



# National Graduate Development Programme **2019/20**

Council information pack



# Next generation leadership

It is the responsibility of all the best leaders to develop their people and ensure their organisations are able to meet the challenges we face today, and are flexible enough to deal with future issues we can't even imagine yet. The next generation of middle and senior level leaders will be essential to the effective functioning of local government. Councils must work hard to attract and develop the right leaders who can take our teams and organisations into the future and continue to thrive and innovate. Our graduate programme provides the perfect opportunity for you to bring into our councils bright, talented and ambitious people.

Our national graduate development programme for local government (ngdp) has been developing new talent for 20 years. The programme has been set up to provide local government with the high-calibre managers and leaders that communities need and attracts top graduates who are driven, passionate and committed to improving public services.

The ngdp is highly regarded by councils, graduates and the wider sector, ranked in The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers and Guardian UK 300. It increases the credibility of a career in local government and has provided a flow of consistently high quality trainees to over 160 authorities through 20 previous cohorts. Evidence shows that councils who hire our national management trainees can expect:

- individuals with leadership potential, who are able to rise to a challenge and make a valid contribution from the very start
- increased capacity to deliver change and transformation
- good value for money.

I know from my experience working in councils the value of employing an ngdp graduate. This pack provides an overview of the ngdp and shares the experiences of some of the councils and individuals who have been involved. It provides a compelling case for your council to be part of the scheme this year. If you are interested in getting on board please get in touch so that we can help you attract and retain the brightest and best in the public sector.



**Mark Lloyd**  
Chief Executive  
Local Government Association

# What is the National Graduate Development Programme?

The only national graduate programme specifically for local government.

Known as the ngdp, the LGA's flagship management trainee programme offers councils a unique opportunity to grow their own local government leaders. Every year it provides the sector with high quality graduates ready to work on strategic projects which contribute to the delivery of your council's goals.

The ngdp is a two year programme, where graduates are employed by councils and undertake a minimum of three placements. Alongside their employment, the LGA provides a prestigious complementary learning and

development offer. This is carried out in parallel so that the graduates can implement their learning whilst working on real projects.

At the end of their two year programme the graduates will have developed a range of skills across a variety of services. The ngdp acts as an opportunity for talented graduates to fast track their local government career and gives councils the opportunity to nurture and develop their own talent.

"It is essential for the future of local government that we continue to develop the leaders of the future and that we do all we can to ensure aspirant graduates choose their career paths within the sector. Here at Brent Council we support and highly value the ngdp scheme, as it helps us to identify talented national management trainees, develop them and deploy them in key positions across the organisation.

Brent has participated in ngdp since 2007 and I can't speak highly enough of the graduates who join us as part of the scheme; it provides fantastic opportunities for graduates to develop a wide array of skills and broaden their experiences through placements across a host of different council departments.

We have had a lot going on across our borough, whether this be through creating new affordable homes through regeneration schemes; pursuing innovative initiatives to reduce homelessness; improving our physical and digital infrastructure for residents; or preparations undertaken for our year as London Borough of Culture. Graduates from the ngdp scheme have been at the heart of all this important work, helping us to be more innovative and effective in the provision of services to residents and businesses.

Many graduates from the scheme hold senior positions in local government now, including here in Brent and I look forward to many of them being chief executives of the future."

**Carolyn Downs**  
Chief Executive  
Brent Council

# Local government's national graduate development programme

The ngdp provides councils with management trainees who have leadership potential and the capacity to work enthusiastically on innovative and strategic projects. To help realise this potential, it also provides a bespoke and prestigious learning and development programme to all graduates recruited through ngdp.

## Why should my council take part in the ngdp?

### Future proofing

Being part of the ngdp allows councils to start thinking earlier about longer-term succession planning and future leadership potential. Growing your own talent is less costly than recruiting higher up in the management structure, and taking on a graduate through the ngdp ensures you will have additional corporate capacity and capability at a senior level. Amongst our alumni you'll find assistant chief executives, heads of service and managers of flagship and transformational local government initiatives.

### Benefits to your council

By employing graduates as part of the ngdp programme, your management trainees will be provided with national networking and learning opportunities across sectors and have access to partners such as central government, from the private sector and other local authorities. This not only enriches the experience for the management trainee, but brings a wealth of best practice and knowledge back to your council.

### Recruiting for you

As a national scheme, the ngdp promotes local government to the graduate market on behalf of councils in England and Wales. Last year, ngdp attracted applications from over 2,700 graduates. The LGA runs a rigorous assessment process to ensure that the most high-calibre graduates are then put forward to interview at your council. All applicants must have a minimum of a 2:2 degree and are subject to numerical, verbal, situational judgement and video assessments before taking part in a bespoke local government assessment centre. Graduate recruitment can be time-consuming and demanding on council resources, and that is why we run a national marketing and recruitment campaign to help identify the most promising future leaders for your council.

### Attracting the best

The ngdp recruits graduates from all different backgrounds, universities and degree disciplines; our aim is to reflect the diverse communities that we serve. We will market ngdp at a national level, attending university career events and promoting in national publications. For councils who sign up before candidate applications close (7 January 2020), we will also promote with your local universities and provide additional support to attract graduates specifically interested in your council.

## Recruiting locally

Taking part in the ngdp offers councils access to a national pool of high calibre graduates, however we recognise that some councils may wish to recruit from their own communities. We are able to provide a range of options for councils who wish to participate in the programme at a local level. We can work with you to support your own local recruitment campaign, where you would market the opportunity to candidates from the local area. This is undertaken in the same timeframes at the national recruitment campaign, which means that successful candidates become part of the national programme and have access to the same learning and development opportunities as the other trainees.

## Developing your talent

The ngdp can offer an exciting and appealing development opportunity to internal staff who you have identified as the future managerial leaders of your council. We can support you to grow your own talent, by offering your existing graduate employees the opportunity to join the ngdp and access the learning and development offer.

## What is the learning and development offer?

To support graduates to fast-track their career, we provide a complementary learning and development programme. This includes a mixture of residential training modules, regional events, online learning and action learning opportunities.

The learning and development programme has been designed to develop future leaders and ensure that your council gets a significant return on investment. The objectives of the learning and development are:

- to enable participants to critically evaluate the challenges facing local government
- to provide participants with high level capabilities in management and leadership, grounded in a public sector context

- to provide participants with a strong understanding of key local government areas of work and management
- to enhance personal effectiveness as a leader and manager
- to increase self-awareness and awareness of others.

## What's expected of my council?

The full list of council commitments is available in the ngdp partnership agreement, however at a glance we ask councils to:

- Promote ngdp to raise the profile of the programme locally and attract a diverse and talented pool of candidates.
- Conduct a local interview at the end of the recruitment process. At this stage the candidates will have been through a rigorous series of assessments, but we want to give you the opportunity to ensure they are the best fit for your council.
- Employ national management trainees on a minimum two-year fixed term contract.
- Pay national management trainee salaries at national local government spinal column point (SCP) 20 (which was £25,295 excluding London Weighting at the time of publication).
- Nominate a member of staff to be the placement coordinator for the programme, once the council's national management trainee(s) is in place.
- Organise a minimum of three placements for each national management trainee over the two years.

## What kind of placements should be offered?

Your council will have full control over what placements to offer the trainees, based on where the need is most prevalent and their skills can be developed and utilised. Placements have included but are not limited to roles within adults or children's social care policy teams, innovation and transformation teams, communications, democratic services, executive support and regeneration. Some councils ask services to bid competitively for a graduate trainee and others allow trainees to steer which kind of placements they might want to take on, as they progress through the scheme. We can provide advice and guidance on appropriate placements to ensure that trainees work at a high competency level.

## What will the LGA do?

- Annually subsidise the programme on behalf of councils in England.
- Market the programme to high-calibre graduates across the UK.
- Assess candidates' suitability through a rigorous and established multi-stage recruitment process.
- Support councils to access and market themselves to candidates.
- Fund and organise a national programme of learning, development and networking.

## What does it cost my council?

- The salary of the graduate over the term of their two year contract is set at a minimum of spinal column point 20 on the local government national payscale. At the time of publication, this was £25,295. Each option outlined below comes with a one-off fee paid to the LGA once the national management trainee has started.

## How can my council get involved?

### **Talk to the LGA about signing up to the scheme**

Discuss participation in the programme and how you can benefit from the next cohort of high-calibre national management trainees.

### **We can come to you**

We can come and meet your team to talk in more detail about the ngdp and how it can work for you.

### **Speak to a council that is already involved**

If you'd like to hear some first-hand experience of the ngdp and how it has worked in another council, please let us know. The LGA can put you in touch with another authority that can tell you all you need to know about participating.

Please contact Helen Reeves, Programme Manager for Leadership and Localism.

Telephone: 020 7664 3035

Email: [helen.reeves@local.gov.uk](mailto:helen.reeves@local.gov.uk)  
or [ngdp@local.gov.uk](mailto:ngdp@local.gov.uk)



# The options

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## 1. National management trainee (NMT)

### **Full participation in the ngdp: Promoting local government**

We market local government as a premier career choice for graduates across the UK and promote the ngdp roles available in your council.

### **Meeting the standard**

We recruit and select the highest calibre graduates for you to interview.

### **Growing capacity**

We support each NMT on the programme with a high quality learning and development programme and provide access to national networking and knowledge events.

**£2,800 per graduate**  
you employ your chosen NMT(s) for two years ensuring a minimum of three different placements with your council.

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## 2. Shared national management trainee

### **All the benefits of participating in the full programme but NMT(s) and their placements are shared between councils.**

Partnerships and practical arrangements are the responsibility of councils involved.

**£2,800 per graduate, split between the councils**  
**Employment is divided proportionally between participating councils.**

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## 3. Local recruitment for management trainees

### **Supported recruitment and equal access to the ngdp's learning and development programme.**

Your council markets its NMT position(s) to candidates from your local area in the same timeframe as the ngdp's national campaign. You can shortlist applications if you wish. The ngdp then facilitates the assessment of your nominated local candidates in line with national candidates to ensure they meet the same standard. Successful candidates will become part of the national cohort with access to ngdp learning and development, networks and knowledge events.\*

**£2,800 per graduate**  
**Please note that to qualify for this mode of recruitment, you will need to sign up by 11 October 2019.**

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## 4. Grow your own management trainee

### **Giving qualified graduates you employ access to the ngdp's learning and development programme.**

Your council markets its NMT position(s) to new or existing graduate employee(s) in the same timeframe as the ngdp's national campaign. You can shortlist applications if you wish. The ngdp then facilitates the assessment of your nominated internal candidates in line with national candidates to ensure they meet the same standard. Successful candidates will become part of the national cohort with access to ngdp learning and development, networks and knowledge events.

**£2,800 per graduate**  
as each NMT is already your employee, salary remains at your discretion.

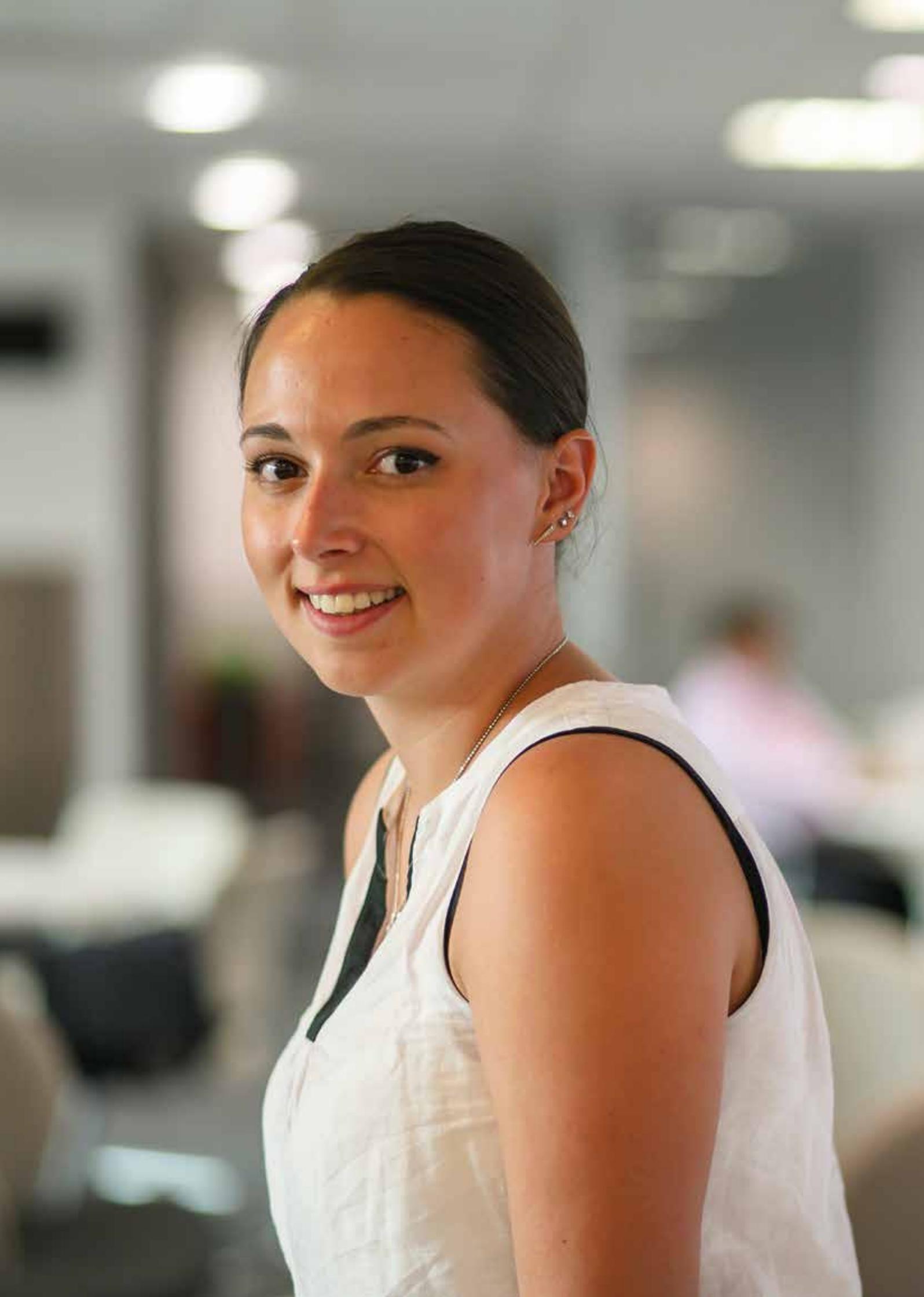
**Please note that to qualify for this mode of recruitment, you will need to sign up by 7 January 2020.**

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## 5. Learning and development programme

Graduates employed by your council who have not been recruited through the ngdp can be enrolled onto our learning and development programme.

\*All candidates must pass the ngdp's assessment benchmarks to take part in this initiative. Recruitment and assessment will be supported in line with the national timetable. For more information please contact our team: [ngdp@local.gov.uk](mailto:ngdp@local.gov.uk)







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REF 23.44