

NHS Leaders Plus Foundation Fellows: Autumn 2022 Impact Evaluation

As a social enterprise we are committed to impact. Our cohort impact reports are designed for internal use, to ensure we are evaluating and accountable to the impact we make. We make the report public because impact is of central importance and we want to be transparent. If you have a question or would like further information please contact office@leadersplus.org.

Thank you to all our Fellows for completing the survey, and to Su Dorrain, Hayley Moore and Josie Rogers for taking the time to explore the impact of the programme in more detail via an interview.

Our Aims

Leaders Plus work with those who want to create a world where no one has to choose between becoming a CEO and their young children. We exist to make change happen for working parents, equipping them with the knowledge, tools, network and confidence to progress to senior leadership roles whilst being a present parent. Our aim is to close the gender pay gap and significantly increase the diversity of those in the top jobs, thus creating a world in which key decisions are made by leaders who more accurately represent the world we live in.

Autumn 2022 Cohort Overview:

Programme Duration	6 months
Number of Fellows that started the Fellowship	36
Number of Fellows who deferred to next cohort	3*
Number of Fellows who completed the Fellowship	33
Number of Fellows who completed the baseline and impact survey	32**

* 2 have confirmed place on Autumn 23

** One fellow completed the majority of the fellowship but missed the final session due to a family illness and did not complete the impact survey.

Diversity breakdown of those that completed the programme:

Identified as from an ethnically minoritised group: 30%

Identified as male: 3%

Identified as female: 97%

How we measure our Impact:

The impact data is based on

- Comparison of self accessed statements and questions (scored from 1-10)
- Direct questions in the impact evaluation survey
- 1:1 interviews with Fellows

Measuring our impact against our intended outcomes outlined in our Theory of Change

Our desired impact as outlined in our Theory of Change is:

Retention: *They are still in the NHS in five years, making a difference and influencing others to improve the workplace. They stay at work because they feel a passion, engaged at work and feel an improvement in their wellbeing*

Impact evidence from the pre and post fellowship surveys that shows we are achieving this:

- Of the 24 fellows that said they were unsure or did not think they were likely to achieve their hopes for the future with their current employer (and were still with the same employer), 50% felt they now could at the end of the programme.
- 97% of fellows were with the same employer at the end of the fellowship as they were at the beginning.
- Fellows were on average 54% more likely to recommend their employer to other working parents by the end of the programme compared to the beginning (those with the same employer).

Impact evidence from Fellows impact survey that support this impact:

- 'An engaged employee who wants to create change in their organisation that will help improve recruitment and retention.'
- 'I feel more engaged and empowered as a leader, and more driven to provide opportunities for my team and help develop their careers.'
- 'We have improved Team Dynamics.'

Career progression: *They have progressed their careers to be more senior and to make a bigger difference, greater gender equality in more senior roles (seniority defined by banding, by taking on senior responsibility, clinical excellence awards etc).*

Impact evidence to highlight from the pre and post fellowship surveys that shows we are achieving this

- All Fellows saw an increase in their confidence in overcoming any barriers in balancing childcare and career development, with an average increase of 111%
- When asked whether they thought that their parenting role negatively impacts their chances of getting to a more senior role, 97% of Fellows felt that the impact was less significant by the end of the programme, compared to at the beginning. The shift in their thinking was, on average, 193% less negative- showing that the programme is transformative in changing mindset.
- 81% of Fellows are in, or have made significant steps towards securing, a more senior role during the Fellowship.
- 97% of Fellows saw a significant rise in their confidence in applying for a job at the next level of seniority, with an average increase of 179%
- 58% saw a salary increase between the beginning and end of the programme, with the average increase of 11%

The below table shows a further breakdown of our desired outcomes outlined in our Theory of Change. The evidence shows that we are making a positive impact in all areas of desired outcomes.

Theory of Change		Evidence of impact				
Key Message of the Fellowship	Desired Outcome	Relevant Question or statement	% who saw an increase	Average score at beginning	Average score at end	Average % improved increase

You have permission to progress your career and don't need to apologise for wanting both a family & a more senior role.	They are bold: e.g. they apply for senior roles even if they are advertised full time and they want to do part time.	Do you think your parenting role negatively impacts your chances of getting to a more senior role?	97%	3.5	7.7	193%
Know the direction you want to take your career and family life, otherwise others will decide for you.	Fellows have a sense of possibility when it comes to their vision for their own career, they believe that having a child doesn't mean they can't strive high.	Do you have a powerful vision for your career and family life?	100%	5.4	8.7	82%
Give yourself permission to do things differently within an imperfect system by experimenting with going 15% beyond your comfort zone.	They are surprised with the positive impact of the brave action they have taken to combine career progression with young children.	How courageous do you feel at work?	91%	5	7.9	74%
Get Support: Invest in each other, give each other a leg up and create a safe, supportive space where diverse individuals can thrive.	Fellows have access to a powerful peer support network that enables them to overcome barriers and challenges beyond the programme end.	I have a strong professional network of peers that supports me to develop my leadership career while balancing looking after my family.	94%	3.6	7.4	151%
		My relationship is making a positive impact on my ability to achieve ambitious career goals while balancing my responsibilities as a working parent.	86%	5.8	8.1	73%
Know what leads to career progression and apply it: sponsorship	They have one or several sponsors.	I have one or several people acting as sponsors to support me to develop my leadership career.	91%	3	6.2	208%
		Confidence in finding a sponsor	100%	2.5	7.6	328%
Invigorate the network: diversity and second degree connections	Their network is strategic, they have shifted their mindset and now unapologetically spend time on networks.	Confidence in Developing a network to support your career development	91%	3.6	8	205%
Work place politics is a reality. Make sure your reputation works for you, your life is easier if you	They are less fazed by work place politics, they don't feel bad promoting themselves and do it to	I am confident in sharing my successes with others.	81%	5.3	7.9	88%

have the skill to deal with a variety of workplace politics challenges and if your reputation paves the way for you.	achieve their vision (with integrity), and they are able to flex their communication style.	Confidence in managing your own reputation	91%	4.8	7.6	119%
		Confidence in Responding to work place politics well	97%	4	7.5	143%
Understand what really senior roles require and be ready to shift thinking.	They get promoted or more seniority in their roles (e.g. higher banding, clinical excellence awards, more pay)	How confident do you feel about applying for a job at the next level of seniority?	97%	4.2	8.3	179%
		% of fellows who are in, or have made significant steps towards securing, a more senior role during the Fellowship.	81%			
You have permission to set boundaries	They feel a bigger sense of agency at work, leaving them feeling more present with their children and more present at work?	How confident do you feel about asking your current employer for a change in working conditions that would help you balance work and family life?	97%	5	8.4	126%
You have permission to delegate and have difficult conversations	Their responses in tough/tense situations make them stand out as a role model and people enjoy working for them which makes it easy for them to achieve their vision.	Confidence in having difficult conversations	97%	4.6	7.9	122%
		Confidence in delegating	93%	4.7	7.9	101%
Be the change for others.	Each Fellow drives change for on average at least 20 other parents as a result of this initial 6 months	I have actively supported other ambitious working parents in the last six months.	81%	5.3	8	107%
		Number of parents supported by Fellows as a direct result of the Fellowship.	100%			
		I have introduced changes in, or influenced my organisation to, support working parents.	91%	4	6.9	105%

You already have what it takes	They boldly ask for what they want and need in their career aspirations.	How confident do you feel in balancing your career with looking after your young child / children?	100%	4.7	8.1	85%
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Fellow Interviews

In order to gain a deeper understanding about what creates high impact for Fellows we spoke with 3 Fellows from the cohort. The findings are below:

What worked:

Time to reflect and focus on a vision. ‘Ah moments’ and new thinking

Susan Dorrain, RCEM West Midlands Regional Chair, Postgraduate Medical Education Quality Lead & Emergency Medicine Consultant at University Hospitals Birmingham.

‘The Fellowship gave me time to reflect on what I wanted. This structured time led me to reflect on the fact that I was well known within my own trust and region, but to make a change and do something bigger, I needed to widen my reputation. It also helped me realise that life is as much about family as it is about career. It challenged me to not just take the next step everyone expected, but to take ownership of my journey.’

Hayley Moore, Learning Disability and Autism Programme Manager, NHS England - Midlands Region

‘The Fellowship gave me a completely new understanding of myself; what I wanted for my career and life. The unique thing about the Fellowship was that it was not just focussed on the workplace, although there were so many learning pathways that impacted directly on the day job, but the fellowship helped me think about my life, not just my career in isolation. The sponsorship element was completely new to me and thinking about sponsors rather than mentor/coach gave me a change in perspective. I asked someone to be my sponsor - they were elated and they have brought me into a space that I would not have been in otherwise, including being shortlisted for roles.’

Josie Rogers, Emergency Medicine Consultant, Queen Elizabeth University Hospital

‘The biggest impact for me was having the time and space to think about my vision that coincided with applying for consultant positions. The self reflection and thinking of tangible things I want to do was really great to talk about in my interview. And I got the job! Plus I moved house and am expecting our third baby.’

A safe place to share and reflect

- Feeling safe in the group: Freedom as trust and respect for each other in the room without having to dig deep into career and hierarchy.
- Groups were truly reflective of a range of Trusts, areas, backgrounds and roles. All opinions were really valued and the diversity was really well managed.
- Talking to a diverse group of peers gave perspective.

Taking action

The Fellowship provided the following opportunities which were instrumental in supporting Fellows to take action to progress their careers:

- Hearing from others and listening to what worked for them
- Being able to take the time to translate what you are hearing to how it could be applicable to your situation during the session.
- Time within the sessions to undertake the thinking and the action planning.
- You leave the session with a plan -not just 'go away and think about it'
- Being open and sharing where you were at with the group and this not just being focused on achieving. For example, 'I heard about this, 'I might go for it', 'I did and I got it', or 'I did and I didn't get it, or 'I didn't in the end as I thought about it and it was not right for me.' Sharing successes and things that didn't go so well.
- Sharing on the community platform Ugenie became a cheerleading space.

Increase in confidence

Hayley Moore , Learning Disability and Autism Programme Manager, NHS England - Midlands Region

'I feel a lot more courageous. I had forgotten a lot about myself and my own capability and strengths. I found so much strength from the people in the group giving me such positive unbiased (never seen my work) feedback, in particular the appreciation at the end of the thinking pairs, was brilliant. The Fellowship helped me come out of my shell and I now have the confidence to set boundaries and call things out. The strength exercise was also very powerful.'

Josie Rogers, Emergency Medicine Consultant, Queen Elizabeth University Hospital

'The Fellowship was an overwhelmingly positive experience. I am at such a different point now than when I started the fellowship.'

Susan Dorrain, RCEM West Midlands Regional Chair, Postgraduate Medical Education Quality Lead & Emergency Medicine Consultant at University Hospitals Birmingham.

'One of the key takeaways from the Fellowship for me was confidence. It gave me the confidence to look for different things and only go for the things that are right for me. It also gave me the knowledge that it is normal to fail and not get things. Knowing that career progression is possible on my terms and the confidence to consider new opportunities in terms of what works for me, and focusing on outcomes based performance.'

Improvement Suggestions

From both the impact survey and in depth interviews the suggestions for improvement are below:

- Include more traditional leadership teaching and lesson type input.
- Be clear that the normal 'leadership' stuff is not covered. Eg - personality types, leadership qualities.
- Having a clear 'north star' goal is important to give the fellowship more impact.
- Assessment on whether NHS or cross sector cohort would suit the candidate best.

- Although the thinking pairs were helpful, sometimes it felt too much focused on thinking and not enough on actions and implementation.
- For trainees there is a very clear promotion path and some of the content did not feel immediately relevant.

Action we are taking to increase impact based on what works and improvement suggestions

- Implementing an action focus plan by including time at the end of each session to focus on putting learning into action.
- Recording actions and sharing on ugenie with encouraging posts to share successful actions and encourage each other.
- Including taking action as part of the criteria to be assessed at interview.
- Encouraging vulnerability in order to foster deep connection with the group, e.g. asking deep questions for opening rounds in early sessions and including the 'What made me' activity for the cross sector cohort.
- Extend the optional content to include more 'input' content.
- Set the expectations more clearly at the interview stage that the focus of the Fellowship is on deep thinking and applying career progression concepts to your own vision rather than teaching leadership skills.
- Make it clear at the interview stage that Fellows did to be in a place where they are able to look forward 5 or 10 years as having a vision is central to the programme.
- Facilitators to acknowledge that they will hear new ways of working, they might not seem applicable in the NHS - but they are! Josie said that at first she wasn't sure about networking, but on reflection realised that it is part of working in the NHS.
- Facilitators to explicitly say to the trainees that some of the content (mostly on areas of visibility and promotion) might not seem applicable but it is worth returning to. Cite that past trainees have reflected on how useful this was when they came to apply for consultant roles.
- Reframe 'promotion' as 'progression' and 'preparing for promotion'.
- Offering more support for applicants at application stage to determine whether they are best suited to the cross sector or NHS programme.

The below quotes are all taken from the impact evaluation survey.

What impact Fellows say the Leaders Plus NHS Foundation Fellowship had made on their work life:

- I feel more secure in my future and know where I'm going.
- This has given me the space I needed to really think about my future and what it could look like. I have made leaps into progressing in my career and have had some of the difficult conversations I needed to get things moving. I genuinely don't think I'd have plucked up the courage to do this without the work I have done during the fellowship.
- I think the impact has been profound. Without realising I find myself having the confidence to engage in discussions and conversations I would have shied away from before. I don't feel afraid to be honest that I'm a mother anymore. I have added 'proud mother of boys' to my professional Twitter account profile. There is no way I would have done this before.

- It has given me the encouragement to apply and gain the position of chief registrar. I have been nominated for an award for supporting colleagues. This fellowship has given me the courage to create my goals and start working towards them.
- The Fellowship has given me the confidence to ask and believe I deserve to be in a higher position.
- Gave me the confidence to go for a consultant post that I otherwise would have been nervous about. Allowed me to really focus on what my vision is & set myself clear goals.
- I am more ambitious, my goals are clearer for myself and supervisors.
- This has given me the space I needed to really think about my future and what it could look like. I have made leaps into progressing in my career and have had some of the difficult conversations I needed to get things moving. I genuinely don't think I'd have plucked up the courage to do this without the work I have done during the fellowship.
- I've actually started some boundary setting and giving back some additional roles that I'd taken on as I realised they weren't helping me work towards my long term goals.

What impact Fellows say the Leaders Plus NHS Foundation Fellowship had made on their home life:

- One significant impact is that the Fellowship has enhanced my ability to set boundaries and manage my time effectively. Through the program, I have gained insights into prioritisation techniques, time management strategies, and ways to create dedicated quality time for my family. This has allowed me to be more present and engaged in my role as a parent, fostering stronger connections and relationships with my children.
- I feel able to voice the unequal burden of tasks with my partner.
- We really benefited from the partner sessions & sharing our visions for work & family life. It allowed us to see how aligned our goals were.
- Negotiating a flexible working agreement for 3 months allows me to spend more time with family at the hours that work for me.
- Building a better future for my family but also making time to have fun as a family.
- I am accepting and comfortable with balancing work and home, and have taken acceptance from the parental staircase.
- I'm better with boundaries and being a present parent and hopefully role model of a working mother to a son and daughter. Even when I've not been there they understand what my job is in wider society but I also still know them for who they are.

What actions Fellows will take as a result of the Leaders Plus NHS Foundation Fellowship:

- I will continue to progress in my leadership role in my organisation and seek out new roles to expand on this.
- I have disseminated the course information within my trust to encourage other working parents to go for it.
- Continue to have conversations with senior management about career progression and leadership opportunities.
- Working on home life to improve performance at work.
- Reprioritise my working life and goals to suit my long term family and health needs.
- Offer to sponsor and mentor other working parents

- Apply for consultant jobs with confidence and use the skills of the fellowship to build a career as a successful change maker for my future organisation.
- Focused actions leading to my vision both at work and at home using the skills I have learnt on the fellowship.
- I will look at more senior roles, I will say no to prevent overload, I will bring my whole self to conversations.

What Fellows say about the Leaders Plus NHS Foundation Fellowship:

- Different from any other form of NHS training. Techniques around listening & feedback that are new, but excellent to translate to NHS work.
- Brilliant to form a network of peers, and to have a source of support and encouragement, as well as a plethora of tools to progress with my career.
- Really enjoyed the course and benefited personally and professionally.
- Thank you so much! Feeling empowered in ways I didn't know I would!
- Literally life changing, I feel more "me". I've learned so much about myself and what I want and need and you've given me the tools to enable me to do this. Thank you
- The impact of the Leaders Plus NHS Fellowship on me has been significant and transformative.