



Leadership Programmes 2027

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What people said about our 2026 Programmes

"Very insightful learning" + "Good time for reflection"

"Lots of discussions, theories, knowledge, scenarios shared"

"Good balance of theory and practice"

"Talking to different people hearing lots of ideas and perspectives and experiences."

"It has been a great Programme. I have learnt a lot"

"Well paced. Opportunities to discuss. Great activities/prompts"

"Really useful, workable models to use"

"Made me think differently about leading and managing as well as about myself, my style and what to work on"

"All of it was valuable. I found the exercise focusing on strengths really useful"

"Engaging and interactive" + "Techniques to take away"

"Practical advice on how we would apply what we are learning, particularly around difficult conversations"

"Inspiring stories, expectations, examples"

Leadership Programmes 2027

OVERVIEW

The Wessex Group of Sixth Form Colleges is committed to developing its staff to become leaders.

Building on more than 20 years of success in leadership programmes across different levels such as future, middle and senior managers, the Wessex Group is once again offering a programme of leadership development activities for 2027. To enhance informal networking, mutual trust and individual engagement we plan on holding all sessions face-to-face (though we can quickly adapt), and we remain committed to offering high quality, useful and inspiring programmes for all leadership levels.

Our programme for **Established Managers** is run as 3 modules each of 2 days duration - 6 days in total and is residential with 1 overnight stay for each module. This programme is suitable for current middle managers with some experience or senior managers who may be new in post.

Our **Future Leaders** programme comprises an initial 2-day session and 3 further individual days, making 5 days in total over 6 months, and scheduled to avoid the early summer period which is often key for teaching staff for examination preparation. Typical participants are upcoming or very new managers who are planning a career in sixth form college leadership and are taking first steps.

We also offer a 'taster' 1-day **Core Knowledge for Leaders** which takes place towards the end of the summer term.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT ELIGIBILITY - The **Leadership programmes** for both Future Leaders and Established Managers **are open to ALL staff in the Wessex Group including teaching, non-teaching and support staff**, provided that they meet the general and specific course requirements.

ENTRY CRITERIA

The Wessex Group's Leadership Programmes are prestigious and highly valued by those that have taken part in past training. It is expected that applications to take part in the programmes will be from staff who:

- have demonstrated commitment to their personal and career development
- are interested in furthering their career in colleges
- have been recommended for leadership development by managers who recognise their potential

- are interested in improving the impact that they have on the success of their college
- are committed to the completion of any required course work and assignments
- are committed to attending all modules of their programme. Unfortunately, those unable to attend the first sessions will forfeit their places on the rest of the programme as well as the fee if their place cannot be filled.

Colleges will be expected to support delegates by ensuring that they are up to date on current college policies and strategy; that they have access to materials required throughout the programmes and that they are able to take time away from the 'day job' to attend each module.

THE PROGRAMMES

Established Managers

Developed from our long running Middle Manager and Senior Manager programmes this highly successful and engaging leadership development programme for Established Managers aims to provide participants with an understanding of leadership qualities, skills and behaviours as well as to provide opportunities for developing and practising skills for key roles and tasks.

The programme provides six cohesive training days (in blocks of 2 days each) led by professional facilitators/trainers. There will be opportunities to work on real issues and concerns, allowing delegates to draw on the programme content in an environment supported by experts. Each delegate will have a written report and 1:1 coaching/feedback from a 360° survey conducted at the start of the course. Further diagnostic surveys are included and the results explained in a supportive setting. Opportunities for short term placements in other partnership colleges can also be arranged.

Programme content will cover:

- Personal Leadership Development (2 days)
- Decision-making, priorities and approaches to change
- Leading the team: building relationships and capacity
- Leading the organisation: Culture, Strategy and Vision
- Review, reflection and forward planning for personal development

Each successful candidate will be allocated a mentor who will preferably not be a line manager and will be a senior post-holder. It is expected that participants will interact with mentors around 3-4 times during the year.

Who should apply? Established managers and aspiring or newly appointed senior managers with the potential for further leadership responsibilities in Wessex Group Sixth Form Colleges. This might include:

- Non-teaching staff with a managerial role in planning, service development and other support areas
- Heads of curriculum departments
- Managers of tutorial provision
- Staff with a role in improving quality in sixth form colleges by managing the delivery of key components of provision

See also page 4 for general criteria for admission to 2027 programmes.

Dates:

Thursday and Friday, 11th and 12th March 2027

Tuesday and Wednesday, 15th and 16th June 2027

Thursday and Friday, 4th and 5th November 2027

Future Leaders

Fresh for this year, our redesigned Leadership programme for emerging or Future Leaders has been developed with the aim of providing an immediate toolbox of skills and knowledge for first time leaders as well as appropriate background in leadership, team management and communication models. Growing initially from a Wessex/LSIS (Learning and Skills Improvement Service) pilot and evolving with changes in the sector over 20 years this is the next iteration in that evolution. Aimed at new or aspiring first line managers who may be working in a curriculum or business, learning or support area, the course has been developed to equip staff with the confidence, self-awareness and knowledge to increase their effectiveness as they move into leadership positions such as Head of Department/Support Service.

The programme consists of five days focusing on:

- Leadership styles and inclusive leadership
- Strengthening self-awareness and flexibility in communication
- Leading and empowering others through effective team building
- Decision-making that aligns with values and organisational priorities
- Leading with influence in the organisation and wider sector

Practical activities and reflective learning run throughout the programme and allow course participants to build a strong, supportive peer network whilst gaining experiential understanding as they work through the course content. Delegates also take part in a leadership profile survey leading to a detailed report on their preferred styles of interaction and leadership behaviours.

Who should apply? Those applying to the course are likely to be new managers or people with the potential to progress to a leadership role in the near future, in both teaching and non-teaching

areas of the college. Candidates are likely to have had little or no formal leadership and management development.

See also page 4 for general criteria for admission to 2027 programmes.

Dates:

5 sessions January to July 2027

Wednesday and Thursday, 20th and 21st January 2027

Wednesday, 3rd March 2027

Wednesday, 15th April 2027

Friday, 25th June 2027

In response to feedback, no modules will run in May.

Core Knowledge for Leaders

Now in its third year, Core Knowledge for Leadership is a brim-filled, one-day 'bite-sized' introduction or refresher in leadership. The format makes it a popular option among attendees and colleges alike, with delegates from a range of positions attending to boost skills and knowledge. Sessions cover both people skills and business topics such as:

- Introduction to managing staff and courageous conversations
- Priorities under pressure & decision-making
- Wellbeing
- Influencing and behaviour of organisations
- Key business aspects in education and sector context
- Statutory/regulatory responsibilities and HR
- Financial awareness & risk management
- Seeing the bigger picture, cross college activity and reputational awareness
- Reflect, review and realistic planning for impact

Date:

Provisionally Tuesday 22nd June 2027 (alternate date Tuesday 6th July 2027)

Look out for booking details coming in the spring.

COURSE FEES

The costs of all programmes run by the Wessex Group are shared between those taking part. Without complete information about training and venue costs and candidate numbers at the time of advertising each programme, the final fees cannot be determined. We therefore ask for **an advance payment once delegate lists have been confirmed** and this may be adjusted upon the completion of the course. However, our estimates have tended to be accurate over the years. We have worked hard to reduce costs as much as possible and have negotiated with trainers, venues and other providers. This year's fees for Leadership Programmes are based on cohorts of 10.

For Established Managers we have been able to keep fees the same as last year. For our slightly shorter Future Leaders course there is a marked fee reduction compared to last year's corresponding offer – due to the shorter course length and no longer including costs associated with an external ILM qualification.

Fees remain subject to small changes as agreed by the Wessex Group Executive for Leadership Programmes and may even reduce if large numbers of delegate bookings are made. The programmes continue to be keenly priced as well as highly relevant. Course fees estimates are as follows:

Course	Length	Advance payment ¹
Leadership Programme for Established Managers	6 days	£1,880
Leadership Programme for Future Leaders	5 days	£1,200
Core Knowledge for Leaders	1 day	tba

How to apply

Following discussion with your Staff Development Officer, line manager and senior managers, an application should be submitted electronically by your staff development officer via the Wessex Group website no later than Friday, 6th November 2026. Enquiries should be directed to the Wessex Group Manager, Gillian Cross gillian@wessexsfc.ac.uk

Links to booking:

ESTABLISHED MANAGERS: <https://wessexsfc.ac.uk/courses/event/detail/592>

FUTURE LEADERS: <https://wessexsfc.ac.uk/courses/event/detail/587>

CORE KNOWLEDGE FOR LEADERS: <https://wessexsfc.ac.uk/courses/event/detail/586>

Or go to the Training and Development page on the Wessex Group website and search for the course.

Closing date: Friday, 6th November 2026

¹ Paid following invoice which will be sent after programmes have been confirmed and delegate lists finalised.

Book now!

Please book as soon as possible, preferably well in advance of the closing date. We need to ensure that we have enough people to run each course, so that we can make suitable arrangements such as venues, activities etc. in good time, and set in train the pre-course preparation. Once the delegate lists are agreed, the commitment to payment is finalised, required and non-refundable.

In the event of oversubscription for courses, arrangements will be made to decide how places will be allocated (via the Wessex Group Executive Group for Leadership Programmes). Booking is not a guarantee of a place. This will be confirmed soon after the closing date.

Gillian Cross – Wessex Group Manager