



# National Graduate Development Programme **2020/21**

## Council information pack

# Next generation leadership

**Mark Lloyd** Chief Executive, Local Government Association

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the vital work of council officers, managers and the value of local leadership. Now more than ever, it is vital that we develop our talented workforce to ensure our organisations are equipped to meet the challenges we face today, and are flexible and resilient enough to navigate what the future may bring.

Identifying and nurturing the next generation of local government leaders will be essential to the effective functioning of local government, as we serve our communities and support the nation. Our national graduate development programme for local government (NGDP) has been developing new talent for over 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, consistently ranked in The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers. It offers the chance to recruit the brightest and best graduates to your organisation, whilst relieving your organisation of much of the time, effort and cost that a national scale recruitment entails.

With councils demonstrating what an empowered local government can achieve more than ever before, we have enhanced our reputation amongst our communities and made working for a council an even more attractive career prospect.

Our specially designed multi-stage recruitment has been tailored to find those passionate about a career in local government. We can help you bring on board talented graduates with real leadership potential, a desire to make a difference, and the capacity to deliver change and transformation.

In recent years, we have listened to your needs and made it easier for you to come on board. As well as recruiting from our diverse, national talent pool, there are also bespoke options to suit any organisation's needs. This could allow you to develop existing talent within your organisation, focus on graduates who already live and work locally, or even partner with another council to take on trainees.

I know from my experience working in councils the value of employing an NGDP graduate. At the LGA, we ourselves take on new graduates annually, as well as benefiting from the alumni of the scheme who also make a massive contribution as their local government careers flourish. All are a real asset to the local government family.

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.



# 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. 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. 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.

"I am a huge supporter of and advocate for the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). I have had the pleasure and privilege of working over the last several years in three London councils who all benefitted from participating in the programme and here in Newham, I work with a number of senior directors who entered local government via that route.

The NGDP is so important because it matches talented graduates to a career path that will not only expose them to a wide range of opportunities and professions, but also rightfully positions local government as a sector to which those graduates can aspire.

Now more than ever as we enter an uncertain economic future in which we as councils have to reorient ourselves to support our communities and places, we need committed and talented thinkers and doers to come and build their careers with us to be our leaders of the future.

In Newham, we have an ambitious and innovative agenda of community wealth-building; a major affordable housing development programme; greening our economy and supporting our residents' health and wellbeing. Our current NGDP intake through their placements will contribute to making this happen. We are also committed to tackling inherent and longstanding inequalities and I see my role as the Sponsor of the NGDP BAME Network as one of the ways to further that aspiration.

I cannot endorse the programme strongly enough and I look forward to continuing to see how its participants go on to create and lead a new and brighter local government future.

**Althea Loderick** Chief Executive, Newham 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 chief executives, directors, senior managers and others leading transformational change across the sector.

### Benefits to your council

By employing graduates as part of the NGDP, your management trainees will be provided with a large national network of other trainees, plus access to a range of partners. 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. Last year, NGDP attracted applications from Over 5,000 graduates. The LGA runs a rigorous, multi-stage recruitment process, all designed bespoke for the local government context. We 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 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 draw from a large talent pool, and help identify the most promising future leaders for your council.

The NGDP recruits graduates from a range of different backgrounds, universities and degree disciplines; our aim is to reflect the diverse communities that we serve.

# The flexibility to work for you

## **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 decide what 'local' means to you, and support you with your own local recruitment campaign to target those candidates. Successful candidates then 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.

## **Join with a partner organisation**

You can work with a partner authority or group of authorities to join the scheme. In recent years we have already had combined authorities, counties partnering with districts, and housing and transport organisations take part in the NGDP.

## **What is the learning and development offer?**

To support graduates to fast-track their career, we provide a complementary learning and development programme. Graduates gain the chance to learn, network and develop together over the two years, whilst working towards an ILM Level 7 qualification.

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?

We ask councils to:

- Help us to promote and 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 NJC spinal column point (SCP) 20 (which was £25,991 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. 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 authority?

- The host authority is expected to pay the salary for the graduate, set at the NJC payscale spinal column point 20 (£25,991). This is what we know is competitive with other graduate programmes. The authority will also be asked to pay a one-off fee of £2,800, paid per graduate only on their successful appointment. This covers the bespoke, multi-stage recruitment, plus the whole learning and development programme and ILM qualification.

# NGDP timetable

Attracting, assessing and matching top graduates to your council follows a similar timetable each year.

<b>Autumn 2020</b>	The NGDP's applications process open for graduates. Councils can start signing up to take part in the NGDP.
<b>January 2021</b>	Applications close for graduates.
<b>February 2021</b>	Graduates who pass the first stage begin video interviews.
<b>March 2021</b>	Our deadline for councils to sign up for the NGDP is 31 March 2021.
<b>March/April 2021</b>	Top graduates complete an assessment centre and those who pass will have an opportunity to meet with participating councils.
<b>May 2021</b>	Candidates who have passed the assessment process are matched with councils for interview processes based on the candidates' preferences.
<b>June 2021</b>	Councils conduct interviews and offer places to their preferred candidates. Candidates accept council offers and prepare to join the organisation in the autumn.

## 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.

### 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

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