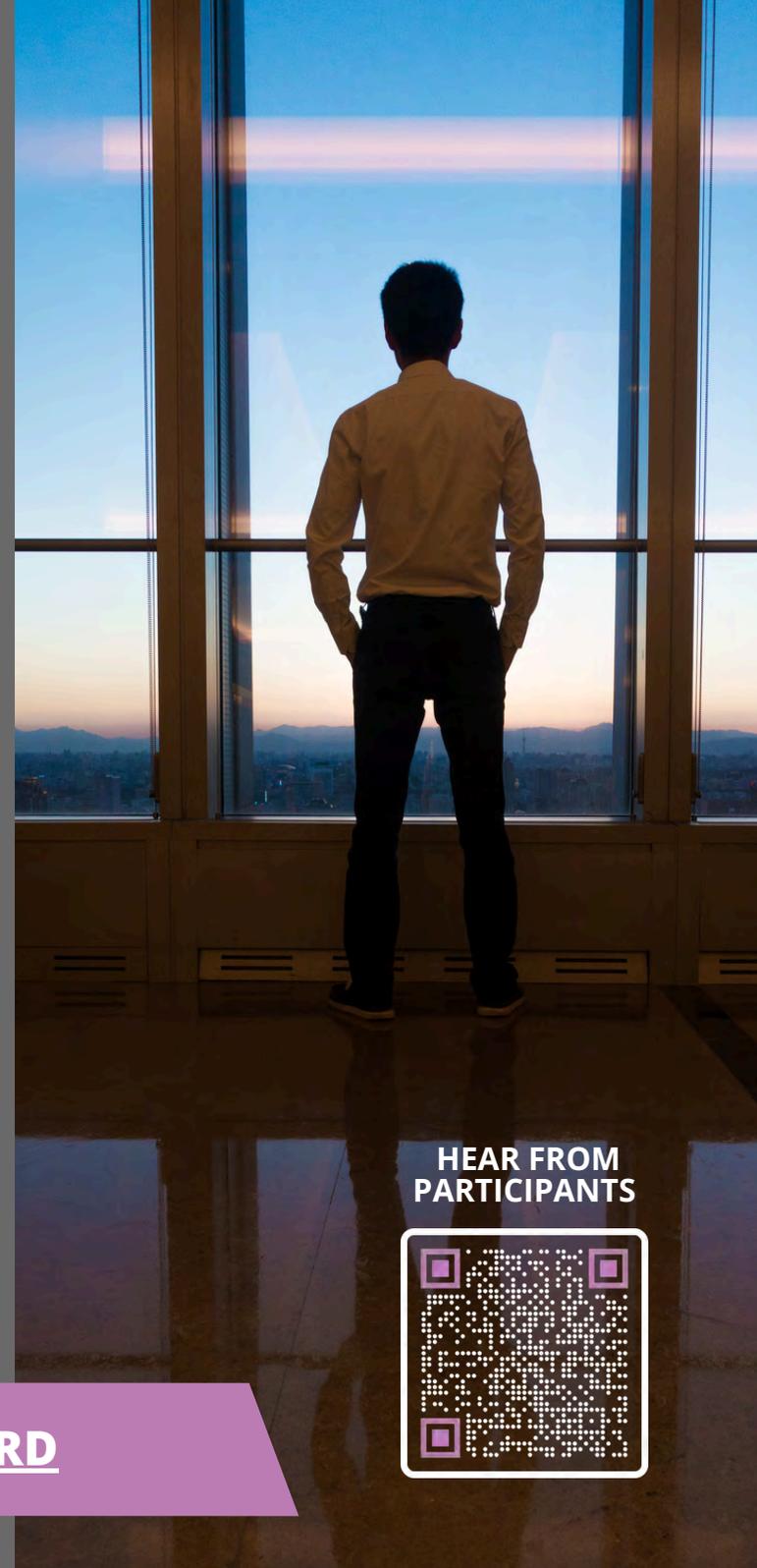
WHO IT'S FOR

Ambitious heads of service and equivalent senior leaders who already excel in their roles and want to expand their influence, perspective and impact.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Four in-person gatherings which will blend inspiration, learning, and stretch
- Mentoring from experienced Chief Executives and Directors
- Attendance at Solace events, including the Solace Summit
- A 12-month Solace membership and the opportunity to join an active alumni network
- Access to webinars and podcasts with senior sector leaders

[READ MORE ABOUT SPRINGBOARD](#)



HEAR FROM
PARTICIPANTS



TOTAL LEADERSHIP

Delivered with the University of Birmingham and sponsored by the LGA, Total Leadership blends cutting-edge academic insight with practical skills and insights from high profile speakers. The programme is designed to help senior executives consolidate their expertise, build confidence in complex, integrated leadership, and gain external validation of their capability. Participants are recognised across the sector for their transformational leadership skills and many have progressed to Chief Executive roles.

WHO IT'S FOR

Senior executives ready to extend their influence and leadership credibility, and assess their readiness for a chief executive role.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Ten-month programme with five residential modules plus action learning on real-time issues
- Co-designed content tailored to real-world leadership challenges, including modules focused on innovation, systems leadership, inclusivity and personal resilience
- Mentoring and coaching support from senior practitioners
- Access to expert facilitators, high-profile speakers, and peer networks
- LGA officer peer registration for ongoing sector learning and networking

"The programme played a major part in preparing me for the selection process to become a Chief Executive and for my first year in post."

Andy Ferrier
Chief Executive
Test Valley Council

[READ MORE ABOUT TOTAL LEADERSHIP](#)



IGNITE

Designed for local government chief executives, Ignite provides a shared space to tackle complex leadership challenges, build peer networks, and deepen understanding of system-wide responsibilities. Over approximately nine months, cohorts of around 12 chief executives co-design this immersive programme to focus on their collective priorities, working alongside senior leaders and critical friends outside local government. Backed by the LGA and presented in collaboration with Collaborate CIC, Ignite is your route to achieving strategic leadership excellence.

WHO IT'S FOR

Chief Executives in local government looking to enhance system leadership, collaboration, and strategic impact.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Collaborative and co-designed residential and one-day modules
- Peer learning and discussion to explore leadership challenges in real time
- Insights from senior leaders and critical friends outside local government
- Networking to strengthen relationships and support sector-wide collaboration
- Practical tools and strategies to tackle complex, system-level issues
- Opportunities to influence and shape your own learning outcomes

"It has been extraordinarily powerful. I have developed trusting, positive and supportive relationships with colleagues across the country who are grappling with issues of public service reform."

Ignite Alumnus



[READ MORE ABOUT IGNITE](#)

CHIEF EXECUTIVES' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Developed by the Local Government Association (LGA) and Solace, this pioneering framework and Development Hub set the standard for excellence in local government leadership. Built with insight from chief executives, councillors, and sector experts, it recognises the complexity of the role and equips chief executives with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to succeed. Nationally recognised as the first structured curriculum for the role, it defines seven core foundations of chief executive leadership - from politics and governance to ethics and continuous improvement.

WHO IT'S FOR

Local government Chief Executives seeking a structured, comprehensive review of the role and its accountabilities.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- A foundations curriculum built around seven core themes of leadership and governance
- Practical insight into navigating political and managerial interfaces
- Exposure to real-world case studies and ethical challenges
- Access to expert contributors and sector leaders
- Wraparound support, mentoring, and ongoing access to a Development Hub of resources

[READ MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMME & HUB](#)



UPCOMING PROGRAMME DATES

PROGRAMME	 RECRUITMENT OPEN	 START DATE
SPRINGBOARD UK	Sept 2026	Feb 2027
SPRINGBOARD SCOTLAND	1 April 2026	Sept 2026
ASPIRING LEADERS WALES	1 Feb 2026	17 June 2026
AMPLify	Open Now	Dec 2026
IGNITE	April 2026	Sept 2026
TOTAL LEADERSHIP	Open Now	12 June 2026
CHIEF EXECUTIVES' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	Open Now	June 2026

You can click on any of these offers for more information about who the programme is suitable for.



LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT APPRENTICESHIPS

TEAM LEADER

Accreditation Level

3

The Team Leader Apprenticeship is designed for those taking their first step into management, or aspiring to do so. It builds the core skills needed to manage people, lead projects and deliver high-quality services. Participants gain a Team Leader Level 3 Apprenticeship Standard with professional recognition from the Chartered Management Institute (CMI). Fully funded by the apprenticeship levy, the programme combines blended learning with on-the-job application, helping participants build confidence, capability and practical leadership skills in real public sector environments.

WHO IT'S FOR

Ideal for aspiring or new first-line managers in the public sector who want to gain real responsibility, build confidence at work and develop the essential skills for effective team leadership.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Blended learning and on-the-job experience over 12 months, plus up to 3 months for end-point assessment
- Learning focused on performance and people management, project planning and delivery, and managing change, risk and budgets
- Developing communication, influence and stakeholder relationship skills
- Exploring equity, diversity and inclusion in leadership
- Completion of a portfolio, presentation and professional discussion to demonstrate applied leadership development

[READ MORE ABOUT THIS APPRENTICESHIP](#)



EMERGING LEADER

The Emerging Leaders Apprenticeship helps aspiring middle managers develop the skills to lead teams, manage change, and deliver impactful public services. Fully funded and flexible, this programme combines face-to-face workshops, online learning, and workplace projects to ensure practical application. The programme provides the tools to grow, the space to learn, and the support to lead. Learners leave confident, capable, and ready to make a real difference in their organisation.

WHO IT'S FOR

Ideal for middle managers in local government keen to take on bigger roles, grow their confidence and increase their impact.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Blended learning: workshops, online tutorials and live projects over 2 years
- Learning will include developing people and teams, improving services with data-informed decision making, navigating regulation and risk, and communicating with purpose in complex environments
- Hands-on projects addressing real challenges in your council
- Portfolio development to showcase applied leadership skills
- You will receive a CMI Level 5 Certificate in Leadership & Management and Level 5 Operational/ Departmental Manager Apprenticeship Standard

[READ MORE ABOUT THIS APPRENTICESHIP](#)

Accreditation Level

5



COACHING PROFESSIONAL

Accreditation Level

5

Develop emotionally intelligent, high-performing coaches across your organisation. Fully funded, the Level 5 Coaching Professional Apprenticeship equips learners with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to support others, build strong relationships, and foster a culture of growth. Through a blend of theory and practical coaching in the workplace, learners become reflective, skilled coaches who can drive engagement, collaboration, and innovation within their teams.

WHO IT'S FOR

For individuals wanting to develop coaching skills to have meaningful impact in one-to-one environments with colleagues or leading team development initiatives.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- 13-months of blended learning with a focus on the role of the coach, coaching cultures and techniques, and measuring coaching impact
- 18-25 hours of live coaching practice with multiple stakeholders
- Supervision, reflective journaling, and portfolio building
- Interactive workshops and online learning to apply theory to real-life

[READ MORE ABOUT THIS APPRENTICESHIP](#)





BESPOKE SUPPORT

HEADS OF SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

We work alongside councils to design and deliver bespoke leadership development for newly appointed and existing heads of service. Our approach combines insight, expertise, and collaboration to support leaders in enhancing their impact, leading teams effectively, and influencing across the organisation.

Through a mix of facilitated workshops, action learning, and practical exercises, we help participants tackle real organisational challenges, strengthen relationships across departments, and embed learning directly into their roles. This is not a off-the-shelf programme – it is tailored to your organisation, its culture, and your local context.

KEY THEMES OFTEN INCORPORATED:

- Political astuteness
- Change management and shifting from operational to strategic thinking
- What good governance and financial management look like
- Developing a coaching style of leadership and emotional intelligence
- Having confidence and skills to tackle difficult conversations
- Leadership vs Management and how to work through influence
- Systems thinking alongside partnership and collaborative working

Participants can expect an opportunity to build new relationships and deepen their understanding of effective teams, with learning which is directly applicable to real workplace improvements. As this programme is co-designed with you, it's best to get in touch with us for a conversation about what this would look like in your organisation.



TEAM COACHING

We partner with leadership teams at all levels of seniority to create bespoke, high-impact coaching and development that strengthens trust, improves collaboration, and drives performance. Whether your team is newly formed, navigating change, or under pressure to deliver more with less, our approach helps you pause, realign, and strengthen how you lead together.

Drawing on frameworks such as Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions of a Team and tools like Insights Discovery, we create safe, challenging spaces to explore dynamics, build self-awareness, and turn insight into action. This blend of evidence-based models and real-world application ensures the work feels practical, relevant and connected to your day-to-day challenges.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Facilitated conversations and self-assessment to explore current team dynamics and identify collective strengths and areas for growth
- Use of diagnostic tools such as Insights Discovery to increase self-awareness, understand behavioural drivers and appreciate difference
- Focused development sessions exploring themes such as trust, conflict, commitment, accountability, resilience and wellbeing.
- Coaching techniques that translate learning into everyday practice, with the option of individual coaching to deepen impact
- Co-created team charters and ways of working that help teams embed new habits and hold each other to account

As this offer is co-designed with you, it's best to get in touch with us for a conversation about what this would look like in your organisation.



TOP TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Leading at the top of a council means holding steady in complexity - balancing political dynamics, community expectations, and national change while keeping delivery on track. Our Top Team Development work is designed for Executive and Corporate Leadership Teams who want to strengthen how they lead together through that complexity.

Working with you in your organisation, we help you step back from the day-to-day, reflect on your shared purpose, and align around the leadership your place needs. We focus on how your senior team operates as a system: how you make decisions, manage relationships, and model collaborative, future-focused leadership for the rest of the organisation.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

You'll take part in a tailored mix of facilitated team sessions, individual coaching and reflection that will help you:

- Clarify your shared purpose, roles and ways of working
- Strengthen trust, communication and collaboration across the team
- Build confidence in navigating political and stakeholder relationships
- Balance transformation with delivery, maintaining focus on outcomes for communities
- Develop resilience and confidence in leading through uncertainty
- Model the tone and behaviours that shape organisational culture
- Develop greater alignment, stronger trust and a renewed sense of purpose

As this offer is co-designed with you, it's best to get in touch with us for a conversation about what this would look like in your organisation.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPRAISALS

Effective Chief Executive appraisals are essential in today's increasingly complex public sector environment. We have designed a time-effective, well tested appraisal methodology that provides clarity, rigour and focus. Combining a structured review of performance over the past 12 months with a forward-looking assessment of priorities, aims and measurable objectives for the year ahead, we ensure the appraisal supports both accountability and future success.

We offer a selection of highly experienced facilitators, all with Chief Executive-level backgrounds and extensive appraisal experience. Because confidence in the facilitator is essential, we provide a range of candidates matched to your requirements, along with the option of chemistry calls to ensure the right fit.

AN EXAMPLE PROCESS:

- 1-1 meetings with the Leader and the Chief Executive to agree expectations, approach and intended outcomes
- Optional 360-degree feedback from colleagues and key partners
- A facilitated joint meeting between the Chief Executive and Leader (or panel) to explore key issues and priorities
- Preparation of two documents for the panel: a review of performance over the previous 12 months and an assessment of priorities and objectives for the year ahead
- A final appraisal meeting with the panel, resulting in an agreed performance contract with built-in review points

If you'd like to find out more, please get in touch for a further conversation.



COACHING & MENTORING

Executive coaching and mentoring provides leaders with a focused, confidential space to reflect, grow and strengthen their leadership impact. Whether through structured coaching or a more experience-led mentoring relationship, individuals deepen self-awareness, enhance strategic impact and build resilience. We work with a large and diverse faculty of over 100 qualified coaches and mentors, bringing a wide range of professional backgrounds and public sector experience.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE:

- A tailored matching process to pair each individual with a coach or mentor whose background and approach aligns with their goals
- An initial chemistry session to confirm fit and agree expectations for the work
- A series of one-to-one sessions, typically 60–90 minutes, shaped around personal and organisational priorities (face-to-face or virtually)
- A confidential space to explore leadership challenges, resilience, strategic thinking and professional growth
- Access to experienced practitioners, including former local government leaders and executive coaches from a range of professional backgrounds
- For mentoring: a developmental relationship focused on practical insight, lived experience, career navigation and leadership development

If you'd like to find out more, please get in touch for a further conversation.



ACTION LEARNING SETS

Action Learning Sets provide a practical and highly effective way for individuals to learn from real work challenges, supported by the insight, experience and questioning of peers. They create a safe, confidential space for reflection, problem-solving and action-focused learning. Through structured discussion and skilled facilitation, participants gain fresh perspectives on complex issues, develop practical solutions and apply learning directly in the workplace. Sets typically consist of five participants who meet quarterly for half-day sessions, with each member taking turns to present a real workplace challenge for exploration by the group.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Present real work issues and receive focused questioning from peers in a safe and confidential environment
- Reflection on past actions and learning, with opportunities to apply insights directly in the workplace
- Active listening, probing questions, and reflective dialogue from other set members, helping presenters clarify challenges and explore solutions
- Guidance from a facilitator to maintain focus, ensure productive questioning, and uphold rules promoting respect and confidentiality
- Peer support to generate creative solutions, test assumptions, and strengthen leadership, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.
- Personal and professional growth, including insight into different approaches, enhanced self-awareness, and increased confidence to act on complex issues

If you'd like to find out more, please get in touch for a further conversation.



RISE & RENEW PROGRAMME

The Rise and Renew Programme offers a tailored pathway for senior public service leaders at different stages of transition. It may support a leader approaching retirement or a major life change or stepping into new or expanded role. The programme offers expert coaching, peer learning, and a residential retreat to help leaders navigate change with clarity, confidence and purpose.

WHO IT'S FOR

This programme is for leaders experiencing a significant professional or personal transition. It will help those stepping into new roles to clarify their leadership, build influence, and sustain energy, while supporting those approaching retirement to reflect on their legacy, reconnect with purpose, and design a meaningful next chapter.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

Participants will benefit from a structured four-month journey that includes:

- Two individual coaching sessions before the retreat
- A two-day residential retreat focused on reflection, identity and what comes next
- Peer learning and shared exploration of purpose, resilience and meaning
- A half-day online reconnection session one month after the retreat
- An individual coaching session to consolidate insight and plan next steps

**READ MORE ABOUT THE RISE
AND RENEW PROGRAMME**



ILM LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

ILM Leadership & Management is a practical, accredited leadership development pathway for managers and leaders at different stages of their career. The Level 5 and Level 7 Certificates and Diplomas combine work-based learning, real organisational challenges and monthly one-to-one coaching to build confidence, capability and measurable impact. Participants develop the skills to lead teams, manage resources, make strategic decisions and deliver meaningful change, with the Certificate providing a strong six-month foundation and the Diploma extending learning through a personalised development plan and a work-based project.

WHO IT'S FOR

Level 5 - Middle Managers. For Aspiring and practising middle managers stepping into greater responsibility and seeking a recognised qualification.

Level 7 - Senior Managers. For experienced leaders who want to strengthen strategic thinking, leadership influence and their ability to lead change.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Accredited development aligned to your role and career stage
- Coaching to build self-awareness, confidence and impact
- Practical assignments applied directly to real work challenges.

This programme can be delivered in-house, as an open programme or for individual participants. Please get in touch for a further conversation.



"The confidence and insight from the coaching, combined with practical assignments relevant to my work, had an immediate and positive effect on my career. I've grown as a manager and seen real results in my team."

A participant

ILM COACHING & MENTORING

ILM Coaching & Mentoring is a practical, accredited pathway for building coaching and mentoring capability within leadership roles or progressing towards professional coaching and supervision practice. The Level 5 and Level 7 Certificates and Diplomas combine real-world practice, structured reflection and one-to-one supervision to build confidence, competence and professional credibility. The six-month Certificate develops core skills through practical experience, with the Diploma extending learning through a personalised development plan and supervised practice hours, assessed through a professional portfolio.

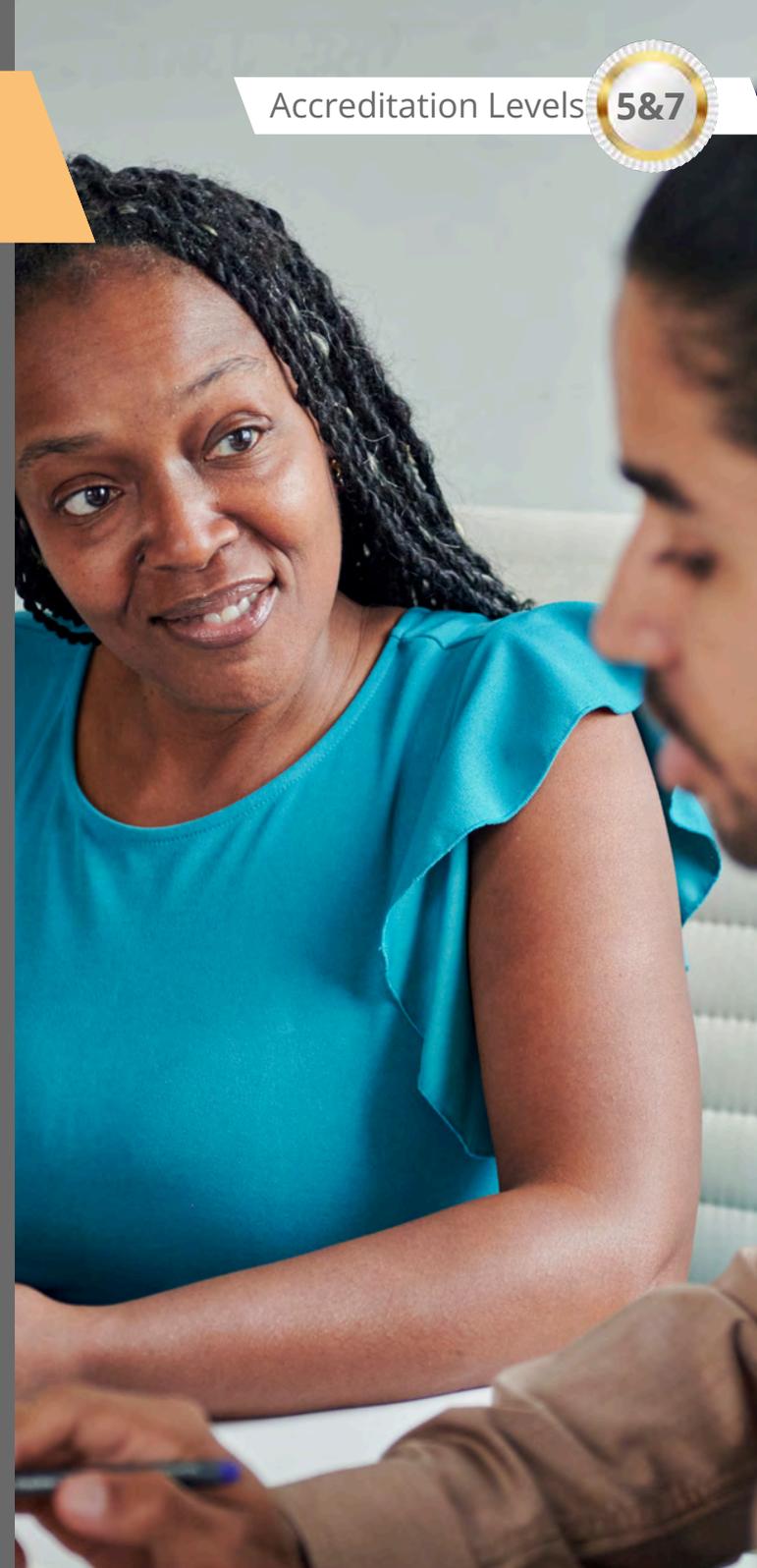
WHO IT'S FOR

Level 5 - For practising managers embedding coaching into their leadership approach, or individuals beginning their journey as professional coaches or mentors. Level 7 - For experienced coaches, mentors and senior leaders who want to develop coaching supervision skills and strengthen coaching practice across teams and organisations.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE

- Applied learning through real coaching or supervision scenarios
- Development of a personal coaching or supervisory model
- Increased confidence, ethical practice and professional impact

This programme can be delivered individually or in-house, so please get in touch for a further conversation.





GET IN TOUCH



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