



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



Office for Health
Improvement
& Disparities

Aspiring Directors in Public Health Programme

APPLICANT INFORMATION 2024

The Purpose of the Programme

The public sector has many experienced and skilled leaders. They work in complex politically charged environments to improve the quality and outcomes of services for people in their communities, through ever more challenging economic times.

If we want to develop leaders and leadership capability for the future public sector, we need to understand what good and effective public sector leaders do. Established and traditional leadership traits – the drive to compete and win, to control through positional authority, and to direct human and financial resources towards achieving organisational targets – are proving ill-suited to the demands of leading across complex, adaptive systems, where problems are ‘wicked’, solutions disputed and those with influence and interest in the issues are often to be found outside traditional organisational boundaries. In these complex systems, evidence shows that successful leaders affect change through influence, share resources and power, and collaborate with diverse groups over the long-term for the greater good.

Recent years—and more specifically, our experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic— have seen increasing focus on place-based and systems leadership. There is recognition in all parts of the system of the need to develop the skills and behaviours of leaders who can lead confidently and collaboratively across organisational and system boundaries.

The challenge for senior public health leaders is to become leaders who are able to work with others to transform the health and wellbeing of their local population and make a difference to population health management and the prevention agenda. Leadership development programmes have a key part to play in providing people with the knowledge, the skills and the space to develop systems leadership and collaborative leadership approaches. This programme has been delivered to over 120 participants over five years and is designed to support senior leaders in public health, and other roles focused on delivering better health and wellbeing for populations, to find, make, and take up their roles and authority more effectively in their local systems.

Programme Design Overview

Learning will be delivered through a range of interventions:

- **Five modules delivered as three one-day and two, two-day (residential) workshops.** These immersive events incorporate:

- Theory ‘bursts’ to introduce the academic theories, frameworks and research evidence underpinning experiential and developmental learning. This is important because evidence of what constitutes effective systemic leadership practice is emerging all theme. We aim to encourage participants to analyse and explore the evidence and test it against their lived experience, as well as apply the learning to their own contexts.

- Experiential work, as well as exercises and practices designed to surface and challenge behaviours and assumptions and provide deep reflective learning and application to practice.
- Hearing from subject matter experts (within public health and other sectors). This includes “In conversation with...” sessions to enable participants to learn from experienced practitioners with leadership responsibilities and experts to gain new insights and develop their skills.
- Reflective learning and journaling.

• **Coaching/Mentoring:** Each participant will have a one-hour coaching session following Module 1 to reflect on the personal development needs and to develop a Personal Development Plan. Participants will also be allocated an experienced Mentor and will have up to 4 one-hour mentoring sessions over the course of the programme. Mentors will be current (or recent former) DsPH drawn from programme alumni and wider networks. Mentoring will focus on the public health practice context and, as the programme develops, suitability and readiness for taking on a DPH or other senior leader role.

• **Reflection & Development Groups:** Each participant will be part of a Reflection & Development Group which will meet for 4 half-day sessions over the course of the programme. The Reflection & Development Group will be led by an experienced developmental coach who will also act as the Learning Co-ordinator for their Group. The work of the Reflection & Development Group will be deliberately developmental in nature, providing intensive groupbased coaching. It will also create opportunities for programme learning to be iterated with practice and will be an important context in which individual development goals are reflected upon and opportunities for further development identified. It is likely that these sessions will be online (though there is some flexibility on this depending on the needs and preferences of each Group). Participants will be encouraged to continue with self-facilitated Groups after the programme ends.

• **Self-Directed Study & Reflective Practice:** A wide range of supporting resources (academic publications and other reading material, videos, presentation, podcasts, processes to support reflective and developmental practice etc.) relevant to the programme content will be made available through SharePoint (or similar) during and for 6 months following the programme.

• **Alumni event:** Each Cohort will have the opportunity to attend an alumni event. Based on our experience, the alumni session is best designed in collaboration with participants (and the programme commissioners) to respond to current needs. Its purpose is both to provide a space for participants to reflect on their development as individuals and as part of a collective

community, and to offer further learning and development after they complete the formal programme. The format may be a Masterclass, Theory Burst, Case study or Experiential event.

Module Details

Each module will have its own learning outcomes, which contribute to the overall aims and objectives of the programme. We anticipate drawing on guest contributors with relevant practice experience across the modules

<p>Module 1: Becoming a systemic leadership practitioner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to the programme and forming as a learning group ▪ Introduction to systems thinking, leadership practice and personal development in the context of the role of ADPH ▪ Personal development planning - introduction to baseline survey, Narrative 360, mentoring and developmental practices ▪ Facilitated discussion/reflection with new and experienced DsPH on their developmental journey
<p>Module 2: Systemic leadership practice across boundaries (2 days)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applying principles of systems thinking to live systemic leadership challenges ▪ Developing systemic leadership skills – e.g. exercising Authority and Leadership, handling disruption drawing on relevant models (e.g. Adaptive Leadership) ▪ Working with big and small politics and the leadership challenges it creates (drawing on contributors with relevant experience as elected local politicians and Directors of Public Health) ▪ Qualities and attributes of systemic leadership teams, how they can be developed and what it takes to lead them ▪ Personal development focus on understanding own preferences/limitations for working with conflict and how they can be addressed
<p>Module 3: Systemic leadership practice for inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applying principles of systems thinking to live systemic leadership challenges deepen understanding and diagnosis of dynamics of exclusion/marginalisation ▪ Deepening systemic leadership skills as they apply to inclusion/marginalisation at different level (e.g. team, organisation, place) ▪ Personal development focus on understanding own meaning-making in relation to inclusion/exclusion and how this affects/limits/resources potential for systemic leadership practice
<p>Module 4: Systemic leadership practice for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applying principles of systems thinking to change and innovation processes (with guest contributors) and application to live systemic leadership challenges

change and innovation (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing and applying systemic leadership skills to challenges of leading through change and innovation (e.g. narrative, framing, handling disruption) ▪ Personal development focus on understanding own and others' reactions and responses to change (including resistance) and practices to address them and to support resilience
Module 5: Next steps in your systemic leadership journey: becoming a senior public health leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment/reflection of own development so far, career aspirations and readiness/willingness to take on role of DPH or other senior leadership role ▪ Critical review of own personal development plan and identification of next and personal development plan to follow the programme ▪ Focus on identifying knowledge, skills and behaviours acquired/not yet acquired and practices that will sustain and/or support them
Alumni Event (1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designed in collaboration with participants

Programme Eligibility and Selection Criteria

This Programme is for individuals who have been working at a senior level in the following areas for at least 2 years:

- Public Health
- Children, Young People and Family Services
- Adult Health and Care Services
- Commissioning & Service Development
- Education, Housing & wider Community Services
- Others with significant responsibility for the delivery or planning of public health related services.

This is a national, highly competitive Programme and places are limited. Priority will be given to applications from people who can demonstrate their ambition and readiness to step up to a director level (or regional/national equivalent) role within the next three years. We welcome applications from people who meet the criteria and who can demonstrate the passion and commitment to personal, team, organisational and system development which we need from our future public health leaders.

Programme cost

The Programme is funded by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and is designed as a collaboration between OHID and the University of Birmingham.

For those in Public Health working in England, the course is free: this includes accommodation during residential sessions and all materials used on the programme. You will be responsible for travel costs and for overnight accommodation prior to the workshops if required. For those in Public Health Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, or if you are working in any of the other services listed above (except Public Health) in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, there will be a cost of £1500 plus VAT. This represents a significant subsidy on the total cost of the programme.

Programme Dates & Venues

ADPH Module 1	16 January 2025	The Edgbaston Park Hotel, University of Birmingham
ADPH Module 2	11-12 March 2025	Edgbaston Park Hotel, University of Birmingham
ADPH Module 3	21 May 2025	The Exchange
ADPH Module 4	16-17 July 2025	The Edgbaston Park Hotel, University of Birmingham
ADPH Module 5	16 September 2025	The Exchange
ADPH Alumni Event	18 November 2025	The Exchange

Applicants to the Programme must be able to commit to all of the scheduled workshops, the additional ALS and coaching sessions and to an average of 3 hours per week personally-directed learning, reflection and application. In practice this could mean 100+ hours in total and participants will be expected to think about and plan for the application of their Programme learning and their personal study.

Workshop 1, 2 and 4 will take place at the Edgbaston Park Hotel. Workshop 3 and 5 will take place at The Exchange, Centenary Square, Birmingham City Centre. Birmingham is a lively and vibrant city, with an exciting and diverse cultural life and within easy transport reach of most of the UK. The University of Birmingham has been challenging and developing great minds for more than a century. Characterised by a tradition of innovation, research at the University has broken new ground, pushed forward the boundaries of knowledge and made an impact on people's lives. As such, we believe it provides an ideal venue to host a development programme for future leaders in the public sector.

Accommodation for residential modules will be provided and fully funded and full details given when you start the Programme. This does not include the evening before a residential.

You will be working hard during Programme days, but we hope you will also find time to explore what the University, and the city, has to offer.

Eligibility to apply

Successful applicants will have, and will have the ability to demonstrate, all of the following:

Criteria
The ability and desire to be a Director of Public Health, or work at Director level (including regional or national equivalent) in their own profession, within 3 years of the end of the Programme.
Support from their manager or a senior organisational sponsor to undertake the Programme.
The commitment to attend all of the 7 days of Programme events between January 2025 and November 2025, and to undertake personally-directed learning throughout and beyond the Programme.
Significant experience and demonstrable leadership potential in Public Health or if in other public sector roles, in their current position.
An enthusiasm for improvement and interest in creating opportunities for shared leadership and system-wide transformation as a leader in the public sector.
A strong commitment to their own leadership development and in sharing learning and experience with others.
Willingness and energy to find ways to apply programme learning to their leadership practice and to continue their learning and development beyond the life of the Programme.
An understanding of how their role can and will contribute to improving health outcomes for the population they serve.

How to Apply

Application to the Programme is via an application pack, which can be requested by emailing the programme office at bli@contacts.bham.ac.uk. Completed forms should be returned to the above email address **by 12pm on Friday 25th October 2024**.

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

For informal enquiries please email bli@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Application Process

To be considered for the Programme you must submit a completed application form, which includes the information from your sponsor. If you or your sponsor prefer, we can send the sponsor form directly to them for submission, but both forms must be submitted by the deadline of **by 12pm on Friday 25th October 2024**.

All eligible applications will be considered by an assessment panel, who will ensure consistency and fairness in reviewing applications. The assessors will use the information included in your application form to make a decision and allocate places. They will also consider the information provided on the Sponsor Form and therefore we encourage you and your sponsor to dedicate time to the application process and to ensure you answer each of the questions fully. All applications will be anonymised prior to assessment.

The decision of the assessment panel will be communicated to applicants during the week commencing 18 November 2024. Any applicant who has not been successful in being offered a place on the Programme may be signposted towards other development opportunities. There will also be an opportunity to receive feedback on your application.

If applicants feel that they want to appeal against the panel decision they must submit their appeal within five days of the date of the email advising them of the assessment panel's decision.

Before You Apply

Make sure you have read all the information about the Programme, have checked that you are eligible to apply and can demonstrate how you meet the selection criteria. Please be sure that you can attend all of the Programme dates. Have a conversation with your Programme sponsor and ensure they have the information they need to complete and submit the Sponsor Form.

Sponsoring Organisations

[Birmingham Leadership Institute](#)

[University of Birmingham Health Services Management Centre](#)

[Office for Health Improvement and Disparities \(OHID\)](#)