

NHS Institute: Leadership for Equality Programme

“The Inclusion Programme will help to develop NHS leaders who are inclusive and reflective of the communities they serve and the workforce they lead, and which systematically removes barriers to participation in leadership for talented people from all backgrounds, ensuring everyone counts.”

The coaching programme supports candidates in performing effectively at Director level within the NHS (whether hospital trusts, GP, public health or other services). Coaching sits within a wider context of the year-long top talent programme, which includes:

- Online assessments, Assessment & Development centres
- Masterclasses & Action Learning Sets
- Mentor Programme
- Coaching Programme

The assessment process identifies ‘top talent’ who are capable of development into Director roles and above.

The Forton Group has supported the programme since 2005, typically for six sessions during the year. Recent clients include staff working in public health roles transitioning to the local authority and the re-organisation issues involved.

The coach-matching process is achieved during a development day for cohort members and takes the form of ‘speed coaching’, where each future coachee meets every available coach.

Coaches are selected by a three-part process:

- Panel interview: to test knowledge and understanding of the NHS and needs of future top leaders
- Professional interview: to test breadth of coaching skills and relevant background skills (e.g psychology, emotional intelligence, current thinking in neuro-science, organisational complexity, diversity, etc.)
- Observed live coaching session

Delivering against NHS Institute’s coaching requirements

Objective “to develop NHS leadership which is inclusive, reflective of the communities we serve and the workforce we lead and which systematically removes barriers to participation in leadership for talented people from all backgrounds, ensuring everyone counts.”

Progress monitoring and evaluation

The Forton Group provides coaching clients with a short self-assessment questionnaire before each coaching session (copy to Coachee and Coach) which measures the following:

- Successful integration into secondment (Coachee’s qualitative response)
- Confidence in delivering in secondment role
- Delivering against specific performance objectives
- Leadership qualities (as defined by the NHS leadership qualities framework)
- Preparedness for Board-level job applications (CV & covering letter support)
- Preparedness for Board-level job interviews

Outcomes: promotion into substantive roles

Successful promotion to Director level or above is an 'unspoken' target, against which the Forton Group's coaching clients have been successful on more than one occasion. On some occasions, while candidates have not been successful in achieving their Director-level roles they have been formally confirmed as 'appointable'. The Forton Group uses its own 'Coaching Impacts' tool with other clients: a combination of coaching client and their Line Manager assessment of the coaching on pre-defined measures. The Coaching Impacts tool has helped identify significant financial business benefits for clients.

RM's story

Having successfully held an assistant director's role, RM wanted to step up to the next level and knew that self-confidence was a key factor. In preparation for his major career move, he enrolled on a number of courses to prepare and equip him.

RM: *"After the assessment course came a tipping point. I knew I had the ability to move up but my confidence and anxiety issues were still barriers. I was setting myself goals which were time rather than opportunity based and when I missed them, my anxiety was compounded. Bespoke one-to-one coaching was what I needed.*

"Helen (Caton Hughes) asked me where I was and where I wanted to be career-wise and helped me see how I could get there, enabling me to find solutions to any problems standing in my way. She helped me to listen to myself and enabled me to find a better work-life balance.

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"Coaching is like managing blood pressure. You need it to cope with the ongoing challenges of work"

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"Coaching has shown me that I should be focusing on my strengths rather than trying to do what I'm less good at, bringing in people from my team to fill the skills gaps. I have also learned to recognise opportunities when they arise and to make myself available. This programme was great to get me through the hoop. But now I've got there and am on

my own I still need help and coaching is the answer for me."

RM is now a Chief Operating Officer in a multi-million pound NHS GP Consortium, whose Chairman has just confirmed a further round of coaching during RM's transition into this new role.