



## **Better Leaders, Better Doctors The RCGP Leadership Programme**

### **Information for Applicants**

#### **Aims of the Programme**

This is a time when health care across the UK needs effective leaders. Leaders who can shape national policy and local provision. Leaders who can prompt the design and redesign of services so that they offer patients clinically effective, responsive care that meets their needs. GPs are uniquely placed to take up this challenge, their breadth of clinical knowledge and the confidence of the public enable them to both perceive what is needed and persuade others of the need for change. What is more, managers across the NHS are actively wanting them to do so.

At the same time general practice careers are changing - there are opportunities to use general practice skills in a range of clinical and organisational settings. Decisions about career direction are not as easy nor as risk free as they have been in the past, and many new career pathways need people who can forge ahead and lead the way.

In these circumstances the profession too needs effective leaders. If the value of medical generalism is to be understood, and if its contribution to the policy debates of the day is to be taken seriously by policy makers, then the profession must have leaders confident in their ability to engage with the issues, the players and the politics.

The overall aim of the Royal College of General Practitioners Leadership Programme is to develop these new leaders. Leaders of health care, leaders of new career pathways and leaders of the profession. To this end, the programme is designed to help participants acquire and develop the understanding, self-awareness, self-confidence and skills necessary to take on and succeed in these leadership roles. More specifically, the aim of the programme is to develop a cadre of General Practitioners who can:

- engage effectively with issues and key players in the fast changing health care environment at local and/or national levels;
- ensure excellent local services;
- work with the College to strengthen a vision and self-belief within the profession;
- explore new opportunities that make the most of changes taking place in the NHS
- help others to realise their leadership potential; and
- recognise and explore the parallels between excellent medical practice and good leadership.

On completion of this programme participants will be better able to:

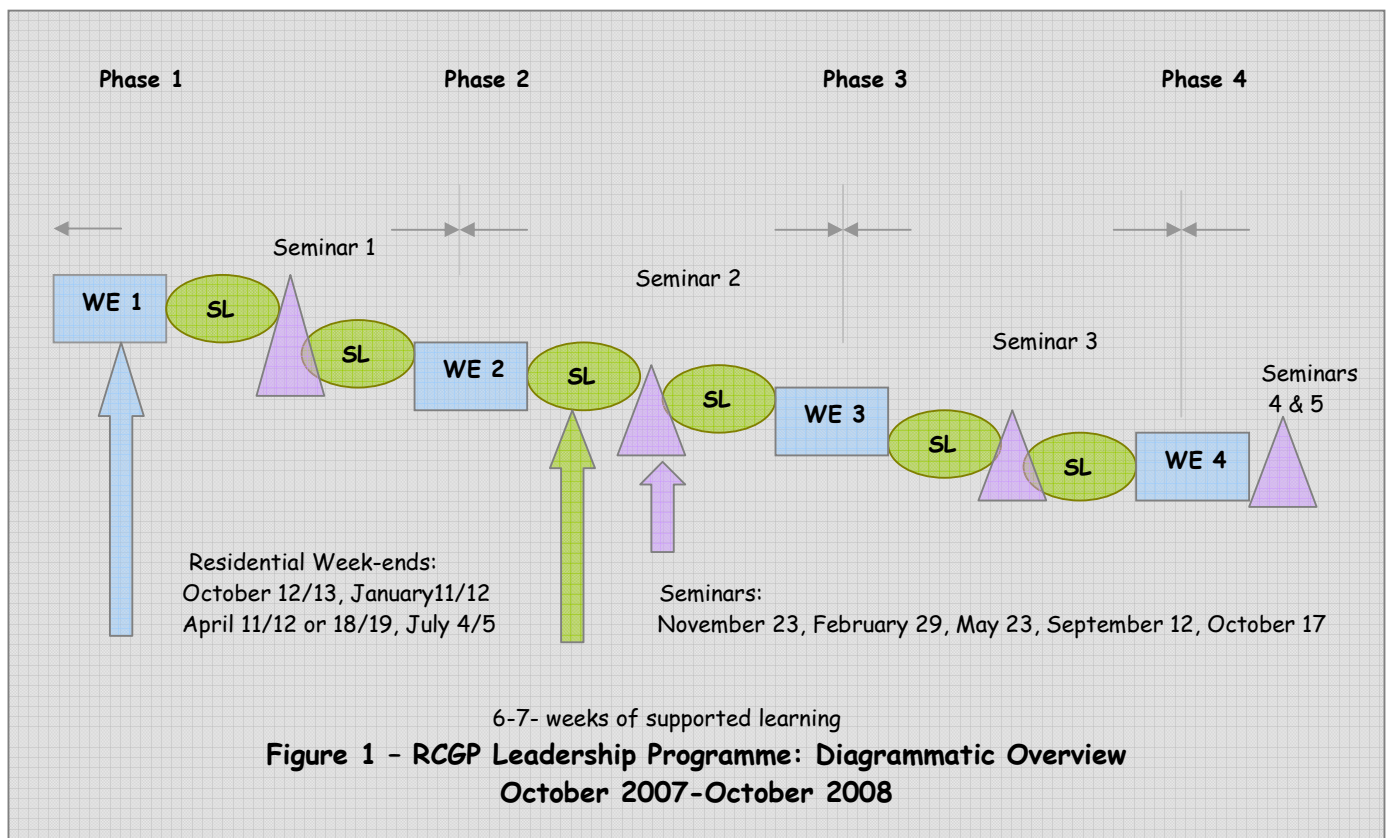
- manage people and resources
- recognise, analyse and take opportunities to act strategically
- negotiate effectively with local managers and national policy makers
- prompt changes in local primary, secondary and tertiary services

- influence opinion among fellow practitioners;
- analyse their impact on situations and develop strategies for being more effective when working with others; and
- become better doctors.

## Overall Shape of the Programme

Figure 1 below provides an overview of the broad shape of the leadership programme. As should be clear from the diagram, the programme comprises three key elements as follows:

Four residential week-ends that begin at 11.00 am on Friday and conclude at tea time on Saturday. These introduce and close the four phases of the programme as depicted in figure 1. These week-ends will consist of a mixture of external inputs; facilitated and personal reflection; small group work; workshop exercises and debates; and co-consulting. The week-ends will also provide an opportunity for participants to meet and debate with a number of nationally and internationally known figures from the world of health care and beyond as well as to meet with their personal tutors (see below). The fourth and final week-end will allow participants to demonstrate their leadership capabilities by taking responsibility for the design of the two days. This will provide an opportunity to build upon, develop and apply the learning and insights gained in earlier phases of the programme.



Eight periods of on-line supported learning and coaching leading up to, and following on from the residential weekends. Supported learning is an innovative approach to on-line study that has been developed by the Centre for Leadership Studies at Exeter University. It combines structured reading, exercises and assignments with coaching feedback, together with the use of a 'learning log' designed to capture and distil the learning arising from these activities. The activities can take the form of consultancy assignments, exchanges, job shadowing or specific projects designed to reflect individuals' interests and to develop and test their leadership capabilities.

Seminar days - midway between the residential week ends. Participants on the programme will – based on their expressed interests and aspirations - be divided into tutor groups of five or six. Each of these groups will be assigned a tutor from the programme faculty who will act as a personal tutor and coach to each individual within the group as well as to the group as a whole. This will entail two principal activities: first, the tutor will act as an individual correspondent and coach during the periods of close learning; and second, the tutor will meet with the whole group at seminar days half way through each stage of the programme as well as at the week-ends themselves. Every participant will have a confidential relationship with their tutor from whom they can expect to receive frank and supportive feedback.

## **Other Key Features of the Programme**

### **The Faculty**

The principal faculty will be drawn from the three organisations who are offering the programme on behalf of the RCGP. These are: (i) the Centre for Leadership Studies at Exeter University (CLS) which brings an in depth expertise in, and understanding of, leadership – what it means, what it takes and how it expresses itself. (ii) the OD Partnerships Network (ODPN where 'OD' stands for Organisational Development) which brings extensive experience of observing, facilitating and supporting leaders and leadership within the context of health care both nationally and internationally; and (iii) the Peninsular Medical School Postgraduate Health Institute (PPHI) which brings an understanding of, and experience in, leadership within the context of contemporary general practice. This unique tripartite collaboration means that the faculty overseeing the programme will be able to combine and integrate these three areas of expertise in ways that reflect the interests and aspirations of participants. In addition, this expertise will be strengthened and enhanced through the contributions of eminent and experienced external contributors (see below).

The programme is also very fortunate to have the support of Astra Zeneca PLC, who provide both financial support and development opportunities for participants who wish to become familiar with the management processes, skills and style within a successful multinational company.

### **The Blue Ribbon Panel**

In order to ensure that the programme is of the very highest quality, the participating organisations have assembled a 'blue ribbon' panel of eminent figures to contribute to and "keep an eye on the quality of" the programme. Members of the panel include Dr. David Colin-Thomé (NHS Director of Primary Care); Sir Alan Langlands (Vice Chancellor of

Dundee University and former Chief Executive of the NHS); Professor Henry Mintzberg (Cleghorn Professor of Management Studies at McGill University in Montreal); Dr. Stephen Thornton (Chief Executive of the Health Foundation); Baroness Barbara Young (Chief Executive of the Environmental Agency and former Chief Executive of the RSPB and of Parkside Health Authority), Dr. Jocelyn Cornwell, Fellow in Health and Social Care, London School of Economics and formerly Chief Executive of the Health Commission, Professor Martin Marshall, GP and Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the NHS, and Dr Harry Burns (Chief Medical Officer, Scotland). These individuals have all agreed to participate in the programme and in particular, to engage with participants in part to reach a judgement about the quality of their experience on the programme.

### **Supporting individual interests and aspirations**

The RCGP and the faculty of the programme are acutely aware that participants will have very different interests, experience and aspirations. An important role of the personal tutors therefore will be to get to know individuals so that the resources available to the programme can – to a significant degree - be tailored to the needs and wishes of each. For example, participants who may aspire to a leadership role in academic general practice might well have more contact with those faculty associated with PPHI while those looking to play a leadership role in Practice Based Commissioning might well see more of the faculty drawn from ODPN. Equally, the various assignments and exercises associated with the seven modules of Supported Learning will be able to be tailored to the differing interests of participants. In general, while much of the programme will be generic, there will also be numerous opportunities to tailor parts of it to the interests of individuals and small groups.

### **Independence**

The programme is designed to ensure that participants become effective in their interactions with key players within the NHS, and it is an important feature of the programme that it is completely independent of any NHS leadership development initiatives. As a result participants can be sure they will develop the skills and insights they need while remaining able to choose for themselves which policy directions they wish to support and which they want to challenge.

### **Doctors as Leaders**

One of the philosophical and design assumptions underpinning the programme is that excellent leaders and excellent doctors require many of the same aptitudes and skills to succeed in their respective fields. Hence, the name of the programme '*Better Leaders, Better Doctors*'. To take just a few examples, both excellent leaders and good doctors must be self aware; they must have self-confidence; they must be able to draw conclusions and take sound decisions in circumstances characterised by ambiguity and uncertainty; and they must be able to work well under pressure. The programme will help participants to develop and/or build upon these (and other) capabilities so that they will become both better leaders and better doctors.

## **Relationship with the RCGP**

Just as the profession requires a new cadre of leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the RCGP must also change and adapt so it too is able to rise to the challenges of the future. Accordingly, participants on the programme will be able to have a close and continuing contact with the officers and key staff of the College. More specifically, there will be a direct 'feedback loop' from the programme into the College.

## **Academic Qualification**

Participants on the programme will be formally registered as external students at the University of Exeter. Successful completion of the programme will earn participants a post-graduate certificate in Leadership from the University of Exeter. In addition, the course units earned in this way can be combined with further study to earn, a post-graduate Diploma and/or Master degree from the University or from the Postgraduate Institute of Health at the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth.

## **Why this programme?**

There are many programmes on offer to GPs at the moment, many of them for a significantly lower financial investment. Why should you choose this programme rather than others?

You shouldn't choose this one if you want to focus on improving your skills in service redesign or improving service quality, the National Primary Care Development Team run an excellent programme that focuses on this and is free. You shouldn't choose this one if you are certain that you wish to become a leader of one of the NHS organisations in your local economy, your SHA will be running one for future generations of CEOs and again these will be free. You shouldn't choose this one if you simply want to extend your existing skill base in a particular management area, there will be many other courses locally that allow you to do this.

This programme aims to help you to see the world in a different way, to open your eyes to processes and politics of which you were previously unaware – one of our current participants talks of 'feeling like an ostrich who has just taken their head out of the sand'. It aims to challenge the way you perceive your interactions with everyone and everything around you, and to enable you to be more effective in situations you have previously found intractably difficult. It allows you to challenge the some of the paradigms within which you have been operating and discover opportunities for your career that you had previously not considered.

This can happen because of the programme leaders':

- depth of understanding of leadership in a wide range of settings and cultures
- depth of understanding of the NHS
- passion for the future of general practice
- independence from the NHS and
- concern about the future of the UK health system and the wider economic system of which this is part.

So you should only choose this programme if you are open to education as opposed to training, if you are willing to re-examine some of your approaches and if you are open to what some of our participants call a 'life changing experience'.

## **Other Information**

### **Financial Support**

The fee for the programme is £6,500. This is tax deductible and in previous years many participants have been able to secure part or whole sponsorship from their practice; their PCT; their local Deanery or equivalent; and/or commercial sources. In addition, the College has a limited number of £1,500 bursaries available to qualified participants who are unable to meet the costs of the programme in any other way. The only other costs are the travel expenses associated with the tutor days, residential week-ends and visits, and a small sum for books.

### **Location**

The launch of the Programme and most seminar days will take place at the College headquarters in London. The residential week-ends are likely to take place in training and residential centres in the Midlands, although this will be negotiated with the participants as a cohort, so that access is as easy as possible wherever people are based.

### **Selection**

Participants will be selected, based on a written application form and an interview, which will be an opportunity for you to meet some of the faculty of the programme and for us to talk to you. It would give us a chance, for example, to listen to you discuss, informally, a case study of some pressing issue in your locality (or something similar) to give us a feel of how the programme might benefit you.

### **Contact us**

If you have any questions that are not addressed here please contact us via Nichola Nightingale on 020 8916 9855 or at [nicholanightingale@odpn.co.uk](mailto:nicholanightingale@odpn.co.uk)