

# Leadership Essentials Feedback Survey Report

2017/18



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## Summary

Between 1 September 2017 and 31 March 2018, paper surveys were distributed to councillors who had just completed a Leadership Essentials course, in order to get feedback on the quality and content of each course.

Leadership Essentials courses are short courses, normally two days in duration, and each is focused on one of a wide range of topics including planning, adult social care and local government finance. The councillors who attend these sessions are those in leadership positions, such as cabinet members and committee chairs.

The results will be used to help the LGA ensure that future leadership training best meets councillors' needs.

## Methodology

Paper surveys were given to 518 councillors who had attended Leadership Essentials training courses between 1 September 2017 and 31 March 2018. A total of 438 submitted responses – a response rate of 85 per cent.

This is a good response rate for a survey of this kind. Therefore, whilst these results should strictly be taken as a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents, rather than representative of all those who attended Leadership Essentials between 1 September 2017 and 31 March 2018, this level of response means that the results are likely to provide a good indication of the views of the cohort more widely.

## Results

- **Satisfaction with the course:** Nearly all respondents (98 per cent) said that they were either very or fairly satisfied with the course they attended.
- **Increased confidence in ability:** Nearly all respondents (96 per cent) said that the course had increased their confidence in their ability to carry out their role, to either a great or moderate extent.
- **Objectives for taking part in the course:** Seventy-seven per cent of respondents said that they wanted to network and learn from other councilors, 63 per cent aimed to learn about the latest developments and 58 per cent wanted to develop their capacity to lead.
- **Achieving objectives:** Many respondents (89 per cent) had fully or largely achieved the objectives they had for taking part in the course.
- **Tutor knowledge and expertise:** A very positive response was received to this question with all respondents saying that course tutors' knowledge and expertise was either very or fairly good.
- **Overall agenda and programme content:** All respondents said that this was either very or fairly good.
- **Venue:** Ninety-seven per cent of respondents said that the venue was either very or fairly good.

- **Catering:** Ninety-six per cent of respondents said that the catering was either very or fairly good.
- **Access needs/special requirements:** Ninety-seven per cent of respondents (excluding those who answered 'not applicable') said that their access needs and/or special requirements were either very or fairly well met.
- **Learning tools:** Nearly all respondents (99 per cent) said that the course had provided them with useful learning tools, to either a great or moderate extent.
- **Recommending the course:** Ninety-eight per cent of respondents said that they would either be very or fairly likely to recommend the course to fellow councillors if asked about it.

## Introduction

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Leadership Essentials courses are short courses, normally two days in duration, and each is focused on one of a wide range of topics including planning, adult social care and local government finance. The councillors who attend these sessions are those in leadership positions, such as cabinet members and committee chairs.

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## Methodology

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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.

## Feedback on the Leadership Essentials course

This section provides full results for each survey question.

All respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the Leadership Essentials course that they attended. Nearly all (98 per cent) said that they were either very or fairly satisfied.

<b>Table 1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with this Leadership Essentials course?</b>	
	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Very or fairly satisfied</b>	<b>98</b>
Very satisfied	75
Fairly satisfied	23
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1
Fairly dissatisfied	0
Very dissatisfied	0
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (430 respondents)

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, they thought that attending the Leadership Essentials course had helped them to feel more confident in their ability to carry out their role. Nearly all (96 per cent) said that it had helped to either a great or moderate extent.

<b>Table 2: To what extent, if at all, do you feel more confident in your ability to carry out your role having participated in the course?</b>	
	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Great or moderate extent</b>	<b>96</b>
To a great extent	54
To a moderate extent	42
To a small extent	4
Not at all	0
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (424 respondents)

All respondents were asked to identify their objectives for taking part in the course. Seventy-seven per cent said that they wanted to network and learn from other councilors, 63 per cent aimed to learn about the latest developments and 58 per cent wanted to develop their capacity to lead.

Table 3: What were your objectives in taking part in the course?	
	Per cent
To network and learn from other councillors	77
To learn about the latest developments	63
To develop my capacity to lead	58
To explore and test new ways of working	50
To share my experiences with others	47
To refresh or sharpen my leadership skills	45
To work with others on the big issues facing the sector	44
Other	8
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (438 respondents)

Note: Percentages total to more than 100, since respondents could select a range of objectives.

Eight per cent of respondents provided an 'other' response to this question and a summary of the key themes is provided below:

- **Expand knowledge:** Many of those respondents who selected 'other' wanted to improve their knowledge around areas such as policy and process, local government finance and technical knowledge.
- **Networking and sharing best practice:** Learning from other members through sharing best practice examples was identified by some respondents.
- **Media and communication skills:** Becoming more confident when working with the press and learning media and interview skills, including better communication with an audience, were highlighted by a small number of respondents.
- **Current role:** A small number of respondents said that they hoped the course would help them to develop a deeper understanding of their current role.
- **Reassurance:** A small number of respondents said that they hoped to gain reassurance that the current activity undertaken by their council was appropriate and correct.

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, they had achieved their objectives. Many respondents (89 per cent) had fully or largely achieved their goals.

Table 4: Were the objectives that you had for taking part in the course achieved?	
	Per cent
<b>Fully or largely achieved</b>	<b>89</b>
Fully achieved (met all goals)	32
Largely achieved (met most goals)	57
Partially achieved (met some goals)	10
Not achieved (met none of the goals)	1
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (416 respondents)

All respondents were asked how they would rate the overall knowledge and expertise of the course tutors. A very positive response was received to this question with all respondents saying that this was either very or fairly good.

<b>Table 5: How would you rate the overall knowledge and expertise of the tutors?</b>	
	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Very or fairly good</b>	<b>100</b>
Very good	91
Fairly good	9
Not very good	0
Not good at all	0
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (427 respondents)

All respondents were asked how they would rate the overall agenda and content of the programme for the course that they attended. Again, a very positive response was received with 100 per cent of respondents saying that this was either very or fairly good.

<b>Table 6: How would you rate the overall agenda and content of the programme?</b>	
	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Very or fairly good</b>	<b>100</b>
Very good	72
Fairly good	28
Not very good	0
Not good at all	0
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (419 respondents)

All respondents were asked how they would rate the course venue. Ninety-seven per cent of respondents said that this was either very or fairly good.

<b>Table 7: How would you rate the venue?</b>	
	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Very or fairly good</b>	<b>97</b>
Very good	86
Fairly good	11
Not very good	9
Not good at all	2
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (423 respondents)

All respondents were asked how they would rate the catering. Ninety-six per cent of respondents said that this was either very or fairly good.

<b>Table 8: How would you rate the catering (food and service)?</b>	
	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Very or fairly good</b>	<b>96</b>
Very good	82
Fairly good	14
Not very good	3
Not good at all	1
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (419 respondents)

All respondents were asked if they had any other comments about the knowledge and expertise of the tutors, the agenda and programme content, the venue or the catering. Thirty-one responses were received and a summary of the key themes is provided below:

- **The knowledge and expertise of the tutors:** Nearly all those who provided comments praised the tutors saying that they were engaging, knowledgeable and accessible. Presentations were described as well paced and tutors gave useful practical examples, provided time for discussion and offered an excellent range of topics. A couple of respondents suggested more participatory learning.

*“The course was well paced, the knowledge of the tutors was very good, equally was the management of the group.”* Effective Scrutiny

*“The tutors were knowledgeable and pitched delivery just right.”* Prevent

- **The agenda and content of the programme:** Many respondents were positive about the course they attended, describing them as well planned and delivered as well as being informative. The opportunities for networking and to engage with speakers were well received however some respondents requested that there should be more time for this. Some respondents mentioned the use of case studies, saying these were valuable but that more of them would be useful. Other comments included making some of the content more in depth and less general and also providing workshops and discussion groups or reflective time for sharing experiences.

*“Really enjoyed the programme content and delivery, and the networking opportunities.”* Cultural Services

*“More of a workshop session and discussion time rather than questions.”* Children’s Services

- **The venue:** Whilst some respondents who provided extra comments praised the venue, a few mentioned that there were long walks between rooms (which was difficult for those with mobility issues) and one or two also mentioned that the room they were in was overheated and too small for the size of the group. Individual responses included limited parking, the distance from the train station, Wi-Fi not working in a bedroom and that no toiletries were provided at the venue.
- **The catering:** Many respondents described the catering as either excellent or good however several highlighted a lack of Halal and vegetarian options and a lack of information regarding special dietary requirements such as gluten free and around allergy issues. Some also mentioned that lunch was basic and that sandwiches were not labelled. The provision of soya milk was appreciated.

*“Catering and hospitality first class”* Children’s Services

All respondents were asked how well the course met their access needs and/or special requirements. Ninety-seven per cent of respondents (excluding those who answered ‘not applicable’) said that these were either very or fairly well met.

Table 9: How well did the course meet your access needs and/or special requirements?	
	Per cent
<b>Very or fairly well</b>	<b>97</b>
Very well	75
Fairly well	22
Not very well	3
Not at all well	0
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents excluding those who answered 'not applicable' (332 respondents)

Those respondents who said that the course did not meet their access needs or special requirements very well or at all well were asked to provide further details. The issues raised echoed those made regarding the venue, for example walking distance between rooms and the availability of Halal food. One respondent said that they were not provided with an accessible room despite requesting one.

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, the course provided them with useful learning tools. Nearly all respondents (99 per cent) said that the course had provided them with useful learning tools to either a great or moderate extent.

Table 10: To what extent, if at all, did the course provide you with useful learning tools?	
	Per cent
<b>Great or moderate extent</b>	<b>99</b>
To a great extent	69
To a moderate extent	30
To a small extent	1
Not at all	0
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (407 respondents)

Respondents were asked what aspects of the course they had found most useful. Three hundred and five responses were received and a summary of the key themes is provided below:

- **Networking:** Many respondents identified the opportunity for networking and interacting with others as positive and helpful. Group work and related discussions provided a chance to make connections and share experiences.

*"The networking is invaluable seeing how others are dealing with similar issues."* Effective Scrutiny

- **Best practice:** Many respondents said that they found the practical, best practice and case study examples that they were given very helpful and informative.

*"Practical examples of what others do (participants and speakers)"* Finance

- **Facilitators and topics:** The knowledge and expertise of presenters and their positive, engaging and informative approach was highlighted by some respondents.

*"I found the energy and enthusiasm of the speakers inspiring, and the ideas."* Cultural Services

- **Programme structure and sessions:** Some respondents said that the broad structure of the programme worked well. Areas highlighted by several respondents as being of particular use were; scrutiny, leadership and influencing, local government terminology/jargon busting, media and interview skills.

*“The course is well put together, I found it all interesting and useful.”* Effective Scrutiny

Respondents were asked what about the course could have been different or improved and how. One hundred and eighty eight responses were received and the key themes are given below:

- **Discussion and interaction:** Many of those who answered this question said that having more workshops and interactive discussion opportunities would be appreciated. Sharing best practice, case studies and having the chance to connect and share experiences through group work were all viewed positively and seen as beneficial learning opportunities.

*“More time for open discussion – maybe split the group in two to allow more people to contribute to discussions.”* Risk Management

- **Group structure:** Leadership Essentials courses vary in size, and some respondents mentioned that smaller groups facilitate better and more effective interaction between delegates. Additionally it was suggested that members from the same council should be separated into different groups and that fewer members attending from the same council would provide a wider political mix. A wider geographic spread of attendees was also encouraged.

*“The course size was much larger than normal and made course time keeping harder and group discussion much more difficult.”* Planning

*“Networking and learning from other experiences is important and it might have been even better if a wider geographical spread could have been achieved.”* Prevent

- **Course structure:** A variety of different comments were received about the structure of the courses. Some respondents suggested that there should be more and smaller workshops, and depending on the course in question, others wanted either more or less speakers and subjects or a slower or faster pace. Some also suggested that the course could be longer to include more content.

*“Perhaps make it a full two days. Lots of comments and interaction, which is good, but needs extended time.”* Planning

- **Course content:** A small number of respondents suggested that they would have been interested in greater depth in some areas. Amongst those mentioned were scrutiny, leadership and budgets/finance.

*“To go deeper in some of the areas especially on the models.”* Finance

- **Venue:** A few suggestions for changes to the venue were provided. These included providing microphones for speakers, improving the food and using bigger rooms.
- **Administration:** A few respondents made suggestions for the administration of the course. These included the provision of handouts or slides at the beginning of the course and providing the full venue address in the joining pack.

*“A handout pack of all slides to be given out at the beginning of the programme”* Effective Scrutiny

Respondents were asked to identify what had been the main learning points for them. Two hundred and sixty one responses were received and these were extensive and varied according to the course attended. Some of the key cross cutting points are provided below:

- gaining confidence and adapting thinking
- developing an understanding (particularly around financial challenges) about how others are experiencing and addressing similar issues
- clarifying the councillor role and the importance of leadership
- understanding risk and responsibilities
- insight, learning, widening knowledge about how other authorities work
- challenge and asking questions
- interview and media skills.

Respondents were asked to comment on whether they found their Leadership Essentials programme co-ordinator to be helpful and to give any views about how that role could be improved. All respondents provided positive feedback to this question saying that co-ordinators were helpful, knowledgeable, approachable, supportive and experienced.

*“Excellent, relaxed and friendly but very efficient in getting things done effectively and on time”* Cultural Services

*“Excellent, helpful and supportive, very knowledgeable”* Effective Scrutiny

Respondents were asked, taking everything in to consideration, how likely they would be to recommend the Leadership Essentials course to fellow councillors if asked about it. Ninety-eight per cent said that they would either be very or fairly likely to recommend the course.

**Table 11: Taking everything in to consideration, how likely would you be to recommend this Leadership Essentials course to fellow councillors if asked about it?**

	Per cent
<b>Very or fairly likely</b>	<b>98</b>
Very likely	84
Fairly likely	14
Not very likely	1
Not at all likely	0
Don't know	0

Base: all respondents (392 respondents)

Finally, some respondents made suggestions as to how the LGA could promote Leadership Essentials to future participants.

**Targeted promotion:** Some respondents suggested that details advertising the course should be sent to both new portfolio holders and existing lead members, as the course provides vital tools and knowledge suitable for both groups, new and existing. Course promotion through social media, regional networks and professional magazines was also suggested.

**Value of information/content:** Providing more information about course content and what can be gained by attending, was encouraged by some respondents. The range of opportunities the course provides such as the sharing of experiences and best practice, networking, team working, building confidence and knowledge and the chance to hear new arguments and ideas were all felt to be areas that could be expanded and emphasised to potential attendees.

**Testimonials:** Several respondents noted the value of including positive testimonials or quotes from previous attendees in promotional materials.

**Course timings:** A few respondents suggested that altering some of the course timings, for example running it for longer or offering evening sessions or shorter seminars could encourage attendance.

## Annex A: Questionnaire

Please complete this short survey about this Leadership Essentials course. The results will help the Local Government Association (LGA) ensure that our future leadership training best meets councillors' needs.

All responses will be treated confidentially by the LGA. Information will be aggregated, and no individual will be identified in any publications without consent.

1. Please enter your details below:

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Role:</b>	
<b>Council:</b>	
<b>Course name:</b>	

2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with this Leadership Essentials course?

Very satisfied   
Fairly satisfied   
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied   
Fairly dissatisfied   
Very dissatisfied   
Don't know

3. To what extent, if at all, do you feel more confident in your ability to carry out your role, having participated in the course?

To a great extent   
To a moderate extent   
To a small extent   
Not at all   
Don't know

4. What were your objectives in taking part in the course?

Please tick all that apply

To develop my capacity to lead   
To refresh or sharpen my leadership skills   
To share my experiences with others   
To network and learn from other councillors   
To learn about the latest developments   
To work with others on the big issues facing the sector   
To explore and test new ways of working   
Other (please specify)   
Don't know

To everyone apart from those who selected 'don't know':

5. Were the objectives that you had for taking part in the course achieved?

- Fully achieved (met all goals)
- Largely achieved (met most goals)
- Partially achieved (met some goals)
- Not achieved (met none of the goals)
- Don't know

6. How would you rate the following?

Please tick one option for each row

	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Fairly good</b>	<b>Not very good</b>	<b>Not good at all</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>The overall knowledge and expertise of the tutors</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>The overall agenda and content of the programme</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>The venue</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>The catering (food and service)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

7. If you have comments on any of the above, please use the space below:

8. How well did the course meet your access needs and/or special requirements?

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not very well (please give details below)
- Not at all well (please give details below)
- Don't know
- Not applicable

9. How would you rate each of the sessions?<sup>1</sup>

Please tick one option for each row

	Very good	Fairly good	Not very good	Not good at all	Don't know
Session 1: xxx	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Session 2: xxx	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Session 3: xxx	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Etc....	<input type="checkbox"/>				

10. If you have comments on any of the sessions, including what went well, please use the space below:

	Comments
Session 1: xxx	
Session 2: xxx	
Etc....	

11. To what extent, if at all, did the course provide you with useful learning tools?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all
- Don't know

12. What aspects of the course did you find most useful?

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<sup>1</sup> These session specific questions have not been analysed in this report as the sessions were different for every course, and their main purpose was to provide quick feedback to allow course organisers to make changes to future courses as needed.

13. What could have been different or improved, and how?

14. What have been the main learning points for you?

15. Please comment on whether you found the Leadership Essentials programme coordinator {name} to be helpful and give any views about how that role could be improved.

16. Taking everything in to consideration, how likely would you be to recommend this Leadership Essentials course to fellow councillors if asked about it?

- Very likely
- Fairly likely
- Not very likely
- Not at all likely
- Don't know

17. We would welcome any comments that we could use to help promote Leadership Essentials to future participants. Please use the space below.

18. Finally, if you have any further comments about the Leadership Essentials course, 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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