

Guidance on Career Transitions

For applicants



Introduction

The NHS High Potential Scheme (HPS) is a new, innovative, 24-month career development scheme to help high potential, middle level leaders accelerate their career to executive roles at a faster pace.

Throughout the scheme participants will develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to become outstanding, compassionate and inclusive senior leaders across health and care.

To help participants get the best development opportunity, HPS offers two development streams.

During the application process, you'll be required to choose the most appropriate development stream and to do this you'll need to understand which stage of your leadership career you are currently in.

Choosing the right High Potential Scheme Development Stream

To help you get the best development opportunity, HPS offers two different development streams. You are required to apply to a specific stream. We have provided guidance below to assist you in selecting the right development stream, however we recognise that identifying your current career stage and the one you would be transitioning through during your time on the scheme is not about your precise grade or role. Please read this guidance in conjunction with the '[Career Stage Self-Assessment](#)', which you are asked to complete and upload as part of your application.

Development Stream 1

Stream 1 is likely to best support those working at Agenda for Change Bands 8A and 8B, consultants and equivalents. Participants should be looking to make the move to higher level Band 8, lead consultant or equivalent roles. Alternatively, this scheme is likely to be suitable for those who are technical or clinical experts but who have had less opportunity to focus on the development of broader leadership skills and capabilities.

Example roles: Deputy head of a clinical or non-clinical service, managing services such as GP practices, professional lead.

Development Stream 2

Stream 2 is likely to support those working at Agenda for Change Bands 8C and 8D, lead consultants and equivalents. Participants should be looking to make the move to Band 9, clinical lead or equivalent roles.

Alternatively, this scheme is likely to be suitable for those with a broad range of middle level leadership experience, looking to broaden their responsibility within an organisation, network or system, in readiness as a future Aspiring Director.

Example Roles: Head of a clinical or non-clinical service, Assistant or Associate Director, Medical or Clinical Consultant.

Identifying your career transition

Planning your transition to a more senior role isn't always easy. There are many roles in health and care leadership, each requiring different experiences, skills and knowledge. Career transitions are the step changes in expectations of leaders' experiences, skills, knowledge and behaviours required to reach the next level up. We will help you identify and progress to the next career stage by:

- Providing the information to help determine which development stream will offer the most appropriate development opportunities for you.
- Enhancing your understanding of the likely changes between your current level and the next level up.
- Focusing your career development plan on gaining experiences that will enable your progression.

The aim of the scheme is to develop the skills required for your next career stage and the transitions describe two stages in the pathway to senior executive roles.

Career Transition 1

At this career transition, leaders are moving towards managing a range of teams. Target roles could have a strong team leadership focus as manager of managers (where team leadership becomes more complex as direct reports are likely to be managers themselves) or have a strong technical/medical expertise focus, for example, a lead consultant role. Roles are likely to lead a service or programme area within a specific department.

The key changes when transitioning into these roles include:

- **Leading People:** From managing a focused team or centre of expertise to managing a service / programme area, consisting of a range of co-ordinating teams collaborating effectively to meet service / programme goals and with a focus on continual performance improvement.
- **Vision / Strategy:** From translating strategy, policies and plans for their team to adapting or developing policies and plans for a specific service / programme area which aligns into and supports the achievement of wider goals and policies.
- **System Working and Collaboration:** From understanding how the work of teams connects to achieve outcomes, to building relationships and working collaboratively with immediate teams and partners to ensure alignment and better outcomes for patients, citizens, communities or staff.

- **Resource Management:** From efficiently allocating work and making use of resources, to resource planning for their service / programme area, maximising efficiency and effectiveness.

Remember, these are the key roles and challenges for the next level up – developing and demonstrating capability in these areas will help progression.

Expectations

The table below outlines the skills, experiences and knowledge that is typically expected of leaders in later stages of their middle leadership career. These have been mapped against the [Aspire Together Success Profile](#) and the [Healthcare Leadership Model](#).

Leading People Inclusively and Compassionately	Vision / Strategy	System Working and Collaboration	Resource Management
Manage the performance and continuous improvement of a service / programme	Accountable for medium term planning and effective service delivery within a defined area	Look outside own area of work to explore and apply new practices and lessons learned to improve service delivery and the achievement of outcomes	Accountable for resource planning for their service / programme, ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources in accordance with planned budgets
Lead a range of teams, enabling co-operation to maximise effectiveness	Translate and communicate organisational and team strategy to gain team engagement and enable understanding of their role in achieving goals	Build relationships and act as a collaborative partner with other teams / services to improve system / service delivery and deliver the best patient service (outcomes)	Proactively offer support and resources to other teams to help them achieve their objectives when in the best interests of the wider system / organisation
Create an enabling environment in which it is easier for people to behave in an inclusive way	Translate broader organisational strategy / policies into area specific policies		
Mentor and coach team managers, enabling them to improve team performance and lead with care	Support the development of service standards and processes		
Provide technical/medical leadership and contribute to policy development within area of expertise	Actively support leaders across their organisation when they courageously stand up for decisions that support and inspire shared purpose		

Experiences

The below experiences are helpful for developing the skills and capabilities required of this transition stage:

- **Continuous improvement:** Experience of researching external practices and new initiatives, adapting new ideas and applying learning to demonstrably and

sustainably improve delivery within own area of practice, including experience of turning around performance or dealing with inherited issues.

- **Technical leadership:** Experience of providing technical/medical leadership and translation for others, for example, developing policies / procedures for an organisation or leading the implementation of new technical/medical developments.
- **People leadership:** Experience of engaging teams through organisational change, maintaining motivation and building support. Experience in dealing with challenging inter-personal leadership issues.
- **Developing great managers:** Experience of coaching / mentoring others, enabling reflective practice and supporting them to work more effectively with their own teams, thereby improving their own and their teams' performance.
- **Enabling collaboration:** Experience taking a lead role on cross-team initiatives and projects, working effectively in collaboration.
- **Resource management:** Experience of managing a budget or resource planning and identifying ways to improve efficiency, demonstration of the ability to make resourcing decision for the 'greater good'.
- **Building a more inclusive and compassionate culture:** Experience of creating a diverse and inclusive team and providing visible support to diversity initiatives / action.

Career Transition 2

At this career transition, the focus moves towards functional leadership. Target roles are likely to be leading part of a complex system, a smaller discrete system, service or complex programme area or acting as a clinical lead with a focus on a target population rather than within a specific department. There is likely to be a notable difference in the need to connect across service areas / functions to deliver successful outcomes for patients, citizens, communities or staff. The key changes when transitioning into these roles include:

- **Leading People:** From managing a service / programme area with a focus on how to achieve set goals to leading a function / service / complex programme with diverse services, balancing a range of priorities to maximise outcomes.
- **Vision / Strategy:** From developing plans and policies for a service / programme area to achieve set goals to setting goals and direction for their service / complex programme, typically within a 1-year time frame, to support the achievement of wider organisational/system strategy.
- **System Working and Collaboration:** From building relationships and working collaboratively with other teams to operating across a CCG / Trust, understanding how their service / programme fits into the broader system and contributing to system / organisation wide decision making.
- **Resource Management:** From resource planning for their service / programme area, maximising efficient use of resources in the short term to resource planning

for a bigger / more complex system / service / programme, balancing short- and long-term needs and defining what's needed for their service for sustainable success.

Remember these are the key changes for this transition to move up to the next level – we would expect candidates for Career Transition 2 to have mastered the key transition challenges for Career Transition 1.

Expectations

The table below outlines the skills, experiences and knowledge that is typically expected of leaders in later stages of their middle leadership career. These have been mapped against the [Aspire Together Success Profile](#) and the [Healthcare Leadership Model](#).

Leading people inclusively and compassionately	Vision / Strategy	System Working and Collaboration	Resource Management
Manage the performance and continuous improvement of a discrete system / service / complex programme	Primary focus is on maximising medium to long term outcomes	Identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership within their area	Accountable for resource planning for their area, balancing long and short-term needs
Mentor and coach their team, spotting and developing diverse talent	Contribute to strategic decision making across the system / organisation	Support and enable others to work effectively across the system / organisation	Creating the business case for short / long-term change to better deliver patient services
Accountable for talent management across their teams to meet current and future talent needs	Set direction / policy for their function, shaping longer term strategic objectives based on internal and external environment and established strategy – challenging the status quo	Contribute to decision making across the system / organisation	Contribute to wider system / organisational resource planning
Recognised role model for culture and values e.g. supports ongoing learning, challenges non-inclusive behaviour, brings things back to the patient/service user	Contribute to policy development for the organisation / system	Increasingly accountable for managing external stakeholder relationships, considering carefully how they influence and engage e.g. with other public sector partners and regulators	
	Engage teams with their direction / vision, winning support and buy-in	Contribute to the shape of the local external environment, for example influencing local and regional policy within a specific area of expertise	

Experiences

The below experiences will be helpful for developing the skills and capabilities required of this transition stage:

- **Delivering better results:** Experience of looking for and implementing new ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their area, and/or turning around an under-performing service.

- **Breadth of experience:** Experience of working in multiple functions or across commissioner/provider organisations or significant system working experience.
- **Strategy development:** Experience of developing functional strategy, spanning at least a 1-year horizon.
- **Developing great leaders:** Experience of coaching / mentoring others, enabling successful leadership practices that drive engagement and performance. Experience in succession and development planning for a broad area to meet a current and future workforce needs.
- **System working:** Experience of working in multiple functions or across commissioner / provider organisations. Experience collaborating across the system and assessment of the impact of initiatives on other areas of the system, working with other leaders to more effectively implement wider organisation goals / strategy.
- **Proactive role model:** Experience of championing the culture and values of their organisation / NHS, actively promoting a culture of challenge and keeping their service users at the forefront of decision making.
- **External relationships:** Experience of leading initiatives with external public sector partners and regulators, demonstrating the ability to wield influence without direct authority.
- **Resource management:** Experience of managing a complex budget or resource plan which considers and aligns priorities across different areas.
- **Building a more inclusive and compassionate culture:** Experience of supporting organisational initiatives to improve diversity and create an inclusive, compassionate culture.

Contact

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