

# National Graduate Development Programme impact survey

Research Report

August 2019



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# Summary

## Background

This online survey of the Local Government Association's (LGA) National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp) was intended to evaluate the overall impact of this graduate scheme on cohort 18, as well as to identify potential ways in which the scheme could be improved for future participants.

## Key findings

- Seventy-two per cent of respondents (23) were still working in local government a year after completing the ngdp.
- Ninety-one per cent of respondents still working in local government (21) said that the ngdp had improved their ability to carry out their current role.
- The same proportion (91 per cent, 21 respondents) of those still working in local government had progressed in their career or taken on additional roles or responsibilities since participating in the ngdp. All these respondents said that the ngdp had positively impacted on their ability to progress their career, to either a great (76 per cent, 16 respondents), a moderate (19 per cent, four respondents), or a small (five per cent, one respondent) extent.

## Introduction

This online survey looked at the extent to which the National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp) had resulted in a lasting impact on those who had participated in cohort 18. The results will help the Local Government Association (LGA) improve and develop the programme.

## Methodology

An email containing a link to an online survey was sent to the 86 graduates who comprised cohort 18 of the ngdp. The survey was sent out at the end of July 2019, one year after the graduates attended their final 'wrap up' event. A total of 32 replied – a response rate of 37 per cent.

Whilst these results should strictly be taken as a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents, rather than representative of all cohort 18 graduates, this level of response means that the results are likely to provide a good indication of the views of the cohort more widely.

Please note the following when reading the report:

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the number who answered each question. Please note that bases vary throughout the survey.
- Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.
- The following conventions are used in tables: '\*' - less than 0.5 per cent; '0' – no observations; '-' – category not applicable/data not available.
- Where the response base is less than 50, care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore where this is the case in this report, absolute

# National Graduate Development Programme impact survey

This section contains analysis of the full results from the survey.

## Current sector of employment

In order to assess the rate of retention of ngdp alumni to local government and the public sector more widely, respondents were asked to specify the sector in which they currently work (that is, the sector in which they worked at the time of completing the survey).

Most respondents (72 per cent, 23) were still working within local government while a quarter (25 per cent, eight) still worked within the public sector. Only one respondent (three per cent) reported working in the private sector at the time of the survey. Among the respondents still working in local government, 70 per cent (16) were still working within the organisation they were originally hired in as part of the ngdp. Tables 1 and 2 show these findings.

<b>Table 1: Sector respondents were working in at the time of the survey</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Private sector	1	3
Local government	23	72
Other public sector	8	25
Third sector	0	0
Self employed	0	0
Studying	0	0
Not currently employed	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: All respondents (32)

<b>Table 2: Whether respondents were still working within the organisation they were originally hired in as part of the ngdp</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Yes	16	70
No	7	30
Prefer not to say	0	0

Base: Respondents still working in local government (23)

## Evaluation of improvements in ability

Respondents still working in local government at the time of the survey were asked to rate the extent to which the ngdp programme improved their ability to carry out their current role. Most respondents (91 per cent, 21) reported that participating in the ngdp improved their ability to perform their current role to either a great or a moderate extent. No respondents felt that it had not improved their ability at all. A full breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: The extent to which respondents thought that participation in the ngdp overall improved their ability to carry out their current role**

	Number	Per cent
<b>To a great or moderate extent</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>91</b>
To a great extent	14	61
To a moderate extent	7	30
To a small extent	1	4
Not at all	0	0
Don't know	1	4

Base: Respondents still working in local government (23)

Respondents in local government positions were asked how much specific aspects of the ngdp improved their ability to carry out their current roles. In relation to their placement experience, once again, 91 per cent (21) thought that it had improved their ability to a good or moderate extent, and none reported a lack of impact. Table 4 shows these findings.

**Table 4: The extent to which respondents thought their ngdp placement experience improved their ability to carry out their current role**

	Number	Per cent
<b>To a great or moderate extent</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>91</b>
To a great extent	13	57
To a moderate extent	8	35
To a small extent	2	9
Not at all	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: Respondents still working in local government (23)

Compared to their placement experience, a lower proportion of respondents still working in local government, 70 per cent (16), thought the learning and development programme had improved their ability to carry out their current role to a good or

moderate extent. A further nine per cent (two) felt that it had not improved their ability to carry out their current role at all. These findings are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: The extent to which respondents thought the ngdp learning and development programme improved their ability to carry out their current role**

	Number	Per cent
<b>To a great or moderate extent</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>70</b>
To a great extent	5	22
To a moderate extent	11	48
To a small extent	4	17
Not at all	2	9
Don't know	1	4

Base: Respondents still working in local government (23)

### Career progression

The respondents who were still working within local government were asked whether they had progressed in their career, or taken on additional roles or responsibilities, since participating in the ngdp. Most respondents (91 per cent, 21) reported that they had while the remaining nine per cent (two respondents) reported that they expected to progress soon. A breakdown of these findings is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Whether respondents had progressed in their career or taken on additional roles or responsibilities since participating in the ngdp**

	Number	Per cent
Yes	21	91
No – but I expect to soon	2	9
No – I plan to maintain my current role and responsibilities for now	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: Respondents still working in local government (23)

Those respondents who had progressed or had taken on additional roles or responsibilities were asked to indicate the extent to which, if at all, their participation in the ngdp had positively impacted on their ability to do so. All respondents reported that it had, with 95 per cent (20) reporting that the impact was great or moderate. Table 7 shows these findings.



**Table 7: The extent to which respondents thought that participation in the ngdp had a positive impact on their ability to progress and/or take on additional roles or responsibilities**

	Number	Per cent
<b>To a great or moderate extent</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>95</b>
To a great extent	16	76
To a moderate extent	4	19
To a small extent	1	5
Not at all	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: Respondents still working in local government (23)

## Comments

Respondents who reported that participating in the ngdp had helped them to achieve their career goals to a great or moderate extent were asked to provide brief details of how it had helped. The following themes emerged from the answers provided:

- Respondents valued the breadth of experience they gained by working across different departments as part of the programme and a small number also felt that this had helped them to become more adaptable.
- The access to senior management afforded by the programme and being able to work on high level projects were seen as helpful for career progression.
- Respondents also reported that the learning and new skills they had acquired on the programme gave them deeper understanding of local government and equipped them to take on more senior roles.

At the end of the survey all respondents were given the opportunity to comment on their experience of the ngdp or how it has impacted their career. A number of the comments echoed those listed above while the following themes also emerged:

- Several respondents commented that taking part in the programme had enabled them to secure their current role. This included both moving to more senior positions and moving into new areas of work.
- While most comments received were positive, a small number mentioned that there was some inconsistency among the placements, and others would have liked more post programme support, such as career planning.

## Annex A: Questionnaire

1. What sector are you currently working in?

- Private sector
- Local government
- Other public sector
- Third sector
- Self employed
- Studying
- Not currently employed
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

To those who still work in local government:

2. Are you still working in the organisation you were originally hired in as part of the ngdp?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

3. To what extent, if at all, do you think that participation in the following improved your ability to carry out your current role?

*Please tick one option for each row*

	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
...the ngdp overall					
...your placement experience					
...the learning and development programme					

To those who answered not at all to 'the ngdp overall' option in Q3:

4. Why do you think that participation in the ngdp did not improve your ability to carry out your role? If you have any suggestions as to how the programme could be improved or developed to help with this, please use the space below.

To those who still work in local government:

5. Since participating in the ngdp have you progressed in your career or taken on additional roles or responsibilities?

Yes

No – but I expect to soon

No – I plan to maintain my current role and responsibilities for now

Don't know

If yes:

6. To what extent, if at all, do you think that participation in the ngdp had a positive impact on your ability to progress and/or take on additional roles or responsibilities?

To a great extent

To a moderate extent

To a small extent

Not at all

Don't know

To those who answered not at all to Q6:

7. Why do you think that participation in the ngdp did not have a positive impact on your ability to progress and/or take on additional roles or responsibilities? If you have any suggestions as to how the programme could be improved or developed to help with this, please use the space below.

To those who answered a great or moderate extent to Q3 or Q6:

8. Please briefly provide any details of how the ngdp has helped you improve your ability to carry out your current role or progress in your career, including examples of things that you have done differently as a result.

To all respondents:

9. If you have any final comments about your experience of the ngdp or how it has impacted your career, please use the space below.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback will be used to improve and develop the programme



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